

# **The remix: The influence of Hip Hop culture on Brand identities in Johannesburg from 2012 to 2015**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this is my unaided work, and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources that I have used. This research is being submitted for the BA Honors Part-time brand leadership and entrepreneur Module 3: Research Methodology. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other higher learning institution.

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## **Abstract**

It can be deliberated that music has occasionally been an intertwined part of human culture, the advancement of technology in modern society has created its increased accessibility and portability, which has led to unprecedented production and listening of this medium that enables individuals to enacts and perform various identities during everyday life. Research also shows that young people are consuming music more than any other age group. As a result music can in some respect be considered to be important cultural influencer in the lives of young individuals. Research that has been conducted thus far has been conducted in gaining understanding the various forms and functions of this influence has focused in the disciplines that a linked to musicology and sociology. European and American psychologists have gained an interest in understanding the role that music has in constructing identity in young individuals. As a contribution to this field of application outside of these contexts and located within a qualitative framework, the purpose of this study is to explore the idea that the Hip Hop sub culture has an influence on the way brands have been positioning themselves from 2012 till 2015, specifically in South Africa. It debates whether or not Hip Hop music has had any impact on how brands in Johannesburg align themselves and create relevance to their target audiences. This research document will argue that Hip Hop culture is creating a new generation of consumers that are finding new ways of creating cultural expression that are redefining how young people are seeing themselves in post apartheid South Africa. Focusing the research on how brands like Ama Kip Kip (Sunday Times best SA brand 2013 and 2012 Old Mutual Teen Choice Award) and Nike S.A. have used Hip Hop to their advantage to grow their urban footprint in Johannesburg's consumer landscape. The study will also look at how Hip Hop has been contextualized in South Africa to move away from its US cultural imperialist constrains (Adam Haupt, 2012).

## **Important terms**

**YFM** is the biggest radio station in the Gauteng region and a major part of its audience are adolescents. YFM also focuses on local and international Rap music in its play listing.

**Rap and Hip Hop** are used synonymously throughout the text. In colloquial language in current society the meaning is the same. In fact the term Rap music is a misnomer as it only refers to the verbal part of the song and not the music (Ogg, & Lipshall,, 1999).

**Rosebank** is a cosmopolitan shopping centre based within the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The shopping centre is a cultural hub that houses several local and international fashion emporiums and the studio of the youth radio station Y FM.

## 1. Introduction

*The issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience- a musical experience (Frith, 1996, p. 109).*

Through out time music played and formed an important component of human culture. In recent times research has been done in sociology and musicology in this discipline (Zillman and Gan, 2005). Psychologists have been interested in defining and comprehending the role that music has in constructing and maintaining identity during the developmental stages of youth ( Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell, 2007; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2001; Zillman & Gan, 1997). For the most part, research conducted on this subject has been largely conducted in The United States of America and Europe and to date, there is not a lot of significant studies done on the influence that music has on youth brand identities and strategies in South Africa ( Nutall; 2010). Local Hip Hop music is amongst the most popular music genres that is consumed and idolized by adolescents in South Africa and around the world (Tsholofelo, 2014). Hip Hop is influencing a generation, as well as brands globally. Its impact must be explored and understood within a local and global context in mind (Stoute, 2011).

This research study will therefore attempt to contribute to the larger context of research on the influence that Hip Hop culture has had on constructing relevant brand identities on youth between the ages of 16-35 in the cohort of Johannesburg from 2012 till 2015.

Hargreaves and North (1997) have defined music as a complex multidimensional and comprises of three different aspects. One being the sound component (physical), two is in the way that individuals understand or relate with the music (subjective component) and thirdly is the social relevance and meaning that is created in a social group around a certain style of music.

In line with these aspects a social psychological outlook to music must consider each dimension of musical experiences and the brand adoptions and consumer behavior that may emerge from this interaction. Zillman and Gan (1997) argue that youth listen to more music than individuals of other different age groups. A study conducted in the

United States of America by Fitzgerald et al (2000) on 16 year olds found that all the young people interviewed pointed that music was an important leisure time component. This illustrates that this affinity to music that youth have implies that a lot of time is spent listening to music and a substantial amount of money on the purchasing of music. This assumption is also true in South Africa. Youth market research in South Africa implies that young people consider music as a valuable pastime activity (Nutall; 2010). A youth local radio station in Johannesburg YFM (Youth FM), targets youth between 16 and 35. YFM started broadcasting in the province of Gauteng in 1997. In just one month the station had grown its audience to 600 000 (yworld.co.za, 2007). Currently the radio station has a listenership of 1.2 million listeners in the Gauteng region (yworld.co.za, 2007).

With the profile that has been stated above of the youth musical listenership, it can be considered that music is an important cultural influencer on youths' living in Johannesburg South Africa (Joffe & Ambert, 2003). In highlighting and taking note of this important influencer, social psychologists and scholars are becoming interested in grasping the psychological impacts of music, yielding to the consumer behavior of target audiences, a new field of study is emerging and gaining momentum. There is literature on the study of music and its influence on youth development (Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell, 2007; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2001; Zillman & Gan, 1997), but there is little focused studies on the influences on particular kinds of music and identities that are formed out of music genres. This research will attempt to take advantage of this gap in literature on the branding influence of Hip Hop on youth brands in Johannesburg from 2012 to 2015 in youth as a purposive target group.

Hip Hop culture has become a cultural phenomena that has a huge impact on consumer behavior as well as brands alike in South Africa's youth brand landscape (Cohen, 2008). According to Cohen (2008) Hip Hop has an important mannerism of individualism, self expression and it also gives consumers a chance to move away from traditional social cues. This can be seen in the way Hip Hop has created the concept of "remixing" and the impact of what is termed as 'glocalisation' (Mitchell, 2001), as a cultural principle that seems to give an understanding on how this pop movement has grown to become a cultural phenomena. In South Africa the genre has been embraced and appropriated to fit the current cultural and economical transformation that is taking place.

Stoute (2011) argues in the Tanning of America that today's consumer is a mind set, not a race - and that mind set is also influenced by music culture, Hip hop culture is proving to be very influential in crafting new brand identities in Johannesburg in the past 5 years. The *Sunday Times* published an article in 2009 titled "Check it out: How the Ama Kip Kip generation is reshaping youth. Local pioneer brands like Magents and Loxion Kulture were credited in having paved the way for independent young brands like Ama Kip Kip, Head Honcho, Shelf Life and Struss Bob who have all had acclaimed success in the last half a decade because of their urban relevance to local Hip Hop culture trends (Boffard, 2011).

The success in the local Hip Hop scene is offering local youth brands a chance to also remix their brand identities and present their take on how to localize this sub culture. Even big international brands are starting to embrace this phenomena because they are noticing that it is here to stay.

### **1.1 Aim**

The aim of this project was to explore the role Hip Hop culture has as an influencer on youth brands identities in a cohort of South African youth. This study attempted to explore the idea that the Hip Hop sub culture has an influence on the way brands have been positioning themselves since 2012 till 2015. It will debate whether or not Hip Hop music has had any impact on how youth and youth brand in Johannesburg align themselves and create relevance to their target audiences as well as society.

### **Problem statement**

Does Hip Hop culture have an influence on youth and youth brand identities in Johannesburg?

## Research questions

1. To examine the term Hip Hop culture.
2. To analyze if brands construct their brand identities in line with the Hip Hop culture?
3. To determine if Hip Hop culture has a seismic impact on youth brands within the framework of Kapferer's brand identity model?

This research document will argue that Hip Hop culture is creating a new generation of consumers that are finding new ways of creating cultural expression that are redefining how young people are seeing themselves in post apartheid South Africa. Focusing the research on how a brand like Ama Kip Kip (*Sunday Times* best SA brand 2013 and 2012 Old Mutual Teen Choice Award), has used Hip Hop to their advantage to grow their urban footprint in Johannesburg's consumer landscape. The study will also look at the term Hip Hop and how it has been contextualized in South Africa to move away from its US cultural constraints. The research document will attempt to see if Hip Hop culture has a seismic impact on youth brands within the framework of Kapferer's brand identity model.

### 1.2 The audience

According to Marketing Charts staff (2008) youth is a period of exploration and self discovery. Africa's youth population is at 494 million (Geohive, 2013), the largest in the world and South Africa's youth population is at 19.1 million and Johannesburg's youth population was sitting at an estimation of 3.3 million in 2014 (Statistics SA, 2014). Youth are characterized as individuals that are between the ages of 13-35 (Youth marketing, 2007), but for the purpose of this study, it shall focus on youth that is between the ages of 16-35 years of age. Erickson (1950) concludes that youth is a stage of adolescence and finding one's identity, which leads to finding your place and space within society. Through this stage of youth, individuals go through a period of moratorium where individuals experiment with social roles and norms (Berk, 1999). Erickson concludes from

his perspective that the youth or adolescent stage can only be adequately negotiated when an individual has found their identity within their society.

Music in itself and its nuances are having a deep influence on young people globally. How we code music and the new developments in technology have made music more accessible to be consumed on a daily bases (Mitchell, 2001; Basu & Lemelle, 2006). Rap music being one of the most popular forms of music in South Africa as well as globally, trying to determine its influences on brand identities can offer insights on how to utilize music's potential in constructing strong brands that communicate in a relevant voice to their target audiences (Boffard, 2011).

The study aims to contribute to the field of branding by exploring the influence of Hip Hop on youth brand identity in the South African youth context.

