



An explorative study of the relationship between consumer feelings toward body positive advertisements and its influence on brand perception.

by

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I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the BCom Honours in Strategic Brand Management degree to the Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not been previously submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the nature of body positive advertisements through the perceptions of South African women and if it can influence how they perceive a brand. Body Positive advertisements are rooted in the body positive movement which started in the 60s and has evolved into upbeat, love yourself advertisements portraying models of differing shapes, sizes and ethnicities.

Supported by substantial studies that investigated the harmful nature of thin-ideal imagery and photoshopped images, South African brands have been increasingly utilizing diversity in their model selection, particularly including models of larger sizes. Given the intricate nature of perceptions and feelings the researcher utilized qualitative structured in-depth interviews to truly explore and gain in-depth insight.

Data was collected by conducting four in-depth semi-structured interviews of South African women within the Gauteng area. Due to the small sample size, the research cannot be generalized to the total population of South African women but rather grant meaningful insight into how they feel toward this rising trend of advertising.

From a thematic analysis of the data, it was evident that the South African woman who participated in the study strongly linked their concept of body positive advertisements with the depiction of a diverse range of models. This influenced how they compared themselves to the models in the campaign and if they felt the campaign represented them. Interestingly, the researcher found in the absence of perceived similarity, if the perception of diversity was maintained, participants felt positive toward the advertisement and the brand. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed below.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Contextualization

The portrayal of women in advertising has been investigated substantially by numerous researchers who have explored the use of gender stereotypes, the objectification of women's bodies and the misrepresentation of women in advertisements (McArthur and Resko, 1975; Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen, 2011). In a time where brands are being pressured to be socially conscious, women are hoping to more 'real' women in advertisements (Mauric, 2019). The emergence of female empowerment advertising, also known as 'Femvertising' has gained steadfast popularity in recent years. Intended as a form of advertising that directly challenges the gender stereotypical advertisements whilst empowering the everyday woman (Akestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017). Research studies have found femvertisements to be more effective than traditional advertisements targeted toward female consumers. In fact, when compared to traditional advertisements, female consumers reported increased brand and advertisement attitudes toward female empowerment advertisements (Thorbjørnsen & Dahlén, 2011).

A form of female empowerment advertisements that have swept the decade of the 2010s is body positive advertisements. Body positivity is rooted in the revolutionary 'fat-acceptance' movement of the 1960s where it was a movement intended to empower overweight, queer, disabled and otherwise marginalized bodies (Crosby, 2020). Body positivity in the form of advertising was first introduced to the world by 'Femvertising' pioneer, Dove, in 2004. The groundbreaking Dove 'Real' beauty campaign interrupted the thin-ideal beauty standard sold by brands by featuring 'real' women of varying body shapes, sizes, and ethnicities most relatable to the everyday woman (Unilever, 2017).

Body positivity has since evolved into a form of branding and advertising which often receives positive reception from consumers, yet some regard it as a form of glorifying obesity (Pounders, 2018). An example of body positive branding is the lingerie brand 'Aerie Real,' who have consistently committed to utilizing models of diverse body sizes in every advertisement which reportedly resonated with its consumers due to its brand ethos of body positivity and inclusion and has since delivered strong sales growth (Kohan, 2019). South African brands such as Ackermans recently launched an 'I Am Me' body

positive campaign which received an overwhelming positive reception from South African women. Ackerman's advertising specialist stated that the campaign was intended to show South African women that they can relate to their advertisements whilst celebrating their individuality (Bizcommunity, 2019). As South African brands are increasingly utilizing models of varying shapes and sizes, little research has explored if true to American research, do South African women find this form of advertising appealing? Brands such as Woolworths, Mr. Price and H&M have recently hopped onto the trend of body positivity and its plausible to expect more brands will join.

Body positive advertising is arguably a form of feminist activism, which positions corporations as revolutionary pioneers. However, researchers have argued that body positivity advertising is a capitalist tool and is therefore hypocritical to activism and social change (Luck, 2016). As South African women will be increasingly exposed to body positive advertisements, research foundation in exploring how they feel and if it truly is more effective can be useful for brands considering this form of advertising. Th, the following research study is aimed at exploring the nature of body positive advertisements through the lens and subjective lived experiences of South African women, and if it can influence how they perceive a brand.

1.1. Rationale

Increasing pressure from consumers to execute body positive advertisements places brands in a peculiar position. Social media amplifies the voice of today's consumers, who are calling for brands to depict more inclusion and diversity of models in advertisements. Research within the field is conflicting, as some researchers have found body positive advertisements to be more effective and others found it to be a glorification of obesity (Pounders 2018). Brands are consequently faced with the decision of sticking to the status quo of thin ideal advertisements or to ascribe to body positive advertisements which have shown to be more positively received, particularly in South Africa.

Body positive advertisements are prevalent within the fashion and beauty industry in which models are often portrayed as users of the product. Aaker (1996) describes this as

ideal user advertising where imagery portrays what the brand would perceive to be a characteristically ideal user. The researcher argued that due to the emotional nature of body positive advertisements encouraging consumers to be upbeat, and to love-the-skin-you're-in, there is a likelihood that it influences how they feel toward the advertisement and possibly how they perceive the brand.

The Festinger (1954) Social Comparison Theory has been widely utilized as a theoretical lens and proven to be a powerful framework in assessing the effect of body image advertising both for plus-size and thin-ideal model advertisements. The theory suggests that individuals tend to compare themselves with the models in the advertisements, be it consciously or subconsciously. Thus, serving as the most appropriate theoretical lens for the exploratory nature of the study to explore how South African women feel toward body positive advertisements. Shoenberger, Kim and Johnson (2019) suggest that body-positive advertising campaigns negate detrimental self-comparison or, according to the social comparison theory, downward comparison leading to positive feelings toward advertisements.

In contrast, experimental studies found consumers exposed to traditional thin-ideal advertisements engaged in higher self-perception comparisons and possessed greater comparison standards than individuals who had viewed advertisements unassociated with appearance (Yu, Damhorst and Russel, 2011). Furthermore, comparisons formulated from thin-ideal advertisements potentially increased self-image anxiety and social evaluations (Cash and Pruzinsky, 2002).

Consequently, consumers have been calling on brands to adopt more diverse models in advertisements. SHE Media stated that 70% of women surveyed are of the opinion that brands should be held responsible to utilize adverts and campaigns positivity toward the empowerment of females to better contribute to societal issues (SHE Media, 2016). It is important for brands to acknowledge this as consumers are increasingly voicing their concerns on social media and could potentially lose sales.

The researcher argued that a one-size-fits-all approach applied in body image advertising

could not be applied in exploring how South African women would feel towards body positive advertisements. European beauty standards have globalized the lens of beauty, whereas South Africa, a country rich in culture and identity, has its own unique standards of beauty and self-perceptions. Thus, South African women's true feelings and perceptions of body positive advertisements could not be assumed but had to be explored. By conducting research on how South African women feel toward body positive advertising, the researcher intended to explore if the American findings would be held true in a South African context and if it would be a plausible form of advertising for South African brands.

1.2. Problem Statement

The media and advertising can be viewed as a mirror of society. Researchers have argued that beauty standards are reflective of cultural and societal norms. Yet, research studies exploring how South African women feel toward advertisements are limited. A global quantitative study by Dove found 71% of South African women do not feel represented in advertisements and 82% wished brands would be representational in their campaigns (Unilever, 2017).

Furthermore, 82% of South African women surveyed wished advertisers would portray women of diverse age, race, shapes and sizes by utilizing models who are similar and representational of how South African women look. By improving representation, consumers felt they would experience increased positive emotions when exposed to advertisements and agreed that it would benefit young South African girls (Unilever, 2017).

South African brands stand to suffer from negative brand perceptions and consequent loss of sales if they do not meet the rising need of South African women wanting to see diversity in advertisements. More importantly, the way in which South African brands have been depicting women in advertisements has impacted how women feel negatively. 75% of South African women surveyed felt pressure from advertising and media create self-appearance and beauty anxiety, to which the researcher believed was troublesome (Unilever, 2019).

South African brands are increasingly utilizing this form of advertising with recent adverts from Mr. Price, Ackermans and Woolworths utilizing models of plus size stature for swimwear and underwear ads. Yet, research has not investigated how South African women feel toward this form of advertising and if they feel better represented. Therefore, it is plausible to explore how South African women feel and perceive body positive advertisements and if it can influence how they perceive a brand.

1.3. Research Goal

The goal of the study is to explore if a relationship exists between how South African women feel toward body positive advertisements and its influence on brand perception. To explore the possibility of this relationship, the researcher set out the following research question.

1.4. Research Question

Primary Research Question: Is there a relationship between consumer feelings toward body positive advertisements and brand perception?

Additionally, in aid of answering the primary research question, the following questions had been deduced:

- What feelings do female consumers derive from body positive advertisements within South Africa?
- How do female consumers emotionally resonate with body positive advertisements?
- How do female consumers feel towards the brand after viewing the body positive advertisement?

1.5. Research Objectives

Primary research objective: To explore if there is a relationship between consumer feelings toward body-positive campaigns and brand perception

Sub research objectives:

- To determine what feelings body-positive advertisements create in female consumers within South Africa?

