

**The hidden sell: subversive  
advertising of fashion products  
in social media**

**by**

**Helen Smith**

**2018**

# **The hidden sell: subversive advertising of fashion products in social media**

by

Helen Smith

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of MAA:  
Fashion in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the Durban University of  
Technology

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 20 August 2018

Approved for final submission:

Supervisor: Mrs M. Cavanagh (MTech: Fashion, DUT)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 20 August 2018

Co-Supervisor: Professor D. Pratt (DTech: Language Practice, DUT)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 20 August 2018

## **ABSTRACT**

With the exorbitant growth in technological presence and the introduction of social media, a whole new realm of advertising and marketing possibilities has been opened to businesses. This study investigated people's perceptions of the use of social media for advertising fashion products under the guise of social media interaction. In other words, online marketing is seen as "subversive" as it is a deceptive form of advertising using celebrity allure to attract prospective clients. The target population comprised females between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine as this population was found to represent the majority of social media users. The purpose of the study was to establish whether the social media users canvassed were aware of this subversive type of advertising, whether they responded by buying the products, and how effective they found this type of marketing overall. The research was carried out within a social constructivist framework, using a nested/embedded strategy in a mixed-methods approach. Users of social networking in South Africa were recruited by means of an Instagram post which introduced the idea of the "subversive sell" and gave them the option of participating in an online survey on the topic. Respondents were also offered the option of participating in two focus groups in the Durban area in order to obtain more in-depth feedback on this marketing strategy. Results showed that participants were aware of the fact that they were being targeted, and that they saw it as an inevitable outcome of using social media. However, it irritated them when realising that social media were saturated with advertisements, and that they should be importuned incessantly with such. They also reported that they would not necessarily purchase fashion products advertised in this way and would rather rely on word-of-mouth recommendations on social media from people using these products. Respondents did, however, comment on the immediacy and novelty of this form of advertising. It was concluded that subversive advertising via social media was not that different from the celebrity endorsements found in traditional media, and that people were responding to this strategy in similar ways.

## DECLARATION

I, Helen Smith, hereby declare that this research dissertation is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

I hereby certify that this report has not been submitted for a degree at any other university or institution.

---

Helen Smith

Date: 20 August 2018

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude to both of my supervisors, namely, Michaela Cavanagh, for your endless patience and encouragement throughout the worst of times and Prof Deidre Pratt, for your extensive knowledge, assistance and spirited outlook. It has been a privilege and pleasure to have worked with you for the duration of this study which could not have been completed without your guidance.

I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues (lecturers at the Durban University of Technology Fashion and Textiles department) for their continuous support and understanding. Special thanks go to Minette and Bianca, without whom I would never have finished. Your knowledge, assistance and infinite support throughout my studies have been immeasurable. I am so grateful for your continued friendship.

To my wonderful family and friends: I would like to thank you for always listening, understanding and supporting me throughout my studies. Your encouragement has assisted in the completion of this study, especially my special Mom, Laura, for your quiet reassurance and knowing when not to ask... and Anthony for always encouraging me to finish.

Nic, my partner and best friend and also the most patient man alive. You have been my late-night sounding board and tea provider. I could never have accomplished this without you. Thank you for the unwavering support, inspiration and dedication you have shown me throughout this process.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>                     | i    |
| <b>DECLARATION</b>                  | ii   |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>              | iii  |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>            | iv   |
| <b>GLOSSARY</b>                     | viii |
| <b>ACRONYMS AND INITIALISATIONS</b> | x    |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>              | x    |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>               | x    |
| <b>LIST OF GRAPHS</b>               | xi   |

## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1.1 Introduction                             | 1 |
| 1.2 The celebrity cult phenomenon            | 1 |
| 1.3 Subversive marketing of fashion products | 2 |
| 1.4 Problem statement                        | 2 |
| 1.5 Rationale                                | 2 |
| 1.6 Critical research questions              | 3 |
| 1.7 Significance of study                    | 3 |
| 1.8 Aim                                      | 4 |
| 1.9 Objectives                               | 4 |
| 1.10 Research design                         | 5 |
| 1.11 Ethical considerations                  | 5 |
| 1.12 Limitations and Delimitations           | 6 |
| 1.12.1 Limitations                           | 6 |
| 1.12.2 Delimitations                         | 6 |
| 1.13 Outline of study                        | 6 |
| 1.14 Conclusion                              | 7 |

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature review**

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 2.1 Introduction                     | 8  |
| 2.2 Fashion as a key industry        | 8  |
| 2.3 Marketing                        | 9  |
| 2.3.1 Traditional advertising        | 10 |
| 2.3.2 Online advertising             | 10 |
| 2.4 Echo boomers and digital natives | 11 |
| 2.5 Social media marketing           | 14 |
| 2.6 Celebrity/influencer endorsement | 16 |
| 2.7 Branding                         | 17 |
| 2.7.1 Product placement              | 18 |
| 2.7.2 Humanisation of corporates     | 19 |
| 2.8 Subversive advertising           | 19 |
| 2.9 Fashion marketing                | 21 |
| 2.10 Conclusion                      | 26 |

## **CHAPTER 3: Orientation, theoretical framework and methodology**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| 3.1 Introduction                   | 28 |
| 3.2 Research orientation           | 28 |
| 3.3 Theoretical framework          | 29 |
| 3.4 Mixed methods                  | 30 |
| 3.4.1 Quantitative research        | 32 |
| 3.4.1.1 Data collection instrument | 32 |
| 3.4.1.2 Sampling                   | 33 |
| a) Sampling method                 | 33 |
| b) Sample population               | 33 |
| 3.4.1.3 Data collection method     | 33 |
| 3.4.1.4 Data analysis              | 34 |
| 3.4.2 Qualitative research         | 35 |
| 3.4.2.1 Data collection instrument | 35 |
| 3.4.2.2 Sampling                   | 35 |
| a) Sampling method                 | 35 |
| b) Sample population               | 36 |

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 3.4.2.3 Data collection method    | 36 |
| 3.4.2.4 Data analysis             | 36 |
| 3.5 Validity and reliability      | 36 |
| 3.6 Limitations and delimitations | 37 |
| 3.7 Ethics                        | 37 |
| 3.8 Conclusion                    | 38 |

## **CHAPTER 4: Data analysis and discussion of results**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 4.1 Introduction                              | 39 |
| 4.2 Phase 1: Survey data analysis and results | 39 |
| 4.2.1 Survey question breakdown               | 39 |
| 4.2.2 Establishing questions                  | 41 |
| 4.2.3 Indicator questions                     | 41 |
| 4.2.3.1 Outcomes                              | 41 |
| 4.2.4 Affirming questions                     | 44 |
| 4.2.4.1 Outcomes                              | 45 |
| 4.3 Focus group discussion recommendations    | 51 |
| 4.4 Phase 2: Focus-group discussion results   | 51 |
| 4.4.1 Focus-group 1 breakdown                 | 51 |
| 4.4.1.1 Outcomes                              | 52 |
| 4.4.1.2 Summary of discussion                 | 58 |
| 4.4.2 Focus-group 2 breakdown                 | 59 |
| 4.4.2.1 Outcomes                              | 60 |
| 4.4.2.2 Summary of discussion                 | 63 |
| 4.5 Conclusion                                | 63 |

## **CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 5.1 Introduction  | 65 |
| 5.2 Key conclusions   | 65 |
| 5.2.1 How can subversive advertising be defined?                                    | 65 |
| 5.2.2 To what extent are participants aware that a product/s<br>are being marketed? | 66 |



|   |    |
|---|----|
| 5.2.3 To what extent are participants influenced to purchase the fashion product/s marketed in this way, and why? | 67 |
| 5.3 Additional discoveries of significance  | 68 |
| 5.3.1 Social media affordability  | 68 |
| 5.3.2 Consumer buying behaviours  | 68 |
| 5.3.3 Consumer rights   | 69 |
| 5.4 Recommendations   | 69 |
| 5.4.1 Recommendations for the identification of subversive advertising  | 69 |
| 5.4.2 Recommendations for the effective business practice on social media   | 70 |
| 5.4.3 Recommendations for further research  | 70 |
| 5.5 Personal insights gained by the researcher  | 70 |
| 5.6 Concluding thoughts   | 71 |

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>REFERENCES</b> | <b>72</b> |
|-------------------|-----------|

## **APPENDICES**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Appendix A: eSurvey and focus-group letter of information           | 93  |
| Appendix B: Focus group letter of consent                           | 95  |
| Appendix C: eSurvey Creator screenshots of the online questionnaire | 96  |
| Appendix D: Proposed focus group discussion points                  | 104 |
| Appendix E: Transcript breakdown of focus-group discussion 1        | 105 |
| Appendix F: Proposed additional focus group discussion points       | 124 |
| Appendix G: Transcript breakdown of focus-group discussion 2        | 125 |
| Appendix H: Turn it in report                                       | 143 |

## GLOSSARY

**Marketing:** This involves a broad series of components, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and, possibly the most important component, advertising (Strauss and Frost 2001).

**Subversive advertising:** For the purpose of this study, marketing aspects such as celebrity endorsement, product placement and businesses attempting to humanise their presence on social media are referred to as subversive advertising.

**Application software:** Programs that can be downloaded on both fixed and mobile devices (Struyk 2013).

**Hashtags:** One-way mathematical algorithms. This allows you to search terms on platforms such as Instagram and Twitter.

**Branding:** This is a strategic point of view that is central to creating customer value which is key to maintaining competitive advantage (Holt n.d).

**Humanisation:** For the purpose of this study, humanisation is referred to in relation to corporates, and specifically to their human-like behaviour (Tuzzolino and Armandi 1981).

**Celebrity cult/ culture:** This is the hype surrounding socialites that is created by the media. Media-driven renown is often influenced by consumers (Cashmore 2016:7).

**Social media:** Social media are websites or applications that involve the use of the internet with the objective of connecting the user to his/her friends and family (Osterrieder 2013).

Social media influencer:

A term referring to a person that has found celebrity status/fame on online platforms (Burke 2017).

Wifi:

Wireless networking technology (Rackley 2007)

Apps:

Application software

## ACRONYMS AND INITIALISATIONS

|       |                           |
|-------|---------------------------|
| FTC:  | Federal Trade Commission  |
| TINA: | Truth in Advertising, Inc |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|              |   |    |
|--------------|---|----|
| Figure 2.1:  | Kylie Jenner advertises for Fit Tea on Instagram                    | 20 |
| Figure 2.2:  | Kim Kardashian advertises for a pharmaceutical product on Instagram | 20 |
| Figure 2.3:  | Kim Kardashian for a magazine shoot                                 | 23 |
| Figure 2.4:  | Kim Kardashian altered Instagram post                               | 23 |
| Figure 2.5:  | Brittany Spears for a magazine shoot a.                             | 24 |
| Figure 2.6:  | Brittany Spears for a magazine shoot b.                             | 24 |
| Figure 2.7:  | Beyoncé altered Instagram post a.                                   | 25 |
| Figure 2.8:  | Beyoncé altered Instagram post b.                                   | 25 |
| Figure 2.9:  | Lindsay Lohan altered Instagram post a.                             | 26 |
| Figure 2.10: | Lindsay Lohan altered Instagram post b.                             | 26 |
| Figure 3.1:  | Diagram of nested/embedded design in mixed methods                  | 31 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|            |   |    |
|------------|---|----|
| Table 4.1: | Tabulated breakdown of closed-ended questions | 45 |
|------------|---|----|

## LIST OF GRAPHS

|             |  |    |
|-------------|--|----|
| Graph 4.1:  | Age breakdown of respondents who qualified to complete the survey.             | 41 |
| Graph 4.2:  | Question 4: How regularly do you log onto social media per week?               | 42 |
| Graph 4.3:  | Question 5: Which social media app/s do you use frequently?                    | 43 |
| Graph 4.4:  | Question 6: What do you use this app/these apps for?<br>Total %                | 43 |
| Graph 4.5:  | Question 6: Age category breakdown.  | 44 |
| Graph 4.6:  | Question 11: Social media that has been found to contain advertising.          | 46 |
| Graph 4.7:  | Age-based breakdown of respondents attracted to online purchases.              | 47 |
| Graph 4.8:  | Categorised list of online purchases made by respondents.                      | 48 |
| Graph 4.9:  | Most influential type of endorsement personality.                              | 49 |
| Graph 4.10: | Respondents' perception of social media advertising.                           | 50 |
| Graph 4.11: | Indication of respondents' opinion of why apps are successful marketing tools. | 50 |

# **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the framework of the study and explains why there is a need for an investigation into the subversive marketing of fashion products. It looks at the phenomenon of the celebrity cult, and, next, examines whether users of social media platforms are aware of the deceptions of the “hidden sell”, for which the term “subversive marketing” is used. A short overview of the problem statement, critical research questions, the significance of the study and aims and objectives are given as well as the critical research questions which were used to guide the inquiry. After a brief account of the research design is given, ethical considerations are discussed as well as the study’s limitations and delimitations. The chapter concludes after an outline of the chapters is provided.

