

**THE RELATIONSHIP AND INTERPRETATION OF CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR  
AND IDENTITY OF AFRICAN SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE  
CORPORATE WORLD IN GAUTENG AND KWAZULU-NATAL  
(SOUTH AFRICA)**

**By  
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DECLARATION

I declare that *The relationship and interpretation of clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal* represents my own work, and that all the sources that I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature...

Maite Modiba

.....13/01/2003.....

Date

**DEDICATION**

**IN MEMORY OF MY LATE FATHER MAISHE MODIBA**

**THIS RESEARCH IS DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER, MY BROTHER, AND SISTERS  
IN APPRECIATION FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT THAT THEY HAVE GIVEN  
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## ABSTRACT

This study addresses the relationship between the clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world, with reference to black identity and Western style of clothes. Central to these two issues the study tried to focus on the factors which may have an influence on the clothing behaviour of African South African women. Clothing as communication and factors which influence people's clothing behaviour were also covered to find out why people wear the clothes they wear.

The sample consisted of African South African women ( $n=100$ ) in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Research was conducted by means of a structured questionnaire. The qualitative method provided a systematic investigation of the topic. The research methods included descriptive and inferential Statistics.

Three hypotheses were formulated for the investigation. Each of the clothing variables was examined relative to the hypothesized relationship. There were fifty-one clothing variables employed in the analyses. The results exhibited a need for ethnically influenced clothes for African South Africans.

The findings indicate that there was symbolic meaning attached to ethnically influenced clothing and beads, and that the symbolism attached to clothing items can influence a person's clothing behaviour. Recommendations were noted and followed by the Conclusion.



The results of this study indicated a positive response by African South African women in relation to the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes.

What has become evident from this research is that African South African women are quite aware that ethnically influenced clothes are not appropriate for the work environment. The results obtained in this study exhibited a need for ethnically influenced clothes for African South Africans. The results of this study demonstrated that there is a relationship between their attitudes about wearing ethnically influenced clothes and identity in regard to the clothing behaviour of African South African women.

## PREFACE

This research is the original work of the author and has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to another University or Technikon.

The text of this dissertation gives a clear indication where use was made of the work of other authors and duly acknowledges these contributions.

The research described in this dissertation was carried out in the Department of Fashion, Durban Institute of Technology, under the supervision of Ms Lo Castro.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Histories of dress provide insight into reasons for dressing the body. From the 1980s, dress historians began to document and analyse fashion changes in non-Western dress (Tortora & Eubank, 2001:5; Trollip, 1995:501). Tortora and Eubank (2001:501) further argue that studies by scholars from many different disciplines for example, Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology contribute to people's understanding of dress as critical to their physical well being, as a communication of identity, and as a tool for negotiating social change. Dress becomes even more important in a global economy as a means to communicate identity and status. In South Africa, the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes by African South Africans has become, above all, a means of expressing a relationship with an independent past.

In order to acquire knowledge on the reasons why African South African women in the corporate world wear either Western or ethnically influenced clothes it is important to seek all forms of documentation of dress, whether academic scholarship or incidental visual evidence. In this way it is possible to learn more about the various ways that people of different cultures dress around the world today and throughout history.



Due to the dominant influence of Western culture which is perceived as a threat to African South African culture, Peter Magubane the African South African acclaimed journalist, documented the vanishing cultures of South Africa, and their manner of dress, in order to preserve them for posterity (Magubane, 2001:8).

The study of clothing as human behaviour has been shaped by social movements or trends, as well as intellectual currents. However, by using theories that incorporate change or symbolism to study clothing phenomena, underlying social and psychological processes that explain, and in some cases surpass these theories, change can be uncovered.

## **1.2 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of this investigation was to analyse and interpret the relationship of clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, with reference to black identity and Western fashion trends.

### **1.2.1 THE SUB-PROBLEMS**

#### **1.2.1.1 Sub-problem One**

Clothing behaviour : To what extent do cross-cultural differences and socio-cultural norms of dress influence a person's clothing behaviour?

#### 1.2.1.2 Sub-problem Two

Black Identity : To what extent would black identity induce a person to wear ethnically influenced clothes?

#### 1.2.1.3 Sub-problem Three

Western fashion trends : To what extent would Western fashion trends influence the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes?

### 1.3. THE HYPOTHESES

#### 1.3.1 Hypothesis One

It was hypothesised that African South African women's perception of ethnically influenced clothes will be positive.

#### 1.3.2 Hypothesis Two

It was hypothesised that although African South African women in the corporate world would like to wear ethnically influenced clothes they may continue to wear Western styled clothes in their working environment.

#### 1.3.3 Hypothesis Three

It was hypothesised that although African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal live in a multi-cultural society and are influenced by Western culture, they may continue to wear ethnically influenced clothes to identify with their culture.

#### **1.4 THE LIMITATIONS**

- The study limited its survey to one hundred ( $n = 100$ ) African South African women between the ages of 24-60 years in the corporate world in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) provinces.
- The emphasis of the study lies only with African South African women in corporate companies.
- Time was also limited, as women in the corporate world have a busy life schedule.

#### **1.5 THE FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY**

This study on the relationship between clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal was feasible because:

- African women in the corporate world were accessible.
- The budget needed for administering the questionnaire was available.
- The selected sample was willing to participate in the study.

#### **1.6 THE ASSUMPTIONS**

##### **1.6.1 Assumption One**

It was assumed that the interviewees will be honest in answering the questions.

##### **1.6.2 Assumption Two**

The second assumption was that the importance of ethnically influenced clothes will increase through the empowerment of African South African women.

### 1.6.3 Assumption Three

The third assumption was that the attitude and perception of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces towards the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes will be influenced by Western trends.

## 1.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Clothing is a very important issue which cannot be overlooked in any society. Together with identity, it forms an important part of how people behave differently from each other. Although previous research has been done on clothing behaviour and identity by other researchers, such as Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1995:65) and Kaiser (1990 -1997), the area for the relationship between the clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world was not covered.

## 1.8 OBJECTIVES

- 1.8.1 The aim of the study was to find out if African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces prefer wearing ethnically influenced clothes rather than Western clothes;
- 1.8.2 To assess whether the cultural background of African South African women influences their clothing behaviour;
- 1.8.3 To analyse whether African South African women in the corporate world would like to express their identity through wearing designs with ethnic patterns.

## 1.9 GLOSSARY

For the purpose of this study, the following are operationally defined:

- Adornment - The act of decorating the body (Lurie, 2000; Wilson, 1981: 3).
- African people - The term African refers to the indigenous people of Africa (Chazan, Lewis, Mortimer, Rothchild, & Stein, 1999:34). However, in relation to this study Africans will only refer to those indigenous ethnic groups which were found by the colonialists in South Africa.
- Africans - In the language of the Apartheid era, Africans were the Bantu-speaking agri-pastoralists (those who practised agriculture and pastoralism). The apartheid government. The apartheid government used "Bantu" as a label for all African "natives" and Bantu now is considered a racist term (Back, 2000:11).
- African Renaissance - The word renaissance means renewal (Mbeki, 2000:15).
- Appearance - Appearance refers to the total, complete image created not only by clothing, but also by the human body and modifications, embellishments, or coverings of the body that is visually perceived; a visual context that includes clothing as well as the body (Kaiser, 1997:5).
- Bastions - Preservations (safekeeping) (Rogers Thesaurus, 1992: 666).

- Braid<sup>1</sup> - *As a noun* - braid is a single piece of hair made by twisting three thinner pieces over and under each other;  
or
- Braid<sup>2</sup> - braid can be twisted threads used for decorating clothes (Cambridge Learner's Dictionary 2001:80).
- Braid - *As a verb* - to braid is to twist three pieces of hair over and under each each other (Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, 2001:80).
- Clothes - Clothes is a collective term for all items of apparel worn on the body by men, women, and children (Calisibetta, 1988:12).
- Clothing - Refers to any tangible or material object connected to the body (Kaiser, 1997:4).
- Conformity - Conformity may be defined as a change in an individual's behaviour in order to achieve consistency based on real  
or  
imagined group pressure (Kiesler & Kiesler, 1970 as cited by Kaiser, 1998:472).  
  
Conformity is the acceptance of or adherence to a clothing norm, that is dressing in accordance with the norm of a specified group.
- Corn-rows - Braided hairstyle, fashioned by parting and braiding sections of the hair to form patterns on the head (Enty, 1979:27).

Culture - Culture is defined as the acquired knowledge that people use in their world to generate social behaviour. Culture is not behaviour itself, it is the knowledge used to construct and understand behaviour. Culture is thus the system of knowledge by which people design their own actions and interpret the behaviour of others (Spradley & McCurdy, 1998:56).

Culture is defined as the signifying system through which a social order is communicated. Culture is what people believe in and the way in which people behave (Battern, 1997:6). To substantiate Battern's definition, Harris and Morgan (1999:23) suggest that suggest that culture gives people a sense of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing.

Dreadlocks - Hair worn in many ringlets or plaits, especially by the Rastafarians (The South African Oxford Dictionary for Leaners 1999:112).

Dress - *As a noun*-Dress refers to the total arrangement of all onwardly detectable modifications of the body and all material objects added to it Roach & Musa, 1980 (as cited by Kaiser, 1997:4).

- *As a verb or as a process* - Dress refers to the act of altering or adding to appearance.

Embellishments -Something that adorns (Rogers Thesaurus, 1992:574).

Ethnicity -Refers to a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage, passed from generation to generation (Helms, 1990:39).

Fashion - *As a noun*- Refers to a style of dress that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because the chosen style is appropriate for the time and situation (Brydon & Nissen, 1998:42)  
- *As a verb* -Fashion is the activity of making or doing something (Barnard, 1996:8).

Globalization -Williams and Chrisman (1994:181) define globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events that occur many miles away, and vice versa.

Identity - Identity gives people an idea of whom they are and of how they relate to others and to the world in which they live (Woodward, 1997:1).

Identity is about belonging, about what a person has in common with some people and what differentiates one person from another. At its most basic identity gives location, the stable core to a person's individuality (Rutherford, 1990:34).

Isiqgoko -Headgear worn by Zulu women (Tyrrell, 1990: 45).



- Mentifacts - According to anthropologists, mentifacts refers to the ideas, ideals, attitudes, believes and values that people live by (Trollip, 1995:151).
- Pearson Chi-Square- Statistical tests of association method which is used to test the hypothesis that the row and the column variables are independent (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996:239).
- Population - Population or universe is the aggregate of all the elements, whilst the survey population is the aggregate of elements from which the sample is selected (Loubser, 1996:251).
- Sample - Refers to a set of elements selected in some way from the population (Loubser, 1996:250).
- Style - Style is a distinctive characteristic or way of expression; style in clothing describes the lines that distinguish one from or shape from another (Kefgen & Touchie-Specht,1986:23).

## 1.10 ACRONYMS

- BMF - Black Management Forum (*Enterprise* magazine:1998).
- SPSS - The SPSS is the Statistical Package which is used to analyse data  
(Sapsford & Jupp, 1998:23; Enty, 1979:36).
- FAWCS - Frequency Analysis With Chi-Square (Enty, 1979:36).

## 1.11 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The term clothes and clothing will be used interchangeably in this study. In this study I have used the term African instead of Blacks as it used to be in the 'Apartheid' era, because I wanted to concentrate only on the indigenous people of Africa who reside in the so-called sub-Saharan continent of South Africa before the invading of the colonialists as the topic clarifies. I have also used the term, 'white' to refer to members of Western society. By using this term terminology, I do not intend to imply any necessary form of mutually experienced identities or community consciousness.

I also used the term 'Apartheid' era, which according to Gordon and Gordon (1996:382) is an Afrikaans word that means "apartness". This is the name given to the system of a racial segregation and white superiority put into place in South Africa in 1948.

Chapter One - discusses the subproblems of the study, the assumptions, the delimitations, and the clarifications of the study. In this chapter the basic concepts or terms used to define the clothing and related cues and examines the clothing behaviour as a variable which affects a person's behaviour. This chapter introduces the background of the study.

Chapter Two-This chapter presents the literature reviewed of the study. This chapter gives some historical background of African South African people before the intervention of the colonialists, and the changes which followed these incidents. This chapter introduces the behaviour of people in relation to the factors which may have an effect on their lives.

Chapter Two further gives the reviewed literature about the clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women. Fashion and clothing are reviewed in the first section of the literature. Appearance is also discussed and how the environment can have an influence on a person's clothing behaviour. This chapter further explains why African South Africans dress in the way they dress which has changed as since the democratic government which took place in 1994.

Chapter Three- Chapter Three is the continuation of the review of the related literature.

Here identity, ethnicity, and culture are reviewed as influencers of clothing behaviour behaviour of African South African women. This chapter discusses the terms Postmodernism, Colonialism and Postcolonialism.

Chapter Four - Chapter Four is the research methodology. This chapter explains what steps will be followed in capturing the data. This chapter also explains methods are going to be applied in order to analyse the collected data.

Chapter Five - In this chapter the results are reported. The frequencies and the Chi-squares were computed in order to formulate the hypotheses.

Conclusions based on the hypotheses are reflected.

Chapter Six - This chapter discusses the results which were reported in Chapter Five in relation to the literature review which is documented in Chapter Two and Three of this study.

Chapter Seven- Chapter Seven is the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

This chapter gives insight into new research which may be undertaken in the future. This is based on what the research revealed and what was overlooked by previous studies in this field of study. The study on its own may give rise to new research projects which may be useful in the near future projects.

Finally the conclusion of this study summed up the main findings of this project.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR, FASHION AND CULTURE**

##### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

South Africa has undergone socio-political changes in recent years which have facilitated the level of cross-cultural interactions. These changes are not only political, they are also economic, religious, cultural and social, all interlinked and reinforced by each other. In contemporary societies, such as those in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, cultural change is inevitable, partly because of economic change and globalization. This economic change in South Africa originated due to the impact of the 'Industrial Revolution' in Europe whose subsequent impact on the rest of the world was equally dramatic. Popenoe, Boulton, and Cunningham (1998:39) state that cultural change is both necessary and inevitable. The natural and social environments change constantly. Similarly, the relationships of any human society also change in unison with the social environments. Cultural change can be set in motion by developments within a culture or by the influence of foreign cultures. Cultural change resulted in changes in lifestyle brought about by the invasion of the colonialists in South Africa during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This change in lifestyle was the result of the emergence of migrant labour systems of Africans to the mines in South Africa.

According to the research done by Seidman (1997:87) the effect of the migrant labour system on the traditional African South African societies was devastating. Seidman (1997:88) notes that this migration resulted in a gradual transformation of rural into urban communities, as well as responses to the realities of modern consumerism. For example, African South Africans did not rely on natural resources, such as animal skins for their clothing, farming and hunting for their survival. The urbanisation caused by this migratory labour system, caused some of the indigenous African cultural traditions of African South African people to disappear. Seidman (1997:91) states that as the new technology began to change the economic structure of Southern Africa, new ideas and beliefs also began to make their impact on African South African culture. Cloth from the mills of England replaced skins and homemade cloths such as the bark-cloth, and goods such as imported clothes and glass manufactured beads became a symbol of wealth. Therefore African South African people bought beads from Europeans and adopted them as part of their culture, which they still cherish to this day as part of their tradition (Seidman, 1990:89; Bedford, 1994: 43, Howes, 1996:67). Presently, most of the ethnically influenced clothes of African South African people are made from fabrics such as Kente, the Dutch wax and Vlisco fabrics which are influences from African countries such as Ghana, Senegal, and European countries such as Germany.

The clothing behaviour of African South African women has also undergone change. Ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women were never brought into the limelight by the South African media during the 'Apartheid' era, because of media restrictions imposed at that time by the South African Government (Bedford, 1994:60). For example, the picture of former President Mandela featured him wearing a Xhosa

traditional costume on the day of his trial in Rivonia in 1962 was never published by South African media until after Mandela was released in 1990, although the same picture was published by media in overseas countries (Bedford, 1994:60). African costumes, culture and history in South Africa were not only being lost, but they were also being overlooked. As a result, African South African people started imitating Western styles of dress.

Hence, after the downfall of the 'Apartheid' government in South Africa in 1994, ethnically influenced clothes seem to have gained recognition in South Africa as a way of re-establishing a national identity of its African people. For example, African South African people wore designs with ethnic patterns to celebrate the new South Africa when they were going for the first South democratic election in 1994 (*The Star*, 28 April, 1994:9).

This study focuses on the relationship of clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. Reviewed literature shows that factors such as the environment and multicultural society in which African South African people live, play a role in influencing African South African women's clothing behaviour (Baker, 1995:14; Rubinstein, 1995:42; Kupfer as cited by Rudd, 1997:50).

Clothing is not just used as a way of creating an image of oneself, or as an attempt to make an impression on other people. People use clothing either as a way of establishing their own identity or for group conformity. In support of this statement Rouse (1989:60) notes that people of different societies wear clothes as a part of their social behaviour.



Similarly, it appears that the majority of African South African women are opting to change their way of dress from a Western influenced way of dress to embody both Western and ethnic influenced styles of dress (*Tribute* magazine December 2000:83). For example, even if African South African women dress in a Western style of dress, African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal tend to complement their dress with matching ethnically influenced jewellery.

African South African youth are also adopting an ethnically influenced trend of dressing. For example, they may dress in the latest style of Levi's designer jeans, but instead of wearing expensive gold jewellery as they used to do, they opt for ethnically influenced beaded chokers and bracelets. They wear braids or dreadlocks and have strings of colourful ethnically influenced beads attached to them, instead of relaxed hair which used to be the fashion trend prior to the first South African democratic elections in 1994.

The topic on the relationship between clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa arises from the need to understand why African South African women are presently wearing ethnically influenced clothes more often than during the 'Apartheid' era. Similarly, it shows that just like the World War II experiences such as women occupying men's jobs, which influenced major fashion changes during the war and thereafter - as contended by Mulvey and Richards (1998:6) - in a way the 'Apartheid-driven' experiences also had an impact on African South African women's clothing behaviour after its collapse. To substantiate this statement, African South African women wear ethnically influenced clothes as a way of embracing their culture (Seidman, 1990:36).

Ethnically influenced fashions - jewellery like beaded safety pins worn as bracelets, ethnically influenced beads as well as elaborate headgear- are also beginning to have an impact on Western style of clothes in South Africa and internationally (*Pace* magazine, September, 2000:40). For example, the launching of ethnically influenced clothes and M-Net Face of Africa which was broadcasted on M-Net on 13 July 2000 in Johannesburg and later showcased during the New York Fashion Week on 17 September 2000 (*Daily News* 12 July 2000:6; *Tribute* magazine, December 2000:77; *True Love* magazine December 2000:77).

This event and the M-Net Face of Africa programme, which is sponsored by M-Net as a way of promoting African models and ethnically influenced clothes internationally, is evidence that after the South African democratic elections in 1994, the South African media aims to bring the ethnically influenced clothes of African South Africans into the limelight. These events serve to make African South African people and other African countries proud of their culture. Furthermore, for example, the launching of the African Traditional Games, which took place in the Orange Free State on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2001, is regarded as a positive move by the democratic South African Government to encourage Africans to be proud of their culture as Africans (*Daily News* 14 March 2001:4; *The Sunday Independent* 25 February 2001:1).

## **2.2 Fashion and Clothing**

Manual (1996:35) states that clothing defines what people wear, and fashion is how people wear clothes. Sproles and Burns (1997:4) contend that in contemporary societies there is nothing as certain as change. Fashion inexorably enters or invades people's daily

lives through, for example, their professions, friendships, lifestyles, values, attitudes - that is, through total personal social experiences. Sproles and Burns (1997:4) elaborate further, that the most visible of changes may perhaps be the daily, weekly, and yearly revisions of people's appearances, the way they see themselves visually, and the way they present themselves visually to others. This is known as fashion (Sproles & Burns, 1997:4). Likewise, it appears that appearance of African South African women in relation to this study concerning their clothing behaviour, since the coming to power of the new South African democratic government in 1994, has turned to be fashionable.

The dawn of the new millennium also had an impact on African South Africans' dress, and influenced change from that of Western influenced clothes to an ethnically influenced way of dress. Ethnically influenced dressing is continually gaining popularity among African South Africans in their daily appearance, as they adorn themselves to embrace their African culture (Trollip, 1995:150; Magubane, 2001:56 ).

Fashion is defined as a process of collective behaviour in which a particular alternative in a set of possibilities is selected as appropriate (Robert & Lauer, 1995:40). In agreement with Robert and Lauer's definition, Brydon and Nissen (1998:42) define fashion as a style of dress that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because the chosen style is appropriate for the time and situation. According to Rouse (1996:70), fashion influences what people like, and as a result people's tastes do change with fashion. Some people feel that their choice of clothes reflects their personal taste which escapes the influence of fashion.

Jackie Kennedy Onassis (1999:74) was one of those people in the twentieth century who had their own personal style and were not influenced by fashion. Even now, after her death, Jackie still influences fashion throughout the world. Onassis' manner of dress was termed "Jackie style" (Jackie: 2001:2). The Late Princess Diana of Wales also emerged as one of the fashion influencers of the twentieth century. Ever since her wedding to Prince Charles of Britain in 1981 until her death in August 1997, Diana the Princess of Wales had her own style which showed her unique personal taste, which influenced fashion instead of fashion influencing her (Walker, 2001:33-34). In a way she was regarded as a fashion leader or fashion trend-setter of the twentieth century. To give an example, if she was featured wearing a specific garment, a day after that event designers would have already copied the style of dress she was wearing and within a few days that style would have been available in most of the designer shops overseas (Frain, 1998:5; Howell, 1998:22; Mendes & De la Haye, 1999:231; Walker, 2000:33).

In South Africa, a woman such as Winnie Madikizela Mandela (*The Saturday Star*, 30 September, 1997:2) may be regarded as one of those people who has their own personal taste without being influenced by fashion, because she dresses in accordance with what is suitable for the mood in relation to the occasion she may be attending (*Daily News*, 29 September, 1999:5).

Fashion moulds a person's concept of what is beautiful and therefore it affects his/her personal taste. For example, if people dress in an outdated fashion, they may feel uncomfortable in that they do not conform to the current clothing styles worn at that particular time. These people may even find it difficult to find styles reflecting their

personal taste in the shops because those styles will not be fashionable anymore (Entwistle, 2000:7). Clothing, as defined by Kaiser (1997:5), refers to any tangible or material objects connected to the human body.

Kaiser (1997:vii) further elaborates that although being tangible objects, clothes provide a frame of reference for interpreting a more abstract social processes: For example, how people relate to one another or how images obtain cultural significance. As a result clothing, then, applies to those objects that people attach to or wear on their bodies. For the purpose of this study, clothing will also include accessories, such as ethnically influenced beads, headgear, amulets, earrings and hairpieces.

People use clothing and fashion as ways of differentiating themselves as individuals or to show some form of uniqueness. For example, most corporate companies in South Africa still use uniforms in order to differentiate their employees from those of other companies. Barnard (1996:8) states that fashion and clothing may be seen as the most significant ways in which social relations between people are constructed. Barnard (1996:12) further argues that fashion and clothing are some of the ways in which people experience, explore, communicate and reproduce the social order. Items of clothing and fashion delineate one group from another, they ensure that one identity remains separate and different from another identity.

With reference to this study, evidently viewed with the hindsight of the first South African democratic elections in 1994, it is apparent that ethnically influenced clothing of African South African women is a way of ensuring that their identities remain different from other identities. Barnard (1996:36) further points out that it is through fashion and clothing that people are constituted as social and cultural beings, that is how they decode their social and cultural milieu (background). African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal use ethnically influenced clothes as a fashion statement for differentiating the identity of African people from that of Western people. As a result, it appears that ethnically influenced clothes of African South Africans, enable African South African women to share a common identity as Africans.

### **2.2.1 Fashion, Clothing and Communication**

McDowell 1994:57, (as cited by Miles, 1998:90), views fashion as a commercial, industrial business concerned less with beauty than with making money. Fashion appears to provide the consumer with a plethora of choice, a palette from which he or she can paint an identity as he or she pleases. Fashion, according to McCracken 1990 (as cited by Miles, 1998:92), is less of a language than a limited set of prefabricated codes. Craik (1996:125) states that fashion provides a means by which individuals can signal aspects of their identity as well as a way of constructing social interaction.

Clothing can be regarded as a means of non-verbal communication used by human beings in almost every culture. For example, historically, in African culture, clothing was used and is still used in some African cultures as a means of communication to differentiate between the different stages in life (rites of passage), such as childhood to adolescence

and from adolescence to adulthood and to old age. Each of these stages has different attire to mark the difference among members (Magubane, 2000:21-26 & 64; de La Harpe & de La Harpe, Leitch, & Derwent, 1998:99).

Eicher and Barnes (1992:1) documented that for thousands of years human beings have communicated with one another first in the language of dress. The clothes that people wear serve as a transformation system to transmit information to other people with whom they come into contact, before they engage in any verbal communication. In what they wear, African South African women inform the world of what they think of themselves as Africans. African South African women use ethnically influenced clothes as a non-verbal way of communication about their culture to those people with whom they interact (Clancy, 1996:217).

Likewise, for example, Mahatma Gandhi used his dress (the loin cloth) as a means of communication, but his message was never understood by the people. The message that Gandhi intended to send to the then ruling South African government was a rejection of the material products of Europe, and also of the European value system. Gandhi hoped visually to expose Indian poverty while simultaneously suggesting its resolution through hand-spinning, weaving, and freedom from the British rule. It was a temporary 'sign of mourning', intended to provoke people into spinning, weaving and clothing among the poor Indian community (Tarlo, 1996:75).

Clothes are regarded as forms of communication even if there is no use of spoken words, but written words may also be used, depending on how the message is being conveyed. For example, the recent AIDS awareness T-shirts in South Africa printed with the words "I am HIV positive" serve as a silent language to communicate with the South African society to fight against AIDS. For example, in relation to this study during the 8<sup>th</sup> opening of the South African democratic Parliament on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001, the majority of Parliamentarians - both men and women - made a fashion statement by wearing ethnically influenced clothes to embrace their culture. This fashion statement shows the cultural diversity of South Africans, which is evidence that African South Africans are proud of their culture (*Sunday Times*, 11 February 2001:11; *Tribute* magazine April 2001:10-12). To support Eicher and Barnes' statement, Kefgen, Touchie-Specht, Marshall, Jackson, and Stanley (2000:4) regard clothing as part of the "silent language" communicated through the use of visual or non-verbal symbols.

This "silent language" is elaborated by clothing semiotics, where sign language is used as a means of communication.

### 2.2.2 Clothing Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure (as cited by Rubinstein, 2001:8) defines language as a system of signs and symbols that exists prior to and outside its use by a given individual. Rubinstein (2001:8) in her study of clothing semiotics contended that when applied to clothing, the term "language" refers to the use of a particular vocabulary derived from the storehouse of images that support the structure of social interaction, the system of statuses and roles. Like words, clothing images become significant only when they are used in a specific social context.



Images may function as signs that convey a single, relatively clear-cut meaning or as symbols having multiple meanings and connotations or associations. Images are signifiers that carry meaning and value (Rubinstein, 2001:8).

Kefgen et al.(2000:46) elaborate further to describe such symbols as "sign-vehicles" or "cues" that select the status to be assigned to individuals and define the ways in which others are expected to treat them. For example, Diana the Princess of Wales (Conran, 1998:14) used to convey her messages about her heartfelt phases and turning points of her difficult years that followed her wedding, to a worldwide audience through the media, using the vocabulary of fashion and clothing. With every outfit she chose to wear she would ask herself: "What type of message will I be giving out if I wear this?" Diana, the Princess of Wales was regarded as one of the best communicators and fashion influencers of the twentieth century (Conran, 1998:14 as cited by Howell, 1998:14 & 16). Howell (1998) stated that those people who understood the language of clothes, were able to decode the messages she was trying to send to the observer (Howell, 1998:16). Kaiser (1998:219) states that semiotics deals with how messages can develop in one context and possibly move across contextual boundaries.

For example, in the 1980s the rock singer Madonna "borrowed" appearance cues normally associated with religious contexts (for example, a cross or crucifix necklace), juxtaposed these cues with those holding erotic cultural connotations (black bra, corset, and black leather) and created a new kind of appearance context. Thus, her appearance as a whole context required a new framework or set of rules of association, for purposes of interpretation.

### **2.2.2.1 Style of Dress**

Rubinstein (2001:9) argues that style of dress has a significance beyond that of conveying information. When a person's appearance is augmented by elements that extend the body's reach, as when one is accompanied by guards carrying arms, the resulting visual image increases a person's physical ability to control the environment. Rubinstein further elaborates that style of dress also tells about other societal categories such as maturity (Rubinstein, 2001:8).

### **2.2.2.2 Clothing Signs**

According to Rubinstein (2001:9) clothing signs are characterised by the following:

- (i) Being task-oriented or instrumental;
- (ii) Having one primary meaning;
- (iii) Being generally recognized as a sign by those who wear it.

Rubinstein (2001:9) notes that a formal code, promulgated by those in authority, mandates the wearing of the specific elements of dress in a particular pattern to signify the particular social position with its distinct rights and responsibilities (for example, military or fire department uniforms). Those wearing this clothing arouse a set of expectations for behaviour in both the wearer and the audience.

Exercising authority, wielding power, differentiating the sexes, and arousing sexual interest are all facilitated by the employment of categories of clothing signs (Rubinstein, 2001:9). For example, with reference to this study the wearing of leopard skin by the African Kings and Queens is a sign of bravery and often signifies nobility or high standing in society (White, 1998:13-14).

### 2.2.3 Fashion, Clothing and Culture

According to Lehnert (1999:8) fashion has become a very important aspect of culture in present day life in relation to clothing. Barnard (1996:57) contends that all cultures will use clothing, if not fashion, to distinguish gender differences, most of these cultures will use clothing to mark the difference between secular and religious classes, and some will use it to mark membership of different families. Barnard (1996:57) and Magubane (2001:23) further note that major changes in status, such as getting married, or becoming a widow/er, will be marked by most cultures as is customary and is often accompanied by clothes which are suitable for such occasions.

With reference to this study, African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal wear ethnically influenced clothes and ethnically influenced beads when attending special occasions and ceremonies, such as weddings or the paying of 'Lobola', as part of their culture as Africans. For example, former Miss South Africa, Basetsana Makgalemele was featured wearing ethnically influenced clothes, ethnic jewellery and ethnic headgear, 'Isigqoko' (traditional headgear for married Zulu women) on her engagement day in September 2000.

Augustine Masilela Chuene wore ethnically influenced clothes on her wedding day in 1999, showing pride in their identity as African women (*Pace* magazine September, 2000:41). Both Makgalemele and Chuene wear Western influenced clothes for their working environments in the corporate world. According to Sproles and Burns (1994:40), clothing is regarded as one category of good material culture that may be observed, and it is used as a tool to understand other cultures as well as a person's own culture. It is evident from the abovementioned statement that culture acts as the primary influence on the type of clothing worn by individuals within a society.