- To explore how female consumers emotionally resonate with body-positive advertisements?
- To investigate how female consumers perceive the brand that has utilized the respective body-positive advertisements?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Comparison Theory

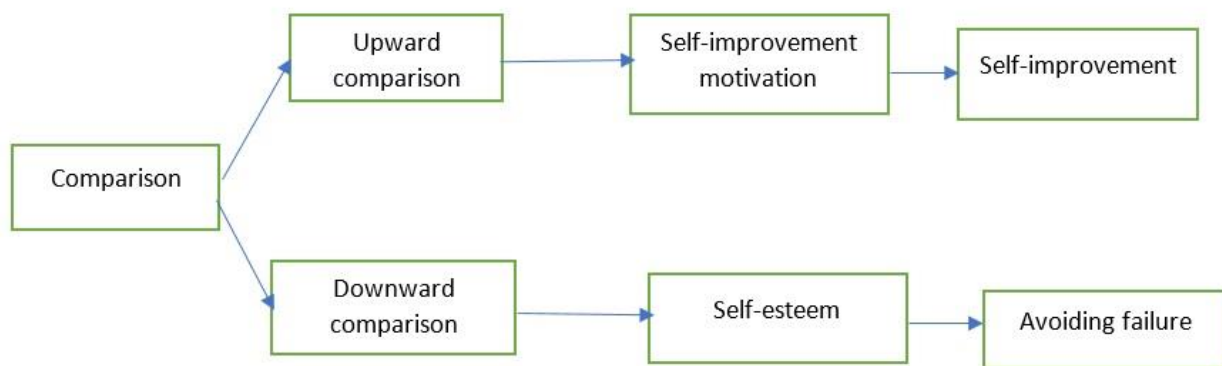


Figure 1: Social Comparison Theory Model (Festinger, 1954)

The Festinger (1954) social comparison theory theorizes that individuals tend to evaluate themselves in comparison to others. Substantial research within thin-ideal and body image advertising has utilized this framework to assess its impact on consumers (Dittmar and Howard, 2004; Vartanian and Dey, 2013). Festinger proposed that an individual has the drive to evaluate themselves according to another to generate a form of self-evaluation. The social comparison theory proposes that individuals tend to compare themselves even if done so subconsciously (Goethals, 1986).

In the context of advertising, the theory proposes that consumers often subconsciously compare themselves to the models in the advertisements resulting in an upward or downward comparison (Pounders, 2018). A downward comparison is when an individual compares themselves to others, they perceive to be lesser than themselves and generate

positive emotions. Whereas an upward comparison occurs when an individual compares themselves to those they feel are of a higher standard, and generate negative emotions.

The social comparison theory is substantially utilized as a theoretical foundation for ‘thin-ideal’ research. Research findings concluded that women and girls upward compare themselves to thin models in advertisements and therefore, suffered from negative moods, increased body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms than those who did not (Field, Carlos, Camargo and Taylor, 1999). Tiggemann, Polivy, Hargreaves (2009) support this findings as they reported increased negative mood and body dissatisfaction when participants upward compared themselves to models in an advertisement. Whereas, in more recent years, the social comparison theory has been utilized to explore how consumers experience body positive advertisements and found downward comparisons lead to increased positive moods and positive brand attitudes (Shoenberger, Kim and Johnson, 2020).

A crucial aspect of the social comparison theory is the element of perceived similarity. This theory is best suited for the purpose of this study as it has been widely used by researchers within the field and will provide renewed insight into exploring feelings generated from body positive campaigns. The researcher argued that body-positive campaigns tend to appeal to female consumers by utilizing models of similar stature to that of consumers, therefore encouraging downward comparisons. Conversely, the opposite is true as pre-existing self-perception can influence how a participant could socially compare themselves to the advertisement thus upward comparison was equally possible.

Thus, the researcher proposed due to South African women feeling underrepresented, perceiving newfound similarity in the models in advertisements could create downward comparisons. Which, according to the social comparison theory, participants would feel positive toward the advertisement and possibly the brand. Hence, serving as an appropriate theoretical framework of the study as the researcher intended to test the theory of comparisons and its influence on how South African women feel.

2.2. Literature Review

Literature in the field of body image advertising and media has been long-standing as considerable research has investigated the effect of thin-ideal media consumption. The researcher notes that little to no studies have been conducted utilizing a South African sample. Therefore, the literature is mostly based on the U.S and U.K markets. The researcher acknowledged that the effects of thin-ideal media and feelings toward body positive campaigns are subjective therefore previous findings could have the opposite effect when applied to South African women.

2.2.1. Thin-Ideal and Digitally Enhanced Advertisements

Cited for their problematic depictions of women in the past, advertising campaigns have upsold and upheld unattainable beauty standards of women for years. Comprehensive research has been conducted within the field of thin-ideal advertising and its consumer effects, dating as far back as 1991. Substantial research has reported a positive relationship between thin-ideal imagery, increased body dissatisfaction and decreased levels of self-esteem (Richins, 1991; Tiggemann and Harper, 2008). Little has changed over the years since Richins (1991) reported female participants had decreased levels of self-perception of attractiveness when viewing thin-ideal televised advertisements as Bozsik, Whisenhunt, Hudson, Bennett and Lundgren (2018) reported similar findings.

When considering the effectiveness of utilizing thin-ideal imagery in advertisements, a study by Monro and Huon (2005) concluded that female participants exposed to thin-idealized advertisements reported increased levels of self-image anxiety and body satisfaction irrespective of the product being advertised and consequently paid more attention to the images of the models instead of the product being advertised which is detrimental for a brand advertising product.

According to Convertino, Rodgers, Franko and Jodoin (2019), an element of thin-ideal advertising perpetuating unattainable standard beauty is underpinned by the undisclosed digital enhancement of models' images. Furthermore, the researchers found it to be detrimental toward a female consumer's self-perception. Research conducted by Tiggeman, Slater, Bury, Hawkins and Firth (2013) found disclaimer labels drew more

attention to the digitally enhanced images and caused social comparison and consequently lower levels of body satisfaction. In fact, a study that utilized an eye-tracker to assess how participants react to disclaimer labels found participants reportedly paid more attention to the digitally enhanced region of the image, which also increased the likelihood of social comparison and consequently higher levels of body dissatisfaction (Bury, Tiggemann and Slater, 2016).

These detrimental effects drew the attention of academics and policymakers alike as Western countries such as France, Australia and UK attempted to create policies that regulate the retouching process of models and require labels to identify retouched images to avoid disillusion between edited and unedited bodies (Telegraph, 2015). The logic behind the social comparison theory and previous studies suggests that inserting digital enhancement disclaimers should ideally mitigate the negative effects of thin-ideal imagery (Peter and Cornelis, 2017). However, research contradicts this proposed theory as studies have reported that disclaimer labels are ineffective in mitigating upward social comparisons, increased negative emotions and negative self-perceptions (Cragg, Mulgrew and Kannis-Dymand, 2017; McComb and Mills, 2019).

The researcher suggested that findings from this field of research served as a strong foundation for the research of body positive advertisements as there is an intersection between the literature and previous researchers often tested the effects of thin-ideal media consumption against plus-size media. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate the literature of thin-ideal media to gain a better understanding of the complexity of body image advertising and its effects.

2.2.2. One-Size-Fits-All Body Positive Campaigning

Although the researcher intended to explore the nature of the relationship between body-positive advertising and brand perception, the researcher proposed that brands who adopt a generalized 'one-size-fits-all' approach to this form of advertising may experience negative brand perceptions. Body positive advertisements are a form of brand activism

which, according to Moorman (2020), is an emerging marketing strategy for brands intending to differentiate themselves by taking a stand on social and political issues.

Academics within the marketing field have cited the importance of perceived authenticity as a key element of brand activism (Kotler and Sakar, 2017). A consumer's perception of authenticity is particularly important in the realm of branding as it is likely to increase brand trust, purchase intention and brand attitude (Bazaar Voice, 2018). The hunt for brands with perceived authenticity has grown amongst consumers that "trust in people above brands" (Cornelis and Peter, 2017). Therefore, making it even more relevant in the age of social media where consumers have an amplified voice toward brands.

In recent investigations of perceived authenticity, findings suggested that high levels of perceived authenticity increase the results the chances of word of mouth and emotional attachment toward the brand (Morhart, Malar, Guevremont, Girardin and Grohmann, 2015) Additionally, research by Miller (2014) suggested that consumers instinctively examine an advertisement's authenticity, where more authentic have been linked to positive advertisement evaluations. In more recent years, a study Kim and Johnson (2020) reported the highest levels of increased brand attitude and purchase intent when plus-size models who were not digitally enhanced were in the advertisements and perceived to be authentic. Additionally, according to the social comparison theory, participants experienced downward comparisons and satisfaction with themselves which lead to positive advertising evaluations.

Brands who utilize body positivity marketing should be authentic in their practices throughout the company to avoid criticisms of brand hypocrisy (Pounders, 2018). As body positive campaigning is not a guaranteed path to positively impacting brand perception, with 56% of consumers perceiving brand activism as a marketing ploy to upsell products. Luck (2016) argues that on the surface, brands appear to be pioneers but serve to uphold the same unattainable beauty standard they revolt against, therefore incompatible with true activism. Bowman (2020) supports this argument by exploring how consumer feelings toward body positive campaigns can be perceived as inauthentic and hinder a brand's image tremendously. An example of this would be the Victoria Secret's 'Perfect

Body' campaign (Annexure D) which featured models of traditionally thin-ideal stature subsequently causing a massive uproar online. Consumers called for Victoria Secret to apologize and created an online petition demanding the campaign to be changed to which it consequently was (Salih, 2016).

Although it may be tempting for brands to jump onto the trend of body positive advertising, the company and brand must align with the values of this form of activism to avoid damage to the brand image. Dove has experienced both praise and criticism for its consistent claim to support and uplift women. However, according to Beale, Malson, and Tischner (2016), Unilever, the parent company of Dove, have been called out for selling "skin-lightening" products and dietary products which directly contradict the body positive culture that Dove as a brand so often promotes. Therefore, the researcher proposes that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied to body positive campaigns as it must be specific to the industry, the corporation's values as well as the target market to be perceived authentically.

2.2.3. "Real" Women versus All Women Shortfalls

The researcher proposed an intersection between consumers formulating positive feelings toward body positive campaigns and perceiving them as both authentic and "real." Cho (2018) states that the Dove 'Real Beauty' campaign was the first to spotlight the term "real" when featuring diverse women in advertisements versus the traditional model in thin-ideal advertisements.