### **1.3 Youth brands**

Youth brands reference to the brands that are targeting young individuals, between the ages of 13 to 35. Consumers in the youth market are important because of their consumption power and also their influence on the spending of their family members. It also should be noted that according research done by the "Golden Age of Youth" the manner in which traditional definitions on the term "youth" can hold no ground in today's standards because of slow emotional and social development in individuals. Brands are now targeting audiences based on their engagement and levels of participation in youth culture. Societies expectations on maturity and living standards are no longer applicable (Youth marketing, 2007).

### **1.4 Limitations of research**

This research study is done using the little cohesive psychological framework and brand identity framework that is available to the researcher in relation to the study of Hip Hop culture and it influences. With the general limits of literature and research methodologies, this research study has some generalization on some part. However, the generalization applied within the study is purposely applied for depth of analysis and for

the critical richness of the study.

### **1.5 Significance of this research**

Hip Hop culture and its influence on brand identities was selected as a topic for this research study primarily because of the fact that it is a popular global phenomena (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999). The influence of Hip Hop culture on youth and brands is prolific and this can be seen in fashion, film and the music industry. Hip Hop can be considered to be more than just as music but a lifestyle. The fact that Hip Hop originated in the United States, the bulk of academic research has been generated from there. However, Hip Hop culture has become more global in its influence and researchers are attempting to grasp its cultural context (Mitchell, 2001; Basu & Lemelle, 2006).

It seem that Hip Hop is commonly appropriated by individuals within local cultures this can be seen in the ways that it is created, transferred, interpreted and consumed. So, exploring the influence that Hip Hop has had on youth brand identities in Johannesburg will offer insights into the ways in which youth in Johannesburg position themselves and the way that brands have used Hip Hop in their brand identities within South African and in comparison to the rest of the World. Therefore, this research forms part of the new wave of scholars that are attempting to understand that global impact of Hip Hop culture. This study will theoretically approach this understanding by referring to the Kapferer (2004) brand identity model with an emphasis on Mitchell (2001) "glocalization". What the term implies is that local and global can interact and create an opportunity to understand space and identity that is fueled by local and global influencers. Hip Hop culture can therefore be seen as a powerful golcalized influencer that can be used to explore how brands are using it as a marker for brand identity strategies and as well as youth national identity negotiator both globally and locally (Mitchell, 2001). This theoretical base suggests that music has a certain relation to youth and the forming of identity in youth brands. These concepts are further explored in the section that follows.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

*Music has always played an important part in forming the identities of individuals and of groups of people. It provides a means of defining oneself as an individual belonging to and allied with a certain group, and of defining others as belonging to other groups which are separate from ones own (Folkestad, 2001, p. 150).*

### **2.1 Introduction**

Determining the seismic impact of Hip Hop on brands in Johannesburg from 2012 to 2015 is a complex task due to the fact that this is still an area that is still being developed in terms of academic studies. Psychology and sociology is starting to do some studies on the ways that music influences communities, however most of the studies in music are largely covered on several other disciplinary fields. This literature review exploration includes research, theories and views from multi-disciplinary scopes of research studies.

The literature review covers different factors that are important in attaining deeper insight on the relationship between Hip Hop and urban youth brands. These include theories on Hip HoP music, Kapferer's (2004) brand identity theory and the nature and prospectives of Hip Hop.

### **2..2 Hip Hop culture**

#### **2.2.1 A Brief History on Hip Hop**

According to Foreman (2004) Hip Hop music and culture can be seen as a way of crafting an abstract and dynamic space for expressing and vocalizing youth identities in urban spaces and race. The origins of Hip Hop music can be traced to the disadvantaged urban spaces of American ghettos. In the disadvantaged neighborhoods of the United States the ghettos are black minorities that live within a larger social-political society. Stoute (2011) writes that Hip Hop seems to have offered commentary on the racial identities and the need for brands to communicate in a language that could identify with urban youth within the confines of these new urban spaces. Hip Hop culture

had to remain true to where it came from for it to be deemed as authentic. Thus Hip Hop created a discourse for brands and followers to create and enact images that are centered around the urban spaces and the links to racial identities in a manner that has to be congruent with references to the local surroundings and cultures (Stoute, (2011).

In 1986 Run-DMC was the group that was high on top of the rap stage and rising to international height, they released a song that described one of their valued possessions. The song which was titled "My Adidas". This is how the rappers of that era related with brands :

"My Adidas  
walked through concert doors  
and roamed all over coliseum floors  
I stepped on stage, at Live Aid  
All the people gave and the poor got paid" (Run DMC, 1986)

By analyzing these lyrics it doesn't take a lot of scrutiny to realize that this is a benign aspect of consumerism (Dirt, 2012). In the first place, the subject is not about the shoes, in the main point. It's focused on the group's experiences on their journey to stardom: the fans that have attended their show, and their headline status. The group also fairly puts themselves as not the subject - it's about Live Aid, a benefit concert that was focused on highlighting the plight of poor people in New York. This was a showcase of Hip Hop's connection to the community and the people around it. This was sole music: the reference to the Adidas shoes would direct the listener to a place where you could see the haves advocating for the have-nots (Questlove,2014).

The creation of Hip Hop came from a social environment where there were often few resources. In the urban ghetto spaces of the United States recreational space was frequently not available to youths to develop making Rap music (Magubane, 2006). The sentiment behind the creation of Hip Hop culture has allowed young people to actively participate within their communities in a seismic way and the line between the audiences and performers has been blurred (Lashua & Fox, 2006). In consequence to that, the

configuration and format of music has also changes and Hip Hop can be enacted internationally in different urban spaces without any regard to the availability of resources that the participants have. It could be that the simple nature and practical ways of engaging and identifying with Hip Hop culture has had an influence on how it has been adopted as well as its cultural practices (Huq, 2006).

Hip Hop culture can be traced to have originated in the 1970s from the inner urban streets of the South Bronx ghetto of American (Foreman, 2004; Watkins; 2004). During the course of time Hip Hop music expanded in its popularity and it became a world wide financial commodity (Chang, 2006; Perkins, 1996; Rose, 1994). Hip Hop had created a industry that granted black youths a platform for cultural expression (Chang, 2005; Thompson, 1996). The Hip Hop industry was a catalyst that structured a generation of black creative entertainers that could become affluent and celebrated (Baldwin; 2004). Moreover a lot of prominent Hip Hop stars have crafted innovative and profitable business models within the music industry by investing with their own profits from their music productions (Miller, 2011). Many of them have gone onto starting their own record companies and commercial brands that went against the popular exploitation of Hip Hop culture and music by established music record industry companies (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999).

In this way Hip Hop music has created a platform to demonstrate to the world a new model of the black American capitalist (Miller, 2011). In the last 15 years many Hip Hop artists perpetuated this role in their song compositions, music videos and live shows by displaying an image of an affluent mob mafia style boss or business mogul (Baldwin, 2004). In contrast to this gluttonous image Hip Hop music had been expected to be a medium that would nullify stereotypes and associations about blackness in America as well as the lower socio-economics status (Baldwin; 2004; Watkins; 2004). Hip Hop's commercialism has created a dilemma with Hip Hop followers that feel that the music was being aesthetically compromised as large brands have been using Hip Hop as a means to attain profits (Huq, 2006; Baldwin, 2004). In the last 20 years it also appears that a different faction of the black middle class of Hip Hop listeners are countering that notion of real Hip Hop having to identify with the urban city streets to be real (Baldwin, 2004). This has evolved into a new breed in the Hip Hop movement that is pioneered by artists who speak for the suburban blackness as opposed to just being linked to urban

city streets in order to attain authenticity. Inevitably Hip Hop has become a spectrum of the contestations of space, race, identity and social class status that sprung from American social- historical definitions about blackness (Baldwin, 2004; Watkins,2004).

The bulk of Hip Hop literature research thus far has focused mainly on Hip Hop as an American cultural phenomenon (Cohen, 2008). One of the pioneering academic writers Rose (1994) is one of the writers who started to reflect on the impact of American Rap music culture as a medium used for understanding of culture, politics, identity and social constructs. However lately, Hip Hop culture has been viewed as a focal point for heightened research that is related to different fields and in different contexts. Iwanmoto, Creswell, & Caldwell (2007) embarked on phenomenological research that explored that meaning of Hip Hop music for different ethnical college students of America.

Caldwell, Cresswell and Iwanmoto (2007) research was viewed as valuable because it used qualitative research approaches in order to determine the constructed meanings of Hip Hop music in a group of individuals. In addition the research was one of the first mental and psychologically focused studies on Hip Hop culture (Crossley, 2005). Their research highlighted the following points (1) Avid Hip Hop listeners were found to use the music as motivation that gave way to a space for motivation, (2) for learning and (3) for identification. The music was also found to manage moods and stress on a everyday basis. Hip Hop's influence has been observed to influence individuals despite the differences in ethnicity, gender, or race.

Caldwell, Cresswell and Iwanmoto's (2007) research found that even when subjects were aware of the explicate messages in the music they were listening to they often ignored that fact and they focused on the constructive parts of the recordings. This contradicted the destructive behavior voiced by other researches ( Caldwell, Creswell, & Iwanmoto, 2007). Caldwell, Cresswell and Iwanmoto's (2007) research determined that Hip Hop music improved communication skills and encouraged participants to increase feelings of being self determined through active participation in Hip Hop culture and communities. The findings and suggestions affirmed those of a study conducted by Stephens, Braithwaite, & Taylor (1998) that successfully heightened HIV risk awareness to a group using Hip Hop music. Similarly another study was done on the efficacy of using Hip Hop music as an additional format for counseling delinquents found that there

were positive and significant advantages that are relevant for studies on control group (Tyson, 2002). Consequently it can be concluded that Hip Hop culture can be used to lend itself to group therapeutic interventions as well as group work in certain contexts (Tyson, 2002).