According to Schrader (1997:12), clothing symbols reflect the cultural values that a person has achieved, and their use is largely a matter of personal choice. Unlike clothing signs, the use of which is covered by norms specifying what people ought not to wear, no rules govern the wearing of clothes in contemporary society. Likewise, in South Africa, since the first South African democratic elections, African South African people are free to wear any type of clothing they like. This is evidenced, by the ethnically influenced clothes that African South African women wore when they were going to the polls in 1994. With regard to this study, as a multi-racial society in which different cultures interact with one another, it appears that African South African women strive to retain their culture, although their lifestyle is influenced by other cultures, which is unavoidable to them as contemporary people.

For example, the Black Management Forum (BMF) held a corporate update dinner at Voda World in Midrand in September 2000 with the theme *Development Management Leadership*, and a Black Management Forum social gathering which was held in

Johannesburg in February 2001. Both occasions featured African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng wearing ethnically influenced clothes as preferred to Western style clothes, which used to be the choice of clothes worn for such types of functions during the colonial era (*Tribute* magazine 2000:12; *Leadership* magazine, February 2001:2).

In agreement with Eicher's and Barnes' (1992:121) statement, Rouse (1989:60) elaborates that people use clothes as a means of communication by attaching meaning to the clothes they wear, but most of the time it does not mean that the observer understands the meaning in the same way as the wearer. As an example of non-verbal communication, former President Mandela wore a full ethnic beaded Tembu costume (traditional costume for Xhosas) at his trial in Rivonia in 1962 (Bedford, 1998:6; de La Harpe & de La Harpe, 2001:23). He intended to make a powerful symbolic statement about his culture as an African, but the judge as the receiver of the message did not understand the meaning of his clothes (Bedford, 1998:6).

### **2.3 Why People Wear the Clothes They Wear**

The social world is a world of dressed or, at least, adorned bodies. Unadorned nakedness is almost always inappropriate, even in situations where the body, or most of it is exposed. For example, when Marilyn Monroe was asked what she wore in bed, her famous answer was "a few drops of Chanel No. 5" (Entwistle and Wilson, 1998:107). For even without garments, the social body is always embellished and decorated to give it symbolic and/or erotic meanings (Entwistle & Wilson, 1998:107).

Entwistle and Wilson (1998) elaborate further by stating that anthropological evidence, too, has shown that all cultures 'dress' the body in some way by clothing, tattooing, scarifying, cosmetics, or other means. In relation to this study, although African dress and grooming were considered scanty by European standards, in their seeming nakedness, the Africans were fully clothed. Likewise, in South Africa, what the nineteenth century missionaries took to be indecent exposure was clearly neither a state of undress nor improper in indigenous eyes.

Deciding what to wear is one of the ways in which people try to 'pin down meaning' and control both representations and interpretations of the self (Tarlo, 1996:18). According to Estelle de Young (1998:5) the choice of dress is a major social activity. People have to consider the individual as an element in the pattern and not only a consideration of the cultural pattern.

The choice of dress depends not only on the attitude and the desires of the individual, but also on the way in which certain basic elements of the design are perceived by the individual and also by the group to which that particular person belongs - for example, the type of fabric used, the collar, et cetera. In relation to this study, African South African women's choice of dress is influenced by the use of colourful braids attached to the garment. For example, the Xhosa women's dress (Umbhaco) is decorated by sewing ethnically influenced beads and braids on the garment as well as the use of embroidery, the latter being an influence from African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria (Magubane, 2000:17; *Bona* magazine April 2001:126-127).

Kefgen and Touchie-Specht (1981:9) suggest that people dress to demonstrate many things, such as to show their social origin, their artistic bent and their sexual make-up. People dress to show their politics, to emulate, to attract or to intimidate, to be accepted, to find security and identity in a group. People's clothing serves as an attraction and a distraction, a security blanket and fantasy. Clothing often reveals and conceals at the same time (Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 1981:9).

The literature reviewed indicates that people dress in order to satisfy one or more of the afore-mentioned reasons of why people wear clothes (2.3). According to the aforementioned statement of Kefgen and Touchie-Specht (1981:145), it is apparent that people do not wear clothes for protective purposes only. Likewise, for example, in America, African-America singer Toni Braxton was featured at the Grammy Awards ceremony in March 2001 wearing a dress which revealed both sides of her body naked. She is one of the celebrities who dress to make a fashion statement because most of the time, whenever there is a social scene, she is featured wearing something which would draw attention to her, among the crowd (*OK! Magazine* 9 March 2001:170; *Drum* magazine 16 April 2001:12).

Furthermore, in South Africa, an incident similar to that of Braxton occurred at the South African Music Awards (SAMA) ceremony on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2001. Nomasonto Malesa, one of the audience and a South African, African woman, was featured wearing a dress that covered only her legs and left her entire bottom bare, which seemed to be even worse to the observer's eye than that of Toni Braxton (*Sunday Times* 8 April 2001:3; *Drum* magazine 16 April 2001:12).

These two recent examples show that people do not only dress for protection or for body covering (Lehnert, 1999:20). To comment on the South African incident, in relation to South Africa as a contemporary society, the person who may be receiving the message may interpret that manner of dress as being indecent behaviour, which in a way intimidates and distracts the viewer's attention.

But, in the case of the wearer as being a true African South African, maybe Nomasonto Malesa wanted to reclaim the Iron Age manner of African dress, which used to cover only the front part of young unmarried women, leaving the rest of the body unclothed (Magubane, 2001:10 & 96; Tyrrell, 1996:27).

However, historically, and even at the present time Zulu maidens are partially dressed during the Reed Ceremony, which is acceptable behaviour because every unmarried girl will be dressed in the same way for that occasion as part of their culture (Tyrrell, 1996:23; Magubane 2000:42- 43). Moreover, even if it is due to the African Renaissance that African people are encouraged to re-adopt their cultural roots, as a modern society, African South Africans still have to choose what to leave out from their culture and what to take along with them to preserve for future generations (Makgoba, 1998:24).

To elaborate further, the aforementioned two examples serve as good examples of "ego screaming". According to Kaiser (1997:462), ego screaming is an individual's reaction to prevalent clothing styles, characterized by an attempt to create shock value and to demand attention.



For example, the South African incident at the SAMA ceremony serves as a good example of an ego screamer because, according to one source, Nomasonto Malesa had stated that she decided she was going to outdo Toni Braxton (*OK, Magazine* 9 March 2001:170) at the SAMA ceremony, and went around boasting to friends that she was going to make headlines the morning after the awards (*Drum magazine*, 16 April 2001:12). This is a clear indication that she intended to create a shocking scene and draw attention from the viewers, knowing that the event was going to be televised.

According to Kaiser (1997:462) this attention is not necessarily desired for purposes of approval or disapproval, but rather for the sake of being noticed, per se. People live in an era of free identity expectation, and the conditions are ripe for a variety of forms of expression. Individual interpretations of fashion allow for a form of ego differentiation, which can become a more powerful motive for dressing than class differentiation. Thus, ego screamers may actually embrace some type of fashion and exaggerate it. Ego screamers are not necessarily left totally to their own devices; in fact, they may actually create a distinct idioculture, in which they derive a group look or a kind of "collective ego" that is different from that expressed by outsiders. For example, the ego screaming in the recent past are punk and post-punk appearances (Kaiser, 1997:462).

Tortora and Eubank (2000:xix) postulate that psychologists and sociologists have attempted to identify the motivations that cause people to dress themselves. They argue that there are places in the world where clothing is not essential for survival, and yet most cultures do use some form of dress.

In support of Tortora and Eubank's statement Rouse (1989:2) notes that the Yaggans of Tierra del Fuego, at the tip of South America stay in extremely cold wether and wear scanty clothing. It is said that Darwin saw snow melting on the skins of these people, and when they were given blankets they tore them into strips which they divided between them and used as decoration (Rouse, 1989:2). With regard to this study for example, historically, in African culture there was not much used as a form of clothing to cover the body because most of the African body was left uncovered (Fisher & Backwith, 1995:10; Tyrrell, 1992:13; Magubane, 2000:26).

For example, even nowadays the Dinka people still wear only little beaded corsets and nothing else (Fisher & Backwith, 2000:65; White, 1998:10). Previous research reveals that the African body was not fully clothed before the advent of the colonialists. Moffat, as cited by Howes (1996:37), stated that "there was so much needed to cover the unclothed African body". By this he meant that Africans wore little pieces of animal skins as clothes, which could not really protect the body from the cold and hot temperatures of the African continent, therefore to him, Africans seemed to be naked.

The most basic reasons that have been suggested for the wearing of clothing are for protection, to denote status, and decoration is generally acknowledged to be primary factors (Howes, 1996:37). Tortora and Eubank (2000:1) further state that most cultures use dress to denote status, but it is argued that this function probably became attached to dress at some time after it first came into use. What constitutes modesty varies from society to society, and what is modest in one part of the world may be deemed immodesty in another.

People wear what they wear to set a scene, create a mood, or to establish their image. Schnumberger (1998:2) points out that people dress for various reasons which may be associated with their cultural background. Kefgen and Touchie-Specht (1981:9) that these reasons may be political, superstition, to keep warm, for appearance, adornment, physical environment and cross-pollination of cultures. In agreement with Schnumberger, Kefgen et al. (2000:45) suggest that people dress to demonstrate different attitudes towards traditional practices, such as clothing for weddings, mourning, or for rites of passage.

Similarly, in relation to this study, reviewed literature shows evidence that African South African women wear ethnically influenced clothes when attending special ceremonies such as weddings, paying of 'Lobola', or when attending political gatherings (Magubane, 1998:28; Magubane, 2000:16, *Pace* magazine, September 2000:34; *Pace* magazine, May 2002:48). Polhemus (1999:30) argues that in any given society people will have different attitudes to change and this will be noticed in their manner of dress. For example, it is evident that the advent of the new democratic Government of South Africa in 1994 influenced a change in the manner of dress of African South African women.

Kefgen et al.(2000:44) view fashion as a major influence on what people wear and what they think. It appears that, due to the political change in South Africa which affects the social life of African South African people, African South African women are modifying their manner of dress from Western style of dress to that of ethnically influenced clothes as a way of reaffirming their culture.

It is apparent that the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women gained popularity towards the end of the twentieth century (Trollip, 1999:150; *Drum*, 2000:13; *The Independent on Saturday*, 28 August 2000:12). To support Trollip's statement Ndamase as cited in *Tribute* magazine, February 2000:23 notes that the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of African South Africans seems to be the current fashion trend in South Africa.

Goldsmith (1990:14) notes that women wear clothes to satisfy a number of psychological needs, which may be for appreciation, attraction and impression. It is not only psychological needs that have an influence on clothing behaviour, but sociological needs such as the person's age, marital status, social status, ethnic identity, religion, politics, et cetera also play a role in influencing people's clothing behaviour (Kefgen et al. 2000:44).

In support of Goldsmith's (1990) statement, Costantino (1998:32) maintains that as people mature they are able to express more individuality in their clothing selection, because they feel more confident about themselves and most of the time they are not influenced by their peer groups. However, when those trends become popular they feel confident to dress like others.

For example, the South African First Lady Zanele Mbeki (*The Mercury*, 2000:8) mostly used to dress in a Western style of dress. Even at the inauguration ceremony of President Thabo Mbeki she wore Western style of dress but had complemented her dress by wearing a dreadlocks hairstyle. However, that seems to have changed as she seems to have gained her confidence, showing pride in being an African and enhancing her African culture.

Zanele Mbeki was featured dressed in ethnically influenced clothes in November 2000 at the opening of 'Nga-Isandla Zethu', which is a company of African South African women in the corporate world in KwaZulu-Natal that specialises in making ethnically influenced beads.

Likewise, at the renaming of the metropolitan city of Tshwane (formerly Pretoria) by its first African South African Mayor Stanley Mogoba, and the opening of Parliament on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001, as well as on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2001 when attending the tribute to the 43 soccer fans who died at Ellis Park stadium on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2001, Mrs Mbeki dressed in ethnically influenced Xhosa attire.

At the opening of the South African Parliament on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2002, she adorned herself with ethnically influenced beads and Venda attire to show her pride as an African (*The Daily News*, November, 2000:20; *Bona* magazine 2001:126; *Tribute* magazine February 2001:6; *Tribute* magazine April 2001:11, *The Sunday Times* 22 April 2001:2; *Saturday Star*, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2002:1).

Costantino (1998:33) points out that people buy clothing both to maintain and enhance their self-image, but self-image is affected by many factors, such as age. Likewise, in relation to this study, it is apparent that African South African women dress in ethnically influenced clothes to enhance their self-image appropriate to their age group (to identify with their age group).

To substantiate this statement, most ethnically influenced clothes are designed by South African fashion designers who have the knowledge of how African South African women want to project their African image. For example, some of the well known South African fashion designers such as Nandipha Madikiza, Fred Eboka - who is a Nigerian fashion designer based in Cape Town - and Marianne Fassler, who uses the Leopard prints as her trademark name, are striving to satisfy the needs of African South African women in relation to ethnically influenced clothes.

Historically, the leopard skins were used to make clothes for African kings and up to the present (Laine', 1991:29, 144-148; Hammond-Tooke, 1995:67; Howes, 1996:25; White, 1998:13; Magubane, 2000:25, Tortora & Eubank, 2000:3). According to African culture, the leopard has the symbolical meaning of power. For example, Chief Sechele of the Kwena tribe in the 1860s ordered his suit to be made of a leopard skin - all "in European fashion". The missionaries and some of the Kwena rulers thought he wished to "make himself white", not realising that the chief wanted that type of suit as a symbol of African chiefs to show his power (Howes, 1996:25).

For example, King Zwelithini in KwaZulu-Natal still wears the leopard skin at special ceremonies such as the Reed Ceremony and cultural events such as the Shaka Day celebration. The latter event is organised to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Shaka, the first King of the Zulu Empire, to embrace his culture and the status of African kingship (*The Independent on Saturday* 16 September 2000:14; Magubane, 2001:10).

Likewise, Chief Sam Mankuroane and his wife were featured wearing leopard skin regalia at his wedding in 1999 in Botswana as a revival of traditional forms of African weddings and other ceremonies, and former President Mandela was presented with a royal leopard skin at the unveiling of cultural museum in Transkei in 1999 (Magubane, 2000:10 & 118). These examples illustrate that the leopard skin has important meaning for African South Africans.

Lurie (2000:xii) contends that though communication between nations has become more rapid, and styles more international, there has also been a counter movement. Nationalism is on the rise, and so is national and ethnic costume. Many neighbourhoods, especially in large cities, are less integrated than they once were, and some members of minorities have begun to adopt what might almost be called native costume. Social conditions, as well as ethnic identity, continue to be reflected in costume.

#### **2.4 The Work Environment**

Kaiser (1997:13) states that feminists strove to reform women's clothing by promoting styles that were more functional, less restrictive, and more comfortable than the styles in that century. It became apparent that clothes have not only physical but also social implications. The work environment determines a dress code for a specific organization. Therefore, the clothing worn at work, according to Kefgen et al.(2000:18), will be influenced by the dress code and the corporate philosophy of that specific company. Entwistle (2000:51) documented in his analysis for working clothes that, nowadays, different occupational settings exhibit different codes of dress.

For example, law and banking professionals will tend to be less fashion conscious than people in the media, engineering, creative and other professions who do not have to wear specific attire to work.

Within these constraints, individual women interpret what is and what is not appropriate to wear at work. However, most companies may expect everyone at management level to wear clothes which will project a 'modern' and 'professional' image of that company (Entwistle, 2000:23). Entwistle (2000:37) further states that women have more choice of dress in that they can, in most workplaces, wear various skirts or trousers with their jackets. There they can also wear a wider range of colour than the usual black, grey, navy of most male suits for the conventional office, as well as jewellery and other decorative accessories. Therefore, in relation to this study, African South African women in the corporate world are at liberty to wear ethnically influenced beads as jewellery.

Kaiser (1997:366) argues that, clothing meaning changes with time. As a greater number of women enter management level jobs, businessmen may become accustomed to a variety of colours in women's dress and meaning of colour value may diminish or change for men (Kaiser, 1997:366). To substantiate Kaiser's statement, Laurie (2000: xiii) states that new words or items of clothing have appeared, and old ones have vanished or taken new meanings. She elaborates further by stating that as time passes, new ideas and experiences demand not only new words but new styles, and most recent social and cultural trends have been mirrored not only in what people say but in what they wear (Laurie, 2000:xiii).



With reference to this study this behaviour of social and cultural trends mirrored in dress is evident in the manner of dress in the South African job environment. Most individuals do not wear the same clothes in all occupations but rather adapt their dress for the particular social context they are to enter. Similarly, it is apparent that African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal have adapted ethnically influenced clothes in their work environment. A person's social (status) situation plays an important role in structuring dress choices. However, African South African women in the corporate world are careful when making a choice of clothes in order to maintain both the organization's image and their own personal appearance.

It appears that the majority of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal tend to combine ethnically influenced beadwork with a Western style of dress, or use matching scarves with ethnic prints to complement their appearance (Bedford, 1994:9). Kaiser (1997:87) further contends that although research has largely documented that women are perceived as being more competent in businesslike attire rather than in traditionally feminine or sexually attractive attire, it also has pointed to either /or nature of women's options, basically, emphasizing personal attractiveness versus competence.

Clothing reflects the behaviour qualities expected in the modern workplace: efficiency and reliability. Hence, ethnically influenced clothes will not be practical for the corporate work environment of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Moreover, not all corporate companies demand a certain dress code from their employees.

Johnson and Lennon (1999:80) assert that similarity of appearances among management personnel in a large corporation helped to reduce uncertainty in the organization in the standard management appearance signified commitment to professionalism and to organizational and business goals on the part of managers. However, for example, at business social gatherings such as the Black Management Forum (BMF) National Conference, and the Awards Dinner which was held at Caesars in Gauteng, African South African women in the corporate world are free to don ethnically influenced clothes.

#### **2.4.1 Change in the Women's Role**

Harriman (1996:21) points out that as South Africans approach the twenty-first century, the loss of "traditional values" that so concerned their forefathers a century ago continues to be a cause for concern: the breakdown of the family, a declining birth rate, a revolution in morals, and the changing roles of women. Yet, an enormous change has occurred in the work sphere. From the standpoint of the industrial society, these changes add up to a very different social world. In today's economic context, women's employment opportunities are coming increasingly from small firms and self-employment.

Likewise, in America during the past twenty-five years, Affirmative Action programmes were an implementation tool for the goal of promoting equal opportunity. Johnson and Lennox (1999:79) maintain that the change in gender representation in business provides an opportunity to explore concomitant changes in role dress as women move in greater proportion into management and executive roles. Johnson and Lennon (1999:79) state further that as individuals take on new roles, dress symbols employed in performance of those roles are likely to be adopted, adapted, and modified by the new role-takers in a process of meaning change.

With reference to this study it is apparent that when adopting and adapting to their new roles in the corporate work arena, African South African women did take into consideration the corporate identity and their cultural identity in order to adjust to societal and organizational expectations for those role players and meanings assigned to symbols used in execution of the role.

There is considerable evidence that these efforts have been highly effective in changing the proportional representation of African women, especially in entry level jobs and in lower-level management jobs (Lynch, 1996:26; Glasser & Glazer, 1997:16; Steel & Bunzel, 1997:36). Similarly, in South Africa, during the nineteen-nineties, the majority of South African organizations have implemented affirmative action (Lessing, 1995:135).

For example, in the following professions:

- ☐ **Marketing:** Thaninga Msimang-Shope was appointed as General Manager of the SABC2 television network. She stated that one of the things she wanted to focus on was to elaborate, acknowledge, and award women. This was done (achieved) through 'Lebone Women of the Year Awards'. Msimang-Shope as cited in (*Tribute Achievers* 1998:34).
- ☐ **Managerial:** Moagi, Manager of George airport. Moagi is the first African South African female manager of a South African airport (*Enterprise magazine*, 1999:10).
- ☐ **Managerial:** Felicia Mabuza-Suttle, former Executive Manager in charge of corporate relations, FMS Productions, she is the first African South African woman to host a talk-show and is an ex-Executive manager for South African Airways (*Enterprise magazine; Portfolio for Black managers*, 1998:120).
- ☐ **Managerial:** Mamphela Ramphele, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. She is the first African woman to be nominated as Managing Director of the World Bank, from 2000 up to the present day in the USA (*Mercury*, April 2000:23).

- **Media:** Tumi Makgabo is the first African South African woman to hold a post as global news reader at CNN (*Fair Lady* 20 December, 2000:139; *Tribute Magazine*, February 2001:73).
- **Sports:** Ria Ledwaba is the first African South African woman to be appointed as a member of the South African Football Association (*Tribute Magazine*, 2000:4; *Tribute Achievers*, 2001:85).

Lessing (1994:14) points out that African South African women are exposed to double discrimination because they are both African and women. Yet in recent years the majority of African South African women have moved upwards on the ladder, steadily, but barely noticed. Particularly in white-collar occupations, growing numbers of African women are proving that diligence, drive and determination can do much to counter disadvantage and discrimination. They have become indispensable, particularly in the professional and clerical sectors of the country's workforce. Women are moving into professions which were, in the past, regarded as being 'a man's world', for example, in the fields of engineering, journalism, managerial, entertainment, sports, et cetera (Lessing, 1994:14).

Therefore, in relation to this study, this is a clear indication that African South African women's way of dress is influenced by the type of higher positions they hold in their working environment, where ethnically influenced clothes would not be considered to be practical.

## 2.5 Fashion and Identity

Entwistle (2000:109) states that fashion can be used to give oneself impressive 'individual' identity, while simultaneously being capable of signalling commonality, it enhances uniformity. Fashion and dress have a complex relationship to identity. On the one hand the clothes that people choose to wear can be expressive of identity, class, status and so on, on the other, people's clothes cannot always be *read*, since they do not straightforwardly speak and can therefore be open to misrepresentation.

Finkelstein (1991:128) notes that clothing is frequently seen as symbolic of the individual's status and morality, whether actual or contrived. When an individual encounters a stranger as initially being mysterious and inaccessible, one can refer to clothing styles and physical appearance, in the absence of any other means, as a reliable sign of identity.

## 2.6 Adorning the Body or Decoration Theory

To adorn means to "make attractive" or to "add beauty" and in the case of clothing, the object of adornment becomes the self. Roach-Higgins, Eicher and Johnson (1995:20) view adornment as the act of decorating the body. Adornment includes anything worn above and beyond purely physical needs. It is probable that various forms of adornment, such as body painting, tattooing, scarification, mutilation, and deformation, preceded the actual wearing of clothes. Body painting is a form of adornment. Craik (1994:65) notes that clothing behaviour and personal adornment form part of social structure and cultural expression.

People of different cultures around the world have painted, tattooed, and mutilated their bodies in order to achieve the standards of beauty appropriate to their society. According to Roach-Higgins, Eicher and Johnson (1995:42) clothing and adornment worn by people, and the meanings associated with them within a society are determined by the cultural environment of contributory members (members of that society). Knowledge and beliefs from the past are remodelled and in the present are firmly established in this environment.

With reference to this study and in support of the afore-mentioned statement, African South African women use white clay to paint dotted circles on their cheeks, from the forehead down towards the nose, as a form of adornment when attending ceremonies and social gatherings. This type of adornment is more evident among the Xhosa women.

Magubane (2001:7) states that clothing and adornments are commonly adopted on special occasions such as weddings, installation of chiefs, celebrations commemorating cultural and other heroes. For example, Xhosa women together with Chief Patekile Holomisa's wife were featured at their wedding (Magubane, 2000:12) wearing ethnically influenced clothes with their faces smeared with white clay, which is used as a means of cosmetics for adorning the African body as part of African culture (Heywood, 1998:24; Magubane, 1998:28 & Magubane, 2000:17).

Similarly, it is apparent that African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal still adhere to their culture of decorating their faces with white clay and attaching ethnic beads to their hair as a way of adorning their bodies, which is part of their culture.

For example, African South African women in the corporate world were featured wearing braided hair and ethnically influenced beads (*Textile View* magazine, Spring 2001/2:55-61).

Historical evidence reveals that Africans used to smear red ochre on their hair and bodies as part of their culture. This behaviour is still visible among some of the African South Africans mainly in KwaZulu-Natal province where African traditions still seem to be strongly honoured. The arrival of the colonists convinced African South Africans to believe that their culture was uncivilised and unclean (Hammond-Tooke, 1994:45; Howes, 1996:25; Magubane, 2000:28; Back & Solomons, 2000:38; Tortora & Eubank, 2000:15).

For example, those who adopted Christianity were not allowed to attend church wearing their traditional clothes. Because those who wore traditional clothes were regarded as heathens by the colonialists. Therefore, Africans were obliged to adopt the Western style of dress (Trollip, 1995:152; Kaczynski, 1997:56).

Furthermore, Africans also abandoned African ways of body adornment. As a result they adopted the Western style of body adornment by using hair relaxers and skin lighteners. However, towards the beginning of the new millennium, it is evident that African South African women in the corporate world are retrieving what has been lost of their culture. African South African women tend to use hair dyes which resemble the colour of 'red ochre' to enhance their African image.



This is a direct reflection of the African diviners' (Sangomas) look, as a way of reaffirming their African roots because products which were used to make red ochre or yellow ochre had become a scarcity in contemporary society. This kind of behaviour is more evident among young African South African women (Heywood, 1998:13).

#### **2.6.1 Dress and Adornment**

Magubane (2000:36) points out that more often than not, the adoption of extravagant forms of dress and other types of adornment attests to a desire to give expression to particular social, political or religious values. In most cases specific kinds of dress or the use of various types of ornamentation are prescribed either by ritual or by conventions of respect, including deeply entrenched gender relations. Alternatively, they bear witness to the dictates of fashion. As such, clothing and other adornments usually underline notions of status and identity. In some situations, items of beadwork may be used to draw attention to a woman's status, such as the mother of an initiate who has just undergone circumcision, while in others they may play a significant symbolic role in divination practices. Traditional, as well as more contemporary styles of dress and adornment thus provide highly visible evidence of a wide range of values and beliefs (Magubane, 2000:36).

In African culture the head is the most conspicuous part of the body, therefore it is often afforded an important symbolic role in rites of passage. Whether it is adorned with beads, covered by a traditional headdress or scarf, shaved or deliberately neglected, the head invariably alerts the viewer to a crucial aspect of the identity of the wearer, including age or marital status.

For example, two African South African women, the legendary singer Miriam Makeba, and the internationally acclaimed muralist, Esther Mahlangu always adorn their heads with ethnically influenced beaded headbands to show pride in their identity as Africans (*Vukani Fashion Awards* magazine 1997:8; *Drum*, magazine 1998:28; Magubane, 2000:37; Magubane, 2001:1). Similarly, the winner of the 2001 Face of Africa competition, Ramatoulaye Diallo shaved her head in order to look more African. Ramatoulaye confessed that she had been advised by the promoter of the Face of Africa competition to shave her head in order to show her African beauty. She stated that she was proud of the way she looks (*Sunday Star* 26 May 2001:1).

Likewise, former Miss South Africa, Basetsana Makgalemele wore ethnically influenced clothes when she was welcomed by the Khumalo's family as their daughter-in-law as a symbolic role in rites of passage on September 2000 (*Pace* magazine May, 2002:48; *Drum* magazine 2002:5). Morris (1994:23) documented that African South African's used beaded ornaments invariably complement the costumes worn at weddings and other African ceremonies.

## 2.7 Clothing Behaviour

Entwistle (2000:78) defines clothing and personal adornment as forms of collective behaviour which provides an integrative means of understanding clothing as both a social structure and a cultural expression. Steele (1998:70) points out that people cannot observe the mentifacts of life directly, but instead the clothes that they wear and fashions that are typical of any given culture or period will reflect those mentifacts.

Consciously or unconsciously, the choices that people make in clothing reveal many of the things that people hold to be important - democracy, equality, beauty, practicality, economy, extravagance, tradition, maturity, progress, individuality, austerity - such are the values and beliefs that are motivating forces in clothing behaviour (Costantino, 1998:45). Likewise, with regards to this study African South African women tend to wear ethnically influenced clothes for different reasons for political reasons - for maturity, for self-enhancement or beauty, and to enhance their tradition.

Goffman, as cited by Davis (1996:17), notes that the clothing a person wears may demonstrate awareness of the expected behaviour associated with the particular status that particular person holds. Individuals try by all means to have others consider them acceptable. Rouse (1989:60), when referring to a person's clothing behaviour, argues that the role which people play in society has a great influence on the type of clothes that a person wears. For example, as an African South African, Winnie Madikizela Mandela dressed in ethnically influenced clothes during Mandela's trial in Rivonia in 1962. She and former President Mandela wanted to show that they were proud of their culture and identity as Africans. Winnie wore ethnically influenced clothes again at the inauguration of President Mandela in 1994 in Pretoria, to enhance her appearance as an African and make other Africans be proud of their culture.

## 2.8 Clothing Symbolism

For centuries, people in society have used clothing as a symbol of sex, age, occupation, socio-economic status and national identity. Howell (1998:14) emphasises that clothing symbols must have a symbolic meaning for the wearer as well as the perceiver in order to serve as a social medium. To support Howell's (1998) statement Kefgen et al. (2000:4) maintain that the wearer and the perceiver must share an identical meaning of clothing symbols (Kefgen et al. 2000:4). Schrader (1997:12) contends that clothing symbols reflect the cultural values that one has achieved, and their use is largely a personal choice. Unlike clothing signs, the use of which is covered by norms specifying what people ought or ought not to wear, no rules govern the wearing of clothes in contemporary society.

Kefgen et al. (2000:4) further argue that clothing symbolism is not only dependent upon the wearer, but it is also influenced by the self-concept of the perceiver. Likewise, African South African women wear braids, cornrow braids and dreadlocks, and also shave their heads as a symbol of their African identity. The clothing symbols for each sub-cultural group express the politics, ideology and philosophy of that particular group. Kaiser (1998:49) asserts that people of all cultures modify their appearance in some way, yet the symbolic systems and codes used to decipher and interpret clothing are likely to vary. For example, in America in the late sixties the zoot-suit subculture among African-Americans emerged as a way of as an emblem of ethnicity and a way of negotiating an identity. The Zoot Suit was refusal: a sub-cultural gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience (McRobbie, 1990:4).

With reference to this study, the ethnically influenced clothing that African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal wear, might appropriately be called "identity clothes" because they symbolise national identity in the African community, and self-acceptance.

For example, Miriam Makeba is famous for wearing an ethnically influenced beaded headband to enhance her identity as an African, which is part of African culture (*Tribute* magazine, December 2000:124). People of all cultures modify their appearance in some way, yet the symbolic systems and codes used to decipher and interpret clothing are likely to vary.