## **1.2 The celebrity cult phenomenon**

We are living in the age of the celebrity-cult. While the concept of the celebrity is not new, the celebrities of today are presented as being “both special and utterly ordinary”, which allows people to bond emotionally with them (Furedi 2010: 493-294). Consumers are being influenced to purchase products and services which celebrities whom they admire are promoting; many consumers idolise and even “worship” media personalities, aspiring to a similar lifestyle through these products (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010). According to Omenugha, Uzuegbunam and Ndolo (2016) consumers are choosing to follow public figures who more often than not have found fame through the media, explaining that media has provided these celebrities with the opportunity to advertise not only themselves but products. Although celebrity endorsement, sponsorship and the practice of product placement is by no means a new addition to marketing (Jan and Martina 2013), it is the veiled manipulation through these tactics that is controversial. Media can be considered the culprit for the recent accelerated growth of the celebrity phenomenon (Lilti 2017: 2; 280) and therefore its influence

on marketing. This study explores what role these provocative aspects play in 'the hidden sell'.

### **1.3 Subversive marketing of fashion products**

For the purpose of this study, these provocative aspects will be termed subversive advertising. Controversial marketing methods are considered debatable because they are not obvious to all consumers and can be misleading. This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating the extent to which consumers are aware of this type of advertising. Furthermore, this research has been focused on South African consumers because celebrity culture is predominantly a western cultural experience influenced by global communication networks (Uzuegbunam 2017: 131-132). This poses the question as to what extent it can be seen to influence South African consumers.

It also explores how the development of the media has been boosted by an evolution in digital technology (Rocamora 2016) and examines what has caused the celebrity/fame obsession to inflate at such a rapid rate (Marwick 2016). As marketing plays such an important role in consumer behaviour (Brierley 1995), it is often found that purchases are based on the suggestions made by product advertisements (Du Plooy 2012). This study aims to clarify why these strategies work and how they are perceived by consumers.

### **1.4 Problem statement**

It is not known to what extent South African consumers and followers of social media are being influenced by subversive marketing. Furthermore, the issue of to what extent they are responding to these underlying veiled prompts necessitates more investigation.

### **1.5 Rationale**

Social media play such a large role in our everyday lifestyles (Kumar and Lim 2008). With users' quick and easy access to these media as well as their broad user base (Evans and McKee 2010), it is easy to understand why businesses

have chosen to utilise such platforms for their marketing and advertising purposes.

The introduction of the humanisation (i.e. restoring interpersonal intimacy and engagement) of corporates, which has become a prevalent practice in today's society (Picard 2014), is an important part of subversive advertising because of its effect on consumer behaviour. Humanisation creates a somewhat misleading sense of comfort to consumers, as corporate use of celebrity, social media influencer endorsement and sponsorship blurs the lines between reality and advertisement (Thompson and Heinberg 1999).

As a fashion student living in South Africa, the researcher is interested in establishing how many consumers in our country are 'buying' into the strategies used by companies when advertising through social media. The factors that have paved the way for a change in product marketing and the introduction of new advertising strategies will therefore be examined. Additionally, the roles of strategies such as celebrity endorsement, humanisation of corporates, product placement and branding will be discussed.

## **1.6 Critical research questions**

The following critical research questions were used to guide the inquiry:

In a participant group of social media users:

**1.6.1** How can subversive advertising be defined?

**1.6.2** To what extent are participants aware that a product/s is/are being marketed?

**1.6.3** To what extent are participants influenced to purchase the fashion product/s marketed in this way, and why?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

Fashion is a key industry globally in terms of the massive amount of revenue generated, in spite of setbacks caused by global events and factors such as the



recession. The fashion industry in Africa, while still in its infancy, has huge potential. Fashion also has implications in South Africa for the tourist industry as a generator of revenue and related benefits, including job creation. As marketing is a key factor in merchandising apparel that consumers will want to purchase, it is important to understand developing trends in marketing, in particular, marketing indirectly through the popular social media. This study is therefore significant because it will result in a better understanding of South African consumer behaviours as they respond to indirect marketing strategies. It will furthermore provide information on their opinions and attitude towards the use of subversive advertising and marketing as a whole through social media. The researcher intends to gauge the success and benefits of using these platforms with the hope that the information gained from this study will give insights into authentic online advertising of fashion and beauty products to women.

## **1.8 Aim**

This study aims to investigate how South African females<sup>1</sup> perceive and experience subversive marketing on social media, with a particular focus on fashion products.

## **1.9 Objectives**

The following research objectives were formulated:

- 1.9.1** To establish whether South African females are aware of subversive social media marketing of fashion products.
- 1.9.2** To establish whether/how they respond in terms of buying the product marketed and why.
- 1.9.3** To establish how effective this form of marketing is for fashion products.

---

<sup>1</sup> Females were chosen for the target population, because, as will be shown in Chapter 2, they comprise the group who most use social media and are most susceptible to social media influence.

## **1.10 Research design**

An overview is provided here of the research design, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Audience response to subversive social media marketing was explored in this study using a mixed-methods approach, working within a social constructivist orientation, and formulating a theoretical framework based on Marcuse's (1964) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man" and Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory. A nested/embedded design was implemented for this study, which meant that the quantitative data led the qualitative data. Quantitative data, which involve the systematic use of numerical data (Maree 2007), were obtained by means of a survey. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) describe qualitative data as multi-faceted, and because of this, focus groups, which allow for probing and expansion, were used to further examine the quantitative data obtained in the survey. The target group consisted of active users of social media platforms. These individuals made use of imagery and supported the ideals of the celebrity cult. It was therefore thought that these participants were the most likely to be subjected to subversive advertising.

## **1.11 Ethical considerations**

Taking into consideration the ethical code and an individual's right to privacy (Leedy and Ormrod 2010:101) some of the questions the sample were required to answer might have contained details and information they considered to be private. The participants were therefore not asked to identify themselves and feedback was anonymous.

Due to the anonymity offered by the internet, the participants who contributed to data collected from the online survey were completely unknown to the researcher. Participants were required to agree that they would give informed consent digitally before they were able to proceed with the survey.

With regard to people volunteering to participate in the focus group, email addresses were known only to the researcher. Before signing consent forms all participants were informed that they would be voice recorded and were free to withdraw at any time during the data -process without consequences (Appendix

B). Although the names of participants were known to the researcher, all written references to data collected from them have been referred to using pseudonyms.

## **1.12 Limitations and Delimitations**

### **1.12.1 Limitations**

This study was limited to South Africa, with participants contributing to the focus group sessions being restricted to the Durban area due to budget constraints.

### **1.12.2 Delimitations**

The study was delimited to users of social media who are females between the ages of 18 – 29 years of age as research suggests that this population represents the majority of social media users. Due to ethical concerns, no minors (under the age of 18) were involved in this study.

## **1.13 Outline of study**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This first chapter serves as an introduction to the study, briefly outlining the research topic, research questions, aims and objectives. It identifies the research orientation, theoretical framework and mixed-methods research methodology that was selected. The research problem is clarified and the issue of subversive advertising in current social media is described.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter highlights the significance of the fashion industry and provides an in-depth overview of the different forms of marketing and media used, and defines subversive advertising. The new generation of consumers is discussed and the role of subversive advertising in consumer behaviour is explained.

### **Chapter 3: Orientation, theoretical framework and methodology**

This chapter discusses the research orientation, social constructivism, and the theoretical framework used within this orientation. The methodology is shown to

be a mixed-methods approach, using a nested/embedded design. The nested/embedded design is explained and the two phases, quantitative and qualitative data collection, are outlined. As the research design is nested/embedded, the quantitative data leads the qualitative data, and discussion topics within the focus groups are led by findings from the online survey conducted.

#### **Chapter 4: Research findings**

This chapter is divided into two sections. Phase one: consists of an analysis and discussion of the findings with the use of graphs and tables from the online survey conducted. The observations from these findings feed into phase two of the research design as the focus groups' topics of debate. The second phase consists of an analysis of the findings from these group conversations.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

This is the final chapter and draws conclusions from the previous chapter's data analysis and findings. The opinions of female South African consumers are discussed in relation to the use of subversive advertising on social media and recommendations are made to improve business advertising practices on social media, to assist consumers with identification of subversive advertising and to suggest what further research could be done in this area.

### **1.14 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research topic and has briefly discussed the need for further research into the different means of subversive advertising in social media and South African consumers' attitudes towards the use of such methods. It has been explained how this information can be used to inform effective product advertising for fashion products and why it is necessary to understand one's consumers and the role their behaviour has in marketing one's product.

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter first emphasises the significance of fashion as a key industry globally and locally, and next discusses a breakdown of marketing methods that have been utilised effectively in the advertising industry over the last century. Brand equity and its role in consumer brand identification are also outlined as well as how the evolution of technology has transformed marketing practices is noted; this is in order to better understand the intentions of online marketers. The new generation of consumers is discussed and a summary of strategies such as product placement and celebrity endorsement is made to provide insight into consumer behaviours. This chapter also illustrates possible reasons why currently subversive advertising appears to be such an effective marketing strategy in society.

### **2.2 Fashion as a key industry**

Fashion is a key industry globally in terms of the massive amount of revenue generated (Gatawa 2008: ii; Statistica: The Statistics Portal. 2018). The McKinsey Global Fashion Index (Business of Fashion 2018:11) predicted that the growth in sales would triple from 2016 to 2018, although 2016 was admittedly “one of the toughest years on record” (Business of Fashion 2017:11), so that an upturn could be expected. According to Douglas (2016), the fashion industry in Africa could be worth \$15.5 billion by 2021. However, Douglas adds the caveat that lack of government support and high operational costs are major obstacles facing the fashion industry. This, she adds, has meant that the majority of fashion businesses in Africa are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and lack the capacity to grow larger.

Dr Moloi-Motsepe, CEO of African Fashion International (AFI), stresses the importance of the fashion industry in South Africa, as it provides jobs not only in the clothing industry, but also in related industries (Smith 2017). Apart from textile

and other associated industries in the supply chain, fashion has implications in South Africa for the tourist industry, again, a generator of revenue and related benefits such as job creation (Gattawa 2008:20). It must also be stressed that the output and profits from the fashion industry are derived from items sold by retailers, not designer collections or high profile fashion shows (Easey 2008:11), so that marketing can be seen to play a crucial role in the fashion industry.

## **2.3 Marketing**

The practice of marketing is thought to be as old as civilisation, according to Davidson (1987), who further explains that the fundamental purpose of marketing is to identify and fulfil a need that a supplier is presented with by prospective customers. This is reiterated by Kotler (2003) who states that the aim of marketing is to create products or services that are so sensationally in demand by customers that they virtually sell themselves. It is felt that the key aspect to an effective and successful marketing plan is based on the marketing-mix theory, better known as the 4Ps: product, price, promotion and place (Stone and Desmond 2007). Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte (1992) describe the marketing mix as a mixture of tools or instruments utilised when pursuing effective marketing strategies. In most cases marketing encompasses: public relations, branding, advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing; the most important of these is arguably advertising (Strauss and Frost 2001). Key thinkers in the field claim advertising to be one of the most criticised and controversial aspects of marketing and business as a whole (Bauer and Greyser 1968).

Because of aspects of advertising being considered controversial by leading authors, it is necessary to understand how this form of marketing has evolved over time and why it plays an integral role in consumer purchases. Furthermore, it is important to clarify the differences between overt and subversive advertising.

Originating in Europe during the early 1600s, advertising was brought to the New World during British colonisation (O'Barr 2008). The early 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw an increase in different forms of advertising, using devices such as illustrations and special typefaces alongside the editorials in newspapers to grab

consumer attention (Pope 2003). Advertising is the non-personal distribution of product information, by means of paid media (Akanbi 2011), and can be presented in many different ways, shapes and channels; it is a way of communicating to your customers, a specialised aspect for which most companies choose to enlist experts for assistance (Shima and Varfan 2008). According to Solomon and Druin (1996), advertising can follow two methods: offline 'traditional' (which includes television, radio and print) and online (which is the use of the internet and web sites, sometimes referred to as electronic advertising) (Blackwell, 2006).