Magubane (2006) found that Hip Hop can also be helpful to excess more knowledge around South African youth and on subjects that are related to Hip Hop culture to determine whether Hip Hop culture can lend itself to therapeutic treatments with youth and be used positively to build youth brands in South Africa. In a follow up project to Magubane (2006), Iwamoto (2003) did a study on the influence that Hip Hop music had on racial and gender based identity. The lyrics from songs by rapper Tupac Shakur explore a discourse on an analysis that was done to examine the hyper-masculine image that is perpetuated in Hip Hop lyrics. The manner in which black men are often portrayed as poor role models in the media. Moreover a lot of people that reside in poor areas are at most times exposed to media that perpetuates that racial stereotypes (Iwamoto, 2003). This fuels that aspiration of many black men in favor of a hyper-masculine identity that is focused on strength, sexual virility and a character that is less emotionally expressive (Iwamoto, 2003; Baldwin, 2004; Watkins, 2004). Iwamoto's (2003) research indicated that Hip Hop culture provided young black men in America with constructions of masculinity in the manner that advocates them to behave in that way to gain respect from their peers, this is related to self blackness and powerlessness in the urban framework. Iwamoto's (2003) research is also to be highlighted that a variety of studies have been conducted and can be commented on how Hip Hop culture can be used as a medium on negotiating identity and forming meaning within urban landscape (Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell, 2007; Rose, 1994; Foreman, 2004).

It is also important to consider the significance of Hip Hop culture and its global influences. Mitchell (2001) elaborated on the study on Hip Hop culture in a landmark book *Global Noise*. The book gave insight on perspectives on the current forces of Hip Hop culture that are happening outside of America. The global expansion of Hip Hop culture has had root in new forms in various countries such as China, Germany, Nigeria, Ghana, Japan, France, England and South Africa (Mitchell, 2001). Much debate has been created because of the development of Hip Hop culture globally. One could argue that it is possible that a lot of these counties are mimicking American culture. It is agued

that the embracement of the Hip Hop cultural behavior or global trends could lead the world into a future that is Americanized and homogenized (Magubane, 2006). Those who oppose Americanization have argued that the Americana cultures have usurped many of the local cultures through behavior because of the unilateral dominance that it hold through music, media and film industries (Haupt, 2012). Those on the other spectrum of the argument debate that countries throughout the globe have the platform to reinterpret the American Hip Hop influences in a local context (Mitchell, 2001).

Music is a critical component of intra-national identity affirmation because of its global impact and distribution, how it can be used as a force for resistance and a means to brand formation as well as identification in a few studies (Stoute, 2011). A few of the parts of identity that have been studied are in relating Hip Hop culture and it's possible political influential viability including national identity, racial identity and gender identify. For example, Ibrahim (2003) explored a study based on whether immigrants residing in Ontario Canada would adopt Hip Hop culture as a means of defining their blackness within Canadian cultural structures. Ibrahim's (2003) research juxtaposed the ambiguities between African and Canadian national identities and African American ones within the definitions of blackness.

### **2.2.2 Hip Hop Culture and identity in South Africa**

Language has had a very important role in South Africa in defining allegiances and connections to various local and global aspects of society (Fenn & Perullo, 2000). Brasse Van Die Kaap reached new grounds by rapping in Afrikaans in the early 90s (Magubane, 2006). What these Capetonian rappers had demonstrated was that it could be possible that one could remain authentically linked to the linguistics that they utilized in their communities and claim a place within the global Hip Hop culture as rap artists (Magubane, 2006). Music has also in the past been used as a powerful tool to creatively protest the racial inequalities that were enforced in South Africa (Swartz, 2003; Steingo, 2005). However after the fall of apartheid many youths have receded from protest political music. Currently one of the most popular music is Kwaito and House music, which are often forms of music that avoid dealing with serious issues (Swartz, 2003; Steingo, 2005).

This recent musical interpretation suggests that there is a distinction between young people of the new contemporary South Africa and times of the past (Allen, 2004). It may seem at times that the young people of South Africa that had spear headed a movement that lead a major role in confronting many serious social ills during apartheid are currently trying to enjoy that tireless earned freedom of this new dispensation (Allen, 2004). As a result to be able to place Hip Hop culture within the South African frame work it is of great importance to place awareness of how the relationship between Kwaito culture and it's relation to that of Hip Hop culture. Kwaito, as a thriving sub culture has in itself played a prominent role in reinventing ideas and concepts of defining blackness and young individuals in South Africa (Nutall, 2004). A large amount of South African youth interact with Kwaito music and culture at different levels and they locate their identity by taking a stance that they want to be included within the Kwaito movement, or totally excluded, neutral or become against it (Swartz, 2003).

The origins of Kwaito can be traced back to the 1990s in South Africa. It is a combination of different genres of music that include Rap, Reggae, Pop and American or Eurocentric House music (Allen, 2004). One of the distinctive parts of Kwaito is in the beat. It can at times be structurally similar to House music, but Kwaito beats are composed with a slower tempo in comparison to House music around the world. Kwaito is composed often in a dialect that fuses different South African languages and colloquial that is used on the streets. This technique aided in keeping the music identity of the genre linked to its primary target market of young black youths (Swartz, 2003). The genre of Kwaito culture molded a different musical identity for black youth. Comparisons have been made between Kwaito and Hip Hop (Allen, 2004, Swartz, 2003). Some scholars have even made conclusions that Kwaito is a South African version and interpretation of Hip Hop music (Swartz, 2003; Magubane, 2006). It is without question that there are similarities between Hip Hop music and Kwaito music. It is to be noted that there are stark distinctions between the two genres of music and the cultures that are practiced in South Africa. Swart (2003) conducted an analysis on Hip Hop and Kwaito. The analysis was carried out using Hall's (1997) framework on the "circuit of culture" that determined the exploration of five elements of meaning that comprised of production, representation, identity, consumption and resistance (Swartz, 2003). The research required the exploration of the narratives that can be related to various related aspects of Kwaito culture. In Swartz (2003) conclusion he came to a conclusion that Kwaito was not South

African Hip Hop but that it was rather a local genre that was created to fulfill the needs of the youth living in South Africa. Although Swartz (2003) also concedes that some of the similarities between Hip Hop and Kwaito by sighting that both music forms served as catalysts of identity and empowerment. Both Kwaito and Hip Hop attempt to determine a new definitions of black identity in this way but there are discernible differences between that two musical genres. Magubane (2006) sights that this difference to be the distinct relationship to American culture. Hip Hop came about as an evolution of those who were the underprivileged minority that was not empathetic to the American dream and amalgamation of classicism and on the other hand Kwaito was the genre of the underprivileged majority that lived in South Africa's population that could not relate or even identify with American Hip Hop culture. In a local and relevant study, Nutall (2004) embarked on a study in Johannesburg that shed light on the culture that has emerged around the youth radio station 'Y FM'. The radio broadcaster that had started in the late 1990s had become a popular regional radio station (Nutall, 2004). The broadcaster was heavily involved in promoting Kwaito while at the same time it had influences on other genres which included American and South African Hip Hop music as well as rhythm and blues. At the same time there were several locally produced clothing brands that started to cater for the needs of this new emerging consumer brands that include Ama Kip Kip, Locion Kulture and Magents to name a few. Nutall (2004, pp. 232) referenced how the young people from the 'Y FM' generation were starting to redefine their identities as a mechanism of "stylizing the self". It is to be noted that race is still a powerful distinctive factor in the new South Africa but it has become possible to accessorize an individuals identity through factors such as preference, taste or consumption. Notions on youth identities in South Africa have gained much ground since the abolishment of structural obstacles such as apartheid. Youth brands are taking on the evolution and they are taking notice, hence the realignment of their brand identities and the formation of new brands that are taking on the new musical trend that are changing consumer behavior (Nutall, 2004). In Johannesburg 'Y FM' has served as an important and relevant agent that was leading the lifestyle changes that most privileged youths could not participate in but the platform provided a possibility for youths to fully participate in and have possible aspirations for the future (Nutall, 2004).

### **2.3 Ama Kip Kip brand and Hip Hop music**

Ama Kip Kip is a brand that was started in 2006 by Nkosana Modise (Ama Kip Kip, 2014). Through a lot of township initiative the Ama Kip Kip brand was conceived with the idea of wanting to create a worldwide infiltration of South African youth culture. When interviewed on 25 April 2015 Nkosana Modise explained that in order for the brand to see its future, the brand looks at the past as well as the present. In the past 5 years the demand for a dynamic, locally produced product was huge. The decrease in the popular brands have left a gap in the demanding youth market. It would seem that the opportunity was there for the taking for the baton to be taken and capture the imagination of the public and popular culture (Modise 2015, pers.comm., 25 April 2015). The brand represents a tipping point within the South African design and one of its main objectives is to penetrate the international retail sector by producing an exportable product that is embedded on quality craftsmanship and an identity that is rooted in South Africa. When asked on how has Hip Hop influence the need to want to create a brand like Ama Kip Kip Nkosana stated that:

“We want to connect our brand to the congruent elements of fashion and music expression to solidify the launch of this initiative by setting our position and contribution to South Africa’s fashion industry, we chose to use Hip Hop music by working with local talent like Jozi, Teargas, Da L.E.S and through the funding of their music videos for up and coming local rappers. Through music we were able to speak in a universal language and through television we could use that lens to showcase our designs” (Modise 2015, pers.comm., 25 April 2015).