## **2.9 Clothing as a Socio-Cultural Stratification**

Kaiser (1998:380) notes that the clothes a person chooses to wear may indicate his or her democratic characteristic. For example, through clothes people may be able to identify the type of occupation, education and income possibilities that the wearer occupies (Kaiser, 1998:380). That means that a person's self esteem may be influenced by the evaluations of his or her re-position in life. Kaiser (1998:380) elaborates further that when there is unequal distribution of power, things such as money, or status in a society, social stratification is apparent.

With reference to this study, it is apparent that because of their in society as a result of the type of jobs which they occupy, African South African women can afford to dress in ethnically influenced clothes. Most of these ethnically influenced clothes are designer clothes and therefore are expensive. Such clothes are beyond the reach of most rural

African South African women who strive for survival in the remote rural areas where they live. They are poverty stricken and therefore they dress in whatever type of clothes they can get, either given to them, bought in cheaper retail shops, or second-hand. To them fashion seems not to exist as they only dress in the clothes they have until they are worn out and discarded. (Magubane, 2001:35).

### 2.9.1 Clothing and Appearance

Rouse (1989:1) notes that human beings have created definite patterns in their appearance and dress. They learn how to modify their appearance, how to make it acceptable to others. Kaiser (1997:516) argues that clothing and personal appearance can be valuable tools in the study of different cultures for a number of reasons. Clothes are added or removed and cosmetics or hairstyles changed, creating temporary alterations in appearance. Similarly, with reference to this study, African South African women wear ethnically influenced clothes as a tool for expressing their cultural roots. As a result of enormous inter-cultural contact in today's modern world these result in a diffusion of dress across (within) the social system (Kaiser, 1997:516).

Barnes and Eicher (1997:1) state that human beings added clothing, paint or jewellery, and even altered the appearance of their bodies. Africans were no exception to this behaviour. Appearance, according to Kaiser (1997:5), is the total, composite image created not only by clothing, but also by the human body, and any modifications to the body that are visually perceived. Appearance emphasises people's understanding of clothing by also considering related processes of body modification, which includes hairstyling, use of cosmetics, tattooing and ear-piercing.

In relation to this study African South African women wear ethnically beaded headgear, braids, dreadlocks with ethnically influenced beads attached as a form of adornment when attending special occasions, such as the Reed Ceremony, Shaka Day celebrations, weddings and political gatherings (Magubane, 1998:30).

For example, some of the African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal were featured wearing traditional Zulu women's headgear, 'Isigqoko', when attending special occasions such as awards-giving ceremonies for their achievement in the corporate world (*Sunday Tribune*, March 2001:28). Winnie Mandela and Miriam Makeba- who was nominated as ambassador of ethnically influenced clothes in 1998- wear clothes that symbolise their identity as Africans.

Davies (1997:146) maintains that through clothes people indicate to what extent they see themselves as decorative and functional. People indicate how much attention they want others to pay attention to their appearance and presentation, and how much attention they want their message to receive. Similarly, it appears that through ethnically influenced clothes African South African women want people to see that they are proud of their culture as Africans.

### **2.9.2 Appearance Management**

Appearance management and appearance perception may be considered a means for framing guidelines or boundaries for understanding people's social experiences (Kaiser, 1997:13). As already stated, appearance management is how people want to be seen by others when they are dressed. It may be for public appearance or when they dress

normally in their daily lives. People like to project a certain image to the outside world and to the people who will be observing them, even when they are at home with their families. This kind of behaviour is also visible in children, and it is something people learn through socialisation, which is a process whereby one learns expected demeanour, expression and behaviour of the group.

Kaiser (1998:128) argues that appearance can also be influenced by the position a person holds at work. People's appearance equally reflects their daily activities and the roles they pursue. Johnson and Lennon (1999:80) supports Kaiser's (1998:128) argument by noting that managerial business suit indicates value of the wearer to the organization and thereby helps to promote, support, and maintain the organization. Rubinstein (1990:4) points out that people make a clothing choice to show their awareness that a style or mode of appearance has meaning. Appearance management facilitates self-expression - that is, how a person presents him or herself - by enabling people to appear before others as they see, or would like to see themselves (Kaiser, 1997:96).

Likewise, in relation to this study, it shows that African South African women are conscious about their appearance and literature reveals that they tend to combine ethnically influenced beads with a Western style of dress, or use matching scarves with ethnic prints to complement their appearance when going to work (Bedford, 1998:63). For example, the organiser of the Face of Africa competition, Malan suggested to Ramatoulaye Diallo that she shave her head for the competition in order to enhance her African beauty. Malan's recommendation was valid because with her shaven head she looked more attractive and close to Africans' cultural norm of shaving or braiding their



hair. As a result, of wearing a shaved head Diallo reflected the true African image and won the Face of Africa 2001 competition (*Sunday Times*, 27 May 2001:1).

For example, a significant number of African South African business women braid their hair and attach strings of colourful ethnically influenced beads to retain their culture, while still looking professional. Appearance management encompasses what people do to or for their bodies visually, as well as how they plan and organize these actions. Individuals may differ in their level of involvement with clothing and appearance concerns. People engage in appearance management in their daily lives although they may not be aware of their behaviour (Kaiser, 1998:5). Rudd (1997:345) notes that people learn to engage in appearance management behaviours which they believe, or which others believe, will enhance their attractiveness and bring them close to their cultural norm (Rudd, 1997:345). Rudd and Lennon (1998:153) state that personal and cultural factors affect how people evaluate their appearances and their subsequent feelings of self-worth, as well as their feelings of social power.

### **2.9.3 Public Appearance**

When individuals decide what to wear, they consider their multiple audience, and multiple expectations. The problem of what to wear hinges on deciding where a person's sartorial affiliations lie at a given moment. For example, Diana the Princess of Wales (Walker, 1999:12) was always conscious that she should project a confident image when making a public appearance. Even if Diana the Princess of Wales' assistants assured her that she looked fine in what she intended to wear she would comment: "But, those people are expecting Lady Diana" (Howell, 1998:139).

To the Princess Diana of Wales, appearance was one of the important things and in a way, she dressed to please the people, and not to be praised about her clothes, as most people do.

In relation to this study, African South African women groom themselves to present an attractive appearance when representing their companies, as they are exposed to the public eye most of the time through the media publicity. Formerly, a woman's appearance had to be interesting and had to differentiate her from others, and yet it had to avoid evoking disapproval or censure (criticism). To achieve this goal, her clothing had to remain within some definition of "respectable" (Mc Lyre, 1996:32).

Today's women tend to follow existing trends as they change their looks with every public appearance, whether it is for a party occasion, wedding or political meeting. Therefore, African South African women complement their Western clothes with ethnically influenced beaded accessories which are suitable for the office environment and enables them to carry on to attend evening business parties, such as the BMF's social gathering held at Caesars in Gauteng on August, 2000 and the honouring of the South African Governor Tito Mboweni on the 24 March 2002 held at Ghallager Estate (Tribute April, 2002:14).

#### **2.9.4 Appearance Perception**

Appearance perception is the opposite of appearance management. Appearance perception is defined by Kaiser (1998:7) as an activity which occurs on a daily basis. People engage in appearance perception when they are confronted by face-to-face encounters with other people, in media presentations where imagery may be used to cast a character, and in stores where people are likely to observe what other people are wearing.

According to Kaiser (1997:67) appearance perception is the process of observing and making evaluations, or drawing inferences based on how people look. In other words, people tend to judge other people with whom they come into contact with, in relation to the type of clothing those people wear, which sometimes gives them wrong interpretations. Entwistle (2000:33) states that the way in which a person is perceived is particularly important in establishing the self in new social roles. In a way, clothing plays an important role in a person's appearance.

#### **2.10 Clothing Attitudes**

Clothes attitudes may be analysed down to awareness of the self, self-analysis, recognition of defects and the creation of an ideal self. Clothes are not only part of the self, but they are the means for expressing those traits which seem desirable. According to De Young (1998:5) people use clothing as a means of self-expression and of conformity to an ideal self. There are different types of clothing attitudes. Individuals may have attitudes which are associated with the desire to conform, which is related to fear of being conspicuous and fear of adverse criticism.

However, it appears that African South African business women have become willing to retrieve their forsaken African traditions by complementing Western style of dress to look more African. The literature review shows that the majority of African women are re-adopting the ethnically influenced way of dress.

Stecker (1996:104) argues that people's personal tastes and requirements in clothing reflect their past experiences, present state and expectations for the future. The way in which people dress expresses their lifestyle, reflecting their individuality, personality and attitudes as well as those of the society in which they live. Many of people's attitudes to fashion and clothes are culturally based. With reference to this study, it is apparent that clothing behaviour of African South African women is culturally orientated. This is visible in their manner of dress of wearing ethnically influenced clothes and beads.

#### **2.10.1 Clothing and the Self**

People use dress as an effective medium of expression for the desire to differentiate themselves from, but at the same time conform to, the standards of their social group. People are apt to think of clothes in the same way as they think of their bodies, and therefore they choose their clothes in such a way that those clothes become, perhaps more than any of their possessions, a part of themselves. With reference to this study it appears that African South African women in the corporate world also use dress as a way of expressing themselves in order to differentiate themselves from, but at the same time conform to, the standards of the social group to which they belong. People dress to look different and to be appreciated by others.

Through clothes, people's own self-esteem tends to be enhanced when they are admired for their clothes (Sproles & Barnes, 1998:34).

### **2.10.2 Clothing Evaluation of the Self**

For most people, clothing is used as a positive means of satisfying the need for self-enhancement. It can make the physical self more desirable, beautify the appearance, as well as bring about a person's acceptance by a social group, and prevent rejection. It may be a source of administration, resulting in increased self-esteem, self-respect, self-confidence, and security. As a cue to personality, clothing gives an impression of what a person is, what he or she does, and believes. But most of the time this impression is not always perceived as the wearer wishes, since different people are perceived by others in terms of their own self-concepts and expectations (Sproles, & Barnes, 1998:34).

### **2.10.3 Clothing Related to the Self-concept and Acceptance**

Eicher and Barnes (1996:31) note that people's clothing choices reflect their self-concept. As people mature they are able to express a social medium as well as more individuality in their clothing selection. The way in which people decorate their bodies, what they wear, and how they wear clothes is part of their culture, their socially learned way of life.

Clothing is a significant force in the enhancement of the self, and when used positively, it contributes to a person's feelings of self-acceptance, self-respect, and self esteem. Likewise, African South African women use ethnically influenced clothes in a positive way to show that they are proud to be Africans, which makes a statement about their culture, because for some decades ethnically influenced beads have remained as part of the African

culture. In support of the above-mentioned statement Kaiser (1997:74) notes that in every person, the image of what constitutes the self must be learned.

With regard to this study, it is apparent that African South African women encourage their children to know their culture and to be proud of it as Africans (Bedford, 1994:62). Similarly, it appears that African South African women use clothing positively as a significant force in the enhancement of their self-being, which contributes to their feeling of self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-esteem. In relation to this study, the ethnically influenced clothes that African South African women wear are a psychological statement which they use to express their self-being (*True Love* magazine March, 2001:31).

#### **2.10.4 Clothing Awareness**

Kaiser (1997:303) notes that individuals' values, attitudes, and interest in clothing are likely to be connected to their extent of awareness of appearance in everyday life. According to Kaiser, (1998:303) awareness, then, is a prerequisite to meaningful appearance communication. Awareness context is like an abstract stage outlining the conditions, in the minds of participants, to guide interpretation of appearances. If one or more perceivers is/are not aware of the potential significance of particular appearance cues, then avenues other appearance communication (such as taking) become more critical to the person's abilities to fit their lines of action together in a meaningful manner. Social psychologists frequently use the term salience to refer to the perceived value or importance of an object to a person. The concept of salience helps to provide a link between personal, value-laden interest in clothing and awareness of clothing in everyday life (Kaiser, 1997:303). Individuals vary in the extent to which they are aware of clothing.

Like clothing and appearance, awareness is essentially linked to social context, as individuals use appearance variously to frame and interpret their experiences. Peacock 1986 (as cited by Kaiser, 1998:303), denotes that culture tends to serve as an "umbrella" awareness context, because it provides, or even consists of, "taken-for-granted but powerfully influential understandings and codes that are learned and shared".

## CHAPTER THREE

### CLOTHING, BODY IMAGE, IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND PRIDE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Clothing has been used over the centuries to conceal, enhance, and modify body contours (Collins et al.1997:57). People may put on clothing to proclaim or disguise their identities or to attract attention. For example, well known ex-South African journalist and writer, the Late Donald Woods, while under house arrest by the then ruling South African government, disguised himself as a priest in order to escape, went into exile in Lesotho and then to London where he stayed until he passed away in December 2000 (Woods, 2000:xii).

This shows that the clothes which Woods wore as a priest assisted him not to be recognised by the South African police. Similarly, it is apparent that African South African women use ethnically influenced clothing to proclaim their identity and to attract attention from other cultures to show that they are proud to be Africans. For example, to support the afore-mentioned statement, at the 8<sup>th</sup> opening of the South African Parliament on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001, Tracy Going was featured on TV1 presenting the morning bulletin at 6a.m. wearing ethnically influenced clothes in orange Xhosa attire (Umbhaco) (SABC3, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001; *Tribute* magazine April, 2001:2).



Davies (1998:38) points out that the expected behaviour of a person may be demonstrated by the type of clothing that particular person wears. Individuals strive to have others consider them rational. In order to be accepted, they strive to control the non-verbal aspects of their behaviour. They attempt to project a desired image, knowing that people read significance into cues such a manner of dress, body position, gestures and facial expressions.

### **3.2 Clothing and Body Image**

Grogan (1999:3) contends that the image that an individual has of his or her body is also largely determined by social experiences. Since most people think of their bodies with clothes on, therefore clothing becomes part of their body image. Body image is strongly influenced by cultural forces. According to Barnard (1996:89) clothing can be used to bring perceived and ideal body images closer to each other by concealment, enhancement, or exposure.

Similarly, it is apparent that African South African women strive to achieve an ideal body image which will make them look attractive and presentable in their clothes because most of them are exposed to the public eye because of the type of work they perform. The majority of the African South African women keep their bodies in shape by engaging in activities such as exercise and maintaining a balanced diet (*Tribute* magazine February 2001:12). Stecker (1996:35) maintains that people are preoccupied with body image, and more often they use fashion to alter, conceal, distort and to conform to society's standards of physical beauty.

Marshall et al. (2000:80) contend that when a style of body becomes fashionable, many people try to attain it. For example, consider the effort made to be thin. At the turn of the century women had ribs removed to achieve an hourglass figure. Similarly, in the 1960s when Twiggy was top model, many co-eds dieted and starved to attain her adolescent-boyish figure of 5 feet, 7 inches and less than 100 pounds.

Currently, the children of the Twiggy generation are often *bulimic* or *anorexic* in that same drive toward extreme thinness. The emphasis on dieting and the demand for thinness is highlighted in certain subcultures like those of dancers, models, and athletes, who have been found to be more at risk of developing eating disorders by reason of their career demands.

With regards to this study, a good example to support Marshall et al's (2000:80) statement that subcultures such as models are subjected to thinness is the incident of two African South African models on megabuck contracts who have been sent home from New York- because they are regarded as being fat. The Face of Africa 2000 winner Nombulelo Mazibuko and finalist Lerato Moloi were send back to South Africa by the world-famous Elite Model Management Karen Lee to reduce their 36-inch hips to 34 inches. They have been given three months in which to achieve their weight loss. Moloi stated that she would not go to the extent of undergoing liposuction, however she has started a strict high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet in order to achieve the required inches.

Moloi further contended that she has never been on a diet before because she had always been naturally thin. Mazibuko maintains that the American models were extremely skinny. She confessed that she will quickly lose the required inches (*Sunday Times Metro*, April 7 2002:6).

The Face of Africa models are encouraged to stay thin if they want to win the competition and become successful international models. This seems to be true because about one hundred Face of Africa contestants from Uganda were not selected to participate in the finals because the organisers regarded them as being fat over the hips.

However, their home organisers regarded them as being suitable for the competition, and they argued that if the girls are too thin in their country, people will regard them as suffering from AIDS (*Sunday Times* 2001:1). Urbanisation is also seen as a motivation for people to stay slim, the more urbanised the society, the more likely that these disorders will prevail. For example, in South Africa young girls who are influenced by being thin are often found in hospital in Sandton City, Johannesburg as *anorexia nervosa* patients, because of their extreme desire to become thin. To support the aforementioned example, the study done by a psychologist in Durban in 1997 reveals that young African South African women are influenced by the media and starve themselves in order to achieve the desired slim body of thinness (*Juice*, magazine 1998:12).

When commenting on the Elite Model Agency which has sent the aforementioned two African South African young women back to South Africa in order to reduce their 38" hips to 36" Durban dietician Ms Wendy Read confirmed that eating disorders in South Africa are on the rise because of the pressure on young women to be thin (*Sunday Tribune News*, April 2002:5).

Further example, to support Marshall, et al. (2001:80) that subcultures such as models are pressurised by their work environment to stay slim is that of Bevinda Mundenge the runner up of The M-Net Face of Africa model of 1998 who forfeited her price in 1999 while serving her contract in America (New York) because she gained weight (*Elle* magazine, October, 2001:43). Likewise, in America, the hip-hop singer Lil Kim stated that fashion is part of her image. Her provocative style of dress has also sparked controversy in the hip-hop world concerning tastefulness.

Lil Kim proclaimed that she reveals certain parts of her body because she is confident about her body and never does it to be obscene, but she claimed that people will never see her naked as she does her act "with class". Furthermore, she argued that what she wears is no different, or worse, than what rap group Salt-N-Pepa wore (Mc Lyre, 1996:32). This shows evidence that people wear the clothes they wear with their body-image in mind. Clothing may be perceived differently by individuals in relation to their body image. As a result each person selects clothes which are suitable to the type of body that he or she has.

### 3.3 Definitions of Body Image

Barnes and Lauer (1999:65) refer to body image as a representation of what people think they look like and takes on values only when seen in a cultural context. Rudd (1999:67) and Rubinstein (1998:69) define body image as the picture which individuals have in their minds about how they look to others. According to Kaiser (1997:98) body image is defined as the mental picture that a person has of his or her body at a given moment in time.

Body image is the individual's perception, thoughts and feelings of his/her own body image. This definition incorporates all the elements of body image originally identified by Schilder and clarified as follows: body size estimation (perceptions), evaluation of body attractiveness (thoughts), and emotions associated with body shape and size (feelings); and is adopted from a definition produced by Thomas Pruzinsky and Thomas Cash (1990).

In support of Pruzinsky and Thomas Cash, Dr David Veale, consultant psychiatrist at The Priory Hospital in North London, UK, and an expert in obsessive behaviour, states that on a psychological point of view suffers of this behaviour judge themselves excessively by appearance ([http:// www. Veale.co.uk](http://www.Veale.co.uk); Longevity November, 2001:43).

Kefgen et al. (1999:65) maintain that the image that an individual has of his or her body affects how he or she feels about himself or herself. The feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction an individual experiences is shaped by current fashion ideals or by real-life models in their society.

Reviewed literature indicates that a person's body shape affects her or his self-image, and it is not so well known about how culture shapes that image (Seeley & Wasilewski, 1996:134).

According to Grogan (1999:3), in affluent societies slenderness is generally associated with happiness, success, youthfulness, and social acceptability. Being overweight is linked with laziness, lack of willpower and being out of control. To support Grogan's opinion of thinness, Nasser (1997:13) contends that thinness nowadays symbolizes beauty, attractiveness, fashionability, health, achievement, and control. For women the ideal body is slim. Nasser (1997:3) contends further that thinness is not only seen as a measure of success, but also sometimes as a licence to succeed. In his research found to be easily manipulated into thinking that their body image was a measure of their value and sense of achievement and control, with success and self - worth equality to a desirable body equating to a desirable body shape (Nasser, 1997:5).

Likewise, for example, in America the famous African-American Talk-show host Oprah Winfrey is known to spend millions of rands yearly as a way of keeping her body weight under control (Oprah Talk-Show SABC1, 5pm December, 1999; *O* magazine May, 2002:17). Non-conformity to the slender ideal has a variety of negative social consequences. Overweight, for both women and men, is seen as unattractive and is also associated with other negative characteristics (Grogan, 1999:3).

Historically, this was the opposite in African cultures. Thinness was associated with poverty and being undernourished. This is still a belief in some of the African South African women in KwaZulu-Natal because they are more traditional as compared to their counterparts in Gauteng who are more cosmopolitan and conscious about their body image (Magubane, 1998:54). For example, the winner of the Face of Africa 2000 model competition, Nombulelo Mazibuko from the Eastern Cape in South Africa, is a good example of this statement.

Referring to her thinness and extra tall structure, Nombulelo's grandfather- who stayed with her and brought her up ever since her birth - confessed that they used to give Nombulelo extra food when she was growing up because of her thinness. Nombulelo's thinness convinced her family that she was undernourished and not healthy, because no matter how much she ate, she still remained thin. This example, shows that it is an African belief that women must be fat to show that they are healthy and attractive. In support of this aforementioned belief Dr Marjanne Senekal, of the Department of physiology Sciences at Stellenbosch University, has done research among women students at the University of the North and Stellenbosch.

The studies showed that young African women were generally slightly heavier and shorter than white women. Dr Senekal stated that culturally, it has traditionally been acceptable for African women to be heavier, but now thin models and the image portrayed to the public is undermining this acceptance of a bigger physique (*Sunday Tribune News*, April 14 2002:5).

To substantiate the aforementioned statement Durban dietician Ms Read commented that the modelling agencies forget that naturally Africans have bigger hips than other cultures therefore the modelling agency should have considered that fact rather than turning the aforementioned two African South African models back to South Africa to reduce their hips, which is putting them under stress (*Sunday Tribune News*, April, 2002:5).

Mulvey and Richards (1998:5) contend that the Western ideal of beauty has changed regularly and radically over the last one hundred years, and there are many reasons for this: world events, developments in technology and shifting priorities are obvious ones, coupled with changes in society often triggered by economics, and the need to create new markets. Perceptions of beauty have changed radically since the last century with various ideals oscillating back and forth.

African South African women's identity originates from past experience or background, choice, and interest which is expressed through image. Mulvey and Richards (1998:6) contend that previous taboos are broken about what women may buy for themselves. Women of the twenty- first century are buying their own perfume, flowers, diamonds and are undergoing cosmetic surgery with impunity (liberation).

For example, literature reveals that some of the African South African women had recently undergone liposuction to achieve the ideal body image of thinness which they desire, because they believed that they were overweight. Felicia Mabuza-Suttle and Tselane Tambo, founder and director of Tselane Tambo Grooming school in Johannesburg, have both undergone liposuction to reduce their bodies to look more



attractive (Mabuza-Suttle, 1999; *Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Talk Show*, SABC1, 9 p.m. December 1999; *True Love* magazine, 2000:23 ). They wanted to feel confident about their appearance as modern cosmopolitan African South African women in the corporate world. To elaborate further, both of them were in exile as young African South African women during the Apartheid era, and as a result they have been exposed to and become accustomed to Western culture, which is still evident in their way of dress, even after they returned to their mother's country (South Africa). The majority of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng are diet watchers. For example, they joined The Weighless Club and exercise as part of their way of staying slim.

This shows that they are conscious about their body image, as compared to those in KwaZulu-Natal who are more traditional (*Tribute Woman* magazine January 2001:69). For example, The Face of Africa competition - which is sponsored by M-NET and Anglo Gold - also encourages the young women on the African continent to stay thin in order to stand a chance of winning the competition as the Face of Africa model of the twenty-first century.

To ensure this, the producers of this competition created a model house in Johannesburg, a project designed exclusively for the benefit of Face of Africa contestants. Alda Venter of Umzingeli Productions, the producers of Face of Africa model competition, states that the concept of a model house has been around for some time.

The aim is to house the finalists of The Face of Africa model competition there, where their diet will be monitored on a daily basis and their measurements taken on a weekly basis to ensure that they remain thin (*True Love* magazine April, 2001:28). This shows that being overweight is discouraged at all, by Western society.

### 3.4 Body Image and Identity

People may seek to communicate their identity or beliefs through wearing certain clothes, but they cannot guarantee that their message will be understood in the way they intend. As Hoffman points out: "The communicative offer made by means of one's costume is frequently understood, but rarely coincides with what the wearer wants to express." With regards to this study it shows that African South African women use ethnically influenced clothes as a way of identifying themselves as Africans. However, as women who occupy higher positions in the corporate world, they dress in accordance with the dress code at their work to promote the image of the company for which they work, whereas when attending special ceremonies they dress in ethnically influenced clothes and adorn their bodies to express their African identity.

Reviewed literature documented by Friedman (1996:143) indicates that identity is a discovery and affirmation of an innate essence which determines what a person is, while others see identity as constructed and a creation from available social roles and material. To support this statement, identity can also pertain to qualities that people perceive the self to have in context. Through a process of self-identification, individuals place and express their identities (Friedman, 1996:143).

### 3.5 Self-concept or Self-image

According to Kefgen et al. (2000:67) self-concept or self-image is the general notion (idea) that each person has of himself or herself. Self-image is the physical and psychological perception that a person has of herself or himself. It is the mental concept of how that person looks and behaves. The self-image develops from the interpersonal and personal development of that particular person. A person's self-concept is formed from the feedback or response received from other people.

The self-concept includes the following:

- ▶ Self-image- is concerned with how a person sees himself or herself;
- ▶ Ideal self-image - how people would like to see themselves;
- ▶ Social self-image - how people think other people see them;
- ▶ Ideal social self-image - how people would like other people to see them.

People buy clothes to maintain and enhance their own self-image, but their self-image is affected by many factors, including age and social class (Costantino, 1998:32). Davies (1996:75) maintains that grooming and clothing indicate the nature of a person's self-image, that is, how that person sees him or herself and how he or she expresses his/her own personality and values.

An individual attempts to select a pattern, including speech, movement, dress, and actions, that will reinforce his or her self-image, or be consistent with the image he or she wishes to project. Kefgen et al. (2000:35) further point out that clothing is regarded as the most visible way in which people express themselves.

Similarly, in relation to this study, it is apparent that African South African women use ethnically influenced clothes, and ethnically influenced beads as a way of expressing their African identity.

### 3.6 IDENTITY

An identity is the organised set of characteristics which an individual perceives as representing or defining the self in a given social situation. Woodward (1998:1) states that identity gives people an idea of who they are and how they relate to others, and to the world in which they live. Identity, according to Rutherford (1997:88), is about belonging, it is about what a person has in common with other people and differentiates that person from others.

In support of these statements, Bellington, Hockey, and Strawbridge (1998:249) point out that identity involves people's experiences and feelings about themselves in relation to others, and the ways in which they are categorised by other people from a different social group. The desire for identity is often expressed by wearing fads and fashions that identify a person as being a member of a particular group. Identity is a concept that enables people to understand perceptions of self across contexts.

Although people have only one self-concept, they may have many contextually relevant identities Troiden 1984 (as cited by Kaiser, 1997:225). For example, people are likely to dress and behave differently in class from the way they would at a party, or when they are interacting with their mothers as compared to their dates.

With reference to this research, African South African women also have sub-identities which in a way determine their way of dress. Hall et al. (1997:45) claim that identity is formed in the 'interaction' between the self and the society in which that person lives.

Smith, Malherbe, Guenther, and Berens (2000:28) argue that people have identities as individuals, and also as members of groups. Furthermore, people seek identities beyond themselves, in groups. For example, they may identify with a political party or religious community and, beyond that, with a nation or a continent. But even if that may be the case, people may also be placed in groups not of their choice. For example, African South Africans experienced this when they were classified according to 'race' for the Apartheid government's Population Register. This had a major impact on African culture and identity, which resulted in African South Africans being obliged to change their manner of dress.

Therefore, in order to be accepted in the groups under which they were classified, African South Africans were willing to dress in the manner of certain groups which restricted them in wearing their traditional dress, which lead them to adopt Western style of dress (Seidman, 1996:45). It was not only their manner of dress that changed, but also their identities. For example, some of them even changed their surnames so as to be able to acquire jobs, because they believed that by abandoning their African names and surnames and adopting those of Western culture they would stand a better chance of being treated fairly.

To substantiate this example, Boahen (1987:107) documented that colonial administrators and their allies, the European missionaries, condemned everything African in culture: African names, music, dance, art, religion, marriage, the system of inheritance, and they completely discouraged the teaching of all these things in their schools and colleges. Even the wearing of African clothes to work or school was barred. All these could not but retard the cultural development of the continent (Boahen, 1987:107). Hall et al.'s (1997:51) contends that identity is not a finished product, but a process, which is never finally achieved, or completed. Smith et al. (1997:43) concur with the Hall et al. (1997:51) statement that the quest to classify can never be complete. People reshape their identities, and they also move in and out of groups.

With reference to this study it is apparent that due to the influence of Western culture African South African women identified themselves with whites. That is to say, African South Africans used to view the world from a Western frame of reference, but after the 1994 first democratic South African elections they started accepting the fact that they are Africans, and as a result they wanted to be identified as Africans. For example, presently there is evidence that shows that the majority of African South Africans have abandoned using European names by reverting to their African names, and have even given their children African names which have a special meaning for them. According to African culture, children are given names in relation to what happened at the time of birth of that particular child. They may be named after natural causes such as a thunderstorm, hail, the sun, heavy rain, or a child may be named after one of the elders related to the parents of that child. This latter method of naming a child is practised to sustain the clan names in that family, to be passed on from generation to generation.

It is a belief in African culture that if there no one is named after that person in the family or relatives of a deceased person, his/her name will no longer exist after that person's death, which would seem that the person was not important to that family and hence he/she will be forgotten.

Likewise, the Dallas-born well known African-American singer Erykah Badu changed her name from Erykah Wright during her high school days in 1998. Erykah proclaimed that she did not want to be known by what she calls "a slave name", and later she released her music album called *Baduizm*. Erykah Badu wears dreadlocks and elaborate headgear which has a symbolic reference to African culture (*Pace* magazine March 2000:11). Her elaborate headgear became a popular style among young African South African women who identified with her by wearing similar headgear in the late 1990s and at the dawn of the new millennium. Therefore, by re-adopting ethnically influenced clothes, African South African people are re-claiming what they have lost in the past, hence the launching of the first African Renaissance which was held in South Africa in Durban in 1998.

According to Hall (1992:309), some identities gravitate towards what Robins calls 'Tradition' in an attempt to restore their former roots and recover the unities and certainties (truth) which are felt as being lost. People accept that identity is subject to the play of history, politics, representation and difference, so they are unlikely ever again to be unitary or be influenced by other cultures, and these consequently gravitate towards what Robins calls 'Transition'.

Similarly, it appears that African South African women are attempting to reclaim their identity by wearing of ethnically influenced clothes, which in a way indicates a transition from Western influenced clothes to ethnically influenced clothes.

The first democratic South African elections on 27 April 1994 were not only a watershed in South African history, but also had both practical and symbolic significance for African South African people. The identities that people seek to change are identities that people cannot over-ride, and whose desires it would be quite pointless to attempt to ignore. According to the reviewed literature, it seems that in the case of African South African women in the corporate world some of them - mostly those who moved to suburbs in urban areas - intended to over-ride their identities as Africans by adopting Western culture and forgetting about the traditions of their culture. But it seems that it is not possible for them because they still find themselves being obliged to follow certain behavioural patterns of African culture which makes their identity different from that of other South African racial groups.

For example, the paying of 'Lobola' (Magadi), which is part of customary law of marriage among Africans and is part of African culture (and cannot be avoided by most African South African people whether they have been influenced by Western culture or not), is totally different from that of Western culture where there is no payment of 'Lobola'.



Evidently, in relation to this study it shows that due to the influence of Western culture some African South Africans identified themselves with whites. That is to say, they used to view the world from a "white" frame of reference. However, after the collapse of the Apartheid government, the majority of African South Africans wanted to be identified as Africans by re-adopting what they lost in the colonial era. Hence, the launching of the African Renaissance by President Thabo Mbeki in 1998 as an attempt to encourage Africans to re-affirm their roots and be proud of their culture, and the renaming of cities by the South African democratic government. To name but a few, Pretoria was officially renamed as Tshwane (formerly Pretoria) and Potgietersrus was re-named as Mokopane (*Mercury*, 2001:12; *SAFM* 7am news bulletin, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2002).

As another example, former Miss South Africa Peggy-Sue Khumalo was featured wearing a traditional Zulu bracelet (Isiphandla) made from a cow's skin on her wrist during her reign as Miss South Africa in 1995, as a way of thanking her ancestors. This type of traditional animal skin bracelet is also worn by a Zulu girl when coming of age (Umemulo), that is on her twenty-first birthday, as a way of both ancestral thanksgiving and adornment. Sangomas also wear this type of skin on their wrist as part of their tradition. This is a symbol of African culture, although not all ethnic groups of Africans wear it (Magubane, 1998:54).

### **3.6.1 Personal (Individual) Identity**

Personal identity, as defined by Bellington et al. (1998:249), is a person's own sense of who he or she is. Personal identities can help people to understand how the construction of identities links into and helps people to perpetuate the structures of power and domination in society (Ballington et al. 1998:37).

Similarly, with regard to this study, African South African women use ethnically influenced beads as a way of publicly expressing their personal or group identities, as well as the deepest personal and social relationships between African South African women and men, mothers and daughters, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, chiefs and commoners, elders and young men. Bedford (1994:37) states that ethnically influenced beadwork of African South African women has the dual effect of transforming the wearers' identities and defining relations between those wearers, as it used to be in the olden days (Bedford, 1994:37). Elements of dress and styles of appearance that the individual chooses to represent the personal self are part of a dialogue between the self and the society. Clothing allows the individual to integrate personal self with the public self.

### **3.6.2 Individuality in Search for Identity**

The term 'individuality' means having exclusive or distinctive characteristics or qualities that no one else has. Individuality also means identifying your talents and developing them to the utmost (Kefgen et al. 2000:24). It appears that fashion designers are aware of the changing needs of the twenty-first century woman. As a result they allow much more leeway for women to express their individuality through their clothes.

This is no exception in the South African case. Local fashion designers try to satisfy the needs of African South African women. Literature reveals that the clothing behaviour of African South Africans is gradually changing from that of a dominant Western style of clothes to an ethnically influenced style of clothes (Trollip, 1995:150). Examples are Nandipha Fashions in Gauteng, which opened in the early 1990s, after the unbanning of the ANC, and the first ethnically influenced clothing boutique in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal at the dawn of the new millennium. It is evident that, with reference to this study, South African designers are keen to meet the demands of African South African women for ethnically influenced clothes. Both of these designers are specialising in ethnically influenced clothes to satisfy the needs of African, South African women in the corporate world (*The Mercury* 11 April, 2000:24).

Lehnert (1998:11) contends that fashion emphasises individuality and transience. It emphasises the individual's affiliation to a particular social group and at the same time emphasises that individual's unmistakable personality. Likewise, it appears that the subjects in this study wear ethnically influenced clothes to symbolise their group solidarity, while at the same time their individual personalities are identified as being African. Davies (1996:146) notes that when people communicate with others they focus on the face, head and shoulders, therefore women could express their individuality through jewellery and scarves if they wear them.

Evidently, with regard to this study, it shows that African South African women in the corporate world complement their Western styled clothes when going to work by adorning themselves with ethnically influenced beads as bracelets, scarves decorated with ethnically influenced prints, and they attach strings of ethnically influenced beads to their braided hair to achieve an African appearance as part of their culture.

### **3.6.3 Black Identity**

According to Robinson (1995:53), Black Identity deals specifically with an individual's awareness, values, attitudes and beliefs about being black. Cross (1991:36) suggests that the development of a black person's racial identity is often characterised by his or her movement through stage models of culture identity. The stage models of culture identity evolve over time through a series of distinct stages of development, each representing a "higher" level of identity formation than the previous one.

Cross (1971:86) widely quoted model of identity development among Blacks as having five stages:

1. Pre-encounter (Blacks reject black heritage and define themselves in terms of white culture);
2. Encounter (They seek identification with black culture);
3. Immersion/emersion (They have completed identification with black culture and show hostility towards whites);
4. Internalization (They become comfortable with black identity; anger and racism is transcended);
5. Internalization/commitment (They become behaviourally active in fighting racism).

Likewise, African South African women accepted a "white" view of themselves, that is, they used to define themselves in terms of the white culture and behave like whites. With reference to this study, it is evident that most African South African people have gone through all these aforementioned stages to develop their present identity, which is encouraged by the establishment of the African Renaissance as a way of encouraging Africans to re-adopt their African heritage. Likewise, the 'Encounter' stage shows that through the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes, African South African women seek identification with African culture.

Drakis-Smith (1996:156) argues that having a collective identity is an important factor in determining the 'differences' of one group from another. This identity may, in turn, emerge from such factors as ethnicity, religion, language, skin colour, location, isolation, segregation and so on. In relation to this study, it is apparent that African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal share a common collective identity, which differentiates them from white South Africans, because their culture differs from the Western culture.

Tosh (2000:2) maintains that for any social grouping to have a collective identity there has to be a shared interpretation of the events and experiences which have formed the group over a time. Sometimes this will include an accepted belief about the origins of the group, as in the case of many nation-states, or the emphasis may be on a vivid turning point and symbolic moments which confirm the self-image and aspirations of the group.

Seemingly, with regard to this study, African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal share the same events and experience, such as the impact of colonialism which destroyed their past. Hence, as Africans who share the same culture, they are trying to reaffirm their identity by wearing ethnically influenced clothes. They strive to maintain a sense of solidarity as Africans.

### 3.7 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is defined by Marshall et al. (2000:52) as a construct or set of self-ideas about a person's own ethnic group membership (Bernal & Knight 1993:33). According to Marshall et al. (2000:52) at the group level, ethnic identity is demonstrated when individuals display a collective consciousness (Lake, 1995) which could be manifested through dress and personal adornment practices. Cohen (as cited by Eicher, 1995:31) views an ethnic group as a collectivity of people who share some patterns of normative behaviour and form part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectives within the framework of a social system. Therefore, ethnicity refers to the degree of conformity by members of the collectivity to these shared norms in the course of social interaction.

Ethnicity embraces ideas of group cohesion, of insiders against outsiders, with boundaries that separate outsiders, with symbols that distinguish group membership from those of different groups. For example, the ethnic group identity includes common heritage with shared language, similar dress manners and lifestyle. Likewise, this is evident in the manner of dress of African South African women in the corporate world which shows that they lead a modern lifestyle and still share a common African culture.

South Africa is a plural society in which different ethnic groups and categories have experienced division along lines, inter alia, of language for over two hundred years, during which various languages changed, merged, were codified and took root, of territory, and of changing relationships in the South African state and economy of the country.

Drakis-Smith (1996:17) contends that ethnic identity is shaped by historical experiences. According to Bekker (1993:12) ethnic identity refers to origin, uniqueness, equal economic rights, et cetera. As chiefdoms expanded, incorporated diverse lineage groups, came into conflict with each other and with colonial settlers, so ethnic identities were often made and remade. For example, in the Eastern Cape, those identities are revealed in the beadwork as subtle but clear regional variations in colour and design. But there is also a remarkable conformity in form and style across ethnic divisions, possibly reflecting the transience and changing attitudes to group identity (Procter & Kloppe, 1993:58). Barth (1994) in his book *'Enduring and emerging issues in the analysis of ethnicity'*; as cited in Jenkins (1997:12) argues that ethnic identity is generated and confirmed in the course of interaction and transition between decision making, strategizing individuals.

Lo Castro (1996:36) states that as individuals progress through stages of ethnic redefinition, their behavioural expressions may change, becoming less styled and more flexible. In the case of African South Africans for example, the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes may be reserved for ceremonies and important occasions. Western styled clothes may be adopted where it is felt to be necessary, and not as a necessity to strengthen feelings of acceptance or self-worth (Lo Castro, 1996:36).

For example, with regards, to this study, the abovementioned statement seems to be true about African South African women because ethnically influenced clothes seem to be inappropriate for their working environment, but they are at liberty to wear them when they attend special ceremonies and social gatherings such as political rallies.

Likewise, for example, research documented by O'Neill (1998:32) reflects that clothing and items of adornment also manifest the collective, cultural consciousness of some African-American men and women. O'Neill's (1998) research findings included African American women who had integrated traditionally- styled garments and accessories imported from various African countries into their professional wardrobes. These interviews revealed not only a collective, cultural consciousness about their Africanness, but also their African-Americanness. O'Neill (1995:32) notes that the shift toward wearing cultural dress evolved as appreciation for Africa, and African heritage developed. According to O'Neill, the participants frequently established the link between wearing ethnically influenced dress and an understanding of their cultural heritage. O'Neill (1995:32) further elaborates that African-Americans used as tangible evidence of the link to the geographical place of their cultural heritage.

For example, African-American singer Erykah Badu dresses in ethnically influenced headgear to symbolise her Africanness, and even changed her surname to that of an African. According to O'Neill, this shows that since learning more about their heritage, African-American women do not wish to live as if they are simply American. They share common physical characteristics, language patterns, history, and ways of relating to the supernatural that can be linked to their geographic area of origin, which is Africa. They



use ethnically influenced dress as a visual expression of that ethnicity (O'Neill, 1995:32). For example African-American couple, Nolan Baynes and his girlfriend, Leslie Mitchell, wanted to get in touch with their African roots by coming to South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal in Phe-Zulu Safari Park at Botha's Hill) and get married in a traditional Zulu wedding. Baynes stated that it was a way of getting connected with their ancestors. Baynes (2000:3) asserted that "more & more African-Americans, particularly those in mainstream society, there is a movement to find more about our heritage" (Independent on Saturday 27 October, 20002:3).

### **3.8 Cultural and Individual Identity**

Kaiser (1997:536) contends that aside from the physical aspects of individuality, humans experience in varying degrees the desire to stand apart from others in social and behavioural contexts. Dressing in a unique manner is one way in which people can draw attention to themselves. This is evident in African South African women in their manner of dress. In relation to this study it is apparent that African South African women show a desire to be different from other African South African racial groups when attending social gatherings, by dressing in a unique manner in ethnically influenced clothes. These ethnically influenced clothes show pride of their identity as Africans.

Kaiser (1997:536) maintains that cultural identity is one of many forms of identity that individuals may express through clothing. Kaiser (1997) elaborates further that cultural or sub-cultural identity may be developed, displayed or ignored by individuals. Acculturation and assimilation continue to take place within many societies, as individuals' diverse cultural heritages introduce aesthetic codes and ideologies.

Symbolic identity is characterised by a nostalgic allegiance (loyalty) to a specific culture, and a love for, and pride in a tradition that can be experienced without being incorporated into everyday behaviour.

### **3.9 Dress and Identity**

Dress and identity are variables which human beings use to express their identity and their culture for conformity to the accepted norms of the type of society in which they live (Eicher & Barnes 1992:1). According to Barnes and Eicher (1992:2) dress includes the wide range of material and actions that constitute appearance. Dress is not only visual, it may also include touch, smell, and sound.

For example, when the American actress Marilyn Monroe was asked what she wore in bed, she responded by saying: "I wear Channel No 5", which is a clear indication that dress does not only mean clothes. Barnes and Eicher (1992:2) further elaborate that dress has an impact on the viewer, but also on the wearer. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1994:4) state that dress includes aspects of body modifications or supplements of the body. Furthermore, they argue that dress is regarded as an effective means of communication during social interactions, as already mentioned earlier in this study. As a result it serves as an influential instrument for people establishing identities of themselves and others.

Similarly, it shows that African South African women wear ethnically influenced clothes as a way of establishing their identities, as a separate entity from those of other African South Africans of different cultural groups. What is important in almost all instances is that the identity expressed in dress is maintained.

### 3.10 Identity, Self and Dress

Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992:5) view self as a composite of an individual's identities which is communicated by dress, bodily aspects of appearance and discourse, as well as the material and social objects that contribute meaning to situations for interaction. Dress helps announce identities for persons who are socially situated. On the basis of the individual's experience through time with other people, individuals develop, in advance of interactions, notions of how other people are likely to react to their dress. If a person's predictions of reactions by others are accurate, the identity or identities this person intends to present via dress will coincide with that which others perceive.

An individual can occupy a number of social positions, hence that person can have a number of identities that contribute to the total configuration of the self. The individual can reflect on these identities and understand that they both connect and separate him or her from other people. Similarly, African South African women possess a number of different identities. For example, when they are at work in the corporate world, they reflect the type of identity which identifies them with that of their co-workers, whereas, on the other hand, by complementing their Western style of dress with scarves having ethnic print motives, and ethnically influenced beaded bracelets and chokers, they can be identified by the observers as African South Africans.

### **3.11 Identity and Social Structure of Dress**

Clothing seems to be an important element in the way social identities are established for others and for oneself. In his article, *Changes in person's perception as a function of dress*, Rouse (1989:97), contended that: 'Early in a child's life he/she learns to identify behavioural intentions from facial expressions and gestures of his parents. Dress therefore provides efficient cues for the classification of others. Thus, just as emotions can be attributed to certain facial expressions, so too, actions and activities can be attributed to persons in different modes of dress' (Rouse, 1989:ii).

Barnes and Eicher (1992:1) contend that dress serves as a sign that the individual belongs to a certain group, but simultaneously differentiates the same individual from all others; it includes and excludes that individual. This property of inclusion and exclusion is also carried over into the meaning of dress in that group. Dress is an indication of the general social position of the person in the society. For example, as an emblem of power, a person's position may be communicated by a crown, staff, or robe. Dress is also a symbol of economic position. But attributes of identity as related to the social positions held by an individual are all affected by the gender identification of the dressed person.

### **3.12 Dressing the Public Self**

Presentation of the Public Self - encouraging the trust of people whom a person does not know- is difficult in a world full of strangers and in work relationships. However, the clothing that a person wears may demonstrate awareness of the expected behaviour associated with the particular status that a particular person holds (portrays).

### **3.13 Impression Management and Impression Formation**

People use clothing to create different impressions of themselves in different situations. These impressions are created in accordance with the different roles which they play (occupy). Rouse, 1989:58); Popenoe et al.(1998:67) state that an individual tries to control the impression he or she gives to others. Rouse (1989:58) further argues that the individuals seek to present themselves in the most favourable light for their purpose. But, in the process of each individual projecting an image of himself or herself and forming impressions of others.

For example, if a person occupies a higher post of leadership in society - such as a church minister, school principal, managerial director, et cetera - and is going for an interview, that person will dress in a way which will make an impression on the people he encounters. However, individuals cannot be assured that the impression they are trying to convey will be understood by the viewers in the way they intend.

The reactions of other people affect the way the individual feels about himself or herself. When people dress up they want to know what image other people will see, and what impression they will make. People's physical self has a substantial influence on their self-image and on the ways they can use clothing to give a particular impression of themselves. Rubinstein (1995:33) states that black people's dress patterns and the stereotypes associated with them have an important impact on impression formation.

Rubinstein (1995:33) further elaborates that clothing may provide people with some information about a person, but it also tends to block input of other information by causing people to perceive selectively, based on their stereotype of clothing patterns and personality types. However, with regard to this study, ethnically influenced clothing is not used by African South African women in the corporate world just to create an image or impression for others, it also helps them to establish a sense of African identity.

### **3.14 Socio-cultural Variations in Dress**

Kaiser (1997:56) states that a socio-cultural approach incorporates the concept of society and culture. Some societies, such as The San people of South Africa, do not have fashion as part of their culture. There is evidence that even now some of them still wear little skins to clothe the lower part of their bodies, as a result fashion to them is non-existent. It is necessary to understand why some societies include fashion in their cultures, whereas others maintain some form of traditional dress.

### **3.15 Culture**

Kaczyn'ski (1997:39) contends that culture as viewed by Hunter (1998:107) can only be fully understood in its historical context, and when the culture under consideration has undergone changes within a generation, the relative importance of the historical context is very much greater than when culture has been comparatively static. Likewise, in relation to this study, this is apparent as far as African South African women are concerned, because of their culture which has undergone revolutionary change since the arrival of the colonialists.

Since the first democratic South African election in 1994 the culture of African South African people seem to be of more importance to them than before, which the women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal express through their manner of dress.

### 3.15.1 Characteristics of Culture

Dadoo, Ghyoot, Lephoko, and Lubbe (1997:19) documented that characteristics of culture include matters such as individualism and collectivism; sense of self and space; communication and language; dress and appearance; food and eating habits; time consciousness roles and relationships; values and norms; mental and learning process; and work habits and social roles.

Culture is a particular way of life of people. These 'ways' cannot be seen directly, but they are expressed by behaviour and, of course, by the product of some material things. Barnard (1996:36) views culture as the signifying system through which a social order is communicated. Battern (1997:6) defines culture as the things that people believe in and the way in which they do them. To substantiate Batten's definition, Harris and Moran suggest that culture gives people a sense of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing.

Culture is dynamic, never static, always changing. Cultural transmission with regard to dress may involve either mental artifacts, such as appearance related stereotypes and symbolic systems, or physical artifacts, including clothing or accessories. Culture is learned. Socially acceptable patterns of dress are learned through socialization.

Through social change and the dynamics of social interaction, individuals continue to learn about the acceptability of certain forms of dress in different social situations (Battern, 1997:6; Kaiser, 1997:352). However, some basic cultural standards, such as modesty, are likely to change more slowly.

Culture is shared. In smaller, homogeneous societies, the meaning of clothing symbols is shared due to the intimate spheres of social influence. In larger heterogeneous societies, status groups and subcultures, as well as the media, may help to reinforce the meaning of clothing symbols.

For example, historically in African culture, ethnically influenced beads have always had a symbolic meaning for Africans, shared between mothers and daughters, daughters-in-law, grandmothers and granddaughters, sisters and brothers, and lovers, which are passed down from generation to generation.

Therefore, ethnically influenced beads have important value for the wearer and for the person who gives them to the wearer. As a result they are treasured as important gifts among Africans. It is apparent that, in relation to this study with reference to ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa, the South African status groups - such as the Parliamentarians as well as the media - are helping to bring ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women into the limelight at home and abroad. As already stated earlier in this study, ethnically influenced clothing launched at Caesar's Palace in Gauteng and later televised on M-Net was featured on the New York Fashion show in September 2000.



### 3.15.2 Diversity in Cultural Patterns

Although dress and adornment are universal aspects of cultures, many variations in this form exist cross-culturally. Cultures vary in the extent to which they allow individual expression. Judy (1990:38) states that a people's culture also includes their customs and traditions. These are patterns of behaviour that the society accepts as the 'right' behaviour, even though people may not know why it is so called. Furthermore, Seidman (1990:39) argues that Africans were made to believe that "European" or "white" civilisation was superior to any African culture.

Today's societies tend to bring people from different backgrounds, different language groups, and different skin colours to work, live together, and depend upon each other. African South African people come from a long, unending process of learning to deal with the world around them. The culture they have today is built out of the culture they inherited from those before them. This is evidenced by the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes and ethnically influenced beads of African South African women.

Winnie Mandela Madikizela, as cited by Bedford (1994:60), proclaimed that Africans should teach their children their African culture as Africans, so that they do not forget their origins. It is apparent that African South African women are trying to teach their children their culture, because, for example, at the recent opening of the South African Parliament on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001, children who attended the opening of Parliament were featured donned in ethnically influenced clothes, which shows they are learning their culture from their parents (*The Sunday Independent* 11 February 2001:8).

Solomon and Back (2000:40) point out that Africans were different from Europeans in so many ways: their clothing, huts, farming, warfare, language, government, morals and (not least important) in their table-manners. This is evident in relation to this study which shows that despite being civilised, contemporary African South African women differ from white people. For example, the rights of passage such as circumcision and wedding ceremonies are some African traditions that follow a distinctive procedure which differs from white people's traditions. Although African clothing and personal etiquette were regarded as absurd, equivalents in European practices were sometimes at times detected in other aspects of African culture. This diversity is expressed in a multiformity of fashion, art, music culture and cuisine (Solomon & Back, 2000:40).

With regard to this study it is apparent that Gauteng province provides immense economic opportunity, cultural vitality and ethnic diversity as compared to KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore it is evident that African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng are more exposed to cultural diversity and influenced by those people around them than their counterparts in the corporate world in KwaZulu-Natal, where the Zulu culture is more dominant than other ethnic groups, making their lifestyle and manner of dress more traditionally orientated (*Entreprice* magazine, September 1999:24).

### **3.15.3 Cross-cultural Influences**

Tortora and Eubank (2000: x) contend that although many non-Western areas (such as Asia, the Near East, Africa and North and South America) have adopted Western style of dress to a greater or lesser extent, most of the regions retain distinctive traditions in dress.

For example, with reference to this study, this is significant among the Zulu people of South Africa in KwaZulu-Natal, who despite the influence of Western culture still adhere to their cultural roots.

Cross-cultural influences may come about through the medium of communication. Many cultures and ethnic groups have contributed to and influenced all aspects of life in the Western world. The study of historic costume can sometimes provide visual representation of some of these multi-cultural contributions. Hence, the theme of cross-cultural influences in dress grows out of recognition that Western society, or any country or other political entity within that society, cannot exist in isolation. As cultures come into contact, a reciprocal infusion of this cross-cultural material is culturally authenticated, resulting in styles that are mixtures. The fashion designer who incorporates ethnic styles into fashionable garments is participating in cultural authentication of the styles that inspired the design (Tortora & Eubank 2000:x).

For example, in South African, fashion designers such as Marianne Fassler, Nandipha Madikiza, and Fred Eboka are some of the South African designers who use ethnic influence when designing clothes. Similarly, African South African women are no exception in this revolutionary period of African Renaissance.

With reference to this study, it seems that African South African women in the corporate world are more influenced by their culture in their manner of dress. They are proud to be Africans and strive to retain their cultural roots. This is evident in African South African women who wear cornrow braids, natural hair or dreadlocks and ethnically

influenced beads as symbols of their African culture. Likewise, in America in the 1960s the slogan "Black is Beautiful" emerged among the youth of America as a way of revolting against the influence of the European culture. American Youth wore Afro hairstyles as a way of symbolising pride in their culture. With reference to this study, de La Harpe et al. (1998:55) state that the Zulu converts were expected to turn their backs on their culture. This included changing the way they dressed, as in the minds of the missionaries, animal skins were closely associated with paganism. Astonishingly, in relation to this study it is evident that with reference to African South African women in the corporate world in KwaZulu-Natal in spite of the fact that modernisation and the increasing level of the cash economy, having invaded and altered much of the Zulu life, some bastions remain unchanged.

It is from these bastions that contemporary Zulu culture draws its strength. Despite numerous onslaughts, certain rituals and ceremonies have survived to this day. These customs are the basis of many rites of passage through which the Zulu pass in the course of their lives. Even though most of the Zulu people have, to a varying extent, become Westernised, the majority of African South African women nevertheless loyally adhere to their traditional rituals and ceremonies. For example, Princess Ntandoyesizwe King Zwelithini's daughter was featured wearing ethnically influenced beaded collar and beaded skirt on the day her in-laws paid her Lobola. She confessed that despite being a modern woman in the corporate world and living in the cosmopolitan area in Gauteng she still adheres to her cultural tradition.

Princess Ntandoyesizwe encourages the young African South African women not to be influenced by Western culture and abandon their culture, she further stated that Africans should preserve their culture to future generations (*Drum* magazine, 25 April, 2002:14).

Likewise, for example, Dr. Sibongile Zungu, the new medical superintendent at the Catherine Booth Hospital near Amatikulu - who made history when she was appointed as chief following the ultimately death of her husband in the early 1990s - dresses in ethnically influenced clothes and ethnically influenced beads when she is off duty (Magubane, 1998:54).

For example, African-American model Peggy Dillard wore her dreadlocks, even as a cover girl of *Mademoiselle* she refused to perm her hair because of her ethnic pride (White, 1998:46). Similarly, the legendary singer Miriam Makeba refused to straighten her hair with a curl relaxer while she was in exile in America in the late sixties to perform at a concert, which showed that she was proud of her hair as an African (Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Show, 9 p.m. SABC1, December 1998).

#### **3.15.3.1 Acculturation**

Acculturation occurs when individuals or groups of individuals come into contact with others from another culture or subculture. In today's world, increased transportation and communication result in frequent contracts among people of different cultures. Processes of adoption and adaptation tend to occur at this time as there is a blending of cultural elements (Kaiser, 1985:445). Kefgen and Touchie-Specht (1986:82) state that as commerce, exchange, and acculturation of ideas takes place.

Among other things, similarities of dress become evident. Adaptations are made and the uniqueness that at one time demarked the costume of the group is diminished or disappears. As expressions of cultural conditions by means of dress become vague, political beliefs, religious ideas, sex differentiation, and marital status become more difficult to determine.

#### 3.15.4 Tradition and Culture

Smart (1993:96) maintains that traditional communities and forms of life have indeed been dislocated, disturbed and disorganised by the corrosive consequences of modern rationalities, by the impact of the institutions of modernity upon traditional customs, practices, and beliefs. With modernity people's relationship to their conditions of existence, their time and place are transformed. For example, likewise, African South Africans had undergone change since they came into contact with the colonialists.

Historians, such as Barker (1995:56) documented that according to the older people, the most rapid changes had taken place in material things, such as dress, ornaments, utensils, tools, implements and furniture. Less rapid, however, had been the changes in rituals, ceremonies and spiritual attitudes. Ceremonial occasions symbolise the zenith of looking good for many African South African women, yet historically, they provide a special way for expressing their culture by the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes.

For example, African South Africans in places such as Eastern Cape (former Transkei) still practise rituals such as circumcision as part of their culture, Swazis and Zulus still practise the Reed ceremonies (Umhlanga) as part of their culture (*Drum*, magazine

1998:34; *Tribute* magazine, 1999:12; Magubane, 2000:25). These examples show part of many ceremonies which have resisted change.

However, with regard to this study African people agreed that change was inevitable and, indeed, essential whenever cultures of differing origins met (Berger, 1999:38). Therefore, it seems that the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes by African South African women after the 1994 election, and the launching of traditional games as a revival of African culture seems essential. Berger (1999:60) states that it is increasingly clear that if sacred or religious elements and traditional forms of life have been devalued or displaced, they have not disappeared but rather they have been, at most, marginalised, concealed or concluded by the relativising forces of modernisation.

### 3.15.5 Cultural Perspective

Kaiser, (1998:48) maintains that almost anything can develop cultural significance as it comes to be regarded as meaningful, whether by design or by serendipity (making happy discoveries by accident). Clothing is certainly no exception. People of all cultures modify their appearance in some way, yet the symbolic systems and codes used to decipher (make meaning out of) and interpret clothing are likely to vary. Kaiser (1998) further contends that the essence of culture from a semiotic viewpoint focussing on how meaning is produced, lies in the interplay between a kind of "historical" memory (the history of meaning) and social resistance to this memory (MacCannel & MacCannell 1982:27). For example, how males and females relate to one another is symbolized by clothing differences, and the meanings people associate with some of the clothes may be traced back to earlier, historical memories that are hard to "shake" (dismiss).

Therefore, a cultural perspective enables people to view the meanings of clothing as they have developed over time, as one historical context leads to another one. Whenever people share a common culture, they are likely to be exposed to a network of tangible products. The buying, selling and wearing of clothes all contributes to signification, or the product that results in the process of signification, but it is also the way people relate to those products and what they do to or with those products. Similarly, for example, with reference to this study, this is evident with regard to African South African women who regard ethnically influenced beads as having a significant meaning for them as part of their culture (Kaiser, 1998:48). Brehem, Kassim, and Fein (1999:67) state that the self-concept is also influenced by cultural factors. These cultural differences influence the way people perceive, feel about, and present themselves in relation to others.

#### **3.15.6 Cultural Background as an Influence of Clothing Behaviour of African South African Women**

Eidner (2000:12) argues that history and society have long dominated image and culture. In society this is evident when a contemporary socialite dresses in a style to represent the manner of her equally or more privileged ancestors. For example, in relation to this study, a socialite like Miriam Makeba serves as a good example of African South African women who reflect their African roots by donning ethnically influenced beads instead of Western style jewellery. Cultural background has a great influence on clothing behaviour. Barwick (1997:5) states that women reflect in their dress their background and their social standing, but they also influence each other if they are well known, and they may also have an influence on the readers of magazines and on designers.



In a culturally varied community such as South Africa, there are, of course many conflicting values. However, there are many shared beliefs as well. The African's life is dominated by the past and the present in that tradition dictates the way he or she acts today. For example, this is reflected in the manner of dress of African South African women. With reference to this study it appears that ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women are increasingly culturally-led and more trends originate from the diversity of cultures which exist in South Africa.

Zulu women, both young and old, have played a significant role in keeping the fabric of Zulu society intact over the years. For example, the Reed ceremony. With better access to education and as African South African women become more economically independent, the majority of them are starting to challenge the fiercely patriarchal rules of Zulu society. Yet, in spite of this, culture and tradition continue to have a strong hold in rural KwaZulu-Natal, which often spills over into the urban environment. Even liberated women may find themselves pressed to show a total regard for their heritage, acknowledging the solid social values it incorporates.

### **3.16 Ethnic Pride**

In South Africa, and with regard to this study, it is important to note the change from Western styled clothes to ethnically influenced clothes among African South African women since the democratic elections in 1994. The post cultural crisis democratic elections in 1994 led to what Spitzer called "defensive Africanisation". Africans were desperate for a means whereby they could "regain their self-respect and heal their battered race pride".

