



Exploring the influence of brand authenticity on
consumer purchase intention.

By

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention and examines the relationship between these two constructs. Consumers are consistently looking for brand authenticity to be present in brands, which consequently influences their purchasing decisions.

The research took a positivist approach, making use of a quantitative design and was deductively led by Azjen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour and the four dimensions of Brand Authenticity as proposed by Morhart, Malär, Girardin, Grohmann and Guèvremont (2015). The population for the study was made up from consumers in the South African skincare industry, which deems skincare as a top priority. A quantitative online questionnaire, created on Google Forms, was distributed via the chosen social media platforms, Whatsapp and Instagram. 56 Valid responses were collected through non-probability, convenience, and virtual snowball sampling. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the collected data. While the researcher found that brand continuity, brand integrity and brand credibility had an impact on consumer purchase intention, the calculated correlations between the variables indicated that brand authenticity does not have a significant impact on respondents' purchase intentions for this specific study.

Keywords: Brand Authenticity, consumer purchase intention, brand credibility, brand integrity, brand continuity.

DECLARATION

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

5 December 2022

Signature Date

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1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualisation

Over the past decade brand authenticity has gained increasing attention from researchers (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). Great emphasis has been placed on more common branding concepts such as brand equity and brand trust, creating a research gap for the brand authenticity concept to be studied (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). While ample research has been conducted on consumer purchase intention, a gap in existing literature exists to explore consumer purchase intention in relation to brand authenticity.

Brand authenticity is regarded from a consumer point-of-view, emphasising the subjectivity of the meaning of the construct (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, Schäfer & Heinrich, 2012).

1.2 Rationale

Brands positioned on superiority, exceptional service or quality are not differentiated in the highly competitive markets they must compete in (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). Brand authenticity is a branding trend that is seen as essential for brands to apply and enables brands to be sincere (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). It is believed that brand authenticity is still in its infancy stages, creating a gap in existing literature for research to be done, especially in the South African skincare industry (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, Schäfer & Heinrich, 2012). Brand authenticity is a branding trend that is seen as essential for brands to apply (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Brands that are perceived as authentic have increased brand trust, are more successful, more likely to be the consumer brand of choice, have a more favourable word-of-mouth appeal and higher emotional consumer-brand attachment (Morhart *et al*, 2015). These outcomes are highly beneficial to brands in the skincare industry since the skincare industry is highly saturated and competitive.

This study aims to build on the existing knowledge of brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention.

Therefore, it is relevant to explore whether authenticity has an influence on the South African skincare industry and if so, how brands can benefit from using it.

1.3 Problem statement

Consumers are faced with consistent meaningless product offerings in the market, higher commercialisation, and an excess amount of fake content (Morhart *et al*, 2015). At the same time brand trust is at an all-time low and continuously decreasing (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). These factors have led to an increased desire for authenticity to be present in brands, products, and

experiences (Napoli, Dickinson-Delaporte and Beverland, 2016). Given that consumers are faced with ample brand choices, research indicates that consumers prefer brands that are real and authentic (Fritz, Schoenmueller and Bruhn, 2017).

Brand authenticity is a construct that has become important in the branding world, and it was found that it has exceeded quality as the main purchase criteria (Morhart *et al*, 2015). It is an effective tool that can be used to increase brand trust (Fritz *et al*, 2017). Brand trust has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intention (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).

Various factors such as a global financial crisis, climate change and increasing political instability leads to increasing feelings of doubt across the globe. This causes a need for authenticity to be present in the brands consumers use and interact with daily. This creates a potential opportunity that skincare brands can benefit from portraying their brands as authentic, since most consumers utilise skincare products on a regular basis.

1.4 Purpose statement

Based on the problem and the concepts posed by Morhart *et al* (2015), Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis (2019), Fritz *et al* (2017) and Gilmore & Pine (2007), this study's purpose is to determine whether consumer purchase intentions are influenced by perceived brand authenticity in the South African skincare industry. The study aims to understand the effects of the main elements of perceived brand authenticity on consumer purchase intentions, including brand continuity, - integrity and - credibility.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Primary research question

- What is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

- How does brand continuity influence purchase intention?
- What is the influence of brand credibility on consumer purchase intention?
- How does brand integrity influence consumer purchase intention?

1.6 Research objectives

- To determine the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intentions
- To determine the influence of brand continuity on consumer purchase intention
- To determine the influence of brand credibility on consumer purchase intention

- To determine the influence of brand integrity on consumer purchase intention

2. Literature review

The academic review of literature on consumer purchase intention and brand authenticity and the construction thereof are covered in this chapter. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the four Dimensions of Brand Authenticity (Morhart *et al*, 2015) are unpacked in the following sections.

2.1 Theoretical foundation

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB) forms the theoretical foundation for this study. The Theory of Planned Behaviour stems from the consumer behaviour theory and exists due to the increasing attention consumer attitudes and beliefs received as the main predictors of buying behaviour. The three antecedents of purchase intention include attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Understanding the elements of the TPB that affects purchase intentions will give further insight to whether consumers are more likely to purchase products from brands that are perceived as authentic.

2.1.1 Behaviour and intention

Behaviour describes the actions taken by individuals. Intention represents the attitude and motivations behind consumer actions. Ajzen (1991) found that the success of a behaviour is determined by the strength of intention to perform the behaviour. The control an individual has over their behaviour is, however, not only determined by their intentions, but by non-motivational factors such as resources and the availability of products (Ajzen, 1991).

2.1.2 Attitude

Consumer attitude towards behaviour describes the degree of favourability of an individual's behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The expected consequences that arise from performing a behaviour, known as salient behavioural beliefs, contribute to the formulation of an individual's attitude towards behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Human attitudes are subject to change. A positive attitude towards a behaviour result in a higher likelihood that the behaviour will be performed. Consumers with a negative attitude towards a behaviour are thus less likely to perform it. Positive attitudes lead to increased purchase intention. Consumers have positive attitudes towards brands that are perceived as authentic (Fernandez-Hernandez & Lewis, 2019).

Conclusions drawn from consumer behaviour studies state that purchase intentions are the least influenced by consumer attitudes. According to Azjen (1991) preconceived ideas about a brand or product has a greater influence on behaviour than a consumer's attitude towards it. This indicates a lower correlation between consumer attitudes and behaviour. The gap between attitude and behaviour cannot be ignored since inaccuracies can occur if too much emphasis is placed on consumers' attitudes toward behaviour. Though a consumer can have a favourable and positive attitude towards purchasing a product from a brand perceived as authentic, it will not necessarily mean that they intend to buy it (Azjen, 1991). It is anticipated that consumers will display a positive attitude towards authentic skincare brands which will result in stronger purchase intentions.

2.1.3 Subjective norms

Subjective norms refer to society's influence on an individual's behaviour and their motivation to comply with it. Individuals experience pressure from social groups to perform an action when it is believed that these groups will approve or disapprove of the specific behaviour (Azjen, 1991). Subjective norms are determined by the perceived importance of these social groups by the individual and their attitudes towards the behaviour. According to Manstead and Parker (1995) subjective norms are determined by salient beliefs. Subjective norms can positively or negatively influence consumer purchase behaviours (Azjen, 1991). Thus, if an individual believes that their relevant social groups will approve their behaviour of purchasing from a skincare brand that is perceived as authentic, they are more likely to purchase from such a brand.

2.1.4 Perceived behavioural control

The ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour is defined as perceived behavioural control (Azjen, 1991). Factors that influence the degree of perceived behavioural control include information gathered from secondary sources with experience, an individual's own previous experiences as well as the identification of additional resources that determine the outcome of the behaviour (Azjen, 1991). A behaviour with few perceived obstacles results in a higher likelihood of intention to perform (Armitage and Christian, 2003). Individuals that believe to have few obstacles to purchase from authentic skincare brands, will have a higher intention to purchase from these brands.

Therefore, the TPB is considered a relevant theoretical framework for the study as it determines the factors of brand authenticity in the skincare industry that influence consumer purchase intention. The suited antecedents of purchase intention for this study are consumer attitudes towards behaviour and subjective norms since these antecedents are more relevant to the purpose of the

study. The perceived behavioural control antecedent will not be studied, as it falls outside of the aim of the research, to explore the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention. The difficulty or ease of purchasing from an authentic skincare brand does not play a key role in answering the research questions.

2.2 Conceptualisation

2.2.1 Brand authenticity

a. Continuity:

Continuity refers to a brand's ability to survive trends, its timelessness, historicity, and its ability to remain true to itself (Morhart *et al*, 2015).

b. Credibility:

Credibility is conceptualised by Morhart *et al* (2015) as a brand's level of honesty and transparency towards consumers.

c. Integrity:

Integrity refers to a brand being motivated by responsibility and caring for consumers (Morhart *et al*, 2015).

d. Symbolism:

Symbolism reflects the brand's ability to help consumers to develop and discover an identity of their own (Morhart *et al*, 2015)

2.2.2 Consumer purchase intention

Purchase intention is related to behaviour and reflects the likelihood of an individual purchasing a specific product in a specific condition (Janany & Shivany, 2018).

2.3 Review of previous literature

2.3.1 Brand Authenticity:

Throughout the years brand authenticity has been defined by authors and researchers in many ways. The concept of brand authenticity is not a simple one-dimensional concept related to originality (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). Bruhn, Schoenmüller, Schäfer and Heinrich (2012) explain that brand authenticity is contextual with varying attributes and thus cannot be simplified to a single definition.

Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland and Farrelly (2012: 1090) define brand authenticity as a reflection of “subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by consumers”. Morhart *et al* (2015) define authentic brands as brands that are continuous, credible, have integrity and are symbolic. According to Diwedi and Mc Donald (2018), authentic brands live up to their promise and are characterised by being true, real, and genuine.

Perceived brand authenticity is more than a decision-making principle that influences brand preference, it helps consumers to express their authentic selves (Fritz, Schoenmueller & Bruhn, 2017). Brand authenticity has become a growing desirable brand characteristic (Athwal & Harris, 2017). Brand authenticity has a positive effect on consumer response (Napoli, Dickinson-Delaporte & Beverland, 2016). The desirable outcomes of perceived brand authenticity include a more favourable word-of-mouth appeal, a higher chance to be the brand of choice and a higher emotional consumer-brand attachment (Morhart *et al*, 2015). Furthermore, higher consumer perceptions of brand authenticity lead to increased brand trust and perceived value (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).

Brand authenticity is related to consumers’ evaluations of brands and its core attributes (Bruhn *et al*, 2012., Morhart *et al*, 2015). The four dimensions of brand authenticity as proposed by Morhart *et al* (2015) include continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. These dimensions will provide context to the study.

a. Continuity

Continuity is often paired with consistency and plays an important role in creating authentic brands (Bruhn *et al*, 2012., Morhart *et al*, 2015). Brand continuity and consistency are classified as “stable brand behaviours” (Napoli, 2016). Morhart *et al* (2015) defines the continuity dimension as a brand’s ability to remain faithful to itself, to survive trends, its timelessness, and its historicity. Well-established brands with a strong link to their heritage can surpass trends while evolving over time and staying true to their roots (Napoli, 2016). It is, however, critical that brands and brand managers find a balance between reminding consumers about their origin and history, while remaining relevant in volatile market conditions (Napoli, 2016). By doing so, brands can prevent a potential loss of continuity.

Brands must ensure consistency across all brand aspects, by aligning the experience they provide to consumers with their vision, identity, values, and communication which in turn leads to increased

brand continuity (Bruhn *et al*, 2012). A study done by Morhart *et al* (2015) revealed continuity to be the most frequently mentioned factor of authentic brands.

b. Credibility

Authentic brands are associated with having a high level of credibility (Napoli *et al*, 2016). Credibility refers to a brand's reliability and how well it delivers its promises (Morhart *et al*, 2015). Morhart *et al* (2015) explains that authentic brands are associated with an increased perception of credibility. Credibility is further conceptualised by Morhart *et al* (2015) as a brand's level of honesty and transparency towards consumers. Credibility plays an important role in scenarios where consumers have trouble making informed decisions due to a lack of motivation (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Furthermore, brand credibility is related to brand trustworthiness (Morhart *et al* 2015). According to prior studies brand trust and credibility is highly influenced by brand authenticity (Beverland, 2005). Consumers often perceive brands as inauthentic when their communicated brand values do not align with their actions (Napoli *et al*, 2016).