A new wave of start-up T-shirt companies had started or followed suit after the creation of Ama Kip Kip and countless counterfeiting this can also allude to the influence of the brand on the South African fashion industry. In the past 5 years one could come to the conclusion that Ama Kip Kip accomplished new heights. The brand has received various accolade awards which include the 2008/09 Old Mutual “best teen choice award” as well the coveted 2009 /2013 Sunday Times Generation Next prize for the “coolest South African Fashion brand”.

Nkosana Modise states that the brand aims to inspire a ‘can do’ attitude onto the youth of South Africa and that young people can dream bigger than their physical, social and

economical limits (Modise 2015, pers.comm., 25 April 2015). Nkosana wants to prove that it is probable and possible to achieve a dream and to further African design is one of his missions with the brand to inspire the youth and move the country forward under the banner of proudly South African ambition.

In the last 7 years the Ama Kip Kip brand has had success and it has allowed Ama Kip Kip to develop a company that can use its resources and create a borderless influence that has helped the brand to be able to allure creative influential support and global recognition from popular Hip Hop personalities such as Naeto C (Nigeria/USA) & Dj Khaled (USA) this has formed the necessary link that facilitates a platform for other local Hip Hop talent to expose their products to the world stage. Nkosana explains that the brand aims to create an establish, long lasting and internationally productive working relationship that can bridge the apparent gap in trade and the intention is to balance that advantages of exchange by promoting a consistent export of quality South African creativity and popular culture (Modise 2015, pers.comm., 25 April 2015). Since the 2006 when the brand operated from a cart stall in The Zone at Rosebank Mall in Johannesburg, the brand has worked tirelessly at realizing this aim by using youth culture in particular Hip Hop culture to move to brand into that consumer mental space (Ama Kip Kip, 2014).

## **2.5 Brand Identity**

Brands are a representation of the value promise on the total results of the experiences that customers can expect (Kotler, 2006). The concept of a brand is a carefully constructed concept; it is a promise that is made to the consumer and all its stakeholders. It ultimately culminates into a favorable reputation (Kapferer, 2004). Kapferer (2004) further elaborates that brand identity has six aspects mainly the physique, the personality, the brand culture, the relationship, the reflection and the self-image. A well-constructed brand has to be able to have a personality from a constructed source to a constructed receiver. A brand has to have social aspect that can define its external expression. These aspects can only come to life when the brand communicates with its audience. Strong brands can weave all the six aspects into an effective whole, that is a clear, consistent and appealing brand identity. The six Brand Identity Prism helps the brand to be able to assess its strengths and weaknesses of the brand by utilizing the aspects of this prism. Below we will expand on the six aspects of Kapferer's brand

identity model.

**Physique:** These are the brand's physical features, that are associated in peoples' minds when the brand is mentioned, this aspect is the basis of the brand. What the brand looks like? The functionality, quality and recognition of the brand in the mind of the consumer are key in crafting a favorable and strong brand identity. Kapferer (2004) states that a brand has to do so by drawing attention to its material benefits.

**Personality:** This in essence is the brands character. By the brand conveying its message with its consumers this can help the brand in that it can be seen that all brand related communication is aligned to a personality with certain traits that communicate with the consumer. This can be in the brands logo design, colour schemes and features. Brand endorsements by persons can give physical representation to a brand's character.

**Culture:** This is related to the values and the foundation of the basic principles that a brand has to link its behavior both in the product and the brands communication. The link between the brand and the organization is the direct link to culture. Associations in this aspect of the brand are linked to the country of origin of the brand. The brand should aspire to have the brands core culture identifiable with is consumer as much as possible.

**Relationship:** A strong brand has to symbolize a certain relationship between people. This requires the brand to express the relationship that it stands for.

**Reflection of the consumer:** This is related to the primary user of the brand, and this is used for identification. Kapferer (2004) states that a brand should aim to present a person/group that will identify and relate to the intended target group.

**Self-image:** This is the mirror that the target consumer sees itself when engaging with the brand. Kapferer (2004) states that Intrinsic deep insights into who the consumer is help build a strong brand and draw on them to make a connection with its consumer.

Kapferer (2004) states in a study titled brand leadership that brand identity model was developed to build strong brands. A relevant and impactful brand should hold a dynamic, clear brand identity and linked values of associations that the brand attempts to construct and carry through their brand identity. In comparison to brand image, a brand identity is what the brand wants to aspire to be seen as within the chosen target market

that it wants to hold within that market. For the most part a brand identity is apparitional and it also always brands to augmented and change their brand identities. In essence a brand identity affirms what a brand stands for and represents. In todays brand world too many brands shirt and drift their brand identity and appear to stand for nothing. Kapferer (2004) argues that brands should strive to be able to communicate the brand identity of their brands.

For a brand identity to be strong it has to resonate with the target market consumer and it should exclusively be able to differentiate what the brand represents in comparison to the competitor and the brand itself. Brands aspire to create or maintain associations that are favorable and relevant to their brand identities. The associations are a promise that the brand makes with the customers and the organization members. Brand identities should be rich and have depth this is because the brand identity of any organization is used to drive the various brand-building efforts Kapferer (2004). Jeff Bezor (2009) states that a person's reputation is primarily based on the actual accounts of what they do as opposed to what they say. This is precisely what a brand is. A brand is constructed largely, not by what the company says about itself, but through what the company does. A well constructed brand identity should be able to allow that brand to be able to bridge the relationship between the brand and the customer through a creation of a value preposition that consists of elements that allow the brand to be functional, emotional, or self-expressive in crating an image that is credible in the benefits that it offers the customer. It is also to be noted that it is preferable to have a single brand identity that can function throughout the product scopes and markets. When a single brand identity is achieved a brand can apply it in all contexts and communication of the organization - this includes both internally and externally - the success of this will ensure the brand is effective and steadfastly linked to the brands business strategy and culture. To have a common identity is one on of the most important goals and the anchoring baseline of a brand strategy. Brand identity is central to a brand and the duty of the brand strategists is in selecting certain elements that add value to the brand and making it relevant while also excluding others that might not favor the brand. A brand has to have a particular sense of meaning and it has to offer direction to those who are in contact with the brand (Kapferer, 2004).

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

*We humans are a musical species no less than a linguistic one. (Sacks, 2007, p. xi.)*

### **3.1. Introduction**

The chapter that follows will address the design and analyzing methods that will be used in this research study. It will give a description on how the sampling techniques will be conducted, how the data will be collected, and what analytic techniques will be used for the interpretation of the resultant transcripts. It will conclude by giving context and highlighting the position of the researcher within the research domains of this study.

### **3.2. Methodology**

#### **3.2.1. Qualitative design**

Qualitative design is a research method for the subjective analysis of text data by a systematic categorizing process of identifying themes and requiring patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). A qualitative design method will allow for making sense of the detailed information and it will be useful in addressing exploratory questions (Mouton, 2004). This research study will be supported through a qualitative approach to the research topic because this is considered as the most appropriate method of collecting data on the subjective aspects of brand identity and Hip Hop culture on youth between the ages of 16-35 in Johannesburg from 2012 till 2015. This study will be contextualised in a newly emerging field that is still not fully mapped out in a comprehensive framework and in that way it will be suited to a qualitative approach. An empirical form will be used for the analysis.

This research project will comprise of a case study and in depth interviews that will be transcribed into text. The data analysis will be interpreted in patterns and themes this will be discernible throughout the research document. Themes will be identified as inductive while some parts of the data yields itself to deductive identification. The themes will overwhelmingly be inductive because the distinct relationship between Hip Hop culture and youth brand identities have not been specifically studies before in a South African

context and from a brand studies perspective.

A description on the structure of the analysis is elaborated on in the section below. Semi-structured interviews will be used as a means for data collection and analysis.

### **3.3. Interview Structure**

An open ended semi-structured in depth- interviews will be utilized as an instrument in this research study. The structure and format of the interview will be useful as it offers the opportunity to extract rich information on responses that are complex about identity, consumer behavior and Hip Hop culture (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). This research study is also exploratory in the flexibility and form of the interview this will be useful in that it will not foreclose possible responds that might not be anticipated from the participants. The interviews will allow for respondents to process and clarify the intended meaning of the answers and answers addressed both local and unique terms (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This will be important in the context of this research study as it is consequently when engaging young individuals, it is of importance to gain insight on the meanings that interviewers link to the use of language and the cultural rituals. The interview will be a catalyst for the gaining of understandings for the participants and the researcher. The questions derived for the interview will be based on literature from the topic of the influence of Hip Hop on youth and theories on brand identity. The theoretical frameworks that will guide the formation of the interview will be drawn from multidiscipline's and Kapferer's (2000) brand identity theory that was explored in the literature review. The interviews will be written out in questionnaires and recorded on audio formats than transcribed verbatim.