For urban African South Africans, the African-American lifestyle has been a reference point for many years, as they identify with the freedom of the African-American. Today the continuation of "an own African culture" is regarded as more important than emulating the African-American image. In support of Spitzer's statement Magubane and Smith 2001 contend that as the concept of black pride took place late 1970s, more African South African people began discarding the tight collars and cuffs of Western dress in favour of traditional African garb, which draws primarily on the West African styles (Magubane & Smith, 2001:108).

Black pride and identity have also replaced the old 'black-follow-white' syndrome in advertising messages. The latter was based on the belief that to obtain white acceptance, Africans had to emulate whites. Similarly, this behaviour was apparent in African South African women, because around the sixties and seventies they used to imitate whites and wanted to be like whites. For example, they even wanted their skin colour to be like those of white people by using skin lightening creams, even though most of these creams were skin-damaging as they contained dangerous substances which were harmful to the skin. African consumers today are proud of their black identity, and as a result, those former yardsticks have become irrelevant and outdated. Today, African consumers are striving for a better lifestyle without necessarily wanting to be like whites. Groups such as the elite young and better-educated (self-motivated) Africans represent powerful reference groups in African society (Simpson & Jowell, 1980 as cited by du Plessis, Rousseau & Blem, 1996:34). With reference to this study, there is evidence which shows that today African South African women are proud of being African in a way most of them were not fifteen years ago.

This is apparent in their manner of dress. For example, African South African women, either young or middle-aged, show pride by wearing ethnically influenced clothes, and ethnically influenced beads as jewellery, instead of the once considered status symbol such as expensive gold jewellery. For example, hair products companies such as Revlon and Black Like Me are striving to satisfy the needs of African South African women by manufacturing hair products which will meet the natural look that African South African women in the corporate world desire (*Pace* magazine, March 2001:29).

What all this indicates is a revolution in consciousness, which has affected women who have never been near a woman's liberation meeting, and which presages profound social change. Likewise, in America the Civil Rights Movement influenced an emergence of ethnic pride that was seen in clothes symbolizing cultural heritage (Kaiser, 1997:445). Similarly, the political change in South Africa since 1994 has had an influence on the clothing behaviour of African South Africans which is evidenced in the ethnically influenced clothes that African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal wear as a symbol of their cultural pride. For example, when Tony Yengeni together with his wife had to appear before a commission of Inquiry in Cape Town in late 2001, they wore cream and black trimmed Xhosa attire and went barefooted to make a cultural statement. That time they intended to show their ethnic pride, unlike at the opening of Parliament in 1998 when they wanted to make both a cultural and political fashion statement.

South African fashion may presently be evincing a parallel where, although fashion change is rapid, ethnic symbolism and fashions are a prominent feature of clothing behaviour, that is "planned obsolescence". This confirms the rights, individuality and pride of a developing nation in a changing climate.

### **3.17 Western Trends Influence on Ethnically Influenced Clothing of South African African Women**

According to Comaroff, 1996 (as cited by Modiba, 1998:24), clothing was considered to represent the 'fabric of civilization' by the British missionaries and, as such, was seen as a major means of fashioning new social identities for the Africans. In many parts of the world Western dress has already replaced traditional folk dress because of the desire of the people to be modern and a part of the twentieth century. This influence of the Western style of dress and grooming is considered a potential cultural threat in areas striving to maintain their unique identity.

Sproles and Burns (1994:156) contend that standards of dress in a group will change with time, but the group will continue to maintain social control over these overt symbols of its identity. Sproles and Burns (1994:156) maintain that standards of dress in a group will change with time, but the group will continue to maintain social control over those overt symbols of its identity. For example, when Pathet Lao took command at Laos, his first command ordered teenagers to give up their Western fashions and cut their hair. Jeans, lipstick, and nail polish were forbidden since they were regarded as a threat to their cultural traditions (Kefgen & Touchie-Spetcht, 1986:82).

With reference to major social and political events that affected the way women were perceived, and the key personalities and innovators of feminine style, the twentieth century is regarded by Mulvey and Richards (1998:6) as the century of "looking good" for women. Crawford (1998:40) believes that women who adopt Western styles are attempting to find a definition of themselves in terms of the modern, western world. In so doing they are withdrawing from participation in the kind of specifically female cultural power described by McLeod (1997:45) but therefore they have negotiated a re-definition of themselves and of their power in the modern world (Eicher, 1995:31). Dawin and Dunlop (as cited by Eicher & Roach, 1993:303), noted that the wearing of Western dress was associated with a society moving from a state of "primitivism" to one of "civilization".

Western countries imposed their own culture on colonial societies when they took socio-political, social and economic control of their empires. They used a combination of political, social and economic strategies to establish and maintain their dominance. To support this Kefgen and Touchie-Spetcht (1986:82) contend that mass production, as seen in Western dress, blurs the cultural expression of occupation, religion, and social status. Fairsevis, in his book *"Costumes of the East"*, postulated that as Westernization of dress takes place throughout the world, people can expect conformity of cultures, standardization of laws, politics, and educational policy, mass values, and, in general, undermining of cultural traditions.

The result of this will be "...one nation, one people, one government, one belief, and, of course, one costume repertory" (Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 1986:82). Bellington et al. (1991:45) contend that Western culture, and moreover, incorporated into a class structure and cultural disadvantage which reflects the imperial power.

The study done by Trollip (1995:454) revealed that African peoples' acceptance of the Christian faith prohibited Africans from wearing traditional dress, as the Christian churches considered the traditional costume to be indecent. However, after the post-Apartheid era, African South Africans are free to dress in what they want. For example, the majority of African South African people who attend the Atteridgeville Catholic church in Pretoria, have re-adopted their cultural roots (*Pretoria News*, March 1999:6). They worship their ancestors in church, dress in ethnically influenced clothes or Western style of dressed when going to church and even their pastor dresses in ethnically influenced attire.

This kind of behaviour was not allowed during the colonial era as it was regarded as being heathen. People like Sangomas were not allowed to attend or become members of any church because of their manner of dress and the worshipping of their ancestors (de La Harpe et al., 1998:155; Howes, 1994:45). With reference to this study, Gauteng province offers undoubtedly the best shopping centres in South Africa, where shoppers are spoilt for choice, with several sophisticated world-class shopping malls offering excellent service and good value for money.



Moreover, African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng's can easily be influenced by European culture because of Gauteng's cosmopolitan shopping malls where a person can shop till late at night, unlike KwaZulu-Natal where Zulu tradition still plays a dominant role in the influence of African South Africans women's way of dress.

Western styled clothing in South Africa at the present moment is influenced by street-wear style and more trends originate from the subculture and street style. Mulvey and Richardson (1998:6) states that in today's African women's mentality, these are appreciated in a way that would be incomprehensible in previous centuries.

### **3.18 Political Influence**

Politics, government and political leaders often have a strong impact on the lives of individuals which can affect clothing styles either directly or indirectly. Such political influences may range from laws restricting the wearing of actual items of dress or the regulation of clothing-related industries, to the desire of individuals or groups to imitate clothing worn by charismatic political leaders. For example, the dress regalia of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Marshall et al. (2000:64) contend that political movements have been supported and suppressed by dress, and this is evident in relation to politics in South Africa. For example, in South Africa, parliamentarians express their cultural identity by wearing ethnically influenced clothes when attending political and social gatherings. This move contributed towards popularising ethnically influenced clothes in the late twentieth century.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century it is apparent that the ethnically influenced clothes of African South Africans has become a fashion statement among the majority of African South African women.

Enormous changes took place in the twentieth century and South Africa was no exception. In the 1990s demographic influences played a part in what people wore. Chabal (1994:87) argues that in Africa, as elsewhere, politics is a reflection of the practices by which societies regulate the relations between power and production, linking the rulers and ruled. Political events throughout the world often influence the form of fashion objects, because they are highly covered by the media and they provide conveyance for cross-cultural awareness. Likewise, in relation to this study, it is apparent in South Africa at present that the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling political party is influencing the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes.

For example, during the opening of Parliament in 1997 Tony Yengeni and his wife wore ethnically influenced clothes as a political statement (*Mercury*, 7 February, 1997:8). However, once considered a political statement, the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes and beads has turned out to be a fashion statement.

Political events often nurture cross-cultural exchange and provide fashion creators with inspiration for unique fashion objects. For example, at the 9<sup>th</sup> opening of Parliament in 9<sup>th</sup> February 2001, First Lady, Zanele Mbeki, Madame Speaker Freddy Ginwala and Lindiwe Mabuza, to name a few, wore ethnically influenced clothes as political fashion



statements, Dullar Omar and his wife dressed in ethnic Arabic clothes in cream and gold, which is proof of the cross-cultural influence of clothing as fashion statement (*Sunday Times*, 13th February 2001:12).

At times, fashion becomes preoccupied with a particular culture due to the perceived intrigue associated with the culture. For example, in the mid-1980s African and Australian cultures influenced fashion due to the perceived excitement and adventure associated with these continents. Again for example, in 1984 overseas designer Yves St Laurent launched ethnically inspired clothes using beads for his range as inspiration from African countries, and following in his steps, Britain's designer John Galiano-designing for Dior designed a dress inspired by Masai beaded corsets (Fisher & Backwith, 2000:13). Similarly, in South Africa, it is apparent that South African designers at present are inspired by African culture in their use of ethnically influenced beads. This fashion trend also seems to attract even overseas designers as it is copied by Paris designers as well as those in Britain and the United States of America.

White (1998:6) argues that African fashion expressions on African South African people are often seen as political act, and they sometimes are. For example, in relation to this study the ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women are worn as part of the culture and as a political statement, because they wear ethnically influenced clothes for ceremonial purposes such as rites of passage and when they attend political meetings to show their solidarity as Africans.

The colonial perception of African culture took a heavy toll on African cultural development. Likewise, in South Africa, television coverage of the opening of Parliament in 1994 as well as yearly opening of Parliament since the new democratic government took over, which publicise a lot of ethnically influenced clothes as a political statement and cultural enhancement has now turned to be a fashion statement of African South African women as they re-adopted their African culture. Global changes and shifts in political and economic structures and allegiances in the contemporary world foreground identity questions and the struggle to assert and maintain national and ethnic identities. Hollander (1994:99) as cited by Finkelstein (1999:367) contends that fashions can indicate a desire for social change that shows an advance of actual shifts in political and cultural attitudes. African fashion expression on African people are often seen as a political act - as they sometimes are.

### **3.19 African Countries as an Influence on Clothing Behaviour of African South Africans**

Barwick (1993:6) states that the many nationalities who migrated to South Africa during the nineteenth century brought their own fashions with them, many of which had been integrated into the mainstream after the 1990s. In the late 1980s up to the present, traditional national costumes from East African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria had an influence on African South African women's clothing behaviour due to various ethnic groups who migrated to South Africa looking for "greener pastures". For example, Fred Eboka, who is a Nigerian fashion designer based in Cape Town, also uses Nigerian influence in his designs, such as decorative embroidery which is mainly used by neighbouring African countries in the creation of ethnically influenced clothes.

### **3. 20 Lifestyle as an Influence on Clothing Behaviour of Africa South African**

#### **Women in the Corporate World in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal**

The population of Southern Africa is mostly rural. This fact hides a huge variety of lifestyles. However, South Africa in particular has a multiracial urbanized society. As would be expected, apartheid has had a huge impact on the lifestyle of the majority of African South Africans, restricting them to low-paid, menial and unskilled professions. The people of Southern Africa reflect a wide variety of lifestyles and cultures.

Lifestyles are part of the socialisation process that influences fashion involvement and consumer behaviour. Kefgen et al. (1999:39) define lifestyle as the pattern by which people live. Lifestyle is determined by the values, attitudes, and interests of each individual. Changes in lifestyles can be responsible for shaping some values. It can also reshuffle the priority of a person's value system. Values are derived from a person's culture, environment, family associates and individual and the media, especially television, as well as the internet and advertising. Likewise, it appears that in relation to this study African South African women's lifestyle is influenced by their environment and advanced technology such as television. Hence, the reason why South African, African women tend to complement Western style of clothes with ethnically influenced jewellery when they choose clothes.

Lifestyles, whether or not they are consciously chosen, establish a kind of order in patterns of consumption. Lifestyles help people to make choices from the numerous alternatives facing them each day. A way of life, friendships, clothing choice, careers, personal philosophies et cetera, are some of the facts of life that are determined by an

individual's lifestyle. Similarly, African South African women's lifestyles are determined by the type of job they occupy as well as the type of society in which they live.

### **3.20.1 Attitudes**

Attitudes are the expression of feelings, thoughts and behaviours. Attitudes are individualistic, that is, they vary from person to person. They are often learned from family and peer groups. When a person matures, his or her attitude is moulded over time by society, familial, and educational experiences. Attitudes about clothing tend to focus on comfort, unity, conformity, economy, fashion, self-expression and status. People reflect their attitudes about specific garment styles through apparel choices. Similarly, in relation to this study, African South African women's attitudes towards their clothing choice reflect their comfort, fashion, and self-expression, as well as their status.

### **3.20.2 The Cosmopolites**

Members of this group tend to be well educated and work in the professions or businesses related to literature and art, such as advertising, publishing and design. Their incomes are typically high. They choose to live in the city to be near its cultural offerings, but they do not have strong ties to local neighbourhoods.

With reference to this study, it is apparent that although majority of African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal are cosmopolitans and well educated and work in businesses such as advertising and managerial spheres, the majority of them still lead a lifestyle that has a link with their African culture.

For example, when *Generations* star Connie Masilo got married to Aaron Ferguson in November 2001, they had two weddings, a traditional ceremony on October 21, 2001 in Botswana and a 'white' wedding on November 22, 2001, in Garden World in Muldersdrift in Gauteng (*Drum* magazine, December:10, 2001; *True Love* magazine, January, 2002:56). This shows the type of lifestyle that African South African women live which indicates that even if they are well educated, they still adhere to their cultural roots.

### 3.21 Postmodernity

Postmodernity may be regarded as a break with, or from modernity. According to Smart (1993:23), a concept of postmodernity is employed in three distinctive senses, namely to imply differences, but through a relationship of continuity with (capitalist) modernity, to indicate a break or modern forms of life, effectively a coming to terms, a facing up to modernity, its benefits and its problematic consequences, its limits and its limitations.

Smart (1993:23) further contends that the idea of postmodernity indicates a modification or change in the way(s) in which people experience and relate to modern thought, modern conditions and modern forms of life, in short, to modernity. In consequence, the postmodern does not so much signal the end of the modern, but rather the pursuit of new rules in doing things.

Featherstone (1998:117) states that postmodernism directs people's attention to changes taking place in contemporary culture. This can be understood in terms of theorization, presentation and dissemination of the work which cannot be detached from changes in specific competitive struggles occurring in particular fields, such as:

- (i) Changes in modes of theorization, presentation and dissemination of work which cannot be detached from certain fields.
- (ii) Changes in broader cultural spheres involving the modes of production, consumption and circulation.
- (iii) Changes in everyday practices and experiences of different groups, who, as a result of some of the processes referred to above, may be using regimes of signification in different ways, and developing new means of orientation and identity structures (Featherstone, 1995:11).

### **3.21.1 Fashion and Postmodernity**

Fashion became increasingly playful, and postmodernism, which left its mark on all aspects of art during the past decades also affected fashion (Lehnert, 2000:84). Fauschou (1997:82) notes that a postmodern society is a society driven to create a perpetual desire for need, for novelty, and for endless differences. Hence, in relation to this study, African South African women are free to dress in the way they like because they are no longer under the influence of Western style of dress.

Postmodernity in fashion for example, may be indicated by changing the styling of the garment, such as seams sewn facing outside, and undergarments worn as outerwear garments, fringed unsewn hems on garments, reversible jeans that can be worn on both

sides. For example, Madonna became a style-setter and introduced the world to her underwear worn on the outside (Tortora & Eubank, 2000:503). Vivian Westwood introduced the wearing of bras as outer garments (Lehnert, 1999:56). In the nineties, rap artists not only composed lyrics that spoke of ghetto life in street language, they also introduced and popularised hip-hop clothing styles (Stone, 2000:61). Stone (2000:61) further notes that prominent individuals have been responsible for certain fashions that continue to be associated with them. Many times, however, these individuals are not what would be considered fashion leaders.

### **3.22 Colonialism**

Okapra et al. (1995:77) state that after World War II, changes in women's clothes took place in many parts of the world. Boahen (1987:98) contends that the colonial system generated a sense of identity and consciousness among the different ethnic groups of each colonial state.

Loomba (1998:124) describes colonialism as a means through which capitalism achieved global expansion. According to Fanon (1996:67) the cultures of colonial societies have been subordinated to the mainstream of Western culture, and moreover incorporated into a class structure and cultural disadvantage which reflects the imperial power. Fanon (1996:67) further argues that the concept of "negrotude" (originally part of a literary movement and meaning essential blackness or 'negro-ness') was not simply a cultural legacy from colonialism, but a necessary antidote for African people to the cultural domination of colonialism.

After the conflict (for liberation) there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man". Essentially, Fanon (1996) was pointing to the damaged cultural identity which emphasized the inferiority of African cultures. Likewise, in South Africa the well known African South African journalist Peter Magubane (1999) documented the vanishing cultures of South Africa as a way of encouraging African South Africans to re-adopt their traditions before they totally vanished under the Western cultural dominance.

The wearing of ethnically influenced beads has been considered as being uncivilised during the colonialists' era. Hence African South Africans tended to wear silver or gold Western jewellery. For example, with reference to this study, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi as cited by Stevenson and Stewart (2000:41) - noted that during his childhood days his cousins, the Zulu Princesses at the Royal Palace of his uncle King Solomon ka-Dinuzulu, where he grew up, were often reprimanded by their teachers and the priest's wife if they adorned themselves in ethnically influenced beadwork. It was regarded as un-Christian. Mangosuthu further stated that it was not permitted for a Christian girl to wear what was regarded as attire worn only by so-called heathens. However, prior to the dawn of the millennium, it seems that a major resurgence caused the majority of the African South African people, young and old to wear ethnically influenced beads as an important source of jewellery to show pride about their culture. For example, African South African ethnically influenced beadwork is now marketed overseas, which is an indication that such beadwork is appreciated by Western cultures, locally and in overseas countries.



Thembeke Nkamba van Wyk, of a South African corporate company called 'Talking Beads' in Pretoria, states that African South Africans must be proud of their culture, and show that in their manner of dress by wearing ethnically influenced clothes and ethnically influenced jewellery (SAFM, South African Women Today, Sunday 7.30 a.m, October 2001).

Eicher et al. (2000:48) documented that as cultures come into contact with each other through processes such as colonialism or globalization, innovative items or ensembles of dress emerge that people define as world dress and world fashion. People balance their own cultural traditions with the demands of a global society against their bodies to express individual tastes. Similarly, it is apparent that with regard to this study, due to the multicultural society, African South African women manage to maintain a balance between their own tradition and the demands of a global society in order to express their own desires and their individual tastes (Eicher, et al. 2000;48).

Williams and Chrisman (1994:12) contend that the desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current of history but is also opposing one's own people. When people undertake an armed struggle or even a political struggle against a relentless colonialism, the significance of tradition changes. As already stated in this study in the introduction of the literature review, this is evident in African South African women whose tradition underwent changes when they were participating in the political struggle-even their manner of dress also changed.

The colonialists were concerned with exploiting African resources and African people. The colonialists regarded the achievements of the African South African people and African culture as being primitive. They assumed that it was their duty to impose European beliefs and systems on the colonised people - whether the colonised people wanted those European beliefs or not. Kefgen et al. (2000:32) documented that the land rights of African people in South Africa were secured under imperial rules, while their essential practical, social and cultural institutions were undermined and transformed by the agents of civilisation- the missionaries, traders and administrators.

### 3.23 Postcolonialism

Many indigenous symbols are being shifted from the area of sacred application to make room for new few usages in the light of changing socio-cultural imperatives. However, it is arguable that precisely because it is not entirely possible to disengage the new usages completely from their implicatedness in circuits of authority in the indigenous domain they, rather contradictorily, reproduce the dominant forms of existing modes of engagement with power.

Jefferson and Skinner (1990:19) contend that contemporary Africans are growing ever more conscious of their ancestral roots in time. They are now appreciating as their own the ancient traditions of Africa. They now see beauty in their faces, their hair and in the unique synthesis they have made of constructing the old and new world cultures. Likewise, with reference to this study, this is apparent among African South African women their manner of dress.

Similarly, recently some traditional African games were launched in March, 2001 as a way of encouraging African children to know and appreciate their tradition.

For example, even with food, South African African restaurants such as the Safika in Pretoria, Tsa Afrika in Randburg, and the Kofifi restaurant in downtown Johannesburg near the Market Theatre, now provide African traditional food, whereas in the past they served European-style food such as pasta and pizzas (to name a few), which was the result of Western influence. Since they opened, these places have been filled with celebrities, entrepreneurs and corporate employees for functions and for ordinary meals. This is further evidence that African South Africans are presently showing pride in their culture, because during the past decade African South African people used to like European food when they dined out, especially the upper class African South African people. However, it is apparent that those days seems to be bygone, as the Africans now prefer their traditional food such as Mopani worms, traditional spinach (morogo) or ox tripe (mala-mogodu) with stiff porridge rather than chicken mayonnaise.

Kaiser (1997:516) argues that when a person from different cultures travels internationally and shops in multicultural malls, and retail chain stores, it is staggering how he or she can lose his or her cultural and ethnic elements of fashion, music, and other stylistic forms. In the world marketplace, according to Baudrillard (1981:113), all values, labour knowledge, social relations, culture, and nature are transformed into a form of economic exchange value.

Chukwudieze (1997:124) defines the post-colonial era in Africa as the era that follows the regaining of the political independence of African states from the European colonial powers. Chukwudieze (1997:124) further concurs that post-coloniality represents, at least potentially, a period of autonomous self-expression on the part of the former colonized peoples, as well as of self-assertion, sober reflection on the values and goals, and the gradual wearing away.

Williams and Chrisman (1994:3) state that like any other form; the post-colonial carries with it, at least a dual sense of being chronologically subsequent to the second term in the relationship and the face of it. William and Chrisman (1994:42) further elaborate that the desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again, not only means going against the tide of history, but is also opposing one's own people. When people undertake an armed or a political struggle against a relentless colonialism, the significance of tradition changes. Similarly, it is apparent among African South African women whose tradition has undergone change, because of the effect of colonialism and Apartheid which destroyed most of the African culture which cannot be retrieved.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This investigation focuses on the relationship between clothing behaviour and the identity of African South African women in the corporate world. The study aims to find out whether these women prefer to wear ethnically influenced clothes as opposed to Western styles of clothes. With the emergence of the new democratic government (1994), the call for the rapid integration of Africans in the mainstream of the corporate world and other sectors has become more pronounced, and this has also had an influence on the African South African women's way of dress. Similarly, it appears that African South African women's way of dress is more culturally influenced by African culture than it was before the emergence of the democratic government in South Africa. This chapter describes the empirical methods used for data collection.

##### 4.1.1 Procedure

The procedure used in this study is presented under the following headings:

- selection and development of the measuring instrument;
- selection of the sample;
- method of data collection;
- data analysis;
- scope and limitations of the study.

The research was executed as follows:

- (i) The target population was defined.
- (ii) The pre-testing was conducted among colleagues to ensure that the questions were correctly formulated.
- (iii) A pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted among African women in Durban and Gauteng.
- (iv) Suggestions arising from the pilot study were incorporated into the final questionnaire.
- (v) The researcher used self-administered questionnaires, to be filled in by the respondents themselves. This was done by distributing the questionnaire to individual respondents together with a letter of request. The respondents were assured of confidentiality. A date was arranged with each respondent on which the researcher would collect the completed questionnaires.

#### **4.1.2 Sampling Procedure**

Selection of the sample and development of the measuring of the instruments.

The sampling procedure entails drawing a representative sample which includes all the elements of the universe, which can be finite or infinite.

#### **4.1.2.1 Sample**

According to Serakan (1992:226), "a sample is a subset of all the population, however, not all the elements of the population would form the sample". By studying the sample, the researcher may draw conclusions or make inferences that allow generalizations about the target population. Loubser (1996:251) states that "population or universe is the aggregate of all the elements, whilst the survey population is the aggregate of elements from which the sample is selected".

The target population refers to the group of people or companies who form the object of the survey and from which conclusions are drawn. The sampling unit refers to the entity which is the focus of the survey. To substantiate Serakan's definition of the sample, Schofield, 1992 (as cited by Sapsford and Jupp, 1996:25) defines a sample as a set of elements selected in some way from a population. The aim of sampling is to save time and effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status in terms of whatever is being researched (Schofield, 1992:25).

##### **4.1.2.1.1 Selection of the Sample**

The selection of a sample can be attributed to various factors, the most important being that it is simply not possible to study every element in the population.

The sample comprised one hundred ( $n = 100$ ) African South African women in the corporate world drawn equally from Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) provinces.

The selected sample ranged between the age group of 24 to 60. Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces were selected to represent African South African women because Gauteng province is cosmopolitan and as such employs more women, comprising many different racial groups, whereas KwaZulu-Natal province is more traditional. Simple random sampling method was used to select the participants. A simple random sampling means that every element in the population of interest has an equal and independent chance of being chosen (Babbie, 1995:213; Schofield, 1992:30).

#### **4.1.3 Method of Data Collection**

Both primary and secondary methods were used to collect the necessary data. The descriptive method was used to summarize the extensive data which has been gathered from the two provinces, to identify the essential characteristics of a random variable and produce a profile of its behaviour (Serakan 1992:219 as cited by Jinabhai, 1998:277). According to Varkevisser (1991:142) "data collection techniques enable the researcher to systematically collect information in order to answer questions in a conclusive way".

The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out whether the pre-stated hypothesis in Chapter 1 will be answered (i.e whether African South African women in the corporate world would like to wear ethnically influenced clothes, in order to retain their cultural roots(as a means of expressing their cultural identity). Annexure A of the questionnaire consisted of eleven biographical questions.

The biographical information covered the participants age, marital status, cultural group, residential area, highest level of education, type of employment and monthly salary.



The questionnaire developed was used by the researcher to collect primary data from the respondents for the study. Tull and Hawkins (1984:252) describe a questionnaire as a formalised set of questions for eliciting information, and is generally associated with survey research to obtain primary data regardless of the form of administration. The questionnaire was designed according to the stated objectives of the study.

#### **4.1. 3.1 Reliability**

Reliability is defined by Bauer and Gaskell (2000:143) as an agreement among interpreters. Reliability refers to the ability of a measure to produce consistent results (Rudestam & Newton, 1992:67).

#### **4.1.3.2 Validation**

Validity refers to the degree to which a result correctly represents the text or its context (Bauer, & Gaskell, 2000:143). The difference between information required and information obtained is required and information obtained is referred to as measurement error, and it is important to avoid pitfall in designing a questionnaire. According to Churchill (1987:382) "a measuring instrument is valid to the extent that differences in scores among objects reflect true differences of the objects on the characteristics that the instrument tries to measure" According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:137), validity is achieved by referring to the literature relating to the area of the study.

#### 4.1.4 Descriptive Statistics

The study comprised both descriptive and inferential statistics. According to Malhotra (1999:148) descriptive research is a type of conclusive research which has as the major objective the description of something - usually market characteristics or functions.

Serakan (1992:259) (as cited by Jinabhai, 1998:277) states that descriptive statistics describes the phenomena of interest, and is used to analyze data for classifying and summarizing numerical data. Serakan (1992:259) further maintains that descriptive statistics incorporate the analysis of data frequencies, dispersions of dependent and independent variables, and measures of central tendency.

Jinabhai (1998:277) substantiates Serakan's statement by pointing out that descriptive statistics facilitate initial data analysis, but the researcher is also interested in making statistical inferences about the population from the sample. Hence, the use of inferential statistics is introduced to present the data in statistical format so that important patterns, relationships (associations), and analyses become more meaningful. For this study, the use of descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, Pearson Chi-square, and (*t*-test) were used to analyse the data.

The Pearson Chi-square statistical test of association was used to test the association between two attributes.

## **4.2. The Data**

The data of this research were collected by means of the questionnaire. Both Primary and Secondary methods were used to collect the necessary data. The descriptive method was used in order to summarize the extensive data which has been gathered from the two provinces to identify the essential characteristics of a random variable and produce a profile of its behaviour.

### **4.2.1. Primary Data**

The primary data of this study was formulated by information received from African South African women in the corporate world. Primary data was collected by means of interviews, using a questionnaire.

### **4.2.2. Secondary Data**

The secondary data of this study was obtained by reviewing the literature, both current and historical in nature, from the following sources:

- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Fashion magazines, both local and overseas
- ☐ Academic journals
- ☐ Textiles magazines
- ☐ Empirical observations
- ☐ Programs on Radio and TV

### 4.3 The Criteria Governing the Admissibility of the Data

Only responses from the specified sample were used in the study. The data was collected by questionnaire during mid-December 2000 and January 2001. The respondents were told they were participating in a Master's degree research project.

### 4.4 Questionnaire Design

Sommer and Sommer (1997:3) state that behavioural research is conducted in accordance with the scientific method. The subject matter is directly observable, or can be made so through some type of representation (for example, questionnaire responses). The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot study. In order to contribute to the validity and reliability of the quantitative questionnaire, a pre-test was done on twenty elements of the sample before establishing and administering the final questionnaire. The results showed that the questionnaires were easily understood and user-friendly.

According to Loubser (1996) the researcher must establish three parameters before a questionnaire can be developed.

- The first is to state the problem which initiated the researcher and to determine the information required to solve it;
- The second is to define the population to be surveyed;
- The third is to choose the best means of collecting the required information (Loubser, 1996:215).

#### **4.4.1 Discription of the Questionnaire**

The instrument used for this survey consisted of a pre-coded questionnaire which was carefully constructed to facilitate maximum response and at the same time obtain more detailed information.

In using structured questions and structured answers, the respondents were given various alternatives to choose from.

Scaled questions, with an array of different types of rating scales. For this questionnaire the five point Likert scale was used to elicit the degree of agreement, or disagreement , with provision for a neutral column for each of a series of statements related to the study object. In design of such statements, Loubser (1996:228) asserts that the "statements must be closely connected with the subject. Section II of the questionnaire consists of ten questions relating to personal feeling about ethnically influenced clothes. The Yes and No was used as a method of indicating whether the respondents support the statement which was stated. There were two questions in Section II in which the respondent should indicate the level in which she feels ethnically influenced clothes has on her.

#### **4.4.2 Pilot Study**

A pilot investigation is a small-scale trial undertaken before the main investigation, intended to assess the adequacy of the research design and of the instruments to be used for data collection; piloting the data-collection instruments is essential, whether interview schedules or questionnaires are used. (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996:103).

Sommer and Sommer (1997:364) define the pilot study as the preliminary use of a procedure designed to identify problems and omissions before the actual study is conducted. A basic rule in questionnaire construction is that the first draft should never be put into the field in finished form. It is easier to change a first draft than to interpret people's answers to ambiguous or non-understandable questions (Sommer & Sommer, 1999:258).

