



An Analysis of How the Fashion Industry Utilises Sustainable Design for Brand Positioning: A Rewoven Case Study

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Research Report

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

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyse which positioning strategies sustainable fashion brands in South Africa are using. Due to the ecological damage caused by the fashion industry, academia, governments, businesses and individuals are turning their attention towards sustainable solutions for the industry's textile waste problem.

Rewoven was chosen as the case study for this paper, due to it being the first South African brand that recycles textile waste to make clothing products. An interpretivist approach informed qualitative interviews with Rewoven Africa's executives. Additionally, a thematic content analysis conducted on Rewoven's and its competitors' websites, enabled an understanding of how a South African fashion brand thinks about target markets, competition, differentiation and sustainable design when creating its brand positioning strategies.

Ultimately, Keller's Brand Positioning Model coupled with the design thinking methodology assisted the researcher to identify the two key elements of Rewoven's brand positioning strategy, in relation to its functional and emotional attributes. Therefore, brands that are looking to build a sustainable fashion brand in South Africa, may find merit in following Keller's brand positioning model and the design thinking approach to solving brand related challenges.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Brand positioning: “The act of designing a company’s offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers’ minds” (Keller, 2009: 7; Keller, 2013: 85).

Fashion industry: Fashion intersects with several industries and sectors, primarily focused on manufacturing, supplying and retailing clothing garments but also includes footwear, accessories and jewellery (dos Santos and Campos, 2020).

Sustainable design: Sustainable design intends to create with holistic and continuous consideration of the future planet and its people. The designer’s purpose then is to create value, promote human, economic and ecological well being and provide a benefit for local and or global communities (Lanteri, 2019).

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

B2B: Business-to-business, a business that makes commercial transactions with another business (Hyder, 2019).

B2C: Business-to-customer, a business that makes commercial transactions with consumers (Hyder, 2019).

POD: Point-of-difference associations are positive features or benefits that consumers associate with a brand that make them believe they are clearly different to competing brands (Keller, 2013).

POP: Point-of-parity associations are those features and benefits that are similar to competitors’ in the mind of the target market (Keller, 2013).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Eight different organisations of the United Nations joined to form the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion in March 2019 to address the tension between fast fashion and sustainable development (UN Environment Programme, 2019). The alliance aims to address the fashion industry's wasteful extraction of water, which is responsible for around 20% of wastewater worldwide - stemming from fabric dyeing and treatment (World Bank, 2019). The future of fashion includes a focused effort to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of; clean water and sanitation, responsible production and consumption and climate action by 2030 (UN, 2019).

As fashion brands and consumers heed the call by the UN to adopt sustainable manufacturing and consumption practices, brands require well-designed positioning strategies to communicate this paradigm shift (Cotler, 2019). By communicating this shift in social thinking and behaviour, brands place themselves in a position to be associated and resonate with the customer's new, sustainable lifestyles and tastes.

Rewoven Africa was chosen to be the focus of this study, as they are the first South African fashion brand whose primary purpose is to help solve the fashion industry's sustainability crisis. Rewoven recycles textile waste into fabric goods that are used to manufacture clothing and ultimately aims to create a circular product lifecycle that diverts and recycles textile waste from landfills (Hertantyo, 2019; Rewoven Africa, 2020). This study adopted Keller's Brand Positioning Model (2013) as the theoretical framework as it focuses on key elements of creating a brand positioning strategy.

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research approach to determine how sustainable fashion brands, such as Rewoven Africa, design brand positioning strategies to remain relevant and resonant with their audiences.

1.1. Rationale

The global fashion industry has played a considerable role in driving the global climate crisis today. Furthermore, South Africa's fashion industry is unable to compete with cheap clothing and textile imports, creating another strain on the local fashion industry (Khumalo, 2019). These issues pose an immediate challenge for building a competitive South African fashion brand.

In 2015, the *Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report* stated that 68% of South Africans show a willingness to pay a premium for a brand that is committed to making a positive social and environmental impact (Nielsen, 2015). Currently, young shoppers globally, especially Gen Z (73%) and Millennials (68%), are described as the most willing to spend more on brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability (First Insight, 2020). Therefore, brands that hope to resonate with today's young consumer, who is increasingly conscious of how brands affect the environment, are competing for limited space in the mind of the conscious consumer.

Claiming a valued place in the target customer's mind requires a tailored approach to marketing a particular brand (Keller, 2013). By exploring literature that discusses problem-solving and brand positioning, this study aims to provide an analysis and recommendations to entities that wish to build strong South African fashion brands that incorporate sustainable design. Therefore contributing knowledge that will enable brands to promote responsible production and consumption practices without compromising their competitive advantage.

1.2. Problem Statement

Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of clean water and sanitation, responsible production and consumption and climate action by 2030, requires the action of the fashion industry (UN, 2020). Textile waste has contaminated our planet's land and air ecosystems and contributes 20% of all industrial wastewater pollution worldwide (UN, 2020).

Brands such as Rewoven Africa are re-evaluating fashion production processes to minimise their environmental harm (Rewoven, 2020). This study explored the brand positioning strategies currently being used by Rewoven Africa, to inform recommendations suited for brand positioning strategies, specifically related to South African brands operating in the sustainable fashion industry.

An analysis was conducted into how a brand in the South African fashion industry utilises sustainable design for their positioning strategies. This paper aims to provide recommendations for brands that want to communicate sustainability as part of their positioning in terms of their offering and image, through a case study analysis of Rewoven Africa's positioning strategies.

1.3. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to identify brand positioning strategies that fashion brands have used to communicate a commitment to sustainable design and recommend strategies for brands to use in the future. By analysing Rewoven Africa's communications, coupled with preeminent brand positioning models, this paper has analysed how a South African fashion brand has integrated sustainability into its identity and positioning.

1.4. Research Questions

1. Which brand positioning strategies do South African, sustainable fashion brands use to create competitive advantages in the minds of South African customers?
2. What is Rewoven Africa's current positioning strategy(ies)?
3. How does Rewoven respond to challenges concerning sustainable design in the South African fashion industry?

1.5. Research Objectives

1. To identify the brand positioning strategies used by fashion brands in South Africa that are pursuing sustainability, through the application of theoretical models of brand positioning.
2. To identify and analyse Rewoven Africa's current brand positioning strategy(ies).
3. To understand how Rewoven responds to challenges facing the SA fashion industry, specifically related to environmental sustainability.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION & LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review that follows will inform the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. Reviewing the current state of knowledge and the seminal works related to the concepts of this study will provide a clear frame of reference for the study's adopted paradigms, models and theories (Howard, 2014). Older, seminal sources used in the literature have been discussed with reference to their contemporary revisions and critiques. Furthermore, the literature consulted in the review will form the basis for understanding the phenomena under investigation, as well as the research design and research methodology chosen.

2.1. Keller's Brand Positioning Model

In Keller's *Strategic Brand Management* (2013), a brand is defined as a name, design or combination of elements created to identify the services or offerings of an entity and is intended to differentiate them from those of competing entities. Emphasising the importance of positioning, Keller states that brand positioning lies at the heart of brand strategy. For Keller, brand positioning is "the act of designing a

company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers' minds" (Keller, 2009: 7; Keller, 2013: 85).

Moreover, establishing a brand position requires brand managers and planners to establish a frame of reference and the most effective points-of-parity and points-of-difference associations. This includes firstly understanding who the target market is, to understand who their direct and indirect competitors are, and lastly to identify the similarities and differences between them. Keller asserts that these elements are crucial to identifying and establishing a strong competitive positioning (Keller, 2013).

A. The Competitive Frame of Reference (target market & nature of the competition)

To identify which brand associations should be pursued, Keller argues that it is important to define and segment a market to select a specific target market segment. He states that a market is all the existing and potential customers who have the means and access to fulfil an interest in a product (Keller, 2013). He continues to define market segmentation as the division of the market into distinct, homogenous groups of customers who require similar marketing mixes (Keller, 2013).

In defining the market segment, Keller states that the overriding consideration brand planners have to take into account is profitability, which he ties to behavioural considerations. This exemplifies the sacrifices brand managers are required to make in deciding between costs and benefits (Keller, 2013). A well-defined market segment will make it easier for brands to profit and satisfy consumer needs and wants. However, increasing the personalisation of marketing efforts may result in greater costs to the brands. Furthermore, Keller argues that segmentation ought to be based on product benefits, behavioural, demographic, psychographic and geographic customer information. He notes that behavioural segmentation may be the most valuable, as key customer behaviours produce clear strategic implications (Keller, 2013).

However, Keller warns against the use of broad demographic segmentation approaches because brand managers run the risk of overlooking niche groups and underlying differences. For example, the use of age and generation as demographic descriptors ignores the size and complexity of groups such as “Millennials” or “Women aged 40-49” (Keller, 2013). Rather, Keller suggests that brand managers may find benefit in further breaking down those broad demographic groups like Millennials, into smaller, demographic and behavioural segments, such as *“luxury firsts”*, *“super sustainables”* or *“couldn’t be bothereds”*. Finally, Keller offers *identifiability*, *size*, *accessibility* and *responsiveness* as four criteria that can help brand managers to segment their market and identify a primary target customer (Keller, 2013).

By identifying a primary target customer, the nature of a brand’s competition is loosely defined. Conducting a competitive analysis, allows brands to understand various arenas of competition including the intentions, capabilities and resources of competing entities. Crucially, Keller argues that the competitive analysis provides brand managers the opportunity to identify the markets where they can strategically act to create value for themselves and their customers (Keller, 2013).

In Keller’s view, it would therefore serve brands to adopt a broad definition of their competition to recognise the most compelling threats and opportunities in the market. Brands that may not face direct competition within their category can still be threatened by brands that share abstract associations with them (Keller, 2013). Furthermore, indirect competition may occur if brands fall into a broadly defined product category such as fashion, clothing and textiles.