Advertising plays an important role in marketing because of the numerous benefits it offers companies by motivating consumers and retailers to buy or stock their products (Brierley 1995). According to Duncan (2005), advertising has the ability to communicate informational aspects and add value to a product thus creating positive associations of brands in the minds of consumers. It is also the most popular tool for creating awareness of products or services amongst consumers and plays a pivotal role in their desired purchases (Du Plooy 2012).

### **2.3.1 Traditional advertising**

The aim of traditional advertising is to determine and fulfil the consumers' wants and needs through various channels (Kotler 2003). This form of marketing makes use of traditional channels of communication, such as face-to-face discussions, catalogues, newspapers and magazines (Shima and Varfan 2008), as well as the use of radios, billboards, flyers, faxes, videos, stickers and television (Brierley 1995). The advertisers' intention is to create products and services that have the ability to sell themselves by fitting the consumers' desires (Kotler 2003). These can be considered traditional media because they are all methods used for advertising that have been developed over the last century, creating platforms that companies understand and for which they can easily create media (Thurman 2013).

### **2.3.2 Online advertising**

Advertising practices have been transformed since the introduction of online

advertising in 1994 (Evans 2009). The use of the internet as an advertising resource is steadily growing in popularity, aided by factors such as its low cost, two-way communication, access to a broader market and its ability to update and improve on its intended target audience more easily (Ducoffe 1996; Lages 2004; Wong 2010). This is important because of the constant change in consumer behaviour with the introduction of a new generation of buyers (Jones, Malczyk and Beneke 2011). According to Johnson (2013), in 2013, online advertising surpassed traditional forms of advertising to become the second most effective method of marketing one's products after the use of television. Moreover, online marketing has demonstrated the fastest growth rate recorded for any advertising medium (Ha and McCann 2008). However, as the internet has evolved significantly, new challenges arise for marketers targeting the current consumers (Belch and Belch 2015).

In recent years, multiple firms have begun specialising in creating promotional campaigns (Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan 2006), featuring recurring content that engages consumers for sales purposes (Falkow 2010). Whether it appears regularly in a movie or on the pages of your favourite glossy magazine, corporates are playing on consumers' subconscious (Hedgren and Persson 2015). Achieved with the use of manipulation, effective marketing imagery and value association with products (Dempsey and Mitchell 2010). However, in recent years corporates have had to adapt their methods of advertising as they are proving to be less effective with the new generation of consumers, who are not as easily swayed by traditional media (Verhoef 2017).

## **2.4 Echo boomers and digital natives**

In order to better understand the intentions of online marketing, it is important to recognise the majority of online consumers when catering to this market. Echo boomers and digital natives are terms and descriptions more commonly based on the American opinion of these generations, and the very existence of these generations in South Africa is debated by authors such as Thinyane (2010) and Howie, Muller and Paterson (2005). However, it is argued by Czerniewicz and Brown (2010) that, while South Africans are not necessarily categorised into



generations they still possess a knowledge and understanding of digital technologies.

Fischer (2015) explains that echo boomers were born to the baby boomers, a generation defined as children born between 1946 and 1964 to war veterans who returned home from World War II, married and started families. He advises, however, that the generation of echo boomers is not as easily defined; it is felt that the reason for discrepancies in years for the echo boomer generation is because there are no defining characteristics. There are therefore many loosely-defined timelines for this cohort. Zick, Mayer and Glaubitz (2012) suggest that the echo boomer generation comprises those born between 1975 and 2000, whereas Shih and Allen (2006) argue that it began any time between 1977 and 1982 and they consider it to have ended between 1994 and 2003. According to Fischer (2015), because of the overlap in boundaries between the two generations, it is not possible to give starting and end dates. However, echo boomers are thought to be heavily impacted and influenced by technology (Valentine and Powers 2013).

Described as flexible, smarter and tolerant of diverse cultures (Pál 2013), Generation Z are those born between the mid 1990s and 2010 (Wood 2013), and are also referred to as digital natives. These people are considered 'native speakers' of the digital language (Prensky 2001). Digital natives can be defined as 'techsavvy' individuals; they have grown up in the age of digital technologies and electronic gadgets with a profound knowledge of social networking and the internet (Pál 2013). Both echo boomers and digital natives are often combined due to their common characteristics, their comfort-level with technology/digital media and relentless practice of networking with the global world being the foremost trait (Wood 2013).

There is limited understanding of buyer behaviours in terms of the psychological factors driving these digital natives in this unique and influential consumer segment (Valentine and Powers 2013: 597). Wood (2013) suggests that there are consumer-orientated differences between baby boomers and echo boomers. This is thought to be because of the difference in age during the economic

recession. Her study suggests that digital natives are more likely to spend freely without hesitation on design-based and technological goods. While, in contrast, echo boomer consumers are most concerned about image and lifestyle trends and are influenced by 'what's hot and what's not' (Gluck 2009). This reiterates Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory that people are often most anxious about the way they are perceived by others. This suggests that echo boomers are more susceptible to social comparison because of their need to be seen as having the latest trends and products.

Online marketers are learning that in order to keep up with their new tech-savvy consumers they themselves need to constantly improve on, develop and evolve their means of marketing, a goal which, at times, can seem impossible to achieve (Jones, Malczyk and Beneke 2011). Technology offers the advantage of effective branding and communication to any and all industries (Eriksen and Hemmingsen 2008). The increase in consumer online presence has caused marketers to intensify their online marketing channels and, in turn, this has shaped a fundamental shift into online advertising (Stephen 2015). This marketing instrument is effective because of its ability to constantly grow and change to accommodate the consumers' demands (Jones, Malczyk and Beneke 2011). The benefits could make mass advertising by conventional mass media an unnecessary expense (Turow 2011).

MAGNA (2016), an intelligence and innovation strategy resource for IPG Mediabrands, states that in December 2016 the increase in revenues for media advertising was the highest it has been since 2010 and is expected to surpass that of television revenue for the first time in 2017. It is believed by Stephen (2015) that social media and mobile marketing, in particular, will see a drastic increase in consumer marketing due to the revenue surge. Stephen's (2015) prediction on the increased use of social media platforms for marketing purposes is beneficial to this study as it is aimed at finding the contributing factors to social media marketing, as discussed below, specifically subversive advertising and social media consumers' perceptions of these practices.

## **2.5 Social media marketing**

According to Yarrow and O'Donnell (2009:137), echo boomers are concerned with fitting in and being part of a group but they also want to be viewed as individuals. Social media offers its users the opportunity to connect with like-minded people all over the world (Amedie 2015). In this way social media is able to fulfil people's need to belong, allowing them to participate in networks with people they otherwise would never have met (Sawyer 2011). Echo boomers were born during the age of the internet and consider it a part of their lifestyle (Leung and Pei Zheng 2012). In fact, the majority if not all of this generation are either distributing, contributing to, or are users of the content provided by online media (Kumar and Lim 2008). Approaching marketing in a traditional manner does not work with echo boomers. Because of their self-absorbed natures they like to feel as though advertisements are catering directly for them, basing their opinion on the experience an advert provides (Williams and Page 2011; Sisk 2010). This generation uses their images to portray themselves as individuals; however, being very image-driven, they also value fitting in and being accepted by their peers (Himmel 2008; Dickey and Sullivan 2007), meaning that through social networking and media they are more likely to take an interest in products that resonate with their peers (Williams and Page 2011). It is this networking and the ability to gain information and communicate and participate with others that social media depend on (Veltri and Elgarah 2009).

Digital marketing and the internet have provided users with the opportunity to buy and sell products online. It has also served as an environment in which users have been able to create and build communities (Miller 2012). What can be considered social technologies have presented the opportunity for people to connect on a wide scale, permitting the sharing of information globally (Evans and McKee 2010). Consumers have also been provided with the ability to network and socialise with like-minded people (Miller 2012). Tuten and Solomon (2013) suggest that this can be considered a Digital natives' social life as there is no longer emphasis on face-to-face consultation. This new-found communication tool is social media, defined as websites and other online references that allow people to communicate and share information (Oxford Dictionary 1994).

According to Safko (2010), there are numerous platforms and providers of these networks worldwide. With the emergence of social media and networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, social networking has become a prevalent part of our global society (Miller 2012). In addition, technological tools such as mobile phones have become available to a broader network of consumers (Stephen 2015) and this has allowed for the development of Application software, more often referred to as 'apps,' which are programs that can be downloaded on both fixed and mobile devices (Struyk 2013).

Wong (2010) discusses the two-way communication that social media offers consumers. Not only are businesses able to advertise and communicate with their customers online but it is now possible for individuals to provide feedback on goods or services. Social media is thought to offer the most advantageous product advertisement opportunities (Couldry 2016), while simultaneously exposing the good, the bad and the ugly thus diminishing exploitation opportunities (Evans and McKee 2010). According to Stephen (2015), the number of people exposing themselves to forms of digital and social media is constantly increasing. This culture of participation allows consumers the ability to interact with organisations and companies, creating the appearance of democracy and camaraderie by means of open lines of communication (Tuten and Solomon 2013). Moreover, consumer ability to provide feedback and input has resulted in social media creating a more consumer-driven market place (Evans and McKee 2010). It has also allowed consumers to communicate their product or service experiences with others (Stephen 2015) and this has forced businesses and organisations to acknowledge the customers as a possible source of innovation and marketing in future successes (Evans and McKee 2010).

All the above knowledge has led to the introduction of social media influencers, people who have found celebrity/fame using online platforms (Burke 2017). Social media has also provided users with the ability to 'brand' themselves, better known as self-branding (Khedher 2014). This is a term that essentially outlines a strategic point of view designed to maintain a competitive advantage (Tuzzolino and Armandi 1981) and is not necessarily a new concept. However, the

introduction of social media has seen a broader practice of this notion (Khamis, Ang and Welling 2016), which will be further discussed in section 2.5. According to Labrecque, Markos and Milne:

No longer does a person need to be familiar with complex coding languages or other technicalities to build Web sites, because virtually anyone can upload text, pictures and video instantly to a site from a personal computer or phone. With technological barriers crumbling and its increasing ubiquity, the Web has become the perfect platform for personal branding (2011: 38).

Identifying the ability these influencers have in affecting the purchase decisions of their followers' businesses has resulted in a new means of advertising their products (Brown and Hayes 2008).

## **2.6 Celebrity/influencer endorsement**

The strategy of introducing celebrity endorsement of fashion products is often found to be effective because the celebrities/influencers involved have already established the impression of an emotional tie between themselves and the consumers (Stone, Joseph and Jones 2003), and of the attainable glamour of high-end fashion to which consumers aspire (Thrift 2008:18; Cashmore 2016:179). It is felt that this consumer behaviour stems from the celebrity cult phenomenon, also known as celebrity worshipers. These consumers are thought to identify emotionally with a celebrity which initiates an unusual loyalty or devotion to them (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010). However, these are cultivated personalities that celebrities show their followers and consumers who in fact relate to a façade. Driven by media renown these 'worshippers' are indoctrinated to believe that certain commodities are necessary in order to fit the social norm, which reiterates Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory that consumers feel a need to attain a media-idealised lifestyle. This fits in with Marcuse's (1964:4) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man", where social strata appear to have been removed, compressing society into a bland continuum with seemingly upper-class privileges (i.e. access to luxury products). In this context it is not surprising that corporates feel the use of celebrities in the endorsement of products can create a positive impact on their brand credibility (Spry, Pappu and Cornwell 2011). This consumer recognition and loyalty to

celebrities explains why advertising in the form of endorsements is increasingly being used to market products (Khatri 2006).

For most of these celebrities, apps such as Instagram have become a new source of income, changing not only how individuals communicate but also the influence of celebrities and small businesses (Kuchler 2015). Advertisers can make use of individual celebrities and influencers who create online glamorous personas and already have existing social networks with a strong following (Hearn and Shoenoff 2016). As will be discussed below, celebrity/influencer endorsement has implications for product branding.

## **2.7 Branding**

Strauss and Frost (2001) state that branding is one of the instruments that marketing encompasses. This is because it acts as the communication tool that creates a relationship between the company and the consumer, playing an important role, in their opinion, of the product's value and reliability (Du Plooy 2012).

