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## **The Lush Brand and the “Ethi-Cool Effect”:**

An exploration into the effects of a simultaneously ethical  
and trendy brand on consumption patterns of mainstream  
South African youth

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# Declaration

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## **Abstract**

Corporate Social Responsibility is an increasingly important factor used by brands to inform a core ethical identity, and considered by consumers in their purchasing decisions. It is claimed that consumers are becoming conscious/green consumers; however, this may not be the case in the context of South African youth. Young consumers may say that they are aware of their environmental or social impact, but do not necessarily support ethical brands as their desire for trendy, material goods may be more prominent. The proposed study arose out of a necessity to address whether a brand such as LUSH, which offers personal care products and is both ethical and trendy, could thus change the consumption patterns of South African youth and potentially inform greener lifestyles overall. Furthermore, the intersection of ethical personal care brands and South African youth is an under-researched area. It is hypothesised that a majority of youth only buy LUSH products for its “cool” value, yet that some young consumers are starting to buy the products as part of a green lifestyle and not just due to the brand’s “cool” factor. The objective is to ascertain whether the above assumptions hold true in reality, and this will be achieved through exploratory, qualitative research. Data was gathered through questionnaires and personal interviews with mainstream South African students aged 18—25, in order to draw conclusions about their ethical/sustainable consumption patterns. Findings show that LUSH has predominantly impacted youth mind sets as opposed to actions, resulting in young consumers requiring that more businesses be transparent about, and accountable for, their actions. The results of the proposed research can help local strategists ascertain what could influence South African youth in purchasing ethical brands and in potentially becoming conscious consumers.

# Table of Contents

|                                                                                        |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Declaration</b>                                                                     | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Abstract</b>                                                                        | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Chapter 1: An Introduction</b>                                                      | <b>5</b>  |
| 1.1. Introduction & Background of the Study                                            | 5         |
| 1.2. Problem Statement                                                                 | 6         |
| 1.3. Research Question                                                                 | 6         |
| 1.4. Research Methodology                                                              | 6         |
| 1.5. Objectives                                                                        | 7         |
| 1.6. Purpose Statement                                                                 | 7         |
| 1.7. Rationale & Significance of the Study                                             | 7         |
| 1.8. The LUSH Effect                                                                   | 8         |
| 1.9. Outline of Chapter Contents                                                       | 10        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>                                                    | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</b>                                                 | <b>17</b> |
| 3.1. A Qualitative Methodological Approach                                             | 17        |
| 3.2. Population & Sample Size                                                          | 17        |
| 3.3. Data Collection & Analysis                                                        | 18        |
| 3.4. Limitations                                                                       | 19        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Findings &amp; Discussion</b>                                            | <b>20</b> |
| 4.1. Theme 1: Wavering loyalty towards LUSH for ethical cosmetics                      | 20        |
| 4.2. Theme 2: Lack of active conscious consumerism, despite awareness of its necessity | 22        |
| 4.3. Theme 3: Youth subscribe to the brand's "cool" factor                             | 28        |
| <b>Chapter 5: Conclusion &amp; Recommendations</b>                                     | <b>30</b> |
| 5.1. Concluding Remarks: A mind set for transparency                                   | 30        |
| 5.2. Final Recommendations                                                             | 32        |
| <b>References</b>                                                                      | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                                                      | <b>37</b> |
| Appendix A: Reference Images                                                           | 37        |
| Appendix B: Example of Questionnaire                                                   | 38        |
| Appendix C: Example of Interview Transcripts                                           | 39        |
| Appendix D: Example of Consent Forms                                                   | 51        |
| Appendix E: Ethical Clearance Form                                                     | 52        |
| <b>SafeAssign Report</b>                                                               |           |

# Chapter 1: An Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study

The inclusion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into a brand's strategy appears to be an increasingly important factor considered by consumers when deciding which brands to support. This phenomenon is linked to the rise of green consumerism, in which people are supposedly more conscious of the impacts of their consumption on society and the environment (Autio & Heinonen, 2004: 138). It was further noted that "we are now living in the "ethics era", whereby society's expectations of markets have changed" (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001: 563). This is particularly true of the current local context as 68% of South African consumers are prepared to spend more on brands that align themselves with aspects of CSR (Kgosiemang, 2015), such as operating ethically and sustainably throughout their supply chain, which includes being conscious of the welfare of communities and the environment (Mohr et al., 2001: 47). To reiterate, it is noted in a recent *fin24* article that "conscious consumerism and innovation is on the rise in the retail space and customers are demanding that attention is paid to details around sustainability, ethical sourcing, making a difference and conserving scarce environmental resources when making their purchasing decisions" (Smith, 2016). It is further explained in the article that conscious consumerism is particularly pertinent in our immediate context considering the current, country-wide drought in South Africa (Smith, 2016). This crisis indicates that the environment is vulnerable – that climate change is a reality – and emphasises the necessity to be aware of our impact on the natural world.

It appears that more brands are aligning CSR with their brand values to the extent that they are incorporating it as part of their core identity or as a primary selling point, rather than just as a superficial marketing tool. The actions of popular cosmetics brand LUSH reflect this trend, as it has "always used creative solutions to make a positive impact on the planet" (LUSH, 2016). Furthermore, while conscious consumerism is on the rise, Schmidt and Birkhoff additionally explain that the natural cosmetics industry, including brands such as LUSH, is growing exponentially (2). To reiterate, it is noted that "customers seek to buy organic make-up and personal care products, preferably without any additional ingredients and on the basis of an ethical business plan" (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 2). However, while South African consumers may claim that CSR is important to them, this does not necessarily mean that they do purchase all their products across categories only from ethical brands, nor that they are fully conscious of the social or environmental impacts of their actions. In line with Autio and Heinonen's assertion that "young people master the discourse of the green consumer, but do not necessarily act accordingly" (2004: 145), this may be particularly true of South African youth.

## 1.2. Problem Statement

Fresh cosmetics brand LUSH recently posted an image (see Appendix A: Image 1) via their local Instagram account featuring a young female consumer purchasing “Toothy Tabs” as opposed to regular toothpaste. The Toothy Tabs are part of LUSH’s latest ethically- and environmentally-conscious movement – underpinned by the tagline “Ditch the Tube, Use the Tab” – which encourages consumers to make a positive impact on the environment by using LUSH’s innovative, vegan and preservative-free toothpaste tablets as opposed to regular toothpaste (LUSH, 2016). The Instagram post calls attention to an issue within the domain of youth and ethical brands that is not so much a problem, but an intriguing observation that the research aims to investigate further. This interesting observation or phenomenon centres on the idea that young consumers could be willing to buy a drastically different type of product – even if it is a daily essential such as toothpaste – in order to align themselves with the ethical and sustainable values of a brand.

## 1.3. Research Question

That leads us to the main research question and sub-questions for this report. The primary research question asks:

1. In what ways could LUSH’s particular alignment of brand values with a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy be affecting the consumption patterns of mainstream South African undergraduate and graduate students aged 18-25, in terms of buying cosmetics and personal care products?

The sub-questions inquire:

1. To what extent are young South African consumers becoming more loyal to LUSH as a go-to brand for *ethical* cosmetics and personal care products?
2. Are these young consumers becoming inspired by brands such as LUSH to be more committed to and conscious of the environmental and/or social impacts of their general consumption and daily actions, and to make a positive impact?
3. Are young South African consumers becoming loyal to the brand only for the sake of its “cool” and trendy products, and not incorporating the ideals of ethical and sustainable living into their identity, and therefore as a part of their daily lives?

## 1.4. Research Methodology

A qualitative approach is applied to examine the above research question, as the question aims to uncover insights about and variances in youth consumers’ behaviour in relation to an ethical brand

and is therefore exploratory by nature. The sample population includes mainstream South African graduate and undergraduate students aged 18—25, and includes young people who have previously engaged with the LUSH brand. The research methodology implemented includes questionnaires with open-ended questions, combined with personal interviews with participants. These were conducted to gather detailed, textured data. Following this, the data was analysed inductively to gain a better understanding as to how youth as a sub-culture of South African society personally perceive the LUSH brand, and practice conscious consumerism in their daily lived experiences.

### **1.5. Objectives**

It is assumed that the following study will uncover that a majority of South African youth, who buy LUSH products regularly, are loyal to the brand primarily due to its “cool” factor. Though it is generally difficult to define what constitutes “cool” (Banaji & Buckingham, 2009: 8), LUSH is a popular brand known for beautiful, quality and innovative products, with quirky names, colourful designs and attention to detail. Therefore, LUSH’s identity as an ethical brand may be seen as just an additional perk. These same consumers may care about the environment, yet it is assumed that they do not fully incorporate ethical consumerism or ethical living as part of their daily actions. However, a minority of young consumers could be loyal to LUSH to the extent that they are willing to commit to conscious consumerism and to change the types of products that they use, as well as to pay a premium. In other words, young consumers could be prepared to consent to certain trade-offs (Cane, 2001: 371) – such as using Toothy Tabs rather than regular toothpaste – to start actively including ethical citizenship as part of their identity. LUSH may be doing something right by aligning their ethical actions and identity with trendy, quality products, in much the same way that Toms Shoes do “Cool with a purpose” to gain the trust and loyalty of young consumers (Roth, 2013). The primary objective of this study is therefore to ascertain whether or not these assumptions hold true in reality.

### **1.6. Purpose Statement**

The purpose is thus to explore the various ways that popular brand LUSH, which includes CSR as part of its core identity, could impact the consumption patterns of South African youth in terms of loyally buying the ethical personal care brand, as well as in terms of incorporating ethical behaviour as part of their identity and daily actions. A greater understanding of this will be achieved by asking the above mentioned research question and sub-questions.

### **1.7. Rationale & Significance of the Study**

As mentioned, LUSH is also a popular, trendy brand that offers both daily essentials in personal care (such as toothpaste), as well as items that could be considered luxury (such as Bath Bombs). Therefore, the desire for youth to consume LUSH products potentially results purely from a desire for

materialistic goods with a trendy brand name. Considering this, an investigation into this phenomenon is worthwhile as it could yield contradictory insights into the consumption patterns of South African youth in an era in which young people are supposedly becoming conscious consumers as it said that “[a] company must have environmental integrity if it wishes to sell to the Millennial Generation” (Roth, 2013). Moreover, the intersection of youth consumption patterns and ethical personal care brands is an under-researched area in South Africa, and there is little research into the LUSH brand – much of the literature on ethical cosmetics brands focuses instead on the company’s competitor, The Body Shop.

Furthermore, much of the existing research in this field is focused on consumers in developed countries, such as Autio and Heinonen’s study of affluent Finnish youth (2004). Conversely, South Africa is a developing country where consumers generally have less disposable income, therefore one cannot successfully apply results of international research to local markets. Thus, the proposed research may assist local brand strategists in understanding precisely what influences South African youth consumers concerning ethical products, specifically in terms of overtly ethical personal care brands. Furthermore, the focus on personal care brands is beneficial. Todd notes that “personal care products provide a unique lens with which to evaluate the ethics of green consumers” as these products are generally viewed as necessities and therefore provide detailed knowledge about consumers’ consumption patterns as well as their identity (2004: 3-4).

### **1.8. The LUSH Effect**

LUSH holds a unique position in the South African market. It is arguably the only personal care or cosmetics brand that bases its identity on an awareness of its environmental and social impact, and that provides basic necessity and luxury products that are both ethical and sustainable. It does this while simultaneously appealing to youth audiences in their fun and trendy brand image, product offerings and sometimes controversial or thought-provoking marketing campaigns. However, before discussing the significance of the emphasis on LUSH, it is necessary to first provide a brief background to the brand itself as well as the values that it purports to uphold.

As mentioned, the LUSH product offering includes ethical and environmentally friendly personal care products and cosmetics, such as innovative solid shampoos, vegan make-up and Toothy Tabs. However, LUSH does not only sell products that could be considered as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, but the brand also incorporates CSR and ethical behaviour as a key component of its identity and brand values, and therefore as one of its primary selling points. The brand’s daily actions and decisions are guided by a particular value system, which includes only using product ingredients that have not been tested on animals as well as only buying from suppliers who uphold the same values; ensuring their products provide good value to their consumers; and a strong belief that it is their responsibility – as well as that of the community at large – to look after our

environment and society (LUSH, 2016). The brand aims to keep improving on this ethical behaviour as well as on the ways in which it is helping the environment, such as by campaigning to use refillable packaging as a means of recycling (LUSH, 2016). To reiterate, it is stated on their website: “We are committed to becoming more sustainable the more we grow, by using our buying power to drive positive change” (LUSH, 2016). It appears that inspiring others to continue to make positive changes is included in their mission.