### **3.4. Data Collection-Sampling**

The data collection process will be field research that will be conducted unobtrusively. The sample will be drawn from two annual Hip Hop events that take place in Johannesburg. The first being the *Nike 25PSI Air Max Day on 26 March 2015*. This is an annual event that celebrates the history of the Nike Air Max through an exhibition and pop-up shop at the Alexander Theater in Braamfontein Johannesburg (Rooyen, 2015). The second being the Freedom day youth festival, Back to the City Hip Hop Festival in

Johannesburg, that takes place on the 27 April 2015. The festival attracts about 21,000 youths that are avid Hip Hop listeners. The parsimony idea will define the parameter for the sample in conducting the qualitative analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). The research will be purposive and focus on a specific group of youth that identified themselves as Hip Hop listeners, that lived in Johannesburg and that were between the ages of 16 to 35. A purposive sampling process will be used to seek youths that consider themselves as Hip Hop listeners. It is important for participants to meet the requirements as the research demanded a subjective identification of themselves within a group of a certain musical taste (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

A document detailing the aims of the study will be given to participants as to give context and understanding in framing the purpose of the research. The researcher will approach the individuals at key Hip Hop events and ask them if they would be interested in doing an interview on Hip Hop and its influences on brands in South Africa. Volunteers will be sourced from the individuals that attend these Hip Hop events. The sample will comprise of 40 individuals who volunteer to take part in the study. The individuals will be between the ages of 16-35 and will be made up of individuals who classify themselves as Hip Hop listeners.

The sample will be composed of youths that freely volunteer, it will consist of 30 men and ten women. The sample will be composed of individuals from different backgrounds that include students, marketers, brand owners, musicians, artists, film makers and individuals in the commerce sector. It is also worth noting that some of the participants of the sample will be active within Hip Hop culture as listeners and performers. The interviews will differ in time length between six minutes and 15 minutes. The interviews will be conducted between April and May 2015. During the interviews, participants will each be handed an information sheet that requires informed consent and signed permission for the interview to be recorded. The interview will be captured verbatim. Interviewers will also be given the opportunity to ask the researcher questions.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

The research will observe all ethical requirements of the Vega School of Leadership's module guide 2015. All subjects will be guaranteed full confidentiality. The safe storage of the transcripts will be insured at the home of the researcher. Interviews will be conducted on a face-to-face basis. Interviewees could request audio of the interviews could be requested at any time and permission will be granted from the participants for the use of direct quotations from the interviews. The researchers email address shall also be given to participants, as to give them the opportunity to convey questions on the project.

### **3.6. Analysis**

#### **3.6.1. Contemplating the Analysis.**

The analysis of the transcripts was conducted using a Thematic Analysis that is described in Brayman & Bell (2014). The interviews will be captured on an audio device and on questionnaires. It will then be transcribed and used as data for the purpose of this research. The data will be analyzed in a dynamic manner throughout the research process (Braun & Clark, 2006). The research will give opportunity to reconsider, obtain knowledge and understandings on the subject. The data will also be analyzed against the Kapferer (2004) brand identity model to see what the perception is amongst the subjects that will be interviewed. The analysis will be conducted with the aim of providing commentary on the themes that are revealed within the data that will be collected to justify the inferences that it was argued in a methodical fashion and that it is valid. The first step will be to set the data into separate divided sub-samples that will be analyzed as separate texts. This research exploration will be conducted by using 40 separate interviews that will be used as a sample of data during the development stages of code development. The themes will then be compared to the various sub-samples to each of the different themes. The six steps that will follow will illustrate how the code was developed and the reliability by Braun and Clark (2006:87). This process will allow the researcher to then apply and validate the themes. When this is completed the researcher can then interpret and identify the themes that emerged from the themes application in a valid and reliable manner.

### **3.6.2. Trustworthiness**

Inter-rater reliability will determine the reliability of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Acceptable levels of reliability that can be used for the purpose of qualitative thematic content analysis will be used by the researcher to assess the code. Once this is done the other aspects of the code that could not be adopted in a reliable fashion to the code will be adjusted and integrated into the code. The aim is to create a code that can be used in an accurate and systemic manner for the purpose of this research document and that it can be adopted by other researchers.

### **3.7. Limitations and Shortcomings**

Thematic content analytical approaches offer several advantages. Firstly, the method facilitated a way in structuring material that initially had no inherent structure. This was imperative in the research study on Hip Hop culture and brand identities in Johannesburg as little to no cohesive psychological framework and brand studies are available on the research topic. Utilizing this approach is useful as it allows that the large amounts of data to be analyzed. The various themes within the transcripts can be open to various interpretations. However the content in the themes is limited to a precise range of understanding within the Hip Hop cultural context. It is to be noted that weakness did arise from this technique. The limits of qualitative methodology did yield themselves to this research, as this study has limited generalisability. The generalisability purposively aided in the depth and richness of the analysis. Purposive sampling methods were adopted for this study and it considered individual that considered themselves Hip Hop music listeners. Insights into Hip Hop culture was limited as the samples did not represent all ethnical groups and some of the volunteers are participants of some nature within Hip Hop culture.

## Chapter 4: Findings

*My own feeling is that the idea of the Hip Hop generation brings together time and race, place and polyculturalism, hot beats and hybridity. It describes the turn from politics to culture, the process of entropy and reconstruction. It captures the collective hopes and nightmares, ambitions and failures of those who would otherwise be described as “post this” or “post that”. (Chang, 2005, p. 2)*

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the content of the findings and interpretation of the case study are reported. Throughout the transcript the local brand Ama Kip Kip will be analysed against the six aspects of Kapferer’s brand identity model and this will feature prominently in the transcript. However it was worth noting and of consideration the various different thematic content that came within the corpus. In accordance with the qualitative case study research analysis, the six aspects of Kapferer’s brand identity model will be introduced and elaborated by quotes from the data and then compared in relation to the research that was conducted in the field and on the brand Ama Kip Kip in relation to the topic. It is also important to note that in some cases pseudonyms were used so as to conceal the names of some of those who volunteered to participate in this project. The nature and form of the themes that are deliberated from the corpus were organized along the six Kapferer (2004) brand identity model as diagrammatically related in figure 1 (above). The themes will be envisaged as being anchored by it’s extreme. This is explored through the tensions that emerge through the negotiation of the various dichotomies. This is the reason why there are six inter-related themes that are based on the Kapferer (2004) brand identity. The themes are elaborated within the framework of consumer and social interactions in the South African and global Hip Hop communities.

The themes that are explored are interconnected and build on each other. With that in consideration the different themes are reported in a manner that enables the former themes are introducing the theme that will follow. The initial theme outlined the participants perception that has played itself between local and global Hip Hop through branding based on the ‘Physique’ aspect on the brand identity model. The second theme

is based on 'Personality' aspect of the brand identity model and the role that Hip Hop plays between public and private life. The third subject matter analyzed the aspect of 'Culture' and this explores the notion of authenticity and commercialism. The fourth topic unpacked the 'Relationship' part of the brand identity model and it looks at the prominent identities within Hip hop culture. The fifth aspect relates to the 'Reflection of the consumer' this relates to how the consumer sees themselves and the competitiveness within the that coexist in the Hip Hop culture. The final theme that was extracted was the 'Self image' that focused on the various ways that Hip Hop followers related to brands these range from being critical to influenced and relating to brands.

The subjects in the study are all defined as avid Hip Hop listeners (Caldwell, Creswell, & Iwamoto 2007) who participated in Hip Hop culture through various social activities and creative outlets that distinct them from casual Hip Hop listeners that may participate in the culture occasionally. This is important to note as many of the themes convincingly substantiated by the fact that the social identity of the participants were listeners, entrepreneurs as well as artists. Thus it is reasonable to come to the conclusion that the more active a young person is in Hip Hop culture the higher the degree of influence it will have on her or his identity (Caldwell, Creswell & Iwamoto, 2007).

## **4.2. Determining the co-relation that Hip Hop and the search for identity has in South African youth**

### **4.2.1 Physique: Local versus global understanding of Hip Hop culture**

#### **4.2.1.1. Understanding glocalisation.**

Based on the above literature review, the word globalisation (Mitchell, 2001) is of much importance in understanding the range of meanings that come up between the global and local thematic poles. There appeared to be many diverging and converging factors that came to play through the process of looking at and comparing the global and local meanings attached to Hip Hop culture. Separating the similarities and the differences was useful for the purpose of this study. In order to interrogate the unique South African

understandings which have had implications for social identity it is imperative to consider the South African socio-political history and cultural factors in understanding this theme.

#### **4.2.1.2. How Hip Hop culture and lifestyle are in Johannesburg South Africa**

To me Hip-hop can be defined as more than just a job or trend. Most people say it's a culture. Hip Hop is something that you live, it is a culture that you can dress.

(Kagiso, p. 1)

In South Africa the different disciplines of Hip Hop culture mentioned in the literature review (included graffiti art, break dancing and the disc jockey) all play major a role in the social constructs of the culture. Ways of dressing and speaking are the other aspects of Hip Hop culture that are daily enacted. In order to gain recognition from different members of the Hip Hop community there is formal and informal competition between those who practice this lifestyle. This global practice is a legacy of the urban base of Hip Hop culture that demanded that young participants had to prove themselves so as to gain respect and popularity. This was done through competition through dance, dress codes and rap competitions. This was in line with the ethos of participation and lifestyle that has formed part of the global Hip Hop culture.

Participants also felt that Hip Hop culture could aid in potentially playing an important role in educating South African youths and brand community like ad agencies through networking with prominent corporates or government initiatives. Through Hip Hop culture young people in Johannesburg are able to contextualised themselves within the broader culture and participate in commerce through a productive fashion. The core message of Hip Hop culture has allowed Hip Hop to be used as a means and tool to communicate to society and to educate people. Hop Hop is South Africa has been used as form of social activism. This can be noted by brands such as Ama Kip Kip that has created a Hip Hop brand that uses Hip Hop culture in crafting a authentic Hip Hop narrative and advances the concept of remixing. Authenticity has always represented a large part in global and South African constructs of Hip Hop culture. From 2012 to 2015 South African Hip Hop culture has been in a position that it has had to address the norms of Rap music in the for it to resonate and reflect where it came from and how that society lived. This factor has prompted innovations such as local brands that have local colloquial language and

rapping in native tongues. Using (remixing) past South African musical culture as an inspiration and a base to connect with the target audience has helped brands like Ama Kip Kip to trade and occupy contemporary spaces. In the last five years there has been a trend where the young urban consumer is seeking unique South African content that differentiates them from other Hip Hop listeners in other countries. The excerpt from one of the transcriptions subsequently agrees that Hip Hop culture is relevant as a global trend that plays an important role in maintaining an awareness of the local environment for brands in today's brand environment.