Brand equity as a concept started during the 1980s (Riezebos, Kist and Kostra 2003), and is formally defined as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand" (Keller 1993:60). It can be referred to as the value of a brand in the marketplace (Pullig, Simmons and Netemeyer 2006), or a consumers' preference towards a brand (Keller 1993). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), a brand refers to the name, symbol or design, or often a combination of these that a company adopts for better identification. Kotler (2001) explains that brand image signifies a consumer's regard for a product or service by a set of beliefs, ideas or impressions such as, luxury, trendiness, reliability and quality.

Currently, where effective marketing involves a relationship between the consumer and business (Amaldas and Chiweshe 2015), brand and brand image play an important role and have become a significant part of global marketing. The function of branding is to provide consumers with a means of identification

and differentiation between competitors. It is this differentiation that is important as it dictates the reputation that consumers believe the business or product has (Keller 2008), reflecting a set of perceptions and memories that consumers relate to their experience of the brand product (Keller 1993). In the absence of branding, consumers are unable to distinguish one company product from another (Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle 2006).

Amaldas and Chiweshe (2015) suggest that there is an increasing emphasis on brand image in marketing due to technological advances. This increases competitors' means of imitation and affects their level of competitive advantage. The internet has certainly redefined marketing; even small businesses now have the opportunity to build and promote their brands on a large scale (Eriksen and Hemmingsen 2008). Methods such as product placement and celebrity/influencer endorsement and corporate humanisation have often been adopted in order to improve brand equity (Kaijansinkko 2003).

### **2.7.1 Product placement**

According to Jan and Martina (2013), the definition of product placement is something that has been continuously adapted throughout years of advertising, however, one of the first and most common definitions of this form of advertising was brought about by Balasubramanian (1994) who defined product placement as the inconspicuous paid message of a brand's product. This is further explained by Ginosar and Levi-Faur (2010) as a company's purposeful disguised incorporation of a product into a non-commercial entity and is considered a method of exposing the audience, as consumers, to the product or brand in a seemingly natural process through channels such as T.V. programmes or movies (Cebzynski 2006). An example of this is the seemingly insignificant integration of a car or soft drink used by an actor in a movie. The item has been strategically placed for the viewer to subconsciously take note of (Saladino 2008). These forms of mass media provide the ability to show products and brands being used in an authentic situational environment (Stephen and Coote 2005). This is an effective method as, according to Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory,

consumers are likely to compare their environment with that shown in these advertisements and will feel the need to emulate what they have seen.

### **2.7.2 Humanisation of corporates**

Picard (2014) states that social media have been co-opted by corporates and are being used as the latest mode of marketing and communication for their brands. Most corporate companies aim to spice up their image and create a false impression of a more personal relationship with their followers (Van Dijck 2013). This corporate behaviour echoes Marcuse's (1964:4) "one-dimensional man" theory that media assist in 'selling' an idealised lifestyle. According to Picard (2015), one of the greatest benefits the transformation of the digital world has allowed corporates is that of humanisation - creating the ability to interact and communicate with customers.

Practices such as celebrity/influencer endorsement, product placement and corporate humanisation to improve a brand cannot, however, be categorised as a form of either traditional or online advertising. Owing to their deceptive nature these practices are referred to as subversive advertising for the purpose of this study.

## **2.8 Subversive advertising**

Donovan (2012) states that there has been much debate over the legality and suggested restriction of controversial or deceptive tools in product marketing. There is evidence of a growing movement against such methods around the world. The United States introduced the Self Esteem Act in 2011 (Abraham 2011), and just a year later Israel introduced what has become informally known as the Photoshop law in 2012 (Skarda 2012). In the following year, Debenhams, a British retailer, announced that they would be committing to the use of body-positive models in their campaigns (Hawkes 2013). It is estimated that with the improvements in technology and the ability to manipulate and post your own imagery, trillions of photos will be uploaded to media platforms annually (Worthington 2014). With such a large quantity of photos being made public it is



almost impossible to tell what is real or fake (Nightingale, Wade and Watson 2017).

The Federal Trade Commission (United States 2016) (FTC) states that, legally, all forms of advertising must be truthful, evidence-based and cannot be unfair or deceptive. Furthermore, the FTC specifies that relationships between the endorser and company must be made clear to consumers. According to Strugatz (2014), there is a difference between imagery which encourages engagement and that which advertises for sales purposes. With the growing popularity of social media and networking, corporates are finding it necessary to be cautious not to expose their motives to improve business and increase profits, keeping up the appearance of camaraderie (Van Dijck 2013). Girimaji (2013:2) argues that this “deceptive advertising” has become common practice in our society, deeming it necessary to educate consumers to critically judge the difference between spin and substance so as to avoid misleading information and manipulation by advertisements.



*Figure 2.1: Kylie Jenner advertises for Fit Tea on Instagram (Axonn Media 2016)*



*Figure 2.2: Kim Kardashian advertises for a pharmaceutical company on Instagram (Axonn Media 2016)*

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show Kylie Jenner and Kim Kardashian advertising products on Instagram. In 2015 the Kardashian-Jenner family were accused of posting over 100 Instagram images in which they endorsed products but had not openly stated they were endorsing (Roettgers 2016). Again in 2016, Truth in Advertising, Inc. (TINA) accused the Kardashian-Jenner family of a plethora of social media

posts that broke advertising laws by failing to disclose their relationships with companies advertised (Cowen 2016). In an email dated 17 August 2016, Laura Smith from TINA stated that Kylie Jenner, specifically, was guilty of “deceptive marketing” for numerous companies such as Puma, Balmain, Calvin Klein, Fit Tea and Waist Gang Society (Cowen 2016:1). Although the sisters were quick to clean up their act a few examples of their misdemeanours can still be found online. As celebrity endorsement plays an important role in defining “trendy” (see the next section), it is important that the companies involved ensure that ethical practices are adhered to in social media advertising.

## **2.9 Fashion marketing**

Easey (2009:7) provides the following definition of fashion marketing:

Fashion marketing is the application of a range of techniques and a business philosophy that centres upon the customer and potential customer of clothing and related products and services in order to meet the long-term goals of the organization.

Much like any product provider, the fashion industry depends on marketing practices such as brand equity and advertising to promote themselves (Seo and Buchanan-Oliver 2015). Roger’s (1962) ‘Diffusion of Innovations’ outlines the stages of consumer acceptance, be it technology, an idea or a product (Sherry and Gibson 2002). Rogers (2003) refers to consumers in five different adopter categories: the innovator, early adopters, early majority, late majority and the laggards. These categories are considered to play a role in how fashion trends are adopted because of the initial innovators (Barnes 2011). It is further explained that the category of people who make up the initial group of innovators are generally “cosmopolites” socially and tend to fall into the high-income bracket, such as that of celebrities (Rogers 2003). Methods such as celebrity endorsement therefore play an important role in what is deemed “trendy” (Barnes 2011).

The above can explain why fashion brands regularly make use of celebrity endorsements, fashion campaigns and shock tactics as methods to ensure consumer attention (Neikova 2014). Social media networks (such as Instagram,

Twitter and Facebook) are also a means of fashion product advertisement and creating new customer awareness (Kasteler 2016). Marketers attempt to achieve results through engaging and surrounding buyers with visual stimulants that appeal to their subconscious (Neikova 2014); better known to this study as deceptive advertising methods that fall into the category of subversive advertising.

The advertising industry holds a long-standing history of controversial techniques, in which the fashion industry has more often than not been guilty of practicing methods such as Photoshop and air brushing (Donovan 2012), a tool designed to turn imagery into artwork (Diedrichs and Lee 2010). These programmes were initially aimed at graphic artists, illustrators and photographers with the intent of retouching photography but have now been adopted by the advertising industry to improve imagery appeal (Soltan 2015). Blurring the line between fiction and reality, the images used in advertising campaigns for media are no longer easily divided into categories of attainable body expectations and those that are not (Thompson and Heinberg 1999). With the clever use of graphic techniques that have been made available to us, images of models, celebrities and influencers look completely realistic and untouched, thus manipulating viewers into thinking these impossible body ideals are attainable (Frith 2012). It is felt that the use of tools such as photoshop in advertisements has influenced a growing dissatisfaction with body image for most women (Owen and Spencer 2013), causing a vehement debate as to whether or not the use of such tools should be restricted in promotional material (Donovan 2012). According to Rumsey and Harcourt (2012), media is one of the largest distributors of idealised imagery that is contributing toward factors of body dissatisfaction amongst women. Filmmaker Jesse Rosten created a parody titled 'Fotoshop by Adobé' in 2012, ridiculing the use of photoshop and airbrushing in advertising and suggesting that, much like women seen in advertisements, anyone can alter the way they look. The prospect of such is becoming a reality with the ever-increasing number of media users who have access to these programmes and the ability to post "thinspirational" imagery on Instagram or exercise, fashion and diet tips on Pinterest (Klein 2013).

Photoshop and similar programmes are, however, not without their faults and not even celebrities can escape airbrushing/retouching catastrophes (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Mortifying examples of repeat offenders are: Kim Kardashian, Britany Spears, Beyoncé and Lindsay Lohan, to name a few.



*Figure 2.3: Kim Kardashian for a magazine shoot (Weisman 2016)*



*Figure 2.4: Kim Kardashian altered Instagram post (Pocklington & Moon 2016)*

While some examples of photoshopped imagery are easily differentiated from their original photos, as in Figures 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6, others are not as obvious. Kim Kardashian's vanishing arm would go almost completely unnoticed if it were not for the defined excerpt of the image (see Figure 2.4).



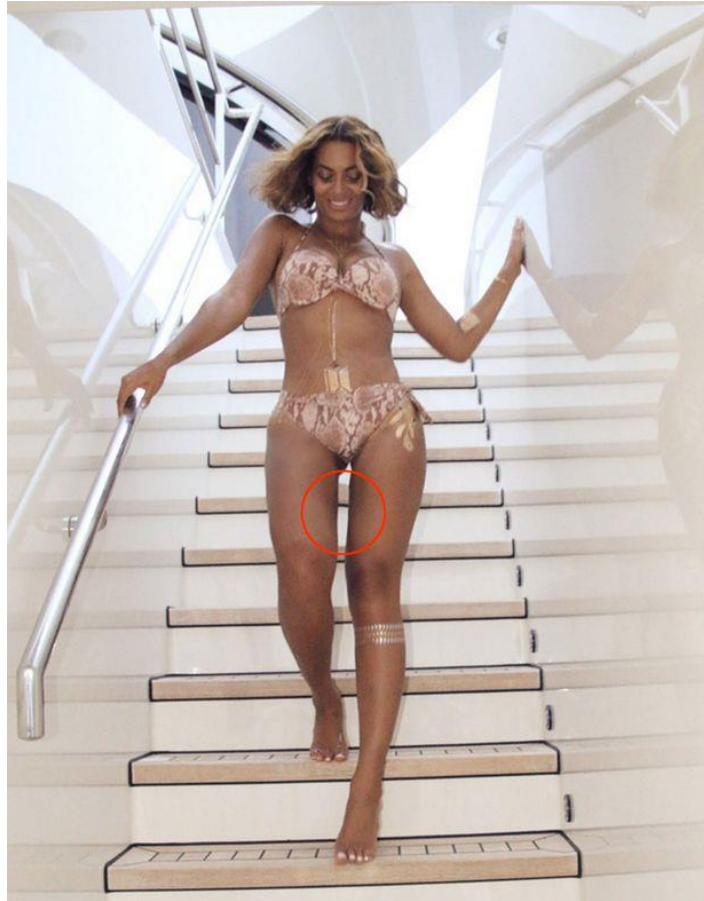
Figure 2.5: Britney Spears for a magazine shoot a. (Weisman 2016)



Figure 2.6: Britney Spears for a magazine shoot b. (Woodward 2014)

Beyoncé may have escaped media followers' judgment unscathed if it weren't for rippling stairs (Figure 2.7) and wavy folds in curtains (Figure 2.8).

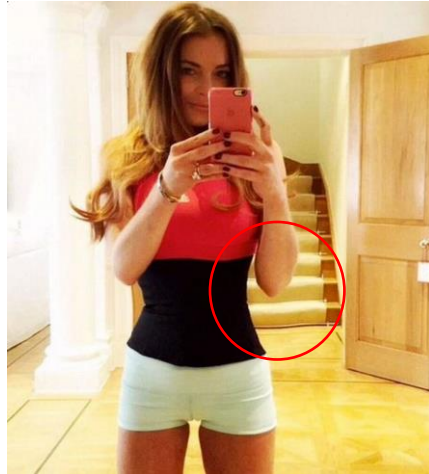




*Figure 2.7: Beyoncé altered Instagram post a. (Pocklington & Moon 2016)*



*Figure 2.8: Beyoncé altered Instagram post b. (Pocklington & Moon 2016)*



*Figure 2.9: Lindsay Lohan altered Instagram post a. (Baxter-Wright 2017)*



*Figure 2.10: Lindsay Lohan altered Instagram post b. (Pocklington & Moon 2016)*

Lindsay Lohan seems almost to mock the use of such programs by failing miserably in hiding her modifications, posting pictures with drooping stairs (Figure 2.9) and concaving walls (2.10). These *faux pas* are all committed in an attempt to create the illusion of flawlessness and perfection.

