



## **An Exploration of Brand Perception and Brand Identity in Female Luxury Designer Fashion**

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## DECLARATION

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

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Signature

17 September 2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

The fashion industry has witnessed significant changes in the past few years. The industry has opened its doors up diverse groups of women that do not conform to the fashion world's definition of 'female beauty' (Givan, 2017). Society has started to voice profound situations of thoughtlessness and cavalier culture appropriation, in order for the fashion world to start embracing diversity (Givan, 2017).

Therefore, the aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the opinions and views that women in South Africa had toward Victoria Secret, in order to determine if their perceptions aligned with the brands identity. This study was based on an axiological position of interpretivism.

The primary research findings were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The nine participants that took part in the study were; female consumers between the ages of 18 to 25 that reside in the East of Pretoria, South Africa. Participants had either come into contact with, or purchased the Victoria Secret brand previously.

The semi-structured interviews contained the following; eighteen in-depth questions, two Victoria's Secret advertising communication campaign video's, and one visual image of the Victoria Secret angels in the "2018 Strapless Bra Campaign". From the primary research findings, seven prominent themes appeared; buying behaviour, brand association, culture, diversity, beauty standards, self-image and sexualisation.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that Victoria Secret continued to portray an image of 'idealised female beauty' with clear absence of female diversity in their advertising and marketing efforts, highlighting the contrast of consumer perceptions in relation to Victoria's Secret brand identity. This had fundamentally impacted the consumer buying behaviour toward the brand.

## **KEYWORDS**

Consumer perception, brand image, brand identity, diversity, Victoria Secret, buying behaviour.

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*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” –*  
Nelson Mandela

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context and Background

The fashion industry has a major impact on the world today (KRUG, 2018). Fashion is referred to as the style of clothing and accessories worn at any given point in time by individuals from all across the world (Steele, 2018). The fashion industry is a multibillion-dollar global business dedicated to the art of creating and selling clothing (Steele, 2018). According to Steele (2018), the fashion industry is an outcome of the modern age. Editorial high fashion supermodels are carefully selected to reveal elite fashion brands clothing lines such as: Vogue, Valentino, Gucci and Victoria Secret (Helmer, 2018).

“Fashion is the armor to survive the reality of everyday life. I don’t think you could do away with it. It would be like doing away with civilization” (Cunningham, 2014).

Modeling is utilised as a categorised form of advertising within the fashion industry (Helmer, 2018). Supermodels are established influencers that are featured in magazines, catalogues, social media and on television (Helmer, 2018). For decades, the world of media has worked to create the ultimate image of what the “perfect woman” resembles (Atkinson, 2013).

The fashion industry has shifted their focus overtime from employing supermodels with a global frame of reference as a brands’ spokesmen, to iconic celebrities and digital influencers used as brand ambassadors, to promote well-known global designer fashion brands that eventually become bonafide fashion stars (Lim, 2018). Designer brands are inclined to select models with unblemished, highly youthful and visually appealing features that resonate with the beauty standards of a specific brands identity (Lim, 2018).

Society at large looks to celebrities, supermodels and influencers presented through media, in order to establish what ideal beauty standards are perceived to be (Hawkins, 2017). The fashion industry places pressure on individuals to achieve a high-level of physical beauty, and for the largest part, society is unable to meet these expectations,

since these beauty ideals do not physically make sense (Hobelman, 2016). For many, there is an unceasing struggle to be able fit that mold of perfection (Atkinson, 2013).

Victoria Secret is an illustration of a brand that employs seemingly flawless supermodels to embody their brand identity. This reinforces the apparent expectations of beauty which are unattainable for the mass population of women globally (Wentland, 2016).

“The Victoria’s Secret Angels are trained through rigorous diet and exercise to fit a certain physique. The Victoria Secret runway show does not encourage its cast to look like the healthiest version of themselves, but instead requires them to conform to a standard of beauty that is unrealistic even for the model’s themselves” (Ezemebhoya, 2017). The Victoria Secret fashion show models illustrate a perfect example of this, by selecting models according to a very specific set of guidelines, in order to portray a certain image of the brand (WOUB DIGITAL , 2017).

Considering the above statement, an increasing number of women are calling for designer fashion brands to represent versatile body female types in advertising, to reflect the true identity of women globally and counteract the incessant media messaging of the “perfect” female shape (Shy , 2015).

As a result of the beauty standards which are encouraged in and amongst the fashion industry and media at large, this study looked to the perceptions of women in South Africa about Victoria Secret, based on the identity that the brand had constructed over time, exposed through advertising communication and divergent media channels, to determine whether the Victoria Secret had influenced their desire to purchase from the brand, or not.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Fashion forms an integral part of people’s lives every day in defining themselves and other people – it is a powerful tool of influence (British Council, 2018). The fashion industry is a community that everyone wants to be a part of, on account of the seemingly “glamorous lifestyle” involved (Stevenson, 2017).

However, supermodels are often exploited in this industry, there is a suggested lack of diversity amongst the selection process of supermodels (Saltzman, 2017). Emphasis is placed on promoting an increased unhealthy lifestyle for supermodels in representing fashion brands, to build a strong brand identity through their immaculate physical features (Saltzman, 2017). Products and brands that often feature skinnier looking supermodels attract more attention (Insaan, 2013). There is an immense amount of pressure from casting directors for models to be thin (Glam Tribal, 2018).

Nowadays, it is evident that the ideal Western standards of supreme beauty are promoted throughout the fashion industry, internet, television and media (Melitauri, 2016). Western cultures have formed a very distinct view of beauty – a slender, seamless proportion with immaculate features (Beauty Undefined, 2018). Models that are seen all over the media, are what the Western cultures consider to be beautiful (Beauty Undefined, 2018). The above statement has highlighted the powerful influence that the fashion industry has on society today.

According to Melitauri (2016), this concept of beauty has been circulating the world and is embedded in the lives of most women every day, having a direct impact on their behaviour and attitudes (Melitauri, 2016).

On the other hand, South African women are diverse in nature (Wild, 2018). Their figures can range from being hour-glass to triangular or pear-shaped, which deviates from the ideal Western body type (Wild, 2018). The voluptuous figures of numerous South African women signify wealth and beauty (Ryan, 2007). Collison (2017) highlighted that, South Africa's excessive range of cultures, ethnic groups and religions has given rise to versatile beauty and fashion.

An important consideration is the definition of beauty, which tends to vary from one culture to another, and has also evolved and changed over time (Banda, 2017).

For most women in Western cultures, appearance is aligned with their self-worth which is synonymous with being thin (Banda, 2017). Banda (2017) pointed out, that South African women are generally content with their physical appearance, but as Western ideals are particularly highlighted through media channels globally, they start to view their bodies as less attractive. Society has continuously made use of direct and indirect

grips to control female's bodies in one way or another (Banda, 2017). Humanity has undermined the struggle for dignification of a women's appearance (Banda, 2017).

Consumer fashion trends have actively evolved from slender ideals toward celebrating a more natural look and acceptance of body shapes (Surino, 2017). However, there is no visible evidence of much attention being paid toward a strong movement of self-acceptance and embracing change within the Victoria's Secret marketing efforts to date and as a result, the brand has been called out on their diversity problem (Gollayan, 2017). The typical appearance of a Victoria Secret supermodel highlights the brands preference to feature tiny-figured, tall women that are predominantly from a white ethnic background (Gollayan, 2017). The brand does not capture a broad market of females which is evident in their cast of similar-featured models (Surino, 2017). Victoria's Secret clothing sizes are exceedingly tiny – the brand openly caters to a niche market of consumers (Surino, 2017).

The brand identity that Victoria Secret has constructed, insentiently celebrates rail-thin, sexy supermodels - the idealised standard of beauty that women in society have always looked up. However, it is a minor representation of the female-figure globally (Gollayan, 2017).

It is important to note, the forty-one-year old brand has continuously tried to sell a sleek and sexy idea of lingerie which has ultimately grown tired over the years (Fickenscher, 2018). The brands lack of change and growth has sparked concern, as the flawless Victoria Secret "angels" are deemed to be unrelatable to consumers (Fickenscher, 2018). The brand no longer demonstrates significance in relation to their competitors' abilities to undercut their product prices and praise diverse body positive empowerment (Fickenscher, 2018). Victoria Secret could potentially be losing their touch as a brand and even more so, their consumers (Andria, 2018).

Furthermore, this reinforced the purpose of the research paper, to uncover whether perceptions that women in South Africa formed about Victoria's Secret, coincided with the brands created identity publicly displayed through broad media platforms, and to which extent that influenced whether they were willing to purchase from the brand, or not.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The fashion industry is starting to touch on the power of representing a wide-range of beauty ideals by incorporating supermodels of different ages, sizes, race and ethnic groups, to step away from the homogeneous perception of beauty (Hunt, 2017). Despite that, diversity and inclusion continue to be a leading problem within the fashion industry based on the aesthetic ideals that designers and brands possess (Tiangco, 2018).

Victoria Secret is a brand within the fashion industry that highlights the importance of what it means to look and feel beautiful. All Victoria Secret “angels” are tall, exceptionally skinny with flawless skin, which forms part of their brand identity (Letourneau, 2015). According to Letourneau (2015), the undergarment brand has captured an ideal of perfect beauty. However, it has been noted that popular culture and trends now focus on authenticity and body positivity – a powerful trend that many of Victoria’s Secret competitors have leveraged off of (Harrington, 2017).

The argument that had started to arise, was whether or not Victoria Secret had created a brand identity that positively resonated with the perceptions and opinions women formed about the brand specifically in South Africa, and whether the brand image that women acquired about Victoria Secret affected them, or not.

For this reason, the study aimed to explore what the opinions and perceptions were of women in South Africa toward Victoria Secret, to establish whether these perceptions and opinions tied in with the brand identity. Another relevant point which needed to be answered, was whether the image that women had formed about the brand affected their decision to purchase from, or interact with the brand.

### **1.4 Research Goal and Questions**

The purpose of a research goal and questions is to identify intriguing results that will provide depth into the insights of the research study (Jansen , 2016). According to Jansen (2016), the research question becomes the beacon that guides the research in finding answers. The research question typically directs the researcher to the correct research literature and resources needed (Jansen , 2016). There are three different groups of research questions, this study lends itself to an exploratory research

question. The reason for this particular direction is due to the fact that, this study had recognised a problem that had not been comprehensively studied before (Muhammed, 2017).

#### **1.4.1 Research Goal**

Has Victoria Secret created a brand identity that resonates with the perceptions and opinions of South African women?

#### **1.4.2 Research Questions**

- What is the brand identity of Victoria Secret?
- How do South African women perceive the brand image of Victoria Secret?
- Does the brand image affect whether they are willing to purchase from Victoria Secret or not?
- Does Victoria's Secret brand identity resonate with how South African women perceive the brand?

#### **1.4.3 Research Objectives**

- To explore the brand identity of Victoria Secret.
- To explore the brand image of Victoria Secret, as perceived by South African women.
- To determine if the perceptions that South Africa women have about Victoria's Secret brand image influence whether they will purchase the brand, or not.
- To evaluate whether the Victoria Secret brand identity aligns with the consumer perception of its brand image.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework serves as a lens through which the research goal and questions are to be evaluated (Stephanie, 2018). The theories that will be investigated in this section of the study are; Aaker's brand identity model and Kapferer's brand identity prism. Each of these theories will outline different perspectives relating to brand identity and image which will essentially provide context into which theory will best support and relate to the nature of this study.

#### 2.1.1 *Aaker's Brand Identity Model*

According to Enslin (2016), Aaker's brand identity presents a business with a strategic direction that is purposeful and meaningful for a brand - one of the fundamental drivers is brand equity (Enslin , 2016). A strong brand will ultimately have a clear, meaningful brand identity – a set of different associations that a brand strategist will seek to create to drive inspiration (Aaker, 1996). Brand identity should be able to assist in establishing a relationship with customers, by constructing a value proposition that consists of functional, emotional and assertive benefits (Enslin , 2016). According to Aaker (1996), one of the core elements of brand identity, is that it intends to be seen by consumers in a specific manner, this essentially guides the brand image which is entirely based on the perceptions that consumers have about a brand (Enslin , 2016). The brand perception is in simple terms, the brand image which is always on the receiver's end (Enslin , 2016). A brand image can be transformed over time, whereas the brand identity exemplifies the extended lasting value of the brand, unless otherwise transformed in time (Enslin , 2016).

Aaker (1996), has created a model centred around brand identity with four different perspectives:

- Brand as a product: The product is a core thrust within the brand identity, and should be linked to attributes that will have a vital influence on the brand identity, as they are linked to the user's requirements of the products experience (Aaker, 1996).

- Brand as an organisation: The brand manager must shift the perspective from the product to the organisation's attributes. The attributes include; customer relationship management, innovation, perceived quality, visibility and poise - adding to the value proposition and the relationships with customers (Aaker, 1996).
- Brand as a person: As a person, a brand should be expressed as having a unique personality, through the careful construction of self-expressive benefits that will essentially drive customers to express their own personalities (Aaker, 1996).
- Brand as a symbol: A brand's symbol captures everything that the brand represents. A strong brand symbol can create an essential, leading role in a brand strategy (Aaker, 1996).

### **2.1.2 Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism**

On the other hand, Kapferer (2012) maintains that a brand identity prism was used to create a detailed brand identity for a value fashion brand. The brand identity prism distinguishes a sender and recipient side, as well as an externalisation and internalisation side (Kapferer, 2012). The six different identity facets explain the various intangible and tangible characteristics of the brand which need to be carefully integrated and aligned to contribute to core of the brand essence (Inkbot Design, 2017). The fundamental purpose of the brand identity prism is to create an identical reflection of the brand identity and brand image, and the split between the brand identity and brand image is where the actual brand is delivered – the ideal brand truth (Inkbot Design, 2017).

According to Kapferer (2012) the six facets of the identity prism include;

- Physique: The tangible facets that communicates physical specifications such as; colour and brand quality (Kapferer, 2012).
- Personality: An internal intangible facet which form the character and soul of the brand (Kapferer, 2012).
- Culture: The intangible facets that integrate the brand into the business which is important in identifying different brands (Kapferer, 2012).

- Relationship: The exterior facets of tangible and intangible elements that describes the behaviour that identifies the brand – how customers connect to the brand (Kapferer, 2012).
- Reflection: The external intangible facets that reflect how customers hope to be seen once they have used the brand – an outward mirror (Kapferer, 2012).
- Self-image: The external intangible facets that reflect the customers attitudes toward the brand. The inner feelings that connect with the brand on an inner personal level - and inward mirror (Kapferer, 2012).

Kapferer (2012) calls for us to remember that a brand communicates to one's self-image. A brand is perceived by the way that it communicates, and the consumers that choose to consume the brand believe it will enhance their self-image. Kapferer (2012) brand identity prism theory agrees with the notion of this study, as the six unique elements aim to create a careful alignment that form the brand identity which essentially seeks to create a reflection of what the brand image will be perceived as by consumers. Furthermore, Kapferer's brand identity prism emphasises the importance of the theories link to this research paper, as the study aims to gain a broad understanding of consumers perceptions and opinions toward Victoria Secret in relation to the brands established brand identity, in order to determine if there is a link between the brand's image and identity. The intention of the link, is to determine whether South African women are willing to purchase from the brand, or not.

## **2.2 Review of Literature**

Designer luxury brands use to be able to control the way that society dressed, but as a result of the rise in online and digital shopping platforms - smaller boutique stores and designer brands are no longer as relevant (McIntosh, 2017).

Luxury designer fashion are starting to shift their advertising to different digital platforms (Gallagher, 2017). The modern world possesses great shifts and changes in marketing and advertising and luxury brands are starting to realise without the use of social media and heavy reliance on traditional platforms, their competitors will get ahead of the game (Cull, 2018).

Social media platforms have cultivated a consumer culture that seeks fast paced fashion (Collectively , 2017). Luxury fashion brands has started to utilise social media to employ influencers that will represent their brands in creating leading strategies, to defeat their competition in a challenging, modern shopper world (Collectively , 2017). It has also been understood, that fashion brands are saving costs through social media exposure, ultimately providing brands with the ability to reach mass audiences rapidly and more directly, which is increasingly effective and inexpensive (Gallagher, 2017). Global fashion organisations are shifting their attention onto consumers' needs by making personalisation a priority to increase sales and loyalty (Scanaro, 2018).

Advertising is such a powerful mechanism that the fashion industry takes advantage of. There is a very distinctive impact that the exposure of modern fashion advertising campaigns have on people, and that growing effect cannot be ignored (Sugget, 2018).The fashion industry continues to use advertising that objectifies the use of women in semi-naked advertising campaigns (Sugget, 2018). Erotic and sexual overtones that are flooding the fashion industries advertising campaigns today which can be dated back to the 1960's, this is where the sexual revolution challenged traditional norms and behaviour, roles were re-outlined in interpersonal relationships (Young, 2018).

For the first time, there is a growing demand for transparency to fully embrace diversity and empower individuals in the fashion industry (Dry, 2017). According to Dry (2017), the public seeks for designer brands and modelling agencies to be more transparent in their conduct and identity to resonate with their followers by relying on their core ability to create fashion, instead of trying to exploit their brands.

Interestingly, there are signs of diversity in fashion industry permitting people of colour, plus-size females, transgender women and models that do not form part of the ideal industry image of what a supermodel is supposed to look like (Givan, 2017). The fashion industry argues to have shifted toward taking a stride in embracing diversity, yet there is a minor representation of this arising trend within the industry (Mirza, 2017). According to Mirza (2017), fashion designer brands are still concerned with what they believe sells, and at no cost are they willing to tarnish their existing brand image. What in actual fact is happening with the absence of diversity at the forefront

of fashion is an accumulation of discontentment amid society, most notably the problem of 'tokenism' (Mirza, 2017).

For a long time, fashion advertising has shaped the type of women that hardly exist within society (Sugget, 2018). The industry continues indoctrinate a belief into society that a women's physical appearance is her most important asset (Young, 2018).

Stereotypical images of what models are expected to look like, stems back to the 1960's (Hart, 2015). Hart (2015) pointed out, that the ideal look was a flawless face, girlish look and an androgynously thin figure. A big influencer was Twiggy – demonstrating a new idea of women that are remarkably slender and petite (Hart, 2015). The clothing in the 1960's supported this look and the fashion industry met the demands of clothing for women with smaller busts and slimmer hips (Hart, 2015). In the 1980's the Amazonian model appearance saw a rise globally which consisted of; tall, elegant, long-legged women that gave way to a new feminine ideal (Hart, 2015). This supermodel trend has extended up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Hart, 2015). Supermodels for example; Giselle Bundchen have demarcated the image of beauty – an era of women with visible toned-bodies, and spotless skin (Hart, 2015). The 21<sup>st</sup> century women aspire to walk in the footsteps of an idealised flawless supermodel like Giselle Bundchen – a former Victoria Secret Model (Hart, 2015).

The Western ideals of beauty are approving a certain standard of thinness that has never before existed (Zeilinger, 2015). Zeilinger (2015) stated, that this culture is slowly starting to influence global cultures, causing a rise in body dissatisfaction globally. Western conventions of attractiveness have turned into the norm within society, envisioning a picture-perfect white female to set the beauty standard for all women around the world (Wholihan, 2016).

On the contrary, stick-thin models are not the general mean within the South African fashion industry – most South African women would not fit the European model standard (Ndlovu, 2011). In South Africa women now face tense external pressure to be tremendously thin as the body type of women in South Africa differs to the average size of women in Europe (Ryan, 2007). The vast majority of women in South Africa do not aspire to look skinny, it exerts an image of poverty and misfortune (Ryan, 2007). Past generations demonstrate a standard body frame of a South Africa women that is

predominantly well-rounded and curvy, but as a result of Western influences of beauty ideals, women in South Africa are caught between two opposing images of what it sincerely means to be beautiful (Ryan, 2007).