Hip Hop trends seem to have the same features globally but I think that what differentiates it from one another is languages and the different settings. South Africa has different problems and situations from other countries, that is why it is important for brands and Hip Hop to express what was happening around their environments.

(Lucky, p. 7)

#### **4.2.1.3. How Hip Hop has been remixed and the impact of globalization in Johannesburg youth**

It seems that Hip Hop culture has proved a framework that is being felt by the youth is that it helps them participate in a global youth culture that also allows them to maintain a South African identity. The ability to reconstruct a South African identity was constructed by selecting a few parts or qualities of global Hip Hop and contextualizing them into a global framework of what Hip Hop culture is locally. The need to remix social identity is a crucial tool that can be utilised to negotiate the tension that exists between global and local aspects that youth in Johannesburg are exposed to. This notion of remixing allows that a fluid concept of identity can be constructed to fit the individual regardless of their location and worldly location.

The idea of remixing seems to reemerge through out the interviews that were conducted as volunteers emphasized the fact that brands and local Hip Hop have to contextualize their message in a South Africa context. The remix concept emerges in the following themes that deal with the complex tensions that exist between individual and public identities. Being an avid Hip Hop listener also gives way into a diverse creative outlet that includes the norms for social participation and personal behaviour.

Hip Hop culture has offered young individuals a worldly framework that grants them a social means to negotiate local and global identities. Though Hip Hop culture young people in Johannesburg are prompted to remix and fuse elements of worldly and local cultures and blend them with contemporary and retro trends so as to redefine the notion of South African youth culture thus the emergence of brands like Ama Kip Kip.

#### **4.2.1.4. The physical differences in Hip Hop culture and a lifestyle**

It is important to distinguish the prevalent differences between American and South African Hip Hop culture. The cultural and social identities of the people in the sample should be contextualized through this backdrop that places them within global perimeters. Unanimously the youth that were interviewed all recognized that Hip Hop culture was fundamentally an American export. The popularity of Hip Hop culture in America for the most part sets how global trends and artists as well distinguish a benchmark in the base of creativity and skill according to that data structure. The scene in Johannesburg has been described as still in a state of development although tremendous strides had been had made. The South African Hip Hop music industry has already produced a handful of performers that are able to support themselves financially. This has created an association between Hip Hop music and success in South Africa at best according to the youth. This is in contrast to the glamorous opulence image that is conveyed in American media.

#### **4.2.1.5. Understanding the role of blackness and the historical differences**

It is important to note that historical frames of reference of self and identity was a narrative that participants were concerned about race and its relation to Hip Hop music. The sociopolitical contrasts between South Africa and America highlight the fact that it is possible that one could all-define a discourse on race and identity without acknowledge the local factors that where at play. This became important to highlight because Hip Hop culture often embraces aspects of local society and it plays a strong and important note

as it gives young individuals the opportunity to redefine the notion of blackness (Rose, 1994).

Ama Kip Kip represents us man. I think it is important to point that out because it's like how Hip Hop is for us. It is for the black people. (Crack, p. 29)

In present South Africa there remains racial tensions between the western ideological mind frame and the more traditional African practices and this can be addressed through individuals being afforded the chance to fulfill their own needs, Hip Hop aids them to do this through their own environments. At times there are a lot of Hip Hop stereotypes that prevail in the multicultural African environment. The following interaction in the research study demonstrated this.

Interviewer: So why do people think that you as a Hip Hop listener are a certain type of person, a stereotype? Do you think that you are miss represented and miss understood?

Subject: Yes, they don't understand us, so we have to create brands that represent us.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Subject: I mean they always have us dancing on the TV and doing stupid things...who do you know who is like that?

Interviewer: laugh.

Subject: I'm tired of it and this is where the gap is. This is where we as young black kids need to fill the gap.

Interviewer: That's true man.

Subjects: We have to do it because no one has done it before and no one will do it if we don't. (Tongo. p37)

These ideas on blackness are linked to the South African identity narrative and this also is relatable with the notions of defining blackness in America. In the 20 years there has been a strong movement in redefining ideas on black identity in South Africa in this post Apartheid era (Swartz, 2003). But in the past 15 years not only has there been a renaissance on the concepts of black identity there has also been a new emergence of unique South African youth identities and this also translates to brands as well. Youth brands are seeing a gap in the newly emerging black identity that is being forged

through local representations of Hip Hop culture and this is also aided by the global distribution and financial clout that is wielded by American and global Hip Hop culture. The citation that follows that was expressed by the participant gave to heed to the fact that American fashion and trends are linked to some Hip Hop and at the same time he expressed the important fact that South African brands need to be authentic if they are going to appeal to the Hip Hop community.

I do what I like man I don't follow that what they think Hip Hop is. I can't act like I come from America because I don't, I'm from Soweto so I can't do that I am just myself and thats all I can be.

(Thabo ,p. 10).

It seems that there are differences between the meanings of South African and American Hip Hop. It is important to note that despite these differences Hip Hop culture is still able to relate to young people and assimilate a life style that is uniquely South African. One of that things that Hip Hop culture has been able to avail is that it has provided a function that gives a global platform in a global community while at the same time being rooted in the authenticity of south African culture. At the same time participants did give evidence that Hip Hop culture gave a framework where a globalized participation could be practiced within the everyday lives of individuals within private and public spaces.

#### **4.2.2. Personality: The private versus the social fabric of Hip Hop**

##### **4.2.2.1. How Hip Hop culture is used by brands**

Participants felt that to a large degree Hip Hop was making head way in influencing brands in South Africa. The data that was derived from the interviews that were conducted confirmed that youths felt that listening to Hip Hop music or them having an active role in it was related to how they engaged with lifestyle brands. Most of the youths that were interviewed admitted to spending two hours and more on listening to Hip Hop music. This further confirmed the findings that were made by Gan & Zillman (1997) proving that music related functions are a popular form of activity for youth. The youths that conducted the interviews sighted Hip Hop culture being a draw card in luring them in

creating brand loyalty. With this in mind, the interpretations were done with the aim of finding out whether brands construct their brand identities in line with the Hip Hop culture. In this chapter interpretations were made based on the personality aspect of the Kapferer brand identity model which is part of the constructed source dimension of the brand (Kapferer, 2004) as well as by the social identity theory and postmodern conceptions of identity.

Those who participate in Hip Hop culture on a daily basis seem to feel that it entails more than just listening to it. The participants also spoke about the manner in which they engaged with the culture. The culture was used to facilitate an outlet for creative expression that gave way to a sense of personality through different expressions. Some of the participants sighted music as an outlet, while others sighted fashion and intellect as a way of expression. Hip Hop facilitates a gateway of interpretation of narratives or metaphors from the music and its core contents directly.

For me it has to engage me, I feel that Hip Hop offers that to me, through the way I see the world and engage with Brands. (Amandla, p. 32)

30 out of the 40 participants discussed that they engaged with Hip Hop music in private settings such as their residents and in their cars. At times it was highlighted that the music at times was used as a way of interacting with society. Hip Hop seems to serve as a mechanism that is used to define public spaces. One of the participants mentioned that she felt that they have to find spaces where they know that they will fit in and experience Hip Hop music.

I have to find a place where I feel that I belong. It's important for me to feel like I belong. Hip Hop can make you stick out like a sore thumb. ( Moeletsi, p. 24)

During the research 25 out of 40 of the youths said that they only attend events where Hip Hop music was the headline feature. It can be seen as a plausible thing that some of the youths would unsure regarding their identities may give a larger emphasis on remaining in an environment that is familiar. Tarrant et al (2001b) did find a correlation between low self esteem and the greater perceived differences between groups based on musical taste. It should also be noted that the majority of the individuals would say

that they would attend clubs or events that played different music types when they had enough motivation to do so.

Although the majority of the individuals were willing to attend clubs or events that played different types of music when there was a sufficient motivation. There was variability between the approaches of different participants in relation to socializing with youths that listened to other kinds of music. Youths sometimes experienced their identity as a rigid entity or most often as a malleable self that was open to change and experimentation depending on their social and personal needs.

#### **4.2.3. Culture: Hip Hop Culture and Brands**

Out of all the volunteers, 30 out of the 40 practiced some form of Hip Hop activity through cultural expression such as rappers, music producers, marketers, entrepreneurs and social and lifestyle activists. Most of the participants sighted music and Hip Hop culture as an inspiration for creative direction for many and brand alignment to their personal tastes.

Yes, music is very important to me. It's a space that I can go to and relate to it. The music takes me to a different place in my mind. (Sydney, p 1)

The youth that were interviewed did highlight the manner in that Hip Hop culture facilitated the brand decision making factor that Hip Hop played in influencing purchasing decisions and creating brand loyalty. The honing of brand affirmation seemed to take place privately at a young stage but later on in adult hood expression seemed to be enacted in public spaces more often. At the two Hip Hop events that took place in Johannesburg, Nike 25PSI Air Max Day and Back to the City Hip Hop Festival, social identity seemed to be related much to taste in music and brand association. Through Hip Hop culture it seemed that participants were allowed to be able to locate themselves in a local and global social hierarchal space (Denora, 2000).