## 2.10 Conclusion

Research suggests that forms of subversive advertising have been ever present in the marketing industry. The accelerated evolution of technology over recent years has allowed for more opportunity and avenues in which to use this form of advertising. This is not only because corporates now have a wider audience by

means of social media, it is also influenced by the humanisation this platform has provided. The theoretical framework (discussed in Chapter 3) suggests that it is human nature to pursue an idealised lifestyle, constantly making comparisons in attempting self-evaluation. This is a possible indication of why subversive advertising in the form of celebrity/influencer endorsement or product placement and corporate humanisation are effective ways of marketing products. Further research has been conducted into the consumer population outlining echo boomers and digital natives as some of the most influential buyers in the current market. Their consumer behaviour is likely a result of their need to fit into society's norms, attesting to Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory and feeding off social media, as suggested by Marcuse's (1964:4) "one-dimensional man" theory (which is why both theories are used to form the theoretical framework for this study, as discussed in the next chapter). With their penchant for technological devices and social media, it is not surprising that these two generations (i.e. echo boomers and digital natives) are considered to be the most influential buyers in current society. The aim of this study is to discover whether these consumers are in fact actually aware of the 'hidden sell' in social media, or if subversive advertising has successfully deceived its followers, and how these methods might possibly benefit the promotion of fashion products.



## **CHAPTER 3: Orientation, theoretical framework and methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research orientation, social constructivism, and the theoretical framework used within this orientation, consisting of Marcuse's (1964:4) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man" and Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory. The methodology is shown to be a mixed-methods approach, using a nested/embedded design. The nested/embedded design is explained, and the two phases, quantitative and qualitative data collection, are outlined. As the research design is nested/embedded, the quantitative data leads the qualitative data, and discussion topics within the focus groups are led by findings from the online survey conducted. The chapter then shows how validity and reliability were established, and identifies the limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter concludes after explaining how ethical concerns were addressed.

### **3.2 Research orientation**

This study was carried out within the research orientation of the social constructivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe the term "paradigm" as a basic belief system that is fundamental to an investigator epistemologically and ontologically, as well as guiding choices in method. Ontologically, the assumption is based around the idea that reality is socially constructed by individuals and their shared experience, as carried out through social interactions. Reality is therefore relative and multiple (Costantino 2008). The epistemological assumption is subjectivism, that knowledge is created through the interaction between the researcher and the research participants (Guba and Lincoln 1994). In keeping with these ontological and epistemological assumptions, the theoretical framework was based on how consumers' perceptions are shaped by social norms (the "one-dimensional man" theory) and the notion that reality is not objective but based on perceptions and images (the

social comparison theory). The methodological approach was also congruent with social constructivism in being an approach that investigates social behaviour through interaction. Both the theoretical framework and the methodology used will be discussed below.

### **3.3 Theoretical framework**

Marcuse's (1964:4) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man" suggests that the entertainment and information industries convey a prescribed way of life, indoctrinating the belief that one needs certain commodities in order to fit the social norm. The "one-dimensional man" theory can be used to explore how consumers of social media perceive and experience the 'one-dimensional' personality of celebrities. According to Hearn and Schoenoff (2016), idealised imagery depicting celebrity lifestyles and 'one-dimensional' portrayals of celebrity personalities on social media such as Instagram are examples of this.

Amaidas and Chiweshe (2015:1) suggest that various forms of marketing such as advertising that make use of idealised imagery of celebrities in modern popular culture contribute to "body image norms". On a global spectrum, female consumers are affected by the attractive people portrayed in various marketing and advertising campaigns. Smirnova (2012) supports this view stating that women's understanding and opinion of their bodies is influenced by advertisements. Kates and Shaw-Garlock (1999) argue that the use of idealised imagery such as thin women in campaigns proves to be more profitable. However, this is an issue so prevalent in society that there is little chance of young females escaping messages that communicate these ideals (Wan, Luk and Chow 2014). Meenaghan (1995:23) believes that "there is no objective reality and that people trade in the realms of perception and image". This lack of objective reality is supported by Festinger's social comparison theory (1954), which states that it is the effects of media-idealised imagery that consumers feel the need to compare themselves to.

Social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) examines the effects of media-idealised imagery, suggesting that it is instinctive for humans to compare

themselves with others in an attempt to self-evaluate. The connection between celebrity informalisation, that is a display of 'ordinariness' (Harvey, Allen and Mendick 2015) and the instinctive human need to imitate these personalities is in alignment with both social comparison theory and the one-dimensional man theory (Marcuse 1964). This is due to the fervent lust that Echo boomers<sup>2</sup> display towards aspects of celebrity cult idealisation which has become a prevalent part of the social media world. These concepts are used to create a theoretical framework for this study. The theoretical framework provides grounding for the study because it is believed that celebrities, influencers and brands are presenting a one-dimensional impression of themselves to the public and their followers. Based on the theory of the "one-dimensional man" and that of social comparison, it is understandable that consumers feel the need to emulate the lifestyles conveyed through idealised imagery (Dittmar 2008: 20), causing them to be more easily deceived by these one-dimensional personalities and therefore susceptible to 'the hidden sell'.

According to Wan et al (2014:38), the appeal to a person's perception of image rather than object can be seen in the use of promotional marketing messages that encourage consumers to think of their self-image when evaluating a brand. Greenwood, Perrin and Duggan (2016) found that 59 percent of idealised-imagery consumers were between the ages of 18-29. Adolescents and young adults display an increasing willingness to connect and interact, and sites such as Instagram allow 'celebrity Instagrammers' the opportunity to create flawless personas and lifestyles which their followers strive to attain (Kong 2015). These theories scaffold the foundation of the following research and underpin the notion that consumers are influenced by marketing that employs tactics that are engaging on a subconscious level.

### **3.4 Mixed methods**

The methodology that was used for this study was the mixed methods, which is "the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic" (Olsen 2004). Implementing a mixed-methods approach allows the

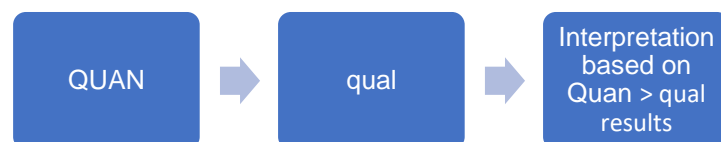
---

<sup>2</sup> The generation following after the baby boomers (Fischer 2015).

researcher to integrate both quantitative data collection and qualitative data collection (Creswell 2013). This permits further discussion, analysis and investigation allowing for unique insights (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). Mixed-methods data collection involves collecting, analysing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data in order to investigate the same phenomenon (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2008). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a better understanding of research than either methodological approach alone.

Bryne and Humble (2007) argue that while both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection present limitations and disadvantages, a mixed-methods approach allows for the opportunity to cancel out discrepancies. They propose that complex research, such as social phenomena, can be better understood and fragmented using a mixed-methods approach. As this study focused on the social phenomena of social media, a mixed-methods approach was well suited. Furthermore, a mixed-method approach provided the opportunity for explanations of information in the event of contradictory or inadequate findings (Green *et al.* 2015).

There are four different types of mixed-methods designs: explanatory, exploratory, triangulation and embedded (Creswell 2003). This study implemented a nested/embedded design, as data collected in the “QUAN” in the form of an online survey led the “qual” (see Figure 3.1), which consisted of two focus-group sessions in which data collected had to be interrogated. This is considered a sequential explanatory approach (Creswell *et al.* 2003).



*Figure 3.1: Diagram of Nested/Embedded Design in Mixed Methods.*

(Adapted from Hanson *et al.* 2005:228)

In order to better understand the design of this study, it is important to understand the two methods of data collection employed first.

### **3.4.1 Quantitative research**

According to Maree (2007), this is the systematic use of numerical data in order to generalise findings from a subgroup of the population. Using measurable variables to answer questions on relationships with the intention to predict, explain or control phenomena (Leedy 1993). Quantitative research is generally initiated by a theory, hypothesis or experiment (Rajasekar, Philominathanet and Chinnathambi 2013). In the case of this study, the research method originated with the theory that deceptive forms of advertising are prevalent in our society, however, consumers are not aware of them. Data are collected by means of surveys and observations and clarified with descriptive or inferential statistics (Williams 2007). According to Cohen and Manion (1980), quantitative data can be defined as social research. This is because it employs empirical methods and statements. Simply put, quantitative research can be described as a method to explain phenomena using numerical data collection that is analysed in a mathematical-based method (Creswell 1994).

#### **3.4.1.1 Data collection instrument**

The quantitative portion of this study made use of an online survey. This type of data collection is advantageous because it offers rapid feedback turnaround. As outlined in the previous chapter, technology has provided the new generation with the opportunity to socialise and network online (Evans and McKee 2010). The internet has also allowed for an increased feedback rate in a shorter time frame (Wong 2010). The online questionnaire was designed to allow for expansion on the extent of the social problem and was administered using eSurvey Creator (Appendix A).

Creswell (2013) suggests that there are two forms of data collection when using a survey: cross-sectional, data that has been collected at one point of time, and longitudinal, when data has been collected over a period of time. This study

implemented cross-sectional data collection. Using an online survey allowed the researcher to dictate delimitations of the study before it was analysed.

#### **3.4.1.2 Sampling**

##### **a) Sampling method**

The selection of participants was criterion based (Patton 2001) which is a form of non-probability sampling (Saumure and Given 2008). This is because the participants had to meet certain criteria in order to be able to answer the research questions. While the criteria of participants were informed by the research, all participants needed to be active users of social media.

##### **b) Sample population**

As suggested by the literature, the user group was based on South African females between the ages of 18 and 29 years and who considered themselves frequent users of social media networks, specifically Instagram. One hundred responses were sought from participants to the questionnaire, as according to Maree (2007:179), “bigger samples are better in terms of three factors namely of representativeness, statistical analysis and accuracy”.

#### **3.4.1.3 Data collection method**

The online survey consisted of 17 questions; the initial three questions established inclusion/exclusion criteria. The following were a series of both open-ended and closed questions, four of which focused on the frequency, attractiveness, purpose and choice in using social media, providing indicators as to the respondents' exposure and susceptibility to indirect marketing on social media. The remainder intended to establish direct responses to the idea of buying products indirectly marketed using social media, as well as evidence of actual purchase. These provided indicators as to respondents' online purchasing practice/s and attitudes towards marketing which used social media (Appendix C).

A link to this online questionnaire was distributed via the researcher's Instagram in the form of an image and video clip using hashtags such as:

- #durban
- #thesissurvey
- #survery
- #answermysurvey
- #durbanfashion
- #sharewithyourfriends

Instagram is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms in South Africa (Becker 2017; Matikiti, Mpinganjira and Roberts-Lombard 2017). Hence, the choice of distribution method was based on the popularity of the platform and the necessity for image-based media. The video was designed with the intention of intriguing followers who came across it on their feeds; the capacity to use hashtags was also highly beneficial in sharing the video with a broader user base (see link for video clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfaFs\\_Rtjm4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfaFs_Rtjm4)). According to Fowler (2002), online modes of communication offer numerous advantages that one cannot achieve when implementing a physical questionnaire. The benefit of using a social network such as Instagram to circulate the survey is the scope of the population it has the ability to interact with. It also allows the researcher the opportunity to include pictures and audio or a combination thereof if necessary.

#### **3.4.1.4 Data analysis**

Data were analysed using the three steps outlined by Vithal and Jansen (2010:27): scanning and cleaning, organising and re-presenting the data. Scanning and cleaning clarifies the relevant responses from the data. Manual coding organises the data into a manageable form (Maree 2007) in order to make sense of the information. Re-presenting involves displaying data in a clear and concise manner (Vithal and Jansen 2010:28).

Fowler (2002) suggests that when administering a survey online it is valuable to further investigate findings from the initial questionnaire. This is critical for clarity. This study therefore implemented a qualitative data-collection method in the form

of two focus groups to discuss findings from the online survey in greater depth. Findings from the qualitative aspect of this study in the form of focus group discussions were analysed by the researcher and relevant important data were collated.