An important purpose of a pilot study is to devise a set of codes or response categories for each question which will cover, as comprehensively as possible, the full range of responses which may be given in reply to the question in the main investigation. For this to work effectively, the pilot sample must be representative of the variety of individuals which the main study is intended to cover (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996:103). The pilot questionnaire was administered to a sample of twenty subjects who were drawn from the African women in the corporate world.

This exercise was completed in August 2000 and conducted prior to the actual survey, in order to determine if any pre-testing or further refinement was required.

The pilot study consisted of fifty-one questions (51) which was conducted among twenty people. The respondents for the exploratory study were chosen from five discreet groups, namely, members of staff in the research department, a statistician, academics and women entrepreneurs and colleagues to generate information that could guide the next stage of the research.

These issues were then used to draw up a structured questionnaire to be administered to women in the corporate world in the main study. That is, the questions which required clarity were re-worded to eliminate any confusion.

The suggestions arising from the pilot study phase were incorporated into the final questionnaire before it was distributed to the sample population.

The questionnaire comprised fifty-one structured questions.

Annexure A of the questionnaire was biographical data which comprised eleven questions.

Annexure B of the questionnaire was divided into the following two sections:

Section I consisted of twenty-nine questions related to general attitudes of African South African women towards ethnically influenced clothes.

A five-point Likert scale was selected for item analysis and scoring of the ethnically influenced clothes and identity attitude scales.

Section 2 comprised ten questions related to personal feeling about clothing preferences.

The approximate time to complete the questionnaire was 20 - 30 minutes.

A covering letter addressed to the respondents outlined the importance of the study, the aim of the survey and the value of participation. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of participating in the study. The biographical data was captured using the Microsoft Excel. The SPSS Version 9.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to capture and analyze the collected data.

The data about the general attitudes of African women towards ethnically influenced clothing questions were grouped into the following questions: politically related questions; questions related to cultural influences on clothing behaviour; questions related to pride; identity questions; conformity questions; questions related to appearance, and personal feeling about ethnically influenced clothes.

#### **4.4.3 Pre-testing the Questionnaire**

Pre-testing refers to the initial testing of the questionnaire by friends or work colleagues to determine the following:

- ☐ How long does it take to fill in the questionnaire?
- ☐ Are questions clearly stated?
- ☐ Is there any ambiguity?
- ☐ Is the wording of the questions clear?
- ☐ Is the layout of the questionnaire simple and easy to understand?

Pre-testing is important for the researcher to be satisfied with the design of the questionnaire. The pre-test questionnaire was drawn and given to colleagues at Durban Institute of Technology (Technikon Natal) for scrutinizing and re-phrasing of questions before it could be printed and sent to the respondents.

Five questions were re-phrased, and three questions were removed. This was done to facilitate thorough understanding of the questionnaire by the respondents.



## **4.5 Quantitative Study**

“Quantitative research is a research methodology that seeks to quantify the data and, typically, applies some form of statistical analysis” (Malhotra, 1999:148). To conduct the quantitative research, it was necessary to select a sample of African South African women who live in the Gauteng and Durban areas, and are employed in the corporate world. The target population included African South African women between the ages of 24 and 60 years. Sommer and Sommer (1997:364) state that behavioural research is conducted in accordance with scientific method. The subject matter is directly observable, or can be made so through some type of representation, for example, questionnaire responses.

### **4.5.1 Data Preparation**

The data were coded before analyzing. Data preparation included coding because with the SPSS software package, data cannot be treated directly. Data preparation also included editing (Wisniewski, 1996:120). SPSS offered adequate diagnostic procedures for the type of analysis required (categorical data analysis).

This research was based on categorical variables that measures the perception of individuals on nominal and ordinal scales. The nominal scales involve simple classifications by certain attributes which are then quantified.

The completed questionnaire was edited and checked for adequacy of completion and consistencies. There was no missing data.

#### 4.5.2 Statistical Analysis of the Data

Statistical analysis is a method of describing and interpreting the data (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 1997:38).

##### 4.5.2.1 Data Analysis

The following procedure was completed:

Frequency Analysis with the Chi-square (FAWCS) (Enty, 1979:12) was chosen as the tool to measure the significance of the relationship between age and the different variables. The hypothesis was developed for each Chi-square, to determine the differences in the variables which were cross-tabulated.

Hypothesis is a testable statement logically derived from the theory or observation; it can be either confirmed (accepted) or disconfirmed (rejected) (Sommer & Sommer, 1997:362).

**H<sub>0</sub>** - This is called the null hypothesis (void or invalid or meaning nothing), which is a statement of no true difference in the sample and the population. The null hypothesis must be developed in such a way that its rejection leads to the acceptance of the other statement called the alternative hypothesis.

Sapsford and Jupp (1996:234) state that the null hypothesis is always the one which is actually tested.

Sommer and Sommer (1997:362) documented that the null hypothesis assumes that differences produced by the research manipulation are due to chance fluctuations and that the independent variable has no effect on the dependent variable.

**H1** - This is the alternative to the null hypothesis. It is stated in a positive form (that there will be an effect) which is different from the null hypothesis. The two hypotheses are developed in such a manner that if one is true the other happens to be false, and vice versa. According to Melville and Goddard (1996:72), "the purpose of a hypothesis is to forecast a relationship between variables that can be tested".

Melville and Goddard (1996:72) outline the following procedure for the application of statistical tests:

- ☐ Identify which test is appropriate.
- ☐ Choose a level (or levels) of significance.
- Formulate **H<sub>0</sub>** and **H<sub>1</sub>**.
- Determine whether the test is one-tailed or two-tailed, determine whether it is an upper or lower-tailed test.
- Calculate a specific test statistic.
- Based on the chosen level /s for alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and the df (degrees of freedom), compare the statistic with a value/s from a table (the critical value).
- Conclude by either accepting or rejecting **H<sub>1</sub>**.

The alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is the level of significance. It is the probability of rejecting the true null hypothesis.

The Chi-square test detects whether there is an association between two categorical variables. However, it does not say anything about how strong that association might be.

Drapper et al. (1998:56) state that frequencies present raw data in a more readily usable

form, which may then be used to draw conclusions of the study. A summary of the statistics consequently presents frequencies of responses for each categorical variable: that is, age and household income per month.

1. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for all variables of the study, for example, identical responses which have been made for the same question.
2. Pearson's Chi-square test of association was computed for all the variables of the study to determine which of the independent variables influenced, and were related to, each of the three dependent variables.

The data were collected and carefully entered into the statistical package SPSS (Version 9.0, 1999). All the data were analysed with the SPSS Version 9.0 computer program available at Durban Institute of Technology. Cross tabulations were conducted for all the variables. The analysis was categorical in nature. The statistical data analysis began with data preparation and cross-tabulation of the data, then various tests were conducted to analyse the relationships between different variables of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

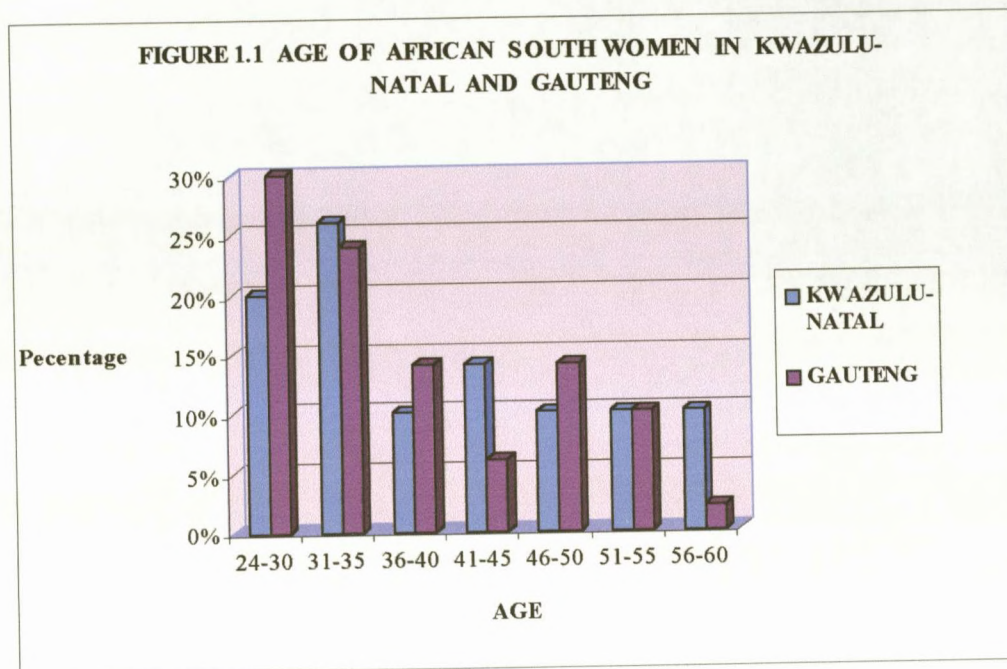
The results were computed by using the various statistical methods stipulated in Chapter Four. This chapter reports on the research findings. The descriptive and the inferential statistical methods were used to analyse the collected data using tables. The mean ages, the frequencies, cross-tabulations, and Chi-squares were used.

#### 5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations were calculated for the demographic data of the African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ). The sample group for African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal consisted of one hundred ( $n = 100$ ) African South African women. The mean ages for African South African women's sample ranged from 24 years to 60 years.

For the purpose of this study the following demographic information, includes age, marital status, cultural groups, highest level of education, residential area, and total household monthly income were selected as the dependent variables that will have more influence on the clothing behaviour of the African South African women.

The demographic results in Figure 1.1 depicts the age categories of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) .



The results in the above bar graph indicated that the sample was between twenty-four (24) and sixty (60) years. The depicted bar graph in Figure 1.1 shows that the majority of the selected sample in both provinces falls in the age category between 24-30 and 31-35 years, the lowest being those being between 56-60 years.



Figure 1.2 below mirrors the marital status of the respondents from Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

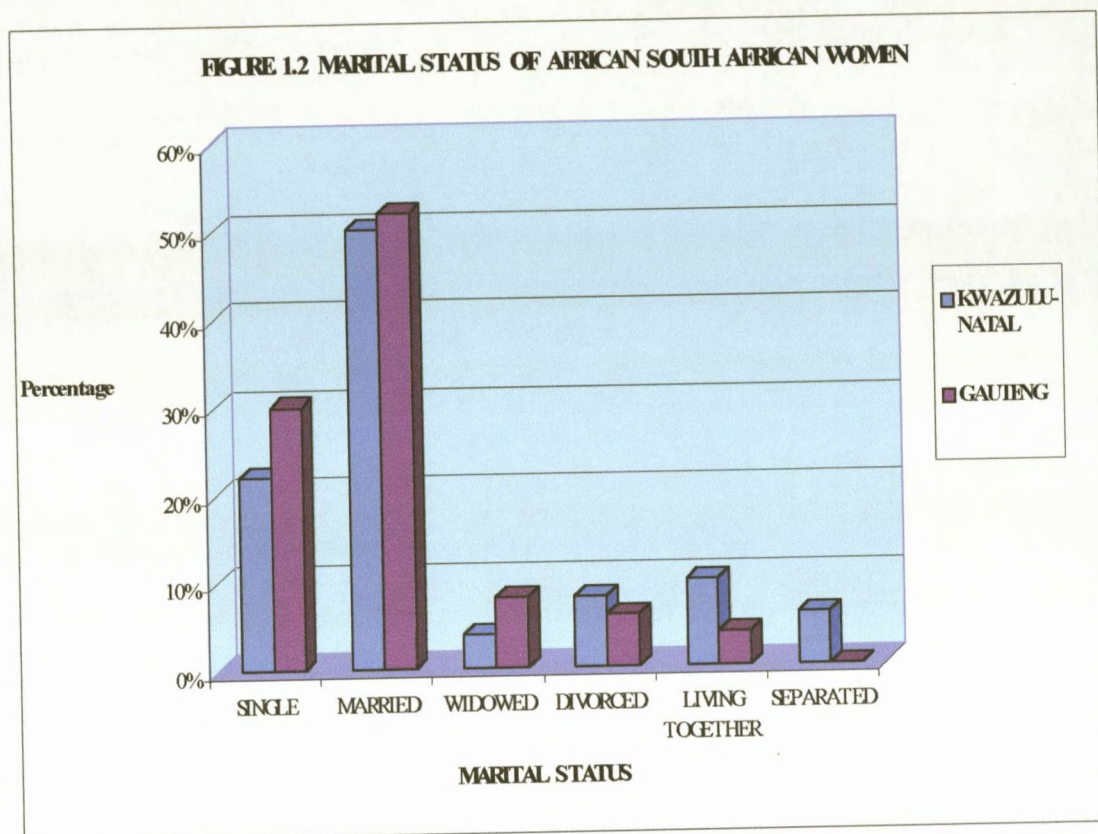
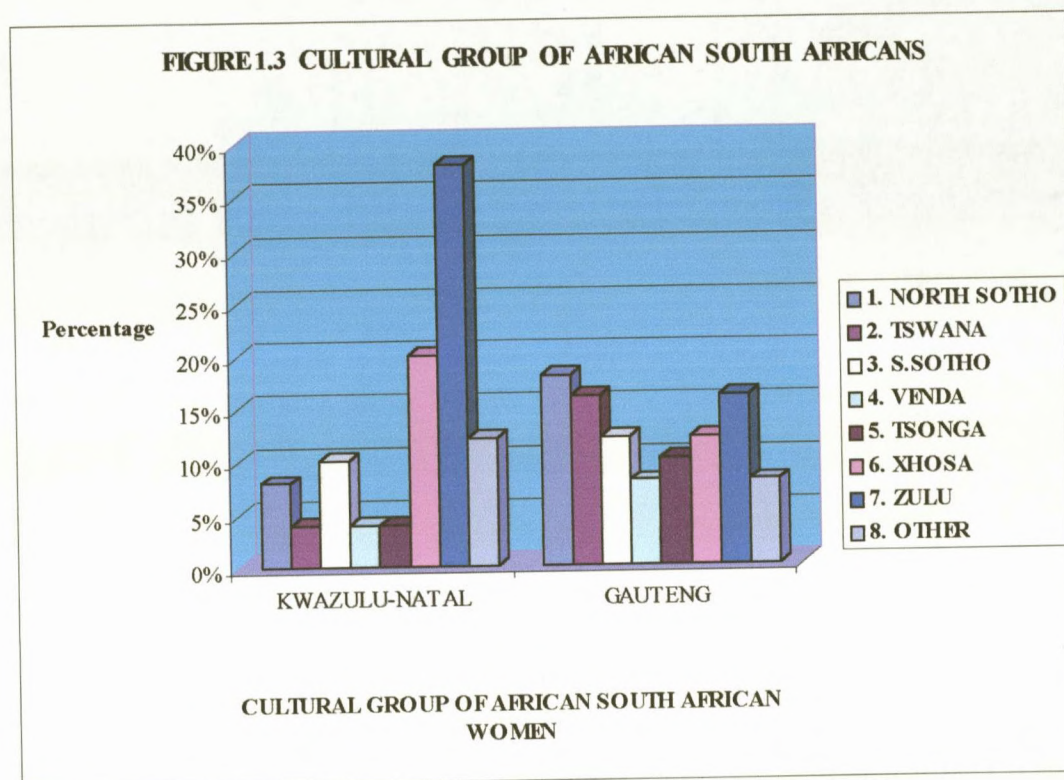


Figure 1.2 reflects that the majority of the respondents in this study were married, 48% in Gauteng and 52% in KwaZulu-Natal, followed by a minimum of 30% in Gauteng and 20% in KwaZulu-Natal who were single, and a small minority who were separated.



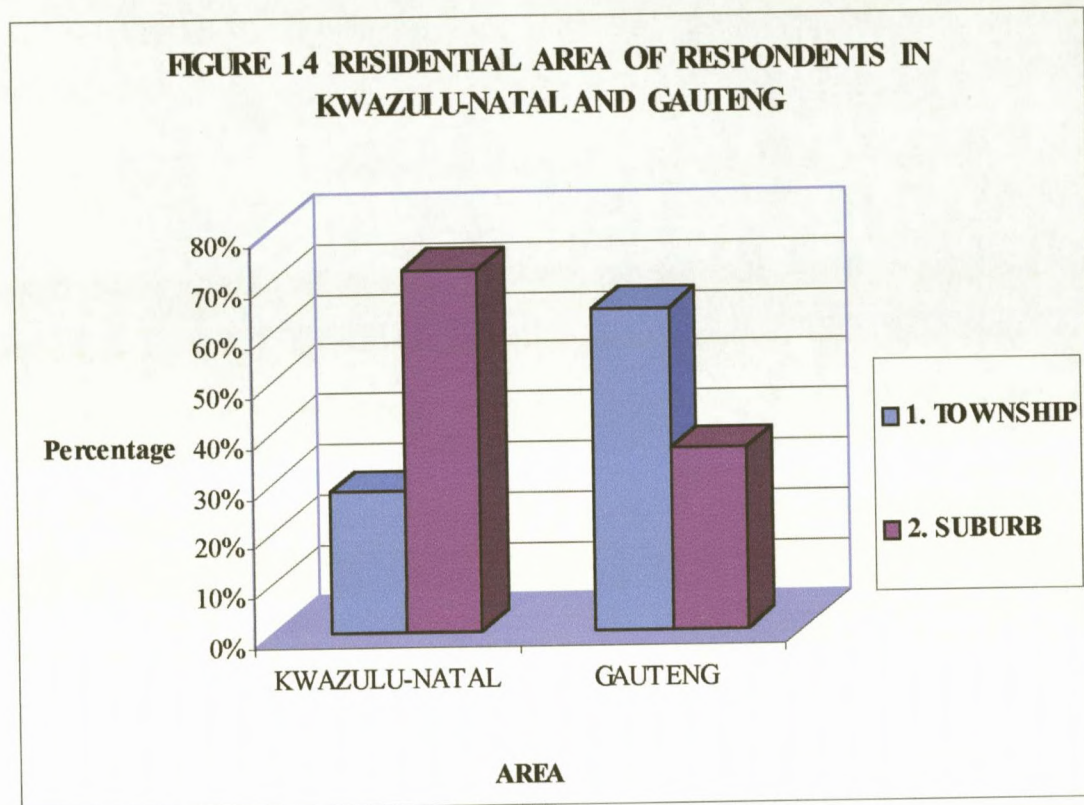
The depicted bar graph in Figure 1.3 indicates the cultural group of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) according to different ethnic groups.



The above bar graph in Figure 1.3 indicates the Zulu (38%) as the most dominating ethnic group in KwaZulu-Natal, whereas in Gauteng the results indicated N. Sotho with 16% followed by both Tswana and Zulu which indicated 16%.



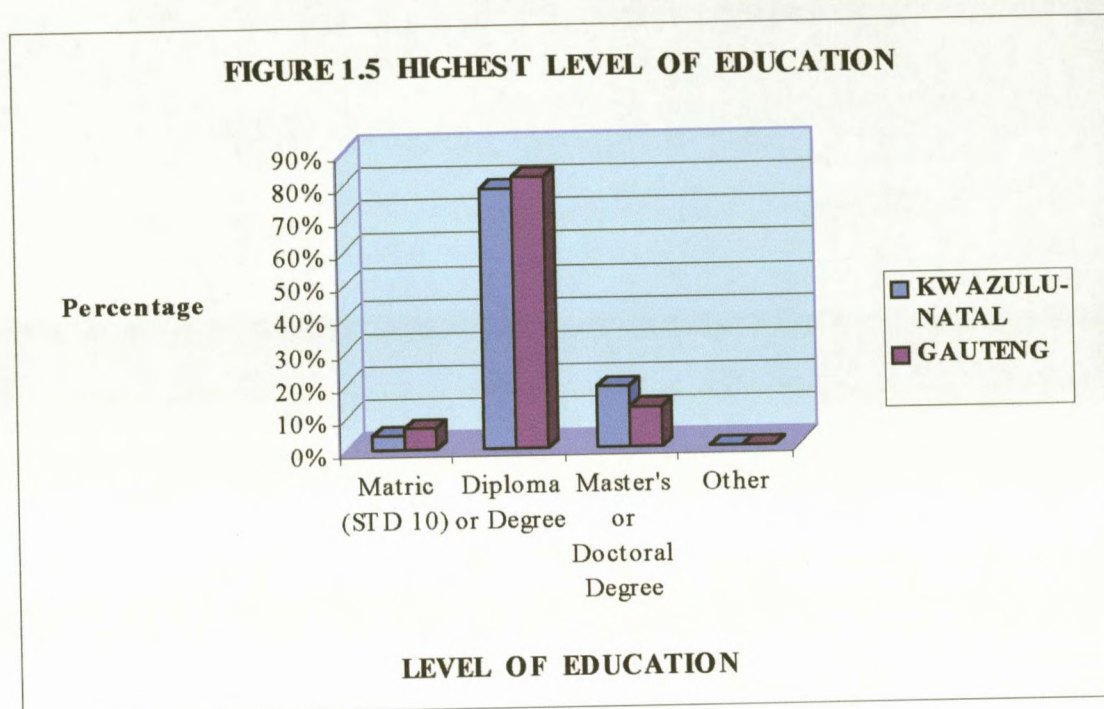
The depicted bar graph (Figure 1.4) shows the residential area of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).



The findings of this study indicate surprising results of those who reside in a suburb in KwaZulu-Natal (72%) and those from Gauteng which indicated a lower response rate (32%). With regard to the township as the area of residence the results indicated a reverse of the above, with the majority of the respondents (6%) being those from Gauteng and a lower rate of 28% reported from KwaZulu- Natal.



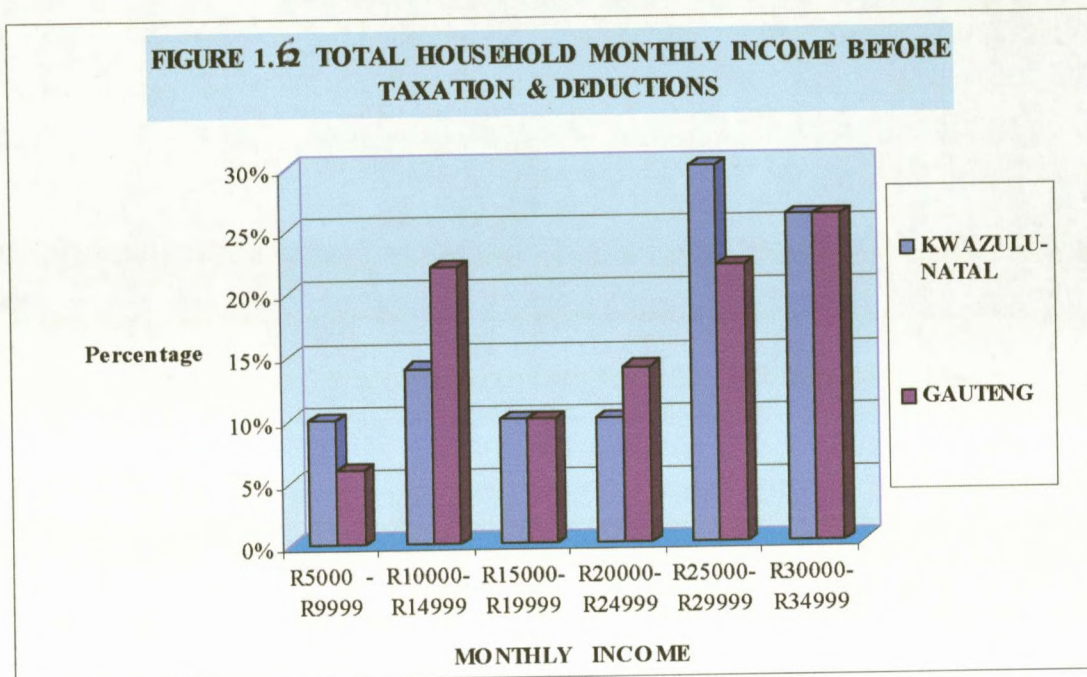
The bar graph in Figure 1.5 indicates the educational qualification of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).



The depicted bar graph in Figure 1.5 reveals that the majority of the African South African women in both provinces have acquired a diploma and/or degree as their qualification. Gauteng indicates as the highest response (80%) as compared with KwaZulu-Natal showing 78% as those who have a diploma or degree. A minimal number of 6% in Gauteng and 4% in KwaZulu-Natal indicated Matric as their highest qualification. These low results may be due to the fact that some of the selected women in this study are much older. Moreover, they have been employed in the corporate world and have acquired experience in the type of job they do, or they may be running a small business where it was not compulsory for them to acquire a specific educational qualification.



The depicted Figure 1.6 illustrates the respondents' total household monthly income before taxation and deduction.



Some of the respondents (24%) in both provinces earn between R30000- R34999, whereas in the category of R25000- R29999 KwaZulu-Natal reported the highest percentage (26%), and (24%) in Gauteng.

### 5.3 CHI-SQUARE

The Chi-Square test is most often used for testing the nominal data. It is an inferential statistic used for analyzing categorical scores. The Chi-square test detects whether there is an association between two categorical variables. However, it does not say anything about how strong that association might be. The following tables indicate the Chi-Square results which show the significance of the results in relation to different variables of this study.

Distribution of frequencies and percentages are shown on the following page in Table 5.1 for the African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

Questionnaire 1. Section I consisted of the Demographic data in frequencies and percentages that presents the distribution of respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

### 5.4 FREQUENCIES and PERCENTAGES

The frequency and percentages in Table 5.1 indicates that 4% of African South African women in Gauteng and 8% in KwaZulu-Natal have Matric as their highest qualification. In Gauteng 12% of the African South African women and 18% in KwaZulu-Natal reported that they have a Master's or a PhD as their highest qualification. The diploma and degree were cited as the educational qualification which most of the respondents had acquired.

**TABLE: 5.1**

**Frequency Distribution of Respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) by Educational attainment.**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Matric (Std10)	Kzn Gp	2	4.0	4	8.0	4.0 4.8
Diploma or degree	Kzn Gp	39	78.0	40	80.0	82.0 88.0
Masters or Doctoral Degree (PhD)	Kzn Gp	9	18.0	6	12.0	100.0 100.0
Total		50	100.0	50	100.0	

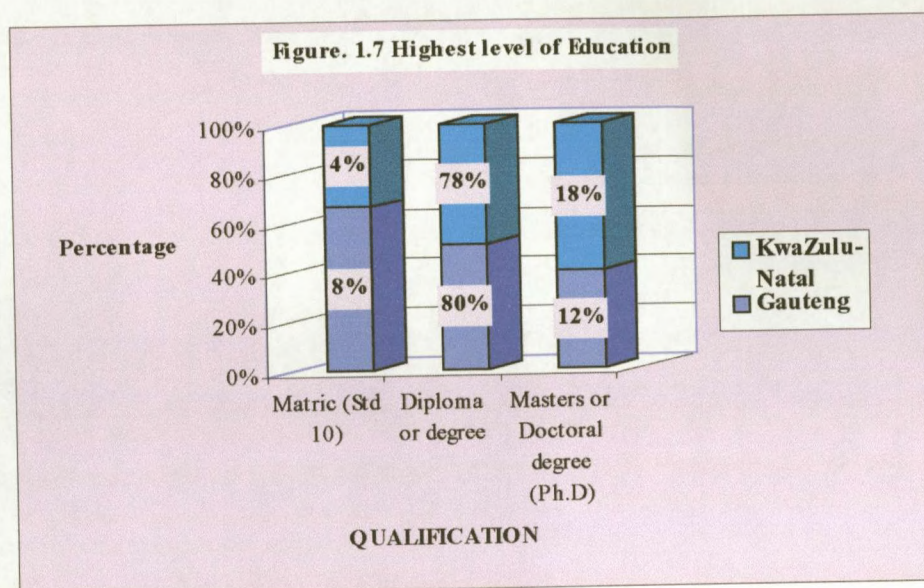
Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province



The depicted Figure 1.7 illustrates the respondents' educational attainment.



The bar graph in Figure 1.7 indicates that majority of respondents both Gauteng 80% and 78% KwaZulu-Natal have acquired diploma or degree as qualification. Twelve (12%) in Gauteng and 18% KwaZulu-Natal are reported as those who have Masters or Doctoral (Ph.D) degree as their highest qualification. A minimal percentage of 8% in Gauteng and 4% in KwaZulu-Natal are those who have matric (Std 10).

**5.5. QUESTIONNAIRE 1: SECTION II: Attitudes and perception of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).**

Table 5.2 below reflects that 88% of the respondents in Gauteng and 84% in KwaZulu-Natal agreed that they wear ethnically influenced clothes as a redefinition of their African culture. In Gauteng 6% of the selected sample and 12% in KwaZulu-Natal were those who strongly agreed that they wear ethnically influenced clothes to redefine their culture. There was a minimal percentage of 6% in Gauteng and 4% in KwaZulu-Natal of the respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

**Table 5.2**

**The wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of the selected sample in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as a redefinition of African culture.**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	Kzn Gp	6	12.0	3	6.0	12.0 6.0
Agree	Kzn Gp	42	84.0	44	88.0	96.0 94.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Kzn Gp	2	4.0	3	6.0	100.0 100.0
Total		50	100.0	50	100.0	

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province



Figure 1. 8 below portrays the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n^1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal( $n^2 = 50$ ) as redefinition of their culture.

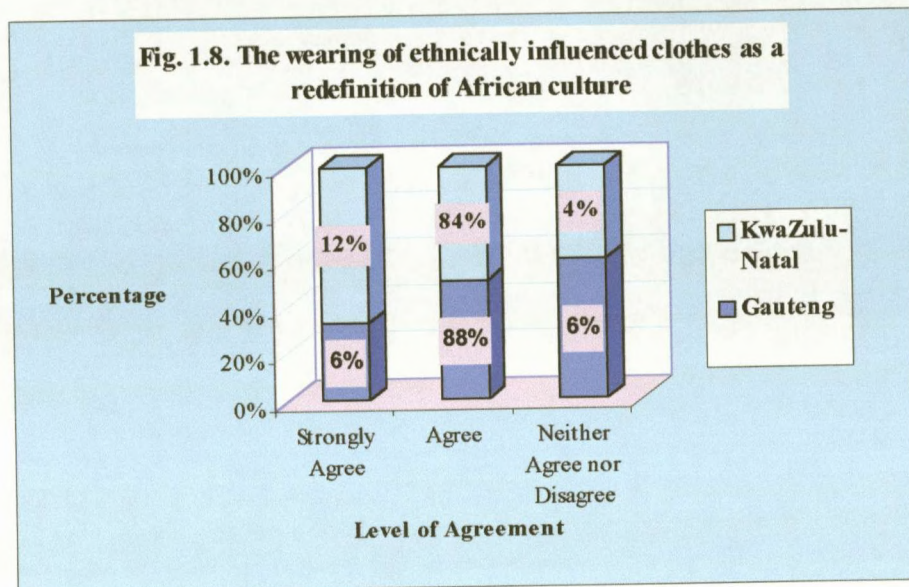


Figure 1. 8 above shows that a higher rate of 88% of the respondents in Gauteng and 84% in KwaZulu-Natal of those who agree that they wear ethnically influenced clothes as a redefinition of their culture. A small percentage of 6% in Gauteng and 7% in KwaZulu-Natal was reported as those respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed that they wear ethnically influenced clothes as a redefinition of African culture. The remaining 6% from Gauteng and 12% from KwaZulu-Natal were reported as those who strongly agreed with this statement.