Furthermore, the brand is accountable for its actions, as an annual report is conducted to keep track of their performance, the reason for which is to guarantee “we maintain green issues alive in the hearts of our staff, ensuring that this policy delivers on what it promises” (LUSH, 2016). The fact that the brand is transparent about its actions and that it practices what it preaches is evident in LUSH’s reaction to a recent issue. The brand claims that “environmental issues are at the heart of the company and trickle through to the decisions we make on a daily basis” (LUSH, 2016), yet it was discovered that LUSH was using plastic glitters in many of its bath products, posing a threat to marine life in particular (Gallon, 2013). However, at the beginning of 2013, the LUSH brand swiftly responded to this problematic discovery and replaced the plastic glitter with environmentally-friendly alternatives – such as edible lustres and sugar – to ensure the products maintained the sparkle and shine that customers expect while implementing an innovative solution (Gallon, 2013). The cosmetics and personal care brand is clearly committed to its ethical identity.

The brand has, however, garnered some criticism, especially with regards to its choice of causes to support as part of its ethical campaigns. Marati notes the brand “has become known for its radical and somewhat offbeat protest methods” (2012), such as using an actress to act out the horrors of animal testing. While these actions might have been jarring to some and appealing to others – such as a younger, more liberal audience – a key criticism is that the brand can be hypocritical in its choices. For example, Marati explains that LUSH will not open stores in Israel due to the brand’s open support of Palestine and condoning of Israel’s alleged human rights abuses; however, the brand is sold in Saudi Arabia, where past human rights abuses have been even more apparent (2012). It is thus clear that the brand “is socially responsible, sustainable, and progressive, but also unpredictable, contradictory, and somewhat of a wild card” (Marati, 2012). Considering these factors – LUSH’s character as a somewhat rebellious environmental crusader – the brand may be particularly appealing to youth audiences.

LUSH is incredibly capable of attracting and interacting with young people, and this is not only due to the brands materially appealing product offering and brand image (Schmidt & Birkhoff, n.d.). For example, Schmidt and Birkhoff note that the brand’s “cool” factor lies in the fact that its online campaigning includes witty comments, good humour and a sexual undertone, which is further evident in the names of some products (41-42) – such as the “Sex Bomb” Bath Bomb. Furthermore, LUSH interacts with its consumers in a laid-back, familiar and more conversational manner than its competitors, which would be more appealing to youth (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 51). In so doing, Schmidt

and Birkhoff explain that young consumers are effectively able to identify with LUSH's ethical brand values (48), and that this ultimately results in "almost a "cult-like" excitement revolving around the brand" (Schmidt & Birkhoff, 59). Thus, the emphasis of this particular study on the LUSH brand is significant and useful as results could indicate the ways that a brand can successfully combine ethical with "cool" in the minds of young consumers, within a context in which "marketers typically suggest that achieving and maintaining the status of 'cool' is particularly difficult given the volatility of the youth market" (Banaji & Buckingham, 2009: 8). In other words, in today's highly saturated marketing environment it is an ongoing challenge to attract – and then keep – the loyalty of youth.

## **1.9. Outline of Chapter Contents**

The following report consists of five chapters, each covering an individual aspect of the the research process:

Chapter one is the preliminary section that sets the tone for the research report by introducing the topic and explaining the background and importance of the study. This chapter also introduces the research method to be followed, as well as objectives and hypothesized results.

Chapter two features the Literature Review and thus details key findings in prior research in this field in order to provide a worldview of the topic. Links were created between the literature and this study, and significant concepts and themes were made note of.

Chapter three details the research design and process used to acquire data and draw conclusions.

Chapter four consists of key findings and discussions, and therefore details significant themes that arose during analysis of the content of the interviews, and which were presented here in the form of quotations.

Chapter five ends off the research report as conclusions to the study are drawn, and recommendations for further research in this field are suggested.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

To ascertain whether ethical brands effect young consumers' purchasing patterns, it is important to begin with an understanding of prior research in the field.

This present study centres on the consumption patterns of South African youth. This is due to the fact that much of the existing literature in this field focuses on the purchasing patterns, mind sets and preferences of young consumers residing in the distant First World. For example, Schmidt and Birkhoff (n.d.) examine the preferences of USA-based youth audiences in terms of their engagement with ethical brands on social media such as Facebook, while both Carrigan and Attalla (2001) and Carrigan et al. (2004) interview UK-based consumers, Westberg and Pope (2005) examine young Australian students, and Autio and Heinonen (2004) base their study in Finland.

Autio and Heinonen focus on mainstream, young Finnish consumers aged 16—19, their environmental awareness, and whether this awareness translates into a green lifestyle (2004). Autio and Heinonen found that, as a majority of young Finnish consumers care more about possessing material goods, an “attitude-behaviour gap” (2004: 145) persists in which “contemporary youth in Finland is conscious of green values and practises but this is not necessarily evident in their consumer behaviour” (2004: 150). The attitude-behaviour gap is a term used throughout the literature in this field (e.g. Davies et al., 2012; Maggioni et al., 2013; Carrigan et al., 2004), and the possible causes of this gap will be elaborated on and discussed further on. To return to Autio and Heinonen's study, it offers an overview of young consumers' attitudes towards ethical products, yet does not focus on a particular ethical product category. This omission, together with the conclusion that “[g]reen consumption cannot fully challenge the pleasure-seeking hedonistic consumer culture” (Autio & Heinonen, 2004: 150), informed this study's focus on a particular brand within a particular product category – LUSH, a fresh cosmetics brand that combines ethical and environmentally sustainable values *and* the types of materialistic and self-gratifying products that Autio and Heinonen (2004) found to be preferred by youth.

Westberg and Pope examine the effects of cause-related marketing (CRM) – an aspect of CSR strategy, which LUSH incorporates – on young Australian students' attitudes towards brands that implement CRM campaigns, and their intention to purchase such brands (2005: 222). The results correspond with that of Autio and Heinonen (2004) as it was found that while CRM creates a positive attitude towards the brand, it does not necessarily lead to the active intention to buy it (Westberg & Pope, 2005: 222). In other words, despite the efforts of CRM, an attitude-behaviour gap still persists among young Australians.

Maggioni et al. aim to further understand the factors that either hinder or heighten the consumer's ability to translate an awareness of ethical and environmental issues into an active consumption of natural, organic and ethical products (2013: 2-3). The study is thus additionally referring to the attitude-behaviour gap, which is here described as the “discrepancy between the

increasing positive attitude of a large portion of the population toward ethical products and the relatively small market share that these kinds of products has gained so far” (Maggioni et al., 2013: 5). The results of this study are based on focus group discussions consisting of young Italian adults aged 18—26, and discussions were centred on their “perceptions about product features, price levels, distribution and communication activities of natural, organic and ethical cosmetics” (Maggioni et al., 2013: 2). These results are especially relevant as the study is one of few examples that provides insights on youth preferences when interacting with the specific product category of ethical cosmetics. In terms of the primary factors that impede youth audiences from purchasing this product type, Maggioni et al. discovered that youth often find it difficult to differentiate between counterfeit and authentically natural cosmetics due to a lack of information about them, that they struggle to discern whether these products are good quality and effective enough compared to their conventional non-ethical counterparts, that ethical products are less noticeable and attractive in terms of packaging and design, and that they generally question whether the ethical businesses are being wholly truthful about the nature and production of their organic and natural products (Maggioni et al., 2013: 10-14). These factors can thus result in the formation of an attitude-behaviour gap amongst young consumers.

Furthermore, these factors provide insights into the preferences of young consumers and therefore informed the choice of the LUSH brand as a specific research focus. This is due to the fact that many of the characteristics of this brand remedy the abovementioned problems that youth encounter when deciding whether or not to purchase ethical, organic and natural cosmetics. For example, Maggioni et al. note that youth “argue that often the look of natural organic and ethical cosmetics is less impressive and, in some ways, less appealing than the one of conventional cosmetics...[and] is one of the main reasons why packaging should play a prominent role” (2013: 12). It is further explained that the packaging must correspond with the ethical values of the cosmetics brand (Maggioni et al., 2013: 12). As mentioned, LUSH aim to use as little product packaging as possible, where many items can be taken home “naked” – that is to say, without any packaging – and, when packaging is completely necessary, 90% of the material is recycled (LUSH, 2014). In this way, the packaging reflects the LUSH ethos. Furthermore, the products themselves are attractive and eye-catching, of good quality, and the brand is transparent about its actions – as was evident in the plastic glitter incident mentioned in the introduction – and therefore constantly reinforces its brand purpose. It stands to reason therefore that LUSH could potentially bridge the attitude-behaviour gap, as it displays the characteristics preferred by youth audiences. On a final note, Maggioni et al. (2013) make a clear argument for the inclusion of youth as a sample population, as opposed to older market segments. As young adults of today have grown up in an era of globalisation, they have numerous choices available to them (Howe & Strauss, 2000 cited in Maggioni, 2013: 6). For this reason, it is said that they can be “extremely individualist and tend to consider their needs before thinking of those of others (Schmeltz, 2012), but at the same time they are inclined to be responsive to sustainable issues” (Bucic et al., 2012; Smith, 2011 cited in Maggioni, 2013: 6-7). Therefore, examining the

responses of this group in terms of ethical consumption and LUSH products – that are sometimes materialistic and therefore individualist – could yield interesting results.

Adams and Risborough, on the other hand, steer away from the preconceived notions of the ethical consumer and the intricacies of their consumption choices, in order to focus on “the broader question of if and how people negotiate the various calls to be ethical in their everyday consumption” (2010: 259). However, by examining the supposedly simple everyday decisions, it was discovered that there are deeper issues impeding consumers in their choice to buy ethical products (Adams & Risborough, 2010: 264). While respondents seemed to agree that the mass-production resulting from globalisation was ‘bad’, and that ethical and conscious consumerism is ‘good’, they “also indicated that in practice, ‘doing good’ was complicated by a number of obstacles” (Adams & Risborough, 2010: 263). For example, Adams and Risborough note that consumers’ varying levels of commitment to ethical consumption intermixed with competing and conflicting demands – for example, Fair Trade products are ‘good’ because of the ethical manner in which they are farmed, yet they are not necessarily as healthy as locally farmed, organic produce – and that this tension generally results in feelings of guilt among consumers (2010: 264). These results thus “support Cherrier’s (2007) assertion that individuals can feel overwhelmed rather than empowered by ‘ethical’ choices” (Adams & Risborough, 2010: 265). Using this allegation as a starting point, the following research will examine whether consumers’ choices can be made less overwhelming by a brand such as LUSH, where the product offering is both visually and materially appealing and ethically ‘good’, thereby potentially making the choice less of a struggle for the consumers and their inner moral conflict. Furthermore, while Adams and Risborough focused on these deeper conflicts of responsibility, their study did uncover that lack of accessibility, poor quality and premium prices also hinder consumers from committing to ethical consumption (2010: 270). As LUSH products are easily accessible and of premium quality, the brand could potentially encourage commitment to ethical consumption among South African youth. However, the brand’s premium price might arise as a hinderance.

Carrigan and Attalla similarly uncovered that factors such as fashion trends, value and brand image were more important than CSR values in the purchasing decisions of UK youth (2001: 659). A prominent finding in the research is that “[w]hen asked to identify socially responsible firms, all respondents signalled The Body Shop, but were quick to point out that they shopped there not to be socially responsible, but because they liked the products” (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001: 568). The following research will examine whether the same holds true for LUSH, a brand which is similar to The Body Shop in its product offering, though arguably more appealing to young consumers in its innovative product design and provocative marketing.

Additionally, in a similar vein as Carrigan and Attalla’s results (2001), Davies et al. found that, in the case of luxury goods, consumers are less inclined to consider the ethical values of a brand when making purchasing decisions (2012: 37), and that aspects such as price and prestige are more important (Davies et al., 2012: 47). This research provides a further framework from which to

examine consumers' behaviour in relation to the LUSH brand as some LUSH products, such as Bath Bombs, could be considered luxury according to the definition provided by Davies et al. – luxury products fulfil an element of desire or aspiration, rather than fulfilling consumers' basic needs (Mortelmans, 2005 cited in Davies et al., 2012: 40). Bath Bombs are not a necessity product, but rather add a luxurious, relaxing and playful element to the bath experience.

Further literature supports the choice of LUSH as a focus for this research, especially in terms of it being a brand preferred by youth. For example, Schmidt and Birkhoff (n.d.) conducted a comparative study which examined the content of the Facebook pages of The Body Shop and LUSH, paying particular attention to the ways in which each brand engaged with their audiences online. The study was based in the USA, and uncovered that, while The Body Shop might be a bigger brand than LUSH, LUSH is better on social media in terms of communicating more appropriately with its youthful target audience, and is therefore more attractive to them (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 2). To reiterate, Schmidt and Birkhoff conclude that LUSH “appears so appealing and attractive...[and] is more capable of the expectations the young consumers and net-generation has of them and therefore acts accordingly” (55). They are effectively attracting young consumers online for a number of reasons. As LUSH frequently posts entertaining images and comments that are both clever and amusing, the brand comes across as unpretentious, compassionate and expresses that it has a sense of humour (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 41-42). Furthermore, Schmidt and Birkhoff note that LUSH Facebook posts – as well as the names of some of their products – have a cheeky, sexual undertone (42), as well as that their social media communication is characterised by the use of casual or playful slang, and referring to customers by their names (43). The brand effectively portrays its amicable identity and “instead of creating an authoritative company image...LUSH tries to build a strong emotional bond through “being a good buddy” and thus evoking a different type of trust leading to engagement” (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 43). LUSH appears to successfully connect and engage with its young audience on an emotional level within the online world. The brand could thus be forming such a strong emotional connection with youth that it may be able to change their ethical buying patterns. This is an observation that this research intends to investigate further.