Most times it seemed that music and Hip Hop culture were utilized as a tool that could aid in the attempt to fit in with the crowd of people. There were limits in the way South African brands often offered a selection of Hip Hop related products and brands did not

relay relevant brand campaigns that related to the Hip Hop community. The following extract demonstrates the manner in which music has been used as a cultural tool.

There is an unspoken understanding between Hip Hop heads. Everyone knows that there is one common goal for us and that is self improvement. We have to redefine how they have labeled us, we have to change the game. It's a new day and it's important that the kid knows that. (Levy, p 9)

Groups and friends who participated in Hip Hop culture created a space where there could be like-minded choice in terms of taste in brands and lifestyle. In these spaces there was the freedom of opinion, brand style, fashion and taste in a social group. This gave the youths the ability to grasp their own identity and mould a new culture within the local and global Hip Hop culture community while at the same time differentiate the self as a sole individual. This confirmed the congruent theory of Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory that says that the need for conforming to the status quo and rules of a person in a group" so as to be accepted. The following interaction demonstrates how approval plays a role in one Hip Hop followers' time spent with friends.

Subject: My friends are my friends because we listen to the same kind of music and we understand music and brands in the same way.

...Interviewer: So what you're saying is that your friends all listen to the same music and that you guys love the same brands?

Subject: Yes, because we all come from the same school of thought. (Dita, p 16)

The Social Identity theory by Tajfel's (1981) seems to hold some relation in addressing the social group interactions. The themes noted in the process of data collection seemed to further confirm studies done by Hargreaves, North and Tarrant, (2001) that stated that peer groups were employed to gauge adolescents' identity on a more positive light if then they listened to the same kind of music. At times it seemed that youths that were interviewed did view other people of similar Hip Hop taste in a positive way and they saw them as positive brand advocates. The following quote related to Hip Hop follower who see themselves as "heads". This term refers to a Hip Hop listener who follows Hip Hop intensively and looks to the culture critically.

Hip Hop is about building, it is about us improving ourselves. Because as you grow you can always learn and get direction in you life from what you follow. (Tumelo, p. 6)

#### **4.2.4. Relationship: Authenticity enacted and expressed through consumption**

You always trying to find spaces and places where you can be yourself and your style can be accepted. It's much easier to find these spaces in Jo'burg than it is to find these places outside of Johannesburg. (Thabo, p4)

There is degree of tension between what is deemed as authentic and which is seen as commercial but from 2010 to 2015 these lines have become blurred. This element provides an informative gaze into the various aspects of brand identity. The foremost aspect that was highlighted was the relation to brands that are seen as being authentic and commercial. What seemed to challenge the Hip Hop follower was to negotiate the social rules and the common norms of Hip Hop culture in an individualized style. The youths that were interviewed were deliberating on how to navigate the various decisions as consumers that formed a lucrative target market that brands were starting to exploit. Everyone of the youths indicated that they had a challenge to search for clothes and music that best fitted with their identity or the social aspirations that they aspired towards (Nutall, 2004). The following quote demonstrated that they manner in which a youth talked and dressed or reading certain publications distinguished Hip Hop consumers from other consumers.

I try to listen to certain types of Hip Hop music and also read various magazines and internet websites. All of this influences my style and what I buy. Through the way I speak, whether formal or informal is mostly in the context of Hip Hop. My thinking is fashioned by Hip Hop. (Thato, p. 19)

It seemed that expressing and enacting a Hip Hop identity as a consumer happened through the affiliation with products and brands that related to Hip Hop culture. Through cultivating an authentic lifestyle that was associated with certain brands and products participants noted that a congruent role that fitted with the norms of Hip Hop culture and its followers. This also differentiated Hip Hop listeners from other out group members. The other level of experiencing the music culture that differentiated the Hip Hop listeners was the degree to how much the search for brands and products a Hip Hop follower was

willing to go. This was in relation to a badge of identification that was granted where youths chose to situate to the general public or the Hip Hop community in particular (Frith, 1981).

You will notice by the way a person dresses that that person is either a real Hip Hop fan or that they just want to look cool. (Tumi, p. 16)

#### **4.2.5 Reflection of the consumer: The Remix**

For me Hip Hop is a phenomena, I can't imagine how life would be without it. I think that it influences my life in a lot of ways that shape the choices I make. (Moeketsi, p. 13)

The concept of remix is a pivotal term that allies to the complex nature of appropriating important social ideas and influences into a unique self identity (Nuttall, 2004). The concept of the remix deemed to fit the interpretation of the data as a solution to the global and local differences in negotiating a commonality and compromise amidst the two private and public interactions. Hip Hop culture did not just aid brands in Johannesburg to position themselves in relation to social groups but at the same time it also can operate as an interdependent trend from the rest of society. Hip Hop culture seems to have a fundamental concept that had boundaries of culture to remain excluded from influences from other social groups in society. The idea of remixing allows a Hip Hop follower to take on interesting sounds, styles and ideas to be re-defined in a way that could be viewed for use in Hip Hop culture (Nuttall, 2004). This has had implications that Hip Hop culture has not been viewed by some as a distinctive culture. But at times it seem that Hip Hop culture in itself was built into a culture that depended on other aspects that prevail in society for inspiration. It seems that the cultural framework of Hip Hop culture is interdependent on the larger global and local societies which form part of the culture. This ability to remix linked Hip Hop to other culture and it allowed certain elements of Hip Hop culture accessible to those who don't listen to Hip Hop music but who might have heard a Hip Hop song that used elements of a genre of music. Thus the cultural framework of Hip Hop music can be interdependent on the broader local and global societies by using elements of history that are familiar to the out group persons. This is a important concept that can be used to gain understanding in the manner in which Hip Hop interfaces with young peoples identities. The youths that were inter

viewed highlighted that Hip Hop introduced them to other cultures and aspects of music. This was partly because with the influence of modern technology the global Hip Hop community has become inter linked. The following quote commented on the manner in which Hip Hop was creating African unification through music culture.

Through music videos and platforms like Channel O and MTV Base African youths are able to connect. It can be relevant in Nigeria and vice versa. There is a lot of collaboration that is happening, whether it collaboration of ideas or of people but it is happening. The continent has become linked up and now it's time that we link up with the rest of the world. ( Steven, p. 15)

At the same time it seemed that this influence on Hip Hop is reciprocal. The idea of remixing ideas and material has also started to be used by other facets in of global contemporary culture as Hip Hop culture had gained global popularity. The concept of remixing as illustrated in Hip Hop seemed to be reflective in the identity possibilities for Hip Hop listeners while still having the choice to be entrenched within the greater Johannesburg social identity. It was fascinating to interpret The Brand Identity Theory in a fashion that could recognize that Hip Hop culture provided the youths and brands the tools to negotiate and define their identities in social spaces. This also related to the intra and inter group interactions, this was plausible that Hip Hop has the ability to remix identities advanced the factors that enabled the majority of youths to be open minded when interacting with individuals from other music taste groups. The term "remix" was able to open up youths to gain a myriad of different identities and could be considered in relation to brand identity theories. The malleability of identity by Hip Hop culture allows for brands to be able to shape their brands accordingly to appeal to the youth target audience. But it is to be noted that the term "remix" implies that identity changes had to be entrenched and rooted in the continuity of Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop trends in youths were a critical identity construct that could not be perceived as rigid category of identity as gender and race. This gave an invaluable chance for youths to be able to experiment with different identities permutations relating them back to music taste. The consumer wanted to see themselves when they interacted with brands. They were looking for brands that could talk to them directly in a voice that they understand. Remixing played a pivotal role in how it could shape a brands image so that it reflected Hip Hop youths.

Today you can take what you know from your up bringing and you can use it in Hip Hop to reflect who you are. Brands are starting to see that Hip Hop is connecting people in a whole new way. (Teboho, p. 7)

Johannesburg was seen to be more competitive in relation to other parts of the South African Hip Hop communities. Perhaps this was fueled by the competitive lifestyle that is prevalent in Africa's financial hub. For an authentic coherent youth to exist, the meanings between the tensions relating to the global and local frameworks of Hip Hop had to be defined. Hence the engagement with Hip Hop culture in Johannesburg took place in two forms through brand consumption and through taking on roles as participants or performers. Both these forms of participation in hip Hop culture have to give great consideration in relation to authenticity.

I live in Joburg but I'm not from here. So when you are out here in Joburg your mentality is different. It's a survival thing here in the city. Everyone wants to play with the big boys and make money. Everyone here is so competitive and you can't survive in this place without being competitive. (Tumi, p. 6)

#### **4.2.6. Self-image: Critical Versus Easily Influenced**

It is a constant journey of finding yourself. I'm constantly trying to find new information and new ideas that can broaden my outlook on life. (Luck, p. 25)

The final theme in the Kapferer brand identity model is the data that referred to the temporal nature of youth being involved in Hip Hop culture. It seems that this process could happen over several years as the engagement with Hip Hop culture changed over time. Looking at the data it also seems that youth could have an interest in aspects of youth culture when they are of a young age and as they grew older they could start to become more discerning in forming their own opinions. At times it appears that there is a tension between these two differences that was reflected in Hip Hop culture by older and new participants. The tension between those who are easily influenced and being interacting critically with all the themes that were determined in the data. This emphasized that opinions of the youth evolved over time.

What was fascinating was that many of the youths that were interviewed stated that they showed an interest in Hip Hop culture from an early age. But, the majority of Hip Hop involvement is performed in clubs and events that do not allow people that are below the age of 18 in South Africa.