### **3.4.2 Qualitative research**

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) refer to qualitative research as multi-faceted, generally supplying one or more services to the researcher, such as description, interpretation, verification and evaluation. It is described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as nonnumeric data that is expressed verbally; offering the unique ability to produce both the general picture and “well-founded cross-contextual generalities” (Mason 2002:2). It is argued that because of the small sample size used during a qualitative study, information gathered is not necessarily an accurate representation of the broader population (Patton and Cochran 2002). However, it is felt that a combination of methods and more than one source of feedback, such as a second focus group, creates a process known as triangulation which improves the validity of data collected using this method (Greenhalgh and Taylor 1997).

#### **3.4.2.1 Data-collection instrument**

The qualitative data collection was drawn from two focus groups. Silverman (2015:526) states that focus groups promote informal discussion which is to be encouraged, allowing the study to focus on issues involved in the research. As this study implemented a nested/embedded design (Hanson *et al.* 2005:228), the discussion was based on findings from the initial online survey. This method added depth to the study due to its comparative nature, also allowing for the second focus group to expand on and explore further both the findings from the questionnaire and the first focus group.

#### **3.4.2.2 Sampling**

##### **a) Sampling method**

Self-selection sampling (Gosling *et al.* 2004; Alvi 2016) which is a form of non-probability sampling, was utilised for the selection of participants taking part in



the qualitative data collection. Having completed the questionnaire, participants were able to volunteer to participate in further research in the form of focus groups.

#### b) Sample population

Focus groups involve recruiting a group of people who share a common interest (Silverman 2015:526), and consisting of 6 – 12 participants, which Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:289) recommend as a manageable number for discussion purposes. These participants lived within the Durban area, had completed the online questionnaire and volunteered their email addresses so as to be contacted for further participation.

#### **3.4.2.3 Data-collection method**

Participants of the online survey who voluntarily provided their email addresses were contacted in advance in order to ascertain an appropriate meeting date and time. The focus group discussions were intended to take place in private, informal and comfortable surroundings. These conversations were recorded using of a voice recorder on a cell phone, with permission from the participants.

#### **3.4.2.4 Data analysis**

Findings from the first focus group were transcribed verbatim and analysed first (Goldbart and Hustler 2005). Data were then manually coded into sub categories (Maree 2007). This was in order to implement and discuss information gathered from the second focus group. On completion of the second focus group discussion the prior-mentioned method of data analysis was repeated. This was in order to improve the validity of the study (discussed in the next section) with the use of a process known as triangulation (Greenhalgh and Taylor 1997).

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

Validity is not necessarily the same for all forms of research and checks must be conducted based on the topic of the study itself. According to Gregory (1992:117), validity can be defined as “the extent to which [a test] measures what it claims to measure”. It is therefore important to ensure that the form of data

collection used in the study has been checked for any misleading factors that do not relate to or may distract from what is being measured in the study. While data collection can be gathered and measured in a reliable fashion it is noted that this does not necessarily mean it is valid if the testing instrument measures factors outside of the supposed construct (Crocker and Algina 1986). Reliability by definition “is not a stagnant function” (Thanasegaran 2009:37). In contrast to validity, Zikmund (2003) suggests that there are two dimensions of reliability: repeatability and consistency.

Creswell *et al.* (2003) suggest that the triangulation of a mixed-methods design allows for the comparison and contrast of different findings which yields well-validated conclusions. A mixed-methods research design was beneficial for this study as findings from the questionnaire could be discussed and analysed amongst the focus group participants. Triangulating the data was achieved by feeding data collected from the questionnaire into the focus-group discussion (Hanson *et al.* 2005:228).

### **3.6 Limitations and delimitations**

Limitations are the challenges that may affect the extent and outcome of research (Maree 2007). A challenge that this study faced was budget constraints, limiting the data collection and research to South Africa.

Informed by findings in the previous Literature review chapter, the focus groups were delimited to female participants between the ages of 18 and 29 years who and resided in the Durban area. This was for convenience for focus-group participants. The online survey was therefore available to participants around South Africa and the focus groups, due to the necessity for direct interaction with respondents living within the Durban area.

### **3.7 Ethics**

Participants were informed of the nature and purpose of this study and were required to give consent before contributing to any stages of the research (Appendix A and B). All participants were free to withdraw at any time during the

data-gathering process without consequences. Taking into consideration the ethical code, that is, an individual's right to privacy (Leedy and Ormrod 2010:101) and due to questions that the sample may have felt contained details and information they considered to be private, participants were not asked to identify themselves. Moreover all feedback was anonymous. Focus-group members who had chosen to participate further by submitting their contact details, were not named at any point in the study but rather referred to by pseudonyms (false names).

For the quantitative aspect of this study, participants were required to complete an online survey. Anonymity was ensured as the researcher had no way of knowing the identity or personal details of those who completed it, nor did she have the ability to contact them unless they chose to include contact details in order to further participate in any focus group discussions.

With regard to people volunteering to participate in the focus group discussions, email addresses were known only to the researcher. She did not know who participants were nor did she have the means of contact them prior to this study. The data obtained during this study has been stored on USB in a securely locked cupboard by the head of department and will be destroyed/deleted after 5 years.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter identified the research orientation as the social constructivist paradigm, and the theoretical framework as comprising the theory of the one-dimensional man and social comparison theory. It also discussed the mixed-methods approach adopted for this study, outlining the importance of triangulation to data collection and the role this design plays in the validity of this study. The nested/embedded design of this study was explained and the necessity for the quantitative data to inform the qualitative data because of their comparative nature was discussed. All methods of data collection utilised for the purpose of this study were summarised, limitations and delimitations were acknowledged and ethical considerations, which are essential to participant-based studies, were defined.

## **CHAPTER 4: Data analysis and discussion of results**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists of a discussion on the two phases of data collection. Findings have been separated because of the nested/embedded design of this study. Outcomes from the initial data collection method led the second phase of data collection. Phase one analyses and discusses the findings from the online survey that was conducted. Notable points and opinions from this data fed into the focus-group questions and results have been presented in the phase two section.

### **4.2 Phase 1: Survey data analysis and results**

The online questionnaire was administered using eSurvey Creator and formed the initial phase of the research. Data were categorised utilising a statistical breakdown in the form of graphs and tables, allowing for a comparison and discussion of findings. The online survey was designed to investigate the role of social media in South Africa, specifically amongst 18- to 29-year-old females. The sample population was guided by the research discussed in Chapter Two. While the evidence collected was helpful in guiding the age and sex of participants, the majority of research gathered on subversive advertising was based on an international viewpoint. There is limited information about the South African opinions of this advertising method, therefore, the online survey aimed to discover whether South African consumers are in fact aware of this form of advertising online and how it is perceived. The use of open-ended questions elicited further information about the effective/ineffective use of social media as an advertising tool from participants.

#### **4.2.1 Survey question breakdown**

The survey comprised 17 questions both closed and open ended. Questions were designed in subgroups with three different purposes:

- a) Establishing questions: these formed the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Respondents who were not between the ages of 18 and 29 years, female or living in South Africa were excluded on completion of this section.
- b) Indicator questions: these provided the underpinning information such as frequency, attractiveness, purpose and choice in using social media which indicated the respondents' exposure and susceptibility to indirect marketing on social media.
- c) Affirming questions: these were designed to establish participants' responses to the idea of buying indirectly-marketed products, as well as evidence of actual purchases, which would provide an indication of respondents' online purchasing practice/s and attitudes towards social media use in marketing.

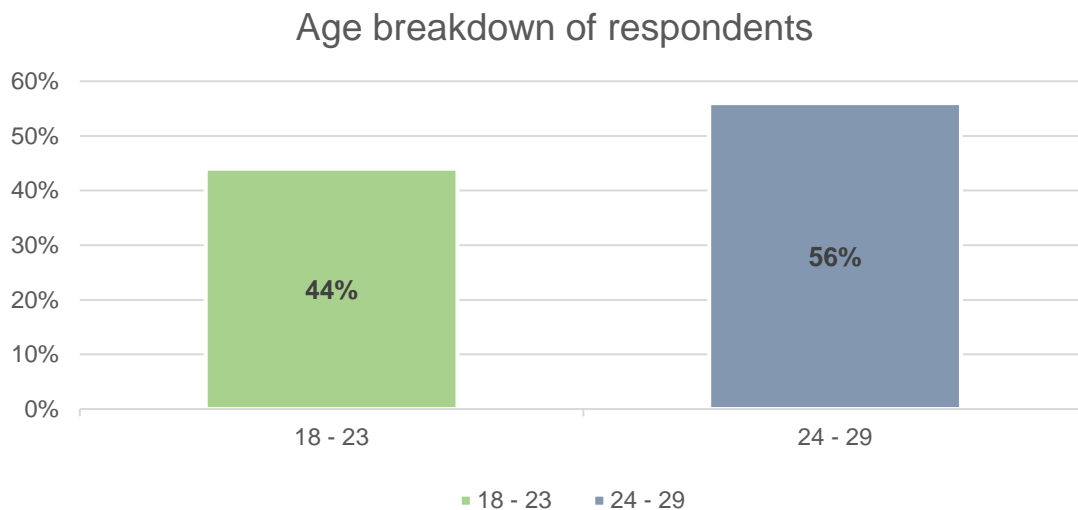
Prior to commencement of the survey, the questionnaire was piloted in order to ensure that the data collection instrument was appropriate for the requirements of the study. The pilot study took place with senior researchers and a few randomly-selected respondents with the purpose of gauging public opinion on the effectiveness of the questionnaire and its usability. All respondents gave positive feedback on the survey: questions were understandable and the survey provider was easy to use on both a PC and cell phone. There were no recommended changes on completion of the pilot study.

The online link to the survey was open for completion over the period of one month after which the link closed and an Excel spreadsheet of the answers was made available. There was a total of 120 respondents to the survey, of which 13 participants were older/younger than the outlined age category of 18 – 29 years. They were therefore excluded from the survey findings. A further 24 respondents failed to complete the survey in full. As outlined in the Ethics section (see section 3.7) respondents were not obligated to complete the survey if they chose not to. However, data collected from the 24 respondents who qualified for the study but did not complete it were still considered; therefore the number of answers for each question varied.

### 4.2.2 Establishing questions

The three establishing questions addressed the following issues:

- 1) Age: Younger 18-23 24-29 Older
- 2) Gender: Female Male
- 3) Country in which you live



*Graph 4.1: Age breakdown of respondents who qualified to complete the survey.*

Graph 4.1 shows the Age breakdown of respondents who qualified to complete the survey. On completion of these questions, participants that qualified were directed to the remainder of the survey and those that did not were redirected to the end of the survey. As stated in the previous section, 13 participants who fell into either the older or younger categories were male or living outside of South Africa.

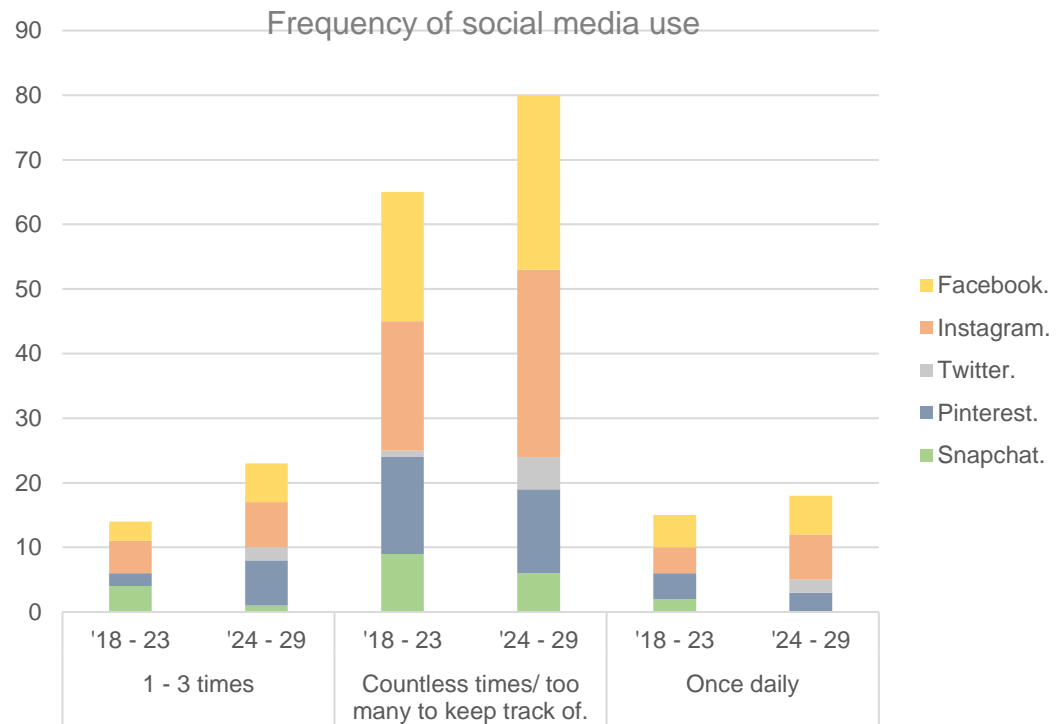
### 4.2.3 Indicator questions

This section of the survey consisted of Questions 4 through to 7 and were designed to gauge the regularity and exposure respondents had to social media.

#### 4.2.3.1 Outcomes

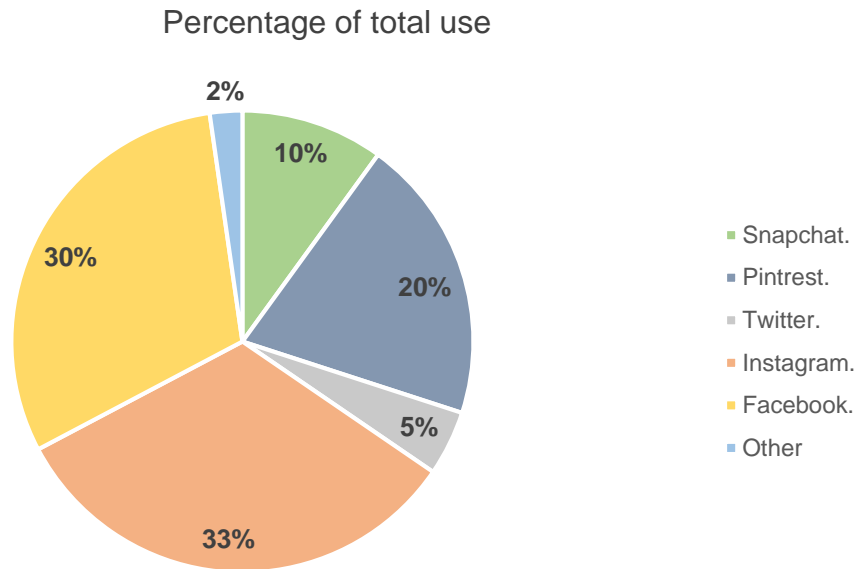
Graph 4.2 indicates the regularity of social media use of 18 – 23-year olds (referred to as young adults) and compares it with the regularity of use of 24 –

29-year olds (mature adults). It was found that the vast majority of social media users in both age groups said that they frequented social media platforms countless times/ too many to keep track of on a daily basis. The platforms that these users visited have also been indicated.

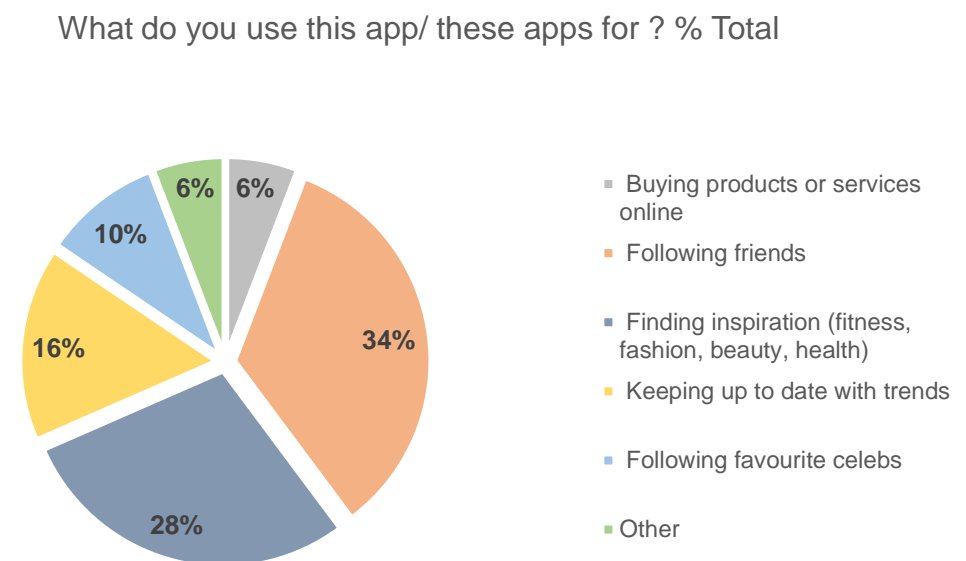


*Graph 4.2:* Question 4: How regularly do you log onto social media per week?

It is interesting to note that in a percentage breakdown of the most regularly-visited platforms (see Graph 4.3), Instagram was the most popular for both age groups. When asked what respondents used these apps for (see Graph 4.4), it was established that up to 34 percent found these platforms were useful when following friends and family. This is consistent with Osterrieder's (2013) opinion that for most users the objective of social media is connectivity.

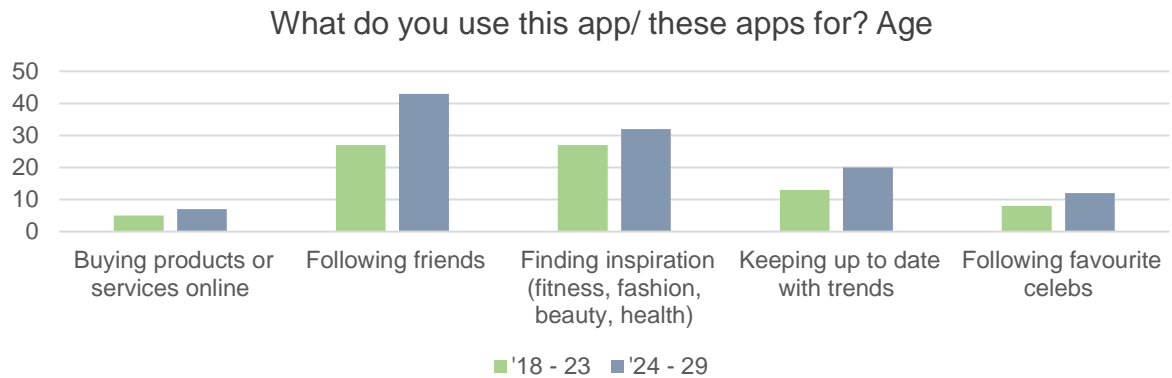


Graph 4.3: Question 5: Which social media app/s do you use frequently?



Graph 4.4: Question 6: What do you use this app/ these apps for? Total





*Graph 4.5: Question 6: Age category breakdown*

Graph 4.5 refers to the number of young and mature adults who responded to the survey. Following friends was the predominant motivation for social media app use overall. However, in contrast to mature adult consumers who indicated following friends as being most important, it was found that young adults considered finding inspiration an equally important reason to use the app.

In response to Question 6 on their reason for app use, respondents suggested that these apps had the ability to impact on a followers' inspirations and desires, indicating that often what they see online can directly reflect on how they perceive their self-image, thus affecting what trend, fashion choices and product purchases they make. It is interesting to note that one respondent felt that social media platforms allowed her to feel as though she were a part of something bigger, and this reiterates Yarrow and O'Donnell's (2009) point (see section 2.4), who provide an example of consumers that fall into what is considered the Echo boomers generation who are concerned with fitting in. These apps were also thought to be providers of information, entertainment and new ideas.

#### **4.2.4 Affirming questions**

The majority of this section was compiled using close-ended questions, however, respondents were often asked to elaborate on or indicate why they felt a certain way. Focusing on online advertising and product marketing, this segment of the survey was designed in order to investigate respondents' awareness and perception of subversive advertising through social media platforms. This section

concludes with questions designed to establish respondents' purchasing behaviour online.

#### 4.2.4.1 Outcomes

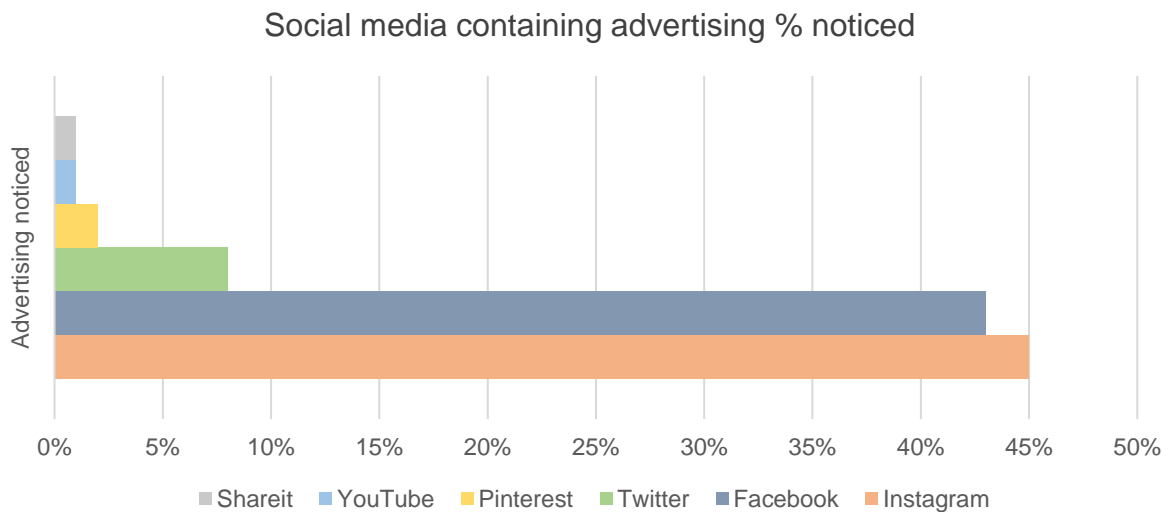
Table 4.1 outlines the close-ended questions asked and the percentage breakdown of the responses. It was found that the majority of social media users who participated in the survey only occasionally enlisted the services of apps for information purposes. However, it was felt by 98 percent of respondents that these platforms offered beneficial advertising opportunities to businesses. They further explained that qualities such as social media availability and exposure to a broad audience, the efficiency, instant feedback and affordability were what made these platforms advantageous advertising opportunities.

*Table 4.1:* Tabulated breakdown of closed-ended questions

| Question:   | Answer      | Total %   |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| 8: How often do you use this app/ these apps to obtain information on a service or product?   | Regularly   | 40%       |
|   | On occasion | 53%       |
|   | Never       | 7%        |
|   | <b>Yes</b>  | <b>No</b> |
| 9: Do you think this app/ these apps could be a beneficial tool in business? Please further explain your answer.  | 98%         | 2%        |
| 10: Did you know that it has become common practice for many businesses to use social media networks such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as a means of product advertisement and creating new customer awareness? | 99%         | 1%        |
| 11: Have you ever noticed product advertising on social media?  | 99%         | 1%        |
| 12: Were you ever attracted to <i>purchasing</i> a product advertised on social media?  | 78%         | 22%       |
| 13: Have you ever actually <i>bought</i> a product from an online provider on one of the social media?  | 70%         | 30%       |
| 14: Have you ever noticed celebrities endorsing products on Instagram?  | 84%         | 16%       |

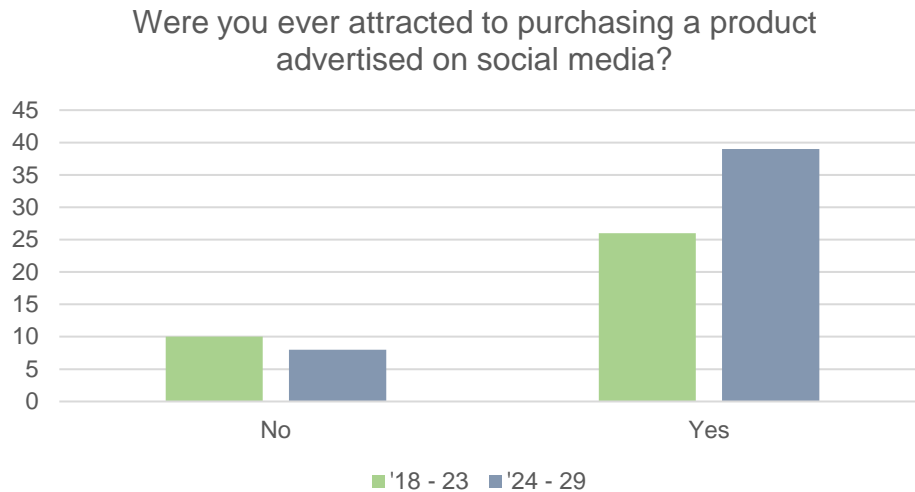
Almost all respondents were aware that product advertising on social media had become common practice and they had taken note of online advertising before. When asked on which social media they had noticed these practices it was interesting to find that amongst Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and others (such

as Pinterest, YouTube and Shareit), both Instagram and Facebook were found to have almost four times more than others (see Graph 4.6). As it has already been observed, respondents acknowledged predominantly using these two apps, therefore the fact that they feel these are the social media with the most noticeable advertising may be due to respondents' frequent usage.