In addition, Keller notes that customers organise products in a hierarchical fashion, which leads to his argument that competition can be defined on many different levels. Stating that the competition you use is most often found at the benefit level, rather than the attribute level (Keller, 2013). He suggests that the hedonic benefits of luxury goods may cause a brand to compete across several product categories.

Keller points to the stagnant sales in the global apparel industry that have been affected by customers who are spending more on personal furnishings and electronic products. In response, he states that fashion brands should consider the points-of-difference of their offerings not against other fashion brands but against other non-essential purchases (Keller, 2013).

Therefore, brands that face broad category competition, often require more than one frame of reference. Rewoven for example, may face various sets of competitors, including *international fast-fashion retailers*, *local supermarket brands* and *local textile suppliers* (Keller, 2013). Furthermore, these unique sets of competitors, each require unique points-of-parity and points-of-difference to establish a competitive advantage in the market. Keller argues further, that the most relevant set of competitors should then be prioritised as the competitive frame of reference (Keller, 2013).

B. Points-of-parity and Points-of-difference

Defining the final brand positioning requires that effective points-of-difference (PODs) and points-of-parity (POPs) associations be established. Keller (2013) adds that the chosen target customer and the nature of the competition, will form the brand's frame of reference for positioning. Furthermore, the frame of reference will dictate who brand awareness reaches, and the types of associations that would ultimately serve to benefit the brand.

Keller defines POD associations as positive features or benefits that consumers associate with a brand that make them believe they are clearly different to competing brands (Keller, 2013). Moreover, the various brand association types are classified according to functional, performance-related considerations or as abstract, imagery-related considerations (Keller, 2013). In this regard, Keller argues that PODs depend on associated performance attributes (Keller, 2013; Rewoven, 2020). Furthermore, Keller notes that many different PODs are possible and that offering

compelling proof points and reasons to believe are key components to establishing competitive points-of-difference (Keller, 2013).

In contrast, POP associations are those features and benefits that are similar to competitors' in the mind of the target customer. These shared associations are category POPs, competitive POPs and correlational POPs (Keller, 2013).

Category POPs are often associations made at the product level. For instance, a fashion brand might not be considered a fashion brand if it did not offer or discuss clothing products, footwear or personal accessories (Keller, 2013; dos Santos and Campos, 2020). *Competitive POPs* are associations that prove competitor PODs wrong. Where a brand is able to contradict a competitor's perceived advantages, Keller asserts that, "the brand should be in a strong and perhaps unbeatable competitive position" (Keller, 2013). Finally, *correlational POPs* are the negative associations that occur as a result of more positive brand associations being present. Keller identifies a tension between POPs and PODs that are inversely related and mutually exclusive. He opines that if a brand is good at one thing in the minds of the target customer, it can't be seen as also good at something else (Keller, 2013). For instance, a brand that is considered "sophisticated" may find it hard to prove its association with "waste reduction" (Keller, 2013: 84; Kim and Oh, 2020: 8). In addition, Keller notes that particular features and benefits tend to carry both negative and positive associations to which he suggests a tradeoff decision must be made. Ultimately, he suggests that it is easier to communicate clear superiority by establishing strong competitive and correlational POP associations (Keller, 2013).

Keller's brand positioning model creates a clear working model towards establishing competitive brand positioning. It asserts that a good brand positioning is aspirational, in that it considers what the brand is and what it wants to be. He continues to argue that a good brand positioning should reflect the benefits customers will derive from the brand and identifies any clear points-of-parity. Finally, he adds that it is important to identify the brand's duality, in its rational and emotional associations, that should appeal to the target customer's head and heart (Keller, 2013).

In attempting to establish a working model, Cant and van Heerden's (2018) *7 Step Positioning Process* was considered. This model, like Keller's, serves to remind brand managers that brands cannot be all things to all people, but that the brand must rather position itself with regards to relevant and profitable target markets in a rapidly changing environment and ensure they are able to satisfy customer needs and wants (Keller, 2013; Cant and van Heerden, 2018). However, the lengthy approach of this model creates a staggered and unfocused methodology to identify a competitive frame of reference and points-of-parity and points-of-difference and is therefore not suitable for this study. Furthermore, the model does not pay sufficient attention to the potential of minor [indirect] competitors, rather focusing its POPs and PODs on major competitors (Cant and van Heerden, 2018).

C. Brand Mantra

Once the brand's frame of reference has been identified and the desired points-of-parity and difference are selected, Keller argues that a brand mantra ought to be designed to summarise the positioning and the "heart and soul" of the brand (2013).

He adds that marketers should keep in mind that brands tend to span multiple products and or service categories and may therefore have several unique brand positionings. In this case, the function of the brand mantra becomes that of a unifying device for a company's various brand positionings, one that creates synergy and consistency for that company's marketing activities (Keller, 2013). The brand mantra ought to "economically" present to stakeholders what the brand is and what it is *not*.

Thus for Keller, the structure of a *good* brand mantra is made up of three-to-five words, exemplified by Nike's brand mantra - *Authentic, Athletic Performance*. This structure requires the brand mantra to consist of an *emotional modifier* term that serves as a qualifier, making it clear how the brand provides benefits and in what ways (*Authentic*). What follows is the *descriptive modifier* term, which emphasises

the brands nature (*Athletic*). Finally the *brand function* term (*Performance*) describes the range of services and or products and experiences the brand may provide (Keller, 2013).

Ultimately, the brand mantra should offer marketing partners a memorable term or phrase that captures what must remain the brand's most salient and top of mind associations (Keller, 2013).

2.1.1. Online brand positioning

Contemporary authors have attempted to understand Keller's positioning model in the sustainability and online contexts (Wang, 2016). Wang argues that today's online and digital media have been influential in building brands. He explores the concept of "green brand positioning", adding to a growing body of literature that explores the relationship between sustainability and corporate branding.

A study conducted by Gazzola *et al.* (2020) analysed how sustainability and principles of a circular economy are influencing perceptions of the fashion industry among young generations of consumers, particularly those born between 1995-2015 - Gen Z. The survey found that today's younger customers pay more attention to sustainability and the principles of a circular economy (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). This led them to the conclusion that for fashion brands, sustainability and circularity are becoming strategically important as a source of long-term competitive advantage (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020).

With specific focus on sustainable brands communicating in the online environment, Wang (2016) argues that two types of green brand positioning, namely functional and emotional, exist. The type of brand positioning utilised by a brand has an impact on whether or not consumers perceive a brand as doing good for the environment or not. For example, Millennials and Gen Zs are seen to be the first demographic groups that are committing to what Lima (2020) opines as circularity (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). According to a Nielsen consumer report in 2015, up to 73% of global

millennials are willing to spend more on sustainable brands (Nielsen, 2015). Today, 73% of Gen Zs and 68% of Millennials in America are willing to spend more on brands committed to sustainability (First Insight, 2020). Therefore, speaking to the hearts and minds of Millennials and Gen Zs involves strategic communication of sustainable design values and activities in an online environment.

2.1.2. Driving associations

A study by Kim and Oh (2020), found that keyword associations are a fundamental tactic to building a strong, sustainable fashion brand image. By analysing fast fashion brands, Zara and H&M, the study aimed to highlight the opportunistic strategy of greenwashing. This reinforces the argument that the use of both image and keyword associations are at the core of brand building and brand positioning strategies (Keller, 2013; Kim and Oh, 2020).

Ultimately, brand positioning requires brand planners to formulate strategic, keyword and image associations that come to mind and connect the target audience to the brand either positively or negatively (Keller, 2013; Kim and Oh, 2020). Therefore consumers have several associations with a particular brand but all of these associations work to influence their attitudes and decision to purchase the brand or not.

2.2. The Global Fashion Industry

The fashion industry, which has seen the proliferation of fast fashion practices, currently operates in tension with sustainability. Thus, fashion brands are looking for solutions, as mounting economic and ecological problems begin to negatively affect the global industry (BoF-McKinsey, 2019). Fashion intersects with several industries and sectors, primarily focused on manufacturing, supplying and retailing clothing garments but also includes footwear, accessories and jewellery (dos Santos and Campos, 2020).

The State of Fashion 2020 Report lays out the dominant mood among the respondents of their Business of Fashion-McKinsey Annual Executive Survey. Predominant themes found were anxiety, concern and pessimism about what 2020 had to offer the fashion industry. This outlook is partly due to the industry's projected growth rate of 4% (BoF-McKinsey, 2019: 10). The slow economic growth rate is compounded by a growing demand by consumers and government organisations, for fashion to take progressive action on the sustainable development agenda (BoF-McKinsey, 2019).

2.2.1. South African fashion industry outlook

In 2019, South Africa's clothing and textile manufacturing retracted by 2.4% in total production volumes, representing the fourth consecutive year of production declines within the sector (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Similarly apparel products, in particular, saw a 4.9% drop in production, leather and textiles saw drops of 3.9% and 3.3% respectively.

Sluggish economic growth and a growing population have hiked the unemployment rate, which rose to 29% in the second quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The clothing manufacturing sector, in particular, is struggling to find strong footing, as production volumes continue to decrease. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), one in ten South Africans is employed in the manufacturing sector, making it one of the most important sources of employment and economic growth for South Africa.

Cheap, luxury-brand imports are argued to have disrupted the local fashion-retail and the manufacturing industries. Factory closures and job-cuts across the fashion industry can be traced to the arrival of international fast fashion retailers. Thus, with no local manufacturing hubs and discounted prices, fast fashion has dealt a blow to the South African fashion industry (Khumalo, 2019).

2.2.2. What is fast fashion?

“Fast fashion” was mentioned by The New York Times for the first time in 1989, following the opening of a Zara store in New York City. According to Gazzola *et al.* (2020: 3), garments produced by Zara would take 15 days to move from ideation to retail. Fast fashion is described as cheap clothing assortments that are inspired by current luxury fashion trends (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang and Chan, 2012; Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). These fast fashion brands, such as Zara and H&M thrive on shortened fashion cycles, coupled with cheap labour and minimal manufacturing costs. This results in the production of high volumes of clothing, priced significantly cheaper than their luxury brand look-alikes, which creates perceived disposability (Joy *et al.*, 2012).

The speed at which brands manufacture clothing, footwear and accessories has increased the occurrence of human rights violations committed by the fashion industry. Certainly, fast fashion’s increasing water consumption and the discharge of hazardous chemicals and the increase in textile waste all point towards an industry in need of reform (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020).

2.2.3. Towards circular fashion

In light of these sustainability challenges facing the fashion industry, dos Santos and Campos (2020) anticipate more companies will incorporate sustainable design into their planning. This refers specifically to recycling fabrics, using new technologies and partnering with new supply chain stakeholders (dos Santos & Campos, 2020).

Circular systems are defined in economic and ecological terms as those systems that place value on natural resources, minimise waste and seek to close the product life-cycle loop (Lima, 2020). This cycle aims to optimise the use of resources to make them circulate more efficiently. However, BoF-McKinsey (2019) share a reminder that making the fashion industry circular is a tangible solution that does not get to the root of the textile waste problem: the need to produce and consume less clothing.

In light of this argument supporting circularity, Lima (2020) stresses that much academic and corporate focus is placed on sustainable design strategies during the conception, development and production stages of fashion. However, addressing issues in fashion's post-production stages ought to be addressed to fill an academic, organisational and social behaviour gap.

2.3. Sustainable Design

Conceptualising sustainable design will be done by isolating two concepts, sustainability and design. Thereafter identifying their defining components to finally synthesise them to present a clear conceptualisation of sustainable design.

Sustainability, which is often mentioned in conjunction with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), aims to go further than corporate responsibility. Sustainability involves and affects several intersecting, ever changing dimensions of life on earth. These include human livelihoods and wellbeing that interact with global ecological, economic and socio-political dynamics (Joy *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.1. Origins in sustainable development

Efforts to protect the natural environment and future generations around the world were formalised in the UN's Brundtland Report (1987) that proposed a new phenomenon; sustainable development. The report defines sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987).

Natural resource depletion is of concern to scholars such as Kuijer (2014) and Kozlowski, Searcy and Bardecki (2018), who note that if the current rates of consumption continue, generations to come will struggle to survive. Their concerns are evidenced in the 2017 Pulse of the Fashion Industry Report that stresses global

“apparel consumption will rise by 63%, from 62 million tons today to 102 million tons in 2030 - an equivalent of more than 500 billion T-shirts” (Global Fashion Agenda and Boston Consulting Group, 2017: 8). The increasing demand for apparel and footwear makes use of 93 billion cubic meters of water annually; enough to meet the consumption needs of five million people (World Bank, 2019).

The Brundtland Report’s futurist outlook on development, set out to protect the planet from the aggressive extraction of its natural resources, which are further threatened by the growing human population (United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). This early definition by the United Nation set the groundwork for today’s conceptions of sustainability and sustainable development.

2.3.2. Design: a problem solving tool

Similar to this general definition of sustainability, Simon defines ‘design’ broadly, allowing for a variety of interpretations that encompass an interdisciplinary approach to design (Kimbell, 2009). He argues that a designer is someone who is interested in creating strategies, policies and products that aim to improve existing contexts into desired ones (Simon, 1996).

In his seminal paper, the Science of the Artificial, Simon lays out his vision of establishing a science of design, where design is thought of as a systemic approach to problem-solving that requires a unique, defined process (Simon, 1996; Visser, 2010; You and Hands, 2019).

At the heart of this call for the science of design is the theory of Bounded Rationality, that assumes the design process is a unique case of decision making limited by a finite list of options. Therefore design, according to BR Theory, is the process of conducting holistic research and identifying existing solutions and then, through a decision-making process, the designer develops and chooses the most satisfactory option as a solution (Beck and Stolterman, 2015). This suggests that design can guide fashion brands in establishing solutions to their brand and industry challenges.

2.3.3. Contemporary design thinking

Design thinking which gained the attention of 21st century scholars, organisations and entrepreneurs alike, offers a unique method of solving novel problems (Micheli, Sarah, Wilner, Bhatti, Mura and Beverland, 2018). In the same breath Black, Gardner, Pierce and Steers (2019) put forward that design thinking is a process used by designers to find solutions to complex issues, to navigate new or uncertain environments and to create new products for stakeholders. Developing a competitive brand position in the challenged fashion industry's context, would therefore require an effective problem solving methodology.

Adopting the design thinking approach can help fashion brands to identify solutions to address key challenges facing the industry. Furthermore, design thinking can assist brands to identify solutions that can offer the brand unique points-of-parity and therefore leverage for a competitive advantage (Lanteri, 2019).

At the heart of this problem-solving process, rests three core principles that design thinking follows (Verganti, Vendraminelli and Iansiti, 2020). Design thinking is people-centred and inspired by empathising with end users. Often through qualitative research, the designer aims to understand a problem from the user's perspective and thereafter attempts to devise the most meaningful solution for their specific context.

Utilising an abductive approach to problem-solving, suggests that designers not only consider how things are but designers also have to imagine a future and make hypotheses about how things might be. For example fashion brands and fashion designers can brainstorm current and potential industry practices that promote sustainable development.

These hypotheses are then tested in fast, iterative cycles of prototyping. The test cycles and iterations give designers the opportunity to refine solutions and tailor

them to the user's satisfaction. Garment mockups, and textile combinations can be tested early on in the design process to gain insight into product quality and customer response (Verganti *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, these principles represent various elements of the design thinking process such as empathy, collaboration, creativity, experimentation and reflection. According to Black *et al.* design thinking's three pillars are practiced over three phases that include inspiration, ideation, and implementation (Black *et al.*, 2019).

However, according to Micheli *et al.* (2018) the design thinking process is not as clear cut as Black *et al.* have proposed. As Lanteri suggests, design thinking involves five, non-linear and continuous phases including, empathising with the user, defining the problem, ideating solutions, prototyping solutions and testing solutions (Lanteri, 2019). These varied processes (three phases and five phases) both rest on design thinking's core principles - people-centred, abductive and iterative design.

To succeed, Lanteri (2019) recommends that companies must be prepared to make reactive decisions that are strategic responses to unexpected environmental changes. Furthermore, the principles of responsive decision making - "continuous and deliberate learning" - allow companies to make faster, well-informed strategic decisions based on previous learnings. For this purpose design thinking offers an effective method to develop a holistic understanding of the brand and its points-of-parity amongst its competition (Lanteri, 2019).

2.3.4. Arriving at sustainable design

Synthesising the above conceptualisations of sustainable development and design thinking can bring us closer to understanding which elements of sustainable design are effective as brand positioning tools.

Sustainable design intends to create with holistic and continuous consideration of the future planet and its people. The designer's purpose then is to create value, promote

human, economic and ecological well being and provide a benefit for local and or global communities (Lanteri, 2019). This methodology has contributed to a rise in “green” brands that have adopted sustainable design and are positioning their brands to be associated with sustainable development and empathy for people and the planet (Wang, 2016: 1407).

2.4. Rewoven Africa

Founded in 2018, Rewoven Africa aims to create a meaningful impact, solve problems and create a more sustainable future for the greater ecosystem we all form part of (Rewoven Africa, 2020).

As the first South African company recycling textile waste for clothing, Rewoven is a leader in the South African fashion industry and a leader in sustainable business (Hertantyo, 2019). They make use of a mechanical process to recycle textile waste, that starts with shredding the waste to create new fibres which are woven into 60% recycled cotton and 40% recycled polyester fabrics. Their website is integrated with a presence on Instagram and LinkedIn, these are their primary communication platforms. Their website’s homepage emphasises the brand’s core elements; *Waste, Fabric, People* (Rewoven, 2020).

A recent event hosted by Rewoven; *The Future of Fashion: A South African Sustainable Fashion Symposium*, created a space for sharing ideas and solutions for brands looking to help develop and grow a sustainable South African fashion industry. Aimed at a wide range of stakeholders, from policymakers, to suppliers and retailers as well as academics and fashion consumers. Their focus is on collaboration between industries and individuals, both local and abroad, to achieve wide reaching sustainability and shared value in the South African fashion industry (Rewoven, 2020).

2.5. Conclusion

Today, global organisations such as the UN are calling on brands to respond to the earth's ecological crises and younger generations are supporting those brands that do so (UN Fashion Alliance, 2019; Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). Brands that are environmentally conscious and able to offer long-term value for the planet and its people are considered competitively positioned to build strong, sustainable fashion brands (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020; Lima, 2020).

It was then argued that by adopting a design thinking approach, brands in the fashion industry can begin to identify and address key challenges in the industry and to identify solutions that can offer the fashion brand unique points-of-parity (Lanteri, 2019). Keller's brand positioning model (2013) was proposed as a framework for brand managers and designers to identify a target market and a competitive frame of reference and then to establish compelling points-of-parity and points-of-difference. Today, Keller's brand positioning model has been successfully applied to building sustainable brands within the online environment, with emphasis on the efficacy of developing favourable brand associations (Keller, 2013; Wang, 2016).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three consists of an outline of how this study achieved its research objectives. This includes a discussion that describes the researcher's selected paradigm, research design, population and sampling method, data collection methods and data analysis methods. The research methods for the study were selected in consideration of the study's research questions, research objectives and its conceptual framework.

3.1. Interpretivist Research Design

Utilising an interpretivist paradigm provided value to the study, as it appreciates the subjective human experience. The paradigm rests on the assumption that human beings cannot be studied using the same methodologies used when studying objects and appreciates the subjectivity of reality, as perceived by individuals (du

Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Ultimately interpretivism helps researchers gain an in-depth understanding of human and social phenomena from the research participant's perspective.

Individual experiences are therefore seen as valid sources of information and knowledge by interpretivists. Unlike the positivist approach, which values empirical data to arrive at absolute truths about reality (Hiller, 2016; du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Furthermore, interpretivism is considered to offer the researcher a deep understanding of phenomena and their complexities, within their unique social and cultural contexts without generalising about entire populations (Pham, 2018).

Yet, unlike interpretivism, which accepts anecdotal evidence as a source of truth about reality, positivism is focused on objectivity and only accepts measurable experiences of the world as valid data for analysis. The uncovered data is then considered the absolute truth about that reality. This suggests that positivism does not take into account how individuals respond to their unique experiences (Hiller, 2016). A positivist approach would, therefore, cause a challenge when trying to understand brand positioning and what brands wish to be associated with.

Therefore, an interpretivist approach was adopted to reach an understanding of how South African fashion brands utilise sustainable design in their brand positioning activities. To understand the modern social world and human behaviour, Bryman (2012) and Chowdhury (2014) propose interpretivism to be well suited to uncovering meaning through the actor's point of view. For this reason, qualitative research methods were used to identify key aspects of sustainable design that fashion brands utilise for brand positioning.

Local fashion brand, Rewoven Africa was approached for a qualitative, in-depth interview to understand the internal brand and its thinking. Additionally, a thematic content analysis was conducted on the content of Rewoven Africa's website. This helped facilitate the understanding of how a sustainable fashion brand is positioning

itself in consideration of the challenges and changes in the South African fashion industry.

This study has, therefore, adopted a cross-sectional approach, that provided insight into various actors' current experiences relating to brand positioning, the fashion industry and sustainability. Adopting a cross-sectional approach has enabled the researcher to describe the perceptions held by young fashion entrepreneurs and designers in the fashion industry today and how this translates to online brand content (Cherry, 2019). Although cross-sectional studies offer an effective approach to understanding specific populations in time-bound contexts, a longitudinal study would further help build an understanding of how sustainable brand positioning has evolved and will evolve over time.

3.2. Qualitative Research Plan

3.2.1. Population and sampling

In trying to gather the required volume of information to answer the research question, a target population and sample size has been chosen. In the same way, the study's research objectives, time limitations and the restrictions on movement were considered when deciding on the study's sample size and its population parameters (Pascoe, 2014).

A. Sampling

The population was purposefully sampled and interviewed. Furthermore, using the purposive sampling method ensured that each characteristic of the selected sample served to benefit the study, as each characteristic was aligned with the study's population parameters.

B. Population

The target population of this study is two of the individuals that founded Rewoven Africa, the CEO and CFO who serve as the primary subjects of the study. In addition, the interview data was analysed alongside its competitors in the fabric and waste management industries. The website content therefore makes up the secondary data of the study and included the content of Rewoven's website as well as Photoganic and Earthling & Moon's websites.

Rewoven Africa is a small company therefore the population is small and this has led to the researcher's focus on the websites of Rewoven Africa and its competitors. Thus, the population parameters for the study were; sustainable fashion brand practitioners together with the website content of competing fabric retailers. The chosen population parameters each share characteristics with the research questions. They are all brands that have websites that inform audiences about their sustainable fabric business, therefore tying them back to the purpose of this study (Pascoe, 2014).

Table 1: Target population, Rewoven Africa's executives

Participant	Role at Rewoven	Gender	Sustainable fashion experience (years)
Participant 1 [CEO]	Chief Executive Officer, Head of Business Development, Co-founder	F	4
Participant 2 [CFO]	Chief Financial Officer, Director of Operations, Co-founder	M	4

Table 2: General population: Photoganic and Earthling & Moon websites

Competitor	Markets	Industry Category
Photoganic	South Africa, B2B & B2C	Organic fabric trader
Earthling & Moon	South Africa, B2C	Sustainable fashion retailer

3.2.2. Data collection methods

Qualitative data collection methods were used for this study to generate data that is thick and detailed in the description of contextual information and able to capture the complexity of the phenomena of the study (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014; Gaya and Smith, 2016). Rewoven is a unique brand, in that it is the first South African brand that recycles textile waste to make new clothing (Twyg, 2019). Therefore, an exploratory, qualitative case study approach enabled the researcher to offer in-depth descriptions of how Rewoven optimises brand positioning, considering their competition with fashion brands and waste management brands in the Western Cape.

A. In-depth qualitative interviews

Having conducted a semi-structured, in-depth interview with two of Rewoven Africa's founders has allowed the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of the internal dynamics of the brand and its thinking. The interviews were conducted using a general interview approach, to create a natural, conversational atmosphere during the interview whilst addressing key topics of brand positioning. This structure also helped to build rapport between the interviewer and interviewees (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to ask questions about the nature of Rewoven's competition and how they see themselves as similar or different to their competition. The conversational style of the interview encouraged rapport between interviewer and the interviewees, which allowed the researcher to gather sufficient data to analyse. By describing how the researcher became aware of Rewoven and how that may or may not be as a result of their marketing intentions, the interviewer established context and direction for the interviewees. Furthermore, the in-depth interview facilitated the more pressing questions and discussions, such as how Rewoven wants to be thought of and what they want to be associated with. The scope of the semi-structured interviews has been outlined in the interview schedule (see Appendix C).

Ultimately, the semi-structured interviews provided a means to answering the research questions by allowing the researcher to see brand positioning through the eyes of the Rewoven team (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Unfortunately, due to the restrictions on movement in response to COVID-19, the interviews were conducted virtually and recorded, via the Zoom teleconference platform. Conducting virtual interviews limited the scope of non-verbal cues that were picked up by the researcher. However, by conducting general, in-depth interviews with the founders of Rewoven Africa the research questions have been answered in rich, subjective detail (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

B. Thematic content analysis

To support the in-depth interview, a thematic content analysis of Rewoven's Homepage and Our Story page, was conducted alongside an analysis of *Photoganic* and *Earthchild & Moon's* websites. Without counting words and codes, the aim of the thematic content analysis was to interpret the social reality presented by the population, as it is mirrored in their provided texts (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

3.2.3. Data analysis methods

The data collected via the interviews and content analysis have been analysed and interpreted by means of a deductive, thematic content analysis. Furthermore, the theoretical frameworks established and the textual data gathered, have informed a set of thematic codes that were developed. The coded data has been interpreted alongside existing knowledge to arrive at the study's findings (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014). The eight steps outlined by Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014) served to guide the content analysis process which was conducted in consideration of the research study's questions and objectives.

Firstly, the content analysis process requires the preparation of the raw data. This was achieved by the transcription of all recorded interviews with Rewoven, into written text. The raw data was then transcribed as accurately as possible, to preserve the depth of the data (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014). However, irrelevant data has been discarded at the researcher's discretion.

Thereafter, this study used words and phrases as coding units to group parts of the transcribed texts that represent a single theme relevant to the questions and objectives of this study. The coding units were then compared and analysed in regards to their similarities, differences and their relations (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014).

The following step included grouping related coding units together to form categories of codes. For that purpose, the conceptual framework to which the categories were set, has included deductive and inductive coding schemes. Furthermore, *in vivo* labels were assigned to categories of codes that were defined in the coding manual (See Appendix D). The researcher has ensured that the selected codes, themes and categories are exhaustive, mutually exclusive, specific and relevant (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014). After establishing category definitions, the clarity and consistency of the coding scheme were tested on a sample of data. The coding definitions and rules were redefined several times to achieve consistency (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014).

The researcher then identified, isolated and contextualised all relevant and meaningful sections of text by applying the coding scheme. The text was reduced into codes, derived from the themes identified in the literature review that was conducted (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014). An iterative approach was adopted when assessing the consistency of the coding scheme. Finally, once satisfied with the level of consistency in the coding scheme, the researcher began interpreting and drawing conclusions from the data. These findings and the methods used have been reported on, in the following chapter (Bezuidenhout and Cronje, 2014).

3.2.4. Ensuring Trustworthiness

The study's qualitative credibility has been enhanced through the triangulation of two data collection methods, an in-depth interview with two brand executives and a thematic content analysis. The analysis and subsequent findings made in this study are useful only to brands and organisations that are geared towards sustainability in the fashion industry, therefore the transferability of the study is limited. However, the data collection and analysis methods and the theoretical frameworks chosen are integrated by design, therefore bolstering dependability. Furthermore, the confirmability of the study has been determined by the findings that support the notion that sustainable fashion brands require unique brand positioning strategies. These strategies are designed to separate them from competition within the sustainable fashion industry (Koonin, 2014).

3.2.5. Limitations and delimitations

Restrictions on movement due to COVID-19 have posed a limitation on being able to meet brand managers and individuals for face-to-face interviews and discussions. Furthermore, this study was self-funded and therefore financial-resources were low. Coupled with movement restrictions and financial limitations, the period of time afforded to conduct this study was relatively short, therefore the nature of the study and the amount of information gathered was limited.

In light of these limitations, this study was conducted digitally. With data being primarily sourced online and all communications restricted to email and social media private messaging. Likewise, a singular brand - Rewoven Africa - was chosen to be the focus of the study, supported by interviews with young South African men and women: millennials born between and 1984 and 1994, as research has shown that these are the most conscious consumers currently (Gazzola, Pavione, Pezzetti and Grechi, 2020: 3).

4. PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

An outline of the Rewoven case study and a discussion about its brand positioning using Keller's *Brand Positioning Model* (2013) follows. The chapter will discuss Rewoven's target markets, the nature of its competition and which points-of-parity and points of difference the brand chooses to emphasise. These will be considered alongside the websites of the competitors that were identified in the interview with Rewoven's CEO and CFO. Thereafter, an overview of the brand positioning strategies utilised by Rewoven Africa will be presented. Finally, Chapter 4 will then discuss the findings of the study in relation to the themes *Positioning Functional Attributes* and *Positioning Emotional Attributes*.

4.1. The Case Study

4.1.1. Rewoven Africa

As the first company in South Africa to collect and recycle textile waste to produce fabric and textile products, Rewoven Africa is operating in more than one market. Firstly, as a waste management company, operating out of Cape Town and secondly as a recycled-textile manufacturing company. These two sides to the business have been addressed using several positioning strategies across multiple channels of communication.

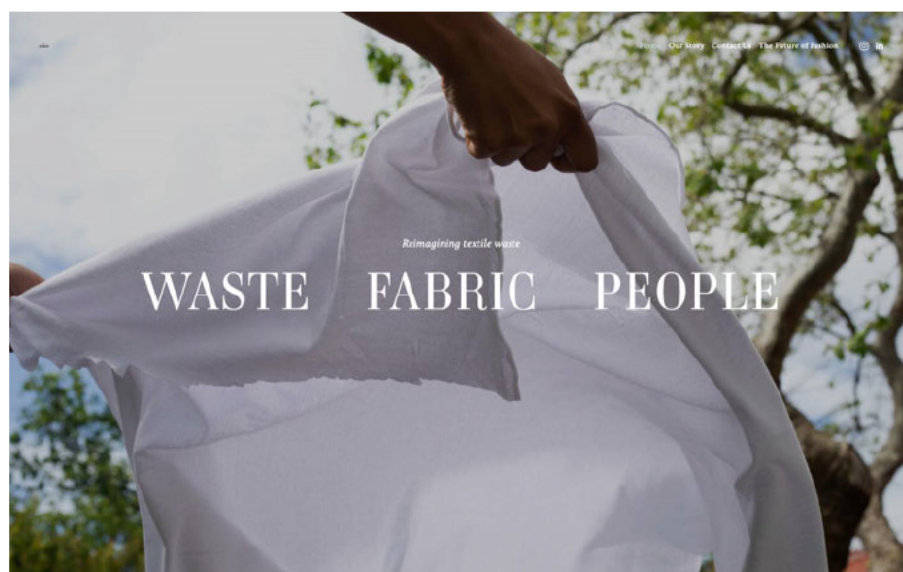
Founded in 2018 and as CEO describes - "*I was thinking of a thesis topic for my masters, that the idea for Rewoven came about*" - the foundation of the business was established in the context of identifying a problem and devising a solution to it.

4.1.2. The Rewoven Africa website

The Rewoven website opens to a simple homepage, with a background image that shows someone holding a sheet of plain white fabric, as it sways in the wind, under a tree (2020). The words, *WASTE*, *FABRIC* and *PEOPLE* are boldly displayed in white

below a heading that reads, *Reimagining textile waste* (Rewoven, 2020). When hovering over each heading, an accompanying image reinforces the heading's meaning. In the top, right hand corner of the homepage, three tabs direct you to the website's various pages - *Our Story*, *Contact Us*, *The Future of Fashion*. Next to the website tabs are links to Rewoven's LinkedIn and Instagram pages. Their website's landing page highlights values embraced by Rewoven both in visual language and text based signs and signifiers (Bryman, 2012).

Figure 1: Rewoven Africa Homepage



Source: <https://www.rewoven.africa/>

4.1.3. Rewoven's Frame of Reference: Target Market

Rewoven has identified customer segments in the B2B and the B2C markets, due to their operations in two business categories. Firstly, Rewoven provides a waste management service to companies in Cape Town, as noted by the CEO:

"We collect pre-consumer, off-cut-fabric so our customers are garment manufacturers primarily, upholstery manufacturers, home textile manufacturers, people who manufacture any textile products and create products out of that fabric in the process."

For success in the B2B market, Keller (2013) argues that developing a strong B2B brand can offer their business customers reassurance and clarity on corporate decisions that are often complex and high risk. Rewoven has been able to identify this opportunity and addressed it by offering businesses a 'recycled goods certification' that details how their textile waste was recycled and furthermore, what was made from that recycled textile waste. Through this, Rewoven has been able to create additional value for their business customers by establishing a transparent waste management process that can be reported on by their customers, in their internal corporate sustainability and impact reports.

Additionally, the CEO states, *"On the fabric side, who purchases our fabric?... anyone who wants to make a garment is our customer on the fabric side of things."*

One of Rewoven's business objectives is to open access to sustainable South African fabrics by lowering minimum quantity orders. Though not their primary target audience, young, South African designers with small fashion brands have identified a major issue in the local industry. As the CEO mentions, *"There are a lot of people who don't have access to the [local] cotton fabric - that came out last year at our Future of Fashion event."* Therefore Rewoven has aimed to address a tension in the customer segment of fashion designers by lowering their prices and minimum quantity orders.

4.1.4. Rewoven's Frame of Reference: Nature of Competition

Both sides of Rewoven's business are unique in terms of direct and indirect competitors identified. However, for the purposes of this study, only their competitors in the fabric and textile (fashion) industry were taken into consideration. However, it is worth noting that Rewoven sees themselves as competing with the Western Cape's general waste collection companies, as CFO puts it,

“On the Westside the normal companies that collect everyone’s waste, I’d say are our direct competitors. We work completely differently.”

It is also worthwhile to reiterate that Rewoven’s business was conjured in the context of a thesis for a Master’s in Development Economics. This was coupled with a personal interest in fashion and subsequently frustration with how the fashion industry looked and functioned (CFO). This spurred an interrogation of sustainability in the fashion industry and ultimately led them to the idea of recycling textile waste and making new textile and fabric products (CEO). Thus establishing Rewoven in a unique category of, sustainable fashion brands.

Within the sustainable fashion brand category, Rewoven identified indirect and direct competitors that include, *“companies that are producing the lower end, lower value-added goods. The dog beds, the blankets, the filaments.”* Furthermore, the direct competitor that was highlighted was a fellow Cape Town based company, *Photoganic*. Choosing to operate in the Western Cape was a strategic decision made by Rewoven that aimed to take advantage of Cape Town’s well-established textile manufacturing industry and begin growing from there (CFO).

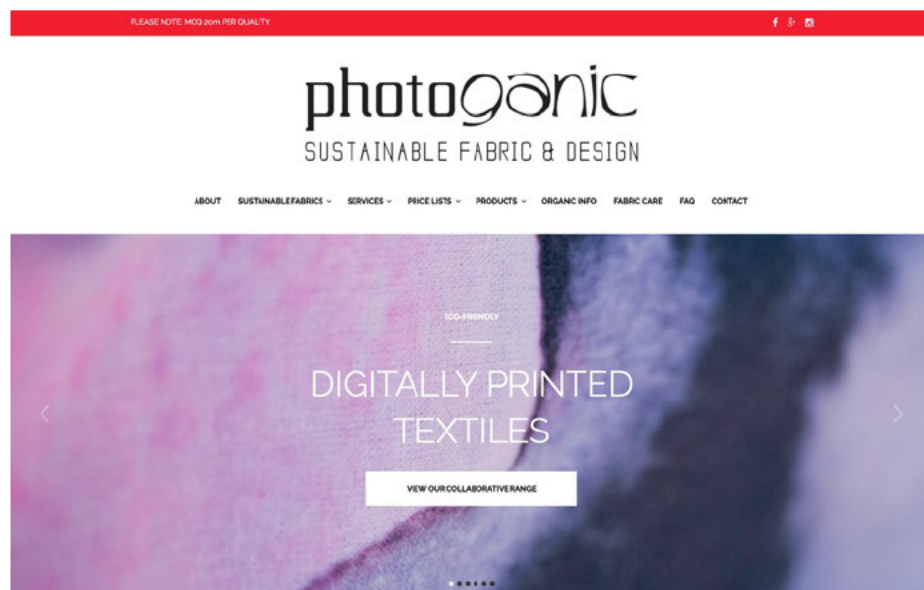
Competitor A: PhotoGanic

Identified by Rewoven as a direct competitor, Photoganic sells and designs sustainable fabrics. A red bar at the top left of the website’s homepage states that the company’s Minimum Order Quantity is set at 20 meters per quality. In the same red bar, on the top right hand of the page, are links to their Facebook, Google+ and Instagram pages.

Much like Rewoven’s homepage, it is clear that both companies produce and retail sustainable fabric. However, unlike Rewoven, Photoganic is not involved in recycling any fabrics or textile waste. Their claim to sustainability is explained on their About Page; “Supplying clients with a collection of certified organic & ethically sourced fabrics in a multitude of weights & grades, including CMIA certified cotton (Certified

Cotton Made In Africa)” (Photoganic, 2020). Their website’s layout delivers a strong ecommerce look and feel. This is perhaps due to their target market being local and international B2B and B2C markets.

Figure 2: PhotoGanic Homepage



Source: <https://www.organicfabrics.co.za/>

Competitor B: Earthling & Moon

Although not mentioned by Rewoven as a direct competitor, Earthling and Moon emphasises their sustainability. E&M presents itself as a brand “*for the conscious and confident*”, which is written on the homepage in a light, elegant font. The imagery shows a young lady, next to a curtained window that allows the sun to gently fill the room. Their “Sun Room” collection creates a feel of light, gentle and conscious clothing designed for women.

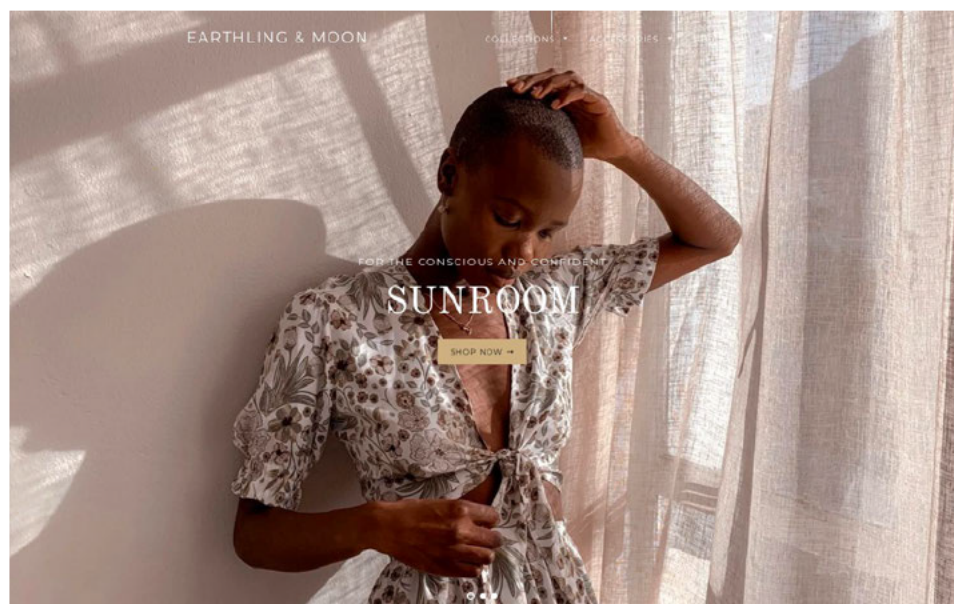
At the top of the E&M homepage are four tabs that lead visitors to their *Collections* page, *Accessories*, *About Us* and the *Shopping Cart* page. This points to their focus being consumer apparel, for women. In trying to identify their claims to sustainability, their About Page has a short discussion of locally sourced fabrics, safe labour practices, plastic-free and reusable packaging. The page continues, “Our swimwear

fabric is sourced from Italy and is made from regenerated ocean waste.” (Earthling and Moon, 2020).

Their claims to sustainability appear to be a greenwashing of ordinary operations, with their swimwear collection being their only true sustainable collection. However, their website and language evokes the imagery of a sustainable brand.

“We are inspired by the spirit of nature and the power of the moon - for the earthlings and moonchildren.”

Figure 3: Earthling & Moon homepage



Source: <https://www.earthlingandmoon.com/>

4.1.4. Points-of-Parity & Points-of-Difference

The situations and types of cues that Rewoven hope to associate their brand with are described by CEO and CFO as their “Why” (Keller, 2013). Slater (2012) notes that a brand’s *WHY* essentially describes the brand’s reason for existence or purpose and motivates audiences to become customers.

For Rewoven, their *why* as defined by the CEO states that, “*The reason we were inspired to do this, being creating jobs, sustainable development... That really gets people quite passionate about even working with us.*”

This is reinforced on their website's *"People"* page, which details how each co-founder answered the question, "Q: Why did you start Rewoven?". Ultimately the team spoke to *"creating a meaningful and impact that will live in our communities"*, *"being creative, solving problems and creating a more sustainable future"* and *"every action we make contributes to the larger ecosystem of existence"*. These values have driven them to innovate within the fashion and waste industries.

Rewoven's *why* also comprises their business operations, relating particularly to the brand's waste management service. Being lean and innovative in their approach to devising new solutions in textile waste management.

Therefore, when trying to identify Rewoven's desired points-of-parity, their desire to remain seen as a waste management company highlights an important classification they make. As a waste management company that specialises in the collection and management of textile waste, they have shifted the brand into a space with little to no competition in category. Therefore creating what Keller (2013) terms a competitive point-of-parity by negating their competition's points-of-difference.

This textile waste specialisation feeds into Rewoven's desired points-of-difference. The waste management service and associations offer Rewoven the unique opportunity to market their products as 100% recycled fabrics sold to B2B and B2C customers at a fraction of the cost and at no minimum quantity orders. Furthermore, this allows Rewoven the opportunity to leverage and champion the concept of circularity in South Africa's textile industry.

4.1.5. Rewoven's Sustainable Design

In December 2019, Rewoven hosted their Future of Fashion event in Johannesburg that aimed to foster a culture of collaboration and to establish a platform for knowledge sharing. Developed due to the industry's apparent lack of technical expertise, Rewoven hopes to fill the skills gap that persists at all stages in the South African textile industry.

This demonstrates Rewoven's systemic approach to the future of sustainable fashion in South Africa, that is focused on educating all stakeholders in the fashion industry. As CFO emphasises;

"Education and reception! Customer education. One thing that we've found is that not a lot of people have information around what's actually happening in the fashion industry and how it is that sustainability affects them. How they fit in, the role that they play as manufacturers, as designers and as consumers and the power that they have to change the social ills that we do see in the fashion industry."

Their approach to sustainable design includes the management of pre-consumer textile waste and consumer-generated textile waste. Furthermore, embedded in their design is their commitment to the sustainable development of South Africa and the lives of black people affected by inequality, poverty and unemployment.

4.2. Findings

The researcher's key findings will be discussed according to the study's research questions, its literature review and in relation to Keller's Brand Positioning Model.

4.2.1. Which brand positioning strategies do South African, sustainable fashion brands use to create competitive advantages in the minds of South African customers?

Both Rewoven and Earthling & Moon adopt a value-based strategy, to position the emotional attributes of their respective brands. On the other hand, Rewoven's direct competitor, Photoganic's website was found to position the brand's functional attributes above all. Their website describes their name and services, with their slogan "*Sustainable fabric and design*" summarising their key offerings.

E&M has opted for a strategy that positions their emotional attributes first. Their featured collection on the homepage is described as being "For the Conscious and Confident", this aims to evoke a positive emotional response by customers and to build a positive attitude towards the brand (Sarkar, Sarkar and Yadav, 2019).

According to Keller (2013), individual differences can affect how consumers respond to the brand positioning. These individual differences arise in audience segments and or amongst competitors, and can force brands to either choose a functional or emotional positioning strategy.

The findings made from the interview with Rewoven's CEO and CFO, as well as the content analyses of its website and their competitors websites, suggest distinct functional and emotional dimensions of positioning a sustainable fashion brand. The interaction between these dimensions, according to Sarkar, Sarkar and Yadav (2019), form the basis of brand associations. Ultimately, strategies that focused on **positioning functional attributes** and **positioning emotional attributes** were the two main themes that emerged from the analysis of South African sustainable fashion brands.

4.2.2. What is Rewoven Africa's current positioning strategy(ies)?

Much like Sarkar, Sarkar and Yadav (2019) argue, Rewoven has focused their positioning efforts across two key themes - Functional Attributes and Emotional Attributes. However, the interview with Rewoven's executives shed light on what they have focused on in the brand positioning strategies.

Rewoven's emphasis during the interview was on them being a solution for the small-to-medium sized brands and designers who only order a small amount of fabric at a time (CEO).

"They're not interested in sending fabric to u'Kgabane who has a clothing brand and needs 500 metres. They don't, and the thing is with the industry in South Africa, it's majority small to medium manufacturers and it's majority small to medium designers. There are only like five of the big guys."

For this reason, Rewoven has focused their primary positioning efforts on positioning the brand's functional attributes. When looking into the positioning of functional attributes, there were three categories that made up the strategy: a *price-based positioning strategy*, a *hyper-specialised positioning strategy* and a *problem/solution positioning strategy*.

A. Price-based Positioning Strategy

Price and Minimum-Order-Quantities is an important means to enabling brands more access to fabric manufactured in South Africa. Their identified target market, primarily B2B, small-scale brands, retailers and designers in the Western Cape, was a key driver for them focusing on lowering their prices. As Khumalo (2019) notes, the struggling South African clothing sector needs fabric manufacturers to empower the small-medium clothing brands and designers, if the industry is to recover jobs and industrial capacity.

"We really want to bring the cost of that fabric to be relatively competitive to other local fabric retailers so that it's affordable for everyone."

According to Keller (2013), marketers must make a choice between a pricing strategy of lowering prices on the one hand and increasing consumer perceptions of product quality on the other. He goes on to suggest that marketers must adjust between a value pricing strategy and an everyday low pricing strategy over the short and long term, to match consumer perceptions of value.

In light of these perceptions of value, the everyday low pricing strategy employed by Rewoven may be hurting the brand's long term brand equity. The consumer perception that may develop in South Africa, is that recycled fabrics are cheap

because they are low quality. Rewoven's CEO is aware of these misplaced perceptions of recycled fabric, they mention.

"Whenever we say 'recycled fabric' people think we're talking about this dodgy fabric that is low quality. Like no, it's actually normal fabric."

It therefore, may prove worthwhile to adopt a value pricing strategy that blends product quality, costs of production and prices that satisfy consumer needs and wants. Furthermore, value pricing strategies are often geared to secure the profit margins of the firm and ensure budgets are not wasted on marketing efforts that lower brand equity (Keller, 2013).

Table 3: Positioning functional attributes, price-based strategy

Category: Price-based Positioning Strategy			
Theme		Frequency	Verbatim
Positioning	Functional Attributes	30	"Also cost I would say is something that we use to kind of differentiate ourselves."

B. Hyper-specialised Positioning Strategy

Rewoven's next focus was to emphasise desired points-of-parity and points-of-difference through a hyper-specialised positioning strategy (Keller, 2013; Houraghan, 2020). Operating in the waste management industry means Rewoven is associated with the general waste collection system, that typically collects a company's or household's waste and then the waste is dumped at a landfill site.

In light of this potential blurring of their brand's role, Rewoven has made the distinction between their operating model and that of their competition. Thus, on the Rewoven website and in the interview, it was emphasised that Rewoven is a textile waste management company. Communicating this key point-of-difference, according to Keller (2013), allows consumers to build a strong, positive association with the brand and the belief that they cannot find the same functional attributes with a competitor brand.

"On the Westside (WP) the normal companies that collect everyone's waste, I'd say are our direct competitors. We work completely differently. We are not interested in other waste products. We're only interested in textile waste."

Furthermore, Rewoven is focused on innovating within the textile waste management and fabric manufacturing industries. The brand aims to collect and

process textile waste without having to use external parties for the textile recycling and fabric manufacturing processes. This suggests that they are moving towards being more lean in their operations and indeed being drivers of innovation in South Africa's textile waste and clothing industries. Ultimately the vision for the brand and indeed their positioning is to be a one-stop-shop, where textile waste is diverted, recycled and '*reimagined*'. Therefore establishing Rewoven as champions of a circular fashion economy in South Africa.

Table 4: Positioning functional attributes, hyper-specialised strategy

Category: Hyper-specialised Positioning Strategy		
Theme	Frequency	Verbatim
Positioning Functional Attributes	30	"On the Westside (WP) the normal companies that collect everyone's waste, I'd say are our direct competitors. We work completely differently. We are not interested in other waste products. We're only interested in textile waste"

C. Problem/Solution Positioning Strategy

Neither the CEO or CFO have backgrounds in fashion, however, they both mentioned that Rewoven was ideated when discussing the CEO's Master's degree thesis topic. The CEO became passionate about sustainable development whilst studying towards a Master's degree in Development Economics. The CEO on the other hand has been involved in starting up several small businesses, "so you could say that I have an inclination to entrepreneurship". This collaboration between academia and entrepreneurship is a fundamental part of Rewoven's foundation.

By interrogating their interests in business and looking for a thesis topic they developed a thorough understanding of the inner-workings of the fashion industry and its ills. This ultimately led to the CEO and CFO contemplating the economic possibility of creating a company that can solve South Africa's textile waste problem.

"That's where my thesis came in. We used that as a springboard to further understand the issues of textile waste, textile recycling and can this actually be made into clothes?"

The key function or service that Rewoven wants to provide is "to be able to collect textile waste to manufacture clothing or fabric for clothing". Therefore, part of Rewoven's positioning strategy involves communicating a problem, textile waste, and its solution, recycling textile waste to create new goods (Bhasin, 2019).

Table 5: Positioning functional attributes, problem/solution strategy

Category: Problem/Solution Positioning Strategy			
Theme		Frequency	Verbatim
Positioning Attributes	Functional	21	"These young innovators, coming up with new solutions..."

4.2.3. How does Rewoven respond to challenges concerning sustainable design in the South African fashion industry?

When identifying the challenges Rewoven faces as a small business and a sustainable fashion brand, they reiterated the need for technical expertise and the need to educate the entire ecosystem of stakeholders in the fashion industry. Furthermore Rewoven is committed to creating jobs to contribute towards the sustainable development of South Africa, in terms of fighting unemployment, poverty and inequality.

These values intersect with Rewoven's CEO and CFO's personal values and identities. A proudly black owned company, Rewoven has had to overcome the residual effects of an unequal governing system and the corrupt regimes that followed (Baker, 2019).

"Because we're young and we're black, they think we're dumb, they think 'aaw cute, young black kids, so ambitious they think they have this idea they think it can happen'."

Proud of their African heritage, Rewoven CEO mentions that they hope to reclaim African sustainability by referring to "ukwenza umsebenzi" the practice that ensures every part of the animal is used when it's slaughtered. More evidently, Rewoven has focused on the concept of collaboration and shared-value - ubuntu - as a tool to drive the shift towards a circular fashion industry (Williams, 2018).

"There needs to be a mind-shift towards working together, collaboration, shared value, now they're talking about the sharing economy. Now they're realising that doing things together is important. We could've told you that long ago, as Africans."

To communicate their heritage and brand values, Rewoven has used a complementary strategy that positions their emotional attributes. An additional component of their values-based strategy involves collaborating and empathising

with manufacturers, designers and their factory workers. Furthermore, they experimented with different processes and fabrics during the pilot phase of their start up and tested their findings with consumers and investors. Ultimately, whether pre-conceived or not, Rewoven has adopted several design thinking processes to build their brand and their brand positioning strategy.

This has culminated in their Future of Fashion symposium event that acts as an educational networking hub for everyday people, fashion students, fashion designers and retailers, and big fabric manufacturers and wholesalers. This industry symposium is Rewoven's tool to change stakeholder behaviour and fill the knowledge and technical expertise gaps that exist in the South African fashion industry.

Table 6: Positioning emotional attributes, values-based strategy

Category: Values-based Positioning Strategy		
Theme	Frequency	Verbatim
Positioning Emotional Attributes	60	"I would say the shareholder approach. So we are openly, open to collaboration. We encourage collaboration, partnerships and working with other brands to make this thing possible."

4.3. Conclusion

Rewoven's website communicates their recycling processes that require no water, a performance benefit they emphasise, furthermore, Rewoven creates single jersey fabric suitable for t-shirts, sweaters, hoodies, leggings made from 100% recycled textile waste, all aspects of their product's origin and utility. The imagery associations made are of Rewoven's recycled textiles that offer the same aesthetic and quality as fabric made from virgin cotton (Rewoven, 2020).

These elements speak to the duality of Rewoven's positioning strategy that focuses on the theme of Positioning Functional Attributes and is supplemented by Positioning Emotional Attributes simultaneously. According to Wang (2016), a sustainable brand's positioning strategy should combine functional attributes with emotional attributes to generate 'significant' positive brand attitudes

4.3.1 Rewoven's Mantra

On Rewoven's website homepage their short mantra reads, Reimagining Textile Waste. Due to the dual sided business model adopted by Rewoven, this mantra serves to synthesise their brand's "heart and soul" (Keller, 2013). Therefore, their brand functions term, Reimagining, may signify their textile recycling processes and their values of collaboration and creating shared value;

"We've got an initiative, the project that I spoke of in Jo'burg? That side of the business looks to speak to the education of consumers, of manufacturers, of brands, of designers."

The subsequent descriptive modifier, Textile, and emotional modifier term, Waste, clarify what Rewoven is and what it is not regarding waste. Thus, Rewoven is not just a waste management service but a textile waste management brand, conjuring new ideas about the benefits of textile waste whilst explicitly describing the brands service offering and product categories (Keller, 2013; Rewoven, 2020). Thus, it was found Rewoven's brand mantra, "Reimagining textile waste", accurately communicates what the brand wants to be the most salient and top of mind associations.

5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter of this study will present a summary of its major findings, the concluding answers to the study's research questions and thereafter provide its recommendations. Finally, this chapter also covers the study's implications and ethical considerations.

5.1. Concluding Answers to The Research Questions

1. Which brand positioning strategies do South African, sustainable fashion brands use to create competitive advantages in the minds of South African customers?

When conducting the interview with Rewoven's executives, they mentioned their direct competitor, Photoganic. The researcher then identified an indirect competitor brand also operating in Cape Town, Earthling & Moon.

An analysis of the three brands' websites, gave the researcher an understanding of the visual language, key touchpoints and most importantly, brand mantras and values used by sustainable fashion brands in South Africa. Through the thematic content analysis of these websites and the Rewoven interview, two major themes/strategies were most evident.

These findings support Wang's (2016) argument that sustainable fashion brands tend to position their functional attributes ahead of their emotional attributes, which act as a complementary strategy. According to Wang (2016), a sustainable fashion brand's positioning strategy should incorporate both the functional and emotional attributes of the brand.

2. What is Rewoven Africa's current positioning strategy(ies)?

Rewoven has two distinct positioning strategies that serve the separate functions of the business. Firstly, Rewoven utilises a strategy that positions its functional attributes, this includes three functional categories that inform the strategy.

Rewoven's *price-based positioning strategy* is intended to communicate accessibility. Their target market being primarily small-to-medium businesses (B2B) and individuals (B2C) who are looking to dispose of textile waste and those who want to make garments on a small scale. Therefore they have lowered their minimum-quantity-orders for fabric and they do not charge at all for their waste collection service.

Additionally, the *hyper-specialised positioning strategy* utilised by Rewoven aims to communicate their intended POPs and POD associations. By emphasising their solution driven specialisation, in textile waste management, Rewoven has successfully differentiated from its competition in waste management in the Western Cape. Furthermore, Rewoven is the first fashion brand in South Africa that is involved in textile waste management and continues to drive innovative solutions in the local fashion industry.

The final aspect of Rewoven's functional positioning strategy, is a *problem/solution positioning strategy*. The core of the business is solving the fashion industry's and South Africa's major ills. Born from a Master's degree thesis, Rewoven is committed to driving sustainable change in the South African fashion industry, whilst addressing unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Rewoven's complementary strategy, *positioning emotional attributes*, is based on the founders' values and Rewoven's brand values. This *values-based positioning strategy* is driven by collaboration, Rewoven aims to engage and connect with all stakeholders in the fashion industry, to educate and spread knowledge on how to work together to establish a sustainable fashion industry.

3. How does Rewoven respond to challenges concerning sustainable design in the fashion industry?

A shortage of technical expertise, a lack of public and industry knowledge and South Africa's three key challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment are the challenges Rewoven aims to address. These and other issues pose a challenge to the development of a circular, local fashion industry (Khumalo, 2019).

Inspired by African culture, Rewoven's response has been to establish a symposium event, the Future of Fashion event. This annual event aims to bring all members of the fashion industry's ecosystem, from ordinary South African consumers to designers and major retailers. The discussions are aimed at educating the industry and finding solutions, through collaborative discussion, for how to design for the sustainable development of South Africa's fashion industry.

5.2. Implications of Findings for Future Practices

The research analysed positioning strategies that South African fashion brands have used when communicating sustainable fashion. These strategies were analysed through the use of Keller's Brand Positioning Model, to develop literature that can guide brand practitioners, organisations and academics towards an understanding of how South Africa's fashion brands, that are also sustainable, are built today.

By analysing Keller's brand positioning model and Rewoven Africa in parallel, newcomers and established brands in the fashion industry have a guide to incorporate established theoretical and practical perspectives into their brand positioning activities. Therefore contributing to the South African fashion industry by encouraging and assisting the growth of more sustainable and competitively-positioned South African fashion brands.

5.3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to analyse which positioning strategies sustainable fashion brands in South Africa are using. It was found that sustainable fashion brands prefer to adopt a combined strategy that includes functional and emotional attributes. It is recommended that new brands use a design thinking approach to find which attributes, functional or emotional, will create positive associations in the minds of its target market.