According to Mamuric (2019), advertisers are finding that female consumers have been hoping to see a version of themselves in advertisements more than they have before. Quantitative findings from a study conducted by Shoenberger, Kim and Johnson (2020) found participants had increased positive feelings toward body-positive campaigns that featured plus-size models and were more likely to purchase from the brand as they perceived them to be "real". Pounders (2018) explains that female consumers are not singularly expectant of brands to include plus-size, diverse and "real" models but also to feature models of differing ethnicity, ability, and genderqueer and non-binary identities.

Growing criticisms toward body positive campaigning calls for brands to expand this form of advertising beyond the inclusion of plus-size models. A UK study conducted by Beale,

Malson and Tilner (2016) aimed to deconstruct the term “real women” in advertising to explore female attitudes towards plus-size women in advertisements and found that along with participants experiencing positive emotions towards the advertisements, participants also found the advertisement's hyper-sexualization of women to be contradictory and reductive by centralizing a woman's worth to her shape or size whilst simultaneously demonizing thin women.

In theory, body positivity is an all-inclusive practice that should include all women regardless of age or ethnicity though the focus of the literature is body positivity is on a model's body size. An article by Bogart (2021) states that body positivity campaigns focus on age, race and the LGBTQI+ but disabled women are hardly represented. Kim (2020) considers Aerie to be an industry leader in authentically featuring women of varying disabilities and has a strong track record to prove it (Annexure D). There is presently a gap in the literature assessing the extent to which brands are truly diverse when featuring models.

The researcher concluded that body-positive campaigns possessed the ability to garner positive feelings when perceived authenticity was maintained as existing literature supports the notion of participants perceiving the campaigns as more “real” than a traditional advertisement, subsequently influencing brand attitude and purchase intention positively.

2.2.4. Emotive Advertising and Body Positivity Campaigns

A crucial element of exploring the primary question of the research is the extent to which feelings have proven to influence brand attitudes in previous literature. The researcher proposed that body positivity campaigns are characteristically emotive in nature. They are upbeat, feel-good 'love yourself' anthems that tend to be infectious to the consumer viewing them.

Hamelin, Moujahid and Thaichon (2017) concluded that emotional advertisements have a higher likelihood of being remembered by consumers. Studies have found that when compared to traditional advertising, body positivity campaigns garnered more positive reactions towards the advertisements and the brand (Kraus and Myrick, 2018). The ability to measure the emotion derived from body positivity campaigns will provide insight into

the importance of consumer feelings in a possible relationship between body positivity and brand perception.

A considerable portion of research has been theoretically founded in the Festinger (1954) social comparison theory. It is crucial to consider a woman's pre-existing self-perception as an influencing factor toward how they self-compare to body positive campaigns. In a study conducted by Leahey, Crowther and Ciesla (2011) it was found that young women with elevated levels of appearance comparison prior to the study were more susceptible to lowered self-perception because of thin-ideal media and advertising.

Previous literature has also found body positive advertisements such as the #AerieReal campaign created fewer negative emotions regarding a young woman's self-perception (Convertino, Rodgers, Franko and Jodoin, 2016). Nonetheless, negative emotions have also been evoked in consumers' post-exposure to body positivity campaigns. Kraus and Myrick (2018) explore the possibility of body positivity requiring audiences to consider their body dissatisfaction and feel guilty for being dissatisfied with their bodies as campaigns prompt them to be. Authors Beale, Malson and Tischner (2016) criticize body-positive campaigns as capitalists of the assumption that women are already dissatisfied with their bodies. Thus, revealing the complexity of how consumers feel toward body positive advertisements although an overwhelming amount of research reports positive emotions, it is possible that South African women may feel differently.

2.3. Key Conceptualization

The following are key conceptualization of terms relevant to exploring the primary research question:

2.3.1. Body Positivity Campaigns

Body Positivity campaigns are a marketing technique adapted from the body positivity movement. Body positivity campaigns are the depiction of models of varying sizes, shapes, ethnicities while resisting the popular use of retouching images to visually manipulate women's bodies (Pounders, 2018). For this study, body positivity campaigns will be viewed as a marketing technique that is not simply reduced to the depiction of

models of diverse sizes, but models of transgender or genderqueer identities, varying ages, disabilities, ethnicities, and the depiction of stretch marks, scars, wrinkles etc. which are not considered palatable for the traditional realm of beauty standards within advertising. It is important to mention that the researcher's conceptualization of Body Positivity does not exclude thin models but viewed it as an all-inclusive depiction of women regardless of their appearance.

2.3.2. Female Representation in Advertising

The depiction of women in advertising has been a source of much debate for years. Criticized for hyper-sexualizing women and perpetuating gender stereotypes, how women are portrayed and represented in advertising has been a field of study for years (Grau and Zotos, 2016). The researcher will conceptualize the term as to how female consumers feel and perceive how they are represented in advertisements and campaigns displayed within the region of South Africa.

2.3.3. Emotive Advertising

A study conducted by Hamelin, Moujahid and Thaichon (2017) found an emotive message in advertising increases an individual's attention toward the product and the advertisement, subsequently boosting an individual's attraction to the product and brand awareness. The purpose of the study is to explore the feelings and perceptions formed by consumers towards a brand after being exposed to a body positivity campaign. The social comparison theory will serve as an anchor in navigating emotions formulated toward the campaigns by categorizing them negatively and positively. Therefore, emotive advertising will be conceptualized as the emotions derived from each campaign viewed by the female consumer.

2.3.4. Brand perception

According to Kervyn, Fiske and Malone (2012), consumers are not singularly concerned about beneficial aspects of a brand and its features, but also a relational aspect and, importantly, an emotional part. The researcher proposes that there is a relationship between emotive body positive campaigns and brand perception. Thus, the conceptualization will view brand perception as how female consumers perceive the

brands and how emotions and feelings formed from body positivity campaigns influence this.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Interpretivist Paradigm

An interpretivist paradigm is best suited for the exploratory nature of the study as the researcher aimed to interpret the intricate nature of feeling formulation toward body positive campaigns. Interpretivism is strongly shaped by phenomenology, an approach that prioritizes the subjective experiences of human beings and their perceptions of their realities (Maree, 2017). Furthermore, feelings are highly subjective in nature to which an interpretivist paradigm addresses effectively.

Additional justification for an interpretivist paradigm, was the researcher's belief that it would be insightful to observe and study people in natural environments where they would feel relaxed in order to gain insight into their feelings and perceptions toward body positive advertisements (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

The researcher thoroughly assumed the role of a 'social actor' to view each participant's perception as equally valid and true (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This subsequently enhanced the intention of gaining an in-depth analysis of the emotional formulation of brand perceptions toward body positivity campaigns.

Due to the subjective interpretivism nature that underpins qualitative research, the researcher maintained the exploration of the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception were explored in a bias-free, open-ended manner and stayed alert for potential misconceptions (Shuttleworth, 2008).

3.1.1. Ontological Assumption

An interpretivist paradigm supports the ontological assumption of social reality as a complexity due to different interpretations of events, therefore resulting in different

perspectives on an event (Maree, 2017). In the context of advertisements, complexity is enhanced as consumers may have varying interpretations and social comparisons toward the body positive advertisements. Thus, to alleviate this complexity the researcher aimed to understand and clarify perceptive reality through the lens of each participant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

3.1.2. Epistemological Assumption

The theoretical framework that underpins the epistemological assumption of interpretivism is the view of the world as “constructed, interpreted and experienced” by individuals with others and social systems larger than themselves (Antwi & Kasim, 2015). The notion of meaning being immersed in the experience of the participants will be reconciled through the perceptions of the researcher (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, reinforcing the subjective nature that is fundamental to the study, the researcher intended to gain an unobtrusive insight into the realities of the participants to achieve the research objectives.

3.1.3. Methodological Assumption

A methodological assumption entails assumptions conjured by the researcher for chosen methods and research strategy for the chosen qualitative strategy (Creswell, 2003). Dave (2013) suggests that the main question conveyed by the methodological assumption is “what is the process of research?” Therefore, the chosen interpretivist research methods are based on the researcher’s subjective research experience in collecting and analyzing data.

3.2. Research Design

Maree (2019) states the decision of the research design is dependent on the researcher’s ontological and epistemological philosophical assumptions, existing research skills and practices which subsequently impact the way the researcher collects data. The researcher elected an exploratory approach to address the research problem of South African women feeling misrepresented in advertisements.

According to De Vaus (2001), an exploratory approach is appropriate for studies where

there is a scarcity of previous literature regarding the research problem where the researcher's focus is to develop insights and knowledge for future investigation. This is true to the research study as there are little to no research studies addressing misrepresentation of South African women qualitatively in South Africa, thus by adopting an open-ended exploratory approach to the research problem, the researcher intended to truly explore the subject matter with true openness toward the subject matter.

Furthermore, a qualitative research design was most ideal for the research problem at hand as feelings and perceptions are an integral aspect of the research which are subjective and true to qualitative approaches. Although previous studies have been quantitative in nature, an exploration through a qualitative methodology can lend a voice to the way in which South African women experience body positive advertisements. A qualitative exploration of South African women's feelings toward female portrayal and representation in advertisements is a neglected aspect of the literature. Qualitative data is inherently an abundant source of information thus was useful for the feelings and perceptions formed by South African women.

