



FEMVERTISING IN THE SPORT INDUSTRY: A CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE



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Abstract

This research used a qualitative approach to investigate the occurrence of femvertising, an advertising tactic that aims to influence female consumers through the promotion of feminist principles. This research primarily examines femvertising within the sports industry, seeking to obtain insights from South African consumers. The researcher conducted content analysis and in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to explore the viewpoints of consumers who were exposed to femvertising. With the intention of revealing the nuanced ways in which six advertisements impacted the opinions of sports consumers in South Africa.

The research centres on a heterogeneous cohort comprising both males and females, representing a range of demographics, to obtain a holistic comprehension of the ways in which femvertising in the sports industry affects individuals from various backgrounds. By employing thematic analysis, the investigator discovered repeating patterns in the responses of the participants, thereby illuminating the psychological and emotional impact of femvertising and anti-femvertising messages. Furthermore, the research investigated the impact of femvertising and anti-femvertising strategies on brand equity and brand response, with the goal of providing brands with a structured approach to successfully adopt femvertising.

The research's results provide valuable contributions to the expanding field of marketing and feminist research by shedding light on the intricate mechanisms through which femvertising influences and mirrors mainstream perspectives on gender. Through the disclosure of the subjective experiences and perspectives of males and females who have been exposed to femvertising in the sports industry, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue regarding the influence of advertising on modern-day gender norms and the empowerment of females. The results of this research have far-reaching consequences for academics, marketers, and brands aiming to gain a more profound understanding of the socio-cultural ramifications of femvertising within the domain of sports consumer culture in South Africa.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1. Background to the study	1
1.2. Preliminary literature review	4
1.2.1. Sports industry	4
1.2.2. Advertising and females in sport	5
1.2.3. Femvertising	6
1.3. Problem statement.....	8
1.4. Research objectives	9
1.5. Delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of research	9
1.5.1. Delimitations and scope.....	9
1.5.2. Limitations	10
1.5.3. Assumptions of research	10
1.6. Research methodology	10
1.6.1. Research design	10
1.6.2. Research approach	11
1.6.3. Research methodology	11
1.7. Ethical considerations	12
1.8. Chapter outline.....	12
1.9. Significance of study.....	13
Chapter Two: Literature review	14
2.1. Introduction	14
2.2. Sports industry	14
2.2.1. The evolution of marketing and advertising in sport	16
2.2.2. Advertising females in sport	19
2.3. Femvertising.....	20
2.4. Customer Based-Brand Equity (CBBE)	22

2.4.1. CBBE and brand response towards advertising	25
2.5. Conclusion	26
Chapter Three: Research methodology	27
3.1. Introduction	27
3.2. Research paradigm.....	27
3.3. Research design	29
3.3.1. Approach to theory development.....	29
3.3.2. Research approach	30
3.4. Research methodology	31
3.4.1. Population and sampling	31
3.4.2. Research instrument.....	31
3.4.3. Data collection	32
3.4.4. Data analysis	32
3.4.4.1. Data reduction.....	33
3.4.4.2. Categorisation.....	33
3.4.5. Trustworthiness, credibility, reliability, and transferability	36
3.5. Limitations	36
3.6. Ethical considerations	37
3.6.1. Dealing with sensitive information	37
3.6.2. Collecting data from participants	37
3.6.3. Providing incentives	37
3.6.4. Avoiding harm	38
3.6.5. Confidentiality versus anonymity	38
3.6.6. Deception.....	38
3.7. Conclusion.....	38
Chapter Four: Data analysis	38
4.1. Introduction	38
4.2. Sampling and participants.....	39
4.2.1. Participant one	39

4.2.2.	Participant two	39
4.2.3.	Participant three.....	39
4.2.4.	Participant four.....	40
4.2.5.	Participant five	40
4.2.6.	Participant six.....	40
4.2.7.	Participant seven	40
4.2.8.	Participant eight	40
4.3.	Method of data collection	40
4.3.1.	Nike.....	41
4.3.2.	Adidas	41
4.3.3.	Budweiser	43
4.3.4.	Under Armour.....	43
4.3.5.	Tennis Federation	44
4.4.	Procedure of data collection	45
4.4.2.	Adidas	46
4.4.3.	Budweiser	46
4.4.4.	Under Armour.....	46
4.4.5.	Tennis federation	47
4.5.	Method of data analysis	47
4.5.1.	Data preparation	47
4.5.2.	Coding procedures	47
4.5.3.	Data reduction.....	51
4.5.4.	Data display	51
4.5.5.	Theme identification.....	51
4.5.6.	Relationships and patterns	51
4.5.8.	Reflexivity.....	52
4.5.9.	Data management	52
4.6.	Credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability	52
4.7.	Conclusion.....	53
Chapter Five: Findings, recommendations, and conclusions		53

5.1. Introduction	53
5.2. Interpretation of findings	53
5.2.1. Females in sport and femvertising in South Africa.....	54
5.2.2. South African consumers' response to femvertising.....	58
5.2.3. The influence of femvertising on brand response	65
5.2.4. The influence of femvertising on brand equity	68
5.2.5. The influence of anti-femvertising on brand equity	74
5.3. Conclusion of findings.....	75
5.4. Limitations and delimitations	84
5.4.1. Limitations	84
5.4.2. Delimitations.....	85
5.5. Recommendations.....	86
5.6. Conclusions	87
5.7. Suggestions for future research	89
5.7.1. Perceptions of authenticity by consumers	90
5.7.2. Context and representation within culture	90
5.7.3. The relationship between social media and activism.....	90
5.7.4. Localised brand strategies	90
5.8. Conclusion	91
<i>List of References</i>	92

Table of figures

<i>Figure 4.1 Nike: Dream Crazier</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Figure 4.2 Adidas: The Family Reunion</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Figure 4.3 Play Until They Can't Look Away</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Figure 4.4 Budweiser: Tune Out</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Figure 4.5 Under Armour: Rule Yourself.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Figure 4.6 WTA: Strong is Beautiful.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Figure 4.7 ATP: Beat This</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Figure 5.1 Do you think “femvertising” was present in the advertisement?.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Figure 5.2 Participant’s engagement with the brand after being exposed to the advertisement.</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Table 4.1. Themes that emerged from interviews</i>	<i>49</i>

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One provides introductory overview of the study's background and contextualisation, preliminary literature review, research problem, research objectives, limitations of the research, research methodology, and ethical considerations. Lastly, a chapter outline will be provided, followed by a brief overview regarding the significance of the study. This study is qualitative and [exploratory](#) in nature and is focused on the influence of femvertising on South African sport consumer' brand response as well as the influence that femvertising can have on the brand's equity from a consumer perspective. The aim of the study is to determine how brands can utilise femvertising effectively and whether consumers believe femvertising can increase a brand's equity. Furthermore, the study will explore consumer's degree of response to a brand that makes use of femvertising as well as brands that make use of anti-femvertising.

1.1. Background to the study

Today, sport permeates all sectors of people's lives, from forging relationships with political officials, to creating a distinct arena for conducting business (Savić, Randelović, Stojanović, Stanković and Šiljak, 2017). The world of sports reflects society (Ball, 2009) and is one of the most significant areas of business activity, which provides the employment of a significant number of individuals in the various segments (Savić *et al.*, 2017). The sports industry is large and diverse, incorporates several organisations (Cheesman, 2023) and is a well-known area for brand promotion and brand equity (Savić *et al.*, 2017) because of its indisputable potential to integrate with advertising (Ball, 2009).

Advertising allows companies to engage with potential customers through paid channels about their services or products (Ward, 2022). It increases customer reach, promotes product benefits, builds customer awareness, boosts sales and demand, provides competitive advantage, and distributes brand information (Advertise your business, 2023). Advertising effectiveness is its ability to achieve a desired result (Corvi and Bonera, 2010), which can affect brand development (Dodds, 2022). According to advertising objectives, brands use advertising to influence consumer decisions (Osman, 2020). Some advertisements raise awareness, while others boost sales. Advertisements can change consumers' brand perceptions, which can drive cultural change (Greenfield, 2018). (Hackley, 2021). According to Abokhoza, Mohamed, and Narula (2019: 114), this depends on the advertisement's message and cultural norms. Diversity and gender equality in

advertising and their messages (Enkhmandakh and Vljakovic, 2022), particularly the inclusion of females, was a major change.

Businesses and their reputations benefit from aligning with gender equality because females influence consumption and spending (Dowdy, 2021). As advertising is often the most effective and necessary form of business-consumer communication, brands use it (Terkan, 2014). The sports industry is trying to ensure gender equality in advertising. More than 50 years of research has examined advertising gender stereotypes (Zotos and Grau, 2016). Research shows that gender roles in advertising boost sales and brand perception (Eisend, 2019). (Windels, Champlin, Shelton, Sterbenk and Poteet, 2019). However, stereotypical depictions of males and females may reinforce or create gender stereotypes, disadvantage women, or promote impossible consumer standards (Pounders, 2018). Advertising promotes "sexism" and distorted body image as acceptable, contributing to gender inequality, according to research (Zotos & Grau, 2016). Advertising has a big impact on consumers, so companies must advertise responsibly and promote gender equality (Dowdy, 2021).

Male sports receive more media attention than female sports, despite the rise in female participation and interest in elite female sports (Katsarova, 2019). The media has a lot of potential to influence society's acceptance of all female athletes at a time when females are so prominent in sports (Fink, 2015). Female talent was once denigrated, but data shows a shift toward more positive portrayals in sports (Zotos & Grau, 2016). Sport media advertising's qualitative and quantitative discrepancies reinforce gender stereotypes and lower female ability ratings (Fink, 2015). This uneven coverage creates deeply ingrained, unquestioned beliefs that confine females beyond sport, restricting the economy, society, and politics and reinforcing the patriarchal power structure that still dominates society (McDonagh and Pappano, 2008). It is claimed that advertising depictions of females have not changed in decades (Knoll, Eisend, and Steinhagen, 2011). More recent studies suggest that female advertising portrayals are evolving (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2022) and that pro-female advertising messages highlighting female talents are increasing (Varghese and Kumar, 2020).

Many social science studies, including advertising research, use gender-based measures to distinguish male and female (Eisend and Roßner, 2022). Non-gendered language is emerging because gender exists beyond a binary measurement and in multiple forms (Eisend & Roßner, 2022), as shown by social developments (Rogers, 2019). This

transformation and the growing number of consumers who view gender as a dynamic, fluid continuum have led advertisers to respond to these new gender perceptions (Eisend & Roßner, 2022). By depicting gender nonbinary and diverse people, advertisers demonstrate social consciousness and progressive values (Eisend & Roßner, 2022). Despite modern advertising practises, advertising researchers continue to conceptualise gender as a binary rather than a spectrum (Eisend & Roßner, 2022). Some companies use femvertising to overcome this. Femvertising aims to promote gender equality and social responsibility through campaigns that challenge stereotypes and sexism, empower females, and promote genuine appreciation (Hernández-Rodríguez and Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). Since activist advertising, especially female-related, emphasises gender equality, femvertisements are receiving more attention in advertising practice and research as they appear on television, in large-scale print and outdoor media, and online (Champlin *et al.*, 2019). Femvertising has improved organisational outcomes by requiring immediate elimination of sexist advertising content (Hernández-Rodríguez & Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). Although femvertising has been extensively pretested, academic research on how audiences use, perceive, and interpret it is scarce (Sternadori and Abitbol, 2019). Femvertising is needed, but its perceptions must be understood.

The expansion and development of the sports industry are compelling organisations to adopt a more refined strategy, one that is more supportive of athletes and more immersive and inclusive of spectators (Jarvis, 2023). Due to females' growing interest in sport and the growing of significance of gender equality, a new generation of advertising using pro-female imagery has developed (Shinoda, Veludo-de-Oliveira and Pereira, 2020). Femvertising, a portmanteau coined by combining the terms feminism and advertising, employ images and messages that empower females (Skey, 2015) with the comprehensive impression of the female portrayal in advertising being its main concern (Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen, 2017). Over the past ten to twenty years, the term has gained prominence, as more brands recognise its importance due to advertising having the ability to reflect and show the roles expected of females in society (Kordrostami and Laczniak, 2022).

The concept of femvertising has been well-supported amongst large sport brands like Nike, for example through their *Dream Crazier* or *Never Settler, Never Done* campaigns, and despite the fact that some consumers have resented the femvertising efforts of some brands because they view the company to be a hypocrite or fraud when it is done just for profit

(Negm, 2023), it is unclear how South African consumers perceive the use of femvertising (Enkhmandakh & Vljakovic, 2022).

Self-perception, individuality, and gender norms usually influence how someone reacts to an atypically gendered advertisement (Genn, 2019). In advertisements, males are more often the main characters, voice-overs, product authorities, and workers (Daalmans and Odink, 2019). However, brands must embrace and successfully promote brand advocacy or brand responsibility to satisfy the audience, especially the socially conscious and ethically oriented millennial consumer, by appearing more socially responsible (Champlin, Sterbenk, Windels and Poteet, 2019). In sports ads, women are portrayed by their looks, age, and family, while men are strong, independent, dominant, and appreciated as athletes (UNESCO, 2019). This imbalance requires the sports industry to be more mindful of how they portray women, as sport advertising can influence gender norms and prejudices (UNESCO, 2019). Understanding how advertisements and brands portray gender helps identify gender stereotypes and socially acceptable behaviours and roles (Hall and Kappel, 2018). Thus, this study examines how femvertising campaigns affect consumer perceptions of sports brand advertising.

1.2. Preliminary literature review

This section identifies the primary literature that supports and verifies the research topic. It will concentrate on topics that provide support for future research and provide an analysis and synthesis of previous research within the context of the current issue.

1.2.1. Sports industry

Institutionalised competitions (Sosis and Kiper, 2022) unite nations across ethnicity, race, religion, and gender (Isnaini and Muttalib, 2022). Since the 1970s, sports participants, capital, and labour have moved around the world (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). At a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.2 percent, the global sports industry increased from \$486.61 billion in 2022 to \$512.14 billion in 2023 and is expected to reach \$623.63 billion in 2027.

Based on sport activities, the sport environment, and industry segments into which diverse sport businesses and organisations can be classified, the sport industry can be conceptualised (Pedersen and Thibault, 2018). Professionalisation in sports increases commercialisation (Moyo, Duffett and Knott, 2022). Commercialisation involves non-profits becoming for-profit (Pedersen and Thibault, 2018). Even though sport was once considered a social institution, it may have been commercialised due to a lack of government funding

(Moyo, Duffett and Knott, 2022). Over time, the sport industry has professionalised and specialised. Clausen *et al.* (2018). Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2014) and Richelieu (2021) state that the sport industry is aware that it competes with other industries, such as the entertainment industry, for consumer attention and money. Current research suggests that sport has evolved into "sportainment," or entertainment sport, requiring marketing strategies to promote sport as entertainment (Richelieu and Webb, 2021).

The sports industry has benefited from many advertising and media partnerships (Pegoraro, Ayer and O'Reilly, 2010). Sport is a vital advertising medium for companies due to its flexibility, reach, and brand and corporate exposure (Kropp, Lavack, Holden and Dalakas, 1999). The mainstreaming of sports and rising advertising spending have increased demand for related research (Pegoraro, Ayer and O'Reilly, 2010). Understanding customer perceptions of sports brands and advertising.

1.2.2. Advertising and females in sport

Advertising has been followed internationally for decades and dates to the beginnings of business, with the goal of finding the best way to communicate with consumers (Enkhmandakh and Vlajkovic, 2022). Advertising contexts have always been male-centric (de Mooij, 2019). Inadequacy advertising exploits female insecurity and anxiety about body images and other feminine stereotypes to portray females as weak, insufficient, and in need of a magic cure from the advertised product (Kozłowska, 2014).

Between 1980 and 2010, only 4 percent of advertisements showed females in the office or corporate workplace; they were usually shown in kitchens praising their products (Altman, 2021). Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017) found that the "typical" female is portrayed using various elements, such as personality traits, physical attributes, roles, and jobs, to grab viewers' attention (de Mooij, 2019). A 2012 focus group by Kolman and Verićić examined responses to gender stereotypes in advertising. Males and females have very different views on the often-portrayed qualities of male and female. Advertisers are often accused of using stereotypical distortions to create attention-grabbing messages that stop and start conversations in a crowded media industry (Rumbo, 2002). Advertisers view stereotypes as common knowledge that reduces distraction, attracts audiences, helps consumers focus on the brand message, and simplifies cognitive processes and categorisation (Tsieh, 2020).

Femvertising is innovative because it questions female stereotypes created and reinforced by advertising, even though gender equality in the form of female liberation has been part of advertising since the 1960s (Abdallah *et al.*, 2018). According to Åkestam *et al.* (2017), this is a key difference between femvertising and traditional advertising. Traditional advertising follows social norms rather than challenging them, according to research (Abdallah *et al.*, 2018). However, gender neutral brand advertisements have become popular due to the recent focus on gender neutrality (Spasova and Taneva, 2021). Thus, gender representations in advertising are a growing field that offers academics and practitioners valuable insights (Tsichla, 2020).

Research shows that female sports participation in the developed world is rising despite marginalisation (Fink, 2015). The feminist fight is reflected in the history, breakthroughs, and progress toward gender equality in sport, international development, and human rights (de Soysa and Zipp, 2019). Since the early 1900s, female sports status has changed drastically (Theberge, 2000). Interest, attendance, viewership, media attention, and investment in female professional sports peaked in 2022. (Jarvis, 2023). This may explain why sports femvertising has increased (Scott *et al.*, 2022).

1.2.3. Femvertising

Femvertising, a *term* coined in 2014, refers to modern advertising campaigns that challenge traditional female gender stereotypes (Åkestam *et al.*, 2017). Femvertising is advertising that empowers females with pro-female talent, imagery, and messages (Macias, 2021; Pillay, 2020; SheKnows Media, 2016). Feminists created it to empower females against stereotypes and culture (Enkhmandakh and Vlajkovic, 2022). Femvertising works because females make up 70 to 80 percent of household purchases and are more likely to link them to social issues (Brennan, 2015). Femvertising has grown as advertisers recognise female purchasing power and respond to their demand for more respectful and empowering advertising (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising, a marketing and communication strategy used by many brands, inspires, and empowers females of all ages with pro-female messages while promoting brand products and increasing brand engagement (Iqbal, 2015). It has become a global trend for companies promoting gender equality and diversity in their advertisements (Enkhmandakh and Vlajkovic, 2022).

In 2016, 53 percent of 4000 females and males polled bought a brand because they liked how the brand's advertisements portrayed females (Hsu, 2018; Sheknows Media, 2016). Additionally, 97 percent of females and 90 percent of males agree that advertising portrays

females in a way that shapes society's view of them (BusinessWire, 2016). Moreover, people favour femvertising because they believe youth must see pro-female advertising (Hsu, 2018). Windels *et al.* (2019) used content analysis and interviews to study femvertising ads and found that different aspects of females are now being featured.

In this digital, transparent world, brands that use poor advertising risk being called out or boycotted if they violate social media's culture of empowerment and support (Hsu, 2018). Advertising messages aligned with femvertising are increasing. Various female decision-makers in public settings are the common factor (Hernández-Rodríguez and Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). Therefore, female empowerment advertising engages consumers, inspires action, and most importantly, creates deep emotional resonance (Sachs, 2012).

Femvertising has garnered praise from both genders for abandoning decades-old stereotypes and empowering females, but it has also raised questions about marketers' motivations (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising is criticised for using pro-female messages to sell products and make money, reducing female power to a commodity (Fineman, 2014). Femvertising has been criticised as a product of advertising firms that usurp feminist elements from modern societal conflicts, where advertising is rarely seen as authentic (Lazar, 2006), and the brands themselves reject it as a benevolent social movement (Becker-Herby, 2016).

Increasing female expectations for truthful communication across channels lead brands to use femvertising to challenge stereotypical cognitive frameworks (Hernández-Rodríguez and Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). This new pro-female advertising has been instrumental in making females more believable and healthier by depicting them outside of the "ideal" framework of previous advertisements (Madriz, Mora and Oropeza, 2021). New models of empowered females have replaced traditional beauty standards and roles (Hernández-Rodríguez and Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022).

Many females like femvertising because it breaks down gender barriers (Sterbenk *et al.*, 2021). Interestingly, femvertising encourages females to overcome social barriers to exercise and play sports (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising, especially sports advertising, portrays a more genuine and believable image, which makes females feel more connected to it. Sports still has sexism and stereotypes (Madriz, Mora and Oropeza, 2021). This advertising approach emphasises a females' strong, muscular body and sports participation to symbolise power, traditionally held by males (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising and male advocacy for positive female roles and equality feature females in new roles beyond stereotypes (Hsu,

2018). Femvertising has shown great results, prompting many organisations to promote female empowerment, femininity, and “female-hood” (Drake, 2017). Promoting femvertising has created a domino effect, encouraging other brands and organisations to follow (Enkhmandakh and Vlajkovic, 2022). The lack of research on femvertising in South Africa makes it unclear how local consumers and brands can benefit. Thus, this study examines how femvertising and anti-femvertising affect South African consumers' perceptions of sports brands and their advertising.

1.3. Problem statement

Advertising has helped businesses compete for consumers' attention by familiarising them with their brand or products (Dhiman, 2021; Hamlett, 2019). Advertising helps distribute brand content, differentiates the brand from competitors, boosts brand equity, increases desires, and retains customers (Wee, 2020). After creating the right message, engagement, sales, and interest will rise immediately (Dhiman, 2021). However, choosing the right message is difficult because consumers constantly see commercials, which influence their behaviour and group perceptions (Hackley, 2021). Recent advertising messages have promoted positive gender representations and dispelled harmful gender stereotypes (UNICEF, 2023). Social gender stereotypes have persisted for generations, especially in sports, which are often seen as microcosms of society (Rice, 2022). Society and culture have associated sports with genders, creating gender stereotypes that shape impressions (Liu, Shentu, Xue, Yin, Wang, Tang, Zhang, and Zheng, 2023). Sport gives people hope and unites them, making it vital to society (Underhill, 2023). Thus, sports often promote diversity and inclusion well. Femvertising, which challenges gender norms and places females at the centre of marketing and advertising narratives (Becker-Herby, 2016), has started a cultural shift, though more needs to be done. Femvertising offers a solution for brands seeking to authentically connect with female consumers by addressing harmful female gender stereotypes and the lack of female representation in the field. Despite the success of femvertising in the sports industry (Becker-Herby, 2016), little is known about its impact on consumers and whether they can tell the difference between brands that use it and those that don't. Femvertising is essential for females to be represented positively in the media and advertising, inspiring them to break away from gender stereotypes and realise their potential. Femvertising supports progressive and inclusive perspectives on gender equality, which helps drive greater societal change. Femvertising can also be seen as a strategic

marketing approach used by brands to appeal to the increasing number of consumers with feminist consciousness.

*Consequently, it is essential to analyse femvertising in the South African sport industry as well as the impact of femvertising and anti-femvertising on consumers to decide how to and whether the usage of this advertising strategy should be enhanced to promote female empowerment and gender equality in the sport industry. Through the examination of customers' reactions to femvertising and their perception of it, brands can gain insight into the potential impact of this advertising technique on brand response and equity. As a result, this study aims to answer the question: *How does femvertising effect the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising?**

1.4. Research objectives

The research problem will be solved based on the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

O₃: How does femvertising influence brand response.

O₄: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

O₅: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

1.5. Delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of research

1.5.1. Delimitations and scope

This study employs qualitative methods, focusing on semi-structured interviews over six days with an eight-person sample, chosen through convenience sampling. Participants, with a sports background and advertising knowledge, assess the impact of femvertising and anti-femvertising in the South African sports industry. Six video-based advertisements from sports brands are shown to participants to gauge their reactions and assess potential impacts on brand response and equity. The study focuses on young adults aged 18 to 40 in South Africa, considering variables like brand equity, performance, imagery, judgment, attitude, and resonance.

1.5.2. Limitations

The research has limitations in sample size and data collection duration, which may compromise reliability and precision. A larger and more diverse sample is recommended for more precise findings. The focus on femvertising and the sports industry neglects the issue of male gender stereotypes. Additionally, the lack of diversity in the sample population, specifically in terms of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, limits the exploration of intersectionality. The researcher being a female [Gen Z](#) also introduces the possibility of personal bias.

1.5.3. Assumptions of research

The researcher operates under the assumption that study participants use rationality while making decisions and selections, considering their personal preferences and the facts at their disposal. In addition, the researcher operates on the assumption that the measurements employed in the study are consistent and trustworthy, signifying that the intended constructs were consistently recorded. Additional assumptions behind this research comprise the reliance on responses obtained from semi-structured interviews and the participants' comprehensive comprehension of the inquiries posed. The researcher concludes by assuming that every interview was carried out in a consistent manner. [The researcher operates under the assumption that femvertising has an influence on consumer perception.](#)

1.6. Research methodology

The research study will employ a qualitative methodology. The research process entails empirical work and the acquisition of data that might confirm, deny, or contest theories, so facilitating the comprehension and explanation of various observations (Morse *et al.*, 2002). A qualitative technique was deemed more appropriate for this research since it allows for better potential to gain more in-depth and significant information based on an individual's experience (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016).

1.6.1. Research design

This study is interpretivist in nature. Beliefs of the interpretivist approach consist of relativist ontology and subjective epistemology (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Relativist ontology refers to when reality is perceived through intersubjectivity through consideration of meanings as well as understandings of social and experiential aspects in the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The subjective epistemology approach is providing a clear link

between the research and research subject as it assumes that humans cannot be divided from their knowledge (Saunders and Thornhill, 2012).

1.6.2. Research approach

This study's purpose and objectives are best met by a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted online via Teams and transcribed manually. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect data because they combine structure with flexibility, allowing topics to be covered in the order most suitable to the interviewee, responses to be fully probed and explored, and the researcher to respond spontaneously to relevant issues raised by the interviewee (Al Balushi, 2017). Interactive semi-structured interviews allow for prompting and probing, another reason they were chosen (Al Balushi, 2017). After data is transcribed, MAXQDA data analysis software will code and analyse it because it supports multiple data types, stores all data in one project pack, and makes qualitative analysis efficient (Bothwell, 2020). The collected data will be interpreted and validated to ensure quality and accuracy. Use thematic content analysis to ensure credibility and reliability (Thakur and Chetty, 2020). These interviews will be recorded and manually transcribed to ensure validity and avoid systematic bias (Rutakumwa *et al.*, 2019).

Interpretivism allows for diverse views (Pham, 2018), and grounded theory provides a methodology to understand social phenomena without pre-forming or pre-theorising them (Engward, 2013). This research study will use deductive reasoning and be [exploratory](#) due to its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to add meaning to previous research (George and Merkus, 2023).

1.6.3. Research methodology

One-on-one semi-structured interviews will be used to collect data because they allow the researcher to analyse interaction patterns at a micro level, focusing on how participants make sense of each other through common interactional norms (White, 2019). Data was collected over six days. No other research method can collect data as effectively as semiotics to understand why consumers and participants think and act the way they do (Olbertová, 2014).

A semi-structured interview follows an interview schedule, but the questions may be ordered differently (Comeet, 2022). While building rapport and empathy between the researcher and participant, the interviewer has considerable latitude to probe and explore further questions

in response to meaningful responses, making this data collection technique preferred (Clements, 2022).

Repeatedly listening to and reading transcribed interviews will help the researcher understand the topic. Coding will simplify participant feedback interpretation after transcription (Medelyan, 2023). Qualitative research relies on keywords to classify and organise text (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). The coding themes and subthemes will be used to analyse, categorise, and organise the data. Therefore, each theme developed will have a unique code (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). Finding patterns and similarities and differences in the data is the next step. Third, data verification involves rechecking transcripts and codes to ensure understanding, allowing the researcher to confirm or change research objectives. Interview data will be analysed using MAXQDA.

This study includes South African male and female consumers of all races, ages, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and residential areas. To get a holistic view of how femvertising campaigns affect sports consumers, this study will use both males and females. A study sample is a portion of the population (McCombes, 2023). This study will select eight people from the population. The sample size is ideal because it allows for a 'fresh and richly detailed understanding' of femvertising while still allowing for a 'deep, case-oriented study' (Vasileiou *et al.*, 2018). Non-probability sampling will be used. This method shows that not all population members can be sampled (Lamm and Lamm, 2019). More specifically, convenience sampling will be used. This method works best with many qualitative research designs (Moran, 2021). It chooses people who are easily accessible to researchers. This usually involves using location and resources to recruit participants. Males and females aged 18 to 40 with internet, social media, and TV access are eligible. This age demographic is most likely to use the internet, social media, and TV and have seen the seven proposed advertisements. Finally, participants should know major sports brands and their ads (e.g., Nike, Adidas, Puma, etc).

1.7. Ethical considerations

Louw (2014) lists several ethical issues that affect this proposal's participants: informed consent, data collection, sensitive information, incentives, harm prevention, confidentiality versus anonymity, and deception. Chapter Three, section 3.6, addresses all these issues.

1.8. Chapter outline

Chapter One: Introduction

Background and contextualisation, preliminary literature review, problem statement, research objectives, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions, research methodology, ethical consideration, chapter outline, and study significance will be covered in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter contains all primary research-related secondary research. The literature review will summarise current knowledge and identify relevant theories, methods, and research gaps.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The chapter covers research design, strategy, population, sample, data collection, and analysis. This chapter describes a research method that precisely identifies independent-dependent variable cause-and-effect relationships.

Chapter Four: Data analysis

This chapter analyses and interprets data, which is essential for sound conclusions and informed decisions. This chapter will provide compelling rationale and description for the sampling selection criteria, consider and report on data credibility and reliability, and follow all formal conventions and standards for presenting and describing data.

Chapter Five: Findings, recommendations, and conclusions

This chapter summarises the findings in a concise but important manner, emphasising their relevance. This chapter is crucial to the study because the researcher links the data to the larger implications.

1.9. Significance of study

This study fills a gap in South African femvertising research. Establishing a framework can help sport brand marketers attract sports consumers, a saturated market segment. Due to increased female sports participation and advocacy for gender equality and empowerment, South African feminist movements are growing. Feminist awareness has made consumers wary of information and marketing, which affects their purchases. Thus, understanding femvertising and its impact on South African sports consumers is crucial.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter of the study, the literature that substantiates and validates the research topic is reviewed and contextualised to this study by providing an overview of the sports industry, femvertising and orientating the discussion using the consumer-based-brand equity model.

2.2. Sports industry

Some believe sports are institutionalised competitions (Sosis and Kiper, 2022) and a national unifier that transcends ethnicity, race, religion, and gender (Isnaini, 2022). Sports are athletic activities that require talent or physical ability and are often competitive (Bleacher Report, 2017). The first Olympic Games were held in 776 B.C., featuring jumping, chariot and foot racing, javelin throwing, wrestling, and discus throwing (Bellis, 2019). There will be 32 sports, 329 events, and 18 days of competition in 2024. (Olympics, 2023). The modern Olympics feature breaking, surfing, basketball, and rugby (Olympic Games Paris, 2023). "Sportification"—organizing a non-sport activity to resemble a sport—provides a fair, enjoyable, and safe environment for people to compete and cooperate on their future and past performances (Heere, 2018: 21) The sportification of sport in the latter quarter of the 19th century replaced folk games and hobbies with rationalized accomplishment sports, led to the emergence of international sports organisations, and increased international tournaments between national teams (Elias and Dunning, 1986).

Sport was mostly limited to the Olympic games until the 1970s and 1980s, when public tournaments gained a global following (Gorvettt, 2021). Rugby, soccer, athletics, tennis, cricket, horseracing, and boxing became modern sports (Wallace, 2019). As technology and popularity increased in the 21st century, sport became more globalised (Wallace, 2019). Globalisation and the shift from traditional to modern sports have led to more rules and stricter systems (Nauright and Zipp, 2018). Sports have been affected positively and negatively (Wallace, 2019). Due to professional sports league globalisation, South Africans wear Los Angeles Lakers gear and Americans wear Manchester United gear (Pardini, 2008).

Due to intense pressure to professionalise South African sports, sporting rivalries and community spirit that contribute to social cohesiveness have decreased local support in the industry (Fredericks, 2022). South Africa's race-sport relationship has always been volatile, affecting the country's sporting dynamic locally and abroad (Oates, 2019). Social, political, and economic issues in South Africa have hindered sport's growth, limiting resources,

exposure, and opportunity (Oates, 2019). Football is the most popular sport, but the Springboks, who have won the Rugby World Cup three times, are the most successful South African sports team internationally and locally (Chebbi, 2022).

Sport's role in globalising public events and business is growing as participants, capital, and labor move around the world (Zhang, Kim, Marstromartino, Qian and Nauright, 2018), making it a lucrative industry in terms of consumer reach. Financial Mail (2023) reports that 60 to 67 percent of people expressed interest in watching sports on TV or streaming platforms in 2022. (Dicey, 2023). However, South African sports consumers now prefer social media and streaming platforms over linear television (Rogers, 2023). According to the latest research, social media and streaming services run by broadcasters, like ESPN, saw increasing usage, while pay television, like DStv, saw a four percent drop in usage as a platform for watching sports and a five percent drop in usage for free-to-air television, like SABC. Due to the intensive pressure to professionalise South African sports, the sporting rivalries and community spirit that contribute to the country's social cohesiveness has led to the fall of local support in the South African sports industry (Fredericks, 2022). Race and sports have always had a volatile relationship in South Africa, and that relationship has affected the country's entire sporting dynamic, both locally and abroad (Oates, 2019). South Africa's social, political, and economic challenges have had a significant impact on the growth of sport, resulting in a lack of opportunity, resources, and exposure (Oates, 2019). Even though football is the most popular sport to participate in, the Springboks, that has won the Rugby World Cup three times, are the most recognised and successful South African sports team on an international and local level (Chebbi, 2022). Eventually, leagues will have multi-continental clubs, and players' road trips will become even more exhausting; this is how globalisation can negatively affect sports and athletes (Pardini, 2008).

Sport can be commercialised based on its activities, environment, and industry segments into which diverse sport businesses and organisations can be classified (Pedersen and Thibault, 2018). The professionalisation of sports has led to increased commercialisation (Moyo, Duffett and Knott, 2022), which has transformed non-profit organisations into for-profit ones (Pedersen & Thibault, 2018). Due to government resource constraints, sport has been commercialised, according to Moyo, Duffet, and Knott (2022: 1).

Based on the sorts of sport activities that exist, the environment in which sport occurs, and the industry segments into which diverse sport businesses and organisations can be classified, the sport industry can be commercialised (Pedersen and Thibault, 2018).

Increased commercialisation is a consequence of the professionalisation of the sport sector (Moyo, Duffett and Knott, 2022) and is a phenomenon characterised by the transformation of non-profit organisations into for-profit entities (Pedersen & Thibault, 2018). Moyo, Duffett and Knott (2022) add that sport has been commercialised because of the lack of resources from institutions such as governments. More specifically, commercialisation has increased the value of the global sports market, which is projected to be over \$510 billion. As technology has advanced and the sports market has grown, more companies have shown interest in advertising in the sports industry (Globe Newswire, 2023). Global sports market value was \$121.39 billion in 2010. (Puzzo, 2015). The global sports market grew from \$486.61 billion in 2022 to \$512.14 billion in 2023 at 5.2 percent and is expected to reach \$623.63 billion in 2027. (Globe Newswire, 2023).

The sports industry competes with other industries, such as the entertainment industry, for consumer money and attention (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton, 2014). Richelieu and Webb (2021:2) add that sport's evolution has changed marketing tactics to promote it as entertainment (Richelieu and Webb, 2021). Thus, benefiting the sporting industry by increasing the number and variety of sport-related publications and social media platforms, media coverage and source publicity of sporting events, sport facilities and events, and sport-related goods and services (Pedersen and Thibault, 2023).

Sports marketers use advertising to build brand equity and fanbases (Pellegrini, 2020). The rise in sports advertising and the integration of the sport industry into mainstream culture have increased the need to understand consumer behaviour, particularly how customers perceive sport brands and their advertising (Pegoraro, Ayer & O'Reilly, 2010).

2.2.1. The evolution of marketing and advertising in sport

For decades, companies have used sports' massive popularity and devoted fan bases to promote their products and services (Dent, 2023). Marketing-driven strategies have helped the sports industry better meet consumers' needs, despite its uniqueness (Da Silva and Las Casas, 2017). The early sports marketing sector focused on product placement, such as Prime's relationship with the UFC, which made it the UFC's official global sports drink and was visible everywhere at pay-per-view events and supported by many UFC fighters, and credibility, such as Al Nassr's recent partnership with Nike as their new kit sponsor. The signing of Cristiano Ronaldo is still seen as a major sponsorship to promote the Saudi Arabian football league. Since then, the industry has grown to include corporate customers' goals and player sponsorship through advertising (Swem, 2021).

Advertising and sports have become increasingly important as brands use sports to build customer loyalty and stand out in consumers' minds (Nensee, 2022). Brands across sectors have increased their advertising spending, particularly digital advertising, in recent years to boost sales, brand awareness, competitive advantage, and consumer education (Tanski-Phillips, 2021). Sports advertising promotes sports teams, organisations, and their products (Kovalenko, 2023). Whether for a year-long league football competition, the Olympics, or a cup final, marketers plan, execute, and analyse their actions (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

During the 2018 FIFA Men's Football World Cup, global advertisers spent 2.4 billion dollars (Galvan, 2022). Sports fans are loyal brand consumers, so the best marketers and advertisers capitalize on this (Carruthers, 2023). Companies can use sports' emotional connection and broad appeal to create compelling marketing campaigns that boost revenue, reach a large audience, and build brand awareness (Kovalenko, 2023). Sports advertising has progressed from wooden signs to LED Jumbotron, massive athlete endorsements, TV commercials, and online ads (Carruthers, 2023). Marketers can now boost sales, reach new customers, build brand loyalty, and educate sports fans with all these advertising mediums (Morgan, 2020). Below, we discuss sports advertising's transformation:

- [Digital Revolution and Social Media Integration](#)

Over 3.2 billion people spend more time online than watching TV (Piskorski and Cordon, 2016). Internet and social media have transformed sports advertising by enabling in-game fan to contact and interactive campaigns (Dent, 2023). We know that digital platforms and internationalisation are helping sports organizations of all sizes overcome geographical barriers (McCaskill, 2019).

- [In-Stadium Signage and Product Placement](#)

Product placement and in-stadium signage are key advertising strategies. Logos appeared on stadium billboards, scoreboards, and banners, and product placement in sports broadcasts integrated brands into the viewing experience (Dent, 2023). These broadcast and field level assets highlight traditional sports venue locations (Reuben, 2021). In sports entertainment, stadium signage has changed how fans interact with their favourite teams (Chicago, 2023).

- [Traditional Branding and Sponsorship](#)

Sports advertising began with simple branding and sponsorship, as companies linked their brands to sports teams, events, or athletes to tap into the positive values and emotions of

sports (Dent, 2023). First, learn about the venue, brand, and audience to create an effective sponsorship. Next, consider ways the brand can add value and better communicate its story (Dicey, 2016). In the first half of 2021, Nielsen Sports saw a 107 percent increase in global sponsorship spending and activations as international sports rebounded. Traditional mass-reach mediums like television and radio saw more brand advertising in 2021. (Nielsen, 2022).

- Endorsement Deals and Athlete Sponsorships

Nike has invested heavily in top athletes like LeBron James and Serena Williams, making it a key player in the sports sponsorship industry (Aniukwu, Akindele, and Umezuruike, 2023). Athlete sponsorships became popular as companies signed exclusive endorsement deals with famous athletes to gain customer trust and credibility (Dent, 2023).

- Native Advertising and Branded Content

Native advertising is a form of paid content distribution in which a brand's content appears alongside editorial content on a third-party outlet, such as a social media network or news website, and is designed to blend in (Weaver, 2023). Branded content, often confused with native advertising, can include graphics, podcasts, articles, videos, and anything else that enhances the consumer's experience and builds brand loyalty (Dutta, 2019)

Native advertising and branded content are becoming more popular for seamless integration into sports media, targeting fans' interests (Dent, 2023). Branded sports content can engage audiences for long periods of time and have a long shelf life due to its authenticity and consumer reception (Geyser, 2022). (Gravel, 2016). Redbull's YouTube channel, which features sponsored extreme sports and adventures, is a good example of sports branded content (Leaders, 2020). Even though the videos don't feature Redbull products, sports fans know it as the energy drink their favourite athletes drink (Leaders, 2020).

- Immersive Experiences and Fan Engagement

Sports advertising now uses augmented reality, interactive installations, and virtual reality to build meaningful relationships with fans and allow them to interact with their favourite teams and businesses in new ways (Dent, 2023). Sports marketing has become popular among marketers because it is one of the few platforms that can still spread messages on a massive scale, which has become harder due to new technology and changing customer preferences (Kboylan, 2018). Immersive experiences and fan participation have replaced branding and passive sponsorship in sports advertising (Dent, 2023). Marketers have recognized the huge

opportunity in capturing consumers while leveraging their emotions, and more companies are wanting to 'get in on the action' (Kboyman, 2018). The future of sports advertising promises tailored dynamic, and engaging experiences that blur advertising and fan enjoyment (Dent, 2023).

2.2.2. Advertising females in sport

In 2012, Kolman and Verićić found that male and female perspectives on gender stereotypes in advertising differ significantly (119). Advertisers are often accused of using stereotypical distortions to create attention-grabbing messages that stop and start conversations in a crowded media industry (Rumbo, 2002). Advertisers view stereotypes as common knowledge that reduces distraction, appeals to audiences, simplifies cognitive processes and categorisation for consumers, and helps consumers focus on the brand message (Tsichla, 2020). Advertisements and campaigns, as well as brands, depend on accurately portraying and targeting males and females (Walley, 2023). According to the Advertisements Standards Authority (ASA), advertising stereotypes can damage people's self-image and social standing, limiting their options and ambitions (Lyons, 2019). The ASA has also examined how advertising reinforces gender stereotypes and the potential harm to people, the economy, and society (Copeman, 2017).

Advertising has been followed internationally for decades and dates to the beginnings of business, with the goal of finding the best way to communicate with consumers (Enkhmandakh & Vlajkovic, 2022). Most advertisements portray females as weak, insufficient, and exploit their anxiety and insecurity about body images and other feminine stereotypes (de Mooij, 2019). (Kozłowska, 2014). Between 1980 and 2010, only 4 percent of advertisements featured females in the office or corporate workplace; they were often shown in kitchens praising their products (Altman, 2021). Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017: 795) suggest that the "typical" female is portrayed using various elements, such as personality traits, physical attributes, roles, and jobs, to grab viewers' attention (de Mooij, 2019).

For decades, sport and advertising have stereotyped females as kitchen dwellers or used phrases like "you throw like a girl" (Yarimoglu, 2022). These stereotypes and gender roles excluded women from male-dominated fields (Women In Sport, 2019). Femvertising has led to a new era of strong female representations, destroying advertising stereotypes, ignoring sexuality, sending pro-female messages, and authentically representing females (Yarimoglu, 2022).

Thus, femvertising will be the main topic of this study. Although gender equality in the form of female liberation has been part of advertising since the 1960s, femvertising is innovative because it questions and self-awareness of female stereotypes reinforced and created by advertisements (Abdallah, Jacobson, Liasse and Lund, 2018). According to Åkestam *et al.* (2017: 795), this is a key difference between femvertising and traditional advertising. Traditional advertising follows social norms rather than challenging them, according to research (Abdallah *et al.*, 2018). However, gender neutral brand ads have become popular due to the recent focus on gender neutrality (Spasova and Taneva, 2021). Thus, gender representations in advertising are a growing field that offers academics and practitioners valuable insights (Tsichla, 2020).

Research shows that female sports participation in the developed world is rising despite marginalisation (Fink, 2015). The feminist fight is reflected in the history, breakthroughs, and progress toward gender equality in international development, human rights, and sport (de Soysa and Zipp, 2019). Since the early 1900s, female sports status has changed drastically (Theberge, 2000). Interest, attendance, viewership, media attention, and investment in female professional sports peaked in 2022. (Jarvis, 2023). This may explain why sports femvertising has increased (Scott, Smith, Darroch and Giles, 2022). However, brand activism is risky because balancing social issue messaging and marketing strategy is difficult (Champlin *et al.*, 2019). The next section will discuss femvertising, its role in advertising, and its comparison to non-femvertising.

2.3. Femvertising

Femvertising, a term coined in 2014, refers to modern advertising campaigns that challenge traditional female gender stereotypes (Åkestam *et al.*, 2017). Femvertising is advertising that empowers females with pro-female talent, imagery, and messages (Macias, 2021; Pillay, 2020; SheKnows Media, 2016). Feminists created it to empower females against stereotypes and culture (Enkhmandakh & Vlajkovic, 2022). Femvertising works because women make 70 to 80 percent of household purchases and are most likely to link them to social issues (Brennan, 2015). Femvertising is now a powerful marketing tool and an unsettling chapter in the fourth wave of feminism (Iqbal, 2015). Advertising has increased femvertising as females have more purchasing power and demand empowering and respectful depictions of females (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising inspires and empowers females of all ages with pro-female messages, increasing brand engagement and promoting brand

products (Iqbal, 2015). It has become a global trend for companies to promote gender equality and diversity in their advertisements (Enkhmandakh & Vlajkovic, 2022).

According to a 2016 poll of 4000 females and males, 53 percent bought a brand because they liked how the brand portrayed females in its advertisements (Hsu, 2018; Sheknows Media, 2016). Additionally, 97 percent of females and 90 percent of males agree that advertising portrays females in a way that shapes society's view of them (BusinessWire, 2016). Moreover, people favour femvertising because they believe youth must see pro-female advertising (Hsu, 2018). After studying femvertising-based advertisements through interviews and content analysis, Windels *et al.* (2019) concluded that the advertising industry is evolving because more female elements are being featured.

As female expectations for truthful communication rise, brands adopt femvertising advertising to challenge stereotypical cognitive frameworks (Hernández-Rodríguez & Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). Due to this new pro-female advertising, females have been portrayed as more believable and healthier outside of the “ideal” framework used in previous ads (Madriz, Mora and Oropeza, 2021). The traditional beauty standards and roles have been replaced by depictions of empowered, active, independent, and professional females (Hernández-Rodríguez & Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022).

In this digital, transparent world, brands that use poor advertising risk being boycotted or called out if they violate social media's empowerment and support culture (Hsu, 2018). Advertising messages aligned with femvertising are increasing. Different female decision-makers in public settings are the common factor (Hernández-Rodríguez and Sepúlveda-Ríos, 2022). Therefore, female empowerment advertising engages consumers, inspires action, and most importantly, creates deep emotional resonance (Drake, 2017).

Femvertising and male advocacy for positive female roles and equality feature females in new, multifaceted roles (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising has shown great results, prompting many organizations to use female empowerment, femininity celebration, and female hood more (Drake, 2017). Promoting femvertising has created a domino effect, encouraging other brands and organisations to follow (Enkhmandakh & Vlajkovic, 2022).

Femvertising has been lauded by both sexes for promoting empowering female images and rejecting stereotypes, but it has raised questions about marketers' motivations (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising has also been criticised for using female empowerment's viral potential for profit and product sales, which reduces female power to a commodity (Fineman, 2014).

Some critics argue that femvertising is the result of advertising companies appropriating feminist elements from contemporary social conflicts, where advertising is rarely seen as authentic (Lazar, 2006), and the brands themselves reject it as a virtuous social movement (Becker-Herby, 2016). Due to a lack of research on femvertising in South Africa, this study examines how this advertising technique affects South African consumers' perceptions of sports companies and their advertising, as well as how non-femvertising does. South African sports brands will have a blueprint for inclusive branding and its impact on consumers, making their advertising and communication strategy more efficient and effective.

Most females think femvertisements remove gender boundaries and are positive (Sterbenk, Champlin, Windels and Shelton, 2021). Interestingly, femvertising encourages females to overcome social barriers to play sports and get active (Hsu, 2018). Femvertising, especially sports advertising, portrays a more genuine and believable image, which makes females feel more connected to it. Sports still have sexism and stereotypes (Madriz, Mora and Oropeza, 2021). Advertising also emphasises female inner strengths and athletic prowess, using muscular and strong females and their sports participation to symbolise power, traditionally held by males (Hsu, 2018).

Effective advertising is needed to build a strong brand, which affects business success (Steenkamp, 2022). Thus, an inclusive advertising and brand strategy to boost brand equity are essential. Femvertising can improve social change by promoting gender parity and brand equity (Puterman, 2020). Thus, the following section will focus on branding, customer-based brand equity, and advertising brand reaction.

2.4. Customer Based-Brand Equity (CBBE)

The creation, maintenance, growth, extension, and leveragability of brands as assets have dominated brand equity literature, connecting strategic brand investments to cash flow growth, acceleration, expansion, and reduced volatility, and thus investors' firm value evaluations (Rego, Brady, Leone, Roberts, Srivastava and Srivastava, 2022). Damage or destruction of brand assets can greatly reduce their value for the company and consumer (Rego *et al.*, 2022). Brand equity is a well-known brand with positive, distinct, and strong consumer associations (Keller, 1993). However, consumer and industrial brands are rarely distinguished. Other studies have found differences between consumer and corporate markets and organisational buyers' buying and decision-making processes (Mudambi, 2002). Various research methodologies have produced many definitions of brand equity that cannot be represented by a single concept or idea (Tuominen, 1999). The differences

between brand equity research model types show this (Adetunji, Rashid and Ishak, 2018). Building an organisation's brand equity is branding's main goal, making it the most important topic (Bhasin, 2023). The customer-based-brand equity (CBBE) strategy allows this.

The Customer-Based-Brand Equity (CBBE) model is the most comprehensive brand equity model in the literature (Keller, 1993, 2001). Theorists see it as an offshoot of brand equity conceptualised for consumer viewpoints (Adetunji, Rashid & Ishak, 2018). This perspective examines the consumer's decision-making process, mind, and attitude to evaluate a brand's qualities and performance, as well as improve communication and marketing (Hsieh, 2004).

Brands, "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers," have existed for thousands of years (Moore and Reid, 2008). (Marion, 2023). Every brand has brand equity, which is its assets or liabilities that increase or decrease product value (Kuhn, Alpert and Pope, 2008). Buyers' willingness to pay more for a preferred brand and recommend it to peers shows this (Hutton, 1997). Positive brand equity allows companies to charge higher prices, expand their product lines, and possibly influence society. Brands seek equity because it drives customer loyalty, sales, and profits (Lee, 2023) and can lead to high-quality products and services and a good reputation, which may boost customer satisfaction (Hayes, 2023).

In the CBBE model, four customer inquiry levels form a "branding ladder," with each step dependent on the previous one (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). The brand identity, meaning, response, and relationship steps of this branding ladder depend on the previous step (Hawker, 2019). These brand processes include salience, performance, imagery, judgements, feelings, and resonance (Kuhn, Alpert & Pope, 2008). To build a powerful brand, one must develop optimal brand encounters or experiences (Hawker, 2019) to reach the peak of the pyramid, where a harmonious client relationship occurs (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). The CBBE measures consumers' brand knowledge, brand experiences, and brand perception (Adetunji, Rashid & Ishak, 2018). Each brand interaction should leave customers or prospects with positive thoughts, feelings, and impressions (Hawker, 2019).

Brand Identity (Salience)

According to the CBBE model, the first step in building a successful brand is establishing the right "brand identity" to associate the brand with a product category or demand (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). The most crucial question is "Who are you?" (Hawker, 2019). High brand salience means consumers recognise and consider a brand when they need a product or

service (Riserbato, 2023). Consumer awareness of a brand is called brand salience (Suhardi, Susilo, Priyanto and Abdi, 2022). The salience building block has two components: need satisfaction and category association (Kuhn, Alpert & Pope, 2008).

Meaning (Performance and Imagery)

The second stage answers, "Who are you?" by creating "brand meaning" and associating the brand with specific attributes (Keller, 2001). Consumers are most drawn to brands that provide functional benefits and best symbolise the "meanings" that help them build and express their self-identity (Batra, 2019). At this point, brand pillars are performance and imagery (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). Primary qualities and features; product reliability, durability, and serviceability; service effectiveness, efficiency, and empathy; style and design; and price are key performance indicators. Product performance determines how well it meets target market needs (Hawker, 2019). Imaging is about your brand's emotional appeal to customers and whether it meets or exceeds branding and social media expectations (Frampton, 2020). Users, employees, CEO, product-related qualities, packaging, logos, product category associations, brand name, symbols, advertising message and style, anthropomorphism, price, and distribution channel can make a brand culturally significant (Batra, 2019).

Response (Judgements and Feelings)

In the next stage, "brand response," customers react appropriately to brand recognition and meaning (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). This stage uses 'judgments' and 'feelings' to answer "What about you?" (Qiao and Wang, 2017). Important questions include: what do consumers associate with the brand? Because people often make assumptions based on their observations, what does it mean to the buyer and how does it make them feel? (Hawker, 2019).

Relationships (Resonance)

The CBBE pyramid's final element, "brand relationships," transforms brand response into an intense, active customer loyalty relationship (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004). (Keller, 2001). Brand resonance is a consumer's strong behavioural, psychological, and social relationships with a brand (Raut, Brito and Pawar, 2019). Keller's pyramid's top question, "What about you and me?" is most important (Hawker, 2019). Brand resonance involves the sequential development of brand awareness, performance, image, feelings, judgement, loyalty, attachment, community, and engagement (Raut and Brito, 2014). Brand resonance—when

consumers are willing to spend time, effort, and money on the brand—is the strongest sign of brand loyalty (Keller, 2002).

CBBE, especially from an organisational perspective, aims to evaluate a brand's strength, measure marketing campaigns' effectiveness, calculate branding's financial impact, and build successful brands (Ailawadi, Lehmann and Neslin, 2003). Academics and industry prioritize CBBE development and regulation (Adetunji, Rashid & Ishak, 2018).

2.4.1. CBBE and brand response towards advertising

Brand advertising has become a key agent of social change (Erasmus, 2018). Advertisers can build strong brands by giving consumers a meaningful experience that creates positive feelings, beliefs, images, opinions, and perceptions about the brand, forming an emotional and psychological connection (Keller, 2001). Ideology dominates global discourse, and Edelman's 2017 earned brand research found that 50 percent of purchasing decisions are based on beliefs (Edelman, 2017). Advertisers use gender stereotypes and roles because the media insists on portraying males and females in traditional roles (Hentschel, Heilman and Peus, 2019). Since femvertising is based on the idea that advertising can empower women and dispel some prejudices, its growth has been significant (Erasmus, 2018). Brands that ignore cultural change and female empowerment risk losing consumers' trust and equity (Edelman, 2017).

Advertising supports brand use and perceived performance (Ha, John, Janda and Muthaly, 2011) by eliciting customer reactions like emotions and judgments, which are thought to correlate with important outcomes like purchase intentions (Curtis, Arnaud and Waguespack, 2017). Traditional advertising is informative and can persuade consumers to buy a product or service by touting its features (Kerin and Hartley, 2014). The advertising message usually appeals to consumer wants and desires, and often to consumers' emotions and judgments (Curtis, Arnaud & Waguespack, 2017). Some advertising fails to achieve its goals, upsets the audience, and elicits a negative response, even though emotional responses are intended to increase customer awareness and attention, lowering brand equity, according to research (Waller, 2005).

However, emotionally significant events and messages are remembered better (Kensinger, 2004). However, individual evaluations involve evidence evaluation and outcome estimation, such as purchase intent (Blanchette and Richards, 2010). The relationship between emotion and judgement is complicated because emotions affect information perception and

evaluation (Curtis, Arnaud & Waguespack, 2017). According to mainstream marketing, brand response evaluation distinguishes between affective and cognitive responses (van Noort and van Reijmersdal, 2019). This interpretation of responses calls brand value or equity multidimensional, with cognitive and affective foundations (van Noort & van Reijmersdal, 2019). Cognitive brand equity addresses brand beliefs and cognition (knowledge, recognition, and recall) (van Noort & van Reijmersdal, 2019). A consumer's brand attitude and emotional connection to a brand are called affective brand equity (van Noort & van Reijmersdal, 2019).

Brand attitude—consumers' overall evaluation of a brand based on brand beliefs—determines its response intensity (Koll & von Wallpach, 2009). These beliefs apply to product-related and non-product-related attributes like functional and experiential benefits (Koll & von Wallpach, 2009). Because characterising and measuring all key traits and benefits is difficult, brand researchers often use a broad assessment of the brand, such as satisfaction, trust, or commitment, to capture brand attitude (Koll & von Wallpach, 2009). Brand behavior includes current and future purchasing behavior, brand usage, and word-of-mouth (Kozinets, 2001). Customers like strong brands because they associate with them (Keller, 1993). These beliefs apply to product-related and non-product-related attributes like functional and experiential benefits (Koll & von Wallpach, 2009).

The CBBE model states that brand equity is determined by marketing-implanted brand knowledge in customers' minds (Keller, 2009). Advertising can boost consumer awareness and increase the likelihood that the brand will be associated with them (Makasi, Govender and Rukweza, 2014).

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed relevant literature and confirmed the research topic. This chapter discussed how globalisation, competition, and increased advertising have changed sport, requiring customer perception research. It examined how the sports industry has evolved from branding to fan interaction and immersive experiences, using marketing-driven strategies to better meet consumers' needs. The literature also found that sports advertising will offer tailored, dynamic, and engaging experiences that blur advertising and fan enjoyment.

This chapter also discussed advertising females in sport and femvertising, a new form of advertising that challenges gender stereotypes and societal norms. Femvertising has had a

positive impact on the sports industry, increasing interest, attendance, viewership, media attention, and investment in female professional sports. To maintain and grow brand equity, brands must establish their own voice to balance social issue messaging and marketing strategy, which can be difficult. This chapter continues with the CBBE model and brand response to advertising.

The CBBE model evaluates consumer brand equity comprehensively. It assesses brand performance by understanding consumer decision-making, mind, and attitude. Brand equity allows brands to raise prices, expand product lines, and impact society, which boosts sales, loyalty, and profits. CBBE's main objective is to evaluate brands, measure marketing campaigns, calculate branding's financial impact, and build successful brands.

This section of the study examined themes that will inform future research and synthesized prior research in the context of the current situation. This chapter provides an introduction, context, and rationale for the study to set the stage for the research approach. It ensures that the study contributes to advertising, fills gaps in the literature, and helps the researcher choose research methods. The research method and literature review guide the process. Next, the study discusses methodology and design.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study followed Saunders's research onion framework (Melnikovas, 2018). Research involves empirical work and data collection to confirm, deny, or contest theories, helping explain observations (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers, 2002). A qualitative approach was chosen for this research because it allows for more in-depth and meaningful information based on an individual's experience (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016). Due to the lack of femvertising research in South Africa, qualitative research was appropriate. Femvertising's impact on South African consumers' brand resonance and brand equity is unknown to brands.

3.2. Research paradigm

In this section the approach, methodology, or pattern for conducting research were discussed. The research paradigm is a collection of beliefs, ideas, or understandings within which theories and practices can function (Abbadia, 2020). Interpretivism, positivism and critical realism are the three prominent research paradigms (Erasmus, 2018).

Positivism validates quantitative a priori assumptions using hypothetico-deductive reasoning. This method establishes functional links between explanatory and causal elements and outcomes (Park, Konge, Artino 2020). Natural scientists who generalize from social reality are positivists (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Positivists believe in a single, measurable, and understandable reality, so they quantify it with quantitative methods (Abbadia, 2022). Therefore, this paradigm is unsuitable for this study. Critical realism seeks explanations by examining individuals' accomplishments within their social context (Stutchbury, 2021). Critical realism acknowledges the complexity of society and the flaws of interpretivism and positivism to reconcile their differing views. Critical realists believe they must expose, criticise, and reform unjust practices to change social relationships (Erasmus, 2018). Feminists are activists even though femvertising empowers females.

The interpretivist study examines femvertising and its effects on brand response and equity. Interpretivism, which emphasises context-related variables and circumstances and distinguishes humans from physical phenomena because they generate deeper meanings, holds that humans cannot be studied like physical phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Most qualitative social science research uses the interpretivist paradigm, which holds that there are multiple realities (Abbadia, 2022). Interpretivism studies human behaviour, like this study on femvertising and consumers.

Interpretivism, which emphasises social and cultural influences on a person's thoughts and beliefs, was the research paradigm (Phair & Warren, 2021). Interpretivism was best for this study because customer perceptions and responses are strongly influenced by their ideas and social and cultural factors. Interpretivism allows diverse viewpoints (Pham, 2018).

Interpretivists believe in relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Relativist ontology recognizes reality through intersubjectivity by considering experiential and social aspects in research (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012). Assuming that people are inseparable from their knowledge, subjectivist epistemology links research subjects to research (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Interpretivism allows for quality data collection and research comprehension. The interpretivist paradigm emphasizes understanding human experience, so understanding how consumers perceive femvertising is crucial. Interviews and other meaning-oriented methods rely on researcher-participant subjective interaction. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm helps explain femvertising. Discussing the research follows.

3.3. Research design

Thus, this section provides the study's foundational ideas (Phair and Warren, 2021). This section establishes the research's ontology, epistemology, beliefs, and ethics (Melnikovas, 2018). Ontology, what really exists in the world about which people can learn, helps researchers decide how specific they can be about the items studied (Moon and Blackman, 2017). Epistemology covers all aspects of scope, validity, and knowledge acquisition, including how knowledge is produced or acquired, what constitutes a knowledge claim, and how its transferability can be assessed (Moon & Blackman, 2017).

3.3.1. Approach to theory development

This study used qualitative research because it best met its goals. This method is best for the study because it interprets participants' behaviour and describes their feelings, experiences, and views on femvertising. The researcher needs this information to understand participants' views (Rahman, 2017). The complexity of femvertising and gender equality makes qualitative research suitable for this study because it allows an in-depth investigation. Qualitative research methods like interviews allow participants to express their true feelings and opinions, unlike quantitative methods. Qualitative research methods are flexible (Rahman, 2017), allowing researchers to adjust data collection methods to participant engagement and deeper understanding. Since quantitative research methods lack a direct researcher-participant link during data collection, they cannot account for participants' experiences and perspectives in highly controlled environments, which is a major drawback (Rahman, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online via Teams and transcribed manually. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for data collection because they combine flexibility and structure (Al Balushi, 2017). Meaning the interview structure is flexible enough to fully explore and probe responses, allow the researcher to respond to relevant issues raised spontaneously by the interviewee, and cover topics in the order most appropriate to the interviewee (George, 2023). Interactive semi-structured interviews allow for prompting and probing, another reason they were chosen (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2019). After transcription, data was coded and analysed using MAXQDA, a data analysis software that allows multiple data sorts, stores all data in a project pack, and makes qualitative analysis efficient (Bothwell, 2020). The collected data was interpreted and validated to ensure quality and accuracy. Credibility and transferability were ensured by making use of thematic content analysis (Thakur and Chetty, 2020). Credibility, the equivalent of internal validity in

quantitative research, is concerned with truth-value and is ensured by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member check. Transferability, on the other hand, is concerned with applicability and requires a 'thick description' of the research process and participants (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). The interviews was recorded on Teams or Zoom, and transcribed manually, this ensures validity and avoids systematic bias (Rutakumwa, Mugisha, Bernays, Kabunga, Tumwekwase, Mbonye and Seeley, 2019).

Current research onion layer refers to larger inductive or deductive research methodology (Phair & Warren, 2021). Inductive reasoning develops a theory, while deductive reasoning tests it (Streefkerk, 2023). This research study used deductive reasoning because it shifts from general principles to specific instances (Soiferman, 2010). It seeks to develop meanings from collected data to uncover patterns and links to build a theory, while allowing the researcher to use established theory to form the research topic (Dudovskiy, 2023). The study was exploratory because it explained previous research, was flexible, and cost- and time-effective (George and Merkus, 2023).

3.3.2. Research approach

The researcher uses the research strategy to choose primary data collection methods to answer the research question and achieve research goals (Melnikovas, 2018). This layer of the research onion refers to a broad strategy that helps the researcher select the primary data collection methods (Melnikovas, 2018). Interpretivism allows for the analysis of cultural and social influences on an individual, so the theoretical framework and research strategy used interpretivism and deductive reasoning (Phair & Warren, 2021). Interpretivism used data to build a new theory, model, or framework, and since femvertising in South Africa is understudied, it is appropriate (Phair & Warren, 2021).

Selection of research methods follows. Research choices include quantitative and qualitative methods, simple or sophisticated combinations of the two, or mono approaches (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The study used a mono-approach, using a single data collection and qualitative analysis method. Semi-structured interviews and qualitative data analysis were used (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). As mentioned, this study used a mono-approach to investigate the topic thoroughly. Complex research questions and objectives required qualitative methods. Qualitative research also allowed the researcher to examine the complex interaction of factors and different perspectives that quantitative methods might miss. Thus, the qualitative mono-approach was best.

Discussing research time horizons follows. This layer of the research onion shows how many cross-sectional or longitudinal data points are planned (Phair & Warren, 2021). Due to its focus on a specific event and period, this study will use a cross-sectional time horizon (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

3.4. Research methodology

3.4.1. Population and sampling

This study included South African male and female consumers of all races, ages, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and residential areas. A diverse population improved quality and precision and provided a deep understanding of consumer preferences and behaviour (Hillman, 2023). To get a holistic view of how femvertising campaigns affect sports consumers, this study used both males and females. A study sample is a portion of the population (McCombes, 2023). Eight people were chosen from the population for this study. The sample size was ideal because it was large enough to develop a 'fresh and richly detailed understanding' of femvertising while small enough to allow for 'deep, case-oriented study' (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young, 2018). Non-probability sampling was used. This method shows that not all population members can be sampled (Lamm and Lamm, 2019). More specifically, convenience sampling was used. Qualitative research designs suit this approach best (Moran, 2021). It was used to choose easily accessible people for researchers. This usually involves using location and resources to recruit participants. Participants were 18 to 40-year-old males and females with internet, social media, and TV access. This age demographic was chosen because they are most likely to use the internet, social media, and TV and have been exposed to advertising. Finally, participants were chosen for their likelihood of engaging with Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, and Budweiser. [These brands were used because the advertisements were clear, and the messaging was concise. I selected four brands because it removes bias.](#)

3.4.2. Research instrument

This study used semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews help qualitative researchers understand participants' feelings and attitudes about issues (Heath, 2023). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer adjusts question sequencing and language to suit the interviewee and environment (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Structured interview questions are in Annexure A. [Semi-structured interviews consist of several questions in the general format of an interview schedule, but the sequence of the](#)

questions may change (Comeet, 2022). While enabling empathy and rapport to build between the participant and researcher, the interviewer has considerable latitude to explore and probe further questions in response to what is deemed to be meaningful responses, this is why this data collection technique is preferred to others (Clements, 2022). Reading and repeatedly listening to the transcribed interviews will assist the researcher in developing a more defined understanding of the topic through the transcription process. Once the material has been transcribed, coding will proceed to make the interpretation of participant feedback easier (Medelyan, 2023).

Due to their power and versatility, semi-structured interviews are a good method for studying consumer perceptions and behaviours in South Africa, where there is little research on femvertising. This research instrument was the right mix of rigidity and adaptability, allowing for the collection of rich and nuanced data while meeting participant needs.

3.4.3. Data collection

The onion's final layer represents research design data collection and analysis (Melnikovas, 2018). One-on-one interviews were used to collect data because they allow the researcher to analyse interaction patterns at a micro level, focusing on how participants make sense of each other through common interactional norms (White, 2019). No other research method could collect data as effectively as semiotics to understand why consumers and participants think and act the way they do (Olbertová, 2014). Participants watched seven femvertising and non-femvertising advertising campaigns and answered structured and impromptu interview questions.

The one-on-one interviews were semi-structured and consisted of several questions in the format of an interview schedule, but the order changed (Comeet, 2022). While building empathy and rapport between participant and researcher, the interviewer had considerable latitude to explore and probe further questions in response to meaningful responses, which is why this data collection method is preferred (Clements, 2022).

3.4.4. Data analysis

Through transcription, the researcher gained a better understanding of the topic by reading and listening to the interviews. Coding began after transcription to simplify participant feedback interpretation (Medelyan, 2023). Qualitative research relied on keywords to organize and classify text (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). After coding, the data was analysed, categorised, and organised by themes and subthemes. Thus, each theme was

coded uniquely (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The next step was comparing and identifying patterns in the data. The third stage, data verification, involves reassessing codes and transcripts to verify understanding. Interview data was analysed using MAXQDA.

3.4.4.1. Data reduction

Data reduction precedes qualitative data analysis. Choosing a conceptual framework, research objections, cases, and equipment helped the researcher limit data collection (Mezmir, 2020). Summarisation, coding, theme identification, and clustering are used to select and condense data from field notes, interviews, tapes, and other sources (Mezmir, 2020). One-on-one semi-structured interviews collected sports femvertising data. Data were manually transcribed. Data irrelevant to the research goals was removed. Irrelevant data is relevant to the study but not to its main theme. After data collection and reduction, the researcher categorised it.

3.4.4.2. Categorisation

Data categorisation involves grouping similar datasets (Patil and Gurtoo, 2021). To organise data, data categorisation involves finding similarities between datasets to form categories (Patil & Gurtoo, 2021). The research objectives guided data categorisation for this study. The classification method for research objectives is:

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

Open coding: The researcher commenced the study by conducting interviews with individuals who possessed prior involvement in the South African sport industry, either as a participant or consumer. The initial categories into which the data was partitioned were:

- Feelings about females in sport.
- Feelings about the representation of females in sport.
- Feelings and/or attitudes towards how females in sports are advertised.

Axial coding: this stage, the researcher delved deeper, identifying correlations between participants' attitudes toward females in sports and perceptions of their representation. Additionally, attitudes and feelings about advertising females in sports were found to be intricately linked to the portrayal of females in sports.

Selective coding: The researcher identified two key categories, with a significant impact on femvertising in South African sports: the representation of females in sports and their portrayal in sports advertisements.

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

Open coding: The study begins by assessing participants' understanding of femvertising and the brands associated with it. Participants are then asked about their opinions on whether sports brands should invest in femvertising and whether all brands should do so. The following initial categories were applied to this data:

- Awareness and exposure to femvertising.
- Perceptions of sports brands using femvertising.
- Perceptions of all brands using femvertising.

The answers of the participants after being shown the seven advertisements were then recorded. The following first categories were applied to this data:

- Emotional responses to femvertising.
- Emotional responses to anti-femvertising.
- The presence of femvertising in the advertisements.
- The presence of anti-femvertising in the advertisements.

Axial coding: By Through further data analysis, the researcher identified correlations between awareness of femvertising and perceptions of brands using femvertising. Consumer awareness and exposure to femvertising were crucial for accurate perception. Additionally, the presence of femvertising in advertisements closely correlated with emotional responses to femvertising.

Selective coding: The researcher identifies key categories representing South African customer perceptions of femvertising. Three significant factors impacting these perceptions are identified: awareness and exposure to femvertising, perceptions of all brands using femvertising, and emotional responses to femvertising.

O₃: How does femvertising influence brand response.

Open coding: After presenting the advertisements to the participants, the researcher inquired about the brands' responses and advertising in general. The initial codes comprised the following:

- Influence of femvertising on purchasing behaviour.
- Influence of anti-femvertising on purchasing behaviour.
- Influence of femvertising in storytelling on purchase behaviour.

- Influence of femvertising as part of a brands advertising, on a consumer's behaviour towards direct-call-to-actions.

Axial coding: Through additional data analysis, the researcher discerned correlations between the implementation of femvertising and consumer purchasing behaviour. There was also a link between femvertising in storytelling with purchasing behaviour.

Selective coding: At this stage, the researcher discerned two primary categories that have a substantial impact on brand response: the influence of femvertising on purchasing behaviour and the role of femvertising as an integral component of storytelling.

O₄: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

Open coding: After presenting the advertisements to the participants, the researcher proceeded to ask questions about brand equity and femvertising. The initial codes comprised the following:

- Consumer perception of a brand utilising femvertising.
- Consumer perception of the brands in the advertisements.
- Consumers perception of the value of the brands in the advertisements.
- Consumer perception of brands before and after advertisements.

Axial coding: Upon conducting more data analysis, the researcher identified correlations between consumers' perceptions and the usage of femvertising. Additionally, a strong association was found between consumers' perceptions of brand value and femvertising.

Selective coding: The study identifies key categories depicting the impact of femvertising on brand equity. Consumer perceptions of brand value and brand are emphasized as critical factors influencing brand equity.

O₅: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

Open coding: The researcher then inquired further about brand equity and anti-femvertising. The initial codes comprised the following:

- Consumer perception of a brand not utilising femvertising.
- Consumer perception of the brands in the advertisements.
- Consumers perception of the value of the brands in the advertisements.
- Consumer perception of brands before and after advertisements.
- Consumer perception of brands utilising anti-femvertising.

Axial coding: Upon conducting more data analysis, the researcher identified correlations between customers' perceptions and the use of anti-femvertising. Additionally, a strong association was found between consumers' perceptions of brand value and anti-femvertising.

Selective coding: The study established the fundamental criteria that most accurately reflect the impact of anti-femvertising on brand equity. Consumer perceptions of brand value and brand are highlighted by the researcher as key areas that have a substantial impact on brand equity.

3.4.5. Trustworthiness, credibility, reliability, and transferability

Thematic content analysis guaranteed credibility and transferability (Thakur & Chetty, 2020), Teams recorded and manually transcribed the interviews to ensure validity and avoid systematic bias (Rutakumwa, Mugisha, Bernays, Kabunga, Tumwekwase, Mbonye and Seeley, 2019).

Thematic content analysis gave the study credibility, trustworthiness, and a complete understanding. Besides interviews, the researcher used thematic analysis on transcripts to find patterns and themes. Coding and interpretations improved study reliability. Reliability was enhanced by ethical practices in data protection, privacy, and participant consent (section 3.6).

Transferability is the potential of the researcher's working hypothesis to be applied elsewhere (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2023). To help readers understand the study and its operational environment, the researcher provided a detailed account of the research context, methodologies, and results. So, others could assess the generalisability of the results to populations with different backgrounds or features, the study participants' demographic and sociocultural attributes were detailed. The study's historical, environmental, and cultural context was discussed. The study's limitations and research design were also examined to assess its scientific rigor and generalisability.

3.5. Limitations

This section of Chapter Three includes the research limitations. These limitations are the weaknesses of the study, based on factors outside of the researcher's control (Jansen, 2022).

Key limitations in this study include a small sample size and limited data collection duration, impacting generalizability, reliability, and precision. The use of convenience sampling,

though providing quick results, further affected reliability and precision. To enhance precision and insight, a larger, more diversified sample is recommended. Time constraints also affected efforts to ensure credibility and reliability. The study's focus on femvertising neglects male gender stereotypes, a significant concern. Convenience sampling contributes to insufficient diversity, particularly in race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, crucial aspects of intersectionality. Recognising the researcher's identity as a female Gen Z, acknowledging the potential for personal bias is imperative.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Priority was placed on the physical and psychological comfort of participants during data collection (Louw, 2014). Participants were informed that their identification and personal information were not to be shared with anyone but the researcher. Participants were sent the Vega School consent form and had to return a signed version to the researcher, if they agreed to participate. These consent forms can be found Annexure H. Interviews were done one-on-one, allowing for the avoidance of having participants feel embarrassed to answer truthfully. The interview and researcher were well organised, and the interviews covered the duration of an hour on average.

3.6.1. Dealing with sensitive information

Sensitive information was protected, and the researcher did not allow her own emotions or biases to interfere (Louw, 2014). Although this study was not aimed to collect sensitive information, the researcher was cognisant of the way the information was managed.

3.6.2. Collecting data from participants

Priority was placed on the physical and psychological comfort of participants during data collection (Louw, 2014). Participants were informed that their identification and personal information will not be shared with anyone but the researcher. Interviews were done one-on-one, allowing for the avoidance of having participants feel embarrassed to answer truthfully. The interview and researcher were well organised, and the interview covered the duration of thirty minutes to an hour and a half (Jamshed, 2014).

3.6.3. Providing incentives

Incentives such as food, a possible vacation, a television money, or money, may seem like a good way to encourage participation, but there are ethical considerations to consider (Louw, 2014). This study did not include any incentives.

3.6.4. Avoiding harm

Researchers should not cause any harm to their participants. However, 'harm' can become intricate and challenging to eradicate (Louw, 2014). To avoid embarrassment or discouragement interviews were one-on-one and private. Sensitive topics, like gender equality or female empowerment for example, were discussed with participants prior to the interview and will be handled with caution.

3.6.5. Confidentiality versus anonymity

A major concern for many participants in research is the protection of their identity and sensitive information (Louw, 2014). In this study, the researcher guaranteed the participants confidentiality, and anonymity using pseudonyms to de-identify participants (Heaton, 2021).

3.6.6. Deception

To avoid the possible deception of participants, the researcher ensured, through proper communication techniques, that participants were well informed regarding the purpose of the study (Louw, 2014) and what exactly it entailed.

3.7. Conclusion

These interpretivist studies used qualitative methods like one-on-one online semi-structured interviews and MAXQDA for data analysis. Analysis of thematic content ensured credibility. Details on context, methods, and results for transferability. Demographics helped comprehension. Limitations and research design were examined thoroughly. Deductive reasoning, explanation, and flexibility guided the study. Convenience sampling of eight South Africans sought to understand femvertising's impact on sports consumers. The next chapter covers data analysis.

Chapter Four: Data analysis

4.1. Introduction

The third chapter examined the research method used to collect primary data on Femvertising in sports. Chapter Four presents the chapter three procedure's data. This chapter will describe the participants, data collection, and analysis methods. The chapter also describes the sampling method and selection criteria. Data collection, advertisement selection, and rationale will be explained.

4.2. Sampling and participants

Convenience sampling was used to study femvertising quickly and cheaply (Lamm and Lamm, 2019). This allows the researcher to explore new femvertising theories. To accurately represent South Africans, the research examines how participants from different cultural backgrounds interpret the theory.

Eight participants with experience in marketing or advertising, sports, or athletic apparel were then selected for the study. For the research to be ethical, participants signed inclusionary consent forms to publish their titles and responses, but to maintain anonymity, pseudonyms will be used throughout. To understand the findings, participant cultural, geographical, professional, and educational backgrounds are described in the following sections.

4.2.1. Participant one

Kelly (25) has identified as a Coloured female that has grown up in Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa. Kelly is a Marketing and Branding Representative for a skills development company in Pretoria. Kelly holds two degrees a Bachelor of Commerce in Financial Management and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion and is currently a student completing her Masters Business of Administration in Fashion Management at IFA Paris. Kelly belongs to the LGBTQIA+ community and self-identifies as [Gen Z, as she was born between 1997 to 2012](#).

4.2.2. Participant two

Jane (25) is a Venezuelan female that has resides in Gauteng, South Africa from the age of six. Presently, she is a Social Media Manager for a small Digital Marketing Agency situated in Gauteng and holds a degree in Drama. She is married and has converted to Islam.

4.2.3. Participant three

Pamela (24) is an African Black female of Ghanaian descent, is a resides in Randburg, Northwest, but spends most of her time and upbringing in Gauteng, South Africa. She has completed her Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing Management. At present, she is employed as a Video Editor at a Gauteng based Digital Marketing Agency. Currently, she is completing a Master of Commerce in Marketing Management at the University of Pretoria. She participated in high school athletics and is enthusiastic about cooking and production.

4.2.4. Participant four

Izzy (27) a White female, is a native of Centurion, South Africa. Her Lebanese and Italian family is comprised of accomplished photographers, and she has prior experience in the field of drama. Presently pursuing an acting career, Izzy is also a freelance photographer. She identifies as [Gen Z](#).

4.2.5. Participant five

John (26) is an African Black male from the South of Johannesburg. Currently, he is employed as a Marketing Intern with a Digital Marketing Agency. He participates in both football and basketball. He formerly engaged in rugby and, “oddly enough”, possesses a penchant for bagpipes. John identifies as [Gen Z](#).

4.2.6. Participant six

Sarah (23) a White female, is a native of Pretoria, South Africa. She possesses a Journalism undergraduate degree and is presently employed as a Social Media Manager. Sarah is enthusiastic about both content production and photography. In elementary school, she participated in competitive hockey and swimming, but she has since lost interest in sports. She participated in competitive dance from her senior year of high school until matriculation. Sarah classifies herself as [Gen Z](#).

4.2.7. Participant seven

Jessica (22) an African Black female, is a native of Johannesburg, South Africa however, and her family extends to London, England. She is a self-taught graphic designer and currently works for a Digital Marketing Agency and various other Ad Hoc jobs. Jessica was an active participant in netball and athletics. She possesses a keen interest in both creative design and fashion.

4.2.8. Participant eight

Doug (24) a Johannesburg-born White male. Presently, he is a medical student enrolled at Witwatersrand (Wits) University. He is of German descent and is passionate about all things football. Doug engaged in kickboxing in addition to ice hockey, basketball, cricket, and rugby during his youth.

4.3. Method of data collection

The interviews took six days, from 19 to 25 October 2023, on Microsoft Teams. Two print advertisements and five video advertisements were presented in the interviews. The seven

advertisements represented different brands and were chosen based on their message, target audience, and femvertising implementation. Eight interviews were recorded. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask secondary research-compiled questions and additional questions (Appendix A) to clarify and delve deeper into specific areas of interest or importance. The shortest interview lasted 35 minutes and the longest 1.5 hours. Therefore, averaging an hour per interview.

4.3.1. Nike

Nike: *Dream Crazier* was the first advertisement evaluated. This advertisement was chosen because it clearly features femvertising by highlighting the accomplishments of female athletes who have defied conventions, united spectators through their athleticism, and inspired future generations of athletes.

Figure 4.1 Nike: Dream Crazier



(Lastesly, 2019)

4.3.2. Adidas

In the second advertisement, *Family Reunion*, a 2022 Adidas Men's Football World Cup advertisement, the world's best players show their personal rituals and remind fans what makes this tournament so special.

Figure 4.2 Adidas: The Family Reunion



(Adidas, 2022)

The third advertisement was *Play Until They Can't Look Away*, a 2023 Adidas Women's Football World Cup ad that showcases some of the world's best football players, whose skill and dedication deserve international recognition and support.

Figure 4.3 Play Until They Can't Look Away



(Adidas, 2023)

The advertisements were chosen because they showed the incongruous marketing used for the Men's and Women's FIFA World Cups. These advertisements show how sports brands like Adidas market male and female sports differently, especially male-dominated sports. The Women's World Cup advertisement's minimal femvertising and the *Family Reunion* advertisement's lack of a female presence stood out when selecting these ads.

4.3.3. Budweiser

Participants watched *Tune Out*, a 2004 Budweiser advertisement, fourth. This advertisement was chosen for its stereotypical gender portrayal and lack of femvertising. The advertisement shows an NFL referee staying calm while an irate coach yells angrily into his ears. The announcers wonder how he can handle such verbal abuse until the match ends with a cut to the referee sitting on a couch at home while his wife yells at him.

Figure 4.4 Budweiser: Tune Out



(CBS, 2009)

4.3.4. Under Armour

The fifth Under Armour advertisement was from its 2015–2016 *Rule yourself* campaign. Stephen Curry (basketball), Misty Copeland (ballerina), and Jordan Spieth (golf) are shown in the ad as an army of synchronised performers who relentlessly practice their skills to succeed. The advertising's unique mix of athletic disciplines and understated, clichéd portrayal of ballet, a feminine sport, were chosen.

Figure 4.5 Under Armour: Rule Yourself



(Alonso and Piacentini, 2015)

4.3.5. Tennis Federation

The final advertisements focused on the Tennis Federation. The sixth advertisement showed participants an excerpt from the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 2014's *Strong is beautiful* campaign. This WTA ad was chosen for its sexuality and stereotyping. This advertisement's depiction of female athletes may oppose female empowerment.

Figure 4.6 WTA: Strong is Beautiful



(Hepburn, 2020)

The seventh and final advertisement was from the 2013 ATP *Beat this* campaign (ATP). The WTA advertisement was contrasted with this one to show how male and female sports marketing strategies differ.

Figure 4.7 ATP: Beat This



(Hepburn, 2020)

4.4. Procedure of data collection

The researcher thanked participants and gave a brief study summary before each interview. The researcher titled the study "Femvertising in the Sport Industry: A Consumer Perspective" and used the interview and data to complete a mini dissertation for IIE Vega School's Master of Commerce in Strategic Brand Leadership. Participants were informed they would see seven advertisements. Participants were then asked for their name, age, occupation, and school or employment status. Participants were also asked about their sports history and participation.

The next segment discussed several key research findings. Participants were asked about female sports participation and representation. Participants were then asked about their first impressions of "femvertising". Femvertising is an advertising tool used by marketers to empower women, the researcher explained in each interview. Participants were asked about femvertising brands. The researcher then asked participants if sports brand, or all brands should invest in femvertising. Additionally, the researcher asked participants about their brand perceptions before and after viewing the advertisement.

The interview ended with brand perception and response. Participants were asked if they would buy products from femvertising brands. Would you buy a brand's products more or less if they used anti-femvertising strategies? The researcher then asked if participants would buy products or participate in activities from a company whose storytelling includes

femvertising. The participants were then asked if they would be influenced by a sports brand's direct calls to action that include femvertising. Finally, participants were asked to rate a femvertising-using and non-using brand.

4.4.1. Nike

Participants were asked about Nike's brand perception and product quality. Participants watched the advertisement on the researcher's screen. After viewing the advertisement, participants were asked about their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. The following question asked if the advertising caught participants' attention and if they saw femvertising. After viewing the advertisement, participants were asked if their Nike brand perception changed. The final question was whether the advertisement makes viewers more likely to buy or interact with the brand.

4.4.2. Adidas

Participants were asked about Adidas before seeing the advertisements. After watching the Men's World Cup advertisement, participants were asked about their emotions and thoughts. The Women's World Cup advertisement follows. The participants are then asked about any emotions or feelings elicited and what caught their attention about the advertisement. Participants are then asked if the ads affected their likelihood of watching the Men's and Women's World Cups. After viewing the advertisements, the researcher asks participants if their opinion of Adidas has changed. Last, participants are asked about Adidas advertisements' femvertising.

4.4.3. Budweiser

After asking participants about Budweiser, the advertisement was shown. After that, participants were asked to describe any feelings or emotions evoked by the advertisement and any parts that caught their attention. The researcher asked if the participant saw femvertising in the advertisement. The participants were asked if the advertisement changed their perception of Budweiser and if it would increase or decrease their likelihood of buying Budweiser products.

4.4.4. Under Armour

After asking participants about Under Armour, the researcher showed the advertisement. After watching the advertisement, participants were asked to describe their feelings, thoughts, and emotions. Participants were then asked about femvertising in the advertisement and how it affected their brand perception. Finally, participants were asked if

they would buy Under Armour products and interact with the brand after seeing the advertisement.

4.4.5. Tennis federation

Participants were asked about professional tennis and its marketing. Participants were then asked about their emotions and whether the advertisement showed femvertising. The researcher then asked if the extract made participants more or less likely to watch professional female tennis. Participants' views on professional male tennis were then asked. The researcher then shown an excerpt from the 2013 Association of Professional Tennis Professionals *Beat this* campaign (ATP). The participants were asked to share their thoughts and feelings while analysing the extract. Following exposure to the advertisement, participants were asked about their propensity to watch male tennis and any differences between the two advertisements.

4.5. Method of data analysis

The eight participants' semi-structured one-on-one interviews were recorded. After the interview, the recordings were meticulously transcribed. Initially, Chapter Three described how open coding is used to analyse transcriptions for data analysis. Initial codes were created to meet research goals. Table 4.1 lists the codes. The initial codes were condensed using axial coding, revealing the themes in the table below (Table 4.1).

4.5.1. Data preparation

This section prepares unprocessed data for analysis and processing. After all eight interviews, the videos were manually transcribed. After editing and cleaning each transcription, inaccurate, incomplete, or duplicate data was removed. Microsoft Word was used for every transcription. The transcriptions were analysed in MAXQDA. Multiple sections were created from the data. As seen above, the first section detailed participant profiles. The second section covered femvertising and consumer knowledge of brands using it as an advertising strategy. Sections were divided by brand: Nike, Adidas, Budweiser, Under Armour, and Tennis Federation. Data were organised for coding after this procedure.

4.5.2. Coding procedures

After reviewing the data, preliminary codes were implemented. Inserting starting codes into snippets. Data were categorised by themes, patterns, and research objectives. The first round was deductive; the second was inductive. MAXQDA is a coding app.

The second coding phase is axial. A deeper analysis of the data to find associations and correlations among open coding categories. The correlations were based on the key words in the open codes to understand and dissect the data. The axial codes, shown in Table 4.1, allowed the researcher to explore these themes and condense the axial codes through selective coding to align with the secondary research themes proposed in the Literature Review (Chapter Two): Sports Industry, Femvertising and the themes present in CBBE framework.

Table 4.1. Themes that emerged from interviews

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Positive consumer perception of brands before advertisements	Brand Awareness	Brand Equity
Negative consumer perception of brands before advertisements		
Positive consumer perception of the brands in the advertisements	Brand Perceptions	
Negative consumer perception of the brands in the advertisements		
Positive consumer perception of a brand not utilising femvertising		
Negative consumer perception of a brand not utilising femvertising		
Positive consumer perception of a brand utilising femvertising		
Negative consumer perception of a brand utilising femvertising		
Positive consumers perception of the value of the brands in the advertisements	Brand Value	Brand Performance & Imagery
Negative consumers perception of the value of the brands in the advertisements		
Positive consumer perception of brands after advertisements	Brand Response	Brand Resonance
Negative consumer perception of brands after advertisements		Femvertising
Positive influence of femvertising on a consumer behaviour towards direct-call-to-actions	Consumer Behaviour	
Negative influence of femvertising on a consumer behaviour towards direct-call-to-actions		
Positive emotional responses to femvertising	Emotional Response	
Negative emotional responses to femvertising		
Positive influence of femvertising on purchasing behaviour	Purchasing Behaviour	
Negative influence of femvertising on purchasing behaviour		
Positive influence of femvertising in storytelling on purchase behaviour		
Negative influence of femvertising in storytelling on purchase behaviour		

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Positive emotional responses to anti-femvertising	Anti-Femvertising	Femvertising
Negative emotional responses to anti-femvertising		
Presence of anti-femvertising in advertisement		
Positive influence of anti-femvertising on purchasing behaviour		
Negative influence of anti-femvertising on purchasing behaviour		
Positive consumer perception of brands utilising anti-femvertising		
Negative consumer perception of brands utilising anti-femvertising		
Awareness and exposure to femvertising	Concept	
Positive consumer perceptions toward controversial gender roles	Controversial	
Negative consumer perceptions toward controversial gender roles		
Positive consumer perceptions of gender stereotypes in the advertisements	Gender Stereotypes	
Negative consumer perceptions of gender stereotypes in the advertisements		
Positive perceptions of sports brands using femvertising	Investment	
Negative perceptions of sports brands using femvertising	Females in Sport	Sports Industry
Neutral perceptions of sports brands using femvertising		
Positive perceptions of all brands using femvertising		
Negative perceptions of all brands using femvertising		
Neutral perceptions of all brands using femvertising		
Presence of femvertising in advertisement	Presence	
Absence of femvertising in advertisement		

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Females in sport	Females in Sport	Sports Industry
Positive attitudes towards advertising females in sport		
Negative attitudes towards advertising females in sport		
Positive representation of females in sport	Representation	
Negative representation of females in sport		

4.5.3. Data reduction

Once the transcripts had been finalised and edited. Reducing the data was performed transcript by transcript. Stuttering and repetitive information such as "Hello, how are you?" were eliminated from the transcripts.

4.5.4. Data display

After MAXQDA coding, the data were visualised using available tools. Each interview used MAXQDA's word cloud function to display themes and key words. MAXQDA data was used in Excel to create histograms. These graphs showed responses to "Do you believe that all sports businesses should invest in femvertising?" Simple pie charts and histograms were used to manually explore data in Microsoft Excel.

4.5.5. Theme identification

By analysing the responses to interview questions and participant feedback, the researcher identified several recurring themes that were significant in each interview. Several significant themes surfaced, including the empowerment of females, the representation of females, the prevalence of stereotypes in sports and beyond, the authenticity of brand messaging, consumer behaviour, and intersectionality.

4.5.6. Relationships and patterns

Once significant themes were identified, data patterns were easier to spot. The data analysis showed these patterns: Participants disliked female sports portrayals. Although most participants were unfamiliar with femvertising, all agreed sports brands should invest in it. After seeing the Nike advertisement, participants felt empowered and motivated. Some thought femvertising brands were "progressive." Participants noted that inspirational icons

like Misty Copeland and Serena Williams, who appear in many ads, influence their brand perceptions. Participants also expressed their feelings about the ad. Some participants expressed “annoyance” at the Budweiser advertisement.

4.5.7. Data verification

The results were validated using detailed descriptions of the research context, procedures, and participants. The coded data and themes were reviewed, refined, interpreted, and analysed using thematic content analysis to ensure trustworthiness.

4.5.8. Reflexivity

The researcher was objective during data collection. The researcher occasionally commented on advertisements after participants submitted their responses. The researcher remained impartial toward her body language and facial expressions.

4.5.9. Data management

The researcher uploaded all transcript files to MAXQDA using the 14-day free trial. Data exploration was limited to Microsoft Excel.

4.6. Credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability

Mono, a single data collection method, was used. One-on-one semi-structured interviews collected data. As previously mentioned, semi-structured interviews provide in-depth, comprehensive insights while maintaining a structured format for comparisons and analyses. The study uses causal and [exploratory](#) research. Personal, one-on-one in-depth interviews were used in [exploratory](#) research to simplify complex issues. While causal research examines the relationship between sports brands, advertising strategies like femvertising, and consumer engagement.

This study used interpretivism. Interpretivism is appropriate because participants interpret the world based on their personal experiences, beliefs, and social environments. Interpretivism aids marketing understanding of complex social dynamics and consumer behaviour. Interpretivism uses subjectivist epistemology and relativist ontology. The study's relativist ontological approach accepts multiple, valid worldviews. The researcher was able to ask participants about femvertising as a sports brand advertising strategy. Subjectivist epistemology emphasises individual perspectives and their biases in knowledge generation, so it is consistently used. These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of femvertising from the perspective of those experiencing it.

Trustworthiness, reliability, and validity were ensured by a clear research design, an appropriate sample size, and transparent research methodologies. (Thakur & Chetty, 2020). The research followed ethical guidelines by getting informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity, and minimising any potential harm.

4.7. Conclusion

Chapter Four consisted of a brief description of the eight participants in study. The data collection method was also explained, as well as the data analysis methodology. The chapter elaborated on the selected sampling techniques and selection criteria. Additionally, the advertisements that were selected, and the rationale behind their selection was explained as well. Chapter Five will discuss the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

Chapter Five: Findings, recommendations, and conclusions

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four covered participants, data collection, and analysis. The final chapter of this study summarises the key findings from the empirical study, aligned with the research sub-problems introduced and examined in light of relevant literature. This chapter includes recommendations, conclusions, and future research avenues.

5.2. Interpretation of findings

As stated in Chapter One's problem statement, femvertising in the South African sport industry and its effects on consumers must be examined to determine how to improve this advertising strategy to empower females and promote gender equality in sports. This study sought to determine how femvertising and anti-femvertising affect the South African sports industry and consumers' brand and advertising responses. Research objectives for this study were:

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

O₃: How does femvertising influence brand response.

O₄: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

O₅: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

Although participants' opinions and feelings about femvertising varied, the interviews' coding preserved the seven most prominent themes. Data was thoroughly examined in participant-specific subsections.

5.2.1. Females in sport and femvertising in South Africa

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

The first research objective was to explore the influence of femvertising in the South African sport industry. The researcher examined the perception and feelings of South African consumers on the representation of females in sport, as well as their representation in sports. Participants were questioned about their understanding of femvertising and whether they believe brands should invest in it.

Females in sport

The eight participants' responses illuminated views on female sports representation. Participants had negative views of females in sports and their representation. Participant two said that "no one really cares about them," even though women in sports are "strong and like warriors." One participant replied, "Women in sports are under-recognised." This is consistent with Pfister (2010:234), who found that female athletes were historically considered the "other sex" and could only participate in "appropriate" sports if allowed. The third participant calls South African sports' lack of female representation "shocking." Some participants also compared male and female athletes. The fourth said, "Much more emphasis on men than women, particularly in sports." Participants six and eight noted that male sports receive more funding than female sports, which helps them succeed. Scheadler and Wagstaff (2018) found that media coverage of female athletes is much less than that of male athletes. Participant number seven said that while it is "nice to see" women in sports, it does not inspire her. According to Scheadler and Wagstaff's 2018 study, sports critics and fans think women's sports are boring and uninteresting. Participant number five called female sports advancements "an empowering thing." Diverse viewpoints enrich the discussion and deepen understanding.

Participants were generally disappointed with female sports representation. The third participant called female sports representation "the antithesis of what we are." One participant said females are "oversexualised" and "inaccurately" portrayed in sports, showing their discontent. This is consistent with findings from Pfister (2010:240) that the continued marginalization of female sports is due to the portrayal of female athletes as

sexually attractive and feminine. Underrepresented, lacking, inaccurate, discouraging, and afterthought were other key terms participants used to describe female representation in sports. While most participants were negative, a small group was optimistic. Participant one expressed hope for females in sport, participant four noted that their status is "growing a bit bigger now," and participant five described it as "slowly progressing." This agrees with Sonia and Vasilica (2019:81), who say female athletes and managers are becoming more common in sports. Participant two said, "I feel like in the past few years I've seen a lot of advertising and a lot of bringing to the forefront, the women that are in sport, which I think is really cool." Most participants acknowledge the growth of female sports, but some insist that more must be done. Despite the participants' perception of females in sport as neglected and underrepresented, they are optimistic about their increasing visibility and accurate media portrayal. Most participants were pessimistic, but some were optimistic. By using this nuanced depiction, one can better understand the complex issues surrounding female sports representation. Positive perspectives and participants expressing hope and progress balance the narrative.

The participants expressed negative views regarding females in sport, highlighting issues such as under-recognition, lack of funding, and media coverage, and the prevalence of gender stereotypes. These perspectives are consistent with existing literature, such as Pfister's findings from 2010, which identified historical marginalisation and the portrayal of female athletes in a limited, often sexualised manner.

Despite the pessimistic outlook presented by most participants, a small group expressed optimism regarding the progress of female sports representation. This optimism aligns with recent trends noted by Sonia and Vasilica in 2019, indicating an increase in the visibility of female athletes and managers in sports.

Overall, there are complex challenges surrounding female sports representation, including systemic inequalities, societal perceptions, and media portrayal. Addressing these issues are important to promote gender equality and empower females in sports.

Femvertising

To assess participants' views on "femvertising," they were asked about their initial impressions. Before this interview, all eight participants had never heard the word. When asked about "femvertising," some participants associated it with feminism, while others associated it with female-targeted advertising. The first participants description of

femvertising as excessive representation and targeting was thought-provoking. I think of femvertising as female-based advertising, said the fifth participant. I think it's female and advertising." Every participant connected femvertising to feminism. According to Erasmus (2018:3), there is little research on femvertising in South Africa, highlighting the general lack of knowledge about the topic. Despite unfamiliarity, participants linked feminism and female-targeted advertising, indicating awareness, and understanding. This suggests gender empowerment openness. The researcher briefly explained femvertising to each participant, explaining that advertisers use it to empower women. Next, participants were asked which brands came to mind when they thought of femvertising. Participants mentioned Dove, Nike, and Adidas. This was expected since Nike and Adidas, two of the largest companies, are highlighting untapped female talent and closing the gender gap in sports (Houlis, 2019). Participants related brand mentions to femvertising to recognise tangible instances. This shows that major brands are recognized for their work in this area. Femvertising was linked to feminism by some participants, but more complex or critical views were not examined. A wider range of responses may reveal consumer perceptions.

All participants agreed that sports brands should invest in femvertising. Participants agreed that sports brands should invest in femvertising due to female sports representation. The fifth participant said, "I think if you look back at how society was laid out, advertising was mostly directed towards males. I think men had more buying power, so it was mostly men. I think women are more empowered now. Femvertising levels the playing field." Advertising targeted males due to their assumed higher purchasing power. Recognising this transition and promoting female empowerment shows cultural awareness. Participant five's statement about femvertising "levelling the playing field," supports its goals of equal opportunity and challenging gender roles. Femvertising can correct advertising industry inequalities, which is positive. Participant eight said, "Yes, sports brands should invest in femvertising. As a future health professional, I want female athletes' off-field physicality to benefit companies because women pay as much as men for gear. This viewpoint supports gender equality and recognizes female consumers' financial impact on sports. The seventh participant said, "Sports brands should invest in femvertising so that females know that if they want to do sport, these are the brands that they can go to for equipment, and clothing, so sport is accessible to them." This supports the societal goal of breaking down barriers and stereotypes by promoting brands that support and cater to women in sports. The participants' consumer-centric responses highlight the strategic and socially responsible nature of femvertising. Market inclusion requires recognizing women's purchasing power

and meeting their needs. In addition to being moral and ethical, participants said femvertising investment is practical for sports brands. Femvertising helps brands reach more consumers, increase market share, and adapt to changing social values. The unanimous consensus is notable, but opposing views or other femvertising challenges may be worth considering. A more diverse perspective may help explain the complexities. Femvertising can be superficial if not done authentically. Sports brands must commit to gender equality in their advertising and organisational framework to avoid empty symbolic gestures.

Most participants disagreed that all brands should use femvertising. Participant six said not all brands should fund femvertising. He thinks some brands should be hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine. Participant six said all brands' femvertising would be "performative." This highlights the importance of brand authenticity and the risks of superficial advertising. Bailey (2023) found that many brands performatively demonstrate their moral superiority to maintain and strengthen their power. Prior research shows that influential, affluent, white, males with advanced degrees disproportionately hold power and often appropriate the messaging of disadvantaged groups, including women. Eight participants agreed that a brand's femvertising budget should be "guided by what the market demands," and that "there needs to be promotion of it through demand rather than doing it because it is what society expects." Participant one agreed that all brands should invest in femvertising, depending on how they do it. Participant number four said that while not all brands should invest in femvertising, the target demographic should determine this. Five agreed with four, saying that "if the brand does interact with females and they are part of the brands target audience, then they should invest in femvertising."

The participants had not heard the term "femvertising" before the study. When asked about it, they associated it with feminism and female-targeted advertising, indicating a connection between the concept of femvertising and empowerment or marketing targeted at females.

Despite the unfamiliarity with femvertising, participants recognised major brands like Dove, Nike, and Adidas as examples of femvertising. This suggests that these brands are seen as actively promoting gender equality and empowering females in their advertising.

Participants perceived femvertising as a tool for promoting gender equality and challenging traditional gender roles in advertising. They believed that femvertising could help level the playing field in advertising and promote equal opportunities for females.

Participants unanimously agreed that sports brands should invest in femvertising, particularly in the context of female sports representation. They believed that femvertising can help break down barriers and stereotypes in sports and promote inclusivity and accessibility for females.

Some participants expressed concerns about the authenticity of femvertising and suggested that not all brands should invest in it. They emphasised the importance of considering the target demographic and avoiding superficial or performative advertising.

There are positive perceptions of femvertising as a tool for promoting gender empowerment and challenging traditional gender norms in advertising. Authenticity and strategic investment in femvertising is crucial to ensure its effectiveness and impact.

5.2.2. South African consumers' response to femvertising

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

The subsequent phase of the interview entailed gathering the reactions of the participants to the advertisements that had been selected by the researcher. However, the researcher's initial objective was to determine the salience of each brand, which was subsequently followed by an examination of how the participants perceived the brands.

Nike: "Dream crazier"

Nike is a widely recognized sportswear company that was named by every participant prior to the screening of the *Dream Crazier* advertisement. Prior to presenting the advertisement, the researcher inquired about the participants' brand perception of Nike. In general, the feedback received concerning the Nike brand's perception was positive. The fifth participant remarked, "Nike is very innovative and in touch with social problems... they are consistently inspiring and empowering." Some participants described the brand as "modern" and "progressive." Throughout every single response, Nike was regarded as a frontrunner in the sports industry. According to the sixth participant, Nike has established a "unique" brand identity through their active engagement in the media and their support for social causes such as the "Black Lives Matter" movement. This further enhances the favourable brand image and demonstrates Nike's dedication to promoting inclusivity and addressing societal issues. This result aligns with the assertion made by Motunrayo (2023) that Nike has consistently demonstrated a steadfast dedication to inclusive marketing. Participant number eight emphasised that the brand's development of the first ever hijab specifically designed for athletes was a noteworthy advancement in promoting cultural unity and societal health.

This development has, in turn, played a significant role in the brand's triumph within the sport industry.

The *Dream Crazier* advertisement was shown to the participants. This advertisement was displayed due to its clear utilisation of femvertising and the researcher's interest in observing consumer responses to it. The responses were generally good. The fifth participant stated that the advertisement featured "great storytelling." Participant one reported that she felt "empowered" after seeing the advertisement. The third participant described the advertisement as "motivating" and "quite inspiring." The advertisement according to the second participant is "feminism 101." The fourth participant said that she was motivated after viewing the advertisement, with the major take away being that "women can do anything they set their minds to." The researcher then inquired whether the participants perceived femvertising in the advertisement; all the participants concurred that it had been. When questioned about the presence of femvertising in this advertisement, most participants agreed. This section examined the efficacy of Nike's femvertising approach, focusing on *Dream Crazier*, as well as the participants' consciousness regarding gender-related messaging in advertising.

Adidas: "Family reunion"

The participants were questioned regarding their overall brand perception of Adidas. In general, the feedback was largely positive; many participants compared the Adidas brand to Nike's "younger sibling," with most of the participants implying that the Adidas brand was a formidable competitor to Nike. One participant remarked, "Nike's brand presence is more than Adidas'." The fifth participant characterised the brand as innovative.

The star-studded FIFA Men's World Cup advertisement *Family Reunion* featured Lionel Messi, a football veteran, and young players such as Jude Bellingham and Pedro González. The advertisement was selected due to its complete absence of female representation, a factor that becomes pertinent while observing the subsequent advertisement for the Women's World Cup.

The participants were presented with the advertisement and subsequently questioned regarding any feelings or thoughts that arose during the viewing experience. The third participant described the *Family Reunion* advertising as "creative, relatable, quirky, and fun." However, a few participants characterised the advertisement as confusing and were left with the question of its subject matter. The first participant observed that "there are no females

present." In contrast, participant four asserted that the advertisement is male-centric and not geared at females. The participants were subsequently shown the next advertisement. When questioned about the presence of femvertising in this advertisement, most participants said that femvertising is not present. When queried regarding the existence of anti-femvertising in the advertisement, every participant responded in the negative. The inclusion of various participant responses enhances the analysis's comprehensiveness and provides a more nuanced depiction of the participants' sentiments.

Adidas: "Play until they can't look away"

The advertisement *Play until they can't look away* was created to promote the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. Presenting the strengths and capabilities of several professional females in football, including Mary Fowler, Alessia Russo, and Lena Oberdorf, in the company of male stars such as Lionel Messi and David Beckham, and actress Jenna Ortega. The athletes demand support and international recognition. The rationale for choosing this advertisement was its empowering qualities and the conspicuous male presence in contrast to the previous Men's World Cup advertisement, which may be perceived as detracting from the representation of female athletes. This preamble establishes the framework for the responses of the participants and aids the reader in comprehending the emphasis on juxtaposing male and female sports advertising depiction.

Play until you can't look away received mixed responses. The third participant said, "I find it audacious that men are featured in an advertisement for a Women's football World Cup." The third participant complained about the advertisement. The second participant was confused by the advertisement and casting choices. The first participant said Adidas "failed to hit the target" with *Play until they couldn't look away*. After participant four asked about the advertisement's inclusion of male footballers, she expressed her displeasure for that reason. Participant six said, "I didn't like that ad. Short and fast, with limited visibility of women's faces. It was too stimulating, and I didn't understand." She then compared the advertisement to *Family Reunion*, noting that the men's advertisement was long and focused on each footballer, while the female advertisement was half as long and had distracting graphics. Seventh participant liked the ad's visuals. Participant five liked the ad's comedy and power. All participants except participant one, who said "anti-femvertising is subtly present in the advertisement," said the advertisement did not contain femvertising. The first participant continued to express her opinion on anti-femvertising by saying the brand did not

appear to be casting enough notable female football players, implying that more females in advertising would be a burden.

Budweiser: "Tune out"

Participants were questioned regarding their perception of the Budweiser brand. A unanimous agreement was reached among the participants that they lacked familiarity with the brand and its products. The first participant noted, "Our level of brand experience is rather limited." The fourth participant described the marketing strategies of the brand as "controversial." Participant number five said that the brand "has consistently demonstrated innovation through the production of captivating and humorous content." This is due to the advertisement's construction of a connection between the coach's yelling on the field and the unanticipated transition to domestic life, specifically your wife's yelling at home.

The participants were presented with *Tune out*, a contentious Super Bowl advertisement that was released in 2004. It was selected on account of its characteristic anti-femvertising stance. The aim of the researcher was to determine the reactions of the participants towards advertisement that promotes stereotypes and undermines the empowerment of females.

Tune out elicited a predominantly negative reaction from the participants. The second participant replied, "That ought to be an unlawful advertisement." "I am experiencing anger." She continued by stating that the advertisement promotes "outdated gender norms," and that the advertisement plays into "toxic masculinity." The first participant remarked that although depicting stereotyped perceptions of male and female, the advertisement is rather creative and humorous. Sixth participant expressed "despondency" over the fact that "as knowledgeable marketers, this is the best they could do?" The seventh participant expressed her disposition toward the advertisement as "annoyed." In contrast, participant eight found the advertisement amusing and characterised it as "satire." He continued by stating that "in today's climate, such an advertisement is not acceptable" due to its provocative content. He further stated that "a lot of people are going to see that as being very offensive." Furthermore, he elaborated by drawing parallels to his own life and to men in general, declaring that "often drinking beer is seen as a male thing. It is something males do when they get together to speak about some of the issues. And obviously a lot of males, when they think something has gone wrong, they collectively go and complain." It is the advertisement; he claims that is "satire based on an exaggeration on what already happens in society."

Each participant agreed that this advertisement did not contain any form of femvertising. Certain individuals have argued that the advertisement contained anti-femvertising content due to its negative and stereotypical depiction of females. The third participant mentioned that the advertisement contained anti-femvertising "because the only depiction of a female is one that is nagging a male and is, essentially, the reason why he is allowed to keep so much composure is because he has a nagging wife at home." She continued by stating that "she has become so irrelevant is his mind that anything like her is equally as irrelevant." Female participants were unanimous in their opinion that the advertising was not specifically aimed at them. In contrast, the advertising was humorous to the male participants.

Under Armour: "Rule yourself"

Then, the participants were questioned regarding their perception of the Under Armour brand. The brand was generally perceived in a neutral manner, devoid of either positive or negative connotations. Surprisingly, the participants possessed limited knowledge regarding the brand and its products. The seventh participant responded, "I am not acquainted with them." Participant number eight remarked that although Under Armour is a relatively new brand, it evokes thoughts of American football. In addition, participant three defined the brand as catering to "people who take sports seriously."

The advertisement that was displayed was *Rule Yourself*. The advertisement conveys the notion that with consistent effort, one can attain excellence, and that training in the dark can eventually lead to success in the light. The advertisement in question was selected by the researcher due to its impartiality and absence of overt femvertising or anti-femvertising.

The participants' overall reactions were rather positive. Initially perplexed, most participants were eventually enlightened by the statement that appeared at the end of the advertisement; "You are the sum of all your training." The participants were perplexed and uncertain about the meaning of the advertisement's reference to the multiplication of individuals. Nevertheless, the final statement established a correlation between consistent practice and perfect performance. Participants number six and seven both expressed that they enjoyed the advertisement. Participant six further mentioned that she was "satisfied" with the advertisement. The fifth participant described the advertising as "creative" and "emotionally charged" due to its high level of engagement. Certain participants noted that this advertising had a subtle instance of femvertising. Participant seven stated that femvertising strategies were "not forced" in this advert, demonstrating the participants' ability to recognise and interpret subtle gender-related messaging in advertising. Participant number four expressed

that an attempt was made to engage in femvertising; however, she deemed the advertisement inadequate, noting that “the execution was done badly because it told me nothing about pushing boundaries on genders.” Regarding the sports codes selected for the genders. Participant number six answered “no” when asked if femvertising is present in the advertisement because “they [Under Armour] did not do anything special. I feel like it was a very neutral approach, aimed towards everyone. There was not anything specifically that I could say was more for the female gaze. I guess in a way it is feminist because feminism is about the equal opportunity for males and females.” She went on to say, “maybe I have a bit of a warped perception of what feminism in advertisements look like.”

WTA: “Strong is beautiful”

The participants were then questioned regarding their perceptions of the marketing of professional female tennis. Participants largely agreed that tennis is one of the few sports in which males and females are frequently depicted and represented in an equal manner. Participant number six indicated that she “enjoys” watching tennis and considers it to be an extremely affluent and elite sport. Participant number eight noted interestingly that: “tennis is a prime example of equality of opportunity rather than trying to promote equality of outcome.” “Nike and Serena are the brands that come to mind when I consider tennis and marketing,” said the fifth participant.

Participants were subsequently shown an extract from the WTA's *Strong is beautiful* campaign. Included in the extracts were Caroline Wozniacki and Victoria Azarenka, both tennis stars. The rationale for selecting this advertising was its contentious nature and representation of females in the realm of sports. Additionally, the advertisement was chosen because to its disclosure of marketing strategies employed to promote female tennis in contrast to the subsequent campaign that focuses on male tennis.

In general, *Strong is beautiful* had a negative reception. While a considerable number of participants expressed agreement with the “strong is beautiful” axiom, there was considerable apprehension surrounded the imagery employed. The initial participant labelled her emotional response to the advertising as “horror.” Furthermore, she highlighted the lighting conditions and the players' attire as being inappropriate. The fourth participant opined that the advertisement does not provide a positive representation of females. Participant number six drew a parallel to male tennis, noting, “Strong is handsome; you would not say that in a male advertisement. What does playing tennis have to do with the way you look.” She continued by stating that the advertisement “merely packages it in a

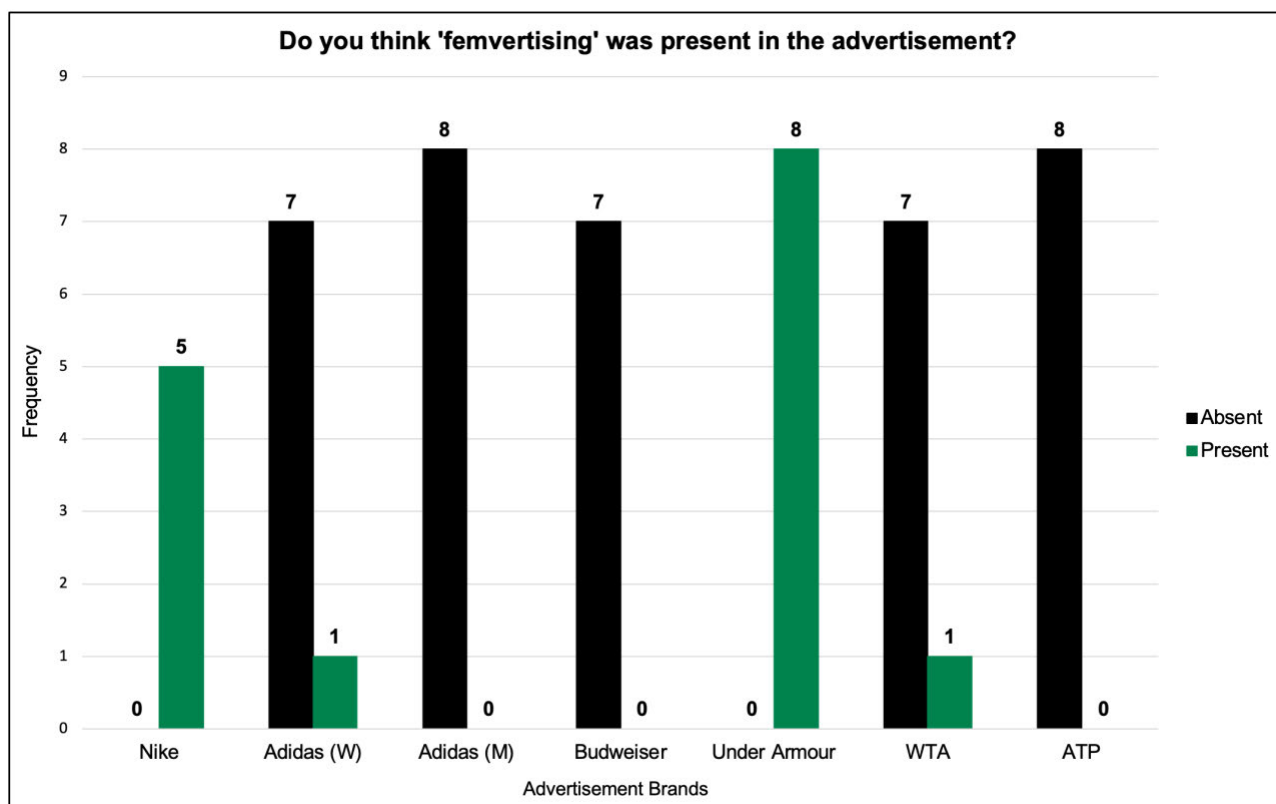
more empowering manner while reducing females to their appearances." While participant number eight expressed admiration for the "strong is beautiful" concept, he contended that the advertisement is "overly sexualised." Most of the participants stated that femvertising is not present in this advertisement. However, participant number eight stated that femvertising is present because of the "empowering" nature of the advertisement. Participant number seven stated that she thought the advertisement was "a male attempt at female advertising," continuing to say, "It does not feel like it was uplifting or reflecting females in the same light as male."

ATP: "Beat this"

The following advertisement that was presented to the audience was an extract from the ATP's *Beat this* campaign. The extract included Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, and numerous other tennis stars. The extract was selected due to its emphasis on the glaring differences in marketing strategies employed for male and female tennis, particularly regarding the characteristics of the advertisements and the underlying content of both campaigns.

Participants exhibited predominantly negative reactions towards the ATP advertisement in comparison to the WTA advertisement that had been previously presented to them. The disparity between messages and representations of males and females infuriated most participants. Participant number three said that the ATP advertisement is plain and ordinary when viewed in isolation. In contrast to the WTA advertisement, "complete offense" is taken. She continued by stating that *Beat this*' statement illustrates the competitive nature of professional tennis, while *Strong is beautiful* reduces the strength of females to mere looks. The first participant described the representational disparity between these two extracts as "shocking," noting, "the male advertisement is so sporty, while the tennis rackets are scarcely visible in the female advertisement." In contrast to the attire of the males in the ATP advertisement, participant number seven expressed perplexity at the attire of the females in the WTA advertisement, expressing that she does not comprehend why the females are dressed in "night-time dresses." She continued by stating that the way males and females are portrayed in WTA and ATP advertisements is "unfair." Participant number five noted that *Beat this* failed to evoke strong emotions within him. All participants stated that there was neither femvertising nor anti-femvertising present in this advertisement.

Figure 5.1 Do you think "femvertising" was present in the advertisement?



5.2.3. The influence of femvertising on brand response

O₃: **How does femvertising influence brand response.**

In this section, the researcher solicited participant responses regarding their impressions of each advertisement and the brand. The primary focus of this section was to determine whether individuals who viewed the corresponding advertisements would make a purchase from the brand or engage with it.

Nike

When questioned whether they are inclined to engage with the brand or make a purchase after viewing *Dream Crazier*, every participant responded in the affirmative. Participant number one provided the rationale that the advertisement serves to "empower." A significant number of participants also expressed a favourable perception of Nike as a brand after viewing the advertisement. Conversely, participant six expressed that the advertisement just elicits emotions, after which she disregards it, alluding to her typical reluctance to invest in sporting brands. Participant number five identified himself as a "brand advocate" for Nike after being exposed to the advertising. Due to the advertisement alone, participant number eight declared that he would not purchase from Nike or interact with the company. He claimed that "all these huge firms sensationalise everything for sales."

The brand responses of participants are influenced by the advertisement's emotional resonance, perceived authenticity, and congruence with their personal beliefs. Positive reactions elicit a feeling of empowerment, but negative reactions originate from doubt and the perception that the brand is exploiting sensationalism to increase sales.

Adidas

Participant number four expressed her intention to watch the Men's World Cup considering this advertisement, perceiving Adidas to be "more serious" about the event compared to the Women's World Cup. Participant six expressed a similar view, adding that she, too, would be watching the Men's World Cup after viewing the advertising. In response to the Women's World Cup advertisement, the third participant declared her intention to refrain from watching the tournament. Additionally, participant number five claimed that he would be less inclined to watch the Women's World Cup because the advertisement it did not impact him. Participant number three declared that, after viewing the advertising, she would make an investment in the Adidas brand. Conversely, participant number six indicated that once viewing both adverts, her propensity to purchase Adidas products would be diminished.

The responses of the participants towards Adidas advertisements are correlated with their inclination to observe the corresponding World Cup tournaments and their readiness to interact with the brand. Positive responses are indicative of individuals perceiving Adidas as more committed to the Men's World Cup, whilst negative reactions indicate that the Women's World Cup advertisement failed to make an impression or failed to pique interest. The presence of mixed or indifferent replies suggests that the collective impact of both advertisements has diverse consequences for the purchasing intent of the participants. In general, the brand responses are determined by the ways in which participants perceive the advertising content and how that impression impacts their opinions towards the Adidas brand and the events.

Budweiser

The first and third participants exhibited favourable reactions after viewing the *Tune Out* advertisement. Participant number one expressed that their increased likelihood of purchasing from Budweiser can be attributed to their demonstration of innovative thinking. Additionally, participant number eight conveyed his probability of making a purchase from the brand after viewing the campaign. This is because he considers the ad as "poking fun at an issue males believe they have," and he appreciated the "banter." In contrast,

participant number two conveyed her aversion to the brand and declared that upon viewing the advertisement, she would not be inclined to make an investment in the brand. The views of participants four, six, and seven were similar.

The varied brand reactions suggest that the Tune Out advertisement, produced by Budweiser, elicits polarising reactions from the participants. Favourable reactions are associated with evaluations of originality, wit, and banter, all of which enhance the probability of making a purchase. On the other hand, negative responses suggest that certain participants were not swayed positively and, in fact, experienced a decreased inclination to invest in the brand. The participants' individual preferences, attitudes, and interpretations of the advertisement's content play a crucial role in shaping their brand responses. The advertisement's comedic elements and message appear to elicit favourable reactions from certain individuals while provoking strong disapproval from others, underscoring the inherently subjective aspect of brand perception.

Under Armour

Participant number two said that upon viewing the advertisement, she would be more inclined to make a purchase from the brand. Participant six expressed a similar viewpoint regarding the way the brand incorporated both males and females into the advertisement. Participant number seven claimed that the advertisement has increased the likelihood that she will interact with the brand by placing it on her "radar." Participant eight expressed that he is more inclined to interact with the brand after viewing the advertisement. Nevertheless, his dissatisfaction with the visual appeal of the products likely precludes him from making a purchase. Participant number four expressed that despite viewing the advertisement, she remains unmotivated to make a purchase from the brand due to the lack of effectiveness of the advertisement. Participant number five indicated that Under Armour's "competition is just too stiff" for him to buy from the brand.

The wide range of brand responses highlights the fact that participants' reactions are impacted by a multitude of elements, such as the visual attractiveness of the items, the inclusivity of the marketing, and the content itself. Positive responses indicate that the advertisement effectively enhanced the likelihood of participants engaging with the brand. Conversely, negative responses indicate that certain participants continue to be unconvinced or encounter external barriers that impede their propensity to make a purchase, such as competition or dissatisfaction with product visuals.

Professional tennis

Despite the extremely critical feedback regarding the WTA campaign, a significant number of participants said the advertisements increased their likelihood of watching professional female tennis. Participant number six stated: "I am more likely to watch it because I just want to actually support them because their own association who endorse them are doing a bad job." After viewing the advertisement, participant number eight stated that he is more inclined to watch female tennis because he perceives it to be "more dynamic." Participant number six conveyed her discontentment with the ATP advertisement, claiming that it has diminished her propensity to observe men's tennis. After viewing the advertisement, participant number eight claimed that he is less inclined to watch men's tennis since it appears "lazy."

The response highlights the possible influence that tennis advertisements may have on the viewing preferences of the participants. Notwithstanding severe criticism, the WTA advertisement exerted a favourable impact on the propensity of certain participants to watch female tennis by highlighting a supportive position. Conversely, several participants' aversion to male tennis was influenced by their discontentment with the ATP advertisement. The reactions indicate that the way professional tennis is portrayed and presented in ads has the potential to influence the perceptions and inclinations of spectators, with the effect being either favourable or unfavourable.

5.2.4. The influence of femvertising on brand equity

O₄: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

During this section, the researcher sought feedback from participants concerning the performance of each brand with respect to its visual aspects, messaging, appropriation, and commercial gain, as well as its market position. The responses of the participants to each advertisement were coded in accordance with the subsets. The responses about the advertisement's intersectionality and representation, diversity, empowerment, and agency were also categorised and analysed in this section. Empowerment, capability and skills, role models, objectification and humanisation, power dynamics, sex and gender, bodies, race, religion, and culture are all subsets.

"Dream crazier" and Nike

As mentioned before, the participants held a favourable perception of the Nike brand and reacted positively to the *Dream crazier* advertisement. The second participant described *Dream Crazier* as "feminism 101." Participant number one expressed her perception of the

Nike brand as "high value" and that the brand "places value on understanding the consumer" after viewing the advertisement. This implied that she found the brand's messaging to be authentic. The fourth participant said that she felt "included" after viewing the advertising and that the tone and voice of the advertisement gave her the impression that it was directed at her. Regarding the visual components of the advertisement, participant number six remarked, "The advertisement appears to be of high quality." She further elaborated on Nike's and the advertisement's authenticity by remarking, "It does not feel performative." According to participant number eight, the primary objective of most brands is commercial gain. Nevertheless, he claimed that upon Nike's introduction of the first sports-specific hijab, he understood that it was "genuinely sincere" and not "necessarily a move to make money." Regarding the pertinence of the messaging and language employed in the *Dream Crazier* advertisement, participant eight expressed that it is "very Americanised." Further, he questioned the veracity of the message, claiming that the advertisement is "inaccurate and sensationalised."

The third participant reacted on the *Dream crazier* advertisement's message of empowerment, adding, "because if I can accomplish it, then it is not impossible, which is essentially what the advertisement says." She elaborated on the advertisement's diversity by remarking that "various races" and "different bodies" were featured. A considerable number of participants remarked that the advertisement is "inspiring" due to its empowering quality. While participants generally have a positive perception of Nike and the *Dream Crazier* advertisement, there are challenges related to cultural specificity and scepticism about message accuracy. The brand equity of Nike benefits from its emphasis on authenticity, inclusivity, empowerment, and quality, all of which align with the brand's historical positioning.

"Family reunion" and Adidas

As noted previously, participants regarded Adidas as a second-most valuable brand after Nike but responded positively to the *Family Reunion* advertisement. The third participant remarked that the tone and voice of the advertisement were "quirky" and "fun." The fourth participant characterised the messaging as "male centric." In reference to the visual components of the advertisements, participant eight remarked that the advertisement "sells this facade of vibrancy." The fifth participant provided feedback regarding the advertisement's pertinence and emphasised how the inclusion of emerging stars such as Jude Bellingham enhanced its relatability.

Regarding the advertisement's utilisation of role models, participants three and five provided feedback. According to the third participant, the advertisement conveyed a disguised type of motivation by stating, "seeing your favourites, not necessarily be great at anything, but just lounge and be relatable." Regarding sex and gender in relation to this advertisement, participant four remarked that it is "very male-centric." Regarding the power dynamics between male and female sports, participant number seven stated, "everyone will follow the men's sports. No one is required to be convinced by you. "Much more must be done with women, such as targeted and directed advertising, to ensure that everyone watches it."

The *Family Reunion* advertisement had a pivotal role in bolstering Adidas's brand equity through its generally favourable reception. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the messaging's possible male-centricity and the existence of power differentials between male and female sports provide obstacles. The favourable emotional response and the incorporation of up-and-coming talent are factors that contribute to the brand's reputation. However, to further bolster Adidas' brand equity, it would be beneficial to address gender inclusivity and provide empowering messaging.

"Play until they can't look away" and Adidas

The response of the participants to this advertisement was varied. Participant three offered her perspective on the advertisement's relevance, expressing her "disappointment" with the presence of males in the advertisement despite its celebration of the Women's World Cup. This sentiment was also expressed by the fourth participant. The seventh participant provided feedback regarding the visual components of the advertisement, remarking that the graphical elements were visually appealing.

Participant number one expressed disbelief on the advertisement's effectiveness, noting that it is "not enough." The fourth participant likewise provided feedback regarding the advertisement's empowerment, claiming that it was "not empowering" for her as a female. Participant six provided feedback regarding the advertisement's presentation of capabilities and skills. They noted that the ad's brevity and hectic pace detracted from the players' talents and skills that were highlighted. The fifth participant provided feedback regarding the advertisement's emphasis on empowerment, adding, "It is clear that Adidas actively supports the notion of female empowerment, particularly in sports."

While some participants appreciated the visual appeal and perceived Adidas's commitment to female empowerment, others raised concerns about the advertisement's effectiveness,

empowerment representation, and its alignment with the Women's World Cup theme. Addressing these concerns could contribute to a more cohesive and impactful brand message, positively influencing Adidas's brand equity.

"Tune out" and Budweiser

Most reactions from participants to this advertisement were negative. Despite their prior knowledge of the Budweiser brand, the participants nevertheless offered their opinions in reaction to the *Tune out* advertisement. Many participants expressed disapproval of the advertisement's overall messaging and tone of voice, arguing that it promotes stereotypical depictions of females. The first participant remarked that the commercial was "quite clever." Participant number seven expressed dissatisfaction with the advertisement's messaging, characterising it as "annoying" in its portrayal of females. Participant number five was the sole one to offer feedback regarding the persuasiveness of the advertisement's messaging. He expressed his need for a beer after viewing the advertisement.

Regarding the advertisement's objectification and representation, participant number three expressed desensitisation, noting, "I have seen it so many times." Several participants expressed disapproval with the portrayal of females in the advertisement, contending that it reinforces societal gender norms that are negative.

The negative responses, particularly concerning stereotypical depictions, dissatisfaction with messaging, and concerns about objectification, pose challenges to Budweiser's brand equity. Addressing these issues, aligning with evolving societal expectations, and reconsidering the messaging approach may contribute to a more positive brand perception and consumer resonance.

"Rule yourself" and Under Armour

Most responses to this advertisement from participants were positive to neutral. Certain participants provided feedback regarding the brand's market positioning and performance, asserting that the brand caters to "individuals who approach athletics with a sense of gravity." A considerable number of participants expressed their initial confusion regarding the advertisement's messaging and then questioned its relevance. The second participant responded that the calibre of athletes featured in the advertisement elevates the value of the brand. The sixth participant remarked that she appreciated the advertisement, particularly the way the female was "presented in the exact same way" as the males. Regarding the visual components of the advertisement, participant number seven remarked

that it is "very artsy." She also elaborated on the persuasiveness of the advertisement, claiming that its messaging was "different and slightly intriguing." Participant number five said that the association with "icon" Stephen Curry "automatically" causes him to perceive the brand as "high value."

Participant number three noted that the advertisement is "motivating" in nature, highlighting its emphasis on empowerment. A few individuals highlighted the presence of role models Misty Copeland and Stephen Curry in the advertisement. Certain participants expressed their admiration for the advertisement's diversity, highlighting the inclusion of a wide range of athletic disciplines. The sixth participant reported feeling "empowered" after viewing the advertisement. Participant number eight expressed satisfaction with the gender and sex variety, noting, "We are addressing both men and women."

The positive associations with athletic gravity, calibre of athletes, empowerment, diversity, and iconic associations contribute positively to Under Armour's brand equity. Addressing any confusion and reinforcing the relevance of the messaging could further enhance the brand's equity and resonance with consumers.

"Strong is beautiful" and the WTA

Most reactions from participants to this advertising were negative. Although a few respondents like the "strong is beautiful" concept, the majority expressed apprehension with the advertisement's visual elements. The dress of the female tennis players made significant participants concerned. The first participant remarked that the garments resembled "lingerie." Many participants deemed the advertisement's messaging and imagery to be "overly sexualised." The fourth participant also highlighted the unsuitable utilisation of red lighting in the advertisement. The sixth respondent characterised the advertisement as "offensive."

A recurring theme expressed by participants in relation to this advertisement was the objectification of females, particularly in reference to its excessively sexualised tone. The lack of racial diversity in the advertising was criticised by the second participant, who questioned, "Why did we just utilise white women in those advertisements?" The first participant questioned how the advertisement could be empowering for females when the female athletes are seen in "lingerie" and their "sex appeal" is emphasised. Regarding the portrayal of females in the advertising, participant number seven expressed that it leads her to believe that "women belong in the kitchen."

The negative responses to the advertisement, particularly concerns about objectification, inappropriate visuals, lack of diversity, and potential offensiveness, poses challenges to the WTA's brand equity. Addressing these concerns and ensuring that future advertisements align with the values and expectations of the target audience is crucial for maintaining and enhancing brand equity.

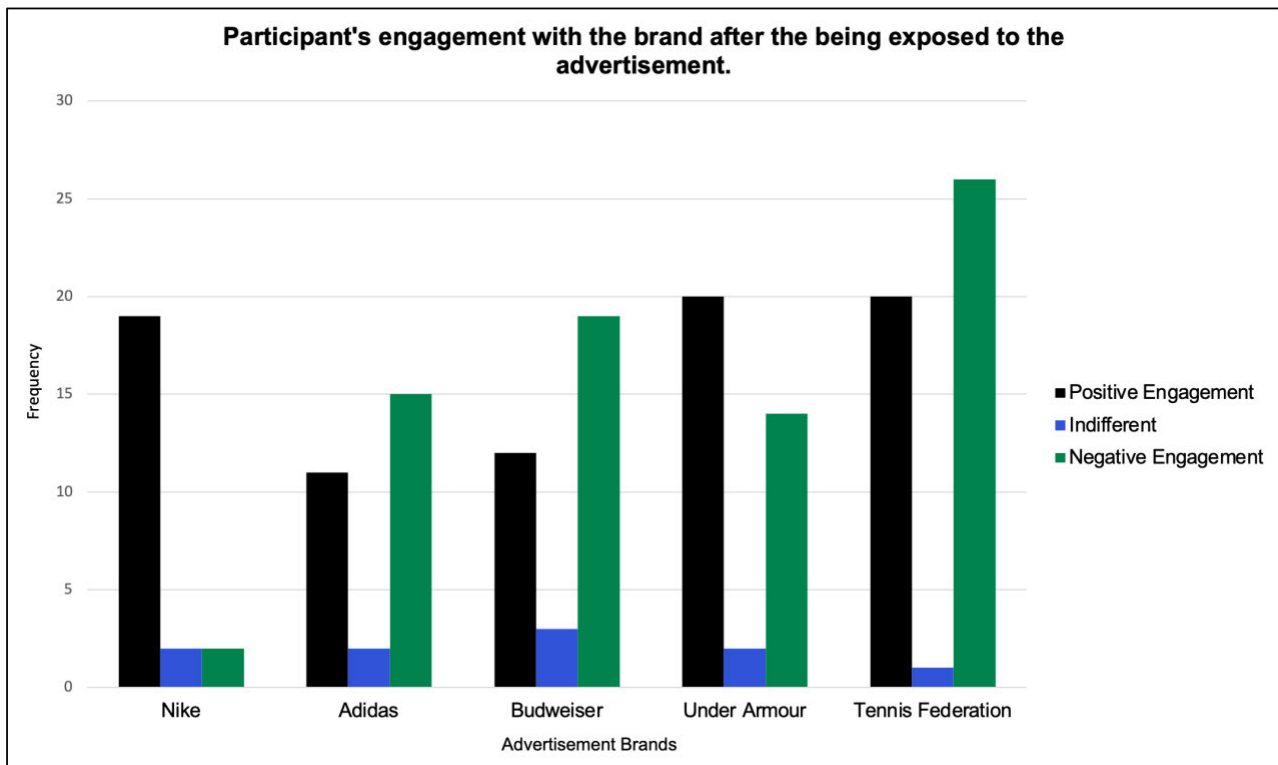
"Beat this" and the ATP

Particularly after viewing the WTA advertisement, participants reacted negatively to the *Beat this* advertisement. The third participant indicated that the ATP advertisement's messaging was marginally intimidating. Participant number one indicated that the advertisement's messaging is "centred around the consumer acquiring tickets." Sixth participant remarked that the advertising's underlying message was "flashy." The eighth participant offered feedback regarding the advertisement's persuasiveness, describing it as "lazy" and claiming that he would not watch the tennis purely because of the pitch if not for Roger Federer. The fifth participant offered feedback regarding the advertisement's visual components, indicating that despite the "star-studded" nature of the extracts, they failed to evoke a strong emotional response from him.

The prevailing observation amongst many participants was the attendance of tennis heavyweights, including Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer. *Beat this*, according to participant number five, "merely demonstrates a star-studded event." Participants had little opinions or judgments regarding this advertising when viewed in isolation; they simply recognised it as a straightforward advertisement aimed at tennis enthusiasts. In contrast to the WTA advertisement, participants were somewhat incensed by the ATP's lack of effort and the WTA's excessive sexualisation of its athletes.

The negative responses to the ATP advertisement, particularly the perceived lack of effort, limited persuasiveness, and transactional focus, suggest potential challenges to brand equity. Addressing these issues, emphasising creativity, and aligning messaging with consumer values are crucial for improving the effectiveness and positive impact of future advertisements.

Figure 5.2 Participant's engagement with the brand after being exposed to the advertisement.



5.2.5. The influence of anti-femvertising on brand equity

O5: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

Advertisements where participants found anti-femvertising present were *Tune Out* and *Strong is beautiful*. Many participants responded negatively to these advertisements, which had repercussions for the equity of each brand. The utilisation of anti-femvertising can result in a detrimental impact on brand equity by engendering a bad brand image. Anti-femvertising exacerbates a poor brand perception, particularly when the communication promotes stereotypes or opposes established society ideals. When consumers identify a particular brand with discriminatory or regressive attitudes, the brand's favourability decreases. Brands such as Budweiser and the WTA who adopt an anti-femvertising stance run the danger of estranging a substantial segment of their intended demographic, specifically individuals who prioritise progressive values and gender equality. This results in a loss of consumer confidence and trustworthiness. A brand that employs anti-femvertising practices risks losing the trust of consumers, particularly those who value gender equality highly. For example, participants who previously held a favourable perspective of the WTA and female tennis altered that perception upon viewing the advertisement, as they ceased to place their trust in the brand. Deterioration of consumer loyalty results from this breach of trust; consequently, both repeat business and long-term customer connections deteriorate. Finally, brands that are viewed as actively opposing gender equality are positioned at a

disadvantage in the industry. Competitors with more inclusive and progressive advertising strategies may gain an edge by appealing to a broader and more diverse consumer base. This assertion is substantiated by an examination of Nike and Adidas. Given Nike's overt commitment to gender equality, consumers tend to overlook Adidas' efforts in this regard and hold the company to a higher standard.

Anti-femvertising can have detrimental effects on brand equity by creating a negative brand image and perception. Brands risk alienating segments of their target demographic, particularly those who prioritise progressive values and gender equality.

Brands that employ anti-femvertising practices risk losing consumer trust and confidence, especially among individuals who value gender equality highly. This loss of trust can lead to a decline in consumer loyalty, repeat business, and long-term customer connections.

Brands perceived as actively opposing gender equality are positioned at a disadvantage in the industry. Competitors with more inclusive and progressive advertising strategies may gain an advantage by appealing to a broader and more diverse consumer base.

5.3. Conclusion of findings

In this section the research findings have been concluded, according to each research objective.

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

The research investigation into the impact of femvertising in the sports sector of South Africa, which involved eight participants, unveiled a multifaceted array of viewpoints. Most of the participants held pessimistic views concerning the lack of female participation in sports, citing past patterns of disregard and marginalisation of females. A consensus was reached on the perceived inequities between male and female athletes in terms of media coverage and financial support. Notwithstanding these obstacles, a portion of the participants retained a positive outlook, attributing it to growth and a gradual yet consistent increase in the prominence of females in sports. Recognising advancements, particularly in the realms of advertising and media portrayal, was received well. The comprehensive results incorporated a range of viewpoints, including varied degrees of pessimism, which enhanced the overall comprehension of the complex challenges associated with the underrepresentation of females in South African sports. Despite the persistence of obstacles, the incorporation of optimistic viewpoints indicates continuous development and the possibility of more strides in the representation of females in the sector.

Advertisements like "Tune Out" and "Strong is Beautiful" that participants perceived as anti-femvertising received negative reactions, impacting the equity of each brand. Employing anti-femvertising can harm brand perception by creating a negative image, especially when it perpetuates stereotypes or opposes societal ideals. Brands adopting such practices risk alienating segments of their target audience, particularly those valuing progressive values and gender equality, leading to a loss of trust and consumer confidence. This breach of trust results in diminished consumer loyalty, affecting repeat business and long-term connections. Brands actively opposing gender equality may find themselves at a disadvantage compared to competitors with more inclusive strategies, as seen in the case of Nike and Adidas, where Nike's overt commitment to gender equality outshines Adidas' efforts.

The responses of the participants demonstrate a favourable outlook on femvertising, perceiving it as a catalyst for change within the sports industry of South Africa, which is consistent with the objective of questioning conventional gender norms. The consensus that athletic businesses ought to allocate resources towards femvertising signifies a consumer-oriented position, underscoring its strategic and socially accountable characteristics. Femvertising's practical advantages are underscored by the acknowledgement of the financial impact of female consumers and its contribution to increasing females' access to sports. Nevertheless, the research acknowledges the necessity of investigating contrasting viewpoints and possible barriers, placing particular emphasis on the significance of genuine commitment to gender equality by athletic brands, which transcends promotional efforts and permeates the organisational structure.

Femvertising's effectiveness, according to the study, is contingent on customer resonance, authenticity, and a more comprehensive analysis of varied viewpoints. The participants offered complex opinions regarding the universal applicability of femvertising investment by all brands. The majority, participant number six among them, expressed opposition to allocating resources universally to femvertising. They emphasised the significance of considering the nature and positioning of a brand. Apprehensions regarding possible performativity are consistent with Bailey's discoveries regarding the hazards linked to shallow advertising. Furthermore, it was emphasised by eight participants that femvertising investment had to be in accordance with market demand as opposed to societal expectations, with a genuine concern for satisfying consumer demands.

Participant one, while endorsing the notion that every company should engage in femvertising, provides an essential qualification by emphasising the significance of the

manner in which brands execute these tactics. On the contrary, responses from individuals ranked fourth and fifth indicate that the suitability of femvertising is contingent upon the target demographic of the brand. The diverse range of responses highlights the intricate nature of the decision that firms must make about their investment in femvertising. Although there are proponents of a selective approach predicated on brand positioning or target demography, opponents emphasise the significance of genuine implementation and market demand. This highlights the complex and varied nature of femvertising considerations.

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

The research on the perception of the Nike brand, with a specific emphasis on its femvertising strategy as exemplified in the Dream Crazier advertising, demonstrates that the opinions expressed by the participants were uniformly favourable. Nike, a renowned athletic apparel manufacturer, was identified without dispute by every participant, providing confirmation of its robust brand visibility even prior to the advertisement screening. The participants expressed positive sentiments regarding Nike's overall brand perception, commending its reputation for innovation, forward-thinking approach, and leadership position in the sports sector. Nike's proactive involvement in media and endorsement of social causes, including the "Black Lives Matter" movement, have been factors in fostering a favourable brand perception, which is consistent with Motunrayo's assessment of the company's dedication to inclusive marketing. The Dream Crazier advertising, which was judiciously selected due to its effective use of femvertising, elicited favourable feedback, being characterised as "inspiring," "motivating," "empowering," and "superb storytelling." The participants acknowledged and reached a consensus regarding the existence of femvertising within the advertisement, which demonstrates Nike's effective integration of gender-related messaging. Prominent endeavours, such as the invention of the inaugural hijab for athletes, were emphasised as substantial contributors to Nike's success in the sport industry. The study suggests that Nike's brand perception is favourable and is reinforced via effective femvertising tactics, most notably demonstrated in the Dream Crazier advertisement. The participants' feedback indicates a favourable perception of Nike's products and a cognisance of the company's dedication to communicating in a way that is inclusive and empowering, with a specific focus on female athletes.

Advertisements like "Tune Out" and "Strong is Beautiful" that some of the participants perceived as anti-femvertising received negative reactions, impacting the equity of each brand. Employing anti-femvertising can harm brand perception by creating a negative

image, especially when it perpetuates stereotypes or opposes societal ideals. Brands adopting such practices risk alienating segments of their target audience, particularly those valuing progressive values and gender equality, leading to a loss of trust and consumer confidence. This breach of trust results in diminished consumer loyalty, affecting repeat business and long-term connections. Brands actively opposing gender equality may find themselves at a disadvantage compared to competitors with more inclusive strategies, as seen in the case of Nike and Adidas, where Nike's overt commitment to gender equality outshines Adidas' efforts.

Diverse participant perspectives were uncovered through the research of the "Play until they can't look away" advertising, which promoted the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. The advertisement sought to highlight the empowering attributes and substantial male representation of the Men's World Cup by featuring a diverse cast of football stars, including actress Jenna Ortega and notable figures such as Mary Fowler, Alessia Russo, Lena Oberdorf, Lionel Messi, and David Beckham. This was done in contrast to the preceding Men's World Cup advertisement. The responses of the participants were diverse, as some regarded it as brazen and enjoyed the union of humour and intensity, whilst others conveyed dismay, perplexity, or irritation. Participant six identified a discrepancy between the duration and emphasis of advertisements featuring males and females, which implies the possibility of unequal representation of athletes. Opinions on the existence of femvertising were divided, with most participants claiming its nonexistence, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the advertisement's messaging. Nevertheless, participant one alluded to a nuanced impression of anti-femvertising, implying that the brand failed to adequately feature prominent female football players. The diversity of viewpoints highlights the intricate and personal nature of interpreting advertisements that advocate for gender equality in sports. This highlights the importance of developing advertising strategies that are considerate and inclusive, with the true intention of empowering athletes of all genders.

The participants' evaluations of the Budweiser brand and responses to the "Tune out" Super Bowl advertisement offered intricate perspectives on comedy, gender portrayal, and marketing. At the outset, all participants conveyed a lack of familiarity with Budweiser, attributing it to their restricted acquaintance with the brand and their varied perspectives on its marketing tactics, which encompassed contentious and pioneering approaches. The examination of the "Tune out" advertisement, which is widely recognised for its controversial anti-femvertising position, generated overwhelmingly adverse responses. Diverse reactions

ensued, spanning from indignation and despair to amusement and ridicule. While certain some found it imaginative and amusing, others vehemently condemned it for reinforcing antiquated gender standards and detrimental machismo. A participant believed that an advertising of this nature could perhaps be considered inappropriate in the current social atmosphere, hence provoking considerable offence among the audience.

There was unanimous agreement among the participants that the Under Armour advertisement did not comprise femvertising. Certain individuals, namely female participants, perceived the lack of positive female representation as anti-femvertising due to fears that it would perpetuate detrimental stereotypes and antiquated gender roles. The wide range of viewpoints highlights the importance of conscientious advertising that considers wider societal circumstances and endeavours to promote inclusiveness. The participants maintained an overall neutral perspective about the Under Armour brand, owing to their little acquaintance with it. The selected advertisement, titled "Rule Yourself," garnered favourable feedback from participants due to its motivational overtones. Contrary viewpoints emerged on the identification of subtle femvertising; some said that it is impossible to objectively assess gender-related messaging in advertising. The study emphasised the significance of incorporating a range of viewpoints when determining how to depict gender in marketing in an effective manner.

According to most participants, tennis is an activity that equally represents males and females. An individual participant emphasised the correlation between Nike and Serena Williams in the realm of tennis marketing. Nevertheless, the *Strong is beautiful* advertisement by the WTA, which showcased tennis prodigies Caroline Wozniacki and Victoria Azarenka, encountered a largely unfavourable reception. The participants voiced apprehensions with the imagery, as certain individuals deemed it unsuitable and reduced females to their physical attributes. Although there were unfavourable attitudes expressed, the prevalence of femvertising was met with a range of opinions; participant eight identified it as empowering, but others held differing views. The intricate nature of interpreting gender-related messaging in sports advertising is demonstrated by this nuanced answer.

As compared to the WTA advertisement, the ATP's Beat this campaign elicited predominantly negative responses from participants. The discontent was conveyed on the conspicuous disparities in marketing approaches employed for male and female tennis. The participants expressed their disapproval of the representational discrepancy, perceiving the ATP advertisement as unremarkable and uninspiring in comparison to the WTA's *Strong is*

beautiful advertisement, which emphasised its athletic and empowering essence. The advertisement's style and representation of males and females were criticised for their perceived inequity. Although the ATP advertisement failed to elicit intense emotional responses, all participants reached a unified consensus that it did not contain any form of femvertising or anti-femvertising. This highlighted the discontent with the incongruous portrayal of gender in tennis marketing.

O₃: How does femvertising influence brand response.

Nike

Following their watch of Dream Crazier, all participants expressed their intention to interact with the brand or complete a purchase, citing factors including a sense of empowerment. Most participants held a positive opinion of Nike as a brand following the advertisement. In contrast, participant six perceived the advertisement as predominantly sentimental and tended to disregard it, indicating a lack of interest in investing in athletic companies. Due to the advertising, participant number five identified as a "brand advocate" for Nike. Conversely, participant eight expressed his refusal to interact with Nike since the advertisement alone, blaming major corporations for using sensationalism to drive sales. In general, the brand reactions of the participants were influenced by the emotional impact, perceived authenticity, and alignment with personal beliefs of the advertisement. Positive reactions elicited feelings of empowerment, while negative reactions prompted scepticism regarding the use of sensationalism to drive sales.

Adidas

In regard to Adidas's perceived greater dedication to the Men's World Cup, Participant Four conveyed their intention to see the event. In a similar vein, the sixth person expressed this opinion. Participant three, on the other hand, announced that she would not watch the Women's World Cup in response to its marketing, and participant five expressed a diminished interest as a result of the lack of influence. Following the watching of the advertisements, participant three conveyed a desire to make an investment in Adidas. Conversely, participant six indicated a reduced tendency to buy Adidas merchandise. Overall, the desire of individuals to interact with the brand and their level of interest in the appropriate World Cup competitions are correlated with their reactions to Adidas advertisements. Favourable responses reflect a perceived level of dedication to the Men's World Cup, but unfavourable or inconclusive responses show diverse effects on the intention

to purchase. The research emphasises the impact that advertising material has on the way in which individuals see Adidas and their level of involvement in the related activities.

Budweiser

The positive reactions exhibited by the first and third individuals subsequent to viewing the Tune Out advertisement were attributed to Budweiser's propensity for inventive thinking. The eighth participant liked the advertisement's wit, which increased the probability of a purchase. On the contrary, participant two, participant four, participant six, and participant seven all conveyed contempt, indicating a diminished level of interest in the brand. The divided brand reactions underscore the variety of responses to the advertisement's novelty and wit, which influenced the purchasing propensities of the participants. The research highlights the inherent subjectivity of brand perception, which is influenced by personal inclinations, attitudes, and interpretations of the content presented in the commercial.

Under Armour

The wide range of brand answers demonstrates the impact of numerous variables on the participants' evaluations of the Under Armour advertisement. Participants two and six had a heightened propensity to make a purchase, attributing it to the positive representation of both genders. The seventh participant recognised the brand's existence, which increased the probability of engagement. In contrast to participant eight's preference for involvement, purchase hesitancy was caused by discontent with the product graphics. On the contrary, participant number five regarded intense competition as an impediment to purchasing from Under Armour, while participant number four deemed the advertisement useless in stimulating a purchase. The diversity of these replies highlights the intricate influence that external factors, visual attractiveness, and inclusivity have on the likelihood that individuals will interact with and make a purchase from the brand.

Professional tennis

Notwithstanding the objections directed towards the WTA advertisement, a subset of participants indicated a heightened inclination to see female tennis, motivated by a solidarity with female athletes and an awareness of the organisation's alleged deficiencies in its support. As a result of the apparent vitality, participant number eight developed a greater inclination to observe female tennis. Nevertheless, the ATP advertisement failed to pique participant six's interest in male tennis, and participant eight shared this sentiment, describing it as "lazy." This exemplifies the way tennis advertisements can impact viewing

preferences, as responses suggest the capacity to mould views in a positive or negative manner.

O4: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

Most of the participants exhibited a positive perception of Nike and responded favourably to the "Dream Crazier" advertising, characterising it as "feminist 101." According to the first participant, Nike is a brand that prioritises consumer comprehension, which signifies its genuineness. The sixth participant remarked on the advertisement's high-quality visuals, which highlighted Nike's non-performance-based legitimacy. Although participant eight recognised Nike's authentic debut of the sports-specific hijab, they perceived the Dream Crazier message as excessively Americanised and had concerns over its veracity and sensationalism. The third participant expressed admiration for the message of empowerment and diversity, finding it to be motivating. In general, participants express gratitude for Nike for its genuineness, inclusiveness, and empowerment. However, they also raise concerns regarding the cultural distinctiveness of its messaging and doubt its truth. The brand equity of Nike is enhanced by its longstanding adherence to these values.

In general, the participants regarded Adidas as the second most valuable brand, following Nike, and shown a favourable reaction towards the "Family Reunion" advertisement. While several individuals perceived the tone as eccentric and light-hearted, others pointed out its male-centric orientation and the pretence of liveliness presented in the images. The advertisement's appeal to up-and-coming celebrities was emphasised in the feedback; nonetheless, apprehensions were voiced over the possibility of male-centricity and power imbalances between male and female sports. The "Play until they can't look away" advertisement elicited diverse reactions from the subjects. Certain individuals voiced discontent with the inclusion of males in an advertising commemorating the Women's World Cup. There were concerns that the advertisement's concise length and fast-paced nature may detract from the emphasised abilities and capabilities of female players. While several individuals expressed admiration for Adidas's dedication to promoting female empowerment, others perceived the advertising as insufficiently empowering in its treatment of females. In general, the favourable affective reaction and recognition of Adidas's dedication to promoting the empowerment of females enhance the standing of the brand. To bolster the overall influence of Adidas's brand message and positively impact brand equity, it is imperative to resolve apprehensions pertaining to male-centricity, effectiveness, and empowering representation.

Although the participants were unfamiliar with the Budweiser brand, the Tune Out campaign elicited predominantly unfavourable reactions. It has been subject to criticism for its messaging, tone, and for perpetuating stereotypical portrayals of females, according to many. One participant regarded it as brilliant, whilst others were so taken aback that they felt the urge for a beer. Difficulties pertaining to objectification, stereotyping, and discontent with communication materials provide obstacles to the brand equity of Budweiser. In order to cultivate a more favourable brand image and find resonance among consumers, it may be imperative to confront these concerns, synchronise with the changing demands of society, and reassess the messaging strategy.

The overall reception of the Under Armour advertisement was favourable, however a few individuals first expressed perplexity regarding the content and raised doubts regarding its pertinence. The feedback emphasised the advertisement's powerful and diverse qualities, the calibre of the featured athletes, and the brand's affiliation with athletic gravity. Significantly, the incorporation of influential figures such as Misty Copeland and Stephen Curry was lauded, so bolstering the brand equity of Under Armour. By avoiding uncertainty and reinforcing the relevancy of messages, the brand's resonance with consumers could be further enhanced.

The "Strong is beautiful" advertisement initiated by the WTA elicited primarily negative responses from participants, who expressed general concern with its visual components, namely the clothing worn by female tennis players. Concerns over objectification, the advertisement's excessively sexualised tone, lack of racial diversity, and potential offensiveness were among the criticisms levelled against it. The lack of diversity and the repeating motif of objectification provide obstacles to the WTA's brand equity. Ensuring that forthcoming advertisements are in line with the values of the target audience is of utmost importance in order to preserve and improve brand perception.

In general, participant responses to the ATP's "Beat this" advertisement were unfavourable, especially in the wake of the WTA campaign. Adverse criticism encompassed interpretations of the messaging as threatening, ticket acquisition-focused, ostentatious and "lazy." Notwithstanding its inclusion of tennis titans such as Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, the advertisement failed to evoke any emotion in its viewers and appeared to be designed solely for tennis enthusiasts. Potential threats to ATP's brand equity include the perception of insufficient effort, restricted persuasiveness, and transactional orientation. It is imperative to recognise and tackle these concerns, prioritise innovation, and synchronise message with

the values of consumers in order to enhance the efficacy and favourable influence of forthcoming advertisements.

O₅: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

Advertisements such as "Tune Out" and "Strong is Beautiful," which were deemed anti-femvertising by the participants, elicited adverse responses that influenced the equity of each respective brand. Anti-femvertising can negatively impact brand perception by fostering an unfavourable image, particularly when it reinforces stereotypes or challenges cultural values (Enkhmandakh & Vljakovic, 2022). Brands that engage in such activities run the risk of estranging portions of their intended demographic, specifically individuals who prioritise progressive ideals and gender parity. This could result in a decline in customer confidence and trust. The waning of consumer loyalty due to this breach of trust has an adverse impact on repeat business and enduring relationships. Brands that vehemently resist gender equality may discover themselves in a disadvantaged position relative to rivals who adopt more inclusive approaches, as exemplified by the comparison between Nike and Adidas, where Nike's explicit dedication to gender equality surpasses that of Adidas.

5.4. Limitations and delimitations

5.4.1. Limitations

Sample size and period of data collection

As mentioned in the Chapter One, the primary constraints of this study were the small sample size and the constrained period for gathering data. Although the limited sample size yielded prompt results, their reliability and precision were compromised due to the insufficient sample size. To attain more accurate results and a wider spectrum of understandings, it is advisable to employ a sample that is both larger and more diverse. An additional limitation of this study was the inadequate diversity present in the sample population. While not specifically measured in this study, diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation are essential components of intersectionality that exert a substantial impact on females and the sports industry.

Researcher inadequacy

The inability of the researcher to consistently request participants to provide more comprehensive explanations for their responses or reactions was an additional constraint of the study. This was due to the restricted timeframe of data collection and the time-consuming nature of semi-structured interviews. Had the researcher not been limited by time, they could

have delved more extensively into the reactions of the participants, potentially yielding more comprehensive information. Furthermore, the substantial volumes of data produced by this kind of data collection required considerable time to analyse and understand.

Exclusion of male-centric stereotypes

Male-centric stereotypes that are utilised in advertising have negative repercussions for both society and the sports industry. However, the focus of this research was on femvertising within the sport industry, hence obviating the opportunity to examine the substantial issue of societal masculine gender stereotypes.

Utilisation of convenience sampling

Furthermore, the use of convenience sampling, was also a limitation, as it does not provide participants that are representative of the entire population. This gives rise to a substantial probability of bias and precludes the generalisability of the results to the entire population. Moving forward, it, is recommended that a distinct, more strategic sampling technique be chosen.

Utilising a mono-approach

An additional constraint of this research was its reliance on a mono-approach. While the qualitative methodology yielded comprehensive insights, the researcher proposes the incorporation of quantitative approaches in subsequent investigations. This facilitates the generation of data that is more diverse and generalisable, hence enhancing its credibility and reliability.

5.4.2. Delimitations

Qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, were employed in this study. The duration of the data collection was six days weeks, with an eight-person sample. Utilising convenience sampling, the researcher chose individuals with a sports background who were also knowledgeable about the advertising and marketing industry, whether through social media or elsewhere.

The objective of this research was to ascertain the impact that femvertising and anti-femvertising strategies have on sport industry consumers in South Africa. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were utilised for data collection. The interviews were carried out online, via Microsoft Teams, and all interviews were recorded. The interviews were carried out in English and participants were shown six advertisements from brands operating in the sports

industry. Their reactions were documented to ascertain the potential impact of femvertising on both brand response and brand equity. The interviews were transcribed manually by the researcher. Brand equity, brand performance and imagery, brand judgment and attitude, and brand resonance were dependent variables in the study. All six advertisements were video based, except for one that utilised still images. The demographic under investigation comprised of young adults between the ages of 18 and 40 because they are most convenient and are most likely highly active in the sports industry; the study's geographical scope was limited to the borders of South Africa.

5.5. Recommendations

The correlation between advertising and sports has become increasingly significant, as companies leverage sports to cultivate customer loyalty and carve out a unique position in the minds of consumers (Nensee, 2022). The implications and recommendations of this study should be considered by brands and marketers attempting to target and engage female consumers and female sports supporters. This research may aid marketers and brands in comprehending the way femvertising can influence the way in which consumers react to their product. Moreover, the results of this study might provide valuable insights to the South African sports brands regarding the level of interest that South Africans have towards females in sports, particularly with regards to femvertising and how female athletes are positioned in the market.

Male sporting codes are significantly more funded, supported, showcased, and advertised in comparison to female sporting codes. However, there is a noticeably societal shift towards valuing the female athlete and the female opinion within the professional sporting spheres such as with commentators, referee's, coaches, tournaments, and events (Jarvis, 2023). The findings of this study indicate that females are notably marginalised and disregarded within the sports industry specifically in media.

Femvertising has increased within the sports industry because of the term femvertising being referred to as advertising that utilises pro-female talent, imagery and, messages to empower females (Macias, 2021). The societal shift from post-feminism to third wave feminism and the changing role of females in modern society have set the cultural landscape for Femvertising to take off (Pillay, 2020).

Consumers engage positively with sports brands that evoke emotions such as empowerment, pride, anticipation, acceptance, and inclusivity Conversely, consumers

emphasise that sport's brands should prioritise real and intersectional femvertising in their messages and advertisements. As this approach ensures genuine audience engagement and empowers consumers to feel understood, appreciated, heard, and represented. The usage of obsolete gender stereotypes in femvertising marketing campaigns would result in a decline in the level of engagement exhibited by the intended audience of a brand.

Sporting brands are advised to allocate resources towards implementing femvertising strategies to close the gender representation gap in the sporting world. Furthermore, consumers regard brands that do not employ femvertising as offensive, complacent, lacking in social awareness, and depreciating in value. All brands and marketers, regardless of whether they utilise Femvertising, are obligated to conduct a thorough evaluation of the creative integrity of their work to guarantee that portrayals are genuine, candid, and reflective of females as unique individuals.

South African businesses should engage in comprehensive study to comprehend the cultural subtleties, societal conventions, and obstacles encountered by females in South Africa. This comprehension will assist businesses in creating precise communications. Marketers may work together with local agencies, organise focus groups, and examine existing research to understand the experiences and ambitions of South African females.

Marketers should aim to accurately depict females in a variety of roles, highlighting their strength, perseverance, and accomplishments in all aspects of life. Utilising female athletes to endorse the Premier Soccer League in South Africa can demonstrate to young females that they have the potential to compete at a professional standard.

Marketers may partner with NGOs and advocacy organisations to increase awareness about critical issues impacting South African females, such as gender-based violence. Brands may establish themselves as supporters of gender equality by connecting their brand values with societal problems and sparking significant discussions.

5.6. Conclusions

The study involved interviews with eight participants, and seven prominent themes emerged, though opinions on femvertising varied among the participants. The first two research objectives revolved around females in sport and their representation:

O₁: How does femvertising influence the South African sports industry.

The lack of acknowledgment for females in sport was criticised by the participants, who cited socioeconomic inequities and male dominance as contributing factors. Despite differing

perspectives, one participant perceived female sports as empowering. Although lacking familiarity with the term "femvertising," the participants made associations between it and feminism or advertising directed at females, citing Dove, Nike, and Adidas as examples. A consensus was reached that to address the issue of female underrepresentation, sports brands should allocate resources towards femvertising. However, there were varying viewpoints regarding whether all brands ought to embrace this strategy, with some perceiving it as performative.

O₂: How do South African sports consumers perceive and respond to femvertising.

The research investigated how participants responded to various advertising and how they perceived brands. Nike gained significant acclaim and favourable reception, particularly for the motivating "Dream Crazier" advertisement. Although Adidas was generally well-received, the "Family Reunion" advertisement for the FIFA Men's World Cup received mixed responses. "Tune Out" by Budweiser was criticised for perpetuating stereotypes. "Rule Yourself" by Under Armour was positively received, with subtle femvertising observed. The WTA advertisement "Strong is Beautiful" was criticised for its sexualisation. Participants were dissatisfied with tennis marketing disparities, and the ATP advertisement was condemned for failing to promote gender equality. In general, opinions varied, which illustrates the intricate nature of the influence that advertising has on consumers.

O₃: How does femvertising influence brand response.

The analysis of participant reactions to different adverts in the brand response section determined the extent to which they were likely to interact with the brand or complete a transaction. Nike was met with unanimity of favourable responses, as individuals shown a propensity to either engage or make a purchase. The responses of Adidas were varied, with each individual being influenced by the advertisement. Budweiser had mixed responses, with humour positively impacting engagement. Under Armour was generally well-received. The WTA advertisement raised interest in women's tennis despite criticism, whilst the ATP advertisement elicited mixed responses. The research emphasized the correlation between sports, advertising, and female consumer involvement, providing valuable insights for brands seeking to implement authentic femvertising tactics while avoiding outdated stereotypes. The research emphasises the critical nature of rectifying gender inequalities in the realm of sports and suggests that brands allocate resources towards boosting femvertising to cultivate customer allegiance.

O4: How does femvertising influence brand equity.

In this section, participants provided feedback on brand equity. Specifically, brand performance, considering visual aspects, messaging, appropriation, commercial gain, and market position. The empowering message of Nike's Dream Crazier advertisement and the eccentric tone of Adidas' Family Reunion both garnered favourable responses. Mixed reactions surfaced for advertisements like *Play until they can't look away* and *Tune Out*, with concerns about stereotyping. In the subsequent section, participants' responses on brand judgments and attitudes were analysed. The diversity of Nike's Dream Crazier garnered praise, whilst Adidas' Family Reunion faced criticism due to its male-centric themes. Disagreements emerged around *Play until they can't look away*, while *Tune Out* was criticized for perpetuating unfavourable gender norms. While *Rule Yourself* was regarded as an inspirational, *Strong is Beautiful* faced criticism for its sexualised nature. A range of views and perspectives were noted, among which participants expressed discontent with the marketing discrepancy between advertisements for the ATP and WTA.

O5: How does anti-femvertising influence brand equity.

Strong is Beautiful and *Tune Out* were examples of advertisements that were considered anti-femvertising and had a detrimental impact on brand equity. Engaging in such behaviours carries the potential to estrange certain segments of the intended audience, particularly those who hold progressive values in high regard. This breach of trust may result in a decrease in consumer loyalty and confidence, which may influence repeat business. In contrast to Adidas, Nike's overt dedication to gender equality was highlighted, with the latter placing greater emphasis on the potential benefits of inclusive strategies.

This study underscores the importance of femvertising and genuine, inclusive portrayals of females in sports advertising. It suggests that embracing these strategies can lead to stronger brand engagement and resonance with consumers, particularly in the context of females in sports.

5.7. Suggestions for future research

Investigating femvertising in South Africa provides a compelling area for further scholarly inquiry, shedding light on the convergence of advertising, gender relations, and cultural subtleties. The primary aim of this study is to provide a foundation for subsequent investigations about femvertising and its effects on consumer brand response and brand equity. Here are some recommendations for potential future research:

5.7.1. Perceptions of authenticity by consumers

Among the most significant difficulties of femvertising is the aspect of authenticity. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct academic research that investigates the manner in which South African consumers assess the authenticity of femvertising messaging and scrutinizes the elements that contribute to the trustworthiness of brands that advertise gender empowerment and equality. This will empower and facilitate brands' comprehension of how to authentically execute femvertising strategies that effectively attract and empower females.

5.7.2. Context and representation within culture

Although this research serves as a foundation for feminist marketing in South Africa, it fails to include the cultural context and the pervasive influences on gender norms and stereotypes in the country. Further academic research is warranted to examine the ways in which cultural factors and the presence of diverse identities in South Africa impact the reception and efficacy of femvertising. This can contribute to brands determining how they can empower and honestly represent females of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

5.7.3. The relationship between social media and activism

Currently, social media marketing is one of the most effective methods for brands of all sizes to promote their products. Therefore, conducting additional study on the potential impact of social media platforms on the dissemination of femvertising messages in South Africa would be a valuable and thought-provoking endeavour. Further investigation into the ways in which social media campaigns and online activism influence public opinion and propel societal transformation could advance the body of knowledge accessible for femvertising.

5.7.4. Localised brand strategies

The responses to advertisements from global brands are utilised in this study. Additional research should be conducted utilizing local brand examples and comparing the femvertising strategies of local South African brands to those of multinational brands. The research should investigate the approaches utilised by prosperous local brands to advocate for gender equality and empowerment in their advertising campaigns. Its objective should be to ascertain how these local brands modify their femvertising strategies to suit the local audience and to identify whether consumer response differs in comparison to that of global brands. Additionally, a comparison between femvertising tendencies in South Africa and global patterns can prove beneficial. An advantageous approach is to conduct an analysis

of similarities and differences, taking into account the ways in which international advertisements are tweaked or adapted to appeal to the South African audience.

5.8. Conclusion

Chapter Five concluded the research study and provided a comprehensive overview of the significant discoveries made throughout the empirical investigation, aligned with the research sub-problems that were introduced and examined in light of pertinent literature findings. This chapter interpreted the findings, that was analysed in Chapter Four and provided the reader with a conclusion for these interpretations. The limitations and delimitations encountered by the researcher was documented in this chapter to assist future researchers in conducting research on femvertising in the South African sport industry. Additionally, the future recommendations will similarly assist brands who utilise this research study to effectively utilise and incorporate femvertising in their marketing efforts. The conclusion of the research study was also examined in this chapter, as well as suggestions for future research on femvertising in South African and in the South African sport industry.

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disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DAn_Analysis_of_Brand_Relationship_with_t.pdf&Expires=1685892976&Signature=eH3byZwB2-8aFmSU8Zg1p~LayZruSFqjTjZIZ35eWh8N3~79Xuhm318vs5Wx38pdFYG4JjWKVkc6nsY1SyuvlkdADEj0-HV31z3XOQU-~tbB5rMtlgfjzbXvaC2udsQaTHJ69AYbVPLqDCmX9Xtbx~VYUqHkbY0C2dvgARCSp9mBUBcRJ1oWYNa3tUtcKqXD8Lr7CXUWre7nY-vjcK0sBTN6t2Bs1IHPIbodGnKF12~XOKrszqfuAS4qqUuUVYXPUD46Egz9eSVhTmQjumPvaH3cxcPmgU9-fPI4lu4OOBOuT8nN9iN3K-O7jTrD1njV-GRr9HR1RJNH-fdBwBVsuw__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA [Accessed 22 May 2023].

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Annexure A: Interview questions

Theme: Demo info

1. What is your full name & age?
2. Where are you from?
3. Do you study or are you working? Industry? Job title
4. Do you or have you ever participated in any sports?

Theme: Femvertising and its influence – Main points Pt.1

5. How do you feel about women in sport?
6. How do you feel about the representation of women in sports?
7. What are your feelings and/or attitudes towards how women in sports are advertised?
8. When you hear the word 'Femvertising' what comes to mind?
9. What brands come to mind when you think of femvertising?
10. Do you feel sports brands should invest in femvertising?
11. Do you feel all brands should invest in femvertising?

Theme: Responses to videos/ads

12. How does this advertisement make you feel?
13. What, if anything, stood out to you about this ad?
14. Do you think Femvertising is present in this ad?
15. Do you think anti-femvertising is present in this ad?

Theme: Femvertising & brand response – Main points Pt.2

16. If a brand utilised femvertising, would you be more willing to buy their products?
17. If a brand utilised anti-femvertising, would you be more willing to buy their products?
18. If a sports brand used Femvertising in their storytelling, how likely are you to buy their products or follow the brand?
19. If a sports brand used Femvertising in their advertising, how likely are you to be affected by their direct call to action advertising?

Theme: Femvertising/Anti Femvertising & brand equity

20. How do you perceive a brand that uses Femvertising?
21. How do you perceive a brand that does not use Femvertising?
22. How do you perceive the brand in this video (Show video).

- 23. How do you perceive the value of this brand's products? (In videos).
- 24. Do you have a negative or positive perception of this brand (before vid)
- 25. Do you have a negative or positive perception of this brand? (after vids)

Annexure B: Advertisements

Annexure D(a)

Nike (Dream crazier): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWfX5jeF6k4>

Annexure D(b)

Adidas (Family reunion): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bv-3Wx2UdbI>

Annexure D(c)

Adidas (Play until they can't look away): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLNZdPD5ps>

Annexure D(d)

Budweiser (Tune out): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr6JHOptvcl>

Annexure D(e)

Under Armour (Rule Yourself): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikmd-vtRCqo>

ANNEXURE G (c) – HIGHER DEGREES RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE REQUEST FORM – (IIE007)

The research ethics request form is to be completed by all IIE students required to conduct research as part of the qualification with specific reference towards the IIE Masters and Doctoral programmes. The IIE subscribes to the Belmont Report as guideline for ethical research practice. The Belmont report highlights the following three principles *respect for persons*, *beneficence*, and *justice* as critical when considering ethical clearance or consent. Carefully consider your request from an ethics perspective before you submit. The IIE's Higher Degrees Committee has the right to withhold any research that is not aligned with the institutional policies and best practices of ethical research. The Belmont Report is briefly summarised in the Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE007) can be found on the Tertiary Hub under the Postgraduate Tab.

Requirements for Conditional Research Ethics Clearance

The research ethics request form must be submitted together with the signed-off proposal to the National Higher Degrees Programme Manager that must serve at the IIE Higher Degrees Committee. The following documentation is required for conditional research ethics clearance:

- Annexure G – Internal Research Ethics Request Form (IIE007)
- Proposal of the study, Certificate of Release (Annexure F) and Reports from the readers (Annexure N).

Requirements for Full Research Ethics Clearance

Full research ethics clearance can only be granted by The IIE Higher Degrees Committee, on the completion of the Literature Review and Research Methodology Chapters. Once the student completed these two chapters, students are required to submit the following documentation to the National Higher Degrees Programme Manager, who would forward it to the IIE Higher Degrees committee for full approval.

- Annexure G (c) – Research Ethics Request Form (IIE007)
- Proposal of the study, Certificate of Release (Annexure F) and Reports from the readers (Annexure N).
- Completed Literature Review and Research Methodology Chapters.
- Data collection instrument (for example: questionnaire, or interview schedule).
- Copy of the consent form to be shared with participants/ respondents.
- Gatekeepers letter from institution/ organisation where you plan on collecting data (if required)

The outcome from the IIE Ethics Committee will be communicated to the applicant in the form of a letter.

About the student	
First name:	Gaironeeza
Last name:	Maclobo
Student number:	
Qualification:	MCOM: Strategic Brand Leadership
Brand Affiliation:	

Full time:	☐	Part time	☒
Year first registered:	2022		
Email address:	[REDACTED]		
Contact Number:	[REDACTED]		
About the supervisor or promoter			
Title, First and last names:	Dr Nicole Cunningham		
Email address:	[REDACTED]		

Select the IIE Brands/ sites where you want to collect data:									
IIE Varsity College		IIE Rosebank College		IIE Vega		IIE School of hospitality and Service Management		IIE Central Academic Team	
Pretoria	☐	Polokwane	☐	Pretoria	☐	Rosebank	☐	Sandton	☐
Sandton	☐	Pretoria	☐	Bordeaux	☐	Cape Town (Newlands)	☐		
Waterfall	☐	Braamfontein	☐	Durban	☐				
DBN North	☐	Bloemfontein	☐	Cape Town	☐	IIE MSA		Advtech Schools	
DBN Westville	☐	Pietermaritzburg	☐		☐	Ruimsig	☐	Sandton	☐
Pietermaritzburg	☐	Durban	☐	IIE Vega National Office	☐				
Nelson Mandela Bay	☐	Nelson Mandela Bay	☐						
Cape Town (Newlands)	☐	Cape Town	☐						
IIE VC Online	☐	IIE RC Online	☐						
IIE VC National Office	☐	IIE RC Central Support Office	☐						

Indicate by ticking the appropriate block and <i>answering</i> the relevant sections.		
Methodology Type	<i>Provide a brief synopsis on the research design, method, sampling, data capturing, and data analysis. (450 – 800 words).</i> The research study will employ a qualitative methodology. The research process entails empirical work and the acquisition of data that might confirm, deny, or contest theories, so facilitating the comprehension and explanation of various observations. A qualitative technique was deemed more appropriate for this research since it allows for better potential to gain more in-depth and significant information based on an individual's experience. The research paradigm is interpretivism, emphasising the impact of social and cultural influences on individuals' thoughts and beliefs. This approach allows for diversifying views and recognising reality through intersubjectivity. Relativist ontology recognises reality through intersubjectivity, while subjectivist epistemology emphasises a clear link between the research subject and the research. This qualitative research study will use semi-structured interviews conducted online via Teams and transcribed manually by the researcher. The flexible structure of a semi-structured interview allows for exploration and probed responses, while the interactive nature allows for prompting or probing. Data will be coded and analysed using MAXQDA software, ensuring efficiency and quality. Credibility and transferability will be ensured through a moderator, ensuring no personal bias. Trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability will be ensured through triangulation and respondent validation. Interviews will be recorded on Teams or Zoom, and manually transcribed, ensuring validity and avoiding systematic bias. The study will also employ inductive reasoning, which shifts from individual observations to broader generalizations and conclusions. Inductive reasoning is chosen for its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to provide more meaning to previous research.	
Qualitative Methodology		✓
Quantitative Methodology		
Mixed method		
Other, Specify:		

		Interpretivism is the theoretical framework and research strategy for this research as it is used to develop a new understanding of social phenomena, particularly femvertising, which, in South Africa, is under-researched. This study uses a mono approach, using single data collection techniques and semi-structured interviews, along with qualitative analysis processes. Cross-sectional time horizon will be utilised as it examines a specific event at a specific period in time. This study will use conversational analysis and semiotic analysis to collect data on the impact of femvertising on the sport industry in South Africa. Semiotic analysis focuses on symbols and their meaning, while conversational analysis will be conducted during one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted when participants view six femvertising and non-femvertising advertising campaigns. The data will be analysed, categorised, and organised according to themes and subthemes, with each theme assigned a unique code. The data will be analysed using MAXQDA. The sample size will be 8 participants, chosen for its size and accessibility. Non-probability sampling will be used, with convenience sampling being the most compatible with qualitative research designs. Participants will be male and female between the ages of 18 and 40, who are most likely to have access to the internet, social media, and television. Participants should be familiar with major sports brands and their advertising, such as Nike, Adidas, or Puma.				
Questionnaire		Interviews		Observations	Secondary Data	Other data collection methods:
Existing		Structured		Number of observations	List the website(s) and institution where and how datasets will be sourced: - Google Scholar - Google - EBSCOHost	Describe the data method collection to be used:
Own		Semi-structured	✓	Note what will be observed		
Open-ended		Number of interviews	8			
Number of respondents		Focus group or workshop				
Briefly identify, describe, or explain the questionnaire.		Participants per focus group				
		Number of focus groups				
		Briefly expand on the interview, workshop, or focus group questions:				

	<i>Do you or have you ever participated in any sports?</i> <i>How do you feel about women in sport?</i> <i>How do you feel about the representation of women in sports?</i> <i>What are your feelings and/or attitudes towards how women in sports are advertised?</i> <i>When you hear the word 'Femvertising' what comes to mind?</i> <i>What brands come to mind when you think of femvertising?</i> <i>How does this advertisement make you feel?</i> <i>Do you feel sports all brands should invest in femvertising?</i> <i>Do you feel all brands should invest in femvertising?</i> <i>If a brand utilised femvertising, would you be more willing to buy their products?</i> <i>If a brand utilised anti-femvertising, would you be more willing to buy their products?</i>			
List of the unit of analysis:	Individuals and Artifacts (In the form of videos/advertisements and photos)			
Average time participants or respondents will be involved in research activities	On average, one hour per participant.			

About the ethics considerations for the research

INSTRUCTION: Applicants should apply the below ethical considerations to their research and explain how the ethical areas of consideration will be covered in the research. Detailed explanation on how each of the below areas are addressed is required.

AREA	DETAIL	RESPONSE PROVIDED BY THE APPLICATION ON EACH OF THE CATEGORIES.
Design, aims and objectives	The question (and assumptions behind the question) must be ethical and appropriate as must be the intended use of the findings as outlined in the institutions ethics guidelines. The literature already reviewed and intended for review will provide a sufficient and up to date overview of the existing status of knowledge on the topic so that the relevance and usefulness of the undertaking is sustained. The proposal must be specific about how the aims and objectives and the methodology are explicitly linked and result in research that is achievable and will produce valid results that will answer the research question. It is not ethical to conduct research that has no relevance or potential benefit so the relevance and benefit must be explicit. The ethical implications (how risk will be managed, harm avoided, dignity protected, and justice supported) of the study has been explicitly analysed and the plans are coherent, detailed and achievable.	The research question and findings are intended to be used to further develop femvertising in South African as well as provide a foundation for the evolution of female representation in sports. The literature review consists of recent references regarding the sports industry, femvertising and women in sport. Women have been misrepresented for centuries, especially in advertising and in sport. Even though, in recent years, femvertising has become popular, it is important that brands understand the effective way to utilise it as well as how exactly in influencers consumers. To manage risk and avoid harm as well as maintain the ethics in this study, a number of factors were taken into account: 1. Informed consent – participants will be sufficiently informed of study and will provide formal consent. Participants will also be informed that they are allowed to leave or decline to proceed in the study at any time, as their participation is completely voluntary. 2. Collecting data from participants – Priority will be placed on the physical and psychological comfort of participants during data collection. Data will be collected in an organised manner and participants will be informed that their identification and personal information will not be shared with anyone but the researcher. 3. Dealing with sensitive information – Sensitive information will be protected, and the researcher will not allow her own emotions or biases to interfere. 4. Providing incentives – Incentives can encourage participation but they increase ethical risk. As such, no incentive will be provided at this stage. 5. Avoiding harm – To avoid harm or embarrassment or discouragement interviews will be one-on-one and private.

		6. Confidentiality versus anonymity – Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms to de-identify participants. 7. Deception – To avoid possible deception, the researcher will ensure, through proper communication techniques, that participants are well informed regarding the purpose of the study.
Participant sample and population	The targeted population and the risk of it being over selected/ under duress to participate and the impact on consent must be dealt with. Recruitment strategies and their impact on the findings and their consent must be managed and provided for. The selection of participants must be appropriate for the research question. The rationale for the planned number of participants must be reasonable in light of the aims and objectives and proposed methodologies. Underpowered studies may be futile. An explanation of how the sample size is to be determined should be provided along with how the sample will be identified and selected. The rationale for the inclusion and exclusion of participants must be clear, explicit and reasonable. If vulnerable participants are to be included, an adequate justification should be provided; protective safeguards and measures should be explained. Inclusion and exclusion criteria, recruitment and the means of getting consent all have ethical implications (e.g. fairness of selection) over and above their impact on generalisability and validity.	The population for this study is male and female consumers of all races, age groups, educational levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and residential areas in South Africa. Utilising a diverse population enhances quality and precision, and provides an in-depth understanding of consumer preferences and behaviour. Both male and female will be used for this study because the aim of the study is to examine the impact femvertising has on the sport industry, in order to obtain a holistic view of how femvertising campaigns impact sports consumers. 8 participants will be selected, through convenience sampling, from the overall population for this investigation. The selected sample size is ideal because it is substantial enough to provide for the development of a 'fresh and richly detailed understanding' of the femvertising phenomenon, while small enough not to impede the 'deep, case-oriented study'. A method of non-probability sampling will be utilised. This method indicates that not every member of the population is eligible for inclusion in the sample. More specifically, a method of convenience sampling will be utilised. This strategy is the most compatible with the majority of qualitative research designs. It is utilised to select individuals who are easily accessible and available for researchers. Typically, this involves utilising geographical location and resources that facilitate participant recruitment. Males and females between the ages of 18 and 40 who have access to the internet, social media, and television are included in the inclusion criteria. The reason for this age demographic is because they are most likely to have access to the internet, social media, and television and would have been exposed to the six proposed advertising campaigns. Lastly, participants should be familiar with major sports brands and their advertising, for example, Nike, Adidas, or Puma.

Research procedures	The expertise (and experience) of the researcher for the method (data collection and analysis) must be catered for including how skill will be built. The proposal needs to make clear that the researcher has command of exactly how the data will be collected, recorded, and processed and that these are appropriate for the question and the method and the hoped for impact of the findings. The risks and benefits to the participants in the context of the procedure/ methodology must be weighed and it must be clear that the benefits outweigh the risks. How risks are to be managed must be clear.	Conducting a semi-structured interview allows for conversational exchange, allowing the researcher to interact as if it was a real-world exchange and setting, alleviating pressures and subsequently possible risks. The semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions to clear up any confusion or provide clarity.
Instrument	The design of the data collection instrument and any associated recording methods speak to the ethical and procedural matters covered in the proposal and ethics clearance.	The data collection instrument in this study is interviews. The interviews will be done online, via Teams, which provides for the interview to be recorded. Participants will be informed in that the interview will be recorded and will provide written consent.
Reimbursements, inducements & costs for participants	If there are going to be any inducements (including refunds of costs) for participation these need to be examined for the impact on the data and procedure.	There will be no inducements.
Participants' privacy & confidentiality interests	Privacy and confidentiality protecting mechanisms must be stated and must be adequate. The means of protecting the data throughout the study and afterwards must be explicitly stated. If there are conditions that may result in a researcher violating confidentiality (such as if abuse is uncovered) this must be stipulated. POPI provisions must be explicitly dealt with including consent from an appropriate person for minors or other vulnerable groups.	Privacy and confidentiality will be ensured by not discussing participants or data collected with any other individual. Participants will also be represented in the study by pseudonyms. Information regarding participants as well as recordings of the interviews will be restricted to the researcher and supervisors if applicable. To ensure privacy, interviews will be conducted one-on-one and not in a public space. To comply with the POPI act, all personal identifiers will be collected and stored in an access-controlled location to prevent access from unauthorised third parties.
Obtaining informed consent	Detail on how the informed consent will be gained must be made clear including how any risk of pressure or influence will be eliminated. This process must detail what information is provided to the potential participant and how it covers all the participant needs to know to make a truly informed decision. The consent letter must fully align to the information detailed in the proposal in relation to consent. It must include details about how the data is being stored and what methods are to be used such as recording.	To ensure risk of pressure or influence is eliminated, the consent forms will be sent electronically and allows participants to sign the form in their own time and in their own space. The consent form will provide a clear and thorough explanation of the research. Including, what the research title and its purpose, the data collection instrument, the fact that the interviews will be recorded, and that the only other party that will have access to their data is my supervisor, and that their identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms.
Dissemination and publication planning	The proposal provides sufficient information for assessment that there is no risk to the researcher, participants or the institution through the proposed dissemination plan.	When deciding on planning dissemination, the participants and institution as well as all other parties involved in the study will be informed and risk will be assessed.

I declare that	
1.	All the statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.
2.	I am bound by the requirements of ethical and sound research practices.
3.	I will not conduct myself in any way to cause harm to my participants, institution or broader society.
4.	I will obtain informed consent in writing from all participants after disclosing all the information that would be needed to give this consent.
5.	I will only use this data for these research purposes and in no other way.
6.	I will protect the anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of participants and associated institutions or structures.
7.	I will only use recording methods (written, audio, video) consented to and in the manner consented to.
8.	I am responsible for the full costs of the research.
9.	I will show the consent and clearance approvals I have to any person – including participants – who have a legitimate interest in seeing that permission.
10.	I will meet all conditions set and not proceed until I have authorisation to do so.

Declaration by the researcher	
I declare that	
1. The submitted proposal and associated documents have been submitted with my consent and I am satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met.	✓
2. The submitted proposal and associated documents have NOT been submitted with my consent and I am NOT satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met. The reasons are:	
Signature of the researcher	Date
	03/08/2023

Declaration by the supervisor(s)	
I declare that	
3. The submitted proposal and associated documents have been submitted with my consent and I am satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met.	X
4. The submitted proposal and associated documents have NOT been submitted with my consent and I am NOT satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met. The reasons are:	
Signature of the supervisor	Date
	10/08/23

Declaration by the co-supervisor(s)	
I declare that	
1. The submitted proposal and associated documents have been submitted with my consent and I am satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met.	
2. The submitted proposal and associated documents have NOT been submitted with my consent and I am NOT satisfied that all requirements – including ethical requirements – have been met. The reasons are:	
Signature of the co-supervisor	Date

Conditions for conducting research at The Independent Institute of Education
1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in their sample.
2. The researcher(s) may only use this data for these research purposes and in no other way.
3. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
4. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research and informed consent from the participants or respondents was obtained, and, even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published.
5. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising their own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled or advised based on this.
7. The reference number of the permission letter, if permission is granted, must appear, in one format or another, on all research documentation distributed amongst respondents / participants.

FOR USE BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE OUTCOME	Outcome
1. Approved. <i>No additional conditions</i>	
2. Approved with minor changes. <i>Feedback from the HDC is to be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor.</i>	
3. Approved with major revisions. <i>Representation is required and must be resubmitted to HDC for approval.</i>	
4. Rejected. <i>The ethics risk involved in this study is too high and researcher is requested to reconsider study and ethical considerations and resubmit to the ethics committee for approval.</i>	

General feedback from the Ethics Committee:

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

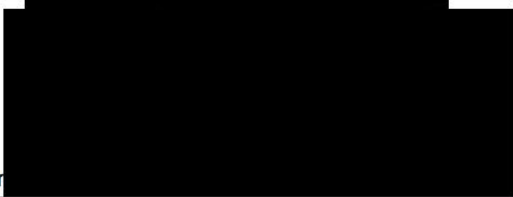
Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Gaironeeza Azailia Ashlin Maclobo and I am a student at The IIE's Vega School. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR NICOLE CUNNINGHAM about the increase of females in sports and Femvertising. As well as the fact that it is an effective tool when it comes to empowering females, and how it should be utilised and embraced by South African advertisers in support of the feminist cause. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect of Femvertising and anti-Femvertising on the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you fit the ideal sample criteria and I would appreciate your responses. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to have an online interview with you, via Teams whereby I will ask you a series of questions and record your responses. The session will be recorded through both visual and an audio recording. The purpose of recording the session is that the recordings will be used for data analysis and transcription. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your (insert what you are examining). If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating. Detail the potential risks and how it will be managed by the researcher. Indicate how the ethical considerations will be applied in the context of the study. Privacy and confidentiality will be ensured by not discussing participants or data collected with any other individual. Participants will also be represented in the study by pseudonyms. Information regarding participants as well as recordings of the interviews will be restricted to the researcher and supervisors if applicable. To ensure privacy, interviews will be conducted one-on-one and not in a public space. To comply with the POPI act, all personal identifiers will be collected and stored in an access-controlled location to prevent access from unauthorised third parties. To ensure risk of pressure or influence is eliminated, the consent forms will be sent electronically and allows participants to sign the form in their own time and in their own space. The consent form will provide a clear and thorough explanation of the research. Including, what the research title and its purpose, the data collection instrument, the fact that the interviews will be recorded, and that the only other party that will have access to their data is my supervisor, and that their identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms.

When deciding on planning dissemination, the participants and institution as well as all other parties involved in the study will be informed and risk will be assessed.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega School, will have access to your interview or personal information, including the video and audio recordings. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?
Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my MCOM: Strategic brand leadership. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.
What happens if I have more questions about the study?
Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. My contact details are as follows: Gaironeeza Maclobo [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: Dr Nicole Cunningham [REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent
I, [REDACTED] agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature		Date 22/10/2023

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants

To whom it may concern,

My name is Gaironeeza Azailia Ashlin Maclobo and I am a student at The IIE's Vega School. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR NICOLE CUNNINGHAM about the increase of females in sports and Femvertising. As well as the fact that it is an effective tool when it comes to empowering females, and how it should be utilised and embraced by South African advertisers in support of the feminist cause. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect of Femvertising and anti-Femvertising on the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising.

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

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

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you fit the ideal sample criteria and I would appreciate your responses. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to have an online interview with you, via Teams whereby I will ask you a series of questions and record your responses. The session will be recorded through both visual and an audio recording. The purpose of recording the session is that the recordings will be used for data analysis and transcription.

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

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

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your (insert what you are examining). If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Detail the potential risks and how it will be managed by the researcher. Indicate how the ethical considerations will be applied in the context of the study.

Privacy and confidentiality will be ensured by not discussing participants or data collected with any other individual. Participants will also be represented in the study by pseudonyms. Information regarding participants as well as recordings of the interviews will be restricted to the researcher and supervisors if applicable. To ensure privacy, interviews will be conducted one-on-one and not in a public space. To comply with the POPI act, all personal identifiers will be collected and stored in an access-controlled location to prevent access from unauthorised third parties.

To ensure risk of pressure or influence is eliminated, the consent forms will be sent electronically and allows participants to sign the form in their own time and in their own space. The consent form will provide a clear and thorough explanation of the research. Including, what the research title and its purpose, the data collection instrument, the fact that the interviews will be recorded, and that the only other party that will have access to their data is my supervisor, and that their identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms.

When deciding on planning dissemination, the participants and institution as well as all other parties involved in the study will be informed and risk will be assessed.

Do I have to participate in the study?

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

Will my identity be protected?

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

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

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

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Gaironeeza Maclobo

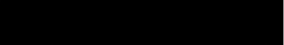


The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr Nicole Cunningham



Participant or respondent consent

I, , agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature



Date

20/10/2023

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Gaironeeza Azailia Ashlin Maclobo and I am a student at The IIE's Vega School. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR NICOLE CUNNINGHAM about the increase of females in sports and Femvertising. As well as the fact that it is an effective tool when it comes to empowering females, and how it should be utilised and embraced by South African advertisers in support of the feminist cause. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect of Femvertising and anti-Femvertising on the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
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I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you fit the ideal sample criteria and I would appreciate your responses. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to have an online interview with you, via Teams whereby I will ask you a series of questions and record your responses. The session will be recorded through both visual and an audio recording. The purpose of recording the session is that the recordings will be used for data analysis and transcription. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
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Do I have to participate in the study?
- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; - If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; - Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Gaironeeza Azailia Ashlin Maclobo and I am a student at The IIE's Vega School. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR NICOLE CUNNINGHAM about the increase of females in sports and Femvertising. As well as the fact that it is an effective tool when it comes to empowering females, and how it should be utilised and embraced by South African advertisers in support of the feminist cause. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect of Femvertising and anti-Femvertising on the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. <u>In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.</u> If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
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Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my MCOM: Strategic brand leadership. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Gaironeeza Maclobo



The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr Nicole Cunningham



Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature



Date 23 -10 - 2023

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

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To whom it may concern, My name is Gaironeeza Azailia Ashlin Maclobo and I am a student at The IIE's Vega School. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR NICOLE CUNNINGHAM about the increase of females in sports and Femvertising. As well as the fact that it is an effective tool when it comes to empowering females, and how it should be utilised and embraced by South African advertisers in support of the feminist cause. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the effect of Femvertising and anti-Femvertising on the South African sport industry and its consumers' response to brands and their advertising. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
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Will my identity be protected? I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to

ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega School, will have access to your interview or personal information, including the video and audio recordings. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

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Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Gaironeeza Maclobo

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr Nicole Cunningham

[REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent

I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

[REDACTED]

Date 2023/10/23

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

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Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my MCOM: Strategic brand leadership. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.
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Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. My contact details are as follows: Gaironeeza Maclobo [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: Dr Nicole Cunningham [REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent
I, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
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S		Date 20/10/23

Annexure H (a) – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants

To whom it may concern,

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Do I have to participate in the study?

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Gaironeeza Maclobo

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr Nicole Cunningham

[REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent

I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by Gaironeeza Maclobo about Femvertising in the sport industry.

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

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

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[REDACTED]

Date
21/10/23

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Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
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Will my identity be protected?

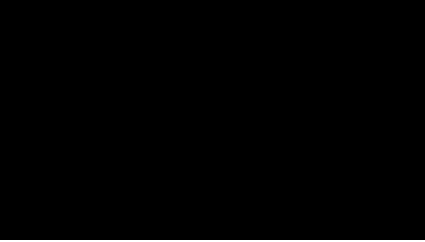
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- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
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		Date: 18/10/2023