

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN 'HIPSTER' TRIBE REALLY?

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*The research paper presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the BA Honours Degree in Strategic Branding
at
Vega School of Brand Leadership*

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Submitted: January 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely appreciate and gratefully acknowledge the following people who in one way or another have contributed in making this study possible.

Adrie Le Roux, my supervisor, for continuously providing help, information, guidance, valuable advice, suggestions and provisions throughout the study's progress. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

Participants in the focus groups, for their cooperation, valuable insights and participation in the research, as without them the study would have not been completed.

Samantha Janse Van Vuuren, the head of management on the Vega Pretoria's campus, for her authorisation and consent to hang up 30 campaign posters on campus for my final activation. Also, for her support and involvement in my final activation.

To all relatives, friends and others who shared their support either morally, financially and physically, thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	iv
GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	v
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	1
1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	3
1.5. DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS	3
1.6. ASSUMPTIONS.....	4
1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	4
1.8. ETHICAL ISSUES.....	4
1.9. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS.....	5
1.10. CONCLUSION	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1. INTRODUCTION	7
2.2. HIPSTERS	8
2.2.1. HIPSTERS AND THE HIPSTER MOVEMENT	8
2.2.2. HIPSTER PHENOMENON AND HIPSTER MANIFESTO	9
2.3. TRIBE, TRIBE THEORY AND TRIBAL BRANDS.....	11
2.3.1. TRIBE THEORY AND TRIBALISM.....	11
2.3.2. BRANDS AND TRIBAL BRANDS.....	13
2.3.3. HIPSTER BRANDS	14
2.4. BRAND HEALTH, MIMETIC THEORY AND MARKETPLACE MYTH	18
2.4.1. BRAND HEALTH AND MIMTEIC THEORY	18
2.4.2. MARKETPLACE MYTH AND HIPSTER MARKETPLACE MYTH.....	20
2.5. CONCLUSION	22
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	23
3.1. INTRODUCTION	23
3.2. RESEARCH METHODOGOLOGY	23
3.2.1. RESEARCH APPROACH.....	23
3.2.2. RESEARCH DESIGN	23

3.2.3. DATA COLLECTION METHOD	24
3.2.4. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD	25
3.3. ETHICS	25
3.4. PILOT STUDY	26
3.5. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	26
3.6. CONCLUSION	28
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH	29
4.1. INTRODUCTION	29
4.2. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE	29
4.3.1. BELONGING TO A TRIBE	30
4.3.2. IDENTIFICATION OF A HIPSTER	31
4.3.2.1. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE TRYING TO BE DIFFERENT	31
4.3.2.2. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE THAT KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST TRENDS AND HAVE A SPECIFIC LOOK OR STYLE	32
4.3.2.3. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN HIPSTER LOCATIONS	33
4.3.3. THE TERM 'HIPSTER' IS EITHER A COMPLIMENT OR AN OFFENSIVE LABEL	34
4.3.4. BRANDS THAT ARE TRENDY AND FASHIONABLE ARE HIPSTER	35
4.3.5. IDENTIFIED SOUTH AFRICAN HIPSTER BRANDS	36
4.3.6. SOUTH AFRICAN BRANDS ARE CURRENTLY TARGETING HIPSTERS	39
4.3.7. HIPSTER BRANDS ARE COPYING EACH OTHER	41
4.4. CONCLUSION	43
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	44
5.1. INTRODUCTION	44
5.3. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	45
5.4. IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS	46
5.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS	46
5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES	47
5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDS	47
5.8. CONCLUSION	48
APPENDIX A	49
APPENDIX B	52
REFERENCES	53

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Hendrick's Cultural Event, 2014.....	16
Figure 2 Hendrick's Sponsors Circus, 2014.....	17

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bohemian:	A Bohemian is a person of Bohemian ancestry and is considered as an optimist, cynical and creative person that leads an alternative lifestyle (Urban Dictionary.com, 2004).
Brand:	A brand is a combination of a unique symbol, word, sign or design that creates a product image and differentiates that product from its competitors (Business Dictionary.com, s.a.).
Brand health:	Brand health is a brand that is absorbed by a company through internal communication and is memorable to the outside world through external communication. It is also considered as a company's hallmark and has a significant impact on brand awareness (Heaton, 2015).
Consumerism:	Consumerism refers to the expanding nature of consumers wants and needs for products and services. It also refers to consumers' actions and belief to spend more money on products and services, which forms the basis of the economy (Business Dictionary.com, s.a.).
Consumer culture:	Consumer culture is the way in which individuals form their social status, values and reinforce their identity by consuming products and services (Study.com, s.a.).
Demythologising:	Demythologising means to dissociate oneself from specific myths and mythologies in order to uncover the underlying meaning that one upholds (Merriam-Webster.com, s.a.).
Healthy brand:	A healthy brand is a brand that has a particular and unique meaning, communicates effectively, is valuable and transparent, builds sustainable relationships and is not profit driven (Moore, 2008).
Hippie:	A Hippie is a person from the baby boomer generation, also known as a flower-child due to their strong values of peace and love. Hippies are also raised in the 1960's in North America or western Europe. (Urban Dictionary.com, 2004).
Hipster:	A Hipster is someone that is part of the hipster subculture by valuing independent and creative thinking, appreciating art, listening to indie rock music and is aware of the latest trends and political events happening all around the world. A Hipster can either be a male or female that is in their twenties or early thirties (Urban Dictionary.com, 2007).
Hipster manifesto:	The Hipster Manifesto refers to hipsters distinguishing what is considered 'cool' and what is not considered 'cool'. Anything that becomes mainstream is considered 'uncool' to hipsters while anything considered to be unconventional and original is considered 'cool' (Grisolano, 2008).

Hipster phenomenon:	The Hipster phenomenon, also known as the Hipsterism phenomenon, is the way in which hipsters refuse to be identified or labeled as a 'hipster' (Palmquist, 2010).
Hipster tribe:	The Hipster tribe refers to individuals all around the world that are tech-savvy and connect with one another through social media which forms the hipster community (Urban Dictionary.com, 2011).
Marketplace myth:	A Marketplace myth is the identity and association attached to products and services that customers consume in order to reinforce their identity (Arsel & Thompson, 2010).
Millennials:	Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are individuals that are becoming adults in the 21 st century. In the current year of 2015, these individuals are between the ages of 18 to 35 and were born between 1981 and 1997 (Bump, 2015).
Mimetic:	Mimetic is characterised by or relates to the way in which individuals imitate and mimic one another (Merriam-Webster.com, s.a.).
Mimetic ability:	Mimetic ability refers to the extent to which all individuals imitate one another, which makes all humans unoriginal and indifferent (Raven Foundation, 2011).
Mimetic desire:	Mimetic desire is when a person only desires an object when he or she perceives the same or similar object being desired by another person that he or she either admires or envies (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995, p.234).
Mimetic theory:	Mimetic theory was created by René Girard over fifty years ago and refers to the way people are influenced by each other and the world around them. The term 'mimetic' originated from the Greek word 'mimesis' which means to imitate or represent others (The Raven Foundation, 2011).
Myth:	A myth is an idea or story that is believed by many people and is told in ancient culture to explain traditions, beliefs and practices (Merriam-Webster.com, s.a.).
Mythologised:	Mythologised is the way in which people talk about or describe a person or thing that deserves to be told about as a myth or legend in order to make that person or thing seem heroic (Merriam-Webster.com, s.a.).
Niche market:	A niche market is a small but specific segment of the population that a company targets their marketing efforts towards (Business Dictionary.com, s.a.).
Social movement:	Social movement refers to a group of diffusely organised people striving towards a common goal, which relates to human society or social change (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Trends:	A trend is a gradual change in society, culture or community, which directs people in that society, culture or community in a new direction (Business Dictionary.com, s.a.).
Tribe:	A tribe is when people form a group from having shared interests, beliefs, values, opinions, language, customs and behaviours (Merriam-Webster.com, s.a.).
Tribalism:	Tribalism refers to a very strong loyalty people have towards the group they belong to and usually dislike those from other groups that are different to their group (Macmillan Dictionary.com, 2009).
Tribal brand:	A tribal brand is a brand that targets a particular group of individuals, also known as a tribe, in order to create brand loyalty, which creates a competitive edge (Harrison, 2008).
Tribal capital:	Tribal capital is cultural capital that a tribal brand contains when a specific tribe purely bases their purchasing decision on the product's brand (Richardson, 2013).
Tribe theory:	Tribe theory is the way in which individuals communicate and share interests, which connects tribe members to one another (Godin, 2008, p.1).

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper is to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe. This study is important because it has identified a gap in literature, as there are various insights to understanding how the 21st hipster came into being and has formed their own tribe but such literature does not exist in a South African context. Furthermore, South African hipster brands have not been identified because the South African hipster tribe has not been fully clarified or understood. For this reason, this study is also important because it aims to fill this gap by not only creating a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe but by also identifying South African hipster brands. Due to the fact that contemporary hipsters are identified by their relationship with consumerism, yet, they are also known of rejecting consumerism (Greif, 2010), this study aims to investigate how brands that are consumed by such a contradictory tribe market themselves to this tribe or don't.

The study follows a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A case study research design was chosen, with 3 focus groups serving as the data collection tool. Purposive sampling was used to identify research participants, who consisted of individuals who identified with the hipster tribe and are living in Gauteng, South Africa. Godin's (2008) tribe theory was used to investigate participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the South African hipster tribe whereas the brands that participants identified as South African hipster brands were evaluated in terms of their brand health and originality by using Cook, Erwin, Carmody and Enslin's (2011) seven indicators of brand health and Girard's (in Raven Foundation, 2011) mimetic theory. It can be expected that a greater understanding of the South African hipster tribe was created and South African hipster brands were identified and evaluated.

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ‘HIPSTER’ TRIBE REALLY?: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Greif (2010) states that, despite the fact that contemporary hipsters are defined as rejecting consumerism, the most common aspect that hipsters use to identify themselves is based on their relationship with consumption and consumerism. Consequently, it can be assumed that hipsters identify themselves through the brands that they consume. For this reason, this research paper aims to understand South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe. This research paper also aims to identify South African hipster brands in order to investigate whether South African brands are aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs, or, if the hipster tribe has unwittingly adopted them.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question is stated as the following:

How can the South African hipster tribe be defined and how can this definition guide the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe?

The secondary research questions are stated as the following:

- What is the link between tribe theory and South African hipsters?
- How are South African hipsters identified?
- What brands can be considered as South African hipster brands?
- Are these brands aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs or are they unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands?
- Are hipsters and hipster brands original?
- Can hipster brands be considered as extremely healthy brands?