Qualitative research tends to be primarily inductive. Inductive methods of reasoning required the researcher to analyze observations to determine commonalities and patterns that will enable the ability to formulate an exploratory hypothesis (Maree, 2019). An exploratory lens provided the researcher with the ability to optimally conduct thorough research despite the limitation of each participant's subjectivity creating a limitation toward the ability to generalize research findings for all South African women (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

The researcher intended to follow the data collection method which consists of primary structured interviews and allowed for secondary research regarding the research instruments. The adoption of a phenomenological lens complimented the philosophical assumptions established through interpretivism by the researcher. Phenomenological studies are centered on the belief that meaning is derived from a participant's lived experience and using comprehensive descriptions provides insight into the perceived meaning (Maree, 2019). The researcher viewed each participant's lived experience of the advertisement as an integral element of the research findings thus a further motivation

for the use of phenomenology within the study. As a social actor the researcher reserved their biases and judgement of the participants to comprehend each participant's experience toward body positive advertisements as equally valid and true.

Two approaches are relevant to the phenomenological tradition being hermeneutical phenomenology and empirical phenomenology (Maree, 2019). The researcher adopted a hermeneutical approach to the research design as it aligns with focusing on the subjective experience of each participant. Through hermeneutical phenomenology view the world of viewing a body positive advertisement through the subjective experience of each South African woman (Kafle, 2019).

3.3. Population

According to Strydom and Venter (2002: 199), the population is defined as “the sampling frame; the totality of persons; events; organization units; case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned.” The researcher considered the population for the purpose of this study to be human beings residing within South Africa. To specify the potential participant pool, the researcher considered the target population.

3.3.1. Target Population

The target population of a research study is defined as anyone who specifically meets the population parameters (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). To accomplish the research objectives, the researcher selected the target population as all South African residents who are 18 years old and above.

3.3.2. Accessible Population

According to Maree (2019), an accessible population is a group of the population that the researcher regards as a potential participant group from the target population. The researcher concluded the accessible population as individuals above the age of 18 residing near Pretoria, Gauteng due to the researcher's travel parameters.

3.4. Sample

Due to the two main constraints of time and cost, the researcher cannot include their population in its entirety, thus a sample should be selected. Additionally, Taderhoost (2016) defines sampling as the process of selecting a subset from the complete population to deduce a generalization on the existing theory. There are two significant classifications of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods. Probability sampling utilizes objectivity in the selection of the sample as each population element is selected at random due to the non-zero probability of selection (Maree, 2019). According to Singh (2018) probability sampling is strictly linked to quantitative research studies therefore would not be suitable for the qualitative exploratory nature of this research study.

Whereas non-probability sampling is a method that tends to focus on a smaller sample size with the intention to examine a real-life phenomenon and not for statistical inferences regarding the population (Yin, 2003). The researcher selected non-probability sampling which compliments the interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative nature of the study. An interpretivist paradigm is rooted in phenomenology that views the subjective experiences of humans and their perceptions of reality as valid and true (Maree, 2019).

Of the four main types of non-probability sampling methods, the researcher chose convenience sampling. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2015) are individuals of the target population that adhere to criteria such as accessibility, proximity to Pretoria, being available during the data collection period of July to September 2021 and the inclination to participate in the research study. Taderhoost (2016) states that convenience sampling is useful in overcoming the limitations of financial and time resources as it is inexpensive and simple.

The researcher selected participants that were easily and conveniently available. In accordance with Maree (2019) definition of convenience sampling, this method was satisfactory for the exploratory nature of the research as the researcher was able to obtain a swift and economical approximation of the truth. Though it is crucial for the researcher to express the limitation of this sampling method as it is subjective to the selection bias of the researcher which impacts the confirmability of the study. Therefore, the researcher

maintained cognizant of selection-bias when selecting the participants to sustain a sample that is representative of the study.

A deficient sample size can significantly undermine the dependability of the research findings. Therefore, the researcher acknowledges that bigger samples are more likely to be representative, accurate and statistically analytical (Maree, 2019). However, due to the significant limitation of time and financial resources, the researcher selected a smaller sample size of four participants. Sandelowski (1995) states that a sufficient sample size in qualitative research is one that allows an in-depth, case-oriented analysis which is an attribute of qualitative inquiry which results in a fresh and richly textured comprehension of the experience, thus the researcher believed four participants would be sufficient. The researcher maintained the belief that the sample size of four participants would result in in-depth, feeling-centric results from the study which would be sufficient in achieving the research objective of exploring if there is a positive relationship between body-positive campaigns and brand perception.

The researcher restricted the selection of the sample to females, due to most body-positive campaigns targeting female consumers and depicting female models. The researcher elected not to create sample parameters based on any characteristics such as age. Believing participants of all ages would be provide insightful data regarding feelings and perceptions, the researcher selected four females based on proximity and willingness to contribute to the research study. The researcher concluded that female participants would be beneficial to the primary research objective though future research including male participants would be beneficial. Furthermore, due to the sensitivity of discussing body image and body positivity in-depth, the researcher decided to exclude female minors as they are below the age of consent.

3.5. Data Collection Method

The researcher proposed due to the intricate nature of feelings and perceptions of which are fundamental to the research study, in-depth interviews a suitable primary data collection method. A qualitative interview is a two-way conversation between the

interviewer and the participant with the objective of viewing the world through the lens of the participant as stipulated in the interpretivist paradigm (Maree, 2019). According to Langkos (2014) in-depth interviews are intimate and intended to identify the emotions, feelings, and perceptions of a participant regarding the study's subject matter of body positive advertisements.

Due to the subjectivity of each participant's experience of the advertisements, the researcher selected to utilize structured interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are frequently used in qualitative research (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2018). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were intended as a relaxed dialogue between the researcher and the participant supported by elastic interview protocol in addition to probing and following up questions. By selecting semi-structured interviews, the researcher intended to create uniformity when collecting the data whilst simultaneously allowing participants to respond in depth. The researcher elected to utilize detailed elaboration probing techniques such as asking the participant "in what way?" or "if not how could they improve?," to encourage the participant to explain their answer further (Maree, 2019). A semi-structured interview ensured that all participants received the same set of questions, asked in the same order, by the same interviewer (Maree, 2019). The researcher formulated the questions prior to the interview and designed them to be asked systematically.

The researcher did not select to adopt sampling parameters thus the risk of a participant being unaware of what body positive advertisements look like was significant. The main purpose of the research is to explore if a positive relationship exists between how South African women respond to body positive advertisements and if this influences how they perceive a brand. Thus, taking into consideration the importance of participants being able to visually view the advertisement during the data collection process, the researcher elected to use it as a supplementary research instrument for the semi-structured interviews.

Therefore, the researcher concluded to utilize six visual advertisement images to supplement the primary semi-structured interview process. The researcher conducted secondary research on Google to guide the selection process of the six campaigns. At

the time of the data collection process, the researcher found little to no South African brands who participated in body positive advertisements. This poses an additional hindrance to the confirmability of the study as the campaigns were subject to the selection bias of the researcher.

The researcher addressed this selection bias by selecting four campaigns that had previously been mentioned in the existing literature, whereas two were selected according to the researcher's choice. The researcher selected the Dove 'Real Beauty' campaign of 2004 due to its prevalence in literature as a pioneer in Body Positive campaigning and 'Femvertising' (Bissel and Rask, 2010). Whereas the second advertisement was the Dove 'Body Shaped Bottles' due to its discussion in the literature as a negative form of body-positive campaigning (Bhattaria, 2017). According to Bahadur (2017), the Victoria Secret '#PerfectBody' campaign received harsh criticism for its failed attempt at body positive campaigning, therefore the researcher selected it. Lastly, the researcher selected an Aerie Real campaign as it is considered by researchers to be a campaign designed to promote positive body image (Convertino, Rodgers, Franko and Jodoin, 2016). Thereafter the researcher selected Ackerman's 'I Am Me' campaign as the singular body positive campaign within the South African region and the American brand Isle of Paradise 'Body Posi' campaign based on its popularity with social media users (Annexure C).

The researcher constructed an interview schedule of 22 questions that were categorized according to four categories (Annexure B). The researcher divided the interview into four categories according to themes that correlated with the research objectives. The first category was 'Body Positive Knowledge' to which the researcher assigned questions 1 - 4 to establish the participants' firstly to establish the participant's knowledge of body positive advertisements in a way that is comfortable in a conversation style manner. The first category was also intended to flexibly explore or establish how a participant feels toward body positivity in general. Questions included "How have these forms of body positivity made you feel thus far?".

The second category 'Exposure to Campaigns' categorized Questions 5 - 11 was intended to precede the researcher systematically placing an advertisement image in front of the participant then asking the category of questions systematically. Examples of

the questions include question 6, “How do you feel about the following campaign?” which is founded on the Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) the theoretical foundation of the research study. The implementation of questions that align with the social comparison theory allowed the researcher to test the theory with a South African sample. Additionally, if true to previous literature, South African women would downward compare themselves to the models in the images and if it could be linked to how they consequently perceive a brand.

Thereafter, the researcher formulated a third category ‘Brand Perception’ to which Questions 12 - 15 were based on the brand of the campaign in front of the participant to establish if brand perceptions have been influenced by the campaign as evidenced by Question 13 “Has viewing the campaign influenced the way you perceive the [insert name] brand?”. This category was intended to address the third sub-research objective to evaluate how South African women feel toward a brand that participates in body positive advertisements.

To conclude the interview, the researcher formulated the ‘Overall Body Positive Feelings’ category which included Questions 16 - 22 designed to explore the the participants overall feelings towards the body positive advertisements and in a South African context. Questions included “Which campaign do you perceive to be the most authentic?” and “Are you satisfied with the body positive campaigns you have seen in South Africa thus far?.”

Therefore, the researcher aimed to use a semi-structured interview schedule and six body positive campaigns to guide the semi-structured systematic interview with a conversational style to ease the participants into being open and casual with the interviewer.

3.6. Application of Data Collection Method

Once the researcher received ethical clearance (Annexure A), the researcher began the data collection process. In compliance with the convenience sampling method, the

researcher selected four female participants in and around the Pretoria area in order to conduct face-to-face structured interviews.

