

AN EXPLORATION OF HOW NICHE CLOTHING BRANDS VALUE RACIAL DIVERSITY AND THE EFFECTS ON WOMEN OF COLOUR: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the effects racial diversity has on women of colour living in the City of Cape Town, Western Cape. Likewise, exploring how niche clothing brands currently value racial diversity.

Intersectional feminism was the theoretical lens for this study. The researcher made use of qualitative research methods, with triangulation as the design; online questionnaires were used to gain qualitative and quantitative data. These questionnaires explored the current perceptions of racial diversity, and the value brands and consumers have over the matter.

In conducting the research, the researcher found that clothing brands often overlook racial diversity because they often do not have the means to be diverse. Brands can identify the importance of racial diversity but cannot create a link between race and colour (complexion). Regarding consumers, many expressed their desire to support racially diverse brands, while others did not carefully consider the matter as it may be unimportant or irrelevant. Both samples were able to understand the strength brands hold in the portrayal of women of colour.

Although the research was done using a small sample, it highlights the importance and relevance of racial diversity. Racial diversity should be integrated into the brands' business models to create authentic connections with the South African market.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. PURPOSE OF STUDY	4
1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM	4
1.3. RELEVANCE OF STUDY	5
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.4.1. <i>Primary Question</i>	6
1.4.2. <i>Secondary Questions</i>	6
1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1. INTERSECTIONALITY IN FEMINIST THEORY	7
2.1.1. <i>The Foundation of Intersectionality</i>	7
A. Understanding Intersectionality	7
B. Meaningfulness of Intersectionality	8
2.1.2. <i>Implications for Diversity</i>	9
A. Representation	9
2.1.3. <i>Perceptions of Physical Attractiveness</i>	10
A. European Standard of Beauty	10
B. Stereotyping	12
2.2. CONCLUSION	14
3. KEY TERMS	15
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	16
4.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM	16
4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN	16
4.2.1. <i>Triangulation Design</i>	17
4.3. POPULATION	17
4.3.1. <i>Target Population</i>	17
A. Brands	17
B. Consumers	18
4.3.2. <i>Accessible Population</i>	18
4.3.3. <i>Population Parameters</i>	19
4.4. SAMPLING	19
4.4.1. <i>Unit of Analysis</i>	19
4.4.2. <i>Non-Probability Sampling</i>	19
A. City Size and Population Density	19
B. Demographics	20
4.4.3. <i>Sampling Method</i>	20
4.4.4. <i>Sample Size</i>	21

4.5.	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	21
4.5.1.	Questionnaires	21
4.5.2.	Role of the Researcher	22
4.6.	DATA ANALYSIS METHOD	22
4.6.1.	Thematic Analysis	22
5.	RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS.....	24
5.1.	VALIDITY	24
5.2.	RELIABILITY	25
5.3.	TRUSTWORTHINESS	25
5.4.	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	25
5.5.	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY	26
5.6.	ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION	27
6.	FINDINGS	28
6.1.	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BRANDS	28
6.1.1.	Section 1.....	28
6.1.2	Section 2.....	29
6.1.3	Section 3.....	31
6.2.	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSUMERS	36
6.2.1	Section 1.....	36
6.2.2.	Section 2.....	38
6.2.3.	Section 3.....	40
7.	CONCLUSION	46
8.	REFERENCES	47
9.	ANNEXURE	54
A.	CONSENT FORMS FOR BRANDS (EXAMPLE)	54
B.	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BRANDS.....	56
C.	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSUMERS.....	58
D.	CONSUMERS RESPONSES FOR SECTION 3, QUESTION 1	61
E.	CONSUMERS RESPONSES FOR SECTION 3, QUESTION 2	63
F.	CONSUMERS RESPONSE TO SECTION 3, QUESTION 3	65
G.	CONSUMERS RESPONSE TO SECTION 3, QUESTION 5	67
H.	ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER	70
I.	ORIGINALITY REPORT	71
J.	SUMMARY TABLE.....	72

1. Introduction

Racial diversity has been an ongoing topic of discussion, not only in South Africa but across the globe. This research is exploring the value of racial diversity among local women's clothing brands and the effects on women, more specifically, black women. The study will be taking place in the City of Cape Town, South Africa.

The theory of intersectional feminism drives this research, as this considers that individuals, people of colour, experience overlapping systems of oppression (Carastathis, 2014). White women may experience sexism; however, black women may experience a combination of sexism and racism (Carastathis, 2014). The focus of this research is in the niche fashion industry and the consumers that interact with the clothing brands – the relationship between the two are essential concerns.

1.1. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to explore online niche clothing brands' beliefs/ attitudes towards racial diversity and what are they doing to be more inclusive in the City of Cape Town. This research study will investigate the effects of racial diversity and what it would mean for brands in Cape Town and whether it is a necessary consideration for brands. Brands have an influence of representing the consumers they are targeting. It can be intimidating, feeling unrepresented and excluded as a person of colour (Gopaldas, 2013). Thus, attempting to provide an in-depth understanding of online niche clothing brands in their decision-making towards the representation of women of colour.

1.2. Research Problem

Racial diversity amongst online women's niche clothing brands is a social issue that needs to be addressed. From corporate spaces to make-up shade ranges, no industry is excluded out of this compelling social issue. This research regards the current representation of women of colour, such as model selection. Cape Town is no stranger to racist claims; in social entertainment spaces, formal working environments and places of education (Jadezweni, 2017). Diversity has become a corporate buzzword for businesses to profit and gain traction, but the need for racial diversity remains (Hunt, 2017). Having racial diversity integrated into brands help consumers identify

and connect with the brand (Hunt, 2017). Hunt (2017) explains that the fashion world has long-time displayed young, thin and white women as the “historical narrow ideal” and there is a desperate need for change. Regarding South African brands, diversity is more than reaching the minimum requirements of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) standards. Therefore it is about multiculturalism adequately integrated into society, specifically in the City of Cape Town, Western Cape.

1.3. Relevance of Study

In a country as multicultural and multiracial as South Africa, it is a relevant consideration for brands to make thoughtful decisions when it comes to racial diversity. Therefore, brands should consider the representation of different ethnicities. In previous news, when H&M first opened their store in the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town, the brand faced severe backlash for their lack of models of colour (Maune, 2015). In observing how a sizeable fast fashion brand missed the mark of diversity and the subsequent backlash. Therefore, implications show how smaller niche brands in Cape Town, also, may not be considering racial diversity and ought to do so. Niche clothing brands have significance because they have a more exceptional ability to communicate authentically with their target audience.

The study is particularly close to the researcher, as they are an enthusiastic online shopper, purchasing clothing from local niche brands as well as international brands. The researcher has noticed that brands often exclude women of colour, particularly dark, black women on their digital platforms. As the researcher is a woman of colour, the researcher is able to understand the exclusion marginalised groups experience. There was a clear interest in this research, as several brands portray a certain visual aesthetic, however this aesthetic seldom includes women of colour. South Africa has had a long history with racism and segregation and this decision of excluding women of colour may not be intentional, but this subconscious decision is important to take note.

1.4. Research Questions

1.4.1. Primary Question

- In what way do women's niche clothing brands communicate/display their value of racial diversity among online consumers in Cape Town?

1.4.2 Secondary Questions

- What are Cape Town women, who purchase online from niche clothing brands, understanding of racial diversity?
- What are the effects of racial diversity on women of colour living in the City of Cape Town?

1.5 Research Objectives

- To explore how online women's niche clothing brands currently value racial diversity. Exploring their considerations towards racial diversity and the representation of women of colour.
- To establish the decision-making process regarding racial diversity in online women's niche clothing brands. It is thus investigating the individual choices that are made to display the brand.
- To explore the effects of racial diversity on black female consumers. This research is exploring whether racial diversity affects women of colour emotionally, their purchasing decisions and customer loyalty.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Intersectionality in Feminist Theory*

In modern feminist theory, intersectionality has become accessible for intellectualising the system of oppression and power of privilege (Carastathis, 2014). Women's lives have many overlapping systems of oppression (Carastathis, 2014). This aspect of intersectional feminist theory provides a lens to critically evaluate the importance of considering multiple intersections of oppression women of colour face, particularly experienced by black women.

2.1.1. *The Foundation of Intersectionality*

Kimberly Williams Crenshaw conceptualised this unique phenomenon; however, it goes further than Crenshaw's ideas (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality by scholars has broadened in education, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, history, ethnic studies and much more (Wong, 2017). Early research often used intersectionality to examine the experiences of women of colour in social spaces (Wong, 2017).

Since intersectionality has gained popularity, it can be understood as a theory, methodology, even paradigm, to name a few (Hankivsky, 2014). The essence of intersectionality is a way to describe and study the multiple layers of discrimination that poor women of colour experience daily (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality can be expressed that the notion of oppression regarding race, class and sex cannot be separated (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality is crucial for factors such as; multidimensionality of people's lives, social and ethical concerns, power dynamics, privilege and oppression, and activism (Hankivsky, 2014). The overall goal of intersectionality is transformation among different groups, working towards justice and equity (Hankivsky, 2014).

A. *Understanding Intersectionality*

Intersectionality argues that research must recognise the different experiences of marginalised groups to ensure that they are understood and valued (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality leads to understanding individual experiences in shared spaces (Wong, 2017). There are no one-size-fits-all descriptions when exploring this concept

(Wong, 2017). Likewise, there is constant cultural consideration through shared practices, rituals, jargon and language, spaces, and stories (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality identifies that culture and identity are human-made, therefore making them dynamic and fluid (Wong, 2017). This way, no single or inflexible system is thrust on communities (Wong, 2017). Research must also consider the impact of inequity, discrimination, systems of power and oppression, all approached with an understanding of how these systems are connected and reinforcing (Wong, 2017). Intersectionality seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by conducting research that explores inequity and social issues that contribute to experiences as knowledge (Wong, 2017). The analytic lens of intersectionality is a conversation about power; the obtaining of power, distribution and deploy of it (Wong, 2017). To understand the lived experience of the population in question, it essential to consider the power play affecting these groups. Meaning activism in the form of social justice, the purpose of which is to break down systems the hoard power and inequality (Wong, 2017).

In modern social sciences, there are multiple ways intersectionality can be used. At a macro-level of analysis, this concept refers to multiplicity and interactivity of social constructs such as race, class and gender (Gopaldas, 2013). The micro-level analysis implies that every individual in society is positioned at an intersection of various social constructs and therefore, subjected to multiple social advantages and disadvantages (Gopaldas, 2013). At a micro-level of analysis, the women of Cape Town do not share a universal experience as each is affected by these demographics. A poor black woman's experiences will influence decisions and shape beliefs; besides, this would be very different from a wealthy white woman's. Being a person of colour and a woman are not separate and are rather intricately linked and interdependent (Wong, 2017).

B. Meaningfulness of Intersectionality

Intersectionality has long emphasised the ways, women of colour experience race, gender and class, compared to white women (Juan et al., 2016). What makes this unique is the personal meaning, the importance and relevance that is derived from these intersectional experiences (Juan et al., 2016). Thus drawn from a broader identity, finding consistent integrating experiences (Juan et al., 2016). These shared

experiences are expected to highlight the importance of the intersection of race, gender and class (Juan et al., 2016). This will then negotiate how to integrate these identities into the sense of self (Juan et al., 2016).

It is essential to understand intersectionality because race, gender and class are influenced by each other. Intersectionality understands that being a poor black woman can result in marginalisation, even discrimination. In this particular research, intersectionality is a relevant theory because it understands and addresses that black women have a long history of being excluded in society.

2.1.2. Implications for Diversity

Intersectionality is an important concept when discussing diversity research, marketing and activism (Gopaldas, 2013). Diversity researchers are often radical and encouraged to be so when exploring ontological, methodological and axiological choices (Gopaldas, 2013).

The practice of marketing with the intention and emphasis of reaching all possible consumer segments is known as diversity marketing (Gopaldas, 2013). To carry out this form of marketing, one needs to create services that carefully cater to the needs of each segment of the population rather than focussing on the wealthier, privileged sectors (Gopaldas, 2013). In most cases, marketing managers only consider racial diversity as a factor for variety (Gopaldas, 2013). Therefore, fashion brands include models of colour to appeal to racially diverse consumers (Gopaldas, 2013). The purpose of this research is to explore if that is the case for online niche women's clothing brands in Cape Town. Ahir Gopaldas (2013) mentions that body type and physical abilities are more overlooked than race by fashion brands. However, Gopaldas fails to mention that colourism is rife in this industry. Therefore, brands avoid dark skin women of colour and represent light skin women of colour. Like this, the public does not identify an issue with these brands, because women of colour are being "represented."

A. Representation

Diversity practitioners may use representational intersectionality, thus accurately representing groups that fail to be served (Secules et al., 2018). To address

representation, brands should understand and reflect current practices (Secules et al., 2018). By revealing the present decisions, adjustments of these practices could follow accordingly (Secules et al., 2018). Then clarify the purpose and messaging, making an internal and external reflection, why are these systems constructed the way they are – research (Secules et al., 2018). Finally, design a new method for practice, that is derived from the study (Secules et al., 2018). Brands need to review why they make decisions like model choices and how the public can register that.

Representation and diversity are relevant considerations in South Africa, not only Cape Town, because of how racially diverse the population is. In addition to different races, there are various traditions and cultures nationwide. Brands in Cape Town cannot target one specific racial or cultural group; representation needs to be integrated.

2.1.3. Perceptions of Physical Attractiveness

Physically attractive people are favoured across all cultures (Agthe et al., 2016). Cultures have their own perception of beauty. However, physical attractive evaluations reflect peoples desires and want to socialise and surround themselves with good-looking people (Agthe et al., 2016). Therefore, this represents social opportunities and personal gain from these interactions (Agthe et al., 2016).

A. *European Standard of Beauty*

Women are regularly exposed to information of what mass media transmits and reinforcement regarding; values, social norm, ideals in fashion and beauty (Yan and Bissell, 2014). The idea of beauty and attractiveness is not separated from the pervasive trend of globalisation (Yan and Bissell, 2014). Before the global age, beauty was unique to each culture (Yan and Bissell, 2014). An example of this is in China and Japan, round faces and plumpness in women were seen as healthy and beautiful (Yan and Bissell, 2014). In Hispanic cultures, the value was emphasised on tan, fuller, curvy bodies as it was seen as fertile and attractive (Yan and Bissell, 2014). With the growth of western culture and cultural assimilation, narrow faces, sharp pronounced noses, lighter skin and slim bodies (Yan and Bissel, 2014). Thus forming the universal standard of beauty.

Beauty is a crucial aspect and plays a significant role within society and is often lead to women of colour assimilating to these beauty ideals – lightening skin and straightening hair (Fills and Joshi, 2015). The European beauty standard is the notions that the more European features a person has, the more attractive they are (Bryant, 2013). This standard believes features like light skin, light coloured eyes, thin nose and lips as beautiful (Bryant, 2013) (Phoenix, 2014). The intersection between racism and colourism can be identified here (Phoenix, 2014). Therefore, leading to the privilege of lighter-skinned women. These unconscious decisions made by brands lead to the exclusion of the unique beauty that is black beauty (Fills and Joshi, 2015). Society unknowingly ranks attractiveness, and it has made an effort to promote European beauty standards (Fills and Joshi, 2015). What this means is that women of colour experience the feeling of dissatisfaction towards skin colour and hair texture – anger, confusion, and hurt (Fills and Joshi, 2015).

'Doll Test'

To understand how internalised this beauty ideal is an experiment in 1947 using 253 black children, between ages three and seven from Arkansas and Massachusetts (Bryant, 2013). The 'Doll Test' consisted of two identical dolls, one black and one white and children had to indicate which one they like more (Bryant, 2013). About two-thirds of the children showed that they preferred the white doll more, although it was against their skin colour (Bryant, 2013). Black children can identify that their complexion is not a positive aspect of themselves; a child further went to mention that the black doll looked naughty (Bryant, 2013). A self-hatred is formed early on in their lives, and that is encouraged by European beauty standards. The study was done again in 2005, and the findings did not change; therefore, the influence of the European beauty standard is still rife (Bryant, 2013).

Beauty Ideal in Magazines

The shaping of the beauty ideal is represented and shared by mass media, more specifically fashion and beauty magazines. Yan and Bissell identified that fashion, entertainment and beauty were the three most common themes for cover stories (Yan and Bissell, 2014). The use of these themes was to share what magazines believed to be the most crucial aspect of a woman's life (Yan and Bissell, 2014). The primary

focus was placed on external beauty, fashion tips, beauty tips, even included tester sachets of perfumes and face creams (Yan and Bissell, 2014). This outer beauty is favoured over and above inner beauty, such as; self-love, careers, personal growth stories, health and fitness (Yan and Bissell, 2014). Besides, the representation of women is also constructed by images representing beauty; often, it is what the magazine believes is ideally beautiful (Yan and Bissell, 2014). Magazines have the strength and overall influence of what is valued in the real world; it shapes beliefs and attitudes of how women should feel about themselves (Yan and Bissell, 2014).

The European beauty standard results in internalisation of colourism and racism within communities of colour (Bryant, 2013). Therefore perpetuating a life-long, generational culture of self-hatred and conforming (Bryant, 2013). In addition to being an internalised matter, it is instilled by public and mass media as a set standard of beauty that should be followed. Women of colour are seen as deviant if they embrace their natural hair or only breaking away from this standard.

B. Stereotyping

Stereotyping is beliefs about attributes often associated with a particular group, often leads to a prejudice – a negative attitude or perception towards a group (Phills et al., 2018). If most stereotypes associated with a group are negative, there is an expectation that the prejudices the group could face could be harsher (Phills et al., 2018). Thus, measuring how stereotypes strongly affect a group is crucial because it will have an equal relationship with prejudice (Phills et al., 2018). Therefore, stereotyping is strongly related to discrimination (Phills et al., 2018).

Gender

Sexism is the result of gender stereotypes based on how cooperative women are with gender norms (Fiske, 2017). This sexism can be understood as hostile sexism, for example; competing with men for work and being in control of their sexuality (Fiske, 2017). Positive perceptions of women are with those that comply with gender norms – they are tender, caring, attractive, sensitive (Fiske, 2017). While negative perceptions of women are with those that are assertive are considered, “controlling” or “bitchy”, for example.

Race

Many racial and ethnic stereotyping is a result of history (Fiske, 2017). Fiske (2017) explains marginalised groups are associated as the 'undeserving' poor – lazy, rude, helpless (Fiske, 2017). In South Africa, a negative stereotype is related to black foreigners (refugees and migrants), while locals are positive (Fiske, 2017). These stereotypes vary for each country, but it is essential to remember that there is shared the belief.

The Interconnection

Phills et al. conducted research to examine whether the known gender in racial stereotyping would foresee prejudice against racial groups (Phills et al., 2018). Mainly from this study, stereotypes affecting minority or marginalised men (of colour) experienced a better group-level prejudice compare to women (of colour) (Phills et al., 2018). As mentioned before, racial stereotypes are a result of history and misinformation. Yanick St. Jean and Joe R. Feagin (2015) explain in Chapter 1 of 'Double Burden: Black Women and Everyday Racism' that black women are as domineering, sexual and exotic. Gendered stereotypes are what separates black women from black men (St. Jean and Feagin, 2015). Also, racial stereotypes are what separates black women from white women. Black women have noted experiencing blatant and subtle racism in everyday situations with white men and women (St. Jean and Feagin, 2015).

Brooks and Hebert (2006) explain that researchers have criticised the representation of black women in media. Media portraying black women as “jezebels”, “welfare mothers” and “mammies” (Brooks and Hebert, 2006). These stereotypes affect the way black women view themselves and the way other races and the opposite sex views them (Brooks and Hebert, 2006). Black men running certain media outlets often hold on to misogynistic portrayals of black women (Brooks and Hebert, 2006). It can be said that black women in film and music videos are only portrayed as sexual beings, not romantic characters (Brooks and Hebert, 2006). Therefore this original image can define women culturally (Brooks and Hebert, 2006). The issues black women face only

affect black women and may not be experienced by white women or other women of colour.

Being a woman and being a person colour can lead to differences in treatment by the general population and other people of colour. Therefore there is a clear relationship between race and gender. Women of colour may experience not only sexism but also racism in the shape of generalised assumptions, like stereotypes.

2.2. Conclusion

There is a meaningful relationship is how interconnected race, gender stereotyping, and the European standard of beauty. A commonality of these sections is that they praise and preference white and lighter-skinned women in society – learning this from the experiences black women face when dealing with white people and the 'Doll Test'. It is a subtle favouring that happens towards white women, done by mass media, the public, as well as people of colour.

Since the research is exploring the retail industry, physical attractiveness and European beauty standards are relevant. Physical attractiveness is based on European beauty ideals, thus being crucial for model selection – this can affect racial diversity and representation. Women of colour may not be represented in the fashion industry due to European beauty standards. Stereotyping becomes part of the conversation because they are existing assumptions of women and races – most importantly affecting black women.

Intersectionality recognises these relationships and therefore, is a relevant theory for this research. As the research is to explore the current value and perceptions brands have of racial diversity and the relationship with the female consumer, intersectionality is a relevant theory. Cape Town brands may not be targeting women of colour; however, their decisions perpetuate a negative perception of themselves by not representing them at all. Besides, clothing choices cannot be assumed by brands as fashion is subjective to the individual.

3. Key Terms

Intersectionality – A concept in feminist theory considering the interconnection of various social identities, such as race, gender and class. Thus, contributing to specific types of oppression and discrimination (Dictionary.com, [s.a.].)

Feminism – Driven by the Women's Rights Movement. Supporting social and economic equality of the sexes (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.].).

Race – A population of people that share specific physical traits and culture (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.].).

Gender – A concept based on behavioural and psychological traits usually associated with one sex (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.].).

Diversity – Encompasses inclusion, respect and understanding of an individual's gender, race and sexual orientation. (Queensborough Community College, [s.a.].).

Beauty Ideals – A standard of physical appearance constructed by a society that pressures women to conform. Directly, an expectation of what women should look like (Forbes et al., 2007).

Racism – Described as discrimination or prejudice to someone of a particular racial group.

Colourism – Discrimination against individuals with darker complexions, typically among people of the same ethnic group (Lexico.com, [s.a.].).

Niche – Specialized in a particular product or service; meant for a specific group of people (Collinsdictionary.com, [s.a.].).

Stereotype – A misinformed belief about a particular person or group of people (Dictionary.cambridge.org, [s.a.].).

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Paradigm

As the research is exploring the value of racial diversity, a relationship between society and individuals can be identified. Therefore, this exploration can be described as interpretivist. Interpretivism believes that individuals have consciousness and experience situations in different ways. This research will utilise an interpretivist approach to methodology, falling within the scope of qualitative research (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). This research aims to develop insight from the participants' perspective, social experiences and interaction with niche clothing brands. Therefore, nominalist philosophy can be implied, where everything is subjective to the individuals' reality.

In this specific research, representation of races is subjective to women ages 18 and 25 years living in the City of Cape Town, South Africa. The age group mentioned is the preferred target audiences of niche clothing brands. The location is a relevant area as niche clothing brands often base their stores there.

The research will explore online niche clothing brands' perceptions of racial diversity and how they value it. Also, what they are currently doing to tackle the issue of racial diversity. Therefore, this research paper will attempt to portray all the necessary information objectively.

4.2. Research Design

Qualitative research is an approach in which the researcher explores a central concept (Creswell et al., 2007). This study will follow a mixed-methods approach, using triangulation design. Triangulation design will act as a companion method to the qualitative research. The goal of this design is to obtain complementary data from the same study (Creswell and Clark, 2006). Triangulation design integrates quantitative results and qualitative findings to validate the data (Creswell and Clark, 2006). Mainly the researcher can compare statistical results (quantitative) with participants' attitudes (qualitative). Additionally, triangulation design is a valuable tool for validity and reliability in research.

The 5 brand representatives and 20 female consumers will be selected and willing to participate in the research. Each group will have a questionnaire best suited to them. The questionnaire will consist of two sections, the first using quantitative type questions and second section requiring qualitative responses. The researcher will gain insight by exploring the value of women of colour among online niche clothing brands. Then the racial diversity and representation effects on the women of Cape Town, concerning online niche clothing brands.

4.2.1. Triangulation Design

Between-method triangulation is the method of comparing qualitative data and quantitative data (Flick, 2004). This design combines and compares the strong points and limitations of the data collected, presenting two research perspectives (Flick, 2004). The strength of triangulation is that it is suitable for new researchers and efficient because both types of data are collected during the same time (Creswell and Clark, 2006). Each data can be collected and analysed separately; consequently, the researcher can analyse the first section of the questionnaire in a quantitative format and the second in a qualitative manner.

Although triangulation is the most common mixed-methods design, it is the most challenging (Creswell and Clark, 2006). Triangulation design requires much effort and expertise (Creswell and Clark, 2006). Additionally, if the research does not align, for example, the quantitative and qualitative results do not agree; this may be difficult for the researcher to move forward (Creswell and Clark, 2006).

4.3. Population

4.3.1. Target Population

The target made up of individuals the research is calling for or who the researcher is interested in studying.

A. Brands

The first target population of this study are online niche clothing brand representatives. Online retail has proven to be a successful and productive industry in the South African

market, with a 25% growth from 2017 to 2018 (Businesstech.co.za, 2019). The growth in apparel accelerates, being the fastest growing sector in online retail (Businesstech.co.za, 2019). The purpose of using online niche clothing brands is the sudden increase in people not wanting to shop in-store anymore (Chaffey, 2017). The reason for this, is that online shopping give people the ability to shop any time of the day (Chaffey, 2017). People can compare prices and specials, shop sales, save time, avoid inconveniences of going in-store and crowds (Chaffey, 2017). Online shopping provides greater product variety, ease to find products and free shipping (Chaffey, 2017).

What makes these niche brands different from mainstream brands, is that they offer limited stock at an excellent quality for a higher price. The value per item for these stores range from R 300.00 to R 2,000.00; therefore, the researcher can consider these brands to be in a middle and high-end category – does not mean luxury. Niche brands are meaningful to consumers as the aim to develop meaningful relationships (Finkle, 2018). Therefore, they are in better positioning for profits and growth (Finkle, 2018). Mainstream brands, may have popularity, have demand, but that does not mean they are favoured by their consumers (Finkle, 2018).

B. Consumers

The second target population are female consumers that live in the City Bowl region of Cape Town, South Africa. These consumers purchase from online niche clothing brands. Consumers value the exclusivity of owning locally made clothing items and are willing to pay any amount of money for it. Additionally, they are supportive of local brands and stay in contact with them through social media and email subscriptions.

4.3.2. Accessible Population

The first accessible population will be online niche clothing brands for women. Since these brands are online, there is no need to consider any specific areas in Cape Town. The other accessible population are female consumers of various demographics between the ages of 18 and 25 who purchase or have purchased from niche clothing brands in Cape Town, South Africa.

4.3.3. Population Parameters

The population parameters of this study are limited to the City of Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa. The City of Cape Town refers to the City Bowl region such as; Bo-Kaap, Devil's Peak Estate, De Waterkant, Foreshore, Gardens, Vredehoek, Higgovale, District Six, Oranjezicht, Salt River, Schotsche Kloof, Tamboerskloof, University Estate, Walmer Estate and Woodstock. This population parameter will only effect the consumer sample population as the brands' participating are not found in a explicit area.

4.4. Sampling

4.4.1. Unit of Analysis

In this particular research, the individual is referred to as the unit of analysis. The first unit of analysis is the brand representatives of the online niche clothing brands. The second unit of analysis would be consumers who purchase or have purchased from niche women's clothing brands.

4.4.2. Non-Probability Sampling

The first sample population will consist of 5 online women's niche clothing brand representatives. The second sample will comprise of 20 women (consumers) between the ages of 18 and 25 years. With Cape Town being the second most populous city, behind Johannesburg (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019). Both samples will be found online, using Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. These populations will be organized before the planned assessment day, as the second sample needs to meet specific requirements.

A. City Size and Population Density

In 2019, the population of Cape Town was counted as 3,740,026 – with a growth rate of 2.57% from the last census in 2011 (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019). The metropolitan area is the City of Cape Town – approximately 400 square kilometres in space with a population density of 1,530 people per square kilometre (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019).

B. Demographics

South Africa is an incredibly diverse country with Cape Town being one of the most multicultural cities in the world (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019). The ethnic composition of Cape Town is; 42.4% Coloured, 38.6% Black, 15.7% White, 1.4% Asian and 1.9% Other (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019).

Demographics are important considerations for this research because the researcher will have to select appropriate racial demographics for the second sample. This means the demographics should be; 8 Coloured, 6 Black, 4 White and 2 Other. However, if the researcher is unable to include all the relevant racial groups, adjustments will be made accordingly. Thus, the biggest concern now is finding Other individuals to take part in this research.

4.4.3. Sampling Method

The sampling method used for this research will be convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-random method of sampling as participants have to meet specific criteria, like easy accessibility, geographical considerations, availability and willingness to contribute to the study (Etikan et al. 2016). Convenience sampling is best suited for participants that meet the requirements the study suggests (Etikan et al. 2016). In this study, demographics such as; race, geography and clothing consumption are important considerations. Also, purchasing habits are relevant, especially for the second sample population. Since the second population could be challenging to access, employing snowball sampling could be beneficial for the research. Snowball sampling makes use of chain-referrals and recruiting among acquaintances (Sharma, 2017). The study will include selected participants and rely on them to share the questionnaire with another individual they believe could contribute to the study. For instance, the research could select 10 women to participate and ask them to share the questionnaire with one friend they believe could add value to the research. It should be noted that participants need to understand the requirements to participate in the study – geographical, behavioural and psychographic concerns.

4.4.4. Sample Size

The original sample size will consist of 5 online niche clothing brand representatives based in Cape Town, South Africa. The second sample size will consist of 20 women living in the City of Cape Town.

4.5. Data Collection Method

4.5.1. Questionnaires

Online questionnaires, using Google Forms, will be shared via email and will compile a list of open-ended and close-ended questions. A questionnaire will be sent to 5 online niche clothing brand representatives, to gain an understanding of their ideas as a brand towards the representation of women of colour. This questionnaire will be broken up into three sections. Section 1 will consist of demographic type questions, to ease into the questionnaire. Section 2 of the questionnaire will consist of questions with answers based off using a Likert scale. This Likert scale will be based off how participants strongly agree or disagree with a statement presented to them. Section 3 will consist of open-ended questions, requiring a detailed response to the questions. Some of the questions in this section may be “yes/no” answers; however, still, require an explanation.

Another questionnaire will be sent to a diverse group of 20 women living in the City of Cape Town. The purpose of the second questionnaire is to understand the perceptions these women have already about diversity and representation. The consumers in the population will be drawn from various racial groups to represent the diversity of racial composition. The diverse racial makeup will facilitate multiple perceptions of the topic. Much like the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire will be broken up into three sections. Section 1 will consist of demographic type questions, to ease the respondents into the questionnaire. Section 2 of the questionnaire will consist of questions that need to be answered using a Likert scale. This Likert scale will be based off how participants strongly agree/disagree with the above statement. Section 3 will consist of open-ended questions, requiring a detailed response to the questions. Some of the questions in this section may be “yes/no” answers; however, they still require an explanation.

A benefit of using triangulation design is that both qualitative and quantitative can be collected at the same time. Since this first section of both questionnaires uses a Likert scale, it automatically becomes quantitative data, because the responses can be organised into statistics. However, the second section will require more in-depth responses from participants.

4.5.2. Role of the Researcher

The researcher will encourage participants to complete the questionnaire at a reasonable pace without rushing responses. Besides, participants will be instructed on how to answer the questions and helped to keep their answers direct, but answering with purpose. The researcher will make the questions straight forward so that they are easy to understand for participants to respond appropriately.

4.6. Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is vital for reliable qualitative research (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Since this research uses a qualitative approach, it can be expected that participants would have answered the questionnaire as carefully as possible. The researcher must analyse and understand that all written responses by interpreting experiences and perceptions to uncover unique circumstances and backgrounds (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

4.6.1. Thematic Analysis

There are many qualitative approaches to analysing data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). This study will need to identify points of similarity, points of difference and themes (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Therefore, thematic analysis is the most appropriate method. Unlike several other qualitative methodologies, thematic analysis is not tied to a particular theoretical or epistemological perspective (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Thus making this method of analysis very flexible and additional advantage.

Thematic analysis can be applied to this study to organise participants shared beliefs on a statement or topic and isolate those with unique feedback from others. All respondents point of views is valued in this type of analysis. The researcher should follow a 6 step process of analysis (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 1; becoming

familiar with the data, reading and re-reading the responses (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 2; organising the data in a meaningful and systematic way (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 3; search for themes, categorising them by significance, because the sample for this research is small, there may be an overlap in coding phase and this phase (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 4; reviewing the themes by further evaluation, the clarity of the themes, the support from the data, overlapping themes, sub-themes and additional themes (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 5; define themes, the final refinement of the themes (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Step 6; writing up the final dissertation (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

5. Research Considerations

The researcher needs to be aware of the chances of participants answering questions inaccurately, sharing false information or lying. This will happen if the participant feels like they could give 'better' answers to the questions, in the hope to be seen a preferred perspective. Therefore, the researcher needs to keep in mind the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the data. This will not only be from the participants' side, but also the researcher's.

5.1. Validity

Validity refers to the state of being valid, the quality of the argument being well-grounded and sound (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). There is no measurement for qualitative research to be tested as valid. However, the arguments being made can only be validated by academic sources or other scholars. When conducting research, the data can only be organised in themes and collective thought. The validity, in that case, can only be justified by appropriate reasoning.

Researchers can only adopt strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the research (Noble and Smith, 2015). The first strategy, to increase validity is to account for personal biases that may influence the findings (Noble and Smith, 2015). Therefore, acknowledging biases that may occur in sampling, the reflection of methodology and relevance of data (Noble and Smith, 2015). The second strategy, thorough administration and record-keeping, making clear decisions and ensuring data interpretations are consistent and honest (Noble and Smith, 2015). The third strategy, establishing similarities and differences in the data collected, making sure different perspectives are represented (Noble and Smith, 2015). The fourth strategy requires precise descriptions of participants' accounts to support the research findings (Noble and Smith, 2015). The fifth strategy demonstrates clarity in terms of thought and interpretations during the data analysis (Noble and Smith, 2015). The sixth strategy, seeking engagement with other researchers or scholars to reduce biases (Noble and Smith, 2015). The seventh strategy, seeking validation from respondents to confirm, comment or give feedback on the questionnaire, organisation of themes or reflection on racial diversity / representation (Noble and Smith, 2015). The eighth strategy, employing triangulation design to help generate more comprehensive findings (Noble

and Smith, 2015). The researcher plans to use triangulation design in their research to receive more precise results.

5.2. Reliability

Reliability is considered when the information or data in question is a certain quality that is then regarded as reliable (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). Necessarily if students were to write the same exam twice, the reviews should have similar answers – receiving a similar mark as before, producing consistent results (Phelan and Wren, 2005). In addition to validity, reliability cannot be accurately measured. Ensuring the reliability of findings requires researchers to make decisions about the soundness of the study concerning the application, appropriateness of the methods undertaken and truth of conclusions (Noble and Smith, 2015).

5.3. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is described as the quality of a person or thing (Vocabulary.com, [s.a.]). Trustworthiness is segregated into five different types; creditworthiness, responsibility, fault, accountability and dependability. Participants should be responsible when answering the questionnaire and accept fault when there is a self-inflicted issue. As the researcher, there should be trust in the participants' responses and be able to analyse ethically. Once the researcher has completed the analysis, it should be believed that the research is trustworthy.

5.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethics can be defined as what has a moral value that can be considered good or right (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). This research will be conducted ethically. All data and information gathered from participants will be used for this study only. Participants will be assured that they will remain anonymous throughout the study. In addition to anonymity, consent is an important ethical issue, also ensuring that all participants are over the age of 18 years. Participants will be assured that their opinions are valued and will not be criticized for their beliefs. The purpose of this research will be explained thoroughly to all participants before the study. Before anything begins, participants will complete a consent form, signed and dated. If anytime, during the research,

participants do not wish to continue to be part of the study, they will be able to exit with no query.

Finally, the researcher should not manipulate or misuse the data or information. Since this study is qualitative, the researcher must remain objective and unbiased throughout. The analysis of these qualitative results will be done in a trustworthy and honest approach.

5.5. Limitations of Study

The research should be aware that racial diversity and representation of people of colour is a particularly difficult topic that many people do not want to address. In the space of South Africa, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is not highly favoured and often seen negatively or unfair. White brand representatives may take offence to this research and find it as a threat to business. This can be considered, White Fragility, a state where white people experience a small amount of racial stress and are triggered, intolerant or offended by the topic (DiAngelo, 2011). It is essential to keep this concept in mind, as brands may exit the study irrationally.

Due to this research only using women living in the City of Cape Town, this will be ignoring other individuals living outside the area, that could offer valuable insight to the study. The individuals living in the City of Cape Town are not the only ones purchasing from online niche clothing brands.

Another limitation of this study is that both sample populations may not be able to respond in appropriate time. Since this study makes use of snowball sampling (for the consumer sample), the participants that receive the questionnaire may not be interested or remember to complete the questionnaire in time. Snowball sampling also means the researcher does not have control of who the questionnaires is sent to, after they have selected their consumer population. Additionally, because the samples are small, it will be difficult to identify strong themes.

5.6. Anticipated Contribution

There is a need for more racial diversity, representation and inclusivity in all industries, not only in fashion. However, fashion industries have long time contributed to the current perceptions people have and has set standards for what is ideal.

If this research is successful, the first expected contribution is that this topic will bring a civil conversation between women of colour and clothing brands regarding race, representation and inclusivity. A second contribution is to the existing knowledge of racial diversity, most importantly, in South Africa. Since the majority of the current research found was studied in the United States of America, this research can be a contribution to the little research that was done in South Africa – likewise for Africa.

6. Findings

This section is to unpack the research questions; 1. *In what way do women's niche clothing brands communicate/display their value of racial diversity among online buyers in Cape Town?* 2. *What are Cape Town women, who purchase online from niche clothing brands, understanding of racial diversity?* And 3. *What are the effects of racial diversity on women of colour living in the City of Cape Town?* While attempting to address the research objectives; 1. *To explore how online women's niche clothing brands currently value racial diversity. Exploring their considerations towards racial diversity and the representation of women of colour.* 2. *To establish the decision-making process regarding racial diversity in online women's niche clothing brands. It is thus investigating the individual choices that are made to display the brand.* 3. *To explore the effects of racial diversity on black female consumers. This research is exploring whether racial diversity affects women of colour emotionally, their purchasing decisions and customer loyalty.*

Two separate questionnaires were conducted, the first was for niche clothing brand representatives and the second for the City of Cape Town female consumers.

6.1. Questionnaire for Brands

This questionnaire was done to understand niche clothing brands understanding of racial diversity and the current representation of women of colour. All brand representatives had to complete a consent form that carefully explains the purpose of the research, see Annexure A of the consent form template. The researcher cannot provide the completed consent forms as they promised anonymity throughout this study. To understand the layout of the questionnaire, please see Annexure B of the questionnaire template. All the brands that participated were found online and reached by Instagram.

6.1.1. Section 1

Section 1 of the questionnaire is for demographic purposes. Aiming to understand the necessary information about brand representatives and their role in the brand they are working for.

Table: Participant Break Down

Respondents	Race	Age	Position in Company
Brand A	Coloured	26 +	Founder / CEO
Brand B	Other*	18 - 25	Creative Director
Brand C	White	18 - 25	Personal Assistant
Brand D	White	26 +	Owner / Designer
Brand E	White	26 +	CEO

**This brand noted that they could not select all races, because they did not want to select their race.*

The research did not ask the gender of the participants, because they are all women, working for female clothing brands. The section was designed to ease the brands into the questions, not solely focussed on the study itself but rather the individual.

6.1.2 Section 2

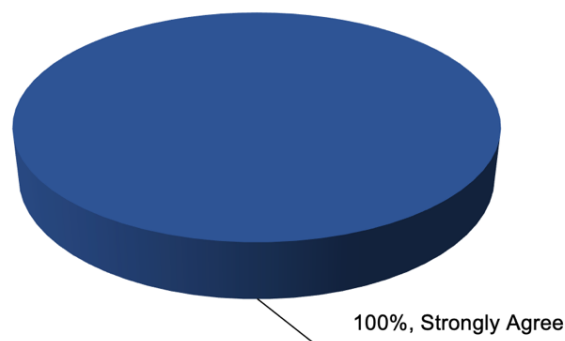
Section 2 of the questionnaire was to understand how strongly the brands agree or disagree with the given quotes – Likert scale. Aiming to understand how the brands feel towards the statements provided.

Question 1

All five brands strongly agreed that women are encouraged and shaped by mass media to follow the beauty ideal. This finding is crucial as it begins to show the role media plays in influencing women.

Figure 1.1: Percentage of Responses for Question 1

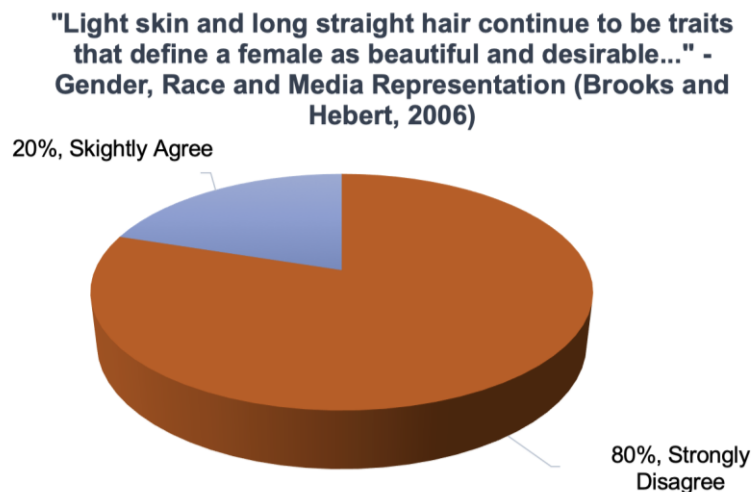
"Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty via images of models, movie stars, and female celebrities..." - The Globalisation of Beauty: How is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines (Yan and Bissell, 2014)



Question 2

Four of the five brands strongly disagreed with the notion that light skin and straight hair is favoured. It is interesting to note that the two people of colour (Brand A and Brand B) strongly disagreed with the quote. Brand E did acknowledge the favouring of lighter skin by slightly agreeing with the statement.

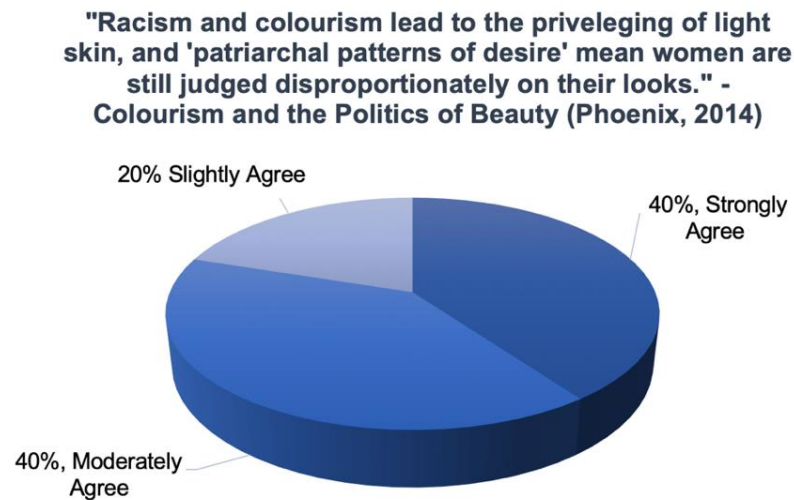
Figure 1.2: Percentage of Responses for Question 2



Question 3

Two of the brands (A and C) that strongly disagreed with the previous statement, strongly agreed that racism and colourism privilege light skin over dark skin. This response contradicts their previous answer; however, they may not be aware of this contradiction. Additionally, two other brands (B and E) moderately agreed with the quote. Their response could be contradictory to their previous answer; however, they do not entirely agree with the statement. Only one brand (D) slightly agreed with the statement.

Figure 1.3: Percentage of Responses for Question 3



The brands acknowledge that women have been expected to follow a certain beauty standard, but racism and colourism lines are blurred. From the researcher's understanding, the brands do not entirely understand that colourism favours lighter-skinned people, but do understand that racism does favour light skin.

6.1.3 Section 3

Section 3 of the questionnaire was to understand the brands' understanding of racial diversity and the decisions they make to be more racially diverse if they have any considerations in place.

Question 1

Based on the responses, there is a general understanding of what racial diversity means. Brands' A, C and E had similar responses. Brand A's response; "My understanding of racial diversity means to have an equal and diverse amount of races within a company or in any given situation." Brand C's response; "Having representation of all races in the content you put out to the world." Moreover, Brand E's response; "All/most races sharing one space/being showcased."

Brand D mentions that racial diversity is the inclusion of cultures and physical traits, not only race but heritage; "Variety of races which takes into account calculated perceived traits such as values, body type, culture/heritage, communication type, etc." While Brand B stated, "All races."

Question 2

Brand D had an interesting approach to the question. They justified, "It would be ignorant to not be diverse living in a world where we are increasingly celebrating all body types and going against societal norm which has been indoctrinated in us through the media over the last millennia. It is important to be diverse, but I, at the same time, sticking to the values of a brand, which celebrates skin and confidence as well as having a certain aesthetic being more natural." Remarking how important racial diversity is in the sweeping landscape; however, remaining true to the brand may not necessarily mean being diverse. Brand D believes aesthetics are more critical to the brand than trying to be diverse when it is not the core value of the brand. The least helpful response was, Brand E, does not offer any insight into their values as a brand, "a lot" was their response. This may be due to the lack of opinion or knowledge on the matter. Therefore, the assumption can be made that diversity may not be a priority for the brand.

Brands' B and C have quite similar opinions on racial diversity, and they want to appeal to everyone, not primarily to one racial group. Brand B's response, "It is important to us that the brand appeals to everyone no matter what race or even gender from that matter." Brand C's response, "It is important to us – as we are trying to appeal to every woman and make sure they see someone who looks similar (similar race) to them in our clothes which in turn would make them feel seen and represented." Racial diversity is integrated throughout the brand. Brand A, the only brand that mentions their employees, not only is a model representation is valued, but the background work as well. Brand A's response, "I strongly believe in having racial diversity within the brand. This is not only for the employees who work for the brand but through all fashion campaigns, photoshoots and even through the outsourced manufacturers, we work with. This is an important factor to the brand, as it is a way to uplift the community equally amongst everyone." They take into account the people behind the scenes, such as manufacturers, staff and community as a great importance.

Question 3

Brands' A, B, C and E, acknowledge their attempts working with women of colour. Brand A explained, "In every fashion shoot and fashion shows, as well as the manufacturers and suppliers we use, the brand has aimed to include all races within all aspects as much as possible." Going further than models, they explore diversity amongst manufacturers as well. Brand B mentions, "We actively try to engage with all races and ethnic groups." Brand B's response could mean engage with consumers of colour, or engage with influencers/models of colour – quite a vague response, but still aligned with the others. Brand C, on the other hand, went in-depth, "We have mostly Muslim women and Black women following, so we use a few Muslim influencers as brand advocates (Aisha Baker and a few others), as well as black women (Sarah Langa and Kefilwe Mabote) as brand advocates. We have not chosen any white women for brand advocates as of yet. When we do shoots for our clothes, we always have Racial diversity when it comes to our models (it is an active choice and something we always make sure we are doing because we believe in it strongly). The owner of the brand is a Muslim woman." Brand C is careful when planning their photoshoots and racial diversity is essential. Brand E, stated, "We do our best to shoot and collaborate with models and influencers of different races, to showcase all in the same." It is clear that they are trying to answer the question to the best of their ability, but it is not clear to what they actively do.

Brand D's response, "When starting in end 2017, it was baby steps. I started designing garments for me specifically, because I did not want to invest in fast fashion, and I wanted to rather wear clothing that was more timeless, natural and had longevity. As a business owner, I am always wanting to know more about the market. I am inquisitive and made a concerted effort to ask my stockists and my clients what pertinent marketing data they could feed me so that I can adjust designs to be more market related and to avoid bias designing. This has allowed for a gradual evolution of my thinking. Funding this business completely on my own without the use of debt I had to make limiting decisions such as only having three sizes; small, medium, large, but I now make extra small and extra-large on request. My goal is to have a complete size offering. Data collecting has allowed me to adjust my future strategies, which I'll go into detail in the next question." They are more concerned with diversity in terms of

physical attributes and size, rather than race. Brand D may have misinterpreted the question or might think physical attributes relate to race.

Question 4

All the responses varied for this particular question. Some use models, ambassadors or influencers that are aligned with the brands' values or look like their consumers or just for substantial engagement. For instance, Brand E uses ambassadors/influencers with a high following. Their response, "Mostly on the benchmark of 15K+ followers, their engagement, their personality (influencers). Models – we like to showcase all races and body types. This is something we are working on as we speak." Unlike Brand E, Brand B has no explanation for their considerations or ambassadors and models, "We don't currently work with any brand ambassadors; however, we don't follow any particular criteria when looking for models. As you can see from our social media, we have everyone/anyone modelling."

Brand A mentions, "We believe it is important to represent beauty in all shapes, colours and sizes. In today's world, there is no ideal beautiful woman as there are truly many forms of this. In choosing models, we would love to represent beauty in having girls in a different colour, as well as body shapes and height. This will also apply to the influencers we will collaborate with in the future." Brand A is the only respondent that carefully accounts for the race into their brand.

Brand D mentioned that it is essential that their ambassador's values are aligned with the brand. They state, "Very importantly, I would select based on values, and I've also included plus size ambassadors. Other than that it's more so clients that have posted and tagged on their own accord. I have one main shoot per year and my strategy for the next phase/shoot/season is to be more racially inclusive." Similarly to Brand C that selects their ambassadors/influencers that are aligned with the brand. Brand C answered this question in the previous question.

Question 5

Brand A and Brand C have always place racial diversity at the core of the business. Brand A, "The brand always valued racial diversity from the very beginning. As this has been run from the very start, it has become a norm to the company and has fortunately been run with ease with no serious matters." However, Brand C does not

only want to appeal to women of colour, “It has been a matter but since the majority of our following are marginalized groups, such as black women and Muslim women it’s more of a natural thing to use those women in our shoots as that’s what our following like to see, as well as it is important to us to be a part of a changing culture especially in the fashion industry. (If I’m being honest we are trying to target white women more as we have very low numbers in that department, but it’s not a huge issue – we would like to appeal to all women).”

Brand D and Brand E did note that being an individual managing an entire business has been particularly tricky. Brand D’s response, “To be honest, as a one-man band with limited resources, my main goal has been to get the quality of the sewing right and find the best high-grade natural fabrics. Racial diversity in terms of body type has been important to me, and I’ve definitely considered this in my designs. But, I have not yet featured diversity in my marketing communication, i.e. aesthetic. This is part of my strategy, though for the next shoot.” While Brand E mentioned, “As this started as a small online boutique where I was using the resources that were available to me with little capital, I would take pictures of myself (white, petite). I realised as we grew that this would not be okay in terms of showcasing different body types, races, etc. That has put a lot of pressure on me to do our best for future campaigns, now that we have grown and are able to.” As their brands’ age, diversity of race and body types are an increasing matter they have to confront.

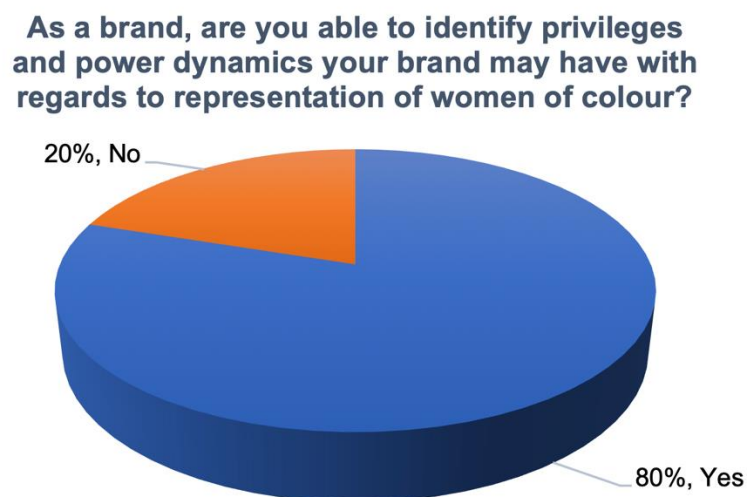
Brand B fell short throughout the questionnaire, not giving helpful responses, in terms of in-depth answers. Their response to question 5; “At [Brand B], everyone is welcome.” This response does not say much about whether or not they consider racial diversity a severe matter. The irony is that of all the brands that participated, Brand B was by far the most interested and excited to participate in the research. The research has noted that Brand B is not reliable when sharing their feedback or answering essential questions.

Question 6

Based on the research, brands and media do have control of how women view themselves, more specifically women of colour. This question was asked to

understand if the brands that participated do understand the power they yield. Brands' A, C, D and E answered "Yes" to the question, while, Brand B answered "No."

Figure 2.1: Percentage of Responses for Question 6



6.2. Questionnaire for Consumers

This questionnaire was done to understand how female consumers understand racial diversity and their current feelings and opinions on the matter. To understand the layout of the questionnaire, please see Annexure C of the questionnaire template. This questionnaire received nineteen respondents, with ten being found using digital platforms (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook), living in the desired parameters. The additional nine derived from snowball sampling.

6.2.1 Section 1

Section 1 of the questionnaire is for demographic purposes. Aiming to understand the necessary information about female consumers and their purchasing habits.

Table: Participant Break Down

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
Participant 1	Coloured	18 - 25	Student
Participant 2	Coloured	18 - 25	Employed
Participant 3	Other	18 - 25	Employed
Participant 4	Black	18 - 25	Student
Participant 5	Other	18 - 25	Student
Participant 6	Coloured	26 +	Employed
Participant 7	White	18 - 25	Student

Participant 8	White	18 - 25	Student
Participant 9	White	18 - 25	Student
Participant 10	White	18 - 25	Student
Participant 11	Coloured	26 +	Employed
Participant 12	Black	18 - 25	Employed
Participant 13	Coloured	18 - 25	Student
Participant 14	Black	18 - 25	Student
Participant 15	Coloured	18 - 25	Student
Participant 16	Black	18 - 25	Student
Participant 17	Coloured	18 - 25	Student
Participant 18	Other	18 - 25	Student
Participant 19	Black	18 - 25	Student

The research did not ask the gender of the participants, because they are all women, carefully selected and found on social media. The section was designed to ease the participants into the questions, not solely focussed on the study itself but rather the person.

Question 4

It is valuable to know the online shopping habits of the participants because it will play a part in whether they notice racial diversity. As the researcher shops online every few weeks, they inevitably noticed concerns of the lack of racial diversity, more so of lack of deeper complexions. Four of the nineteen participants shop online every few weeks.

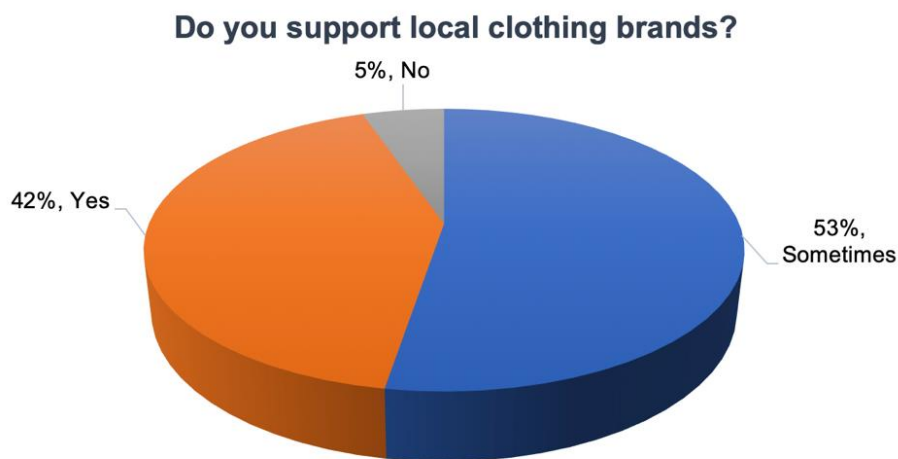
Figure 1.1: Percentage of Responses for Question 4



Question 5

Only one (Participant 11) of the nineteen participants do not support local brands; their response can still be helpful. The response may hinder the research because the questionnaire is for those who purchase from local clothing brands. Since they do not support local brands, they may not show interest or have any knowledge of the current local market.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of Responses for Question 5



6.2.2. Section 2

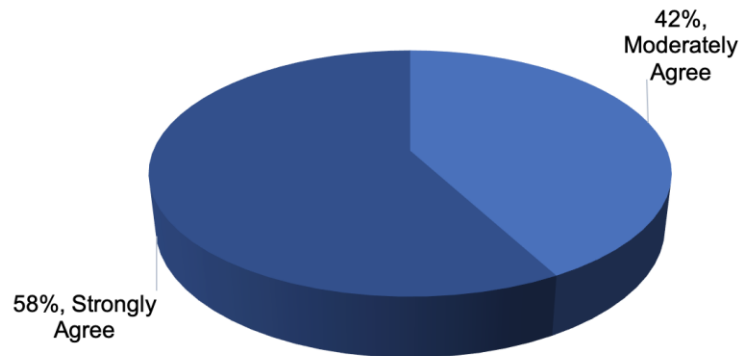
Section 2 of the questionnaire was to understand how strongly the brands agree or disagree with the given quotes – Likert scale. Aiming to understand how consumers feel towards the statements provided.

Question 1

Twelve of the twenty participants strongly agreed that women are encouraged and influenced by mass media to follow an absolute beauty ideal. This finding is crucial as it begins to show that women understand the power media has in manipulating women.

Figure 2.1: Percentage of Responses for Question 1

"Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty via images of models, movie stars, and female celebrities..." - The Globalisation of Beauty: How is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines (Yan and Bissell, 2014)

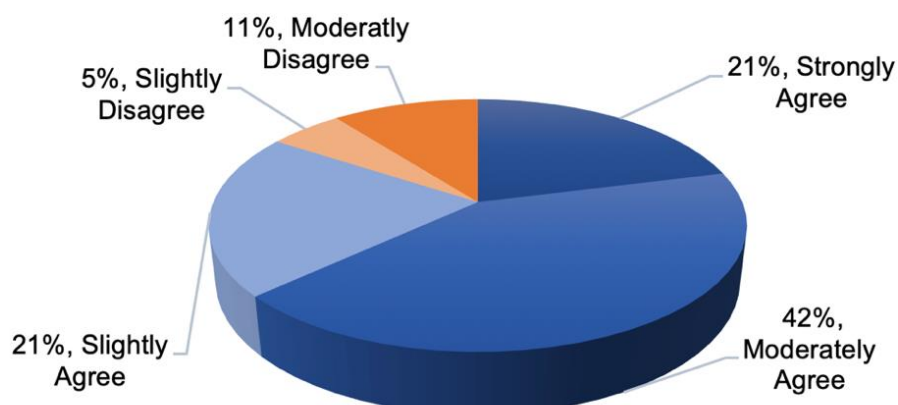


Question 2

Unlike the brands that are strongly disagreed to this quote, the majority of the participants moderately agreed with it, while three participants disagreed (one slightly disagreed, two moderately disagreed).

Figure 2.2: Percentage of Responses for Question 2

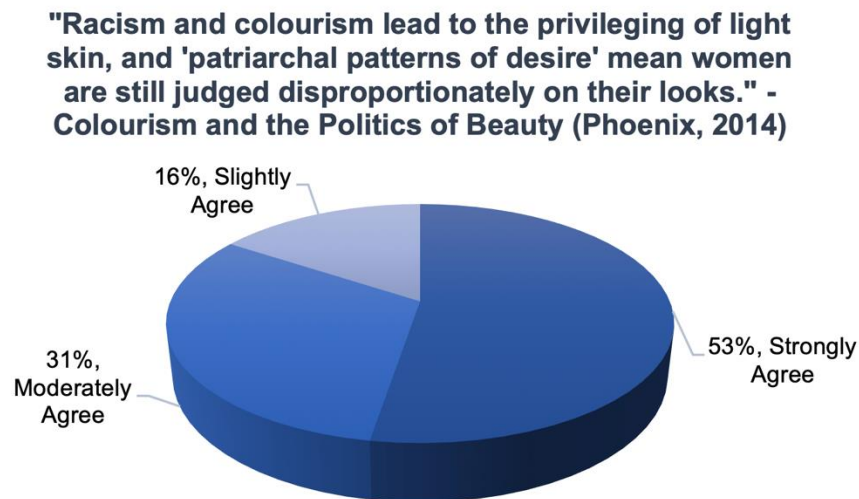
"Light skin and long straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable..." - Gender, Race and Media Representation (Brooks and Hebert, 2006)



Question 3

This result was expected as many participants answered similarly to the previous question. However, the participants that disagreed with the previous statement moderately agreed (Participant 3) and strongly agreed (Participant 1) to this statement. Participant's 7, 10 and 18 slightly agreed to the statement.

Figure 2.3: Percentage of Responses for Question 3



6.2.3. Section 3

Section 3 of the questionnaire was to understand the consumer's understanding of racial diversity and whether or not racial diversity influences purchasing. Fundamentally understanding if the matter does affect them.

Question 1

Since there are many responses for this questionnaire, the researcher cannot break down every response, see Annexure D of the consumer's response to Section 3, Question 1. The researcher organised the data by keywords that stood out in the responses. The choice of wording is interesting because racial diversity can have various meanings and understanding to the participants. The key words the researcher noted in all the responses are "include" or "inclusive", "represent" or "representation", "equality" and "advertising" or "media."

Inclusivity means to involve and accommodate people that have been previously disadvantaged or excluded historically (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). Few

participants (1, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 16) all mentioned inclusivity in their response. They identified that there is a connection between inclusivity and racial diversity in the core meaning. Participant 15's response was noteworthy, differing from others as they address socio-economic factors that affect racial diversity and how inclusivity aids the matter. Participant 15 stated, "Inclusion of historically marginalized racial groups within socio-economic contexts. Not merely "light-skin" or 'white-passing' but an entire spectrum of race and colour."

Representation refers to the action of representing a person, in this specific research representation is involving people of several racial groups in a brand (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). Participant's 1, 4, 5 and 16 added representation in their answer. Participant 5's response was more than addressing race, but culture as well, their answer; "Having representation of people of different races, cultures, ideals and backgrounds represented equally in society." In a country like South Africa with several races, cultures, religions and languages, representation does matter. It is difficult to identify who specifically brands are targeting because their target market would not be one racial group.

Equality is considered as a state of everything or everyone being equal (Merriam-webster.com, [s.a.]). The use of the word "equality" in some responses are quite interesting, because the participants have associated equality with racial diversity – identifying a clear relationship between the two. Some participants' (2, 4, 10, 12 and 19) described that equality is a factor when addressing racial diversity. They cannot separate the concept of racial diversity and equality. Participant 2 did use "equality" in a way others did not. From the researchers understanding of their response, inequality is the result of discrimination, therefore resulting in a lack of racial diversity.

There was a theme of media and advertising (campaigns) being addressed in some responses. Participant 9 can recognise a clear example of where racial diversity can be applied, especially in the context of the research. Participant 11 went as far as to pinpoint fashion campaigns as an example for when racial diversity considerations are made, their response, "Regarding fashion campaigns that would mean having models of various races involved."

Participants' 3, 13, 17 and 18 explained racial diversity as a means of coexisting and sharing the same spaces. Participant 3's response addressed that sharing spaces are ideal; however, influences like, segregation and colonisation affect this shared space. Their response; "A phenomenon where people of different ethnicities and race live in the same space. However, it does not explain the reason as to why these groups live in that same space, e.g. slavery, colonisation, war, immigration etc."

Question 2

The researcher identified and broke down selected unique responses, because they cannot break down every response, see Annexure D of all the consumer's responses to Section 3, Question 2.

Representation was mentioned again by several participants' (1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11). Participant 1 refers to representation as a base for equality, for instance, using various brand ambassadors of different races to appeal to more consumers. While participant 6 mentions that authenticity of racial diversity matters more to them and representation is secondary. Additionally, participant 11 believes that racial diversity needs to be aligned with the country's demographics. Therefore, if a population is mostly black, advertising/campaigns should illustrate that with their cast members. Participant 16 also mentions that racial diversity needs to speak to the South African market.

Participant 19 addressed the inner conflicts they had to deal with while growing up. They were surrounded by primarily white women in media, it affected the way they saw them-self. They note that although they are unlearning the standard of beauty, they have to admit the subconscious effects.

Addressing racial diversity is a matter of understanding the history of South Africa. Participant's 13 and 15 explain that people, in this case niche brands, should be more accommodating to races that have been excluded and disadvantaged.

Question 3

The researcher identified and broke down selected responses because they cannot break down every individual response, see Annexure E of the consumer's response to Section 3, Question 3. The researcher was surprised by the answers, nine (participants' 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13 and 14) said "yes", racial diversity does affect purchasing habits from a clothing brand, while three (participants 6, 8 and 11) are on the fence or "sometimes" and seven (participants' 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) said "no."

Participant 4, although they are influenced by diversity when purchasing, cannot believe that a brand is being transparent about their diversity internally. Not only do the models need to racially diverse but the staff should be as well, they explain, "You can have a brand that has black and brown models, but you look in the company and not one of the employees is black or brown." Participant 14 also mentions that a lack of racial diversity may not mean discrimination; however, if garments were made by women of colour, they might think again before purchase.

"As a woman of colour, I want to feel as though the brand is catering and invested in people like me..." – Participant 6 adds in her response that brands need to appeal directly to them. The researcher understands this is much more than representation and diversity; it is actively including cultures and wanting to be inclusive. In addition to promoting diversity, participant 9, would prefer to purchase clothes from racially diverse brands, but they may not be actively doing so.

Those who said no had quite overwhelming responses, with few being unbothered by the lack of racial diversity. Despite expressing their inner battles with beauty and media, participant 19 is not more inclined to purchase from racially diverse brands; they mention, "I buy what I think will suit me..." Two participants' (10 and 16) were unaware of the matter entirely, not taking race into account while purchasing clothes. Three participants' (12, 15 and 17) mentioned that they look passed who is modelling the clothes, the model is a secondary factor for them.

Racial diversity may not be an actual issue that consumers themselves are aware of; however, from understanding the literature and responses thus far, it does influence how consumers view themselves.

Question 4

The local clothing market in Cape Town is quite small, with several niche businesses appealing to various types of people. In Cape Town, streetwear brands thrive, and there can be confusion of which niche brands the researcher may be referring to – this response is expected. These streetwear brands are notoriously known for their inclusive campaigns of all races, genders and sexualities.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of Responses for Question 4



Question 5

The researcher identified and broke down selected responses (ones that stood out) because they cannot break down every response, see Annexure F of the consumers' response to Section 3, Question 5.

Although several participants noted that the lack of racial diversity is wrong, some made a further point to say that brands may not be targeting them – participants 6 and 13 made this distinction. Participant 6 mentioned, "If I don't feel represented by a brand, then I don't feel like it was made with me in mind." Additionally, they added that when brands do find models that look like their consumers, it becomes more pleasing. Participant 8 does address that racial diversity can make the general public relate more to a brand, strengthening connections.

Including different races in fashion and media can challenge existing beauty ideals. Participant 15 notices the strength brands have with changing perceptions. Participant 11 does believe that more prominent brands set the standard that influences smaller brands to do better with regards to representation. Racial diversity should be a normalised concern for brands. Additionally, participant 9 does believe that brands should promote racial diversity.

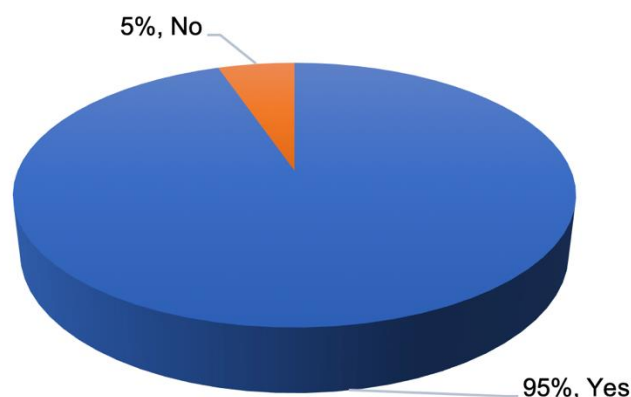
Although several participants have tried their best to answer this question, few go into depth about the matter. Five participants' (2, 5, 7, 12 and 17) barely speak on the topic and do not necessarily have a distinguishable opinion. Participant 2 goes as far as to say and is a good response, "I don't know enough to have an opinion on this." Some individuals may not be aware of serious issues, such as the lacking of racial diversity, and that is acceptable. Participant 10's response is quite impressive, "I feel as if we're moving backwards..." unsure of what they are insinuating. This comment could be because the topic is race and they may be on the defence of brands they do know that lack racial diversity.

Question 6

Participant 10 was the only one that selected "No" which is an understandable response; not many can identify the strengths brands hold. The researcher was surprised by this response, but quite pleased that many do acknowledge this.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of Responses for Question 6

Do you understand the power brands have with regards to the representation of women of colour?



7. Conclusion

Racial diversity in fashion brands does affect women of colour – based on the existing literature and research conducted. It is imperative to mention that a study like this should be done on a larger scale with a more significant sample population. Brands and consumers can identify the importance of racial diversity. However, brands may not be considering racial diversity because they lack the means to do so. Likewise, several consumers are consciously aware of the lack of racial diversity and want to support diverse brands, nevertheless they will purchase what they believe suits them. Additionally, few consumers were not interested in racial diversity but were able to identify that the lack of racial diversity is wrong in the South African context.

Racial diversity is a topic that should be introduced to niche clothing brands, as they are appealing to a diverse market. With the majority of the brand representatives being white women, it is up to them to educate and implement systems that integrate racial diversity into their brand. Furthermore, these brands may be missing essential connections with potential target audiences by not representing all races.

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A. Consent Forms for Brands (Example)



I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

- Yes. No names of the brand or any individuals associated with the brand will be mentioned in my research.

- Yes. There is no need for any other party to be involved unless it is my supervisor, but that should not be the case.

- No. It is not ethical to assume or place judgements on your response. My only responsibility is to accept what you decide to share with me.

- No. This is purely for my studies, I receive no financial gain from this research.

If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information.





Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this document and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

I _____ hereby agree to participate in the research mentioned above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



MASTER'S**HONOURS****DEGREES****DIPLOMAS****CERTIFICATES**

Directors: RJ Douglas (UK) (CEO), JDR Desch (non-executive), Michael Douglas Aiken (non-executive) | **Company Secretary:** D Dickson



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B. Questionnaire for Brands

This questionnaire is to understand the brands perspective of racial diversity and representation of women of colour.

There are three Sections in this Questionnaire, answer all sections to the best of your ability. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Section 1:

This section is for demographic purposes.

Race

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Coloured
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other

Age

- ☐ 18 – 25
- ☐ 26 +

What is your current position at the brand you are working for?

Section 2:

This section requires a rating on how strongly agree to strongly disagree with the statements provided.

"Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty via images of models, movie stars, and female celebrities..." - The Globalisation of Beauty: How is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines (Yan and Bissell, 2014)

- ☐ Strongly Agree

- ☐ Moderately Agree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Moderately Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

"Light skin and long straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable..." - Gender, Race and Media Representation (Brooks and Hebert, 2006)

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Moderately Agree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Moderately Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

"Racism and colourism lead to the privileging of light skin, and 'patriarchal patterns of desire' mean women are still judged disproportionately on their looks." - Colourism and the Politics of Beauty (Phoenix, 2014)

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Moderately Agree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Moderately Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Section 3:

What is your understanding of racial diversity?

What does racial diversity mean to your brand?

To what extent has your brand aimed to be racially diverse?

How do you go about the selection of models and relevant brand representatives, like brand ambassadors (if applicable) for your brand?

Has racial diversity been a serious matter for the brand? and please explain

As a brand, are you able to identify privileges and power dynamics your brand may have with regards to representation of women of colour?

☐ Yes

☐ No

C. Questionnaire for Consumers

This questionnaire is to understand the consumers perspective of racial diversity and representation of women of colour among local niche clothing brands (online). By completing this questionnaire you consent to the research.

There are three Sections in this Questionnaire, answer all sections to the best of your ability. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Section 1:

This section is for demographic purposes.

Race

☐ Black

☐ Coloured

☐ White

☐ Other

Age

☐ 18 – 25

☐ 26 +

Occupation

☐ Student

☐ Employed

☐ Unemployed

How often do you shop online?

☐ Every few weeks

☐ Every few months

☐ A few times a year

Do you support local clothing brands?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

Section 2:

This section requires a rating on how strongly agree to strongly disagree with the statements provided.

"Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty via images of models, movie stars, and female celebrities..." - The Globalisation of Beauty: How is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines (Yan and Bissell, 2014)

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Moderately Agree

☐ Slightly Agree

☐ Slightly Disagree

☐ Moderately Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

"Light skin and long straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable..." - Gender, Race and Media Representation (Brooks and Hebert, 2006)

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Moderately Agree

☐ Slightly Agree

☐ Slightly Disagree

☐ Moderately Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

"Racism and colourism lead to the privileging of light skin, and 'patriarchal patterns of desire' mean women are still judged disproportionately on their looks." - Colourism and the Politics of Beauty (Phoenix, 2014)

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Moderately Agree

☐ Slightly Agree

☐ Slightly Disagree

☐ Moderately Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

Section 3:

What is your understanding of racial diversity?

What does racial diversity mean to you?

Does racial diversity have an effect on whether you purchase from a clothing brand? and please explain.

Are you aware of any local clothing brands that lack racial diversity?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your opinion on the lack of racial diversity among these clothing brands?

Do you understand the power brands have with regards to the representation of women of colour?

☐ Yes

☐ No

D. Consumers Responses for Section 3, Question 1

Participant 1: "Racial diversity refers to the use of people from various races in order to include and represent races that were previously neglected."

Participant 2: "Racial diversity can be described as a number of specific characteristics/difference within races. Many people view it a fault, as it usually implies a lot of inequality based on race."

Participant 3: "A phenomenon where people of different ethnicities and race live in the same space. However, it does not explain the reason as to why these groups live in that same space, e.g. slavery, colonisation, war, immigration etc."

Participant 4: "All races have equal opportunity and representation."

Participant 5: "Having representation of people of different races, cultures, ideals and backgrounds represented equally in society."

Participant 6: "Racial diversity refers to the presence of various, different races."

Participant 7: "A society which is inclusive of all and accepting of all."

Participant 8: "Inclusivity of all races across all platforms."

Participant 9: "Within brands, racial diversity is when the brand is advertising with a wide variety of people from different races or cultural background."

Participant 10: "I strongly feel that everyone should be treated equally and fairly regardless of the colour of their skin."

Participant 11: "Regarding fashion campaigns that would mean having models of various races involved."

Participant 12: "Equality of all races and skin colour."

Participant 13: "It means to have a society that consists of different races living together."

Participant 14: "It is being inclusive of all races in different kinds of settings, and being representative of the different kinds of races."

Participant 15: "Inclusion of historically marginalized racial groups within socio-economic contexts. Not merely 'light-skin' or 'white-passing' but an entire spectrum of race and colour."

Participant 16: "My understanding of racial diversity is when all racial ethnicities are included in marketing material etc. and not only one representation of women/men."

Participant 17: "The existence of many different races that coexist."

Participant 18: "Different race groups in the same place."

Participant 19: "That all races are represented equally throughout media."

E. Consumers Responses for Section 3, Question 2

Participant 1: "To me, it means that each race is afforded equal representation. Specifically, in the marketing industry, when brands are racially diverse when selecting ambassadors, it shows that they are catering to future customers of different races as opposed to having majority-white brand ambassadors. It is important for those customers to see that they accurately represented."

Participant 2: "I guess the same as above."

Participant 3: "A mix of different races."

Participant 4: "All races have equal opportunity and representation. In addition to my above answer, I think it's important that organisations and society achieve racial diversity with the impact of it on people's consciousness so that we can tackle unconscious biases."

Participant 5: "That all races are seen and represented equally."

Participant 6: "To me, it is important racial diversity is authentic and not staged. Including individuals representative of their space that can make an impact."

Participant 7: "No discrimination and seeing representation everywhere."

Participant 8: "It means everyone has the chance to be represented and treated equally."

Participant 9: "I think it is very important to promote racial diversity as all people should be labelled as equal, and the fact that we are all different should be embraced."

Participant 10: "The fair treatment of everyone regardless of their race."

Participant 11: "Campaigns being representative of a country's demographics."

Participant 12: "All mankind is seen as equal in societal spheres."

Participant 13: "It is important. People of different races need to live and interact with each other. People differ in many ways besides race, and so it is important to understand other races but, more importantly, accept them. Especially considering the negative after-effects of the apartheid era still occurring today."

Participant 14: "It means embracing every race in all sorts of spaces without exclusivity for a certain race, basically equality."

Participant 15: "Important judgment factor. It shows whether the party has attempted to include 'othered' racial groups to disrupt a history of exclusion and discrimination that make POC's feel unwelcome."

Participant 16: "To me, racial diversity means everyone getting a seat at the table while also being realistic and relatable to the South African market."

Participant 17: "We each bring different kinds of value, views and beliefs to the world by default of our racial make-up."

Participant 18: "There are more than one group of races in the same place doesn't define the nature of the event or place."

Participant 19: "It is important to me as I am a young black woman and have grown up being primarily exposed to white women in media and this has had an effect on how I view myself. Although this is changing and I have been able to accept my beauty and appearance, being only exposed to white women in media and being told that that is the "normal" standard of beauty has had an effect on how I view myself."

F. Consumers Response to Section 3, Question 3

Participant 1: “Yes, usually if a brand is not racially diverse that means the clothing is not made to suit different body types therefore the clothing would rarely suit or fit me, especially because I dress modestly and not all brands cater to those needs.”

Participant 2: “I think it does. Some clothing items I wouldn’t consider wearing, as it isn’t considered suitable within my culture/race. And more appropriate for others instead.”

Participant 3: “Yes, I tend to support brands that advertise and work with different race groups, as if a brand only uses models of a certain race to advertise themselves, it feels as if they are targeting a certain group of people. By doing so, it would make the rest of the world feel alienated and almost scared or ashamed to purchase anything from such brands.”

Participant 4: “Yes, but it is never really transparent. You can have a brand that has black and brown models but you look in the company and not one of the employees is black or brown. It’s tough, you want to reject these brands that are not diverse, but you are also trying to go with the trends of society and achieve the beauty standards that are projected onto you. So in essence, I don’t let that generally stop me from purchasing clothing unless there is some backlash or hectic racially motivated PR disaster.”

Participant 5: “Yes because some brands specially tailor their lines for specific racial groups.”

Participant 6: “Sometimes yes, I’m very aware of brands that are intentional and conscious about their inclusion of different races and sizes. As a woman of colour, I want to feel as though the brand is catering and invested in people like me. I always feel more inclined to support brands that are actively diverse in their presentation, whether it be size, race etc.”

Participant 7: "Yes. Hopefully supporting businesses to encourage continued diversity."

Participant 8: "Sometimes, I am more effected by trying to find clothes that fit my body type than what the brand represents. So I guess when it comes to clothing brands I look more at all types of diversity including size and race to be representative in every category."

Participant 9: "Yes. I would prefer to purchase something from a company who promotes racial diversity."

Participant 10 did mention they have never been made aware of racial diversity or the lack thereof within brands, stating, "No, it's never been something I have been aware of."

Participant 11: "Yes and no. If a brand has been insensitive in the way they're marketing their clothes, I'll be hesitant to buy from them."

Participant 12: "No, I buy what I like and look past who's modelling the clothing."

Participant 13: "Yes. I wouldn't choose to support a brand that does not represent all races in adverts or its products. In that, their products only work well on a certain race/s."

Participant 14: "Certainly. Although lack of racial diversity may not imply any form of discrimination it certainly makes me think twice about whether a product was made for an individual of my skin colour."

Participant 15: "Not necessarily. If I like the item I will more likely than not purchase it anyway."

Participant 16: "Not necessarily- I don't think I have paid much attention because I often shop at global brand stores and not niche brand stores."

Participant 17: "No, a clothing brand is an individual material expression and is in no way attached to race."

Participant 18: "No it doesn't. If someone is trying to make a living by selling clothes then it should be supported."

Participant 19: "No, it does not. I buy what I think will suit me despite whether all races have been equally represented or not."

G. Consumers Response to Section 3, Question 5

Participant 1: "I think it's a bad marketing strategy and disregard for their customers because by being more inclusive it will have a positive impact on the business."

Participant 2: "I don't know enough to have an opinion on this."

Participant 3: "It reduces the amount of customer for these brands. Portrays a rather bad image of the brand, it raises questions on the brand's morals. It encourages segregation (which is not a positive thing), bullying, a close minded mentality rather than an open one."

Participant 4: "It is expected. South Africa is an incredibly racist nation."

Participant 5: "Brands must be inclusive of all races."

Participant 6: "If I don't feel represented by a brand, then I don't feel like it was made with me in mind. If the only models are tall and slender, then I assume your product was designed to best suit that look. Seeing someone that looks like you is a great way to appeal to a wider audience. A lack of racial diversity also just comes across as wilfully apathetic in the current political climate."

Participant 7: "It is disappointing."

Participant 8: "I believe everyone should be represented so that the public can relate more strongly to a brand and feel more connected to them."

Participant 9: "I do not agree without it and I think that these brand should take more effort into promoting the matter. It is by no means difficult to do so."

Participant 10: "I feel as if we're moving backwards and has a negative effect on people and the business as well."

Participant 11: "It's up to bigger brands to make the change, to influence smaller and other brands. Normalising racial diversity and embracing different types of bodies, skin colours, hair etc. is incredibly important. Representation matters."

Participant 12: "They need to be more inclusive."

Participant 13: "It is wrong. Their exclusion of some races may make these races feel like their products are not made for them."

Participant 14: "It is unfortunate because many of these brands' customers are racially diverse. They certainly need to be more inclusive and representative."

Participant 15: "The brands fail to see how race impacts almost every aspect of society. They have failed to be inclusive and use their power as a brand that is marketing to an audience to change perceptions. They are perpetuating skewed beauty standards."

Participant 16: "They want to appeal to a certain market and that's ok but marketing to only one target audience is not effective for the country we are in as there are vast majority of black and coloured people also."

Participant 17: "None."

Participant 18: "Clothing brands need to appeal to everyone as South Africa has many races."

Participant 19: "All the current SA brands I know do represent all races effectively in my opinion (Woollies, Young n Lazy, Selfi, etc.)."

H. Ethical Clearance Letter



29 August 2019

Student name: Micaela Beaumont

Student number: 16001762

Campus: Cape Town



Re: Approval BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance

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 we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.



There may be some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. If this is the case, feedback will be provided to you in writing. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor.

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Monika Edwards
Supervisor

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I. Originality Report



RESM8419_2019_ALL_VGCT - RESM8419_VGCT1

Research Report 1

Micaela Beaumont on Thu, Oct 24 2019, 11:03 PM

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Submission ID: 45cd80034-0497-4b6f-ac71-c874cdfb571

Beaumont Micaela - 1...

Word Count: 17,374

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Citations (18/18)

- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper
- <http://cretaadulthoodeduc.gr/b...>
- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper

Abstract

This study aims to understand the effects racial diversity has on women of colour living in the City of Cape Town, Western Cape. Likewise, exploring how niche clothing brands currently value racial diversity.

Intersectional feminism was the theoretical lens for this study. The researcher made use of qualitative research methods, with triangulation as the design; online questionnaires were used to gain qualitative and quantitative data. These questionnaires explored the current perceptions of racial diversity, and the value brands and consumers have over the matter.

In conducting the research, the researcher found that clothing brands often overlook racial diversity because they often do not have the means to be diverse. Brands can identify the importance of racial diversity but cannot create a link between race and colour (complexion). Regarding consumers, many expressed their desire to support racially diverse brands, while others did not carefully consider the matter as it may be unimportant or irrelevant. Both samples were able to understand the strength brands hold in the portrayal of women of colour.

Although the research was done using a small sample, it highlights the importance and relevance of racial diversity. Racial diversity should be integrated into the brands' business models to create authentic connections with the South African market.

J. Summary Table

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Authors/ Sources	Lit. Review – Concept. Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations	
To explore how online women’s niche clothing brands currently value racial diversity. To establish decision-making regarding racial diversity in online women’s niche brands. To explore the effects of racial diversity on black female consumers.	In what way do women's niche clothing brands communicate/display their value of racial diversity among online consumers in Cape Town?	It is a relevant consideration for brands to make careful decisions when it comes to diversity and visible, showing the representation of different ethnicities.	Carastathis, 2014 Wong,2017 Hankivsky, 2014 Gopaldas, 2013 Juan,2016 Secules et al., 2018 Agthe,2016 Yan&Bissel, 2014 Fills&Joshi, 2015 Bryant,2013 Phills,2018 St. Jean& Feagin,2015 Brooks&Hebert, 2006	Theme 1: Intersection-ality Theme 2: Feminism Theme 3: Diversity Theme 4: European Beauty Standard Theme 5: Represent-ation Theme 6: Stereotyping	Paradigm : Interp-retivist Epistemo-logy: Generate evidence that racial diversity affects consumer negatively Ontol-ogy: Nomin-alist Axiology: Ethics, the concept of right and good.	Qualitative method.	Online questionnaires using Google Forms. Consisting of Likert scale type questions, close-ended questions and open-ended questions.	Consent of brands prior questionnaire . The researcher must be respectful and understandin g the participants' opinions. Promising anonymity. Confidentialit y agreement.	Brands are not carefully considering racial diversity. Consumers want to support racially diverse brands. Consumers often overlook the models that wear the clothes because they do not know better.	Brands need to slowly integrate women of colour in their business (not only as models, but as key stakeholder s).	
						Population					5 female brand representatives. 19 female consumers.
						Sampling					Data Analysis Methods
Research Problem	Secondary Questions	Key Concepts	Key Theories								
Diversity is not carefully considered in brands development and image.	What are Cape Town women, who purchase online from niche clothing brands, understanding of racial diversity? What are the effects of racial diversity on women of colour living in the City of Cape Town?	Intersection ality. Feminism. Race. Gender. Diversity. Beauty Ideals. Racism. Stereotyp-ing	Intersectional Feminism.								