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Limited literature on South African hipsters exists, and they appear to be a poorly understood tribe. As a tribe that can be understood through their relationship with consumerism (Greif 2010), it is surprising that few South African brands seem to target hipsters directly. Nor has the researcher been able to easily identify any South African “hipster brands”. Consequently, the aim of this study is to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe by investigating this tribe’s perceptions and attitudes of the brands that they consume, and to further investigate the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

Tolstad (2006, p.28) states that the 21st century hipsters consider themselves as original by conforming against convention and anything that is considered to be mainstream. For this reason, this study also aims to investigate the originality of the 21st century hipsters and the South African brands they consume. While discussing the originality of South African hipster brands, these brands are also discussed in terms of their brand health. This is so because brands’ originality forms part of its’ brand health. Girard’s (in Raven Foundation, 2011) mimetic theory is used to evaluate these brands’ originality while Cook, Erwin, Carmody and Enslin’s (2011) seven indicators of brand health evaluates these brands’ brand health as well contribute to the originality evaluation.

The objectives for this study are based on various academic theories and include:

- To use Godin’s (2008) tribe theory to conceptualise the hipster tribe within a South African context.
- To conduct focus groups with a sample of South Africans that can be considered as part of the hipster tribe, in order to create a better understanding of their perceptions of, and attitudes towards brands that they consume.
- To use these focus groups to identify the brands that research participants consider hipster.
- To use Girard’s (in Raven Foundation, 2011) mimetic theory to determine whether the 21st century hipsters and their brands can be considered as original.
- To discuss South African hipster brands’ originality in relation to Cook’s *et al* (2011)

brand health, especially the third indicator of brand health which questions a brand's distinctive identity.

1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that is primarily used for this study is Godin's (2008) tribe theory. This was used to investigate this tribe's perceptions and attitudes of the brands that they consume. The secondary framework used to evaluate these brands in terms of their brand health is Cook's *et al* (2011) seven indicators of brand health. Lastly, Girard's (in Raven Foundation, 2011) mimetic theory was used to evaluate the brands' originality. The seven indicators of brand health and mimetic theory are discussed in relation to one another as a brands' originality forms part of its' brand health, which Girard (in Raven Foundation, 2011) argues no brand is truly original as all brands are created by people for people and that to some extent all people imitate each other. The purpose of using different frameworks is to ensure the research's reliability and validity.

1.5. DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The delimitations to this study are stated as the following:

- The research paper does not involve identifying hipster brands outside of South Africa.
- The research paper does not evaluate hipster brands in terms of their attractiveness and business success.
- The research paper only refers to the 21st century hipster that is defined by their relationship and association with consumerism.

The limitations to this study are stated as the following:

- The research paper cannot be generalised to the South African population because this study only covers a subset of the hipster population living in Gauteng.
- Identifying South African hipster brands is only as accurate as the public and academic's understanding of what is considered to be hipster.
- Evaluating South African hipster brands' originality and brand health is only as accurate as the tools used to evaluate such brands.

- The study is only based on consumers' perspectives about South African hipster brands as this study did not investigate brands' perceptions of being classified as South African hipster brands.

1.6. ASSUMPTIONS

Based on this study's aims, the following assumptions are made for this study:

- The assumption that the hipster movement has come to South Africa.
- The assumption that tribes will continue to be important to the economy, as it is a way of identifying and understanding target audiences.
- The assumption that a brand can always be tested in terms of its originality and brand health.
- The assumption that some brands are aware of being so-called "hipster brands", and that these brands cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs, or that brands are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have consequently adopted them as hipster brands.
- The assumption that the outcomes of this study will reveal that some brands may not have a specific marketing campaign or target audience.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A case study research design was chosen, with focus groups serving as the data collection tool. Purposive sampling was used to identify research participants, who consisted of individuals who identified with the hipster tribe and are living in Gauteng, South Africa. Inductive data analysis was used for the study, in the forms of a thematic analysis that made use of open and axial coding.

1.8. ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues were considered in order to ensure that the participants involved in the study's focus groups were protected in terms of their human rights. The ethical issues are the following:

- Participants in the focus groups were provided with consent forms (provided in

APPENDIX A) that they signed in order to partake in this research study.

- Participants were made aware that their responses through the sampling process were used in this research paper and had the option to remain anonymous.
- However, at any point of the study, participants may withdraw.
- Participants' personal information and identities are to remain confidential.
- The focus groups met at a venue that has security and this ensured them their safety.

These ethical issues created a safe and welcoming environment that made it easier for participants to openly express their ideas and opinions.

1.9. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

- *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

This chapter consists of a literature review that is inherently a narrative review because this study is inductive and theoretical as well as conceptual terms were defined prior to its data collection. The literature review's theoretical framework reinforces and supports the study's research aims and questions.

- *Chapter 3: Methodology*

The methodology consists of the research approach, research design, data collection and data analysis method, which form this chapter. The methodology elaborates on the study's research techniques and methods, which validates the study's results.

- *Chapter 4: Research Analysis and Results*

The chapter provides the research analysis, research findings and a discussion on the research findings. The research analysis consists of conducted thematic analysis used when collecting data from the possible South African hipsters that form the three focus groups. While the research findings are conducted from the data collection and data analysis process. The research findings also formed part of a discussion paragraph where the research findings were discussed in a more commentary manner.

- *Chapter 5: Conclusion*

The final chapter forms the conclusion by linking the research findings, research questions and literature review together. This chapter also reinforced the significance of

the study as well as clarifying the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

1.10. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the only way to understand South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe by acknowledging the relationship this 21st century tribe has with consumption, which South African academics have not yet comprehended. Therefore, it is crucial to identify South African hipster brands because the type of brands that these hipsters consume is what forms their hipster tribe. The relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe was determined by identifying South African hipster brands as brands that are either aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs or are brands that are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands. This also put emphasis on some brands that might not have a specific marketing campaign or target audience.

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ‘HIPSTER’ TRIBE REALLY?: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

It is important to note that much of the theoretical literature concerning hipsters and hipster brands in a South African context is quite limited since most of the information comes from popular culture. This is evident as most of the information is extracted from blogs, websites and wikis. In other words, there is a gap in literature in terms of hipsters and the South African brands that they consume. This is supported by Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009), as they stated the following:

“Much in this area is still under-theorised. Academics have explored and discussed the degree of connectedness between consumers and brands and the implications for post-modern organisations and consumption. Kozinets and Handelman have been amongst those to call for further conceptualisations.”

The gap in the literature that this research paper aims to address is important since according to Greif (2010), consumption is what forms the hipster tribe, culture and movement. For this reason, this literature review is inherently a narrative review because it aims to generate understanding rather than accumulate knowledge.

For the purpose of this study, this literature review briefly mentions that the hippies of the 50s as well as the bohemian hipsters of the 60s and 70s. However, the main focus of this study is to investigate the 21st century hipster, also known as Millennial or contemporary hipsters, and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe. The literature review also discusses how brands target a specific tribe, such as the hipster tribe, in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors. This differentiation is referred to as originality, though Girard’s mimetic theory argues that no hipster or brand is truly original because every human or organisation has the mimetic ability to imitate others (Raven Foundation, 2011). Cook’s *et al* (2011) seven indicators of brand health are also discussed in order to further elaborate on these brands’ originality. Applying the seven indicators of brand health determine if

such brands can be considered healthy brands. The sources discussed below form the theoretical framework that is used to support and conduct this study.

2.2. HIPSTERS

2.2.1. HIPSTERS AND THE HIPSTER MOVEMENT

According to Parasuco (2014), a hipster is someone who wears skinny jeans, retro glasses, rides bicycles and listens to old records etc. Hipsters are also people who generally have degrees in mathematics, science and art. They are creative, artistic thinkers and they greatly influence changes in society. Hipsters seek to be the first people to see cultural changes and turn these changes into the latest trend in society. In other words, the hipster movement is, or rather should be considered, economical (Parasuco, 2014). Chang (in Loewenstein, 2014) considers hipsters to be eco-conscious innovators who have created eco-trends that brands must live by in order to attract this particular target audience.

Godin (2008, p.20) claims that a social movement takes place when people communicate, interact and share ideas with one another in such a way that a community forms. In this case, Millennials have formed their own hipster community, which is in turn, is part of the hipster movement. According to Chang (in Mail & Guardian Online Reporter, 2012), hipsters are Millennials, as these individuals tend to be in their twenties and have shared interests of being healthy, environmentally friendly, independent and up-to-date with modern technology. In other words, the term hipster is another word that can be used to describe Millennials (Mail & Guardian Online Reporter, 2012). Bloom (2014) claims that the exact time at which the hipster movement came to South Africa is unclear. Nevertheless, the hipster movement in South Africa appears to have first started in Cape Town. It is unsurprising that Cape Town is generally considered the hipster capital since it provides hipsters with all the products they love, ranging from craft beers to music festivals, and antique stores to coffee shops (Bloom, 2014).

According to Tolstad (2006, p.25), a group of people known as bohemians existed in a village called Greenwich, in the USA. These bohemians are considered as bohemian

hipsters and they were black Americans who lived on the outskirts of society. They lived in cheap, poor living conditions and left themselves alienated from the general upper class white society. The bohemian hipsters embraced their poverty and tried to make it a positive aspect of their lives. For example, they would create their own music as well as wear and style the clothes they could afford in such a way that it became a fashion statement. Tolstad (2006, p.28) further elaborates by stating that the 21st century hipsters originated from these bohemian hipsters because the 21st century hipsters copied the bohemian hipsters' lifestyle and just added a new twist to it, which is consumption.

Hsu (2010) proposes that the first hipsters, also called 'hepsters' or 'hep cats', were urban black jazz enthusiasts from New York City; in 1994, a group of urban jazz musicians were featured on the cover of *Times magazine* and they coined the term hipster. Bloom (2014) states that technology of today has made trends, such as the hipster trend, popular in society. Hipsters are early adopters of fashion and technology (Bloom, 2014). This helps one to understand how the hipster movement has become a commercial movement that has spread rapidly around the world. According to Tolstad (2006, p.35), hipsters can be found anywhere in the world today and although it is quickly becoming just another fashion trend, the hipster movement is not going to disappear anytime soon.

2.2.2. HIPSTER PHENOMENON AND HIPSTER MANIFESTO

Palmquist (2010) defines the hipster phenomenon as a "contradictory symbol of coolness that strives for nothing other than complete 'hipsterness' while firmly rejecting any association whatsoever with the term 'hipster'". According to Palmquist (2010), the hipster phenomenon evolved from its countercultural roots and has formed the trend-seeking über-consumer hipster of the 21th century. In other words, the 21th century hipsters threaten to become a cultural cliché as these hipsters can now be considered a mainstream consumer culture. However, these hipsters deny being identified as hipsters despite their obvious hipsterness. Palmquist (2010) proposes that this hipsterness can be associated with indie products, as many researchers will go to an indie marketplace to learn more about hipsters.