Though the researcher had considered conducting interviews online on platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet in order to expand the geographical reach of participants, the researcher found that face-to-face interviews would assist in making participants feel more at ease during the interview process. Therefore, all four interviews were conducted in person whilst adhering COVID-19 protocols in order to maintain the safety of both the interviewer and the participant.

The researcher, Kimberly Munatsi, assumed the role of the sole interviewer for the study. Upon the conclusion of a discussion to participate between the participant and the researcher, the researcher then emailed the explanatory information form to each participant ahead of time. Once the participant had agreed to be interviewed, the date, time and location of the interview was agreed upon at the participants' earliest convenience.

When meeting the participant at their desired time and location, the interviewer handed the participant the explanatory form to read once more as well as the interview and audio consent form. Upon signing both forms the interviewer verbally alerted the participant that the interviewer was going to begin the audio recording on the interviewer's smartphone. Recording an interview is crucial and must be done meticulously in order to retain the data (Maree, 2019). However, the interviewer opted not to take notes during the interview to prevent the participant from feeling uneasy consequently disrupting the conversation style of the interview.

Though the researcher acknowledges that a pre-test interview would have been helpful in establishing the systematic nature of the interview prior to interviewing the first participant, the researcher still assumed the role of the interviewer quite reasonably. Initially, the researcher had proposed obtaining the age and occupation of the participant, but later found this to be irrelevant to the study and discarded it after the first interview. Additionally, the researcher adjusted the sequence of two questions from the 'Brand Perception' category and placed them into the 'Overall Body Positive Campaign Feelings' category.

The semi-structured interviews spanned from 38 minutes to an hour depending on the participant. The researcher systematically and comprehensively guided the interview in a manner that sustained the intended line of action, which can often be a challenge if deviations from the subject matter of the interview occur (Jamshed, 2014).

All participants were asked the same questions according to the same sequence except for participant one who was interviewed prior to the adjustment of the brand perception category.

All participants were interviewed according to the same categorical flow of the questions resulting in a seamless flow from the first category to the last. The 'Body Positivity Knowledge' category would only be asked once at the beginning of the interview. Thereafter the interviewer would systematically place an A4 print of one of the six campaigns, with a label and the publishing year of the campaign below the image, in front of the participant. The interviewer concealed the other campaigns in a folder in order to maintain the focus on a singular campaign. Lastly, to prevent any external bias implicating the participants perception, the interviewer withheld whether the campaign was favorable or unfavorable according to the secondary research.

After the 'Body Positive Knowledge' category had been asked, the interviewer utilized prompts such as "Now that we're done with the body positive knowledge category, I'll be showing you the [insert campaign name] campaign and asking you a few questions". The interviewer utilized the prompts in order to guide the participant through the process and make them aware of completion of each category. The interviewer systematically showed the participants each campaign in a sequence of the Dove Real Beauty campaign first, followed by the Dove Body Shaped Bottles, followed by the Victoria Secret 'Perfect Body' campaign, the Ackermans 'I Am Me' campaign, thereafter the Aerie Real Role Model campaign and finally the Isle of Paradise 'Body Posi' throughout each interview.

The Body Positive Campaigns and Brand Perception category were asked for each of the campaigns shown, one at a time to the participant. Apart from the two Dove campaigns to which the 'Brand Perception' category as both campaigns belonged to the Dove brand. The Overall Body Positive Campaign Feelings category would be asked at the end of the interview as the questions pertained to the overall perception of the participant.

Once the interviewer had asked the participant both the all three categories for all six campaigns, the interviewer placed the six campaigns on the table in front of the participant and asked them the last 'overall body positive campaign feelings' category questions 16 - 22.

Upon completing the category, the interviewer thanked the participant for their time and ended the audio recording. The systematic nature of the interview ensured little to no deviations from the subject matter and the interviews generated rich in-depth data from the feelings and perceptions of the four sampled South African women.

3.7. Data Analysis Method

According to Maree (2019) qualitative data intends to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analyzing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in order to estimate a participants' construction of the phenomenon. Through the lens of a phenomenological data analysis approach the researcher assumed the role of an unobtrusive observer in order to view the participants' perceptions and feelings toward body positivity as value and true. Phenomenological data analysis required the researcher to bracket out oneself in order to enter the world of the participants perspective and experience of body positive advertisements, which was a crucial element of exploring the primary research objective (Maree, 2019).

The research study is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm; therefore, the ontological assumption is that reality is subjective which consequently influences the way the interview data was analyzed (Du Plooy, 2001). Due to the highly subjective nature of the feelings and perceptions of the participants, the researcher has selected to follow a hermeneutics data analysis. Hermeneutics is rooted in interpretivism and was designed for deciphering a concealed meaning in the textually rich transcribed interviews in order to dissect the data and make sense of a bigger picture (Maree, 2019). Therefore, it was with these justifications that the researcher followed the following steps for as prescribed by Maree (2019):

Step one: Transcribe your data

According to Maree (2019), states that interview data must be transcribed verbatim in order to ensure accuracy. It is recommended that non-verbal cues be recorded such as laughs or pauses. Additionally, if a software is utilized to transcribe it is vital to verify the audio and transcript for accuracy.

Step Two: Become familiar with the data

Memoing is a process of data analysis that ensures the researcher is familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the transcribed data repeatedly (Maree, 2019).

Step Three: Code the data

Coding is an analytical process that entails meticulously reading the transcribed interview, line by line, and sectioning it into meaningful analytical units (Maree, 2019). By open coding data, the researcher intends to speedily collect interview data that is associated with a thematic idea in order to compare to meaningful units in order to examine together later (Maree, 2019).

Step Four: Establish Categories, themes and patterns

Once the transcribed data has been coded, Maree (2019) recommends categorizing the codes according to a system that is useful in understanding the data. Krippendorff (1980) defines a category to be a group of data that share similarity. The researcher intends to utilize a hierarchical category method to provide meaning to the data which displays the relationship of commonality between data and assists in identifying patterns (Maree, 2019).

Step Five: Record a report of the data

Upon concluding the process of coding the transcribed interview, the researcher aims to provide names for each category which are relevant to the key concepts conceptualized in the literature review. The researcher will create a report of the data afterwards that will display the identified patterns, themes and commonality in order to interpret and provide meaning to the data for the interpretation stage (Maree, 2019).

4.8. Application of Data Analysis Method

Upon completion of each interview with a participant, the researcher saved the file according to the participant number in order of when the interview occurred. The researcher transferred the file onto their laptop and uploaded it onto a secure Google Drive as a form of secondary storage.

Thereafter the researcher followed the data analysis method as described in the research proposal according to Maree (2019):

Step 1: Transcribing interview data into textually rich data

The researcher utilized a free online website by the name of Otter.ai which transcribed the interview for up to forty minutes free of charge for the researcher. The researcher then manually listened to the audio reading the transcribed data in order to edit and verify the transcription accurately. Additionally, the researcher edited the transcription to include non-verbal cues such as laughter and thoughtful pauses to which the website did not detect. In the case that the interview was beyond the 40 minute allowance mark of the website, the researcher manually transcribed the data on a Word document. Thereafter the researcher exported the file onto a Word document respectively for each participant.

Step 2: Become familiar with your data

The researcher then printed each interview and read them several times in order to ensure familiarity with the data at hand. Additionally, the researcher had a separate page for note taking in the case of any ideas and insights that may occur as the researcher read the data in order to safekeep for the interpretation stage.

Step Three: Code the data

After becoming familiar with the data, the researcher began the process of open coding which entailed coding each interview one at a time, line by line. This was a time-consuming process, however, provided the researcher with rich insight into the perceptions and feelings of participants. The researcher made reflective notes on the transcription page and colour coded each respective code under a code column added

onto the transcription. The researcher made use of inductive coding which is ideal when exploring the subject matter as it allows the researcher to be guided by the data

Step Four: Establish categories, themes and patterns

Once the open coding data analysis had been completed for all four interviews, the researcher then began to search the transcripts for common themes, categories and patterns. Due to the highly subjective nature of each participant's feelings and perceptions, it was crucial that the researcher find commonality in the data codes. After doing so the research attempted to establish common themes in the emotions of the participants and compare against reflective notes to which the researcher named accordingly.

Step Five: Record a report of the data

Finally, the researcher reported the data in a table form in order to theme it according to the key concepts conceptualized in the literature review alongside a list of which questions corresponded with the themes and the coded data. This also assisted in relating the data to the existing theory established in the literature review.

4.

FINDINGS

After completing the data analysis process, the researcher assigned meaningful themes to the coded data. The researcher ensured that the participants confidentiality will thus be referred to as participant 1, participant 2, participant 3 and participant 4 from here on.

4.1. Presentation of Findings



How has body positivity made you feel thus far?



Participant 1

"Actually disheartened"



Participant 2

"I haven't really put much thought into it. Actually. I guess, I don't know, I don't really much attention."



Participant 3

"I truly don't like it. I never have"



Participant 4

"I think its really important for representation as a whole."



Are you satisfied with the body positive campaigns you have seen in South Africa thus far?



Participant 1

"I haven't seen any, to be honest"



Participant 2

"I actually haven't seen any other than what you've shown me."



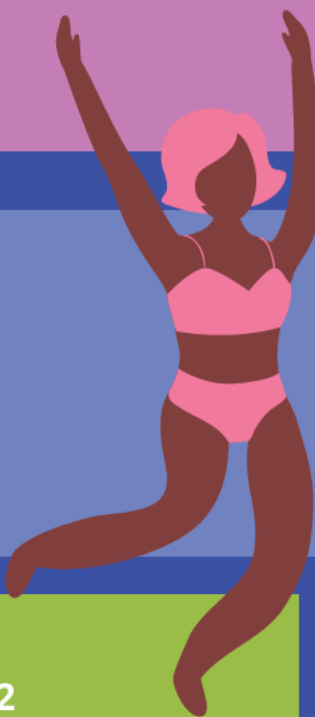
Participant 3

"I think I wouldn't say satisfied, but I think we have taken a step in the right direction."