A quintessential illustration of a Western beauty convention brand is Victoria Secret. Victoria Secret affirms a narrow range of body types and skin tones which is seen in their marketing efforts and product line (Feldman, 2017). It has been noted that in the past, Victoria Secret has used more curvaceous models but as time progressed their models have become thinner (Feldman, 2017). According to Feldman (2017), the brand directs marketing efforts at women, thus a lesser concern regarding men and what they find attractive, but more the idealised perception of what beauty means to women globally. Victoria Secret has been slated for its' lack of diversity in advertising and runway shows, which entirely consists of rail-thin models (Hanbury, 2018).

Body positive and diverse designer fashion lingerie brands globally are gaining market share over the once market leader Victoria Secret, due to their lack of growth in supporting female diversity (Hanbury, 2018). Victoria Secret has been accused on social ceaselessly regarding the lack of race and body variety within their brand (Hudson , 2017). The CEO of the brand appears to overlook this concern (Harrington, 2017).

In spite of this, Victoria's Secret identifies itself as a world-class designer lingerie brand, well-known globally for exquisite products (Victoria's Secret, 2018). The designer fashion lingerie market has been conquered by their products for consumers that have established an interest in fleshly, classy lingerie (Victoria's Secret, 2018). The Victoria Secret name is synonymous with femininity and beauty, consumers are known to love their stores and believe that customers thrive based on the way that the brand makes them feel (Victoria's Secret, 2018).

The above literature calls for us to recognise, that Victoria's Secret brand image and brand identity are starting to display indisputable signs of contrasting perspectives.

Brand identity lies in the complete experience that the brand aims to offer to its consumers - the core foundation of what a brand truly stands for (Wu, 2013). A brand

that has the ability to offer an outstanding overall experience, has a direct impact on the relationship facet of the brand's image creation (Wu, 2013).

Everything the brand wants to be perceived as in the eyes of the public, is the brand's identity (Murphy, 2009). In contrast to the brand identity, lies the brand image (Murphy, 2009). The brand image is how consumers and the public view the brand, along with the feelings that the brand evokes in their minds (Murphy, 2009). The brand image is built upon the experience a customer may or may not encounter with the brand.

The literature of this study considers that South African women do not predominantly fit the stereotypical mould of what idealised beauty encapsulates, as specified by Victoria Secret. On that account, this study intends to explore the perceptions (which form part of the brand image) that women in South Africa have toward Victoria Secret based on the brand's identity, to ascertain whether that has an effect on their inclination to purchase from the brand, or not.

## **2.3 Conceptualisation of Key Concepts**

### **2.3.1 *Brand Image***

Brand image is the perception about the brand, reflected through brand associations that are held in the mind of the consumer (Keller, 2002). The brand image is an outline of the beliefs, opinions and impressions that consumers have about a specific brand (Pahwa, 2017). Consumers create a perception of a brand based on a variety of factors; word of mouth, social media presence, advertising efforts and most importantly, small details that lie in each point of contact with current and potential consumers (Thimothy, 2016).

Furthermore, the brand image is the most influential factor and will determine if the brand makes sales (Bhasin, 2018). Every brand tries to create a brand image that will align with the way that the brand wants to be seen by consumers (Bhasin, 2018). Bhasin (2018) pointed out, that having a strong brand image is directly linked to consumer buying behaviour. Therefore, this key concept has a fundamental link to the study in uncovering the perceptions of female consumers in South Africa toward Victoria Secret which ultimately determines what the brand's image is.

### **2.3.2 Brand Identity**

Brand identity is the complete value offering that the aims to offer to potential and current consumers, consisting of; features, benefits, attributes, quality, performance, service as well as the worth that the brand acquires (Murphy, 2009). According to Murphy (2009), a strong brand identity helps consumers differentiate a brand's offering from its competitors, which can essentially have a positive influence on consumers purchasing decisions, impacting the probability of the brand. Additionally, it is how the wants to be perceived by the consumers (Pahwa, 2017).

Taking a closer look at Victoria's Secret brand identity; it is a brand that aims to encourage women to feel bold, sexy and independent (Chintamani, 2018). The brand was founded in 1977, and is considered to be the largest luxury lingerie retailer in America. The brand is bright, playful and young (Chintamani, 2018). According to Chintamani (2018), putting customers first and creating a leading brand through passion, is their ultimate drive. Victoria Secret strongly believes in a culture of inclusion, which makes them powerful in providing value to all of their stakeholders (Chintamani, 2018). The supermodels are used to captivate the audience through their advertising, presenting their exclusive range of high-end female products (Chintamani, 2018). The brands products are specifically manufactured to create a sense of comfort, at an affordable price range (Chintamani, 2018).

The key concept "brand identity" is brought into play, as there is a strong relationship between a brand's image and identity in establishing organisational success, as previously mentioned. This study aims to explore whether the brand identity and the brand image of Victoria Secret resonate with one another.

### **2.3.3 Consumer Perception**

Consumer perception refers to the progression by which the consumer will first choose, then organise and interpret information, in order to generate a significant picture of the brand (MBASchool, 2011). There are three different stages in a consumer's perception namely; exposure, attention and interpretation (MBASchool, 2011). Each person perceives one or the same product, or brand in a different way,

having the potential to deviate from the way in which the brand had intended initially (Recklies, 2015).

The consumer perception contributes to the brand image of Victoria Secret; what the consumers perceive about the brand is directly filtered into the image that consumers hold to be true about the brand.

#### **2.3.4 *Victoria Secret***

This research literature examines the designer fashion industry as a whole. However, the study specifically focuses on Victoria Secret to establish the brand's identity and brand image, as well as the perceptions and opinions that female consumers in South Africa have concerning the brand.

Victoria Secret brand started in 1977 (Victoria's Secret, 2018). Since then, the brand has grown extensively to become the market leading, specialty retailer that focuses on designer lingerie and beauty products globally. (Victoria's Secret, 2018). The brand consists of modern fashion-inspired items, fragrances and make-up products advertised through the use of celebrity supermodels that represent the brand in world-famous runway shows (Victoria's Secret, 2018). Victoria Secret embodies the world of luxury in thousands of stores worldwide (Victoria's Secret, 2018). Victoria Secret aims to promote high quality and empowerment through their product range (Victoria's Secret, 2018). Chintamani (2018) expressed that, the trendy, high-end brand creates colourful and vibrant products that are intended to fit consumers different body shapes comfortably.

#### **2.3.5 *Diversity***

Diversity can be referred to as any dimension used to differentiate individuals and groups from one another (Global Diversity Practice, 2018). According to Global Diversity Practice (2018), the term diversity involves empowering all people by respecting and appreciating the characteristics that make them different, such as; age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and physical disparities

This study takes a keen look at the key concept "diversity" within the fashion industry. The lack of representation has been an obstacle within the world of fashion, and most

fashion brands have yet to overcome this hindrance (Najjar, 2018). It is undoubtedly one of the biggest problems that the industry faces – neglecting the different demographics of models to try create a very specific look which ties into the “ideal beauty standard”, fundamentally posing a dire impact on individuals in society through advertising and media channels (Rika, 2017).

The key concept diversity, goes even further to examine its connection to Victoria Secret. The brand has been called out numerous times in selecting models for their campaigns and annual fashion show that express minor signs or diversity, specifically with regard to race and body type (Levinson, 2017).

### **2.3.6 *Buying Behaviour***

Customer buying behaviour is a journey a customer might take before investing in a brand, purchasing a product or service (Johnston, 2016). There are many different reasons that influence how, when, where and why consumers purchase which include some of the following factors; consumers purchase from a brand based on whether their values and beliefs align with a brand, possible social status, income, perceptions and attitudes toward a brand (Bhasin, 2018).

This key concept forms an essential part of this study to decipher if the brand image of consumer perceptions affects their purchasing behaviour toward the Victoria Secret brand.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is employed to implement a particular way of studying phenomena that is significant to the specified field of study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). It is important to be able to identify as a researcher what can be changed, as that often determines the kinds of questions that are considered worthwhile for the investigation and what kinds of processes are needed for the answers to be acceptable (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

When researchers pursue certain methods and processes of conduct for research, problems can occur (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). According to du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), at some point inconsistencies can result in a crisis regarding the specific discipline being studied. A revolution then takes place that results in change, called a paradigm shift (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). When a paradigm shift is incurred the researcher needs to conduct research in a new way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This study was focused on an Interpretivist paradigm.

##### **3.1.1 Interpretivist Paradigm**

Qualitative research in social sciences utilises the interpretivism approach (Reading Craze, 2017). Interpretivists believe in the idea that human behaviours have several layers and cannot be proven by pre-defined probability models (Reading Craze, 2017). According to (Reading Craze, 2017), it depends on a particular situation and environmental impacts other than genes. Human behaviour is influenced by a number of different factors that tend to be subjective in nature (Reading Craze, 2017). Therefore, interpretivists believe in analysing human behaviour in a normal “everyday life” setting, rather than in a controlled space (Reading Craze, 2017).

As this research paper looked to an exploration of human behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and opinions regarding a luxury designer fashion brand - it is important to mention, that an interpretivist paradigm was well-aligned to the nature of the study, through the use of qualitative research.

There are different positions linked to interpretivism:

- The epistemological position of interpretivism

According to this approach, individuals cannot be disconnected from the knowledge that they possess therefore, there is a distinctive link between the researcher and the subject of research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). According to Maree (2016), this stance is more subjective, the role is a lot more participative often disregarding traditional methods of natural science.

- The ontological position of interpretivism

Interpretivists envision reality as a social construction which is entirely dependent on the meanings that are assigned to each individual experience and interaction with people (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). To understand how meaning from within this array, the world needs to be entered from their perspective and observed from the inside (Maree & Pietersen, 2016).

- The metatheatrical position of interpretivism

This tradition goes on to describe an interprets manners, by stating that people live in a certain context and conduct their daily lives in a certain way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

- The methodological position of interpretivism

Interpretivism takes a look at people's subjective interactions, based on how people create the social world by sharing various ideas and how they interact with each other (Nieuwenhuis, 2017).

- The axiological position of interpretivism

Interpretivists assert that there is value in the complex understanding of unique realities (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Interpretivists do not attempt to create value-free research but instead, openly converse about the values that shape their research which comprise of their individual unique interpretations and opinions of participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

This study specifically looked at the opinions and perceptions of diverse women in South Africa with unique physical attributes, that are not particularly aligned with the ideal bodily standard of Western women - most of these 'idealised' women are called to represent Victoria Secret as brand ambassadors. Furthermore, this study was exceedingly unique in nature, there was very little prior research conducted with regard to importance and value of individual perceptions and opinions of women regarding Victoria Secret from a South African perspective. This highlighted the significance of the study using an axiological position of interpretivism.

### **3.2 Methodological Approach**

It is important to identify that there are two different methodological approaches in research; a qualitative or a quantitative approach. Each of these approaches have the ability to serve entirely different purposes (Dovetail, 2018).

Qualitative research is frequently used for explorative purposes, to gain a thorough understanding of underlying ideas, reasoning, opinions and motivations (Dovetail, 2018). According to Dovetail (2018), qualitative research provides insight into a problem or the development of ideas. The researcher focuses more on a humanistic angle and has the ability to gain considerably richer information by understanding the intent behind certain actions (Dovetail, 2018).

Whereas, quantitative research aims to quantify a problem through the use of numerical data that can be transformed into functioning statistics (Dovetail, 2018). Quantitative research measures data to formulate facts and uncover certain patterns within research (Dovetail, 2018).

On that account, it is important to clarify that this research paper specifically considered a qualitative approach. As previously mentioned, this study aimed to better understand and explore the opinions and perceptions of women in South Africa toward Victoria Secret. This could only be obtained through the use of qualitative research as there was no statistical relevance that would fundamentally contribute to the nature of this study. This research paper was concerned with obtaining a rich understanding of individuals thoughts and feelings toward Victoria Secret through a qualitative research approach.

Within qualitative research there are three different designs namely; exploratory, descriptive and causal research.

Exploratory research intends to become familiar with a subject which has not yet clearly been identified (Jackson, 2018). The main objective of exploratory research is to identify key issues and variables to accumulate a deeper knowledge of phenomenon, a group of people or a social setting (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). It is not used to draw exact conclusions based on a lack of statistical strength however, it assists the research in establishing why and how certain phenomena occurs (Jackson, 2018). Nieuwenhuis (2016) stated that, exploratory studies tend to be rather inductive in nature, working largely with a developing theoretical framework instead of an established theory.

Within descriptive research, the researcher will usually attempt to describe certain groups of people or phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Descriptive research is primarily involved with finding answers to “what” questions that have a vital role to play in educational research (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

Causal research is an investigation into the extent and nature of a cause and effect relationship (MBASchool, 2011). It seeks to establish the impact of a dependent variable change in relation to variations of an independent variable (MBASchool, 2011). The underlying cause of behaviour is vital to understand (MBASchool, 2011).

Based on a thorough understanding of all three designs, explorative research agreed best with the nature of the study in understanding and exploring the perceptions of female consumers in South Africa. The use of an exploratory research design through an axiological position of interpretivism, allowed for a genuine understanding into the insights of various South Africa women regarding Victoria Secret. Accordingly, this study argued that the interpretivist paradigm agreed with an explorative research approach, which was based entirely on the researchers understanding of how to uncover the unique interpretations and opinions of participants through primary research, linked to Victoria Secret.

### **3.3 Population and Sampling**

A sample is a subdivision of the population at hand (Exploarable, 2018). The sample arises from the inability of researchers to test each individual in a targeted population (Exploarable, 2018). A population often consists of too many people to conveniently study, therefore an investigation is limited to one or more samples drawn from the population (Exploarable, 2018).

#### **3.3.1 Population**

In terms of qualitative research, the population elements are not based on random selection methods (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Within a population there is a target population which is further narrowed down into the accessible population for the study (Exploarable, 2018).

A target population is made up of the entire group of individuals to which the researcher is interested in generalising conclusions from (Validated, 2014). Thus, the target population which was observed and analysed throughout this research study included; dissimilar groups of female consumers that reside in South Africa, familiar with the Victoria Secret brand.

The accessible population can be described as the population which a researcher has the capability of applying their conclusions in research to (Validated, 2014). The accessible population for this study consisted of; women that reside in the East of Pretoria primarily in the Brooklyn and Menlyn region between the ages of 18-25, that had come into contact with Victoria Secret marketing communication or, had purchased from Victoria Secret previously. It was fundamental for this explicit population of women to form part of a diverse group of South African females, in order to assist in truly understanding and establishing ground-breaking insight into the perceptions and opinions that these women held concerning Victoria Secret.

#### **3.3.2 Sampling**

There are two predominant sampling methods that are used in research namely; probability and non-probability methods (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). A probability sampling method tends to be based on a philosophy of randomness and probability

theory, whereas non-probability methods are not random at all (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Probability sampling is linked to quantitative research. Consequently, this study integrated a non-probability sampling method based off a qualitative research method.

Within non-probability sampling, random selection does not occur as a result of it being hazardous to draw random conclusions about a population potentially generating inconclusive results (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). There are a number of non-probability sampling techniques which can be explored. However, this research study strongly agreed with a snowball sampling technique that effectively contributed to the accuracy of the research findings (McLeod, 2014). Snowball sampling is utilised when the characteristics and traits of the sample participants are challenging to find (Research Methodology, 2018). In other words, the method is primarily based off of identifying participants that will contribute to the accuracy of the research, and utilising them for referrals of participants that will align with the characteristics needed for the research study (Research Methodology, 2018). The sample that was utilised for this study as mentioned before, were Gauteng-based female consumers that expressed diverse characteristics, typically living in the East of Pretoria between the ages of 18 and 25 that had come into contact with any of Victoria's Secret advertising campaigns or, had purchased from the brand previously.

Victoria Secret is intentionally targeted at a younger, vibrant market of diverse female consumers (Parsley, 2012). According to Parsley (2012), the brand is well-known for their extensive product line that typically inspires young middle, to higher-class women. Hence, the sample group of young South African women that were interviewed, were well-aligned to the true nature of the intended research. Victoria's Secret social media presence can be seen as a marketing campaign alone (Buonomo, 2017). The brand uses a number of platforms to actively engage with their consumers such as; Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook and Snapchat (Buonomo, 2017). The platforms that Victoria Secret has utilised on social media has provided consumers direct access to the brand and allowed for personal interaction (Buonomo, 2017). The marketing campaigns themselves, have gone viral on social media which has generated an exhilarating sense of entertainment for the brands followers collaborating with influencer celebrities and models (Buonomo, 2017). Having said this, the sample group of female participants for this study were predominately

“Generation Z” and “Millennial” consumers; constantly exposed to new trends and influencers on social media, spending most of their time interacting with brands on Facebook and Instagram (Kleinschmit , 2015). This group of consumers high-level of interaction on social media, validated the idea that each of the participants would have caught a glimpse of the brands content in some shape or form online.

Therefore, in order to gain a well-rounded perspective of the phenomenon of this study, a selection of both the “Generation Z and “Millennials” had been used within the sample group.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews. This involves a formal interview which is conducted amongst the interviewer and the participant whereby, the interviewer follows a structure of several predetermined questions but has the option during the interview process to probe if the situation calls for it (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The reason for utilising in-depth interviews, is that it enables the researcher to gain valuable individual information regarding several topics of interest that can be obtained through a personal conversation which would not be possible through the use of a questionnaire or a survey (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews allow for all questions to be carefully prepared before the interview process takes place – this allows for participants to prepare for the interview process beforehand (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).Keller (2018) explains that, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to have the freedom of expressing their views on their own terms. Having said this, this research paper solely relied on the sincere holistic perspectives of respondents, to be able to effectively contribute to the knowledge of this study.

Each of the interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants in a private setting which allowed for the participants to openly express their opinions, which had paved the way for in-depth data to be collected and a comprehensive understanding of the participants responses were gained. Probing took place when deemed necessary, regarding clear explanations to responses. Careful attention was paid to the body language and facial expression of participants, along with visual aids which

were used to support the interviewer in the interview process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). It was predetermined that ten different participants would be interviewed. However, data was gathered until the point at which theoretical saturation was considered reached. Theoretical saturation is referred to the instant where all primary alternatives have been considered and ultimately integrated into the developing theory (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Finally, nine participants were interviewed. The purpose of the interview process was to essentially gather expressive and expansive data for real insight to emerge into the female consumers opinions of the brand, in order to establish whether their perceptions of the brand image aligned with the brands identity. More so, whether or not, that effected their reason to want to purchase from the brand.

### **3.5 Procedure of Data Collection**

Each of the semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, as previously mentioned. Visual imagery - which included video and image content, was utilised to support the interviewer's stance, with respect to research study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews were all conducted in English. The interviews were all video and voice recorded, to later transcribe for the data analysis portion of the study.

The Victoria Secret brand was carefully studied within this research report. The purpose was ultimately to gain an insightful understanding of perceptions of female consumers in South Africa toward the brand, based on image the brand had portrayed through various advertising communication and campaigns. The opening interview discussion started with general questions relating to beauty, distinct first impressions of the brand and associations linked to Victoria Secret before any visual content was introduced. Followed by this, a "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial 2018" was shown to the participants to stimulate a greater response regarding the advertising campaign. Based on this, questions regarding the brands culture, personality and characteristics were discussed in depth. Another video was shown to the participants from a 'behind the scenes' perspective of the brand labelled "Making of an Angel". Once the video was revealed, several discussions took place regarding how the brand seemed to be portraying itself through media, what the brand truly stood for, as well as the brands influence on the participants. Lastly, an image of one Victoria's Secret campaigns were shown to participants marked, "The Victoria Secret Strapless Bra Campaign" to decipher what in particular had stood out to participants in the image.

Furthermore, it was also crucial to ascertain based the content that participants had seen up until that point in the interview, whether the brand had appealed to them more, or less. Their ability to connect with the brand, or lack thereof, ultimately caused an effect on the last question of the interview - whether participants would, or would not be inclined to purchase from the brand after viewing all of the visual content within the interview, in conjunction to their prior interactions with the brand.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction to the Data Analysis Methods**

This research was based on an axiological position through an interpretivist paradigm. This complete intention of the study was to be able to openly communicate the values, unique interpretations and opinions of individuals which then shaped the structure and outcome of the research. The data analysis method which had been utilised for this study was thematic analysis. It is important to note that, thematic analysis involves analysing text through the process of data reduction by identifying different themes within the transcript (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). It is a flexible data analysis method which contains six different steps namely; (1) Familiarisation of data, (2) Generating codes, (3) Searching for themes, (4) Reviewing the different themes, (5) Defining and naming the themes, (6) Producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This data analysis method was selected to obtain insight into the data collected, which allowed for patterns and themes to emerge. Thus, a deeper understanding of consumers opinions and views were acquired without a predetermination of the researcher.

Therefore, the themes that had emerged from the data collected were based on the interviews conducted. The themes were credible in nature, from which valid findings had arisen, and therefrom assumptions had been made. Furthermore, the second phase that took place was coding. Nine participant interviews were conducted and carefully analysed by firstly applying an open coding method to the data. All of the transcripts were read and carefully examined in order to gain an overall understanding of the text, to identify concepts that were then grouped into bigger concepts (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). Axial coding was then applied to the transcripts once the concepts were clearly understood, to highlight the relationships of the different concepts across categories - confirming prominent themes that continuously resurfaced when analysing and exploring the relationship between the different transcripts. This accurately represented the participants' responses throughout the different interview (refer to Annexure 4 for participant transcripts).

Participants were at no point referred to by their names, to ensure their anonymity and to uphold confidentiality within the interviews. For this reason, each of the participants

had been coded according to their interviews; participant 1 = P1, participant 2 = P2, participant 3 = P3, etc. (Refer to Addendum 2 for participant code list).

## **4.2 Participants**

The research participants formed an integral part of this research, particularly due to the fact that the participants had a relevant understanding of the Victoria Secret brand, explored through their willingness to contribute toward the study. This would not have been possible without their inclination to contribute to the nature of the study. Furthermore, the sampling method which was employed to conduct the interviews was a snowball sampling method, as the research of interest consisted of an interconnected group of individuals (Maree & Pietersen, 2018). The participants that were interviewed were all females between the ages of 18 and 25 years old that typically reside in the East of Pretoria, and have come into contact with the Victoria Secret, or had previously purchased from the brand. In total, nine participants took part in this study with semi-structured interviews being the appropriate method of data collection selected. The interviews ranged from between twenty-one to forty-five minutes, conducted in a private setting.

## **4.3 Themes**

Through the process of carefully analysing each of the nine different transcripts, there were seven predominant themes that arose namely; buying behaviour, brand association, brand culture, diversity, beauty standards, self-image and sexualisation. In this section, each of the themes will be defined and discussed in detail in accordance to the primary research which was conducted and analysed.

### **4.3.1 Brand Association**

The theme 'brand association; stemmed from the opinions that participants stereotypically linked to the Victoria Secret brand. Brand associations are images and symbols associated with a brand (Juneja, 2018). According to Juneja (2018), it involves relating perceived qualities of a brand to a known entity. Brand association can ultimately be anything that is deeply-instilled in the customers mind about the brand (Juneja, 2018).

“...models with good bodies to be honest” – P1

Considering the Victoria Secret brand, only two of the nine participants thought of the brands products when the brand name “Victoria Secret” was mentioned, the remainder of participants focused on the look of the brand’s supermodels, that portrayed the brands image. P4 said that the first thing that came to mind when thinking about Victoria Secret was, “Lingerie”. In contrast to P3 that mentioned, “very skinny girls” when asked the same question. Most of participants spoke about to the Victoria Secret supermodels and their physical appearance’s when speak about then brand, this directly tied into the participants associations of the brand.

Question four discussed the personality and characteristics of the brand. Kapferer’s brand identity prism suggests that personality reveals the honest character of the brand (Kapferer, 2012). P9’s answer to question four, when asked what the brands personality would be like was, “Kind of like a Barbie Doll. It’s like uhm...very Barbie, I don’t know how to explain it but like plastic and fake. That’s basically what I see when I see Victoria Secret, it is very fake, shiny and put on”. This is naturally a very strong negative brand association that related to the brands personality. Additionally, P6 mentioned, “...you associate it with the unattainable lifestyle. It is like the person that lives the very perfect ideal”. P8 stated, “a young, blonde female with very long legs and uhm...a perfect body” and P3 stipulated, “...I would not say they are in promotion of the female body form”. However, it is interesting to note that P2’s opinion contrasted to most of the participants by mentioning, “...I’d say characteristics wise, the person would be very confident, outgoing, fun”. Majority of the brand associations identified throughout primary research regarding Victoria Secret seemed to be undesirable, yet three of the participants associated the brand with more positive characteristics.

Therefore, when referring back to previous literature within this study, it was mentioned that the brand identity is rooted in the way that the brand wants to be perceived by the public (Murphy, 2009). The brand image is how consumers and the public view the brand, along with the feelings that the brand evokes in their minds (Murphy, 2009). The brand can only be perceived in a positive manner when the correct associations are linked to the brand (Murphy, 2009).

#### **4.3.2 Brand Culture**

Brand culture can be referred to as the culture a company cultivates to be able to powerfully, competitively and consistently deliver to its target audience (Somma, 2017). Somma (2017) pointed out that, brand culture extends to as far as being an expression of the people who work for the brand. The challenge arises when, what the brand stands for does not resonate with the people working for the brand and what they do thus, creating a brand culture is a powerful tool within an organisation (Somma, 2017).

“...that is not the first thing I see. I see the girls, which is all Victoria Secret is about, they promote the girls more than the actual product” – P9

The Victoria Secret angels have been described as role models for their wholesome image (Alexander , 2014). It is interesting to note that Alexander (2014) also mentioned, the brand does not really sell underwear but rather an idealised image of women to flaunt the sexy, submissive nature of the women – that promotes the brands desirable world of fun.

This theme emerged close to the beginning of the interview process when respondents viewed the “Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial 2018”, and were asked to elaborate on the atmosphere and culture of the brand, portrayed through the video content. The commercial was well received by participants. However, there was a pattern that emerged from the responses that the advertising promoted an unobtainable lifestyle the brand aimed to sell. The models in the advertising were said to have fun and portray confidence, but seemed rather unnatural. P1 stated, “everything just looks so perfect...I think they have pretty much one type of women they use”. P4 went on to explain that, “...it is almost like discriminatory. I guess what they trying for is feminism, like having fun with girls, but it almost comes across as sexist”. P3 expressed, “...I mean those are clearly women but they are portrayed as girls, sorting of taking the maturity away from them”. However, it was interesting that P5 pointed out, “I think their culture always tries to make people look like are enjoying themselves and that they are confident. Uhm...and ya just carefree”.

Kapferer (2012), refers to culture as the values that the brands target audience can relate to, and it appeals to them. Naturally, a lot of strong brand cultural assets that emerged included; fun, confidence and playfulness when looking at the participant interviews but, it had also been noted that participants mentioned the brand did not promote a culture of inclusivity and women were frequently sexualised within the brand. When referring back to the previous literature, there was emphasis placed on the idea that the Victoria Secret brand portrayed themselves to be a sophisticated, sexy and powerful brand that was desired globally. However, the brand has been slated for its' lack of diversity – Victoria's Secret constant disregard for female variety in advertising campaigns and runway shows was realised in the brand's culture (Hanbury, 2018).

#### **4.3.3 Diversity**

The concept of diversity embodies respect and acceptance (QCC, 2018). QCC (2018) stated that, diversity means understanding that each person is individual and their differences should be recognised as such. Diversity stems from the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, status and religious beliefs etc. (QCC, 2018). Diversity is about understanding each person, accepting and embracing the rich extent of diversity that is contained within every person (QCC, 2018).

Diversity was a reoccurring theme throughout the primary research process. The theme arose repeatedly throughout different questions within the interviews. Each of the participants touched on revealing aspects of this theme. However, based on personal experiences the participants brought elements of race and body types, into the discussion.

"...they represent a really small portion of women out there" – P3

P1 referred to all of the Victoria Secret content discussed in the interview and proposed that, "...they should use, I don't know, different types of people, different types of cultures – most of the girls are white". In addition to this P2 stated, "I kind of feel like the kind of profile that they are going for is still a certain type, it is not open to any women...they are looking for that one type of women". P4 highlighted, "...if you are fuller-figured they actually do not operate for you". When viewing the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial 2018", P4 also mentioned, "I think in the bunch of

ten girls there, was probably two black girls but there's no Asians, no Indians, there's no racial equality there. And there is also no body difference". After P5 examined the "Making of an Angel" video, she voiced her opinion about the Victoria Secret brand in its' earlier days, "I feel like the body shapes were a lot more diverse then it is now. Like they weren't as skinny as they are now...I feel like their brand has changed a little bit in that sense, because they use to encourage more diversity amongst women's body shapes now they don't anymore". It was fascinating to hear P8's opinion concerning why the brand appealed to her less after viewing all of the content and went on to explain, "...I feel that if I had to wear one of their products I wouldn't look as good, because they haven't shown me what somebody my size – who is a bit short and a little bit chubbier would look like. So, if I had to see that person would look good, I'd feel more confident in buying that brand". P8 went on later in the interview process to explain when asked if Victoria Secret was a brand that honestly represented who women were all over the world, "...not everyone looks the same and the brand portrays one image of how women look". P9 had recognised the brands attempt in introducing some form of diversity however, mentioned that the brand did not cater to race as much as it should have – specifically for a big organisation such as Victoria Secret.

Physique is one of the strongest elements within Kapferer's brand identity prism, which underlines the physical characteristics of a brand (Kapferer, 2012). The role is to shape and outline the different ideas and values behind the brands name and which visual features a brand will have (Kapferer, 2012). The physique element of Kapferer's brand identity prism tied powerfully into the theme, diversity. P9 mentioned, "...basically they are just showing you, you have to be a barbie to make it or be beautiful in life". P5 also elaborated on the fact that all the Victoria Secret models were, "...obviously very beautiful, but ya they are very skinny and the look of a lot of them is not extremely diverse". It is through the physique element that a brand can try to create an image that resonates with the perceptions that people have of the brand (Kapferer, 2012). In this case, most of the participants appeared to feel strongly about the fact that Victoria Secret did not represent a great level of inclusivity as a brand, having a specific visual brand image that did not cater to the bulk of women globally. Previous literature stressed, Victoria Secret has faced an immense problem regarding their lack of cultural diversity in the fashion Industry, alienating some of their most prominent clients as a result of their lack of inclusivity as a brand (Harrington, 2017).

#### **4.3.4 Beauty Standards**

The concept of beauty is highly controversial however, each individual in the world has a perspective on what beauty means, and each culture defines beauty in a different way (Rajvanshi, 2015). Society sets the beauty standards which become the ideals that women internationally strive to meet thus, industries that include; fashion, make-up and fitness thrive, because women look up to these industries and spend extensive amounts of time and money to try reach the beauty standards that have been set (Majola , 2017).

Beauty standards was considered another prominent theme, highlighted and explored throughout the research study. P1 expressed her opinion regarding the behind the scenes of the “Making of an Angel” video, “...a lot of girls are out of proportion and they are looking for the perfect girl, but to be honest I don’t think there is anyone perfect”. When asking P2 the same question she said, “I kind of feel like the profile they are going for is still a certain type, it’s not open to any women. So, it’s going to be tall, skinny, and then she has to have all the features”. P3 mentioned, “...You are excluding more then 80% of the world in the perfect body type. So, who do you want to wear your lingerie?”. P4 stated, “if I looked up to them I would be depressed, it is just unattainable to me. But I do think a lot of them are beautiful”. P5 underlined the link between the pressure of the models behind the scenes which was similar to societal circumstances, “...a lot of women face a similar sort of pressure to look a certain way uhm...the behind the scenes of Victoria Secret is quite focused on the same sort of things that that society looks at. So, it does kind of get portrayed in their image, as well as the immense amount of pressure to look good”. P6 pointed out, “They obviously associate the perfect women with being very skinny and having the right proportion...I mean what they are advertising is unrealistic”.

Throughout the process of the interviews, various visual content was shown to participants and it appeared that each and every one of the participants gradually became more surprised by the distinct beauty standards the brand deemed ideal. This was seen throughout their advertising and communication efforts which only spoke to a minor percentage of women’s physical appearances globally.

Kapferer calls for us look at reflection as part of the brand identity prism (Kapferer, 2012). This element strongly tied into the theme of beauty standards. Reflection can be seen as a set of stereotypical notions of a brand's customer base which are used for promotional purposes and emphasized within their advertising and commercials (Kapferer, 2012). The brand reflection represents the typical user of the brand (Kapferer, 2012). As a brand that is targeted at embracing confidence and beauty, their very specific mould of beauty that they have created, has threatened everything that Victoria's Secret marketing is known for – not serving all types of women and their dynamic differences (Schlossberg, 2018). P8 stressed the above point by stating, "I think the brand puts a lot of pressure on girls, especially young girls because they see that and they think that is the only ideal version of beauty because that's what is out there and that is what we are exposed to. So, the brand really makes you doubt yourself".

#### **4.3.5 Self-image,**

According to ASHA (2018), a self-image is the picture an individual person has of themselves, it is also linked to one's perception of their physical body. Self-image also consists of how you feel about your own strengths, weaknesses and ability to do things (ASHA, 2018).

Self-image with respect to Kapferer's brand identity prism looks at the element as a means of how customers of a particular brand view themselves, and the brand can ultimately benefit from incorporating self-image into the brands identity (Kapferer, 2012). Self-image is a theme which was noticeable within the research, as the Victoria Secret brand had a strong link to the different participants self-image.

When revealing the "Making of an Angel" video, participants were asked how they felt, P6 stated, "I feel angry. I personally feel a little bit self-conscious because they associate that with beauty...So, it feels like you need to meet this expectation". P5 went on to express that, "...it does sort of negatively impact your body image or how you look at yourself just because you are not a hundred percent aligning with how they look". P8 explained in a sense that the brand did, but also did not resonate with her idea of beauty when referring to the brands models and their advertising campaigns, "...they all look the same, they all have perfect bodies There is no variety of district

variety...it could make you feel insecure about yourself". P4 indicated, "Victoria Secret is selling a lifestyle that only one percent of the world could obtain...You look at Candice Swanepoel and think, wow this bra is going to look just like this on me! You then realise when you put it on, it just doesn't look the same". The content within the "Making of an Angel" video had upset P3 and she stressed that, "...it's frustrating because we are trying to get people to be healthy and to move away from eating disorders but if a lot of people had to watch this they would feel insecure". However, P1 had a contrasting view and felt that the brand did not affect her, "If you try to force yourself always to be in that criteria you will always be disappointed". Interestingly P9 mentioned, "I mean majority of the women that are going to see their advertising are not going to feel good enough and think they don't look like that".

Considering Victoria's Secret advertising campaigns and visual content, notably, seven out of the nine participants suggested to have felt affected by the brand and its efforts to portray an image of what women physically look like, which ultimately had a direct impact on their self-image. On the other hand, two of the respondents discussed the comfort they felt within their own skin, and that there was no certain effect the brand had on their self-image, despite the brands evident attempt to incorporate a minor demographic of women globally.

In relation to the primary research findings above, previous literature emphasised the idea, media and advertising that utilise unrealistic body types can harm one's self-image (WOUB DIGITAL, 2017). WOUB DIGITAL (2017) pointed out that, Victoria Secret typifies the concept on an unrealistic female body type that can often result in women having forming an idealistic expectation of what their bodies should look like - whether it might be attainable or not.

#### **4.3.6 Sexualisation**

Sexualisation is a common tool used in advertising communication which lends itself to sexually provocative or erotic imagery, deliberately created to arouse interest of a particular product, service or brand (Suggett , 2018). According to Suggett (2018), typically, sex denotes beautiful women that are used to lure in a viewer – the pre-programmed temperament of sexual imagery is so powerful in advertising.

In context of the theme sexualisation, there was a strong link to element personality, as it described the character of the brand (Inkbot Design, 2017). The brand personality assists a brand in establishing their target audience which will be able to relate to the brand (Inkbot Design, 2017). The brand personality can be explained through a specific tone, attitude, type of writing or colours to personify the brand (Inkbot Design, 2017).

“...and in the adverts it was more like in a submissive way, they are very playful and sexualised and there wasn’t really any independence or assertiveness” – P3

Sexualisation, as a theme, arose from five out of the nine participant interviews. The theme emerged throughout different questions and in-depth discussions during the interview process. Typical statements made regarding the Victoria Secret brand included the following; P8 pointed out, with reference to her lack of a personal connection to the brand, “...in the sense of the image they portray as being sexy uhm...and that there is only one kind of sexy, it doesn’t appeal to me in any way”. P1 commented on the why the brand appealed to her less after all the visual content had been revealed, “...they should put models in stuff that isn’t that revealing in a sense...there is always half naked girls”. P3 specified after watching the, “Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial 2018” that the culture of the brand seemed to be, “...sort of playful and lightly sort of sexualised”. P4 went on to examine the idea, “..when people buy Victoria Secret, I think you’re trying to have it for sex appeal for guys – and that is what comes across, even the fact that they are undressing on the beach”.

The personality of a brand builds character and exposes the type of person the brand would be if it were a person, and based on the theme “sexualisation” the above findings pointed to the fact that Victoria Secret seemed to have a highly sexual nature.

Drawing insight from previous literature it has been said that, female perceptions of the Victoria Secret brand have seen an all time decline since 2013 from the 18 to 49 year old market, based on what they have seen and heard (Hanbury, 2018). The company has been called out on the fact that they ignore customers in their rants regarding their over-sexualised advertising content (Hanbury, 2018).

#### **4.3.7 *Buying Behaviour***

A consumer will make decisions to purchase from a brand or product based on certain criteria (Bhasin, 2018). Marketing and advertising play a fundamental roll into triggering whether a person might or might not decide to purchase a product or utilise a service (Bhasin, 2018). Consumers tend to purchase products and services that are aligned with their interests and values.

The theme buying behaviour surfaced at the end of the interview process, each participant had to explain whether the knowledge they had consumed up until that point regarding Victoria Secret, would affect their purchasing from the brand, or not. P4's response was, "If their bras were able to fit me I would probably go out – not buy all their stuff but I would buy it...I guess what they are selling is something I can't buy, even the lifestyle they are selling...It's not a brand that resonates deeply within me". P7 had a contrasting view, "...their bikinis are really nice, I would still purchase from them". P9 indicated that, "...it made me more like feel, I really shouldn't buy from them, but if I do, it would more be stuff that I don't wear". P8 suggested that the brand tied into being something one could aspire to buy, "...you wouldn't think you would look beautiful in that type of lingerie or swimwear...so more of something you aspire to buy". P3 felt strongly about her decision of not wanting to purchase from Victoria Secret, "I wouldn't try to support companies that aren't in line with the same beliefs as mine. P5 felt hesitant but mentioned, "...Just because the brand does not represent a hundred percent of what I think women should consider beautiful...Uhm ya, that might make me think twice about buying stuff from them". P1 suggested, "I would buy Victoria Secret if I had money...I would buy it because their clothes are brilliant, it's not always about the models". P2 felt confident in her stance, "If I had to compare it to a brand like Calvin Klein underwear, I don't really know what they do as a brand but I would still buy it. Just because of the name of the brand and the fact that it is Victoria Secret, I would still buy it". P6 stated, "I probably wouldn't support them. I feel like if I support them i'm supporting...how do you say, what they represent...I would buy other lingerie but specifically not Victoria Secret". From the research findings there were suggestions pointing to the fact that, six out of the nine participants would not be inclined to purchase from the Victoria Secret brand and that three of the nine participants would purchase Victoria Secret.

Furthermore, considering Kapferer's brand identity prism Inkbot Design (2017), it is important to highlight at this point, all of the six different facets of the prism that include; physique, personality, relationship, culture, reflection and self-image play a vital role in Victoria Secret's ability to have established a brand identity that ultimately resonates with consumers buying behaviour (Inkbot Design, 2017). The brand identity prism as a whole, tells brands how to build a meaningful story to connect with customers through a much needed identity that will ultimately results in a succesful brand or not (Inkbot Design, 2017).

Conclusively, it was deduced that from the suggested research findings the perceptions that the pariticipants retained about Victoria Secret, affected their decision to purchase from the brand. Majority of the respondents indicated that they feel strongly about not wanting to purchase from the brand.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The nine participant interviews revealed that the Victoria Secret brand was predominately linked to negative associations. The brand culture demonstrated signs of controversy; described as being playful and fun, yet suggested having a sexual nature, as well as an absence of a diverse balance with regard to race and versatile body types portrayed through the media and the brands advertising campaigns. All of the above-mentioned elements had an impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers. Furthermore, the themes with the greatest influence identified were; brand association, beauty standards, diversity and buying behaviour.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

All of the above data had been analysed by means of thematic analysis in the data analysis section whereby, seven different themes were identified. In the final section of the study, the data was further interpreted into findings through the use of triangulation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Triangulation was utilised to acquire a thorough understanding of different perspectives with respect to phenomena which was studied, in order to increase the level of knowledge regarding the study so that researcher's stance could be strengthened from different viewpoints.

### **5.2 Findings**

This study resulted from the fact that the fashion industry has entered into an extensive transition phase, as a result of new societal movements and industry trends that have risen in recent years. Today, the world of fashion is facing a critical turning point - embracing diversity, in order survive (Tai, 2018). However, the fashion industry still has copious amounts of work to do when it comes to embracing and representing variety within their branded advertising campaigns and content (Tai, 2018).

When taking a look at this study and its significance to the recent shift in the fashion industry, there is much controversy with regard to whether Victoria Secret has become a brand that embodies a culture of inclusivity and diversity or not, and how that poses an impact on the brand's identity, to the extent of affecting consumer buying behaviour. Very few studies had considered the perceptions of Victoria Secret from the eyes of South African female consumers; and considering the recent uproar within the fashion industry, this had substantially highlighted the relevance of the study.

This study was explorative in nature and utilised an axiological position of Interpretism. Secondary research was conducted prior to primary research whereby, nine female participants between the ages of 18 to 25 were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Seven major themes had emerged from the nine interviews namely; brand association, buying behaviour, culture, diversity, self-image and sexualisation.

This study was intentionally undertaken to answer the following overarching research question:

Has Victoria Secret created a brand identity that resonates with the perceptions and opinions of South African women?

Secondary questions had emerged, in order to thoroughly answer the overarching research question:

- What is the brand identity of Victoria Secret?
- How do South African women perceive the brand image of Victoria Secret?
- Does the brand image affect whether they are willing to purchase from Victoria Secret, or not?
- Does Victoria's Secret brand identity resonate with how South African women perceive the brand?

### ***5.2.1 Overreaching Research Question***

The overarching research question stated the following; "Has Victoria Secret created a brand identity that resonates with the perceptions and opinions of South African women?" The section below discussed the above question in-depth.

Remarkable findings had surfaced from the primary research. Brand association was frequently addressed throughout the entire process of all nine interviews. The first word that participants naturally mentioned in relation to what came to mind when thinking about Victoria Secret, was directly aimed at the physical appearance of the Victoria Secret models placed in the brands advertising campaigns to portray the brands image - words such as "skinny", "perfection" and "Pink" constantly emerged. The "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial 2018" predominantly received positive feedback with respect to the brands culture, suggesting a playful, fun and confident atmosphere. However, participants did point out the 'ideal' type of women that the brand utilised within the advert leaned toward, a Caucasian female with tall and skinny bodily features.

Furthermore, it was interesting to see that when participants were asked to describe the brand as a person, more than half pointed out that it would be; a young blonde female, with blue eyes, blonde hair and a perfect body – that she would be fun and confident in nature, overseeing all the injustices in the world. When participants were shown a behind the scenes video of “The Making of an Angel”, the opinions were contentious, and a lot more expressive and passionate in essence, than the previous video. P2, P4, P7 acknowledged the brands effort in trying to promote a vibrant, confident environment, and that an outgoing personality was a fundamental trait the models would have to express in portraying the brands image to the public. In saying this, P1, P3, P5, P6, P8 and P9 all mentioned that, the brand placed supermodels in a high-pressure situation to be selected for Victoria Secret to create a perfect brand image of female beauty, which was considered materialistic, superficial, unrealistic. To further elaborate this point, when asking participants what the brand stood for, there was a mutual agreement in the sense that the brand stood for the ‘elite’, encouraging an idealistic lifestyle that endorsed unattainable beauty goals to women through sexualised, physical homogeneous advertising of supermodels.

According to Keller (2002), a brand image is fundamental to a brands success, it is an accumulation of different opinions and views regarding a particular brand. The character and worth of a brand are described through its image, linked to the associations a consumer might consider about a brand (Keller, 2002). The prevalent negative associations that participants have disclosed in the above discussion, affect Victoria’s Secret brand image – now attached to selling consumer an unrealistic image of beauty that inaccurately represents women globally which lacks a culture of diversity - especially with regard to race and body type, evident throughout their brand operations up to advertising and marketing communication efforts.

An additional thought-provoking insight was rooted in the statements made by P4, P8 and P9 highlighting that, the undergarment sizes that Victoria Secret produces were limited, they do not in fact cater for fuller-figured women’s body shapes with unique bodily-features, which makes it difficult to resonate with the brand on any level thus, discouraging their wanting to purchase from the brand. According to MacInnis (2016), people become exceedingly enamored with brands when they offer products that; solve problems, satisfy customer senses, emotions, thoughts, and make them feel

good about themselves. Based on the findings discussed above, it was evident that Victoria Secret certainly lacked the ability to make consumers feel good.

If we look at previous literature, brand identity is formed from within an organisation, and is based on how the brand wants to be perceived in the eyes of consumer (Aaker, 1996). Victoria Secret identify themselves as a colourful brand that encourages customers to feel sexy, strong and fearless by leveraging diversity as a driver to provide value to their customers, associates and stakeholders (Chintamani, 2018). According to Chintamani (2018), the brand assures quality products that strive to give women a stronger self-esteem to wear their sexy Victoria Secret garments confidently.

When we look at Kapferer's identity prism, all of the elements Victoria Secret had utilised to carefully craft their brand identity, is how the brand wanted to be perceived whereas; the brand image is how the consumers formed perceptions and opinions based on the brand's identity (Kapferer, 2012). For the first time in the research study one could deduce that it was evident, based on what the research findings told us, the perceptions of consumers regarding Victoria Secret were predominantly negative and suggested no signs of clear alignment to Victoria's Secret brand identity. Kapferer (2012) calls for us to remember that, a powerful brand can only be built when the way that customers perceive your brand, is parallel to your brand identity.

### **5.2.2 Secondary Research Questions**

The first research question was sought to explore the brand identity of Victoria Secret. Furthermore, the brand identity of Victoria Secret had been explored and clarified in the secondary research part of the study. Reflecting on earlier literature, Victoria Secret is a market leading female lingerie brand that sells various female apparel, the product line is typically pink and targeted at young women all over the world (Bhasin, 2018). The brand aims to create sensual but tasteful products to attract consumers through the use of well-known female supermodels that promote the brand's garments (Bhasin, 2018). The brand started using the models in their advertising shows in 2002 to promote to women globally that when wearing their products, you can feel self-assured and confident (Bhasin, 2018). The above literature explored the brand's identity.

The second research question looked at the brand image of Victoria Secret as perceived by South African women. The primary research findings gave good insight into the brand image of Victoria Secret. Eight out of the nine participants strongly addressed that the appeal of Victoria Secret had deteriorated, based on prior knowledge and content shown in the interview - participants felt that the brand did not cater to their diverse body shapes was confined to a strict niche market of “skinnier” consumers, creating an unfavorable image of reality, to the extent that some participants would no longer support the brand. One of the participants felt strongly about the brand appeal, her perception was that the brand could potentially provide her with a sense of confidence - this finding related to the fundamental process of creating a positive brand image (Aaker, 1996). Looking at the findings, it was evident that the brand was predominately associated with a negative brand image.

The purpose of the third question was to determine if the perceptions that South African women had about Victoria Secret influenced whether they were willing to purchase from the brand, or not. Interestingly, six out of the nine participants refused to purchase from Victoria Secret based on the perceptions they had formed about the brand. P4 pointed out, “...I guess what they are selling is something I can’t buy, even the lifestyle they are selling”. P6 and P3’s opinions were closely aligned, they both felt that they could not support a brand with a poor representation of women and specifically because the brands beliefs were not in-line with theirs. On the contrary, P2 was not concerned about the image the brand tried to sell but was rather inclined to purchase from the brand because of their high-quality products. According to Kasi (2010), a consumers attitudes and beliefs shape a brands image which ultimately affects their reason to purchase, or not. Therefore, research findings suggested that there was a strong mutual agreement between the way that consumers perceived the Victoria Secret brand. As a result, majority of the participants were not inclined to purchase from the brand. Based on what had been discussed, evidence pointed to the fact that Victoria’s Secret brand identity was not aligned with the consumer perceptions of the brands image.

### **5.3 Implications of Study**

The aim of this research study was to explore an in-depth understanding of the perceptions that South African women had about Victoria Secret, and whether the brand image was aligned with the brands identity.

It was found that, most South African female consumers possessed an unfavourable image of Victoria Secret. This was highlighted through the brands visual content, generally causing negative feedback from consumers that felt the brand showed minimal signs of diversity in terms of race and body shape, and felt offended that models were sexually objectified through the imagery – this in itself, promoted unrealistic goals for young women.

Hence, there is a dire need for diversity and authenticity through the brands communication efforts to consumers.

### **5.4 Trustworthiness**

To achieve Trustworthiness in research consists the following needs to be accomplished; credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Credibility was achieved through the use of triangulation; utilising a number of different sources throughout the research study to explore the accuracy of the findings (Statistic Solutions, 2018). Transferability was achieved through the use of previous literature applied to the interviews and quotes which had been discussed within the study and interview process (Statistic Solutions, 2018). An audit trail of the entire data analysis process was provided as well as a several secondary opinions to ensure the accuracy of the participants responses and research findings, which essentially addressed the confirmability aspect of the research (Statistic Solutions, 2018).

### **5.5 Recommendations**

This study specifically focused on female consumers between the ages of 18 to 25 perceptions of Victoria Secret. The study could have incorporated a younger population into the research study. Seeing as though the brand targets a younger demographic, exploring the perceptions of the brand image from a younger

demographics point of view could uncover new insights. An integration of both qualitative and quantitative research could be suggested – making use of a mixed methods approach, in order to have understood the study comprehensively (Nieuwenhuis, 2017).

## **5.6 Ethical Considerations**

Vega School of Brand Leadership had granted this research study ethical clearance on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2018. Ethical considerations are valued within research, a dissertation could be subject to failure having not considered this (Research Methodology, 2018). To ensure ethical practice was maintained throughout the duration of the interview process and reporting, the following ethical considerations transpired;

### **5.6.1 Participant Considerations**

- Participants had the opportunity to carefully read though the consent form before the interview took place, they have the opportunity to ask the researcher questions at any point during the interview. The participants only signed the consent form based on knowing what was expected of them for the interview.
- The participation of respondents was voluntary, they had the right at any point to withdraw from the study.
- The use of any distasteful language was disregarded from any participant.
- Privacy and anonymity in terms of disclosing the participants information throughout the study was maintained.
- The voice recordings within the interview process were transcribed, coded and stored on the researcher's computer safely, to ensure full participant confidentiality.

### **5.6.2 Researcher Considerations**

- All authors were acknowledged when used as part of the research paper according to the Harvard referencing style.
- All intellectual property has been discussed honestly when research was conducted.

- The researcher was conscious of exploiting or harming others' interests when conducting the study.
- The informed-consent was followed as accurately as possible.

### **5.6.3 Brand Considerations**

- The highest level of objectivity regarding the Victoria Secret brand was maintained throughout the process of the study.
- All information gathered and disclosed for the study regarding Victoria Secret was honest, in order for the reputation of the business not to be jeopardised.
- There was no misuse of research results and quotations regarding Victoria Secret.
- The findings obtained from this study regarding Victoria Secret were not sold at any point.

Whilst this study took place, none of the above ethical considerations were breached (Research Methodology, 2018).

## **5.7 LIMITATIONS**

Limitations include challenges that influence and limit the research (Maree, 2016). Limitations for this research included; lack of time, as this essentially impacted the number of questions and depth the study could go into. A number of potential respondents could not take part in the study, as a result of the fact that no financial incentive could be offered to them for time contributed to the study.

## **5.8 DELIMITATIONS**

Delimitations are the boundaries that are put in place for the research that are within the control of the researcher (Divergent Web Solutions, 2018). The population of this study was limited to only female consumers between the ages of 18-25 in South Africa, that were familiar with Victoria Secret. The purpose of the study was to determine if Victoria Secret created a brand identity that resonated with the perceptions and opinions of South African women. This research included semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gain valuable perceptions and opinions from consumers that focused specifically on one brand in the fashion industry – Victoria Secret.

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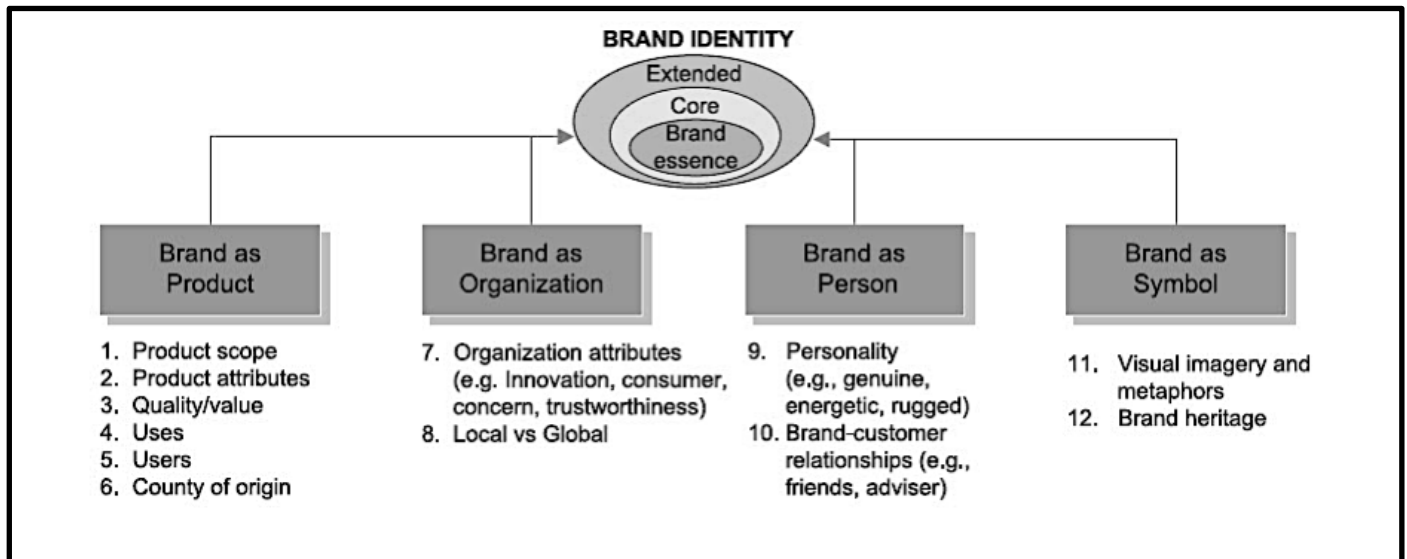
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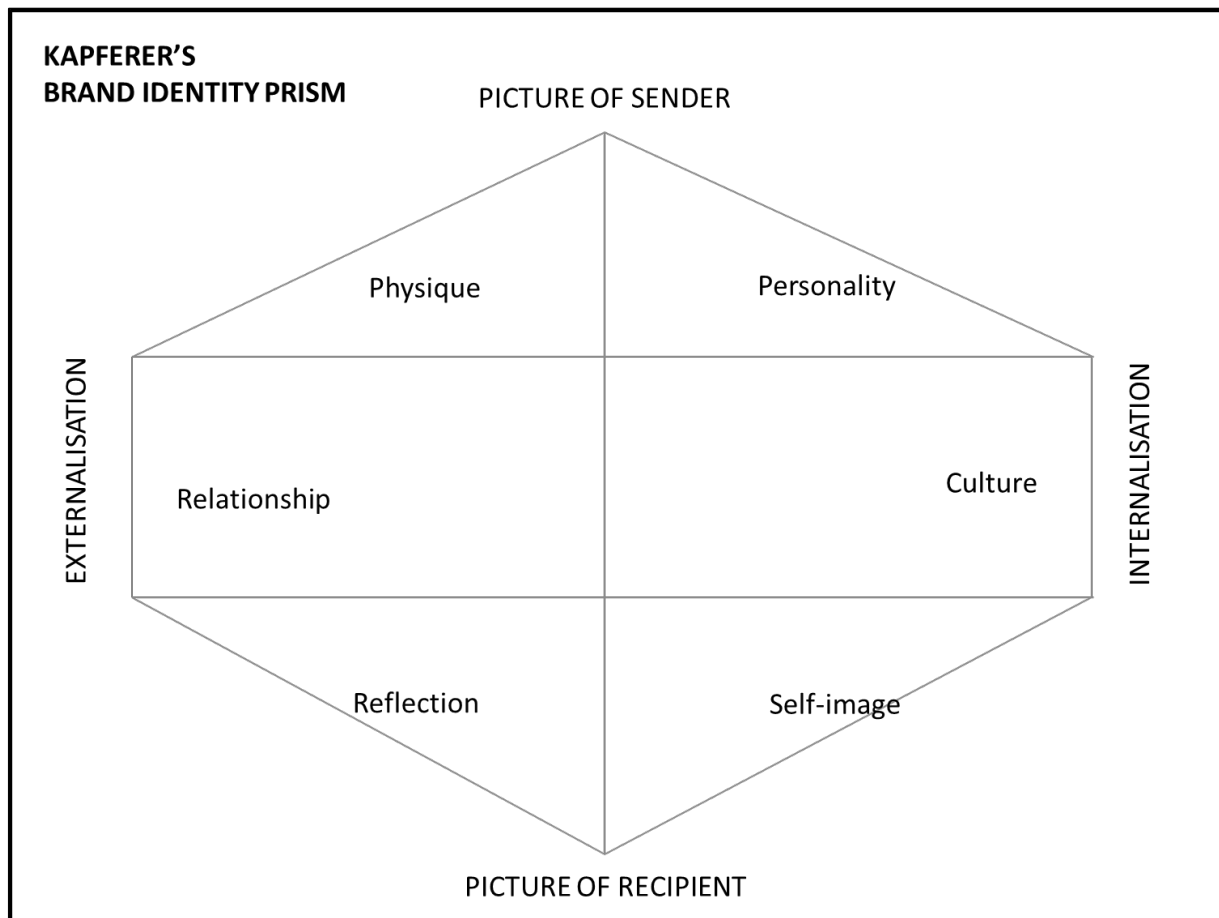
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**LIST OF FIGURES:*****Figure 1: Aaker's Brand Identity Model***

Brand Identity Perspectives

(Van Haaften, 2017)

**Figure 2: Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism**

Brand Identity Prism

(Abedin, 2013)

## **LIST OF ANNEXURES**

### ***Annexure 1: Interview Outline***

All of the Interviews will be conducted face-to-face in a private setting.

The interview will be Semi-Structured in nature: Questions will be open-ended to get as much information as possible and the interviewee may be prompted for clarification.

The interview guidelines are structured based on Kapferer's brand identity prism (Kapferer, 2008).

All of the interviews will be recorded using two recording devices, e.g. mobile device(s) and/or digital recording device.

Each section will be briefly introduced to the interviewee prior to the questions being asked. It is proposed that a test interview be scheduled, to establish the approximate time it will take to conduct the interview, as well as to establish if any changes or additions/deletions are required for the questions.

## **INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEW**

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for participating in this study which aims to explore the perceptions that different women have about the Victoria Secret brand, based on the brands established brand identity revealed through divergent marketing and media channels. It is in hope that this research will enhance an understanding of whether Victoria's Secret brand identity aligns with the brands image based on consumers perceptions.

You have been selected to participate in this study because you form part of the target population for this study, which includes diverse groups of women between the ages of 18-25 that reside in Pretoria that are familiar with, have come across any advertising, or have purchased from the Victoria Secret brand.

I will be showing you visual content such as images and videos in order for you to give your opinion regarding the various materials that I show you.

I would like to inform you that the interview will be video-taped and voice recorded whilst I take notes of your answers, which will remain confidential.

Please remember that in order for this research to produce accurate results I need your full and honest opinion at all times, there are no right or wrong answers, I am just interested in gaining a deeper understanding of your perception and opinions regarding this study.

It is important that you remember to speak up and do not hesitate to ask me questions or to add additional comments at any point. Please ensure that your cell phone is switched off during the interview which will take no longer than one hour, I will full require your full participation throughout the interview.

Ok, so let us get started.

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## **PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW**

“Victoria Secret is a luxury designer lingerie featuring influential-celebrated supermodels and a world-renowned runway show. Their products are sold in more than 1 600 stores globally.”

1. What is your definition of beauty, why?
  2. What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?
  3. I would like to show you a video of the “Victoria’s Secret Swim Special commercial”. Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole, and then tell me what you think their culture consists of? (Victoria's Secret, 2017).
-

4. If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like, and what their characteristics would be?
  5. I am now going to show you a video of the “Making of an angel” and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards (Victoria's Secret, 2017).
  6. What are your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?
  7. How does this make you feel, why?
  8. After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret stands for as a brand, why?
  9. Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?
  10. What do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?
- 
11. Now I would like to show you a picture of the Victoria Secret fashion show in 2018, what really stands out to you in this picture? (Glamour, 2017).
  12. After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less, why?
  13. Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all, if not, why?
- 
14. Based on the question I asked you earlier regarding your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is, why?
  15. Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty, if not, why?
  16. Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman, if not, why?

17. Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all over the world, if not, why?
18. In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?
- 

Thank you for your time, your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me.

***Annexure 2: Visual Imagery in the Interview***

**‘Victoria’s Secret Strapless Bra Campaign’**



***Annexure 3: Interview Consent Form*****Consent Form**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tyler Carnie and I am a student at Vega School of Brand Leadership. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Althea Fordyce. This study aims to look at the perceptions that women in South Africa have formed about the Victoria Secret brand, based on the brands established brand identity revealed through divergent media platforms. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of whether or not Victoria's Secret brand identity aligns with the consumer perception of its brand image.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

**What will I be doing if I participate in your study?**

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you form part of my target population I need to investigate for my study to obtain accurate results. If you decide to participate in this research, the interview will take no longer than 60 minutes. Myself, the researcher and you, the participant will be the only two individuals present in the interview. The participant will be reordered using a voice-recording instrument. The nature of the questions that will be asked during the interview will be based on your knowledge of the Victoria Secret brand the opinions that you have toward the brand and how it has possibly influenced or affected you in anyway. You will also be asked to respond based on a scenario of advertisements regarding the Victoria Secret brand presented to you, once fully explained.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

### **Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?**

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your opinion to assist in gaining a better understanding how women perceive designer fashion luxury brands in reality which potentially does not resonate with the brand identity they have tried to create and portray to the world. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

### **Do I have to participate in the study?**

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

### **Will my identity be protected?**

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

### **What will happen to the information that participants provide?**

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

### **What happens if I have more questions about the study?**

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details:

Tyler Carnie

The contact details of my supervisor:

Althea Fordyce

### **Consent form for participants**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research conducted by Tyler Carnie regarding the perceptions that women in South Africa have about the Victoria Secret brand, based on the brands established brand identity revealed through divergent media platforms.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.

1. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.

2. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
3. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

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Signature

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Date

***Annexure 4: Participant Transcripts*****PARTICIPANT 1**

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 1: I think it is anyone who is confident, it doesn't have to be how they look – thin, not thin. With regards to Victoria Secret a lot of the models on the runway like Kylie Jenner for example, are just thin and that is how everyone perceives Victoria Secret. But, I think beauty is if you are confident in yourself, and you present yourself and that's pretty much what I see it as.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 1: Models with good bodies to be honest.

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole, and then tell me what you think their culture consists of?

Participant 1: Ok first of all, I think they have pretty much one type. Race kind of thing, mostly white girls and I think only one black girl there, and I think also only one body type. All of them have big boobs, very thin, small legs. So, I think, to the audience or the people they are, like their target market, it looks at specific people with nice bodies, it does not give a variety. For example, another brand - they will have costumes or lingerie for bigger girls, and I think with this it shows beautiful girls, they all beautiful, they all thin, they all have the perfect body. In this video everything just looks so perfect, you know like they out, they on yachts, they in the sea. I don't know, that's how I see it, not that it's like that because I know Victoria Secret does have stuff for bigger women, but in this video, it portrays a certain target market they are looking for, that's what I think.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 1: Ok. Blonde, blue eyes, like the perfect body but super tanned, they have a lot of confidence and they look very fun to be around and, that's about it I think. Just like a blonde girl, big boobs, tiny body, tiny waste, but they are all confident and it looks like they are always having fun and they love the brand or they market the brand well if you know what I'm saying. Like all these girls made everything look good, so I think they just pick the right people just to convey their message or what they selling.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making of an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What are your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 1: Ok, first of all I think like they said, a lot of girls are out of proportion and they are looking for the perfect girl, but to be honest I don't think there is anyone perfect and I think these girls, not particularly starve themselves or gym until they can't anymore, I think they just know that Victoria Secret just has pretty much like a certain thing that they are looking for and I think girls that want to become Victoria Secret angels they push themselves to be in that target just so they can get picked, but I think it shouldn't be like that. You should go in, go with you – how you originally are, you shouldn't change yourself just to become a model for them. And like they said two or three times they are looking for the right proportion, the girl with the best hair, the girl with the looks. Yes, they said personality but it's pretty much you don't talk to a girl on the run way it's all about looks.

So, I think they focus too much on that and a girl being too skinny or having the right waste size and colour hair and stuff like that and I don't – like ya... they look nice but I just don't think it's right that they say your proportion is off or you don't have the right colour hair or sorry your eyebrows are too thick, or anything like that. So, I think they are too obsessive on how the girls are supposed to look.

- How does this make you feel, why?

Participant 1: Well I don't particularly like it, because they putting up ... what is that word? I need to get the word for it to sound right, uhm... like a criteria of how a girl is supposed to look or how she is supposed to look if she ever wants to be a model, so I just think that they just pick people who have the best looks, like there's a lot of

runway companies or clothing companies where now they use bigger girls and thinner girls, like very thin girls and very thick girls if you know what I'm saying.

And Victoria Secret is all about this crazy body with beautiful hair, beautiful eyes, beautiful toned body, beautiful skin. So, I think it's just – that's how they want their target to be but they should use, I don't know, different types of people, different types cultures – most of the girls are white. So, I think they should switch it up, let's say if a black girl was watching this, she would think: "Yissy, there's only white chicks here I'm not gonna buy their stuff". It's not particularly like that, but you kind of think like that. Or if like Cotton On, a lot of girls say: "Oh no, the clothes don't fit me.", so they will go to a place where there is a variety of stuff. And I think with this, they just show a particular category and that's it.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret stands for, and why?

Participant 1: Oh gosh, uhm...I would say like confidence in a way, and obviously nice lingerie and nice swimwear but I think they are also looking at a higher class, this brand is normally for the higher class, because its more expensive and its "so called" better quality, I don't really know. Uhm... but it's also variety, I have a Victoria Secret spray but it's not like a perfume, it's just like that mist stuff and there's little make up bags, so I think they have a lot of variety, but I think it's mostly for higher class people, like if you don't have money you can't buy their stuff. So, I don't know, I think they portray pretty girls and confident girls and nice clothing or nice lingerie but I think they are for a certain target market – and pretty much for that only.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 1: I think it has a part to do with it, uhm...because let's say for example Kendall Jenner, or wait what's her name, yes Kendall Jenner. When she got that job even though she is so famous and so pretty it was such a huge deal for her, and she is so famous already and for her to get picked as a Victoria Secret angel – she started crying. So, I think even though she is so famous it was such a huge thing to her because it's such thing to become an angel. I think a lot of girls think, "You know, I wish I could do it but I am not good enough, I don't fit the criteria."

But, I mean... I think it is a very good brand and a lot of girls these days want to look like these girls so, I think yes, they are a good brand but as I said before they get certain girls and that's how girls want to look and it's not supposed to be like that. So, I think Victoria Secret specifically because its bra's, its panties, its costumes – everyone wants to look good in that. So, I think they are a big influence, and a lot of people want their stuff, so even though they look at a higher-class target market people will try and get to that target market – either by let's say they want to become a model, they'll start gyming or whatever or either they want to get there with regards to buying the stuff. And people will buy it, you'll always say, "Ok, it's worth buying, I'll buy one thing and it will last long. So ya, I think they do.

- What do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 1: Ok, well obviously physical stuff as I said before. So: the hair, the bodies, the boobs, toned. I see on all of them they have no piercings at all, and no tattoos. They all tall – I haven't seen one short girl yet, they all tall, skinny either brown or blonde hair seen a red head Victoria Secret model. Uhm... mostly white there are some black girls, coloured girls or Indian girls but I also think like they said "they look for personality" so I think, the girl must be bubbly she can't be a quiet, introverted girl. She must have confidence – I think a lot of confidence to be a brand ambassador for like a lingerie company, uhm.... they must have a high self-esteem I think, and they mustn't be like, for example if they had an interview they can't be scared so, they need to train themselves on how to answer questions properly, to be prepared for stuff, if they get asked random stuff. I think they also need to be quick on their feet and obviously not wild - like they can go out and stuff but I don't think to the extent where you go out and you get drunk and they need to be content with how they are and control themselves in certain situations and that's what I think.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 1: So, you asking what stands out?

Interviewer: Yes, what are the things that really stand out for you in the picture?

Participant 1: Ok, well I think the good thing about the picture is that there is a variety so, I think in this day and age it's all about having equality and being equal, so with that it's good – there's some blonde girls, there's some brown head girls, there's a black girl there, they are all different skin tones. One girl is very light, one is very tanned...ya, you see one girl Caucasian - so European, a black girl, a blonde girl, a brown head girl... So, I think they have good variety but the thing is still body wise they are all super thin, nice legs, super tall. That is pretty much what I see Victoria Secret as – girls with very nice bodies and I feel like they don't really look happy in this picture, they are like serious all the time, with regards their modelling they not smiling or like making jokes, they are always serious.

I think the women act towards what the brand wants, maybe for examples some of these girls could be modelling for them but have the lowest self-esteem, maybe not believing in themselves but portraying that they have the best self-esteem just in order to get in to Victoria Secret. They could be portrayed as the happiest people just to get into the brand but they might not be. And I think the people who interview them don't realise that because you can act to a person for a certain amount of time to act like you are happy or act like you have confidence, but I don't think they actually get to know the people on a deeper level or their staff member, I don't think they get to know them. I mean it is a brilliant brand but I just think she should have more variety. Like there's other brands, like Sissy boy that use bigger girls to model for them and I think that when that happens bigger girls is at least trying for them and making their size clothes but here its stereotypical, they all thin, do you know what I'm saying? So, a bigger girl is not necessarily going to go to Victoria Secret and be like, "Oh, maybe I should find lingerie." Because they have never a bigger girl in the lingerie or Victoria Secret's lingerie. So, I think they go for a certain target market as in like size and I think also class, so they go higher-class and smaller sizes, that's what I think.

- After looking at this and viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less, why?

Participant 1: Less, because pretty much what I said before, it is always one target market and also, they don't try, even though their products are great they can also try – not necessarily make stuff cheaper but make a lower range for people who can't necessarily afford this range but they can afford the lower range. I think they should

they should make a bigger variety of what they are advertising all the time. And also, with their angels everyone has a perception like, "Oh my gosh this girl's body.", but people never say, "Ah, I wonder if this girl is nice?" you know, it's always about stereotypically their bodies, but who knows how this girl's personality is going to be, you are pretty much just always looking at them and it's always half naked. So, I mean I would love to go into Victoria Secret and buy their stuff and I don't really mind because most models these days are thin and tall and this and this. So, it would not bother me but I think for other people it would because there is not a big variety.

I think they should put models in stuff that isn't that revealing in a sense respect them more and their bums aren't hanging out. This also gives the target market guys because, guys will always be looking. Let's say for example that guys girlfriend says, "Ah, you have to get this kind of lingerie." But maybe... I just don't know how to explain it, but there is always half naked girls - they are beautiful and I mean if I could look that I would be half-naked most of the time but I think it's just portraying how a girl is like 'the perfect person' yet these girls portray to have the biggest self-esteem and confidence but maybe they probably don't, they just portray themselves as having the best self-esteem or loving life to the fullest, but maybe they don't like it at all because it's so in demand you have to eat properly, you have to gym, you always have to look good, you can't just walk out your house like us sometimes looking so bad, they always have to be on their toes. If paparazzi is there they always have to look good. Their bodies need to look good – how many times have you seen a person in the "YOU" magazine where they have a piece of cellulite and they like, "Ooo, Amy is putting on weight!". So, they always have to make themselves look brilliant but maybe they don't want to do that, they just doing it to try fit in this whole Victoria Secret brand. So that's why I think also a variety is important.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand or not, why?

Participant 1: No, like their stuff is nice but I know I'll never be able to buy it. So, I don't really have the money because they are so expensive, and ya I know I am small and stuff but I know I won't look like this. You know what I'm saying... I won't look like this in their clothes so I won't even go any try anything to do with their brand. And also, because of the price I won't ever walk into Victoria Secret because you stand there and you are like, "Oh my gosh I want this so badly but I can't have it.". So, I'd rather

just not go there and just stay away from the brand. Their stuff is beautiful like their costumes and their lingerie but it's just too expensive.

- Based on the question I asked earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is, why?

Participant 1: Ok, physical again. So, I think society if I had to ask a guy, what does he think being beautiful is? He would probably say "small, or thin, tall" but then there are other guys that would say they look at personality. But I think most of society would say looks, but then you get a small percentage where they look more into a person then looks. If you know what I am saying? For example, Cath she wants to be attracted to the person but its more about the finer details of their personality. Most guys just look at girls that look good and don't care if they have no personality.

But I do think in this day and age society does look at personality, like confidence I think. For example, if you are very shy people won't particularly notice you – but if there is a girl somewhere that has confidence people will be drawn to her. So, in this day and age it is looks, and confidence and reputation but I mean that Pretoria. To be honest, because it is such a small place.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret resonates with your idea of beauty, and why?

Participant 1: In a way yes, because I would not mind looking like these girls at all. But like personally I would say no because a perfect girl is not just about looks, its much deeper then looks because you could beautiful but you could be the most horrible person ever. So, I think, maybe these girls are great but I think beauty is about personality like your confidence, how much you care for other people, the stuff you do for people it's not necessarily how you look. It is much deeper then looks, so yes you might see someone and think, "Yis that person is pretty" but you could also get to know them and think that person isn't pretty anymore. So, I think beauty is twofold, it can mean being physically pretty and internally pretty.

- Does this affect the way that you feel as a woman or not, why?

Participant 1: No, not really, I've come to the realisation that I will never look like that. If you keep on beating yourself up about it and trying to be person you are not –

gyiming, eating healthy and trying to put yourself specifically in this category you are never going to be happy with yourself. So, I think, if you accept how you look you'll be fine. If you try force yourself always to be in that criteria you'll be disappointed. I think a lot of people still do that but some people just get to a point where they are just like...I'm just gonna eat, do you know what I'm saying?

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents women all around the world, why?

Participant 1: I feel like I am very negative with this all.

Interviewer: No but the thing is remembering what I said in the beginning, nothing is wrong, nothing is right – it's your opinion, that's all I want to hear. It's your opinions, it's your perceptions, it's honestly how you feel. So, what do you think the brand honestly represents, they are such a world-renowned, massive brand...so do you think that Victoria Secret that honestly represents who women are all around the world?

Participant 1: No, because not every single woman looks like this, and that's how they are generalising it. So, everyone in their brand looks pretty much the same, but you can go to let's say... a restaurant, you will see different kind of body types, different kind of ethnic groups, everyone is so different and not everyone looks like this but they portray everyone in their model run shows...or whatever it is called... catwalks. They look so specific. Like they said they look for a girl with great hair, in proportion. I feel like no one is in proportion – ever. Generally ok, yes... you find the few who are on point, but I think most of the world is not in proportion, they are always unhappy with some part of their body, but here they portray that everything is perfect like in one body, do you know what I'm saying? And I think like 80% of the world is not perfect in that one body. But that 20% is probably Victoria Secret people, because they are literally just perfect, but probably on the inside they are suffering from something.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 1: I don't think so, like I would buy Victoria Secret if I had the money. So yes, I would buy from them because I don't think seeing a girl like this would affect me because If I love how I look, like I've accepted what I have on my body. Like if I can

buy Victoria Secret I will because, yes, this people will be more angry at this like saying, "it's not right, it's not right." I know it's not right but that is how the world is. They portray someone, everyone wants to look like them, that's how it is. So, I'm not like criticizing them I think they should have more variety and whatever...but if I had the money I would buy it because their clothes are brilliant, it's not always about the models – their lingerie and bikinis are beautiful. So, if I could fit into that and look good in it I would buy it.

Interviewer: It's just the way that people all over the world see the brand, is that they utilise these models to show-off the brand and that's how people understand the brand, you know. It's quite difficult because these models are the brand ambassadors – they have to portray everything the brand wants people to think about. So obviously that's really an important element. The angels and the models are there to showcase who the brand is.

Participant 1: And I feel like they would, not necessarily do better because they are such a big brand and they make so much money, but I think if they have more of a variety – people would be more willing to go. For example: KK, she is a big woman and if they had something for her, I'm telling you she would be there because in school she would always tell me, "Yis, these chicks are so beautiful bla bla bla." Cause I remember we use to speak about and if they just had a variety you know? Not even for bigger girls but just thicker girls – girls with big bums or legs I think there will be more customers, because there are less customers who are all this thin, skinny, you know what i'm saying? If there were just a few sizes bigger or if there is a model that is a little bit bigger I think the girls will be like, "well, yis you know, they are actually thinking about us. I'm going to now just go try their stuff because they have a variety" you know what I'm saying? Like that whole Guess thing went viral because there was that girl in the high wasted bikini and she was big, and so many people shared it saying, "Ya, this is brand is supposed to be about and they not only supposed to portray like thin, beautiful, girls. They are also supposed to portray what's real in life." That's pretty much what the article was about that there they portray the fantasy of what a girl is supposed to be, not the real self of how it actually is.

## PARTICIPANT 2

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 2: Hmm...a combination of various things. So, how you act in front of people – so the person that you are, as well as the way that you carry yourself. Not necessarily the skinniest the skinniest girl, but someone who just has confidence and isn't sort of afraid to show that to anyone.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 2: Skinny (laughs).

- I would like to show you a video of the “Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial”. Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and I will ask you questions followed by the video.

Interviewer: Reflecting on this video as a whole, I want you to tell me what you think their culture as a brand consists of?

Participant 2: What do you mean the culture?

Interviewer: What their brand is about, who they are, after watching this video of how the women are portraying Victoria Secret and the brand to be?

Participant 2: Ok, well when I watched it... I kind of felt it was natural, all the girls look very natural uhm... so sort of like how they look now is just them being them, I don't know if that makes sense? So, it wasn't like a “I starve myself to be this skinny”, it was natural and that's how they look. I kind of felt like when I was watching it...I don't know if this is weird but “girl power” kind of, ya it was more like girls having fun together that's how I saw it. I thought it was going to be sultry-sexy.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 2: Ok, so I'll start with looks: thick nice hair, everything is sort of voluptuous to them, they are very curvy, they have big boobs, lips. They all should be like generally taller than most girls. Uhm... and I'd say characteristics wise the person would be very confident, outgoing, fun, also kind of maybe like approachable.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making if an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 2: I still kind of felt like the panel from what they should you on the video is quite a fun environment, they don't want the girls to have to come in and like feel like they are all clones. Uhm... I still kind of think that they looking for girls with special touches to them so, not every girl is going to be exactly the same, but she has got to have a certain profile which they are looking for. So, I feel like they are still open to different women but they do want someone that is confident and can sort of portray what they want.

- How does this make you feel, why?

Participant 2: I kind of feel like the kind of profile that they are going for is still a certain type, it's not open to any women. So, it's going to be tall, skinny, and then she has to have all the features. So, it's not like say now a woman that is a bit short or someone that's fuller, or someone that's mainly fit – has got a fit body, they are not open to that. They looking for that one type of women.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 2: (Sighs) That's a tough question.

Interviewer: just remember there is no right or wrong answer.

Participant 2: Ya, ya, ya I remember. I'm just trying to think what I would think that they stand for. It seems like they stand for striving for perfection. So, you know you have to... I don't know how to say this. So, even though the first ad showed that the girls and the brand was all fun I think they do have a sense of "girl power", but it might be slightly distorted in the sense that they portraying these ambassadors that are all as

you can say “the ideal women”. So, everything is in proportion, nothing can be out of place. It is sort of a perfect lifestyle and a perfect woman that they portray and the perfect women would wear their clothing – if you wear their stuff you are perfect. That’s sort of a better way of saying it...

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 2: I think they are influential because of the fact that they say these are “supermodels” who are their ambassadors, and women do tend to look at them and say, “Wow, that’s what I want in life.”, like they make them their goals, so I definitely think that it is influential.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 2: You sort of have to stay in good shape the whole times, all year round. You can’t really step out of line, so you have to portray a sort of “perfect lifestyle” the whole time, in everything that you do. Uhm... there can never be bad days, you always have to look perfect, act perfect ya...

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 2: Ok, so one thing or...

Interviewer: You can mention a few things, whatever comes to mind, like when you look at this picture what really stands out to you.

Participant 2: In this picture everyone is sort of not too busty – like their boobs are kind of medium sized. Everyone is skinny, I’d say tall as well and thick hair. They also have a very similar face profile also.

Interviewer: So, like in mentioning that they want girls that are like – they look for these profiles of girls that have a perfect ideal lifestyle and they say they look for something

different in women, does it come across to you as though they have a certain type of look?

Participant 2: Ya, there is definitely one general profile actually that they are looking for.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less, why?

Participant 2: Uhm, I wouldn't say it appeals to me less purely because I think that it's just a strategy of the type of picture or the type of way that they want to portray their brand. So, I sort of can understand that they are going to pick these girls, uhm but ya it doesn't really not make me want to be with the brand. I think it actually makes you want to look like that, and that's why you would want those products just because of the perception that it creates.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 2: I wouldn't say personal connection, the only reason why I think I would buy their stuff or even buy their lingerie is because of the name behind it.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 2: I'd say that their perception of beauty has changed, it still kind of is generally women that are smaller, petite, not too tall but not too short. Every feature woman which is perfect. Her lips aren't too big but they aren't too small – so it's sort of a very difficult criteria to relate to, but I still think it is that classic skinny girl, her boobs are big, maybe slightly curvy, not like a plank skinny -but still skinnier rather than muscular.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 2: Well I think that the women that are on it are really beautiful uhm but, I do believe there are various degrees of beauty. For example, if I have to see a Victoria's secret model who was like fitter and not as tall I would still think it was beautiful.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 2: Ya, it kind of makes you feel like...like you sort of feel like you are not at that level, like you definitely wouldn't be able to be on those women's level. Like if I had to be in that room I would feel like an idiot.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 2: I don't really think so, because of the fact that they have this very specific profile, uhm... even though they are going for women that are more confident and maybe more outgoing, it is still in the look profile that they are looking for, so it is still tall, skinny, you know like they said in proportion. So, it's not really – even I mean if a big girl had to go and be confident she wouldn't become a Victoria Secret model. So that maybe not really their type of girl they go for.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 2: Not really (laughing). But that is just really purely based on the fact that it is Victoria Secret and there is like this "hype" about it. It's sort of just like... if I had to compare it to a brand like Calving Klein underwear, I don't really know what they do in the brand but I would still buy it. Just because of the name of the brand and the fact that it is Victoria secret I would still buy it.

Interviewer: So that's the most important thing that obviously comes through for you, "whatever they are doing that's their thing, I just love the brand because of their products"

Participant 2: Ya, I just kind of love them for what they sell, I know that seems shallow. I see it as their brand strategy and if that's the image they want to portray then that's for them, but that's obviously just one way that they think they are going to get clients, it doesn't really matter to me.

## PARTICIPANT 3

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 3: (Laughs) Wow, ok.

Interviewer: I know it is very broad, but I would just like to know in your opinion what you consider it to be in a person.

Participant 3: For me I guess it is something that is sort of natural uhm, ya. Sort of being comfortable in your own skin without you having to add a lot of artificial things to your look.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 3: Very skinny girls. I mean know about their very good runway shows which I think are quite cool in terms of the artistic element but I haven't actually been in a Victoria Secret shop, so ya I've just seen the models showcasing the brand that's all I know really.

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole, and then tell me what you think their culture consists of?

Participant 3: Hmm, well...the idea they gave there was very sort of playful and lightly sort of sexualised, but they also give this idea – I mean those are clearly all women but they portray them as girls sort of taking away that maturity of them. Uhm, ya and they all have the same body type excluding the rest of the world, ya.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 3: Hmm (thinking). Well I suppose the person would look like the type of model they portray to the world so, sort of tall, slender, uhm...very lean, not really a curvy type of person, obviously then a women with long hair - I would say not in

promotion of the female form because it's really excluding your big curvy girls or your skinny-skinny girls, I mean I only saw one girl of colour in there, it does not cover all your ethnic groups.

Interviewer: So just a very specific type of look and kind of women?

Participant 3: Ya I think so.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making of an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- Ok, so what are your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 3: Very ignorant and shallow. Ya...

Interviewer: Why would you say that it is very ignorant and shallow?

Participant 3: Because I think, especially with what the movements are that are happening today in terms of you know trying to encourage women to be proud of what they have and who they are you know, sort of enhancing your body type to your best ability instead of trying to be this ideal body type. Like they said there, "You have to have the right proportions and the right body type". What is the right body type? Because I mean only a small percentage of the world have bodies like that – long legs, very skinny, no boobs, no butt – all that. So that actually then...you are excluding more than 80% of the world in the perfect body type. So, who do you want to wear your lingerie.

Interviewer: So, it's very interesting you say that the brand portrays a certain figure, women are a certain figure.

Participant 3: Exactly!

- So how would you say this make you feel, why?

Participant 3: It makes me angry, uhm... ya because I just feel like some people – you know you get them and obviously they work hard to have the bodies that they do, but then you get athletes that work just as hard but they won't have that type of body they will have more of a muscular body, but that's ok because they are happy and confident

in their own skin, but you are still excluding that whole part...Then you get dancers who also have a completely different body type and then your everyday person that just goes to the gym that still enjoys eating, so they don't have that body type. So ya, it's just kind of frustrating because we are trying to get people to be healthy and move away from eating disorders but if a lot of people had to watch this they would feel insecure.

Interviewer: Ya, that is true

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret stands for and why?

Participant 3: I think they stand for a very...like 10 years ago the ideal women which was: be skinny, be attractive, be playful, but none of those women actually appear striking and sort of...strong and independent, here they all sort of seem submissive to the audience that need to judge them to decide whether they are good enough to be in the show or not adverts it was more like in a submissive way they are playful and sexualised and there wasn't really any independence or assertiveness.

- I mean it is interesting, still to this day Victoria Secret is one of the leading lingerie brands, do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 3: Uhm...(thinking) For me it is difficult to say because I've actually not been influenced by them at all so, like I've said I haven't been in a Victoria Secret shop or many of their adverts I've just seen snippets of their runway show here and there but...ya it's difficult for me to say but I would presume that they do have a big influence considering that they are the largest lingerie company ya.

Interviewer: Do you think that it is a good thing or a bad thing?

Participant 3: What, the influence?

Interviewer: (Nods head) Yes.

Participant 3: Uhm...no, well if this is the image that they portray then I think it's a bad thing.

- What do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 3: (Looking surprised) Sho well... you constantly have to be on a strict training program and a strict diet – because it's all over social media people try to follow their diet and training programs. It's really not obtainable for an everyday working person because you have to commit to that lifestyle.

Interviewer: And these are the models only jobs.

Participant 3: Yes, exactly! And that also creates this sort of... ag now I've lost the word... Unrealistic, unrealistic goal you are setting for yourself.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 3: Hmm... well there's two girls of colour, the rest are still white but then there's not Asians, then they are all very tall – long legs, very skinny, probably all about A/B cup I guess...ya.

Interviewer: Interesting, so then would you say there is a very specific mould of women that they choose or not.

Participant 3: Ya, it's very weird because they go sort of against a lot of cultures. I mean especially like African cultures – the curvier you are the better you know. Uhm... I mean if you even look back at renaissance painting's the girls were all curvy and they were encouraged to be curvy and to sort of be ok with that. Where here the skinnier or like slender – it's as though they can through a slit (laughs).

- After looking at this and viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less, why?

Participant 3: No less. I don't think I'll ever find a bra that will fit me. (Laughs)

Interviewer: Can you elaborate a bit more on why the brand appeals to you less?

Participant 3: I mean I'm a big supporter of encouraging all women to be ok with who they are uhm... and if you are sort of encouraging this sort of 'perfect proportional body', well I don't fall into that category at all, and I will never and never plan to because I enjoy my sport and I uhm...enjoy strong and having muscles so ya. For me I can't support something that make women feel ashamed of who they are for having different interests and things like that.

Interviewer: Ok well that's interesting.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand or not, why?

No, no not at all. I mean before this I always thought "ya, maybe I should check Victoria Secret out", because of what they're about cause every "raves" about them but after all of this I have no interest because I won't find anything there that suits who I am.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 3: Uhm...ya, that's difficult as well because I think there are a lot of movements now these days that sort of coincide with what I'm sort of viewing beauty as - encouraging the natural beauty, being comfortable in your own skin but then there is still some of these companies that encourage the fact that you need to wear make-up, your hair needs to be blow-dried, you have to be a certain size and weight or proportion. So, it is difficult but I think we are moving away and actually embracing the female form in its diversity. As soon as you are comfortable in your own skin – people still decide you need to wear a lot of make-up to be able to be beautiful. There are constantly a lot of videos on social media to embrace who you are.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 3: No...no (laughing). They do not.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 3: No, it will probably not because I have already established who I am, I have in my head where I would like to go with myself. So, no they don't have an influence on me.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 3: Uhm no, like I said they represent a really small portion of women out there. Uhm, for instance the majority of women are white and here and there they have started including black people but they are still excluding a large majority of women out there.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 3: Yes, I wouldn't try to support companies that aren't in-line with the same beliefs as mine.

## PARTICIPANT 4

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 4: I think everyone has a different view of beauty, I think it is how you view yourself and how you view others. So, I think if you don't view yourself positively you will never see beauty in any other things. You can be envious of other people's attributes you see as beautiful but I don't think you could find other people beautiful. So, I think beauty is something different to everyone, but to me I think it's someone with like I guess a good energy, happy, someone that's content with themselves – and if they are not content with themselves they are happy to be with you and content for you.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 4: Honestly, Pink. Like the word pink. I associate the word pink – it sounds so bad but like those blonde, blue-eyes girls, like Pink. Its pink. Its' very girly – and girly is not always feminine. Very young very, very girly. Maybe as you get older Victoria secret isn't something you would really participate it. Actually, if you see in America, when they get older you see they do "La Perla" and stuff because Victoria Secret's more of a younger market – to me, I'd say. I would never think of Victoria Secret when I'm like forty. Ya, now when you like early twenties it's beautiful and stuff but I think when you get to forties you looking for high-end lingerie – I'd do "La Perla" or like other things, even like "Wonderbra".

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and I will ask you questions followed by the video.

Interviewer: Reflecting on this video as a whole, I want you to tell me what you think their culture as a brand consists of?

Participant 4: If you just look at it there is no sort of...it's almost like discriminatory. I think in the bunch of ten girls there was probably two black girls but there's no Asians, no Indians, there's no racial equality there. And then also there is no body difference

– it's like body discrimination. You can have liked added in their 'Ashley Graham'. I guess what they try go for – and this is what I mean with the word 'pink', is feminism like having fun with girls, but it almost comes across as sexist – like you almost trying to do this for the boys and I think that's their target market. I think when people buy Victoria Secret I think you trying to have it for sex appeal for guys – and that's what comes across, even the fact that they are undressing on the beach, I mean I almost want to say it could be an intro to a 'porno' – to turn a guy on.

Interviewer: Ok, I understand what you are saying a 100%, but let's just take it a step back and reflect on what you saw in the video and really focus on what you think the brands culture is about.

Participant 4: I would say, like what they say in America a 'size zero', like very bouncy – a blonde girl. Their culture is praising the ideal girl I think – depending on what you see as the ideal girl because they have a lot of brunette girls with light eyes. So, it's just the fashion world ideal girl – tall, skinny you know. I also think it is what men want, I mean what else is better? Girls playing volleyball on the beach...getting angry at each other. A very sexualised playful nature, ya. I think its young, its playful it's fun but it wouldn't be for a mature target market – it is for a specific group of girls...I mean even the way that they jumped into the pool (laughing), I just don't know anyone that would jump into the pool like that. Ya, so their target market's very very small. I had Victoria Secret and their bra sizes don't go above like a Double D and they stop at like a 38 – if I remember. So, if you are fuller-figured they actually don't operate for you.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 4: Like a blonde, blue-eyed. It's someone very playful, very flirty, I wouldn't say someone very serious. When you look at beauty and brains I'd say it is someone more on the beauty side. So, like blonde hair, blue eyes, perfect body, like playful. A perfect example is Mikayla McClean – very playful, serious and flirty, I wouldn't go to her and speak about feminism you know. Someone who doesn't see the discrimination in the world – it's almost horrible to say, like they don't see the different complexes. I Guess it would also be a young woman, I wouldn't ever see my mom going to Victoria

Secret and enjoying it. This is for like young women – almost like confused like they don't really know what's going on

- I am now going to show you a video of the “Making if an Angel” and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 4: Uhm...I think what they are trying to go for is really good – like they say they looking for personality and I guess being a model you have to learn to smile with your eyes, and I guess their personality does need to shine through but, I know that with Victoria Secret two or three years ago they were having quite a big uproar and they only started to use the Asia market in their shows only very very recently. So, they say they looking for a different type of women - I guess they are starting to come with more different races and stuff but it's all the same women still that are tall, and like you saw they are looking for the right proportion and stuff and you have a table of judges that are just judging you and I guess that is your job – you are there to look good but for them to judge you.

The fact of the matter is that you walk up and down in your underwear and there isn't really an interview like asking, “Hi, how you got here, and what do you do, what's your past experiences?”. I think it's all based on the exterior – I think feminist people really go wild over this type of stuff. But ya you basically just judging someone on their outer proportions on their weight and their body and everything. So, I think what they mean with proportions is the girls that are like short and stuff they don't get chosen and their portions are off. I mean they come off across as though they looking for confidence and stuff but i'm pretty sure all of those plus size models have not been included – and it's not like they don't have confidence. I think as much as they preach about looking for confidence and the right personality it's all about body – which I guess that's the industry they're in.

- How does this make you feel, why?

Participant 4: Well... i'm not really their target market so I wouldn't – that's the thing I can't buy from Victoria Secret bra's and stuff – according to my body i'm two sizes bigger then I am on the top then the bottom because of my boobs so I can't buy from

them. So, I guess the older you get the more comfortable you get with yourself, but definitely when I started buying from Victoria Secret I was like 17...and I obviously knew about them ages ago so it obviously does create a lot of body discomfort... like ok you should be really tall, skinny, you should be really skinny you should be really toned. So, it does create a lot of body discomfort because then you realise this is what the lingerie industry finds beautiful. So, if you don't fit in it – and obviously they don't make lingerie then for you, can you really wear lingerie? You don't see advertising of regular sizes in any of their campaigns it's just for tiny women.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 4: I think they stand for playful, flirty, sexual energy. I would say that. Girls having a good time. Even in the designs of their bikini's – it is very girly, very young girls having fun. I think you also see it in their fashion shows the outfits are so "out there" like you will see a design of a massive butterfly and then you look at the underwear and you can't really see yourself wearing that at like 30. It's very young and playful.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 4: Uhm... I do think so, I think now it's getting less and less but I really do think in terms of where it is, like here in South Africa not really because it's not that prominent. But I think in a place like America where I think Victoria Secret is like your La Senza – you could really cause a lot of body dysmorphia, a lot of eating disorders and depression because I think you saw in the first video – it's what every boys dream is. You start to think like that because you don't fit the body and I think it causes of eating disorders and anxiety. I think the older you get obviously it gets better, but it's for young, flirty girls and the brand has a bigger impact on younger girls.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 4: Well in terms of body or...?

Interviewer: Just more in general who they person has to be?

Participant 4: I think you would have to be like fit, I think your body has to be on point – I think they are possibly quite stringent on that. I think they want someone confident, someone who is playful, who is flirty, who kind of stands for what their brand is – can go on the beach, can go in the pool, can do whatever they want. I guess someone who can live the perceived Victoria Secret girl lifestyle. It's all of that stereotypical "girls having fun".

Interviewer: Tell me a bit more about that representation of young flirty girls "trying to" have fun?

Participant 4: I think it depends what point you are in your life – when I was younger it looked like, "wow, this is what people do and how they have fun in varsity" but now the older you get the more you realise, "hey, most of these adverts aren't real life". I think it even makes you angry at the fashion industry but I think when you younger...like eighteen to twenty-four, that is something you aspire to be like, and then I think when you realise you don't fit the demographics of it then it could be a bit disheartening.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 4: The major thing that stands out for me is that there is no diversity – and never mind in terms of the race of the girls there are no Asian girls and there are four white girls and two girls of colour. I think like I said again there isn't much body diversity – I think none of them are bigger than a "B-cup", I think they are all extra-small panties - I think there are a lot of plus size models you can add into this, like if you look at America a small percentage of their people are like this and everyone else is either normal or obese. So, there is not much body diversity in that. And the problem with them is that they can't show body diversity because their sizes don't allow body diversity. Like in this I think that they could show a normal person – like someone with a bit more hips, a bit shorter a little bit stubbier because they don't offer bigger sizes in terms of plus size wear. Their "double-D" cup sizes are also a lot smaller compared to other brands. So, I don't think they can show body diversity because they do not make body diversity underwear.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less, why?

Participant 4: Uhm...I think when I was younger – before my boobs grew and stuff it did appeal to me because I still kind of fitted in there, but now it just doesn't appeal because it's one of those things where you "look but don't touch" like some of their stuff is beautiful but I'm just not going to buy it. I can't buy underwear there – I could buy bottoms 100% but I can't buy tops there its honestly a brand I right now follow because I think some of their stuff is really beautiful but it's not a brand I follow because I'm going to buy their things.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 4: Uhm...no, like I don't think – I don't know I was just never one of those fun, flirty girls. It just wasn't me, maybe if I had a different body, I might be personally connected to it but I don't feel personally connected because: a) I don't own much Victoria Secret and b) It doesn't appeal to me – I can't buy it. Now when you look at it you think, "why would I buy a bra with a bunch of little pink flowers on it – like where are you gonna wear it, and how do you wear it under clothes?".

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 4: I would say it is someone that is quite thin if you look at all the fashion magazines. I still do think in society you can be thing but I don't think people find Kate Moss beautiful and she is as thin as possible – I find she is interesting to look at. But I do think there is a certain type of confidence that comes out of it, a certain smile, you know...certain facial features. I think right now in society beauty as horrible as it is...is someone small, I would say tall but not too tall – it's almost impossible to achieve. It's unrealistic view of beauty. But they say each country beauty is different – some people like wider eyes, some people like smaller eyes. But generally – I think there was a marketing campaign where they asked each country to design the most beautiful women...everyone is a lot smaller except for the Latin women and obviously if you go to the Asian countries they prefer longer necks... things like that.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 4: Uhm...I think let me explain it like this, when you see them on the Victoria Secret stage and stuff they really happy and they look confident and a lot of them are really happy and confident and happy with who they are and that to me is beautiful. But, I wouldn't say those are particularly women I look up to – if I looked up to them I would just be depressed, it is just to me unattainable. But I do think a lot of them are beautiful – like dark hair and bright blue eyes like I think that's beautiful, it's very different – and a few of them are different. With some of them the confidence is there – and to me that's the biggest thing – I think if you are confident in your beauty you are beautiful.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 4: I think if you are not trying to be a Victoria Secret supermodel – it makes you aggressive because I kind of think that's what men expect from you – well not all men but hat some men expect from you, I think it's the girls who don't want to be labelled that or fight against it that are almost labelled as bitter. So, they don't resonate with me and they haven't changed me as a person, and you know I am just one of those girls that if guys come I'm the first to tell you, it's unrealistic – I don't know anyone that went to a sleepover and had a sexy pillow fight. I think it makes you realise how far women still have to go because you never see men – like bathing suit places for men...them running on the beach playing volleyball, or kind of just standing in the waves. So, I think it just kind of shows I guess how long and far society is from changing. And, as much as things change and we do change there are still a lot of things that aren't changing, they almost going backwards – it's like you take one step forward and two steps back, that to me is what Victoria Secret is. It's because it doesn't resonate with me as a person it is unattainable – like I won't have a body like that it's just unattainable.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 4: No, that I can say a straight no. I just don't think women all around the world look like that. Like I said they just don't have the demographics right either. You know – I guess all people think it's just white women but there are a lot of Latinos and a lot of Europeans, I just don't think women all around the world look like that. You

know, I don't even think one percentage of the women around the world look like this. You know they might be tall but they don't look perfect like this, they might be tall but not have the body like this, or they have the body and they are short. So, I just don't think this represents women around the world if i'm being hundred percent honest – especially like just also women who are struggling and stuff I don't think they would relate to Victoria Secret at all, I think Victoria Secret would kind of be an “American Dream” to someone who is struggling – like something that is unattainable, like something you'd want to do one day like frolic on the beach with your friends. Especially to the Asian market, to the African market and to the Latin market I think this is really not realistic.

Victoria Secret is selling a lifestyle that only one percent of the world could possible obtain. So, I think they are trying to sell, “If you buy our things, if you buy our lingerie you are part of this little click that we have and you might frolic on the beach with your friend.”. But I just think it's false hope, you know and I think even when you buy these bras you look at Candice Swanepoel and think “Wow, this bra is going to look just like this on me.”, you then realise when you put it on it just doesn't look the same – so I think if you are one of those women that looks at Victoria Secret I think it could lead to a lot of body dysmorphia and depression. So, to their target market it's either making them really happy or really sad – you either fit the description or you don't.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 4: I think I am just a bit of a bigger, fuller chick. If I had to look how everyone advertises and I had to get offended by it then you wouldn't be able to buy anywhere, because everywhere is kind of like smaller – even Woolworths, I buy a lot of my clothes at Woolworths but you will never see a curvy girl unless it's in the curvy girl section, you'll never see it in their advertising. So, I don't really get offended and even though I have all of these views on Victoria Secret if their bras were able to fit me I probably would go out - not buy all their stuff but I would buy it. But, it really does – I guess what they are selling is something I can't buy but even the lifestyle they are selling I wouldn't kill myself if I couldn't get a Victoria Secret bikini. You know, it's not a brand that resonates deeply within me and that's again because I can't buy it. But even if I could buy it, I don't look up to the lifestyle so it doesn't affect me as much. I don't want to be

a beach babe on the beach – you know, I just never have but for other girls who want to be a beach babe or want to be this small I think you could definitely get offended or you would get obsessed with Victoria Secret.

But with me personally, I think it's just a big lie their advertising campaign is just unrealistic for majority of women – but then again, I think that's just the fashion industry. I guess they just selling a lifestyle and it's something to look up to – I just don't think people in Africa are looking at Victoria Secret like, "this is the brand, this is the one, today I have to go frolic on the beach and get their bikini."

## PARTICIPANT 5

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 5: Oh, wow that's a difficult question (laughing). Ok...uhm I think beauty is if you can see that someone is confident and they know who they are and it shines through in how they behave...just when you can see someone is living the most comfortable version of themselves.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 5: I think playful actually, specifically the fashion show. They always seem like they are having a ton of fun in all of the fashion show or Instagram and whatever it always looks like they are having a lot of fun...so like very playful.

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and tell me what you think their culture consists of?

Participant 5: I think they like aim to always make it look like the girls are always enjoying the shoots and everything. Like this one for example, it actually looks like they are on holiday having fun – you know and it's actually their job to do this (laughing). Ya and I know their winter shoots they also try make it look like the girls are just a bunch of friends, just a group of friends going on holiday and having fun. When really, it's the shoot for the ad. So, I think the culture always tries to make it look like people are enjoying themselves and that they are like very confident. Uhm...and ya just like carefree.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 5: Ok let me just think. Ok I think it would be someone who is 24 or 25. Uhm... she would look like one of the models so thin and tall...and what I think she would like be doing?

Interviewer: Ya, sort of just like what she looks like and what her characteristics would be like as a person

Participant 5: Uhm...I actually need to think about this. I think she would be what the brand tries to make their models seem like she would be carefree, she would travel very often, she wouldn't be too caught up in the stresses of life, she would sort of just go with the flow. Uhm...she would be like quite healthy and health conscious. She would like dress very trendy.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making if an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 5: So, I think the pressure on the Angels is quite hectic – to stay in shape obviously. Like she was saying she makes them put on the lingerie for the casting and they look at every little single detail – they are looking for every imperfection so I think there is a lot of pressure walking in there and trying to get casted. Uhm...and they say they are looking for personality and everything as well but I feel like that is kind of secondary to "does she look good". Personally, that is what I think and then, does she the personality to go along with it.

- How does this make you feel; does it make you feel a certain way?

Participant 5: Uhm... I think it just shows you the pressure on – or that a lot of women face a similar sort of pressure to look a certain way and uhm... the behind the scenes of Victoria Secret is quite focused on the same sort of things that society looks at. So, it does kind of get portrayed in their image as well the immense amount of pressure to look good.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 5: So, if you look at Victoria Secret maybe twenty years ago maybe when Tyra Banks and Heidi Klum and everyone was walking – I feel like the body shapes the body shapes of the women were a lot more diverse then it is now. Like they weren't as skinny as they are now. So, I feel like maybe the brands identity has changed a bit

because it use to be more about like curvy women – like I know the girls that use to walk back then never use to walk in any other shows because all the other designers refused to hire them. Now, the models that are walking for Victoria Secret are walking in Chanel and all the other shows – they are just as skinny as all the other models you would see everywhere else. I feel like their brand has changed a little bit in that sense because they use to encourage more diversity amongst women's body shapes now they don't anymore. So, I feel like they stand for much more uniformity - in terms of women's proportions and weight. The brand use to be a lot more focused on personality and that has faded a bit, ya.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 5: I think from a fashion perspective definitely because I know like a lot of brands try to replicate – for example I know in South Africa they don't sell all the underwear and swimwear so a lot of the brands will try replicate the Victoria Secret swimwear or Victoria Secret underwear like Cotton On or Cotton On body will be like influenced by a lot of the stuff Victoria Secret does. Uhm... and I do think their models – if you a chosen as one of their models you have such a presence on social media and because their runways show are such a big deal and they get massive musicians to perform at their thing. I think they do influence how people like view beauty standards, and I do think from a fashion perspective they influence how brands design and replicate what they do.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 5: So, I think... just getting there is quite hectic. Like I know a lot of the models will try for years and years to audition for Victoria Secret so, it takes a lot of discipline and there is a lot of pressure on what you look like to try break into Victoria Secret. Uhm... and I feel like from a diet and exercise perspective it takes a lot because you don't just look like that by accident. So, I obviously think these people are working out a lot, eating very strict meals and they do work hard – the people that get in there

are often models for a couple of years before they get into Victoria Secret so, I do think it is very difficult.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 5: Hmm... ok well they are obviously all very beautiful (laughing), but ya they are very skinny and the look of a lot of them it's not extremely diverse – the look that they going for, ya. And, ya the fact that they are very thin...(laughing).

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less?

Participant 5: I don't know, it's difficult to say because like obviously they do project this image of what they consider to be beautiful but because they are such an influential brand, I do still kind of look up to it even though it is not realistic or that 90% of the population will never be what they look like. It's difficult to sort of separate in your mind what you know is unrealistic and what you still look up to as a brand – but it does sort of make you question yourself just because you know that there are negative factors and parts of their image that come out.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 5: Ya, I think I do. I just think because I've grown up each year watching the show – It's like an event in my calendar. And when they change the angels I'll notice or when they have new ones or if they release who is walking in the fantasy bra I'll like get excited for that (laughing). So, I do feel very much like I'm part of what's going on, but it's also like the idea of it that I've grown up with for so long. So, ya and like I followed it from when it was Heidi Klum to now when its Martha Hunt ya...

Interviewer: Do you think your connection lies more with the Victoria Secret models themselves or the brand and their clothing.

Participant 5: It might actually be more with their models because like they don't really sell a lot of Victoria Secret stuff here but I have bought overseas. But I don't religiously go buy Victoria secret stuff – I don't know if it would be different if they sold stuff here.

Uhm... I think it might be more with the image that the models portray and less with what they are selling.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 5: So, I think in the recent year's society has become more focused on like curvy body types. But the definition of beauty is still overall – very skinny, tall, perfect skin and like very confident. Because of like the Kardashians curvier people are being normalised a bit more. But the change is like slow. I think Victoria Secret models are very much in the same sort of description that society sees as beautiful – uhm... so I think they do sort of emphasize more what society thinks is beautiful, because they just keep hiring models that fit that description.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 5: I think like I said when someone is confident and looks comfortable in themselves that's what they try to portray in their ads and stuff of the girls having so much fun. So, in a way yes but at the same time it keeps coming up in your head how much they even went through to get to that point. I feel like some aspects of the brand would align with what I see as beautiful but no necessarily that they promote being that thin, that girls' sort of have to meet certain body proportions.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 5: Ya I think it does, because if you constantly have images of them on Instagram or on YouTube even you do sort of compare yourself to how they look and it's never really favourable, you are never going to be like, "Wow, I look better than Jasmine does" "(laughing). So, it does sort of negatively impact your body image or how you look at yourself just because you are not a hundred percent aligning with how they look.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 5: No, I don't think that they have a diverse enough representation of models. Uhm...Not only just race but also like body shapes and everything. The brand does not accurately portray different types of women that you get. Uhm...and they all sort of – they are not all exactly the same but they all come from the same the same experiences so, that is also not accurately representing life and women. So, no I don't think so.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 5: Hmm...I am not actually sure, I think it actually might. Just because the brand does not represent a hundred percent of what I think women should consider beautiful. Uhm... ya that might make me think twice about buying stuff from them.

## PARTICIPANT 6

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 6: I think beauty is probably confidence, so if a woman is confident in herself. Uhm... ya I would say that's my definition of beauty. I Don't think it necessarily matters – you mustn't be neglectful, you must look after yourself and go through the effort you know to do your hair, nails and things like that. But at the end of the day I think if you are very confident that is beautiful in a woman.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 6: Oh... that's very difficult because initially the first thing that comes to my mind is superficial but I feel like if you go a little bit deeper uhm... they do try promote women to feel confident – i'm sure that is what they go after, but I feel like the brands look is a little bit unrealistic, that they appeal to women that are very skinny.

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and tell me what you think their culture consists of?

Participant 6: The culture... it could probably be that they are trying to promote that if you wear their brand you will have a lot of fun, their culture would probably be something social, uhm... I want to say partying and having a holiday.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 6: Ok, alright...ok so obviously a female, uhm...very good looking (laughing). Personality wise probably very outgoing, very social, very wealthy...

Interviewer: It can literally be anything that comes to mind.

Participant 6: Ya, because you associate it with the unattainable life almost. It is like the person that lives the very perfect, ideal – doesn't have to get down and dirty, you

know what I mean. Living the good life. This person would typically be twenties to early thirties.

- I am now going to show you a video of the “Making if an Angel” and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 6: Ok, my thoughts are bad...(shocked). It's very superficial and unrealistic. They obviously associate the perfect women with very skinny and having the right proportion. What did they say..." they choose twenty-five of the most beautiful girls", I mean what they are advertising is unrealistic, I mean the majority of females do not look like this on a daily basis? I mean those chicks are probably those chicks are probably starving forever to look like that (laughing). Uhm...So, I think that's ridiculous.

- How does this make you feel; does it make you feel a certain way?

Participant 6: Upset! I feel angry. I personally feel a little bit self-conscious because they associate that with beauty. So, if they saying it, it must be true – because they are the professionals. So, it feels like you need to meet this expectation, I feel a little bit upset.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 6: Uhm...they probably stand for the elite, the people who are upper-class – the unattainable. They are not promoting confidence for women. They don't hit that mark for me, I feel for me they promote more for the elite – only the elite can be like that, a niche – they don't advertise to all females.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 6: Yes, very influential but not necessarily in a good way more influential in a harmful light. I think that the brand promotes unrealistic standards for females. Uhm... still with that being said, very influential. So, I think influential might not be a nice word to use because they are not getting good out of their marketing, you know what I mean. So, let's say if they had to promote women's confidence – then they

would do a very good job. But they are not influential in a good way. They are not promoting the right image but they are getting through to a lot of females.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 6: I would say that it takes long hours of dedication of training, a very strict diet, a lot of hours of travelling – they travel a lot. Uhm...probably have to be well connected and obviously exceptionally beautiful.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 6: Ok so... majority of them are Caucasian, and then I feel like the one lady there is of colour, is she?

Interviewer: Yes, she is.

Participant 6: Ok, so it seems like they are obviously trying to incorporate different colours but they are not doing a very good job of it. It feels like they just put her there because she is of colour. It is an ugly thing to say...shame she is really beautiful but uhm... look I've always thought the Victoria Secret models are racist, not the models the brand because I feel like they obviously favour females that are tall and skinny. There is a certain look and I feel like they think people of colour don't fit that that sort of look.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less?

Participant 6: Less, because I always thought in the back of my head that Victoria Secret – there was some hope. Like the women are very confident and promoting beauty and things like that but after that video and this, I feel that it is very superficial. I feel that the lives that the models live...imagine being judged like that (annoyed)? Imagine them walking down and the only thing they are looking at is your body and if you have the right proportion and if you are the most beautiful women then you fit their mould of what's the most beautiful, you know. I don't think that's right, I think that's

very upsetting actually because on social media you often hear like Candice Swanepoel she's always like, "Ah, you know women are so beautiful" and she posts about nature and stuff but she is probably very superficial, surely for you to be in that kind of business you have to be – I didn't know it was that hectic.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 6: Personal connection in terms of I feel, I feel personally attacked (bursts out laughing). Like because you are not tall, blonde and beautiful you are never gonna be beautiful, no-one is ever gonna find you attractive, you have to be like that. So, yes personal in that sense but not in a good way (laughing).

Interviewer: That's really funny (laughing), but more in general do you feel you have a connection with the brand?

Participant 6: There is no connection for me with the brand because I don't feel firstly, I will ever be able to live up to that and I am to a superficial person... I don't value the same things that the brand does. I would more value for example a person with a brain – I'm not saying the girls are dumb but how would I know because they are not judged on anything other than their appearance, ya.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 6: I would say society's definition of beauty is skinny, blonde, bimbo...that's ugly (laughing). It's different from all eyes but probably from a male's perspective if she can cater to his ego – if she makes him look good kind of thing. But in terms of actual looks, definitely skinny in proportion: big boobs, small waist, nice bum kind of thing.

Interviewer: So where do you think Victoria Secret comes into play in terms of their brand and beauty in society?

Participant 6: They are obviously catering to the general society, uhm...what the general population sees as beautiful. So, yes, I think it's a society problem. So, ya they are catering to society and it works – they sell.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 6: Hmm...no, because I think it is fake confidence. I don't think those girls are truly confident – you can't be, I mean they probably ripped to shreds and if they pick up an ounce of weight...you know true confidence is not that.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 6: Yes, it makes me feel self-conscious, sort of like I have to cover up now because I don't look like that. I don't know, if it is necessarily accurate but I do feel worse as a female.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 6: No... definitely not, I think that they are very far from that. I think that they are completely inaccurate.

Interviewer: Please could you just elaborate a little bit more on why you feel that it is inaccurate?

Participant 6: Ok well...let's say we are sitting at a restaurant, most of the women that you see walking past, or sitting next to you do not look like that. I mean their weight is not average, their height is not average. The average women do not look like that and it is unattainable. Most people do not live those kinds of lives and cannot afford Victoria Secret, you know what I'm saying. Their lifestyles, their looks – the average women will, even if they wanted to could not lead that sort of lifestyle or appearance. So, it's completely unrealistic. If you just look around you in public nobody looks like that. The brand just doesn't have an accurate representation of females everywhere.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 6: Ya, I probably wouldn't support them. I feel like if I support them i'm supporting their poor...how do you say – what they represent. But I am a very opinionated person so, if I stand against something I won't support it. But then I don't

know if that is hypercritical because I would buy other lingerie but specifically not Victoria Secret. I don't know.

## PARTICIPANT 7

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 7: Well, I think when you look at people it's confidence and more like an act of kindness instead of what people are wearing – not looking at what they are wearing or what their bodies look like, it's how they behave.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 7: Lingerie

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and tell me what their culture consists of?

Participant 7: I think it's fun, playful and uhm...ya uhm having a healthy kind of good body or having a healthy body that is on point (laughing).

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 7: Ok...I think it would obviously be a woman, long hair, blonde or brown, she would have kind eyes...she would also be well dressed – not too formal more like jeans and more like a pretty skirt sort of vibe.

Interviewer: What's sorts of colours would you associate with this person?

Participant 7: Uhm... I think like light pastel colours. She will have a crazy feel to her as well. Uhm... she would have a heart for people, caring and she would be kind – basically a person that would be ahead of a charity sort of personality like a Rolene Strauss sort of vibe.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making if an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.

- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 7: Uhm... I think they are very critical – the judges and kind of like of like judgemental in a way but also the girls (the models) are confident in their own skin I think ya.

Interviewer: Why would you say they look confident in their own skin?

Participant 7: The way they walk and how they act when doing the casting to walk on the runway.

Interviewer: So, speak to me a bit about the criteria that they mentioned the models need to have to be part of the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 7: Well...I never thought people would look at women in terms of their proportions, it was very strict and how they mentioned a model can look good in clothes but then when she is in lingerie she can look out of proportion which is quite harsh I think.

- How does this make you feel; does it make you feel a certain way?

Participant 7: Uhm...I don't know I think if I had to be in that atmosphere I would feel uncomfortable because I would think that they would look at me in terms of my proportions and judge me, it's very judgemental. I think they have a very specific criteria and they don't dwell from it - like they won't stop until they get the perfect model for the show.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 7: I just think they want their brand to look good so they will only choose models based on their bodies and also, I think there is still a sense of their attitude – they have to have a vibe around like confidence but I don't think they look at personality so I think the brand is very materialistic. Like this runway video and the first video is very contradictory because it gives out two different messages in my personal opinion.

Interviewer: So, then what does that say to you about their advertising?

Participant 7: I think their advertising is good because they don't make you feel like people are gonna watch you with a false eye in terms of bodies that are out of proportion...that you will look good in what they offer.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 7: Uhm... I do think so yes, but also no because women are also focusing on loving who they are, especially with oversize models it's ok to be skinny but uhm...I also think on younger girls it has a big influence because they are unsure of who they are so they try to be someone different sometimes.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned the movement of women focusing on loving who they are and being comfortable as a woman on society today, so do you think Victoria Secret is a brand that promotes being comfortable as a woman in society today?

Participant 7: Yes, I think so because the models look very comfortable in the bikini's that they wear in the advert. It looks as though they are having fun and being comfortable and playing sport and so which means it's quite comfortable.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 7: Uhm... I think you have to be really pretty and well built, and also, I think you need to have a lot of confidence I think you also need to be a nice person – get along well with people and become an outgoing person.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 7: Uhm...culture, every lingerie is the colour of their skin – I don't know why... confidence also like well-built models and maybe like a sense of friendship and teamwork kind of.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less?

Participant 7: Uhm... I think it appeals more to me because I don't know a lot about it I would buy Victoria Secret and then I would feel like I could wear it with confidence because everyone else does.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 7: Not really, because I don't know the brand well enough and I can't exactly resonate so well with the brand and the models.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 7: I think it's still very based on what you wear and what you look like and what's on the outside if you look at society not just individuals.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 7: Uhm...well when I think of beauty I don't actually think of what they wear like bikini's or lingerie I more think of outfits and what people are like, but I do think confidence is beauty...the first advert looks like they kind people and I like kind and nice people.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 7: No.

Interviewer: Why?

Participant 7: Because I am starting to feel comfortable in my own skin and how I look like, and accepting that I might not have a flat tummy but that doesn't make me fat or ugly, ya. I feel confident about myself.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 7: No.

Interviewer: Just elaborate a little bit on why you think so?

Participant 7: Because it's impossible for all women and ladies in the world to look like these models. Uhm...ya and I think people also have different meanings of beauty and that that might not be beautiful to everyone and we may have different perceptions on what Victoria Secret is trying to show us as a brand.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 7: No, because it is a brand of good quality and you get really nice designs – like fashion actually more lingerie and their bikinis are really nice I would still purchase from them.

## PARTICIPANT 8

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 8: My definition of beauty I think relies on the person. So, if I had to define what beautiful is I'd say; feeling confident and beautiful in your own skin.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 8: The first word is sexy.

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and tell me what you think the brand's culture would consist of?

Participant 8: I think it consists of beautiful women. Uhm...but also showing that they have fun or you can have fun, uhm...there is a sense of enjoyment and the models or women in that video seem to be confident about themselves.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 8: Ok, what they look like: a young, blonde female with very long legs and uhm...the perfect body.

Interviewer: Wait, stop and just elaborate on what you consider the perfect body.

Participant 8: So, like a flat stomach, good sized boobs, uhm...very toned and tall. And the characteristics would include being unashamed so therefore, confident and uhm...also carefree in a sense.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making of an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 8: After viewing that video it seems like actually it is a very high-pressured situation for the models. Showing how the brand actually carefully selects them is very interesting because even being a model they have to live up to more specific, better standards than the average person, like the one guy said they need to be very proportioned in certain ways and have beautiful skin and uhm... something that they also look for is confidence so that their personality comes through which is important but they still very focused on the beauty and what they look like – especially when the lady said they need to consider how different they look in clothes in comparison to lingerie. Ya, because you see things up close and there is no retouching done so they've got to be very perfect.

Interviewer: So, what image does it seem that the brand wants to portray about themselves?

Participant 8: Definitely and image of perfection.

- How does this make you feel; does it make you feel a certain way?

Participant 8: Well, the first advert made me feel like it's something that I want to purchase because of the feeling it looked like those girls were having – and like I said my definition of beauty it how I feel but the fact that what goes on behind the scenes is that they search for that perfection...I think puts a lot pressure on girls, especially young girls because they see that and they think that is the only ideal version of beauty because that is what is out there and that is what we are exposed to. So, the brand really makes you doubt yourself.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 8: I think they stand for beauty but confident beauty. So, yes in a way they are looking for the perfect person visually but it does take confidence to walk around and flaunt yourself like that in your underwear. So, ya confident beauty.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 8: Ya, I think it's very influential because it's so well-known and the Victoria Secret fashion show is a big thing, I know about it and you can see it on social media and on tv. Many of those girls become celebrities and for many of those models it's their dream. So, it is a big deal and they have a platform because they have a voice because they are well-known in society. So, I think it does have an influence on society because we see that and it makes us think that is what the ideal person would look like or the perfect or the most beautiful person would look like. But uhm... even they are under-pressure to look like that.

Interviewer: Do you think it is a good or bad thing that the brand does that?

Participant 8: No, I think it's a bad thing, it gives girls – especially young girls the wrong message that that's the only kind of beautiful, that even a model is beautiful because she's a model still has to go through a hectic process to be cast.

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 8: Uhm... to act as an ambassador of the brand I feel they need to embody the brand so, physically because I said they look for beauty they have got to be beautiful. They have to have good bodies because they are modelling lingerie and swimwear but uhm...like I said they are comfortable and confident in their skin which is also a good thing because it shows you that even maybe they also have insecurities. Uhm to an extent they might have racially diverse people but they don't have different body types or short people you know. So, it is an ideal that they strive to put forward.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 8: Ok so, the main thing is the way that the colours gradiate, they've matched the persons skin colour to the colour of their underwear. In a good way it does show diversity however, they all have good bodies it's still showing you to be sexy you've got to be thin – I think. They all look the same in the sense that they all have good hair and great skin. So, it could also be photoshopped and if it has been for a reason – which is not realistic because what if they don't look like that.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less?

Participant 8: Uhm...probably less because I feel that if I had to wear one of their products I wouldn't look as good because they haven't shown me what somebody my size – who is short and a little bit chubbier would look like. So, if I had to see that person would look good I'd feel more confident in buying that brand.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 8: Uhm...to an extent a little bit because – especially watching the behind the scenes video uhm...it shows that they are still people, the models of the brand are still people and as beautiful as they are they are still criticized. So, they are not that perfect but in the sense of the image they portray as being sexy uhm...and that there is only one kind of sexy, it doesn't appeal to me in any way.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 8: I think society's definition is – I think it's slowly changing but it will always have something to do with what a person looks like, their exterior features. Uhm...people always say beauty is in the eye of the beholder but I don't always think that's true – especially because of what you see and what you are exposed to, they portray beauty as beautiful things – sexy girls and people that are beautiful.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 8: Uhm...yes and no because I did say that everyone's is different and that confidence does play a part, they do show some sort of confidence but no in terms of its very "cookie-cutter".

Interviewer: What exactly do you mean by that?

Participant 8: So, they all look the same, they all have perfect bodies. There is no variety or distinct variety.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 8: Ya, because it could make you feel insecure about yourself.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 8: No, I think they represent women in general, as a whole...They do have racially diverse people but that's just one aspect of it, there's lots of other things that differentiate women from each other – not everyone looks the same and the brand portrays one image of how women look.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 8: Uhm...not really, well maybe to an extent yes because like I said you wouldn't think you would look beautiful in that type of lingerie or swimwear or whatever but uhm...maybe you could because the rest do and in terms of their actual product they do have a good reputation, it looks like a nice thing to buy – so more of something that you could aspire to buy.

## PARTICIPANT 9

- What is your definition of beauty?

Participant 9: Like what do I identify as beauty?

Interviewer: Ya, what do you think beauty is when you look at people.

Participant 9: I think it is confidence in one's self, it doesn't have to be specific like uhm, like extremely skinny or whatever you can be beautiful if you are confident in yourself I think that that's the most beautiful you can be – like confidence, to have confidence in yourself.

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Victoria Secret Brand?

Participant 9: Hot models (laughing).

- I would like to show you a video of the "Victoria Secret Swim Special Commercial". Once the video is finished, I want you to reflect on this advertisement as a whole and tell me what you think their brand culture consists of?

Participant 9: (Laughing) really skinny women with small boobs. Uhm...they are focusing more on the girls then their own product. I feel like they focus more on how sexy the girls are and make the brand look then like showing the product. Ya, they are all the same size boobs - which are tiny, and small bums, none of them have curves. I know that was a big problem for me I could never buy Victoria Secret stuff and when I did they were too small because their sizes are completely weird.

Interviewer: Ok that is interesting, I just want you to elaborate a bit more on the culture for me. So, what does it look like the brand is trying to portray through this video?

Participant 9: Well...it looks like more obviously like beachy girls that can afford obviously to do things, you need to have money to do things that they were doing. It did look like they were having fun sometimes but a lot of the times they were posing. It wasn't very natural there was a lot more posing.

- If you were to imagine Victoria Secret, the brand, as a person, describe in detail who this person would be in terms of what this person would look like and what their characteristics would be?

Participant 9: Super beautiful face, long hair- that very straight or wavy not curly. It's more like a really toned chick who has small boobs and a little perky bum. Uhm...really beautiful blue or green eyes, very feminine facial features.

Interviewer: Ok, and what would this person's personality be like?

Participant 9: Kind of like a "barbie doll". It's more like uhm... (Pause) very barbie I don't know how to explain it but like plastic and fake, that's basically what I see when I see Victoria Secret is very fake, very shiny, very put on...She would sort of have this attitude like "look at me". She would be quite attention seeking.

- I am now going to show you a video of the "Making if an Angel" and we will discuss what you understood about this video afterwards.
- What were your thoughts about Victoria Secret after viewing this video, why?

Participant 9: I thought it was pretty ironic when he said at the end, "we don't want 28 identical clones walking down the runway", when literally what he said was "we are looking for the right proportions, we looking for beautiful women, with luscious hair etc..." which is literally putting a person into a category – he wants the same thing. So, he kind of shot himself in the foot there. Also, Victoria Secret think's the most beautiful women have to be super skinny and super in proportion...like it's unrealistic! It's unrealistic to people, I know how that affects other people, how can you say that's the most beautiful? Ok, everyone has their own look how can you put people into one category, which is one of the biggest things for society now that is messing girls up because they are putting girls into categories and saying, "this is how you have to look to be beautiful".

- How does this make you feel; does it make you feel a certain way?

Participant 9: Angry, upset.

Interviewer: specifically, because...?

Participant 9: Specially because Victoria Secret puts women into categories like this and there are girls out there have eating disorders and problems and they thing they need to look like that to be beautiful whereas, their body proportions won't allow them to look like that – either they have wider hips or shorter or longer legs. Victoria Secret is basically saying you have to look like this to be beautiful and that's upsetting because I know and I have experienced it with people close to who have eating problems and have issues – they see stuff like that and it affects them, so that's why it makes me angry the brand is promoting unrealistic beauty.

- After viewing this video what do you think Victoria Secret really stands for, why?

Participant 9: For like the “barbie doll” structure and unrealistic goals and... they want the most beautiful girl which is unrealistic. So basically, plastic and fake.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is an influential brand on women today in society, why?

Participant 9: No, because like I said before they don't cater to women who are not like that and it's a very small percentage of women who are tall, skinny uhm...long hair, and a beautiful face. Uhm...so it's not influential because it puts those wrong. The brand could be so influential because so many people watch their shows, if they have to use someone who is not a barbie doll – because basically they are just showing you have to be a barbie to make it in life or be beautiful.

Interviewer: Ok, i'm going to pose the question in a different way, do you think the brand itself that because so many women know about and follow this brand that that has an influence on women today in society?

Participant 8: Oh ok, yes, a 100% percent. So, like the brand does influence women's self-image and self-esteem not in a positive way. I mean majority of the women that are going to see their advertising are not going to feel good enough and think they don't look like that. And, that is majority, they would want to try be in that category

- Looking at the content we have seen thus far, what do you think it takes to be a Victoria Secret supermodel that acts as an ambassador for the Victoria Secret brand?

Participant 9: So, I think they do like girls with big personalities or are very quirky girl but that's not the biggest thing for them, the biggest thing is that they have to have these really long tall legs, a long torso with a really toned tummy, small boobs, small bum – that's perky obviously.

- Now I would like to show you a picture of the main Victoria Secret models to date, then I want you to tell me what really stands out to you in this picture?

Participant 9: Well there is more white girls, none of them are standing naturally. Extremely long legs (laughing) and luscious hair and toned tummies. I don't see the bras that they are trying to show, like that is not the first thing I see. I see the girls, which is all Victoria Secret is about, they promote the girls more than the actual product.

- After viewing all of the content thus far, does the brand appeal to you more or less?

Participant 9: Less.

Interviewer: Elaborate a little bit on why you say less?

Participant 9: Because I've always known Victoria Secret is a very like...they cater for the girls that are really skinny. I know they have always been biased in that way, they have never tried to move away – they do have girls of colour but that's not even that many. Uhm, so they don't cater for people of colour as much as they should especially for a big company. Because of the fact – what I've seen is they promote girls more than their actual product the fact that they put all these unrealistic goals in everybody's face. So, I just think the reason why I say I like them less is because it's just very unfortunate that they even say it behind the scenes that they are looking for the most beautiful girl which they identify as being "perfect", that isn't a beautiful person.

- Do you feel a personal connection with the brand at all?

Participant 9: No, I don't even follow the brand that much I follow the individual girls more than the actual brand. I have a pair of Victoria Secret underwear just because I mean it is Victoria Secret and everyone has one so I thought, "ag, let me just get one". But other than that, there is no personal connection, no.

- Based on the question I asked you earlier about your definition of beauty, what do you think society's definition of beauty is?

Participant 9: I think societies of beauty has always been up and down, but now it is more you have to be: skinny, very healthy, you have to eat healthy, you can't be a little bit overweight. There are some people speaking up against it but that's like really little. Majority of society see it as being gluten-free, vegan and uhm...all of this stuff so you can be accepted into society. So, it is skinny, beautiful hair, beautiful skin, really tall and toned and healthy but like perceived to be eating healthy food like greens and that kind of stuff.

- Does Victoria Secret resonate with your idea of beauty at all?

Participant 9: They do look for girls who are confident so I like that because as I said confidence is beauty but. They focus too much on looks like I don't even mention that looks mean you are beautiful – I mean you can be overweight and be absolutely stunning, ya. A natural look without make-up is so beautiful to me. I mean the Victoria Secret girls are posing in these ridiculous positions constantly painting their faces that is – I mean that's nobodies' body and you can't perceive yourself like that because you don't stand like that.

- Does this affect the way that you feel or act as a woman in any way?

Participant 9: Well look i'm very confident in myself as a woman so this kind of stuff doesn't bother me but it bothers me because I know people who it bothers and it affect me because I know how it affects other people – I've had some encounters with this and I know people who have had problems with this as a result of unrealistic expectations.

- Do you think that Victoria Secret is a brand that honestly represents who woman are all around world?

Participant 9: No, not at all. Because like I said before they don't even represent as many girls of colour never mind that, the girls of colour have really light eyes, light skin and really long hair which girls of colour don't have.

- In your opinion, based on the knowledge you now have about Victoria Secret, does this affect whether you decide to purchase from the brand or not?

Participant 9: I think if I were to buy anything it would be more like perfumes. I won't buy their bras – I think their bras are terrible. Uhm...but ya I don't even – if I walk past a Victoria Secret store (which I have done many times) I have never felt the need to go in and want to buy something or need to buy something. So ya, it made me more like feel, "I really shouldn't buy from them" but, if I do it would more be stuff that I don't wear like a vanity bag.

**Annexure 5: Letter of Ethical Clearance**

**August 3, 2018**

**Student name:** Tyler Carnie

**Student number:** 17608111

**Campus:** Vega Pretoria



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



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



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

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

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Amalia van Schalkwyk  
Supervisor  
Coordinator

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**Annexure 6: Final Research Report Document**

| Purpose/<br>Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Primary Research<br>Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Research<br>Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Seminal Authors/<br>Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Literature Review<br>– Concept                                                                                                                                                                                | Paradigm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Approach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Data Collection<br>Method(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Ethics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The fashion industry has undergone drastic changes with regard to diversity, the purpose of this study was to look at South African female consumer perceptions of Victoria Secret, to determine whether it resonated with the brand identity of Victoria Secret - specifically due to the uproar in the industry going through major shifts. | Has Victoria Secret created a brand identity that resonates with the perceptions and opinions of South African women?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Victoria Secret is ultimately comprehending the need for transition to become an more inclusive brand therefore, it was fundamental to understand what consumers current opinions and perceptions about the brand and the impact of their current marketing and advertising efforts on consumers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carla Enslin (2016)</li> <li>Kobus Maree (2016)</li> <li>Jean-Noël Kapferer (2012)</li> <li>David A. Aaker (1995)</li> <li>Jan Nieuwenhuis (2016)</li> <li>Franzél du Plooy-Cilliers (2014)</li> </ul> | <p>Theme 1: Brand association</p> <p>Theme 2: Diversity</p> <p>Theme 3: Culture</p> <p>Theme 4: Beauty standards</p> <p>Theme 5: Self-image</p> <p>Them 6: Buying behaviour</p> <p>Theme 7: Sexualisation</p> | <p>As this research paper looked to an exploration of human behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and opinions toward Victoria Secret. It is important to mention, that an interpretivist paradigm best suited this study, through qualitative research.</p> <p>This study made use of an axiological position of interpretivism.</p> | <p>Explorative research agreed with the nature of this study which was linked to individual opinions.</p> <p><b>Population</b></p> <p><b>Target population</b><br/>Diverse South African women that know about Victoria Secret between 18 -25 years old.</p> <p><b>Accessible population</b><br/>Diverse groups of Women that reside in the East of Pretoria (Brooklyn and Menlyn) between 18-25 that have purchased from or come into contact with Victoria's Secret Advertising.</p> | In-depth interviews that were conducted were semi-structured in nature.                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Participant</b><br/>Privacy and anonymity in terms of disclosing the participants information.</p> <p><b>Researcher</b><br/>Authors needed to be acknowledged as part of this research paper according to Harvard referencing</p> <p><b>Brand</b><br/>Highest level of integrity of Victoria Secret was maintained in the study</p> | Research findings suggested that was a strong mutual link between the way that consumers perceive the Victoria Secret brand, as a result majority of the participants are not inclined to purchase from the brand. Evidence points to the fact that Victoria's Secret brand identity is not aligned with the consumer perceptions of the brands image. | <p>This study could have incorporated a younger population of female consumers to gain new insightful findings about the brand.</p> <p>A mixed method approach could have been utilised to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research study.</p> |
| Research Problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Secondary Questions/<br>Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Key Concepts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Key Theories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Sampling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Data Analysis Method(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Limitations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Key Contribution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| There is a diversity problem in the fashion industry, specially looking at Victoria Secret – the brand embodies an image of what 'ideal beauty' ought to be, which is not representative of women globally.                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore the brand identity of V.S.</li> <li>To explore the brand image of V.S. as perceived by South African Women.</li> <li>To determine if their perceptions influence their willingness to purchase from the brand.</li> <li>To evaluate whether the brand identity and brand image of V.S. are aligned.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand identity</li> <li>Brand image</li> <li>Consumer perception</li> <li>Culture</li> <li>Victoria Secret</li> <li>Buying behaviour</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aaker's brand identity model</li> <li>Kapferer's brand identity prism</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Probability or non-probability</b><br/>Non-probability sampling</p> <p><b>Sampling method</b><br/>Snowball sampling method</p> <p><b>Size</b><br/>9 participants</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>the data analysis method which was utilised within this study was thematic analysis, as it ties into considering and analysing consumers unique opinions.</p> <p>Identifying themes and patterns within the set of data were fundamental to the findings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of time</li> <li>Lack of financial resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Delimitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sample group</li> <li>Data collection method</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | To contribute to a greater understanding of Victoria's Secret brand image specifically amongst South African consumers which has not been done in-depth before.                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