Consequently the nature of Hip Hop seems diverse and can be hard for a child to form an accurate understanding of what Hip Hop culture related to in relation to broader society. The following quote from the data illustrated that this Hip Hop listener had started listening to Hip Ho music as a young child.

I started listening to Hip Hop from a young age, I think I started at the age of 7 years old. (Thabo, p.20)

The participant elaborated that he began listening to Hip Hop music at the age of 9. At the time of the interview this young person had been listening to Hip Hop music for over twenty years. From that data it is evident that youths interacted in different various ways with Hip Hop culture as time progressed. It is plausible that one could assume that the conclusion in relation to identity of young individuals and of brands through meaning also could influence on adults that continued to follow and participate in Hip Hop cultural activities.

Interviewer: You are 34 now, how long will you keep on listening to Hip Hop music?

Participant: For the rest of my life. (Phats, p. 39)

Hip Hop culture is a global media that is able to present its listeners with a diverse selection of content, a large amount of youths start to engage with Hip Hop from a naive point of view that can be easily influenced. The following quote from the data acknowledges that the younger youths are naively influenced by Hip Hop music.

If you look at a local brand like Ama Kip Kip they have managed to capture the imagination of the young kids through product placement in music videos. The youngsters see this and they go crazy for that stuff, they sponge on it and they think of that as the new cool. (Muso, p.20)

30 out of the 40 participants did recognize that brands used Hip Hop to position themselves as current but they felt that brands that did take on this brand position need to be authentic and relevant. This was pronounced in this participant's consideration on brands that exploitatively use Hip Hop culture.

Sometimes brands think that we are stupid as consumers. They think if they can just use Hip Hop in their strategies young people will buy into it. No, Hip Hop listeners are people with real life problems, aspirations and dreams. Brands need to tap into that before we can believe them. (Jeff, p. 3)

This participant felt that Hip Hop listeners do have an informed opinion and that they can wield some popularity for brands that are associated with them. The youths in the sample frequently discussed the challenges that faced Hip Hop culture and it being taken seriously by corporate South Africa. The nature of the content of Hip Hop often highlighted socio-political topics which for many of the youths could have to have had informed opinions regarding these topics. This quote from the data demonstrates that youths can learn about global events through Hip Hop music and culture.

I feel more in tune with the world around me because of the music I listen to. I sometimes feel that if it wasn't for Hip Hop my world view would be so much different, I feel that Hip Hop can open your mind like that to ideas and to the world out there. (Thumi. p. 24)

The participants also expressed that making decisions on brand loyalty was enhanced through Hip Hop because of the way it encouraged and facilitated youths to engage with products in this manner. This supported the process of individuation described in Erickson's (1950) study that occurred as youth gained the ability to establish their own place in society which is based on the personal decisions that are often distinct in a family structure. The transition between adulthood and childhood was considered a stage of moratorium where young people could be permitted to define their identities and brand could take advantage of this period in relation to how they lavage their products and brands to this target audience.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

Branding in Hip Hop culture therefore appeared to play a role that allowed youth the platform to experiment with various products and make consumer choices as an individual. Participating in Hip Hop culture at times was seen as political choice. It seems that the culture of Hip Hop offers youth the access into a global community that they can share information and social activities. Hip Hop culture can function as a framework that aids in balancing a variety of different tensions that can be negotiated by participating youths like Ama Kip Kip. Perhaps because Hip Hop is a youth culture it is analogous that it should somewhat juggle such a turbulent nature of self-expression and that it should negotiate these various tensions. The youth wanted to expand their identities through their affiliation with Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop culture's definition has offered them the social and ideological ability to facilitate a trajectory through which to navigate the tensions that are there in contemporary South African youth as they moved in search of authenticity and adulthood. Perhaps in 2015, Hip Hop will assist us form reconciling definitions of where we come from, who we are which is an imaginative and associative process than that of and exact science (Neate, 2003, p.93).

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this final chapter a brief synopsis of the major findings of the research will be provided. The strengths and weakness of the research will be reflected upon so as to gain a truthful perspective on the ramifications of the results. The chapter will then conclude with a few recommendations that could be useful in future research projects to investigate. The themes that emerged from the research analysis were interconnected based on Kapferer's six dimensions brand identity model (2004). Each theme was represented as a range of meanings in relation to the constructed source versus the constructed receiver and the externalization versus the internalization. Hence the spectrum between Hip Hop brands and social identity for South African youth framed as a process that placed that required coming to terms with the six aspects of brand identity that capture the experience of engaging and participating in Hip Hop culture for the sample that was carried out.

### **5.2. To examine the term Hip Hop culture.**

#### **5.2.1. A Global culture from a South African vantage point**

The theme that is discussed in this section involves how the participants positioned Hip Hop within a local and global influencer. Hip Hop culture seems to have provided the participants with a global sense of location. This global status was identified by how the participants articulated strongly how Hip Hop provided them with a distinctive South African voice. This was also highlighted by the more focused exploration of the local and global meanings of blackness. Evidently Hip Hop seems to provide a symbolic segue in relation to global and local blackness. It seems that through Hip Hop the youth of South Africa appear to be able to connect with the global matrix while crafting their regional and national identities after the fall of apartheid's voicelessness. For the most part it appeared that participants were conscious of the complexities that prevailed in South African culture. The location of Johannesburg Hip Hop identity in comparison to the global matrix of the popular culture appeared to highlight the many tensions of a globally aware South African youth.

The term 'remix' was a tool that was invoked by the participants and in their comprehension of the manner in which Hip Hop culture would find inspiration from different music genres in the aim of reinventing material so that it could have meaning in a Hip Hop framework (Nutall, 2004). This term seemed to embody the way participants lived as a way of remixing the self identity and brands alike (Nutall, 2004). This was also highlighted by how local brands were naming their brands in using a pallet of South African languages. This unique social legacy comprised a range of possible identity accessories. This mode of appropriating South African influences has been linked to the global Hip Hop template of 'remixing' the old into a new frame of reference. It seems that the global framework of Hip Hop has been integrated into South African culture. However, developmentally, the global influence of Hip Hop brands and trends appeared to highlight that new approaches and strategies have to be taken into account when marketing to youths that are navigating into adulthood.

### **5.3. Youth identity and Hip Hop culture**

#### **5.3.1. Johannesburg Hip Hop community**

The participants voiced the contrasts that existed in the way they considered music and how they engaged with it in public and private spaces. Moreover, it seems that music was a medium that young people could display aspects of an aspiring identity (Nutall, 2004) to friends or family. Hip Hop culture also functioned as a tool that could navigate social and economical hierarchies and this extended into the parameters of brands strategies that employ elements of South African youth cultures (De Nora, 2000). Authenticity was a prominent theme in the data and it was a fundamental idea within Hip Hop culture. The participants in the sample were producers as well as consumers of Hip Hop culture. As a producer brands have to assume the responsibility of finding a authentic South African voice that is in line with their brand identity in the context of Hip Hop expression

## **5.4. The impact of Hip Hop on youth brands**

### **5.4.1 Remixing**

One of the most significant results from the data was the Hip Hop specific concept of what is termed as remixing in the way that it plays across how brands are aligning their brand identities. Constantly basing on the idea of remixing, the participants are determined to mobilize this important element of Hip Hop mode in incorporating into their everyday lives. To be able to remix aspects of the self (Nutall, 2004) through moulding certain aspects of inspirations from other cultures in crafting ways to explore and embrace parts of contemporary and retro South Africa and global cultures at the same time. It seems that Hip Hop youths could navigate the entire scope of global culture in a dynamic and non-rigid confinements. The aptitude of the remix concept strives for authentic living and space of expression. Hip Hop followers appeared to have a curiosity on other cultures and this fostered ties to other social groups. It appears that the Hip Hop listener has fluid social identities and granted them the ability to be inter-dependent on groups that were outside of Hip Hop. Remixing in the context of Hip Hop seems to be a key mode of identity and identification amongst its South African consumers. In many ways Hip hop in South Africa allows youth to remix the past and the present, old and new, global and local. For this reason, it seems that the youth that are part of the governing political discourse would appropriate an electric rather than rigid bounded culture such as Hip Hop.

The fundamental nature of Hip Hop culture; how it emphasises on self-expression, individuation, authenticity and a social awareness that is similar to the traditional Ericksonian theories of identity during adolescence. Hip Hop culture can provide a musical vehicle for youth to express themselves in the process of reconfiguration of identity, this implies that Hip Hop can contribute to the developmental drive of brand strategies. In addition, the socio-cultural nuances of South Africa have seemingly exerted influence on the local appropriation of Hip Hop culture. This research project aimed at being exploratory within the multi-disciplinary area of brand study and human communication. However it also attempted at contributing to the growing consumer

behavior study by applying music in a South African context to gain foundational findings.

### **5.5. Recommendations**

The framework that emerged from this project could be perhaps applied to brand strategies and extended to a wider population sample through questionnaires that could be distributed across different ages and locations within the country. For example it could be interesting to assess the impact of brands outside of Johannesburg and how brand messaging is resonating with other youths in South Africa. Qualitative data methods could also be used to gain understanding of other youths that are Hip Hop listeners in other countries. Furthermore, the study could help in the establishment of new brands or brands strategies that want to employ Hip Hop as a marketing tool. The research could be a useful starting point in the exploration of the permutations that are prevalent in the process of adolescent identity negotiation with specific reference to membership to a specific groups within local societies that have undergone wide spread local political transition such as South Africa.

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