Wise (2010) further elaborates on this by defining the “hipsterism phenomenon”. This phenomenon can be defined as the way hipsters refuse to be identified or associated with the term, hipster. Consequently, Wise (2010) states that psychologists that study consumer behaviour have discovered that people are largely motivated to spend money not only on things that they materially need, though they also buy things that will strengthen and reinforce their sense of identity. People do not only consume products and services, they also consume mythologies.

The problem with the hipster paradigm is that hipsters tend to purchase goods, for example indie products, that place them within the hipster category and mythology that they despise (Wise, 2010). Wise (2010) claims that the Millennial hipster represents not only a consumer trend, though also a target market that consumes things that are ‘cool’ rather than creating something that is ‘cool’, which the 50s hippies and bohemian hipsters would create. Therefore, only the hipsters from the 21st century can be associated with consumerism.

Grisolano (2008) refers to the hipster phenomenon as the hipster manifesto. She defines the hipster manifesto as what is considered to be ‘cool’ and what is not considered to be ‘cool’. She further elaborates by stating that hipsters are aware of the latest ‘cool’ restaurants, bars, bands, music venues, books, clothes and neighbourhoods to live in. This is supported by Grisolano’s (2008) definition of a hipster which is that hipsters are people that:

“...buck convention by getting a job out of college that is unique, dress in non-conformist clothes, probably majored in some liberal arts degree at school, loathe the idea of ever living in the suburbs, listen to NPR, go to bars that are off the beaten path, like quirky movies, and listen to bands that probably get very little major network radio time. And the minute a movie, band, restaurant, bar, or neighbourhood, starts becoming mainstream, hipsters no longer consider it ‘cool’.”

Both Grisolano (2008) and Wise’s (2010) believe that hipsters consume ‘cool’ rather than creating it. Hipsters are always searching for the latest trend before it becomes too trendy and this is done like clockwork. Once everyone else is doing it, then it is not hipster because it is not original. However, hipsters consume what is considered to be

the latest 'cool' trend rather than creating the latest 'cool' trend. Ironically, hipsters despise being just like everyone else although hipsters are really just advocating more of the same products, services and trends that everyone else consumes (Grisolano, 2008).

2.3. TRIBE, TRIBE THEORY AND TRIBAL BRANDS

2.3.1. TRIBE THEORY AND TRIBALISM

According to Goins (2015), there are three steps to building a successful tribe, which can better explain how hipsters have formed their own tribe. The first step is for one to be as personal as possible, which means one must be able to be vulnerable, approachable and communicate in a way that everyone understands. The second step involves one remaining relevant to their audience. In other words one must be able to put their tribe before themselves. This step also involves identifying a niche market that one would belong to and exclude others by only communicating to those that belong to the same group. The third step recommends that one must create anticipation in their group because group members must be interested in what one has to say or be at risk of getting booted out of the group (Goins, 2015).

Godin (2008, p.21) suggests that shared interests and communication form a tribe. Goins' (2015) three steps appear to reinforce Godin's idea of how a tribe is formed in that Goins' (2015) three steps explain how individuals become part of a group, in other words a tribe, by being themselves and only attracting others that are similar to them. Qudosi (2014) states that hipsters form their own tribe because they are a group of individuals that make up a community, which think, act and share similar beliefs. Even though hipsters, especially Millennial hipsters, consider themselves to be individuals, they are in fact part of a popular 21st century consumer culture (Qudosi, 2014).

According to Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009, p.316), tribalism is a collective sense of belonging within a group. Ayn Rand Lexicon (2015) further elaborates on this by defining tribalism as a product of irrationalism and collectivism because it is the way of conforming to a specific group of individuals that possess a strong cultural and ethnic identity.

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009, p.316) suggest that a tribe member can distinguish itself from another tribe through its collective identity gained by being part of a specific tribe.

Dixon (2005, p.1) believes that tribalism is one of the trends that dominate humanity's future. Trends, according to him, can pose as both treats and opportunities for businesses. Tribalism, according to Dixon (2005) is a powerful force that can create positive and negative aspects; the positive aspects being identity, belonging, family, community, teams and nations, while the negative aspects include war, separatism, violence and genocide. Dixon (2005, p.1) states that many people have lost their own tribe through migration, broken down families and communities. For this reason, many people are looking for new tribes to join. Even though this disrupts society, tribalism can also create opportunities for businesses.

According to the Richardson (2013), marketers can create a tribe by providing a platform for brand-related social connections amongst consumers. However, tribes are more initiated by consumers than marketers. This is so because consumers share their brand experience with others, which creates a sense of community as consumer share similar feelings and beliefs about the brand. In other words, the power of a tribe connects their members to a brand while the power of a brand connects members of a tribe to one another (Richardson, 2013).

Dixon (2005, p.1) claims that successful brands will take this opportunity to create tribes and will also create companies that will nurture the specific tribe. This is known as tribal leadership, which is dynamic and inspirational to many brands. In other words, a brand can be considered as a tribal leader when it creates a specific tribe by understanding mergers of tribes and by directing its organisation that has a single-minded purpose in a specific direction. Corporate tribalism refers to the way an organisation forms its identity, culture and operations. Corporate tribalism is an important factor in the success of a brand and its organisation (Dixon, 2005, p.1).

2.3.2. BRANDS AND TRIBAL BRANDS

According to Bowes (2015), a brand can be defined as an organisation's personality as well as the personality of the products and services that the organisation provides. Bowes further states that an organisation cannot control the way the public perceives its brand though it can influence the public's brand perception by providing building material that shapes customers' brand experience.

Gallagher and Savard (2009, p.1) define a brand as a word or symbol that an organisation uses so that customers can identify and distinguish the organisation's products and services to those of competitors. Brown (2011) suggests that Nigel Hollis' three key advantages of a brand supports Gallagher and Savard's definition of a brand as Hollis' advantages include the following: firstly, an organisation's brand differentiates itself from its competitors; secondly, customers may find the brand more appealing than its competitors; and lastly, customers will form a bond with the brand if they consider the brand to have some meaning or importance to them (Brown, 2011).

According to Harrison (2008), a brand that targets a particular group of individuals, also known as a tribe, is called a tribal brand. Tribal brands gain brand loyalty, which is considered a competitive advantage, by targeting a certain tribe. Barrow (2013) further elaborates by suggesting that brands find it easier to market themselves to a specific tribe because these brands then know their target audience. This is so because brands that target tribes identify groups of individuals in more detail by looking beyond their demographics and looking more into their psychographics. In contrast, brands that do not target a tribe, target a group of individuals purely based on their demographics. This is how tribal brands differentiate themselves from brands that do not target tribes (Barrow, 2013).

Tribal brands can also differentiate themselves from other brands by containing tribal capital (Richardson, 2013). Richardson (2013) defines tribal capital as cultural capital that a tribal brand contains when members of a tribe buy a product purely based on the brand of that particular product. It also refers to the way in which members of a tribe have a

shared understanding of what products to consume and how to consume those products (Richardson, 2013). Godin ([s.a.], p.204) proposes that evolving tribes are cohesive tribes that evolve, change, adapt and find a way to become predominant over time, just like the brands that target this tribe. Similarly, brands that do not target a tribe, will also evolve, change or adapt as their target audience changes into a different demographic bracket (Barrow, 2013). However, some brands that do not target a tribe will not evolve, change or adapt even if the group of individuals grow out of the specific demographic bracket that they are targeting. This is so because a new group of individuals will replace the previous group of individuals. Therefore, the brand will continuously be targeting a group of individuals that fall in a specific demographic bracket (Barrow, 2013).

2.3.3. HIPSTER BRANDS

Segran (2014) claims that the hipster tribe can also be considered a brand tribe. Dixon (2005) defines a brand tribe as a group of individuals that have a shared brand belief which makes the group members not only consumers, though also promoters and believers of a brand. For this reason, the group can create implications for a business by taking collective action. Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007, p8) further state that this collective action will only take place once a tribe decides to what extent they will be manipulated or misled by a particular brand. While Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009, p316) posit that brand tribalism portrays the 21st century society as a tribe that forms its identity through its consumption. This is further supported by Greif (2010), who states that the 21st century hipster tribe consists of individuals that have a strong relationship with consumption.

According to Segran (2014), there are brands that are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands while there are other brands that are aware of being hipster brands that cater to this tribe's specific needs. Palmquist further elaborates (2010) by stating that an indie brand is an example of a brand that has been unwittingly adopted by the hipster tribe.

This is so because researchers, academics and the general public associate hipsters with indie brands and products. Just as people are accused of being hipsters from using indie products, indie products are accused of having hipster brands (Palmquist, 2010). Hsu (2010) states some indie brands have created the association with hipsters while other indie brands have adopted this association. On the one hand, some of the branding done by companies and cultural critics are creating the connection between indie and hipster. However, on the other hand, many people that enjoy the indie culture are no longer buying indie products, as they fear being accused of being a hipster (Hsu, 2010).

Segran (2014) defines a hipster brand as a curious and out of the ordinary brand, which mainstream brands lack. An example of a hipster brand that is aware of being a hipster brand is *Hendrick's Gin*, which is a brand of alcohol. *Hendrick's* believes that hipsters are their target audience as they attract loyal drinkers that are trendy city dwellers in their twenties and thirties. This brand has made itself an expert in hipster culture as it attracts drinkers who separate themselves from mainstream brands and are attracted to exotic brands that are artistic, vintage and have culture and history (Segran, 2014).

Hendrick's Gin is a successful hipster brand because it prides itself in catering to a small community of consumers with distinguishing taste, which is evident in its motto: "it is not for everyone" (Segran, 2014). This can be further supported by the fact that companies trying to reach the hipster market have always been trapped in a catch-22, which is the minute a brand becomes popular they lose this hipster target audience. In terms of marketing, hipsters hate obvious marketing (Segran, 2014). Richardson (2013) elaborates by stating that the face of consumer marketing has changed and that tribal brands must now engage with offline and online approaches as a way of developing a strong brand that will enhance brand loyalty. Therefore, any marketing that has a broad, general appeal is too unsophisticated for hipsters' taste (Segran, 2014).

Hendrick's Gin markets itself by hosting and sponsoring cultural events that hipsters appreciate, which is evident in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*. For example, *Hendrick's* began to sponsor live events for Atlas Obscura, a travel website that showcases unusual, little-

known destinations from around the world. The site has a small readership, however tends to attract tastemakers from the literary set. By hosting and sponsoring cultural events, awareness of *Hendrick's* spreads by word of mouth, from hipster to hipster, each one feeling like he or she has discovered *Hendricks Gin* for the first time. Therefore, there is a high level of craftsmanship that goes into the *Hendrick's* brand that matters to the hipster market. Hipsters buy into brands that put effort into crafting their story and identity (Segran, 2014).