Previous research also found that brand authenticity is critical because it acts as a driver for consumer' behavioural intentions and brand relationship quality. Brand trust is especially important to establish the desired customer-brand relationship (Morhart *et al*, 2015). Furthermore, credibility has similarities to brand quality, reflecting a brand's ability to live up to consumer expectations (Frizzo, Korelo, Oh & Prado, 2019).

c. Integrity

Integrity refers to a brand being motivated by responsibility and caring for consumers (Morhart *et al*, 2015). This dimension relates to how honest a brand's intentions are (Morhart *et al*, 2015). Morhart *et al* (2015) explain that brands that are driven by honest intentions and strong values are seen as more authentic. According to Beverland and Farrelly (2012: 301) "brands must be without an instrumental economic agenda" and must stay true to its morals.

d. Symbolism

Symbolism reflects the brand's ability to help consumers to develop and discover an identity of their own (Morhart *et al*, 2015). According to Bruhn *et al* (2012) the symbolism dimension is directly linked to the consumer-brand relationship. Authentic brands reflect values that are deemed as important to consumers and contribute to consumers' authentic selves (Morhart *et al*, 2015., Beverland & Farrelly, 2012., Fritz *et al*, 2017).

2.3.2 Consumer purchase intention

Consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by their emotional needs and desire to gain enhancement through the purchasing process (Grunert, Loebnitz, 2021). Gilmore and Pine (2007) found that authenticity has exceeded quality as the main purchasing criteria. Purchase intention is a buying interest that is influenced by the confidence consumers have in products. This reflects the critical role that brand authenticity plays in related to consumer purchase intention. Trevail, Manila, Schlack & Lerman (2016) explains that openness, empathy, experience, emotion, and relevance are preferred by consumers.

3. Research methodology

To clarify the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry, the research methodology must be unpacked. This chapter addresses the research method and plan. Specific emphasis will be placed on the research paradigm, design and approach, population and sampling, data collection method and the data analysis method.

3.1 Research paradigm

This study made use of a positivist paradigm to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention. Positivists believe that this relationship can only be explored by acknowledging that a reality or objective truth exist and that it is governed by laws (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Positivism believes reality and the laws that control it are discoverable by humans (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). This allowed the researcher to objectively uncover and report on findings and thus determine whether there is a relationship between the two variables (Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey, McEvoy, 2020). The ontological assumption of the positivist paradigm is that the individual is separated from the world that it exists in, creating an objective reality. This reality can thus be observed and measured through experiments, individuals' senses, or experiences (Maree, 2020). The epistemological assumption of positivism views knowledge as quantifiable, objective, and truthful (Maree, 2020). Employing positivism in this study allowed the researcher to make sense of the primary research question, "what is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention?", from an objective perspective. Facts were used to explore whether consumer purchase intention is influenced by brand authenticity.

3.2 Research design/ approach

A quantitative approach was applied to the study since a positivist paradigm was employed. Considering the researcher views brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention as quantifiable amounts that can be studied, this was the most appropriate approach for the study. The collection of statistical objective data contributed to the development of knowledge surrounding the research topic (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014).

A deductive logic standpoint was used since the study was grounded on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Lastly, the research was cross-sectional in nature since data was only collected on one occasion (Maree, 2020).

3.3 Population

The population plays an important role in the researcher's ability to answer the primary and secondary research questions (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). The unit of analysis for the study were South African individuals. The targeted population included consumer from the skincare industry in South Africa. The accessible population for this study included South African consumers aged between 18 – 55 years, that deemed skincare as a top priority during the duration of the study and that were contactable by the researcher via the social media platforms Instagram and Whatsapp.

The shared characteristics of the population are classified as population parameters (Du Plooy *et al*, 2014). These parameters include:

- Respondents must be above 18 years of age
- Respondents must reside in South Africa
- Respondents must deem skincare as a top priority

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is classified as a numerically and random subdivision of the population selected by the researcher to participate in the data collection process (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014).

A non-probability sampling method was applied to the study, while making use of convenience sampling (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). The personal judgement of the researcher helped to select the units of the sample (Babin & Zikmund, 2016). This included selecting respondents that fit the parameters of the population. Since there was no complete list of the accessible population available, and it was impossible to reach all consumers within the skincare industry, along with the time constraints associated with the study, convenience sampling was the most appropriate

sampling method (Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey, McEvoy, 2020). Convenience sampling refers to the process of selecting sampling units based on the ease of being able to collect the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014) argues that is the most suited sampling method for an exploratory research study. Convenience sampling is, however, influenced by the social context of researcher, which can create potential bias (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). By distributing the online quantitative survey to respondents that are known as well as unknown to the researcher, the effects of the bias can be decreased (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). The researcher utilised virtual snowball sampling to distribute the surveys to potential respondents. Virtual snowball sampling complemented the convenience sampling method.

3.5 Data-collection method

The chosen data-collection method was an online quantitative survey, which allowed the researcher to collect a larger amount of data while prioritising quantitative research values and techniques (Braun *et al*, 2020). The survey was created and distributed via the chosen online survey tool, Google Forms, and through social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Instagram to collect data from 56 respondents. The survey, as displayed in Annexure C, was self-administered, and questions were displayed in a standard and set order to respondents (Braun *et al*, 2020). The first section of the survey served the purpose of screening respondents. Furthermore, the quantitative survey contained close-ended questions, centred around the chosen topic (Braun *et al*, 2020). Considering that a possibility existed that respondents could be influenced by social norms leading to untruthful responses, total anonymity was ensured at the start of the survey. This encouraged more truthful responses thus improving the accuracy of the collected data (Braun *et al*, 2020).

The survey questions were based on the dimensions of brand authenticity as proposed by Morhart *et al* (2015) and the Theory of Planned behaviour as proposed by Azjen (1991). Following the section containing the consent questions, the next section contained a close-ended qualifying question to give respondents access to the entire survey (Alchemer, 2021). The remainder of the survey was divided into three sections namely, Brand Authenticity, Purchase intention and Brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention towards South African skincare brands. The predetermined answers respondents had to choose from, were sourced from previous studies based on the four dimensions of BA and the TPB.

The survey contained multiple choice questions, checkbox questions and 5-point Likert-scale questions. The multiple-choice questions contained questions such as how often respondents use

skincare products or what their preferred or most purchased skincare brands are. The checkbox questions were used to gain an understanding of respondents' perception of brand authenticity, for example. The 5-point Likert-scale questions included answers such as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree and measured respondents' attitudes.

One of the benefits of utilising an online quantitative survey included being flexible and thus able to have collected a larger number of responses in a shorter time, compared to making use of focus groups or in-depth interviews (Braun et al, 2020). According to Braun et al (2020) an online quantitative survey is cost-effective, saving the researcher money and time. Additionally, the use of quantitative close-ended questions prevented survey fatigue from taking place (Alchemer, 2021). The data collected from the survey was aimed at making predictions about the topic (Alchemer, 2021).

Before the survey was distributed on the chosen social media platforms, a pilot survey was designed and completed by a Bcom Honours student at IIE Vega School to determine any necessary changes that had to be made. The data collection period ranged from 7 August 2022 to 1 September 2022 where 30 responses were collected. The researcher felt a higher response count would increase the validity of the quantitative study. The survey was then reopened on 25 September 2022 until 14 October 2022 to collect more data and thus increase the validity of the study.

3.6 Data-analysis method

The collected data was analysed to answer whether brand authenticity has an influence on consumer purchase intention. The chosen platform to analyse the quantitative data was Google Forms. The platform automatically processed the data by creating graphs and pie charts to visually display the responses. The quantitative questions mainly included multiple choice questions (such as choosing specific characteristics), 5-point Likert scale questions and checkbox style questions. The types of questions used, simplified the data analysis process. By utilising a platform such as Google Forms, the researcher could increase the objectivity of the study through predetermined answers that respondents had to choose from. The platform displayed the responses as a percentage of the total responses received. Responses could be viewed as individual or in summary format displayed as bar graphs and pie charts, ensuring that the researcher could analyse the data effectively. The responses collected from the 56 respondents were exported to an Excel spreadsheet where the data was further prepared and organised. The quantitative nature of the study added

structure to the questionnaire and thus prevented researcher bias. The main goal of analysing the data was to address the primary and secondary research questions set out by the researcher.

Descriptive statistics were the chosen data analysis method. This helped the researcher to simplify the large amount of collected data. After doing so, the data was more understandable and manageable. The central tendency of the data was the focus point for the descriptive statistics. This included the median, mode and mean of the data. For the purposes and goals of this study, the median was excluded from the calculations. By determining the mean and mode, the researcher could address the primary and secondary research questions by uncovering, for example, if the variables, brand continuity, brand integrity and brand credibility, influence consumers purchase intentions of skincare brands. Each question in the survey was analysed individually, highlighting the most common answers. The individual answers were then compared to the entire set of collected data to identify any relevant trends.

The main goal of analysing the collected data was to reach the study's research objectives which ultimately led to answering the primary research question.

4. Findings

The data collected from the quantitative online questionnaire led to the interpretation and discussion of findings that were uncovered. The responses to 56 quantitative questionnaires were used to explore the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention.

4.1 Presentation of findings

The nature of the study did not require for respondents to fall within specific age or gender parameters. Respondents that regarded skincare as a top priority is visually displayed in the pie chart below, demonstrating that 82% (56) of 68 potential respondents deemed skincare as a top priority. These 56 respondents thus qualified to participate in the entire survey. As demonstrated in the literature review section of the study, subjective norms are antecedents of consumer purchase intention (Azjen, 1991). The researcher determined the subjective norms towards skincare by asking respondents whether they deem it as a top priority.

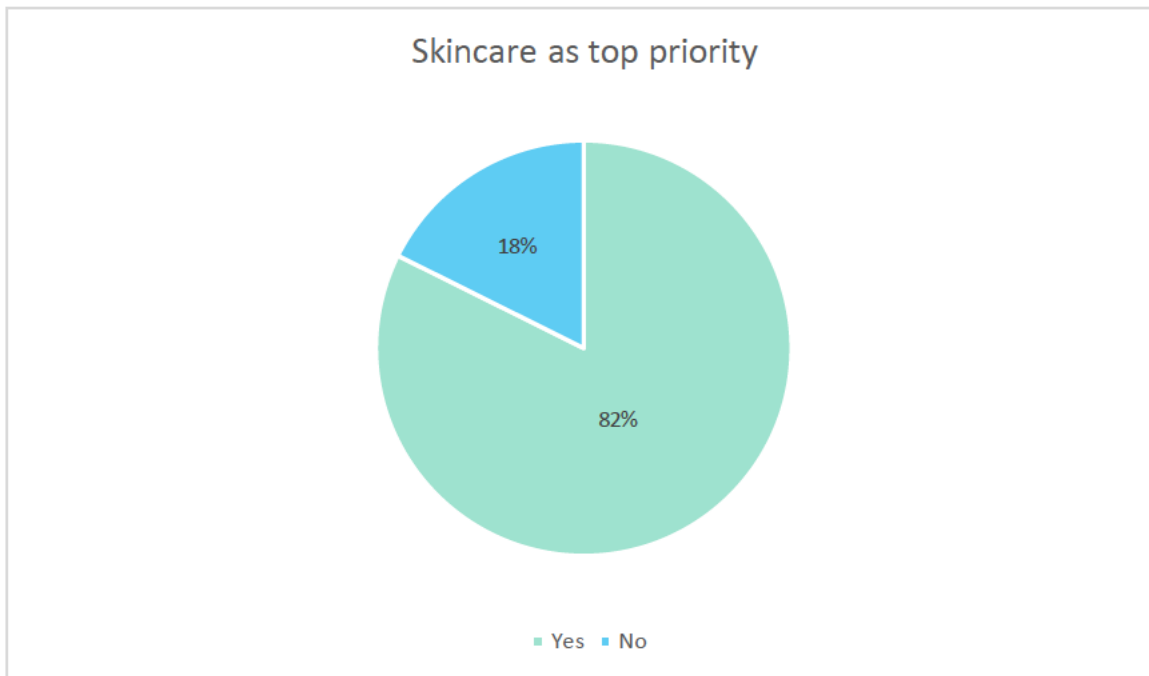


Figure 1: Pie Chart – Screening question

Thereafter, exploring whether brand authenticity can influence consumer purchase intention required the researcher to determine respondents' attitudes towards skincare products, as proposed by the TBP (Azjen, 1991). This was done by asking respondents whether they follow a specific skincare routine. The results are summarised in Figure 2 and demonstrate that 84% of respondents follow a skincare routine. This provided clarity on respondents' attitudes towards skincare products since skincare forms an essential part of most respondents' lives.