5.6. Table 5.3 indicates the opinion of the respondents in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in relation to using a curl relaxer to straighten their hair. The succeeding Chi-Square Test results in Table 5.3 reveal that there is no significance between the African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal and the use of a curl relaxer to straighten their hair.

**Table 5.3 (a)**

**Attitudes of respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) towards using a curl relaxer and straightening of hair.**

	Sample size	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
Kzn	50	21	29			50
Gp	50			21	29	50
Total		21	29	21	29	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : There is no association between the opinions of African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal about using hair relaxer to straighten their hair.

$H_1$ : There is an association between the opinions of African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal about using hair relaxer to straighten their hair.

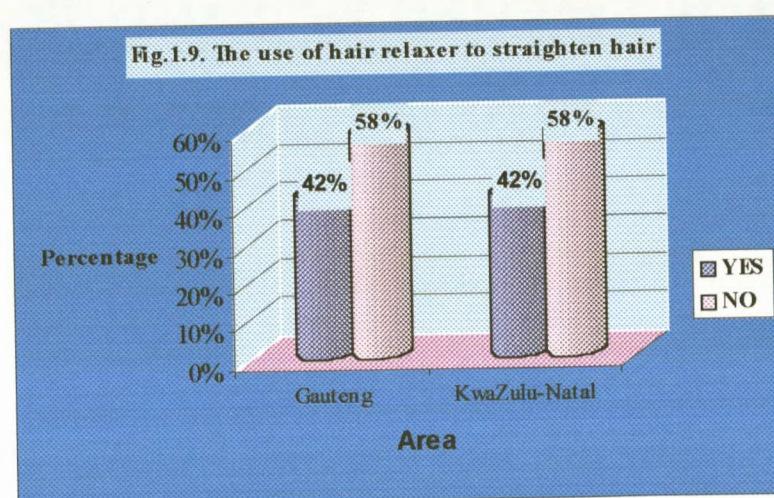
$\alpha = 0.05$

Decision Rule.

If  $P < .05$ , significant at 5%, Reject  $H_0$

If  $P \geq .05$  not significant at 5%, Do not reject  $H_0$

Figure 1.9 image the opinion of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n^1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n^2 = 50$ ) with regard to the use of a curl relaxer to straighten their hair.



The results with regard to African South African women and the using of hair relaxer as hair straightener reflected the same percentage in both provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal of more than a half (58%) of those who responded with a 'Yes' as their answer to this statement. Less than half (42%) of the respondents indicated a 'No' to indicate that they don't straighten their hair.

Table 5.3 (b)

The use of a curl relaxer by respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as a hair straightener.

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	P-value	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.000	1	1.000		
Continuity Correction	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.000	1	1.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.580
Linear-by-Linear	.000	1	1.000		

$P = 1.000$   $P \geq .05$  is not significant at 5%

$\therefore$  Do not reject  $H_0$

Decision : There is no association between the opinions of African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal with regard to straightening of hair using hair relaxer.

Conclusion: The results shows that there is no association between the opinion of African South African women with regard to straightening of hair using hair relaxer.

5.7 Table 5.4. illustrates the cross-tabulation of variables and perception of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) and the specific meaning that ethnically influenced beads have on African South Africans.

**Table 5.4 (a)**

**Perception of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and in KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) with regard to ethnically influenced beads and its specific meaning to Africans.**

**Cross-tabulation**

	Sample size	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
Kzn	50	33	17			50
Gp	50			21	29	50
Total	100	33	17	21	29	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : Ethnic beads have no specific meaning to the two groups.

$H_1$ : Ethnic beads have specific meaning to the two groups.

$\alpha = 0.05$

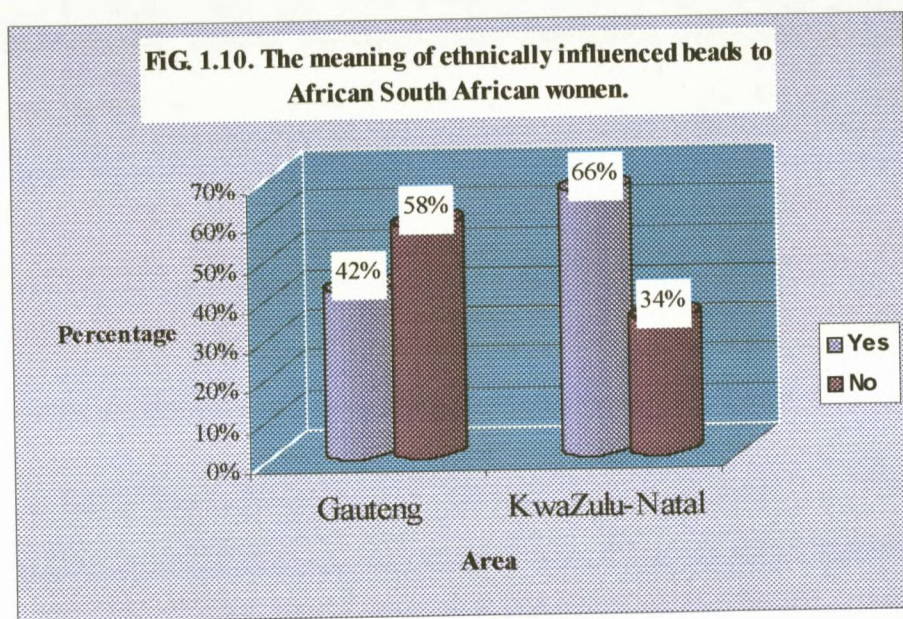


### Decision Rule

If  $P < .05$ , significant at 5%, Reject  $H_0$

If  $P \geq .05$  not significant at 5%, Do not Reject

Figure 1.10 reflects the meaning that ethnically influenced beads has to the respondents in Gauteng ( $n^1 = 50$ ) and ( $n^2 = 50$ ).



The above cylinder graph shows that 66% in KwaZulu-Natal and 58% of the respondents in Gauteng that indicated 'yes' as the answer that ethnically influenced beads has meaning to them. Less than half 42% in Gauteng and 34% of those in KwaZulu-Natal were those who responded with a 'no' that ethnically influenced beads do not have meaning to them.

The following Chi-square results in Table 5.4(b) show the significant meaning of ethnically influenced beads of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

**Table 5.4 (b)**

**The meaning of ethnically influenced beads to African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).**

**Chi-square results.**

	Value	df	P-value	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.797	1	.016		
Continuity Correction	4.871	1	.027		
Likelihood Ratio	5.856	1	.016		
Fisher's Exact Test				.027	.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.739	1	.017		

The results show the P-value of .016 which is  $< 0.05$ .

$P = 0.016$   $P < 0.05$  a significant at 5%.

$\therefore$  Reject  $H_0$ .

Decision : Ethnic beads have specific meaning for the African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

Conclusion: There is a significant association between the two groups of African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in relation to ethnically influenced beads having specific meaning for African South Africans.

5.8. Table 5.6 overleaf discloses a positive response between both groups. Seventy-eight (78%) of the African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) whereas ninety-two (92%) of those in KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) responded with a 'yes' about the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day. A low percentage of 22% respondents from Gauteng and 8% from those in KwaZulu-Natal recorded a 'no' response with regard to the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day.

With respect to the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes the frequencies in Table 5.6 overleaf reveal that 78% of the African South African women in Gauteng and 92% of those in KwaZulu-Natal showed a positive response towards the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day.

**Table 5.6**

**The wearing of ethnically influenced clothes by respondents in Gauteng  
( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) on their wedding day.**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Yes	Kzn	46	92.0			92.0
	Gp			39	78.0	78.0
No	Kzn	4	8.0			100.0
	Gp			11	22.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	50	100. 0	

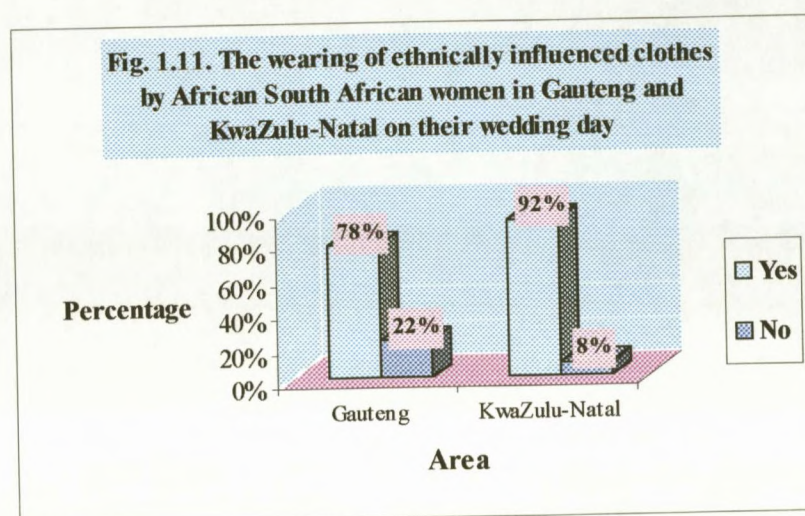
Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu- Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province



Figure 1.11 below delineates the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n^1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n^2 = 50$ ) on their wedding day.



The results in Figure 1.11 depicts that there was an overwhelming respond of ninety-two (92%) of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and seventy-eight (78%) of those in Gauteng with regard to the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day. A minimal percentage of eight (8%) was reported in KwaZulu-Natal and in Gauteng only twenty-two (22%) was reported from those who do not want to wear ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day.

**5.9.** Cross-tabulation of variables with respect to the wearing of ethnically influenced jewellery as accessories are recorded in Table 5.7 (a) overleaf which indicates that 42% of the African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and 49% in KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) indicated that they wear ethnically influenced clothes as accessories.

**Table 5.7 (a)**

**Cross-tabulation on variables of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as to whether they would like to wear ethnically influenced jewellery as accessories.**

**Cross-tabulation**

	Sample size	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
Kzn	50	49	1			50
Gp	50			42	8	50
Total	100	49	1	42	8	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : There is no association between accessorising clothes with ethnically influenced jewellery.

$H_1$ : There is an association between accessorising clothes and ethnic jewellery.

$\alpha = 0.05$

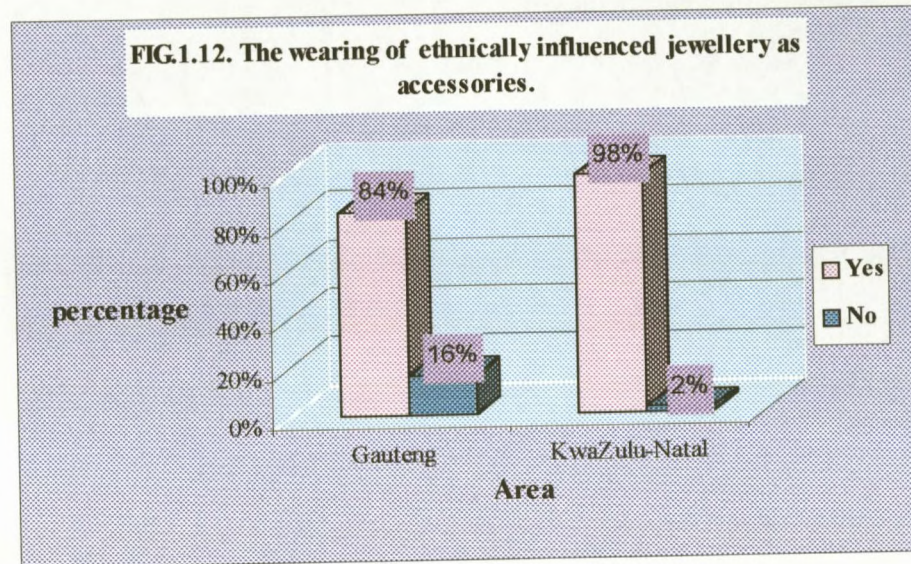
Decision Rule

If  $P < .05$ , significant at 5%, Reject  $H_0$ .

If  $P \geq .05$  not significant at 5%, Do not reject  $H_0$ .



Figure 1.12 below symbolizes the wearing of ethnically influenced jewellery as accessories.



The results reported that ninety-eight percent (98%) in KwaZulu-Natal and eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents stated that they wear ethnically influenced jewellery as accessories. A very small amount of two percent (2%) in KwaZulu-Natal and only sixteen percent (16%) in Gauteng reported that they do not wear ethnically influenced clothes as jewellery.

Table 5.7 (b)

Table 5.7(a) depicts the wearing of ethnically influenced beads as accessories by African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

Chi-Square results

	Value	df	P-value	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.983	1	.014		
Continuity Correction	4.396	1	.036		
Likelihood Ratio	6.737	1	.009		.015
Fisher's Exact Test				.031	
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.923 100	1	.015		

$P = .014$  significant at 5%.

$\therefore$  Reject  $H_0$ .

Decision : There is significant association between the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes and the wearing of ethnically influenced beads as accessories.

Conclusion: There is significant association among the two groups of African South African women in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in the wearing of ethnically influenced beads as accessories.

5.10 Although the computed results in Table 5.8 indicate a higher response rate in both Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ), a slight difference among the two groups was recorded. In Gauteng a 84% response was noted whereas in KwaZulu-Natal a 98% was recorded to show that they agree that they use ethnically influenced beads as accessories. There is a 16% 'no' response rate of African South African women in Gauteng and only 2% in KwaZulu-Natal of those who do not use ethnically influenced beads as accessories.

**Table 5.8**

**The use of ethnically influenced jewellery by African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as accessories.**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Yes	Kzn	49	98.0			98.0
	Gp			42	84.0	84.0
No	Kzn	1	2.0			100.0
	Gp			8	16.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	50	100.0	

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng



The depicted Figure 1.13 indicates the wearing of formal Western clothes for the working environment by African South African women in Gauteng ( $n^1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n^2 = 50$ ).

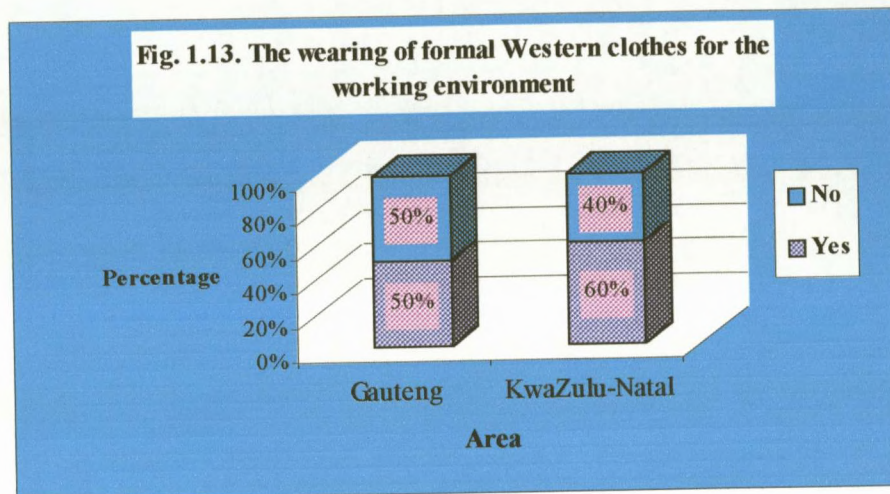


Figure 1.13 depicts that sixty percentage (60%) of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and fifty percent (50%) in Gauteng stated that they wear formal clothes for the work environment. Half the number (50%) of the respondents in Gauteng and forty percent (40%) of those in KwaZulu-Natal were those who noted that they do not wear formal clothes when going to work.

5.11 The results in Table 5.9 reflect that 50% of the African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) agreed that they wear formal Western styles of clothes to work as compared with 60% of those in KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ). In Gauteng an equal number of 50% who do not wear Western styles of clothes to work was noted, whereas in KwaZulu-Natal a 40% 'no' response was reported as the answer of those who do not wear Western styles of clothes to work

**Table 5.9**

**The wearing of formal Western clothes for the working environment by African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Yes	Kzn	30	60.0			60.0
	Gp			25	50.0	50.0
No	Kzn	20	40.0			40.0
	Gp			25	50.0	50.0
Total		50		50	100.0	

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

5.12 Table 5.10 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the cultural background of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as an influence on a person's choice of clothes. The results reflect 44% of African South African women in Gauteng and 62% in KwaZulu-Natal as those who indicated a medium response of cultural background as an influence on a person's clothing choice.

**Table 5.10**

**Cultural background as an influence on the choice of clothes of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).**

	Area	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Low influence	Kzn	3	6.0			6.0
	Gp			16	32.0	32.0
Medium influence	Kzn	31	62.0			68.0
	Gp			22	44.0	76.0
High influence	Kzn	16	32.0			100.0
	Gp			12	24.0	100.0
Total		50	100.	50	100.	

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province



Figure 1.14 below portrays the level of influence that cultural background has on African South African women's choice of clothes.

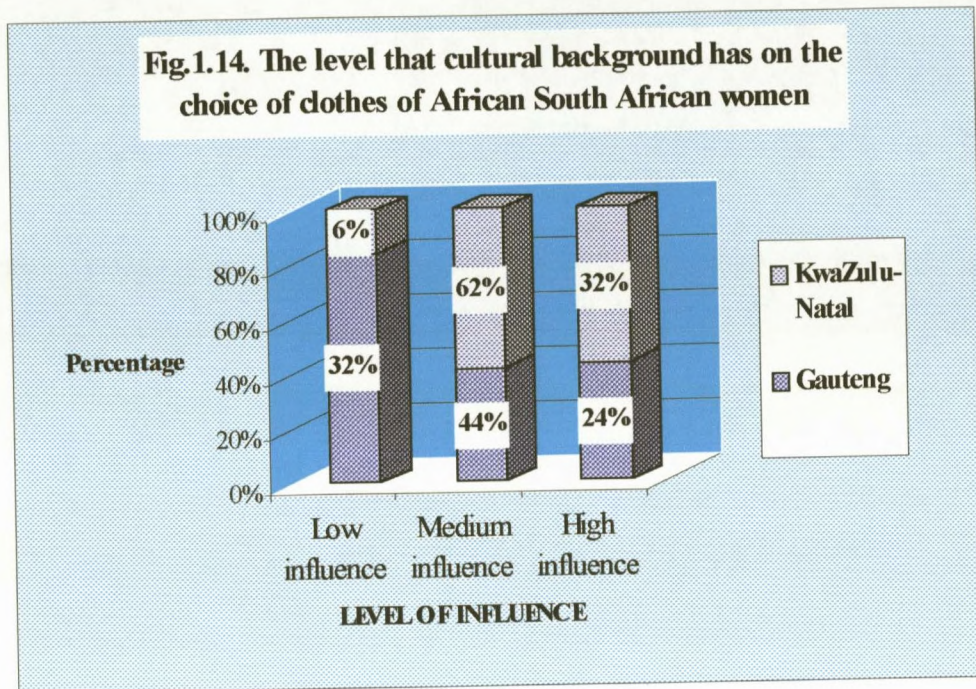


Figure 1.14 reflects that there is a low level of cultural influence of 4% in KwaZulu-Natal and 32% in Gauteng of the those respondents who are regard their cultural background as an influence on their choice of clothes. Sixty-two (62%) in KwaZulu-Natal and forty-four (44%) was recorded as those who regarded culture as an influence of their choice of clothes. An amount of thirty-two percent (32%) in KwaZulu-Natal and twenty-four percent (24%) of those in Gauteng regarded their cultural background has a higher influence on their choice of clothes.

**5.13** Table 5.11 (a) shows the cross-tabulation of respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) indicates the rate which cultural background has in influencing a person's choice of clothes. A Chi-Square Test in Table 5.11(b) was computed to find out if there is an association between ethnically influenced clothes and cultural background of African South African women.

**Table 5.11 (a)**

**Cross-tabulation of cultural background of respondents in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) as an influence in their choice of clothes.**

	Low Area influence	Medium influence	High influence	Low influence	Medium influence	High influence	Total
Kzn	3	31	16				50
Gp				16	22	12	50
Total	3	31	16	16	22	12	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : There is no association between cultural background and the choice of ethnically influenced clothes.

$H_1$ : There is an association between cultural background and the choice of clothes of African South African women.

$\alpha = 0.05$

### Decision Rule

If  $P < .05$ , significant at 5%. Reject  $H_0$

If  $P \geq .05$  not significant at 5%. Do not reject  $H_0$

**Table 5.11 (b)**

**Cultural background as an influence of ethnically influenced clothes to African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ).**

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-	10.994	2	.004
Likelihood Ratio	11.875	2	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.194	1	.013

$P = .004 < .05$ , significant at 5%

$\therefore$  Reject  $H_0$

**Decision** : There is an association between cultural background and ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women.

**Conclusion:** The results show that cultural background does have an influence on the choice of clothes of African South African women. The results indicate that  $P = .004^*$  which shows that there is a relationship between cultural background and ethnically influenced clothes.

5.14 Cross-tabulation in Table 5.12(a) overleaf was done on various variables to show the level of influence which Western culture has on influencing people who do not want to wear ethnically influenced clothes.

**Table 5.12 (a)**

**Western culture as an influence on African South African people in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) who do not wear designs with ethnic patterns.**

**Cross-tabulation**

Area	Low level	Medium level	High level	Low level	Medium level	High level	Total
Kzn	2	6	42				50
Gp					5	45	50
Total	2	6	42		5	45	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : Western culture does not have any influence on designs with ethnic patterns.

$H_1$ : Western culture does have an influence on designs with ethnic patterns.

$\alpha = 0.05$ .

### Decision Rule

If  $P > .05$ , significant at 5%. Reject  $H_0$ .

If  $P \geq .05$  significant at 5% . Do not reject  $H_0$ .

Table 5.12(b)

Western culture as an influence on African South Africans  
in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) who do  
not want wear ethnically influenced clothes.

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.194	2	.334
Likelihood Ratio	2.967	2	.227
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.478	1	.224

$P = .334 > 0.05$  not significant.

$\therefore$  Accept  $H_0$ .

Decision : Western culture does not have any influence on ethnically influenced cloth  
clothes.

Conclusion: Western culture does not have any influence on ethnically influenced  
clothes.

5.15 Cross-tabulation results in Table 5.13(a) indicate opinions of African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) with regard to whether designs with ethnic patterns have a link with historic roots of African culture.

**Table 5.13 (a)**

**Opinion of the African South African women in Gauteng ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and KwaZulu-Natal ( $n_2 = 50$ ) with regard to ethnically influenced patterns and the link to historic roots of African culture.**

**Cross-tabulation**

	Sample size	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
Kzn	50	46	4			50
Gp	50			39	11	50
Total		46	4	39	11	100

Key:

Kzn = KwaZulu-Natal Province

Gp = Gauteng Province

$H_0$ : There is no association between designs with ethnic patterns having a link with historic roots of African culture.

$H_1$ : There is an association between designs with ethnic patterns having a link with historic roots of African culture.

$\alpha = 0.05$ .

### Decision Rule

If  $P < .050$ , significant at 5%. Reject  $H_0$ .

If  $P \geq .050$  not significant at 5%. Do not Reject  $H_0$ .

**Table 5.13 (b).**

**Ethnically influenced patterns and their link to the historic roots of African culture.**

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	P-value	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.005	1	.025		
Continuity Correction	3.677	1	.055		
Likelihood Ratio	5.369	1	.020		
Fisher's Exact Test				.051	.026
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.955	1	.026		

$P = .025 < .050$  is significant at 5%.

$\therefore$  Reject  $H_0$ .

Decision : There is a link between ethnically influenced patterns and historic African culture.

Conclusion: The findings reveal that there is a link between ethnic patterns and historic African culture.

An integrated discussion of these results is presented in Chapter 6, which links there relevant findings with the literature review and the systemic model proposed.



## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation was to analyse and interpret clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women in the corporate world in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, with reference to black identity and Western fashion trends.

In the previous chapter (Chapter 5) the results from the processed data were presented. In this chapter the results and findings are integrated and evaluated, based on the recent literature. A discussion of the findings follows in this chapter in order to identify the attitudes which affect the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes by African South Africans.

Although more research is needed in the area of African South African dress, the results from this study support the theory that there has been a change in African South Africans' perception of their physical characteristics and their attitude towards black identity.

The results indicated that the attitude of African South African women towards the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes was positive. Overall it was found that the results in this study reflected a positive attitude from respondents in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal towards the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes.

## 6.2 Hypothesis One

### **The Impact of the Interpretation of Ethnic Symbolism in Contemporary South Africa**

The results supported the hypothesis that African South African women's perception of ethnically influenced clothes will be positive. Hypothesis One was accepted at the 0.05 level of significance. The results in chapter five of this study demonstrate that 88% of the African South African women in Gauteng and 84% of those in KwaZulu-Natal showed a positive response in the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes to reaffirm their culture.

Kaiser (1998:49) points out that some appearance styles seem to carry with them a kind of "historic memory". It has become evident that almost any object can develop cultural significance as it comes to be regarded as meaningful, whether by design or by discovery. Clothing is certainly no exception. The literature review as noted by (Kaiser, 1998:49) indicates that people of all cultures modify their appearance in some way, yet the symbolic systems and codes used to decipher and interpret clothing are likely to vary.

Whenever people share a common culture, they are likely to be exposed to a network of tangible products. The buying, selling, and wearing of clothes all contribute to signification, or the development of meaning associated with cultural objects. Hence, it is not just the product that results in the process of signification, but it is also the way people relate to those products and what they do to or with them.

Therefore, as a result of this high response rate in the way African South African women perceive the meaning of ethnically influenced clothes, it is concluded that they attach similar meaning to ethnically influenced clothes which acts as a motive to the wearing of these types of clothes, as highlighted in the literature review (2.9.1).

### 6.3 Hypothesis Two

#### **Dress Serves as a Visual Metaphor for Corporate Identity**

Hypothesis Two was accepted at the 0.05 level of significance. There was a positive response with regard to this hypothesis. Johnson and Lennon (1999:80) proposed that similarity of appearances among management personnel in a large corporation helped to reduce uncertainty in the organization, in that the standard management appearance signified commitment to professionalism and to organizational and business goals on the part of managers (2.4). The managerial business suit indicates the value of the wearer to the organization and thereby helps to promote, support, and maintain the organization (Johnson & Lennon, 1999:80), as stated in the literature review (2.9.2).

Rafaeli and Pratt (1993 as cited by Johnson & Lennon, 1999:80), assert that dress helps individuals to perform business roles. With regard to this hypothesis, the results Table 5.9 indicate that the respondents concur with Johnson and Lennon's (1999) proposition because they are considerate in what they wear to work in order to maintain the standard of the organization. The results in Table 5.9 denote that the respondents in Gauteng and in KwaZulu-Natal agreed that they wear formal Western clothes for work.

Based on this positive response, it is concluded that African South African women intend to wear Western styles of clothes for the work environment in order to achieve a professional status. In agreement with what Johnson and Lennon (1994) suggested, it is apparent that African South African women intend to have a similar appearance to that of their counterparts when they dress for work. Hence, they choose to dress in Western style of clothes when they go to work, in order to identify with the organization, rather than wear ethnically influenced clothes which will reflect ethnic identity instead of the corporate identity. Therefore, it is concluded that African South African women strive to balance both the organization and their ethnic identity.

Davis (1992) supports Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) by contending that dress, therefore, helps the person in a management role to learn the role and perform the role through shared meanings. The corporate identity is managed and constructed, in part, through dress. Dress serves, then, as a visual metaphor for corporate identity. The change in gender representation in business provides an opportunity to explore concomitant proportion in the role of dress, as women move in greater proportion into management and executive roles. As individuals take on new roles, dress symbols employed in the performance of those roles are likely to be adopted, adapted, and modified by the new role-takers in a process of meaning change (Johnson & Lennon, 1999:79).

However, the findings in this research (Table 5.9) reported that African South African women intend to retain ethnically influenced clothes for special occasions and ceremonies. Based on these aforementioned findings (Table 5.9), it is interesting to note that African South African women are aware that ethnically influenced clothes are not appropriate for the work environment. Hence, by wearing Western style of dress to the work environment, they intend to identify with the organization in order to project the organization's image, by this it is concluded that they intend to satisfy both the corporate identity and their African identity, as cited in the literature (2.4.1).

Rucker, Anderson and Kangas (1999:59), as cited by Johnson and Lennon (1999:59), assert that several factors have made dressing for success in the 1990s more complicated than it has been in the previous decades. This is evident in South Africa in relation to this study, where it is noticeable that corporate wear versus ethnically influenced clothes. One of those factors is the increase in diversity of the workforce. Johnson and Lennon (1999:59) contend further that a shift in corporate dress codes towards casual dress has also made constructing a powerful image more difficult. Johnson and Lennon's (1999) argument is supported by the findings (Table 5.9) which denote that not all the respondents agreed with the statement that their work environment determines their manner of dress. There were 40% in KwaZulu-Natal and 50% in Gauteng of the respondents who disagreed that their manner of dress is determined by their work environment.

This might be due to the fact that certain corporate companies allow their employees freedom of dress but must still maintain a professional business look - as stated in the literature review (2.4) that dress codes vary from one company to another.

Johnson and Lennon (1999:89) contend that people's dress codes come from their environment, and as they rise in the organization their environment changes. Therefore, to support Johnson and Lennon's (1999) statement, it is shown that the work environment differs from that of the African South African women's home environment, due to the fact that when they dress for work they consider if what they wear will be suitable to perform the roles assigned to them by the corporate companies (2.4.1).

The findings in Chapter 5 of this study show that it is apparent that the work environment does not totally give African South African women the freedom to dress as they please. This gives leeway to African South African women to express their freedom of dress when attending social gatherings and special ceremonies by dressing in ethnically influenced clothes (2.4). The results in this study supported this statement, due to the fact that 38% of the respondents in Gauteng and 30% in KwaZulu-Natal, agree that they wear Western style of clothes to work. However, 36% of the respondents in Gauteng and 22% in KwaZulu-Natal disagreed that their work environment, determines their dress code.

It is concluded that this response may be due to the fact that the literature review (2.4) noted that the majority of the corporate companies have recently changed their dress code in order to make their employees feel more comfortable about what they wear to work. This is supported by the fact that the results (Table 5.9) demonstrate that 60% of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and 50% of those Gauteng agreed that they wear formal Western styles of dress for work.

The results (Table 5.9) indicate that 48% respondents from Gauteng and 40% in KwaZulu-Natal agreed that it was difficult to integrate ethnically influenced clothes into career clothes. However, the literature (2.4) denoted that African South African women complement their working dress codes with ethnically influenced scarves and beads in order to achieve both the corporate and African appearance.

Johnson and Lennon (1999:386) assert that scarves and ties focus attention toward the face. Business women can brighten a suit or dress by selecting a scarf in a contrasting colour. Molloy (1977:27) in his book *The Women's Dress for Success*, documented that certain industries require certain dress. And while there is nothing wrong with a polyester pantsuit, research shows that it will not help a woman in business. A good skirted suit says a woman is an upper class, or middle class executive type, while an obviously cheap polyester pantsuit says she's not.

Molloy's (1977) research shows that when a woman is wearing a good skirted suit, it is easier for her to give orders and have them carried out. A person's clothes should move her/him up socially and not hold her/him back in business. As an African South African woman, Mabuza-Suttle (1999:132) concurs with Molloy (1977) by contending that to be successful "A person's image can make or break her/his on her/him way up the ladder of success. A person's dress says a lot about how she/he feels about herself/himself, her/his environment, and the people she/he interacts with".

Jan Dunlop, as cited by Mabuza-Suttle (1999:132), argues that, "visual appearance will tilt the scale for or against a person more and more as she/he moves toward the narrowing arena at the top. Dunlop further states that he always dresses professionally and not fashionably. The women in this study supported Dunlop's statement of dressing for professionalism and not fashionably, due to the fact that 24% in Gauteng and 36% in KwaZulu-Natal were indicated as the highest response rate of those respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement that they wear ethnically influenced clothes because they are fashionable. Based on the results Chapter 5 it is revealed that African South African women dress professionally and are not influenced by fashion. Hence, it is deduced that African South African women do not rate ethnically influenced clothes as fashionable items.



#### 6.4 Hypothesis Three

##### The Influence of Western Culture on African South African Women

Sproles and Burns (1994:156) maintain that standards of dress in a group will change with time, but the group will continue to maintain social control over these overt symbols of its identity. The results in this study Sproles and Burns' (1994) statement due to the fact that they reflected 44% in Gauteng and 42% in KwaZulu-Natal of those respondents who strongly agreed that they will continue wearing ethnically influenced clothes to identify with their culture.

Therefore, Hypothesis Three was accepted at the 0.05 level of significance. Although the respondents in this study live in a multi-cultural society and are influenced by Western culture, the results (Table 5.12) indicate that 45 women of the 50 selected sample in Gauteng and 42 of the 50 in KwaZulu-Natal gave a higher response that they will continue wearing ethnically influenced clothes. In Gauteng 48% and 72% in KwaZulu-Natal of the respondents agreed that braids are a sign of identity of African South Africans. Kaiser (1998:459) points out that through style variations, then, culture may send messages to itself about the discourse or struggle across cultural categories, and collective ambivalence about these categories, and what they represent.

As style becomes an arena for expression, revolt, and identification, it displays that culture is not necessarily based on "one-track" structure of feeling. The findings (Table 5.11.b) with regard to this statement received an overall response in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The literature (2.8) denotes that clothing can be employed as a symbolic indicator of the self.

The results (Table 5.8) revealed that the wearing of ethnically influenced beads as accessories was rated as being important among both respondents from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The literature (2.6) denotes that although African South African women wear formal Western type clothes for work, they prefer to accessorise their Western style of dress with ethnically influenced beads rather than Western styles of jewellery. This was supported by the results (Table 5.8) which revealed that from the selected sample 98% of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and 84% in Gauteng accessorised their clothes with ethnically influenced jewellery. Based on these results (Table 5.8) it is argued that there is a high degree of preference for ethnically influenced beads worn as jewellery, as compared with Western style of jewellery which used to be regarded as a status symbol among the African South Africans during the Apartheid era.

This overwhelming response may be due to the fact that ethnically influenced beads were used by African South Africans as part of their culture of communicating with one another. These findings support the research done by Morris- as stated in 3.15.3- in South Africa in 1994 which demonstrated that beaded ornaments invariably complement the costumes worn at weddings and other African ceremonies (Morris, 1994:23).

From the literature (3.15.6) it has been noticed that ethnically influenced beads play an important role in the African South African women's lives. It is concluded that African South African women still use ethnically influenced beads as a means of communication. Even if the results (Table 5.8) did not indicate whether these ethnically influenced beads are still used as a means of communication among the African South Africans, Bedford (1994) coincides with Morris' (1994) research results which revealed that African South Africans still use ethnically influenced beads as a means of communication and adornment. The findings (Table 5.8) substantiate Bedford (1994:12) who states that beadwork has been used to establish and entrench personal, social and ethnic identities, and it has also undoubtedly been the product of contact and interaction between many groups of people (Kaufmann, Proctor & Klopper). Beadwork encodes social information about the power, age, gender and ritual states of the wearer. With regard to the media as a promotional tool for ethnically influenced clothes, the results in this study denote that 52% in Gauteng and 70% in KwaZulu-Natal of the tested sample strongly agreed that the media promotes the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes.

The results in this study support Sproles and Burns' (1994:246) statement that a major channel of fashion communication is fashion advertising and promotion through the mass media. Newspaper advertising has become one of the most important channels for promoting selected styles available to consumers in local markets.

Sproles and Burns (1994) further contend that when fashions are advertised on television and radio, although the advertising often emphasizes brand names or store names rather than specific fashions, the endorsement of specific fashions is powerful. The findings in this study supported this assertion that visual observation is regarded as the most powerful communication due to the fact that 72% of the respondents in Gauteng and 69% in KwaZulu-Natal agreed that media promotes the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa. According to Sproles and Burns (1994), one of the most powerful fashion communications is the visual observation of styles being worn by other people. Burns and Sproles (1994) state further that an individual has considerable opportunity to receive this non-verbal communication every day.

Sproles and Burns (1994:247) are of the opinion that television programme, communicate fashion information through the clothing worn by characters. Non-promotional communications through mass media fashions are directly exposed to consumers through the non-promotional content of media. The findings in this study denote that some of the respondents in this study strongly agreed that the media promotes the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa, whereas others were less committed to the idea of wearing ethnically influenced clothes.

The findings in this study support Kaiser's (1998:432) statement that newspapers have been a traditional source of fashion information, and many older female fashion consumers appear to rely on them for this purpose (Lumpkin and Greenberg, 1989; Kaiser & Chanler, 1985;

Martin, 1996). Yet it appears that older adults notice and appreciate some of the clothing styles they see on television as well, and thus are likely to derive some ideas from this medium.

Kaiser (1998:433) further argues that older women appear to be selective about the fashion information they filter through the media. In support of Kaiser's (1998) argument it is apparent that some of the respondents in this study select ethnically influenced clothes, as worn by some African South African Parliamentarians, which has influenced their choice, rather than focus on the Western style of clothes. Therefore, it is concluded that some of the respondents in this study do choose to wear ethnically influenced clothes similar to the African South African Parliamentarians, and not fashionable Western styles of clothes, which may be due to their age, as they may be more concerned about readopting their cultural roots which they lost during the colonial era. To elaborate further that some of the women in the selected sample prefer ethnically influenced clothes, it might be that they are not influenced by fashion fads as other women in the selected sample do.

However, most surprisingly, it is noticed that some of the respondents in the sample population are following in their parents' footsteps, due to the fact that the literature review (3.15.2) revealed that even if young African South African women like to dress in fashionable designer labels such as Guess, Soviet, or Levis jeans, it is apparent that they complement their dress by wearing ethnically influenced beads as jewellery to show pride in their culture. This is supported by the results in Table 5.8.

The study done by Chowdhary (1988), as cited by Kaiser (1998:433), revealed that selection of women's clothing styles was related to media exposure. The literature review in this research (3.15.1) revealed that African South African celebrities and parliamentarians appear to be the most people who are exposed to the public through the media. Judging from the literature (3.15.1) it is deduced that the South African media appears to serve as a major source of exposure of ethnically influenced clothes to African South African women.

The results were striking with regard to the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes as wedding dresses. The wearing of ethnically influenced clothes as wedding dresses was significant at 0.05 level of significance. The literature review (3.20.2) noted that some of the African South African women wear either or both traditional (African) or Western wedding dresses when getting married. The frequency results (Table 5.6) indicate that 92% of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and 78% from those in Gauteng agreed that they wore or will wear ethnically influenced clothes on their wedding day. When viewing these results, it is evident that Western culture does not totally influenced African South Africans to the extent that they have forsaken their cultural roots. It is then concluded that the objective of this study was achieved due to the fact that African South African women like to express their identity through wearing designs with ethnic patterns.

When these women in the corporate world wore both Western and African garments as wedding dresses they are aware that by wearing only Western styles of clothes it might look as though they have totally adopted Western culture and abandoned their culture.

Therefore, based on the findings in Table 5.6 it is deduced that even if African South African women are influenced by other cultures with which they come into contact, they still adhere to their traditions.

It is further concluded that while interacting with other cultures African South Africans have carefully selected what is important from their culture in order to carry it to prosperity (3.15.3). Furthermore, these results (Table 5.6) support the literature review (2.2.3) which noted that ethnically influenced clothes are worn when attending social gatherings and special ceremonies.

Based on these findings it is apparent that African South African women are proud of their culture to the extent that even if they are influenced by Western culture they still adhere to their tradition. Furthermore, it may be concluded that in order to satisfy both Western and African culture, African South African women combine the two in order to be able to succeed in today's modern world.

With regards to ethnically influenced clothes being out of fashion, the findings exhibit that 84% of the respondents from Gauteng and 94% of those from KwaZulu-Natal do not consider ethnically influenced clothes to be out of fashion. These results in this study harmonize with Molloy's (1977:17) study in which he asserts that it is a mistake for a person to let the fashion industry influence her/his choice of clothes.

Judging from the findings in this study it is apparent that ethnically influenced clothes are not regarded by African South African women as fashionable items which will sooner or later be out of fashion.

Therefore, this could be an indication that African South African women will still want to wear ethnically influenced clothes in the future. From these findings it is concluded that the reason why ethnically influenced clothes are not regarded as fashionable items by African South African women, is because they attach certain important historic meaning to these clothes. There was 66% 'yes' response rate from KwaZulu-Natal and 42% from Gauteng with regard to the meaning that ethnically influenced beads has to African South Africans. The findings in this study (Table 5.4.b) imply that ethnically influenced beads are regarded as valuable items by African South Africans.

There is an overwhelming response to this statement. Ninety-four (94%) of the sample in KwaZulu-Natal and eighty-six (86%) in Gauteng agreed that they own clothes designed with ethnically influenced patterns. This indicates that the majority of the African South African women wear ethnically influenced clothes at one stage or another.

These findings give an impression that, even if some of the companies where African South African women work have restrictions in the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes to work, it is apparent that the majority of the respondents own ethnically influenced clothes because of the important meaning they attach to them.



A minimal number of 14% in Gauteng and six percent (6%) in KwaZulu-Natal reported not having clothes designed with ethnic patterns. This gives an impression that they may still be undecided as to whether they should wear ethnically influenced clothes or not. Furthermore, it is concluded that African South African women are highly influenced by Western culture to an extent that they do not find ethnically influenced clothes appealing to them. In support of these findings the literature review (2.3) noted that some people feel less confident wearing certain types of clothing, but when a particular style becomes popular they may feel obliged to wear it (Kaiser, 1998).

The findings in this study corroborate with Kaiser (1998) due to the fact that an equal minimal number of two percent (2%) of the response was recorded in Gauteng and in KwaZulu-Natal to the statement of preferring not four percent (4%) in KwaZulu-Natal and two percent (2%) in Gauteng dislike wearing ethnically influenced clothes because they do not want to identify with Africa. Based on these findings, it is concluded that these aforementioned responses are justification for those respondents who do not own clothes designed with ethnic patterns. There was an equal response rate of 42% from both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal respondents as a 'yes' answer that Western culture has an influence on hair styles. This percentage indicates that less than fifty percent of the selected African South African women are influenced by Western culture to an extent that they still use a curl relaxer to straighten their hair.

The cross-tabulated results indicate that area of residence does not have an influence on the respondents' hair styles. As a result the use of a hair straightener and the area of residence do not have significant results. This is an indication that Western culture does not have any influence on the hair styles of African South Africans. Therefore, it is concluded that Western culture did not influence African people to the extent that they forgot their roots. These findings are supported by the literature review which reported that African South African women are opting to re-adopt their culture by wearing natural hair (Malan, 2001). Therefore, from these results it is deduced that the majority of these women refrain from straightening their hair and opt to wear braids, shave their heads, or wear dreadlocks to retain their natural African look.

According to Marshall et al. (2000:31), an understanding of the influences of culture on the choices in clothing and items of adornment is important for both individuals and fashion professionals. The types of clothing and adornment worn and the meanings associated with them within a society are determined by the cultural environment of contributory members. The results in this study (Table 5.11.b) show that there is a relationship between cultural background and ethnically influenced clothes.

The findings (Table 5.11.b) revealed a significant relationship at 0.05 level of significant. Sixty-two (62%) in KwaZulu-Natal and forty-four (44%) of the responses in Gauteng were noted as the medium response that cultural background had an influence on the respondents' choice of clothes, whereas sixteen percent (16%) in Gauteng and six percent (6%) in

KwaZulu-Natal reported cultural background as having low influence on their choice of clothes.

#### **Western Culture having an Influence in South Africa.**

Howes (1990:54) documented that the arrival of the missionaries in South Africa had enormous impact on the life of African South Africans. This impact led African South African culture to undergo some change. It is noted in the literature review of this study that due to the influence of colonialists African South Africans adopted Western styles of clothes to cover their bodies in order to be acceptable to Western/modern behavioural dress codes, and the new moral values of Christian churches. Els and Coertzee (1990:154) state that it is useful to distinguish between traditional dress items, and Western items, that are incorporated into current dress practices to such an extent that the function and symbolism no longer resembles the original.

The results (Table 5.12.b) indicate that Western culture does not have an influence on ethnically influenced clothes. These results show that although African South Africans are living in a Westernized world they still prefer to stick to their cultural manner of dress. In support of Els and Coertzee (1990), the study done by Trollip (1995) in South Africa revealed that Christian churches considered the traditional costume indecent (Trollip, 1995:4).

The results in this study support Howes' (1990:9) statement that African South Africans adopted Western styles of dress because of being under the influence of Western civilization.

This is reflected in the results, which indicate that 64% from those in KwaZulu-Natal and 68% in Gauteng who agreed that Western clothes are a strong influence in South Africa. The results (Table 5.12.b) revealed that there is no significance at 0.05 level of significant. However, an analysis of African South African women has revealed that, despite the influence of Western civilization, ethnically influenced clothes remain an important aspect of clothing in the lives African South African women.

Kaiser (1998:328) argues that fashion has been influenced by other social movements, such as the civil rights movement, anti-war sentiments, women's liberation, gay rights and the green movement. Kaiser (1998) further asserts that it is evident from research that in a democratic post-industrial society, fashion is a visible force in its own right, and the upward flow of diffusion will increase in importance whatever the social order in the social movements that influence the values of the masses (Kaiser, 1998:328).

Lo Castro (1996) in her study agrees with Kaiser (1998) by stating that in South Africa from 1994 the use of fashion as a means of expressing values in a changing social order is illustrative of the transition to a multi-cultural democratic society. Based on the findings in this study, it is concluded that the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes is influenced by the South African politicians.

The results in this study show 62% in KwaZulu-Natal and 68% in Gauteng agreed that ethnically influenced clothes are gaining recognition as a fashion statement in South Africa. Therefore, it is concluded that the respondents wear ethnically influenced clothes intending to make a fashion statement, in order to encourage other African South Africans to be proud of their culture.

However, it is clear that even if there is a positive response to this statement, the respondents do not wear ethnically influenced clothes just because they are in fashion, but it is possible that they will want to continue to wear ethnically influenced clothes. The literature review (3.18) supports these findings by stating that African South African Parliamentarians wear ethnically influenced clothes when attending political meetings and social gatherings.

Although the findings in this study indicate that 68% of the respondents from Gauteng and 62% in KwaZulu-Natal agreed that ethnically influenced clothes are gaining recognition as a fashion statement in South Africa, as noted in the literature of this study (3.18).

According to Kaiser (1998:49), some appearance styles seem to carry with them a kind of "historical memory". The results obtained from this research support Kaiser (1998) because they indicated that 82% of the respondents in Gauteng and 96% of those in KwaZulu-Natal responded with a 'yes' to the statement of ethnically influenced patterns having a link with the historic roots of African culture. The findings (Table 5.13.b) reveal that there is a link between ethnic patterns and historic roots of African culture.

Kaiser (1998:48-49) further maintains that the essence of culture, from a semiotic viewpoint focusing on how meaning is produced, lies in the interplay between a kind of "historical" memory (history of meaning) and social resistance to this memory (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982:27).

The findings (Table 5.13.b) supports Kaiser's (1998) statement which proves that there is a link between the ethnically influenced clothes that African South African women wear and the historic roots of their culture. How people relate to one another is symbolized by clothing differences, and the meaning people associate with some of these clothes may be traced back to earlier, historical memories that are hard to "shake".

The results support Magubane (2000: 23) who maintains that the clothes that African South African people wear reflects the culture of their society, or those who existed before them. Therefore, a cultural perspective enables people to view the meanings of clothing as they have developed over time, as one historical context leads to another.

According to Kefgen et al. (1999:23), attitudes about clothing tend to focus on comfort, utility, conformity, economy, fashion, self-expression, and status. People reflect their attitudes about specific garment styles through apparel choices. With regard to this statement, the overall response rate of 88% from the respondents in Gauteng and 82% of those in KwaZulu-Natal shows that it is evident that, as modern, African South African women, they prefer to wear what suits them best.

A significant relationship was also found between political change and the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes. The results- regarding perception of political change in South Africa as being an influence on the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women in South Africa- indicate a positive response rate of 79% in Gauteng and 65% in KwaZulu-Natal of the respondents, who strongly agreed with this statement. Kaiser (1998:402) contends that it is evident from previous research that in a democratic post-industrial society, fashion is a visible force in its own right, and the upward flow of diffusion will increase in importance, whatever the social order is or the social movements that influence the values of the masses. Based on these results, it is concluded that these positive results may be due to the fact that most of the time the majority of the African South African politicians are featured wearing ethnically influenced clothes when attending political meetings or social gatherings. Hence, the majority of the African South Africans tend to imitate the manner of dress of these politicians.

African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana influence the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa. In this regard, to this statement the results yielded 88% from the respondents in Gauteng and 74% from those in KwaZulu-Natal who agreed with this statement. It is concluded that due to the fact that these African countries were freed from the oppression of Colonialism before South Africa, they were free to readopt their ethnically influenced clothes. As a result, African countries such as those aforementioned have developed fabric mills where they produce ethnically influenced fabrics, which feature ethnic prints by interpreting African culture on those fabrics.

The literature review revealed that the majority of African South Africans use ethnically influenced fabrics such as Vlisco fabrics. Therefore, the majority of the African South African designers use these African printed fabrics when designing ethnically influenced clothes.

The cross-tabulated results indicated that the respondents agree that other African countries has an influence on the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa. This is due to the fact that these other African countries had been liberated from the oppression of the Western countries and readopted their culture, while African South Africans were still living under the Apartheid government. According to Bedford (1994:79), the way people dress conveys messages about themselves and so offers an illustration of the way cultural forms are used to express identity, while adapting to changing social environments. Kaiser (1998:545) concurs with Bedford (1994) by pointing out that clothing choices and related dimensions of appearance management become part of a larger context of communications and of communicating identities on an everyday basis.

The results corroborate Bedford (1994) due to the fact that they denote that 44% of the respondents in Gauteng and 42% from KwaZulu-Natal agreed that the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes is an expression of personal identity. With reference to this study and in agreement with Bedford's (1994) study, it is apparent that those respondents who agreed that they express their identity through the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes are proud of who they are.



A minimal number of eight percent (8%) from Gauteng and six percent (6%) from KwaZulu-Natal disagreed with this statement.

Judging from this response, it seems that those respondents who disagreed with this statement have forsaken their identity, due to the influence of Western culture. As a result, it is concluded that they might be uncertain as to whether they ought to readopt their identity as Africans or continue to live like Westerners as they did during the apartheid era, as noted in the literature in this study.

Morris (1994:6) states that there has been a conscious elaboration and fostering (promotion) of local styles that include beaded decorations, and what many people believe to be traditional dress, or elements of it, are worn with pride and blended felicitously with the most sophisticated of modern dress. The results coincide with Morris's (1994) statement by reflecting 52% in Gauteng and 62% in KwaZulu-Natal of the respondents who agreed that they wear ethnically influenced clothes to show their ethnic pride.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Dress provides insight into the ability of people to create new social worlds and contexts for interpretation, especially in modern social environments where behaviour cues are vague. The meaning attached to clothing styles must be always viewed within a time specific time span and within social environments where they are popular.

The literature review reports that ethnic identity is expressed visually by African South Africans who wear ethnically influenced clothes to celebrate their African heritage. Although the culture of African South Africans has undergone change due to the impact of colonialism, the function and meaning of ethnically influenced clothes and beads as an expression of African culture has not changed. It is no surprise, then, that the contemporary ethnically influenced clothes of African South African women incorporate similarities of traditional items. Emerging ethnically influenced fashion trends in South Africa point to the strategic role that ethnically influenced clothes play in the life of African South Africans. In South Africa, the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes by African South African women has become, above all, a means of expressing a relationship with an independent past.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

While research indicates that people do perceive clothing as a symbol of identity, attitudes, values and moods of the validity of clothing as an indicator need further investigation. The results imply that the following questions are as yet unanswered, thus providing scope for further research to be carried out.

- For further research the study should take a larger sample, to enable the results to cover a larger area of the study.
- The results of this study indicate that there is symbolic meaning attached to ethnically influenced beads. Further research is recommended to explore the relationship between attitudes held toward ethnically influenced beads and clothing behaviour.
- Further research needs to be carried out in order to find out if there is a market for ethnically influenced clothes internationally.
- Further research is needed to determine how preferences interact with the clothing behaviour of African South Africans.
- Further research is needed to explore the degree of the relationship between attitudes held towards clothing items, such as ethnically influenced beads.
- Since ethnically influenced clothes and their manufacture is restricted to private enterprise, market research is essential to identify whether there is a commercial and retail market for ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa.
- Further research is necessary to identify whether African South Africans would like to continue to wear ethnically influenced beads as a means of adornment.

- Since South Africa is a multiracial country, further research is necessary to find out whether other population groups are interested in wearing ethnically influenced clothes and beads.
- It is recommended that further research be carried out to encourage South African tertiary institutions which offer courses in fashion design, to encourage upcoming young designers to focus on ethnically influenced clothing in their designs for future productions, seeing that there is still a lack of South African designers who specialize in ethnically influenced clothes.
- It is further recommended that South African designers should take into consideration the need for ethnically influenced clothes when designing, in order to give African South African women a variety of choice and access to ethnically influenced clothes.

### 7.3 CONCLUSION

In South Africa, published works on dress concentrated only on the Zulu, the Xhosa and the Ndebele dress- omitting to document, in detail, dress for other African South African ethnic groups. One notable development in many twentieth-century histories of dress, whether of Western or non-Western dress, is an increased emphasis on the examination and interpretation of dress within a total social, cultural, economic, and political context. Changes in types of dress are studied in relation to other changes in a society, instead of as an isolated social phenomenon. The results of this study evinced that there is a relationship between the clothing behaviour and identity of African South African women.

The results of this study demonstrated that ethnically influenced clothes and beads have specific meaning to African South African women.

The findings show that reverence for African culture continues to be expressed visually by African South African women who wear ethnically influenced clothes and beads. The results in this study support the supposition that although African South African women in the corporate world would like to wear ethnically influenced clothes they may continue to wear Western styles of clothes for their work environment.

The findings in this study indicate that there was symbolic meaning attached to ethnically influenced clothes, and that the symbolism attached to these clothes influences the clothing behaviour of African South African women. Moreover, the results evinced that there is a link between ethnically influenced clothes and the historic roots of African culture.

It is apparent that the choice of clothing is significant, but of even greater importance is the African South African women's motivation of wearing ethnically influenced clothes. Dress can be used as an instrument to study societies in transition. It is concluded that emerging ethnically influenced fashion trends in South Africa point to the strategic role that the ethnically influenced clothes play in the life of African South African women.

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**APPENDIX 1**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### ANNEXURE: A

#### BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

INSTRCTIONS: Tick in the squares below to indicate your answer.

##### 1. AGE IN YEARS

1	24 - 30		1
2	31 - 35		2
3	36 - 40		3
4	41 - 45		4
5	46 - 50		5
6	51 - 55		6
7	56 - 60		7

##### 2. MARITAL STATUS

SINGLE	MARRIED	WIDOWED	DIVORCED	LIVING TOGETHER	SEPARATED	
1	2	3	4	5	6	

##### 3. CULTURAL GROUP

N .Sotho	Tswana	S.Sotho	Venda	Tsonga	Khosa	Zulu	Other	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

##### 4. What language is most spoken at home:

i. Home.....

ii. At work.....

##### 5. RESIDENTIAL AREA

TOWNSHIP	SURBURB	
1	2	

## PRELIMINARIES

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6. Please indicate your highest level of formal education

MATRIC (STD 10)	DIPLOMA OR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	MASTERS DEGREE OR DOCTORAL DEGREE (Ph.D)	OTHER	

7. Please state the name of country where qualification was obtained

i.....

ii. ....

8. JOB TITLE

CODE (For office use)

--	--

9. Name of city or town which you work

.....

10. TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

1	Private company	
2	State for provincial	
3	Public company	
4	NGO	
5	Self employed	
6	Other	

**11. Please indicate on the scale below your household total monthly income before  
taxation & deductions.**

1	R5000 - R9999	
2	R10000 - R14999	
3	R15000 - R19999	
4	R20000 - R24999	
5	R25000 - R29999	
6	R30000 - R34999	

**ANNEXURE: B**

**SECTION. 1**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

You are requested to help in scientific study by completing this questionnaire. Your answers to this questionnaire will be used as a helpful tool for the completion of a research and it will be treated as confidential. Please do not write on any of the materials.

Use the scale below and mark with an X to indicate the answer which suits your personality. There are write or wrong answers for the statements.

**SCALE:**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree



**Section:I**

**Heading: General Attitude towards Ethnically Influence Clothes.**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1	I wear ethnically influenced clothes because they are fashionable.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Ethnically influenced clothes are gaining recognition as a fashion statement in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
3	South African, African women Parliamentarians promote ethnically influenced clothes when attending political gatherings.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Political change in South Africa influences my choice of clothes.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Media coverage in South Africa promotes the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5

...continued overleaf

**Section:I. ...continued**

**Heading: General Attitude towards Ethnically Influence Clothes.**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
6	African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana influence the wearing of ethnically influenced clothes in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Modern African dressing is influenced by different ethnic South Africans.	1	2	3	4	5
8	South African, African women leaders wear ethnically influenced clothes to redefine their African culture.	1	2	3	4	5
9	My clothes make a cultural statement.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I wear ethnically influenced clothes when attending special occasions.	1	2	3	4	5

**...continued overleaf**

**Section: I. ...continued**

**Heading: General Attitude towards Ethnically influenced Clothes.**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
11	African women Leaders in South Africa wear ethnically influenced clothes to show pride as Africans.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I express my ethnic pride by wearing ethnically influenced clothes.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Ethnic beadwork in South Africa should be preserved for the future African generation as an adornment.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Wearing ethnic beads makes me feel more confident than I do when wearing gold jewellery.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Beadwork is used to establish ethnic identity for African South African women in south Africa.	1	2	3	4	5

...continued overleaf

**Section:I. ...continued**

**Heading: General Attitude towards Ethnically influenced Clothes.**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
16	I wear ethnic beads because they are a new fashion trend in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
17	African prints do not appeal to me.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I dislike wearing ethnically influenced clothes because I don't want to identify with Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I wear ethnically influenced clothes because I want to express my identity.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Braids are a sign of identity of African women in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
21	As an African woman I wear cornrows for group identity.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I prefer to wear clothes with ethnic prints because I am afraid of being stigmatized as a black person.	1	2	3	4	5

**...continued overleaf**

Section: I. ...continued

Heading: General Attitude towards Ethnically influenced Clothes.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	As a modern African woman I prefer to wear what suits me best.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Western clothes are a strong influence in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I prefer to wear Western clothes because they make me feel confident about my way of	1	2	3	4	5
26	Change in social environment influence my way of dress.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Generally I prefer African prints to Western .	1	2	3	4	5
28	My work place determine my dress code.	1	2	3	4	5
29	It is difficult to integrate ethnic African dress into Western style career clothes.	1	2	3	4	5

**SECTION II: HEADING:- Personal feeling about Clothing preferences.**

**Please answer the following questions by circling an appropriate answer of your choice.**

**There are no right or wrong answers.**

1. Do ethnic beads have any meaning to you?

1. Yes

2. No

2. Do you consider ethnically influenced clothe to be out of fashion?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Do you use curl relaxer to straighten your hair?

1. Yes

2. No

4. Do you have any clothes designed with ethnic patterns?

1. Yes

2. No

5. Would you or did you wear ethnically influenced clothes on your wedding day?

1. Yes

2. No

6. Do you like to accessorise your clothes with ethnically influenced jewellery?
1. Yes
  2. No
7. Do you wear formal Western clothes for work?
1. Yes
  2. No
8. To what level does your cultural background influences your choice of clothes?
1. Low influence
  2. Medium influence
  3. High influence
9. To what level do you think African people in South Africa who don't want to wear designs with ethnic patterns are influenced by Western culture?
1. Low influence
  2. Medium influence
  3. High influence
10. Do you think designs with ethnic patterns have a link with the historic roots of African culture?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

**APPENDIX 2**

**LETTER TO RESPONDENTS**





D U R B A N  
INSTITUTE of  
TECHNOLOGY

Technikon Natal Residence  
18 Corlo Court  
18 Heswall Road  
Durban  
4001  
12 September 2000

Dear Participant

As a Master's student in Fashion Design at the Durban Institute of Technology, I am appealing to you for assistance. I am investigating the relationship between clothing behaviour and identity of Adfrican South African women in the corporate world in (South Africa) for my Master's dissertation. All I require is a few minutes of your time.

Ethnically influenced clothing seem to have gained recognition as a way of expressing the national identity of Africans. The information you provide will assist in discovering answers about whether African South African women would like to wear ethnically influenced clothes and why they wear them. Your answer will be completely confidential. Your name will never appear on the questionnaire.

Please give an honest opinion about the way you feel regarding ethnic clothes as an African women. The instructions on how to complete the questionnaire will be stated on the questionnaire. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully.

Maite Modiba

**HEAD:DEPARTMENT OF FASHION**