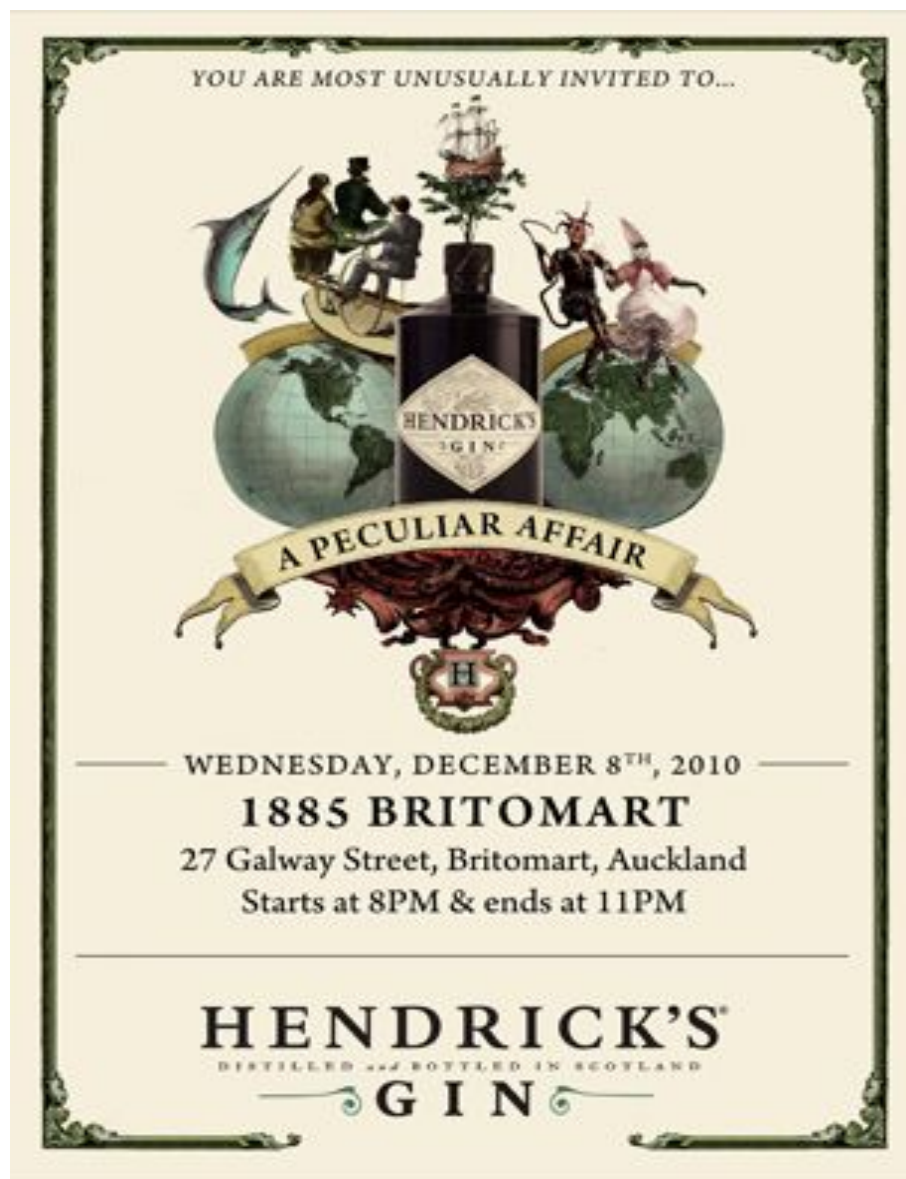


Figure 1: Segran, E. 2014. *Hendrick's Cultural Event*.



Figure 2: Segrán, E. 2014. *Hendrick's Sponsors Circus*.

Segrán (2014) states that true hipster brands follow the hipsterism phenomenon, which Wise (2010) defines as the way hipsters refuse to be identified as hipsters. Just like hipsters, hipster brands must also not identify themselves as hipster brands or else they will not attract the hipster market. For this reason, *Hendricks Gin* identifies its target audience as hipsters though will not advertise itself as a hipster brand or brand that targets hipsters because if it did, it would lose this target audience (Segrán, 2014).

Qudosi (2014) suggests that hipster brands push away from complex logos and move towards simpler and more text-reliant logos. If the hipster brand has a graphic element, the graphic conforms to, or works with, the text. Hipsters favour brands that are simpler and have an aesthetic element to it, as hipsters do not respond to chunky corporate brands and logos. Hipsters want to interact with the product or service, they want to feel like they are making a difference to a brand and that they are a part of the brand's story.

Corporate brands do not allow that to happen, which is another reason why hipsters do not like corporate brands (Qudosi, 2014).

In terms of brands being unaware of being hipster brands, Qudosi (2014) states that hipsters are very well marketed by brand giants, as corporates are even making their brands more simple, appealing and meaningful in order to attract the hipster market. Other corporate companies have become experts in marketing their brand in such a way that it manipulates the hipster tribe to push their own hipster brands (Qudosi, 2014).

2.4. BRAND HEALTH, MIMETIC THEORY AND MARKETPLACE MYTH

2.4.1. BRAND HEALTH AND MIMTEIC THEORY

Brand health can be defined as a brand's state of well-being in terms of its effort to improve the well-being of all humans, animals and the planet at large by attempting to solve environmental and social issues that threaten humanity (Cook, *et al*, 2011, p.10). Cook *et al* (2011, p.11) has created seven indicators that can be used to evaluate a brand in terms of its brand health. Brand health is important alternative model because it ensures that there is a more conscious and direct connection between micro-economic sub-systems and the broader socio economic systems that is necessary to sustain human dignity and life. The seven indicators consist of a brand having a meaningful purpose and distinctive identity, being consistent, valuable and a good communicator as well as building sustainable relationships and not being profit driven. Therefore, when a assessing a brand's brand health, the following questions must be answered in order to determine whether a brand can truly be considered healthy:

1. Does the brand have a particular and meaningful purpose?
2. Is the brand purpose served in all that the brand does?
3. Does the brand have a distinctive identity?
4. Is the brand an engaging, authentic and coherent communicator?
5. Does the brand add value to the lives of people?
6. Does the brand build sustainable relationships by never taking more than it gives?
7. Does the brand and the business that underpins it demonstrate that profit is not the driver, but a consequence of all the above? (Cook *et al*, 2011, pp.11-13).

According to Cook, *et al* (2011, p.10), if a brand meets all of the seven indicators, in other words if a brand can say 'yes' to each of the questions above and provide evidence in saying 'yes' then the brand can be considered as an extremely healthy brand. Although, a brand can still be considered moderately healthy if the brand meets anywhere between four to six indicators because if a brand meets less than that then the brand can be considered as a unhealthy brand (Cook *et al*, 2011, p.10). This study aims to identify South African hipster brands and once these brands have been identified, these seven indicators are used to determine whether such brands can be considered healthy brands.

The Raven Foundation (2011) proposes that no human is truly original because they have the mimetic ability to imitate others, therefore to some extent the brands and organisations humans create are also unoriginal. However, Cook's *et al* (2011, p.10) third indicator of brand health argues that all healthy brands have a distinctive identity and therefore are original. In other words, Cook *et al* (2011, p.10) suggest that all brands have the opportunity to become a healthy brand if they apply the seven indicators of brand health. Conversely, Girard's mimetic theory suggests that no human, brand or organisation can be truly original and for this reason there is no brand that can truly be a healthy brand (Raven Foundation, 2011). Therefore, when South African hipster brands were evaluated in terms of their brand health and originality, both Cook's *et al* seven indicators of brand health and Girard's mimetic theory were taken into account.

Girard's mimetic theory in terms of desire, undifferentiation and conflict were applied to South African hipster brands in order to question their originality. According to the Raven Foundation (2011), mimetic theory is a whole system and a structure that human culture and society has become dependent on. According to Gebauer and Wulf (1995, p.234), mimetic desire leads to conflict and undifferentiation which can be best explained through Girard's triangular desire that consists of three elements: the object of desire, the other and the self. One (the self) desires an object (object of desire) when one perceives the same or similar object being desired by another (model) that one either admires or

envies. Conflict arises between the subject and the model when the object of desire is scarce as there is not enough of the object to go around (Madrid, 2007).

One does not have to be a philosopher to understand mimetic theory. In fact, many different communities and organisations are analysing and building onto mimetic theory in order to achieve a better understanding of the world we live in (The Raven Foundation, 2011). According to Nordby (2013, p.56), many hipsters consider themselves to be anti-mainstream even though hipsters are seen as a culture of imitators and the term hipster has become a derogatory label. The hipsters of today started the movement in a sense of irony, wearing ironic band shirts, riding old bicycles, listening to bands that no one had heard of - basically doing anything to remain anti-mainstream (Nordby, 2013, p.59).

Nordby (2013, p.62) declares that most hipsters assume that they are original as they try to be original by conforming against what is considered to be mainstream. However, they do conform to one another and therefore are not original. This is further supported by the Raven Foundation (2011), as they believe that no one is truly original whether one is a hipster or not, as all humans have the mimetic ability to imitate others, which is considered to be a fundamental human trait that forms all of our values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and culture. Nevertheless, one can be considered to be original to the extent that all humans choose, whether consciously or unconsciously, what they want to imitate. However, since they are still imitating others, all humans and even the brands they create can be considered as indifferent (Raven Foundation, 2011).

2.4.2. MARKETPLACE MYTH AND HIPSTER MARKETPLACE MYTH

Arsel and Thompson (2010) define the marketing myths as commonly conceptualised cultural resources that attract consumers to a consumption activity or brand. Consumers invest their identity in the field of consumption, which is motivated by an associated marketplace myth. Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007, p2) further support this by stating that the products and brands that tribe members consume contribute and amplify their tribe identity. Tribes are primarily consumers as they associate themselves with the commercial identities and definitions of the self provided by the products and brands they

consume. This is so because they use these identities and definitions as a way of relating to others in their tribe (Cova, Kozinets & Shankar, 2007, p2)

Arsel and Thompson (2010) state that consumers invest in a commercially mythologised consumption field by building social connections and cultural capital. The marketplace myth is experienced as a trivialisation by a group of consumers having the same or similar aesthetic interest. Consumption activities, material goods and brands become channels for marketplace myths. Consumers are drawn to a consumption activity or brand by marketplace myth and consumers use these commercially used meanings to advance their personal and/or collectively shared identity.

Arsel and Thompson (2010) state that consumers “use iconic brands as symbolic slaves. They grab hold of the myth as they use the product as a means to lessen their identity burden.” Marketplace myths culturally frame consumers’ consumption interests, tastes and practices. Consumers will use demythologising practices to protect their identity from undesirable associations. For example, Solon (2010) suggests that indie consumption has been culturally branded by the hipster marketplace myth. In order for consumers to not be accused of being hipsters they will use demythologising practices or techniques.

Solon (2010) has constructed three demythologising techniques that indie consumers can use against the hipster accusation. These demythologising techniques will help differentiate between legitimate indie consumers and those that want to be identified as hipsters through their consumption. The first technique is ‘aesthetic discrimination’. This where an indie consumer will tell the accuser that he or she is an uninformed outsider who does not have sophisticated enough taste to be able to discriminate between the hipster caricature and the authentic indie consumer. The second technique is ‘symbolic demarcation’, which refers to the indie consumer’s intellectual knowledge about the indie culture, which allows him or her to dismiss the hipster accusation. The last technique is ‘proclaiming (mythologised) consumer sovereignty’. This is when the indie consumer reframes his or her interests in the indie field in order to prove that he or she is not a hipster (Solon, 2010).

By using demythologising practices or techniques, one can retrain their tastes and interests while protecting these tastes from trivialising mythologies (Solon, 2010). According to Palmquist (2010), just as indie consumers do not want to be identified as hipsters, hipsters may not want to be identified with the undesirable associations that some brands create. However, Palmquist (2010) has discovered that hipsters will remain loyal to their chosen brands because just like indie consumers, they are able to demythologise their consumer choices to distance themselves from labels they see as derisive.

2.5. CONCLUSION

Bloom (2014), Chang (in Mail & Guardian Online Reporter, 2012 and in Loewenstein, 2014), Greif (2010), Grisolan (2008), Hsu (2010), Palmquist (2010), Parasuco (2014), Segran (2014) Solon (2010), Tolstad (2006) and Wise (2010) are some of the authors that have provided academic literature concerning hipsters, hipster brands and the hipster movement. However, a gap in this literature has been identified, as no literature exists on the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ‘HIPSTER’ TRIBE REALLY?: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The methodology chapter within in this study contains a research approach, research design, data collection and data analysis method.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOGOLOGY

3.2.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

This study follows a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. Qualitative approach aims to gain an understanding of humans in terms of their behaviours, reactions, values, experiences and background (John Hopkins Medicine, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because the study aims to generate a better understanding of how the South African hipster tribe formed and originated from.

While interpretivism focuses on a person or community in terms of their social conventions, norms and standards which are crucial elements in understanding human behaviour (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Interpretivist paradigm is suitable for this study because the study also aims at identifying South African hipster brands and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe.

3.2.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bryman and Bell (2014, p.110), a case study is an intensive analysis that focuses on a specific case that the researcher aims to study in-depth. In other words, this study's research design is inherently a case study because the study specifically investigates and intensively analyses South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

Bryman and Bell (2014, p.111) defines a multiple or collective case study as a way of exploring a general phenomenon by undertaking multiple cases together. The specific type of case study that is used in this study is a collective case because the study particularly focuses on investigating South African hipster brands and South African hipsters that are specifically living in Gauteng.

3.2.3. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In the beginning of this research paper, it was mentioned that hipsters are classified as Millennials because in the current year of 2015 these individuals are in the twenties. Sampling that is done with a specific purpose in mind is considered as purposive sampling (CSUN, 2015, p.22). Therefore, this study used purposive sampling because information was collected by three focus groups where each group consisted of five individuals that are living in South Africa, in Gauteng, are in their twenties and consider themselves as hipsters or are considered as possible hipsters by others.

Furthermore, convenience and snowball sampling was used to form the three focus group. According to Bryman and Bell (2014, p.178), convenience sampling is when participants are randomly selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. While snowball sampling is when the researcher uses their initial contact to establish contact with other people (Bryman & Bell, 2014, p.179). Convenience sampling was used, as the individuals that formed these focus groups were the researcher's friends, family members or acquaintances living in Gauteng. Snowball sampling was used, as the focus groups also consisted of the friends, family and acquaintances of the initial contact. As the researcher, I generated three focus groups in order to address whether or not participants consider themselves as hipster or are accused of being a hipster by others. Furthermore, it was to establish participants' feelings towards being classified as part of the hipster tribe and their perceptions of the hipster tribe in a South African context. It also lead participants to identify South African hipster brands and to determine if they feel that these brands are aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs or are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands. In other words, the aim of the

focus groups is to create an understanding of what brands hipsters consume, why, and gather information on their perceptions and attitudes towards brands that meet their needs.

3.2.4. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

This study is an inductive study because it relies on the ideas and opinions of the participants that are part of the focus groups. The input gathered from these participants provided the solutions to the research problem, which is to understand hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

According to Bryman and Bell (2014, p.350), thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that is used to identify possible themes and meaning within the participants' responses. Before possible themes have been identified, the three phases of coding, which include open, axial and selective coding, will be used to evaluate data. Firstly, open coding is a descriptive process that yields concepts by breaking down, examining, conceptualising, comparing and categorising primary data (Bryman & Bell, 2014, p.346). Secondly, after open coding has been conducted, axial coding is conducted to put the primary data back together by grouping the descriptive concepts into explanatory categories (Bryman & Bell, 2014, p.346). Lastly, selective coding is used to further integrate and redefine the categories created during axial coding. The core category is then selected which is the central focus around all the other categories because these categories are integrated into the core category (Bryman & Bell, 2014, p.346). For the purpose of this study, only open and axial was used to determine whether or not participants could be considered as South African hipsters, to identify the brands that participants consider hipster and to determine the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe.

3.3. ETHICS

Each participant in the focus group was provided with a consent form (provided in *APPENDIX A*) and participants were required to sign an informed consent form if they agreed to partake in this study. Participants were also made aware of their confidentiality,

the fact that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time, with no negative consequences, and that their responses would be securely stored on my laptop until the final mark for the research document is released.

3.4. PILOT STUDY

According to Stachowiak (2014), a pilot study can be defined as small-scale experiment that must be taken to decide whether to launch the full-scale project. This study consists of three focus groups in which participants either consider themselves as a hipster or are accused of being a hipster by others. The questions asked in the focus groups addressed South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe. A pilot study was conducted before the focus groups took place and it involved asking five people external to this study the questions that were asked in the focus groups (provided in *APPENDIX B*) in order to ensure that the questions were not misleading. The independent sources, which are the five external participants, confirmed that the questions in the focus groups were reasonably clear and operate well. Therefore, the data collection process only took place once the research questions were tested and approved.

3.5. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Phelan and Wren (2006) defines reliability as the extent to which a study produces stable and consistent results while validity is defined as the extent to which a study measures what it is meant to measure. The study's reliability and validity are evaluated by determining the study's trustworthiness (Bryman & Bell, 2014, p.44). According to Lincoln and Guba (in Bryman & Bell, 2014, pp.44-45), the trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluate as it determines the study's worth. While, Bryman and Bell (2014, p.44) further elaborate by stating that trustworthiness involves establishing a study's credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

The credibility of this study is measured through member checks and triangulation while the study's transferability is measured by thick description. Lincoln and Guba (in Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) define member checks as data that is tested by members of those

groups in which the data was originally obtained from. Even though the study's validity refers to the stability of the limited information gathered from academic literature that might fluctuate over time as new information may be discovered. Nevertheless, this study's validity was guaranteed by a member check that was done on participants in the three focus groups in order to ensure that participants are living in Gauteng and are in their twenties as well as considered as possible South African hipsters. The participants in these focus groups tested the study's data by providing diverse responses that either supported or contradicted the study's data.

Triangulation is a way of using multiple data in order to create a greater understanding of the research topic (Lincoln and Guba in Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The study made use of triangulation by gathering various opinions and perceptions from participants in the study's focus groups in order to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters and hipster brands. The credibility of this study can be established from the focus groups, as most qualitative studies are formed from all of the participants' point of view. This study measures what it is meant to measure because the questions asked in the focus groups are relevant to the study's topic and purpose. Participants that form the focus groups are also relevant to this study as participants are considered as possible South African hipsters and provide their perceptions and attitudes towards the brands that the hipster tribe consumes.

The study's transferability is measured through thick description, which Lincoln and Guba (in Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) define as the way to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other time and situations. This study provided detailed descriptions and explanations of what a hipster and hipster brand is because limited academic literature exists on the matter. Therefore, despite the study's limitations, the study can still be considered valid due to its credibility and transferability.

While the dependability of this study may change as most of the information about hipsters and hipster brands is formed in popular culture while limited information exists in academic literature. Hence, that some of the information extracted from websites, blogs

or wikis, which is from popular culture, may have little reliability. Also, the information about hipsters and hipster brands are ever-changing because it is based on peoples' perceptions. However, external audits were conducted to ensure not only the study's dependability but also its conformability. According to Lincoln and Guba (in Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), external audits are when a researcher that is not involved in the study examines the study's progress. Besides from the researcher's debriefer that provides informal advice, the researcher also gets formal advice from their supervisor, which is academic and researcher themselves. The researcher's supervisor reinsures the dependability and conformability of this study by providing the researcher with academic guidance and advice while the study progresses.

3.6. CONCLUSION

The research methods and techniques used reinsures that the focus groups consisted of South African hipsters living in Gauteng and participants identified the South African brands that they consider to be hipster. The participants also determined whether South African hipster brands are aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs or are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands. In turn, this identified the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe. The research methodology does not only contribute to achieving the research aims but it also contributes to the research findings and results.

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ‘HIPSTER’ TRIBE REALLY?: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the primary data that was collected from three focus groups, which consisted of a total of 15 participants, was interpreted and analysed in such a way that it will respond to the research problem and questions posed in Chapter 1. The methodology described in the previous chapter provided the baseline for gathering the study's primary data. Also, the primary data formed various themes that are discussed in relation to the study's theoretical framework, which is presented in Chapter 2. The aim of collecting primary data was to create a greater understanding of the South African hipster tribe, to identify South African hipster brands and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe.