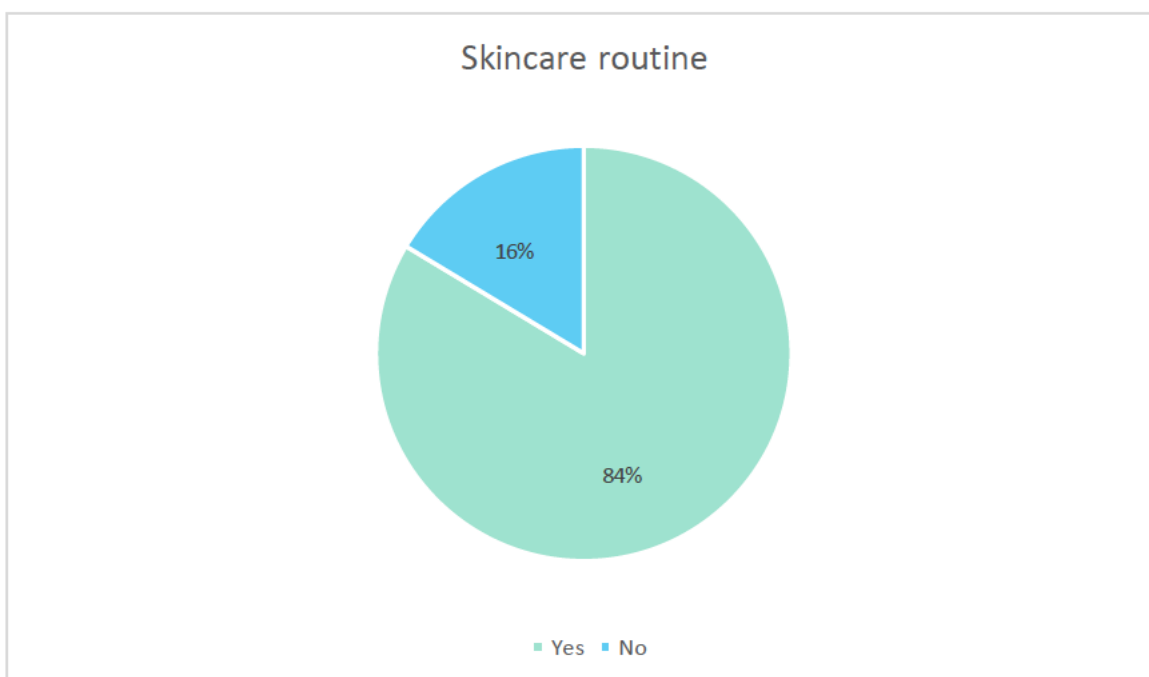


Figure 2: Pie Chart – Skincare routine

Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they use skincare products. The results displayed in Figure 3 below demonstrate that nearly 90% of respondents use skincare products daily. This was important to determine since it gave the researcher insight into the role that skincare products play in consumers' lives. With almost 90% of respondents using skincare products daily, the researcher concluded that respondents view it an essential part of their day and that the possibility of repeat purchases for skincare products exist.

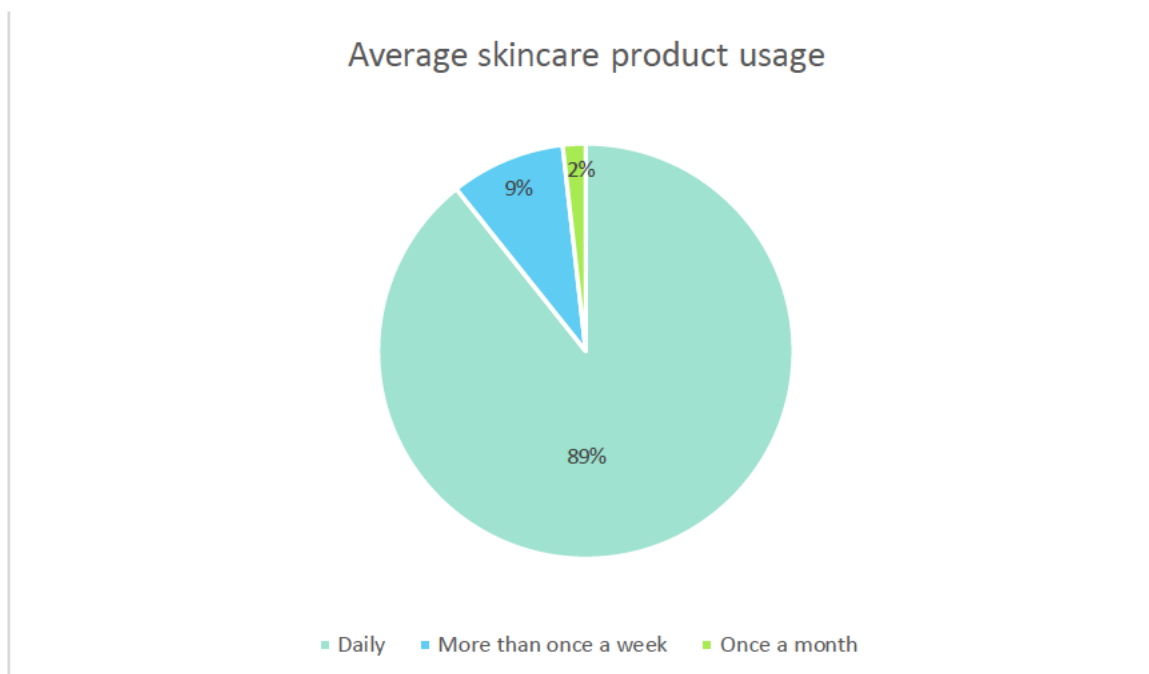


Figure 3: Pie Chart – Average skincare product usage

Thereafter, respondents were asked to identify their most preferred or purchased skincare brands (Figure 4). The researcher wanted to determine whether respondents had a preference towards a certain skincare brand and if so, whether they had an alternative brand that they preferred (Figure 5).

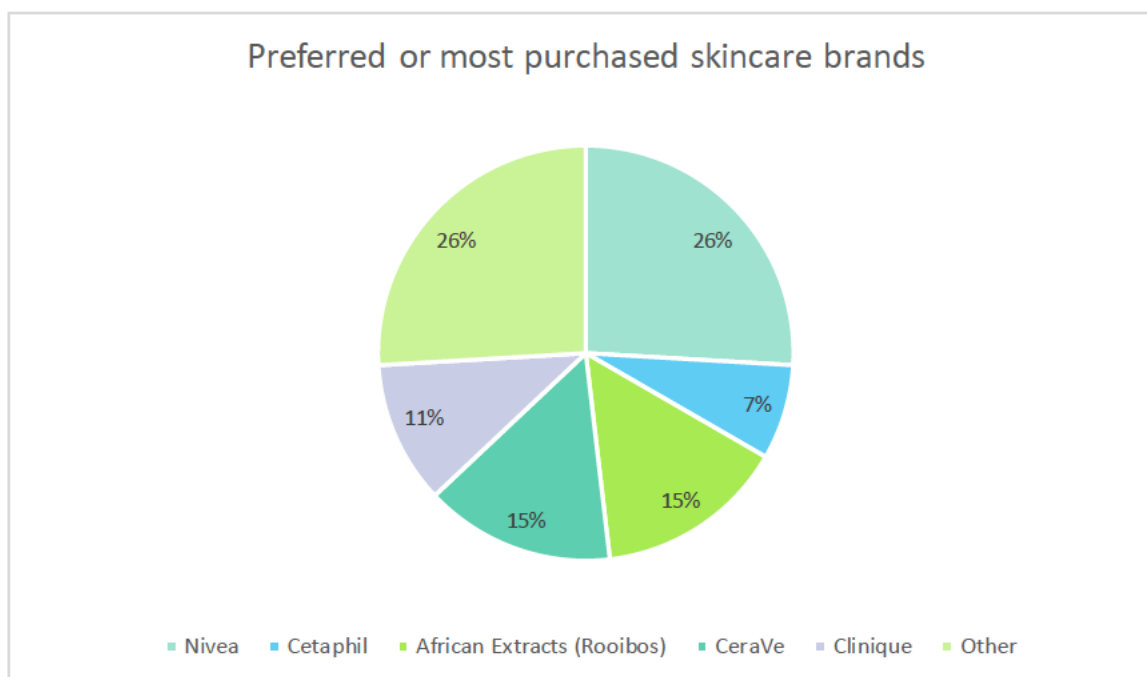


Figure 4: Pie Chart – Most purchased/ preferred skincare brand

The results displayed in Figure 5 below indicated that 80% of respondents in fact had an alternative skincare brand of choice.

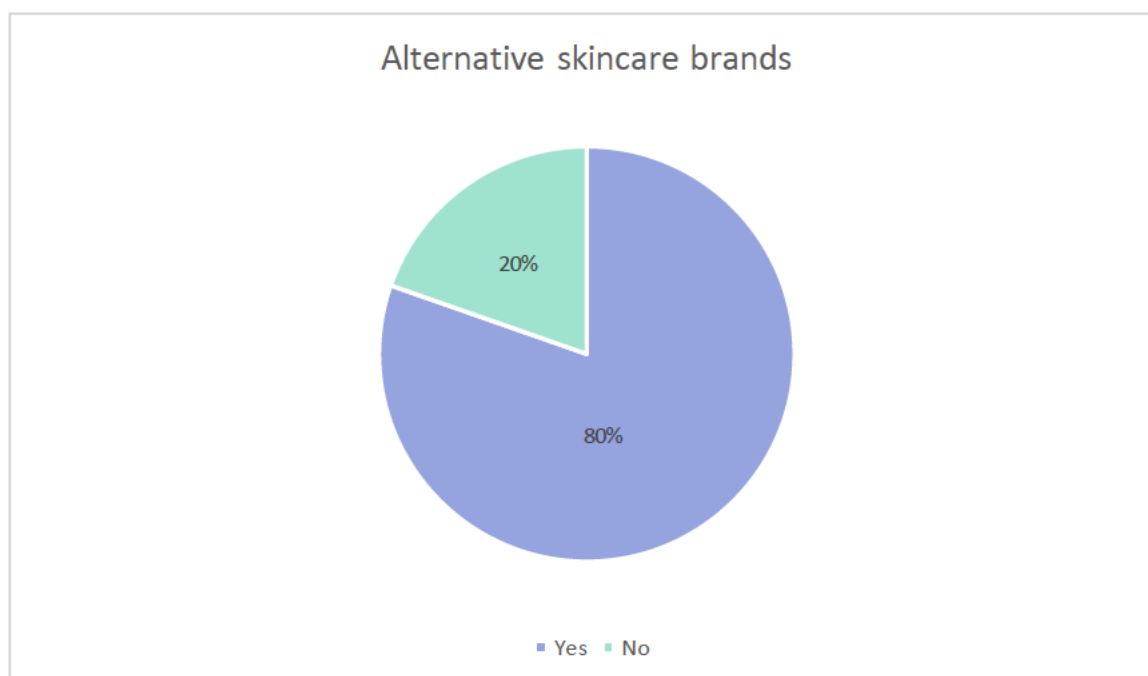


Figure 5: Pie Chart – Alternative skincare brands purchased

To explore whether respondents are easily influenced to purchase from a skincare brand other than their most preferred or purchased brand, respondents were asked whether they are loyal to these brands (figure 6 below). It is important to note that almost 40% of respondents were not loyal or might not be loyal to these brands, as seen in Figure 6 below. The researcher concluded that brand

while the majority of respondents indicated that they are loyal to their current preferred or most purchased skincare brand, a significant number of respondents had the potential of being influenced to purchase from a different skincare brand. This was further strengthened by the 80% of respondents who previously indicated that they have an alternative preferred skincare brand.