Participant 4

"No, no"



Participants feelings toward the body positive campaigns



Participant 1

- Dove Real Beauty - Neutral
- Dove Body Shaped Bottles - Negative
- Victoria Secret Perfect Body - Negative
- Aerie Real Role Model - Positive
- Ackermans #IAmMe - Positive
- Isle Of Paradise #BodyPosi - Positive



Participant 2

- Dove Real Beauty - Positive
- Dove Body Shaped Bottles - Positive
- Victoria Secret Perfect Body - Negative
- Aerie Real Role Model - Positive
- Ackermans #IAmMe - Positive
- Isle Of Paradise #BodyPosi - Positive



Participant 3

- Dove Real Beauty - Neutral
- Dove Body Shaped Bottles - Neutral
- Victoria Secret Perfect Body - Negative
- Aerie Real Role Model - Positive
- Ackermans #IAmMe - Positive
- Isle Of Paradise #BodyPosi - Positive



Participant 4

- Dove Real Beauty - Positive
- Dove Body Shaped Bottles - Positive
- Victoria Secret Perfect Body - Negative
- Aerie Real Role Model - Positive
- Ackermans #IAmMe - Positive
- Isle Of Paradise #BodyPosi - Positive



4.2. Interpretation of Findings and Key Themes

In accordance with the key concepts and categories of interview questions, the researcher gathered the following findings:

Key themes	Findings
Emotive advertising and body positive campaigns	• Positive emotions • Neutral emotions • Negative emotions

Female representation in advertising	• Self-comparisons • Inclusivity and diversity • Real women and all women
Brand perception	• Influenced brand perception

Table 1: Key Themes and Findings

Theme 1: Emotive advertising and body positive campaigns

The researcher found that the category of emotive advertisements and feelings toward body positive campaigns were interlinked, therefore interpreted them as such. Additionally, this is a research objective of the study as the study aims to ascertain how South African women feel toward this form of advertising. Participants experienced three categories of emotions when expressing how they feel toward a campaign:

Negative Emotions

All four participants felt particularly negative toward the Victoria ‘Perfect Body’ campaign (see annexure). Interestingly, all four participants had a pre-existing brand perception of Victoria secret, which either affirmed or changed their perceptions of the advertisement. The researcher had anticipated this finding as predicted as it would be unrealistic to expect brand perception to change instantly due to one singular body positive advertisement. Although all four participants had varying definitions of body positivity, participants concluded that advertisements were not a form of body positive campaigns when there was no perceived diversity.

Participants often visually searched the advertisements for different types of models, and when they could not find evidence of this, they did not perceive it to be a form of body positivity. This is in alignment with the researcher’s conceptualization of body positivity which is the inclusion of diverse models in the advertisement. For example, participant 3 felt strong negative emotions toward Victoria Secret as a brand and had stated having always “felt excluded” from the brand due to their advertisements in prior years and thus viewing the campaign simply affirmed her negative brand perception of Victoria Secret.

At times when a participant could physically identify with a model in the advertisement due to perceived similarity, surprisingly, negative emotions toward the advertisement were sustained particularly Victoria Secret due to their perception of it as a brand “that excludes a lot of people” based on previous advertisements throughout the years. This finding highlights to the researcher that participants perceive body positive campaigns to be inclusive in nature.

Thus, when unsatisfied with the extent of diverse women included in the advertisement, participants expressed negative emotions as they felt that it was not a true form of body positivity. In fact, participants felt strongly when the advertisement was categorized as a form of body positivity but visually did not appear to be so. Participants perceived this to be a form of hypocrisy and consequently formed negative emotions toward the brand. Most interestingly, consumers expected to see diverse models in advertisements they perceived to be body positive, even when they did not feel physically see a version of themselves or have a perception of similarity toward models in the campaign.

Neutral Emotions

At times, participants felt neutral or indifferent towards a particular campaign. This is evident in participant 3 feeling neutral towards the Dove ‘Body Shaped Bottles’. The participant is quoted as stating “It doesn’t make me feel better about myself. It doesn’t change my viewpoint on my body. It doesn’t change my confidence or feeling a little better”. This comment suggests that the participant has an expectation of body positive advertisements to influence how they perceive themselves. This evidences that participants perceive body positive advertisements as ‘love-yourself’ anthems as previous literature has identified. Thus, when participants did not feel that the advertisements made them feel this way, they had emotions that ranged from slightly negative to neutral.

Prior to the fieldwork the researcher theoretically proposed that body positive campaigns are feel-good anthems that encourage consumers to embrace themselves and their flaws. This notion was affirmed by an often-recurring theme of participants expecting exemplary

body positive campaigns to embody a 'love yourself as you are' tone and imagery, and consequently felt neutral or negative toward them when they did not.

Positive Emotions

When participants would feel positive, an emotion that occurred more often than negative and neutral, they would often attribute it to the appearance of a diverse range of models in the campaign. Which reveals a trend to the researcher that participants initially visually search for diversity when assessing how they feel toward a body positive campaign. Thus, demonstrating that participants associate diverse body types, races and ages with body positivity. Participants had varying forms of positive feelings including participant 1 that stated feeling happiness toward the Isle of Paradise #BodyPosi campaign, and delight in viewing a man in the campaign. Interestingly, all participants were pleased to view a male model, to which the researcher recognizes as a new form of body positive advertisements as it is rare to see male models in this form of advertising.

Participants conclusively felt positive toward campaigns that they perceived as body positive. Participants perceived an advertisement to be body positive when there was a diverse range of models, and consequently felt positive toward it even in cases where they did not see a version of themselves in the advertisement. When asked why she felt positively toward the Ackermans #IAmMe campaign participant 4 states that she think's the advertisement is beautiful and the message is "I am me, it's being fearless and strong in your skin, no matter what you look like". Thus, affirming the researchers proposed notion of body positive campaigns being perceived as upbeat "love yourself anthems" and participants felt positive toward this.

The researcher found strong evidence of the perception of an advertisement as a form of body positivity evoking an emotion out of the participants. The researcher argues that it is plausible for brands and advertisers to expect an emotional response from South African women when utilizing body positive advertisements. Particularly, when consumers perceive advertisements to be a bad form of body positive advertisements, or to be inconsistent in terms of branding or the company ethos, South African women may feel negative emotions toward the advertisement and possibly the brand.

Theme two: Female Representation in Advertising

Female representation in advertising was a category of interview questions intended to assess how body positive campaigns could address the research problem of female consumers feeling underrepresented in advertising. From the findings the researcher has created the following sub-themes:

Self-comparisons

When asked if they felt represented by the campaign, participants would immediately compare themselves to the models in the campaign in search of physically similar models. Participants were more likely to perceive the campaign and brand positively in instances where they perceived similarity between themselves, and experienced downward comparisons as prescribed by Festinger's social comparison theory. Participants often searched for similar characteristics between themselves and the models often searching for the race of the models, body size or hair type. Participant 1 is quoted as stating "I could see myself in it" when confirming feeling represented by the campaign. Perceived similarity also influenced whether participants felt the advertisement was inclusive.

In the case of participant 4, when asked if she felt represented by the campaign, she stated "I feel represented by this body type but that doesn't mean that other people are going to be represented by this body type, it's just because I'm tall and thin. So, I can relate with this, but no." The researcher is fascinated by this quote, as the participants achieved perceived similarity but noted due to the lack of diversity, a recurring theme in body positive advertisements, felt slightly negative toward it as other women would feel excluded from the advertisement. In contrast, when participant 1 could not physically find similarities between herself and the advertisement, she experienced positive emotions toward the advertisement due to perceived diversity and still reported feeling represented. She stated, "I guess I subconsciously feel represented", which fascinated the research as it could be difficult for brands to include every type of South African women in advertisement, but by including a diverse range of women, South African women would feel better represented entirely. Thus, leading into an important sub-theme and finding of the research study, diversity and inclusivity.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Diversity and inclusivity had not been an element that the researcher had explored extensively but remained a recurring theme amongst the participants. Campaigns that participants felt positively toward were campaigns that they perceived to be diverse and/or inclusive. The opposite is true with negatively perceived body positive campaigns that lacked diversity and/or inclusivity, as participant 3 felt negatively and firmly stated that “Victoria Secret sucks at being inclusive and I don’t think it’ll ever be inclusive. I don't think it wants to be”. Thus, demonstrating that participants pre-existing feelings toward a brand being exclusionary could be confirmed simply by the type of women a brand utilizes in advertisements. The researcher found participants felt represented by campaigns that included diverse models, even when they did not find similarity with their appearance and that of the models. Participant 3 is quoted saying “Now i feel included, even though i would say my type of body is really not there”.

A quote by participant 2 that piqued the researcher's interest was when asked if she considered the campaign to be inclusive, she stated “Absolutely, there's nothing that's unaccepting of who the buyer is”. The researcher has found that participants associate body positive campaigns with the extent to which the brand is accepting or unaccepting who they are as a consumer. This directly links with Aaker’s 1996 ideal user theory as stipulated earlier in the research study, which is evident in the findings. Participants viewed the advertisements to be a form of who the brand’s ideal users would be, thus when perceived diversity was not achieved, they felt excluded. The researcher notes that this is an interestingly emotional aspect of body positive campaign perceptions as participants would feel offended or rejected by a brand when they did not feel represented in a campaign or accepted and embraced when they were.

Real Women and All Women

When participants were asked if they considered the campaign to be a depiction of real women, participants often mentioned the extent to which they perceived the campaign to be diverse and inclusive and subsequently, a depiction of real women. Participants often referred to visual aspects of diversity when concluding a campaign did not depict real women because it excluded “all women”.