4.2. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The study follows a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A collective case study research design was chosen, with focus groups serving as the data collection tool. Therefore, the study's data collection method consisted of gathering qualitative data from 15 participants using three focus groups, where each group consisted of 5 participants. Purposive sampling was used to identify research participants, who consisted of individuals who identified with the hipster tribe and are living in Gauteng, South Africa. Inductive data analysis was used for this study, in the forms of a thematic analysis that made use of open and axial coding. Convenience sampling was used, as some of the participants were the researcher's friends, family members and acquaintances. While snowball sampling was also used as some of the other participants were the friends, family and acquaintances of the researcher's initial contact. There were 8 male participants while the other 7 participants were female. Participants were in their twenties as participants were between the ages of 21 to 29. All of the participants are living in Gauteng, South Africa as 11 participants are living in Pretoria while the other 5 participants are living in Johannesburg. Also, all of the participants are South African as

they were all born and raised in South Africa.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF THEMES

The 16 semi-structured questions that were generated in the focus groups are presented in *APPENDIX B*. Questions were asked in a manner that could facilitate conversation outside of the semi-structured questions, with the aim of allowing other themes to emerge naturally. When interpreting and analysing the data from the focus groups, the following dominant themes were identified and then each theme are discussed as the following:

- Belonging to a tribe
- Identification of a hipster
 - Hipsters are people trying to be different
 - Hipsters are people that keep up with the latest trends and have a specific look or style
 - Hipsters are people that live in hipster locations
- The term 'hipster' is either a compliment or an offensive label
- Brands that are trendy and fashionable are hipster
- Identified South African hipster brands
- South African brands are currently targeting hipsters
- Hipster brands are copying each other

4.3.1. BELONGING TO A TRIBE

It is interesting to note that none of the participants identified themselves as part of a specific group or tribe. However, 6 out of the 15 participants believed that if they did belong to a specific tribe they were unaware of it and even if they were aware of it they would not identify themselves as part of that tribe. This is evident as one of the participants stated:

"I would never define myself as part of any group or tribe regardless if I am aware of that group or not because there are many things I will agree with within a particular tribe's beliefs but there are also many things I would disagree with at the same time. And I believe if you don't share 100% of the same beliefs then you can't identify yourself as part of that tribe."

This supports Godin's (2008, p.21) tribe theory that suggests that people only form tribes by sharing the same values, beliefs, interests and communication. If people lose that sense of belonging it is because they have changed and are no longer able to communicate or share the same values, beliefs and interests with their tribe members (Godin, 2008, p.21). Qudosi (2014) argues that Millennial hipsters consider themselves to be individuals and would not identify themselves as part of any tribe however they are in fact part of a popular 21st century consumer tribe.

According to Godin's (2008) tribe theory, hipsters should feel a sense of belonging to one another. Yet, Qudosi (2014) states that hipsters will never admit they are part of the hipster tribe because if they did it would go against one of their tribe's shared beliefs, which is to be a unique individual. This can be further supported by another participant's statement; "I wouldn't *openly* say I belong to any particular group or tribe." Therefore, based on Godin (2008) and Qudosi's (2014) theories, it can be assumed that the majority of the participants are Millennial hipsters because they are in their twenties and do not identify themselves as part of any tribe.

4.3.2. IDENTIFICATION OF A HIPSTER

When participants were asked if they were aware of what a hipster is, 5 out of the 15 participants stated that they "did not know what a hipster is". Although, after participants were provided with Greif's (2010) definition of a 21st century hipster, which states that these hipsters are defined and identified from their relationship with consumerism, the majority of the participants started providing their understanding of what a 21st century hipster is. Therefore, the following three themes appeared when participants provided their definitions and understanding of a hipster or hipsters:

4.3.2.1. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE TRYING TO BE DIFFERENT

Two out of the 15 participants defined hipsters as a group of people that are "trying to be different". This supports Tolstad (2006, p.28) statement that the 21st century hipster originated from the bohemian hipsters, as both types of hipsters attempted to be different and original by wearing clothing or listening to music that identified them as being

different from the rest of society.

Another participant commented that: “Hipsters are a group of people trying to be different but are essentially the same as they are all trying to be different”

Their statement refers back to Grisolano’s (2008) theory that the 21st century hipster is trying to be different by consuming the latest trend first rather than creating the latest trend. Ironically, hipsters are really just advocating more of the same products, services and trends that everyone else consumes (Grisolano, 2008). According to Norby (2013, p.62), hipsters try to be different by conforming against what is considered to be mainstream however hipsters conform to one another and therefore are not original. Girard’s mimetic theory further confirms that no one is truly original (whether one is a hipster or not), as all humans have the mimetic ability to imitate others (Raven Foundation 2011).

4.3.2.2. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE THAT KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST TRENDS AND HAVE A SPECIFIC LOOK OR STYLE

Four other participants’ defined hipsters as people that keep up with the “latest trends” and according to Parasuco (2014), hipsters seek to be the first people to see cultural changes and turn these changes into the latest trends in society. Even though, as previously mentioned by Grisolano (2008), hipsters do not create these latest trends but rather consume them before they become popular. Nevertheless, hipsters are still the first people to be aware of the latest new restaurants, bars, bands, music venues, books, clothes and neighbourhoods to live in. According to Grisolano (2008), this refers to the hipster phenomenon or hipster manifesto, as it is the way hipsters determine what is considered ‘cool’ (or the latest trend) and what is not considered to be ‘cool’ (or the latest trend).

However, one of these participants questioned the following:

“If someone who keeps up the latest trends is considered a hipster then isn’t everyone a hipster because to some extent everyone keeps up with the latest trends whether it be wearing the latest fashionable clothing, or getting the latest iPhone or watching a new

movie or series that becomes a craze and same thing with listening to music or keeping up with the news.”

Bloom (2014) argues that hipsters are early adopters of fashion and technology however technology of today has made trends, such as the hipster trend, popular in society. In other words, if one keeps up with the latest trends then one can be considered as hipster though one will not be considered a hipster if one keeps up with the hipster trend. This is can be further supported Tolstad (2006, p.35), who states that hipsters can be found anywhere in the world today although it is quickly becoming just another fashion trend.

Bloom (2014) and Tolstad’s (2006) theories support the other 8 participants belief that being a hipster is having a specific “look” or “style”. This definition best suits Greif’s (2010) definition of 21st century hipster, as hipsters are identified as hipsters by the brands or products that they consume. For this reason, the hipster tribe can also be considered a brand tribe (Segran, 2014). This is evident as one of the participants stated:

“I think it is a way a person looks in the sense of what they wear, is what makes them a hipster. Because to me, a hipster is someone that wears skinny jeans, have tattoos and piercings and most likely has a full-grown beard. It is a person that is trying to stand out.”

Arsel and Thompson (2010) further elaborate by proposing that consumers invest their identity in the field of consumption, which is motivated by an associated marketplace myth. A marketplace myth is an association or identity that is attached to a particular brand or product, which a consumer inherits when purchasing or consuming that particular brand or product (Arsel & Thompson, 2010). Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007, p2) further elaborate by stating that the brands and products that tribe members consume contribute and amplify their tribe identity. Therefore, the products and brands hipsters’ purchase and consume have a hipster marketplace myth attached to them, which identifies hipsters as part of the hipster tribe.

4.3.2.3. HIPSTERS ARE PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN HIPSTER LOCATIONS

In one of the focus groups, one of the participants stated that he believed that “if you live in Cape Town, then you are automatically a hipster”. Even though the other four

participants in this focus had already provided their understanding of the 21st century hipsters, they also all agreed with and contributed to this participant's definition of a hipster.

One of the participants had the following humorous remark: "Once you pass the boarder of the Northern Cape you are automatically a hipster, you are actually given a checkered shirt at the boarder" which led another participant to state: "If you live in a hipster location, like Cape Town, you are obviously a hipster."

These two responses supports Bloom's (2014) claim that one can be considered a hipster if they live in an area where hipster products are provided or produced. Tolstad (2006, p.35), however notes that hipsters can be found anywhere in the world today and this helps one to understand how the hipster movement has become a commercial movement that has spread rapidly around the world.

4.3.3. THE TERM 'HIPSTER' IS EITHER A COMPLIMENT OR AN OFFENSIVE LABEL

The majority of participants did not identify themselves as being hipsters though other people have referred to them as being a hipster. This supports Wise's (2010) understanding of the hipster phenomenon which he defined as the way hipsters refuse to be identified or associated with the term, hipster. Yet, surprisingly when participants were asked how they felt when being called a hipster, the majority of participants stated they either took it "offensively" or as a "compliment". This is evident as one of the participants stated: "I think it depends who is saying it and how they are saying it because I think everyone has a different understanding of what a hipster is."

The majority of participants explained if the person who was calling them a hipster understood the term as a way of being trendy and fashionable then they would take it as a compliment because they are using the term positively. However, if the person who was calling them a hipster understood the term as a way of fitting in or conforming to a social construction then they would take it offensively because they are using the term as an insult. This was evident when another participant stated:

“I think it depends, if someone is calling me a hipster because I look good then I wouldn’t mind it but if you calling me a hipster because you think I am a wannabee then no I would get offended.”

However, one of the participants expressed that it would not bother him if someone kept referring to him as a hipster, as he stated:

“Because the hipster trend has become so popular the chances of you buying some sort of hipster clothing is high so regardless if you are not a hipster, you are going to be called a hipster some time of your life.”

It was concluded that South African hipsters form part of a contradictory tribe as the majority of participants consider the term hipster to be a “compliment” or “offensive label”. The South African hipster tribe can also be considered as a contradictory tribe as the majority of participant would still not openly classify themselves as hipsters regardless if people understood the term as a compliment that referred to one being trendy and fashionable, as the one participant stated: “Why do we need to label people anyways.”

4.3.4. BRANDS THAT ARE TRENDY AND FASHIONABLE ARE HIPSTER

All of the participants believed that products and brands could be classified as hipster because the specific products and brands a person uses it what makes them hipster. One of the participants further elaborated by stating: “I think because people don’t understand the term hipster, the only way to identify a hipster is through the products and brands that they consume.” While the majority of participants specifically believed that more clothing brands could be classified as hipster because hipsters are most likely to be identified by the clothes that they wear. This is evident as another participant claimed that: “People identify hipsters by the way they look, so from the clothes and clothes brands they wear.”

For this reason, when participants were asked what makes a brand stand out as hipster, the majority of participants stated that brands that are “fashionable”, “stylish” or keep up with the “latest trends” (also referred as being “trendy”) can be considered hipster. This led the majority of participants to later explain that hipsters consume and use brands that are “fashionable”, “stylish” and “trendy” as a way of remaining, “fashionable”, “stylish” and

“trendy”. One participant stated; *“Brands that are considered trendy and fashionable to society can be considered as hipster brands”*. Participants also assumed that the reason that more clothing brands can be classified as hipster is because it is easier for consumers to identify whether clothing brands are “trendy”, “fashionable” and “stylish” compared to other brands that do not sell clothes.

This supports Tolstad’s (2006, p.35) theory that the term hipster will eventually be understood as fashion trend that is spread all around the world, which based on these focus groups, it seems that a few people already refer to hipsters as individuals that conform to a particular fashion trend. According to Wise (2010), hipster brands have adopted the hipster phenomenon by refusing to identify themselves as hipsters. While according to Arsel and Thompson (2010) hipster brands have also adopted certain hipster associations or identifies, known as hipster marketplace myths. Therefore, it can be assumed that products or brands that are considered as “trendy”, “fashionable” and “stylish” are associated with a hipster marketplace myth. This is so because hipsters invest their identity in the field of consumption, therefore if hipsters are considered “trendy” and “fashionable” then the products or brands they consume must also be considered as “trendy” and “fashionable”.

4.3.5. IDENTIFIED SOUTH AFRICAN HIPSTER BRANDS

The majority of participants, at first, mistaken a few overseas brands as being South African hipster brands, as participants identified the following overseas brands:

- Cotton On
- Factorie
- Typo
- Top Shop

Once participants were informed that the above brands were in fact overseas brands, participants then started to identify South African brands that they consider to be hipster. The following South African hipster brands were identified and are grouped according to their product category:

- Craft Beer: CBC, Darling Brew and Jack Black
- Restaurant: Lucky Rodrigo, Capital Craft and Tribeca
- Festival: Park Acoustics and Oppi Koppi
- Clothes: Mr. Price, Old Khaki, Edgars and Woolworths.
- Accessories: Bamboo Revolution (wristwatch company)

It is interesting to note that well established brands, such Edgars and Woolworths are considered as South African hipster brands even though such brands do not seem to market hipsters but have rather incorporated other hipster brands into their stores. For example, Top Shop is an overseas brand that is considered to be a hipster brand that is incorporated in Edgars stores. Twelve out of the 15 participants further stated that these brands are hipster because they keep up with the “latest trends” and “fashion” whereas the other 3 participants stated that these brands are hipster because they “fit into that hipster category” or “style”. However, Segrán (2014) argues when a hipster brand becomes popular they lose their target audience although according to the participants South African brands are either hipster or becoming hipster because the hipster trend has become popular. One of the participants further elaborated by using Mr. Price as an example and stated the following: “Well Mr. Price for example has to keep up with the trends and that is why many none hipster brands are becoming hipster brands because that is the latest trend now.”

Participant responses largely coincided with Segrán’s (2014) claim that the hipster tribe can also be considered as a brand tribe, which Dixon (2005) defines as a group of individuals that have a shared brand belief which makes the group members not only consumers, though also promoters and believers of the brand.

Ten out of the 15 participants stated that South African hipster brands do not advertise themselves as hipster because if they did they would lose this target audience. This supports the hipster phenomenon because just like hipsters, hipster brands must also not identify themselves as hipster or else they will not attract the hipster market (Wise, 2010). While, the other 5 participants stated that most South African hipster brands do not

advertise themselves as hipster however there are a few South African hipster brands that do advertise themselves as being hipster. The majority of participants identified Mr. Price as a South African brand that has become hipster though only 5 participants stated that Mr. Price is one of the few brands that openly advertise themselves as being hipster. These 5 participants explained that Mr. Price has a new campaign that openly advertise themselves as being hipster by directly targeting the 21st century hipsters, one of these participants even stated: “Mr. Price has a new campaign called #trendingwithoutspending and this campaign openly states it is for the new hipster.”

All of the participants agree that all South African hipster brands are aware of targeting the South African hipster tribe as they cater to this tribe’s specific needs. Yet, the majority of participants agree that hipster brands do not openly advertise themselves as being hipster although a few will argue that some of the hipster brands do. Segrán (2014) proposes that the reason that hipster brands do not openly advertise themselves as hipster is because hipsters hate obvious marketing as it has a general appeal that is too unsophisticated for hipsters’ taste.

Surprisingly, 12 out of the 15 participants suggested that South African hipster brands should openly advertise themselves as hipster brands because then consumers will be aware of the fact that if they use these brands they will be identified as hipsters. After these participants agreed that hipster brands should advertise themselves as being hipster, three out of the 12 participants discussed this matter further by stating the following:

“Yes because at least you know what you are buying and at least there won’t be hidden meanings or identifications that are attached to their products.”

“Yes I agree because at least that will create more clarity because I don’t want to purchase a brand that I think portrays one thing while others think it portrays something else.”

“I agree, I mean people judge you from first appearances, I want to at least know what identity or image does the brands that I wear portray.”

This supports Arsel and Thompson's (2010) marketplace myth theory as consumers use these commercially used meanings to advance their personal and/or collectively shared identity. Therefore, People do not only consume products and services, they also consume mythologies. However, Solon (2010) states that consumers can also use demythologising techniques to protect themselves from marketplace myths. If a consumer dislikes a marketplace myth and does not want to be associated with that myth, one of the demythologising techniques that can be used is to avoid purchasing brands and products that have that marketplace myth. Therefore, 12 participants want to be aware of the hipster marketplace myth in order to embrace or avoid that myth. Whereas the other 3 participants stated that it "does not bother them" whether hipster brands advertise themselves as hipster or not because at moment hipster brands are the only brands that are available to them. Nevertheless, it is difficult for all of the participants to avoid the hipster marketplace myth.

4.3.6. SOUTH AFRICAN BRANDS ARE CURRENTLY TARGETING HIPSTERS

All of the participants stated that they use the brands that they considered to be hipster brands. However, 12 of the participants claimed that they only used these brands because most stores in South Africa are becoming hipster and it is difficult to find stores that are neither hipster nor becoming hipster. The other 3 participants claimed that they use these products or brands because they keep up with the latest trends and fashion though they do not use these brands because they are considered as hipster. Although, all of the participants were conflicted when asked if a person can be classified as a hipster if he or she consumes hipster brands. Six out of the 15 participants said "no" that a person should not be classified as hipster just because he or she consumes hipster brands. One of these 6 participants further elaborated by stating: "No, because there are very few brands that aren't going hipster, so many of us are forced to buy at such places."

Also, it is important to note that these 6 participants stated that South African clothes stores and brands are mostly becoming hipster. Many of the participants expressed Mr. Price, Edgars, and Woolworths are some of the South African clothing brands that have

become hipster but that they have always bought from these stores because they provide good quality or affordable clothes. Participants further elaborated by stating that if they could buy clothes from other stores that do not sell hipster clothes they would, though as one of the participants stated, “it’s difficult to find clothing that isn’t considered hipster.” Some of the male participants even discussed how difficult it is to find a “normal pair of jeans” as they can only find “hipster jeans”. Participants explained that “hipster jeans” are “skinny jeans”, jeans that have “rips in them” or ‘jeans that are cut shorter at the bottom” so it shows the bottom of your legs. Participants expressed that they even experienced this problem at Woolworths as one of the participants stated: “When I went to go buy jeans at Woolworths, they all had rips in them or were skinny jeans”.

Whereas, the other 9 participants said “yes” that a person could be classified as hipster if he or she consumes hipster brands. When these participants justified their response, they also referred to clothing stores that they considered as being hipster or becoming hipster. This is evident when one of the participants justified her response by stating:

“...regardless if you can only get access to those types of clothing, you are still wearing those clothes whether you like it or not and the way someone looks is what determines whether they are a hipster or not.”

These 9 participants agreed that regardless that most of them use these hipster brands, people identify hipsters by the products and brands that they consume. Therefore, if a person uses a brand that is considered to be hipster then other people will identify that person as a hipster. One of these 9 participants further elaborated by stating:

“It makes sense because people judge you based on your appearance rather than your being. Most stereotypes and labels work that way, just as the hipster stereotype or label works that way.”

It was concluded that these participants agreed that the term hipster is stereotype that is given to people that use brands or products that are considered or identified as hipster.

Participants then determined whether they felt that hipster brands are brands that aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe’s specific needs or are unaware of how the hipster tribe uses them and have adopted them as hipster brands. All of the

participants believe that hipster brands are aware of being hipster brands as they specifically target hipsters by catering to the hipster tribe's specific needs. Participants also believe that corporates created the hipster trend in order to get people to buy their products and brands, this is apparent as two of the participants stated:

"Corporates have created this hipster craze by coming out with new clothes and other products that they indirectly claim is hipster."

"Yes! Because the hipster culture is created by corporates trying to get you to buy their products and brands so you can become the ultimate hipster."

This supports Qudosi (2014) theory that states that hipsters are very well marketed by brand giants, as corporates are even making their brands more simple, appealing and meaningful in order to attract the hipster market. Other corporate companies have become experts in marketing their brand in such a way that it manipulates the hipster tribe to push their own hipster brands (Qudosi, 2014). Due to the fact that participants believe that South African brands are either becoming hipster brands or are already hipster brands, it can be assumed that many South African brands are either becoming tribal brands or are already tribal brands.

According to Barrow (2013), tribal brands are brands that identify a group of individuals in more detail by looking beyond their demographics and looking more into their psychographics. Therefore, South African brands that are specifically targeting the hipster tribe can be considered as tribal brands. Many brands become tribal brands in order to differentiate themselves from other brands by containing tribal capital. Richardson (2013) defines tribal capital as cultural capital that a tribal brand contains when members of a tribe buy a product purely based on the brand of that particular product. Therefore, South African hipster brands can achieve a competitive edge by containing tribal capital or brand loyalty amongst the South African hipster tribe.

4.3.7. HIPSTER BRANDS ARE COPYING EACH OTHER

All of the participants stated that South African hipster brands are not original and unique because they are all "copying each other" by "trying to be hipster". The majority of participants believe that South African hipster brands are copying each other in order to

keep up with the latest trends, which is currently the hipster trend as some of the participants stated:

“No because very few brands were considered hipster a few years back but now because hipsters are the in thing and most brands are trying to adopt to this movement, most brands can now be considered hipster so they can’t be original.”

“It’s just a current trend, in a few years a new trend will come out and then brands will be copying each other again.”

“Think about the Skater and Punk or Emo and Goth stage, brands were copying each other then too, so in five years time something new will come along and they will be copying each other again that is just how marketing works. In marketing terms, brands always know who they are targeting and how they going to target those people, keeping up with the latest trends is just a way of making a profit.”

A few of the participants also stated that South African brands are forced to keep up with the latest trends, such as the hipster trend, or they stand the chance of losing their “competitive edge”. This is evident as two participants stated:

“All South African brands are copying each other and they have to do that in order to compete with one another, so no they are not original or unique.”

“No they aren’t because they are copying each other which they have to in order to survive.”

According to Cook et al (2011, p.10), brand health can be defined as a brand’s state of well-being and Cook *et al* (2011, p.11) has created seven indicators that can be used to evaluate a brand in terms of its brand health. Due to the fact that participants believe that South African hipster brands are neither original nor unique, these brands cannot be considered as extremely healthy brands because these brands cannot meet all of the seven indicators of brand health. This is so because hipster brands do not meet the third indicator of brand health, which suggests that a brand must have a distinctive identity and therefore be original and unique. This supports one of the participants’ statements, which is the following: “Exactly, if you can identify a brand as being hipster based on a few elements like being trendy and fashionable, then you know brands are copying each other because you can easily identify brands that are doing that.”

As previously mentioned, participants were able to identify South African hipster brands as brands that are “trying to be different”, brands that fit into that “hipster style” or brands that keep up with the “latest trends” and “fashion”. This proves that South African hipster brands are not original nor unique because participants were able to identify South African hipster brands based on a few elements. Therefore, a South African hipster brand does not have a distinct identity because many South African brands have copied or are copying each other in order to be classified as hipster.