Figure 6: Pie Chart – Brand loyalty towards skincare brands

After determining whether respondents are loyal to their most preferred or purchased skincare brands the researcher had to determine the main purchase drivers for these brands. As displayed in Figure 7 below, 36% of respondents identified the effectiveness of the products as the main purchase driver. The second main purchase driver was affordability with 27% of respondents indicating it as their main purchase driver for their most purchased or preferred skincare brand. More than 60% of respondents thus consider the effectiveness and affordability of the products when making a purchase decision.



Figure 7: Bar Graph – Reasons for purchase

Thereafter respondents had to answer a series of 5-point Liker-scale questions related to their most purchased or preferred skincare brands (Figure 8 and 9). The statements in the survey were adapted from previous studies and were aimed at determining the perceived brand authenticity on respondents' most preferred or purchased skincare brands. The results indicated that the majority of respondents view their most purchased or preferred brands as authentic.

Thus, respondents view their most purchased or preferred brands as authentic.

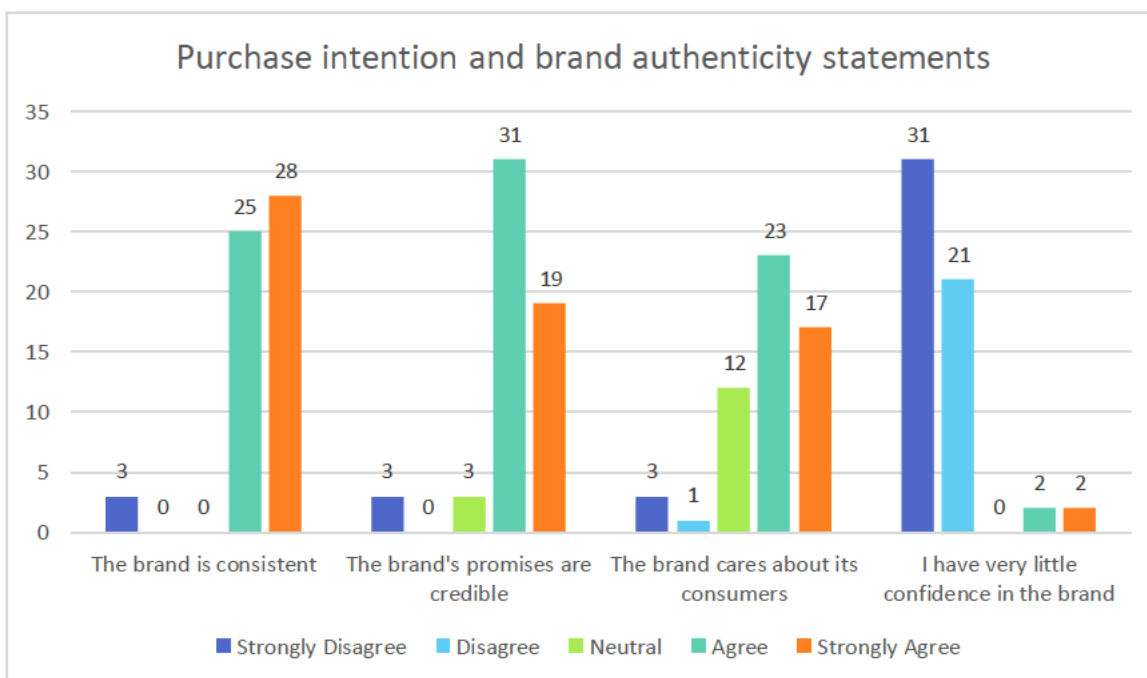


Figure 8: Bar Graph – Purchase intention and brand authenticity statements

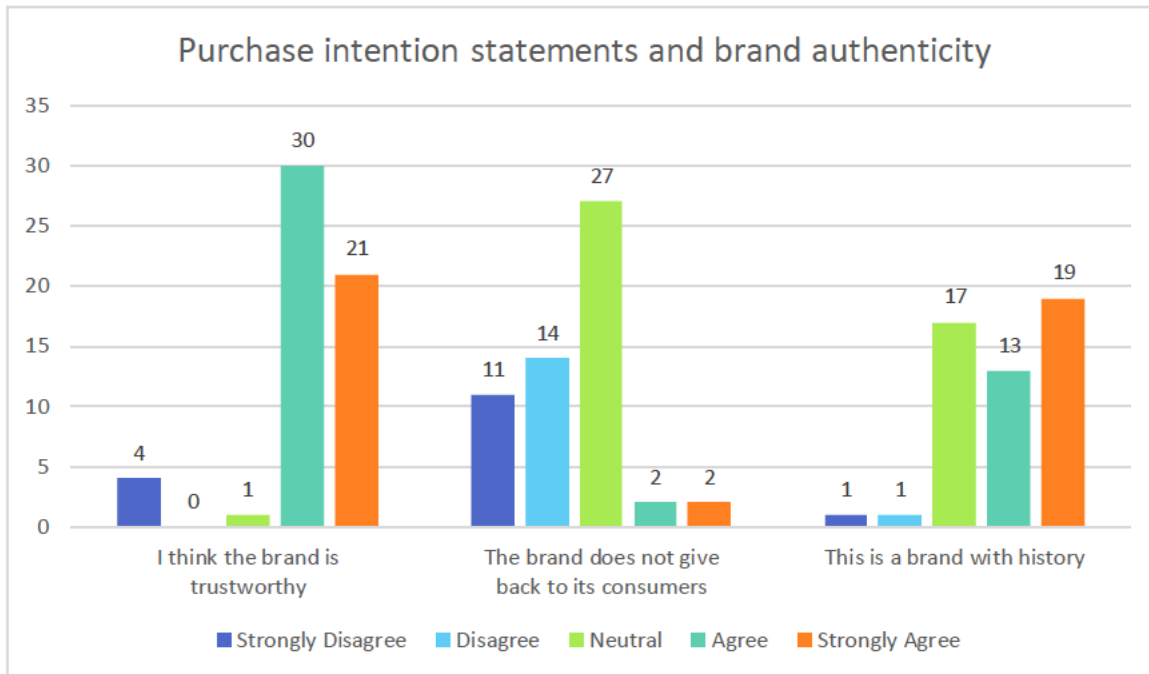


Figure 9: Bar Graph – Purchase intention and brand authenticity statements (continued)

Respondents were then asked how they would describe an authentic brand as seen in Figure 10 below. Respondents could choose more than one answer. “A brand that is trustworthy” was the most common answer, with “a brand that meets my expectations” and “a brand that is honest” following. This indicated that brand credibility had the most significant impact on respondents’ perceptions of brand authenticity, with “a brand that is trustworthy” and “a brand that meets my expectations” as brand credibility items.

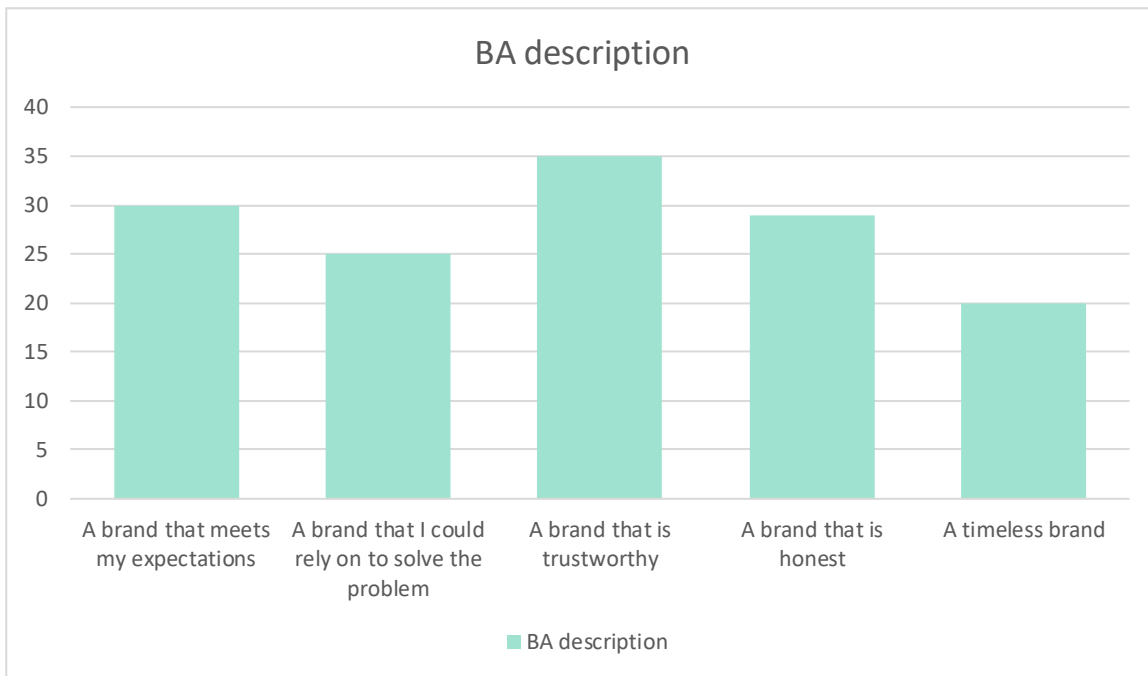


Figure 10: Bar Graph – Brand authenticity description

After defining brand authenticity respondents were asked to identify the key characteristics, they associate with brand authenticity. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one characteristic. Figure 11 below demonstrates that 93% (52) of respondents chose reliability as the top characteristic. Reliability is a brand credibility item, strengthening the finding in the previous question.

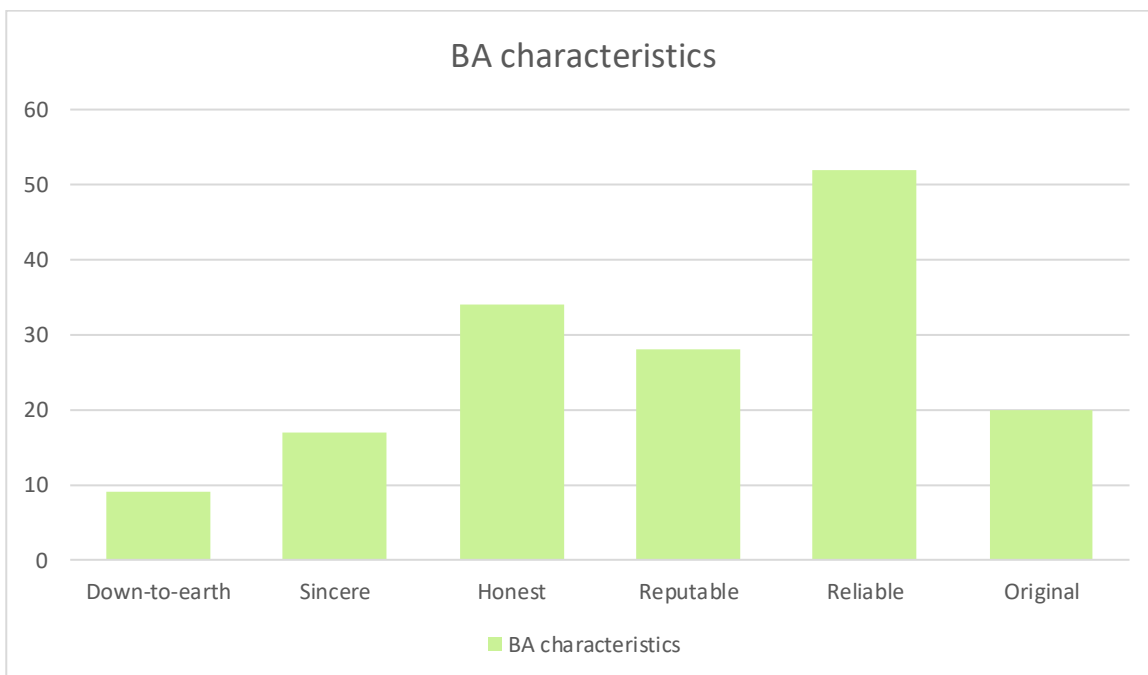


Figure 11: Bar Graph – Brand authenticity characteristics

The next question determined whether respondents are more likely to purchase from a brand they perceive as authentic. As seen in Figure 12 below, 92% of Respondents stated they would be more likely to purchase from an authentic brand.

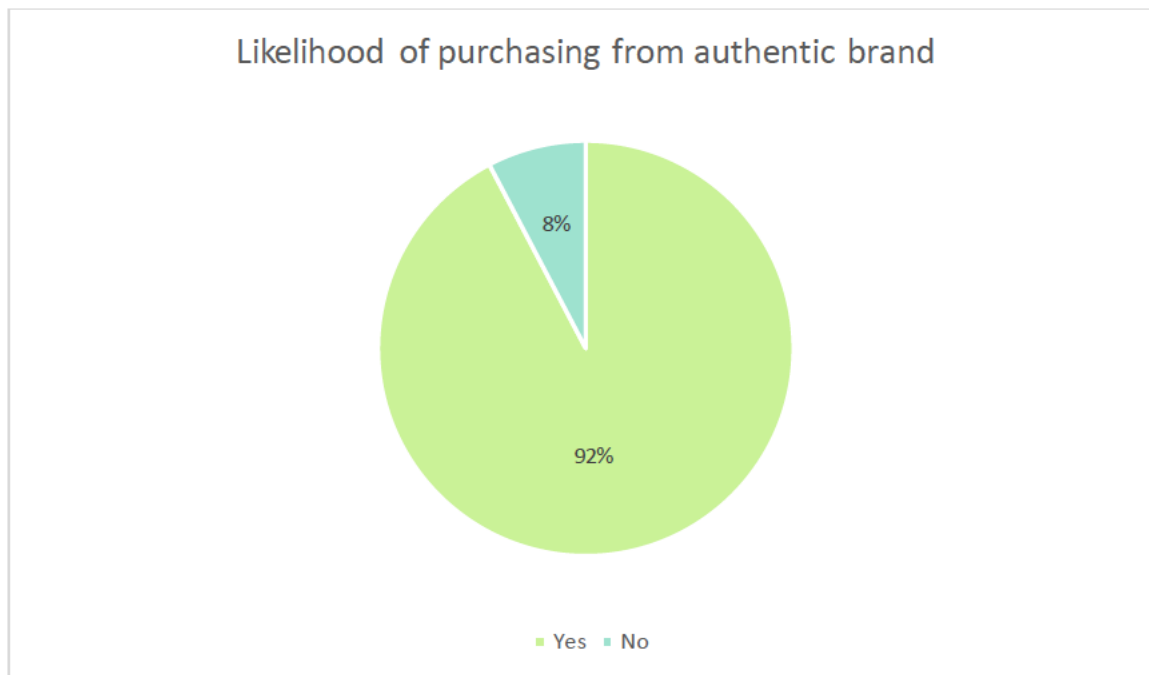


Figure 12: Pie chart – Likelihood of purchasing from authentic brand

Thereafter, the researcher had to determine which factors would increase the likelihood of respondents purchasing from a brand they perceive as authentic, as seen in Figure 13 below. The questions were asked in a 5-point Liker-scale format where respondents had to state their level of agreeableness to the statements. The extent to which respondents find the brand appealing, the degree of originality of the brand and the extent to which a brand helps respondents manage problems in their daily lives were the most likely to influence their purchase intention of a perceived authentic skincare brand. These statements were brand credibility and brand integrity items.

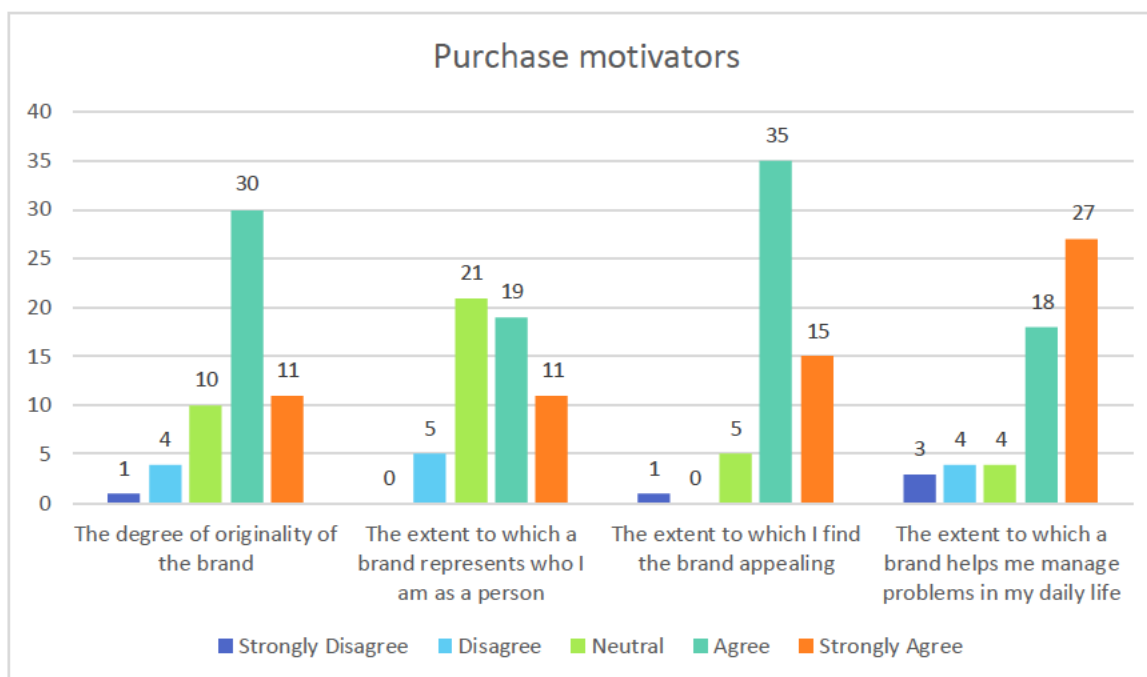


Figure 13: Bar graph – Purchase motivators

Brand authenticity in the South African context was explored by presenting respondents with four South African skincare brands. Four photos were chosen that contain certain elements related to brand authenticity, aimed at evaluating how and why respondents perceive certain brands as authentic. Respondents were asked to indicate which brand they perceive as the most authentic. As seen in Figure 14 below, more than half of respondents viewed “Skoon” as the most authentic brand.

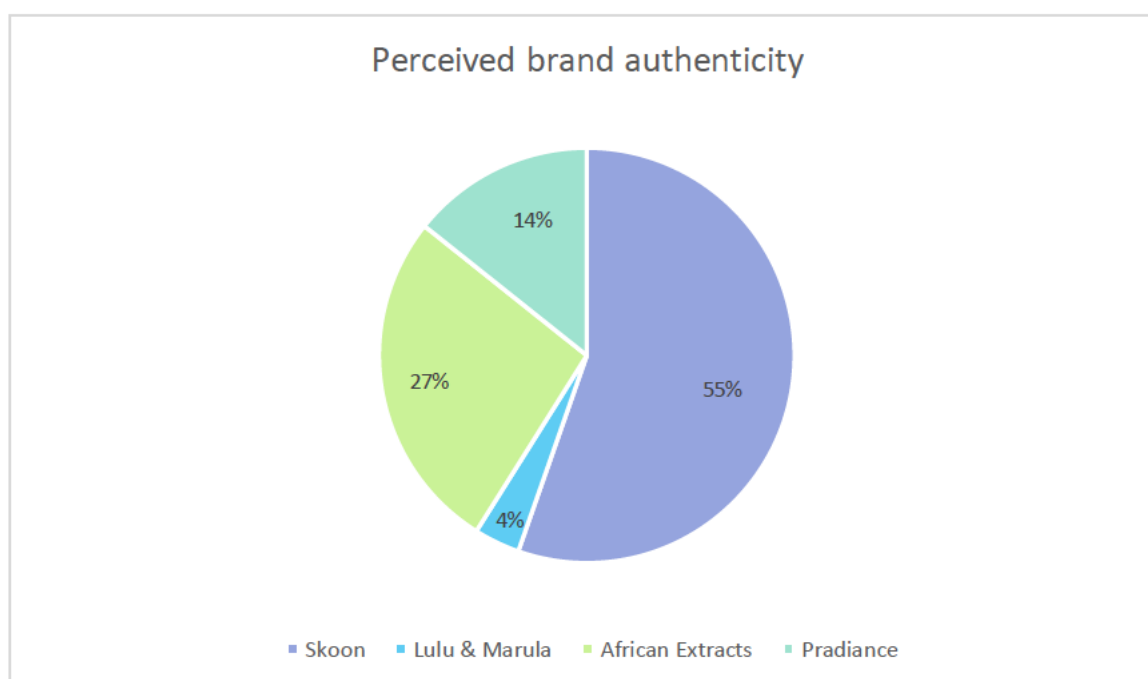


Figure 14: Pie Chart – Perceived authentic brands

After establishing which brand respondents regarded as the most authentic, the researcher had to determine if respondents would be more likely to purchase the brand they perceive as most authentic. Figure 15 showcases that 64% of respondents are more likely to purchase the brand “Skoon”. Respondents’ purchase intention is thus the most favourable towards the brand perceived as the most authentic.

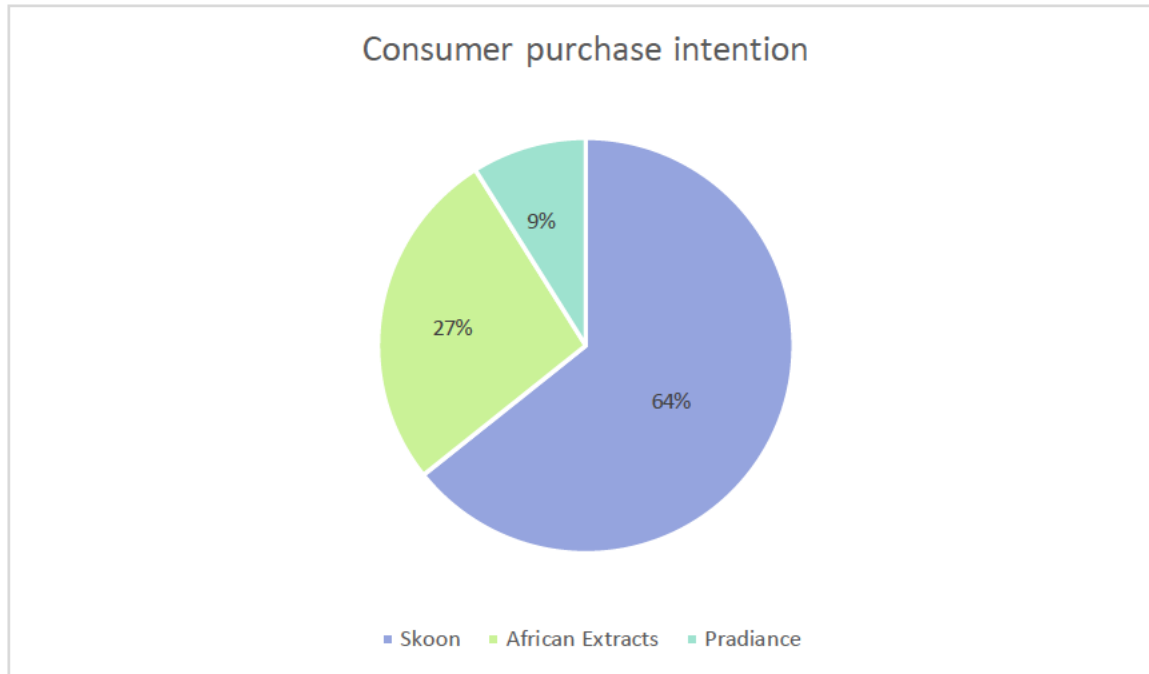


Figure 15: Pie Chart – Purchase intention towards perceived authentic brands

When asked to identify the reasoning for their choice in the previous question, “the brand has a clear concept that it pursues” was chosen by 64% of respondents. This is a brand integrity item thus contributing to the researcher’s previous finding, that brand credibility and brand integrity has the biggest influence on consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, “the brand is familiar to me” was chosen by 54% of respondents. This is a brand continuity item.

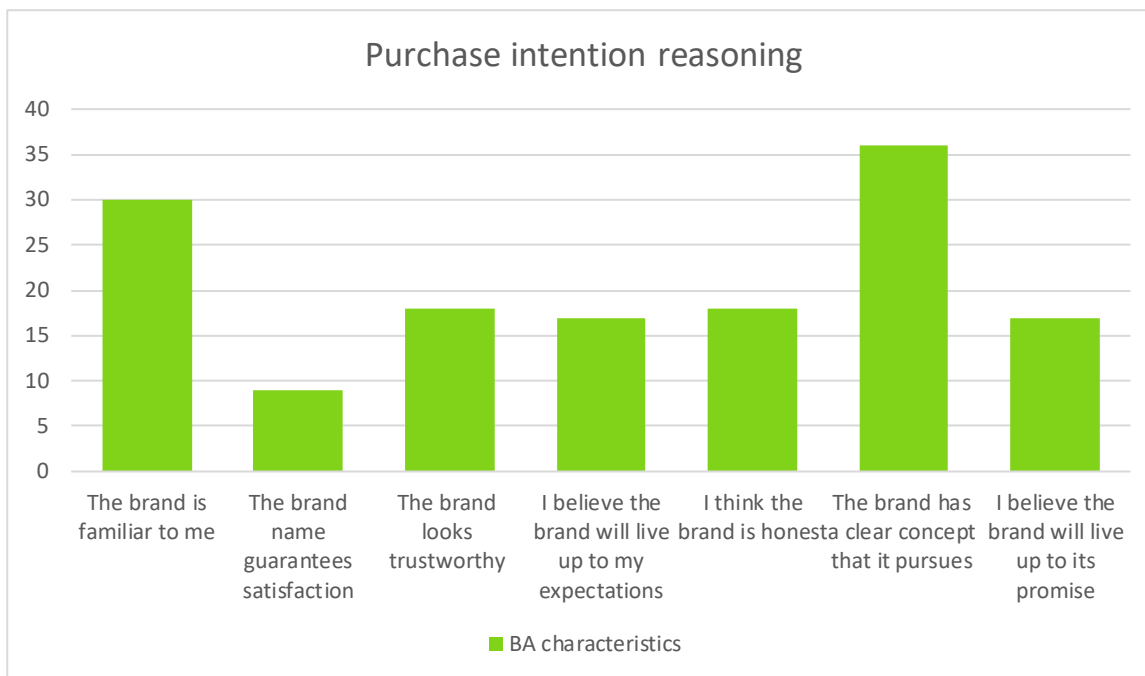


Figure 16: Bar graph – Purchase intention reasoning

Lastly, the researcher had to evaluate the respondents' purchase intent towards the four South African skincare brands. This was done by determining respondents' level of agreeableness to three purchase intent statements. Figures 17 – 19 visually represents the percentage distribution of the level of agreeableness to each of the three statements. It was found that nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they would try this brand by choosing "agree" and "strongly agree" to the statement. Only 39% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that they would purchase the chosen brand the next time they need that type of product. Lastly, 46% of respondents, however, agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that it is very likely that they will buy the chosen skincare brand. Following the findings presented in Figure 17 – 19, a research gap presented itself to investigate the reason behind the majority of respondents initially indicating that they would

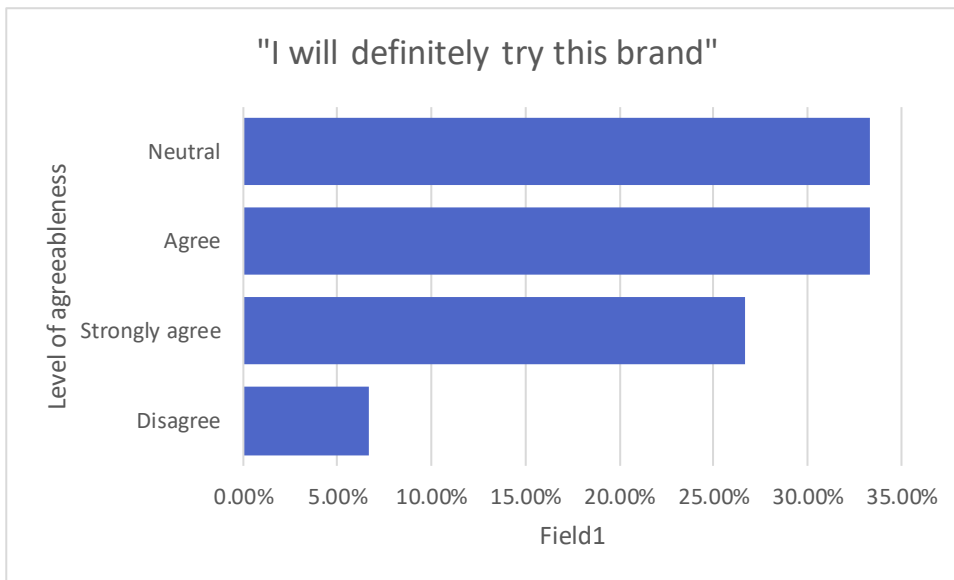


Figure 17: Bar graph – Purchase intention

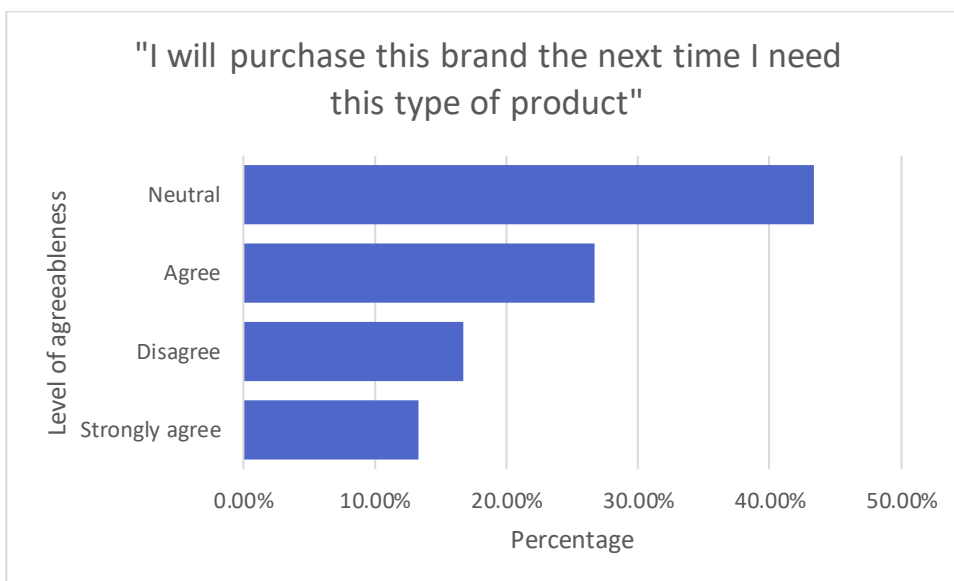


Figure 18: Bar graph – Purchase intention

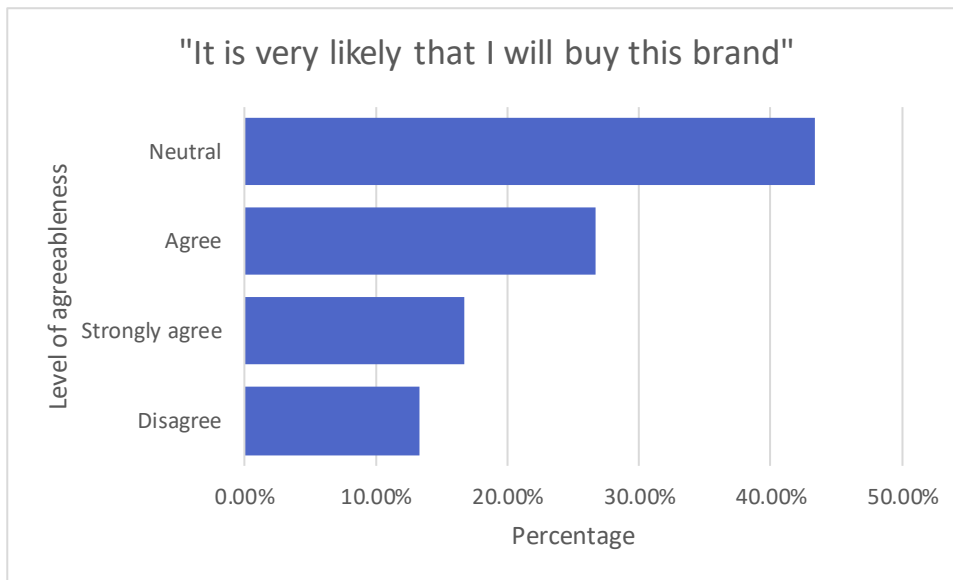


Figure 19: Bar graph – Purchase intention

Previously, brand credibility, - integrity and - continuity were investigated separately. To address the primary research question, “what is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention”, the researcher had to view these variables in relation to consumer purchase intention by calculating the correlation between the variables.

30 respondents were chosen to test whether there is a correlation between brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention. To answer the secondary research questions a correlation coefficient test was performed by testing these respondents’ previous responses to brand credibility, brand integrity and brand continuity statements. These statements include “It is very likely that I will try this brand”, “The degree of originality of the brand”, “The extent to which a brand represents who I am as a person” and “This is a brand with history”.

The researcher assigned the following values to brand continuity, brand credibility, brand integrity and consumer purchase intention to test whether a correlation exist between the variables :

Consumer purchase intention	
“It is very likely that I will try this brand”	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	15
Neutral	10
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	0

Brand credibility	
“The degree of originality of the brand”	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	15
Neutral	10
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	0
Brand integrity	
“The extent to which a brand represents who I am as a person”	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	15
Neutral	10
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	0
Brand continuity	
“This is a brand with history”	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	15
Neutral	10
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	0

Table 1: Values assigned to Consumer Purchase intention, brand credibility, brand continuity and brand integrity

Table 2 below showcase the results from assigning the values to the brand credibility, - integrity, - continuity and consumer purchase intention statements. After assigning a numeric value to each of the 30 responses for all four categories, the research utilised the excel formula “correl” to calculate the correlation between consumer purchase intention & brand credibility, consumer purchase intention & brand continuity and lastly the correlation between consumer purchase intention & brand integrity.

With regards to a correlation between consumer purchase intention and brand continuity, a correlation coefficient of 0,22 was returned, suggesting a weak positive correlation between consumer purchase intention and brand continuity. In terms of a correlation between consumer

purchase intention and brand credibility, a correlation coefficient of 0,53 was achieved, suggesting a moderate positive correlation. Lastly, a correlation coefficient of 0,53 was achieved for the correlation between consumer purchase intention and brand integrity was calculated, indicating a weak positive correlation between the two variables.

Consumer purchase intention	Brand continuity	Brand credibility	Brand integrity
15	15	15	10
10	20	10	10
15	10	15	10
10	15	10	5
20	20	20	20
20	10	20	15
20	20	10	20
15	20	15	15
15	20	5	10
10	20	20	15
20	20	20	20
5	20	5	10
5	15	5	5
20	15	15	10
10	10	5	5
20	15	20	20
15	20	15	10
10	10	15	15
15	20	15	10
10	10	15	10
20	15	15	15
20	15	15	10
15	20	15	10
10	10	15	15
10	5	15	10
15	20	20	20
15	10	15	15
10	10	15	15
10	15	15	10
15	15	20	20

Table2 – Scores achieved for consumer purchase intention, brand credibility, brand continuity and brand integrity

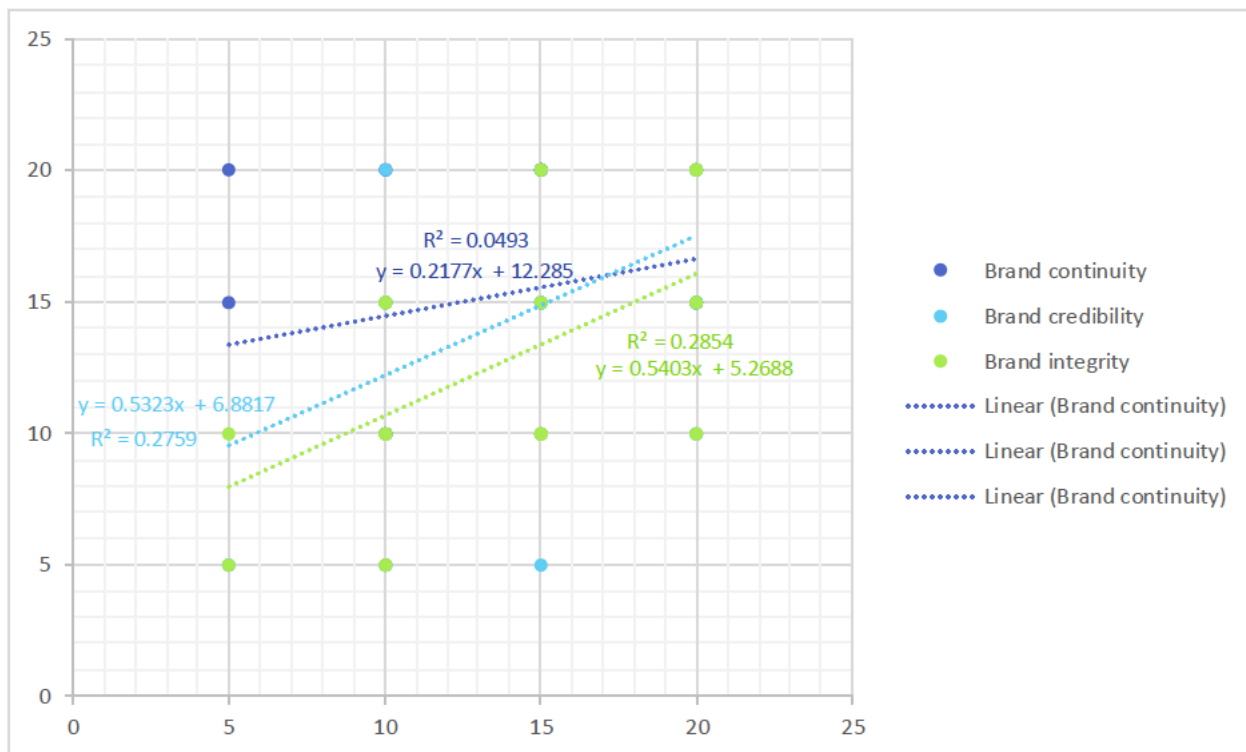


Figure 20 – Scatterplot: consumer purchase intention, brand credibility, brand continuity and brand integrity

4.2 Addressing the research questions

Based on the analysed data findings, the research question, problem and objectives can be addressed and answered.

Primary Research Question

- What is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention?

When exploring the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention, the researcher uncovered that more than 90% of respondents initially indicated that they would purchase the brand they perceived as most authentic.

This was contrasted by less than 45% of respondents indicating that they would purchase from the South African skincare brand they perceived as the most authentic.

When the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention is examined, it became clear that brands pursuing a clear concept has an influence on consumer purchase intention towards perceived authentic brands.

Secondary Research Questions

- How does brand continuity influence purchase intention?

While exploring the influence that brand authenticity has on consumer purchase intention, the continuity dimension of brand authenticity was present throughout the findings. Brand continuity had a significant impact on respondents' perceptions towards their most purchased or preferred skincare brands. The findings from Figure 9 indicated that 95% of respondents stated they strongly agree or agree with the statement, "the brand is consistent over time". This supports the findings from Morhart's (2015) study, mentioned in the literature review section, that revealed continuity to be the most frequently mentioned factor of authentic brands.

Furthermore, 57% of respondents stated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement "This is a brand with history". Continuity was linked to purchase intention by including these statements, based on respondents' most preferred or purchased brands. A contrasting finding as seen in Figure 10, is that only 36% of respondents would describe an authentic brand as "a timeless brand".

This led to the insight that while respondents may deem consistency and history as main characteristics of authentic brands, respondents do not associate timelessness with authentic brands, leading to a research gap to be further explored. It can thus be concluded that the perceived degree of timelessness of a skincare brand will not act as a main purchase driver for consumers. Additionally, 50% of respondents associate an authentic brand with being reputable, as seen in Figure 11. Figure 16 further displayed the effect of brand continuity on consumer purchase intention. It was found that 54% of respondents deem familiarity as a purchase driver for the South African skincare brand they perceived as the most authentic. A contrasting 16% of respondents indicated in the same question that the brand name would drive as a purchasing driver.

- What is the influence of brand credibility on consumer purchase intention?

The findings uncovered that brand credibility was evident throughout the responses collected. Figure 9 showcased that 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agree with the statement "the brand's promises are credible" with regards to their most purchased skincare brands. Additionally, also seen in Figure 9, 92% of respondents strongly disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I have very little confidence in the brand". This indicated that respondents had both high confidence in their most purchased and believed that the promises made by the brand are credible. The researcher concluded that this indicated that respondents trust their most preferred or purchased brands, as supported by Morhart *et al's* (2015) statement that brand credibility is associated with brand trust. This was further supported by the findings in Figure 9, where 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I think the brand is trustworthy". Figure

10 showcased how only 63% of respondents chose to describe an authentic brand as “a brand that is trustworthy”. This somewhat contradicts the findings showcased in Figure 9 and the researcher concluded that this might be because respondents were asked to describe an authentic brand in general, where the previous question was specific to their most purchased skincare brand. When asked how respondents would describe an authentic brand, Figure 10 showcased the 54% respondents that said, “a brand that meets my expectations”. As discussed in the literature review section, Fournier & Alvarez (2012) highlight the importance role that brand credibility plays in scenarios where consumers struggle to make informed decisions because of a lack of motivation. This statement is supported by the findings presented in Figure 13 where 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement “The degree of originality of the brand” would influence the likelihood of respondents purchasing from a brand they perceive as authentic. This is further supported by the 80% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The extent to which a brand helps me manage problems in my daily life”. A contradicting finding was presented in Figure 16, where only 32% of respondents chose “the brand looks trustworthy” to explain why they perceived a certain brand as the most authentic. The moderate positive correlation calculated for brand credibility and consumer purchase intention answers the secondary question that brand credibility does not have a significant impact on consumer purchase intention.

- **How does brand integrity influence consumer purchase intention**

To answer the final secondary research question, the findings from Figure 9 will be used. 71% of Respondents stated that they strongly agree or agree with the statement, “the brand cares about its consumers”. Furthermore, 45% of consumers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “the brand does not care about its consumers”. The findings in Figure 10 indicate that only 45% of respondents would describe an authentic brand as a brand they can rely on to solve the problem. This indicates low brand trust.

The moderate positive correlation calculated for brand integrity and consumer purchase intention answers the secondary question that brand integrity does not have a significant impact on consumer purchase intention.

4.3 Validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of findings

4.3.1 Validity

Validity and reliability were important measuring instruments for the research study. Maree and Pietersen (2020) define internal validity as the ability of a measure to accurately measure what intended to, without bias. Since the researcher both developed the survey and analysed the findings thereof, the validity of the findings was automatically influenced. Any mistakes made by the researcher or potential weaknesses that could have been overlooked, could have an impact on the results. The researcher took the necessary steps to increase the validity of the study by using items from previous research instruments that have previously been tested.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The final chapter of the study includes recommendations for future research, the limitations of the study and research, ethical considerations, the anticipated contribution of this study to the field of brand authenticity and the final conclusions drawn.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

This research study explored the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry in a small-scale study. This study can be used as a guide for a large-scale study by increasing the sample size to increase the generalisation of the study. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that an inductive logic standpoint can be taken, since there is still limited knowledge and research done on the Brand Authenticity construct. This could lead to new findings and discoveries.

5.3 Limitations

The limitations for this study include the factors that is out of the researcher's control but will have an impact on the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). Firstly, the researcher's lack of money and resources are considered limitations to the study. Financial constraints will hinder the researcher's capability to access a larger population. The researcher has a limited budget to conduct the study. Secondly, the timeframe limited the study. The researcher could thus not perform a longitudinal study. The amount of quality information and data the research will be able to collect is limited by this timeframe. The chosen sampling method acts as a limitation for the study. Convenience sampling can lead to an unbalanced participant demographic. Additionally, convenience sampling is influenced by the social context of researcher, which can create potential bias (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). Furthermore, the results from study cannot be generalised to the entire population due

to the subjective, quantitative nature of the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). The sample size of the quantitative study can be seen as a limitation, since only 56 responses were collected. The results thus cannot be generalised to the entire population (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014).

5.4 Ethical considerations

5.4.1 Respondents

Firstly, respondents had to consent to participate in the study. The researcher received consent from respondents by employing a letter of consent before respondents could complete the online quantitative survey. The letter provided the broad purpose of the research topic and how the data was analysed. Respondents were informed that they were allowed to withdraw at any given time without consequences. Respondents must have been over the age of 18 to take part in the study. The respondents were informed that their identities remained anonymous. The respondents' names were not stated, ensuring participant confidentiality. The researcher communicated the purpose of the study to respondents, that no deception took place and that respondents would be able to obtain the results from the study once completed.

5.4.2 The researcher

The researcher did not adjust or tamper the collected data to achieve a desired outcome. The researcher aligned the research method with the research purpose to ensure that the appropriate research method was used to obtain results. The researcher avoided the distortion of data by treating all collected results obtained in the study as equal. It was predicted that a degree of bias will take place during the study, since the researcher utilised convenience sampling. During the data analysis and collection period, the researcher was mindful to exclude bias where possible.

5.5 Anticipated contribution

This study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge in the South African skincare industry by providing skincare brands and members of the public with a deeper understanding of brand authenticity and how it can affect consumer purchase intention. The South African skincare industry is constantly growing and evolving, and the insight gained from this study on how brand authenticity can be applied, can be beneficial to existing and potential brands. Furthermore, the quantitative methodology used in this study aims to contribute to methodological significance. A qualitative methodology is more widely adopted by studies within this field of study (Schallehn, Burmann &

Riley, 2014). The quantitative methodology added objectivity to the existing studies on brand authenticity (Schallehn *et al*, 2014).

5.6 Conclusion of the study

The study aimed to explore what the effect of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention can have in the South African skincare industry. Initially, the researcher anticipated that a significant relationship between brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention would exist, specifically since skincare products

It soon became apparent that while the dimensions of brand authenticity can influence purchasing decisions, when exploring what the correlation between these variables were, not one of the variables demonstrated a strong correlation.

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7. ANNEXURES

7.1 Annexure A: Final research report summary document table

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors / Sources	Lit Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To determine whether consumer purchase intentions are influenced by perceived brand authenticity in the South African skincare industry	Primary: What is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention? Secondary: 1.How does brand continuity influence purchase intention? 2.What is the influence of brand credibility on consumer	Brands positioned on superiority, exceptional service or quality are not differentiated in the highly competitive markets they must compete in (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).	Azjen (1991) – Theory of planned behaviour - Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) - Beverland (2005) - Gilmore and Pine (2007) - Liao and Ma (2009) - Kolar and	Theme 1: Brand authenticity 1. Continuity 2. Credibility 3. Integrity 4. symbolism Theme 2: Consumer purchase intention Theme 3: Brand trust	Paradigm <i>Positivism</i> Epistemology To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention Ontology A reality or objective truth exist and that it is governed by laws Axiology Employing positivism in this study allowed the researcher	<i>Quantitative</i>	The chosen data-collection method was an online quantitative survey, which allowed the researcher to collect a larger amount of data while prioritising quantitative research values and techniques	Informed consent: participants must consent to participate in the study. - Participants must be over the age of 18 - Participants are allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time, without consequences. - The identities of participants remain anonymous. - The		This research study explored the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry in a small-scale study. This study can be used as a guide for a large-scale study by increasing the sample size to increase the
						Population				
						Population Parameters The accessible population for this study included South African consumers aged between 18 – 55 years, that deemed skincare as a top priority during the duration of the study and that were contactable by the researcher via the social				

	purchase intention? 3.How does brand integrity influence consumer purchase intention?	Brand authenticity is a branding trend that is seen as essential for brands to apply and enables brands to be sincere (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). It is believed that brand authenticity is still in its infancy stages, creating a gap in	Zabkar (2010) - Bruhn, Schoenmueller, Schäfer and Heinrich (2012) - Rajh (2012) - Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland and Farrelly (2014) - Schallehn, Burmann and Riley (2014) - Morhart, Malär, Girardin, Grohmann and Guèvremont (2015) - Napoli, Dickinson-	to make sense of the primary research question, “what is the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention?”, from an objective perspective.	media platforms Instagram and Whatsapp.		researcher will communicate the purpose of the study to participants, no deception will take place and participants will be able to obtain the results from the study once completed.?		generalisation of the study. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that an inductive logic standpoint can be taken, since there is still limited knowledge and research done on the Brand Authenticity construct. This could lead to new findings and discoveries.
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		existing literature for research to be done, especially in the South African skincare industry (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, Schäfer & Heinrich, 2012) . Brand authenticity is a branding trend that is seen as essential for brands to apply (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Brands that are perceived	Delaporte and Beverland (2016) - Moulard, Raggio and Folse (2016) - Fritz, Schoenmueller and Bruhn (2017) - Hernandez-Fernandez and Lewis (2019)							
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		as authentic have increased brand trust, are more successful , more likely to be the consumer brand of choice, have a more favourable word-of-mouth appeal and higher emotional consumer-brand attachment (Morhart <i>et al</i> , 2015). These outcomes are highly beneficial								
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		to brands in the skincare industry since the skincare industry is highly saturated and competitive. This study aims to build on the existing knowledge of brand authenticity and consumer purchase intention. Therefore, it is relevant to explore whether authenticity has an influence on the								
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		South African skincare industry and if so, how brands can benefit from using it.								
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	

Consumers are faced with consistent meaningless product offerings in the market, higher commercialisation, and an excess amount of fake content (Morhart <i>et al</i>, 2015). At the same time brand trust is at an all-time low and continuously decreasing (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). These factors have led to an increased desire for authenticity to be present in brands, products, and experiences (Napoli, Dickinson-Delaporte and Beverland, 2016). Given that consumers are faced with ample	1.How does brand continuity influence purchase intention? 2.What is the influence of brand credibility on consumer purchase intention? 3.How does brand integrity influence consumer purchase intention	Brand authenticity (continuity, credibility, integrity, symbolism), consumer purchase intention, brand trust	Theoretical framework – Morhart, Malär, Girardin, Grohmann and Guèvremont (2015): Dimensions of Perceived Brand Authenticity Consumer purchase intention - The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)			Non-probability sampling – Convenience sampling There is no complete list of the accessible population available, and it is impossible to reach all consumers within the skincare industry	The collected data was analysed to answer whether brand authenticity has an influence on consumer purchase intention. The chosen platform to analyse the quantitative data was Google Forms. The platform automatically processed the data by creating graphs and pie charts to visually display the responses. The quantitative questions mainly included multiple	Lack of money and resources - Time constraint (could not perform a longitudinal study) - Sampling method (convenience sampling) - Results from study cannot be generalised to the entire population (due to smaller sample size)	This study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge in the South African skincare industry by providing skincare brands and members of the public with a deeper understanding of brand authenticity and how it can affect consumer purchase intention. The South African skincare industry is constantly growing and evolving, and the insight gained from this study on how brand	
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brand choices, research indicates that consumers prefer brands that are real and authentic (Fritz, Schoenmueller and Bruhn, 2017). Brand authenticity is a construct that has become important in the branding world, and it was found that is has exceeded quality as the main purchase criteria (Morhart <i>et al</i> , 2015). It is an effective tool that can be used to increase brand trust (Fritz <i>et al</i> , 2017). Brand trust has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intention (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).							choice questions (such as choosing specific characteristic s), 5-point Likert scale questions and checkbox style questions. The types of questions used, simplified the data analysis process. By utilising a platform such as Google Forms, the researcher could increase the objectivity of the study through predetermined answers that respondents had to		authenticity can be applied, can be beneficial to existing and potential brands. Furthermore, the quantitative methodology used in this study aims to contribute to methodological significance. A qualitative methodology is more widely adopted by studies within this field of study (Schallehn, Burmann & Riley, 2014). The quantitative methodology added objectivity to the existing studies on	
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Various factors such as a global financial crisis, climate change and increasing political instability leads to increasing feelings of doubt across the globe. This causes a need for authenticity to be present in the brands consumers use and interact with daily. This creates a potential opportunity that skincare brands can benefit from portraying their brands as authentic, since most consumers utilise skincare products on a regular basis.							choose from. The platform displayed the responses as a percentage of the total responses received. Responses could be viewed as individual or in summary format displayed as bar graphs and pie charts, ensuring that the researcher could analyse the data effectively. The responses collected from the 56 respondents were exported to an Excel spreadsheet where the data was		brand authenticity (Schallehn <i>et al</i> , 2014).	
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							further prepared and organised. The quantitative nature of the study added structure to the questionnaire and thus prevented researcher bias (source). The main goal of analysing the data was to address the primary and secondary research questions set out by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were the chosen data analysis method. This helped the researcher to simplify the large amount			
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							of collected data. After doing so, the data was more understandable and manageable. The central tendency of the data was the focus point for the descriptive statistics. This included the median, mode and mean of the data. For the purposes and goals of this study, the median was excluded from the calculations. By determining the mean and mode, the researcher could address the			
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							primary and secondary research questions by uncovering, for example, if the variables, brand continuity, brand integrity and brand credibility, influence consumers purchase intentions of skincare brands. Each question in the survey was analysed individually, highlighting the most common answers. The individual answers were then compared to the entire set of collected data to			
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							identify any relevant trends. The main goal of analysing the collected data was to reach the study's research objectives which ultimately led to answering the primary research question.			
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7.2 Annexure B: Measurement instrument

The influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry

Dear prospective participant

Thank you for your interest in completing this questionnaire. My name is Danielle Theron, a student at the IIE Vega, inviting you to participate in this survey. The results of which will contribute to the findings of my research assignment as part of the completion of my Bcom Honours degree in Strategic Brand Management. The information that follows explains the details of the assignment. Before proceeding to the questions, please take the time to read through it. Your participation is voluntary, and you are therefore free to decline and participate or withdraw from the study at any given point. This will not affect you negatively in any way. The identities of all participants will remain anonymous throughout the questionnaire. The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry. The questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 min and will contain questions related to brand authenticity and consumer purchase intent.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me. My email is ST10094186@vgconnect.edu.za.

Please answer the following questions honestly

The influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry



* Required

Consent

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided for the study *

☐ Yes

☐ No

I hereby agree to participate in the study *

☐ Yes

☐ No

I am above 18 years of age *

☐ Yes

☐ No

The influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention in the South African skincare industry



* Required

Importance of skincare

Please indicate whether you believe skincare is a top priority for you.

Would you say that skincare is a top priority for you? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skincare habits

The following section contains questions about your general skincare habits

Do you follow a specific skincare routine? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

On average, how often do you use skincare products? *

☐ Daily

☐ Once a week

☐ More than once a week

☐ Once a month

☐ Other:

Please select your most preferred or purchased skincare brand from the options below. *

- ☐ Nivea
- ☐ Cetaphil
- ☐ African Extracts (Rooibos)
- ☐ CeraVe
- ☐ Clinique
- ☐ Other:

Do you have any alternative skincare brands that you purchase? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you consider yourself loyal to your most purchased or preferred skincare brands? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why do you purchase these brands? *

- ☐ It's affordable
- ☐ Effective products
- ☐ Trustworthy brand
- ☐ Well-known brand
- ☐ Ingredients
- ☐ Other:

Please answer the following questions with regards to your most purchased skincare brand(s) *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The brand is consistent over time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brand's promises are credible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brand cares about its consumers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have very little confidence in the brand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think the brand is trustworthy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brand does not give back to its consumers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a brand with history	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Brand Authenticity

The following section contains questions about your general understanding about "brand authenticity".

How would you describe an authentic brand? *

- ☐ A brand that meets my expectations
- ☐ A brand that I could rely on to solve the problem
- ☐ A brand that is trustworthy
- ☐ A brand that is honest
- ☐ A timeless brand

Please choose the characteristic(s) you believe are most relevant to authentic brands *

- ☐ Down-to-earth
- ☐ Sincere
- ☐ Honest
- ☐ Reputable
- ☐ Reliable
- ☐ Original

Purchase intention and brand authenticity

Are you more likely to purchase from a brand you perceive as authentic? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I believe the following factors will increase the likelihood of me buying from a brand I perceive as authentic brand *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The degree of originality of the brand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The extent to which a brand represents who I am as a person	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The extent to which I find the brand appealing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The extent to which a brand helps me manage problems in my daily life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

South African skincare brands

The images in this section reflect brands that portray certain aspects of brand authenticity.

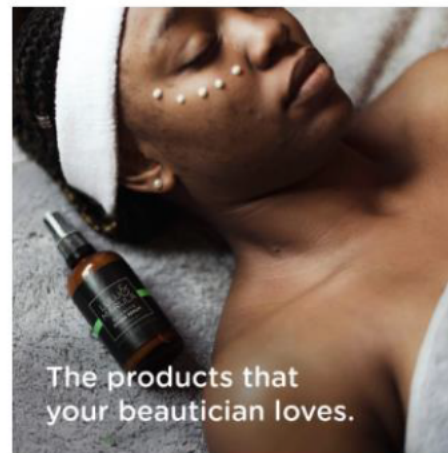
By considering the images below, which of the following brands do you perceive as the most authentic? *

- ☐ Skoon
- ☐ Lulu & Marula
- ☐ African Extracts
- ☐ Pradiance

a. Skoon



b. Lulu & Marula



c. African Extracts



d. Pradance



By considering the images above, which of the following brands are you most likely to purchase from? *

- ☐ Skoon
- ☐ Lulu & Marula
- ☐ African Extracts
- ☐ Pradance

Please explain the reasoning behind your choice *

- ☐ The brand is familiar to me
- ☐ The brand name guarantees satisfaction
- ☐ The brand looks trustworthy
- ☐ I believe the brand will live up to my expectations
- ☐ I think the brand is honest
- ☐ The brand has a clear concept that it pursues
- ☐ I believe the brand will live up to its promise

Purchase intention and South African skincare brands

Please answer the following questions with regards to the brand you chose in the above section:

I will definitely try this brand *

Strongly disagree

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

Strongly agree

I will purchase this brand the next time I need this type of product *

Strongly disagree

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

Strongly agree

It is very likely that I will buy this brand *

Strongly disagree

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

Strongly agree



Date: 04/08/2022

Student name: Daniëlle Marguerite Theron

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega School (online)

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

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

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

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

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

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

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.

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

Supervisor name: Amalia van Schalkwyk

Signature:



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Dr Tish Taylor

Signature:

