

Magazines' representation of women and the influence on identity construction

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nereshnee Govender hereby declare that the work presented in this research is my own and all sources have been duly acknowledged.

Nereshnee Govender

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ABSTRACT

The history of South Africa has many scars of oppression and women have long experienced a disempowered position in society. It is also a history of intrepid efforts to emancipate South Africans from past afflictions. Media in South Africa played a key role in amplifying the apartheid regime and also overthrowing it. Media has significant power, is regarded as a bastion of freedom and nation building, and by means of its representation, contributes to our individual and social identities. Magazine media, in particular, are modern and popular cultural forms of representation. It is a significant force in South African culture and plays a central role in shaping public opinion on women. South Africa has a deep-rooted patriarchal value system and while advances can be commended, significant challenges persist. Despite women actively engaging in various aspects of society, from business to sport, they continue to receive marginal support and media attention. Stereotypical representations abound in magazine content and women are often sexualised and objectified in traditionally feminine, decorative roles and framed by their social positions as homemakers and non-professionals. This study explores magazines' representation of women and the influence on identity construction. The connected landscapes of media's production and consumption practices is also addressed, as there is a powerful interplay of how the economics of publishing significantly shape media content. This study proposes a model that contributes to promoting diversity in media content, ownership and control, critical citizenry and media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality. The qualitative methodological approach addresses the issue of objectification of women in editorial content and advertisements of two of South Africa's leading consumer magazines, *YOU* and *DRUM*. The findings reveal that gender stereotypes thrive in magazine texts that repeatedly represent women as objects for male consumption, thereby not reflecting the diverse and progressive roles of modern day women. Magazine media can play a powerful role in helping to dislodge the patriarchal, public attitudes towards women. Diversified, equitable representation of gender in media is important so that it may demonstrate, and influence, society's shift towards egalitarian principles. This study serves as a catalyst for change by building a knowledge base and raising awareness regarding magazines' role in identity

construction, by advocating gender issues and by contributing to gender parity in and through the media.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my father, Ronnie Govender for his constant motivation, support and love ... you are the strength behind all my achievements.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Adspend	Advertising spend
AMPS	All Media Products Survey
FGDP	Focus Group Discussion Participant
FG	Focus Group
GMPS	Gender and Media Progress Study
GL	Gender Links
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LSM	Living Scales Measurements
MDDA	Media Development and Diversity Agency
SAARF	South African Advertising Research Foundation

Chapter 1 : Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction and background

South Africa is now in its third decade of democracy and is characterised by a social and political dispensation based on the principles of freedom of expression and progressive rights, including non-sexism. These principles ought to be embedded in all aspects of society, including the media we consume. Media has significant power and by means of its representation, it contributes to our understanding of the world and of our individual and social identities. Magazine media, in particular, are modern and are popular cultural forms of representation. They are a significant force in modern society and in South African culture today. This is affirmed by Hjarvard (2013: 23) who maintains that magazines “play an important role in society and contribute to the development of a cultural public sphere.”

A plethora of media forms exist in South Africa, however this study specifically addresses the media form of print magazines. Magazines have been chosen as the communication medium as they provide understanding and insight into the changing aspects of a patriarchal society that continues to be influenced by socially significant markers including the constructs of gender¹ and sexuality. The objective of this study is to focus on print magazine content, however the connected landscapes of media’s production and consumption practices in democratic South Africa will also be addressed as there is a powerful interplay between the media, state control and market forces. Furthermore, transformation of society should include media’s many facets, including diversity of publications and viewpoints, and ownership, distribution and control of the media. This study also explores the underlying gender

¹ “A social and cultural construct, rather than a biological given and subject to continuous negotiation, gender is a signifying system that allows for the cultural differentiation of male from female” (Van Zoonen’s, 1994: 4). Van Zoonen’s understanding of gender is particularly useful: “[gender is] a particular discourse, that is, a set of overlapping and often contradictory cultural descriptions and prescriptions referring to sexual difference which arises from and regulates particular economic, technological and other non-discursive contexts.”

dynamics within the institutional structures of the media. This research study aims to identify and understand trends in the industry that may reduce and affect media quality. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will ascertain how women are represented in magazines and how these representations influence identity construction. It is important to analyse the relationship between media, gender and identity because media and communication are important components of contemporary life and gender and sexuality are central in the development of our identities. Media contains an abundance of imageries and messages about masculinity, femininity and sexuality and it is most likely that these views and ideas will impact on identity construction. This study sets out to ascertain the type and impact of messages that media conveys to contemporary audiences. It does so by examining South Africa's two leading weekly consumer magazines, namely YOU and DRUM magazines. Both are English-language general-interest magazines that form part of the Media24 publishing group. Magazine content including editorial content and advertisements are the main focus in this study. These are channels in which prevalent messages are conveyed and they will be analysed using various themes. Furthermore, the Living Scales Measurements (LSMs)² indicate that the magazines in the study sample cater for the middle and upper-middle classes in South Africa.

The ability to participate in all aspects of society is inherently connected to a country's history and politics. During the apartheid era in South Africa, marginalisation and segregation was a tool used to divide and rule. Democratic elections in 1994 brought many changes to the social, political and economic landscape of South Africa. The elections and negotiations that preceded them laid the foundation for free and equal rights of South African society and as a framework for the fledgling democracy, the Constitution was introduced in 1996. After many years of government control of the media

² The LSM tool measures the standard of living of South African media audiences and "divides the population into 10 groups, with LSM one being the group with the lowest standard of living and ten the highest. LSM 7-10 are further split into 'high' and 'low' sub-groups to allow for finer targeting" (Chronis, 2013: 98).

during the repressive apartheid regime, the newly institutionalised democratic government committed itself to diversify the media and encouraged dialogue. South Africa's Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996: 7) section nine states: "Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. The right of equality protects anyone with respect to unfair discrimination, on one or more grounds of race, sex, colour, religion, language, ethnic or social origin," and that "the Commission of Gender Equality must promote gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality." This right acknowledges that women have been instrumental in the deposing of the apartheid system and continue to play a fundamental role in the transformation of the country's evolving democracy. In addition, these declarations acknowledge the role of women and media in economic, political and social development of a country. Thus, media's approach in its representation of women is crucial in ensuring that equitable relations of power are reproduced within society, as this directly impacts on the way in which women interpret popular media forms such as magazines.

South Africa has experienced phenomenal transition that brought about a constitutional democracy which has entrenched human rights and freedom of expression. An address by Nelson Mandela in June 2002 at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Institute of Advanced Journalism stated:

South Africa should put the freedom of its press and media at the top of its priorities as a democracy. None of our irritations with the perceived inadequacies of the media should ever allow us to suggest even faintly that the independence of the press could be compromised or coerced. A bad free press is preferable to a technically good, subservient one (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2015: 1).

This statement confirms media's role in a democracy and maintains that its freedom should allow for autonomous evaluation and inspection as it is a force that shapes society. Media enables citizens to make informed decisions on various matters, and this is a central component of the South African Constitution. Overt government media censorship is no longer applied to the

print media and the constitution that took effect in February 1997 guarantees that every South African has a right to freedom of expression. South Africa is abounding with new freedoms; healing and reconciliation have begun after decades of inequality, discrimination, and injustice. What have these new conditions meant for the South African media?

In democracies a diverse range of opinions should be expressed, portrayed and disseminated. Women should be awarded positive representations that strengthen and elevate their position in society. Important questions about media coverage and performance persist. After twenty years of democracy has there been an increase in diversity and range of opinions? Can South Africa be declared a propaganda-free zone now that freedom has prevailed? How does market-driven media impact on the content that we receive? More specifically, how has democracy and neoliberalism transformed South African English-language magazines and what impact does this have on magazines' representation of women and the influence on constructing gender identity? These are important questions to answer as the country celebrates twenty one years of democracy and embraces the ideology of social change and gender equality.

The media in South Africa is undoubtedly in a steady process of growth and transformation. The role of journalism in a democracy faces many challenges and changes as a result of converging media markets, looming competitiveness and the global economy. Media and other social institutions face the challenge of providing and maintaining equitable and objective representation to the South African population. This study will also analyse whether magazine media portray men and women in ways that ensure profits. It must be noted that the lifestyle nature of certain magazines does not exempt them from media professionalism, ensuring quality of content or good journalistic practice. In the case of women, media plays a powerful role in helping to dislodge negative stereotypes and the patriarchal, public attitudes towards women. For example, media frequently perpetuate gender biases in

occupational categories. A recent study by Gender Links (GL)³: Southern African Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) by Rama (2010: 9) revealed that women predominate as homemakers, beauty contestants, social workers and sex workers in media content. In addition to occupational categories and according to Collins (2011) and Andrews and McNamara (2014) women are often sexualised in content, typically by showing them in traditionally feminine, decorative, stereotyped roles and they are frequently framed by their social positions as homemakers, girlfriends, mothers, wives, non-professionals and sexual gatekeepers. Van Zoonen (1994: 1) affirms these views and maintains that “women who appear in media content tend to be young and conventionally pretty, defined by personal tags in relation to their husband, father, son, or boss and portrayed as passive, indecisive, submissive and dependent.” This underlines the limited ways women are represented and the objectification of women in media content. Further to this, Peirce (1990: 372) highlighted that images in magazines portray females as being “neurotic, helpless, and timid beings that must rely on external sources, usually men, to make sense of their lives.” These limiting magazine representations propagate negative stereotypes and patriarchal public attitudes towards women.

Stereotypical perceptions of women permeate in our society and hinder the development of women. Leavy, Gnong and Ross (2009) affirm this and maintain that matters related to sexuality and gender are constructed by the societies we live in. Media is an invariable component of the social and cultural landscape in South Africa and directly or indirectly provides messages that shape our perceptions. The presence of media is often taken for granted as its impact can be persuasive and powerful. Media can have a compelling impact on how women observe and understand the world and recognise their

³ “Gender Links is a Southern African non-governmental organisation (NGO) and was formed in March 2001. Its headquarters is in Johannesburg, South Africa and it promotes gender equality and justice ... Gender Links is committed to a region in which women and men are able to participate equally in all aspects of public and private life in accordance with the provisions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and development” (Rama 2010: 1).

sense of self and find their place in society. Media can be used to characterise their roles and define and develop their identity. Granello's (1997: 24) view is that "women looking for information about their current developmental tasks will take that information from any available source." Magazines are an influential medium of communication. They proliferate in society and many women receive sustenance through reading magazines as it provides them with a means to understand, interpret, and respond to the world. This implies that media can contribute to social change today that is largely overlooked and can be seen as a central link between culture and personality.

For the purposes of this study, which attempts to assess the relationship between media consumption and identity construction, magazines are understood as 'meta-commodities' which serve as vehicles "for the dissemination of other commodities" (Beetham 1996: 2). In terms of gender identity, this study explores the prospect of self-transformation and self-improvement which magazines often propose to women. Media has a significant influence on the socialisation of women and promoting these beauty ideals can restrict the availability of viable role models for women. Liebau (2007: 8) purports that "emphasis on sexiness, revealing fashions and overvaluing of physical appeal, creates pressure to measure up to ultra-thin models or celebrities and leads to unrealistic expectations among women about how their own bodies should actually look." In order to create and sustain change, magazine media must be challenged to diversify content. This can be achieved by not only diversifying content to include coverage and imagery of the remarkable achievements of women but also by diversifying coverage and representing women with varying body shapes, women with disabilities, elderly women and racial and ethnic minorities – a true reflection of reality.

Women deserve unbiased media representation and magazines have a responsibility to distribute unprejudiced content that reflects the significant achievements of women. Diversified, equitable representation of gender in

media is important as it demonstrates society's shift towards egalitarian principles. The media should serve as an instrument in the process of shaping the perception of audiences as inequitable and tainted representations will keep women's achievements at a distance. Magazine media's approach in addressing or ignoring this situation is imperative. This study will attempt to address the issue of objectification of women by exploring how magazines represent women, how audiences relate to magazine media texts⁴ and the influence on identity construction.

1.2 Problem statement

As a developing nation, South Africa has achieved huge advancements in the transformation and growth of the country. Women play a dynamic role in South African society and for many, media play a central part of their lives in informing their knowledge, opinions and attitudes. Many authors (Chan-Meetoo and Kasenally, 2012; Hyden, Leslie and Ogundimu, 2002; Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 2001) affirm that media play a critical role in a democracy and can be seen as an agent for change in a new democracy.

Women have made huge strides towards career development yet we seldom hear about their triumphs. They actively engage in politics, business and sport; however, they receive marginal support and media attention. This indicates an imbalanced representation of women in media and a disregard for the sacrifices, commitment and exceptional talent of women.

The marketing of popular media has a significant impact on many aspects of our lives as it permeates the social fabric of South Africa. Sanders (2009: 1) affirms that consumer magazines are interlinked with elements of celebrity life, entertainment and style and this makes it difficult for consumers to distinguish "reality from fantasy" when consuming these popular media forms. Celebrities,

⁴ 'Texts' in this study refers specifically to (editorial and advertising) magazine content.

regardless of their status, become “role-models” to be emulated. Sanders (2009: 1) further suggests that digital editing has fashioned an artificial and fictitious world that is virtually unattainable. Air brushing of photographs ensures that almost all the faces are strikingly pretty and the bodies well-toned. Women are equipped with information on how seductive poses and pouts are essential and appropriate to achieving success. Naigle (2005: 7) argues that “the media is an ever-pervasive influence, which helps to present, enforce, and maintain the perception that ultra-thin, non-average body forms should be the desired goal of all women.” Visual images proliferate in magazine content and are powerful instruments in shaping attitudes and values. These visual falsehoods and the portrayal of unblemished, over-glamorised models projects the view that attractive and skinny women are successful.

Female stereotypes thrive in the media we consume. Parry and Karam (2001: 383) claim that media persuasively convey patriarchal interpretations that have a profound influence on women’s role in society and identity construction. This study includes both ‘text’ and ‘audience-based’ analysis as a means to analyse how women interpret popular media forms such as magazines and to ascertain whether magazines serve as self-improving and informal educational tools that contribute to identity construction. Critical questions that remain are, therefore: to what extent does the representation of women in magazines influence identity construction and what is the role of magazines in empowering or limiting the development of women in society?

1.3 Research objectives

The overall objective of this study is to explore magazines’ representation of women and the influence on identity construction. The sub-objectives of this study are:

- To investigate how magazines represent women and their impact on identity construction;

- To analyse textual and visual representation of women in magazines (editorial content and advertisements);
- To investigate the way in which women interpret popular media forms (how readers relate to media texts) and
- To propose a model that contributes to social change and gender equality.

1.4 Delimitations

- Democracy requires a robust and free media to disseminate information that encourages diversity and citizen participation. Print media in South Africa is robust and dynamic and as a result, this study limits itself to print media's coverage of women.
- The study's remit is the discussion of media influences on identity construction in South African magazine media. The study acknowledges the importance of media influences on gender identities in other countries, however, limits itself to the South African media industry as other countries are beyond the scope of this study.
- In terms of ownership and control, print media constitutes the largest section of media in South Africa and the study is limited to print media and specifically to Media24 magazines. Media24 is the leading media player in the print media industry in South Africa.
- Laden (2001: 188) maintains that "consumer magazines provide great insight into the workings of socio-cultural entities" and this study is limited to consumer magazines, specifically general-interest English-

language weekly magazines, namely, YOU and DRUM magazine that form part of the Media24 publishing group. The particular range of magazine titles are appropriate for a variety of reasons. “YOU is the biggest-selling weekly, English-language magazine in the country” (Media24 2014a) and “DRUM is the sixth largest consumer magazine in Africa” (South African History Online 2015: 1).

- The study is delimited to a specific timeframe: the period June 2013 to June 2014. This timeframe is significant as it marks 20 years of democracy in South Africa.
- YOU and DRUM magazines’ readership profile indicates that the target market is women and men, skewed towards women at 65% and 62% respectively (Media24 2014a). YOU magazine’s largest readership group at 28% are 25-35 year olds; DRUM’s largest readership group at 30% are between the ages of 15-35 (Media24 2014b). Therefore, this study is further limited to women readers in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) between the ages of 18 and 35.
- This study is limited to addressing issues around gender, specifically women and has excluded other significant identity markers such as disability, culture, ethnicity, race and class from this exploration, as this study does not provide the space to explore representations of these subjectivities and the intersections between them in magazines.
- It is important to highlight that this study acknowledges political and economic influences on the media. The researcher draws on Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) “propaganda model” and assesses how the “marketplace and the economics of publishing” extensively shape media content.

1.5 Literature review

This section sets up a theoretical framework by identifying and discussing the principle theories and themes that frame media representation. The Literature review comprises two chapters. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, various concepts will be explored in Chapter 2, including media as an instrument of representation and in the development of identity. One of the fundamental outcomes of the study is to investigate how magazines represent women and how audiences or readers relate to media texts. This chapter also addresses the political and economic influences of the media in democratic South Africa and explores whether propaganda and media control continues today. Magazines' representation of women with specific emphasis on the stigmatising of women in editorial and advertising content and the effects of exposure to underrepresentation of women will be discussed. It is against this crucial backdrop that the researcher will analyse the impact of market-driven media and the dependence on advertising. This section also explores the changing representations of women in magazine texts. The literature further provides background on the South African media landscape with specific reference to the print media industry. In doing so, it expounds on the operations of the Media24 publishing group, specifically YOU and DRUM magazines which are the primary unit of analysis.

There are many theoretical perspectives that underpin representation and the media, however the researcher employs the dominant theories to discuss the literature. In Chapter 3, normative theory framework and media effect theories that address the role of magazines in constructing gender identity will be explored. Critical political economy theory assesses how commercial pressures are mediated through the operations of the media newsroom and journalistic practice.

In terms of gender and the media, it must be noted that there are no dominant theories however there are a number of shared concerns as media serves an

important social learning function in that it acts as an agent of socialisation that can influence identity construction. This section concludes by looking at feminist media theory that lends a gendered inflection to this study.

1.6 Research methodology

This study uses an interpretative research design employing a qualitative methodology to gather data. A case study approach was selected and as defined by Welman and Kruger (2005: 190) it is a “limited number of units of analysis (often only one)... such as an individual, a group or an institution (which) are studied intensively.” The Media24 publishing group, specifically YOU and DRUM magazines were selected to explore how magazines represent women and how this representation influences identity construction.

Data will be collected using multiple techniques including content analysis (textual and visual representation of women in magazines: editorial content and advertisements), interviews with editors, journalists and media commentators and focus group discussions with women readers in KZN between the ages of 18-35. Qualitative analysis draws primarily on thematic content analysis as a research method and this study is interpretative and analytical in nature. The analysis will delve beneath the surface connotations and explore implicit social meanings. The researcher will assess the context of media messages and their implied meaning. Hence, words and phrases will be italicised to highlight implied connotations.

1.7 Overview of the study

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and contextualises the study. Chapters 2 and 3 discusses the literature and propose a theoretical framework. Chapter 2 specifically provides an analysis of media as an instrument of representation and assesses how media’s political and economic influences shape media content. It further locates the study within the media environment and the

broad historical context of the South African political economy by providing a snapshot of the South African media landscape, specifically the Media24 publishing house. The researcher will address the various themes and theories that frame media representation in Chapter 3. These chapters assess the role of media and contemporary journalism in society.

The empirical aspects of this study are discoursed in three parts. These include the research methodology, the analysis and interpretation of results and conclusions and recommendations. Chapter 4 discusses the research methods employed and Chapter 5 provides data analysis by unpacking the meanings embedded in the data collected. These include: magazine texts (textual and visual representation of women in magazines: editorial content and advertisements), information from interviews with media professionals on the role of magazines in representing women and constructing gender identity and information from the focus groups discussions with women readers in KZN. The data will be analysed by using specific themes to explore the role of YOU and DRUM magazines in identity construction. This chapter provides the central findings of the study relating to the key objective and the sub objectives of the study.

Chapter 6 offers conclusions and recommendations and proposes a model with a view to highlighting media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality. It acknowledges the political, economic and social factors that contribute to media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality concerning the representation of women in magazine media.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for this research by providing the background to this study. The position taken in this research is that as an influential institution, media has to play a transformative role in the development of a diverse egalitarian culture and cannot consistently reinforce

and reproduce stereotypical discourses about gender and women in particular. At best, this study sets out to explore and discuss the ways in which hegemonic constructions of gender are either maintained, reproduced or subverted in magazine media, the changing representations in magazine media and how these representations relate to the broader South African goal of developing a true democracy where women's human rights and gender equality are centralised. It does so by exploring critical approaches to magazine texts and how readers relate to them.

This chapter also provided an outline of the remaining six chapters. The next chapter will explore various concepts including an analysis of media and representation and its role in identity construction. This section will take a critical look at the market driven media industry and how the economics of publishing significantly shape media content. An overview of the South African media industry, specifically the publishing group Media24 and the primary unit of analysis, YOU and DRUM magazines will be provided.

Chapter 2 : Media representation, market forces and identity construction

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a background and an introduction to this study and maintains that the key objective is to explore magazines' representation of women and their influence on identity construction. To attain the goals of this study, various concepts will be explored in the Literature review, which comprises this and the following chapter. The researcher draws on seven main bodies of literature and theory:

- a) Media as an instrument of representation and identity construction;
- b) The political economy of the media – manufacturing consent in democratic South Africa;
- c) Magazines: A reconnaissance of editorial and advertising content;
- d) South African media landscape - Media24 - YOU and DRUM magazine;
- e) Normative theory framework;
- f) Media effect theory and
- g) Feminist media theory.

This chapter will begin with an analysis of media as an instrument of representation and its role in constructing gender identity, exploring the work of theorists Stuart Hall, Dennis McQuail, David Gauntlett, Theodor Adorno and John Fiske who provide valuable insight on media's position and responsibility in the development of gender identities.

This study acknowledges Herman and Chomsky's (1988) political economy approach that contributes to the commercial media environment and this concept will be discussed in both Chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter, the researcher will analyse the media system and whether it is fragmenting or becoming more specialised in terms of the rest of the South African economy

by specifically dissecting the Five Filters Propaganda Model prescribed by Herman and Chomsky. To consider the question of how commercial pressures are mediated through the operations of the newsroom and journalistic practice, in Chapter 3, the researcher expounds on the critical political economy theory which examines the impact of the commercial need to generate revenue on media's ability to fulfil their assigned role.

This chapter will also expound on the discourse⁵ of magazines and discusses magazine media's portrayal of women with specific emphasis on the stigmatising of women in editorial and advertising content and the effects of exposure to underrepresentation of women. This section raises important questions: What role does YOU and DRUM magazines play in shaping gender identities; do these publications serve as aspirational and informal educational devices or are they pure entertainment sources? This chapter also provides a snapshot of the historical context of the media industry as well as its current status. This allows the researcher to locate the two magazines under study within a historical and theoretical framework. In doing so, the final section of this chapter provides background to the Media24 publishing group and more specifically the primary unit of analysis, YOU and DRUM magazines.

2.2 Media – an instrument of representation and identity construction

Media plays an important role in society as it is saturated with information that can shape one's thinking and behaviour. It is a dominant and influential tool, a source of information, education and entertainment and often subliminally shapes how we understand, see and interpret others, society and ourselves. Lussier and Sherman (2014: 221) state that media is a central source of communication and information in society and plays a key role in deciding what

⁵ "Discourse broadly means a 'way of talking about things' within a particular group, culture or society, or a set of ideas within a culture which shapes how we perceive the world" (Gauntlett 2002: 16).

develops into reality. Through its representation, media tells us a lot about the society we live in – it influences the way we understand, perceive and view the world.

In contemporary society, people consume media in abundance by watching television and movies, reading popular magazines and surfing the internet and are submerged into the sphere of popular culture and advertising. Schroder, Drotner, Kline and Murray (2003: 63) state:

In media-saturated and media-integrated societies, then, scholars are encouraged and enforced to seek routes of study that are geared to grasping how media interrelate as material objects and symbolic forms of expression, and how media are constructive of people's sense-making processes and exchanges of experiences in their everyday lives.

Media houses in South Africa are on the increase and there is a permeation of media messages that infiltrate society. This study will specifically assess the impact of magazine media messages and how as symbolic forms of expression, they contribute to shaping the lives of readers. Hall's (1997: 15) view on representation is that the use of language, signs and images allows for meaning to be produced and exchanged between people. This highlights the power of the media in creating views, understanding and meaning in people's lives. Hall's exploration of representation is vast and he analysed representation as a signifying practice in diverse media and social contexts. Hall was famous for the 1970's 'encoding and decoding' model. Gauntlett (2002: 24) explains that this model "suggested that a media producer may 'encode' a certain meaning into their text, which would be based on a certain social context and understandings, but noted that when the text is consumed, the other persons reading or 'decoding' of it, based on their own social context and experience, is likely to be different." This validates that reader diversity is recognised, as is the fact that media messages are 'polysemic,' capable of having multiple meanings. There is therefore the possibility for different interpretation of media messages in accordance to an audience member's social status and understanding of issues and events. Furthermore,

audiences belong to communities where they share comparable practises, encounters and discursive frameworks with members. Gauntlett's view (2002: 24) is that the model was advantageous as it emphasised the importance of interpretation of media messages by those receiving it, as well as the inter-relationship among those involved in the production and distribution of media. This includes regulators, distributors, media audiences as well as media professionals such as journalists and editors. Smith (2011: 62) affirms that polysemy has also been used to understand people's interaction with cultural products, and Hall's model delineates the various readings or interpretations arising from polysemic texts. Magazine can be regarded as polysemic texts as they can be interpreted differently by readers based on aspects including readers' cultural knowledge and viewpoints. This highlights the multiple meanings that can be derived from magazine media content.

Hall's exploration of media was centred on media production as well as representation; however, he also argues that these two concepts are interconnected with the role of audiences. Hall reinforces the impact of media on the development of an individual's identity. According to Lacey (2009: 22), "representations are often a product of institutions and are the result of conventions produced at a particular time and place, and determined by the dominant ideology." Lacey's view affirms that there are many contributing factors that influence media representation. These views emphasise that if patriarchal perceptions are dominant in a particular society then those views will proliferate in media content. Hall (1997: 15) affirms that "representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent the world meaningfully to other people ... it is the construction of meaning through language." This highlights the power and influence of media language and its role in shaping public opinion. In exploring the research question, this study will analyse the connotations and associations that magazine language carries. Magazines are a powerful force and through the use of language can contribute to the shaping of beliefs and views among people. Media language

can elevate or reduce the significance of an issue and influence the reader by means of the various connotations it carries. Dunstan (in Hill, Galligan and Mangan 2007: 121) postulates that “Within language, male experience is the ‘norm’, and woman is the ‘other’ against which the norm is defined. As ‘other’, woman is always both in a subordinate and negative position.” Media language that makes use of these types of historical, stereotypical views of women as a ‘man’s subordinate’ highlights negative connotations of women that proliferate in society. This greatly restricts the evolving role of women in society and subsequently can impact on identity construction. The analysis of texts in YOU and DRUM magazines will provide insight into the way magazines address gender roles and how this shapes identity construction.

Inequitable portrayals of women are not a true representation of women and their contribution to society. Apart from language in magazine content, photographic images are powerful and they alone in media content can tell myriads of stories and shape consensus. Gender stereotypes are maintained by photographic images that focus on women’s bodies, heightening visual pleasure for the gendered male gaze. Photographic images in magazine content emphasises sexual attractiveness and often foreground women’s bodies. This can have widespread negative consequences for both men and women. For women specifically, these images of the “ideal women” can result in women having a negative body image and low self-esteem.

Hall’s views are a clear rationale for studying media representations and based on his analysis on the interconnectedness between media representation and audiences, this study will include both ‘textual’ and ‘audience-based or reception’ analysis as a means to analyse how women interpret popular media forms such as magazines. Smith (2011: 17) in her work affirms that media consumption is a process informed and determined by broader social, political and economic realities and a form of cultural production and reproduction. One of the first media scholars to argue for an approach that takes cognizance of the everyday contexts of media reception was Herman Bausinger (1984).

Bausinger argued that any meaningful study of the media should proceed from an awareness of the fact that media use is a collective process that occurs in the context of family and friends and is an integral part of the routines of everyday life. Media texts should not be considered in isolation but should be seen as part of the 'media ensemble' which people encounter on a daily basis. This study also acknowledges that consumption practices exist in relation to production, regulation, representation and identity – the 'circuit of culture' as proffered by Hall (1997).

The next section explores various subjects including previous mass media studies relating to media representation of women, unheard voices and gender stereotypes in the media and the signifying power of the media. In addition, it provides insight into previous local and international mass media studies in the field of gendered media representations.

2.2.1 Mass media studies: women, media and representation

Numerous studies have been reviewed concerning women, media and representation including Clowes (2002, 2004, 2006), Driver (2002), Gauntlett (2002), Patton (2006), Len-Ríos, Rodgers, Thorson and Yoon (2005), Mutongi (2000), Overland (2002) and Ross (2013). Gauntlett (2002) conducted a historical study and explored changing constructions of femininity and masculinity in the United States mass media. He looked at gendered identities from the 1940's to the 21st century and highlights how representations of gender in mass media have evolved. Friedan in Gauntlett, (2002: 50) states that in the 40's and 50's the 'happy housewife heroine' was celebrated in magazines and in the 60's the representations of gender deviated from these traditional roles for women. Despite the development of woman in the workplace and politics and global affairs, popularity of more traditional magazines such as *Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Women's Own* and *Women's Weekly* in the US was still dominant. According to Gauntlett (2002: 53) the arrival of *Ms* and *Cosmopolitan* during the 1970's and

1980's reflected a strong sexual identity for women and reflected their multiple roles. Advertising in the United States was similarly shaped with changes in gender representation taking place in the 90's. His study however posits that despite advertisers portraying women in more realistic roles the ideal of women as 'attractive,' 'slim' and 'young' as compared to men who were 'strong', 'fit', 'adventurous' and 'active' was not dislodged. This reinforces the stereotypical beliefs that women are expected to be 'weak' and 'timid' or 'merely token female', whereas men are supposed to be 'strong' and 'forceful'. This is affirmed by Murphy (in Painter and Ferruci 2012: 249) who maintains that submissiveness, weakness and dependency to men was a common and accepted representation of women in media. These confining representations need to be challenged to ensure that equitable, empowering representations are accessible to media audiences.

Overland's (2002) study focuses on representations of gender in post-apartheid South Africa and looks at advertising content in television and magazines and how it reproduces and reflects sexual and racial stereotypes. The study highlights that advertisements in South African television and magazines normalise dependency and domesticity of women and strengthen notions of control and access to power of men. This indicates that confining media messages are not limited to editorial content of magazines. YOU and DRUM magazines' advertising content will be analysed with emphasis on the stigmatising of women and the effects of exposure to stereotypical representations.

Gauntlett (2002: 32) in his analysis of media explains that Mulvey, in her work made huge contributions to the work of feminist film studies, specifically, gender and representation. Mulvey outlines the position that patriarchy puts women into:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze

projects its phantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness* (Gauntlett 2002: 33).

Mulvey maintains that male audiences connect with male characters and “the female characters are the subject of their desiring gaze” (Gauntlett 2002: 33). This highlights the patriarchal views that thrive in media saturated societies. She adds that women audiences are coerced to accept the perspective of the main male character. This denies women their own opinions and beliefs and subsequently leads to women becoming the objects of men’s desire. “Men look at women; women watch themselves being looked at”, as John Berger explained in his classic work *Ways of Seeing* (1972: 47). Mulvey’s view is that men constantly lead the stories while women are typically represented as ‘passive’, ‘sexy’ and ‘erotic’ objects. She adds that women actors have very little relevance in film apart from the erotic object of men’s desire. These examples highlight the misrepresentation and limiting representation of women in media content. This is further evident in many television films in the 80’s and 90’s where the entire movie focuses on the lead character, who is almost always a male character, underlining his fearlessness and heroism. It must be noted that not all women characters on television in the 80’s and 90’s were cast as incompetent, however the male counterparts were always cast as more successful, intellectual and confident. The above relates to this study as it highlights women’s subjugated position in media content and how patriarchy impacts on women’s identity construction.

Gauntlett (2002: 40) acknowledges that Susan Faludi (1991) in the best-selling book *Backlash: The undeclared war against women*, argued that “films of the 1980s such as *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *Baby Boom* (1987) were part of a wider backlash against women’s liberation and women’s careers.” She emphasised female characters being repeatedly relegated to insignificant characters. This highlights that mass media, films in particular awarded men

lead character and powerful roles while women were reduced to romantic partners, helpers and housewife roles. The inequitable representation of women in media content can significantly impact on how women define and develop their identity.

The movie *Charlie's Angels* starring actresses Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu as detectives received varied reactions with some enjoying seeing women 'kick ass' and others who criticised the movie as being distasteful and offensive. According to Gauntlett (2002: 53), American critic Roger Ebert dismissed it as "eye candy for the blind" in a Chicago newspaper, and expressed concern about the portrayal of the three actresses: "Barrymore, Diaz and Liu represent redhead, blond and brunet respectively (or, as my colleague David Poland has pointed out, T[its], A[ss] and Hair). Sad, isn't it, that three such intelligent, charming and talented actresses could be reduced to their most prominent component parts?" This newspaper description of the women actresses confirms that media workers, by the use of such language, propagate society's patriarchal and offensive perceptions and categorisation of women. However, Gauntlett juxtaposes this notion explaining that the women's ability to multi-skill is showcased in the movie. He does however also confirm that their attractiveness is also emphasised in the film. This validates that when women are given lead roles in media content, emphasis is predominantly on their physical appearance with focus on specific parts of their bodies as highlighted in the above example.

By the late 90's, film and representation of women began to change and although the representation of women was far from feminist ideals, change was indeed visible. As Gauntlett (2002: 34) points out, Tasker's popular book *Working Girls: Gender and sexuality in popular cinema* (1998) provided an account of different and emerging characters including women as heroines and pop stars. Tasker highlights the increase in the number of gendered collaborations in famous movies such as *Speed*, *Strange Days* and *Broken Arrow*. This change in media's representation of women in the 90's saw

women becoming more visible in the media, however, the feminist concern remained regarding the type of coverage afforded to women in the media. Tuchman (in Van Zoonen 1994: 16) proclaims that “mass media, television in particular, symbolically annihilates women, and tells society that women are not very important by showing an overwhelming majority of men in almost all kinds of television output.” His classic work on media and women confirms that apart from unbalanced portrayal of gender on television women are also frequently portrayed as inferior and weak. The absence of positive representation of women will result in women feeling disenfranchised, threatening social development for women. This ultimately leads to a lack of positive images upon which women can model their behaviour.

Tuchman’s research is consistent with other findings. The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2015: 1) study analysed over 4,000 characters in movies and revealed that media content comprised the “inferior” and “hypersexual” woman. This study found that:

Traditionality was a function of the character’s relational and parental status: women are more likely to be portrayed as parents and in a committed relationship; and hypersexuality was portrayed by an overemphasis on attractiveness and sexuality by way of clothing and body proportions.

The confining representation of women in media can limit the development of women in society. Furthermore, Morna and Ndlovu’s (2007: 17) analysis on gender representations and advertising in Southern Africa assert that manifestly patriarchal stereotypes are endorsed in mass media advertising. Their study emphasises the portrayal of women as means to sell products and highlights that often there is no association between the visual image of women and the advertised product. It further reveals that women are regularly featured in images with highly charged sexual undertones.

An American Psychological Association (2007) study reveals that even short exposure of visual excerpts that objectify and trivialise women, can impact on female audience members in a way that can cause them to be more self-conscious about their own bodies. This is as a result of women not being able to meet the accepted 'beauty ideal' as marketed by the media. The study also revealed that younger girls exposed to the objectification of women in media content may also see themselves as sex objects and young men may shape their perceptions and beliefs of women based on media messages. This highlights the role of the media's visual representations in shaping individuals' beliefs, perceptions and views of themselves.

South African radio has also come under the spotlight in terms of gender representations. This is evident from research in the Southern African (GMPS) (Rama 2010) highlighting SAFM's 2009 coverage on women entrepreneur, Uyanda Mbuli where excessive focus was on the subject's physical attributes as opposed to her abilities.

Co-owner of Diamond Face Couture, Uyanda Mbuli, describes herself as someone who loves life and also works hard

SAFM did a profile piece on Uyanda Mbuli on the 8 November 2009. Mbuli broke the barriers in a male dominated business sector. On the face of it, the story appears to be gender aware - it embraces her achievements, but as it unfolds it reinforces stereotypes. It focuses more on her physical attributes, presenting her as a model rather than successful entrepreneur. The headline presents Mbuli as a socialite rather than building on her business acumen. The profile piece underplays her academic, writing and business skills and achievements. The subject, Uyanda Mbuli, is the only source. No attempt is made to speak to her business associates in the male-dominated business. Other women business leaders who have worked with her should have contributed to the story. The language presents the subject as a television personality rather than a successful business woman, which means listeners may conclude that she is successful because of her beauty. The language stereotypes women as people who use their beauty to break barriers in male-dominated businesses.

The story individualises her experience and fails to link her challenges to that which other women face. It paints her as heroic without tackling or tracking her path to success. The story

does not explore her business or the number of people she employs. Neither does it connect small businesses' contribution to economic growth and social welfare. Only at the end of the interview does the subject speak about her business and even that is scant. Mbuli is presented as a television personality rather than a successful business woman. The focus is on her as a celebrity personality rather than upcoming or successful entrepreneur. Moreover, the story is relegated to the bottom of a one-hour news programme.

Source: (Rama 2010: 28) Southern African Gender and Media Progress Study.

This is a clear undervaluing of South Africa's women as many of them are now well-established in their careers and immeasurably contribute to society. This example reaffirms the stereotypical perceptions of women that saturate mass media content. It additionally underlines that when women are awarded media coverage limited media sources are used to add credibility to the story, language used places emphasis on physical beauty, career achievements are underplayed and limited time or space is provided for women's issues. This is validated by the study conducted by Gender Links (GL) Southern African (Rama: 2010) which reveals that the southern African media often misrepresent women and offer limited coverage that gives voice to women's views. The qualitative study revealed the disproportionate coverage awarded to women and highlighted women's subjugated roles. It also revealed that women are seldom heard on subjects relating to economic, political or sporting issues. The section below will explore this further and will also refer to studies on gender stereotypes in the media.

2.2.2 Unheard voices and gender stereotypes in the media

Early studies investigating media and gender stereotypes were those undertaken by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), Goffman (1976), Tuchman (1978) and Williamson (1978). Their research primarily centred on advertising in the print media sector. This was as a result of the easy availability of advertisements. These authors published numerous important findings

relating to the representation of women in print media. In modern-day society, identity is strongly mediated by representations propagated by the media and advertising constantly creates an environment to model one's identity. Women's self-worth may be adversely affected by magazine media that are objectifying them rather than focusing on their intellectual capacity and societal achievements.

Gender stereotypes thrive in our society and issues regarding masculinity and femininity are created by culture and society. While stereotyping is a complex issue, many myths are communicated through these stereotypes. Media may work on opposite ends as they often serve to reinforce stereotypical attitudes or do little to challenge them. Leading media theorist Dyer (1993: 11) associates stereotypes with terms of abuse. Furthermore, stereotypes have a negative disposition. Fourie (2007: 263) proposes that stereotypes can be challenged by journalists who are more aware of gender issues and the impact that their messages may have on audiences. Detailed analysis on media professionals' role in society will be provided in the theoretical part of the literature review in Chapter 3.

Stereotypes are generalised, oversimplified and inaccurate categorisation of people. Stereotypes are often inaccurate generalisations and a means of control. It must be noted that not all housewives lack ambition, not all blondes are dumb, not all musicians use drugs, and not all politicians are corrupt. However, the mass media can, by using stereotypes, support and reinforce these stereotypes in the mass audience's mind. Common stereotypes regarding gender are that women are expected to be submissive and do as they are told, women are not as strong as men and women are expected to look attractive and be looked at by men. These common stereotypes regularly appear in media content. Grasswick (2011: 92) affirms that stereotypes are underpinned in the social praxis of society. Stereotypes have a hegemonic function and they often serve to acclimatise the power relationships in society and therefore women are often stereotyped as submissive to men.

Stereotypical representations in magazines can negatively impact on the identity construction of women. If women are stereotyped as weak, passive and inferior to men these interpretations can create male hierarchy leading to woman believing that they are inferior to men. This will severely limit the role of women in society.

Rama (2010: 17) adds that “the consistent representation of women in passive, subordinate roles is complicit in supporting an oppressive gender order that is at odds with reality.” Media need to be responsible in their reporting and strive to portray women in diverse, uplifting settings. An example of oppressive representation of women is evident in an advertisement that appeared in *Top Women in Business and Government* magazine (Phakela, 2011: 40). The magazine aims at promoting women who excel in top management positions across different fields in South Africa. It profiles women that dominate the public sphere in order to break stereotypes about women’s capabilities and commemorate the success of women in the corporate and government sector. This advertisement was aimed at profiling a successful women entrepreneur, Jenna Clifford. However, the advertisement that appears on the first page of the magazine, propagates a gender stereotype as it portrays women as a sex object in order to promote the product. The advertisement displays a woman lying on the floor, naked and covered with only three over-sized diamond rings. The visual representation contradicts the aim of the publication and fails the women it claims to represent. Magazines have the power to shape women readers’ views of the choices available to them including those in the workplace. This advertisement further proves that women are often seen and not heard in the media.

Another example of South African media’s stereotypical coverage of women is the *Mail & Guardian’s* coverage of Gerry Elsdon’s suspension. The newspaper reported that “The South African Red Cross’s governing board has suspended former beauty queen and TV personality Gerry Elsdon with

immediate effect” (Letwaba 2013: 1). Elsdon is a successful women entrepreneur and ambassador of many companies. Despite the fact that the article is on her suspension, the newspaper focused primarily on her beauty.

Similarly, a Ford Figo car advertisement featured on the Internet portraying three women in scanty apparel, gagged and with hands tied up and thrown in the boot of a car. The advertisement by an advertising firm based in India also featured former Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi who is sitting in the driver seat. The aim of the advertisement was to illustrate the cars’ spacious boot however the headline stated “Leave All Your Worries Behind with the Figo’s X-Large Boot” (Letwaba 2013: 1). This advertisement can be understood as being severely abhorrent, particularly as India was in the midst of addressing the recent violence against women as a result of the publicly protested incident where a female student was raped in a bus by a group of men. The advertisement can be said to endorse rape in the way it has represented the women. Furthermore, it emphasises women’s physical appearance and implies that women are meant to be controlled and remain in an inferior position. This advertisement clearly portrays women in a negative, circumscribed, stereotypical manner to promote the product and brand. This advertisement limits women’s position in society by portraying women in a weak, subdued and defenceless manner. In relation to this study, it can be averred that inaccurate, limited portrayals of women impact negatively on identity construction.

2.2.3 Signifying power of the media

McQuail (2010) raised insightful matters on the assessment of media’s role in society. Through his work he showed that there is a need for analytical rigour in addressing issues relating to the power and influence of media. The representation of events and issues, as well as how it is interpreted by audiences, contribute to the shaping of opinions and views. Women should be able to count on media to promote gender parity and diversity in content

and to refrain from stereotypical portrayals. Theorists (Ross and Carter 2011; Winseck and Jin 2011) believe that the creation, production and control of media content are still largely dominated by men and media proffers a damaging representation of women due to the limited number of women media professionals. This infers that women in magazine media may be represented in a way that suits those controlling media's production process and benefitting from the profit. Gender biases and prejudices have become so endemic to media production that most stories are conveyed through the voices of men. This emphasises the power of the media and the numerous spheres that media influence. This study acknowledges that diversity of media is not limited to gender alone but also includes elements such as race, class and political viewpoints. According to the MDDA's Report on Transformation of Print and Digital Media (2014: 73-75):

In terms of the top and senior posts, from boardrooms to offices to newsrooms, print media businesses were and are mainly the domain of men. Most editors are men and while women dot the newsrooms and other business offices they hardly set foot in the boardrooms and have virtually no presence at ownership and management levels. The marginalisation of women is a factor that prevents them from taking their rightful place and making a contribution based on their ability in the print media.

The statement from the above report highlights the deep sexist attitude that continues to permeate media newsrooms in South Africa. This study aims to unpack aspects of gender relations in media newsrooms through interviews with media commentators and professionals.

The media provides information and enjoyment to audiences who rely on media to provide a conceptual representation of the world. Geraghty (in Curran and Gurevitch 1996: 265) expresses that in order to understand media one has to assess issues such as priority of media content, ownership and profit making and impact of media messages on how people contextualise everyday issues. Geraghty's inquiries and the statement from the Report on

Transformation of Print and Digital Media are particularly relevant as this study undertakes to use these concerns to assess and explore the representation of women in magazines and its influence on identity construction. Media undoubtedly plays an important role in constructing identity. Durham and Kellner (2001: 1) explain that "... products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of 'us' and 'them'." This affirms that media products shape our perceptions of people, issues and events and affects our lives in immeasurable ways.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency [MDDA] (MDDA 2008: 7) affirms media's watchdog role and considers media as the "fourth pillar of a democratic society." This highlights media's role and responsibility in disseminating accurate information to audiences in contemporary society. It further infers that media has to be accountable to those it serves and should offer fair and equitable representation of women as the media has significant power in identity construction. Talbot, Atkinson and Atkinson (2003: 5) declare that media's power has increased dramatically in recent times and has substituted other suppliers of communication such as churches and worker unions. This reinforces and highlights the influence of the media and its impact on audiences. Other researchers (Fields, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2009; Liu, 2006; Moy and Van Halem, 2001 and Ross and Carter, 2011) also support this view. Media shapes our identities and are sites and instruments of transformation. This is supported by Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2001: 123) who maintain that media are instrumental in the growth and development of a society and essential in exploring and debating issues around societal improvement. These authors maintain that media shape society and furthermore carefully select the content distributed. In this way media are powerful players in framing and shaping our perceptions.

They provide images in which we see ourselves and others, as well as role models to which we are able to aspire, versions of the 'other' against which we rebel ... all these heavily-laden signifiers are the raw material through which we confirm, modify or negate our already existing sense of identity, both at the personal and at the national level (Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli 2001: 123).

These views suggest that media contribute to an individual's existing identity and are powerful forces in shaping the world around us. The mass media is itself a field with huge signifying power, with enormous reach and because it is so much part of our lives, its representations can easily come to seem like truths. Through their representations, the media provides information, explanations and ways of understanding the world. Furthermore, media have the ability to provide people with aspects of the world that they may have never imagined experiencing. Media serves as an informational tool and provides audiences with a means of interpreting and understanding the world around them. They are able to highlight specific issues and limit others, thereby offering an interpretation of the world and issues in society (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2005: 34). In relation to this study, this relates to media's power in presenting a prejudicial view when representing women. McQuail (2010: 549) expounds on this, stating that bias reporting is that which deviates from factual and accurate accounts. The lack of positive representation of women and their misrepresentation and stereotypical portrayals in the media hinders South African society's shift towards egalitarian principles. These issues require rigorous efforts to ensure that media remain accountable to society.

Media need to recognise women's accomplishments and endorse the abundance of talent that can be shared and valued in society. The media plays a huge role in defining reality for the public. As Hall (in Braude 1999: 18) explains:

The media defines not merely produces 'reality'. Definitions of reality are sustained and produced through all the linguistic practices by means of which selective definitions of the 'real' are represented. Representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active

work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping; not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean. It is a practice, a production of meaning; what has been defined as signifying practice. The media are signifying agents.

In keeping with Hall's position of media being able to define our reality, media has a significant influence and power in constructing gender identity. Magazine media wield huge power and are agents of socialisation. Furthermore, they can directly or subliminally shape perceptions of women and contribute to identity development. However, the audience also yields substantial power and this will be explored in the next section.

Media power versus audience power:

A leading debate on the social impact of media is the question of media power versus people power: *"Does the media have a considerable amount of power over its audience or does the audience wield more power than the media?"* Celebrated exponents of the potential power of the media are theorists Theodor Adorno and John Fiske who hold opposing, polarised views. Adorno maintains that media have huge power over people and society, describing media as "a well-oiled machine" that produces entertaining commodities for profit-making and Fiske argues that it is the audience that has the most power (Gauntlett 2002: 20). Adorno maintains that media content encourages conformity and diminished scope of resistance such that autonomous independent individuals and critical thinking is hindered by mass-produced popular culture. In relation to audience or people power, Fiske's work presents an opposing view to Adorno. Fiske is best known for his work in "Understanding popular culture and reading the popular" (Gauntlett 2002: 21) where he bluntly suggests that audiences' capability of interpreting media messages outweighs media organisations' ability to disseminate messages and ideologies to audiences within their text. He maintains that popular culture is shaped and created by the people who interpret it according to their personal needs. Fiske's (1989: 24) stance is that the audience has significantly more

power over the media. Meanwhile, Gauntlett (2002: 24) posits that, “although Fiske was opposed to the cynical stance of critics like Adorno, he was ‘a man of the people’ who wanted to illustrate that people are not ‘foolish dupes’”. Fiske highlighted that audiences have their individual, complex and changing perceptions which may not relate to their social environment. Fiske is in agreement that society is capitalist-driven and patriarchal in nature but also maintains that we cannot assume that audiences are imprudent. Fiske, in his writing refers to “guerrilla tactics” where users interpret information from mass media to enhance their needs. Fiske eloquently expounds on this by using the case of Madonna who remains ever popular in society today. He alludes that she remains iconic in contemporary society because of her ability to connect with audiences and meaningfully contribute to their lives. Fiske adds:

Madonna is an exemplary popular text because she is so full of contradictions, she contains the patriarchal meanings of feminine sexuality, and the resisting ones that her sexuality is hers to use as she wishes in ways that do not require masculine approval.... Far from being an adequate text in herself, she is a provoker of meanings whose cultural effects can be studied only in her multiple and often contradictory circulations (Fiske 1989: 124).

Gauntlett (2002: 18) concedes to Fiske’s view by affirming that gender identities are developed through a complex process including negotiation of views, emotions and values. By using this example, Fiske affirms his debate that an audience member interprets media texts within their social context to add meaning to their life. This example further confirms that media often provide audiences with conflicting messages. Based on the views of Adorno and Fiske, this study will investigate the power of the media and how audiences relate to media, specifically magazine texts.

Keeping the powerless, powerless:

Hall’s (1997) concern was in relation to the ideology of capitalism which is described as a dominating “hegemonic system” that suppressed and

controlled people in society. He asserted that media created support for the ideology of a capitalist society and explained that media have a way of maintaining the power relations in society by allowing the powerful to sustain domination while simultaneously keeping the powerless, powerless. Hall asserts that control of media inhibits the free flow of information and propagates social inequalities by not affording equitable coverage on the social and economic conditions of the majority of people in society thereby keeping the powerless, powerless. Hall's concern was not on the actual information being propagated in the media, but on the sources and producers of this information.

Power and affluence plays a significant role in the way magazines present identities to readers and is a unifying theme across the history of media analysis. A more nuanced discussion on the relationship of power of the media and the powerless of the consumers will follow under critical political economy theory in Chapter 3 and in the next section, the media and society. Although the media might reflect societal values to some extent, as a powerful institution pervading the lives of individuals through easy access to its products, it yields considerable power and control and has the ability to influence and shape public perceptions and identity construction. The next section addresses the political and economic influences of the media in democratic South Africa.

2.3 The political economy of the media – manufacturing consent in democratic South Africa

As the country advances in its third decade of democracy, further assessment and understanding of the relationship between the media, the state and the market is required. The government maintains that the new South Africa is and will be better for all South Africans. Within this milieu, freedom of the media is central in making this goal a reality and an evaluation of the effects of this relationship on society and democracy is warranted.

Apart from the media having an entertainment value, it also serves as a conduit of information and edification because it takes on the role of a watchdog of a democratic society. This makes the media powerful economic and political role players. An analysis of the political and economic influences on the media is essential as consolidated media has changed the role of the media industry. Market-driven media is intensifying and have the power to regulate and restrain content for the benefit of the wealthy and elite in society. This pro-market world view greatly restricts freedom and democracy. Media is often referred to as the 'fourth estate' or the 'defender of public interest' due to the important role in disseminating valuable information, serving public interest and taking on a watchdog role in society. Ideally this would contribute to a thriving, robust democracy, however the ascendancy of commercialism and neoliberalism has transformed the media into a corporate focussed institution, thus strengthening a 'lapdog' role and weakening their 'watchdog' role.

The work of Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) chronicles how an elite consensus has the ability to construct and shape various components of media content. Herman and Chomsky's work drew powerful conclusions about the interconnectedness between media freedom, democracy and the relationship with corporations and government. In their seminal work *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, they investigate the workings of the marketplace and how the economics of media publishing influences media content. They dissect the framing of media content and masterfully provide insight on how the powerful skew the media agenda, propagate commercial values and safeguard corporate interests. Their media analysis offers an account of the propagandist media industry and their innovative ways of operating. Herman and Chomsky (1988) demonstrate that media actively shape and advocate stories for the benefit and promotion of the wealthy elite in society. This further questions media's autonomous position in society. In Chapter 3 this study will provide a detailed review of media effect theories that relate to the power of media in setting-up the issues

or the agenda that audiences will perceive to be important as well as the critical political economy theories that expound on media's commercial and public interest functions.

Propaganda has a deep-rooted history. Research about propaganda is most developed in the United States and for this reason the history of propaganda in the US will be used as a foundation for this study. Expanding Herman and Chomsky's focus to outside of the US, the researcher illustrates that influencing the minds and behaviours of individuals through the media is not limited to repressive state regimes. A central question is whether propaganda and media regulation continues in South Africa despite the existence of an egalitarian regime, within South African English-language consumer magazines.

National social, economic, and political transformation continues to be addressed post-apartheid and transformation is also ensuing within the South African media industry. To effectively evaluate South African media performance, an examination of the interrelationships between production and consumption of the media is necessary i.e. a political economy approach. In their book *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), Herman and Chomsky present a systematic "propaganda model" to explicate the behaviour of the commercial news media of the United States of America (USA). These authors' analysis can be similarly applied to the magazine media landscape in South Africa. Herman and McChesney (1989: 1-13) point out that Herman and Chomsky offer a simple but powerful 'five filters' model explaining media's operating power and its allegiance in propagating and promoting the needs and agenda of the elite sectors in society.

2.3.1 Herman and Chomsky's 'five filters' propaganda model

The propaganda model presents a series of five filters to account for the USA media's propagandist approach which supports and promotes the interests of the elite. They explain that only stories that relate to the elite, travel through the five filters unhindered and acquire appropriate coverage. These filters are: media ownership; advertising; use of sources; flak; and anti-communism/neoliberalism. For the purpose of this study, these five filters will be applied to South Africa's media industry, specifically the magazine media context.

Media ownership:

The first filter that shapes media messages is media ownership. Contrary to the rhetoric about a free press, there is a high concentration of media among a handful of corporations that are commercially-driven businesses. These corporations need for profit greatly impacts on media content and they are unlikely to criticise the power of the marketplace because they benefit from that very market. There is a marked conflict of interest as a handful of corporations have come to dominate the media. Furthermore, globalisation has further intensified a higher concentration of private ownership of the media. These untrammelled 'market forces' could lead to damaging results as large corporations control vast amounts of media which gives them power to produce a social and political world for South Africans. With the advent of a democratic system in 1994, the country called for a free press that should be independent of government control. While the media in South Africa has expanded and become more diverse since the end of apartheid, these very same media institutions have become entrenched within the political and economic structures of the country. The Media24 publishing group clearly meets the first filter criteria of being a large corporation that owns various media products as outlined by Herman and Chomsky. Information on the company's ownership shares and its operations will be provided in section 2.5 of this study.

Media ownership in South Africa is not broad based and this poses a challenge to provide objective and unbiased media content. MDDA (2008: 19) declares that this can be attributed to the commercialisation of the media. Disproportionate ownership may result in unbalanced media that promote the views and opinions of big media houses. This is evident despite the fact that media professionals, specifically journalists, have editorial liberties. A significant challenge in the media industry in South Africa is that the ownership and control is steadily moving into the realm of leading media houses. This view is supported by the MDDA (2014: 7) who maintain that a few large conglomerates own and control media in South Africa. Consolidation of media directly leads to a reliance on profit-making and advertising which lends itself to the control and repression of a diversity of viewpoints and homogenisation of media content.

In terms of magazine media and in relation to this study, the suppression of diversity in content may result in subjective, unfair and inaccurate representation of women. The above underlines the point that concentrated magazine media ownership and self-interest of a handful of large corporations can powerfully impact on shaping public opinion and constructing gender identities. Devereux (2014: 18) affirms that media infiltration that influences our beliefs and actions is progressively influenced by profit rather than altruism.

The state of emergency in South Africa between 1985 and 1991 saw severe restrictions imposed on the media. The apartheid government controlled and manipulated information, depicting a limited world to South Africans. Democracy needs a robust and diverse media and an exploration of media performance in an egalitarian regime is imperative. If South Africa is to embrace democratic values and principles, media performance is vital.

Advertising:

Advertising is media's major conduit for profits and is the second filter of the 'five filter' model. Herman and Chomsky (1988: 14-18) assess the stifling impact of commercialism on media content. The advertising filter can be directly associated to this study as magazines have a huge circulation and readership base and bring in huge returns through advertising. Commercial magazines acquire the majority of their profits from advertising and this makes them vulnerable to market pressures. Advertising influences the magazine media by providing an income to offset the costs of production while simultaneously positioning advertisements to audiences.

According to Kellner (1997: 104) the political economy of the media underlines that in cultural production, revenue is positioned as a priority. Kellner's views underscore that powerful capitalist forces influence media production and control media content. This shapes not only the range of magazines available but also the content of magazines as they are aligned with advertisements. The question this raises is: will magazine media succumb to the pressures from advertisers and resort to self-censorship? This reinforces the existence of the complex relationship between media's commercial and public interest functions. Media are responsible for informing citizens about important issues as well as operating in accordance to the marketplace for survival. Kilbourne (1999: 49-50), however, adds that:

Self-censorship in advertising is seen the most in magazines: Advertising's influence on media content is exerted in two major ways: via suppression of information that would harm or 'offend the sponsor' and via inclusion of editorial content that is advertiser friendly and that creates an environment in which the ads look good.

The reality is that large media companies are propelled by demands for larger profits and in a market-driven economy it may not be possible to serve the interests of both public citizens and the powerful investors who are paying the

bills. Media companies are going to be mindful of not alienating a powerful source of revenue. What this implies is that in representing gender, magazine media may portray men and women in ways that will ensure profits.

Some media editors argue that the separation of editorial content and advertising is not required and appropriate in the fast-paced media market and welcome the integration of editorial and marketing. Crotty (in Hadland, Cowling and Tabe 2007: 7) believes that media forms provide people with what they want and sees nothing wrong with print media using their products to generate as much profit as possible. Crotty maintains that each print organisation is a business that exists to generate value and growth for shareholders and income for employees. In some instances, editors argue that 'the market' ultimately matches the public's demands with a media that serves to fulfil them. However, people in positions of authority often harness the media to suit their interests and needs; they view society as hierarchal and frame and set the parameters of civil discourse.

Other media commentators (Bagdikian 2000) affirm that linking editorial content to advertising content obscures the origin of the content and threatens a democracy. Furthermore, print media contribute to Jurgen Habermas's contested but important 'public sphere' approach and have an important role to play regarding the government and society. Media forms part of the public sphere to enlighten the citizenry on matters of common concern and when magazines produce constrained information this provides a limited world to individuals. This additionally indicates that when government or private capital takes over the media, democracy is severely threatened. Media that is not controlled by government or private interests, but the wider masses, ultimately serves the public best. Critiques of Habermas's public sphere approach comes from supporters of the critical political economy of the media and those who argue that this approach does not reflect on how the media should maintain democratic requirements (Curran 2000: 129). The supposition upon which that approach is based maintains that media consumers have a

significant responsibility in producing content “because as a public sphere, the media publish what the public want and express their views and interests” (Curran 2000: 129).

Research analysing commercialisation of the media (Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli 2001; Golding and Murdock 2000; Curran 2000; Pillay 2004) has elucidated that many social, economic and political factors contribute to the production, dissemination and framing of media messages. This highlights the powerful interplay between the media, state control and market forces. Curran (2000: 132) contends that important aspects such as advertising limit it to those audiences with money. This highlights looming competitiveness in the media industry and raises the questions of whether magazine media portray men and women in ways that will ensure profits. The study sample, *YOU* and *DRUM* magazine, caters for the middle and upper-middle classes in South Africa.

Recent debates in media circles (Hadland, Cowling and Tabe 2007) highlight that there is increased blurring between editorial content and paid for advertisements in the print media. Changes in the global economy such as the arrival of international companies ready to compete with local ones and the introduction of international versions of local magazines prompt local media companies to change their strategies. This is evident in the South African magazine industry which now has international versions of many magazines such as *Seventeen*, *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan* and *GQ*. This impacts significantly on the way advertisers and marketers conduct business and these changes lead many to relook at their strategies and consider placing advertising in an environment that is more likely to create a ‘buying mood.’ One way to do this is to produce editorial content and advertising as a package. According to Bagdikian (2000: 151) these packages or sections often have limited reader appeal but have an abundance of advertising and the extent and content of these sections often are dependent on the amount of advertising associated with them.

Another strategy is to grow editorial content of a publication and establish special departments that focus on advertising. Some media organisations combine editorial writers with advertising salespeople. These strategies reflect the changing business and media environment. However, in a society that has a responsibility to its citizens one has to address the implications of these types of adaptations to the media environment.

According to MDDA (2014: 130) advertising is the lifeblood of print media, and, in order to succeed, media houses rely on advertising to ensure revenue generation. Furthermore, in most countries advertising spend (adspend) is directed toward affluent groups as they attract premium adspend. In South Africa, advertisers use LSM a demographic tool that was created by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF)⁶. These groups have varying media habits with Chronis (2013: 98) indicating that the AMPS results showed that 75.4% of LSM 8-10 are magazine readers while only 24.3% of LSM 1-4 are doing the same. AMPS⁷ “is a quantitative behavioural study conducted twice a year” and is one of the largest surveys in the country (Chronis 2013: 96).

MDDA (2014: 63) states that government spends advertising money on the big media groups. Figure 2.1 provides a breakdown of the total advertising spend over four years from 2009 to 2013 that the major media players received from government advertising spending. MDDA (2014: 14) research revealed that Sekunjalo Independent Newspapers; Times Media Group; Media24; Mail & Guardian and The New Age in South Africa enjoyed big adspend.

⁶ “SAARF was founded in 1974 as a non-profit joint industry committee because of a need in the marketing and advertising communities for an independent, comprehensive, unbiased, reliable, regular and technically excellent media audience and products survey. SAARF’s purpose is to provide information about the population’s use of the media, products, and services to enable reliable targeting for advertising purposes. SAARF provides three of the local industry’s media audience currency: Radio Audience measurement Survey (RAMS) and Television Audience Members Survey (TAMPS) and All Media and Products Survey (AMPS) which provides the official media audience data for the print industry” (SAARF 2014: 1).

⁷ “AMPS focuses on three main areas: media consumption; characteristics of consumers; and the purchase and consumption of products and brands. AMPS is the official readership currency for the print media and focuses on all major commercial newspapers, most major consumer magazines and some special interest consumer magazines” (Chronis 2013: 96).

Adspend for media houses in South Africa 2009 - 2013	
Sekunjalo Independent Newspapers	R5.8 million
Times Media Group	R8.5 mil lion
Media24	R6.8 million + 14.8 million
Mail & Guardian	R4.6 million
The New Age	R2 million

Figure 2.1: Adspend for media houses in South Africa: 2009 - 2013

Source: The Star, 5 June 2013 in (MDDA 2014: 63)

It is clear that advertising is commonplace and is a driving force in magazine content. Although magazine publishers have experienced huge profits during the past twenty years they face firm competition in terms of readers and advertising. It is envisaged that interviews with media professionals and focus group discussions with magazine readers will provide key information on magazine media's commercial and public interest functions and its impact on readers in terms of identity construction.

Use of sources:

Herman and Chomsky's (1988: 18) third filter is the use of sources, where "the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest." This filter indicates how the use of certain sources contributes to restricting media performance. Media institutions often depend on content supplied by corporate and government institutions in South Africa and these sources are known to have become experts in "managing the media." These establishments often subsidise media organisations and they in turn must ensure not to resist or disregard such a provider. These suppliers of information have the power to frame issues resulting in a limited view of reality. This filter raises the question of the source of media content and the influence of powerful media players such as government, media partners, investors and

advertisers. It further explains how the composition and ownership of media corporations shape media production and performance.

Public relations firms also play a significant role in crafting and contributing to information that appears in magazine media content. It is very unlikely that controversial information on those who invest in magazine media will be made public as a result of their mutually beneficial relationship. According to Lovaas (2008: 97) Ann Donald, the editor of *Fair Lady* (Media 24 and Naspers), reported that she was prevented from featuring a story about beauty products that were ineffective because the magazine had advertisers that were going to be mentioned. This implies that when advertisers pay for advertising space and this are agreed to by editors there might be a compromise on the magazines' integrity. This will be probed further in the interviews with Media24 media professionals.

Large media corporations as in the case of Media24 are not only connected to the corporate world through their holdings, but also through their board members who often come from the same interlocking institutions that run the country's economy. According to Media24 (2014c: 1):

The board of directors of Media24 Holdings Proprietary Limited and Media24 Proprietary Limited ("Media24") is responsible for setting the "tone at the top" by formulating the company's values and ensuring that ethical business standards are integrated into the group's strategies and operations.

This implies that corporate leaders on media boards have major influence and power in the control of media houses. It further raises the question of whether media houses will provide controversial media coverage of an associate board member or investor who has the power associated with "setting the 'tone at the top'".

Flak:

The fourth filter is 'flak' or negative feedback or reactions to media content. Flak can be direct or indirect and include phone calls, letters to editors, petitions or indirect reactions such as complaining to employees and shareholders when undesirable information is seen in media content. Herman and McChesney (1989: 3) claim that "it refers to the development of right-wing corporate 'flak' producers such as Accuracy in Media to harass the mass media and to put pressure upon them to follow the corporate agenda." The concept of 'Flak' highlights threats that can be posed to media by the subjects of the content that is disseminated. These could include government and advertising companies. This filter is a way of containing certain issues and ensuring that the existing power structures are not challenged. The government in South Africa regularly threatens, assails and corrects the media and therefore can be viewed as a 'threat' or producer of 'flak'. The production of 'flak' on a big scale can be costly economically and in terms of power and authority. Furthermore, government's interest in the media has grown and it has made use of the free market system that exists locally to exert pressure on the media by often threatening to withdraw advertising. Meanwhile, government has raised concerns that increasing concentration of media ownership poses threats to media integrity.

In 2011 the Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom banned two digitally retouched advertisements with celebrity actress Julia Roberts, alleging that the digitally improved photographs were misleading. They demanded that the company remove the magazine advertisement for Lancôme, which is one of L'Oréal's makeup brands, claiming that Robert's "flawless skin looked too good to be true" (Jones 2011).



Figure 2.2: Lancôme – L'Oréal
Source: Jones 2011

The Lancôme advertisement illustrated in Figure 2.2 is one of many airbrushed advertisements that is seen in magazine media today. While this particular advertisement was banned, there are many other similar advertisements that still appear in mass media content. Air-brushing is mostly used on advertisements with women, particularly those that reflect make-up and beauty products. These types of advertisements can severely weaken an audiences' self-esteem and confidence. This will be probed further in focus group discussions with women readers of YOU and DRUM magazines.

An example of flak in the South African magazine industry is evident by the uproar caused by the cover page of YOU magazine⁸ (23 October 2014) featuring celebrity, Leanne Liebenberg appearing bald for a cancer awareness initiative. This magazine cover page as is evident in Figure 2.3, drew widespread attention and criticism from the public and magazine readers because the celebrity did not shave her hair, instead the celebrities' image was retouched using digital editing. YOU's editor, Linda Pietersen explained in an interview on 20 November 2014 that an apology was published and said that

⁸ Note: YOU or DRUM and other magazines (*GLAMOUR*, *SHAPE*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Fair Lady*) and their items that are specifically referenced with a date and page number will not be entered separately as items in the Bibliography.

it was “certainly not our intention to hurt anyone or mock people with cancer”. Pietersen, added that it was “an example of the most controversial cover we’ve ever done ... I think that was my worst week I’ve had here. It didn’t sell. Hugely controversial and it didn’t sell the magazine”. She also explained that readers were quick to attack the celebrity and the publication but did not read the entire article which stated that Liebenberg’s father, mother and grandfather had cancer.



Figure 2.3: Cancer Awareness – Lee-ann Liebenberg
Source: YOU, 23 October 2014

Furthermore, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is instrumental in vetoing offensive advertisements in South Africa. In 2009, the organisation banned a Sexpo advertisement that was said to objectify women as it revealed a women’s legs with her undies being impishly removed. According to Hiller (2009) ASA’s ruling was that the representation of the women objectifies her as an object of desire and as a sex object. This study will analyse the types of content in magazine media and the reactions of media audiences.

Anti-communism / neoliberalism:

'Anti-communism' is the last filter of the 'five filters' model and serves as a control mechanism. This filter refers to anti-Communist ideology, which, according to Herman and McChesney (1989: 3) "has been ingrained into acceptable journalistic practices in the USA, to the point that even in periods of 'détente' it is fully appropriate and expected for journalists to frame issues in terms of 'our side' versus the communist 'bad guys'". This filter can be applied to South Africa's media environment as it highlights factors relating to media control and its ability to frame content. This filter refers to anyone that can be a threat to free-market ideology and which can be used to mobilise people against a common enemy.

These five filters indicate how the free flow of information is restricted in the media and also provide insight into the structures of media ownership and patterns of media content. The political economy of the media is a central concept as it relates directly to media influence and framing of media content. Herman and Chomsky's observations on democracy, media freedom and their relationship with corporations and government can be aptly related to the South African magazine media landscape. The filters imply that in exploring representations of gender and identity construction in South African magazines, it is critical to locate magazine messages carefully within the specific social, economic and political contexts of their production.

It is fundamental to assess the ideals regarding a democratic media that emerged as South Africa transitioned to a democracy. Since democracy, has there been a significant change compared to the use of propaganda and censorship under apartheid? A critical question remains: while the end of apartheid has effected and initiated the end of government repression and media censorship, has there been a significant change in relation to the use of propaganda and censorship or have new-found practices come to replace the old? Within this setting, the next section will explore editorial and

advertising content in magazines. This section will also explore issues including the 'media-created women'; local and international studies on magazines representation of women; magazines' rousing textual and visual content and how magazines serve as meta-commodities.

2.4 Magazines: A reconnaissance of editorial and advertising content

Since inception, magazines have been an influential medium of communication. Discourse on magazines are crucial to our understanding of the textual and visual representations that they disseminate and the assumptions that underlie them.

South Africans have an abundance of daily and weekly magazines in a variety of languages and genres and readers have been spoilt for choice with a plethora of new magazine titles entering the market. Millions of people receive sustenance through reading magazines as it provides them with a means to understand, interpret, and respond to the world. Furthermore, many women rely on magazines for information of a personal nature as they contain information on how to carry oneself, how to attain the "perfect look" and on various aspects of life. Magazines are highly visual mediums that form part of many individuals' everyday routine. According to Belch and Belch (2009: 392) magazines are consumed for their informational and educational value. Consumers have a variety of magazine genres to choose from and the reason for the abundance of magazine titles is because there is one to attract to every type of audience.

Magazines have a longer lifespan and offer readers a degree of permanence as compared to other mediums. This allows the magazine to deliver its messages every time the magazine is re-opened. Magazines also have a high pass-along rate and are often read by all members of a household. They are a visually appealing medium and provide advertisers with flexibility and creativity in relation to their advertisements. Magazines often use many

strategies such as gatefolds and bleed pages to enhance their visual appeal. Gatefolds refer to the third page that folds out making a double spread look even bigger and bleed pages refer to the use of all white spaces in a magazine and this allows for an advertisement to be extended to every corner of the page. These creative methods are meant to capture the attention of the reader. Other creative options include pre-printed advertisements that are inserted into magazines, scented advertisements and product samples. YOU and DRUM magazines are regarded as general-interest, family magazines and form the primary unit of analysis for this study. The following sub-sections will explore gendered constructions that emanate from media content.

2.4.1 The ‘media-created’ women

Magazines form part of popular culture and are associated with producing representations of women. Magazines are one of the only media forms of media where women are over-represented, however the images and messages that are presented raise many debates. As a cultural phenomenon, magazines have received huge interest from media feminists and theorists. This is due to the contested portrayal of women in magazine content and the impact it has on society. According to Van Zoonen (1994: 66) “the media-created woman is (1) wife, mother, housekeeper for men, (2) a sex object used to sell products to men, (3) a person trying to be beautiful for men.” What this implies is that magazines provide content that relates to women’s sexuality rather than to her intellectual capacity. Such content frames women in ways that emphasise sexual readiness, subservience and weakness.

Society’s discrimination against women is well illustrated in the unfair exhibitionism of women in media content. Despite the expanding roles of women, limiting portrayals persists in media content, from feature articles to advertising. Damean (2006: 93) observes that:

Media portray a distorted representation of emancipated femininity. Instead of liberating women from their status of objects and instead of placing them on equal position to men at work, home and in society, media creates the perfect women, setting standards very difficult to reach.

This suggests that media messages and images promote women that match the idealistic persona of perfection, presenting unattainable and unrealistic goals for 'ordinary' women to achieve. It further infers that the misleading representations in media content presents unattainable and unrealistic goals for women to achieve. Gauntlett (2002: 54) maintains that stereotypes in advertising have shown little change over time. This is despite commercial benefits that could be acquired from improving and changing their practice. The reluctance of doing things differently is evident in the case of *Marie Claire* magazine in 2000. The magazines' editor at the time, Liz Jones attempted to launch plans that was hoped would inspire editors to incorporate a diversity of women models in magazine content. Her effort was prohibited and subsequently in 2001 she resigned from the publication. "I simply had enough of working in an industry that pretends to support women while it bombards them with impossible images of perfection day after day, undermining their self-confidence, their health and hard-earned cash" (Jones 2001: 1). This case highlights resistance from media organisations in terms of diversifying content to appeal to wider groups in society. Diversification of content in terms of editorial and advertisements are essential in deepening South Africa's democratic ideals.

Magazines commonly sustain and sell the qualities of sexuality as valuable attributes of femininity. In addition, they often portray women in sensual poses shaping readers perception of lifestyle and these portrayals have the power to manipulate and curtail public discussions. In doing so, magazines actively limit the development of women in society. This misleading bombardment of sexualised content can influence perceptions and beliefs of readers.

Contemporary society places a significant emphasis on bodily perfection with an incessant stream of photographic images redefining femininity in terms of unattainable beauty ideals. Increasingly, everyday women are dissatisfied with themselves and their inability to 'control' or 'master' their own body. Disturbingly, studies show that women describe themselves in ways which unrealistically distort their bodies negatively, while men's self-descriptions unrealistically distort their bodies positively. In exploring the representation of women's bodies in media content (Macdonald 1995: 192) maintains that women's bodies have "always been central to feminine identity and, when women decorate and adorn the body, they are participating in a system of meaning-creation, the same system employed in advertising and media forms." This is validated by the countless magazine texts evoking the desire to create the ideal beauty image. Magazines systematically invite women to join a practice of meaning-creation and an example of this can be seen in *Glamour* (2010: 68) which details how celebrities maximise their looks when they participate in photo-shoots for magazines. A professional tip provided in this publication suggests that "angling your arms will minimise bingo wings, popping a hip will make your legs look sleeker" (Glamour 2010: 68). These messages endorse the 'thin-ideal' and reinforces that in order to look attractive, women should appear skinnier.

Advertisements can be seen as a powerful visual expression. Kotler and Keller (2012: 500) state that "advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor." The paid aspect means that the space as in the case of magazines must be purchased. By receiving payment for the advertisement the organisation or magazine in this case is responsible and in control of the advertising message that is being disseminated to its readers. This affirms that the organisation has control of the message, when it is sent and to whom it is sent.

Hall (2004: 182) maintains that advertising has many effects and when consumers are presented with advertisements its function is to frame perception. It does so by creating 'consumer expectation' of the product. For example, an advertisement for Slimz, a weight control product (YOU, 27 February 2014: 97) may get the reader speculating whether to spend their money on this product. Furthermore, the advertisement appeals to the consumer on an emotional level by 'creating anticipation' of what the product can do. This advertisement may get the reader thinking about whether consuming the product will make them feel better about themselves in terms of their appearance. Advertisements also provide 'interpretation' in the form of reason to purchase the product such as special offers, testimonials or benefits. This is evident particularly in advertisements for weight-loss products that are often accompanied by testimonials from users as well as before and after photographs emphasising specific parts of a women's body. Testimonials, specifically, are used to emotionally appeal to women and persuade them that if the product was successful for others, they too can achieve the results they long for and desire. Furthermore, the use of photographs drawing of attention to specific parts of a women's body can raise women's insecurities about those aspects of their bodies.

According to Eikhof, Summers and Carter (2013: 559) magazines shape women's opinions by representing specific choices as attractive and attainable. They additionally have the ability to influence women's real-life practices. As postulated by Laden (2001: 518) media has evocative power and influence and they inspire cultural reordering and revitalisation. Magazine media is a compelling transmitter of cultural perceptions of femininity, masculinity and beauty ideals. Our media culture is swift in judging women for the most negligible aberrations while male counterparts are able to get away with weightiness and baldness. This is evident by frenzied magazine media coverage of celebrities Julia Roberts, Drew Barrymore and Hilary Swank all of whom became prey to media scrutiny because of showcasing their hairy-armpits in public. Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5 portrays Julia Roberts spotted

during an enthusiastic arm wave during the 1999 premiere of her film *Notting Hill* and Drew Barrymore at a 2005 Marc Jacobs fashion show. Figure 2.6 highlights Hillary Swank's hairy armpits on the 'red carpet'.



Figure 2.4: Julia Roberts at the premiere of Notting Hill
Source: Pocklington 2014



Figure 2.5: Drew Barrymore at a 2005 Marc Jacobs fashion show
Source: Pocklington 2014



Figure 2.6: Hillary Swank at an *Elle* magazine party in October 2010
Source: Pocklington 2014

Helmore (2001) writes that “Roberts sarcastically responded to a reporter who asked about her \$20 million-per-film fees, Yeah, I get paid by the armpit hair. For each hair I get an extra dollar.” Media reports included headlines such as “*So why the furry friends?*”, “*Hilary Swank reveals hair armpits on Red Carpet*”; “*Hairy underarms – are they the pits?*” “*Julia Roberts hairy premiere Situation.*”

The above examples of media coverage affirms the inequality that women face and highlights the distorted representation of emancipated femininity. It further underlines media’s pre-occupation with creating the ‘perfect women’ and setting standards relating to cultural perceptions of femininity and beauty.

2.4.2 International research on magazines' representation of women

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) presented a huge criticism of images in magazines of "the happy housewife heroine". For many years she contributed to magazine content, however, the excerpt below (from a magazine article) highlights her concern regarding this portrayal of blissful domesticity:

The image of woman that emerges from this big, pretty magazine is young and frivolous, almost childlike; fluffy and feminine; passive; gaily content in a world of bedroom and kitchen, sex, babies, and home. The magazine surely does not leave out sex; the only goal a woman is permitted is the pursuit of a man. It is crammed full of food, clothing, cosmetics, furniture, and the physical bodies of young women, but where is the world of thought and ideas, the life of the mind and spirit? (Friedan 1963:32).

This highlights that women's role in society was limited and her value was denied by media. It infers that important aspects relating to uplifting women and contributing to their intellect are restricted in magazine content. Gauntlett (2002) explains that from the 1940s to Friedan's 1960s, women's magazines had focused on a girlish, house-wifely representation that was not trivialised. During this time magazines emphasised the significance of women's position in society. However, Friedan's (1963: 37) critique of this was fuelled by magazine content which stated that "careers and higher education were leading to the masculinisation of women with enormously dangerous consequences to the home, the children dependent on it and to the ability of the woman, as well as her husband, to obtain sexual gratification." These views highlight the media's patriarchal attitudes and beliefs toward women in society. It additionally reinforces societal beliefs that women's life goal should be to pursue and satisfy men.

Authors Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) were amongst the first to assess women's roles in magazine content. Their study examining advertising

revealed that magazines portray women in a restricted manner and in relation to non-working activities. They further examined women imageries used in commodities advertised. Their study drew attention to the stereotypical representation of women, the inequitable treatment of women in magazines and the way in which this disadvantages their position in society. Despite women's achievements in society, magazine coverage of women continued to suppress them in relation to men. The advertisements in the study reflected the following stereotypical views: "A woman's place is in the home, women do not make important decisions or do important things, women are dependent and need men's protection, men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they are not interested in women as people" (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971: 94). This raises the concern of how magazine texts 'position' the female subject. More recent findings (Kilbourne 1999; Sanders 2009; Nelson 2012) found that an overwhelming number of women readers become unhappier about their appearance once they have consumed magazines. This is supported by Groesz, Levine and Murnen (2002) who undertook a meta-analysis, examining 25 experimental studies concurrently. They concluded that the portrayal of "thin media images" as compared to any other type of image led to women feeling unhappy about their bodily appearance. This highlights that magazine messages significantly impact on women's self-confidence and bodily image.

Other studies assessing the role of advertising revealed that a variety approaches that are implemented to exert influence and control over readers, particularly women. Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2013: 61) maintain that advertising promotes an ideal world to readers and influences them to believe whatever is being advertised. The beauty myth is repeatedly conveyed through magazines by categorising specific commodities and associating them with a better life. This relates to this study as it analyses YOU and DRUM magazines readers' perception on the self-transformation and self-improvement possibility that magazines often suggest. It also analyses how

women interpret magazine messages and whether magazines serve as aspirational and informal educational devices.

2.4.3 South African studies on magazines' representation of women

Wilbrahim's 1990's (1996a, 1996b, 1996c) work on magazines *YOU*, *Fairlady* and *Femina* in South Africa explores discourses on advice texts on women's experiences around beauty. The study looked at the ideas of social attractiveness and how institutions' information disempowers women by normalising concepts of dieting, relationships and beauty. The study infers that in consuming magazines, women look for answers regarding issues around weight and beauty in the hope of personal fulfilment and contentment. This relates to this study in that it highlights how exposure to underrepresentation of women can impact on identity construction.

Noteworthy research relating to South African magazines was conducted by Laden (1997; 2000) and Murray (1994; 1998). Seven magazines targeting Black consumers were analysed by Laden to assess the role of those magazines in the dynamics of cultural change in the country (Laden 1997: 121). Laden views consumer magazines as 'cultural tools' which promote and assist in societal change and maintain that they function as informative tools and modelling devices. She highlights the central connection between (cultural) consumption and identity, "defining consumer culture in terms of devising new ways of doing things in life, and accessing new resources and sets of strategies directed at the social (as well as individual) production of selfhood" (Laden 2000:10). This underlines the inextricable link between popular culture and identity construction.

Murray's (1998) study offers a self-reflexive and context-specific examination of South African consumer culture. She explores the complex meanings ascribed to malls, magazines and sites of 'themed' leisure. Murray's analysis

of South African consumer culture highlights an awareness that the consumption or enjoyment of cultural 'texts' is an active process which is often experienced in contradictory or ambivalent ways. Commercial culture may be "emotional as well as cognitive, sensuous as well as critical, mundane as well as exceptional, since individuals come to commodity culture with a range of longings, dreams, fears and sediment allegiances" (Murray 1998: iii). Murray's detailed analysis of magazines illustrates the complex relationship between media content and the consumer. It also highlights that a culture's audiences or readers often have differing expectations and needs and this implies the need for diversified content that can appeal to a large section of society.

Clowes, (2002, 2004, 2006), Driver, (2002) and Mutongi, (2000) explored representations of gender in DRUM magazine. Mutongi's 1960's to mid-80's study analysed the advice and letter section of the magazine. The study revealed that the advice and letters pages which were managed by mostly male editors at that time, were aligned to gendered constructions that undermined women as compared to men. Mutongi (2000: 14) highlights how young women were warned to be cautious, self-disciplined and sensible in their relationships and were blamed for pregnancy. These views infer that the dominance of male editors contributed to the stereotypical views of women. Driver's (2002) study discusses representation of women in magazines with a specific focus on the shift from 'rural' past to 'urban' present. Her study reflects the damaging representations of women in the form of presenting women's physical bodies to the 'modern male gaze'. The study highlighted that representations of sportswomen, housewives and political women frequently focussed on femininity. This underlines the perpetual objectification of women in magazines. It additionally emphasises that the views and positions that dominate in society are those that proliferate in magazine content. It is imperative to explore the dominant messages about gender in magazines in South Africa and track if changes are evident in the way women are represented in magazines in modern society.

2.4.4 'How to' manuals and femininity guides for young woman

Media activist Jean Kilbourne's (1999: 138) study revealed that young females in particular, are especially attuned to images of women and are influenced by representations of other women as they seek information on behavioral attributes. This is further emphasised by Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006) "As a girl grows up, she becomes increasingly aware of what society's standards are for the 'ideal body'; by the age of eight, girls are already aware of societal images of female beauty and have internalised the thin ideal." This implies that magazines can serve as cultural developmental indicators and informal educational tools for young girls who have not even entered adolescence. In a year-long ethnographic study, Kehily (1999) investigated magazine consumption of females between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Her study explored how magazines that are targeted at young females serve as guides and cultural resources on issues of sexuality. The study revealed that magazines often served as frameworks to discuss issues of sexuality and participants of the focus groups frequently compared their experiences to those that appeared in the media. This is supported by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 87) who recognise that one of the ways in which discourses construct what gender is, is through mediums such as magazines.

In addition, Smith (2011) in her study of youth, media and lifestyles indicated that more young people from the peri-urban cohort preferred reading magazines to newspapers and read them primarily for 'information purposes', 'knowledge', 'inspiration' and 'entertainment'. Magazines that proved most popular in Smith's research among peri-urban South African youth were *DRUM*, *True Love* and *YOU* and urban-based youth selected *DRUM*, *True Love*, and *Cosmopolitan*. According to Smith's study (2011:107) the reasons for selecting these magazines included, among others, "interesting, informative and entertaining," "They are all black-oriented"; "They talk about my side of the fence". These responses reflect how young individuals identify with characters in the media and how they rely on the media for information

that contributes to the development of their identity. Kehily's and Smith's findings will be considered in relation to the findings of this study, which is also concerned with the reception of magazines, specifically by women readers.

In magazines, images of women's attractiveness repeatedly display "hyper-thin" bodies. Kilbourne (1999) cogently asserts that the overpowering actuality of visual representations revealing harrowingly skinny women denotes that women's 'actual' bodies have become masked. "The objectification of the female body in media prepares adolescent girls for internalising the object of gaze and the result is that appearance is far more important than it should be to girls" (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kilmartin, Forssman-Falk and Kliwer 1998: 19). The concept of the 'male gaze' in mass media is usually associated with cinematic gaze however it can be related to magazine media content. It is unfortunate that many women judge themselves by the standards set by media. In some instances women establish ways to compete with other women for male attention. Based on this, magazine media should strive to ensure that coverage is educational, informative and can contribute to thought and ideas that will positively influence women's identity construction.

Furthermore, advertising significantly contributes to how women are represented in magazines. Oswald (2010) affirms that advertising as a mode of cultural production has the means to develop representations that attracts consumers and lures them into desiring the products in postmodern society. Women dominate in advertisements for beauty and cosmetics and that which relates to the domestic environment, while men dominate in advertisements signifying high status events and products such as cars and electronics. Men are often presented as 'leaders' in control. In stark contrast to women, men often appear in advertisements reflecting business, finance and politics. When women are used in advertisements to sell cars and other high status products they are often sexualised and presented as objects of men's desire. "Advertising characterised by a special focus on visual cues such as

expression, posture and gesture reflects to a great extent social values, prevailing norms, beliefs and stereotypes of society” (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos 2009: 1411). This is evident in modern day magazines that constantly use sexualised images of women’s bodies as a tool to sell products. Slender, attractive bodies are used to sell all types of products from jewellery to vehicles. This is confirmed by Van Zoonen (1994: 71) who states that “advertising has been singled out as one of the most disturbing cultural products since its early stages of development and displays preoccupation with gender that is hardly matched in any other media genre.” Consequently, society’s ascendancy of masculinity and objectification of woman is strengthened. Gender stereotypes are further maintained through the male gaze. Photographs focus on women’s bodies, heightening visual pleasure for the gendered male gaze. Women are exposed sexually with emphasis on their breasts, eyes and lips and these symbolisms relate to how they are presented as objects of men’s desire.

Magazines provide readers with content that highlights ways of being sexual but also that which is acceptable in society (Joshi, Peter and Valkenburg 2011). Women are vulnerable to magazine messages that are propagated by advertisers; however, young females are often a prime target. Media advertisers are aware that they are inexperienced consumers whose identities are being developed and use this to their advantage. In addition, as Kilbourne (1999: 129) explains, “advertisers do not hesitate to take advantage of the insecurities and anxieties of young people, usually in the guise of offering solutions.” Research has indicated that some young people internalise media messages and young women are particularly disposed to body image discontent, due to the abundance of skinny media models in media content (Halliwell and Dittmar 2004; Dittmar and Howard 2004a; Dittmar and Howard 2004b; Thompson and Stice 2001; Stice, Spangler and Agras 2001). These stereotypical portrayals reinforce historically created notions of gendered roles and are disseminated frequently in magazine media.

Massoni's (2004: 51) study investigated the gendered setting in *Seventeen* magazine and assessed the relationship between mass media and girl culture. His view is that magazines serve as "femininity how-to manuals from a patriarchal point of production, 'femininity guides' centring almost exclusively on white women pursuing beauty and heterosexual relationships, with the main themes being youthfulness, beauty and heterosexual relationships" (Massoni 2004: 51). This highlights media's ability to persuade readers, particularly young innocent readers who are looking to define themselves. It also suggests that magazines consistently communicate to women readers that their life goals should include using their sexuality to pursue men and they further normalise concepts relating to physical beauty.

Durham's (1999) study found several messages promoting young women to use their sexuality. This is evident in magazines, where words such as "hot", "sexy", and "kissable" are displayed regularly on magazine covers. Furthermore, articles relating to physical training promotes the attainment of sleek, sexy figures in preference to the promotion of exercise and fitness. Articles on fashion and beauty focus on satisfying men and images of women characterise girls as sexy and desirous, yet shy. His study revealed that the content of magazines were mixed, conflicting and stereotypical. These deeply entrenched stereotypical representations can limit the development of young women and skew their perception of a healthy gender identity. According to Botta (2003: 23):

It is ironic that: [Our] culture's obsession with thin ideals is played out in the media via models and actresses who may have eating disorders themselves, who may have personal trainers to help them maintain a thin body, and whose bodies, as portrayed through airbrushing and camera-angle techniques, may not even be their own.

The above statement highlights the negative, inaccurate messages and images that magazine media send to women, particularly young women and the association that beautiful women are thin. It further confirms that a large

part of media messages present a 'false world' to readers which can influence identity construction.

2.4.5 Rousing textual and visual content

Magazines have a transcendent quality in their ability to rouse individuals and shape perceptions. Magazines are influenced by consumer culture and are aimed at making a profit through the sale of advertising. Magazines need to attract consumers and they draw them in by using enticing illustrations, teasing tag lines, coaxing language and alluring covers. With meaning-laden photographic elements, magazines offer readers quality still material. A huge amount of space in magazines is dedicated to advertisements and editorial targeting women as consumers of fashion and beauty products. The researcher reviewed many studies assessing the influence of magazines' visual imagery on women readers (Johnson 2003; Johnson, David and Huey 2003, 2004; Pompper and Koenig 2004; Valdivia 2004). Advertising plays a substantial role in portraying subjectivities and particular masculinities and femininities as normative. Kilbourne (1995: 122) asserts that in magazine media, there exists a recurring feminine ideal where:

The sex object is a mannequin, a shell...she has no lines or wrinkles (which would indicate she had the bad taste and poor judgement to grow older), no scars or blemishes – indeed she has no pores. She is thin, generally tall and long-legged, and above all, she is young. All 'beautiful' women in advertisements (including minority women), regardless of product or audience, conform to this norm. Women are constantly exhorted to emulate this ideal, to feel ashamed and guilty if they fail, and to feel that their desirability and lovability are contingent upon physical perfection.

This 'ideal' women is stereotyped through the use of language and visual imagery in magazines. Apart from visual elements, magazines often use language to lure readers. With its creative use of language, magazines often address readers directly by using possessive pronouns such as 'you' and 'yours'. Fairclough (1989: 62) describes this reference on an individual basis

as “synthetic personalization”. Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2013: 61) further affirm that language in advertising can be used to influence and control readers’ views. An example of this ‘direct’ address can be seen in many advertising features and examples on magazine cover pages are provided in Figure 2.7 (Fall fashion!Ideas to take ‘*your*’ style to the next level) and Figure 2.8 (Firm up ‘*your*’ middle for good in just ten minutes a day; Take and inch off ‘*your*’ hips).



Figure 2.7: *GLAMOUR* magazine
Source: *Glamour* September 2013

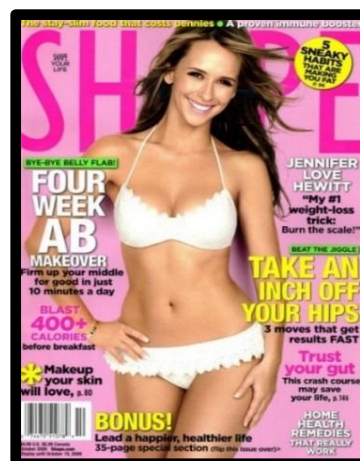


Figure 2.8: *SHAPE* magazine
Source: *Shape* October 2009

Media suggest that femininity can only be achieved through hard work and perpetuates the sexualisation of women's bodies. Magazine covers alone often highlight the nature of magazines – the face of a woman, often the hallmark, is usually represented as young-looking and flawless. Syster (2004: 1) argues that despite magazines attempting to show their originality and diversity from those they compete with, most magazines have a common focus which is telling women how they can self-transform in terms of their physical appearance. This highlights that magazines have significant power in influencing their readers and promoting advertised products. McCracken (1996: 99) maintains:

The photographic text of a magazine cover extends meaning to the material inside: usually a concrete representation of an idealised model of physical beauty, the cover photo whets the consumer's appetite for what is to follow. As a pleasurable visual representation, it invites us to enjoy further pleasure by consuming the magazine's contents, visually flipping through the pictures page by page. At the same time, it leads us necessarily to the verbal texts in the magazine, through which we will be given specific instructions for attaining the model of ideal beauty, which can only be attained through consumerism.

Magazine covers are perceived as extremely important by editors and readers alike as they serve to entice readers to consume the publication. Cover pages are significantly important as readers often first scan the cover to determine whether they will purchase the magazine. The language and visual imagery portrayed in YOU and DRUM magazines will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

2.4.6 Magazines as meta-commodities

Magazines are an attractive advertising medium (Belch and Belch 2009: 394). They have a long life span in comparison to other media and are often read by more than one member of a household. According to Beetham (1996: 2) magazines “work at the intersection of different economies of money, public discourse and individual desire” and have an important position for the

promotion of other products. Magazines are highly commodified. This is confirmed by (Laden 2000: 123) who maintains that “magazines are ‘meta-commodities,’ commodities in themselves and also sites used for the dissemination of other commodities.” Magazines are themselves products of the print media industry which function to market other products and, at the same time, they are cultural products which circulate societal beliefs. Magazines have a central role in linking the desirability of commodities to their visibility. They provide the reader with an opportunity to romanticise and fanaticise an ideal world and an ideal self. Beetham (1996: 8) maintains that the positioning of magazine readers as consumers creates an opening to a world of commodities. The link between feminine gender identity and consumption has undoubtedly grown and magazines remain deeply involved in consumer culture. This is affirmed by Nzamela (2002: 24) who asserts that “Magazines are deeply involved in capitalist production and consumption as well as circulation in the cultural economy of collective meanings and construction of an identity for the individual reader as a gendered and sexual being”. The possibilities suggested by magazines are endless and they often entice readers to purchase products, particularly self-improvement products. Critics such as Douglas (1995) view this as a triumph of the capitalists, who according to Gauntlett (2002: 54) manage to “turn feminism into something narcissistic which you have to spend lots of money on, and – in line with L’Oreal’s ‘Because I’m worth it!’ tagline – even feel pleasure and liberation in doing so.” An important question is whether these strategies are deliberately used by capitalists to foster insecurities in readers and then offer solutions to? Germaine Greer powerfully presents her opinion in *The Whole Woman*:

Every woman knows that, regardless of her other achievements, she is a failure if she is not beautiful...The UK beauty industry takes £8.9 billion a year out of women’s pockets. Magazines financed by the beauty industry teach little girls that they need make-up and train them to use it, so establishing their lifelong reliance on beauty products.... Pre-teen cosmetics are relatively cheap but within a few years more sophisticated marketing will have persuaded the most level-headed woman to throw money away on alchemical preparations containing anything from silk to cashmere, pearls, proteins, royal jelly ... anything

real or phony that might fend off her imminent collapse into hideous decrepitude (Greer 1999: 19-23).

In addition to beauty and make-up products, cosmetic surgery offerings are also now a regular feature in magazines which highlights society's promotion of idealised beauty. Gauntlett (2002) adds that this fixation with physical appearance can be harmful to men and women. He asserts that men are also expected to have tight-toned bodies and the pressure culture puts on people is not limited to one gender; however, women are constantly encouraged to self-transform, be made-up and to appear thinner.

Magazines use persuasive language to entice readers to either take some form of action or buy products. Examples can be seen in the following magazines:

- Firmer skin in just 4 days [Regenerist Daily 3 Point Treatment Cream] (*Cosmopolitan*, December 2010: 99)
- My new products Make and Keep you hair healthy and beautiful [Dr Miracles] (DRUM, 24 April 2014: 35)
- Look up to 10 years younger [Ponds] (*Cosmopolitan*, July 2014: 19)

Magazine advertisements have mastered the art of creating 'a relationship' with readers by prompting relaxed conversation with readers to skilfully engage them and capture their attention rather than simply bombarding them with product information. This is done by framing material as questions. Examples can be seen in the following magazines:

- Has your skin started aging? [Ponds] (*Cosmopolitan*, July 2014: 19)
- Do you suffer from digestive problems? Milkosan is the answer [A Voegel – Milkosan] (YOU, 13 March: 45)

Cronin's (2000: 279) article titled *Consumerism and compulsory individuality*, contends that advertisements highlight an individual's ability to transform themselves through consuming specific products. Through the use of advertisements, magazines objectify women and promise women self-transformation. "Yet, even as subjects, women have faced an impossible imperative 'to be ourselves' through 'doing ourselves' mediated by 'doing' make-up (making yourself up), fashion (fashioning yourself), dieting and exercise (re-forming yourself)" (Cronin 2000: 279). Women are often coerced into believing that they should strive for perfection and media advertising serves as a means to persuade them to indulge in self-improvement cosmetic treatments. Magazine advertisements are engulfed with artificial products such as artificial nails, artificial hair and beauty enhancing products. Cronin (2000: 129) cautions that "these regimes can never make women truly individual; indeed, as more and more messages tell us to 'just be yourself' or 'express yourself', this 'compulsory individuality' takes women further ... away from truly being 'an individual'." Content used in magazines is constructed in a way that provides readers with unrealistic ways to think about their lives and prompts readers to question and reflect on their unfulfilled desires. Advertisers attempt to convince readers that personal satisfaction and pleasure will be attained through consumption. By means of propaganda, popular culture presents a representation of perfect beauty. This can create a ripple effect that stimulates and promotes insecurity-driven consumerism. Magazine advertising promises to transform readers' lives through products that can make one 'fulfil all their desires'. Women are increasingly dissatisfied with their appearance and the emphasis of perfection and extreme beauty ideals together with the barrage of visual representations in media redefine femininity in terms of unattainable standards. Advertising draws readers into a relationship with products and taps into readers' insecurities.

Consumption as a process is not only about meeting basic needs but is increasingly understood as responding to certain emotional or unconscious human desires. These desires, which are socially and culturally learned are

central in identity construction. The connection between one's yearning to consume products and consumer practice is affirmed and maintained by the stimulating visual imagery portrayed in magazines. Cultural studies' understandings of consumption recognise that consumption includes the consumption of signs and signifying practices. Within postmodern society people progressively use representations and signs for individual reasons and benefits (Strinati 1995: 213). Modern consumption depends largely on advertising which is described as an influential aspect of consumerism. Advertising exploits the signifying power of images to create an association between certain products and desirable traits and lifestyles. Advertising invites people to 'join' these lifestyles and, in this way, ideologically constructs "consumption communities" (Fairclough 1989: 206). The ideological 'work' of advertising is in providing subject positions within such consumption communities. Thus, consumption becomes entwined with an individual's sense of identity. While in the past, identity was determined by one's occupation and processes of production, within postmodernity, identity relates to aspects of appearance, images and the consuming of products.

A separation of advertising sales and editorial departments can be seen in the print industry particularly newspapers, however, this line is less rigid with magazines as they interact more closely. Authors (Bagdikian 2000; Lamb, Hair and McDaniel 2013) affirm that magazines are created solely to carry advertisements to a target audience. An outspoken critic of media and advertising is former journalist Ben Bagdikian (2000: 151) who affirms:

Advertising is not a luxury to large corporations but an activity with profound economic and political consequences. The media are now dependent on these corporations for most of their revenues and increasingly they are owned by such corporations. The media have become partners in achieving the social and economic goals of their patrons and owners. Yet it is the newspapers, general magazines and broadcasters who are citizens' primary source of information and analysis of precisely this kind of economic and political issue. This raises the question of whether the mass media are free to exercise the traditional role of mediating among the forces of society at a time when

they have become an integral part of one of these sources.

Bagdikian, writer of the book *The Media Monopoly*, provides an analysis regarding changes in media organisations and the “dumbing down” and shaping of content based on audience’s demographic profile. This implies that media content is slowly becoming less important compared to the importance of advertising’s target audience. He also implies that “giving the audience what they want is also a bit misleading because, if anything, it is more about targeting those readers that can afford the products that are advertised and so it is almost like giving the advertisers what they want” (Bagdikian 2000: 138). This can severely impact on media’s accountability to society and raises the question of the balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making. The ‘dumbing down’ of media messages as explained above is aimed at promoting a ‘buying mood’. Bagdikian (2000: 138) briefly traces the long history of advertising in magazine media:

The influence of advertising on magazines reached a point where editors began selecting articles not only on the basis of their expected interest for readers but for their influence on advertisements. Serious articles were not always the best support for ads. An article that put the reader in an analytical frame of mind did not encourage the reader to take seriously an ad that depended on fantasy or promoted a trivial product. An article on genuine social suffering might interrupt the buying mood on which most ads for luxuries depend.

The above statement affirms the power of the market and magazine media’s dependency on advertisements. It highlights that media organisations are more concerned with capitalist production and profit-making compared to offering readers information that can contribute to the positive development of their identities. It further emphasises that media players also commission content to persuade prospective audiences who would purchase commodities that feature in the magazines and that magazines are created for specific readers and sold to specific advertisers. In contemporary society magazines appear to perpetuate and reinforce specific femininities and portray women as passive or as an object of men’s desire. Despite the progress that has been

made there is a long way to go, both in the quantity and quality of media representations of woman.

2.4.7 Changing representations of gender in magazines

This study assesses if and how YOU and DRUM magazines offer changing representations of women in magazine text and images. This was accomplished by analysing magazine content, conducting interviews with media professionals as well as focus group discussions with women readers that have been reading the magazines for three years or more.

Winship's well-acclaimed book *Inside Women's Magazines* was printed in 1987 and she noted how magazines were taking into account the change of women's status in society. At the beginning of the book she explains how her feminist associates believed that researching the way in which women are represented in magazines was insignificant as it was a given that magazines objectify and discriminate women to make profit. Winship (1987: *ibid.*: xiii) was not discouraged and states:

I continued to believe that it was as important to understand what women's magazines were about as it was, say, to understand how sex discrimination operated in the workplace. I felt that to simply dismiss women's magazines was also to dismiss the lives of millions of women who read and enjoyed them each week.

However, Winship (1987: 38) succinctly states that the "business of magazines is a venture involving two disparate but intimately linked selling operations: one to women, the other to advertisers". Her statement is imperative as it highlights the intricate relationship between media's commercial and public interest functions. Magazine media are accountable for providing information to citizens about relevant matters. However, they are also expected to operate in accordance to the marketplace for survival in an extremely competitive industry. This will be explored further in the analysis of interviews with YOU

and DRUM magazines' editors and journalists, interviews with media commentators as well as in focus groups discussions with women readers. This exploration provides insight into how media users interpret popular media forms as well as magazine media professionals' balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making.

In terms of media's changing representation of women, *Brigitte*, a popular German magazine undertook to feature 'real women' in their magazines' images. The editor explained that this bold decision was as a result of criticisms from readers who could not connect with the magazines' physical representation of women (Connolly 2009). This infers that women readers are seeking more realistic, accurate representations in media content. Focus group discussions with women readers of YOU and DRUM magazines provides insight into how women relate to current magazine content and to the type of coverage they benefit from.

Leive, editor of *US Glamour*, stated in her blog that the magazine commits itself to portraying a range of body types of women. This was after the magazine received feedback from their readers that they were pleased to see models with 'real' bodies in the magazine pages in the September 2009 issue (Leive 2009). In interviews with media professionals and focus group discussions, the researcher asked questions regarding the representation of all types of women in the magazines under study.

The 'O' *Oprah Magazine* has also claimed to contain content that encourages women to critically reflect on their life choices. Krum in Gauntlett (2002: 192) states that O's editor, Amy Gross, stated that they want to inform women about things that are important to them and not related to what they should change about themselves. This indicates that the magazine claims that it is lucrative because it does not benefit from readers' insecurities but rather on providing valuable, beneficial, informative content. In analysing YOU and DRUM

magazines texts, the researcher will investigate how magazines represent women and its impact on identity construction.

Women should be represented in positive settings that show their uniqueness and competence. In the past, women have fought for equality and recognition and imbalanced coverage of their successes in magazine media constrains advancement of social change and the equality of men and women in South Africa. The magazine industry has an important role to play in shaping public opinion and influencing identity construction. The final section in this chapter provides background to the media landscape in South Africa, particularly the Media24 publishing group and the primary unit of analysis, YOU and DRUM magazines.

2.5 South African media landscape – Media24: YOU and DRUM magazines

As an ever present entity, media has a compelling influence in constructing meaning in our lives. The media analyses and interprets events in society, it puts facts into perspective, explains the importance of events, provides depth on different opinions, and often persuades people to act in a certain way. Messages that are communicated via the mass media stand a much better chance of getting noticed and even becoming important than messages that are not. Mass communication has the capability, unlike any other communication context, of moving masses of people to action.

The South African media industry is thriving and is one of the African continent's main media players. The media industry was severely controlled by censorship during apartheid. The dawn of democracy saw an end to censorship and a new, negotiated constitution was legislated with a Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) guaranteeing South African citizens the right to freedom of expression which included freedom of the press and other media. South Africa has an open environment and access into journalism as a career is free with

no specific restrictions for media workers. The establishment of press freedom since the end of apartheid strengthened the media industry making it more dynamic and influential and introduced significant changes in the media landscape. The print media industry has shown considerable growth and transformation despite fierce competition. MDDA (2009: 12) confirms this and explains that “The print media industry has experienced good growth in terms of revenue and available titles, despite the growth in broadcasting and new media which are in direct competition for adspend.” In terms of the number of titles and ownership in South Africa, print media makes up the main share of media. Furthermore, the expanding media sector is characterised by mergers, takeovers, globalisation and the blurring between privately and publically run media. The print media in South Africa is highly concentrated among four key front runners (the ‘Big 4’) that dominate the sector, with two fairly big players that have recently entered the market. Media24, Times Media Group formerly known as AVUSA, Independent Newspapers now bought by Sekunjalo and Caxton dominate the market share. The fairly new entrants are the Mail & Guardian and The New Age.

These big players are mainly White owned companies and publish mostly in English and Afrikaans. These mainstream media houses also have ownership share in other media businesses such as broadcast and online. In terms of ownership and control there is little notable change of the print media as ownership is centralised and dominated by a few companies. MDDA (2014: 129) asserts that there is minimal change in media ownership and control, especially amongst the ‘Big 4’; this has been observed from their BBBEE ratings as per their individual scorecards. In recent years, the big players have been accused of anti-competitive behaviour in that they buy-out or strangle small publications that compete with them for market share. Media24 and Caxton have been cited most for this behaviour. MDDA (2014: 130) revealed that The Competition Commission has dealt with some of the cases lodged against them by fellow small and independent publishers.

It is valuable to reflect on the undertakings of the Media24 publishing group within the South African media landscape and understand media in an historical context. YOU and DRUM magazines form part of the Media24 group, a multinational media company, and serve as the primary unit for evaluation in this study.

The number of commercial magazines in South Africa has grown dramatically in the past 20 years. MDDA (2014: 19-20) states that the South African Media Facts report 2009, estimated that there are about 660 consumer magazines in South Africa with “a readership of 12,6 million – the highest magazine readership is in Gauteng at 3.5 million readers followed by KZN at 1.9 million readers.” The magazine sector in South Africa is dominated by Media24. According to MDDA (2014: 19) as indicated in Figure 2.9 the group publishes approximately 50 consumer magazines and approximately 80 newspaper titles in South Africa with a combined readership of 25 million South Africans.

Media24	INDEPENDENT NEWSPIRERS KUNJALO NINJA	Times Media Group	CAXTON	THE NEW AGE	M&G	SMALL COMMERCIAL & COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority shareholder Naspers. 17 mainstream newspapers 60+ local newspapers 50 consumer magazines Publish in English /Afrikaans and IsiZulu Combined readership of around 25 million South Africans Level 4 contributor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously foreign owned, now bought by a consortium led by Sekunjalo. Majority shareholder is Sekunjalo and the Government Employees Pension Fund. 18 paid newspaper titles 14 free suburban Newspapers Publish in English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu Level 6 Contributor - but expected to change after the sale of the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Times Media Group is formally known as AVUSA Publish the Sunday Times, The Times, The Herald, Daily Dispatch. +- 30 Magazines Level 4 Contributor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 140 local paid and free newspaper titles, wholly owned or in joint venture with other print media owners. 16 Magazines Owns newspapers, Magazine distribution network Is controlling shareholder of Moneyweb Listed on JSE - approximately R7 bn. Level 5 Contributor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owned by the Gupta family. Established in June 2010 Focuses on all 9 provinces of SA. The New Age -not audited by ABC. Claims to print over 100,000 copies Readership was 107,000 in Jan to Dec 2012. Level 3 Contributor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owned by Newtrust Company Botswana Limited, owned by Trevor Ncube (87.5%). The London-based Guardian Newspapers Limited holds 10% of the company and minority shareholders make up the rest. Mail & Guardian Online was the first internet-based news publication in Africa. Level 6 Contributor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large number of free (advertising funded) local and community newspapers – published in a variety of languages Most community newspapers are owned by small companies (SME's) located in the provinces and are published and circulated within that province These companies face a fierce competition – many go bankrupt within a short period of time due cash flow
DTI to unveil new BBBEE codes Amended empowerment codes will cause massive downgrade of transformation credentials across the country Source: The New Age 3 October 2013						

Figure 2.9: Overview of the 'Big 4' and new entrants

However, the magazine media industry is also a game of ‘survival of the fittest’ with many other titles having closed down in recent years as a result of increasing inflation which affects advertising and consumer spending. Media houses rely heavily on advertising to ensure revenue generation. This is confirmed by MDDA (2014: 130) who explain that of the revenue generated, between 60% and 100% are then used to cover publishing cost.

The Media24 group has nine weekly magazines and is Africa's front runner in the media and publishing arena. The groups operating business divisions encompass “newspapers, magazines, internet businesses, book publishing, printing plants and distribution companies” (Media24 2014d: 9). These enterprises are managed predominantly in South Africa and a few are managed in other African countries. This implies that Media24 is vertically integrated. As indicated by the Report on the Transformation of print and digital media (2013: 52) “there is ownership across the supply chain and they are therefore able to maintain control over the entire value chain process, as they own content production, printing plants, advertising sales agencies as well as newspaper and magazine distributors.” The vertical integration at Media24 highlights that the supply chain of the company is owned by the company itself and emphasises the monopolisation of media which can lead to limited and non-diverse media content.

MDDA (2014: 31) state that most of Media24 establishments are market leaders and the company “also has many international and local companies in the media industry through its holding company, Naspers⁹, which owns MIH Group, the owner of MultiChoice.” Naspers was founded in 1915 and in the same year *De Burger*, a daily newspaper was published. *De Huisgenoot* was established in 1916. In the year 2000, Media24, the former Nasmedia, became an independent company. The restructuring led to Naspers moving

⁹ “Naspers Limited, a company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Limited (JSE) and the London Stock Exchange (LSE) and is subject to the Listings Requirements of the JSE... as well as legislation applicable to publicly listed companies in South Africa” (Media24 2015: 1).

all its media products under a single umbrella. According to Media24's annual financial statement report (2014d: 1):

Like traditional media companies across the globe, Media24 continues to face tough economic conditions and large-scale structural changes to the industry. Despite these challenges, revenue grew by 5% to R8,2 billion, while trading profit of R519 million was 5% lower than last year.

The Media24 report highlighted that the magazine sector had a profitable year and explained that plans were implemented to deal with a drop in returns. The company "retained their leading circulation and advertising market share among the top five publishers in South Africa" during the 2013 and 2014 period (Media24 2014d). This highlights that the publication house is a leading player in the South African media industry.

Print magazine publishers have expanded their markets and now publish versions of their magazines online and make them available on mobile technology. Media24 is one of the media players that have embraced mobile technologies to promote their publications' content. The company has also implemented a programme or 'journalism academy' which provides journalism placements, awards scholarships as well as schooling of reporters. This indicates that the company is proactive in terms of promoting journalistic ethics and standards.

YOU and DRUM magazines are national titles and form part of the Media24 publishing company. According to Patterson (2014: 1) who extracted raw data and reviewed magazine performance for a 12-month period up until January 2014, the top three selling magazines in South Africa are: *Huisgenoot*, YOU, and DRUM and all three have a focus on fashion, celebrity gossip, and entertainment.

2.5.1 YOU magazine

YOU magazine has become a 'house-hold name and "is the biggest-selling weekly, English-language magazine in the South Africa", with 2 215 000 million readers (Media24 2014a). It has two 'sister' magazines: *Huisgenoot* whose target market is the White and Coloured Afrikaans-speaking readers, and DRUM whose target market is Black, English, Sotho and Zulu-speaking readers. YOU magazine was launched in September 1987 by Nasionale Pers, which later became Media24. The magazine operations are based in Cape Town and it is an English version of the hugely successful *Huisgenoot*, a weekly Afrikaans news and culture magazine. *Huisgenoot* has maintained its popularity since inception, making it and sister publication YOU, leading magazines in South Africa with DRUM following closely. It is a family magazine, targeting readers from a wide age group. The magazine's editorial offering rests on four pillars; "topicality; celebrity news; lifestyle and children" (Media24 2014a). According to SuperBrands (2015: 1):

YOU strives to bring readers up to date with insightful stories and articles. YOU offers credibility in editorial content, topicality in news and actuality features, easy readability, broadest appeal across social and income groups and cutting edge typography and layout. Integrity means the entire family is able to read YOU and the magazine is seen as trustworthy, reliable, informative and empowering.

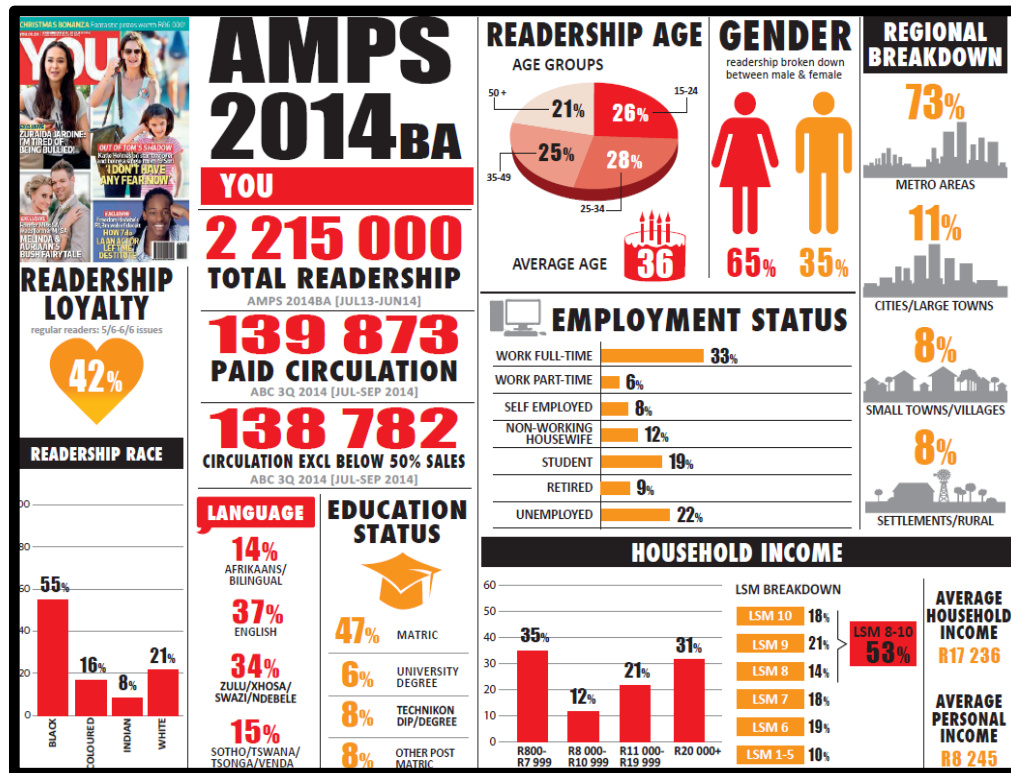


Figure 2.10: YOU AMPS 2014

Source: Media24 2014a

The readership profile of the publication as indicated in Figure 2.10 shows that the target market is women and men, angled towards women at 65% with men at 35%. The average age of YOU's reader is 36 and 53% of its readers are in LSM 8-10. YOU magazines' 25-34 year olds form the highest readership age group. In terms of readership ethnicity, 55% are Blacks, 21% Whites, 16% Coloured and 8% Indian. The majority of YOU magazine readers (73%) are from metro areas followed by 11% from large cities and towns. According to Patterson (2014: 1) YOU and *Huisgenoot* earn their position as the largest income generating magazine titles.

2.5.2 DRUM magazine

DRUM is a South African family magazine and “is the sixth largest consumer magazine in Africa” (South African History Online 2015: 1). It is published in English and has a Zulu edition that makes up 15 percent of its print order. According to Superbrands (2015: 1) “in the African market there is no competitor for this publication in terms of editorial mix, publishing excellence as well as printing and distribution.” This highlights that the publication is a leader in its field.

With a total readership of 3 163 000, DRUM is aimed at young Black readers. It caters for the average black South African family and covers topics such as news, sport, fashion and beauty, celebrity gossip, recipes and advice on how to improve your health and life. Together with *Huisgenoot* and *YOU*, DRUM offers a major part of the South African reader, current affairs, lifestyle and entertainment features. Initially branded as the ‘African Drum,’ it was started by journalist, Robert Crisp. Jim Bailey took over the magazine in 1951 and the magazines target market changed to South Africa’s urban black townships. According to South African History Online (2015: 1) this formula worked:

Each issue of DRUM was read by up to nine people, passed from hand to hand on the streets, in the clubs or on the trains. By May 1965 DRUM had faded and became simply a fortnightly supplement to the *Golden City Post* another Bailey property. It was revived in 1968. In 1984 Naspers acquired DRUM Publications, the publisher of *City Press*, *DRUM* and *True Love & Family*.

DRUM became a weekly magazine in 1996. “Once a resounding voice of resistance, DRUM is considered part of every black South African's daily life and remains true to the words of its current tagline: “The Beat Goes On” (South African History Online (2015: 1).

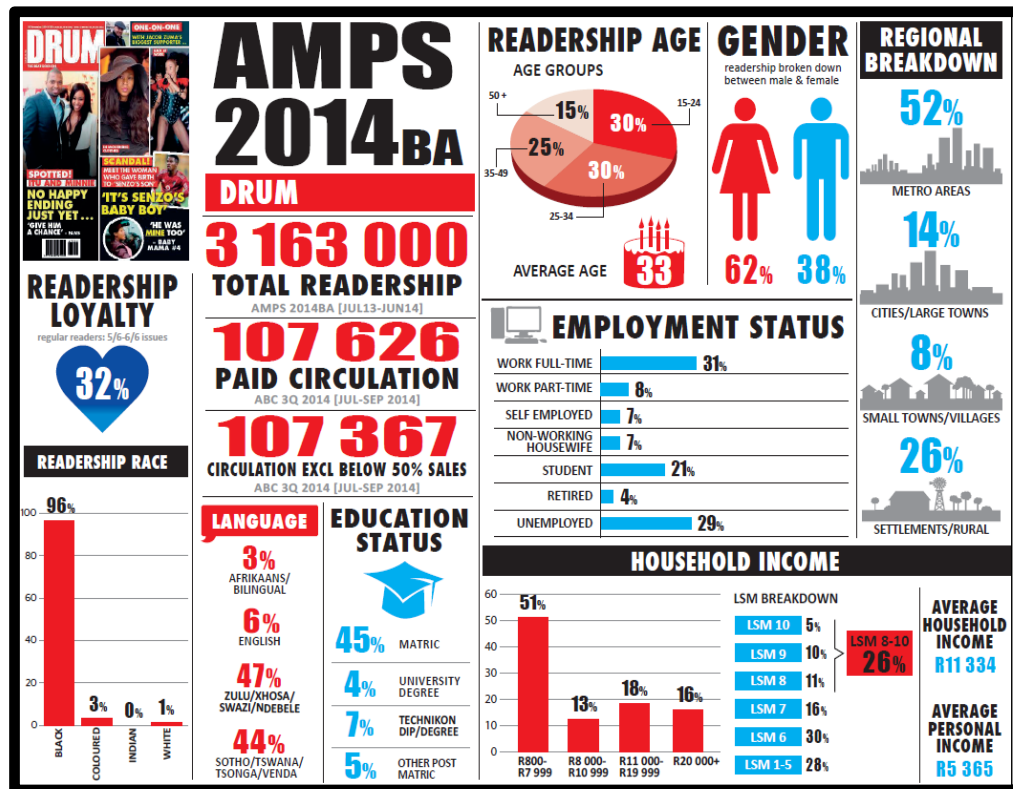


Figure 2.11: DRUM AMPS - 2014

Source: Media24 2014b

The readership profile of the publication as illustrated in Figure 2.11 indicates that the target market is women and men, angled towards women at 62% with men at 38%. The average age of DRUM's reader is 33 and 26% of its readers are in LSM 8-10. DRUM magazines' 15-24 year olds and 25-35 year olds form the highest readership age group at 30% each. In terms of readership ethnicity, 96% are Blacks, 1% Whites, 3% Coloured and 0% Indian. The majority of DRUM magazine readers at 52% are from metro areas followed by 26% from settlements or rural areas. In analysing the South African media landscape the above section has outlined the structure and operation of the Media24 publishing group and YOU and DRUM magazines which serve as the primary unit for evaluation.

2.6 Conclusion

In contemporary South Africa, discourse around media and gender are complex and progress on this long standing issue has been slow. The magazine media by its meaning-laden content often suggests ways for women to interpret the world and interact with each other. The continuing success of magazines demonstrates how consumption practices and identity construction are intrinsically connected within postmodern consumer culture.

South Africa has achieved remarkable feats in its transition from apartheid to democracy, however these achievements are not without imbedded problems including the diversity of information. In discussing the media conundrum, this section also emphasised the need for transformation of dominant ideologies that reinforce and legitimise hierarchical positions in society. The various sub-sections highlighted magazine media's role as a key driver of transformation in the media terrain in South Africa. The themes discussed highlight that there is still much negotiation, contestation and disagreement concerning media's role in post-apartheid society and its contribution to the deepening of democracy and overcoming of continued marginalisation of more than half of its population.

The media industry is an important pillar of the democratic dispensation and a vehicle for transformation and nation building. However, what has emerged is that transformation in the magazine media industry remains a challenge as media organisations have become key bulwarks of global capitalism. What is needed is a media system that adds diversity and a new trajectory insofar as they give voice to the marginalised and convey counterhegemonic information that will strengthen our democracy. The next chapter examines the dominant theories that address media's influence on identity construction namely normative theories and media effect theory. It also addresses feminist media perspectives relating to the representation of women in media content.

Chapter 3 : Theoretical perspectives underpinning the representation of women in media

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies and discusses the dominant theories that frame media representation. In setting up a theoretical framework, the researcher acknowledges that many theories exist, but the dominant theories will be used to discuss the literature, namely, normative theory, media effect theories and feminist media theory. The selected theoretical approaches allow for an analysis of South Africa's media landscape and an understanding of how the political, social and economic forces that wield power over media shape media content. This chapter discusses critical concepts such as media's public interest and social responsibility function from a South African normative perspective and reviews studies of numerous authors such as McQuail (2003, 2005), Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White (2009), Thompson (1995), Curran and Park (2000), and Fourie (2002, 2005, 2007).

This study expands on existing theory and its relevance with the aim of building a case for rethinking the role of media in South Africa's democracy. Knowledge and understanding of existing theory is imperative as it assists in identifying shortfalls of older theoretical frameworks, while laying the groundwork for the advancement and growth of postmodern criticism of these theoretical approaches. Consequently, this discussion provides an important foundation for new thinking on the role of magazines in constructing gender identities.

The role of journalism in a democracy faces many challenges as a result of changes in the global economy and the converging media markets. This chapter looks at the role of media and contemporary journalism in society and

discusses concepts of media freedom, journalistic professionalism and democratic participation. An evaluation of media's role in democracy allows the researcher to focus on values and objectives of the media. This section further raises important question such as: is the media a powerful source that is able to shape the consciousness of modern society and what role should the media play in a developmental democracy such as South Africa?

It must be noted that although there is an extensive amount of research into gender and the media there are no dominant theories or methods used, however there is a tendency towards a methodological eclecticism and a number of shared concerns (McQuail 1994). The main interest in media and gender studies lies in the belief that the media serves an important "social learning function" in that it acts as an agent of socialisation (McQuail 1994: 309). Socialisation is "the process whereby people come to learn social values, norms and expectations and are thus made social" (O'Sullivan, Sanders, Montgomery, Hartley, and Fiske 1994: 290). The assumption behind media studies in general is that the media has an influencing effect in shaping people's attitudes and ways of thinking.

For feminist media scholars, the implication of the media in gender constructions is of particular concern. Feminist scholars are concerned with the differential way in which 'masculinity' and 'femininity' have been encoded into media texts and with the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies. The theoretical approach in this research is also based on a feminist epistemological critique that aims to explore and analyse women's subjugated knowledges, unmask patriarchal forces, and advance women's position in society. Feminist media principles offers a gendered inflection to this study and contends that women are instrumental in the development of South Africa's democracy.

3.2 Normative media theory framework

Theory and research about the role of the press and how they function in society is known as normative theories. Normative theories assess what the press can do and what the press ought to be doing. This chapter presents a discussion of the theoretical understanding of the role of media in society. It will examine normative media theory with a view to understanding how the existing theoretical frameworks remain relevant to the changing social and economic settings in South African media, particularly magazines. The traditional normative theories of the media, such as the four theories of the press have, on one hand been criticised to an extent for not adequately accounting for the changing media-society relationship. On the other hand, the four theories of the press have been recognised by other researchers as providing a useful framework regarding the interconnectedness of the media-society relationship. In reviewing the link between media and South Africa's democratic ideals these press theories offer a basis for expounding on the intersectionality between media, gender and society. However, it must be noted as affirmed by O'Leary (2004: 74) that "research may be done alone, but it is never done in isolation ... the production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge, in the form of already available literature." The above statement highlights the fact that the analysis of the press theories provides a basis for this research and as a result, these theories, particularly the social responsibility theory is approached from a postmodern perspective.

Media studies pioneers Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1956) work was informed by central questions such as: "*What is and what should be the media's role in society?*" and "*How do we classify media systems and journalistic traditions?*" These questions undoubtedly remain as relevant today as they were decades ago, however researchers are yet to find suitable answers to these questions. In discussing normative theory, the researcher

looks at the intersectionality of media, gender and society, based on the principles of public communication and democracy.

Normative theories serve to support media autonomy and self-regulation. The normative tradition not only reflects on media's responsibility to society but promotes the pluralism of media content and challenges concentration of media ownership and control. Normative theories prescribe how the press should operate but is applicable to all forms of media. Normative theories provide a means of understanding media systems and reflecting on the freedoms and restrictions of the media industry and on their performance in democracies. Norms are systems that regulate the behaviour of members of a group and in most instances are understood and followed by group members.

Rudy, Popova and Linz (2011: 151-159) state that when women are portrayed in the media they are often sexualised, and represented in provocative fashion. If the media focus their attention on physical attributes of women and downplay the successes and contribution of women in society, these patterns will be adopted and understood as the norm. According to McQuail (2000: 8), normative theory is "concerned with examining or prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained". Normative theory relates to this study in that it reflects on media's role in society. The media has the ability to raise the public profile of women in society.

Normative magazine messages have a powerful ability to reinforce ideals on masculinity and femininity. Magazines often portray women as unblemished, coy and figure conscious and coverage of women as frail and emotional beings has not been extricated. Coverage of this nature can severely impact on women's self-image and identity construction as it objectifies and enfeebles their prowess. In relation to this study, if magazines privilege specific masculinities and femininities this may be accepted by readers as credible and acceptable.

Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White (2009: 14) state that many theorists and researchers worked on the class bias and ideological character of media content and the tendency towards hegemony – these include the best known names in the field of communication including Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Noam Chomsky, Herbert Marcuse, Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller. These authors affirm that normative level of theorising still occupies a central place in communication. The work of Stuart Hall and Noam Chomsky have been discursively deliberated in Chapter 2 of this study.

McQuail (2010: 14) claims that “a society’s normative theories concerning its own media are found in laws, regulations, media policies, codes of ethics and the substance of public debate and it plays a part in shaping and legitimising media institutions”. In South Africa there is generally an open media environment where access into journalism is free with no specific restrictions for media professionals. However, the end of the apartheid system of repressive regulations made way for a system of media self-regulation, with a Press Council responsible for arbitrating public complaints in accordance with the new democratic era. The South African media industry is guided by organisations such as the Press Council of South Africa¹⁰ which are responsible for developing regulations and policies in the public interest to ensure quality services for all South Africans. The South African press code is the cornerstone of the regulatory systems of print media. The press code has the longest history compared to any other media code. According to Thloloe (2012: 111) the Press Council, in reviewing the code, looked at more than 100 codes and confirms that it is at an extremely high-standard and the majority of print media entities subscribe to the Press Code.

¹⁰ “The Press Council of South Africa maintains that the effectiveness of self-regulation by the print media is enhanced by public participation in a co-regulatory process....the organisation established a voluntary independent co-regulatory system involving exclusively representatives of the press and representatives of the public...In terms of the establishment of the press Council, the founding associations are Print Media South Africa (PMSA), which includes: The Newspaper Association of South Africa (NASA); The Magazine Publishers Association of South Africa (MPASA); The Association of Independent Publishers (AIP); The Forum of Community Journalists (FCJ); and The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), which also acts in trust for a journalists' association until such an association is formed” (Press Council of South Africa 2015: 1).

The constitution of the Press Council of South Africa (Press Council of South Africa 2015: 1) acknowledges that:

[the] South African Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and that SA is also party to the 2002 Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, drawn up by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, which states: Effective self-regulation is the best system for promoting high standards in the media.

This relates to media's responsibility to maintain professional and ethical standards. It also highlights the ideologies of professional conduct that are expected to be embraced and maintained by media professionals and how these play an important role in influencing public perceptions regarding the portrayal of women in magazine media.

Media commentators (Oosthuizen 1997; Potter 2013) maintain that the majority of people depend on media for information. Media privilege and normalise certain types of discourse about gender. Media's role is undeniable and through its representations media portray the various norms of groups in contemporary society. They decide what should be covered and how it should be covered and they provide an interpretation of issues and events. They have the ability to influence the thinking of individual readers and if focus is regularly on men while continuously playing down the abilities and achievements of women by devaluing their accomplishments, these representations may become accepted as the norm. MDDA (2014: 4) affirms that "media is an important medium for communication as it informs, educates, entertains and provides a platform for dialogue necessary for democratic discourse." A lack of diversity in the media is of great concern for media practice as its central responsibility is to report issues in a fair, accurate and balanced manner, with a diversity of voices to contribute towards building democracy.

Authors including (Christians 2004; Fourie 2008) discuss how philosophies of African Ubuntu with its emphasis on community and collectivism have stimulated the development of doctrines regarding the indigenous role of the media and warn of the misuse of such doctrines to limit media freedom and human rights. An important question is: how free is the media, when two decades into the democratic order it is still, to an extent, unrepresentative of those it serves? Gender activist and head of GL, Morna (2008: 1), raised this question and states that “despite having a South African constitution that entrenches equal rights, discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices, patriarchy and sexism are still alive and well in our South African newsrooms.” South African media workers confirm that there are notable inequalities regarding gender in executive positions in South African media houses. Senior positions at most media houses are dominated by men and male journalists dominate in areas such as politics, sport and economics. This highlights the unbalanced power relations in media organisations and suggests why women are often associated with specific kinds of media outputs, with certain genres being deemed ‘feminine’ and labelled as ‘women genres’. Morna (2008) adds that despite many southern African regimes committing themselves to gender equality, none of the media players in her study identified detailed objectives in working towards achieving gender parity.

Chetty, news editor at Media24 in an interview on 12 December 2014 maintained that many genres of media remain the preserve of men and a huge amount of media organisations ‘window dress’ by including a few women in central positions while maintaining a male-controlled environment. Meanwhile, Narsimdas, former journalist at YOU magazine in an interview on 15 December 2014 affirmed that even in magazine media it is predominantly a ‘boys club’. This highlights that power and control of media messages remain in the hands of men despite the fact that magazines are one of the very few media instruments that have women in leading positions.

According to Steyn and De Beer (2004) research indicates that newsrooms in South Africa remain white and male-dominated with women being under-represented as journalists, sources of information as well as recipients of information. The Glass Ceilings Study (Rama 2010), which explored the institutional composition of media houses in Southern Africa, revealed that the newsroom setting has a huge impact on achieving gender equality. Rama (2010: 1) states that increasing the number of women decision-makers may not necessarily result in an increase in content that relates to and involves women. However, the study revealed that the proportion of women in senior positions is 25% which is higher than the 20% proportion of women news sources and indicates that having women in the media can only make a difference if strategies to mainstream gender issues are integrated into all aspects of media work. The Glass Ceiling study found that women reached the 'glass ceiling' at executive level. It also found that male counterparts received good working contracts and dominated in specialised departments such as editorial and production, while women predominated in support departments. Very few media houses in South Africa have gender policies that are committed to achieving gender balance. The Glass Ceiling study also revealed that having more women journalists does make a difference in that women journalists access significantly more women sources than male reporters. This study will explore whether the gender make-up of magazine newsrooms do in fact allow for more objective and balanced coverage of gender. In doing so, the researcher will also focus on the issue of whether women are portrayed in ways that are suitable to those media and market players who will benefit profitably.

Qualitative monitoring of media in the Glass Ceiling study revealed blatant stereotypes on the part of some editors who still believe that the outward bodily appearance of women is more valuable than intellectual attributes. During the consultative workshops participants noted various possible reasons behind some of the results, and also suggested solutions to the low representation of women in newsrooms. One of the comments that was often repeated was the

need for women to own media to expand the proportion of women journalists in the newsrooms.

Mhengerera of Tanzania's Express newspaper in Rama (2010) blamed the low numbers of women reporters in some media houses on employer attitudes. He gave an example of his media house, where four women journalists were fired at the same time he and another male journalist were employed:

The employer argued that we two male journalists were able to cover the work done by four women journalists, who, the employer said, spent three-quarters of their time beautifying themselves. How do you realise gender parity with such employers? (Rama 2010: 64).

It must be noted that although this study tracks gender representation and equality from a societal perspective with an analysis of magazine text and audience analysis, it is also imperative to understand the underlying gender dynamics within the institutional structures of the media. The connected landscapes of media's production and consumption practices will also be addressed as there is a powerful interplay between the media, the state and the market. Mhengerera in Rama (2010) further observed that women in media are either freelancers or correspondents, which makes it easy for employers to fire them, and also difficult for them to be promoted to influential positions. Mngumi from Tanzania concurred, noting that the nature of employment for women reporters also makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse. She explained that often women journalists are expected to perform sexual favours in exchange for their stories being published. In Botswana, for example, participants noted that most newsrooms were dominated by men, with the exception of *The Voice*, which was owned by a woman. The editor and news editor of *The Voice* are also women. In contrast, the *Sunday Standard* which is co-owned by three men, does not have a single female reporter, and only one female intern. This shows that if women own media, the likelihood that there will be more women journalists in the newsroom and senior management

is higher. Participants in the consultative workshops observed that women are keen to venture into the media industry.

The majority of print media newsrooms in South Africa have male editors, except for a few such as the *Mail & Guardian* who currently has Angela Quintel as their editor in chief. This publication also appointed the country's first female editor, Ferial Haffajee, in 1994. In recent years South African media institutions have appointed more women editors. Gender and media activists and institutions need to work unwaveringly to pave the way for gender diversity in the media terrain. Likewise, media have a responsibility to offer diverse gendered perspectives and ensuring the visibility of women in newsrooms and news content.

Media institutions must aim to disseminate balanced representation of gender in media content. Media institutions need to monitor the representation of women and men in the media and join together to take action to promote gender equality in and through the media. A critical question is: can gender equality be achieved in South African newsrooms while media representations and employment practices continue to stereotype, marginalise or under-represent women?

Media has a responsibility to communicate information in an objective manner and present an equitable account of women's position in society. However, many media workers continue to have oppressive attitudes towards women. This is evident in a column by an international writer who justified why women did not deserve more sport coverage than they received. The *Irish Times'* Kevin Myers (Dublin Sports and Recreation Council 2007: 7) states "we don't want to watch women playing sports because generally speaking they're not very good – they're small and they're weak and they're slow and watching an average woman throw an object is a deeply moving tragedy." Myers view exemplifies the deeply patriarchal attitudes that are alive in media

organisations and society and reinforce the stereotype that women are less competent than men. Meanwhile, Byerly in Govender (2010: 41) states:

The absence of women in news stories globally, in public affairs and magazines and media's over sexualisation of women, and women's under-employment by media organisations all amount to a symbolic annihilation of women by media and should be stopped at all costs. I think there is no single answer to this dilemma. Increasing the number of women in media, changing policies and increasing public funding for media and the inclusion by media companies of gender policies and mechanisms to put them in place might help solve the problem and contribute to parity in media.

Govender's (2010) study also highlighted many male media workers' beliefs that media is not a job for women as they are not mentally tough enough. This reinforces the attitudes that prevail in society and particularly within media organisations. In analysing normative media theory it is important to look back as one re-assesses the role of the media in postmodern, globalising and changing media landscape. In the next section the researcher will explore media's responsibility to society.

3.2.1 Social responsibility theory

This theory refers to the responsibility media has in society from setting professional, ethical standards, pursuing objective reporting and self-regulation. Self-regulation refers to ethics and principles of professional conduct that are expected to be embraced and implemented by media professionals. This theory highlights the interplay between nation-building and media freedom and responsibility. The social responsibility theory draws attention to the concept of self-control and media's responsibility to create a forum to represent different views in media content. Media are accountable to society and Fourie (2008: 240) defines media objectivity as the hallmark of good journalism and an important criterion to test the reliability of information.

Theorists including Taflinger (1996: 6) state “objectivity is not a possible goal in human interaction, including journalism; as long as human beings gather and disseminate information, subjectivity will be the rule, not the exception”. Additional contentions have been developed against the concept of ‘objectivity’. Merrill (1990: 272) explains that the process of selection creates an environment for subjectivity in media coverage, “the reporter selects, and the selection of what to put into a story automatically subjectivises it, in a sense biasing and distorting the reality that the reporter is claiming to objectify in the report.” His work demonstrates the difficulties media players face in reporting all elements of a story and addresses the different ways facts and viewpoints are reported.

Media scholars propound that achieving objectivity in journalism is challenging due to the many constraints affecting media. Furthermore, written content, verbal messages and images adversely affect the concept of objectivity. The authors Taflinger (1996) and Merrill (1990) posit that media is encumbered with subjectivity that works against objectivity instead of advocating it. They point out that external constraints and environmental conditions, including working conditions of journalists, policies of the media and the market-driven environment also determine the impact of media’s approach to objectivity.

However, other media theorists such as Gauthier (1991), McQuail (2010) and Mencher (1991) defend the concept of objectivity in journalism and suggest that despite many existing constraints, this does not imply that objectivity is impossible. Exponents of the social responsibility theory undertake to unite the concepts of media freedom with accountability to society. In his paper *In Defence of a Supposedly Outdated Notion: The Range of Application of Journalistic Objectivity* Gauthier (1991: 4) advocates the concept of objectivity. He maintains that although objectivity is sometimes impeded it is possible to maintain this standard of professionalism. Mencher (1991: 46) contends that objectivity relates to a media worker’s ability to provide factual information free of bias, one’s feelings or opinions and when they can be checked against

something. McQuail (2010: 200) concedes that “objectivity is a particular form of media practice and also a particular attitude to the task of information collection, processing and dissemination.” This highlights the concept of detachment, the absence of subjectivity, ensuring freedom of partisanship, reliable sources and factual accuracy.

People in society depend on media for information. Therefore media has an important role and is responsible for representing information in an accurate and objective manner. According to Barkemeyer, Holt and Figge (2010: 382) media undoubtedly contribute to the awareness of certain issues and frame others in society. This emphasises how media can shape people’s views of important societal issues. It also raises the question of media accountability. McQuail (2004: 251) emphasised:

In a free society it is desirable that multiple forms of accountability should exist, to avoid centralised power of control over media, to maximize space for freedom and also to reflect the many and real differences of purpose lying behind the whole enterprise ... accountability cannot be considered of its essence as inconsistent with freedom.

These views highlight that democracy requires a robust, diversified and free media to disseminate information that encourages diversity and citizen participation. A journalist’s task is to provide information without including subjective views. In disseminating information, journalists may intentionally or unintentionally allow their personal opinions to be disseminated by means of the visual imagery or language selected and this subjectivity can threaten media objectivity. Objectivity in media will lead to media products having more credibility and thereby more market value. This view is supported by McQuail (2010: 202) who asserts that media content should offer balanced and impartial coverage and diverse perspectives. This raises the long-standing questions of transparency and accountability and whether journalism can be objective. According to McQuail (2010: 172-174), “a journalistic code of ethics refers to a set of principles of professional conduct that are adopted and

controlled by journalists themselves.” These include aspects such as accuracy in content, respect for sources and maintaining a responsibility to provide objective coverage. The social responsibility theory implores media to embrace the country’s democratic position, by representing diverse views and opinions that will contribute to raising the public profile of women and allows for comment, criticism and public expression. In linking representation of women to social responsibility of the media, Boswell (2002:1) states:

The media, contrary to its protestations of neutrality and objectivity, is not a neutral entity. It has incredible power, and concomitant responsibility, in shaping its public’s views of the world.... The mass media therefore can be a tool for upholding the status quo (which includes racial and gender equity) a tool for transformation and a just, more equitable social order. The media collectively, plays an important role in the shaping of perceptions around women, their role in society and what is considered acceptable with regards to gender roles.

Media workers have a responsibility to represent truthful, impartial and relevant information to society and to champion ethical and professional performance. Media ought to provide appropriate, deserving coverage to women. The same applies to reporting of men – it should reflect their contribution to society and not the patriarchal representations that engulf media content. The predisposition of prejudice of women in magazine content can be seen through the selection of content, the exclusion of important issues and the placement of content.

Under-representation of women’s remarkable contributions to society and sexualised, stereotypical portrayals of women have the power to persuade in readers the belief that women are not strong and influential. Media often sexualise women by centring on physical appearance. Furthermore, women are frequently displayed as sexual objects for male consumption in media texts. Many authors have argued that media images particularly those that venerate the “thin ideal” can influence identity construction and body image (Dittmar and Howard 2004a; Halliwell and Dittmar 2004).

An example of media sexualising women can be seen in the popular Dolce and Gabana's perfume advertisements which have included controversial images of women and men – all of which have sparked debate around how visual images in the media are interpreted, and the impact on society.



Figure 3.1: Dolce & Gabbana
Source: Gender Links 2015

The advertisement in Figure 3.1 presents a young woman in a black swimming costume and strappy high heels. She is slim and has long voluminous hair. She is pinioned by a man who is partly dressed, while another three muscular men stand around witnessing the act. Despite the Dolce and Gabana's brand arguing that the advertisement plays on sexual fantasy and is conveying sex and appeal, the blank, detached facial expression reveals that she is not a willing participant and has no control over what is happening to her. It further has connotations of sexual violence or "a scene of impending gang rape and can be seen to promote violence against women" (GL 2015: 1). The image can be interpreted as a young woman being raped while other men pay no attention to it, give approval to it, or desire it themselves. The male is standing over the woman, holding her hands down and is emitting a position of power

and showing that he is in control. According to GL (2015: 1) the advertisement may be used to:

Promote violence against women; promote debate and discussion around what influence images have over actions or beliefs; discuss the impact of images that rely increasingly on 'shock value' to sell products; illustrate the 'sex sells' mentality of fashion advertisers and discuss where the line between sexy and offensive lies; and show that advertising is far more demeaning to women today than it was 20 years ago.

Furthermore, the support for the objectification of women in media is a multifaceted problem in South Africa particularly because the country has extremely high violence and rape statistics. Media should be instrumental in ensuring that its content does not promote the demeaning violent acts against women that are rife in the country. This is confirmed by Mwilu (2010: 1) who states:

The lack of respect for women that leads to rampant violence against them is fed by media tendencies to portray women in sexually demeaning ways. There is a serious need to prioritise and regulate the interrogation of media messages, so that whatever power they have to create and sustain meanings is not wielded at the expense of women and girls ... with rape statistics as high as South Africa's, any portrayals that glamorise the sexual objectification of women should be discouraged with the resolve and seriousness they demand. Any efforts to counter rape need to take account of what the media are promoting as normal.

Mwilu's statement questions the impact of sexualised content in magazines. These types of advertisements abound in magazine media content and misrepresent gender. Furthermore, men are also starkly misrepresented and portrayed as sexually driven, callous and insensitive individuals. According to GL (2015: 1) Dolce and Gabana has a tendency of creating provocative advertisement. GL (2015: 1) affirms that:

Images hold a great deal of power in society. They can both challenge and uphold a society's beliefs and assumptions. While Dolce and

Gabbana possibly hoped to challenge assumptions, they have actually reinforced them. This image tells us that rape is acceptable, that men are powerful sexual predators, and that dressing in a particular way will get a woman into 'trouble'.

Media professionals need to reflect on their responsibility to society. Despite the common view that magazines are reliant on advertisers for their survival, media professionals need to question whether the increasingly subversive and shocking imagery is necessary to keep a leading edge on the market? This raises the question of how gender is being used in magazines, and should spur media professionals and advertisers to reflect on the importance of creating visuals that are gender sensitive.

By representing women in a confined, subdued manner, media are reproducing concepts of patriarchy, particularly in terms of women being portrayed as sex objects for male consumption. When women do appear in editorial content or advertisements it is often in a way that offers more credibility on men than on women. Women are also often featured based on their physical attributes and media constructions trivialise their contributions and detract attention from their abilities. Additionally, when women are photographed, mostly in advertisements, it is often in a highly sexualised way, foregrounding their bodies.

When exploring images it is important to look at the quantity and quality of images and how they are positioned. Quantity of photographs of women are plentiful and proliferate in media content particularly magazines. However, these representations are saturated with sexuality and limiting portrayals of women. Media can positively influence society by representing women and men in progressive roles. The Southern African GMPS (Rama 2010: 17) revealed that 73% of South African women and 56% of men would prefer a new agenda reflecting a celebration of women's diversity and where men make the pages in non-traditional roles. These findings are clearly a call for change that media needs to be aware of.

Social responsibility theory relates to this study as it focusses on media output specifically objective coverage that promotes quality, ethics and diversity in the South African media. This theory implies that magazines should provide an unbiased, factual reflection of the achievements of women in society. The social responsibility theory implores media professionals to be heedful of their responsibility to maintain professional standards relating to the representation of women in magazine media content. This theory further contributes to the debate of media professionalism and objectivity. The preceding discussion provided an overview of normative theory of the media, specifically the social responsibility theory, to assess the role of magazines in representing women and in constructing gender identity.

3.2.2 Critical political economy theory

In this section, the researcher discusses critical political economy theory and analyses media and propaganda in democratic South Africa, reviewing the market-driven media industry and its influence in shaping public perception and identity construction of magazine readers. The critical political economy theory “takes into consideration the holistic nature of the media industry and links it to issues of action and structure, in an attempt to discern the real constraints that shape the lives and opportunities of the media industry” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 73). Critical political economy theory focuses on the media’s commercial factors and the powerful role they assume. This theory also allows the researcher to assess how the professional practice of journalists and editors intersect with the market-driven media. Critical political economy theory suggests that media are driven by the need to gain advertising and are influenced by advertisers. This will be investigated in this research study as it seeks to explore this intersection through in-depth analysis of *YOU* and *DRUM* magazine’s texts and interviews with media professionals.

This concept has been well-researched internationally. Many studies have examined the impact of commercialisation on media content (Campbell 2008;

Herman and Chomsky 1998; Schudson 1993). However, in South Africa, this is a relatively new field of study as compared to countries like the United States and United Kingdom. In discoursing critical political economy, this study will contribute to an emerging body of research in South Africa into the impact that advertising has within the media sector.

Studies (Cowling, Hadland and Tabi Tabe 2008; Dlamini 2008) have been conducted at mainstream newspaper publications to determine the influence of advertising on editorial copy and content. These studies have raised important issues relating to business objectives and professional integrity. Cowling, Hadland and Tabi Tabe's 2008 study of the special projects unit at the *Star* and Dlamini's 2008 study at the *Financial Mail* focussed on the critical political economy and media professionalism. In terms of magazines, Cowling, Hadland and Tabi Tabe observed that magazines are indeed influenced by advertisers and take their needs into consideration in terms of production. This raises the question of the dependency on advertising. Hadland, Cowling and Tabi Tabe (2007: 65) maintain that advertising has become crucial for some media publications' existence.

The political economy approach explores media's role in implementing a dual role: providing society with objective information and providing advertisers with value for money. The advertiser–editor relationship can face a backlash as was experienced by Rapport Motoring editor Egmont Sippel. Sippel published a damaging car review which led to the manufacturer withdrawing advertising spend after the paper refused to retract the article (Ueckermann 2006). This raises the question of media's dual-role which includes media professionals' ability to balance journalistic objectivity and media houses pursuit of profit-making.

The South African government has also often raised issues around lack of demographic representation within the media. This is well-articulated in a comment by the former Minister in the Presidency, Essop Pahad (2001: 1)

who was concerned at an “almost total lack of a public culture in SA”. He was referring to the media’s commercial interests and he called on the media to play an active role in “meeting people’s needs.” According to Pahad (2001: 1)

The media can be adept at defining the issues, at writing the agenda, and creating public opinion, which can, at times, bear little relation to reality on the ground. They could benefit by remaining closer to the grassroots, by absorbing what people are saying, and by sending their reporters to what they might view as the "back blocks" and seeing what is happening out there – however inconvenient this may be to the news-gatherers. There is no doubt in my mind that things are vastly better in terms of our meeting people's needs in the new, democratic South Africa, but the media has an extended role to play in this.

Pahad’s statement relates to this study as it emphasises media’s role in a democracy and its responsibility in providing diverse content that will contribute to creating a well informed and critical thinking citizenry. Media’s impact is persuasive and powerful and it needs to be aware of how its commercial interests can compromise ensuring quality of content and good journalistic practice.

The media has also come under criticism for targeting affluent audiences with spending power in order to increase their share of advertising revenue. Commercial interests of the press are leaving the interests of the poor behind (Duncan 2003). Hadland, Cowling and Tabi Tabe (2007: 65) state that advertisers influence copy and that editors and journalists operate with this in mind. This issue was raised in a discussion document entitled “*Media in a Democratic South Africa*”, which the ANC placed on the table at its 51st national conference in December 2002. Duncan (2003: 3) elucidated:

Commercialisation of media was reinforcing the historic disparities in the media inherited from apartheid to create a potent mix of exclusion. Given the economic inequalities in the country, it was inevitable that advertiser-driven media would exclude the poor: a problem that was becoming increasingly stark as advertising assumed ever greater importance as the commercial media's revenue stream.

This raises the questions of the balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making. Critical political economy theory indicates that media often face pressure to meet targets and find themselves conceding to advertiser demands. Media commentator, Chris Moerdyk (in Ueckermann 2006: 32) says that, “while during the apartheid years editors were powerful, and could tell advertisers to ‘get stuffed’, today’s editors have to ‘start thinking like businessmen’”. Ueckermann (2006: 32) affirms that the trend is not uniquely South African. Furthermore, ownership, control and fierce competition of the media in South Africa and a shrinking advertising pool intensifies the battle for profit among media players. The dependency on advertising results in the demise of publications that are not able to attract advertising due to their smaller market shares (Herman & Chomsky 1998: 15).

This section assessed the underlying dynamics involved in the intersection of media’s commercial and professional obligations and is cognately linked to the political economy of the media that was comprehensively discussed in Chapter 2. The next section will explore the long term media effect theories that influence the way society interpret information and how this impacts on identity construction.

3.3 Media effect theory

Media effect theory highlights the power of modern day media and its ability to impact on people over a period of time. Fourie (2007: 237) supports this view stating that “the underlying assumption of long-term theories is that media do not have an immediate impact on behaviour and people’s way of thinking, but can affect behaviour over a longer period of exposure to media content.” Furthermore, media has entered into an area where it is increasingly linked to all aspects of society and are therefore seen as influential components of society. This is affirmed by McQuail (in Pinto and Sousa 2011: 129) who maintains that media can be seen as extremely powerful as they contribute to the economic, political and cultural life of societies. There are many mass

communication theories including agenda-setting theory, cultivation theory and spiral of silence theory. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will look specifically at long term media effect theories, specifically agenda setting theory. However, the researcher will also expound on the spiral of silence concept; social expectation theory and accumulation theory which resonate with the agenda setting theory.

3.3.1 Agenda setting theory

Agenda setting theory relates to the dynamics of issues and how they are categorised and positioned in media content. The agenda setting theory was formally developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972). These authors believe in media's ability to influence what people think about, transferring information to the public agenda. This theory reaffirms the power of the media in shaping public opinion. It explains that by merely drawing attention to specific issues and neglecting other issues in its content, media can influence public opinion. The agenda setting theory highlights how magazine media's representation of women can impact on the construction of gender identity. If magazines focus the majority of their attention on portraying women as sex objects this could impact and contribute significantly on women's development of self-identity, self-image and self-esteem. Fourie (2001: 304) maintains that the "assumption of the agenda-setting theory is that, whether consciously or unconsciously, the media create a particular image of reality." This means that the omission of information even the emphasis of specific information can contribute to the way audiences view and understand aspects in society.

An important component in the agenda setting theory is the concept of framing which is an extension of agenda setting. This refers to media workers "framing judgments" in selecting and representing information. This means that readers will receive information as a social construction in which it has been 'framed' and therefore this can impact on the way in which people interpret and process

information presented in media. Authors Jakubowicz (2007); Deuze (2007); Williams and Delli Carpini (2011) contend that media are one of the main arenas within which societal issues are framed and developed. In terms of shaping content and the media's power, McCombs (1985: 132) argues:

This ability to affect cognitive change among individuals is one of the most important aspects of the power of mass communication. However, there is consequently some uncertainty about whether agenda setting is initiated by the media or by the members of the public and their needs, or by institutional elites who act as sources for the media.

This theory highlights that media not only shapes public opinion but also influences and sets the agenda on what people should think about. This is often based on the needs of institutional elites who control the media. This highlights the power of magazine media to perpetuate gender stereotypes and how limiting coverage of women could have an impact on identity construction. The agenda setting theory points out that based on the information presented in the media in terms of priority, people will determine what aspects to focus on in terms of their own lives. What is required is diversity and plurality of content and sources that will lead to critical, well-informed citizenry and the deepening of democracy. This draws attention to media's significant role in terms of setting the agenda for people to follow. The agenda setting process is described as one where issues or 'the agenda' are framed by media professionals and those issues will consequently be the ones that are consumed by the public as important. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2005: 24) describe agenda setting as "instances in which media coverage draws attention to an issue or events and 'puts it on the agenda' for public discussion and debate." Several generalisations have been concluded about the agenda setting concept:

Firstly, different media do tend to agree about the relative salience of a set of issues; secondly, media indicators do not closely match 'real world' indicators. It is not the absolute significance of an issue that counts but the relative strength of forces and people trying to define

and promote an issue (Rogers and Dearing in McQuail, 2000: 456).

The agenda setting theory has been linked to many other concepts including gate-keeping, Noelle Neumann's spiral of silence concept and the bandwagon effect. A critical question is: "Who sets the agenda for agenda setters?" Media exponents Fourie (2001) and McQuail (2000) maintain that "media gatekeepers" are in control of content that makes it into media space. Magazines have their own hierarchies of "media gatekeepers" who control flow and access of information regarding people, issues and advertising. Fourie (2008: 75) explains that gatekeeping can be described as the means by which information moves along various checkpoints before being disseminated to the public. This affirms that media not only have the power to influence individuals thinking but also afford 'privileged' media access to those in positions of power.

Gatekeepers can be defined as the powerful individuals or factions within media organisations that have control over media content and how it is going to be presented. Their influence extends far beyond newsgathering and publication. They are also involved in assigning space to information and thus have the ability to emphasise or reduce the significance of information. With the selection and placement of media content, the importance of issues are emphasised. Despite the fact that gatekeeping has been pioneered by media itself, it influences the content of magazines. This implies that gatekeeping has the power to alter the quality of content of magazines. This further illustrates that the final product of magazine content has filtered through several 'editorial checkpoints' before reaching audiences. Content selection also depends on the ideology of the media editors. As indicated in Figure 3.2 audiences or readers are exposed to a constructed view of reality, controlled and influenced by elements including market forces, economic power and editorial alignment. This study acknowledges the importance of the political and economic influences on the media and this has been discussed in the previous chapter. Blurring of editorial content can have negative

consequences including decrease of public trust and compromising the integrity of media and it further divests citizens of valuable information.

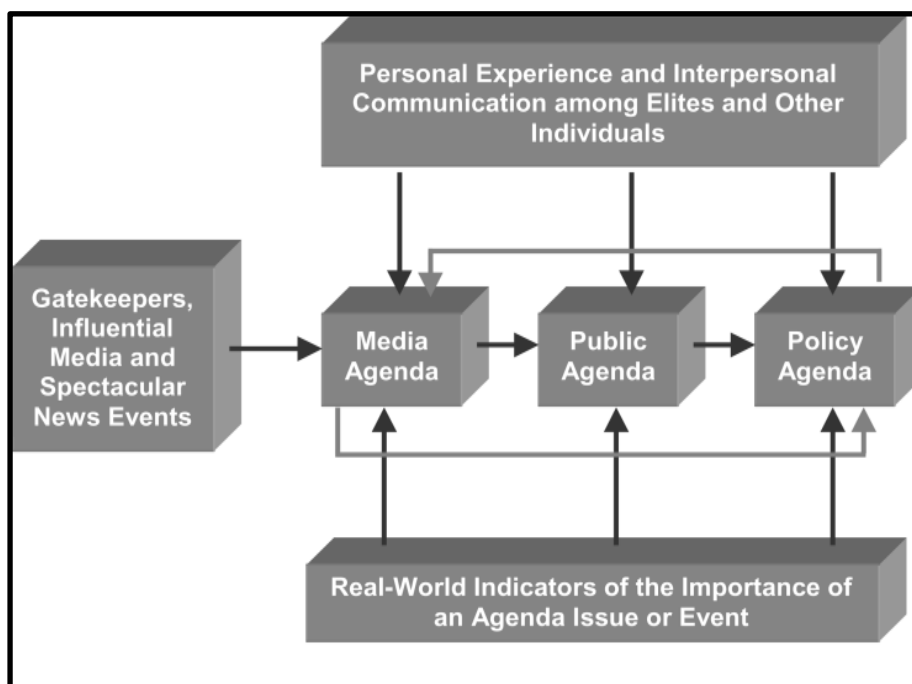


Figure 3.2: Agenda Setting

Source: Rogers and Dearing (1988: 557)

Clowes (2002: 14-15) discusses the persuasive role of magazines:

Magazines embody 'processes of persuasion'; they are in a sense vehicles of persuasion that reflect, produce and ratify what is defined as 'normal' and what is 'abnormal' for particular audiences in particular historical junctures. The discourse of a magazine inevitably emphasises and privileges one version of reality over another, enabling editors, writers and even owners (themselves gendered products of society) to attribute particular sets of gendered meanings (out of a range of meanings) to the events or processes they deem newsworthy.

The above statement maintains that by providing people with information to think about, media are able to persuade our opinions, shape our thinking and influence the decisions we make. If the successes of women are limited or excluded in magazines, this will compromise the quality of information

presented to readers and influence their perspectives. It can also be argued that if magazines place emphasis on women in stereotypical roles this could negatively impact on identity construction and how women view themselves.

McCombs and Shaw (1972: 178) describe the relationship between media and society, “here lies the most important effect of mass communication, its ability to mentally order and organise our world for us. In short, the media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about.” They believe that media audiences determine how to prioritise specific issues and the importance to attach to issues based on how they are presented in the media. Thus a magazines’ underrepresentation of women can severely threaten the development of women in society as it will have a negative impact on identity construction. This theory highlights that media has powerful influence on the way individuals think about issues and form their opinions.

3.3.2 Spiral of silence concept

In the 1970s, Noelle-Neumann developed the “Spiral of silence” theory. It suggested “that the expression and formation of public opinion results from people’s perception of the climate of opinion” (Glynn, Hayes and Shanahan 1997: 452). The spiral of silence concept has similarities to the agenda setting theory as both are associated with the impact of dominant messages circulated in the media.

Neumann’s concept as illustrated in Figure 3.3 has been analysed repeatedly over the years and suggests that individuals turn to society for signs relating to society’s dominant ideologies. They further seek information on what views and concepts are increasing in popularity and those that are declining.

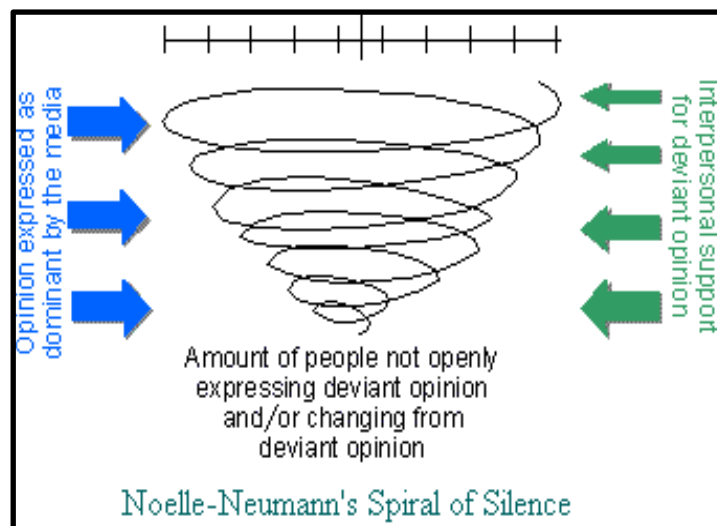


Figure 3.3: Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Concept

Source: Noelle-Neumann (1991: 256)

The theory of the spiral of silence proposes a model that equates public opinion as the pressure to follow others (Oh 2011: 7). The inferences of the theory are as follows:

Society threatens deviant individuals with isolation, individuals' experience fear of isolation continuously, this fear of isolation causes individuals to try to assess the climate of opinion at all times and the result of the estimate affect their behaviour in public, specially their willingness or not to express opinions openly (McQuail 2000: 462).

This implies that people will be less likely to express their views particularly if it is not a dominant view in society. Liu and Fahmy (2011: 45) support this view, stating that people would prefer to be silent and not express their opinions, particularly if their views are deviant or on the decline in society.

Hayes (2007: 785) states that individuals use a 'quasistatistical sense' to determine whether their opinions are popular or not. Heney (2011: 7) explains that this theory purports that individuals base their reading of public opinion on a series of cues in their environment, ranging from newspapers and mass

media to outspoken opinion makers. As a result of this, dominant views gain additional exposure and diverse ones regress. “The more individuals perceive these tendencies and adapt their view accordingly, the more one faction appears to dominate and others to be on the downgrade” (Noelle-Neumann in McQuail 2000: 461). Waldahl (1989: 126) adds “The tendency of the one to speak up and the other to be silent starts off a spiralling process which increasingly establishes one’s opinion as the prevailing one”. This concept relates to media having the ability to sway people who are fearful of social isolation.

This type of behaviour can form public opinion and also alter public opinions. By focusing on specific issues, media has the ability to sway public perceptions and views. Oh (2011: 8) infers that for Noelle-Neumann (1974), messages communicated through the mass media had three main characteristics: ubiquity (mass media messages are omnipresent); cumulation (they are also repeated over time); and consonance (they are uniform across the mainstream media). The media therefore have an instrumental role in constructing gender identity and it can be argued that if magazines represent women in a limited manner, this may have a negative impact on their self-image and identity construction. This will profoundly impede the country’s resolve to upholding gender parity for a more equitable social order.

As postulated by O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2005: 25), media have the ability to provide extensive focus to selected issues. These authors believe that a ‘snowball effect’ is created by media, building momentum on topics which then results in audiences perceiving it to be of huge significance. This concept highlights magazine media’s role in positioning issues relating to women and the impact it can have on readers. The above section explored the agenda setting theory, a long term media effect theory as well as the spiral of silence concept. In the next section the researcher expounds on the social expectation theory and the accumulation theory.

3.3.3 Social expectation theory

Social expectation theory relates to media's long-range and indirect influence on audiences. This theory explains how constant media messages over a period of time can influence and transform audience's opinions and mind-sets. It assess how the representation of people, events and issues in the media, influences people's beliefs. The social expectation theory indicates that media can be used as a source, directly or indirectly to develop guides for what is deemed as acceptable behaviour in society. This emphasises media's power in terms of influencing and shaping the opinions of the public. Fourie (2007: 186) maintains as influential socialisation channels media can also promote assimilation and harmonisation by offering information, educational and entertaining content. This means that if magazine media uniformly offer an objective representation of women, this can holistically lead to a more gender aware society. This theory elucidates how magazine representations can contribute to the long-term socialisation of readers.

This theory relates to this study in terms of the portrayal of gender differences in magazines. It further highlights that magazines focusing excessively on physical appearance rather than women's ability can limit women's role in society. This implies that through their content, magazines may reproduce, strengthen and sustain patriarchal ideology.

Women in South Africa have fought tirelessly for recognition of their sacrifices and are productive, active members of society. Their accomplishments and successes need to be documented and embraced by society. Magazine media are accountable and need to provide a fair, equitable representation of women in media content. Media messages and images can have a long term effect on audiences. Herman and Chomsky (1988: 1) maintain "the function of the mass media is to amuse, entertain, inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the wider society." This is affirmed by

O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2005: 457) who assert that "media has a cumulative effect on audiences and long term exposure to media 'cultivates' attitudes and beliefs through the persistent repetition of messages and images." Women need to be appropriately recognised by media as this will directly impact on society's opinion of women. The limited portrayal of women in media could lead to societal belief that women's achievements are unimportant. This theory infers that media periodically, indirectly, influence people and therefore, magazine media content can impact on public perception of women.

Fourie (2001: 241) affirms that according to social expectation theory, by consuming media "we can, over a period of time, learn the social norms adhered to by certain social groups, people and organisations in society". This theory illustrates how individuals ascertain information from the media and use it to shape their beliefs and behaviour in society.

An example is the abundance of magazine coverage on the lives of celebrities and pop stars that sends messages on their exciting and glamorous lifestyles. This is clearly evident in the Sketchers 'naughty but nice' magazine advertising campaign for teenage training shoes featuring pop star, Christina Aguilera. The advertisements appeared in billboards, shopping malls but mainly appeared in *Cosmo Girl!* and *Seventeen* magazine.

Christina Aguilera is featured in contrasting roles in all three advertisements (Figure 3.4). Firstly, as a belt-clad nurse and injured patient, secondly as a police officer with handcuffs, dressed in shorts and as a suspect bent over a car and lastly as a schoolgirl and teacher with her shirt unbuttoned. These images promote girls as sexual objects and can negatively affect women in many ways. These magazine advertisements present women as active desirable sexual objects and reinforce sexual stereotypes.



Figure 3.4: Christina Aguilera Sketchers' advertisements

Source: Business Wire 2004

In Figure 3.4 Christina Aguilera appears in contrasting roles, for instance as a police officer and a woman who has been arrested. These two roles, the authoritative and submissive roles limit her within a sexualised framework. Regardless of her image as strong or weak, dark or light, in leather boots or running shoes the advertisements in Figure 3.4 portray sexual connotations. Furthermore, the weak Christina with her hands placed on the hood of the car, leaning forward with her legs spread, gives the officer control over her. She is pictured lifting her rear-end upward, while turning sideways, exposing her chest.

The illustration in Figure 3.4 reinforces that the notions of beauty and lifestyle are constructed by western ideals and these messages often include visual images of celebrities dressed as sex objects and these images are idealised by magazine readers. This type of celebrity endorsement may lead readers', particularly young readers to compare their appearance to what magazine media presents as 'attractive' and 'successful' and as a means to be accepted in society.

The above example resonates with social norms and roles which are the suppositions of the social expectations theory. DeFleur and Dennis (1994: 591) provide the assumptions of this theory in Figure 3.5:

Assumptions of the Social expectation theory	
	• Different types of content disseminated by the media regularly depict “social activities and group life”;
	• These representations are often portrayed among “various media, providing corroboration;”
	• Those audiences that receive the information are provided with constructions of meaning about the people within that group. This is so, particularly for those with limited contact with “actual people of the stereotyped group;”
	• Audiences incorporate these interpretations relating to the norms and behaviour of these groups. “This leads to incidental learning of behaviour patterns or stereotyped interpretations” when interacting with people within the group, regardless of their actual character traits.

Figure 3.5: Social expectation theory

Social expectation theory explains the role of the media in conveying stereotypes in society. The social expectation theory also has affinities with the accumulation theory which will be discussed below.

3.3.4 Accumulation theory

This theory refers to how the long term exposure of issues in the media can change people’s way of thinking, attitude and conduct. DeFleur and Dennis (1994: 579) provide the following views of the theory in Figure 3.6:

Propositions of the Accumulation theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media produces messages and images about issues and events in society consistently over a period of time. These include topics such as gender and race discrimination, social and economic issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These representations corroborate each other. “People become increasingly aware of these messages, and on a person-to-person basis, a growing comprehension develops in the interpretations of the topic presented by the media”;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growing understanding of the topics presented by the media lead to “beliefs and attitudes that serves as guides to behaviour for members of the audience”;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequently, “minor individual-by-individual changes accumulate and new beliefs and attitudes emerge to provide significant changes in norms of appropriate behaviour related to the topic.”

Figure 3.6: Propositions of the Accumulation theory

Fourie (2001: 239) argues that “accumulation theory provides an explanation for the role of the media in changing people’s attitudes about topics such as divorce, sex, style and politics, over a period of time.” This implies that if various magazine media corroborate each other over a period of time this can lead to changes in the way people think and behave.

Stice, Spangler and Agras (2001) conducted a valuable longitudinal study and found that regular exposure to skinny women in magazines over a 15 month period can have a damaging impact on vulnerable young women. This is supported by many authors who claim that young women are overly influenced by the pressure to live up to “thin ideal” (Lokken, Ferraro, Kirchner and Bowling 2003; Mitola, Papas, Fusillo and Black 2006; Musher-Eizenman, Holub, Barnhart-Miller, Goldstein, and Edwards-Leeper 2004; Phares, Steinberg and Thompson 2004). This can be particularly related to the persistent magazine coverage of weight loss products by means of advertisements as well as editorial content. The question this raises is: what message is this sending to

women? This study will assess how women readers interpret these media messages and how it impacts on constructing gender identity.

The preceding section discussed normative theories, critical political economy theory and media effects theories in order to assess media's role in society and as a means to discuss the literature. These theories validate the impact of media in terms of shaping public opinion. The next section discusses feminist media perspectives relating to the representation of women in media content.

3.4 Feminist media theory

As we move into the third decade of democracy, gender remains a socially-significant identity marker that is distinctly relevant in South African society. Feminist media critique is important because this study focuses on gender issues, specifically the representation of women in magazines and its impact on identity construction. The feminist underpinning lends a gendered inflection to this study. Research undertaken within a feminist framework is sensitive to aspects of power, oppressive systems and can offer fresh perspectives relating to the media's representation of women and the role of women in society.

Harding and Norberg (2005: 2010) maintain that "feminist research projects have often advanced social science understanding and knowledge and research of this nature brings fresh perspectives to bear on old questions and ask new questions about ourselves and the social worlds with which we interact." In line with their stance, this study of representations of women in magazine media is framed within a feminist poststructuralist approach. Within this framework, the researcher explores the ways in which representations of gender intersect in South African English language consumer magazines. Feminist research starts from the recognition that society is pervasively patriarchal and that patriarchal ideology has pervaded all forms of cultural

production. Early feminist theory reviewed the influence of culture and society on women's physical appearance and behaviour and today a large amount of feminist research focuses on the media's role in shaping perceptions and constructing identity. Glenn (2000: 5) affirms that "Gender as a social construction largely defines the project of feminism and is the closest thing to a unifying concept in feminist studies".

Analysis of consumer magazines has formed part of the larger feminist concern as a result of the gender-based classifications they contain. Feminist media scholars have been particularly concerned with media's role in gender constructions and the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies. Van Zoonen (1994: 11), affirms that demeaning and irreverent depictions of femininity proliferate in media and are regularly at the core of feminist criticism. Furthermore, the media are instrumental in disseminating stereotypical, patriarchal and hegemonic values about women and femininity. According to Van Zoonen (1994: 6) "there has been a successful and inspiring alliance between feminist and cultural studies", both of which developed out of Marxist theory and are linked to progressive political movements outside of the academy.

The analytical application of feminist theories allows one to expand knowledge on gender issues. Feminist theories offer a base to examine and expand our epistemologies and ideals and therefore lends a gendered inflection to this study. According to Bourdieu (2005: 220) monitoring and examining media's representation of women and attaining approaches to challenge gender stereotyping is an age-old concern of gender and media advocates. Feminist theories address society's disproportionate power relations and assess how women have been omitted from important systems of society. Critical feminist theory aims to uplift women's position in society by constructing strategies and alternative frameworks for evaluating gender and social relations.

Feminist theory analyses and offers critique on patriarchal hegemony and attempts to increase the group awareness and influence of women. Durham (1999: 214) affirms that “feminist theory suggests that patriarchal ideology is embedded in unequal power relations and represented in traditional femininity as efforts to sustain gender inequities and sexual subordination.” When women are afforded media coverage, it is often confining in nature with emphasis on physical beauty. Durham (1999: 214) adds that “contemporary mass media are fully aware of the power of feminist ideas on women, cleverly using them as rhetorical devices while working simultaneously to undercut feminism.” In addition, Harding and Norberg (2005: 2009) highlight why studies exploring media are appropriately framed within a feminist methodology:

Feminist methodology and epistemology prioritises “studying up” studying the powerful, their institutions, policies and practices instead of focusing only on those whom the powerful govern. By studying up, researchers can identify the conceptual practices of power and how they shape daily social relations. Understanding how our lives are governed not primarily by individuals but more powerfully by institutions, conceptual schemes and their “texts”, which are seemingly far removed from our everyday lives, is crucial for designing effective projects of social transformation.

Commentators Hesse-Biber and Leckenby (2004) acknowledge that a synergistic research perspective is significant to the practice of conducting feminist studies and this involves the interlocking of epistemology, methodology and method, which interact in the production of new knowledge, interrogating the status quo and fostering an awareness on how we go about research. Stanley and Wise (1990: 23) maintain that feminist research involves an understanding that the researchers’ interpretations are politically, intellectually and emotionally grounded and power always exists in the research process. They affirm that a feminist epistemology ‘takes into account who can be the ‘knower’, what can be ‘known’ and what validates knowledge.’ McRobbie’s (1996: 172) argument is that magazines may be the most concentrated and uninterrupted media-scape for the construction of normative

femininity. Representations of women in media, and misrepresentations, have constructed gender inequalities that could impact on identity formation. Authors Curran and Gurevitch (1991: 34) concede that “media act as socialisation agents, along with the family – teaching children in particular their appropriate sex roles and symbolically rewarding them for appropriate behaviour”. Sexist practices, trivialising or ‘othering’ women have been taking place in various domains for decades. An example of the trivialising of women is evident in *YOU* (13 March 2014: 102) magazine’s coverage of the Duchess of York. The article is titled “Fergie’s roller coaster”. Excerpts from the article states *“the mom of two, who at one point tipped the scales at 101kg and was dubbed the Duchess of ‘Pork’ ... has followed a rigorous three-month exercise programme. “The Duchess of York appears to be winning the battle of the bulge – but her yo-yo dieting has taken its toll on her looks ... one moment she is lean and luscious the next she is puffy and a bit thick in the waist”*. This article severely annihilates the Duchess of York as the majority of the article focuses on her physical appearance and weight gain. In addition, the word ‘Pork’ equates her to a pig. This coverage highlights the existence of media’s rife sexist ideology and reinforces that women are often besmirched and devalued in the media.

Feminist theory suggests that there is a sexist ideology that incessantly permeates media content. These messages about skinniness, slimming and beauty, communicate to women that their bodies are an object to be perfected. This is evident in a *Fairlady* (2005) magazine advertisement that features a bleed page photograph of a black African woman, highlighting her naked body that is exposed from behind. The photographic representation in Figure 3.7 illustrates a hunkering glistening body of a women. The woman’s face is side-profiled and emphasis of the image is on the posterior of her figure, specifically her buttocks. Furthermore, her buttocks is accentuated as it is positioned on her heels. Her hidden face and the accentuation of her buttocks, highlights how she has been dehumanised by fragmenting her body. Representations of semi-naked women in magazine media sustains the oppressive

objectification of women. This further elucidates that women are more often seen than heard in magazine media content.

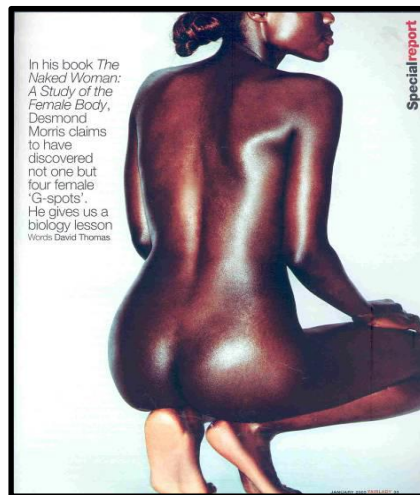


Figure 3.7: Fair Lady 2005 advertisement
Source: *Fair Lady*, January, 2005: 33

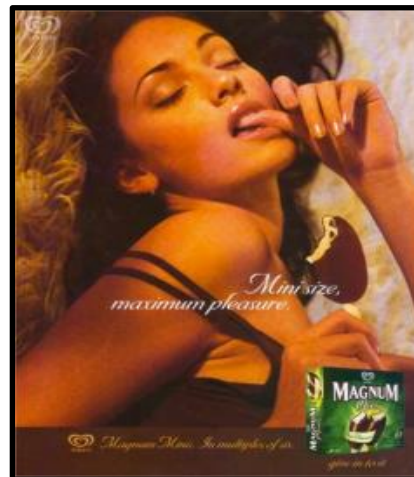


Figure 3.8: Magnum advertisement
Source: *Advertising and Society* 2012: 1

The objectification of women is further evident in magnum ice-cream advertisements that are often displayed with images that highlight women's physical appearance. The advertisement in Figure 3.8 displays an attractive white women, head slanting and eyes closed. She is photographed with her

left thumb in her mouth. Her strappy top has fallen onto her right shoulder and the image is highly charged with sexual undertones. In terms of the way in which she is positioned, one can take the modernist approach and view the woman in a submissive position as she is on her back. The visual representations in Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8 raises the question of the ways in which women are represented in media content. These visuals highlight the submissive and objectifying ways that women are represented. Sanger (2007: 4) highlights how media images severely confine women, “lounging, standing or sitting, where attention is drawn to particular parts of their bodies which our society deems sexual – buttocks, breasts, legs and mouth – and where they are presented as ‘available’ to the male reader.” This emphasises that media portray women in ways that reduce them to objects of men’s desire and as dependent on men.

Furthermore, feminist critics also deplore the way in which working women are positioned in media in comparison to males. This is clearly evident in the media coverage of an appointment of a woman in a high profile job in a New Zealand company. McGregor (2000: 294) states:

Gattung's appointment was devalued by framing her new job in terms of emphasis on her gender and age. The primary focus of introductory paragraphs and headlines on her youth, questions about her marital status and whether she intended to have children, as well as trivial inquiries about how far she swam each day, are not usually asked of new male CEOs when they meet the press.

This coverage reflects an outdated mythology relating to women and highlights journalists’ counterproductive philosophies and attitudes that subjugate and oppress women. McGregor (2000: 294) adds that “the primary framing of stories written by male journalists on the day of Gattung’s appointment showed that age and gender were regarded as the most salient elements featured.” It is clear that the coverage had little to do with her career aspirations and success and is an example of how the construction of media messages can downplay women’s contributions to society. It also highlights media’s power

to conceal specific information and overemphasise other information. This can have a negative impact on women readers who look to the media as educational and modelling devices and as a means to interpret the world.

These views are consistent with other countries 'representation' of women in politics. Just before the elections in the UK in 2010, women politicians were spotlighted for all the wrong reasons. Owen and Carlin (2009: 558) in *The Daily Mail* commented on the composition of the Conservative Party by introducing readers to what they described as "Cameron's Cuties: the 80 women likely to be among MPs in the Tories new woman friendly party". Another headline in *The Daily Mail* (Platell 2010) read "Have Cameron's Cuties really got what it takes to transform politics?" These examples highlight that the 'othering' of women and stereotypical representations are not unique to South African media but exist in media institutions in many countries.

Media are undoubtedly saturated with stereotypical and patriarchal representations of women and research in this field is warranted. Rakow (1986: 17) explains that research on gendered representations in the media and their effects entered academic journals in the 1970s. The birth of gender discussion signalled that the matter was a growing concern within the context of media analysis. Media and gender research was initiated mostly by feminists who encouraged transformation of media practices and content and by the late 70's it informed a large body of gender-related literature. Feminists have taken a leading role in gendered media research "since the second wave of feminism" (Marshall 2008: 687). There were huge advancements during the 80s and 90s and liberal feminist theory maintained a place in the academic world, and private and public organisations. Research focused primarily on the representation of women in media advertising through content analysis. Rakow (1986: 18) maintains that "it is easier to accommodate women and minorities by instituting policies and making content changes in media than it is to change the socio-economic systems." Despite the commitment to research, feminist media scholars often disagreed on the attainment of

equitable gender representation (Len-Ríos, Rodgers, Thorson and Yoon 2005). Liberal feminists argue that equality in the portrayal of women in media will promote acknowledgment of women in society whereas radical feminists advocate for societal intervention. McFadden's radical feminist position (2002: 2) states:

Intellectual engagement is the most sensual and most satisfying experience of living. It is akin to nurturing the very essence of my being. As a feminist I draw critical impetus from my own struggles to live differently: to be free and autonomous as a woman who bears an African identity that I can re-craft and reshape in continuous interaction with modernity as a moment of opportunity to live differently. The resistance that women engage in against reactionary patriarchal ideology and its practice feeds my radical feminist intellectual politics and informs my praxis of living and thinking within a radical tradition.

According to Butler and Paisley (in Van Zoonen 1994: 17) "media function in a counterproductive way because of the dominance of male editors, producers and journalists whose gender socialisation causes them to reproduce society's dominant values." This means that media may operate in a way that benefits a patriarchal and consumerist society. Restrictive representations in media is challenging as it lends to the fostering of the view that women are inferior and the 'weaker sex'.

Within this poststructuralist paradigm, this study aims to explore how magazines represent women by analysing relations of power, identities and knowledge production. It further assesses the ways in which these operate through power. According to Clark (2006: 9) a poststructuralist feminist approach would accentuate the social construction of subjectivity where issues of identity and experience are produced and positioned through historical and institutional relations. This approach further emphasises the importance of questioning these historical processes. A feminist poststructuralist exploration considers presentations of subjectivities. The terms subjectivities and identity are taken from Saco (1992: 23) who explains it as follows:

Subjectivities need to be understood as symbolic categories that emerge out of particular discourses: For example, masculinity and femininity are two subject positions made possible by the discourse of gender, and we can well imagine androgyny as another possibility. Second, identity should be regarded as a composite term signifying the multiple subjectivities that comprise one's sense of who one is.

In terms of this study of South African magazines, a feminist poststructuralist approach to understanding subjectivities around gender suggests that texts can be understood beyond the level of words and function as a representation of reality and a signifier of meaning. A poststructuralist paradigm provides a space for analysis of magazine messages about gender and how these powerful messages subvert, reinforce and reproduce, damaging constructions of gender identity. Saco (1992: 24) explains:

Given the historical incommensurability of some subject positions, identity is best understood not as a product, but as a process that involves the constant negotiation and renegotiation of multiple subjectivities in which human beings have unequal investments. Identity is the feigned product of interested intersubjective mediations. The dual nature of identity – its concomitant *presentness* and *becomingness* – derives from these endless mediations and is what makes identity fluid: at once defined and redefined, at once real and (re)presented.

While feminist analysis provides a basis for exploring how magazines play a significant role in relaying particular messages about gender, such research also seeks to contribute to the transformation of these ideologies. Feminist research can be seen as the exploration of women's experiences in an attempt to address the devaluing and misrepresentation of women's experiences as a means to contribute to eradicating women's inequitable position in society. The increasing tendency to portray women in a circumscribed manner in media is a disturbing trend and women should receive unprejudiced and balanced treatment. As a powerful medium, media need to feature achievements of women and refrain from the saturation of stereotypical, unrealistic representations of woman. This implies that post-

apartheid South Africa is still largely characterised by persistent disparities and inequalities with respect to gender.

The feminist poststructuralist approach contextualising this study is that opportunities and privileges attached to one side of the dichotomies of gender continue to operate as normative, reproducing inequalities that are inconsistent with philosophies of transformation and democracy. This study aims to contribute to feminist studies endeavouring to improve the position of women in society by unmasking patriarchal powers. This study will address magazines' representation of women by critically analysing magazine texts and by engaging in in-depth focus group discussions with women readers and interviews with media professionals.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided the theoretical foundation, which has served as a navigational tool for this study. It discoursed dominant theories that relate to media's representation of women and highlighted the need to place media democratisation on the progressive agenda. The dominant theories allowed the researcher to explore the context of magazines in this study. It employed a gendered lens to assess magazines' representation of women and the impact it has on identity construction. Magazines set the climate in which issues are understood and assessed and has a critical role in putting women on the public agenda. This chapter also highlighted that personality and behaviour are shaped by culture and society and changes in individual's consciousness will make way for changes in society.

The Literature review provided the theoretical base and determined issues to be discoursed. Based on this discussion, core themes have emerged. The researcher will address the issues of objectification of women in magazines. The themes identified are: objectivity of magazines' coverage of women; language used in coverage; visual imagery presented to readers and the

changing representation of women in magazines. These themes will be used to analyse the role of YOU and DRUM magazines in constructing gender identity. In doing so, the researcher will test the study's proposition and propose a model that contributes to social change and gender equality.

The next chapter details the methodological premises of the study. It explains the methods used to collect empirical data including interviews with media professionals and focus group discussions with magazine readers. The chapter will also provide details on the analytical tools used to determine the hegemonic discourses on gender in magazines.

Chapter 4 : Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters discussed the dominant themes and theories that frame media representation. These identified key concepts to be covered in this study and based on this discussion, core themes have emerged. Data garnered will be analysed and interpreted based on these themes.

This chapter firstly discusses the research design that comprises a qualitative approach and case study method. Secondly, the data collection methods will be outlined. Thirdly, the research instrument will be explored. Fourthly, data analysis techniques will be explained. Fifthly, the concept of reliability and validity will be addressed.

This chapter details the methodological premises of this study and highlights the approaches used to collect empirical data. These include interviews with media professionals and focus group discussions with women readers. This chapter also provides details on the analytical tools used to determine the hegemonic discourses on gender in magazines. Qualitative methods of data analysis are employed as this type of analysis draws primarily on thematic content analysis as a research method. The analysis is analytical and interpretive and will examine more implicit social meanings. This study contributes empirically and theoretically to interdisciplinary knowledge on women, media representations, femininity and the media-society relationship.

4.2 Research design

A case study method is used with the Media24 publishing house – YOU and DRUM magazines as the case. Yin (2009: 187) states in qualitative research “a case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit and uses multiple

variables". Furthermore, feminist researchers have been predominantly concerned with how gender differences are signified through media representations. Early feminist studies mostly made use of content analysis techniques and analysed media's stereotypical representations and its unrelenting depiction of women in gender specific roles. As explained in Chapter 2, media representations have the power to convey ideological views and thereby display societal inequalities, beliefs and shape people's consciousness. Advertising alone in media has specifically come under scrutiny as a result of its perpetual use of gendered messages and images as its signifying power. However, content analysis of gender representations have also been criticised for not confronting the underlying sexist ideology which stereotypical portrayals suggest and devoting too much attention on manifest content at the expense of latent meanings (McQuail 1994). Van Zoonen (1994: 67) argues that it is imperative to note that "a range of distinctions such as medium type, genre, formats, target audience etc., differently determine particular representations of gender". Another vital area of concern is the role of the media in gender construction and the manner in which media texts 'position' women subjects. Contemporary gender related media research has centred on the audience and the contexts of media reception and this study makes its own, more 'qualitative' content analysis of consumer magazines and includes an analysis of how these magazines are received by women readers. It thus employs both text-based and audience-based or reception analysis research. Therefore, in analysing Media24 magazines, this study examines magazine texts (editorial and advertising content). Furthermore, interviews with media professionals are conducted and focus group discussions are facilitated with women readers.

The associated methods of media research are largely qualitative and ethnographic, as applied to studies of the reception of television and magazines (Baehr and Gray 1996). Therefore, the approach taken in this study is qualitative and ethnographic, drawing on focus groups to gain insight into the ways in which women interpret magazine content. Within the sphere

of media studies, the concept of ethnography is often associated with terms such as reception analysis, interpretative media studies and qualitative audience research (Van Zoonen 1994). Despite the different appellations, the concept remains the same: the concern is with the audience's active production of meaning in everyday life and the importance of daily life and social context is recognised. The new ethnographically influenced audience research attempts to understand the meaning of popular culture by asking members of the audience (now understood to be active producers of meaning rather than passive receivers of media messages) about their interpretations and use of the media (Van Zoonen 1994). Ethnography is a qualitative approach to research, used to understand people and their behaviours. Media ethnography looks specifically at media texts and contexts.

The qualitative methodology is also known widely as creative and interpretative (Denzin and Lincoln 2011: 14). The qualitative nature of this research allows for an evaluation of how readers interact with media content, specifically editorial and advertisements and explore magazines representation of women and the influence on identity construction. Since the interpretative method relates to the practical and everyday lived experience of audiences, it is ideally suited to the needs of researchers concerned with everyday media consumption. The various different strands of interpretative research as affirmed by Van Zoonen (1994: 134) all share an emphasis on the everyday interpretative and signifying practices of human beings, the meanings that people give to their actions, and the way these meanings direct their actions. Furthermore, a qualitative methodology has been selected because an exploration of media content of representation requires in-depth textual analysis. The study is qualitative by way of the gathering and description of data, specifically textual¹¹ data. Magazines will be analysed in terms of the representations prevalent in them and meanings will be explored using qualitative thematic analysis. Qualitative research is interpretative,

¹¹ Textual data refers to written texts as well as images in articles and advertisements.

since the researchers' involvement in the sense-making process is central – hence the interchangeability of the terms 'qualitative' and 'interpretative'.

Qualitative content analysis is also supported by feminist scholars as it takes on an explanatory methodology seeking to explore the ways in which media language and visual imagery are arranged and represented. This analysis explores the meanings that are embedded in the representations instead of only the frequency of topics or themes. Strauss and Corbin (in Van Zoonen 1994: 134) explain that “qualitative is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” This is supported by Rudestam and Newton (1992) and Van Zoonen (1994) who state that qualitative methods involve descriptive data, using words, texts and language as primary units, rather than numbers. This implies that qualitative research is centrally concerned with understanding concepts in contrast to quantifying or measuring them. Rudestam and Newton (1992) elucidate that qualitative research shares the purposes laid out in Figure 4.1.

Purpose of Qualitative Research	
Verification:	
	Allows for the testing of the validity of hypotheses, concepts and beliefs within everyday and practical settings.
Description:	
	Reveals the disposition of settings, procedures, relationships and people.
Interpretation:	
	Enables:
	(a) Insight about the nature of specific happenings or experiences;
	(b) Development of new hypothesis about the happenings or experiences;
	(c) Understanding and discovering the problems relating to the happenings or experiences.

Figure 4.1: Purpose of qualitative research
Source: Adapted from Rudestam and Newton (1992)

Based on the suggestions in Figure 4.1, this research was carried out using various techniques to collect data. These included magazine publications, interview transcripts and field notes. In terms of the sample, the researcher selected Media24's YOU and DRUM magazines as the unit of analysis. The researcher conducted interviews with Media24 professionals and facilitated focus group discussions with women readers. The interpretation of data was conducted concurrently with the data being collected. The study's data collection methods will be discursively discussed in section 4.3.

The main focus of this study is on human interactions, meaning construction and social context and the qualitative or interpretative approach as described by Van Zoonen (1994: 134) aims "to understand the everyday meanings and interpretations people ascribe to their surroundings and the acts that arise from these interpretations." This relates directly to this study as the overall objective is to explore magazines' representation of women and the influence on identity construction.

4.3 Data collection methods

The researcher selected Media24 as it is the leading media player in the print media industry in South Africa. Furthermore, the media house is a leading player in the magazine media sector. This is consistent with the purpose of this study, as it explores how women are represented in YOU and DRUM magazines and how these representations influence identity construction. Stake (in Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 243) asserts that "...nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases. It is a sampling problem. The case will be selected to represent some population of cases." Based on this, careful consideration was afforded to the selection of the sample.

Data was collected using three main methods: content analysis of magazine texts, interviews with media professionals and focus group discussions with women readers between the ages of 18 and 35 in KZN. Hard-copy and online

publications of DRUM and YOU magazines were collected. Both YOU and DRUM magazines are weekly publications, however for the purpose of this study, one edition per month of each of the magazines for the specific timeframe was selected. Content focussing on specific themes were collected from these magazines. The primary unit of analysis are therefore texts (editorial and advertisements) from YOU and DRUM magazines for the period June 2013 to June 2014. The prominent themes that dominated magazine editorial were selected from a pool of editorial content. Editorial content selected highlighted prominent issues that made up the editorial identity of YOU and DRUM magazines. Purposive sampling has therefore been used. A total of 26 editions of YOU and DRUM magazines were analysed – 13 editions of YOU magazine and 13 editions of DRUM magazine. A total of 195 text items were analysed. This comprised 73 articles (editorial content) and 112 advertisements. A total of 40 articles from YOU magazine and 33 articles from DRUM magazine were analysed. Furthermore, 52 YOU magazine advertisements and 60 DRUM magazine advertisements were examined. These were limited to full-page advertisements that predominantly featured one or more women.

Reflecting on the South African media's influential role in shaping readers' perceptions of subjectivities such as gender and influencing the way readers perceive the world, the period 2013 to 2014 is significant in that it marks twenty years of freedom for the country, emphasising much needed social transformation. The year in review also allowed the researcher a short enough timeframe to comprehensively engage with the magazine texts.

Furthermore, interviews were administered to media professionals at YOU and DRUM magazines. Assessing views from media professionals within the sector and looking into issues of journalistic autonomy added depth to this study as it is an area that is often neglected. It must be noted that after initially deciding to interview journalists and editors of the magazines under study, the researcher decided to incorporate the perspective of media commentators

from Media24 to add their perspective on the area under study. This proved to add depth to the study, particularly in terms of assessing how commercial pressures are mediated through the operations of the media newsroom and journalistic practice.

Lastly, focus group discussions were facilitated with women readers. A focal aspect of audience reception analysis is that the audience is actively involved in the construction of meaning from media messages. Reception analysis thus affirms the “power of the audience” (McQuail 1994: 53). Attention is shifted from the text, usually central to studies of media content, to the contexts of reception. The target population for this focus group discussion was women in KZN between the ages of 18-35 who have been reading YOU or DRUM magazines for three years. In South Africa it is mainly “women, students and people under 35” who consume magazine media (Claasen 1998). These magazines have been selected because they are the leading consumer magazines in South Africa. YOU has a readership of 2 215 000 and DRUM is currently the “sixth largest consumer magazine in Africa” and leading weekly magazine in South Africa, with a readership of 3 163 000 (SAARF 2014: 3). Women who have been regularly reading YOU or DRUM magazine for three consecutive years were selected as Fourie (2007: 237) affirms that longer periods of exposure to media content can affect people’s way of thinking and behaviour. Therefore, sustained exposure to media content can have an influence on identity construction.

Sampling method:

The sample was drawn using non probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The rationale for using purposive sampling was to ensure that by focusing on specific characteristics of the population selected, the researcher would be able to meet the key objective of the study. Purposive sampling was therefore used to select 30 respondents based on the following criteria:

- Women in KZN;

- Women between the ages of 18-35 years; and
- Women that have been regularly reading YOU and DRUM magazines for three years.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 69) explain that “purposive sampling is the most important type of non-probability sampling”. During this method the researchers rely on their knowledge, ingenuity or experience to achieve an assessment that will represent the relative population. This sampling method allows for symbolic representation in the study.

Two approaches can be used to acquire information about people, situations or problems, namely secondary data and primary data. This study used primary sources and the research instruments employed will be discussed below.

4.4 Research instruments

4.4.1 Thematic content analysis of YOU and DRUM magazines

The researcher collected and purchased hard-copy and online publications of DRUM and YOU magazines. Central themes were identified and articles and advertisements were analysed based on these themes. The textual analysis is analytical and interpretive in nature as it seeks to examine more implicit social meanings of magazine texts and the implied connotations and different ways that it can be interpreted.

4.4.2 Interview schedule for journalists, editors and media commentators

The key informants for this study were media professionals: editors, journalists and media commentators. A semi-structured interview schedule was

compiled and administered to editors and journalists of YOU and DRUM magazines as well as a media commentator from Media24. It comprised predominantly open-ended questions and this was used to provide a range of responses to add depth to the study. Interviews were audio recorded using a dictaphone and permission for this was obtained from participants. A research assistant thereafter assisted with the transcription of interviews. Coffee and Atkinson (in Oka and Shaw 2000: 8) affirm “We should never collect data without substantial analysis going on simultaneously” and based on this approach, preliminary analysis was effected during the data collection phase and on the field notes taken after each interview. Interviews with media professionals were carried out over three months. The researcher put probing questions to journalists and editors such as: *“How has democracy and neoliberalism contributed to the transformation of South African English-language magazines and what impact does this have on magazines’ representation of women and the influence on gender identity?”*

The purpose of the interviews with media professionals was to explore their views about editorial and advertising content that make up their publications and what they convey about gender, social responsibility and identity construction. It is imperative to note that editors themselves are social products of history and context in South Africa. This is affirmed by Clowes (2002: 16) who states that magazines and the people that make them are products of particular social and historical circumstances and they reflect gendered contexts in which they themselves are made and this shapes the final version offered to consumers. Based on this, the research decided to conduct an additional interview with media commentators from a Media24 publication to add their perspective to the issues under study. The researcher probed with questions such as: *Advertising makes up a large portion of magazine content and magazine decision makers are often concerned about increasing profits and expanding markets. Describe Media24’s relationship between editorial integrity, advertising revenue and remaining economically viable.*

Editors and media professionals have their individual likes and dislikes, their own ideas about issues and they have preferred decision-making strategies and values all of which contribute to how media messages are selected and disseminated to the public. The researcher felt it was necessary to explore whether there is a link between editor's ideologies and perceptions of magazine media's social responsibility impact and how this contributes to their decisions in representing gender. The interviews were imperative in drawing on the interviewee's perspective as they offered a valuable channel of collecting data on aspects and procedures that may not be successfully understood using other means. Moreover, qualitative interviews can "verify, validate, or comment on information obtained from other sources hence achieving efficiency in data collection" (Ugangu 2012: 194). This is asserted by Stake (1995: 64) who maintains that "the interview is the main road to multiple realities." Furthermore, the interviews allowed the researcher to probe the influence that advertisers have within magazine newsrooms and the extent to which these commercial imperatives meet with resistance from magazine media professionals.

4.4.3 Interview schedule for focus group discussions

A semi-structured schedule comprising predominately open ended questions was used in three focus group discussions made up of 10 respondents each. The development of the questionnaires for the focus group discussions were informed by the need to garner robust data regarding the link between women and representation, magazine media and identity construction. The questions focused on how women are represented in magazines to gain insight into how women interpret popular media forms and how these representations influence identity construction. Focus groups discussions used probing questions such as: *"Images are powerful tools that shape and reflect attitudes and values. How would you describe the representation of women in YOU / DRUM magazines? (Specifically those that portray women)."* The advantage of conducting group discussions is that everyday social interpretative practices

are reconstructed more realistically than is the case with one-on-one interviews (Van Zoonen 1994). Focus group discussions were conducted over a period of three months and audio recorded. The discussions were then transcribed. The interview schedule comprised open and closed ended questions. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 175) propose that “closed ended questions are extremely useful for eliciting factual information while open-ended questions are particularly valued for seeking opinions, attitudes and perceptions.” Open-ended questions allowed for detailed, qualitative diversity of information to be attained and based on this, the researcher employed predominantly open ended questions. However Kumar (2005: 134) explains “analysis of open-ended questions is more difficult as the researcher usually needs to go through another process, content analysis – in order to classify the data.” Data classification will be elaborated on in section 4.5.

4.5 Data analysis

This textual study used thematic content analysis as the research tool. One of the key goals of content analysis is to assess media features and the impact on audiences’ beliefs and behaviours. Wright (in Berger 2000: 173) maintains that “content analysis is a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain qualitative analysis or both.” Furthermore, content analysis is non-intrusive and provides a foundation for monitoring shifts in societal perceptions. McQuail (2000: 493) describes this method as “a technique for the objective description of media texts, that is useful for certain purposes of classifying output, looking for effects and making comparisons between content and ‘reality’.” This technique relates to this study in that its objective is to explore magazines’ representation of women and to raise awareness on media’s role in society. Van Zoonen (1994: 134) maintains that “interpretive research can vary widely and qualitative techniques of data gathering are most adequate to gain insight into the meanings of everyday life”. Dines, Jensen and Russo (1998: 70) further express their views on conventional quantitative content analyses:

It tells us little about what images and words mean. A text is a structured whole, and fragmenting it into quantifiable units leads us away from, not toward, understanding... despite the postmodernist stance of 'no definitive truth', a collective understanding of a text is possible through a context-bound, context-specific reading, which locates the text within the socio-political climate in which it is produced and the genre it represents.

This study is concerned with the meanings of images and words. As expressed by Roussell (2013: 15), "the purpose of textual analysis is to find the range of possible meanings within a media text." According to Kavoori (1999) "this can include non-verbal language, such as camera angle, sequencing and graphics that may point to a specific interpretation or meaning." This relates specifically to this study as it will also analyse magazines' visual representations (photographs and advertisements) that are presented to readers and the impact of this on identity construction.

Furthermore, it must be noted that engagement of magazine texts alone would be inadequate in terms of exploring the topic under study. Based on this, this study employed textual analysis and audience /reception analysis. The voices of media commentators, magazine editors, journalists and magazine readers were incorporated to add depth and to enhance the study. This was done by interviewing editors, journalists and media commentators as well as conducting focus group discussions with women readers.

Fowler (1991: 4) asserts "a meaning interrogated is often not the surface meaning, but the deeper meaning." Therefore this study will explore more implicit social meanings. Fowler (1991: 5) explains "this is an enquiry into the relations between signs, meanings and the social and historical conditions which govern the semiotic structure of discourse, using a particular kind of linguistic analysis". This enquiry based method allows for an analysis of the ideological perspective from which articles and advertisements are written and can be interpreted. Consequently, the following data analysis techniques were employed:

Thematic content analysis of YOU and DRUM magazines. The researcher analysed YOU and DRUM magazines' texts and representation of women by identifying central themes. Articles and advertisements were interpreted based on the identified themes: objectivity of magazines' coverage of women, language used in coverage, visual imagery presented to readers and the changing representation of women in magazines. The researcher examined articles, advertisements and magazine covers and analysed prominence given to content, objectivity, context, implied meaning and the representation of women in photographs. Editorial and advertising content selected highlighted specific issues that constitute the editorial identity of YOU and DRUM magazines.

Interviews with media professionals: editors, journalists and media commentators. Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the themes selected. The interviews allowed the researcher to get a broader understanding of how media's political and economic influences shape magazine content as well as the underlying gender dynamics that exist in media newsrooms. It also provided information on the conditions under which magazine media operate, the advertising strategies employed and perceptions of trends in the sector. The predominantly open-ended interview questions were compiled purposely to add dimension to the data. The interviewer began the interviews with a view to making the interviewee comfortable. An explanation on the area of the study was provided and the nature and format of the interview was explained. The interviewer requested to allow for the interview to be recorded. The recording of the interviews gave the researcher the platform to fully participate in the interview. The only limitation of recording the interviews was that it took time to transcribe and analyse.

Focus group discussions. Data from discussions were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the themes selected. The research assistant transcribed the discussions. The focus group discussions allowed the researcher to

observe how readers engage with editorial and advertising content. Participants conversed freely and the researcher encouraged the natural and free flow of discussion.

Patton (2002: 386) explains:

Unlike a series of one-on-one interviews, in a focus group, participants get to hear each other's responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say. However, participants need not agree with each other or reach any kind of consensus. Nor is it necessary for people to disagree. The object is to get high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others.

Employing a feminist perspective influenced this research in interconnected ways. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007) and Leavy (2007) affirm that particularly for qualitative feminist researchers, maintaining a relationship between epistemological and theoretical framework and the methods practices is essential. In concurrence with feminist literature, in interviews the study's objective was to provide a yardstick for research participants to contribute to the knowledge-building process of gender equality and social change.

The researcher noted that discussions with women regarding media representation, required unstructured qualitative interviews and specific listening techniques that would aid the objective of the research question. A focus group strategy was employed with procedures proposed by Anderson and Jack (1991), all of which involved listening without imposing one's personal opinions. Three specific listening techniques were implemented:

- Firstly, the researcher submerged herself in the focus group discussions to listen for meaning from the participants' viewpoints.
- Secondly, cognisance was given to the participants' language during the interview. This element of listening was specifically informative during discussions of media power and audience power.

- Finally, meta-statements were listened to. This refers to points in the discussion where participants spontaneously stopped, reflected and “commented about their own thoughts” or commented on something that was just discussed and “alerted the researcher to the individual’s awareness of a discrepancy within the self or between what is expected and what is being said” (Anderson and Jack 1991: 21).

The range of listening techniques was aimed at assessing muted channels of communication and their underlying meanings. This method allowed the researcher to relate participants’ comments with feminist understanding, drawn from the literature. Participants frequently reflected on their views when others raised controversial topics regarding magazines’ representation of women. It was often noted that participants added to their original comments after reflecting on the annotations made by others. By conducting the focus group discussions, the researcher was able to gain valuable insight on how readers’ interpret magazine messages and their influence on identity construction.

In addition to employing the listening techniques, notes were made immediately after the interviews relating to any atypical conduct on the part of the participants in terms of their behaviour and specific interests. This provided supplementary information to enhance participant’s contribution and it proved extremely useful during the analysis and interpretation of the data.

It must be noted that this research has a feminist perspective and as a result a research method that contributed to feminist knowledge was employed. Borland (2004); Hesse-Biber, Leavy and Yaiser (2004); Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007) and Leavy (2007) explain that often feminist researchers find data interpretation very challenging specifically those that seek to locate their participants’ experiences within the objectives and framework of the study. Furthermore, the feminist underpinning of this study also shaped the selection

of the data analysis and interpretation techniques. This study aimed to contribute to highlighting magazine media's role in contributing to social change and gender parity as well as uplifting the position of women.

Feminist researchers and those conducting interviews are intensely reflexive about how power and opinions influence the research relationship (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007), and it is for this reason that the researcher listened for women's subdued language. Based on this, notes were added to interview and focus group transcripts highlighting silences, pauses and shifts in participants' tone and views about participant's input to assist in data analysis and interpretation.

The qualitative interview schedules probed the selected themes in order to further explore magazines' representation of women. The qualitative approach allowed for the further exploration of relevant aspects of the research. For example, the focus group discussion interview schedule attempted to provide an indication of aspirations, fears and concerns, social contexts and lived experiences of women readers of YOU and DRUM magazines, while the interviews further probed media professionals views on issues such as the political and economic influences of the media ownership, distribution and diversity of views and publications and the underlying gender dynamics within the institutional structures of media houses.

Upon transcribing the data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it was evident that there is a multifaceted link between media and society as well as participants' experiences and institutional components of patriarchy. As attested by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) when a study draws on multiple data collection methods, such as the use of content analysis, interviews and focus group discussions, the approaches should be used in collaboration so as to ensure that the different approaches inform each other. Incorporating the interviews and focus group discussions greatly enhanced the study.

4.5.1 The Participants – Interviews

Five face-to-face interviews were conducted. The interview sessions ranged from 20 minutes to 40 minutes. Two YOU magazine media professionals were interviewed. One was YOU magazine editor and the other was a journalist. Two DRUM magazine media professionals were interviewed. One was DRUM magazine advice editor and the other was a journalist. One media commentator was interviewed.

4.5.2 The Participants – Focus group discussions

Three focus group discussions were conducted. Each group consisted of ten participants. The sessions ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. Participants were given an opportunity to peruse copies of YOU and DRUM magazines. This encouraged and stimulated discussion. The researcher led the participants in a relatively unstructured dialogue about the focal topic.

Focus group discussions included women in KZN between the ages of 18 and 35. The discussions commenced with questions on media consumption practices, followed by specific questions about YOU and DRUM magazines' content and its impact on identity construction. The focus group discussions were informal and conversational, owing to the popularity and familiarity of the genres in question. Although all of the participants were very enthusiastic to discuss the issue of magazines' representation of women, all three groups were dominated by an extroverted 'leader' that could be identified. This did not, however, disrupt or hinder communication in the group, it diametrically spurred more engaging and robust discussions. Participants were engrossed and engaged in the discussions and had valuable viewpoints on magazine media's contribution to social change and gender equality. It was evident that participants were informed and knowledgeable about media stereotypes and desire a diversity of content that they can relate to. In addition, topics addressing issues of relationships and sexuality surfaced during discussions

of how magazines represent famous personalities and the influence this has on readers. This clearly suggested that media can significantly influence the behaviour of individuals, thereby demonstrating a distinct relationship between femininity in the media and the construction of identity.

The researcher hoped that the interviews and focus group discussions would provide an opportunity for participants to self-reflect as this is a necessity for feminist cognizance and self-empowerment. The researcher believes that this was achieved as the majority of participants indicated that the discussions allowed them to reflect on the way in which media messages shape their perceptions and contribute to their identity development. The researcher situated the participant's comments in line with the themes and theories in the literature review, thereby connecting and informing the current study area. In this way, although the sample size did not allow for generalisations, this study was able to suggest nexuses between interviewee and focus group participants' practices and experiences, and institutional components of patriarchy that exist in society.

4.6 Validity and reliability

Weber (1990: 12) maintains that "to make valid inferences from the text, it is important that the classification procedure is reliable in the sense of being consistent." Therefore the study's inferences from the evaluation of the content was supported by the theories discoursed in Chapters 2 and 3. In addition, the interpretation of the content is subjective to the researcher's interpretation, however it is grounded in the literature review. Furthermore, the analysis will incorporate data from interviews and focus group discussions regarding the impact of media's representation of women. The trustworthiness approach and triangulation approach is discursively provided below.

4.6.1 Trustworthiness approach

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 276) state that “validity can be tested using the trustworthiness approach” which can elucidate the concept of objectivity in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290) propose that qualitative researchers establish the trustworthiness of their findings by using “four principles, which are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity”. Trustworthiness infers that the study will be carried out ethically and objectively with rigor in the analysis procedure. The principles of the trustworthiness approach and the relationship to this study are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Principles of the trustworthiness approach		
Principle	Definition	Relationship to the study
1. Credibility	Can be described as the “compatibility between constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them” (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 277).	Triangulation was applied to ensure credibility.
2. Transferability	Can be described as the “extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts” (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 277).	Detailed data that was collected from the research instruments were provided.
3. Dependability	Refers to the soundness of the research and if a comparable analysis was carried out would similar results be achieved.	Credibility of the study was achieved as outlined above, therefore the findings must be dependable.
4. Conformity	Relates to the extent that the findings of the study are based on the aim of the analysis and not the researchers’ views and prejudices.	Data including focus group and interview transcripts will be stored, categorised and accessible on request to evaluate the study’s outcomes.

Figure 4.2: Principles of the trustworthiness approach

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290)

4.6.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is a functional strategy in enhancing the “trustworthiness” of a study. In qualitative research, validation takes the form of triangulation which is the use of several research methods to determine the reliability of data. The intention of assessing issues from various angles enhances the quality and value of the research. Yin (2009: 115) affirms that “the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry – a process of triangulation and corroboration”. This was employed in the approach to data collection in order to best explore magazines’ representation of women and the influence on identity construction during a specific time period (June 2013 - June 2014).

Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993: 132) explain that “triangulation lends credibility to the findings by incorporating multiple sources of data, methods, investigators, or theories”. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 194) add that “triangulation is used to corroborate findings according to at least three different approaches.” This study ensured credibility by using varying approaches particularly in terms of data methods and theoretical approaches. Denzin (in Padgett, 1998) identified four types of triangulation and these have been applied to this study as explained in Figure 4.3.

Four types of Triangulation		
No.	Triangulation type	Application to study
1.	Theory triangulation – using various theories in the interpretation of data.	Several theories, including normative media theory, critical political economy theory and media effects theory was used in this study.
2.	Methodological triangulation – using various methods or the combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques.	Bowen (1996: 10) explains: “methodological triangulation can enhance, illustrate and clarify research findings thus improving the validity of a study.” Although primarily qualitative in nature, this study does make use of some aspects of quantitative analysis in discussing the frequency of textual and visual content.
3.	Observer Triangulation – using more than one observer.	Two observers were used to collect data. A research assistant was tasked with observing focus group discussions, transcribing data and assisting with administering questionnaires.
4.	Data Triangulation – using multiple data sources.	Multiple data sources were used. Firstly, an examination of magazine texts for the period June 2013 to June 2014 was carried out. Secondly, interviews were conducted with editors, journalists and media commentators. Thirdly, focus group discussions were conducted with 30 women readers of YOU and DRUM magazines.

Figure 4.3: Four types of Triangulation
Source: Adapted from Denzin (in Padgett 1998)

Triangulation “not only increases the validity of the study, but increases the ...enriching and completing [of] knowledge...[and] increase [d] scope, depth and consistency of methodological proceedings” (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005: 194). As evidenced in Figure 4.3 the researcher’s predominant use of triangulation is most evident in terms of both theory and data triangulation and these will be elaborated on.

Theory triangulation. It is essential to employ various theoretical approaches in the analysis and interpretation of data. Therefore, the principle theories that address media's influence on identity construction namely normative theories, and media effect theory were discussed earlier. The study also discussed feminist media theory which offered a gendered perspective to this research. Furthermore, the researcher included previous analyses relating to the representation of women in media that validated the design of the study. Marshall and Rossman (in Van Zoonen 1994: 139) maintain that "ideally interpretative research does not rely on a single type of data but takes advantage of triangulation, the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point." The researcher attempted to improve the value of this study by expounding on earlier research into media's influence in the representation of women.

Data triangulation. The study used different methods of data collection in order to explore magazine texts (editorial and advertising content) and elicit responses from participants that can then be used for interpreting their media consumption practices and lifestyles. The aim of garnering diverse data was for the different methods to inform each other. The researcher examined magazines' representation of women by analysing objectivity of articles and advertisements, language used, visual imagery and the changing representation of women. Interviews were conducted with editors and journalists of YOU and DRUM magazines as well as with a media commentator from Media24. Lastly, focus group discussions with 30 women readers of both YOU and DRUM magazines were conducted and the data was corroborated with information from other data sources. The focus group discussions provided a snapshot of media consumption practices among women, their brand awareness and their views on magazines' representation of women and the influence of this representation on identity construction. These triangular approaches provided latitude to analyse various perspectives on magazines' representation of women and the influence on identity construction.

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 122) claim “validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concepts under consideration.” The above steps indicate that extensive effort has been made to ensure validity in addressing the objective of the study. Furthermore, the triangulation and trustworthiness approach allowed for a depth of understanding of the research question and a greater understanding of the topic, while concomitantly providing outcomes that ensured validity and reliability.

4.6.3 Ensuring reliability

Yin (1994: 68) advocates that “certain issues need to be planned for the data collection protocol to ensure reliability”. Figure 4.4 provides an overview on how reliability protocol was implemented in this study.

Ensuring Reliability	
Protocol	Protocol status in relation to study
Gaining access to key interviewees	Prior consent was gained from the Editor-in-chief of the media house. Subsequently, appointments were set-up directly with the interviewees;
Development of appropriate data collection methods within clear timeframes.	This was carried out;
Provision for unexpected incidents, such as unavailability of interviewees, no responses from identifies sources.	In these instances appointments were rescheduled. When communication was not received, an alternative source was contacted.

Figure 4.4: Ensuring reliability
Source: Adapted from Yin (1994: 68)

A combination of methods was used to recruit interview respondents. The researcher relied on personal media associates to suggest useful contacts. A telephone call was firstly made to the Editor-in-chief of YOU and DRUM magazines to inform her of the impending research. Verbal and written consent was obtained. This was followed by numerous emails to YOU and DRUM magazines' editors and journalists. The aims and objectives of the research were explained and their participation was requested. Appointments were confirmed with those that responded. In other instances emails were repeatedly sent to relevant media professionals informing them of the research and requesting their participation. Where appointments could not be confirmed, alternative media professionals at the publications were contacted. The researcher acquired participants who met the criteria for a "good informant" as suggested by Morse (in Flick 1998: 70) in Figure 4.5.

Recommendation for a 'Good informant'		
Necessary knowledge and experience	Interview participants and FGDP were knowledgeable on the area under study.	All media professionals had substantial work experience. FGDP that have been reading the magazines for more than three years were interviewed.
Capability to reflect and articulate	Participants had several years of experience and could articulate proficiently.	Participants were able to reflect on the questions asked and provide expert knowledge.
Availability and time to be interviewed	Appointments were set-up in all instances.	Most interviews were conducted away from participant's office and this reduced any interruption.
Ready to participate in the study	Interview participants and FGDP voluntarily submitted to interviewing.	All participants were of the understanding that participation was not compulsory.

Figure 4.5: Recommendation for a 'good informant'

Source: Adapted from Morse (in Flick 1998: 70)

'Good informants' were contacted individually and appointments were secured. Padgett (1998: 53) suggests that "the use of incentives to encourage participation is not uncommon", however no form of incentive was offered to participants as they participated voluntarily. Participants were informed that they could request research findings upon completion of the study.

Furthermore, Mason (2003: 284) proclaims "reactivity refers to the possible influence the researcher's presence may bring to the study in terms of attitudes and feelings". The study was able to minimise reactivity in the following way:

- Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in a neutral location, ensuring the participants did not feel intimidated.
- Participants could not plan their responses as they were only asked the questions at the interviews and at the focus group discussions.

4.6.4 Threats to reliability

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009: 156) mention three types of errors that can threaten reliability, namely "subject or participant error; subject or participant bias and observer bias". It is for this reason that respondents were carefully identified and the questions were framed with care so that respondents do not view them as obtrusive. Kumar (2005: 132) suggests that "the form and wording of questions is extremely important in a research instrument as they have an effect on the type and quality of information obtained." All respondents received the same questionnaire and were asked the same questions in their respective category.

Padgett (1998: 92) asserts that "researcher bias involves filtering one's observations and interpretations through a lens clouded by preconceptions and opinions." Based on this, several strategies were implemented to reduce

any form of unfairness. This included ensuring that interview questions were not leading. In addition, all interviews were recorded to ensure a formal research practice. Furthermore, strategic selection of interviewees were implemented via the direction of senior associates of Media24. It must be noted that qualitative research does not claim to be completely 'objective', but, instead, acknowledges the researcher's position and uses this subjectivity "as a resource, not a problem" (Parker 2005: 112). Therefore those involved in qualitative research are expected to monitor their role, values, views and influence during the research process. Participants were encouraged to not withhold information and to be as objective as possible. The researcher additionally highlighted that participation was voluntary and therefore required accurate, impartial and unprejudiced input.

4.6.5 Pilot testing

The pilot study ensured that challenges were dealt with early to avoid shortcomings in the main study. A pilot questionnaire was administered. The pilot test was conducted to ascertain if respondents were able to contribute efficiently to the study and if the questionnaire was easy to interpret. The pilot study allowed the researcher to evaluate the appropriateness of the research method, its suitability and quality of the measuring instrument.

4.6.6 Reflexivity

Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) posit that valid research as representative of an absolute 'truth' is impossible when working within a feminist paradigm which suggests that all knowledge is socially constructed: "All research is constructed, that no knowledge is certain, whatever the claims, but is rather a particular understanding in process, and that different understandings, different ways of knowing, exist" (Bannister et al. 1994: 157). These views suggest that interpretative research particularly, must take into consideration various factors in terms of how data is produced. This is further

affirmed by Bloor (1997: 39) who states that research findings are based on the circumstances of the way they are produced. Bannister et al. (1994) bring forth an important element in terms of offering an alternative element to qualitative research methods and characterise 'reflexivity' as a method of validation in the form of chronicling the researcher's experiences within the development of the research. Bannister et al. (1994: 151) propose that a reflective journal can be used to document profound information from why the researcher chose the particular area of study or to position themselves subjectively within the research to know how this impacts on the research process. In keeping with this proposition, the researcher kept a reflective journal where experiences and reflections were documented.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological and substantive framework on which the study is based. It particularly expounded on the qualitative strategy employed and the rationale for selecting this methodology. This chapter maintains that given the nature of the study area that aimed to explore the interconnectedness of magazine media and society, in a changing socio-economic context, there was need to ensure a flexible and liberal research method was employed.

The next chapter discusses the analysis of the sample of magazine content selected and unpacks messages in articles and advertisements. Chapter 5 is an analytical chapter and provides information on media professionals' views on the role of magazines in representing women and constructing gender identity. This section provides critical information on media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality. In addition, data from the interviews and focus groups discussions will be analysed and discussed. The identified themes will be used to analyse the role of YOU and DRUM magazines in identity construction of women.

Chapter 5 : Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

5.1 Introduction

The foregoing chapter explained the methodological approach employed in this study. This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of magazine texts from YOU and DRUM magazines for the period June 2013 to June 2014, interviews conducted with media professionals and responses from focus group discussions with women readers. The themes and theories discussed in the literature review will be analysed in relation to the data collected and these will be validated or contested. This chapter begins with a summation of the analysis of magazines' representation of women and subsequently provides a detailed thematisation of magazine texts (editorial and advertising content), interviews and focus group discussions. To ensure coherency, the researcher will concurrently analyse and discuss the findings from all data sources.

Dominant themes will be used to interpret the data. Themes identified are: objectivity of magazine media's coverage of women, language used in editorial and advertising content, visual imagery that are presented to readers and the changing representation of women in magazines.

Chapter framework:

- Summation: An overview of the findings of the prominent areas, gaps and issues within the magazines under study for the period June 2013 to June 2014.
- Thematisation: This section provides a "theory driven" description of the qualitative findings. Specific themes identified will be used to interpret and discuss magazine texts (editorial and advertising

content), interview responses and focus group discussion responses.

5.2 Summation of texts in YOU and DRUM magazines

YOU and DRUM magazines serve as the case study for analysis. Both magazines form part of the Media24 publishing group. Media24 is the leading media player in South Africa. YOU magazine has been in existence for 28 years and DRUM magazine has been in existence for over six decades. Both magazines are 'household names' in the magazine media sector and are prominent weekly, general-interest consumer magazines. Media commentator Kuben Chetty, the current deputy editor of Media24's *The Witness* newspaper and former news editor of the *Daily News* avers that magazines offer consumers a range of information in a single package. He explains that these magazines are a variety of consumer needs in one package, but they also offer escapism for the reader. Chetty comments, "In fact, it has a very strong human interest factor and I think that's what makes them very popular – they have a mix of human interest and current affairs."

Linda Pietersen the current editor of YOU magazine, who has also been involved with DRUM magazine as news editor for approximately 13 years, states that both magazines were "a very different animal to what they are today. We shared content – YOU and DRUM massively. Now I see DRUM as one of my competitors, so we've got a very prickly relationship." Pietersen highlights that the Black market of YOU magazine has increased enormously. "It's picked up 60-70% of our readers. It started off completely as a translation of Huisgenoot ... now YOU magazine has become a magazine completely on its own." Pietersen explained that the publications share a few stories but now they have a much wider and different audience.

A total of 26 editions of the publications were analysed for the period June 2013 to June 2014. Thirteen editions of YOU magazine and 13 editions of

DRUM magazine were analysed. A total of 195 texts were analysed. This comprised 73 articles (editorial content) and 112 advertisements that were selected for the period June 2013 to June 2014. A total of 40 articles from YOU magazine and 33 articles from DRUM magazine were analysed. Furthermore, 52 advertisements from YOU magazine and 60 advertisements from DRUM magazine were analysed. These advertisements were limited to full page advertisements that predominantly featured one or more women.

Magazines are an influential mass medium as they provide significant insight into the changing aspects of a patriarchal society that continues to be influenced by socially-significant markers such as gender, sexuality, race and socio-economic status. The analysis of both YOU and DRUM magazines revealed that they feature content predominantly on celebrities, relationships, sexuality and beauty and thrive on drama and scandal relating to women's lives. Important questions in the analysis of texts was whether the magazines under study portrayed women's social or professional needs and aspirations without boundaries, whether they portrayed women as sex objects to be desired by men, or whether they offered both representations to readers.

This study found that there are some progressive and evolving coverage of women in magazines, however certain stereotypical representations continue to prevail. Equitable relations of power need to be reproduced within society and magazines should play a part and have a responsibility in contributing to the transformation, growth and advancement of a dynamic and egalitarian media culture.

There is a large amount of content in both publications that exposes readers to sexual fantasy material in the guise of educational information. Articles present women with information and guidelines relating to how to conduct themselves in their private lives and how to attain the perfect look from a patriarchal perspective. YOU and DRUM magazines' texts further propagate the "thin ideal" by consistently providing content relating to weight-loss.

Magazine content promotes a women's physical self-improvement and this can lead to unrealistic expectations among women and lower their self-esteem. Magazines additionally offer women a means to improve their appearance and "self-transform" and readers' views on this will be discussed in section 5.3.

In addition to serving as "how to guides", these magazines portray celebrities as role models and people that should be emulated. YOU and DRUM magazines sell the image of glamour, style and sexuality and this is evident in their editorial content and advertisements. They achieve this through many creative means such as the use of vibrant visual imagery aimed at attracting a consumer. In addition, suave and beguiling language are used to draw the reader's attention. This is evident in both YOU and DRUM publications' editorial content and advertisements. DRUM's advice news editor, Vida Li Sik claims that a large number of DRUM readers read the celebrity pages therefore a lot of the news in the magazine is focused on that. She confirms that coverage often includes the "Rihannas and people that would not be the mother's choice as role models, but for young people they are, so you've got to include it ... unfortunately that's what seems to dominate the magazine now days."

Cover pages and headlines play a huge part in capturing reader's attention and YOU and DRUM magazines headlines cover a variety of themes and most dominant are celebrity, relationships, and beauty and glamour themes. This is evident in the cover page headlines of YOU and DRUM as they range from *"Dirty secrets of squeaky clean Gwyneth"* (YOU, 10 April 2014), *"Fairytale love story – Jeannie D and her hunky man tell all;"* *"Tina Turners' night of moonlight and magic"* (YOU, 15 August 2013); *"Why jealous Kate doesn't want Harry to marry his blonde"* (YOU, 19 September 2013); *"Dual of divas," "Tantrums, triumphs and toyboys"* (DRUM, 31 October 2013); *"Star wars – Minnie and Bonang's fight goes to the street – It's game on now!"* (DRUM, 19 June 2014).

The connotations that these headlines carry will be explained in the detailed thematisation of the content in section 5.3.

Furthermore, in editorial content, headlines in articles frequently refer to women defined by personal tags. The skewed reporting of women is a tragic disservice to women's sacrifices and talent. These stereotypical perceptions will hinder the development of women in society. Examples can be seen in YOU and DRUM texts that describe actress Demi Moore as "*the sexy mom of three*", Jenifer Lopez as "*a 43-year old mom*," The Duchess of Cambridge as "*the super-mom*" and Leanne Manas "*on her mommy guilt and losing weight*". These texts confirm that women are often represented in a limiting, negative and circumscribed manner.

In assessing the role of the media in identity construction, it is important to analyse how magazine texts 'position' women subjects. Advertising alone in media has specifically come under scrutiny. This is as a result of its "perpetual preoccupation with gender which it uses for its signifying power" (Van Zoonen 1994: 33). The study found that women in YOU and DRUM magazines were predominantly portrayed in a decorative manner and were the central element in advertisements for weight-loss products. This affirms that magazines propagate the stereotypical view that women should be consumers instead of producers of media content. Of the 112 full page advertisements in YOU and DRUM magazines, 56 were on weight-loss and personal care products.

The analysis of texts in YOU and DRUM magazines affirm that advertisements have significant leeway in relation to the use of language and imageries. This is evident by the use of words with sexual innuendo such as "*taut tush*", "*cheeky*", "*voluptuous*" and "*booty*" all of which appeared in YOU and DRUM magazines coverage of women.

The possessive "*your man*" and "*my man*" is evident in the sample analysed. An overwhelming amount of emotive words and positive adjectives are used

particularly in magazine advertisements. This is also evident in editorial content. Furthermore, people are often addressed on an individual basis and this is referred to as “synthetic personalisation” (Fairclough 1989: 62) and is used as a means to lure readers and create a ‘buying mood’. Furthermore, advertisements in the publications contain imperatives, questions or statements demanding action from the reader. Statements imploring readers into action often make their way into magazine pages, with taglines and phrases such as “*beauty products to make you glow*” (YOU, 13 March: 36) or “*give your hair some TLC*” (DRUM, 20 March 2014: 31).

Emotive words appeal to a readers emotions, can influence decisions and carry certain connotations with them. Examples of emotive words that are frequently used in the YOU and DRUM magazine texts analysed include “*sexy*”, “*youthful*” and “*glam*”. This type of language in advertisements is aimed at enticing and influencing readers. This is confirmed by Claudia Pillay, a former journalist at DRUM magazine who maintains that language in DRUM magazine is very emotive and descriptive.

Positive adjectives are often used to demonstrate the quality and value of the advertised product. These adjectives are used to make a lasting impact in the minds of readers and Cook (2001: 108) refers to the use of these adjectives “as fusion that will imbue the characterless product with desirable qualities”. In addition, emotive adjectives are used to arouse a sense of imagination and pleasure. This is particularly evident in advertisements for women’s personal-care products.

Furthermore, compound words regularly feature in advertisements, specifically for hair care products and make-up and include words such as “*short-lashed*”, “*wide-eyed*”, “*smudge-shield*”, “*long-lasting*”, “*youthful-looking*”, “*high-performance*”, and “*age-defying*”. This is evident in both YOU and DRUM publications and their implied connotations will be elaborated on in section 5.3.

In YOU and DRUM magazines there are also repetitions through the use of synonyms that serve to strengthen the advertisements. In the magazines analysed, synonyms such as “*restore*”, “*rejuvenate*” and “*revitalise*” are regularly used in advertisements particularly for personal care products.

The language used in YOU and DRUM magazine publications analysed, comprised a combination of formal and informal words. Intertextuality also occurs and this is evident particularly in advertisements when specific words, such as words from technology and science are used to entice readers and assure them that the product is of a noteworthy standard. The analysis of advertisements in this study, emphasise how particular products can serve as the answers to women’s issues, specifically relating to their appearance. An example is, by using a weight-loss product you can “*make and keep your hair healthy and beautiful*” (DRUM, 24 April 2014: 35) and by using an eye-lash product you can attain a “*retro look, with fanned-out volume*” (YOU, 31 October 2013: 72). The researcher is not suggesting that women are unintelligent dupes however the language used persuade readers into believing that they need to improve their appearance. The “manufacturing of consent and invoking inadequacies techniques employed” as described by Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2013: 70), manipulate and deceive women. Readers are repeatedly inundated with information on the positive benefits of advertised products. Additionally, the representation of famous personalities is another technique in manipulating women. The testimonials by celebrities further advocate for and sanction the advertised products.

Half (50%) of advertisements that appeared in YOU and DRUM magazines for the period June 2013 to June 2014 emphasise enhancing one’s appearance by means of weight-loss products as well as hair and make-up products. The magazines promote the “beauty ideal” through its advertisements. This confirms that YOU and DRUM magazines’ advertisements are designed to capture the attention of the reader and create a ‘buying mood’.

With regards to advertising, products or concepts are given associations and connotations. The shape of a heart for example symbolises love and this is accepted universally. In addition, it is commonly accepted that cars, jewellery and particular clothing connote 'coolness,' perfumes connote 'passion' and 'sensuality' and certain foods connote a 'healthy lifestyle'. Other coded signifiers such as exposed cleavage, smouldering eyes and evocative clothing are representations related to women as sexual objects that exist for the desire of men. YOU and DRUM magazines advertisements clearly continue to represent women as sexual objects to be desired by men by using women's images to promote the sale of products. There is an abundance of images of women in magazine media. However, it is not in its quantity that is concerning but in the unrepresentative type of coverage provided. YOU and DRUM magazines focus a lot of attention on women taking on contemporary trends and place emphasis on glamour and make-up. This is evident in editorial content and advertisements. When women are featured in articles, focus is usually on their clothing or specific parts of their bodies. The clothing items that are advertised in YOU and DRUM magazines repeatedly portray women as sex objects and this is also evident by the way that the models pose. Twenty three percent of advertisements in YOU and DRUM magazines featured women's apparel. Apart from clothing, specific features of women's bodies such as their eyes, mouths and buttocks are often enhanced. Models often pose in pin-up girl style, arms raised behind the head and face tilted provocatively. The framing and positioning of the women in these publications promote the 'beauty myth' with seductive expressions, smooth textured skin and a sun-kissed glowing body. The text that complements these photographs also emphasises sexual attractiveness. These visual representations imply that femininity is something that can be attained by heeding the advice presented in magazines. This indicates that women are exploited by magazines in order to gain profits. This affirms that "magazines are understood as 'meta-commodities' which serve as vehicles for the dissemination of other commodities" (Beetham 1996: 2). Regardless of what is advertised in these magazines from fashion, clothes to careers or

relationships, women readers are skilfully urged to transform themselves by heeding the guidelines provided in the magazines.

Magazines also often use gatefolds and bleed pages to enhance their visual appeal. Gatefolds refer to the third page that folds out making a double spread look even bigger and bleed pages refer to the use of all white spaces in a magazine – this allows for an advertisement to be extended to every corner of the page. These creative methods are meant to capture the attention of the reader. The analysis of advertisements in YOU and DRUM did not make use of gatefolds however it did make use of bleed pages. Other creative options included pre-printed advertisements that are inserted into magazines, scented advertisements and product samples. These were not used in the sample of YOU and DRUM magazines analysed.

There is undoubtedly transformation in the representation of women in magazine media. The study sample provided varied images of women and some of them are evolving and progressive. Carter and Steiners (2004) supports this statement regarding change in magazine media's representation of women and states when they say "rigidity of such hierarchical feminine gendered identity has nevertheless begun to break down." Articles of women in business and sport have been featured in YOU and DRUM magazines' publications and this will be discussed in section 5.3. The heterosexual women for example is not the sole representation of sexual orientation; articles and imagery on lesbian women do appear in YOU and DRUM magazines. However, McRobbie (1996: 182) postulates that "this kind of representation exists as a category in the magazines, as a sign that we live in a more open, multicultural sexually diverse society". Furthermore, in terms of advertising, women are seen less in advertisements normalising dependency and domesticity of women. The advertisements analysed indicate that the majority of the advertisements focused on beauty and weight-loss products and not on cooking and cleaning products. Representation of women in magazine media have undoubtedly expanded, offering new identities and new roles, however

certain confining, patriarchal identities continue to predominate. The next section will discursively provide an analysis of editorial content and advertisements of YOU and DRUM magazines, interview responses of media professionals and focus group discussion responses of women readers, using the dominant themes that have been drawn from the literature.

5.3 Thematisation of magazine content, interview responses and focus group discussion responses

Based on contextualisation of the themes and theories discussed in the literature review, dominant themes have been identified and data will be interpreted and presented employing these themes. The central themes identified are objectivity of magazine media's coverage of women; language used in editorial and advertising content; visual imagery that are presented to readers and the changing representation of women in magazines.

The central themes identify the primary discussion within the magazines under study. In analysing articles and advertisements, particular words and phrases will be italicised to indicate the different ways that they can be interpreted and the connotations they convey.

A detailed account of the interview responses from media professionals and responses from focus group discussions conducted with women readers will also be presented. Media professionals have to make important decisions daily that impact on wider society. As a result of this, their actions are often evaluated by society and they are judged by their ability or inability to provide responsible coverage, reflective of the diverse South African population. Furthermore, focus group discussions with readers allowed the researcher to look closely at the impact of direct and indirect messages that are evident in magazines. Hence, in analysing magazine media texts, emphasis will be placed on contextualisation of issues and implied meaning of how magazines represent women and the influence on identity construction.

5.3.1 Objectivity of magazine media's coverage of women

Media has traditionally portrayed women as unblemished, coy and figure conscious and the analysis of texts in YOU and DRUM magazines confirm that coverage of women as frail and emotional beings has not been eliminated. This is evident in a YOU magazine article where the opening line states *"As the crown was placed on her pretty brunette head the crowd went wild ... But for someone who'd just won the country's most coveted beauty title, Rolene Strauss seemed remarkably composed – no tears or melodrama from her"* (YOU, 10 April 2014: 14). The writer highlights the stereotypical view that women are assumed to be 'the weaker sex', more emotional and dramatic. The words *"no tears or melodrama from her"* have connotations of passivity or weakness. Content of this nature undermines the accomplishments of women, objectifies them and promotes society's stereotypical beliefs about women as the "weaker sex". This is supported by a focus group discussion participant (FGDP) in focus group (FG 3) who states that media assume that "We [women] are weak, the first thing you do is cry" – alluding to the stereotypical belief that women are weak.

YOU and DRUM publications further highlight media's focus on women's stereotypical roles. An example of this appears in YOU magazine with the cover page stating *"Former Miss SA – Thuli-Sithole – single-minded single mom – I want to retire at 35"* (YOU, 27 Feb 2014: 110). The words *"single-mom"* was underlined on the cover page. These types of magazine headlines encourage readers to define women in a traditional family setting as a wife or mother and promotes the conformist ideology of femininity. It further frames marriage and motherhood as life-goals. Women's remarkable accomplishments often go unnoticed and excerpts from this article authenticate this. The opening line of the article states *"Sections of her long dark hair are pinned up as a stylist creates a few curls"* (YOU, 27 Feb 2014: 110). The coverage affirms that media professionals frequently use descriptive words that emphasise femininity, physical appearance and

devalue the achievements and successes of women. The entire article focuses on her pregnancies, her marriage, break-up and role as a single mother and the only mention of her successful career is at the end of the two-page article. This is despite the fact that the article's headline on the cover page states that she wants to retire at 35 – which could only mean that she is a very successful career woman. This information appears towards the end of the article. The article is headlined "*I know what love is*" and extensively reports on her role as a mother. Furthermore, the cover page features a photograph of Sithole and her baby and similar images are represented in the two-page article. Readers of YOU and DRUM magazines should be afforded balanced and impartial information and journalists should ensure that all content provides an accurate reflection of women. This type of reporting demoralises the position of women, particularly those in business and confirms that when women are awarded magazine coverage, focus is on stereotypical roles and rarely on their career attributes and achievements. This article further affirms that bias of women can be seen through the depth of coverage and the positioning of specific information in a magazine.

Many participants from the focus groups maintained that they viewed these publications as credible sources of information when compared with other mainstream magazine offerings. When asked about the reasons for consuming these publications, participants had varying viewpoints. These included: "I think basically it is to find out more information about what is happening around the country;" "For me it was celebrity gossip;" "For me it's about the fashion, what they're wearing and the gossip and who's doing what;" "For me it's basically the health and lifestyle and the jokes section." According to YOU's editor, Pietersen the magazine's role in society is to entertain and educate and aims to make life easier for readers. She maintains that if readers read nothing else but the current publication and they will be up to date on any newsworthy topic from news, celebrity gossip to financial matters.

DRUM's *Celebrity News* section (13 June 2013: 98-99) features a double page spread on Kris Jenner with the headline titled *"Filthy rich" – Kris Jenner is a shrewd businesswomen who has made a tidy sum out of her famous family*". This article also features an image of Jenner holding up a sign that is partially blocked revealing the words and letters *"Queen of F***** everything."* The article focuses on her relationship scandals, extensive cosmetic surgeries and the management of her children. The article centres on the falsehoods alleged to be created by Jenna, with the intention of making more money. The coverage states *"Kris is already encouraging Kim to lose weight after the birth of her baby because she wants to seal a \$3.2 million deal with Weight Watchers. Meanwhile, she wants her only son Rob (26) to get even fatter (he recently gained 18 kg) so he can write a book on weight loss. She also dreams of a reality series starring her two youngest daughters Kendall (17) and Kylie (15) so she's discouraging them from going to university."* The coverage highlights the false world of celebrities and can have a negative impact on women, particularly young girls. This magazine coverage focuses on the 'thin ideal' and can influence young girls in their own decision making about their appearance. This confirms magazine media's ability to set up the agenda on issues which readers will perceive as important. Hall (1997: 15) asserts that the media has signifying power and "through the use of language, signs and images it allows for meaning to be produced and exchanged between people."



Figure 5.1: Queen of F*** Everything**

Source: DRUM, 13 June 2013: 98-99

The use of the image in Figure 5.1 with Jenna holding up a sign that is partially blocked revealing the words and letters “*Queen of F***** everything*” further advocates the use of obscene language. The content in this article contradicts YOU’s core values that professes that the magazine is a “family magazine” that can be enjoyed by every member of the family.

Both publications under study maintain that they are family orientated. DRUM’s Li Sik states that “Being a family magazine there are sections for children, for all age groups but the official demographics are 18-35 and people who are aspiring to better their lives”. This is affirmed by DRUM’s Pillay who describes DRUM as “Aspirational, bottom to middle LSM, very curious, family orientated – one person buys the magazine and the entire family reads it so you have something for everybody, some focus on news as well as entertainment”. In describing YOU magazines’ target audience, Pietersen explains that the magazine is a family buy “so even if you’re a single mum, your mother will want to read it, your niece will want to read it. So it’s not really aimed to make women’s lives easier. It’s to make everybody’s lives easier.”

Furthermore, the emphasis on the lives of celebrities can be seen in another YOU article featuring the Kardashians (16 Jan 2014: 108-109) titled “*R100000 to look like Kim.*” In this article, a YOU reporter investigates the costs related to changing her facial features to look like celebrity, Kim Kardashian. This coverage highlights magazines’ emphasis on celebrities as well as the stereotypical view that women should strive for perfection in their appearance. This article promotes the use of cosmetic surgery. These two texts on the Kardashians can be particularly harmful to young women who look to the media to define themselves. This article further emphasises the need to constantly improve your look by any means and cost. The publications use of their own journalist endorses the concept of beauty enhancing therapy. It must be noted that the last six lines of the two page spread does allude to the concept of ongoing dissatisfaction that may be experienced by someone who wants to look like another person. However, the greater part of the article provides readers with the fantasy of being able to achieve a drastic physical make-over with sub-headings including “*A new face*”; “*Skin resurfacing*”; and “*Nose job.*”

FGDP in (FG 1) explains that there was a time when DRUM magazine had a very good story line, particularly motivational stories on young women who are making it out there.

But then there were times they started to obsess with celebrity lives and gossip and trying to emulate what they do, how they dress ... they would tell you if you’re not dressed like her, then you’re not okay and I felt like that was extremely superficial. They moved away from being motivational to this magazine that emphasises the lives of celebrities and promoting their lives.

The celebrity focus evident in YOU and DRUM highlights that the magazines thrive on the lives of famous personalities and lure readers, particularly women, to buy into these idealised lifestyles. In terms of YOU’s reader demographics, Pietersen maintains that there are more females than males that consume the publication, “She’s early 30s and not everyone has a child

at all ...YOU magazine [has] got a very mixed lot. A lot of single people, a lot of single mums and a lot of families so it's a completely mixed bag..."

YOU (12 December 2013: 104-106) features a three-page article in the YOU *Big Read* section titled "*Match made in China*" and centres on the many single Chinese millionaires that are in search of wives and how they use lucrative match-making agencies to set them up with prospective young women. The article provides information from one request by a 42-year old, male billionaire. He requested that "*She had to have smooth alabaster skin, be 1,67m tall, young, slim and a virgin.*" The reporter explains that an ideal candidate is searched for in shopping malls and city streets and when spotted she is followed around to see where she shops, what she likes and how she walks. This confirms that women are severely objectified and demeaned in society and are objects of men's desire. This is affirmed by the article's third page sub-heading that states "*In Chinese tradition women over 30 are treated like trash.*" This article features a photograph of a Chinese female at a poolside game during the match-making weekend, where she is expected to fall backwards in the arms of a group of middle-aged men. The article states "*A young woman in a frill fuchsia bikini, is poised, ready to jump.... Waiting in the shade of the palm trees is a row of women in similarly skimpy swimwear. Some giggling nervously and adjust their strap.*" In addition, the female's hands are tied together by a piece of cloth, thereby robbing her of control. Furthermore, the article states that the billionaires that were at the matchmaking weekend at a luxury resort, paid more than R165 000 to be there. This reporting highlights the patriarchal perspectives that are still alive in contemporary society and also emphasises the interconnectedness between money and power. This coverage underlines society's stereotypical views as it portrays women as objects for the desire of men. This type of coverage can negatively impact women, particularly young women. Li Sik states that magazines "play a huge role in the process of moving young women from adolescence into womanhood and contributing to their sense of self-identity." She maintains that they play a significant role in guiding teens

that come from difficult home situations and play a part in guiding them through various chapters of their lives.

YOU magazine (21 November 2013: 14) features an exclusive article titled *“Marriage, Kids – I can’t wait!”* The article details South African celebrity Minnie Dlamini’s life, from her childhood to her relationship with local soccer star, Itumeleng Khune. The opening line of the two-page article states *“She’s as gorgeous in real life as she is on the small screen. Dressed in a colourful, high-waisted skirt, a white vest and killer heels, when we meet her, she’s every inch the style icon we have come to know.”* The words used to describe Dlamini’s appearance objectifies her and by centring on her appearance, her success as an actress is undermined. This type of reporting underlines society’s archaic beliefs that confine women to specific roles such as ‘wife,’ ‘girlfriend’ and ‘mother’. The reporting clearly devalues women and undermines their competency, trivialises their contribution to society and detracts from their credibility in terms of their careers. The coverage authenticates Van Zoonen’s (1994: 17) opinion that “women who appear in media content tend to be young and conventionally pretty, defined by personal tags in relation to their husband, father, son, or boss and portrayed as passive, indecisive, submissive and dependent.” The article highlights that magazine media continue to normalise dependency and domesticity of women.

YOU magazine (19 September: 41) features a Coca-cola advertorial accompanied by a photograph of a mother and child. Headlined, *“Get together for family mealtime”*, the advertorial states *“Mom knows there is no better way to serve our culinary masterpieces than with a glass of ice-cold Coca-cola. Moms knows it makes family mealtime’s even happier occasions.”* This advertorial portrays women as a housewife, mother and nurturer, which restricts the role of women in society. The constant portrayal of women in patriarchal ways limits and restricts the position of women.

The exclusion and underreporting of the remarkable achievements of women in society raises the long standing debate of objectivity in journalism. It is fundamental that media professionals provide accurate accounts of reality. Taflinger's (1996: 15) proclamation is that "reporters must examine their work to be sure that prejudice, bias and a personal world-view is not the one that dominates in gathering, preparing and disseminating information." Gilda Narimdas, a former YOU magazine journalist asserts that more effort is required by media players particularly journalists regarding accurate and objective representation of women in media. Stereotypes around women will continue to dominate if women are side-lined in magazine pages or are reduced to objects of men's desire. Media players have a significant responsibility in uplifting the status of women in society. This has been affirmed by Fourie (2007: 263) who maintains that "in order to change stereotypes every media worker should be critical of his or her own views and interpretations, sensitive towards the feelings of others and aware of the possible harm his or her view, perceptions and interpretations may have."

YOU's *Lifestyle and Beauty* section features an article titled "*War on Wrinkles*" (25 July 2013: 42) outlining the do's and don'ts for keeping your skin "*youthful*". This coverage implies that women need to constantly work on looking physically attractive and youthful. Wrinkles are a natural process of aging, however these types of features put emphasis on a women's physical appearance. Furthermore, this feature includes skin-care products or "solutions", details of stockists and their prices. This affirms that magazines can be regarded as meta-commodities that are often used to promote other commodities.

DRUM (8 August 2013: 108) features an advertisement for a hair straightening product. The advertisement encourages parents to use the product on their children's hair and features a before and after photograph of a young female child. The advertisement states "*Treat your little princesses' hair ... and let her enjoy looking and feeling adorable.*" Young females are often prime

targets because they are new and inexperienced consumers. This is supported by Kilbourne (1999: 129) who affirms that “young girls are in the process of learning their values and roles and developing their self-concepts and advertisers are aware of their role and do not hesitate to take advantage of their insecurities and anxieties usually in the guise of offering solutions.” Magazines are also aware that they are at risk of losing younger readers to digital media and therefore make significant endeavours to retain their readership. Pietersen acknowledges that magazines are losing younger readers:

It is a big thing. If we start losing our younger readers, you will be dead in 20 years' time as a magazine. So we specifically started a teen section to draw back the younger reader and once that younger reader is drawn in, then she's going to then grow with the magazine so you've got to basically capture the mind of that person and when they've got into the teens and realise there is other stuff in the magazine, they will grow with the magazine and keep reading it.

Pietersen's comments highlight the strategies employed by media houses to ensure they retain their target audience. Chetty asserts that *YOU* and *DRUM* magazines often play contradictory roles in the process of moving particularly young females from adolescence into womanhood and contributing to their identity construction. “On one hand they like to portray themselves as being very feminist, but on the other hand they sometimes look at women in a more archaic manner. There's a more stereotypical, patriarchal view of women”.

The cover page of *DRUM* (19 September 2013) features a headline titled “*Meet Mzansi's pro twerkers ... We're dancers not prostitutes.*” This controversial dance style was started by celebrity Miley Cyrus and has caused significant public debate. *DRUM* (19 September 2013: 96-97) profiles a two-page article “*Queens of the twerk ... love it or hate it this sexy dance is making waves.*” The article is accompanied by photographs of the women dressed in scanty clothing with emphasis on their buttocks. Reporting of this nature brings into question objectivity in journalism and further confirms that limited

coverage of women can be seen through the selection of articles and the angles used that feature women.

Media professionals need to provide positive, uplifting and objective information on women that underlines their triumphs in a similar way that it is often done for men. The task of journalists should be to maintain professional standards that ensures objectivity and balance in their reporting. Furthermore, they need to be challenged if they fail in their professional responsibility. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2005: 457) affirm this and state that objective reporting relates to providing neutral, unbiased views. The importance of journalists maintaining objectivity is further supported by Greer (1999: 19) who maintains that "readers have a right to factual information and reporting, and being trustworthy to the reader is the basis of good journalism."

YOU magazine (19 September 2013: 40) in the *Better Life and Beauty* section features an article titled "*Lush lashes.... Easy way to give your lashes a boost.*" The article is accompanied by eye-lash products, prices and a photograph of a female with emphasis on her eye-lashes. Meanwhile, the back page of DRUM (20 March 2014) features an oil control cream. An image of a young black female with flawless skin accompanies the advertisement and the tagline of the advertisement states "*Beautiful skin, clinically proven.*" The bleed page advertisement offers readers the chance to win "*1 of 40 bursaries and R5 off your next purchase*" of the product. These types of advertisements highlight the many creative tactics that are used to entice readers into purchasing products. This includes the use of intertextuality (words from other discourses) aimed at convincing the reader about the effectiveness of the advertised product as well as the use of airbrushed models to manipulate women into believing that they too, can attain a flawless, radiant look.

DRUM (17 October 2013: 59) features an advertisement for a hair supplement capsule. The advertisement is accompanied by a photograph of a young, white women with flawless skin and salon-styled hair. The airbrushed image

highlights her smouldering eyes and bare shoulders. The advertisement is another example of how women are lured into purchasing products to attain the 'ideal look.'

Critical political economists Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that it is impossible for the media to operate independently from those who pay the bills – the advertisers. However, according to (Nolan 2009) the need to be commercially sustainable can be balanced from interference by advertisers through a strong ethical culture within media newsrooms, which is ensured through processes and procedures to ensure editorial independence. Relating to the relationship between magazines editorial management and advertisers, Pietersen affirms that:

They [advertisers] are not allowed to touch our editorial at all. We've got a very good relationship with them. They are never allowed to tell a client if you do this, the editors will do that. Never, because we wouldn't. Even if they signed a R2 million campaign. If they said I have to write something ... we just won't do it. We'd rather flush the R2 million down the drain than do it.

Pietersen's stance is that YOU magazine does not compromise its content and is not influenced by advertisers. Advertising makes up a large portion of magazine content and magazine decision makers are often concerned about increasing profits and expanding markets. In terms of Media24's relationship between editorial integrity, advertising revenue and remaining economic viable, media commentator Chetty, maintains that Media24 maintains credibility at all cost, by offering the following example:

I was just told a story by one of my editors at Media24, while he was investigating one of the big advertisers in the country and they ran the story and there were threats not to publish, but they went ahead and published it. The lawyers looked at the story and they okayed it and 6 months later, just in passing, someone at head office said oh, by the way do you know that in Durban we lost about R60 million because after you ran that story the advertiser pulled out and he was surprised but the thing is that no Directors or CEO came to him to tell him not to write the story because these guys are

threatening to pull out and we will lose R60 million.

Chetty believes that a commendable characteristic of the operations of Media24 is that the company strives to maintain integrity at all cost and they hire good editors. He also attests to the fact that the media house trusts the editors they hire and that the editors will make decisions that will ensure credibility. This view infers that Media24 allow editors substantial editorial independence.

On the issue of the extent of commercial decisions meeting with resistance from within the Media24 newsroom, particularly with journalists, Chetty further maintains that media professionals are given editorial independence and Media24 operate with an open policy. He adds that “It’s good to be in a company where you can raise your objections and you could say that you think something [is] wrong here or I have concerns about this and you won’t be persecuted because of that.”

An evaluation and reflection of the long-established role of media workers is important. Media professionals are the conduit of information to society and have an important task in that they can influence the way that their newsrooms and media houses represent women. This is supported by YOU’s Narimdas, who states:

There was always that sense that we needed to be responsible. It links back to journalism and everyday life to reporting responsibly, not being biased, being honest, having integrity [and] having courage. You needed to accept that this was your home and you needed to be responsible of all of your actions in that space.

DRUM’s *Better Life and Beauty* section (7 November 2013: 32-33) features tips on wearing your lipstick in the perfect way for the season. The two-page article titled “*Pouts Pop*” offers readers advice on what shades are in season and provides different lipstick brand options and prices. This advertisement is

accompanied by three photographs of women with emphasis on their eyes and lips. This emphasises that women's bodies are often fragmented in magazines.

In addition, DRUM's *Better Life and Beauty* section (6 February 2014: 34-35) features a two-page spread titled "*It's Date Night!*" with the sub-heading "*Make the month of love count with these four sexy date looks.*" The segment contains tips for women as well as various make-up products and costs. These features highlight how magazines are used as commodities for the sale of other products. This section is accompanied by four photographs of women, all with heavy make-up. It further offers the reader the fantasy of achieving a specific look with the sub-headings stating "*Be a glowing goddess; Be bright and beautiful.*"

FGDP in (FG 1) states that magazines, especially YOU magazine, gives readers the wrong idea and wrong perspectives about how to deal with life and relationships, "magazines make you think that you're supposed to look like this for this knight and shining armour, this perfect person, but no one is perfect." This highlights how magazines creates a world of fantasy for its readers and that magazines thrive on the 'ideal of perfection'.

DRUM's *Better Life and Beauty* section (9 Jan 2014: 34) features actress and singer Jennifer Hudson's pixie-cut hairstyle. The reader is provided with information on how to go about attaining this trend and the tagline states "*Get the Look.*" This feature is accompanied by a photograph of Hudson as well as the advertising of the products associated with attaining this hair-style. By providing celebrity status to this 'look' the reader is duped into believing that they too should attain 'the look' or the hairstyle, particularly if it is endorsed by a celebrity personality, Hudson.

DRUM magazine cover page (19 September 2013) features a before and after photograph of South African singer, Kelly Khumalo. The actress is thought to

be using face lightening creams to improve her complexion. The cover page headline states, “*Shocker! How Kelly bleached her skin for R30.*” The four-page exclusive article addresses the issue of skin lightening and the harmful effects to one’s health. However, the article is contradictory, as although it highlights the harmful effects of skin lightening treatments, it also features five other local South African celebrities said to be using these treatments and thereby indirectly endorsing skin lightening products.

One of the central objectives of analysing magazines’ representation of women involves examining how readers interpret popular media forms and to determine how these contribute to identity construction. Based on research and studies (Laden 1997, 2000; Beetham 1996; Murray 1998 and Kehily 1999) discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher aimed to ascertain whether magazines serve as aspirational and informal educational devices. The concept of media reception is imperative particularly in the study of women and magazine representation and this is confirmed by Van Zoonen (1994: 124) who maintains that “Media content is saturated with representations of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ which is why media reception is one of the key sites in which the construction of gender identity is assumed to take place”. FGDP in (FG 2) affirms, “When you read an article about the celebrity lifestyle, the fashion or what they’re doing, in your mind as a young person you think what they’re doing is right ... and you want to do that and follow the trend and be ‘in’ like them.” This emphasises the role magazines can play in contributing to readers’ sense of attitude, behaviour and identity construction.

A weight control product is advertised in DRUM magazine (20 March 2014: 71) featuring television presenter and model, Boity Thulo. The sub-heading for the advisement states “*New breakthrough in body fat reduction.*” The advertisement includes a testimonial from Thulo and states, “*Phedra-Cut Lipo XT is fantastic. I have never looked or felt better!*” This type of advertisement can contribute to women believing that purchasing the advertised products can allow them to ‘fit in’ to modern society and enter into the world of celebrities.

It further provides readers with the false belief that they can attain a 'superstar look' and achieve success by emulating celebrities' outward appearance and the choices they make. Women are lured into feeling conscious about their appearance and they are further persuaded into believing that beauty and glamour are keys to success. What this implies is that through advertisements, identities are constructed. This can negatively impact the self-image and self-esteem of readers. Furthermore, the abundance of images of blemish-free women in magazine content can lead women to feeling self-doubt and insecure. Magazines take advantage of women's insecurities which they themselves create and offer a feeling of relief to readers by presenting products as solutions to their insecurities. This is supported by Apaolaza-Ibanez (in Kaur, Arumugam, and Yunus 2013: 69) who claims that "cosmetics advertising works by lowering women's self-perception and then delivering relief from this negative feeling as an emotional benefit through the brand." Furthermore, the above advertisements' sub-heading reveals that it is a "*New breakthrough in body fat reduction*" implying that there is no other product like it. Advertisements often act on the insecurities and anxieties of a reader by evoking emotions of discontent, and through its textual and visual representation provides a feeling of relief as a stratagem to sell products. This advertisement (DRUM, 20 March 2014: 71) influences readers into believing that they can attain a desirous look, particularly ones embodied by celebrities.

A study by Trampe (in Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus 2013) highlights how specific products impact on women's confidence. The study (Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus 2013: 69) concludes:

Beauty product advertisements lower female consumers' self-Esteem.... [and] infers that the advertising industry has the power to transform mundane objects into highly desirable products. Eye cream, mascara and lipstick are beauty enhancing products which once advertised affect how women view themselves ... beauty product advertisements do not just sell products but also the lifestyle that inherently comes with using the product.

This highlights the strategies used to manipulate readers into purchasing products. Media commentator Chetty says many magazine publishers depend on advertising revenue not only to cover costs, but also to be profitable. Media workers are expected to maintain objectivity, professional integrity, impartiality and promote the quality and ethics of journalism. However, the bottom line of profit by a publisher is often at odds with the professional objectives by journalists to provide objective coverage and champion freedom of expression. Journalistic autonomy can be limited within the newsroom environment if editors are not willing to stand up for journalistic independence. YOU's Narimdas asserts that in terms of balancing journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit making; as a journalist, you have absolutely zero control over it. This affirms that there are different requirements for editorial content and advertisements and media workers often face the challenge of balancing journalistic objectivity in the quest for profit-making. Narimdas states:

You get told what to do. If you don't like it, you can step away from the story, you can say you don't want to put your name on this because you don't feel right about it but at the end of the day it's management who makes these decisions. You can state your case as much as you can in the hope that they will see the light or understand your point of view but if they don't, you have to understand that you are not the decision maker.

Narimdas confirms that editorial decisions do meet with resistance from journalists. "It happens almost weekly where there will be something that someone's not happy about ... you build your business on having good relationships with celebrities. That's how we make a living.... It's part of our KPA to build relationships but only to have them broken down." This confirms that journalists have to engage in a balancing act with their content sources and the relationship with their editors. Narimdas declares that "it is difficult to be loved by the celebrities and your editor because at some point somebody's going to hate you".

This is affirmed by DRUM's Li Sik who explains that it is very difficult to balance journalistic objectivity and the magazines' objective of profit making. In terms of the extent that commercial decisions meet with resistance from the Media24 newsroom, particularly journalists regarding objectivity and professionalism, Li Sik maintains that as a journalist the final decision is not yours and some of them are dictated to you. "If there's a big client that wants [something] they are going to try and bend over backwards and as a journalist you've got no say. You can complain until the cows come home and you do make your objections known but you have no say" declares Li Sik.

This raises the question of media power and influence and the commercialisation of media's role in society as a social institution. Advertising and neoliberalism alike have a steamrolling effect that can compromise the content and quality of magazines. This further underlines the fact that media organisations priorities are often influenced by external factors and they are primarily concerned with getting their publications to the newsstand. This further highlights that media's role of "serving the public good" becomes severely watered down. The actuality is that media houses face huge competition and in a market-driven economy, it is almost impossible to serve the interests of society and investors who are paying the bills.

Content in media such as magazines should offer an accurate account of events and issues as they are popular media forms. Often what we receive in media content is a slanted view of reality because it has moved along various checkpoints before being disseminated to the public. McQuail (2010: 591) maintains:

A distinction is usually made between intended and unintended bias. The former serves mainly from partisanship, advocacy and the ideological standpoint of the media or source. The latter is generally attributed to organisational and routine factors in selection and processing of news.

Curran and Gurevitch's (1996: 184) view is that "since mass media are in the hands of male owners and producers, they will operate to the benefit of a patriarchal society." These views were confirmed in the interviews with media professionals who explained that not much has evolved regarding gender in newsrooms. This validates that "there is a strong lingering element of male – yesterday's males still running newsrooms" (Oosthuizen in Govender 2010:108). Butler and Paisley (in Van Zoonen 1994: 17) claim that dominance of male editors contribute to the stereotypical views of women.

The interviews with media professionals allowed the researcher to get their acuties on the role that patriarchy and masculinity play in shaping and advancing their careers at media institutions. Interviewees maintained that men dominate in top positions in media institutions. However, in magazine media gender dynamics are relatively different in terms of women workers. In terms of the underlying gender dynamics that exist in magazine media institutions and its impact on magazine content, Chetty believes that there is not a major difference having more women in magazine media as even women in senior management roles in these publications adopt a [patriarchal] sort of thinking. He asserts that the stereotypical view of women particularly the patriarchal view of how women should be portrayed is evident in magazine content as well as the representation of women as sex symbols and imagery on what sells, comes through. Chetty maintains "They feel in order to compete in that sort of environment they have to think and feel the same way [as men], and also ... 'sex sells' so they might get reinforcement of that thinking so you get a continuation of that [stereotypical representation of women]."

Narimdas affirms that while a lot of men are still in management positions across the board at Media24 there are very few who work on the ground. "In our [YOU] newsroom we have one, at Huisgenoot they have two. So you have a team of about 30 people and you have three men so the dynamics in the newsroom itself is very different....but [despite this] it is pretty much still a boys camp." According to Li Sik, DRUM's newsroom has experienced some

change “where your experienced news people are men, but a lot of the journalists are female ... that’s basically what we have now. There was one stage when we had very few men in the newsroom but it’s about 1/3.” Understanding the gender dynamics in magazine newsrooms is imperative as it provides insight into the cross-cutting nature of gender issues in media practice, production and consumption.

YOU (10 April 2014: 6-7) covers an article on actress Gwyneth Paltrow titled *“Happily uncoupled.”* The sub-heading of the article reads, *“Feuds, flirting and affairs – what really lies behind the divorce of the actress everyone loves to hate.”* This story also features on the magazine’s cover-page and is titled *“Dirty secrets of squeaky clean Gwyneth.”* The cover-page headline, article headline and sub heading make use of an oxymoron as the words *“dirty and clean;” “happily unmarried”* and *“love to hate”* are contradictory. The entire two-page article focuses on Paltrow’s so-called negative qualities from her interference with her husband’s band *Coldplay*, to her several lifelong enemies with other celebrities such as Wynona Ryder and model Kate Moss. The article also centres on Paltrow’s *“obsessive two-hour daily workouts”* and states *“the star feuded with supermodel Kate Moss in 2012 when she told Kate she worked out so she wouldn’t look like the supermodel when she grew old. Kate allegedly threw a handful of French fries at Gwyneth and yelled eat some f***ing carbs!”* This article primarily focuses on the celebrities’ distasteful qualities by the use of words *“feuded”* and *“obsessive”* which have negative connotations and taints Paltrow’s character.

Similarly, YOU magazine (31 October 2013: 134) features a three-page spread titled *“Am I Bossy? Absolutely”* on model Naomi Campbell’s negative attributes. The entire article focuses on her *“short temper, lack of punctuality, airport tantrums over lost luggage and assault of staff and the paparazzi”*. Campbell is pictured in a bleed page and emphasis is on her bare legs. Media, are expected to serve the interests of the public by providing newsworthy and credible information. These celebrity representations confirm that often when

women do make it into the pages of magazines, they are portrayed in a negative and constrained manner.

YOU's *Have You Heard* section (31 October 2013: 155) features an article titled "*Kate back to her svelte self*". The article states:

Can you believe this super flat tummy belongs to the Duchess of Cambridge ...Just three months after giving birth, the 31 year old revealed her thin body at a game of volleyball as part of her duties for the Charity SportsAid. The super-mom looked super thin in a pair of jeggings, a Ralph Lauren blazer, striped shirt and wedges.

The article is accompanied by a photograph of Kate Middleton playing volleyball and attention is drawn to her abs with the words "*look at those washboard abs*" boldly visible across the photograph. The coverage raises the question of objectivity of media's coverage and informational value that this publication claims to provide to readers. The words "*super flat tummy and thin body*" draws attention to her body and completely overlooks her sporting ability. The words "*super thin*" draws attention once again to her physical appearance and underestimates her ability to participate in sport. Furthermore, the coverage clearly objectifies Middleton and the words "*thin body*," "*super thin*" and "*svelte*" underline magazine media's preoccupation with thinness. In discussing the negative aspects of the magazines under study, focus group participants highlighted the substantial gossip, disrespecting of privacy and mockery of people particularly celebrities in the magazines.

YOU's *News* section features a double page spread on celebrity Joan Rivers titled "*Still a big mouth!*" (YOU, April 10 2014: 102-103). The subheading states "*At 80, caustic Joan Rivers has plenty to say – and is looking younger than ever!*" The article centres on Rivers' appearance and the '739 procedures' she underwent. The article is accompanied by several pictures of Rivers, as indicated in Figure 5.2, showing her "*plastic surgery timeline*" and

also features a photograph revealing “*what it costs to look like Joan*” highlighting the various facial plastic surgeries and its cost. The words “*younger than ever*” also confirms media’s endorsement of the importance of maintaining a young-looking appearance at any cost. However, it must be noted that the article is also critical of people who spend large amount of money on plastic surgery.



Figure 5.2: Joan Rivers and her 739 procedures

Source: YOU, April 10 2014: 102-103

DRUM magazine’s cover page (June 19 2014: 12) features an article headlined “*Star wars Minnie and Bonang’s fight goes to the street – It’s game on now!*” The coverage highlights how media sensationalises stories on successful women by comparing their achievements. This leads to the downplaying of their actual career success by the media. Furthermore, the drama highlighted by magazine media casts a shadow on women’s accomplishments. The article is accompanied by photographs of the two celebrities in glamorous dresses and lingerie. In the *Celebrity News* section the article headlined “*It just got real*” centres on the alleged ongoing feud between the two television personalities. The sub-heading of the article states “*Mirror mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all?*” The feud between “it

girls Minnie Dlamini and Bonang Matheba has spilled over to social media.” The use of the words “*Mirror mirror on the wall...*” implies being the best in terms of looks and seeking attention. Furthermore it alludes to a ‘fantasy world’ and the words “*it girls*” objectifies the women as it implies that the two celebrities in the article are living the life that every women should aspire to.

YOU (21 November 2013: 106-107) features a two-page article titled “*Sleazy does it.*” The article centres on Miley Cyrus’s image transformation from her young, innocent Hannah Montana role to her current, edgy make-over that has stirred a lot of controversy. The article is accompanied by a picture featuring naked Cyrus in her “*Wrecking Ball*” music video (Figure 5.3). The word “*sleazy*” also has negative connotations as it is often associated with prostitutes.



Figure 5.3: Sleazy does it

Source: YOU, 21 November 2013: 106-107

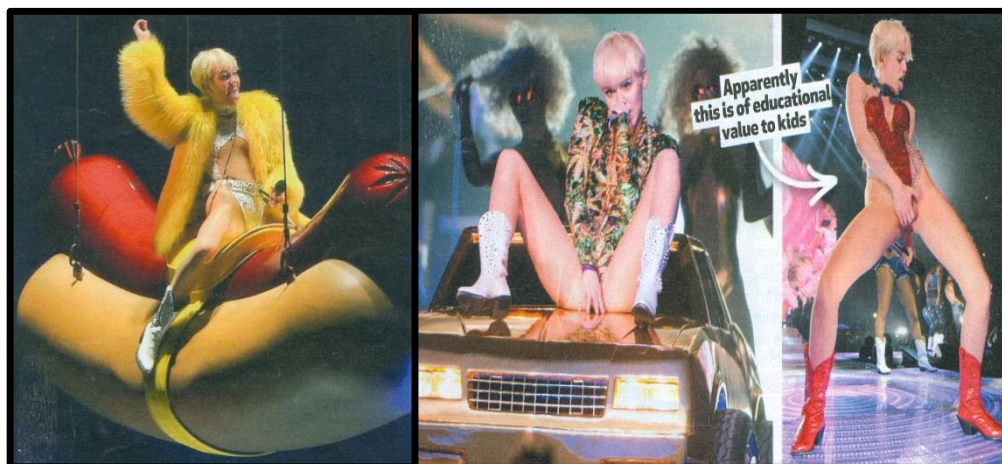


Figure 5.4: Please stop Miley!
Source: YOU, 6 March 2014: 116

FGDP in (FG 1) points out that editors should ensure that content reflects a responsibility to society. “So for example, don’t show us the Miley Cyrus type of story, show us an inspirational teenager story with a good role model. Then I would let my teenage daughter read it.” In addition, YOU’s *Celeb – Have You Heard* section (6 March 2014: 116) features a piece on Miley Cyrus titled “*Please stop, Miley!*” The controversial singer and former Hannah Montana child star has faced huge backlash particularly from parents. The article states “...parents slammed her X-rated stage antics - which included miming a sex act with a man wearing a Bill Clinton mask - and risqué outfits as soft porn.” The former Disney star says “It can be a good education for the kids who come to my concerts....I like to experiment. I don’t understand what most girls are wearing today. I find it boring.” The article is accompanied by four highly sexualised pictures of the singer (Figure 5.4). The coverage, specifically the imagery in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 raises the concern of appropriate role modelling for women, particularly young women. This validates Tuchman’s (in Van Zoonen 1994: 19) assertion that “the symbolic annihilation of women will endanger social development, for girls who lack positive images on which to model their behaviour.” It must be highlighted that despite elements of critique of Cyrus’s behaviour and appearance evident in this article, these sexual

images presented are powerful, but also grossly conflicting and can negatively influence young women's identity construction and attitudes. FGDP in (FG 3) states that this type of imagery in magazines proclaim that nakedness is the way forward:

She moved from being our childhood Hannah Montana role model and now here she is riding on a sausage. It looks so wrong. These magazines don't have an age restriction ... so I could leave this lying around and my little sister will see that. What is it saying to her?"

FGDP in (FG 1) describes Cyrus's image as a means to get attention and further asserts that she is an example of negative and controversial role models for youngsters. "[If] we look at society now, there are so many youngsters posting nude pictures of themselves on Facebook and MXIt and ... we end up with these internet stalkers that go to limits to get to these teenagers so it's all really negative..."

YOU's *Have You Heard* section (16 Jan 2014: 114) features celebrity Britney Spears and the focus is on her "abs" that, according to the text, "*looked too good to be true.*" The article indicates that the singer's stomach muscles were painted on with make-up. Headlined "*Fake abs?*" this piece is accompanied by a photograph of Spears in a cropped fitted top and low-waisted pants, showcasing the "*painted on*" abs. This type of content highlights the 'false' world of celebrities and it further emphasises that coverage of women is predominantly focused on aspects of their bodies. It underlines media's pre-occupation with physical perfection and the use of digital editing, air brushing and photo-shopping of magazine texts. This is acknowledged by Chetty who states that there is a lot of photo-shopping and a lot of manipulation of pictures in magazine media:

There is a lot of editing, touching up of people that have blemishes... this is not a true reflection of people and society. It's a sort of very utopian reflection of people ... it is what the perfect person could look like and I think it's what magazines have been doing for a long time,

but it doesn't necessarily help those people that aren't perfect and blemish free. Not everyone looks like [those] on the cover of a magazine.

FGDP in (FG 1) comments on the use of digital retouching in magazines, "Who wants to look like a photo-shopped model that we usually see in these magazines? Most of the time it is photo-shopped stuff, it's not real women. We want real women who look and do things the way we do." In addition another FGDP in (FG 1) states "If you're a mum, if you're a career woman, you have a multi-faceted life, you want to see that, but instead we end up seeing these celebrities who have the perfect life."

YOU's cover page (12 June 2014) features TV presenter Leanne Manas headlined "*Leanne Manas on her mommy guilt and losing weight – 17kg lighter but it has been a battle.*" The article (12 June 2014: 10) is headlined "*Looking lovely, Leanne.*" The article states "*it's hard to believe that not too long ago, the beautiful women sitting in front of us couldn't bear to look at herself.*" The four-page article is accompanied by many photographs, one with the caption "*Leanne's black and white dress shows of her lovely legs after she lost 17 kgs after her pregnancy.*" The coverage highlights the fact that despite career advancements and successes, often when women are featured in magazines emphasis is on their physical appearance. Manas is a successful career woman and owner of her own business, however the writer focuses on her appearance, particularly her weight-loss.

YOU's News section (12 June 2014: 126) features a two-page article titled "*G Whizz Kate!*" The sub-heading states:

Pretty as it is, Kate's bottom has led to calls for the Duchess to ditch her G-string for granny pants and develop a stronger sense of loyal decorum ... The Duchess of Cambridge inadvertently gave the world a glimpse of her bottom during the recent tour Down Under and one thing for sure – Pippa's posterior will no longer be the most talked about Middleton bottom after the picture of Kate's taut tush emerged.

The article is accompanied by a photograph showing Kate Middleton's dress being blown skywards as she and Harry are about to take a helicopter trip. This article also features five additional photographs with her dress flying up. The article continues, *"And if that weren't enough to get tongues wagging, the 32 year-old appeared to be wearing a g-string (if she were wearing any panties at all.)"* The German tabloid *Bild* won the rights to publish the photograph and *Bild* added the rather cheeky caption: *"never have we been so thankful to a helicopter for creating such a wind."* This article is accompanied by many photographs and detailed accounts of instances where Middleton's bottom appeared in public as evidenced in Figure 5.5. The headline *"G Whizz Kate"* skilfully makes reference to a women's under garment. In addition the article highlights a quote in bold red font that states *"If I had a rear end like hers, I'd pray for wind."*



Figure 5.5: G-Whizz Kate!
Source: YOU, 12 June 2014: 126

The blatant ridiculing and demeaning coverage afforded to the Duchess raises questions of journalistic professionalism, objectivity and the informational value of the content provided. In addition, the coverage illustrates that women are often dishonoured and devalued in the media.

5.3.2 Language used in magazine content

Language has an instrumental role in shaping people's perception of reality and through language, media consistently focus on women's appearance. This is evident in a two-page article in YOU's *Spotlight* section titled "*Wedding belle*" (YOU, 13 June 2013: 118-119) about Pippa Middleton's role as a society wedding guest. The writer's opening line states "*She was the unexpected star at the wedding of the decade and her shapely bottom in a clingy bridesmaid dress was spoken about for weeks afterwards. Now it seems every wannabe society bride in Britain wants Pippa's posterior in a pew.*" The words "*shapely bottom*" and "*clingy bridesmaid dress*" draw attention to specific areas of Middleton's body and her physical appearance. The article also states that "*Pippa often also opts for dresses better suited to a London bachelorette party*". It is universally accepted that a bride-to-be is dressed scantily for her bachelorette party in the name of fun. By referring to Middleton's attire as "*better suited to a bachelorette party*" this implies that her choice of dress when attending these weddings are questionable. By the use of language, the article is demeaning and has very little informational value. The language used is derogatory and is focused excessively on physical appearance. Furthermore, it is accompanied by several photographs of Middleton with emphasis on her body, particularly her buttocks.

Pietersen maintains that YOU magazine serves as an instrument in providing educational and inspirational information to readers. She explains:

We want the woman that buys YOU magazine – that has a family – not to feel guilty. So I'm buying it cos I like the skinner story about Kim Kardashian, but I'm actually buying it cos there are education pages in the middle for my child, there's some motoring stuff for my husband, there's something for granny. So we make sure that we cover every aspect.

Her views highlight that magazines offer readers a range of information from lifestyle, current affairs to celebrity gossip. As powerful forms of expression they can have a huge in shaping public opinion and forming identities.

YOU's cover page (13 June 2013) is solely on the Oscar Pistorius trial and the article is titled "*Final Pics of a doomed love story*". The first part of the exclusive article states "*These are the photos of a couple in love – the relaxed beauty nuzzling her man's neck, all shiny-eyed and glam at a social event and cosying up in a festive mood. No one could guess at the horror that would follow*" (YOU, 13 June 2013: 6-7). The use of the words "*relaxed beauty*," and "*shiny-eyed and glam*" all place emphasis on Steinkamp's physical appearance. In the *News Cover Stories* section of this publication, five articles are featured on the relationship between Oscar Pistorius and Reeva Steenkamp. Furthermore, the use of the words "her man's" in the subheading of the exclusive article highlights media's positioning of women as possessive, implying Steinkamp's need to have claim over Pistorius. One article is titled "*Blade Runners other blondes*." This use of the word "*blonde*" to describe a woman is demeaning as it focuses entirely on the woman's physical attributes. The article titled "*The other blondes*" (YOU, 13 June 2013: 16-17) features Erin Stear who was associated with having a relationship with Pistorius. The article is accompanied by Stear's Facebook pictures of her partying, showing off her tattoos and her buttocks. Similarly, YOU magazine (19 September 2013) cover page makes two additional references to blondes. The first article is titled "*Snapped! Blonde Beyonce and baby blue making waves;*" and the second "*Right Royal Drama! – Why jealous Kate doesn't want Harry to marry his blonde*." The latter article features in the YOU News section and is headlined "*The claws come out*."

Magazine media's emphasis of competition among women is also evident in a three-page article (YOU, 31 October: 10-12) featuring celebrities Jennifer Lopez and Mariah Carey that states : "*Their perfectly manicured talons are out, but these diva rivals have more in common than they'd care to admit*". The

words “*perfectly manicured talons*” are contradictory as manicured nails symbolise femininity and talons refer to claws – associated with animals. The words “talons” and “claws” as used in the article “*Right Royal Drama! – Why jealous Kate doesn’t want Harry to marry his blonde*” (YOU, 19 September 2013) depicts the celebrities in an aggressive and vengeful manner, highlighting the rife competitiveness among female celebrities. The cover page of YOU magazine (31 October 2013) is titled “*J Lo vs Mariah*” “*Dual of divas,*” “*Tantrums, triumphs and toyboys.*” The article provides details of their “toy-boys” and is accompanied by many photographs of the celebrities.

Sexual inferences are clearly visible in magazine media particularly when featuring women and this is lucidly apparent in YOU and DRUM magazines coverage of women. YOU’s *Celebs – Have You Heard* section (27 February 2014: 115) features full-page coverage of singer and actress, Jennifer Lopez with the headline “*Shake that Booty.*” The article states “*The pop star showed off her hour-glass figure in a skimpy outfit as she filmed segments of her video for We Are One (Ole Ola), the official anthem for the FIFA World Cup.*” The words “*booty*” and “*hour-glass figure*” objectifies the celebrity and draws attention to her bodily appearance, specifically her buttocks. The constant celebrity focus dominating magazine media may lead readers’, particularly young readers, to compare and match their own appearance to what magazine media presents as ‘beautiful’ and ‘successful’ and as a means to be recognised and accepted in society.

DRUM’s *In The News* section (6 February 2014: 98) features an inspirational two-page article on Mapaseka Makhanya, a female athlete. The entire article centres on her achievements and her future plans. The article is accompanied by four photographs of Mapaseka and the headline states “*Mapaseka is stylish even while running*”. The emphasis on the sportswomen being fashionable or “*stylish*” detracts attention from her sporting success and reinforces media’s tendency to focus on women’s femininity. This reinforces the connotations of disempowerment that are evident in YOU and DRUM magazine’s reporting of

women. This affirms Driver's (2002: 157) view that "representations of women in sports, always emphasises their femininity." Although the article shows that women sport stars are acknowledged, by the use of language it signifies reporting that is mixed and conflicting. It also highlights that women in sport are seldom awarded the coverage they deserve. Magazine media can contribute to uplifting women's sporting profiles by offering objective coverage to sportswomen.

What is required is representation of women in non-stereotypical, non-confining ways using non-sexist language to promote social change and gender equality in media. Although limited coverage in magazine media highlights media's unfair representation of women, more concerning is the quality of the coverage provided in terms of language used. Language used in magazine media can greatly impact on women's identity construction and can shape people's perception of reality. Magazine coverage should strive to reflect the remarkable accomplishments of women and journalists should refrain from using language that will negatively impact on women's identity construction.

DRUM's *Better Life and Fabulous* section (9 Jan 2014: 32-33) features a two-page spread of larger women in work wear. The section offers advice to women on how to transform clothing into "*smart work wear*." Despite the use of larger women in the coverage, the language used implies that 'thinness' should be the sought after desire and ambition of all women. The feature states, "*Nude heels make your legs look longer and create a slimmer look*." The feature also provides information on the clothing companies that stock the advertised products and their prices. This type of coverage affirms that magazine media often function in counter-productive ways as can be seen in the article. It implies that despite the publication including images of larger women, by the use of language, it remains firm in the promotion of the culture of thinness. FGDP in (FG 1) asserts that:

Beauty comes in different ways and it shouldn't be limited...a size 0

shouldn't be the most perfect woman. A plus sized woman at a size 38 can be beautiful and smart and intelligent, but somehow the media and society tend to overlook those things and make women feel the thinner you are, the more beautiful you are, which is crazy.

DRUM's *Inspiration* section (9 Jan 2014: 88-89) features an article on a successful woman who has started her own spice company. The fact that the article appears in the "Inspiration" category of the magazine, one would expect the coverage to offer inspirational information to women. The headline of the article is titled "*Spicy Mama*." The word 'spicy mama' is derogatory and implies a 'hot' woman and highlights connotations of disempowerment and marginalisation.

DRUM's *Profile* section (9 Jan 2014: 96-99) features an article headlined "*Our Top 12 beautiful people*". In the feature, actress Pearl Thusi is described as "*one hot mamma*" and "*This glamorous 'It' girl is just about everywhere.... She's vibrant and vivacious – a party all on its own – oh and how we love that hair.*" Minnie Dlamini also features in the coverage and is described as "*hot, talented and stylish.*" Meanwhile, Zizo Beda is described as having "*nice-girl appeal firmly intact – just the kinda girl you want your brother to marry.*" The description of these women distinctly objectifies them and reduces them to sex objects for the desire of men. In addition the words 'hot' has sexual connotations. The choice of words used in this coverage validates this. Through the use of language, "*a party all on its own,*" this article highlights how successful women's achievements are often underplayed and trivialised.

The use of words with sexual connotations is also evident in magazine advertisements. YOU magazine (13 June 2013: 91) features an advert for women's jeans. The advert describes the jeans with the words "*hot denim*" which has sexual connotations. Furthermore, the photographed image reveals only the bottom half of a slender woman in tight clad denim jeans and high heels. This advertisement reveals that women are often stripped of their identity and are used for the promotion and sale of products in media. The

sexual connotations imply that women are objectified and frequently reduced to sex objects to be desired by men. This type of content is offensive and clearly limits women's position in society.

YOU (16 Jan 2014: 16-17) features a two-page article on Nigella Lawson titled *"Revenge is sweet."* The opening line of the article states *"Being a success is undoubtedly the best revenge the voluptuous chef could have taken on her former husband, who couldn't destroy her career no matter how hard he tried."* The word "revenge" reinforces the belief or stereotype that women are vengeful, particularly in fallen relationships. The last line of the two-page article includes a quote by Tiffany Darke, a writer in the Sunday times and states *"She's transcended her profile as domestic goddess, cookbook fall-back and voluptuous finger-licker. And to that make-up maestro, 50-something survivor and good-time girl. We can only watch her rise."* The article is accompanied by four photographs of Lawson. Furthermore, the words "domestic goddess" stereotypes women's role in the home and family.

Media commentator Chetty highlights the disparagement of women in magazine media by providing the example of South African celebrities Senzo Myewiwa and Kelly Khumalo:

Magazines will definitely still criticise the mistress into a piranha. They don't look at the role that the man actually played in that relationship and you often find that women are derided for that role in the relationship and magazines will definitely run it and target the mistress, more so than they will the man in that relationship. So double standards definitely apply in that environment.

This is also evident in an article in DRUM magazine (01 May 2014) where the cover page states *"It's a mess! Lizelle dumps Teko for a rich married man"* *"Gold Digger strikes again."* The opening line of the two-page article states *"She's a beautiful model whose interest in men range from those in politics, sport and high finance – as long as they can maintain her expensive lifestyle,*

which has given her a reputation for being a 'gold digger' and 'marriage wrecker'." Magazines are often used by women as modelling devices and this type of coverage raises the question of appropriate role models available for women, particularly young women.

DRUM's *In The News* section (01 May 2014: 118-119) covers a two-page article on local actress Liteboho Moitse headlined *"TV's new sweetheart."* The word *"sweetheart"* is a term of endearment and can be perceived as inappropriate and misleading in a professional setting as it is an affectionate term often used to address a good friend or family member. This affirms that magazine media often portray women as demure and lovable and by the use of language, detract attention away from their career triumphs. This further highlights that magazine media, through the use of language, reveals connotations of weakness when representing women.

YOU's *Celebs Have You Heard* section (12 June 2014: 133) features a piece with the headline *"Now That's cheeky!"* The coverage states *"We all know that Prince Harry has a thing for blondes, so could we be seeing more of this leggy beauty? The tanned beauty was snapped when her dress rode accidentally up and exposed her knickers...."* The article is accompanied by photographs of the women revealing her dress that rode up and no mention of her name is provided. The coverage devalues the unnamed women and the word *"blonde"*, *"tanned beauty"*, *"leggy beauty"* and *"cheeky"* focusses on her physical appearance and deprives her of an identity. The coverage indicates that women are often reduced to sexual objects for the desire of men. In addition, emphasis is placed on her buttocks by the use of arrows revealing her exposed buttocks with the highlighted words *"she's pulling a Kate on us."* This confirms that gender stereotypes are maintained through the male gaze. The unnamed woman is exposed sexually with emphasis on her legs and buttocks and these symbolisms relate to women's portrayals as sexual objects for the benefit of men's desire.

YOU's (12 December 2013) cover page features a headline "*Nigella in a pickle,*" with the sub-heading "*Coked-up domestic goddess – career under threat.*" The cover page also features a photograph of Nigella Lawson in a cleavage-bearing dress. The two-page article features in the YOU News section (12 December 2013: 10-11) and is headlined "*Hell for Highjella*" as the article focuses on her alleged cocaine addiction. It is accompanied by many photographs, two of which imply that the celebrity was on drugs. This coverage has connotations of disparagement of the celebrity. The researcher does not suggest that information should be suppressed to reveal unblemished portraits of successful career-women, however Lawson is one of the most successful woman in the food industry and the coverage affirms that when successful women do get media space it is usually with a negative or scandalous angle. The coverage illustrates magazine media's sensational approach to its content. The publication also skilfully makes use of a play on words in the cover-page "*Coked-up*" as well as in the articles headline, "*Hell for Highjella*" by creating a play on her name, emphasising her alleged drug use.

DRUM magazine (19 September 2013: 28) in the *Better Life and Beauty* section features an article titled "*Boost your lashes – Make your eyes the centre of attention. We show you the tools you need and give you the tips on how to make the most of your lashes – even if they're not perfect.*" The article provides readers with "*lash-building tools, the lash collection, step-by-step falsies,*" and information on mascara. The article is accompanied by lash products and prices. The words "*even if they are not perfect*" implies that readers should strive for perfection in their appearance. The concept of beauty is reinforced and the "manufacturing of consent and invoking inadequacies techniques employed" (Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus 2013: 70) by the use of the words "*even if they are not perfect*" further manipulates and deceives women. This feature also highlights how particular products are by the use of language, framed as solutions to women's problems. Furthermore, the repetitive use of the word "*you*" and "*your*" is meant to personalise the product

and lure the reader and veer them into buying the product. With their creative use of language, magazines often seek to address readers directly and personally by using possessive pronouns such as “you” and “yours”.

DRUM magazine features an advertisement for a hair care product (19 December 2013: 53) with the tagline “*Just be glam*” and “*For me, only the best.*” The advertisement portrays a young, glamorous woman with long braids that are draped over her bare shoulders. The use of the words “*just be glam*” emphasises the world of glamour, style and beauty that magazines thrive on and propagate. This is also evident in DRUM’s (24 April 2014: 81) advertisement for an Indian hair oil that states “*My secret to shiny, stronger hair*” and includes a blemish-free image of an Indian women. The ‘ideology of beauty’ is reinforced by magazine advertisements that propagate glamour and beauty and associate these aspects with attaining a good and better life. The various messages and meanings used in advertising, including language and visual elements, are aimed at influencing readers with the hope that they will be prompted into action to purchase products.

In addition, DRUM (8 August 2013: 108) features an advertisement for a hair straightening product encouraging parents to use the product on their children’s hair and features a before and after photograph of a young female child. This affirms that many of the advertisements in YOU and DRUM magazines contain imperatives, questions or statements demanding action from the reader. This particular advertisement is aimed at luring a young target market in the hope that they will become regular readers. Pietersen affirmed this and maintains that in order to survive in the competitive media environment one has to draw in young people and ensure that they grow with the publication.

DRUM (7 November 2013: 115) features an advertisement for a hair-strengthening product with the tagline “*discover beauty discover Revlon realistic*”. The advertisement states “*Using the Revlon realistic range of*

products with Olive Oil, a natural conditioner for your hair, will help to revitalise the natural strength of your hair; help to moisturise and improve elasticity and shine. Quality you love!" In addition, YOU magazine features an advertisement for Vinolia body lotion (27 Feb 2014: 103) with the tagline *"luxury in the palm of your hands."* Both advertisements are accompanied by a young, blemish free women. These advertisements affirm that people are often addressed on an individual basis or through Fairclough's (1989: 62) "synthetic personalisation" as a means to appeal to the reader and entice them into purchasing the product.

YOU magazine (31 October 2013: 72) features a make-up advertisement for mascara. The advertisement promotes a retro look, encouraging readers to try out the new product, *"A wide-eyed false lash look," "Fanned out volume, no clumps," "Try thick and thin eyeliner for any line you crave."* The advertisement features a female with pouting lips and bold mascara laden eyes. The advertisement also highlights that by the use of linguistic devices such as direct address or the pronoun *"you"*, readers are persuaded into believing that the product should be purchased. In addition, YOU magazine (25 July 2013: 43) features an advertisement for lipstick with a bare shouldered model. The advertisement states *"No dragging; no drying; no let downs at all."* These advertisements affirm that magazines express ideological meanings by the use of language and sentence construction. Language selection such as verb choices, repetition of words and use of compound words and adjectives contribute to representing 'reality' to readers. In YOU and DRUM magazines, the use of compound words for example offer an intensified form of the meaning of the advertisements. In the samples analysed in YOU and DRUM magazines and illustrated in the examples offered above, synonyms and compound words such as *"wide-eyed"*, *"lash-building"* and *"fanned-out"* are frequently used as techniques to charm and entice readers.

The back page of DRUM (20 March 2014) features an advertisement for an oil control cream and accompanying the advertisement is a photographic image

of a young black woman with flawless skin. The tagline of the advertisement states “*Beautiful skin, clinically proven.*” This advertisement highlights the use of formal and informal words and intertextuality in magazine media. The word “*clinically proven*” highlights how the use of technical words are used to influence the reader of this advertisement that this oil control cream is of noteworthy standard. Furthermore, this advertisement is accompanied by a competition to win a bursary as well as R5 off your next purchase of the advertised product. This emphasises magazine media’s commercial standpoint and highlights that many techniques are employed to guarantee profit-making which is high on the agenda of media houses.

YOU magazine (31 October 2013) features celebrities Jennifer Lopez and Mariah Carey in a headline titled “*J Lo vs Mariah*” “*Dual of divas,*” “*Tantrums, triumphs and toyboys.*” The three-page article (31 October: 10-12) also includes photographs, advertising their perfumes. Mariah Carey is seen in a sensual pose, draped in lavender silk while J Lo is featured in a fur coat, with smoky eyes and a seductive pose all of which cleverly provide a sensual message to women readers. The advertised perfume, symbolises beauty and radiance. Through the language used in this advertisement, the magazine sends the message that the reader can also be as radiant as the celebrities featured in the magazine, provided they use the products advertised. Furthermore, as postulated by Cook (2001: 108) “adjectives are the fusion that will imbue the characterless product [in this case the perfume bottle] with desirable qualities.” Furthermore, the beautiful women represented in the advertisement are used as signs, symbols of beauty and attractiveness. The perfume advertisement has been included as part of the main article as its aim is to persuade and invite women into the domain of celebrities and fantasy.

Many of the advertisements in the publications under study contain imperatives, questions or statements demanding action from the reader. The tone of communication highlights magazines’ underlying commercial purpose. According to Li Sik “We try to work with the advertising people ... but generally

the attitude ... [is that the] final call is that we will not be dictated to by advertising ... we will not be influenced by it.” Meanwhile, media commentator Chetty emphasised that advertising pays the bills in media houses:

There used to be a time when editors would cringe at having to allow a certain ad. It was ad percentage versus editorial percentage, but now editors realise it is advertising and not the circulation that is a huge factor, so editors have sort of backed off in that way. At the same time, it is the credibility of the publication that they have to take into consideration so it is always a fine line that they have to balance but the editors don't have powers now that they had 20-30 years ago.

The statement above relates to the commercial media environment and the inextricable relationship between the media and the marketplace. It further highlights how the “marketplace and the economics of publishing” as discoursed by Herman and Chomsky (1988) extensively impact on magazine media content.

DRUM's *ShowBuzz* section (18 July 2013: 104) features an article titled “*Kerry's Taken, Boys!*” “*The sexy, talented Kerry Washington (36) is officially off the market. It seems the sultry beauty has a lot more in common with Olivia Pope the character she plays on The Fixer, than we thought.*” The words “*sexy*,” “*sultry*” and “*taken*” indicate that the actress is reduced to a mere object of men's desire. It further emphasises that magazines continue to promote the patriarchal view that women exist to be beautiful for men and to be acquired by men.

An article featuring the failed marriage of South African Powerball Presenter Jolene Martin appears in DRUM (8 August 2013: 92) and describes Martin as follows: “*Over the years, her perfectly sculptured cheekbones, radiant brown eyes and friendly smile have captivated the hearts of viewers since she presented her first show in 2009.*” The use of the words “*perfectly sculptured cheekbones, radiant brown eyes and friendly smile*” draws attention to Martin's

physical appearance and not her career successes. In addition, the feature is accompanied by two photographs of Martin, one with her lying on a couch in a cleavage-bearing dress. The coverage signifies that women are often marginalised in magazine media content and when they are awarded media space, through the use of language and visuals, emphasis is placed on their bodies. The entire article focuses on her failed marriage and only the last few lines of the two-page article makes reference to her career. It also underlines that when women are afforded coverage, positive aspects are usually relegated to the bottom of magazine media pages.

An article titled “*She’s a hot mama*” (DRUM, 8 August 2013: 98-99) describes Nonhle Thema’s mother-in-law as “*a gorgeous granny and mother of four and sexy and youthful mother-in-law*”. It further states that “*...sexy Nonhle is in for competition in the beauty stakes and from a most unlikely source, her future mother-in-law!*” The entire article focuses on beauty, physical appearance and youthfulness. The coverage emphasises the ideal of thinness and obliterates aging as a natural process of life and these types of features place inappropriate attention on women’s appearance. The caption of the accompanying photographs also makes reference to “*her perfect, wrinkle-free complexion*” and “*petite youthful body*”. This feature further emphasises that magazine media mask women’s actual bodily forms. By portraying women in a limited and confined manner, magazine media convey that integrity, personality and one’s contribution to society are not as important as the expression of physical appeal.

YOU’s *Celebs Have You Heard* section (01 May 2014: 115) features a full-page article and photographs of Heidi Klum titled “*Heidi’s sexy beach break*.” The coverage is accompanied by many photographs of Klum with boyfriend Vito Schnabel who is referred to as her “*toy boy*.” Furthermore, the coverage emphasises Klum’s buttocks with the words “*Nice booty babe*” that appears in bold capital letters and this highlights the emphasis of media coverage on women’s physical appearance. The choice of words in this article validates

that women are greatly undervalued in magazine media. It must also be noted that this article is also disparaging to men by the use of the words “toy boy” as it reduces men to sexual objects for female pleasure.

DRUM magazine cover page states “*Mzansi’s money-makers – Pearl, Minnie and Bonang – But who is making the most money?*” The article features in the *Celebrity News* section of DRUM (17 October 2013: 16-17) and is titled “*Earning big bucks*”. The sub-heading states “*These Mzansi TV darlings have worked hard and are now smiling all the way to the bank.*” The three local celebrities are referred to as “*it girls*.” The use of the words “*it girls*” suggests that they are what others should aspire to be like. Furthermore the word “*darlings*” is inappropriate as it downplays their success as it is a term of endearment and detracts attention from their career achievements.

YOU’s cover page (6 March 2014) features an exclusive on Princess Charlene titled “*Party princess lets her hair down ... Charlene’s island jaunt ... kissing, hugging, drinking and no sign of Albert!*” The four-page YOU exclusive on the Princess of Monaco (6 March 2014: 6) was titled “*Champagne Charlene*”. The subheading states “*The Monaco princess looked relaxed on a Caribbean break – but again no sign of hubby!*” The article negatively represents Charlene by means of the various connotations it conveys. Firstly by use of the words “*Champagne Charlene*” the writer implies that she is under the influence of alcohol. The article states “*Gone is the sadness that seems to have settled about her and in its place is laughter, flirting and hands in the air happiness in the company of friends.... But it doesn’t really befit her Serene Highness the Princess of Monaco, especially when her husband is nowhere in sight.*” The Princess was described as having a “*raucous time*” and having “*draped herself over more than one man, none of them the head of the Monegasque people.*” The use of the verb and adjective “*raucous*” and “*draped*” implies that the *Princess of Monaco* was not carrying herself in a manner deemed to be appropriate for a princess. It further states “*it’s hard to imagine Albert approving of Charlene leaning in for kisses and hugs with the*

men in her company.” The article reveals that when with Albert, Charlene is “*back to her cool composure*” and suggests that theirs is not a happy, healthy relationship. The article also centres on her producing a heir and states:

She’s increasingly under pressure to have a baby, especially after the birth of two boys in the family.... High society Monegasque gossips believe Albert will ditch Charlene if she doesn’t have his child in the next year. She reportedly brokered a deal that would give her freedom after three years of marriage, a deadline that looms large (YOU, 6 March 2014: 8).

The above statement highlights magazine media’s persistent, stereotypical representations of women as mothers and wives. The article is accompanied by several photographs of Charlene and friends as seen in Figure 5.6, and one photograph of Charlene and Albert after the holiday with the caption “*Charlene joined her husband, Prince Albert, at a soccer match in Monaco days after her trip. The cloud of sadness seems to have settled once again.*” The language used in the article has many implied meanings and most clear are the allusions to an unhappy marriage. The article highlights connotations of disempowerment and relegation of Charlene by implying that she needs the guidance of a man, her husband, to keep her in place. It further highlights the patriarchal view that motherhood and marriage should be the goal of all women by stating that her deadline to have children is looming.



Figure 5.6: Champagne Charlene
Source: YOU, 6 March 2014: 6

Language is a powerful force for creating and maintaining attitudes. The use of language in magazine media can elevate or reduce the value of the information and influence readers by means of the connotations that it carries. In terms of the type of language and the types of words used in magazines, Chetty affirms that men are frequently favoured over women:

I think it goes back to the history of these magazines and also the company. Media24, which is very conservative, very family-orientated and again for example if DRUM magazine has a story of a celebrity couple splitting up, invariably you will find that the husband will tell his side of the story and the wife either doesn't want to comment because the media went to him first or if there is comment, it's portrayed as if she's sort of the [reason for] the problem...it's stereotypical, it's patriarchal and ... a trend.

Chetty expresses that despite the end of the apartheid era which was beset with patriarchy and sexism, there is still an ongoing patriarchal trend in the media, particularly magazines. He provides as an example the sex scandal regarding South Africa's former rugby captain, Joost van der Westhuizen. Chetty maintains that in this high profile story the focus moved away from van der Westhuizen and to the woman that was on the video and thereafter to his wife Amor Vittone. According to Chetty "So they [magazines] definitely chose

sides and they say ok this is the bad person and turn Joost into this hero now and forgive him and you [readers] should forgive him too.” However YOU’s editor Pietersen explained in an interview on 20 November 2014 that:

We’ve got a tone that goes [throughout] the magazine ... it’s YOU magazine’s tone of voice [that] will come through ... you’ll never read something that looks like it doesn’t fit in YOU magazine. And also, we never allow journalists to editorialise. Don’t put your own comment in ... not interested in your comment, we’re interested in the expert’s comment.

The above statement highlights media’s power in influencing readers’ perceptions on issues, people and events. This is affirmed by Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2001: 123) who maintain that “media shapes our identities and are sites and instruments of transformation as they frame the kinds of stories we read, see and hear”. FGDP in (FG 1) states “I don’t think they [media houses] are aware of the power they wield with the influence they have on people and I think sometimes they forget that they need to be responsible [in selecting] content within their magazines.”

The analysis of editorial content and advertisements concludes that a variety of linguistic techniques are used to attract and persuade women. This is evident by the use of linguistic devices such as catch phrases in headlines, including direct address, taglines and slogans. Vocabulary, particularly in beauty products, contain ‘beauty myths’ that should be desired by women including having “less wrinkles”, “plumped, shiny lips” and “lengthy, thicker eye lashes”.

5.3.3 Visual imagery presented to readers

Women are looking to understand the world, recognise their sense of self and often turn to popular culture to define their roles and develop their identity. The exclusion of certain issues and the accentuation of specific aspects of magazine media content can impact on how women perceive reality. Stereotypical perceptions of women proliferate in our culture and society and issues regarding masculinity and femininity are often constructed by society. The *Have You Heard* section of *YOU* (13 June 2013: 126) features an article on Jennifer Lopez's criticism for her overtly sexual performance at the family friendly show *Britain's Got Talent*. Included in the coverage, are three photographs of the celebrity with the headline "*Tone it down, J Lo!*" The coverage states that J Lo was "*clad in barely there leotard and bondage styled boots, the 43-year old mom of two left little to the imagination as she thrust her hips, touched her crotch and ended her performance by sliding towards the camera as with her knees apart.*" It must be highlighted that the article criticises Lopez's images however the language and visual portrayal of the celebrity is highly sexually charged and the visual representations featured in Figure 5.7 highlight the inappropriate nature of the images. The article also states that J Lo's inappropriate dance routine and 'x-rated' performance flooded social media as many parents allowed their kids to stay up and watch the popular show as it was during school holidays.

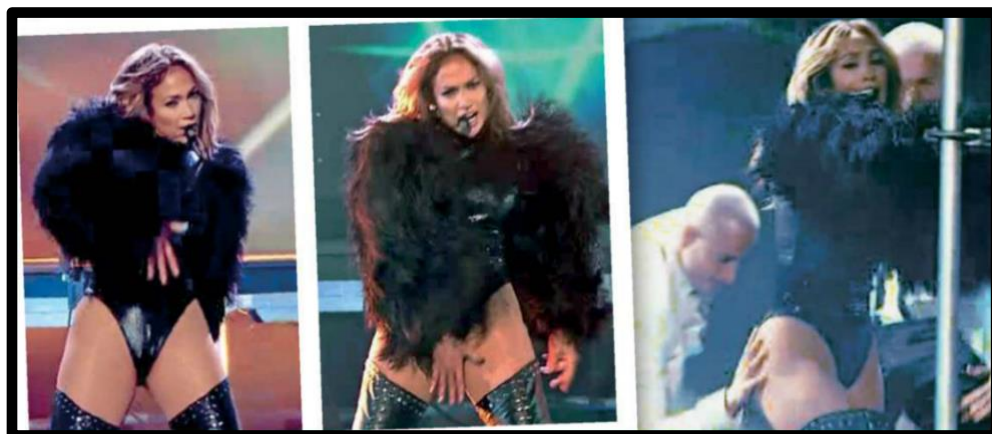


Figure 5.7: Tone it down, J Lo!

Source: YOU, 13 June 2013: 126

As stated by Liebau (2007: 8) “emphasis on sexiness, revealing fashions, and the overvaluing of physical appeal creates pressure to measure up to ultra-thin models or celebrities and leads to unrealistic expectations among women about how their own bodies should actually look.” An article headlined *“Boity’s Cheeky move....she’s the talk of the town since baring her pert posterior in a glossy mag”* features Boity Thulo and pictures of her bottom (YOU, 6 March 2014: 22-23). The article is accompanied by an image of Boity’s naked shoot and the cover of the magazine is headlined *“Bootylicious Boity”* and *“Right now I do as I please”* and *“Bootylicious Boity”*. The article centres on the media frenzy surrounding pictures of her naked bottom that appeared in *Marie Claire’s* Naked Issue. Furthermore, the words *“cheeky”* and *“bootylicious”* are riddled with sexual innuendo. The article also describes her as the “petite actress”. The article states *“But it seems the other celebs pics paled in comparison with the image in which Boity shows off what’s become her bootylicious bum.”* It is accompanied by four pictures of the celebrity including one of her naked shoot. This coverage conveys to women that to be a success and to become noticed, she should portray herself in a sexy manner. Media has the power to shape the socialisation of women and repetitively advocating an ‘ideal look’ through sexualised visual images, significantly limits role models

that women could look up to. In addition, the nude image in Figure 5.8 contradicts the publications standpoint that it is a family read.



Figure 5.8: Boity's Cheeky Move for *Marie Claire's* Naked issue

Source: YOU, 6 March 2014: 23

Focus group discussion participants held opposing views regarding the visual imager in Figure 4.7. FGDP in (FG 1) states "It's ok because she has a perfect bum;" "That's fantastic – she's got a big base and wants to show it off." Another FGDP in (FG 3) stated:

Every guy was talking about that ass from the article – every single guy. If you went on social networks everybody was talking about Boity's butt. Personally I think we should also take into account that she is a celebrity and she is an ambassador for some and I think maybe it was actually wrong for her to show off her butt.

By portraying women in a limited and confined manner, magazine media convey that integrity, personality and one's contribution to society are not as important as the expression of physical appeal. Content in articles and advertisements constantly allude that women's bodies are 'in need of fixing.' This is evident particularly with headlines in the study sample such as "*How to look subtly sexy*", "*Hot new ways to get slim*" and "*Body fat reduction techniques*" engulfing magazine content. Furthermore, women are constantly

glamorised and used to sell products. This false world created makes it difficult for readers to differentiate between the real world and that which is illusionary.

Magazines promote the ideal of what constitutes beauty as well as the techniques women should use to achieve it and this affirms the underlying assumption that women are obliged to heed this advice and follow the routines in order to feel better about themselves and be accepted by others. Through magazine media texts women are promised the attainment of perfection if they adhere to instructions as presented by the magazines. Furthermore, once this perfection is achieved, men will be more interested in them.

YOU magazine (13 June 2013: 73) portrays a naked woman advertising for an eczema relief product. Her face is absent and a side profile of her unclothed upper body is visible. The advertisement objectifies women as a means to sell a product and the illustration has no correlation with the product advertised. Similarly, YOU (31 October 2013: 89) features an advertisement on a medication for bladder infections. The advertisement contains detailed information on urinary tract infections and the pain associated with it. The advertisement includes a photograph of the medication said to assist with this ailment as well as another photograph revealing only the bare legs of a women in red high-heels, with her hand over her knees. Both advertisements show that women are objectified and their bodies are used in magazines for the promotion of other commodities. DRUM's inside cover (20 March 2014) features an advertisement for Vaseline body lotion. The bleed page advertisement features a naked, black female with her body side profiled. Her lips are visible to the reader, however the rest of her face is cut off the photograph, her individuality is denied, thereby dehumanising her. The image in Figure 5.9 reveals that emphasis is placed on her unclothed, unblemished, glistening body.



Figure 5.9: Vaseline: Dry skin restored

Source: DRUM, 20 March 2014

FGDP in (FG 1) challenged this type of portrayal of women, “we’d like to see a hot guy there. Why aren’t men being sexualised like this? For me it’s very sexual the way she’s tilting her head ... Why couldn’t they use a baby? A mum rubbing Vaseline on her baby ... yes a family picture.” Another FGDP in (FG 2) expressed that the image plays on women’s self-image and promotes the sale of the product, “you’re thinking your skin is not that perfect. If I buy this lotion, it’s going to be that perfect. It makes me want to buy that lotion so that I can have skin like hers ... its possible for my skin to be like this.”

YOU (12 December 2013: 81) features an advertisement for women’s underwear with the tagline “*Essential Secrets*” and a full length image of a young woman in an off-the-shoulder t-shirt and panties. The woman is photographed in a seductive pose with her face side profiled, away from the camera. The positioning of the women in the image and by the camera angle highlights how women are sexualised in magazine texts. Similarly, YOU (31 October 2013: 137) features a sun tanning mousse advertisement promising “*the ultimate tan*”. The advertisement in Figure 5.10 portrays a bare backed young woman without clothing. Her head is positioned at an angle towards

the camera and she exudes a seductive pose. Her long hair is draped along her bare back. The model poses with an open mouth and this confirms magazine media's ability to emphasise sexuality of women by placing focus on specific parts of her body.



Figure 5.10: St Tropez – The ultimate tan
Source: YOU, 31 October 2013: 137

YOU's *Have You Heard* section features Ellen Degeneres in an article titled "*Is that you, Ellen?*" (25 July 2013: 134). The coverage focusses on the fact that Degeneres ditched her make-up while out shopping for furniture. A photograph of Degeneres with and without make-up also features in the publication. The words "*shop till I drop*" was highlighted in a bubble on the photograph with Degeneres without make-up focusing attention on her appearance. The coverage candidly criticises Degeneres's appearance and the words "*shop till I drop*" implies that she looked like "death."

YOU's *Celebs Have You Heard* section (01 May 2014: 114) features an article and photographs of Lady Gaga titled "*Gaga laid bare*". The article centres on Gaga's appearance in a Versace advertisement and criticises her look as she was not wearing any make-up. The article states "*Seems the retouching team at Versace weren't fans of Lady Gaga's au naturel look when she posed for a*

new ad campaign recently." The coverage is accompanied by two photographs of Gaga, one of "reality" the other "retouched." The coverage highlights the false world that is often presented to readers.

In terms of the criteria used when selecting photographs for YOU magazine, specifically in those that portray women, Narimdas affirms that photographic decisions are primarily decided on by the creative [team] at the publication who will assess "What impact does the picture have? Does it go with the story? Does it blend in perfectly with the story that was written for it?" She confirms that image selection is made before a story can be prepared and correlation is done afterwards. "More often than changing a picture, we might ask a journalist to change copy to fit it," explains Narimdas. This affirms the power of images and Narimdas states that "with regards to YOU they are always looking for powerful images. But at the same time being cognisant of being sensitive because ... we have readers who will not hesitate to pick up a phone, SMS you, write you nasty letters to call you out." This was evidenced in YOU's cover page that featured a cancer awareness piece with celebrity Leanne Liebenberg as discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. According to Narimdas "It's happened before when people have gone to the Press Ombudsman because they felt that we, as Media24, were being insensitive in some way so I think we are very cognisant of how we select these images but there's always going to be times when people are not going to be happy."

The direct impact of media's visual elements on women's socialisation and identity construction have been intensely studied by many researchers (Johnson 2003; Johnson, David and Huey 2003, 2004; Pompper and Koenig 2004; Valdivia 2000). Studies have highlighted how women readers are vulnerable to media content and this highlights the importance of media professionals maintaining professional and ethical standards in their coverage. Inequitable, stereotypical representations of women in magazine media may instil in readers the belief that women are not deserving of the same level of equitable and diverse coverage which is afforded to men. Visual imagery

presented in magazines have the power to influence public opinion and consequently media workers must uphold their professional standards and offer representations that are fair and reflective of the South African population.

YOU (12 June 2014: 141) features an advertisement for Calvin Klein watches. The advertisement portrays a naked women whose body is entwined with another naked body, with long brown hair wearing only a watch and ring.



Figure 5.11: Calvin Klein – Swiss made
Source: YOU, 12 June 2014: 141

The image in Figure 5.11 portrays two naked bodies and this bleed page advertisement highlights magazine media's use of sexuality to promote products. These types of advertisements confirm magazines consistent sexualising of women and promotion of the 'ideal' women through visual imagery. This is affirmed by Nzamela (2002: 45) who maintains that:

The image that is created through the 'girl' depicted in these magazines is a flexible identity that could be easily changed through performative tactics, covert strategies and cultural consumption. The idea of this kind of woman is the predominant form of representation of the ideal woman in the magazines.

YOU of 27 February 2014 (pg 97) features an advertisement for *Slimz* – *targeted weight control*. The headline states “*target your problem areas the Slimz way.*” The advertisement is accompanied by a testimonial from a user that states “*As a mother of two, I have lost over 30kg in all the right places. The Slimz way has changed my life forever!*” A before and after photograph of the woman is portrayed and as indicated in Figure 5.12 various parts of her body are emphasised.



Figure 5.12: Slimz – Target your problem areas the Slimz way

Source: YOU, 27 February 2014: 97

The deliberate manipulation of women regarding the way she feels about her body is demeaning and inappropriate as it reinforces the notion that women's bodies are in need of constant improving. Furthermore, FGDP in (FG 1) notes that images of before and after representations of women in weight-loss advertisements motivate you in terms of purchasing these products: "It does. I have tried it but I haven't stuck with it but it didn't work so this didn't happen for me, but the before and after pictures did make me think that I should try this and maybe it will work, maybe it will happen for me."

An advertisement for women's perfume appears in DRUM magazine (19 September 2013: 37). The advertisement profiles a bare-shouldered female with emphasis on her brightly coloured lips and eyes. It also features the characterless perfume bottle. The woman in the advertisement is used to personify the product – the perfume. Magazine advertisements as evident in this example uses “covert strategies” as explained by Nzamela (2002: 67) and “implicitly suggests to the reader that if they step into the world that is being described in the advertisement then they may end up with the real thing, getting a man that will find them irresistible because of the nice scent.” Furthermore, the image confirms that magazine media often focus on aspects of a woman's body to entice the reader, in this example through the emphasis of the model's lips and eyes.

The YOU of 31 October 2013 features three advertisements promoting weight-loss products. The first advertisement (YOU, 31 October 2013, pg 89), for a “*natural weight-loss*” product, is accompanied by a well-toned female in fitness gear. The second advertisement (YOU, 31 October 2013: 91) features “*Reli slim Herbal*” – another weight loss product featuring a slim woman who is advertising the product. A woman who is overweight for example, may be persuaded to purchase the product to resolve their weight problem. This type of representation taps into readers insecurities. The third advertisement (YOU, 31 October 2013: 143) profiles an advertisement for “*Shake and shape*” and its new strawberry flavoured weight-loss drink. The advertisement includes a photograph of a thin young female posing with a measuring tape around her waist. The measuring tape signifies weight loss and the advertisement implies that this is the ideal readers should aspire to achieve. These magazines assert that women with weight issues are repulsive and influence them to consume products to eliminate these ‘flaws’ (Govender, Rawjee and Govender 2014).

Advertisements can be seen as a powerful form of a magazines' visual expression. Magazines receive huge amounts of income from advertising and

are responsible and in control of the messages disseminated to their readers. The type of message, when it is sent and to whom, is all controlled by the media company. Images in magazines are powerful tools that reflect attitudes and values in society. In terms of the criteria used in selecting photographs portraying women, YOU magazine maintains that its images are aimed at relating to everyday people. This is affirmed by the editor, Pietersen who states:

We will make sure that we have a hook in a family member who we are talking to so that it is a real person. If we have to choose those celebrity shots of women, we make sure that we reflect every colour of the country, and that is my criteria, is my reader feeling comfortable in this mag?, so it's not that they must be skinny.... That doesn't work with YOU magazine. Our readers are normal people and they see themselves in the mag.

These view are contested by focus group discussion participants who expressed their desire for content that they can relate to and that will assist them in their own lives. Magazine content is engulfed with celebrity focus which presents readers with a false world to aspire to.

The YOU *Have You heard* section (21 November 2013: 123) features The Duchess of Cambridge whose grey hair is highlighted in a photograph. The article was titled “*Bad hair day for Kate.*” The article is accompanied by a visual of Kate’s grey hair and the representation does not support aging as a natural process of life. This once again reiterates that magazines emphasise that women should always strive for physical perfection. This content also raises the question of informational value of content in magazines. It underlines that important issues in magazine media are dismissed and ignored while readers are diverted to the latest gossip relating to celebrities.

The YOU *Have You Heard* section (21 November 2013: 124) features a full-page exclusive on celebrities Will Smith and Margot Robbie in a photo booth with the headline “*Will’s racy photos*”. The exclusive photographs show the

two “*cavorting*” during their last day of filming. Furthermore, this feature is accompanied by another photograph of Jada Pinket Smith “*at a charity gala without her ring.*” This type of coverage is an example of media’s ability to shape the views of readers and in this case into thinking that the Smith’s marriage is being threatened. Smith’s and Robbie’s photographs are sexually charged particularly the one of Robbie “*lifting her top to reveal her lacy white bra, while Will nuzzles up behind her.*” The highly sexual imagery in Figure 5.13 implies possible infidelity and the inclusion of the photograph of Jada Pinket Smith without her wedding ring is meant to persuade and shape the thinking of readers that there could be marital problems with the celebrity couple.



Figure 5.13: Will’s racy photos
Source: YOU, 21 November 2013: 124

YOU magazine features an advertisement on a weight loss product with the tagline “*Spring clean your body and lose weight naturally*” (25 July 2013: 49). The advertisement features a women on a scale and underlines magazine media’s accentuation of the “thin ideal.” The constant portrayal of women and weight loss products may lead to women internalising these stereotypes and judging themselves by these standards.

An advertisement titled “*The Diet everyone talks about*” (YOU, 25 July 2013: 87) features information on different diet products and before and after pictures of women who have used the products. The use of the photographs is aimed at luring readers into the belief that they too will see the results as portrayed in the visual images of the advertisement. The use of the word “everyone” in the tagline “*The Diet everyone talks about*” implies the popularity of the product and is a means of enticing the reader. The portrayal of larger women in magazines is mostly seen in advertising for weight loss products. This is affirmed by FGDP in (FG 1) who states:

in most cases [magazines] will show a plus sized woman and some diet shake and show you the before and after and that’s the only time they will show a woman who’s plus sized. And it’s so difficult for especially the Black race because we inherit [this] and you cannot get rid of your big bum.

DRUM magazine (7 November 2013: 55) features an advertisement for the hair product range “*Style and Image*” with the tagline “*The birth of true beauty – because your hair is your image.*” The advertisement tells readers that the appearance and beauty of their hair largely contributes to their personal, overall image. The advertisement is accompanied by a photograph of a beautiful, young woman with sleek, shiny hair. This visual representation affirms magazines’ tendency to feature young, flawless looking women and constantly encourages women to work on their appearance. DRUM magazine features an advertisement for Sta-Sof-Fro (7 November 2013: 67) with the tagline “*Just be glam.*” The advertisement in Figure 5.14 portrays a young, glamorous woman with long braids. These images provide readers with an unrealistic way to think about their lives and prompt readers to reflect on their unfulfilled desires. Advertisers attempt to convince readers that personal satisfaction and pleasure will be attained through consumption. This is affirmed by Leavy, Gnonng and Ross (2009: 279) who maintain that “images of flawless beauty delivers a message in a way that encourages insecurity-driven consumerism.”



Figure 5.14: Just be glam

Source: DRUM, 7 November 2013: 67

DRUM's *Stylebuzz* section (6 February 2014: 106) features the 56th Annual Grammy Awards with Beyoncé's Knowles dress as the highlight. The caption to her photograph states: *"Bey's late album release meant she had no solo nominations, so she focussed on being her usual bootylicious self instead!"* Focus is entirely on her revealing dress, which was the focus of the entire feature, and the word "bootylicious" emphasises her buttocks. In addition, the DRUM *Rad* section (20 March 2014: 77) covers an article on Beyonce titled *"Bye-Bye Bootylicious?"* The article centres on her weight loss, how she accomplished it and is accompanied by two photographs of the singer.

DRUM (01 May 2014: 49) features an advertisement on a body lotion with the tagline *"You're beautiful."* The advertisement of the three-in-one beauty treatment is accompanied by a photograph of a bare shouldered, young black female with airbrushed, blemish free skin. The manufacturing of consent and manipulation of women through the images used, deceive women into believing that they can achieve the look as represented in the magazine.

DRUM (01 May 2014: 57) features an advert on Revlon realistic products with the tagline “*discover beauty.*” The advertisement is accompanied by a black woman in a glamorous gold dress with a high-cut slit that reveals her legs. The advertisement emphasises magazines’ consistent sexualisation of women. The woman portrayed symbolises beauty and her visual image is intended to allure readers into the belief that they too can “*discover beauty*” as depicted by the displayed woman. This example underlines how media professionals repeatedly represent women as sexual objects instead of affording them coverage that highlights their talent and achievements. The representation of women in YOU and DRUM magazines places an unbalanced emphasis on beauty that portrays women as sexual objects and not as talented individuals with noteworthy characteristics other than physical appearance and beauty. By focusing attention on the achievement of the ‘beauty ideal’ at any cost, women’s attention is also shifted away from the many significant roles of women in society and lures them to consumerism.

Chetty proposes that magazine media should take greater care in selecting what they place in their advertising pages. He maintains that these magazines offer readers a utopian lifestyle and shows you what your perfect life could be like. Chetty acknowledges that:

It is up to individuals to see if it actually is self-transformation and self-improvement or if it actually could be helpful as well and I think people need to distinguish between what they possibly can achieve and what a magazine says they can achieve ... if people are expecting that the products from these magazines can do wonders for them and give them a make-over, there are issues. Magazines don’t really take as much care as newspapers do when it comes to those types of advertorials because it is income and revenue for them.

Chetty’s views confirm that magazine readers are vulnerable to content and messages that shape their thinking and behaviour and at the same time these messages are aimed at bringing in profits to media companies. This is affirmed by Narindas who states, “Sometimes it comes from a place that’s

sensationalist that wants to sell magazines.... The ideal of self-transformation is always very prettily packaged regardless of what magazine you pick up. You think 'I can do this'." FGDP in (FG 1) maintains that magazines present subliminal messages from adverts, "You may not know it but it is actually changing and affecting society."

The emphasis on beauty as a prerequisite to femininity influences women to want to achieve this 'beauty ideal' at any cost. This can lead to women fantasising about an "ideal self". The myth and value of the traditional family and motherhood is also offered by these magazines as they evidently uphold the patriarchal view that motherhood and marriage should be the goal of all women. Career advancements of women is often seen as insignificant as portrayed in these magazines. Women's qualities and her skills and intelligence are downplayed, relegated or completely disregarded in magazine media. Furthermore, when women are awarded coverage regarding their careers, media professionals often state that their success is as a result of their physical appearance.

5.3.4 Changing representations of women in magazines

The analysis of YOU and DRUM magazines found that there are changing and progressive coverage of women, however patriarchal positions and stereotypical representations abound and predominate. Magazines play an important role in reproducing balanced relations of power in contemporary society and contributing to a diversified, thriving media culture.

In the study sample there is evidence that YOU and DRUM magazines do provided some progressive coverage of women. The findings show that new roles and identities are evident in magazine coverage. The researcher acknowledges that not all images of the female body can be criticised and it is important to recognise that part of feminist struggles highlighted that women should gain control of their sexuality. Sexuality is an important part of what it

means to be human and changing representations of women in media content need to be celebrated. Women in magazine advertisements were in the past seen in the 'domestic environment' and these adverts urged women to make use of particular products for cleaning and cooking to ensure that they perform at their best as mothers, wives and housekeepers. These advertisements reinforced the stereotype that a women's place is in the home. However, from the sample of YOU and DRUM magazines analysed it was evident that there was little emphasis on the normalisation of domesticity of women. This can be seen as an advancement in the portrayal of women in magazines.

Features on women in business, government and sport have made their way into YOU and DRUM magazine publications although in a limited way only. FGDP in (FG 1) acknowledges that coverage on women in sport is a good example of what we should be seeing in magazines as it can inspire young women. DRUM magazine (13 June 2013: 100-101) features a double spread article titled "*First ladies of Sport*". The entire feature provides women's perspectives on how they make it in a male-dominated industry as sports journalists. It highlights the determination of these young South African women to aspire to be successful in a career that is known to be dictated by males. The article accentuates women's achievements and determination to succeed in their careers. It is accompanied by photographs of the three journalists. FGDP in (FG 1) states "That's quite cool ... making it in a man's world.... Well they don't say that but it's an inspirational profile ... you want something like this because this is real."

In terms of inspirational women in the world of business, an article focussing on the many attributes of the wife of Steve Jobs, Laurene Powell Jobs from her academic success to her volunteering spirit features in YOU magazine's *News* section and is titled "*Mrs Jobs' new job*" (13 June 2013: 22). The inspirational article focusses on the importance of humility and service to humanity regardless of one's financial position or status. The article is accompanied by two photographic images, one of Jobs speaking at a panel

discussion on immigration strategy and another of Steve Jobs and Laurene Jobs. The article also reveals that United States President Barack Obama has appointed Laurene Jobs as an advisor to him on how to assist communities in the United States. Inspiring features such as this can have a positive influence on readers as it demonstrates that despite one's wealth it is important to contribute to society and those less fortunate than oneself. It further elevates women's role in society by reflecting on Jobs' career success and charity work. Despite the elevating and educational coverage, the headline of the article emphasises Laurene Jobs' role as a wife, before her other roles as defined in the article. This is also evident in the sub-heading of the article that states "The late Apple CEO's wife has stepped into the spotlight..." In addition Jobs is described as "*the willowy blonde*" and this signifies magazine media's mixed and conflicting coverage of women and promotion of the 'thin ideal' in all types of magazine content.

YOU (31 October 2013: 20) profiles US economist Janet Yellen, in a two-page article titled "*Power banker*". The article states that Yellen could become "one of the most influential people in the world" if she becomes head of the Federal Reserve in the US. This article supports the growing number of women who are making their mark in the business and government sector. FGDP in FG (2) expressed that they would like to see more coverage of women in business, "I think they could have more articles of woman in business ... how did she get there and focus on her actual achievements and not on her physical appearance ... so young women will be inspired..."

In terms of current, newsworthy coverage, a two-page article titled "*Lesbian Murdered*" (DRUM, 18 July 2013: 16) features a young lesbian woman that was murdered as a result of an alleged hate crime. This highlights that magazines do not only feature heterosexual coverage but do offer coverage on important aspects that can appeal to a wider audience. In addition, YOU (19 September: 106-107) features an inspirational article on a woman's rape ordeal and how she coped with the suffering. The article titled "*I'm alive for*

my kids” reflects the rape ordeal of a female attorney whose message to rape victims is that “*you can live with rape.*” Furthermore, DRUM (20 March 2014, pg 12-13) features an article on presenter and actress Amanda Du-Pont who was raped by someone she loved and trusted. The headline states “*I am stronger now*” and tells of Du-Pont’s journey of healing through this traumatic ordeal. The coverage of current issues such as hate crimes, rape and abuse of women as well as of lesbians and gays are important societal issues that require media coverage, as this provides readers with valuable information on present-day topical issues. However, these types of articles are limited in YOU and DRUM magazines’ content.

DRUM magazine (18 July 2013: 96-97) features an article on South African comedian and actress, Celeste Ntuli. This inspiring and motivating article centres on Ntuli’s success as a South African female comedian and actress. It further tracks her success in the competitive ‘male-dominated’ entertainment industry. This feature is accompanied by four animated photographs of the “zany comedian.”

DRUM (24 April 2014: 114) features an inspirational article on a young female with no arms and how she conquers life’s trials. The two-page article titled “*No arms, No problem!*” is an inspiring piece accompanied by several pictures of Mpho Suping and how she taught herself how to use her feet. The moving feature centres on the confidence and independence of a young women, as indicated in Figure 5.15, who has maintained a positive outlook on life to overcome life’s challenges. This article is accompanied by six inspirational photographs showing how she taught herself to do everything from changing her clothes to using a computer with her feet.

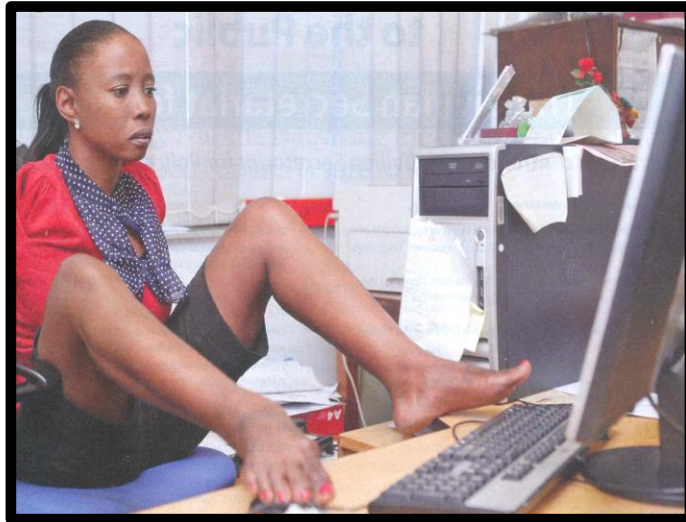


Figure 5.15: No arms, No problem!

Source: DRUM, 24 April 2014: 114

As postulated by Pietersen, *YOU* magazine plays a huge role in influencing readers' aspirations and views of the world and themselves. Pietersen tells of an article that was covered of a young boy from the township who had become a model and pursued his career overseas. According to Pietersen:

It was the most responded-to story we had in the mag. Everyone was like "If he can, I can", so show us more, show us people that have not come from fantastic backgrounds but have actually struggled and done amazing things, so we try and have an inspirational story in every week.

This is confirmed by Narimdas who maintains that "the magazine is always looking for at least one inspirational story per issue, in addition to the news and the gossipy entertainment." An article titled "*Star Quality*" (DRUM, 19 September 2013) features Thabelelo Sephuma's success and talent. The article includes a question and answer section highlighting Sephuma's drive as a young South African female who was determined to succeed in the entertainment industry on her own will and not based on the fact that her mother is well known singer, Judith Sephuma. This article can positively impact on women, particularly young women.

An article titled “*Master of her world*” (DRUM, 19 September 2013: 18) features 2013 Masterchef South Africa winner Kamini Pather and her plans after winning the competition. This inspiring article is accompanied by two photographs of Pather displaying her culinary skill. This type of coverage is supported by readers as is confirmed by FGDP in (FG 1) who explained that what they want from a magazine is “Self-help, inspirational stories about real women.” DRUM’s Li Sik states that as a female editor she strives to “celebrate female achievements and also do inspirational pieces. Whether its business, politics or even just an ordinary woman we do try and push that forward and try and showcase them.”

DRUM (19 September 2013: 94-95) profiles actress Brenda Ngxoli in an article titled “*Footloose and fancy free*”. The article focusses on her perseverance in her career despite the challenges she encountered. Ngxoli was fired from a local show and took some time off the screens to enjoy a sabbatical in her home town. The article centre’s on how Ngxoli enjoys the simple things in life and connecting with her roots. DRUM magazine cover (7 November 2013) features generation actor Mam Ruby with the headline “*I ate to keep the Pain away*”. The cover page headline is also accompanied by a before and after photograph of the actor. Despite the fact that the article is focused on weight-loss, this exclusive two-page article (7 November 2013: 14-15) titled “*A new women*” is an inspirational piece on how the actress chooses to live a healthier lifestyle. The focus here is not merely on losing weight but on being healthy and aspiring to lead a healthy life. This article is accompanied by six vibrant photographs of the actress. This type of coverage is affirmed by DRUM’s Pillay who maintains that magazines serve as an instrument of providing educational and inspirational information to women readers by providing role models, [aspects of] how you can change your life, how to live your life [and] how to eat healthy. FGDP in (FG 1) expresses that magazines do act as an advocacy tunnel for women: “I have noticed most of the times magazines have women on the cover instead of men. Editors in magazines are usually women

because they want to try and change the world through viewing it through the women's eyes."

The above examples advocate women's sacrifices, achievements, uniqueness and competence. However, we cannot deny the existence of anomalies and confinement consistent with the relegation of women in magazine media. According to Li Sik:

The focus is so much on celebrities because we have to face it, if you put a celebrity on the cover its more likely to sell, whereas if you put somebody who's doing great in society, but it doesn't resonate with our readers. They do want to read the gossip and scandal and that's an unfortunate thing.

In terms of magazines ability to either empower or limit the development of women in society, Chetty suggests that both magazines played a significant role in defining what femininity was at that point in time (of the interview):

YOU's latest edition has Angelina Jolie on the cover and it portrays Angelina Jolie as an independent woman, but with a strong focus on balancing a career and family. The limitations here are within the magazine. Would they put a woman who is in her 30s or 40s, who doesn't have a child or is a single mother on the cover ... they also look at their readership and their values and that comes through in the magazine.

Magazines undoubtedly have a huge role to play in terms of creating a sense of gender awareness and in contributing to social change and gender equality in South Africa. FGDP in (FG 1) is of the opinion that "media is a very useful tool to promote whatever you want. And the way we feel right now is because of the media. The way we grew up in wanting to be like someone it's because of magazines..." Furthermore, transformation of magazine content is noticeable as affirmed by FGDP in (FG 1):

We've seen the transformation over the years. I found a magazine from 1992. I think it was one of those Afrikaaner magazines, but you

could see how magazines have transformed from then to now and it's amazing. So as much as we may be criticising what magazines may be doing, they've transformed in a big way over the years so there are a lot of positive things coming out of magazines.

The analysis indicated that there is evolving coverage of women in magazines, however these are limited. Furthermore, stereotypical representations of women prevail in magazine media content.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis and interpretation of texts from YOU and DRUM magazines for the period June 2013 to June 2014. It presented the findings of the thematic content analysis of magazine texts from YOU and DRUM magazines, the interviews with media professionals and responses from focus group discussions with women readers. Magazine texts were analysed and interpreted using various themes. The interviews with media professionals provided insight into the important decisions they make that have an impact on wider society. It also allowed for an evaluation of their responsibility to provide coverage that reflects the egalitarian and diverse South African populace. Furthermore, focus group discussions with women readers allowed the researcher to look closely at the impact of the messages that are presented to magazine readers. The analysis and interpretations suggested a number of important findings and based on this, conclusions and recommendations will be provided in the final chapter. Chapter 6 proposes a model highlighting media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality.

Chapter 6 : Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this final chapter relate to the outcomes in the preceding chapter. This study has explored magazines' representation of women and their influence on identity construction. It has done so by investigating how magazines represent women and the impact on identity construction, analysing textual and visual representation of women in magazines (editorial content and advertisements) and investigating the way in which women interpret popular media forms (how audiences relate to media texts) with the objective to propose a model that contributes to social change and gender equality. The proposed model highlights media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality and the researcher suggests ways in which issues can be addressed as an agenda for change regarding identity construction of women through magazine media.

Although the findings are not generalisable to all magazine publishers, the focus on Media24, specifically YOU and DRUM magazines, allowed the researcher to examine magazine media practices and content. This study contributes empirically and theoretically to interdisciplinary knowledge on magazines' representation of women and the influence on identity construction. The findings reveal that media and society are inextricably connected. It also found that it is imperative to examine existing gaps to understand the motivations and dispositions of magazine media in order to propose strategies that will influence and support the equitable representation of women in magazine media. From the foregoing discussions it is confirmed that the nature of the main objective of the study does not expect explicit and specific empirical answers. However, it supports extensive and ongoing

analysis and explorations of current debates to offer a means to chart change in magazine media's representation of women.

6.2 Conclusions

This study confirmed that magazine media has significant power by means of its representation which contributes to one's understanding of the world and individual and social identities. In qualitatively analysing how magazines represent women and the impact on identity construction, this study indicated that stereotypical and patriarchal representations of women continue to exist in magazine media. The majority of the content in the publications under study portrayed women in stereotypical, dismissive and confining ways that trivialise their achievements. Magazine media often objectifies women by reducing them to incidental characters and portraying them as sex objects for the desire of men. The subjective treatment of women in media devalues the remarkable accomplishments of women. Women were often portrayed as objects of male attention. The common stereotypes included the 'glamorous sex kitten', the 'sainted mother' and 'hard-faced corporate and political climber'.

Media may work on opposite ends as they frequently serve to reinforce stereotypical attitudes or alternatively are limited in their efforts to contest and challenge them. The repetitive objectification of women systematically disadvantages women and limits their role in society. The representation of women as 'frail and weak' has not been dislodged. In addition, magazine texts normalise dependency and domesticity of women. Family life is presented as essential to all women, particularly motherhood which is emphasised as the ultimate goal of all women and that which women would be incomplete without. This representation of family life highlights the archaic traditional family model, thereby strengthening societal stereotypes and norms. The imbalanced coverage of women is a gross devaluing of the accomplishments, perseverance and exceptional abilities of this country's extraordinary women.

Significant issues in magazine media are dismissed, suppressed, or more likely ignored as readers are diverted to the latest gossip and scandal. Women are also drawn into a world of celebrities who are often represented as role models that should be emulated. The coverage in the magazines analysed, downplay important characteristics such as women's professional successes and their role in the struggle for gender parity. Furthermore, YOU and DRUM magazines' coverage confirm society's socially dominant roles and gender relations. The study found that despite women actively engaging in politics, business and sport, they continue to receive marginal support and media attention. Magazines further promote the stereotype that women are successful because of their appearance and beauty.

The findings of the analysis of the textual and visual representations of women in magazines illustrate that the limited way in which women are portrayed do not reflect the diversified and changing roles women play in society. Magazine texts repeatedly present women as objects for male consumption. Furthermore, they seldom represent women as talented individuals whose accomplishments should be acknowledged. When women are provided magazine space, they are regularly described in ways that strengthen stereotypical societal attitudes about them. This can have harmful effects on a women's mind and body and the development of identity. The analysis confirms that the barrage of images of women on offer in magazines, steer female attitudes and identity construction. There are undoubtedly serious concerns that need to be resolved regarding magazines' representation of women as they do not reflect the diverse and progressive roles and achievements of modern day women.

Sexual images presented in the magazines were powerful and intense, however, they also provide conflicting messages. These sexualised images proliferate in magazine content and are powerful instruments in shaping attitudes and values. Magazines have a huge influence on women, particularly young women's socialisation by serving as femininity 'how to' manuals.

Articles and advertisements on beauty place emphasis on women's bodies as objects that need to be constantly enhanced and perfected. As a powerful cultural developmental indicator, magazines illustrate what constitutes a beautiful woman and through its coverage, offer ways to achieve this. Central to magazine coverage is content relating to "defying ageing", "achieving a sun-kissed look", "putting on the right perfume and make-up", "achieving the perfect body and hair" and "having beautiful legs". Magazine texts regularly focus on a woman's appearance from her hair and make-up to aspects of her body. YOU and DRUM magazines have regular sections relating to beauty matters with tips to assist women to achieve the "beauty myth". Furthermore, photo-shopping of images has led to a "false world" that is virtually unattainable and air brushing ensures that almost all women's faces are strikingly pretty and their bodies, well-toned. Women are often photographed in highly sexualised style, foregrounding their bodies and which illustrates magazines' unfair exhibitionism of women. This highlights that magazines often demote women by providing a limited representation of their accomplishments and women are more often seen than heard in magazine content. The majority of photographs featured women with identical body proportions. Furthermore, women were repeatedly represented as heavily made up, emphasising the baring of skin and visuals of models in revealing clothing.

The findings of this study indicate that women in magazine content are objectified and featured using emotive language. Lead lines in articles often begin by extolling the appearance of women. Furthermore, language in advertisements highlights the overvaluing of physical appeal and the emphasis of women's sexuality rather than her intellectual capacity. The language and visual imagery used in magazine media is a dominant tool in reinforcing gender stereotypes. Language and visual imagery of magazine media normalise and glamourise the sexual objectification of women.

The analysis of YOU and DRUM magazines suggest numerous and significant findings regarding the selection of advertisements. The majority of the advertisements analysed drew attention to a women's body either by representing a young, flawless face, which is often the hallmark, or as expressed through certain parts of her body. Furthermore, women were represented as sex objects whose function was to gratify men. Advertisements further sell the qualities of sexuality as valuable attributes of femininity. The findings reveal that the majority of YOU and DRUM magazines' advertisements provided a general and unspecific description of the products advertised. This highlights that there is no careful consideration of the target market. It must be noted that YOU and DRUM magazines' readers are not as homogeneous as the magazines presume them to be.

Furthermore, women are represented as sex objects particularly in advertisements, as they portray women in ways that will encourage the purchase of products. The magazines under review further promote the attainment of femininity, specifically through beauty and weight-loss products. This highlights the latitude that advertisements have as an influential and convincing communication medium. Advertisements should reflect a changing representation of women, one that uplifts their position in all sectors of society. Mwilu (2010: 3) asserts that "Sexualised images of women in advertising media contribute to the negative stereotype of women being 'more looks than brains' because their bodies are emphasised, but other personality aspects like emotions and critical thinking are conveniently ignored." The representation of women as sexual objects contradicts the Constitution of South Africa which promotes gender equality and non-sexism and acknowledges the role of women and media in economic, political and social development.

While a large section of the consumerist persuasion comes in the form of advertisements, a huge portion is masked as editorial content in the form of features, lifestyle and advice pieces or exercise columns. This is evident by

the many articles that are accompanied by products and prices as a means of persuading readers to purchase the products. The media industry is driven by profits and likewise magazines operate in a way that ensure profits. This study confirms that magazine media portray men and women in ways that generate and secure revenue. There is undoubtedly an intrinsic relationship between media's production and consumption practices. This frames the way magazines represent gender. The pressures exerted on media by political and economic factors need to be challenged. Commercialisation and neoliberalism has led to a shift in the media agenda, from addressing citizens to addressing consumers. Consumer magazines, specifically YOU and DRUM magazines are entwined in a global media system, both shaping it and being shaped by it. This study confirmed that the 'marketplace' and the 'economics of publishing' extensively influence media content and commercial pressures are mediated through the operations of the media newsroom and journalistic practice. Furthermore, the country's magazine media is controlled by a few media owners who maintain a capitalist system. While public interest values are advocated for and written into codes of conduct for media workers and proffered as guiding principles, the dynamics of commercialism and neoliberalism has skewed the media agenda. Only a handful of companies benefit and control what is provided, how it is provided, and when it is provided and this leads to biased stories that subsequently inform readers' opinions, perceptions, and decisions. Indications are that while media houses express their preparedness for change and development, changes to date are meagre. Furthermore, in exploring the underlying gender dynamics within the institutional structures of the media, the study found that despite women being more represented in magazine staff, these media institutions are dominated by men in terms of executive positions. Despite the progress and growth of the number of women in media positions, media continue to produce stereotypical representations that confine the role of women.

The findings from the investigation into how women interpret popular media forms such as magazines, reveals that magazine media assist women

navigate their lives. Issues around sexuality and gender are constructed by the societies we live in. The study found that the abundant messages and images relating to masculinity, femininity and sexuality impact on identity construction. Magazines serve as an educational and entertainment source and an escape from women's everyday routine. Women often communicate about things they read in media content and it is acknowledged that information that media prioritise will be considered as that which requires attention by women readers. This study found that YOU and DRUM magazines serve as aspirational and informal educational devices and as entertainment sources for women readers. In addition, the study found that there are limited coverage on current, social and economic issues in magazine content. Current issues such as hate crimes, violence and abuse of women can provide readers with valuable information on present-day issues. These issues do make their way into the magazine pages, however, it is limited. The data analysed indicate that readers seek content and information that they can relate to and personalities and articles that represent their lives.

6.3 Recommendations

Magazine media are central in communicating information that contribute to our thoughts, knowledge development and beliefs relating to women. Sadly, women's experiences and successes are continually underreported in magazine media. Gender representation in modern day society is multifaceted and evidently less stereotypical, however, women continue to be relegated to confining and dismissive roles. It is imperative that media representations are observed and challenged. This calls for the skilful implementation of change in the way in which women are represented in magazines. Women's encounters from objectification and disempowerment needs to be challenged. Magazines should be used as a vehicle to provide quality content that celebrates the accomplishments of women from various backgrounds. This will contribute to providing women with appropriate role models and contributing to media accountability, accuracy and credibility. Magazine media

should represent women in progressive, contemporary roles and use non-sexist language. Such concerns emerge as particularly salient as the country celebrates twenty years of democracy. The recasting of South African media is required so that it becomes more representative, more free, more diverse and more informative.

Media organisations have a responsibility to society. Media professionals need to avoid the stereotypical representations and focus on modern-day aspects of femininity and masculinity. The 'frail female' stereotype has not been dislodged and magazine journalists must abandon the sexist practice of centring women as the 'weaker sex' and as more emotional and reactionary. Magazine media need to refrain from all linguistic descriptors implying weakness as language used in a magazine highlights a publication's position concerning gender. The prevalence of stereotypical and patriarchal representations of women in magazine content must spur individuals to challenge issues in a holistic manner and the marginalisation of women in media must be broken down.

Magazine media also has a fundamental role to play in offering role models to women. They can further serve as informal educational devices and modelling tools for young women. Magazine media can contribute to building the knowledge base and raising awareness on advocating gender issues and inspiring readers to become educated consumers who will be able to make well informed choices that contribute to their identity construction. Consumer magazines are considered as 'cultural tools' which can serve as a vehicle to promote and assist in societal change and thereby contribute to constructing gender identity. YOU and DRUM magazines and media houses should feature wide-ranging reporting of the various aspects in society that women contribute to. Constantly promoting the 'beauty myth' or 'ideal look' significantly limits the availability of role models for women. What is required is diverse portrayals of women. Media workers need to abjure use of text and images that sexualise women and undermine their prowess. Alternative

imageries and viewpoints will create space for a multiplicity of identities. The media has a central role in the construction of identity and this reinforces the issue of how the agenda of magazine media and those that consume it are interconnected.

Magazine media can be used as a tool to challenge unequal power relationships and patriarchy. As an 'enabler' of ideas, attitudes and meanings it can be used as a tool to promote diversity, which can lead to social change and gender equality. What is required is the strengthening of journalistic practice in South Africa by means of the consistent application of ethical editorial standards, accuracy, and non-discrimination. Media professionals have a responsibility and ability to eliminate negative stereotypes in magazines and inroads must be made to eliminate the harmful typecasting of women. Media workers need to confront the bias reflexes in media houses. As part of its responsibility to society, magazine media should provide impartial coverage of women that profiles women's societal endeavours. Media institutions that fail in their professional responsibility must be brought to account. Media institutions should create enabling environments by developing gender policies to promote the integration of gender into all facets of their work. Magazine media contribute to highlighting the importance of critical citizenry and societal intervention should be employed in holding the media accountable if they fail to meet professional, ethical standards. What is required is debate, training of media professionals and practical commitment to challenge inequity and the championing of journalistic standards. Media organisations need to be responsible for the power they have and how they wield their power. What is required is objectivity and plurality of viewpoints.

It is imperative to identify, acknowledge and explore changes in the media terrain. It is evident that there are visible progressive changes, however, magazine media continue to propagate several deeply entrenched and confining components of femininity. Bringing these issues to light can spur media professionals to rethink the roles and identities presented to readers.

Introducing and maintaining change must encompass challenging magazines to raise the public profile of women. Many women are now well-established in their careers and immeasurably contribute to society and this calls for a wider range of women to be represented in magazine media.

South Africans need to play an active role in shaping, influencing, regulating and developing new approaches of media interaction and performance and urge media to fulfil its democratic function. Continued media analysis, debate, and reform are required to create a truly free democracy. These approaches will support media professionals in assessing progress on gender at their institutions. It will further allow media houses to recognise challenges and address them. Media analysis and gender policies are imperative in the promotion and development of women in media.

Women should be awarded positive representations that strengthen and elevate their position in society. In the case of women, media's role in dislodging negative stereotypes and the patriarchal, public attitudes cannot be dismissed. Media play a central role in how information and knowledge is created and endorsed. If women are assigned roles such as "sexual objects" in media, these roles provide scope for negative portrayals and perceptions to thrive. Therefore, collective responsibility for achieving gender equality in magazine media requires specific robust monitoring frameworks and policy attention and action. Media is an instrument for transformation, however, the relationship between society and the media remains vulnerable. Fresh perspectives and media debate will positively contribute to the future of print media policy making which will in turn contribute to high-quality journalism, an informed society and the deepening of democracy. An evaluation of the media landscape will stimulate and trigger discussions and facilitate growth in the media environment. Based on the preceding discussions, the researcher proposes a model aimed at contributing to social change and gender equality in the media.

6.4 Proposed model for social change and gender equality

A new media-society relationship and the ideology of social change and gender equality can be realised through proactive participation from all sectors of society that have an influence in remedying the disparities of the past. A transformative approach is required to promote change and monitor transformation in gender-based coverage in magazine media. The proposed model in Figure 5.1 acknowledges the political, economic and social factors that contribute to media accountability in terms of social change and gender equality concerning the representation of women in magazine media.

A collective approach towards media accountability can lead to accelerating progress on the representation of women in magazines. What is required is the promotion of pluralism, diversity of viewpoints, freedom of expression, strategic advocacy, media monitoring and evaluation and rigorous research. Furthermore, gender policies need to promote the integration of gender into all aspects of media. Democracy requires a robust and free media to disseminate information that encourages diversity of views and citizen participation. Media's role in a democracy should allow for autonomous evaluation and inspection as it is a force that shapes society. Overt government media censorship is no longer applied to the print media and the constitution that took effect in February 1997 guarantees that every South African has a right to freedom of expression. What is required is high-quality journalism, an informed society and the deepening of democracy.

Gender issues need to be mainstreamed in institutional practice and editorial and advertising content of magazine media. Media need to reflect the many faces of society and in this way, men and women's voices will be heard. Magazine media can serve as an agent for change and contribute to ensuring gender parity in media content. This will also ensure the advancement of gender-specific issues and the enjoyment of the country's democratic liberties. Media workers need to ensure gender aware reporting, objectivity in media

coverage and plurality of viewpoints. They have a responsibility to convey credible and objective information. In democracies, a diverse range of opinions should be expressed, portrayed and disseminated. Women should be awarded positive representations that strengthen and elevate their position in society.

In this study, the researcher drew on Herman and Chomsky's (1988) "propaganda model" and assessed how the "marketplace and the economics of publishing" extensively influence media content. Market driven media and the dependence on advertising for profits impacts on media's ability to fulfil its role in a democracy. Powerful media owners skew the media agenda, propagate commercial values and safeguard corporate interests. What is required is broad based media ownership. Transformation of society should include media's many facets, including diversity of publications and viewpoints and this can be achieved through diversified, decentralised ownership, distribution and control of the media. Diversified competition, media ownership and content can contribute to an informed public which can lead to a meaningful participation in society. Control of media inhibits the free flow of information. Concentration of media ownership can hinder the democratic function of media and reduce quality journalism.

Media can contribute to social change today that is largely overlooked and can be seen as a central link between culture and personality. Social factors relate to the impact of media content in educating and informing citizens on important issues and creating critical citizenry. Women also have the capacity to influence decision-making and can achieve this by mobilising citizens to call media producers to account if media fail in their professional responsibility to provide objective, equitable coverage of women. Media need to ensure diverse viewpoints in media content and facilitate critical independent thinking among citizens.

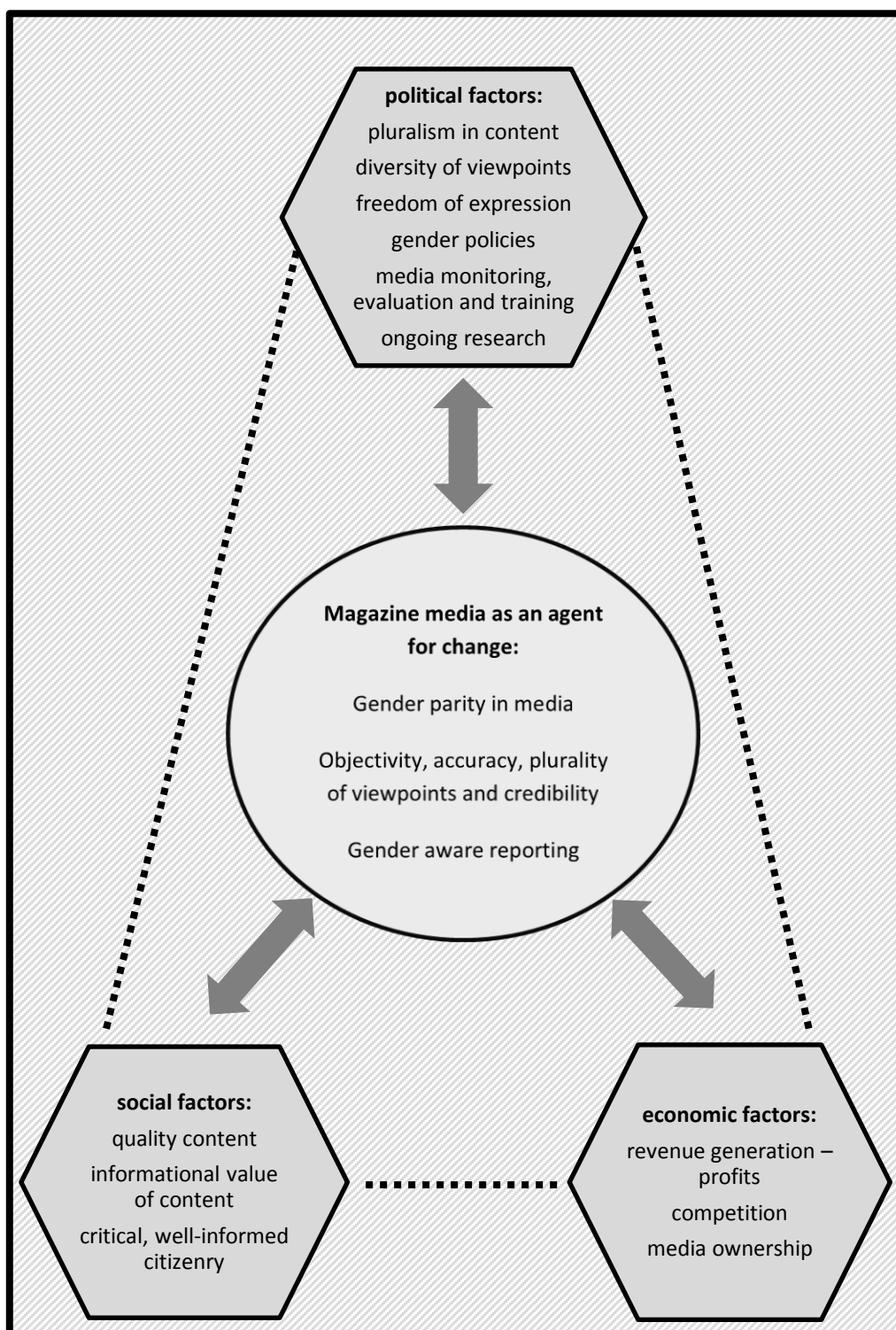


Figure 6.1: Model for social change and gender equality

6.5 Avenues for further research

This research has opened up space for further qualitative and quantitative research on media's representation of women. This can extend to an analysis of broadcast media as well as online publications. This research was limited to the Media24 publication house, however an analysis of the 'Big 4' media houses and their representation of women can be explored. This study was also limited to addressing issues around gender, specifically women and excluded other significant identity markers such as disability, race, culture, ethnicity and class which can be explored further.

6.6 Conclusion

The history of South Africa has many scars of oppression and women have long experienced a disempowered position in South African society. However, it is also a history of the intrepid efforts to emancipate South Africans from past afflictions. The country has a deep-rooted patriarchal value system and while gains can be celebrated, significant challenges persist as the egalitarian regime evolves. Media in South Africa is regarded as a bastion of freedom, nation building and development. It had been a key role-player in amplifying the apartheid regime and also in overthrowing it. Therefore, change must include transformation of the media in all its facets, including issues such as ownership, diversity of views and publications and gender parity in the representation of women. It was important to examine the relationship between media, gender and identity because media and communication are important components of contemporary life and gender and sexuality are central in the development of our identities. This study confirms that magazine media plays a significant role in constructing gender identity. It further served as a catalyst to highlight and acknowledge the role of women and magazine media in economic, political and social development of a country.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Editors

Name and Surname: _____

Date: _____

Designation: _____

1. What is the role of consumer magazines (YOU and / DRUM) in society?
2. How would you describe your average reader? (YOU and / DRUM magazine) (demographics: gender, education level, age, religion, race, ethnicity, specific needs)
3. Have you noted any changes in the readership profile in the last 10 years?

YES	NO
4. Describe these changes and explain what they can be attributed to?
5. How have you implemented changes in your publication that are reflective of the diverse South African population; what are the constraints and opportunities for implementing these changes? To probe further
6. In what way can YOU and / DRUM magazines serve as instruments in providing educational and inspirational information to women readers? To probe further
7. What role does YOU and / DRUM magazines play in the process of moving young women from adolescence into womanhood and contributing to their sense of identity? To probe further

8. Images are powerful tools that shape and reflect attitudes and values. What criteria are used when selecting photographs in YOU and / DRUM magazines (specifically those that portray women). To probe further

9. To what extent do you think magazines are able to influence reader's aspirations and views of themselves? To probe further

10. Research has indicated that men still dominate in top positions in media institutions. What are the underlying gender dynamics that exist in magazine-media institutions and what are your views on its impact on magazine content. To probe further

11. What is your view in terms of the values of non-racialism and non-sexism being entrenched in magazine-media and what role do magazines play in nation building and contributing to the ideology of social change and gender equality? To probe further

12. As an editor, what are your views on YOU and / DRUM magazines ability to provide unbiased reflections of the achievements of women in society? To probe further

13. Language used in media can elevate or reduce the significance of an issue and influence the reader by means of the various connotations it carries. Does the language used in YOU and / DRUM magazines differ from gender to gender; do the magazines favour a particular gender over the other? Explain To probe further

14. As a leading media conglomerate in South Africa, Media24 undoubtedly face challenges and heavy competition from other media houses within the sector; describe these challenges and explain how they are handled? To probe further

15. What are your views on the balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making? To probe further

16. What is the relationship between YOU and / DRUM magazines editorial management and advertisers and has this relationship ever led to discord over editorial content? To probe further

17. To what extent does commercial decisions meet with resistance from within the Media24 newsroom, particularly with journalists? To probe further

Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Journalists

Name and Surname: _____

Date: _____

Designation: _____

1. How would you describe your average reader? (YOU and / DRUM magazine) (demographics: gender, education level, age, religion, race, ethnicity, specific needs)
2. In what ways can YOU and / DRUM magazines serve as an instrument in providing educational and inspirational information to women readers?
3. What role does YOU and / DRUM magazines play in the process of moving young women from adolescence into womanhood and contributing to their sense of identity?
4. Images are powerful tools that shape and reflect attitudes and values. What criteria are used when selecting photographs in YOU and / DRUM magazines (specifically those that portray women) To probe further
5. Research has indicated that men still dominate in top positions in media institutions. What are the underlying gender dynamics that exist in magazine-media institutions and what are your views on its impact on magazine content. To probe further
6. What is the role of journalism in a democracy? To probe further
7. South Africa is characterised by democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism. What is your view in terms of these values being entrenched in magazine-media and what role do magazines play in nation building and contributing to the ideology of social change and gender equality? To probe further

8. As a journalist, what are your views on YOU and / DRUM magazines ability to provide true, unbiased reflections of the achievements of women in society?
To probe further

9. Language used in media can elevate or reduce the significance of an issue and influence the reader by means of the various connotations it carries. Does the language used in YOU and / DRUM magazines differ from gender to gender; do the magazines favour a particular gender over the other? Explain
To probe further

10. The media industry faces many challenges and changes as a result of converging media markets and the global economy. Describe the challenges and explain how they are handled?
To probe further

11. What are your views on the balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making?
To probe further

12. Magazines are understood as 'meta-commodities' which serve as vehicles for the dissemination of other commodities. In terms of gender identity, what are your views on the possibility of self-transformation and self-improvement which magazines often suggest?
To probe further

13. What is the relationship between YOU and / DRUM magazines editorial management and advertisers and has this relationship ever led to discord over editorial content?
To probe further

14. To what extent does commercial decisions meet with resistance from within the Media24 newsroom, particularly with journalists?
To probe further

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for Media Commentators¹²

Name and Surname: _____	Date: _____
Designation: _____	

1. What is the role of consumer magazines (YOU and DRUM) in society?
2. What role does YOU and DRUM magazines play in the process of moving young women from adolescence into womanhood and contributing to identity construction?
3. Images are powerful tools that shape and reflect attitudes and values. What criteria should be used when selecting photographs for magazines?
4. Research has indicated that men still dominate in top positions in media institutions. What are the underlying gender dynamics that exist in magazine-media institutions and what are your views on its impact on magazine content?
5. SA is characterised by democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism. What is your view in terms of these values being entrenched in the magazine-media we consume (YOU and DRUM) and what role do magazines play in nation building and contributing to the ideology of social change and gender equality?
6. How has democracy and neoliberalism contributed to the transformation of South African English-language magazines and what impact does this have on magazines' representation of women and the influence on gender identity?
7. What are your views on YOU and DRUM magazines ability to provide true, unbiased reflections of the achievements and abilities of women in society?

¹² All questions with the media commentator was probed further.

8. To what extent does the representation of women in magazines influence gender identity and what is the role of YOU and DRUM magazines in empowering or limiting the development of women in society?
9. Language used in media can elevate or reduce the significance of an issue and influence the reader by means of the various connotations it carries. Does the language used in YOU and / DRUM magazines differ from gender to gender; do the magazines favour a particular gender over the other? Explain
10. As a leading media conglomerate in South Africa, Media24 undoubtedly face challenges and heavy competition from other media houses within the sector; describe these challenges and explain how they are handled?
11. What are your views on the linking of editorial content to advertising content in magazine-media?
12. Magazines are understood as 'meta-commodities' which serve as vehicles for the dissemination of other commodities. In terms of gender identity, what are your views on the possibility of self-transformation and self-improvement which magazines often suggest (specifically through advertisements)?
13. Advertising makes up a large portion of magazine content and magazine decision makers are often concerned about increasing profits and expanding markets. Describe Media24's relationship between editorial integrity, advertising revenue and remaining economically viable.
14. What are your views on the balancing of journalistic objectivity and professionalism in the quest for profit-making?
15. To what extent do commercial decisions meet with resistance from within the Media24 newsroom, particularly with journalists?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for focus group discussions with women readers

Name: _____ Surname: _____	Date: _____ Age: _____
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1. Do you read YOU and / DRUM magazines?

YOU	DRUM	BOTH

2. Why do you read these magazines?
3. Can you describe the negative and positive aspects of these magazines?
4. What role do these magazines play in contributing to your sense of identity construction? To probe further
5. Images are powerful tools that shape and reflect attitudes and values. How would you describe the representation of women in YOU and / DRUM magazines? (Specifically those that portray women). To probe further
6. What are your views on YOU and / DRUM magazines' ability to provide true, unbiased reflections of the abilities and achievements of women in society? To probe further
7. South Africa is characterised by democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism. How do you think these magazines can contribute to nation building and to the ideology of social change and gender equality? To probe further

8. Are you able to distinguish between newsroom-driven content and paid-for content in these magazines? To probe further

YES	NO

9. What are your views on this particular article and the images? How does it make you feel? (Analysis of magazine text) See editorial content

10. Advertising makes up a large portion of magazine content. What are your views on this advertisement? (Analysis of magazine text) Does the advertisement appeal to you? Why or why not? See Advertisement

11. What are your views on the content portrayed to readers in magazines (See editorial content and advertisement provided). Can you describe alternative ways that they could be presented to readers? To probe further