As mentioned, it appears evident in the literature that youth will only buy ethical brands if the products do not diminish their style status (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001: 571). Todd examines a related theme, by analysing the ways in which ethical personal care brands – such as The Body Shop and Burt's Bees – are advertised to international markets (2004). Todd notes that “[i]f products containing natural ingredients have outstanding beauty results, more people can be persuaded to buy these environmentally friendly products instead of cosmetics produced with animal by-products” (2004: 12), and that this must translate into brand communication that blends aesthetic and ethical values to appeal to mainstream audiences (2004: 17). In an exploration of websites that encourage ethical consumption among youth, Banaji and Buckingham also found that the successful websites are those which “overtly legitimate shopping as a valid leisure pursuit, but also seek to construct it as an ethical

practice” (2009: 28). It appears that a correlation is necessary between an ethical and environmentally sustainable brand identity, and a trendy as well as materially appealing product offering in order for CSR brands to attract young audiences and potentially encourage further conscious consumerism and a green lifestyle.

On a related note, Parmar (2014) examines the factors that youth look for when deciding which cosmetics brands to buy. Parmar’s (2014) study is particularly useful as it examines the preferences of Indian youth, and therefore provides interesting insights as it is one of few examples that focuses on the behaviour of participants residing in the developing world. In correspondence with Carrigan and Attalla (2001), Parmar notes that the “Y-generation is style and fashion dominated and would like to be referred as style icon” (2014: 9). In terms of youth preferences, the research uncovered that cosmetics brands which display outstanding quality products, which adequately satisfy needs and which are endorsed by a well-known brand name instil a higher degree of brand loyalty within young consumers (Parmar, 2014: 9). As LUSH displays these factors, the brand could potentially build increased loyalty towards an ethical cosmetic brand among young South Africans. Finally, one of the most prominent findings in the research is that, when considering buying cosmetic products, “friends are the most powerful reference group” (Anjali Sharma et al., 2013 cited in Parmar, 2014: 12). Individuals could be encouraged by friends to buy into a certain trend, and therefore purchase particular cosmetics brands. This is an interesting insight as LUSH brand loyalists may potentially be loyal to the brand only due to it being a trend within their social network.

The older market, in comparison to the younger consumers, display slightly different behavioural patterns and preferences when it comes to ethical consumerism. Carrigan et al. note that, while older consumers are generally not linked to the ethical consumerism movement (2004: 402), recent Mintel reports conducted in the UK show that conscious consumers are more likely to be 35-years-old and above (Carrigan et al., 2004: 403). Furthermore, the study uncovered that those over 65-years-old “were the most active recyclers of household waste, and deliberately sought recycled products” (Carrigan et al., 2004: 403). By conducting in-depth interviews with seven UK-based older consumers, Carrigan et al. additionally found that older consumers have more time on their hands or have fewer distractions and are therefore more likely to digest information about ethical goods (2004: 404). Previous studies about younger markets, on the other hand, found that lack of information about ethical products hinders youth from purchasing them (e.g. Maggioni et al., 2013). It was further noted that “age, wisdom and consumer experience have also been shown to create more discriminating older buyers who may translate into ethical purchasing” (Corlett, 1998; Cowe and Williams, 2001; Silvers, 1997 cited in Carrigan et al., 2004: 404). However, Carrigan et al. do concede that an attitude-behaviour gap persists among older audiences (2004: 404), a finding which is emphasised by Mohr et al. (2001). Mohr et al. found that older consumers understand that buying CSR brands is wise, but that they seldom do this in practice (2001: 63). This discussion of literature which centres on older audiences may appear to be a deviation from the recent focus on young consumers. However, the

above mentioned studies not only provide some additional insights into youth purchasing patterns – for example, it was mentioned that “older consumers...may not be as sensitive to price as younger consumers” (Moschis et al., 2009 cited in Carrigan et al., 2004: 402), insinuating that youth have less disposable income to spend on premium-priced ethical goods – but they also point to the ways in which ethical consumerism is linked to the formation of one’s identity. Carrigan et al. explain that ethical consumption can aid an individual in building their identity as well as their unique lifestyle (2004: 401). This is a significant finding as one of the research sub-questions inquires whether or not young South African consumers are becoming loyal to the LUSH brand only for the sake of its trendy factor, and whether they are incorporating the ideals of ethical living as part of their identity. The pertinence of this factor in relation to youth is reiterated by Maggioni et al. in their conclusion that “consumption of natural, organic, and ethical cosmetics seems also to represent for [young consumers] a way to interact with and to introduce young people’s self to the society” (2013: 20).

Thus, having conducted a review of prior literature, the emphasis of the present study will be on LUSH as it not only appears to efficiently engage with its youth audience on an emotional level, but it also embodies the seemingly necessary combination of an ethical and environmentally friendly brand value, and a trendy or materially appealing product offering, as this is what youth supposedly prefer. Furthermore, the study will examine whether LUSH could therefore contribute to a narrowing of the attitude-behaviour gap, and potentially encourage conscious consumerism among young South African students. This specific focus was chosen as it is apparent that the South African youth are an under-researched target market, particularly in the context of ethical personal care brands.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.1. A Qualitative Methodological Approach

A qualitative approach to the primary research has been taken as the research question inquires: *In what ways could LUSH's particular alignment of brand values with a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy be affecting the consumption patterns of South African undergraduate and graduate students aged 18-25, in terms of buying cosmetics and personal care products?* It is exploratory by nature and aims to uncover deeper insights about youth consumers' behaviour and perceptions in relation to an ethical brand, therefore a qualitative approach is appropriate.

### 3.2. Population & Sample Size

The sample population will include young, mainstream South African under-graduate and graduate students aged 18—25. This unit of analysis was chosen as this is generally an age at which young people begin to mature in their independent brand choices. It is noted in the literature within this field that young adults “live a particular exploration period of their life (Benson and Fusenbergh, 2007), in which they could test and experience a “*variety of possible life directions in love, work and worldviews*”” (Maggioni et al., 2013: 7), as well as that they “are in the end stage of forming their personal identity and developing a personal system of beliefs and values” (Vermier and Verbeke, 2008 cited in Maggioni et al., 2013: 20). In other words, young adults are generally at a stage in which they are maturing in their autonomous decisions to live according to certain lifestyles or value systems i.e. potentially that of a conscious consumer.

The present study focuses specifically on the LUSH brand. Therefore, a homogenous sampling selection method has been applied to ensure the sample includes young consumers who have all previously engaged with the brand – they have purchased the brand before, or purchase and use it fairly regularly. The sample additionally includes young adults who have been, or currently are, employed at a local LUSH store, of which there are many in South Africa. This was done to gain insight into whether – and in what ways – engaging with the brand on such a deep and consistent level as working in-store can affect the mind sets of young people in terms of conscious consumerism. Furthermore, the particular former employee who took part in this research was the social media manager for LUSH South Africa's Instagram account in 2016, and therefore potentially provides significant insights into *how* the brand is marketed to young South African consumers. By analysing this participant's response to the questionnaire, the researcher additionally aimed to uncover how the brand engages with youth – whether it is their intention to promote the “cool” aspect of the brand over the ethical side, or a combination of these two qualities.

Before conducting each questionnaire or interview, it was ensured that the researcher gained written consent from each participant. The participants were fully informed that their involvement in

the research is voluntary and could be terminated at any point, and permission was obtained before recording their answers and using their perceptions in the form of quotations in the following report.

### **3.3. Data Collection & Analysis**

The data was collected by handing out an in-depth questionnaire to 12 participants. The questionnaire included unstructured and semi-structured questions. Personal interviews were conducted with two of these participants, who were identified as representative of the two primary – albeit conflicting – mind sets towards the LUSH brand. One of these participants actively opposes animal testing and will only buy cosmetics or personal care products from brands (such as LUSH) that are ethical in that they do not test on animals. Conversely, the second participant is indifferent to purchasing cruelty-free products, and only buys LUSH products for their aesthetic, “cool” appeal. During these interviews, the researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify certain answers from the questionnaires in order to gain a better and more textured understanding of how youth as a sub-culture of South African society personally perceive the LUSH brand and conscious consumerism in their daily lived experiences. The choice of individual questionnaires was made to minimise the chances of participants being influenced by the answers of their peers, which may be the case in other methods such as focus groups. A recording device was used to keep track of these discussions, which were then listened to and transcribed.

A thematic data analysis was applied to a reading and interpretation of the questionnaire answers and interview transcripts. This form of analysis is appropriate as it can be adapted theoretically, and be used to answer a variety of research questions (The University of Auckland School of Psychology, 2016). It is further suitable as the research question concerns the experiences and perceptions of the participants (The University of Auckland School of Psychology, 2016). An inductive approach to thematic data-analysis, in which “themes are allowed to emerge from the data itself” (Maree, 2016: 39), was applied as there could have been multiple answers or patterns that transpired by asking the specific research question. However, the analysis process also allowed for certain deductions to be made, as the researcher took note of certain themes that arose and which were also prominent in previous literature, such as the attitude-behaviour gap.

During the inductive analysis of the data content, distinct and recurring concepts were coded for, such as the premium price of LUSH products and ethical consumerism as a general practice, natural ingredients, anti-animal testing, awareness that ethical consumption is necessary, mention of other ethical cosmetic brands, the trendy appeal of LUSH products, and so forth. From these distinct concepts, the researcher was able to develop common themes and patterns that arose, in order to uncover the deeper meaning in the participants’ apparent answers. The results have been presented in the following report in the form of quotations, which represent the most meaningful answers or important themes that surfaced during the course of the primary research, and from which conclusions were drawn.

### **3.4. Limitations**

Limitations of this method include “social desirability bias” in which participants may give the socially acceptable answers they think the researcher wants to hear (Davies et al., 2012: 38).

In addition, LUSH primarily targets female consumers, although the brand does include a small range of men’s products such as shaving creams, as well as advocates for gender-fluid products. With reference to LUSH’s men’s range, it is noted that “Men, just in case you thought otherwise, you are not restricted to our men’s range. And likewise, women, you are not excluded from our men’s range” (LUSH, 2016). As a result, a majority of the participants in this study are young women. Therefore, the opinions and perceptions expressed in the results only represent the small segment of the population used in the research sample, and cannot be said to reflect the opinions of South African youth in its entirety.

## Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion

In terms of demographics, the respondents were aged 19-24 and were, as expected, predominantly female. However, when comparing notes, there was not a significant difference in the responses given by females, versus that by the male segment. A majority of the respondents are students of the University of Cape Town, although participants are also enrolled at other local institutions of tertiary education such as Rhodes University, Vega Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The findings and themes uncovered during this study have been presented in relation to the three key sub-questions. As mentioned, these sub-questions essentially aimed to uncover to what extent young South African students are loyal to LUSH as a go-to brand for ethical cosmetics; whether, to what extent, and how LUSH could be inspiring these young consumers to think differently about social/environmental issues, and therefore to consume more consciously and ethically; or whether youth only engage with LUSH due its “cool” and trendy value, and do not incorporate ethical consumption in their daily lives. By teasing out responses to these questions using further sub-questions and developing significant themes, the researcher was able to develop answers and a conclusion to the main research question.

### 4.1. Theme 1: Wavering loyalty towards LUSH for ethical cosmetics

In general, South African youth are not becoming more loyal to LUSH as a go-to brand for ethical cosmetics and personal care products. Rather, the products are predominantly viewed as trendy, luxury goods. The youth’s lack of loyalty towards LUSH for ethical goods results from a number of factors.

For the most part, these young consumers claim that LUSH products are too expensive to purchase on a regular basis, and therefore they do not form part of their potential ethical consumption patterns. To illustrate, one participant explains that “LUSH is relatively expensive – this is the only reason I struggle to buy all my cosmetics from them”. This sentiment was repeated by almost all participants. Considering the review of previous literature, this response was expected to be the norm, as young consumers generally claimed in those studies that price was the main factor hindering them from buying into certain ethical brands. For example, this finding is echoed by Adams and Risborough whose study uncovered that premium prices impede young consumers from *committing* to ethical consumerism as a daily practice (2010: 270). One participant reflects on this phenomenon in the statement that “Not everyone has bought into ethical consumerism as it is seen as either too expensive, or too hard to stick to. I have noticed that not everyone finds it easy to commit to making ethical purchases”. Considering the expense of ethical cosmetics, it appears that habitually consuming

these products may not be financially viable for young consumers, who generally do not have as much disposable income as an older, working-class market segment.