Participants associated the term real women with the everyday women that they described as “normal”, “comfortable” and “natural”. Participants did not define what they considered to be real women; however, the researcher interprets that the participants perceive real women to be more everyday women and less model-like to which they felt represented by. Participant 3 affirms this as she concluded that the Aerie Real campaign was a depiction of real women as “it depicts your sister, it shows your sister, your friend, your mom or something? It's like seeing yourself on a picture”. This finding links to the chosen theoretical foundation of the Social Comparison theory, as participants searched for similarities within the campaign and generated positive emotions when similarities were found. The researcher understands that on this basis it is difficult to depict every kind of woman in a campaign, however when the advertisement had diverse models with visible attributes such as stretch marks, cellulite or little to no makeup, participants perceive this to be a form of normality and therefore a real woman, to which they emotionally resonated with.

Theme three: Brand Perception

Influenced brand perception

The researcher intended to explore if a positive relationship exists between positive feelings toward body positive campaigns and brand perception. The researcher found pre-existing brand perceptions played a fundamental role in how the participants perceived the brand post-exposure to the campaign.

When participants had a pre-existing negative brand perception, body positive advertisements rarely influenced positively enough to adjust their perceptions. Participant 4 perceived the Victoria Secret brand negatively prior to the campaign and expressed “it instills that the brand only cares about that one body type” after viewing the campaign. Participant 2 perceived the Ackermans #IAmMe campaign positively however, sustained a negative perception toward the Ackermans brand as a result of negative past experiences. The researcher interprets this as brands needing to utilize body positive advertisements consistently rather than a once-off campaign to truly influence how South African women perceive them. In the case of a South African brand such as Ackermans, participants were pleasantly surprised to view this form of advertising and this influenced

perceiving them as a brand positively in the short-term, however it could be investigated what the influence would be of consistent body positive advertisements on a brand's perception in the long term.

The researcher found in instances where participants were unaware of the brand prior to the study, being exposed to a body positive advertisement influenced their brand perception positively. Additionally, when perceived positively, participants had increased purchase intention and positive brand awareness. When viewing the Isle of Paradise campaign, a brand she had not been aware of prior to the research study, participant 1 states "I feel pretty good about it, I would definitely want to get something there".

4.3. Findings in Context

At the foundation of the research study is the Festinger (1954) social comparison theory which evaluates how an individual compares themselves to others, particularly models in advertisements. The researcher proposed that brands utilize normal appearing, also termed "real women", in body positive campaigns to create an affinity with consumers that physically identify with the models therefore resulting in a downward comparisons and subsequently positive feelings.

The researcher's findings conclusively agree with both the social comparison theory and Shoenberger, Kim and Johnson (2020) found body positive campaigns lead to decreased negative self-comparisons and consequently increased positive feelings toward the advertisement as demonstrated in the findings. The researcher found when participants experienced perceived similarity when comparing themselves to the model, they experienced positive emotions and were more likely to perceive the brand positively.

Pounders (2018) found a positive relationship between the perception of advertisement as authentically body positive and an increase in positive feelings. The researcher's findings align with this finding as participants conclusively felt positive toward body positive advertisements. Interestingly, the researcher found in the absence of perceived similarity, if the campaign was perceived as diverse and/or inclusive, participants would

generate a positive feeling towards it and feel represented therefore showing that South African brands can improve representing women simply by increasing diversity.

Conversely, this theory was strongly substantiated when participants viewed thin-ideal campaigns as they generated negative feelings toward the campaigns due to upward comparisons, as theorized in a study by Field, Carlos, Camargo and Taylor (1999). Researchers such as ... found consumers experience upward comparisons, decreased self-satisfaction and increased negative emotions when viewing thin ideal advertisements such as Victoria Secret. However, the researcher could have included an additional advertisement of thin-ideal models to unequivocally agree with researchers. Despite this, the researcher can conclude the theoretical framework as effective in assessing how the element of similarity played a significant role in how participants perceived the advertisement and its influence on the brand.

Additionally, the researcher's findings agreed with Bowman (2020) as participants felt particularly negative toward body positive advertisements they perceived as inauthentic which consequently impacted the brand's image negatively. Furthermore, participants felt offended by campaigns that they perceived to be 'trend-hopping' or inauthentic with the intended message of body positivity. Participant 3 reported feeling neutral toward the Dove Body shaped bottles campaign however, felt as though the brand was being "very insensitive" and inauthentic as she did not perceive it to be an adequate form of body positivity. Additionally, the researcher found perceived authenticity contributed to a positive brand image as reported by Pounders (2018). An example of this was participant 1 who felt Dove has remained committed to body positive campaigns due to their first campaign being from 2004 and consequently generated a positive feeling toward the brand.

Shoenberger, Kim and Johnson (2020) found that participants higher positive feelings toward a body positive advertisement that featured plus-sized models and were more likely to purchase from them because they perceived them to be "real". Fascinatingly, the researcher found this finding to be true even when the participants were unaware of who the brand was prior to the campaign. When Participant 3 viewed the Isle of Paradise

campaign, a brand she had been unaware of prior to the research study, she experienced a positive feeling of the campaign and perceived it to be a depiction of “real” women and had increased purchase intention toward the brand. Participant 1 also evidenced an increase in purchase intention toward the Isle of Paradise brand which she perceived to be “real”. Of the campaigns that participants considered to be body positive, diverse and subsequently “real”, there was an increase in purchase intention.

When considering the feelings generated toward body positive campaigns the researcher contradicts the findings of Kraus and Myrick (2020), who concluded a positive relationship between guilt and pride upon viewing a body positive campaign. The participants did not report either feeling or allude to it throughout the process of viewing the six campaigns, even in the case where the participant disapproved of body positivity from the onset.

4.4. Research Objectives and Problem Addressed

The primary objective of the study was to explore if a relationship exists between body positive advertisements and brand perceptions. The researcher can conclude that a positive relationship exists to a certain extent. Elements such as pre-existing brand perception and perception of the advertisement affect the relationship between the variables. When participants were unaware of the brand prior to the research study and found it to be an ideal form of diversity, inclusivity and consequently body positivity, a direct positive relationship was present as all four participants felt positive toward the campaign.

However, pre-existing brand perceptions are crucial to the way a participant reacted toward the advertisement and the brand. When the participant had a pre-existing negative emotion toward the brand, they experienced negative emotions toward the advertisement, thus exemplifying a positive relationship between the elements. Although there were instances of neutrality where participants did not depict a relationship between the two variables.

From the first research objective of exploring how South African women feel toward body positive advertisements, the researcher found when satisfied with the perception of an advertisement as being adequately body positive, participants reported feeling positive.

Negative and neutral emotions had not been emotions the researcher had anticipated to explore, however they remained recurring emotions despite not being the most prevalent. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that body positive advertisements evoke an overwhelming number of positive emotions from the participants.

Secondly, the researcher intended to assess how participants would emotionally resonate with body positive campaigns. Interestingly, the researcher found that participants often connected body positive advertisements to how they perceive themselves. They emotionally resonated with advertisements that made them feel accepted and possessed a love yourself tone. In instances where they felt excluded by the advertisement due to lack of perceived diversity or inclusivity, participants felt 'rejected' by the brand and did not emotionally resonate with it.

Lastly, the researcher intended to explore how participants would feel post-exposure to the advertisement in the short term. Participants would feel positively post-exposure to the advertisement if they had perceived it positively. The inverse was true in instances where they perceived an advertisement negatively.

5. TRUSTWORTHINESS, CREDIBILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

According to Du-Plooy-Cilliers et.al (2014), to consider research as trustworthy, it must meet the criteria of being credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable:

Credibility

Credibility refers to the level of confidence in the researcher's findings, to which the researcher ensured by following the steps of analyzing data according to Maree (2019). Additionally, the researcher highlighted and coded the interview scripts to which they reviewed on multiple occasions to maintain the accuracy of the data being analyzed.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which this research study can be duplicated under

different circumstances and yield similar findings (Du-Plooy Cilliers, 2014). To achieve transferability, the researcher described the sampling, participants, data collection and findings in detail to the extent that the research study could be performed again.

Dependability

Dependability assesses the quality of the process of evaluating the data collection method, data analysis and the findings produced from the data (Du-Plooy Cilliers, 2014). Dependability can be achieved when enough information is provided, as the researcher has ensured so much so that an audit or the replication of the study would yield the same results.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a study applies to the level of neutrality from the researcher and the researcher's ability to be objective and free of bias (Du-Plooy Cilliers, 2014). Due to the subjective nature of the study and the researcher's own knowledge of the subject matter of body positivity, the researcher ensured that they did not influence the way participants answered interview questions, the presentation of findings or the interpretation thereafter.

6. Anticipated Contribution

The researcher anticipated contributing primarily to the emerging field of literature of body positive campaigning within South Africa. The study anticipated, based on previous studies, that consumers will downwardly compare themselves to campaigns, consequently formulating positive emotions toward the body-positive campaigns.

By exploring whether there is a relationship between feelings toward body-positive body positive advertisements and brand perception, the researcher intends to provide conclusive data regarding the eligibility of brands pursuing this form of social justice campaigning. Moreover, the researcher anticipated the study would provide partial insight into the way in which South African women perceive brands as well as addressing the issue of South African women feeling underrepresented by brands.

7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations of a research study are a crucial element to the field of research. Resnik (2020) argues that principles such as knowledge, honesty, and avoidance of error are crucial to maintaining ethical research. Therefore, maintaining transparency and conducting oneself in an objective and ethically sound manner serves to protect the best interests of the researcher, participants and the institution (du Plooy-Cilliers, et.al., 2014).

Therefore, the researcher has included an annexure of documents to reserve the interests of participants and the Vega institution. All participants were provided with an information sheet (Annexure A) that clearly explained the study, the goal of the research and a section for questions that the participants had. This information was provided to the participant before the consent form so that they can make an informed decision before signing and providing consent on the consent form (Annexure B).