Regardless if participants did consider South African hipster brands as original, Girard’s mimetic theory states that all brands are unoriginal as they are created by humans who have the mimetic ability to imitate others as it is a fundamental human trait that forms all of our values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and culture (Raven Foundation, 2011). Nordby (2013, p.62) concludes that South African hipster brands, just like South African hipsters, have become mainstream as they conform to one another and therefore are neither original nor unique.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Participants in these three focus groups were possible South African hipsters that identified South African brands that they considered to be hipster based on elements that they believed made these brands hipster. Participants’ attitudes and perceptions about South African hipsters were discussed in relation to tribe theory in order to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe. Furthermore, participants’ opinions towards South African hipster brands’ originality was discussed in relation to brand health and mimetic theory. The relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe was also determined as participants considered South African hipster brands to be brands that are aware of being hipster brands that cater to the hipster tribe’s specific needs. Whereas, in terms of South Africa hipster brands advertising themselves as hipster, the majority of participants believed that the most successful South African hipster brands do not market or advertise themselves as hipster.

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ‘HIPSTER’ TRIBE REALLY?: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe by investigating this tribe's perceptions and attitudes of the brands that they consume in order to identify the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe. Furthermore, this study aimed to identify South African hipster brands and investigate these brands' brand health and originality. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the study's research findings in order to provide an overview of the research findings and to provide the research findings' limitations, significance and implications. Also, this chapter presents recommendations for further research.

5.2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Several dominant themes were identified when interpreting and analysing the qualitative data from the focus groups. These dominant themes are identified as follows:

- Belonging to a tribe
- Identification of a hipster
 - Hipsters are people trying to be different
 - Hipsters are people that keep up with the latest trends and have a specific look or style
 - Hipsters are people that live in hipster locations
- The term 'hipster' is either a compliment or an offensive label
- Brands that are trendy and fashionable are hipster
- Identified South African hipster brands
- South African brands are currently targeting hipsters
- Hipster brands are copying each other

5.3. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

It can be concluded that participants attitudes towards South African hipsters was identified as being largely contradictory as participants' understanding of South African hipsters included both positive and negative aspects. Some aspects that were positive were that the majority of the participants believed that hipsters were people that kept up with the "latest trends" and can be considered as "fashionable" or "stylish". However, some negative aspects were that the majority of the participants believed that the term hipster is an offensive label or stereotype given to people that have a specific "style" or "look" that is considered to be hipster. Therefore, the term hipster can be considered as a compliment or an insult. The South African hipster tribe can be considered as a contradictory tribe because not only do participants consider the term hipster to be a "compliment" or "offensive label" but also participants would still not openly classify themselves as hipsters regardless if people understood the term as a compliment. While South African hipster brands have to adopt a contradictory stance, as hipsters do, in their marketing efforts by not openly advertising themselves as hipster brands. The few South African hipster brands that do openly advertise themselves as hipster are not experts in the hipster culture because they are going against this contradictory stance and for this reason they will eventually loose their target audience, which is the South African hipster tribe. Therefore, this reveals the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe.

It should be noted that the small scale of the study means that the research findings cannot be generalised to the South African population. This study only covers a subset of the hipster population living in Gauteng, and notes that identifying South African hipster brands is only as accurate as the public and academic's understanding of what is considered to be hipster. It should further be noted that the study is only based on consumers' perspectives about South African hipster brands as this study did not investigate brands' perceptions of being classified as South African hipster brands.

5.4. IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The South African hipster tribe is considered as a contradictory tribe as this tribe follows the hipster phenomenon by refusing to be identified as hipster. Just like the South African hipster tribe is considered as a contradictory tribe, South African hipster brands can also be considered as contradictory brands because they also follow the hipster phenomenon by not advertising or marketing themselves as hipster brands. Due to this fact, many people are unaware of being classified as a hipster as they are unaware that the certain products or brands that they consume are considered as hipster. Although there are a few South African brands that do advertise and market themselves as being hipster but because they are going against the hipster phenomenon, they will eventually lose their target audience, which is the South African hipster tribe. This is so because hipsters invest their identity in the field of consumption therefore just like hipsters, hipster brands must also follow the hipster phenomenon. Furthermore, the participants indicated that it appears that South African brands are either hipster or becoming hipster because they are forced to keep up with the latest trends, which is currently the hipster trend, in order to survive and compete in the market. According to consumers then, they consider South African hipster brands as being *aware* of their hipster status because they identify these brands as brands that cater to the hipster tribe's specific needs regardless if they advertise themselves as being hipster or not.

5.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

The study's research findings established that participants identified and understood the term hipster as individuals that have a specific "look" or "style", which is formed by the specific products and brands that they consume. Therefore, Greif's (2010) understanding of 21st century hipsters, which is a tribe that consists of individuals that have a strong relationship with consumption, was applied and understood in a South African context. It was also established that participants in the three focus groups were considered as part of the South African hipster tribe because participants are living in Gauteng, South Africa and other people regularly identify them as hipsters. Research participants mostly identified and considered South African clothing brands as being hipster brands (such as Mr. Price and Old Khaki) or brands that are becoming hipster brands (such as Edgars

and Woolworths). Besides from participants considering South African hipster brands as neither original nor unique, Girard's mimetic theory states that no brand can truly be original or unique as humans who have mimetic ability to imitate others create brands (Raven Foundation, 2011). Therefore, both participants and Girard's mimetic theory agree that all brands are "copying each other" as they are all created by humans which all humans "copy each other" whether consciously or unconsciously. Due to the fact that the study's research findings established that all South African hipster brands are neither original nor unique, none of these brands can be considered as extremely healthy brands as they do not meet Cook's *et al* (2011) third indicator of brand health, which is to have a distinctive brand identity by being original and unique.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

For further research, a larger sample size should be conducted and not only by hosting more focus groups but by also gathering data from individuals that can be considered as possible hipsters living in other provinces in South Africa. It can be recommended that further data should be collected from South African brands that are considered hipster by the public in order to gain not only consumers' perspectives of South African hipster brands but to also gain brands' perspectives of being a South African hipster brand or approach of becoming a South African hipster brand. Also, further studies could be conducted to create a direct comparison between South African hipster brands and overseas hipster brands as well as to create a direct comparison between the South African hipster tribe and the overseas hipster tribe. However, if further studies are conducted to create a direct comparison between South African hipster brands and overseas hipster brands, Cook's *et al* (2011) seven indicators of brand health and Girard's (in Raven Foundation, 2011) mimetic theory should still be used to draw this comparison in terms of these brands' brand health and originality.

5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDS

Brands in general should be transparent enough that consumers are aware of the associations and identities attached to their brands and products. This is so because consumers inherit the association and identity that is attached to a particular brand when

they consume that brand and its products (Arsel & Thompson's, 2010). Although, due to the fact that the hipster tribe has been established as a contradictory tribe, hipster brands need to figure out how to communicate their attached associations and identities in a way that isn't "upsetting" to the hipster. Consumerism is the hipster tribe's main identifier, so hipster brands should develop a language that enables them to speak to the hipster tribe.

5.8. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this small-scale study cannot be generalised to the larger South African population however this study did indicate that the hipster trend has become a popular phenomenon in South Africa as many South African brands can be considered as hipster brands or brands that are becoming hipster brands. For this reason, further research should be conducted because even though the hipster trend has spread all around the world limited academic literature exists on this topic. This study also discovered that the hipster phenomenon established by Palmquist (2010), and Wise (2010) has not only established South African hipsters as a contradictory tribe but has also established South African hipster brands as contradictory brands.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSCENT FORM



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN 'HIPSTER' TRIBE REALLY?

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about '*What is the South African "Hipster" tribe really?*' The main purpose of this study is to create a greater understanding of South African hipsters as a tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the South African hipster tribe.

The information in this consent form is provided to assist you in deciding whether you would like to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be part of a one of the three focus groups, which each group will consist of five individuals. You will be asked whether you consider yourself to be a hipster or have been accused of being a hipster and your perceptions and attitudes towards brands that hipsters consume. You will also participate in identifying South African hipster brands and whether such brands are aware of being hipster brands.

It is important that you fully understand what is involved if you agree to participate in this study. If you have any questions that you feel are not addressed or explained fully in this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher for more information. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. The contact details of the researcher are as follows:

Email address: stacey.cabeleira@gmail.com

Contact number: 082 555 9521

Office number: 012 343 3669

2. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the South African hipster tribe and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

The focus groups will meet for approximately one hour and each group will take place at a different time. You will be in a group with four other participants. You will be asked various questions related to hipsters, South African hipsters as a tribe, South African hipster brands and the relationship South African hipster brands have with the hipster tribe

4. RISK(S) OR DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

Participants may be offended of participating in a hipster focus group, as they may not consider themselves as a possible hipster.

5. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Participants will help identify South African hipster brands, which has not been identified in academic literature. Identifying South African hipster brands is crucial in understanding South African hipsters as a tribe because hipsters are identified with regards to their relationship with consumption. The specific types of products and brands are what form the 21st century hipster tribe, culture and movement. Though South African academics have not come to acknowledge or understand this identification with hipsters and no literature has been written about it.

6. WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

- 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.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

ALL information gathered in this study will be held in strict confidence and only the researcher will have access to the original data. Results will only be retained for as long as required for the research purpose and will thereafter be depersonalised and presented in such a way that you will not be identifiable.

8. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the information presented to me in a language that I understand and I understand the implications of participating in this study. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied that they have been adequately addressed. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from this study at any stage without having to provide an explanation for my withdrawal. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

PARTICIPANT

Full Name and Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

WITNESS

Full Name and Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Hello everyone, just to clarify, the information that you provided today will remain confidential and all information will be stored on my laptop until the final marks for my research document has been released then all information will be deleted. Before we get started, can everyone please be sure to read and sign the consent forms then everyone can pass their consent forms to me.

1. Do you think of yourself as belonging to a specific tribe or group? If so, what?
2. Do you know what a hipster is?
3. What makes a group or person a hipster?
4. Are you happy to be classified as a hipster? Why or why not?
5. Regardless if you consider yourself as a hipster or not, have others referred to you as being a hipster? And why?
6. Do you think brands or products can be classified as hipster? Why or why not?
7. What make these brands stand out as hipster?
8. How do you think hipsters consume or use brands?
9. Do you use any of these brands or products?
10. Do you think that one can be classified as a hipster if he or she consumes hipster brands?
11. In your opinion, do the products or brands you identified specifically target hipsters?
12. Can you think of any South African products or brands that are hipster?
13. What in your opinion makes you think that these products or brands are hipster?
14. Do you think hipster brands are unique and original? Why or why not?
15. Do you think these brands market/advertise themselves as being hipster brands? Why or why not?
16. Would you prefer a brand that marketed themselves as hipster?

Thank you for your time and information

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