Rather than being a go-to brand for *ethical* cosmetics as such, it was uncovered that more young consumers are becoming loyal to LUSH as a brand for products containing desirable *natural* ingredients. One participant explains that “As I have sensitive skin, I often look for products with natural ingredients... I identify with the [LUSH] brand as I enjoy using products that are nurturing and natural”. A key selling point for LUSH is that the products contain natural ingredients; however, the fact that these natural ingredients are intertwined with the brand’s commitment to its value system to the extent that they are ethically-sourced is the most important quality. For example, the brand offers a body conditioner called African Paradise, which contains Fair Trade Shea Butter sourced from Ghana and Fair Trade Aloe Vera sourced from Kenya (LUSH, 2016). Yet, a majority of the respondents that claimed to be loyal to LUSH for the products’ natural ingredients did not mention the source of these ingredients as having importance to them. In other words, youth prefer cosmetics to contain natural ingredients – as opposed to synthetic materials, such as the preservative Methyl – but to them “natural” does not mean that they are necessarily worried about the production or sourcing of these ingredients. This is reflected in the fact that youth were generally unable to name other ethical, animal-friendly or Fair Trade cosmetic brands; however, this phenomenon will be returned to. Overall, this finding echoes the primary theme that, in general, young consumers are not necessarily loyal to LUSH due to the brand’s ethical value.

However, as was assumed, a minority of young consumers *are* becoming more loyal to LUSH as a brand for ethical products, and it forms an important part of their ethical consumption habits. These outliers were passionate in explaining their love of the brand and its commitment to CSR, as well as the layered ways in which they identify with it. This was in stark contrast to the youth who predominantly identified with the brand’s “cool” factor – they were largely indifferent to the ethical value, yet, in a personal interview, the participant who represents the majority in this aspect spoke excitedly and animatedly about how beautiful the products are.

Furthermore, the minority group’s loyalty to LUSH on an ethical basis arose as more complex than the brand simply claiming to be ethical. The fact that LUSH do not test on animals – that it is cruelty-free – is the ethical value that they are most drawn to. It is the primary quality that attracts them, where other attributes such as quality, price and aesthetic appeal are secondary. To reiterate, one participant notes that “Without that [cruelty-free policy], I would not buy from them. Even with the aesthetic and everything that’s so nice, I wouldn’t be as loyal as I am”. Interestingly, the fact that LUSH claims to be against animal-testing is not the only factor that garners loyalty in relation to animals – young consumers additionally identify with the brand *actively* fighting against animal cruelty on a regular basis. For example, a participant who represents this segment’s perceptions enthusiastically explains in the personal interview that “The thing that attracts me to the brand the most is the fact that they are against animal testing, but they also fight against it...they actually take a

passionate stance against it, rather than just being, like, ‘Oh ja, we don’t test on animals’”. It is interesting to note at this point that a majority of participants throughout the research did claim to care about animal welfare, while still openly consuming products that are not cruelty-free; however, this theme will be returned to further on.

The question of whether young consumers are becoming more loyal to LUSH as a top-of-mind brand for ethical cosmetics additionally inquired to what extent they are loyal. Considering the minority set that do identify with the LUSH brand’s ethical value, it was assumed that these conscious consumers would be loyal to the extent that they would be prepared to make certain trade-offs, such as buying alternative versions of everyday products – for example, Toothy Tabs instead of regular toothpaste, or solid shampoo instead of its liquid counterpart. While it was found that young consumers were not willing to make such drastic changes – which could be due to the fact that other ethical brands offer animal- and environmentally-friendly products in their conventional form – they were willing to make other trade-offs. These trade-offs include paying more for LUSH products, as one participant notes that “I would rather not have something else and be able to have that [LUSH products] because I love the brand so much and I love the products and they always deliver. I feel if the price and the quality didn’t match up then I would be upset and that would put me off”. This is an interesting finding considering it is contrary to the theme that the LUSH brand’s premium prices are a deterrent for a majority of young South Africans. Furthermore, while this minority group of loyal conscious consumers identifies with the brand predominantly due to its ethical approach, they also require that the products simultaneously be of good quality. LUSH products are perceived to be of premium quality by young consumers in general, regardless of their stance towards ethical consumption. For example, one participant explains: “I buy LUSH because of the quality of their products. Further...their values resonate with me”. This further resonates with previous research, which finds that youth generally steer away from environmentally-friendly cosmetics as they struggle to determine their level of quality (Maggioni et al., 2013: 10-14). Yet, LUSH products are overwhelmingly identified as a high quality product, which should encourage youth to purchase it. It appears that, for ethically-conscious consumers, LUSH is doing something right by being both ethical *and* of good quality, which therefore justifies the premium price. This minority group of consumers is perhaps representative of LUSH’s branding power over time, as the brand’s presence in South Africa is still relatively new. The potential of this impact is illustrated in one participant’s response: “It [the LUSH brand] definitely makes me think that it is possible to buy good quality products that are still pretty and fun, but are ethical as well”.

#### **4.2. Theme 2: Lack of active conscious consumerism, despite awareness of its necessity**

This study uncovered that LUSH South Africa’s social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook are the second most common way that youth engage with the brand, next to viewing the products in-store. It appears that the LUSH brand is successful in forming a strong bond with local

consumers through its social media engagement that is predominantly perceived as fun and friendly. This impact on South African youth is in line with Schmidt and Birkhoff's USA-based study, which found that LUSH's use of a conversational tone, slang, cheeky comments, and referring to consumers on a first-name basis forms a strong emotional bond with youth. It was assumed that this emotional connection – the notion that the LUSH brand could be perceived as “a good buddy” (Schmidt & Birkhoff: 43) – could encourage young South Africans to actively incorporate ethically conscious purchasing decisions. However, this study revealed that, while almost all participants displayed awareness that conscious consumerism is necessary, the LUSH brand has not successfully encouraged them to *actively* consume differently i.e. with awareness of the social and/or environmental impacts of their daily actions.

In general, youth claim to already be aware of the negative effects that consumerism – and their actions – can have on society and the environment. Most already incorporate some traits of a conscious consumer such as recycling – though this is generally sporadic behaviour, done “every now and again” – and planting a home vegetable garden. Moreover, a fair amount of respondents claimed to be concerned about animal welfare. For example, one participant explains: “I’m not trying to go waste-free or whatever, but I would say that it is really important to me... But, the biggest thing is that I don’t buy from brands that are unethical [in terms of testing on animals]”. An additional participant confirms this pattern in the assertion that “[with reference to recycling, planting own vegetables, choosing to buy Fair Trade chocolate] It’s been a slow, but necessary change. I am trying the ‘small change, big difference’ concept”. Yet, these acts of conscious consumerism are not the norm.

As mentioned, young South African consumers are aware that being conscious and ethical in one's purchasing decisions is important, as well as that Corporate Social Responsibility is a trend that more and more brands are intertwining with their identity and value system. One respondent claims that “The direction in which the world is moving, ethical consumerism is pivotal to success”, while another participant backs up this sentiment: “Buying ethically can help the struggle for a better world and every helping hand counts”. Moreover, youth perceive conscious consumerism as “cool”. One participant notes that “as we are becoming more aware of the strain we place on the planet, ethical consumerism has been encouraged to the point that it’s almost normalised and even seen as cool”. The same participant continues to explain that the typical ethical consumer is *not* someone who is old-fashioned or conservative, but forward-thinking and trendy instead. In spite of this universal attitude, however, South African youth do not purchase ethically-responsible products on a regular basis, nor display other traits of an actively conscious consumer, such a recycling or planting a personal vegetable garden. For example, one participant explains that “I buy from ethical shops, but that is not usually at the forefront of my mind when buying products”, while another confirms this with the response that “I could probably do a lot more and choose my products and brands a lot more conscientiously”.

Their lack of commitment to purchasing responsibly, despite awareness that it is important and necessary, is emphasised by the fact that most cannot name ethical cosmetic brands, beyond Woolworths and The Body Shop. For example, the same participant who claimed that CSR is “pivotal to success”, could not name an ethical cosmetics brand besides for The Body Shop. In addition, it arose that even The Body Shop’s actions may be questionable, as reflected by one of the more ethically-conscious participant’s comments that “I do not buy anything from The Body Shop anymore due to the fact that they are now a part of L’Oreal products”, a brand which notoriously tests on animals, thereby not aligning with The Body Shop’s supposed values, and making them a less reliable or transparent choice. It is abundantly clear therefore that the attitude-behaviour gap persists among South African youth. To reiterate, the attitude-behaviour gap refers to the phenomenon in which “contemporary youth...is conscious of green values and practises but this is not necessarily evident in their consumer behaviour” (Autio & Heinonen, 2004: 150). This study confirms that South African youth are aware of ethical issues, but do not purchase ethical brands on a regular or habitual basis.

As mentioned, LUSH South Africa’s use of social media has been successful in forming relationships with its target audience. Most respondents claimed to find the brand’s communication in general to be friendly, fun and engaging, and therefore appealing. However, LUSH’s current inability to contribute to bridging the attitude-behaviour gap may additionally result from the brand’s marketing choices. In South Africa, the marketing strategy for increasing awareness and loyalty does not appear to focus on promoting the brand’s environmentally- and socially-responsible practices. Rather, the brand relies on word-of-mouth, press-drops and aligning itself with social media influencers – regardless of their stance on ethical consumerism. In other words, promoting the beautiful, trendy aspects of the products, and aligning them with “cool” influencers appears to be of primary importance. These findings were gathered by engaging with a former employee of LUSH, who was additionally responsible for LUSH South Africa’s social media management in 2016. This participant explains that the brand “relies heavily on word of mouth and customer loyalty...LUSH South Africa makes use of social media, product drop-offs at specific influencers, or loyal customers”. Considering this strategy together with Banaji and Buckingham’s study, which focuses on websites that promote ethical consumption and found that the successful websites “overtly legitimate shopping as a valid leisure pursuit, but also seek to construct it as an ethical practice” (2009: 28), it may be assumed that LUSH would likewise be successful in promoting active ethical consumption among youth. For example, a participant explains that the way social media influencers interact with the brand encourage this participant to take the brand more seriously and therefore support it. However, LUSH South Africa’s marketing perhaps focuses too much on the trendy value, rather than the ethical. This alternative attribute is brought to light by one participant’s response: “In terms of environmental impact, I haven’t noticed much campaigning from the South African LUSH pages – this could definitely improve”. Furthermore, the negative effects of this strategy are illustrated by the fact that, initially, young consumers were generally not aware that LUSH products are socially-

and environmentally-friendly, despite this supposedly being one of the brand's primary selling points – "I actually had no idea about the ethical value. Which is terrible. But, I love the products for its quality and its fun branding". The finding that youth are predominantly drawn to LUSH's fun personality and branding is a significant theme that will be discussed in more detail further on.

It is important to note at this point that LUSH South Africa is having an impact on the active purchasing behaviour of a select few young consumers, and in a number of ways. For example, some participants cite that the brand has successfully opened their eyes to purchasing locally-produced products, as well as products with natural ingredients. Furthermore, they have been encouraged to do more research before purchasing cosmetics, to confirm such attributes as their origin and whether or not they are cruelty-free. For example, one participant claims to have been "motivated to do more research about brands before I support and purchase them. I would like to support brands that are environmentally-friendly and that are involved in CSR". In a personal interview, the participant who highly identified with LUSH's ethical value reiterates with enthusiasm the importance of doing research before purchasing: "I think a lot of people say they don't want to buy products [tested on animals], but they don't go do the research!". Research is an important part of the ethical purchasing process, especially considering certain cosmetic brands – Inglot make-up, for example – do not test on animals, but they do not display this attribute openly on their product packaging. If young consumers desire to purchase ethical products, but do not know whether certain brands fit these requirements, they will not be encouraged to buy them, thereby continuing the cycle of inadequate conscious consumerism. This recurring theme is similar to the findings from previous research, as Maggioni et al. found that young consumers are often unable to distinguish whether products are honestly ethical due to a lack of accessible and detailed information about them (2013: 10-14).

It is further significant that LUSH's combination of ethical and "cool" attributes had the greatest impact on the participant identified as a former employee of the brand. This participant explains that:

*"During training they [LUSH] have a session on ethics which has stuck with me. It changes the way you do things and the way you want to lead your life. So many people are oblivious to the consequences of their actions and working for LUSH has made me and everyone around me more conscious and aware of the impacts of positive change."*

It appears that engaging with the brand on such a deep level, as the former employee did – which included promoting the products in-store on a daily basis, educating potential consumers, social media management and intensive training to ingrain the LUSH brand's values – could encourage youth to actively consume more ethically and responsibly. On a side note, this participant's mind set and actions is evidence of LUSH as an accountable brand that practices what it preaches, in terms of its CSR strategy. As mentioned, the brand would like to "maintain green issues alive in the hearts of our staff, ensuring that this policy delivers on what it promises" (LUSH, 2016), a value which is apparent in this former employee.

This report initially assumed that LUSH's particular alignment of material products and a fun, friendly personality with a CSR strategy could change the purchasing *actions* of young South Africans. However, it appears that, while LUSH is largely unsuccessful in changing the actions of youth, the brand may be having a more meaningful and significant impact on their *mind sets*.

Firstly, youth exhibit awareness that the LUSH brand can potentially change perceptions of ethical consumerism. One participant reflects on this trend in the assertion that "the viral nature of LUSH products and their strong social media following has made it cool to make ethical purchases...LUSH has made it cool to be conscious of how everyday products affect our environment". Young consumers are becoming mindful through engaging with LUSH and its particular brand of "ethi-cool" that conscious consumerism could be trendy and align with their desire to be fashionable. This is an interesting finding, considering that the brand's social media strategy does not focus too heavily on promoting the ethical side of the brand. However, much of the in-store promotion does endorse this value, as was brought to the researcher's attention by numerous respondents. For example, a majority of respondents find the brand's "naked", environmentally-friendly packaging to be appealing, and are aware of the "Fighting animal testing" symbols displayed in-store. Therefore, it appears that it is the combination of physical in-store marketing and social media engagement that has been successful in changing youth mind sets. This is significant as these separate platforms were uncovered as the two most popular points of contact between the LUSH brand and its target audience. Furthermore, Todd's finding that ethical brands need to communicate with their audience in a way that combines ethics and aesthetics to attract a mainstream audience, is reflected here (Todd, 2004: 17). Overall, this finding represents an important step in the right direction for LUSH, in terms of encouraging loyalty towards the brand on a trendy *and* ethical basis, as previous literature finds that ethical products which can appeal to youth on a fashion-conscious level are able to build greater brand loyalty (Parmar, 2014: 11). To reiterate, Parmar notes that youth of today want to be perceived as style icons (2014: 9) and, similarly, this research finds that fashion and trends are important to South African youth.

Yet, LUSH's particular brand of "ethi-cool" – as conveyed through a combination of in-store and social media engagement – has not only impacted mind sets by encouraging more youth to perceive ethical consumerism as an on-trend activity. But, more significantly, it has also inspired a majority of the participants to demand more from other brands that they engage with. One participant honestly noted in the questionnaire that LUSH has not inspired this participant to actually consume differently, but continues to explain that LUSH has opened this individual's eyes to the fact that "It is possible for other companies to be more ethical, so I expect more from other companies". It appears that more youth are wanting brands to incorporate ethical aspects such as anti-cruelty policies and biodegradable packaging almost instinctively. In other words, in an ideal world, incorporating CSR should be an inherent part of all branded products to the extent that consumers should not have to worry about considering CSR when making purchases as it would be assumed that all products *are*

ethically sound. To emphasise the shared mind set among South African youth, one participant explains that “It [LUSH] makes me want more companies to switch to biodegradable packaging, and want more companies to abandon animal testing. If LUSH can do so well without animal testing, why can’t other brands?”

This study additionally uncovered that, having been encouraged by the LUSH brand and its marketing strategies, youth want more brands to be more authentic, and more transparent about their actions. LUSH is generally perceived by South African youth as both authentic and transparent. To illustrate, one participant explains that “They [LUSH] are true to what they believe in – they are an authentic communicator”. In other words, the brand practises what it preaches and is therefore transparent about its actions. In terms of an example of authentic communication, one participant finds it genuine and appealing that LUSH uses men, women and gender fluid individuals, with diverse body types and ethnicities, in their marketing campaigns. This quality is illustrated in the brand’s recent “We prefer to be naked” social media campaign, which utilises local LUSH employees with diverse body types as models to embrace body positivity (Grounsell, 2015). Furthermore, evidence of LUSH as a transparent and accountable brand was discussed earlier in this research report, with reference to the brand changing some of its product ingredients to ensure that they are truly environmentally-friendly. The importance of transparency is emphasised by a respondent’s acknowledgement that they no longer support The Body Shop – a brand that incorporates CSR – due it now being owned by L’Oréal – a brand that notoriously tests on animals. Following this change in ownership, the participant explains that they find The Body Shop’s actions to be unreliable: “I don’t believe that The Body Shop are as transparent as they make themselves seem. For me, it is about transparency”. However, it is interesting to note at this point that, while youth are apparently critical of The Body Shop, they did not exhibit awareness that the LUSH brand has likewise been criticised for some of its seemingly hypocritical marketing decisions. As mentioned, the brand refuses to open stores in Israel due to alleged human rights abuses, yet operates in Saudi Arabia which has openly been condemned for similar such issues. This finding is perhaps evidence of the extent of young South African’s loyalty to LUSH on a predominantly material basis.

Thus, this study finds that – while South African youth now expect more companies to be transparent and accountable – by the same token, “ethical” brands that are potentially dishonest about their actions are undesirable. This echoes Adams and Risborough’s study, which found that there are more complex factors impeding youth from committing to ethical consumption, beyond these products being perceived as out-of-date or too expensive (2010: 264). Adams and Risborough’s findings are reiterated by Maggioni et al., who uncovered that youth often question whether ethical brands are being truthful about the production processes of their supposedly environmentally-friendly products, as well as that they generally find it difficult to differentiate between genuine and authentic ethical cosmetics due little information about them (Maggioni et al., 2013: 10-14). The research findings echo this trend as they reveal that South African youth are similarly sceptical and cynical

about the actions of brands. For example, one participant explains that “There are plenty of unethical things happening behind the scenes that aren’t reported enough”. Another respondent backs up this sentiment by noting that “sometimes some brands are promoted as being socially- or environmentally-friendly when in fact they contain some products that actually have been tested on animals, or made by children that aren’t treated well, but these products are hidden”. However, this research additionally uncovered that LUSH is not only perceived as a transparent, reliable and therefore appealing choice of ethical cosmetics for youth, but it has also encouraged youth to expect other ethical brands to do the same, in order to win their loyalty. This change in mind set, combined with the fact that LUSH has encouraged youth to perceive ethical products as trendy as well as motivated some to do research prior to purchasing – thereby *actively* seeking out the missing information about certain brands – could lead to more youth incorporating active ethical consumption in their daily lives.

#### **4.3. Theme 3: Youth subscribe to the brand’s “cool” factor**

It has been uncovered that the attitude-behaviour gap persists among South African youth as they are aware of the necessity of ethical consumption, yet CSR is not an important value considered by them before making purchases. In conjunction, this study found that youth are predominantly loyal to LUSH on an aesthetic – rather than ethical – basis. LUSH products embody a number of aesthetic, or material, qualities that youth are drawn to.

Firstly, for a majority of South African youth, the initial appeal of LUSH was an aesthetic one. Respondents claim that they were drawn to the brand’s “fun” branding – for example, the colourful logo and products. To emphasise this point, one respondent notes that “I love things that are different and fun and unique, and LUSH embodies that”. Moreover, some participants, as mentioned, were not even aware of LUSH’s ethical identity at first. Significantly, they were initially drawn to how the branding and products appeared in-store. For most participants, seeing – and smelling – the products in-store, in local shopping centres such the V & A Waterfront and Cavendish Square, was the first point of interaction between them and the LUSH brand. A majority of participants explained that they walked past the store, smelt the fragrant aromas emanating from within, and were drawn to go inside. Here, they were further attracted to the brand through its “interactive” display of products. For example, certain products can be moulded like play-dough, and many participants cited the fact that one can choose their own products by hand and put them into the packaging themselves as an appealing, interactive experience.

Moreover, youth primarily perceive LUSH products as luxury goods, the most popular of which are the Bath Bombs. When explaining that LUSH is a “cool”, fun and luxurious brand, they refer to Bath Bombs as embodying this trait. These luxurious products have contributed to participants’ perceptions of “bath-time” as a relaxing experience to enjoy, and these products are also therefore considered an appropriate gift by numerous participants. To illustrate this theme, one respondent explains that “I buy the Bath Bombs on quite a regular basis, and buy a lot of gifts for

friends there [at LUSH]”. The perception of LUSH products as luxurious could account for the fact that the brand has not as of yet had a significant impact on the ethical purchasing patterns of South African youth. This assertion is in line with the findings of Davies et al., who discovered that consumers are generally less inclined to consider CSR values when purchasing luxury goods, owing to their prestigious status and price premium (2012: 37). Likewise, LUSH products are unanimously perceived by the respondents as expensive – and, for some, too expensive.

As mentioned, LUSH has encouraged youth to view CSR brands and the act of ethical consumption as on-trend. This may result from the fact that a majority of youth consider the ethical LUSH brand itself to be fashionable, and therefore appealing on an aesthetic level. The participants explained that they are loyal to LUSH primarily due to the fact that it is able to tap into current trends, which is reflected in their product designs. For example, one participant explains that “I feel like they [LUSH] are really up to date with trends and everything, like now everyone is obsessed with glitter”, with numerous other respondents citing the glitter as an attractive trend that the brand has embodied. An additional trend embodied by LUSH that youth find appealing is that of the Disney film *Frozen* – LUSH recently released a Bath Bomb by the same name, in shimmering blue tones and with a fresh “sunshine” fragrance to represent the theme of the film, and its fairy tale ending (LUSH, 2016).

In sum, while South African youth consider the brand’s ethical value as an added benefit, this is secondary in their pre-purchase consideration set. For a majority, the brand’s aesthetically-pleasing, “cool” factor is the primary attribute that builds brand loyalty. This finding correlates with much of the prior research in this field. For example, Carrigan and Attalla found that youth are more concerned about fashion trends and brand image than CSR when making purchases (2001: 659). Likewise, this research found that youth are primarily loyal to LUSH as it is stylish, where some participants were not initially aware of the brand’s CSR strategy. Furthermore, Maggioni et al. explain that youth find the look of ethical cosmetics to be unimpressive and therefore unattractive in relation to their more conventional counterparts (2013: 12). This research confirms these findings in relation to young South African’s as it was uncovered that LUSH has changed their initial perceptions of ethical products – these products were originally considered as being behind current trends, yet LUSH has encouraged youth to view them as fashionable. In addition, past research notes that ethical products are generally considered less visible when it comes to visual branding elements such as packaging and design, and that this “is one of the main reasons why packaging should play a prominent role” (Maggioni et al., 2013: 10-14). The actions of LUSH reflect this theme as the brand’s success in appealing to the fashion- and style-conscious youth largely derives from its emphasis on fun, eye-catching product design.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations

### 5.1. Concluding Remarks: A mind set for transparency

Overall, South African youth in general are not becoming more loyal to LUSH for ethical cosmetics, on a habitual basis. This is primarily due to the products' premium price-point, which also accounts for the general perception that LUSH products are luxury cosmetics, and not in the category of basic necessities. However, it was additionally uncovered that a minority group of youth are becoming more loyal to LUSH on an ethical basis, and the brand forms part of their identity as ethical citizens and conscious consumers. This finding mirrors previous research in the field – albeit in a South African context – that ethical consumption can form part of one's identity and choice of lifestyle (Carrigan et al., 2004: 401). Youth that are loyal on an ethical basis largely identify with that products are wholly cruelty-free, as well as with LUSH's active, authentic and passionate stance against environmental and societal issues. One such participant's response illustrates this significant theme: "I am incredibly supportive of brands that live by what they say their purpose is...I respect the brand for standing up for what they believe in". This minority group perhaps represents the brand's power over time, as LUSH is still fairly new in the South African market.

It appears that LUSH South Africa advertises its "cool" factor predominantly through social media engagement, whereas its ethical value is largely conveyed via the in-store experience. It was uncovered that these platforms – the physical stores and social media platforms – are the two most popular ways that youth interact with the brand. While it has been noted that – in the opinion of South African youth – LUSH does not promote its CSR efforts adequately, the brand is sufficiently communicating its "ethi-cool" value to South African audiences through a combination of its two most popular contact points. Evidence is apparent in the research outcome that many youths have been motivated by the brand to perceive ethical consumption as "cool". In spite of this, however, youth have not been stimulated by LUSH to actively consume more responsibly, especially in terms of cosmetics. The fact that youth identify primarily with LUSH's ability to tap into trends, thereby winning their loyalty, resonates with this conclusion, as well as indicates that in the South African market, "[g]reen consumption cannot fully challenge the pleasure-seeking hedonistic consumer culture" (Autio & Heinonen, 2004: 150). This theme is further reflected by the fact that a majority of young consumers could not name any other ethical cosmetics brands beyond The Body Shop, whose actions were identified by some participants as questionable. Additionally, this trope is emphasised by the recurring finding that South African youth claim to be aware of the critical necessity of ethical consumption – for both the environment and corporate success – and that a majority are concerned about the welfare of animals. The attitudes of young South Africans reflect trends uncovered in prior research, such as that youth "are inclined to be responsive to sustainable issues (Bucic et al., 2012; Smitt, 2011 cited in Maggioni, 2013: 6-7). However, in spite of this general awareness and display of

compassion, youth generally do not incorporate elements of a conscious consumer – such as recycling, buying organic produce and purchasing ethical or Fair Trade brands – into their daily lives. This indicates that the attitude-behaviour gap persists among South African youth – in other words, youth claim to care about the welfare of the society and the environment around them, but their day-to-day actions do not reflect this sentiment. The attitude-behaviour gap is a phenomenon that arises in much of the research relating to conscious consumerism and youth (e.g. Autio & Heinonen, 2004; Davies et al., 2012; Maggioni et al., 2013; Carrigan et al., 2004), and this research conveys that the trend additionally resonates in a South African context.

On the other hand, it was found that LUSH *has* had a positive impact on the actions of some young consumers, by encouraging them to support small, local businesses and to buy products with natural ingredients that do not harm the environment. In addition, it has motivated them to do research before making purchases to gain information about the origin and production processes of products.

However, regardless of whether the participants identified more with the brand's ethical value or the materially-appealing aspect of the brand, there is one significant and universal impact that LUSH has had on the purchasing behaviour of young South African consumers so far. To return to the beginning of this report, the main research question inquired as to what ways LUSH's particular alignment of brand values with a CSR strategy – that is to say, its “ethi-cool” appeal – could be affecting the consumption patterns of young South African students. It was assumed that LUSH would have a major impact on actions; however, it was found that the most prominent and collective impact has been on mind sets. Through its effective combination of a CSR strategy with a trendy brand image and product offering, LUSH has encouraged South African youth to expect and demand more from other brands in the market. As mentioned, this impact was universal – the participant who claimed that conscious consumerism is “pivotal to success” yet could not name ethical cosmetics brands and the participant who identified so strongly with the LUSH brand to the extent that this participant does not buy any cosmetics that are not cruelty-free, both shared the same sentiment. LUSH is open about their CSR strategies – it is a key selling point – as well as stands up for what it believes in, is honest, accountable and transparent about its actions. This is the norm that youth now expect from other brands. To illustrate, one participant explains that “I love that they're so public with it [CSR strategy] because that completely draws me to them and I wish that other brands were like that as well”, while another participant backs up this general sentiment with the response that “If LUSH can do so well without animal testing, why can't other brands?”. Overall, while it is understood that the brand does not operate in a vacuum, LUSH has made headway in changing youth mind sets to expect all brands to be as transparent about and accountable for their actions as LUSH, in order to win their loyalty. A change in mind sets is perhaps the first critical step in encouraging more youth to consume more responsibly. In so doing, the gap between youth attitudes and behaviour may be bridged.

## 5.2. Final Recommendations

Care has been taken to ensure the results of this study are valid and reliable. It was ensured that the questionnaire did not include questions that would lead the participants to give certain answers, as well as that the participants had previously engaged with the LUSH brand to guarantee their responses would be relevant. Furthermore, the researcher hoped that by conducting questionnaires and personal interviews, the respondents would be honest in their opinions, and would not only give answers that they deem socially acceptable.

The research has contributed to the field in numerous ways. The findings illuminate the mind sets of South African youth towards conscious consumerism and ethical brands, a target segment which is under-researched in the area of CSR brand strategies. Furthermore, the results provide insights into youth behaviour in relation to LUSH, about which there is little academic research. Moreover, in terms of LUSH South Africa's marketing strategies, results show that local young consumers would like the brand to communicate more of its ethical identity and actions through social media. This is significant considering the friendly, fun manner in which they currently communicate already deeply resonates with the target audience. The brand could leverage this to encourage more and more youth to "go green". In addition, this research provides inspiration for marketing strategists of local brands – to win the wavering loyalty of youth, communicators should ensure that brands are transparent and accountable.

To work towards creating a bigger picture of the mind sets of South African youth towards ethical consumption, it is recommended that further research make use of a larger research sample of the target population, which was not possible at present owing to time constraints. A larger – and more gender diverse – sample would ensure maximum reliability and validity. Furthermore, a mixed methodology approach could test the validity of the research results, by incorporating a quantitative technique. For example, a measurement of consumer mind set metrics (which include awareness, brand liking and brand consideration) can be used to uncover the quantifiable effect of LUSH's marketing strategies on customers' mind sets in relation to their purchasing behaviour (Vanhuele, 2009). Finally, it was mentioned that South African youth would like more of LUSH South Africa's marketing to focus on the brand's ethical value. It is interesting to note that LUSH South Africa recently launched a social media campaign – the first post appeared on Facebook 1 October 2016 – which fulfils this requirement to an extent. The campaign bares the slogan "We prefer to be naked like over 100 of our products", and is similar to the promotions run by LUSH Australia last year. Thus far, the local campaign comprises images of South African LUSH employees in the nude – posted on Instagram and Facebook – with various LUSH products modestly covering parts of their body, and a caption that reads: "Plenty of our beautiful massage bars, Bath Bombs, soaps (and more) are available completely stark naked. They're better for the environment while still being as brilliantly effective for you" (see Appendix A: Image 2). The campaign conveys LUSH's cheeky, youthful personality as well its commitment to a CSR strategy that is both socially and environmentally responsible, as it

aims to “highlight the excessive packaging used for many products and promote positive body image” (Grounsell, 2015). Considering this advertisement fulfils youth desires of LUSH’s communication strategy by embodying the “ethi-cool” factor, it would be interesting to conduct further research into the quantifiable impact of this campaign on South African consumer’s mind set metrics. The campaign could successfully aid in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap that persists in our society, which could aid in building a healthier, greener society overall.

**(word count: 13850)**

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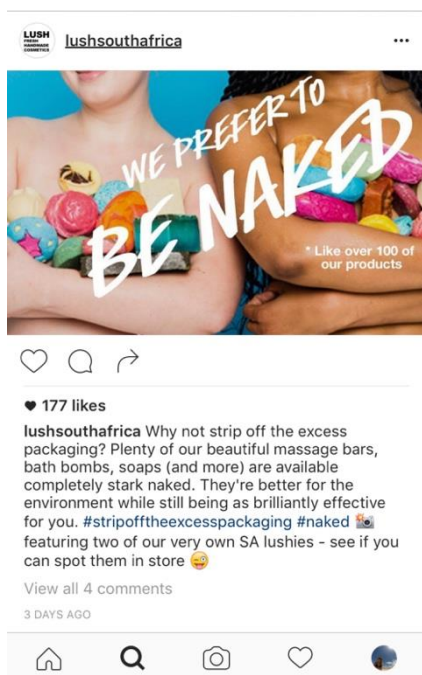
# Appendices

## Appendix A: Reference images

Image 1 (source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BB7UC63Bnvb/?taken-by=lushsouthafrica>)



Image 2 (source: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BLA-7DYDht\\_/?taken-by=lushsouthafrica](https://www.instagram.com/p/BLA-7DYDht_/?taken-by=lushsouthafrica))



## **Appendix B: Example of Questionnaire**

### Nature of the research project:

This study focuses on branding and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR generally refers to the extent to which brands take responsibility for their impact on the environment and the community within which they operate by, for example, ensuring their products are not tested on animals, and LUSH is an example of a brand that does this. The purpose of the study is to ascertain whether a brand like LUSH, which is seen as both ethical and “cool” (as its product offering is trendy and materially appealing, and they engage with young consumers on a personal, often humorous level) can have an impact on the consumption patterns of South African youth, in terms of thinking and consuming more responsibly.

### Questions:

1. Please state your age?
2. Please state your gender?
3. Please state your Institution of Tertiary Education?
4. When did you first hear about the LUSH brand, and from what source?
5. How regularly do you engage with the LUSH brand?
6. What is your most common means of interacting with the brand?
7. What is it about the brand that attracts you to it the most? – Would you say you buy into more for the ethical value, or the cool/ “trendy” appeal of the products?
8. What else do you look for when buying into a particular cosmetics brand?
9. In what ways do you identify with LUSH?
10. What is it about LUSH’s communication/advertising that appeals to you most?
11. In what ways is ethical consumerism part of your lifestyle? (i.e. recycling, buying other brands that are considered ethical or responsible e.g. Woolworths, The Body Shop)
12. Do you think ethical consumerism is associated with a particular kind of person/personality type?
13. In what ways has LUSH inspired you to consume or think differently, in terms of being more aware of the impact your actions can have on the environment?
14. Which other companies first come to mind when you think of socially or environmentally friendly cosmetics?
15. What factors could hinder you from buying from these brands? Do these factors also apply to LUSH?
16. How has LUSH changed your perception of buying ethically?

Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix C: Interview Transcripts

### Participant 1:

1. 22
2. female
3. Institute of tertiary education: University of Cape Town
4. I can't remember exactly...I think it was when lush came here to Cavendish and I was walking through with my mom and we saw it, and I smelt the shop and I had to go in there. Then, I love watching youtube videos and people started doing lush hauls and its became, like, really cool to have LUSH stuff and then I started seeing all their products and thought I really needed to try some.
5. I would say quite often. The thing is with LUSH I get a stockpile and keep it. But I would say 8-12 times a year
6. I think it would be going instore and like seeing what they have and smelling all the stuff – sometimes I don't even buy anything. Because it just love going in there. It makes me feel relaxed and I like chatting to the people there. And the aesthetic definitely draws me in 100%. Then I would say that's tied with me used the product because I do use them on a regularly basis
7. The thing that attracts me to the brand the most is the fact that they are against animal testing but they also fight against it. I remember I was once chatting to someone instore and he was explaining to me all the legalities and they actually take a passionate stance against it rather than just being, like "oh ya we don't test on animals", it's a really big selling point for them. Without that, I would not buy from them. Even with the aesthetic and everything that's so nice, I wouldn't be as loyal as I am.
8. My number one thing is I don't buy things that are tested on animals so I will do research before I need to buy something. For the most part, my skincare and haircare I buy from woolworths because they don't test on animals. Secondly, I guess it would be the aesthetics, how it looks, but again that's not such a huge factor for me. Even if it really wasn't my style, though, but it didn't test on animals and had good ratings online via blogposts and youtube then I would still buy it – I also look for what other people have said about it.
9. I'm pescatarian, I'm fully against animal testing and I also prefer things that are more natural and have less chemicals. So basically all of those align with the LUSH brand. At the same time, I love things that are different and fun and unique and LUSH embodies that. Like, I enjoyed bathing and stuff before lush, but nothing compared to now. Like now when I have a bath, I always have a lush product in it. Like I will not have one without something in it. It's also changed my idea – it's like me time but much more fun [about the experience]. I feel like

they're really up to date with trends and everything, like now everyone is obsessed with glitter and wherever you look, like on Instagram, people have got glitter in their hair and now Lush already had glitter stuff before so it just makes me want it even more.

10. n/a

11. I'm not completely over the top, I'm not trying to go waste free or whatever but I would say that it is really important to me. I do recycle at home, I do try and be "green" wherever I can. But the biggest thing is that I don't buy from brands that are unethical. For example, everyone goes on about MAC make up all the time but I won't buy from there now, even though a year ago I was like "oh they're so good" but now it's like common knowledge that they do test on animals so I'd rather just stay away from the brand. It does impact on what I buy and my everyday life as well [constantly in her consciousness]... The reality is, for me, because I've always been an animal lover that's comes first in terms of ethics, personally. But I feel the main reason that's preventing me from buying from Nike isn't that they have sweat shops but that it's really expensive. It doesn't mean I don't lust after Nike shoes because I do. But the same as I look at MAC products and think a lipstick looks amazing. I guess I would have to say no, I don't think it would stop me.

12. Ya definitely. Even on the Lush bags they have the rabbits and they say "we fight against animal testing". I love that they're so public with it because that completely draws me to them and I wish that other brands were like that as well. Like I wish Woolworths would throw it out there "we don't test on animals" because I think a lot of people say they don't want to buy products [tested on animals] but they don't go do the research... I definitely expect more from other brands now, I guess that's what I'm heading at. I wish other brands would be as passionately ethical as they are

13. n/a

14. It's different for me because I think the average person on the street doesn't do as much research because I, Beauty Without Cruelty, always read their lists and I look out for their logo on stuff so in terms of that I would say Woolworths because they have the official [Beauty Without Cruelty logo]. For example, the makeup brand Essence they don't test on animals but they don't have the logo – for them it's more about affordability. Yeah their affordability is great but I buy them because they don't test on animals. But nothing as much as Lush because it's a selling point for the product. For Woolworths, they don't advertise like Lush do. And most of the time I'll have to ask [uses Inglot as example]. I can't think of others that really jump out at me... also Goodstuff

15. The price definitely – even Lush is a bit of a push for us because it is a foreign brand so for us here because of our currency. But for me, I would rather not have something else and be able to have that because I love the brand so much and I love the products and they always deliver. I feel like if the price and the quality didn't match up then I would be upset and that would

put me off. Whereas for them, because its so unique then I gravitate towards that. I mean, if it was R100 for a bath bomb [currently priced around R50] then I would get maybe 2 a year. It would put me off because it would seem more pretentious. And also quality – if I buy something and its crap then im not going to buy it again [never had a bad experience]

16. I guess I never really thought about it as much. I guess a lot of this branding stuff is quite sub conscious, but now that you're asking me this I definitely do think its made an impact

**Participant 2:**

1. 22
2. Female
3. The University of Cape Town
4. I enjoy watching British beauty vloggers and saw them reviewing Lush products.
5. I follow them on Instagram and occasionally visit the website if I'm looking to see if a specific product is in stock.
6. Social media
7. The look and feel definitely drew me in initially but the ethical values of the company helps me justify the price.
8. Price in relation to quality, I'm at a stage in my life where saving and budgeting is important to me and I like being able to justify my purchases which I usually do by how well the product works for me.
9. As a creative person, I really love the packaging and the look of the products themselves. I love the bright colours, I also enjoy the interactive nature of the store.
10. The brand is very fun and easy-going. Their language usage and imagery is appealing and easy to engage with.
11. Buying responsible brands, recycling as far as I can, trying to have a meat-free day once a week.
12. I think in years before this kind of consumerism might have been associated with 'hippies' and 'earth children' but as we are becoming more aware of the strain we place on the planet, ethical consumerism has been encouraged to the point that it's almost been normalised and even seen as cool.
13. It hasn't really, to be completely honest.
14. Woolworths
15. I am more likely to purchase products from other brands than I am to purchase from LUSH especially since there has been such a drastic increase in price.
16. I think that the viral nature of LUSH products and their strong social media following has made it 'cool' to make ethical purchases. Having social media influencers interact with the

brand on an international scale has really help cement this brand as one that should be taken seriously. LUSH has made it 'cool' to be conscious of how everyday products affect our environment.

**Participant 3:**

1. Age. 22
2. Female
3. Cape Peninsula University of Technology
4. I had heard about a store where all the staff play with bubbles and wear facemasks while assisting customers from my mom when she came back from her first trip to London in 2010.
5. I worked for Lush South Africa as a Sales Assistant from October 2014 – March 2015 and again from September 2015 – February 2016 as a Sales Assistant as well as social media manager for Instagram.
6. Marketing budgets don't exactly exist – this money is instead invested into the product. Marketing is not done in the traditional sense where TV ads or print media is used instead the brand relies heavily on word-of-mouth and customer loyalty. Lush South Africa makes use of Social Media, product drop-offs at specific influencers or loyal customers and product launches where they showcase new products; this usually takes place over the Festive season. The brand attracts its target market by being super conversational and “real” in their communications. The products are quite interesting and don't need to be hyped. What's better than lathering up with wobbly jelly soap or washing in the fluffiest bubbles and confetti? The products are showcased in-store where the staff demonstrates products either on the customer or in a large bowl filled with warm water.
7. Other than the sweet smells, it is the friendly and knowledgeable staff as well as the amazing products that attract me to the Lush brand.
8. Animal-friendly products that work well with my skin and hair are definitely top of the list.
9. Lush has values and displays ethics which align with mine where they show integrity, honesty and hard work in order to remain a frontrunner in their industry.
10. I have recently changed the chocolate I eat to the Woolworths UTZ certified chocolate De Villiers range which is made from ethically sourced cocoa. My family and I have decided to plant our own veggie garden as opposed to purchasing vegetables that may be genetically modified or have some sort of pesticide. We recycle where we can. It's been a rather slow, but necessary change. I am trying the small change, big difference concept.
11. It definitely relates to your personality and the objects you deem important. Not everyone has bought into ethical consumerism as it is seen as either too expensive or too hard to stick to. I have noticed that not everyone finds it easy to commit to making ethical purchases and not

everyone thinks of all parties who are involved in the production or consumption of the product.

12. n/a

13. During training they have a session on ethics which has stuck with me. It changes the way you do things and the way you want to lead your life. So many people are oblivious to the consequences of their actions and working for Lush has made me and everyone around me more conscious and aware of the impact of positive change.

14. Woolworths, The Body Shop and Hey Gorgeous.

15. Price point, Availability, Scent, Staff's product knowledge, Packaging, Product suitability... These factors play a role in all of my purchases, even when shopping at Lush.

16. Making ethical purchases generally benefits all in the process from producers to consumers and all intermediaries. Other corporations seem to be more sensitive to ethical production and manufacturing which gives the consumer greater buying power within the market and has a knock-on effect from which more parties benefit.

#### **Participant 4:**

1. 22

2. Female

3. Stellenbosch University / Vega

4. I went to Australia in 2010 and discovered it at one of the Melbourne malls – the smell drew me in and my exchange partner told me all about it as we went to the store.

5. About once a month, I buy the bath bombs on quite a regular basis and buy a lot of gifts for friends there.

6. In-store experience. I do not make use of many social media channels at the moment – only Facebook. However, when I did I used to use SM regularly I engaged with their Instagram posts quite often.

7. I buy LUSH because of the quality of their products. Further, I buy the products due to the fact that their values resonate with me as an individual.

8. I do not wear a lot of make-up or use any particular cosmetic products. I cannot say that I buy all my products at LUSH and I am not extremely picky with the products I use. I love LUSH for their bath bombs as well as a few other products that I won't stray away from.

9. I am incredibly supportive of brands that live by what they state their purpose is – LUSH is extremely involved in campaigning about issues close to the brand's heart. I am not a vegan/animal rights activist at all – BUT, what is amazing is that LUSH is actively involved in what they believe in. (Make sense?) I respect the brand for standing up for what they believe in.

10. Their advertising of their products is extremely visual and beautiful to look at. Their campaign on Naked packaging was incredible. I love the fact that the brand speaks to woman and men of all ages, sizes (advertising: the naked images of different sized women) – it is more about a community of people with similar beliefs. They are true to what they believe in – they are an authentic communicator.
11. I recycle a lot! I take my own bags to the shops and do most of my shopping at Woolworths because I trust that they live by their promise. I also make an effort to support local businesses – I would prefer to buy an authentic piece of clothing made by a young SA entrepreneur than buying something from a MNC. I do not buy anything from the Body Shop anymore due to the fact that they are now apart of Loreal – it is not to say that I don't buy Loreal products, because I do. But I don't believe that the Body Shop are as transparent as they make themselves seem. For me, it is more about transparency.
12. I believe that I am someone who stands up for what I believe in, a “do what is right kind of person” in an open manner – in terms of my personality, I am extroverted and base my decisions on judging while thinking of others at the same time (Myers Briggs test – haha). This speaks to the fact that I will be active in my feelings towards brands. So in that sense, perhaps people with personality traits that include feeling/thinking about a community would be ethical. So, active citizens that care for society as a whole? I am not sure...I definitely believe that ethical consumerism speaks to a certain type of lifestyle, for example, vegans would support LUSH. Tricky question!
13. In terms of environmental impact, I haven't noticed much campaigning from the SA LUSH pages – this could definitely improve. LUSH has most definitely inspired me to think about the local communities differently – the fact that they source local ingredients is great. It's inspired me to support local businesses. Further, it is inspired me to be more careful in terms of which products I use – natural ingredients are the way forward.
14. Not many. Perhaps local goods at markets.
15. Not many – I would buy these products. LUSH is relatively expensive, this is the only reason that I struggle to buy all my cosmetics from them.
16. In quite a great manner – as seen above.

#### **Participant 5:**

1. 20
2. Female
3. Vega
4. I heard about Lush when it first opened up at the Waterfront, whilst walking past it.
5. Not regularly

6. Mostly in their store
7. I'm attracted to the brand due to their cool/ "trendy" appeal of the products, and their store.
8. Quality, price and their brand name.
9. No ways.
10. Their bold logo which captures the consumers eye immediately.
11. Unfortunately, no ways.
12. Yes.
13. None
14. The Body Shop
15. Price range, quality, and product range.
16. Buying ethically can help in the struggle for a better world and every helping hand counts.

### **Participant 6:**

1. Female
2. Rhodes University
3. I saw it in the shopping centre
4. Around every five months
5. Body products (moisturiser)
6. I love the way it looks and smells. The minimalist appeal of the packaging is also very attractive to me.
7. I look at price
8. It is on trend, it is young and is clear about what the products will do for you
9. It is very much in line with the style of most products currently on the market. It looks like a product that is made for someone my age and that is communicated through their advertising.
10. I buy from ethical shops but that is not usually at the fore front of my mind when buying products.
11. Obviously those who are hippy and are very much focused on the environment. Also recently those who are trendy and very much aware of fashion/beauty have been associated with ethical consumerism
12. It hasn't, I just buy the products
13. Body Shop, Wellness Warehouse and Unilever
14. I buy from them so nothing really hinders them
15. It hasn't very much, I just buy lush things

### **Participant 7:**

1. Female
2. Vega
3. I walked past the LUSH store in the V&A Waterfront and also came across their Instagram page, finding it very informative about the products.
4. I follow their Instagram page and therefore frequently see their up – dates. Additionally, I go into the store once a month to find out about new products or sales.
5. Social Media, their Instagram page is interesting and fun.
6. The brand is attractive to me as there is no animal testing; the products are also scented with interesting fragrances; the packaging is colourful and quirky and I therefore perceive it to be a trendy product.
7. I look for products that are easy to use and that have an instruction guide as to how I can apply the product. I am also a price conscious consumer and therefore the products with lower prices will be more appealing to me. As I have sensitive skin, I often look for products with natural ingredients and that are made for sensitive skin types.
8. I am someone who cares about animals and I am against animal cruelty, the brand is therefore attractive to me. Furthermore, I identify with the brand as I enjoy using products that are nurturing and natural.
9. The advertisements are straight forward, easy to read and comprehensible. This appeals to me, as I can process the necessary information without reading through long texts and I am provided with the most necessary information.
10. I try to be conscious when I buy products to purchase brands that have a no sweat shop policy. I support American Apparel for this reason as they are a ‘free trade’ organisation.
11. I associate ethical considerations with humanitarian individuals and those who are involved in charities. I also associate kindness, gentleness and consideration with ethical consumerism.
12. I have been motivated to do research about brands before I support and purchase them. I would like to support brands that are environmentally friendly and that are involved in CSR.
13. I certainly associate the Body Shop and Bean There coffee shop with the concept of being environmentally and socially friendly.
14. Often these brands are slightly more expensive which could hinder me about investing in these brands. I often compare prices and make a decision based on the price of the product.
15. I certainly would like to make a conscious effort to purchase brands that are ethically responsible as one cannot always know how products are manufactured. It is therefore necessary to research brands before deciding to support them. LUSH has influenced me in this way.

**Participant 8:**

1. 19
2. Male
3. UCT
4. 17 - Family member
5. 3 or 4 times a year
6. By store
7. Appeal of the product
8. Smell and Sanitation
9. Hygiene
10. N/A
11. Occasionally Recycle and would prefer to purchase a more ethically produced product if possible than a non-ethically produced product.
12. Yes.
13. Not at all.
14. N/A.
15. N/A.
16. N/A.

**Participant 9:**

1. 22
2. Female
3. UCT
4. Must have been in about 2012/2013? Walked past the store that opened in Gateway in Durban.
5. Every now and then (every 3 or 4 months maybe)
6. Walking into one of the stores to see if they have new products.
7. I actually had no idea about the ethical value... Which is terrible. But I love the product for its quality and its fun branding – so I guess the cool appeal of the products they supply.
8. Quality and price.
9. Their products' quality is good. They update their products regularly as well and know what the trends are of a particular period.
10. Their packaging is always good and I like the way that they advertise their products in the store – so the way that the bath bombs etc are in the open and on display so that you can choose exactly which one you want as opposed to just being in a box like all other stores.

11. Not to the greatest extent... I do try to choose products that are known to not have been tested on animals and I recycle when at home but I could probably do a lot more and choose my products and brands a lot more conscientiously
12. I think in today's world there isn't a particular type (like a "hippie" I guess), because we are mostly all aware of what is or isn't ethical... But perhaps there are those like "hipsters" where it is seen as cooler to be more ethically conscientious etc
13. Probably not much... Considering I didn't know about ethical consumerism
14. Hmm... I'm not great with this
15. Sometimes some brands are promoted as being "socially/environmentally friendly" when in fact they contain some products that actually have been tested on animals/made by children that aren't treated well etc but these products are hidden and no one knows about the use of them in certain products that claim they haven't used this.
16. It definitely makes me think that it is possible to buy good quality products that are still pretty and fun but are ethically friendly as well.

**Participant 10:**

1. 24
2. Male
3. University of Cape Town
4. My mother
5. Seldom
6. Bath time
7. They make the bath water fancy, so probably the cool/ trendy aspect.
8. Innovation and originality, anyone can make a soap...
9. I associate them with fragrant smells and bright colours
10. They seem to have a lot of energy and freshness to their advertising
11. Most likely in terms of the food I eat. To me this seems like the type of ethical consumerism that most directly affects me and my health
12. No, I think it more depends on how informed people are. There are plenty of unethical things happening behind the scenes in our world that aren't reported enough.
13. I haven't really paid attention to their environmental policies in-depth, however I do know that in some ways they do consider the environment. I don't think they have inspired me to consider my actions on the environment in too great a depth.
14. LUSH, I don't really know many.
15. None

16. They haven't really. I would choose the more ethically responsible product in terms of anything I consume, so I would say that my perceptions have been changed by factors other than the companies that provide ethical products. i.e. news sources, other forms of education around unethical practices.

**Participant 11:**

1. 21
2. Female
3. University of Cape Town
4. In 2013, from a friend
5. ? I buy one or two Lush products about 2-3 times a year. Sometimes someone will give me Lush products for my birthday, but not every year.
6. Buying bath bombs/bubble bars as a means of de-stressing, usually after exam time. Sometimes I receive Lush products for my birthday
7. Definitely the ethical value, but also the quality and the fun factor. The bubble bars work much better (at producing bubble baths) than any foam bath/bubble bath product I've ever used. Also, the bath bombs are a lot of fun to use due to their bright and changing colours, scents, themes (eg. Frozen, Christmas, Intergalactic, and sometimes glitter.
8. Affordability
9. I don't know how I identify with lush but I definitely associate it with being ethical, with being a luxury, with being fun, and with being relaxing.
10. The fact that they advertise that they do not test on animals, and that the packaging is biodegradable (often) or reusable (often).
11. I always try to buy brands that are ethical (eg. Free range, not tested on animals) and better for the environment, and while I try to use as many of these products as I can, I do not only use these products.
12. Probably a more liberal/socially conscious person, not someone conservative or "old-fashioned"
13. It makes me want more companies to switch to biodegradable packaging, and want more companies to abandon animal testing. If Lush can do so well without animal testing, why can't other brands? To be honest, it doesn't inspire me to consume differently.
14. Woolworths beauty, Essence (I think), the body shop
15. The quality of the products – I buy essence, especially because it is cheap, but there are trendier and better quality cosmetics brands than Woolworths and The Body Shop
16. That it can be a bit more expensive. But also that it is possible for other companies to be more ethical, so I expect more from other companies.

**17. Participant 12:**

1. 21
2. Male
3. Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)
4. A few years ago, my girlfriend introduced me to their products
5. No longer engage with the brand unless I get given a product from a friend. The introduction phase of the brand was exciting; being associated with the image of the company was “cool”
6. The word “natural”.
7. Does it actually do what it “promises”.
8. n/a
9. The direction is which the world is moving, ethical consumerism is pivotal to success.
10. No, not really
11. n/a
12. I have always had a level of respect for my environment, I respected because it had shared the same value.
13. n/a
14. The body shop? Not too sure
15. I don’t associate myself with those who harm animals; I guess that does not apply to LUSH as I believe they do not test their products on animals.
16. n/a

## Appendix D: Example of Consent Forms

You are invited to participate in a research study that focuses on branding and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR generally refers to the extent to which brands take responsibility for their impact on the environment and the community within which they operate by, for example, ensuring their products are not tested on animals. LUSH is an example of a brand that does this. The purpose of the study is to ascertain whether a brand like LUSH, which is seen as both ethical and “cool” can have an impact on the consumption patterns of South African youth, in terms of thinking and consuming more responsibly.

The information in this consent form is provided to assist you in deciding whether you would like to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be required to answer open-ended questions in the form of a questionnaire or personal interview. You will be asked questions about your engagement with the LUSH brand, as well as ethical consumerism, which will help the researcher gain insights into youth consumption patterns in relation to ethical brands.

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

Email: [emma.strumpman@gmail.com](mailto:emma.strumpman@gmail.com)

Contact number: 082 857 7574

Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to. Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision. All information gathered in this study will be held in strict confidence and only the researcher will have access to the original data. Results will only be retained for as long as required for the research purpose and will thereafter be depersonalised and presented in such a way that you will not be identifiable.

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

### PARTICIPANT

Full name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### WITNESS

Full name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Ethical Clearance Consent Form



### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CONSENT FORM

No research may be carried out by any student or staff member; or independent contractor or person associated with The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) that will be associated with The Independent Institute of Education; or that involves in any way, The Independent Institute of Education; without formal ethical clearance to conduct the research having been obtained.

The process is similar for students registered on IIE qualifications or for researchers wishing to conduct research on, or at The IIE.

In order to get consent to do research associated with or on or at The IIE the following need to be submitted to the R&D Manager via the appropriate academic (normally your supervisor for internal students) or the designated academic manager at your brand if you are associated with a site and not a registered student of The IIE or the Academic Manager if you are employed in the Central Academic Team (CAT).

Please submit the following:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Please tick |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Proposal — select one:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    |             |
| <b>IIE and other registered students:</b> Proposal as approved by supervisor with a declaration in relation to the status of the proposal at your institution where you are a student, if you are a student.     | ✓           |
| <b>Research by internal people who are not students:</b> Proposal as approved by your designated academic manager or the CAT Academic Manager if you are not a student but are directly associated with The IIE. |             |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>External researchers who are not students:</b> Formal research proposal plus full details of the sponsoring body.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| <b>Ethical clearance application form:</b> Please check that all sections are complete and that the form has been signed by the person who will supervise your research and by the designated academic manager where required. If you are a student <u>and</u> you are working or you are otherwise associated with The IIE and its campuses; your form needs to be signed by both the designated manager and your institutional supervisor. If you are an external researcher the form also needs to be signed by a senior manager at the sponsoring organisation. |  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Participant consent form:</b> Example of participant consent form (where applicable). The original signed forms have to be provided to the supervisor after permission is granted. |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## 1. Identifying information

|                                                   |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Name:                                             | <b>Emma</b>                                  |
| Surname:                                          | <b>Strumpman</b>                             |
| Student number:                                   | <b>15016579</b>                              |
| Institution where registered:                     | <b>Vega (Cape Town)</b>                      |
| Qualification:                                    | <b>Honours strategic brand communication</b> |
| Year in which you would like to conduct research: | <b>2016</b>                                  |
| Year in which you aim to graduate:                | <b>2016</b>                                  |
| Contact Number:                                   | <b>0828577574</b>                            |
| E-Mail Address:                                   | <b>15016579@vegaconnect.co.za</b>            |

## 2. Supervisor's Name and Contact Details

|                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Name and surname and designation: | Danny Shorkend |
| Contact telephone number:         | 071 1336211    |

|                                                                                                                                             |                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Contact e-mail address:                                                                                                                     | dannysorkend@yahoo.co.uk |
| Signature confirming that this form is being submitted with Supervisor's consent and signifying that the information submitted is accurate: | Danny Shorkend           |
| Date of signature:                                                                                                                          | 31 March 2016            |

### **3. Designated academic manager's details (if applicable)**

|                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Name and surname and designation:                                                                                                                 |  |
| Contact telephone number:                                                                                                                         |  |
| Contact e-mail address:                                                                                                                           |  |
| Signature confirming that this form is being submitted with Academic Manager's consent and signifying that the information submitted is accurate: |  |
| Date of signature:                                                                                                                                |  |

### **4. Designated manager of sponsoring organisation (if applicable)**

|                                                                                                                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Name and surname and designation:                                                                                                        |  |
| Contact telephone number:                                                                                                                |  |
| Contact e-mail address:                                                                                                                  |  |
| Signature confirming that this form is being submitted with Manager's consent and signifying that the information submitted is accurate: |  |
| Date of signature:                                                                                                                       |  |

### **5. Title of Research**

**The Lush Brand and the “Ethi-cool Effect”: An exploration into the effects of a simultaneously ethical and trendy brand on consumption patterns of South African youth**

**6. Proposal:**

If this information is contained in your attached research proposal please reference the page; if not please provide full detail.

**6.1 Abstract – no more than 250 words**

**See page 3**

## **6.2 Research Aims/ Goals/ Objectives**

See page 5 and 6

## **6.3 6.3 Methodology**

See page 9

## **6.4 Ethical considerations**

See page 10

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**6.5 Research impact on people and or brand/IIE (directly as participants or in terms of the use of their data or conducting research in their environment):**

If your research involves anything other than investigation of publicly available information or data or documents please detail this and the steps you are taking or will take to protect the rights of people involved. Please detail measures to avoid harm and to gain informed consent.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The research involves focus group discussions/interviews with students aged 18-25. They will be fully informed before commencing the focus groups that their participation is voluntary, about the nature of the research and that their answers may be included in the research report as quotations. They will also be informed that that their names will not be used to ensure privacy. Following this, participants will need to sign a consent form. Respect will be paid to participants throughout the study, and if they feel uncomfortable at any point, they may leave the discussion and will not be forced to complete it.</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 7. Particular elements of study:

| Please indicate which of these apply.                                                                                                                         | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Literature survey of an environment with no interaction with participants. Use of artefacts for data collection.                                              | ✓   |    |
| Observation of an environment with no interaction with participants and no manipulation of the environment.                                                   |     | ✓  |
| Observation of an environment with no interaction with participants and with manipulation of the environment.                                                 |     | ✓  |
| Data is collected about individual participants but they are taken from existing available records (e.g. an existing report or student record).               |     | ✓  |
| Data is collected about groups but they are taken from available records (e.g. an existing report) and will only be reported at the group level.              |     | ✓  |
| General and/ or personal information required to be collected <i>de novo</i> from participants through interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observation, etc. | ✓   |    |
| Collecting information from participants via an existing validated and approved test instruments (e.g. an approved psychometric test).                        |     | ✓  |
| Collecting information from participants via an invalidated test instrument.                                                                                  |     | ✓  |

## 8. Description of participants:

Please detail the age, demographics and context of the participants. The IIE will not normally give consent for the involvement of persons who are under the age of 18 or who are vulnerable (physically, socially, mentally or psychologically) unless you are an experienced researcher with a proven track record of conducting research involving participants from these groups. You are thus encouraged to provide such evidence if your participants could be deemed to be vulnerable or under the age of 18.

In all instances informed consent would be required:

Participants will be South African mainstream students aged 18-25

9. Please describe the impact that your research may have on participants and or the brand/IIE CAT – positive or negative and the measures you will have in place to reduce the risk of harm.

As the nature of the research is not necessarily sensitive, it will not have harmful effects on participants; however, it could potentially make participants aware of their lack of awareness about their social/environmental impacts through consumption. While this may initially make participants feel uncomfortable or self-conscious (for these reasons, their identity will remain anonymous), it could also incite positive change in/awareness of their actions.

**10. Declaration on Ethical Conduct in Research**

I have read and understand the requirements laid out in the ethical clearance form as well as the Code of Ethics (see below) as extracted from The IIE Research Policy (IIE007) and commit to observe and uphold the principles of this Code in all aspects of the research work carried out in association with The IIE.

I confirm that all the information I have provided to enable The IIE to make a decision about my research is honest, complete and accurate and that I have not withheld any information that may adversely influence the decision.

I confirm that I will not hold The IIE liable for any action taken against me in relation to this research and its impacts and I take full legal and moral responsibility for the research and its impact.

## **Research Code of Ethics:**

### **Researchers are required to:**

- Familiarise themselves with ethics guidelines and observe such guidelines throughout their projects;
- Accept that they are ethically accountable for honesty, objectivity and integrity of carrying out and reporting on their research;
- Strive to conduct research of a high standard;
- Always clearly indicate the limitations of their work to provide perspective of the validity of their data and reports;
- Ensure that data is not falsified, misinterpreted, fabricating, misrepresented or changed;
- Ensure that data is collected in a manner that will not affect its validity and make known any aspects of their project that might have affected such validity of their data;
- Disclose their methodologies and processes in a transparent manner to uphold its integrity;
- Keep data safely and securely for a period of three years and produce this in support of other researchers' work or to confirm the authenticity of a project, in consideration of any agreement(s) with individuals who were part of the sample group;
- Recognise sources of information by accurately and appropriately referencing such sources and respecting the copyrights of all reference work and sources;
- Recognise fellow workers and co-workers who are part of the project;
- Be considerate and professional in dealing with individuals and sample groups, respecting their right to refuse to participate and the rights to their privacy;
- Accept responsibility to ensure that data with personal particulars of individuals and sample groups must be secured, in particular, when it is in digital format;
- Avoid placing the safety or security of participants at risk through any research that is conducted;
- Demonstrate commitment to sharing knowledge, disseminating the results of research work in an appropriate manner;
- Retain objectivity to prevent bias throughout any research project;

- Adhere to the conventions associated with publication which includes only submitting to one publisher at a time and always citing where papers have been used before.

## RESEARCHER

Full name: Emma Strumpman\_\_\_\_\_

Identity number: 9404190098182\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 3 April 2016\_\_\_\_\_

## WITNESS

Full name: Nicola du Plessis\_\_\_\_\_

Identity number: \_\_16008326\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_4 April 2016\_\_\_\_\_

## WITNESS

Full name: \_\_Alexandra Verhoef\_\_\_\_\_

Identity number: \_75075221\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_4 April 2016\_\_\_\_\_

Please note: You may not proceed with the research until you have written confirmation of approval of your study from the Postgraduate Committee of The IIE.