The researcher ensured all participants would be able to withdraw at any point in time during the research and that confidentiality regarding their identity was maintained throughout. A second consent form has been included (Annexure C) to make participants aware of audio recording and to gain their consent prior to any audio being recorded during the data-collection process. The researcher maintained that it was ethically sound and ensured the integrity of the study, the participants and the institution.

8. LIMITATIONS

It is of vital importance that the researcher considered the implications of limitations for the study. Firstly, the study is highly subjective and feeling-centric so the results may be subject to the participants chosen. With regards to the participants, convenience sampling was subject to the selection bias of the researcher therefore impacting the transferability of the study.

The use of supporting research instruments of advertisements, selected by the researcher, yet justified by its prevalence in previous research is a limitation as it was impacted by the selection of the researcher. Secondly, convenience sampling limits the study as it is not a representative sampling that can be utilized to generalize the findings of South African women's feelings toward body positive campaigns and its influence on brand perception (Maree, 2019).

The researcher is currently a full-time student so there was a limitation of time and resources. Consequently, no research funding will be provided and there is a limitation of time as the researcher has six months to complete the study. Attributing to the highly subjective nature of the study, antecedents regarding self-perception and body image may have influenced the participants' answers. The researcher had chosen not to foundation the study through the lens of body image and self-perception as antecedents for how a consumer may feel toward body positive advertisements as this can be a sensitive topic to vulnerable participants.

Changing conditions in the COVID-19 pandemic and rising cases created a limitation toward the study due to possible participant reluctance toward face-to-face interviews for fear of contracting the virus.

9. CONCEPT DOCUMENT TABLE

See Annexure D

10. CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that body positive advertisements are complex in nature on the basis that everyone is unique. It would be impossible for brands to physically represent all South African women; however, this research has proved that South African women felt positive toward advertisements that diversity and inclusion even when they could not physically identify with the advertisements. Beyond mitigating detrimental emotions such as decreased self-esteem and increased appearance anxiety, body positive advertisements could solve the increasing need for South African women to see themselves in advertisements.

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12. APPENDICES

Annexure D

Final Research Report Document Table

An explorative study of the relationship between consumer feelings toward body positive advertisements and its influence on brand perceptions

Research objective	Primary research question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature review - Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Methods	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
To determine if there is a relationship between body positive advertisements and brand perception.	What is the relationship between female consumer feelings toward body-positive advertisements and brand perception?	Consumers are increasingly requiring brands to be activists Body positivity is feminist activism Thin ideal media consumption had been detrimental Researcher proposes a relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perceptions	Festinger, L. (1954) Pounders, K. (2018) Shoenberger, H., Kim, E.A and Johnson E.K. (2020)	Theme 1 Thin-ideal and digitally enhanced advertisements Theme 2 One-size-fits-all body positive campaigns Theme 3 "Real" women versus All women shortfalls Theme 4 Emotive advertising and body positive campaigns	Paradigm Interpretivism paradigm Ontological assumption Role of the researcher will be to understand, clarify and illustrate reality through the perspective of the participants. Epistemological assumption Researcher will gain unobtrusive insight to the realities of participants to achieve the research objectives	Qualitative Population South Africans Population Parameter Accessible population Gauteng residents above the age of 18. Target population Female Gauteng residents above 18	The researcher intends to conduct semi-structured interviews Participants will be exposed to six body positive advertisements from the lingerie and beauty industry The researcher has selected each campaign based on previous consumer reactions to the campaigns The researcher will audio record	Participant information will be confidential and anonymous. Participants will complete a consent form. All data gathered will be available to participants.	The researcher anticipates a positive relationship between consumer feelings and brand perception. The researcher proposes based on the social comparison theory which the research anticipates participants will downward compare themselves to the advertisements therefore forming positive feelings.	Festinger, L. 1954. A Theory of Social Comparison Processes. <i>Human Relations</i>, 7(2): 117-140. [Online]. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/001872675400700202?journalCode=huma [Accessed 15 June 2021]. Maree, K (ed.). 2019. First steps in Research. 3rd Edition. Van Schaik: Pretoria.
Research Problem	Secondary questions	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
South African women feel underrepresented in advertising Brands could utilize this advertising to address South African females feeling underrepresented No present literature exists	What feelings do female consumers derive from body-positive advertisements? How do female consumers emotionally resonate with body-positive advertisements? How do female consumers perceive the brands that utilize body-positive advertisements?	Body positive campaigns Female representation in advertising Emotive advertising Brand perception	Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)		Methodological assumption Researchers subjective experience in conducting research influences the study	Non-probability sampling Convenience sampling due to limited resources Gender specific to females Sample size of four participants	The researcher will utilize thematic coding on Microsoft Words.	Covid-19 Lockdown Sample size can't be generalized Limited time and resources Highly subjective study so findings are participant dependent	Researcher anticipates to contribute to the developing literature of body image advertising in South Africa Will provide insight for South African brands on the plausibility of this form of advertising Researcher anticipates to find there is a relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception	

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



Image 1: Dove Real Beauty Campaign (2004)

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



The image is a promotional advertisement for the Victoria Secret 'Perfect Body' campaign from 2014. It features ten models of diverse body types standing in a row against a plain white background. Each model is wearing a different style of bra and matching underwear. The text 'THE PERFECT "BODY"' is prominently displayed in the center in large, white, bold letters. Below this, the tagline 'PERFECT FIT. PERFECT COMFORT. PERFECTLY SOFT.' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a list of ten bra styles, each corresponding to one of the models. The models are arranged from left to right in the following order: Long Line Demi, New! Unlined Demi, Perfect Coverage, Demi, Racerback, Wireless, Multi-Way, Perfect Shape, New! Perfect Comfort Demi Push-Up, and Push-Up.

THE PERFECT "BODY"

PERFECT FIT. PERFECT COMFORT. PERFECTLY SOFT.

EXPLORE THE COLLECTION >

LONG LINE
DEMI

NEW!
UNLINED
DEMI

PERFECT
COVERAGE

DEMI

RACERBACK

WIRELESS

MULTI-WAY

PERFECT
SHAPE

NEW! PERFECT
COMFORT
DEMI PUSH-UP

PUSH-UP

Image 2: Victoria Secret 'Perfect Body' campaign (2014)

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



Image 3: Ackermans 'I Am Me' campaign (2019)

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



Image 4: Dove 'Body-Shaped Bottles' campaign (2015)

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



Image 5: Aerie's #AerieReal Role Model Spring Campaign (2020)

ANNEXURE A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS



Image 6: Isle of Paradise 'Get Body Posi' campaign (2019)

Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT

I  agree to participate in the research conducted by Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi about the exploration of the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured.
- My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.


Signature

17/08/2021
Date

Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi about the exploration of the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

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- There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

Audio Consent Form



I, [REDACTED], agree to allow Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private;
- The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer;
- Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

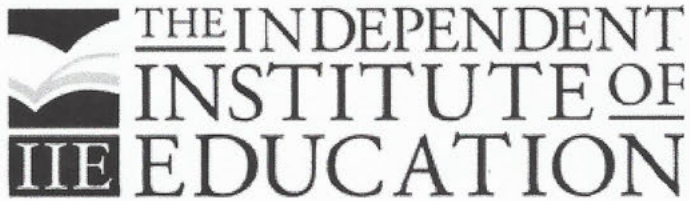
[REDACTED]

Signature

01.08.21

Date

Annexure B - Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT

I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi about the exploration of the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured.
- My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

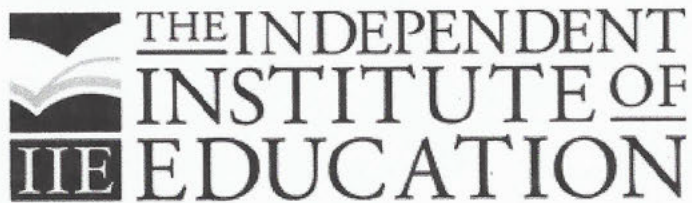
A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the participant.

Signature

30/7/2021

Date

Interview Consent Form



I, [REDACTED], agree to allow Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

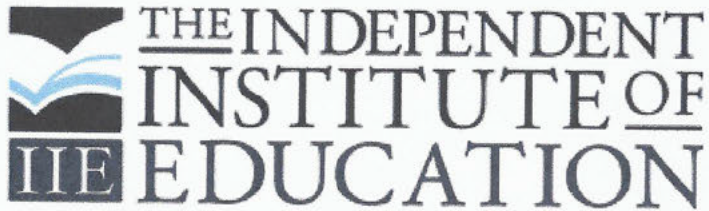
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private;
- The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer;
- Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature

Date

30/7/2021

Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT

I, _____ agree to participate in the research conducted by Munyaradzi Kimberly Munatsi about the exploration of the relationship between body positive campaigns and brand perception. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

I understand that:

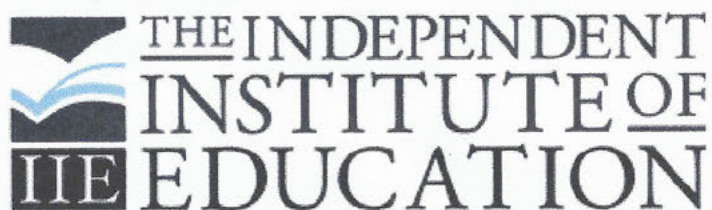
- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured.
- My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature \

Date

19/08/2021

Audio Consent Form



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Signature

19/08/2021
Date

Audio Consent Form



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- The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer;
- Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.


Signature

17/08/2021
Date

Date: 07 July 2021

Student name: Kimberly Munatsi

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: IIE Vega Pretoria Campus

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.

4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Ivan Mkhomazi



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Dr SC Engelbrecht



Signature: