



**An Exploratory study on consumer attitudes of Capetonian Female Millennials'
towards natural skincare product consumption.**

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Abstract

Natural skincare is the fastest growing industry within the green cosmetic field. The increase in popularity of these products is due to their minimal environmental impact and perceived consumer safety. Millennials, specifically females, are known at the forefront of green product purchases globally. Research indicates that a positive attitude towards natural products usually results in purchase behaviour; however, this assumption may cause natural skincare producers and marketers astray without understanding what contributes to the formation of their attitudes. South Africa has abundant natural plant species to produce commercial natural skincare, creating a unique economic opportunity. This qualitative study aimed to understand female millennial consumers' attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption and investigate whether these attitudes translate into purchase behaviour. The data collection method consisted of semi-structured interviews where six female Millennials based in Cape Town were interviewed via Zoom. The findings indicate that consumers' attitudes towards natural skincare may be positive; however, the minority purchase and incorporate these products into their daily skin care regime. It was further found that environmental concern and trust play the most significant role in forming an attitude that translates into actionable purchase behaviour. These findings aim to further contribute to the existing knowledge of consumer attitudes towards natural skincare, hoping to entice further research to expand the natural skincare industry within South Africa.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the research report submitted for the BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications to the Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my own work and has not been previously submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for a postgraduate qualification.

Christy Nell

21 November 2021

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter will introduce the topic of the research. This includes the background and problem setting, as well as explaining the rationale and importance of the study. Towards the end of this chapter, the problem statement and purpose statement will be explained, alongside with the research questions and objectives for this study.

Background and Problem Setting

According to Peattie (1995), Green cosmetics is a term that has been on the radar for many consumers since 1995. Green cosmetics is “a multifaceted construct for the preservation of the environment, minimisation of pollution, responsible use of non-renewable resources, and animal welfare and species preservation.” (McEachern and McClean, 2002 in Lin, Yang, Hanifah and Iqbal, 2018). Although the definition of natural products seems to be disputed amongst many academics, the acknowledgement of the environmental and consumer benefit of natural products is agreed upon by many (Peattie, 1995 in Hsu, Chang & Yansritakul, 2017, McEachern & McClean, 2002; Ribeiro, Estabqueiro, Oliveira, Manuel & Lobo, 2015; Onel, 2016; Lin et al., 2018).

Despite the multiple interpretations of what green or natural products are, current research agrees that green cosmetics, specifically natural skincare, is the fastest-growing market in the green products industry (Nadlifatin, Rachmaniati, Persada & Razif, 2016; ltd, 2019; Ridder, 2020). An explanation for the sudden increase in the popularity of natural skincare products may be due to consumers realising the importance of using safer, cleaner products that are less harmful to the environment (Lin et al., 2018; Sagbo & Mbeng, 2018; Boon, Fern & Chee, 2020). Marketers have previously noted that Generation Y, primarily women, significantly participate in cosmetic consumption (Chinomona, 2016). Women also tend to be more environmentally conscious when making purchase decisions than their male counterparts (Robert, 1996 in Anvar & Venter, 2014). Multiple researchers have acknowledged that attitudes tend to be the strongest indicator of purchase intention regarding natural products (Ayob, Awadh, Hadi, Jaffri, Jamshed and Ahmad, 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020).

Research in South Africa suggests that consumers, specifically women, display a positive relationship between their attitudes towards natural products and their consumption (Anvar & Venter, 2014). Furthermore, the efficacy of products has been identified as an essential influence for the formation of attitudes towards natural skincare consumption (Průša & Sadílek, 2019). Despite the research mentioned above, Lin et al., (2018) found that although consumers may hold positive attitudes towards natural skincare, their purchase behaviours are more likely to lean towards convenient/chemical skincare, as they believe it to be more affordable and efficient in performance. Lin et al., (2018) will serve as the foundation for this researcher's current study.

South African researchers have also indicated the abundance of plant biodiversity available that cannot be sourced anywhere else in the world (Van Wyk, Oudtshoorn & Gericke, 1997 in Ndhlovu, Mooki, Mbeng & Aremu, 2019; Mongalo & Makhafola, 2018). In the context of utilising South African plant species for natural product content production, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape (EC) have been identified as hotspots (Sagbo & Mbeng 2018, 2019; Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Thibane, Ndhlala, Abdelgadir, Finnie & Van Staden, 2019).

The abundance of raw materials that can be used to produce natural skincare products, paired with the increasing global demand for these natural cosmetic products, provide a unique economic opportunity for South Africa (Van Wyk et al., 1997 in Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Mongalo & Makhafola, 2018, Sagbo & Mbeng 2018; Ltd, 2019; Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Thibane et al., 2019; Ridder, 2020). If managed effectively and appropriately, this opportunity can aid in job creation and profit generation for the South African economy. Sagbo and Mbeng (2018 & 2019), as well as Ndlovu et al., (2019), have therefore implored that more extensive research towards the efficacy and consumption of commercial natural skincare products in South Africa be conducted to fully capitalise on the economic potential of these plant extracts in commercial skincare.

By investigating consumers' attitudes towards natural skincare consumption and uncovering whether these attitudes are appropriately translated into purchase behaviour, the researcher hopes to understand natural skincare product consumption's limiting and contributing factors. It is the researchers hope that this research will aid the natural

skincare industry, as the findings may be a step closer to understanding what consumers think, feel and associate with natural skincare product consumption: which can be used to adjust marketing efforts to increase the appeal towards potential consumers.

Conceptualisation

Natural skincare

A *cosmetic product* is a substance that comes into direct contact with the most outer layer of the skin, teeth or mucous membranes. These products are used to maintain, clean and protect the outermost layer of the product user (Kole, Jadhav, Thakurdesai, Nagappa, Mesua & Prunus, 2005). Skincare resonates with the product function of cosmetics and has been acknowledged as an essential industry for many countries' economic functions (Ridder, 2020).

The shift towards natural products, specifically skincare, detonates from the fear and risk factors associated with the use of conventional products due to their chemical formulation and other societal concerns (Lin et al., 2018; Sagbo & Mbeng, 2018; Boon et al., 2020). Onel (2016) states that no harm towards anyone or anything should occur throughout a green product life cycle. A product based on a natural formulation consists of a combination of ingredients that can be found within the environment (Ribeiro et al., 2015).

In the case of skincare, green/natural skincare is based on plant and fruit extracts (Csorba & Boglea, 2011). This finding is consistent in the South African context of natural skincare due to the medicinal benefits of organic compounds within the green cosmetic product (Chen, Van Wyk, Vermaak & Viljoen, 2012; Vermaak, Kamatou, Komane-Mofokeng, Viljoen & Beckett, 2012).

For this study, natural skincare encompasses a holistic approach towards environmental and health sustainability and incorporating non-harmful, organic extracts (McEachern & McClean, 2002; Csorba & Boglea, 2011; Chen et al., 2012; Vermaak et al., 2012; Onel, 2016).

Rationale

As mentioned, attitudes are the most accurate predictor for consumers purchase behaviour for natural products (Ayob et al., 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). However, Lin et al., (2018) uncovered that although consumers are likely to regard natural skincare positively, their purchase habits do not translate these positive attitudes. Therefore, the abovementioned study suggests that a positive attitude might not be enough to ensure purchase behaviour. The researcher believes that identifying, understanding, and analysing the factors contributing to consumers' attitudes might provide greater insight into why consumers participate in natural skincare product consumption or avoid it. In addition, the researcher hopes to better understand the factors that contribute towards the attitudes that translate into purchase behaviour of natural skincare product consumption.

The natural skincare industry predicts a 7.4% growth rate over the next three years in South Africa (Ltd, 2019). On a global scale, the natural skincare industry has an anticipated \$54.5 Billion in profit by 2027 (Ridder, 2020). As discussed, South Africa has abundant plant species that can be processed for commercial natural skincare products (Lall and Kishore, 2014; Sagbo and Mbeng, 2018). The availability of natural resources and increasing demand for natural skincare products present an economic opportunity for South Africa to expand their market share within the natural skincare industry on a national and global scale. (Lall and Kishore, 2014; Sagbo and Mbeng, 2018; Ltd, 2019; Ridder, 2020). Further, research suggests the use of natural skincare products has minimal impact on the environment in comparison to convenient/chemical skincare (Juliano & Magrini, 2017; Lin et al., 2018; Sagbo & Mbeng, 2018; Boon et al., 2020). Understanding consumers' attitudes and identifying the most impactful factors that contribute to consumers' purchase behaviour (or lack thereof) towards natural skincare products is, therefore, a worthy topic to investigate for the advancement of the natural skincare industry in South Africa. This research also aims to contribute towards understanding consumers' attitudes towards consuming environmentally friendly products. An increase in the use of eco-friendly cosmetic products may aid in the battle against plastic pollution, as well as the (Su, Cui, Liu, Zhang & Baninla, 2020).

As the study is exploratory, the findings should provide insight into the issue but not solve the identified problem (Maree, 2019). Therefore, the data obtained from this study will play a small role in understanding consumers' attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that this humble contribution will aid as a guideline for natural product marketers to effectively execute strategic marketing efforts to sell more locally made green products for economic stimulation and environmental protection.

Problem Statement

Research suggests that the strength of an attitude is an accurate predictor of purchase behaviour for natural products (Ayob et al., 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). However, Lin et al., (2018) found that despite consumers generally positive attitudes towards natural cosmetic products, their attitudes did not translate into purchase behaviour. As South Africa has abundant plant species extracts that can support commercial natural skincare production, ensuring that the positive attitudes translate into purchase behaviour is imperative to expand the natural skincare industry market share (Van Wyk et al., 1997 in Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Mongalo & Makhafola, 2018, Sagbo & Mbeng 2018; Ltd, 2019; Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Thibane et al., 2019; Ridder, 2020). The increase in the use of natural products, such as natural skincare, can also help decrease the detrimental impact on the environment due to the environmental consciousness and protection considered in the production of these products (McEachern & McClean, 2002; Ribeiro et al., 2015; Onel, 2016; Lin, Yang, Hanifah & Iqbal, 2018). Whereas conventional/ chemical cosmetic products are one of the most significant contributors to plastic pollution, release dangerous toxins into the environment, and tend to be the most commonly used cosmetic products amongst consumers (Su et al., 2020). The assumed consensus of positive consumer attitudes towards natural skincare, yet the lack of purchasing these products, may threaten the expansion of the industry and the opportunity to capitalise on this growing industry for South Africa. Thereby potentially inhibiting local economic growth, job creation, and industry expansion.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative study aims to understand consumer attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption and the factors contributing to the formation of these attitudes. The research seeks to gain a greater understanding of consumer attitudes and their current skincare consumption habits. Further, the researcher will be investigating whether these attitudes inhibit or translate into purchase behaviour. This contribution towards the existing knowledge concerning consumer attitudes and perception towards natural skincare is an attempt to help advance the natural skincare industry in South Africa.

Research Question and Objectives

Main Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of Millennial Capetonian women towards natural skincare products?
2. Are these attitudes accurately translated towards their purchase behaviour with regards to natural skincare product consumption?

Sub-Research Questions

1. If the attitudes are positive
 - a. What are the factors that mainly contribute towards the positive attitudes towards natural skincare products?
 - b. Are these positive feelings towards natural skincare being translated into the consumer's purchase behaviour?
 - i. If not, what are the factors that are prohibiting consumers from purchasing natural skincare products, despite their positive attitudes thereof?
2. If the attitudes are negative
 - a. What are the factors contributing towards the negative regard consumers have for natural skincare products?

- i. What do consumers believe to contribute towards these negative feelings / attitudes towards natural skincare?

Main Research Objectives

1. Understand millennial Capetonian females' attitudes towards natural skincare.
2. Identify whether these attitudes are appropriately translated towards their purchase behaviour for natural skincare consumption.

Sub-Research Objectives

1. If the attitudes are positive
 - a. Identify the features that contribute towards consumers positive attitudes towards natural skincare.
 - b. Investigate whether these positive attitudes are being translated into their purchase behaviours.
 - i. If not, identify and analyse the factors that are preventing consumers from purchasing natural skincare products, despite their positive attitudes towards the product / concept.
2. If the attitudes are negative
 - a. Identify the factors that contribute towards the formation of negative attitudes towards natural skincare.
 - i. Understanding what the consumer believes plays a role in the formation of their negative attitudes towards natural skincare.

Outline for rest of the report

The research report will further discuss the fundamental theoretical foundation that serves as the guideline for the researcher, namely the Pro-Environmental Theory of Reasoned Action (PERA) model. After that, an in-depth literature review will analyse relevant theory and data concerning consumers' attitudes and purchase behaviour towards natural skin care products. The study's methodology will expand on the research design and approach, data collection method and data analysis process. Towards the conclusion, the findings will explore the data in the context of existing literature. Finally, the conclusion will aim to discuss the success of the research and comment on the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 – Study in context

This chapter will discuss and conceptualise the key theoretical foundation for the study. Further, a literature review will be conducted, where the researcher will summarise and deliver commentary on relevant research regarding the topic of consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour towards natural goods and skincare.

Theoretical Foundation

The PERA is a model used to predict consumers environmentally conscious behaviour/purchase intentions (Nadlifatin et al., 2016). This model extends the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), used extensively to predict behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973; Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988; Madden, Ellen & Ajzen, 1992). The TRA model looks at the relationships between Subjective Norms (SN), Attitudes and Behaviour Intention (BI) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). Additionally, the PERA model adds on Perceived Authority Support (PAS), and consumers Perceived Environmental Concern (PEC) into the existing TRA model in an attempt to understand the factors involved towards contributing to eco-friendly products and services (Nadlifatin et al., 2016) (See figure 1). Further, please refer to Annexure A for the list of abbreviations used throughout this research report.

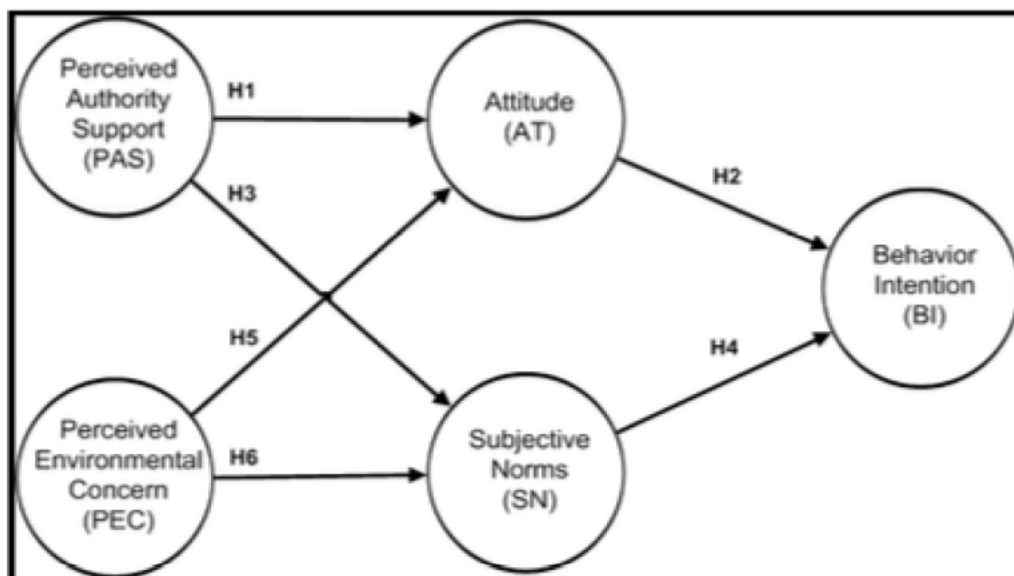


Figure 1 (Nadlifatin et al., 2016: 10)

Attitudes have been identified as the most predictive antecedent of BI in natural product consumption (Hsu et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018; Boon et al., 2020). For this study, attitudes towards natural skincare consumption will be the primary antecedent investigated. Attitudes are multifaceted and are influenced by numerous internal and external factors (Lin et al., 2018). Some believe values and beliefs form attitudes about specific outcomes due to behaviour (Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Rosenberg and Hanland (1960) created a model that suggests that attitudes are based on three components: mainly cognition (knowledge of a concept), affect (feelings towards the product), and behavioural (ability to interact with activity) (Chih, Liou & Hsu, 2014). Lin et al., (2018) found that social factors, such as SN and PAC, play a role in shaping attitudes (Nadlifatin et al., 2016). Therefore, the researcher proposes investigating the attitudes of Female Millennials towards product consumption with regards to natural skincare-utilising the PERA model as a guideline.

SN refers to the effects of social perception from friends and family associated with the interaction or intention towards the behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). Collectivist cultures tend to have higher conformity rates due to the integration and interdependence of social networks to shape views (Midilli & Tolunay, 2021). South Africa has been identified as a collectivist culture (Eaton & Louw, 2002). Therefore, the researcher will investigate whether social conformity plays a role in the millennial females' attitude towards natural skincare product consumption.

The government or any authoritative figure that demonstrates and supports pro-environmental or sustainable behaviour is known as the PAS (Persada, Lin, Nadlifatin & Razif, 2015). The municipality in Cape Town has a strong incentive for industries to move towards greener and cleaner strategies (Western Cape Government, 2013; City of Cape Town, 2017). According to the PERA model (Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin, Jiang, Mufidah, Persada & Noer, 2018), this should affect the BI and attitudes of consumers. The researcher will use this information as a referral when conducting data collection in the Cape Town area, as the PAS antecedent may play a role in the attitude formations of the participants.

PEC affects the individual experiences towards the environment and the conservation thereof when participating in BI towards a pro-environmental product or service (Persada et al., 2015). Furthermore, effects are associated with attitude formation, and research suggests that PEC plays a significant role in attitudes towards eco-friendly BI (Chih et al., 2015; Nadlifatin et al., 2016). Therefore, the researcher will use this information to comprehend the extent of PEC of the participants when analysing their attitudes.

BI refers to the level of interest the participant displays towards actually completing or doing the behaviour. This antecedent of the PERA will not be directly relevant to the researcher, as it had no impact on attitudes; however, it will gain insight when conducting data collection.

The PERA model will serve as an informational foundation for the researcher. Inductive reasoning, however, will be used with collecting and analysing data, as the researcher is interested in the beliefs and attitudes of the participants towards purchasing and consuming natural skincare made in South Africa (Slevitch, 2011).

Literature Review

The Literature Review will consist of a summary of relevant studies in chronological order according to central themes. Towards the end of this section, the discussion regarding the relevance of the current research and analysed literature will take place.

Summary of Literature

Consumer attitudes towards cosmetic products

In 2016, a Malaysian study investigated consumer attitudes, perceptions and awareness towards cosmetic products (Ayob et al., 2016). The study developed a quantitative cross-sectional questionnaire by researching Malaysian consumers' attitudes, perceptions and level of awareness towards cosmetic products. The influence of the participants' culture, race, and finances were also assessed. A convenient sampling method gathered 66 participants, predominantly female, to participate in the study. The results indicate that the level of awareness has no association with attitudes and perceptions. However, the two latter factors do positively impact one another. Culture and race are closely associated and have a significant impact on attitudes and perceptions towards cosmetic products. The price of the products also significantly impacts the consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards cosmetic product consumption (Ayob et al., 2016).

Another study assessing consumer attitudes towards cosmetics was conducted in the United Kingdom; however, this study focused on green cosmetics. The qualitative study set out to understand consumers' attitudes toward natural cosmetics by investigating consumers' definitions of natural cosmetics, assessing their attitudes and the factors that contribute to the formation of these attitudes. The data was collected via focus groups of women between the ages of 20 and 65. Out of the 30 participants, majority of the participants were in the 20-35 age group. The findings suggest that female consumers in the UK had a varied understanding of what natural skincare was. The attitudes towards natural skincare were neutral to positive, yet there was little interest in consuming natural cosmetic products. The formation of the attitudes is based on three main themes: knowledge of natural skincare, prior experience with natural skincare, and the immediate social inclination towards natural skincare (Lin et al., 2018).

Průša and Sadílek (2019) specifically aimed to investigate the relationships between consumers' sincere environmental concern (ENV), their preferences (PRE), and tolerance (TOL) towards natural goods, as well as their willingness to spend more money for natural products (PAY). A quantitative questionnaire was distributed amongst 520 Czech university students, who were sampled by implementing quota sampling. As the researcher identified that attitudes change over time, the study was repeated to ensure validation. The sample was a mixture of native and international students, with the majority being female in both rounds. All four hypotheses were supported, finding significant relationships between Gen Y consumers PRE and their level of PAY, ENV, TOL and green purchase behaviour. Meaning that even though consumers are willing to pay more for green products, there is also a correlation with regards to their level of TOL for less efficient products. Overall, it was found that attitudes are positive towards natural product consumption (Průša & Sadílek, 2019).

More recently, researchers aimed to investigate the role of collective self-esteem (CSE) and social influence (SI), as well as attitudes and the generational differences of Millennials and Gen X on Turkish purchase behaviour towards natural products (Midilli & Tolunay, 2021). 370 Participants were conveniently sampled. One hundred eighteen participants identified as men, and 3 participants did not disclose their gender, leaving the majority female (67%). The participants were sampled in Istanbul, Turkey. The age of the participants ranged from 16-66 years; however, the most prevalent age group consisted of the 26-35 cohort (49%). A quantitative questionnaire was distributed amongst Turkish green product consumers. According to the results of the questionnaire, CSE and SI both have mild effects on green product purchase behaviour. However, the impact of the Generational cohort is significant on CSE and SI, which then have a substantial influence on attitudes and PI (Midilli & Tolunay, 2021).

The PERA Model

In 2016, a study assessed consumers' purchase intentions by applying the PERA model (Nadlifatin et al., 2016). The PERA model was developed to conduct the research, as it is an extension of the TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973) with two added factors known as PAS and PES. The study aimed to investigate Indonesian consumers and their

purchase/behaviour intentions towards products labelled as eco-friendly. 213 participants were conveniently sampled from 47 cities within Indonesia. The age ranged from 17-36, while 63% of the participants were female. The quantitative study utilised on-and-offline data collection methods to answer a two-section questionnaire assessing their personal background information. The assessment included the five constructs that form the PERA model: PAS, PEC, AT, SN and BI. It was found that PAS impacts SN, PAS and attitudes have a significant relationship, and PEC has a medium effect on SN. However, SN does not have a strong correlation with BI and therefore was rejected. PEC and attitudes had a positively significant correlation, but the strongest positive correlation was found between attitudes and BI (Nadlifatin et al., 2016).

Chin et al., (2018) further investigated the critical constructs of the PERA model and the extent of the effects of PAS and PEC with regards to natural skincare consumption. The study was also conducted in Indonesia but focused only on females between 21-50 years old. The majority of the participants were 21-30 years old (76.4%). The questionnaire was either distributed online or in-person and based on a quantitative approach. The questionnaire focused on the SN, attitudes, PEC, PAS and BI-related questions, along with their background. The results indicated that PAS had significant relationships with SN, attitudes and PEC. Whereas PEC only showed direct positive correlations with regards to SN and attitudes. The central hypothesis, which investigated the positive relationship between PAS and PEC, was supported. Similar to Nadlifatin et al., (2016), attitudes and BI had the strongest positive correlation, indicating that positive attitudes towards Natural skincare will most likely result in BI/purchasing of Natural Skincare (Chin et al., 2018).

Consumer behaviour towards natural products

Hsu et al., (2017) apply the theory of planned behaviour, along with effects such as country of origin (COO) and price sensitivity (PS). The study's main aim is to test the relationships between attitudes, SN, and perceived behavioural control (PBC) and BI and explore the effects of COO and PS regarding natural skincare purchase behaviour. The study focuses exclusively on females between 18-24 years, with the majority being around 20 years old. 300 participants were conveniently sampled amongst university

students in Northern Taiwan. The quantitative survey sought out to test the relationships between the six above mentioned constructs. AT, SN and PBC all tested positively for significant correlations towards PI of green skincare products. The effects of COO and PS positively impact SN, attitudes, PBC and BI, and are suggested to be an intensifying effect for green purchase behaviour. Special mention was given towards the effect of attitudes on BI towards natural skincare, as it was found to be the strongest correlation in the study (Hsu et al., 2017).

Boon, Fern and Chee (2020) conducted a similar study in Malaysia. This study looked at the relationships between AT, SN, PBC and BI towards natural skincare, with added value for money (VM) and past experiences (PE). Bahru, Melaka and Selangor were identified as major cities in Malaysia, and purposive sampling was implemented to determine a sample of 200 participants. 44% identified as male and 56% as female. The majority of the participants were in the age range of 18-22. A quantitative questionnaire was used to assess the variables mentioned above and their relationship with PI.

Interestingly, there was no significant relationship found between SN and PBC and PI. However, there is a direct positive relationship between PE and PI and VM and PI. Meaning that consumers appeal more to products if they feel it appropriately measures up to the payment made for the product. Once again, attitude had the most significant relationship with PI throughout the study (Boon et al., 2020).

Ethnobotanicals in South Africa

Sagbo and Mbeng (2018) reviewed the literature regarding the cosmetic utilisation of plant extracts for skincare purposes in the realm of the EC. Approximately 105 plant species from the EC region that are used for traditional natural skincare practices were identified in the ethnobotanical review. However, it was revealed that only 70 had been scientifically documented. Indicating that 35 plant species have not undergone scientific research, thus not being commercially utilised by the natural skincare industry.

In 2019, Sagbo and Mbeng decided to further investigate the issue mentioned above in the EC (Sagbo & Mbeng, 2019), specifically addressing whether traditional plant species are present in mainstream natural cosmetic products. Therefore, a survey was designed to help the large grocery and pharmaceutical chains in the province identify whether they

stocked naturally based cosmetic products. The results from the survey were analysed in accordance with the ethnobotanical research document from the past year (Sagbo & Mbeng, 2018). The results indicated that only six of the 105 plant species are used in green cosmetic products in the Eastern Cape, revealing the lack of incorporation of natural resources (plant extracts) in local commercial green cosmetic products.

Identified Flaw in Literature

The majority of this studies reviewed on attitudes or perceptions of consumers were quantitatively based (Ayob et al., 2016; Průša & Sadílek, 2019; Midilli & Tolunay, 2021). As attitudes are based on beliefs and experiences, a quantitative methodology is limiting in fully grasping the depth of the participants' attitudes and the formations thereof (Rahman, 2016). Therefore, the researcher identified this flaw as a methodological weakness. The researcher will be using a qualitative approach, specifically semi-structured interviews. As Lin et al., (2018) note, focus groups can change participants' attitudes due to SN and may change participants' original attitudes or thoughts. Individual semi-structured interviews should ensure each participant unbiased attitude towards natural skincare product consumption.

Identified Gap in Literature

The majority of the studies reviewed investigated attitudes and purchase behaviours toward natural or cosmetic products in Asia (Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Ayob et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2017; Chin et al., 2018) and some in Europe (Lin et al., 2018; Průša & Sadílek, 2019). This observation aligns with the statistic regarding countries that use natural skincare the most (Ridder, 2020). South Africa is in the mid-level playing field concerning natural skincare consumption (Ridder, 2020).

However, researchers have indicated the abundance of biodiversity available in South Africa (Van Wyk et al., 1997 in Ndhlovu et al., 2019; Mongalo & Makhafola, 2018). The findings from Sagbo and Mbeng (2018; 2019) suggest that South Africans are not fully utilising the natural resources available to their economic advantage. Therefore, Sagbo and Mbeng (2018; 2019) recommend the immediate intervention of researching the

efficiency of plant species in the EC regarding natural cosmetics. This recommendation is also made by Ndhlovu et al., (2019) with regards to Limpopo's biodiversity.

These suggestions, as mentioned above, is crucial for the researcher moving forward. Although it is not in the South African context, it was found that VM and PS directly impact PI (Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). These results indicate the importance of efficient production of natural skincare, as consumers are willing to pay more for natural products. More importantly, consumers have a lower level of TOL for inefficient natural products (Průša & Sadílek, 2019). Therefore, as mentioned by Sagbo and Mbeng (2018, 2019) and Ndlovu et al., (2019), the intervention for more research on the commercial cosmetic benefit of plants will significantly contribute to the improvement of efficiency for natural skincare products in South Africa, which should support the economic expansion of the industry.

Most of the studies investigated purchase behaviour or attitudes towards natural products by applying a variation of the Theory of Reasoned Action or the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ayob et al., 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020, Midilli & Tolunay, 2021). The researcher identified that the Theory of Pro-Environmental Action (PERA) investigates the influence of SN, PEC and PAS on attitudes and BI (Nadlifatin et al., 2016). From the literature analysed, the researcher noticed that the level of PEC should have an important contributing factor on the formation of attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption. The PERA model is based on the seminal theory of the TRA, with the adaptation towards investigating pro-environmental purchase behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1997).

Almost all the studies reviewed found that attitudes had the most substantial correlational relationship towards PI of natural or cosmeceutical products (Ayob et al., 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). With only one exception, attitudes were used to mediate PI (Midilli & Tolunay, 2021). The findings mentioned above showcase the significance of perspectives for the purchase behaviour of consumers.

The importance of attitudes towards natural skincare PI, alongside the opportunity for South Africa to capitalise on the natural skincare industry, has led to the gap identification for this researcher. In addition, understanding current consumer attitudes towards

purchasing locally made natural skincare products will contribute an insight into the factors that are most considered most when purchasing skincare.

In terms of location, the research will be conducted within the city of Cape Town as the researcher resides in Cape Town. Financial and time restraints also serve as a limit in terms of geography. Additionally, the Western Cape municipality is driving the incorporation of green strategies within Cape Town, which means that Capetonian consumers should be more environmentally conscious due to the government's incentive (Western Cape Government, 2013; City of Cape Town, 2017). This driving force of sustainable consumption indicates the presence of PAS from the Cape Town municipality, which according to the PERA model, has a positive impact on attitudes and BI towards the natural product or skincare consumption (Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018).

The consistent presence of millennial females within the review led the researcher to acknowledge their significance towards natural product consumption. Thereby exclusively studying female Millennials attitudes towards natural skincare. Most of the studies utilised a larger sample with simple random sampling. However: budget, time constraints, and lack of experience concerning the researcher's abilities contribute to the study choosing small sample size. Purposive and snowball sampling will also be used in association with budget and time constraints (Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Ayob et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2017; Chin et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018; Průša & Sadílek, 2019).

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The methodology of the proposed research study will be expanded upon in this chapter. Specifically, the research paradigm, in accordance with the design and approach towards the study, will be discussed. Further, the population and sampling method will be detailed. Thereafter, the data collection and analysis method will be explained regarding the practical application of theory regarding semi-structured interviews and thematic content analysis.

Research Paradigm

A paradigm provides direction for researchers when they conduct an academic study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It ensures that data is collected and interpreted following a set of beliefs or norms that have been recognised by other academics (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, the choice of paradigm, and philosophical approach, impacts how this researcher will administer their study. For this study, an interpretive paradigm will be applied with an ontological approach. The choice of paradigm and philosophy will be discussed and motivated in this section.

Interpretivism sets out to uncover research objectively, focusing on human interactions and the meaning (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretivism believes that people construct their realities. Therefore, it should apply a qualitative approach to collecting data to fully comprehend the significance of the information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In an interpretative study, the researcher is encouraged to apply empathy, see the world from the participant's viewpoint, and analyse the factors contributing to their socially constructed reality (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998 in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This researcher aims to understand the attitudes and perceptions of natural skincare from the perspective of the consumer. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm is deemed appropriate as it will enable the researcher to indulge in a deeper understanding of the participant's viewpoint regarding natural skincare consumption. This will be achieved by assessing their attitudes and investigating the factors they perceive to be restrictive or inductive towards their purchase behaviour of natural skincare.

To fully immerse within the reality of the participants, the researcher will approach the research with an ontological assumption (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This approach will enable the researcher to interpret the participants' multiple realities and underlying beliefs towards natural skincare consumption (Slevitch, 2011). As mentioned, the interpretive nature of this study aligns with qualitative methodology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As qualitative research values, the subjectivity and individual interpretation of data, an ontological approach towards the research will aid the researcher in investigating the participants' realities and beliefs, and thereby their attitudes towards natural skincare consumption (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 in Slevitch, 2011).

As discussed, the purpose and aims of the study fit within the interpretivist paradigm. Applying an ontological assumption will ensure the validation of each participant's reality, as attitudes and perceptions are constructed by their social surroundings (Lin et al., 2018).

Research Design and Approach

As mentioned, the nature of the interpretive paradigm and qualitative research design aligned to achieve the objectives of the researcher's study: investigating the attitudes of female millennials towards consuming natural skincare products (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). By utilising a qualitative methodology, the researcher fully interpreted the data retrieved to understand why the participants hold certain attitudes and beliefs towards natural skincare products and whether these attitudes translate into their purchase behaviours (Thorne, 2000). Unlike a quantitative approach, qualitative research values understanding why the participants feel or think a certain way (Thorne, 2000). Due to the methodology's nature within the current study, the qualitative approach will require the researcher to focus on uncovering the individual truth of each human experience (ontology) (Maree, 2019). Whilst simultaneously analysing the uncovered data subjectively to contribute to the greater understanding of the leading research questions: What are consumers' attitudes towards consuming natural skincare products? Are these attitudes accurately translated into their purchase behaviours towards natural skin care products? (Sandelowski, 1993; Maree, 2019).

The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to fully explore the problem without the expectation of deriving a solution for the identified issue (Stebbins, 2011 in Maree, 2019). Therefore, the study's exploratory nature worked in synergy with the inductive method of reasoning (Arthur, 1994; Maree, 2019). Applying inductive reasoning within the study empowered the researcher to observe patterns from the retrieved qualitative data to construct a more refined theoretical concept. Thereby generalising the interpreted information to compare to other qualitative data within the same field of research (Maree, 2019). The researcher acknowledged that the world of academia is novel to them, and therefore subjectively explored female consumers' attitudes towards natural skincare. After that, they used inductive reasoning to understand the factors contributing to attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption that translate into purchase behaviour (Sandelowski 1993; Thorne, 2000; Maree, 2019).

The qualities mentioned above fell within an exploratory study design (Creswell, 2007 in Maree, 2019). An exploratory research design approaches research from the participant's viewpoint, with the objective to uncover the broader context of a participant's experience. Thus, the researcher studied the participants' social experiences and beliefs to inductively understand the formation of their attitudes (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). This study was cross-sectional due to time constraints (Willis & Trondman, 2000; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2019).

Population

The study population refers to the specific cohort of individuals that share common traits, interests, or characteristics that will be researched to answer the research question. To aid in identifying individuals that will fit the population for a study, researchers rely on aspects such as nature, size, or any other unique characteristic. These are known as the parameters of a population (Maree, 2019).

Target Population

The study's target population is defined by the researcher's population parameters (Maree, 2019). The researcher based their study on female millennials and their attitudes towards natural skincare consumption for this study.

The following information guided establishing the parameters for the target population for this study: Women are the primary consumer's skincare products, as they invest more time in establishing a skincare routine (Kurnts, 2019). In addition, millennials currently have the most impactful spending power and have shown a growing interest in natural products (Průša & Sadílek, 2019; Boon et al., 2020; Midilli and Tolunay, 2021). Lastly, consumers who consume skincare, specifically natural skincare products, tend to fall within a high living standard measure (LSM). Typically, these individuals are educated and have a sustainable income source to support their skincare habits (D'Souza et al., 2007, cited in Anvar & Venter, 2014). As the study sets out to understand female millennials' attitudes towards consumer behaviour of natural skincare, the unit of analysis will be individuals who fit within the female millennial cohort (Maree, 2019).

Accessible Population

The accessible population consists of the researcher's portion to realistically reach to fulfil the research objective (Maree, 2019). Furthermore, due to the size of the millennial female cohort in, as well as the number of female skincare users within South Africa, the following parameters were further provided to access a realistic margin of the target population (Maree, 2019):

- ***Female Millennial***

- The age range the researcher has the most access to within the Millennial cohort is females between 23 – 28 years of age.

- ***Frequent skincare user***

- Practice a skincare regimen at least five times a week

- ***Cape Town resident***

- Live within the boundaries of the Cape Town municipality.

- ***Tertiary degree***

- To ensure the participants are within a certain LSM, with a future or current career prospect that can sustainably support their skincare regime.

Sample

As mentioned, the exploratory nature of this study revolves around collecting rich, qualitative data of female millennials' attitudes towards consumer behaviour of natural skincare. The researcher purposefully chose six participants that fit within the accessible population parameters as the sample for this study. Multiple academics have noted that qualitative research does not require a specific sample size to ensure validity. Instead, the sample size should be based on the objectives and nature of the study, as well as the experience of the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994 in Etikan et al., 2016; Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016; Maree, 2019). Therefore, the researcher focused on obtaining detailed data within a smaller sample better to understand consumer attitudes (Maree, 2019). Since it is not the researcher's objective to generalise these findings but rather create a remarkable account of consumers' attitudes towards consuming natural skincare, there was no need to have a large sample (Maree, 2019). Further, the researcher collected information until data saturation was achieved, attained after interviewing six participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Sampling methods

Purposive Sampling

According to Maree (2019), qualitative research mainly utilises purposive sampling.

Regarding this study, the researcher used their resources to purposefully choose participants that fit the criteria of the accessible population to ensure the research objectives are accurately attained (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 in Maree, 2019). Furthermore, the specificity of the target population of the study was enhanced by utilising homogeneous purposive sampling, as all the participants have similar characteristics to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Patton, 2002 in Maree, 2019). The researcher contacted eight individuals through WhatsApp that they believed to fit within the target population parameters. However, of the eight potential participants, only four individuals were able to participate in the study. This led to the researcher utilising the snowball sampling method to attain more participants (Maree, 2019).

Snowball Sampling

As mentioned, the researcher had exhausted their resources to find participants willing to participate in the study due to schedule conflicts. In addition, many of the original participants contracted Covid-19 and were therefore not physically or mentally available for interviews. The researcher, therefore, made use of snowball sampling by asking current willing participants to recommend individuals that fit within the parameters of the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2019). By utilising this non-probable method, the researcher was able to find two more respondents that fit the target population parameters and were willing to participate in their study. Using both the purposive sampling and snowball sampling method, the researcher could begin the data collection process. The researcher used WhatsApp to contact the participants, and gained their additional contact details to confirm their interviews. The sample, therefore, consisted of six female Millennials between the ages of 23-28. They were all had a set skin care regime they used at least five times a week, lived within the Cape Town area, had obtained a tertiary degree and had a sustainable source of income to support their skin care habits.

The Data Collection Method

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured open-ended interviews are most commonly used in qualitative research, specifically exploratory research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The nature of the study required participants to discuss their views and attitudes towards natural skincare, and the consumption of these products, alongside any other factors that may contribute or inhibit the purchase of natural skincare products. Maree (2019) notes that semi-structured interviews are commonly used for cross-sectional studies, which aligns with the research design. The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to explore the participant's viewpoints fully. With regards to the ontological approach, every participant has individual experiences that contribute towards their attitude formation. Therefore, the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to delve deeper into specific themes or topics relevant to the research questions regarding the participant's viewpoint (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 in Slevitch, 2011; Britten, 2006; DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Maree, 2019).

The semi-structured interviews were based upon the main research question and enhanced by the prompt of the sub-research questions. Furthermore, any contributing factors mentioned by the participants were further investigated to understand the realities that contribute to the formation of their attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The researcher used the PERA model as a foundation for the interview questions; however, this relied on the participant's contribution to further investigate their realities (Maree, 2019). The participants' willingness and time were considered with regards to the time limit for the data collection. The interviews lasted between 20 to 40 minutes, depending on whether the researcher had met data saturation (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Probing was ethically applied throughout all six of the interview sessions (Please see Annexure B for the discussion guide).

The researcher found it necessary to investigate each participant's themes and viewpoints further to fully understand their rationale regarding their consideration process towards purchasing natural skincare (Maree, 2019). This ethical probing led to the interviews being conducted conversationally, ensuring the participants were comfortable and relaxed. Although the researcher initially planned to conduct the interviews in person or via zoom, the third wave of Covid led the researcher to conduct all the interviews on zoom (ENCA, 2021). This decision to conduct all the interviews online ensured that the researcher and all the participants were safe and not put in contact to avoid the potential spread of the virus.

Interview Proceedings

Each participant was individually asked to participate in the study via WhatsApp. The purpose of the study, the role the participant would play in the interview session, and ethical considerations for the research project were all explained. Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, the date and time were established for the online interview session between the researcher and each participant. An email was sent with the following information to confirm the participant's commitment to the study:

- The interview Zoom link.
- Date and time of interview.
- The consent forms to participate in the study as well as the consent form to record the session.

Half an hour before each interview session, the researcher sent a reminder message to the participant, ensuring the participant would fill in the consent forms and send them via email to the researcher prior to the interview session (Please see Annexure C & D for the consent forms).

The interview sessions were conducted online via Zoom to ensure the researcher's safety and research participants from Covid-19. Before recording the online session, the researcher gave the participant a quick overview of the proceedings of the interview session to ensure the participant was comfortable and understood what the data collection procedure entailed. Once the recording began, the researcher once again

explained the purpose of the study, the role of the participant, and the ethical considerations of the study. To reassure the participant that their identity would remain anonymous, the researcher reminded them that data would remain confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. Once the participant agreed and stated they understood, the interview procedure for the research questions began.

The discussion guide consisted of 9 prewritten questions. First, three grand tour questions were asked regarding the general skincare habits of the participant, and after that, six-core questions were asked that focused on the participant's current attitude towards natural skincare products and the contributing factors that may play a role in the formation of their attitudes towards purchasing of natural skincare products. Depending on the discussion between the researcher and the participant, specific topics were further investigated by using ethical prompting. This resulted in each conversation/interview being unique to the participant, as their personal experience and purchasing habits regarding natural skincare were investigated. The researcher took detailed notes during the discussion: detailing ideas, bodily gestures, pauses and tone of voice of the participant. Once the interview was completed, the researcher reminded the participant they may request a copy of the interview recording, notes, transcripts, and the final research report to ensure the researcher accurately interpreted their reality and attitudes.

After the interview session, a "thank you" message was sent to each participant, thanking them for their time and contribution.

Data Analysis Method

Qualitative Thematic Content Analysis

The researcher identified qualitative thematic content analysis as an appropriate data analysis method for this study. This method enabled the researcher to inductively extract recurring patterns and information from the raw data and code it according to themes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). This method aided the researcher in translating the interviews into interpretive and digestible findings that are easy to read and understand (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). As the research goal is to contribute to the general understanding of the attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption amongst

female millennials, the researcher opted to subjectively understand each participant's reality and see any common themes amongst the research participants. Therefore, the researcher used induction to analyse the raw data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

As noted by many, qualitative content analysis is an organic process. Therefore, the eight steps were viewed as a guideline for the researcher to use as a reference for direction when analysing the raw data (Saldaña, 2011 in Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009 in Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Strydom & Delpont, 2020).

Once the interviews were conducted, the recordings of the interviews were organised and translated into transcribed data by using an online application known as Temi (Temi, n.a.). The handwritten notes and mementoes that the researcher took during each interview were also included in the transcribed written word document to ensure the researcher could holistically see the participant's emotions and motivations conveyed via their body language (non-verbal cues). The researcher thoughtfully read each interview and noted their impression of the interview/text on a separate piece of paper to begin the data analysis process. Once all six transcripts were read, the researcher again read each interview transcript and highlighted certain words, ideas, and actions repeated throughout the data in different colours depending on the theme or topic. This includes relevant or contradicting information from past studies. Therefore, the highlighted sections were colour coded, with notes on the transcript as to why this information was relevant or significant for the researcher.

By coding the information, the researcher could break down the raw data into a more organised system that was logical and coherent with the objectives of the researcher's study. Further, by coding the information, this process allowed the researcher to understand that each participant has a different perception and understanding of what the concept of natural skincare entails, their attitudes towards the products, and whether their attitudes translate into natural skincare product consumption.

As many ideas and codes were created to make sense of the data, the codes were re-analysed. Codes that were related/interconnected were sorted together to start creating overarching themes/ideas of the codes slowly. This process was repeated until the researcher had achieved a logical induction of information that could be presented in an

appropriate variation of themes and categories relevant to the topic of the study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). These themes were then defined and described to ensure each code was appropriately allocated to the correct theme. The researcher consistently referred to the study's questions, objectives, and key theory to provide the information within each theme to answer the study's research questions.

Once the themes were established and defined, the researcher looked at the possible relationship between them and their contribution to the attitude formation towards natural skincare product consumption. This was achieved by creating mind maps to recreate the connections between the themes and topics mentioned in the interviews. Visually presenting the themes using colour and drawings allowed the researcher to conclude that some themes were more consistent amongst some participants. In contrast, others were more dependent on a singular participant's individual experience or attitude. This trend reminded the researcher to be open-minded and contextualise the data according to what the respondents shared. The analysis and organisation of the raw data, including the mind maps, additional notes made and any other relevant information regarding the study, was documented in a notebook for safekeeping. Further, the transcribed interviews, with notes and colour-coded highlighted sections, were stored in a file with all the relevant information and drafts for the research study.

After the data was analysed and organised, the researcher reported the findings. Ensuring the voice and report was neutral and accurate to the participant's experience and lifestyle. After that, the researcher could connect the findings and past studies that reinforced theories or contradicted past journals in the discussion portion. Contrasting ideas and general insights from the participants were also discussed and analysed to showcase that each individual has a unique set of factors that play a role in their attitudes towards natural skincare consumption.

The integrity and Trustworthiness of the study

As this study is qualitative and subjective, the data is represented through the ontological lens of the researcher's interpretation of participants' experiences and realities. Unlike quantitative research, which is based on the objective measure of causal numerical relationships, qualitative research cannot ensure validity and reliability. Instead, the researcher focused on ensuring the study's trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Maree, 2019). Thereby ensuring the integrity of the study.

Credibility

Credibility refers to how accurate the researcher interpreted the reality/experience of the research participant (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher first focused on gaining the rapport and trust of each research participant to gain access to their personal experiences regarding their attitudes towards purchasing natural skincare. This was achieved by creating an inviting and relaxed environment. Techniques such as warm eye contact, a relaxed demeanour and casual small talk to set the participant at ease were used. During the interview, the researcher often verbally summarised an important point mentioned by the participant to ensure they understood the context and significance of the answer to each question. Post-interview member check-ins were held to confirm that the information captured was accurate to the participants' reality. Furthermore, credibility was ensured by consistently practising triangulation throughout the data analysis process. This includes referring to the transcripts and notes from the interviews, using the chosen key theory as a guideline, and applying the ontological lens to interpret and analyse the raw data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2019).

Transferability

Although quantitative research values generalizability, qualitative research should focus on the ability to see connections and related themes within the conclusive data obtained to other research that has been conducted within a similar context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Maree, 2019). This will be achieved using the technique of thick description: thorough

and in-depth explanation of the study to ensure the readers understand the rationale and methodology of the study should they choose to replicate it (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The goal for transferability is to ensure that similar outcomes will be achieved within the appropriate context if other researchers replicate the study (Maree, 2019).

Dependability

Dependability refers to the researcher's attention and detail towards the documentation of the research process (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). As mentioned, the researcher documented, filed and organised all the content and themes obtained during the data collection and analysis process in a traceable, logical and easy to follow. Furthermore, by documenting the data and progression of analysis, the researcher ensured an audit trail to review and reflect on past notes when revising or updating the findings (Maree, 2019). This audit trail also supports the researcher's decisions throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Maree, 2019).

Confirmability

This concept is associated with neutrality and the absence of bias throughout the conduction of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Maree, 2019). By using member checking, the researcher will invite the participants to review their note-taking findings and conclusions to confirm they accurately captured their attitudes and motivations towards purchasing natural skincare products (Maree, 2019). Further, the researcher will also refrain from asking any leading questions that may cause bias during the semi-structured interviews (Maree, 2019). Direct quotes will be used within the appropriate context and not per the researcher's agenda. At all times, the researcher will act unbiased towards the research process to capture the raw data and interpret it per the participants' reality (Maree, 2019).

Chapter 4 – Findings and Interpretation

A Positive Attitude is Not Enough - An Overview

A total of six female participants were interviewed, who all stated they felt a positive attitude/association towards natural skincare product consumption. All six of the participants displayed positive emotions towards the traits of natural skincare and expressed their appeal towards the benefits of natural skincare. However, despite these attitudes, only two of the six participants were actively incorporating natural skincare products into their daily routine.

According to numerous researchers, it is generally accepted that positive attitudes tend to be the most significant indicator of natural product consumption (Ayob et al., 2016; Nadlifatin, 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). Průša and Sadílek (2019) noted that although there may be a keen perception of natural skincare, these attitudes are not always translated accurately into purchase behaviour. This trend was also observed by Moser (2015) in Midilli and Tolunay (2021), stating that the actual attitudes and feelings held towards the environment have little to no impact on the purchase intention towards natural products. Both these findings are consistent with what the researcher found in the current study. Of all the participants, only participant 5 had never tried natural skincare before. The rest all have used natural/organic skincare.

The following findings will be discussed and interpreted in this section:

The positive attitudes that do not translate into purchase behaviour have been analysed to understand the factors that inhibit consuming natural skincare products. Further, the attitudes that positively translate into purchase behaviour will be interpreted to understand what drives consumers to incorporate natural skincare into their daily skincare routines.

The information has been summarised using the framework of the Tricomponent model of Attitudes and the PERA model. The Tricomponent model of Attitudes refers to the three components that help form an attitude: cognitive, behavioural and affective participant's emotions and feelings. The PERA model is based on the TRA, and expands on the factors that impact Behaviour Intention in terms of a Pro-environmental behaviour: namely PEC will be discussed (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960 in Chih et al., 2015; Nadlifatin et al., 2016).

Components that form an Attitude

The Tricomponent model of Attitude has been used to present the three themes that were captured during the interviews. Further, aspects of the PERA model, such as PEC and Subjective Norms (SN), have been iterated within the Tricomponent model. Attitudes are based on the cognitive, behavioural and affective components.

Theme 1: Level of knowledge (Cognitive)

We know what it means

Cognitive refers to the mental capacity of participants regarding a topic (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960 in Chih et al., 2015). As mentioned, all six of the participants held a competent understanding of the traits of natural skincare. Further, they all expressed positive regard towards the contents of natural skincare. The following words/concepts were used to describe natural skincare:

- Non Toxic / non-harmful (6 mentions)
- Environmentally friendly / sustainable (3 mentions)
- Plant extracts / natural ingredients (5 mentions)
- Animal cruelty free (6 mentions)
- Fresh (3 mentions)
- Expensive (2 mentions)

It was noted that Participants 1 & 2 (active natural skincare users) used more emotive words/descriptors to explain how the products made them feel as well as the benefits of the products in terms of not harming the environment, other individuals and animals. Thereby focusing on materials used as well as the impact of the production process on the environment.

“It feels like I am basically putting the environment on my face, so I can’t be harming myself or anyone...” (Participant 1)

“I am always thinking ahead for the (skincare) products I am purchasing and the impact there will be on the environment.” (Participant 2)

Participants 3,4,5, and 6 (non-active natural skincare users), however, only used words that described the characteristics / benefits of a natural skincare product and how it would individually impact them.

“Using natural skincare would just not interfere with my skin and what it wants... it would not interfere with the natural process of my skin rejuvenating itself...” (Participant 4)

The above-mentioned findings show that the participants are fully aware of the traits/characteristics associated with natural skincare and can therefore use this information to help them make informed decisions regarding skincare product consumption. As Ajzen and Fishbein (1997) state: knowledge helps lay the foundation for an attitude, and therefore plays a crucial role in aiding in the formation of a strong attitude that can be translated into a behaviour intention. As mentioned, those who used more emotive language to motivate the product's benefits, excluding the product's primary function, were in the minority (2/6 participants). They also spoke about the mutual benefit for society with regards to natural skincare consumption, unlike those who were not active natural skincare users (4/6 participants). This finding coincides with Lin et al., (2018) data report of a minority of natural skincare users. It must, however, be noted that the sample for the current study was much smaller than this English study in 2018.

Theme 2: All about the lifestyle (Behavioural)

The behavioural components will focus on the level of environmental concern and the two factors (price and performance) that participants believe impact their purchase intentions towards natural skincare.

The level of environmental concern – PEC

The level of PEC between the active natural skincare users and non-active natural skincare users differed significantly. Throughout the interviews, Participants 1 and 2 (active natural skincare users) consistently mentioned their environmentally friendly lifestyle, their values, and the sense of moral obligation/responsibility to make purchase decisions that do not harm themselves or those around them. They also indicated they were using natural/organic products in other areas of their lives (excluding skincare). This finding supports Boon et al., (2020) statement that past experiences with other natural

products will increase the likelihood of implementing natural skincare in their daily skin care regimen.

“I try to keep my products as clean as possible because what we use and flush down the drain will have an impact on, maybe not us, but the environment. It’s about doing the right thing to ensure that the next person that comes into contact with it (ingredients) will not be harmed” (Participant 2)

The participants who were not actively engaged in natural skincare product consumption showed a lower level of PEC in their everyday lives. For example, when asking participants whether they considered any sustainable or ethical aspects in their skincare routine, the response was as follows:

“I didn’t even think that far to think about it, even though it matters to me... I just didn’t think that far. I was just like, not even worried...” (Participant 5)

“Unfortunately at this moment, yes... it’s (the ethical consideration) not a part of my purchase decision process...” (Participant 6)

The most important factors when considering purchase

Price and performance were identified as the most impactful for participants when considering/consuming natural skincare. Further, the intensity of skin complications (acne, dryness, rosacea, excessive oil, etcetera) played a role in whether the participant would opt for natural skincare and their attitude towards the products. These factors agree with the findings from two separate studies that the price of a product, as well as the performance thereof, are the most crucial considerations for consumers when deciding whether to purchase an item (Ayob et al., 2016; Kim & Chung 2011 in Boon et al., 2020).

The researcher noticed that the level of PEC, the perception of the product, and the existing condition of the participant’s skin played a role in the justification for the price and purchase of the natural skincare. For example, participants 1 & 2 had fewer complications with their skin, and both had a higher level of PEC. This might have played a role in the participant’s perception and attitude towards the products, as they felt natural skincare was sufficient in performance and could justify the price. Whereas participants 4, 5, and 6 experienced more complications with their skin, had a lower PEC, and felt as though

the products were too expensive / believed the products would not perform to their expectations. Participant 3 was the only individual who wanted to use natural skincare but could not afford the product. The perception differed as shown below:

“My skincare routine is a very limited range...I believe less is more and when it’s a concentrated product like natural skincare, it’s more concentrated. So yes, while it is a bit more expensive, it does last longer...” (Participant 2; active natural skincare user)

“Because its’s (natural skincare) such a concentrated product, it comes in a limited quantity. So in the end again, it’s not that affordable because you have to buy like a new pot every month, whereas something else could last you between three to six months...” (Participant 6; non-active natural skincare user).

This finding, therefore, resonates with Boon et al., (2020) theory that the perceived value of the product impacts whether consumers will spend money on natural skincare products. The researcher further suggests that the level of PEC also plays some role in the perception of the value/performance of the natural skincare product.

Theme 3: The concept of Trust (Affective)

The affective component refers to the participant's emotions and feelings that contribute towards attitudes (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960 in Chih et al., 2015). The researcher noticed a common emotion/theme between the participants that purchased natural skincare and those who did not: Trust.

The way it makes me feel

After analysing the participant's motivation for why they do or do not engage in natural skincare consumption, the researcher understood that skincare product consumption undergoes a carefully considered purchasing process. For the participants, skincare consumption is mainly used for preventative, corrective and maintenance measures to enhance their physical appearance. This finding is similar to the conclusion that skincare consumption is strongly related to the desire to improve users' physical appearance (Sukato and Elsey, 2009 in Boon et al., 2020). The researcher further noted that skincare was related to the confidence and appeal of the participant's facial appearance on their overall perception of themselves.

“I had this problem with my skin and this confidence wise affected me... so it (skincare routine) was something I wanted to do for myself to help me and my appearance...”
(Participant 4)

“Essentially I think it's so nice to wake up to be able to wake up in the morning and if you need to go somewhere quickly, you don't have to worry about the fact that you have a breakout on your forehead or oily skin... I think if someone feels good about the way they look, they will immediately feel better about themselves...” (Participant 6)

This information indicates that participants are likely to be highly sceptical and cautious of the products they consume for their skin, as it affects their self-confidence and perception of themselves. Therefore, a high level of trust is required between brands and consumers for them to use their products.

Trusting the contents

For the active skincare users (Participants 1&2), the ethical values and natural ingredients instilled trust within the consumer to use the products.

“I get scared when I buy these tubes of, of things with all these words I cannot understand and this code and that code and that kind of all freaks me out because we wouldn’t eat it. So, if I would won’t eat it, why would I put it on my skin?... and it’s so nice to know there is an expiry date. Like it is fresh enough to expire, that sets me at ease...” (Participant 1)

“The ingredients you put on your face are fresh and natural, so it is so much more fulfilling for me as a user because I know where it comes from...” (Participant 2)

These statements, however, were not without scepticism from the natural skincare users over the efficacy of natural skincare products, which coincides with the non-active natural skincare users. These findings are also consistent with Sagbo and Mbeng (2019) suggestions for the commercial natural skincare industry in South Africa to do further research on the safety and efficacy of plant species used in commercial natural skincare products.

“So I think that’s an industry (natural skincare) that the local market can tap into more by proving that it works just as well as other products (conventional skincare), that it can be just as effective.” (Participant 1)

“I also want it (natural skincare product) to be researched quite extensively. Just because something is natural, doesn’t always mean that it’s good for your skin...” (Participant 2)

“I would not necessarily say it’s better for the skin so much as it’s better for the environment... but I do think something can be found that works better if there is more research... some bigger brands are doing it already...” (Participant 6)

Rather sticking with what we know

For the non-active skincare users (Participants 4, 5, and 6), the lack of trust in the efficacy of the products prevented them from consuming natural skincare, even though they previously indicated the aspects of natural skincare appealed to them. More specifically,

the participants are hesitant to try new products and claim they are not comfortable straying from what they are familiar with.

“I guess it’s just from what I know, I’m just more comfortable using it (conventional skincare). And I am very sceptical of using new product. Like I am hesitant of putting just anything on my face, but I think using a natural product is more inviting than something chemical... I don’t know I prefer to just stick to what I trust and know.” (Participant 4)

“I think I just do not have the financial freedom to experiment with a product that might not work and then it just stands there. Like that for me is just a waste. So, if the products I am using now work, I am going to stick with it” (Participant 5)

“I just have not found a brand I am comfortable with... I do believe we need some sort of chemical component to help balance out everything on our skin and natural skincare can’t do that” (Participant 6)

As mentioned earlier, within the behavioural aspect of attitude formation, price and performance are the most critical factors for consumers when considering whether to purchase a product (Boon et al., 2020). The researcher further suggests that level of trust and familiarity with the product may contribute to consumers' attitude and could potentially play a role in translating the attitude towards natural skincare product consumption.

The role of Local vs Global in trust

All participants expressed their desire to support local brands in general for national economic stimulation. The findings, however, indicate that trust and purchase behaviour within local skincare brands only resonated with the natural skincare users (2/6 participants). When discussing the aspects of natural skincare, the researcher noticed that active natural skincare users (Participant 1&2) expressed that their trust in the product was enhanced if it was made locally. Although participant 3 is not actively using natural skincare, they also explained why they are more likely to trust a local brand for their skincare needs. This is due to the perception that local brands cater more personally towards their consumers, thereby creating an intimate bond and trusting relationship.

“I like that it’s not mass produced, so it feels like there is more quality control and thought put into the product... also if I were to break out from using a product, if it was like

Dermalogica, they would not care or help me. But with a local brand, there is a personal relationship and I can WhatsApp them and I know they will help me...” (Participant 1)

“I feel like I can relate more to the product and the developers, and I just see it a bit more open to communicate what I feel regarding the product” (Participant 2)

“I know they (a local brand) will cater for my needs as a South Africa... made by South Africans for South Africans...” (Participant 4)

This observation supports the finding from Lin et al., (2018), as their participants also had the perception that natural skincare is more trustworthy as a local brand compared to being a globally manufactured product. Further, the data also resonates with Hsu et al., (2017) finding that country of origin strongly affects the attitude and perception towards natural skincare product consumption.

The non-active natural skincare users (Participants 5 and 6), on the other hand, preferred more globally reputable brands for their skincare product regimen.

“I just wanted something that worked, and whatever was recommended to me by my skin aesthetician is what I used... and I know they mostly use larger brands and so I just trusted that over anything else” (Participant 5)

“I am a bit of a big brand shopper. So, if I know a product has been on the market for a while, and has had results, and yeah, if I am familiar with it. I’m a bit more of if it’s been working for 10 years for other people, then it should work for me.” (Participant 6)

The findings mentioned above present the contrasting justifications for the factors that play a role in establishing trust between consumers and their skincare products. The researcher, therefore, suggests that trust might be a crucial component in establishing an actionable attitude that can translate into the purchase behaviour of natural skincare product consumption.

The impact of subjective norms

The role of social circles, such as friends and family, played a less significant role in the participant’s purchase consideration for natural skincare. This finding is unlike most literature concerning the role of subjective norms in green product consumption (Ayob et

al., 2016; Nadlifatin et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Boon et al., 2020). Although participants appreciated their friends' recommendations, their influence was affirmation instead of convincing them to try something new. For active natural skincare users (2/6 participants), it seemed that the role of PEC and their lifestyle choices drove their choices for incorporating natural skincare. Non-active skincare users (4/6 participants) mainly relied upon and trusted the opinion of professionals in the skincare industry. It was found that dermatologists rarely recommend natural skincare, which may play a significant role in potential consumers' perception of natural skincare.

"I think if I recommend something to someone, and they also love the brand, it just affirms my choices... I am way more likely to trust my friends' opinion over an influencer because most of the time they are just paid to say things..." (Participant 1, active natural skincare user)

"I would say only 30% use natural skincare, and the other 70% don't... I just don't think they are as invested in the products they buy or think of what is the impact of what they use... I consider myself more the influencer in making my friends conscious of their decisions with regards to sustainability..." (Participant 2; active natural skincare user)

"I guess I trust my friends more than I trust an influencer, cause it's like sponsorship based. I'll chat to a friend but I think a dermatologist is really good..." (Participant 4; non-active natural skincare user)

"I think I actually rely on her (dermatologist) quite a lot because I don't think my peers are very informed. Like we ask each other what we're all using, but I fully rely on her... I fully trust the skincare professional on what I should be using" (Participant 5; non-active natural skincare user)

Noticeably, all the participants agreed they do not trust influencers. They believe the content is inaccurate to the actual product performance and understand that social media does not accurately reflect the real world. This distrust is an area that can be further explored in future research concerning natural skincare purchases and the impact of influencers on purchase behaviour.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

This section summarises and concludes the research report. The content includes answering the research questions, discussing the ethical considerations of the study, and expanding on the limitations of the research. Further, potential research on this topic is suggested to build upon the understanding of attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption.

Answering the Research Questions

The researcher attempted to address the identified research problem by exploring female Millennials' attitudes towards natural skincare product consumption. More specifically, investigating whether these attitudes translated into purchase behaviour and understanding the contributing factors towards these attitudes. The answer for each research question will be discussed below:

What are the attitudes of Millennial Capetonian women towards natural skincare product consumption and do these attitudes accurately translate towards their purchase behavior?

All six participants held a positive attitude towards natural skincare and expressed an appeal towards natural skincare features. Despite the above mentioned, it was found that the attitudes alone are not strong enough to ensure purchase behaviour for most participants. Only 2/6 participants held a positive attitude that accurately translated into purchase behaviour of natural skincare product consumption. Although claiming to have a positive attitude and regard towards natural skincare, the rest of the participants were not actively incorporating these products into the skincare regimen. The factors that contribute to purchasing or inhibiting natural skincare products will be further explored.

What are the main factors that contribute towards positive attitudes that translate into purchase behaviour of natural skincare products?

Forming part of an essential basis for purchasing an item is the level of awareness (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960 in Chih et al., 2015). All the participants displayed a competent awareness and understanding of what natural skincare entails: including its benefits, presence in South Africa and aesthetic appeal. The individuals incorporating

natural skincare into their daily skincare regimen did notably have lesser skin complications than the rest of the participants. However, the most crucial factor contributing to the positive attitudes that translated purchase behaviour of natural skincare is based on the level of PEC. The researcher found that the highly invested participants in the conservation and protection of the environment would consider, justify, and rationalise their purchase behaviour factors based on their impact on the environment. For example, the concept of using a product that does not harm themselves, the environment or anyone around them was a notably important consideration factor for their purchase behaviour. Role of trust also played an essential role in their purchase behaviour. Due to their inherent affiliation with nature and its ingredients: the contents of the natural skincare products played a significant role in their purchase. The participants expressed they felt as though they could trust the content not to hurt them. Trust in the manufacturer also played a contributing role in their purchase behaviour. As interviewees considered natural skincare to be local, this construct put them at ease knowing that the products were more likely to be “handcrafted” or made with more attention to detail than more prominent brands.

As most literature concludes, the price and efficiency of the products tend to have the most significant influence on natural product purchases (Ayob et al., 2016; Kim & Chung 2011 in Boon et al., 2020). However, regarding active natural skincare users, the researcher suggests that the level of PEC and trust within the natural components of the products rationalised the price and efficiency of the natural skincare products they were using. Interestingly, the role of SN played an insignificant role in the active natural skincare users purchase behaviour consideration.

What are the factors that inhibit purchase behavior despite the positive attitude towards natural skincare product consumption?

Although 4/6 participants expressed their appeal and positive attitude towards natural skincare product consumption, their purchase behaviour proved otherwise. Although they displayed a competent understanding of the benefits of natural skincare and desire to use non-harmful products, the researcher noted their PEC level was much lower than the active natural skincare users. The researcher, therefore, firmly believes that the level of

PEC has the most critical impact on the purchase of natural skincare products. The other important factor that inhibited the acquisition of natural skincare products was the concept of trust in the products. As mentioned earlier, compared to the active natural skincare product users, the non-active natural skincare users had more severe skin conditions than the active natural skincare users. Their skin conditions might have impacted their perception of whether the natural skincare products would work for their skin, thereby highlighting their uncertainty and lack of trust in the efficacy of these products. The participants further explained that natural skincare was expensive, and they did not have the financial resources to “experiment” with different products. The doubt concerning the efficacy of the natural skincare products once again brought the topic of trust to the researcher’s attention. The role of trust was further exhibited when non-active skincare users expressed their desire to use locally made products. However, they admitted to choosing internationally renowned brands due to their reputation.

Once again, contrasting to the natural skincare users, these individuals showcased a high level of trust and reliance on the advice of skincare professionals. The role of SN for non-active skincare users, therefore, was noted as significant.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to any research procedure commencing, the researcher’s proposal had to be reviewed and cleared by the IIE to ensure the study would not inflict harm or research a topic that may be violating or invasive for participants (The Independent Institute of Education, 2021). Once the ethical clearance form was obtained, the researcher began with the infield research process (Please see Annexure E for the Ethical Clearance letter).

As this study included interviews with female skincare users, the researcher ensured that each participant understood the topic being researched and their role in the study. Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, the researcher asked each participant to sign a consent form. This form acknowledges their informed consent to participate in the study, as well as their consent for the researcher to record the interview session online. Prior and during the interview session, the researcher reminded participants that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time with no consequence whatsoever. Further, the researcher explained to all the participants that

their identity would remain anonymous, and the information from the interview session would remain confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. The researcher made a conscious effort to remain unbiased throughout the research process. This effort was ensured with the aid of the interview script guiding the conversation, and helping the researcher remain focused on obtaining relevant data that could answer the research questions. Further, the researcher used ethical prompting when participants mentioned an idea or topic of interest. By carefully asking the participant to elaborate or expand, the researcher maintained the position of a third part observer of the participant's reality.

To ensure the safety of all the participants, the researcher opted for online interviews via Zoom to ensure no one would potentially be exposed to Covid-19 by participating in this study. Once each interview was completed, the researcher debriefed the participant and reminded them they have access to the transcripts, notes and final research report to ensure the researcher accurately captured their attitudes and motivations towards natural skincare product consumption (Maree, 2019; The Independent Institute of Education, 2021).

Limitations and future study recommendations

This study faced two key limitations, namely the sample size and data collection method. The first limitation to this study would be the sample size recruited to participate in the study. Due to the researchers limited time, experience and resources: a small sample was chosen through purposive and snowball sampling. This might have caused the researcher to use people like them for the study. Although this study was exploratory and interpretive in nature, and therefore never intended to be generalised, the small sample is hardly an accurate depiction of the female Millennial population in South Africa (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2019). The researcher suggests a larger sample for future studies regarding natural skincare product consumption. Further, as the researcher only recruited Caucasian females to participate, the lack of representation is also considered as a limitation. The researcher therefore suggests a broader and more accurate representation of ethnicities and skin types of female Millennials in South Africa to be included in future studies regarding this specific topic (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2019).

The second limitation to this data would be the data collection method. Semi-structured interviews may increase the opportunity for the researcher to implicate their bias in the study. The researcher suggests future studies on attitudes towards natural skincare consumption be conducted via focus groups. Focus groups will allow for participants to form opinions and partake in a natural conversation, where the researcher can observe and limit any interjection or opinion (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2018; Maree, 2019).

The research conducted indicated the importance of the level of trust consumers have with products efficiency, origin and the opinion of their trusted advisors. The researcher therefore suggests further research on how natural skincare brands can establish trust between consumers and their products in an attempt to expand their market share in the cosmetic industry.

Final Concluding Remarks

Overall, this qualitative study found that attitudes towards natural skincare are positive, and consumers expressed an appeal towards natural skincare features. Despite the above mentioned, attitudes alone are not strong enough to translate into purchase behaviour for most participants. Although none of the participants expressed a negative attitude towards natural skincare, the researcher noted that the level of PEC and trust play the most significant roles in perceiving and adopting natural skincare product consumption. Therefore, the higher the level of PEC and belief in natural ingredients and their origin: the more likely the participant would consume natural skincare products. Further, the factors mentioned above would alter the perception of price and performance, which were the essential product features considered for purchasing products. Most of the findings resonated with previous literature; however, the results also present unique opportunities for further research towards understanding consumers' rationale and process regarding establishing trust within natural skincare brands in South Africa.

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Annexure

Annexure A

A list of Abbreviations used throughout the Research Report:

- BI - Behaviour Intention
- COO -Country of Origin
- CSE - Collective Self Esteem
- EC - Eastern Cape
- ENV - Environmental Concern
- PAS - Perceived Authority Support
- PAY - Willingness to pay for natural goods
- PBC - Perceived Behavioural Control
- PE - Past Experiences
- PEC - Perceived Environmental Concern
- PERA - Pro-Environmental Theory of Reasoned Action
- PI - Purchase Intention
- PRE - Preferences
- PS - Price Sensitivity
- SI - Social Influence
- SN - Subjective Norms
- TOL - Tolerance towards natural goods
- TRA - Theory of Reasoned Action
- VM - Value for Money

Annexure B

The discussion guide for the semi-structured interviews:

Grand Tour questions:

1. Do you have an established skincare routine?
2. How long have you been using a set skincare routine?
3. For what reasons have you invested in a skincare routine?

Core Questions:

1. How do you feel about the term “natural skincare?”
 - a. This includes thoughts, attitudes, opinions, feelings etc. whether positive or negative.
 - i. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 1. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary.
2. What is your understanding of the term “natural skincare?”
 - a. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 - i. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary.
3. Do you use natural skincare?
 - a. If so why or why not?
 - i. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 1. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary
4. When purchasing skincare, are any of the following factors a consideration in the purchasing process? (please expand on each factor that applies to you)
 - a. Efficacy of product
 - b. Price of product
 - c. Whether the product is locally made
 - d. Whether the product is made with environmental and ethical consideration

- e. Any other
 - i. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 - 1. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary
- 5. Do your friends use natural skincare? Have their skincare habits influenced you over the years?
 - a. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 - i. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary
- 6. Do you think living in South Africa, specifically Cape Town, has played a role in your skincare product consumption behavior?
 - a. Allow for expansion and dialogue between researcher and participant
 - i. Ethical probing will be used if the researcher deems it necessary

Unplanned follow up questions

Depending on the respondent's personal views and attitudes, the researcher will use their (the respondent) input as a guideline for unplanned questions to gain a further insight towards the participant's attitudes and the contributing factors thereof.

Annexure C

The consent form for participants to participate in the study:

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is <u>Christy Nell</u> and I am a student at Vega. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Samuel Enow about exploring female millennials attitudes towards natural skincare consumption in Cape Town. I hope that this research will contribute towards our understanding of the attitudes of Capetonian female millennials towards natural skincare consumption and their purchase behaviors. 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. 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 sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you fall within the population parameters for my study. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to interview you, and engage in a discussion to gain insight on your attitudes and understanding of natural skincare consumption. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might,

however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your attitudes and feelings towards natural skincare consumption.

If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Christy Nell

██████████

████████████████████

████ contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Samuel Enow

████████████████████

Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Christy Nell about attitudes towards natural skincare consumption amongst female millennials in Cape Town.

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

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

Signature

Date

Annexure D

The consent form for audio recording of interview:

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow <u>Christy Nell</u> to audio record my interviews as part of the research about attitudes towards natural skincare consumption amongst female millennials in Cape Town. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private; • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer; and • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Annexure E

Ethical clearance letter:



Date: 24 June 2021

Student name: Christy Nell

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega, Cape Town

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

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

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

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

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

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

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Samuel Enow

Signature:



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Carol Affleck

Signature:



Annexure F

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY DOCUMENT TEMPLATE

TITLE: *An exploratory study on consumer attitudes of Capetonian Female Millennials towards natural skincare product consumption.*

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Lit Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
<i>To investigate female Millennials attitudes and purchase behaviour towards natural skincare products.</i>	<i>What are the attitudes of Female Millennials towards natural skincare consumption?</i> <i>Do these attitudes translate accurately towards their purchase behaviour of skincare products?</i>	<i>South Africa presents a unique economic opportunity to capitalise on the natural skincare trend, due to its rich resources of plant extracts. Understanding consumer attitudes that contribute or inhibit purchase behaviour should provide insight towards improving the industry.</i>	<i>Ajzen, I and Fishbein, M. 1973.</i>	Theme 1: Consumer attitudes towards cosmetic products Theme 2: The PERA model Theme 3: Consumer behaviour towards natural products Theme 4: Ethnobotanicals in South Africa	This study will make use of an interpretivist paradigm with an ontological approach. This approach and application of paradigm enabled the researcher to view the data from the participants' social reality. Accepting and respecting that everyone has their own set of experiences that contribute towards their lifestyles and attitudes, which may impact their purchase behaviour.	A Qualitative, exploratory approach was used for this study. Population Population Parameters Female Millennial (23-28 years of age) Frequent Skincare user (minimum of 5 x a week) Cape Town resident Tertiary degree (Upper LSM)	The researcher decided to conduct semi-structured interviews via Zoom due to the increase in Covid cases. The researcher used the PERA model as a framework to create their discussion guide, and used ethical probing to create a conversation-like interview with each participant.	The researcher first obtained their ethical clearance from the IEE. Remaining unbiased as a researcher was achieved by sharing the information with the participants and their supervisor. Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity at all times to protect the participants.	Although all the participants felt a positive attitude towards natural skincare product consumption, only 2/6 were actively incorporating these products into their skincare regime. Further, the researcher noted that the level of PEC and trust significantly impacted whether the participant would use these products. Price and Performance also played an important role.	Further research should be done on a larger sample, that is a more representative description of the South African population. Specifically, more research regarding the process of establishing trust within local natural skincare brands should be done to ensure the industry can effectively target potential consumers. As the researcher's current findings suggest that gaining their (consumers) trust to purchase and incorporate natural skincare will significantly positively impact the natural skincare industry.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
<i>The assumption that a positive attitude towards natural skincare will result in purchase behaviour may lead natural skincare producers astray.</i>	<i>If the attitudes are positive, what contributes towards this specific formation?</i> <i>Does this positive attitude result in purchase behaviour?</i> <i>If the attitude is positive and it doesn't result in purchase behaviour, why not?</i>	<i>What are the key concepts that you needed to conceptualise?</i>	<i>The Pro-Environmental theory of Reasoned Action</i> <i>(PERA model)</i> <i>This model is based off of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)</i>			This study made use of non-probability sampling. Specifically, purposive and snowball sampling. The researcher had a sample of six participants, whom were all contacted via WhatsApp to participate in the study. Each participant fell within the population parameters as mentioned above.	Unit of Analysis People Data Analysis Method(s) The researcher used thematic content analysis. By using the eight-step process as a guideline, the researcher organically organised, coded and interpreted the data into a summarised format.	The sample size would be the greatest limitation. Although this exploratory does not seek to generalise these findings, a larger sample that is more representative of South African women of colour would have presented a more accurate example of current consumer attitudes. Further, using interviews might also be a limitation, as attitudes are a social construct which could be enhanced in a focus group setting.	The researcher believes their contribution is towards the greater understanding of consumer attitudes towards natural skincare. As South Africa has an abundant resource of natural plant extracts that can be used for commercial natural skincare, the researcher hopes their findings entice further research to support this industry.	

[illegible]