Rewoven was chosen as the case study for this paper, due to it being the first South African brand that recycles textile waste to make clothing products. It was found that at the core of Rewoven's strategy is a functional attribute positioning strategy, that was informed by collaborating with and differentiating from industry players and periods dedicated to pilot testing fabrics and processes. Rewoven's accompanying

emotional attribute positioning strategy serves to drive their collaborator values, whilst sharing and gaining knowledge with the greater fashion industry ecosystem. Therefore it is recommended that new sustainable fashion brands consider Keller's Brand Positioning Model coupled with the design thinking methodology when identifying key associations they wish to drive with their positioning strategy.

5.4. Ethical Considerations

All research done for this study was done in an ethical manner to minimise harm and to ensure mutual benefit from the research. To avoid doing any harm to the brand interviewed, all the information that has been gathered will be used solely for the purposes of this research report, furthermore, no private or sensitive information pertaining to the brands in question will be shared (Louw, 2014).

To ensure that participation was voluntary, all interviewees and respondents were informed of their option to opt-in or out of the study at any time during the research. A consent form that outlines the details of the study and the researcher's and supervisor's contact details were provided prior to all interviews (Louw, 2014; See Appendix A and B). Finally, it was the researcher's primary concern to remain objective and avoid bias throughout the duration of the study by reflecting on personal ideals without manipulating information when interpreting data (Louw, 2014).

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APPENDIX

A. Ethical Clearance Letter



15 July 2020



Student name: Kgabane Lengane

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega Bordeaux



Re: Approval of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Strategic Brand Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance



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



Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.



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

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Marleen Rolland
Supervisor



Dr. Helena van Wyk
Campus Postgraduate
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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.

The Independent Institute of Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors, are indemnified against all claims which may arise in connection with or as a result of any loss, damage or injury to you as a researcher entering into an agreement with a participant in the course of your research, provided that such loss, damage or injury is caused by the gross negligence or intentional act(s) or omission(s) of The Independent of Institute Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors.

Wishing you the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely,



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator – RESM8419

Dr. Ria van Zyl

National Post-graduate Coordinator – IIE-Vega

The Independent Institute of Education

B. Informed Consent Form



INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To Rewoven's Co-founders,

My name is Kgabane and I am an honours student at Vega. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Marleen Rolland about how sustainable fashion brands position themselves in the South African market. The aim of this research is to identify brand positioning strategies that sustainable fashion brands are using in order to guide the positioning strategies of brands in similar markets.

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 as a co-founder of Rewoven Africa your insight into building a sustainable brand can offer valuable insight for other South African brands to confidently and competitively embrace sustainability in fashion. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to interview you, along with your co-founders on a Zoom video-call on Tuesday, 28 July at 11h00.

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 experiences building a sustainable fashion brand. 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 purely 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 agree 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 and I 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 Communication. 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 lecturer 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:

Kgabane Lengane

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My supervisor's contact details are as follows:

Marleen Rolland

[REDACTED]

C. Interview Schedule

Section 1: Introductions	Example
Context and study will be given.	Good morning, my name is Kgabane and I am a VEGA honours student. My research focus is on how sustainable fashion brands in South Africa position themselves.
The study's purpose will be established.	I am interested in Rewoven because, as the first brand to recycle textile waste into clothing, your offering is extremely unique and this piqued my interest.
How information will be used will be mentioned	The interviews will assist me in collecting data regarding how Rewoven thinks about sustainability, fashion and how you want the public to view you.

Section 2: Interview Body	Relevant Research Question
Establishing sources as credible:	Please can you share what your role at Rewoven is and a little bit about you?
Theoretical framework: Keller's brand positioning model Central questions: Key Aspects - Where does the brand want to focus its positioning efforts? POPs & PODs? Target market - Which market segments does Rewoven target? Why? How? Nature of competition - Who are Rewoven's direct & indirect competitors? Points-of-parity & difference - How does Rewoven see themselves similarly or different to their competitors?	Research Question 1 and 3 Research Question 1 and 2 Research question 2 Research question 1, 2 and 3

Section 3: Closing remarks	Example
Begin concluding the interview:	Unfortunately, our time is running up, is there anything that I may have missed, that you would like to add?
Thanks and any insight gained from the interviewee:	Thank you for your time today, I had not thought about brand positioning through that perspective.

Interview Questions

Section 1: Introductions

Good morning, my name is Kgabane and I am a VEGA honours student. My research focus is on how sustainable fashion brands in South Africa position themselves.

I am interested in Rewoven because, as the first brand to recycle textile waste into clothing, your offering is extremely unique and this piqued my interest.

The interviews will assist me in collecting data regarding how Rewoven thinks about sustainability, fashion and how you want the public to view you.

Section 2: Establishing Credibility & Body

1. Please can you share what your role is at Rewoven and a bit about yourself?
2. When and why was Rewoven founded?
3. What are some of the challenges you face as a small brand in South Africa?
4. Where do you see Rewoven in the next 3 to 5 years?

RQ1: What are the key aspects of developing a competitive positioning strategy, considering Keller's Brand Positioning model?

5. When positioning Rewoven, what aspects of the company did you focus on, to make the brand competitive within the market?
6. I'm curious about the Future of Fashion Event? Why did you opt for a symposium event as opposed to an online, social media campaign or influencer campaign?

7. Your social media presence is limited to LinkedIn and Instagram? Why have you chosen these two social media platforms?

RQ2: Which brand positioning strategies do sustainable fashion brands use to create competitive advantages in the minds of South African customers?

8. Who are some of your direct & indirect competitors?
9. What strategies are you using to differentiate from your competition? What sets you apart as a brand?

RQ3: What is Rewoven Africa's current positioning strategy(ies)?

10. What are the vision and mission of this company?
11. Does Rewoven have a mantra, slogan or beliefs that it tries to live up to?
12. Who is the Rewoven target market? Who do you wish to appeal to as a company? Why?
13. How do you prefer to engage with your audiences and customers? Why?
14. What are Rewoven's key differentiators?
15. In one sentence, what do you want Rewoven to be associated with?

Section 3: Closing Remarks

Unfortunately, our time is running up, is there anything that I may have missed, that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time today, I had not thought about brand positioning through that perspective.

D. Coding Manual

Quoted Text	Codes	Categories	Themes
1. Thesis Topic: Problem-solving 2. There wasn't much expression 3. Waste to produce fashion products 4. Western Cape 5. Waste management & recycling services 6. Fibres, fabrics & textile retailers/wholesalers	Frame of Reference: Nature of Competition	Problem/Solution Positioning Strategy	Positioning Functional Attributes
1. Small, medium to large clothing manufacturers [B2B] 2. Fashion designers 3. Anyone who wants to make a garment 4. Lower minimum-quantity orders 5. Opening Access 6. Young South Africans [B2C]	Frame of Reference: Target Market	Price-based Positioning Strategy	
1. Our "Why" 2. Lean operations 3. Innovation in category 4. Recycling Textile waste only 5. Providing recycling certification 6. Developing circularity	Innovating in Textile & Waste Industries: POPs & PODs	Hyper-specialised Positioning Strategy	
1. Sustainable development 2. Technical expertise shortage 3. Public education 4. Shared value & Collaboration 5. Addressing SA's 3 challenge 6. African, black-owned	Sustainable Design: Driving behaviour change & championing the spirit of Ubuntu	Values-based Positioning Strategy	Positioning Emotional Attributes

E: Final Research Report Summary Document Template

Title: An Analysis of how the Fashion Industry Utilises Sustainable Design for Brand Positioning: a Rewoven case study

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework
Identify brand positioning strategies that fashion brands have used to communicate a commitment to sustainable design and recommend strategies for brands to use in future.	What can be learnt from the brand positioning strategy used by Rewoven Africa to inform future brand positioning strategies, specifically related to brands operating in the sustainable fashion nexus?	1. South African fashion brands face two major challenges: slow growth, causing environmental harm. 2.Brands are competing for limited space in the mind of the young and conscious consumer. 3. Contribute towards knowledge that will enable brands to promote responsible production and consumption practices.	Keller, K.,L. 2009. Brand Planning. Keller, K.,L. 2013. Strategic Brand Management.	Theme 1: Fashion Industry [Local x Global] Theme 2: Sustainable Design Theme 3: Competitive brand positioning
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	
How brands in the South African fashion industry utilise sustainable design for their positioning strategies and recommend positioning strategies for brands looking to integrate sustainability into their offering and image.	1.What elements contribute to the success of sustainable fashion brands in South Africa? 2.What is Rewoven Africa's positioning strategy? 3.Which marketing strategies do other fashion brands use to create awareness of their sustainable design methods? 4.Is Rewoven Africa competitively positioned amongst its competition?	1. Fashion 2. Sustainable design [sustainable development and design thinking] 3. Brand positioning	Keller's brand positioning model	

Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings
Critical Realism Epistemology: Subjectivist Axiology: Balanced Ontology: Relativist Methodology: Naturalist	Qualitative	Qualitative in-depth interviews	1. Confidentiality	Rewoven positions itself as a collaborative, textile waste company. Using the below strategies to position its functional and emotional attributes: 1 - Problem/Solution Positioning Strategy 2 - Price-based Positioning Strategy 3 - Hyper-specialised Positioning Strategy 4 - Values-based Positioning Strategy Sustainable fashion brands, have to utilise a positioning strategy that combines its functional and emotional attributes in order to remain competitive.
	Population	Thematic Content Analysis	2. Consent/Voluntary Participation	
	Founders of a sustainable fashion brand - Rewoven Africa		3. Case Study - Rewoven's competitor brands should be informed about the purpose of the research.	
	Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution
	Purposive Size: 1 brand, it's founders and website	Thematic Content Analysis Coding	COVID-19 Financial resources Time-bound	To contribute towards academic and organisational knowledge of how to build strong, competitive brands that add value to all of their stakeholders whilst minimising harm to people and the planet.

Recommendations
1. It is recommended that new brands use a design thinking approach to find which attributes, functional or emotional, will create positive associations in the minds of their target market. 2. New sustainable fashion brands should consider Keller's Brand Positioning Model coupled with the design thinking methodology when identifying key associations they wish to drive with their positioning strategy.