*Graph 4.6:* Question 11: Social media that has been observed to contain advertising.

It was found that 84 percent of respondents were attracted to the idea of purchasing products that they had seen advertised online. The predominantly-used platforms were again reiterated. Respondents further explained which media they had been attracted to for purchasing products: 50 percent stated Facebook and 48 percent suggested Instagram as having most influential advertisement provider. The following graph is a breakdown of opinions based on age category.



*Graph 4.7: Age-based breakdown of respondents attracted to online purchases.*

It was found that the young adults were not as enticed as the mature adults (see Graph 4.7), as the young adults were less likely to be persuaded to make purchases based on the product advertisements they had seen online. When asked why they had not felt enticed to making online purchases, feedback from the respondents suggested that it was often a lack of trust in the advertisement source. Numerous participants also felt that these adverts often did not relate to them or that they were simply irritating and thus chose to ignore them because it was not their reason for using social media. Having considered how many people were attracted to the products online, it was considered important to find out whether or not people were actually buying online. An average of 70 percent admitted to making online purchases, 57 percent of whom fell into the mature adult age group. This could be based on the differing financial situations of the two groups. The possibility of this will be addressed in the focus group sessions.

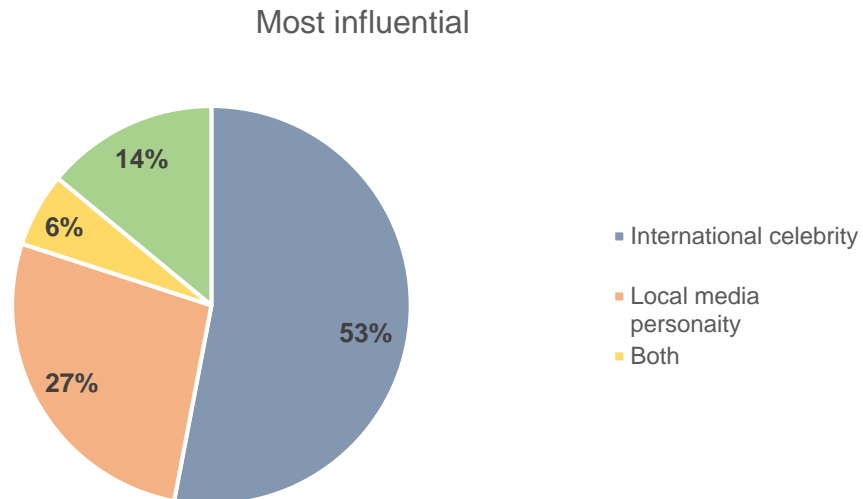
It was important for the researcher to find out what purchases were being made by these respondents as this study aimed to find an effective means of marketing fashion products online so she first needed to find out if these goods were actually being bought. When asked to further explain their purchases a variety of responses emerged, as shown in Graph 4.8.



*Graph 4.8: Categorised list of online purchases made by respondents*

This provides evidence that fashion goods are some of the best-selling products, with 57 percent of the consumers amongst this gender and age bracket making a fashion related-purchase. Respondents who claimed they had not bought online suggested that some of the issues with making these purchases were the risk involved, with unreliable delivery and the possibility of one's product never arriving after payment or the dreaded fear that banking details may be stolen. There was also a general concern with logistics when it came to international company purchases and delivery arrangements which more often than not can become very expensive.

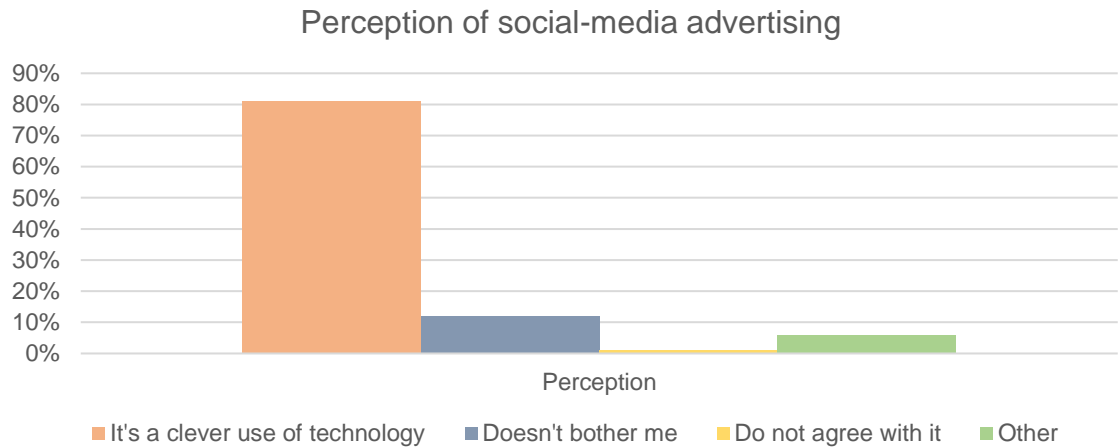
Of respondents, 84 percent stated that they were aware, and had experienced celebrity endorsement and advertising, on Instagram specifically. The researcher felt it was important when dealing with the South African market to know which celebrities and social media influencers South African women found to be most significant to them: international celebrity or local media personality.



*Graph 4.9: Most influential type of endorsement personality*

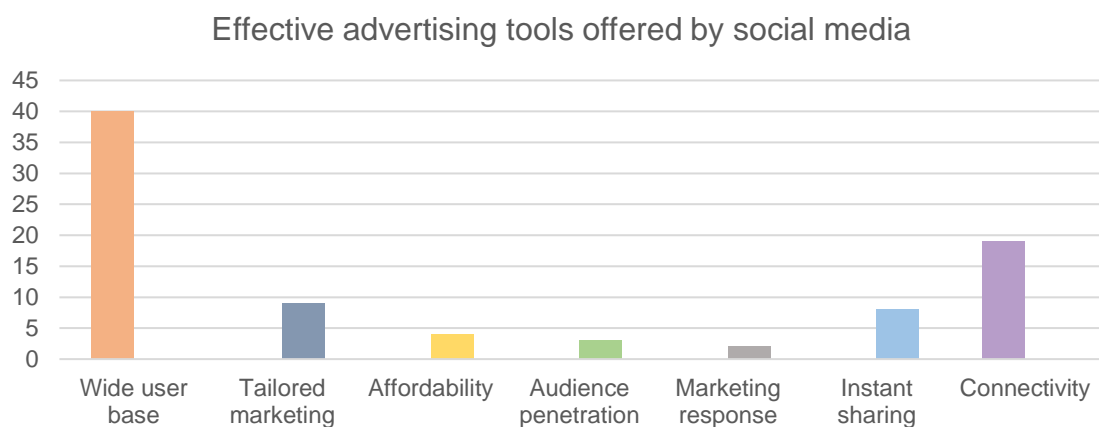
As discussed in Chapter Three, Marcuse's (1964:4) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man" suggests that the entertainment and information industry, in which we most often find celebrities, influencers and media personalities, is the one thought to convey a prescribed way of life. It is very interesting to note that, although only a comparatively small percentage was involved, 14 percent of respondents felt that celebrities, influencers and media personalities did not play a persuasive role in their daily social media use at all (see Graph 4.9).

Consumer exposure to social media is ever increasing (Stephen 2015) as corporates are considering this method of advertising to be the most advantageous (Couldry 2016). For this reason, it is not surprising to find that 99 percent of respondents had noticed advertising online prior to the survey (see Graph 4.10). As this study aimed to investigate how South African consumers perceived subversive advertising it was important to find out how they felt about social media advertising. Respondents were then presented with a multiple-choice question and were given the opportunity to further explain:



*Graph 4.10: Respondents' perceptions of social-media advertising*

It is interesting to note that 81 percent of respondents felt that this was a clever use of technology. This was confirmed as 80 percent felt that apps such as Instagram and Facebook were an effective way of marketing. Graph 4.11 shows the possible reasons indicated by respondents indicated for these apps' success.



*Graph 4.11: Indication of respondents' opinion on why apps are successful marketing tools*

Respondents, however, also commented on the fact that these adverts could be frustrating and annoying when using apps generally for recreational purposes. It was suggested that while these platforms could be very useful tools for a business, they also provided a marketing method that could at times be abused.

### **4.3 Focus group discussion recommendations**

In line with the nested/embedded methodologic design, focus groups were used to further probe data generated quantitatively in the survey. The online survey investigated how female South Africans viewed social media as a platform for the marketing of fashion products. Questions were designed to provide an indication of which social media platforms were the most popular and commonly used amongst women between the ages of 18 and 29 years and why.

The aim of the focus group was to concentrate on prompting participants to provide further insight into online buying behaviour and their awareness of online advertising as a tool for businesses. A series of discussion points and questions were developed in order to further investigate why women living in South Africa, who fell into this age category, were persuaded by this method of advertising.

### **4.4 Phase 2: Focus-group discussion results**

The two focus-group discussions formed the concluding phase of the research. Data gathered through the use of voice recordings that were transcribed verbatim were examined and refined. The focus groups took place on separate dates so that data collected from the first discussion could be transcribed and analysed prior to the subsequent meeting. The sample population was guided by the online survey, comprising participants who had completed the survey and volunteered to partake further in this study. These discussions took place in the researcher's home for the duration of 30 – 40 minutes on two separate dates. The initial focus group was designed to further investigate participants' opinions of advertising in social media and why they felt this was a fast-growing phenomenon.

#### **4.4.1 Focus-group 1 breakdown**

The first focus group was convened on Sunday 21 January 2018 with six volunteers present. Preparation for the first focus group involved 12 proposed questions/topics for discussion. These were designed to further investigate how South Africans defined subversive advertising, to what extent these participants



were aware of products that were being marketed and whether or not these adverts were successfully influencing participants to purchase fashion products.

Prior to commencement of the focus group discussion, participants were welcomed and provided with a brief introduction to the study. They were informed that the discussion would be recorded on both a phone recorder and a dictaphone for transcription purposes and that their identities and feedback would be kept anonymous by using pseudonyms. Furthermore, should they feel uncomfortable at any point, they had the right to leave without consequence at any stage of the discussion. Participants were then required to complete the provided Durban University of Technology consent form issued in order to further contribute (Annexure B).

#### **4.4.1.1 Outcomes**

a) How would you define subversive marketing?

It was felt that subversive advertising could be described as “an association”. Participants suggested that this was the use of positive aspects such as celebrity or even colour that created a comfortable and familiarity with a brand or product through advertising. For the purpose of this study, aspects such as celebrity endorsement and humanisation of corporates on social media is referred to as subversive advertising. Participants’ responses confirmed Neikova’s (2014) opinion that visual stimulants were used to appeal to some buyers’ subconscious (see section 2.9). It was interesting to note that while participants seemed to be in agreement on the topic, few had really spent much time thinking about the methods corporates employ when advertising.

b) Have you ever, on any platform of social media, noticed celebrities using a product that is not necessarily distinctly portrayed as an advert or an endorsement?

Participants suggested that while they often looked at or followed celebrities and took note of the things they were wearing or how their children were dressed,

they had not often thought of it from an advertisement perspective. It was acknowledged that they had noticed brands were being tagged in the posts, specifically on Instagram but they had not necessarily realised that it may be sponsored.

This led the researcher to a discussion on corporate humanisation, since participants were not necessarily taking note of celebrity endorsement and sponsorship. She felt it was necessary to find out if they were also aware that businesses were using these platforms as a direct line of communication with consumers (see section 2.7.2).

c) Corporate humanisation, businesses that humanise themselves on social media by creating content that communicates their brands while also allowing them the ability to interact directly with their consumers. Do you think this is a clever use of social media as a tool?

It was noted that this has become common practice on all forms of social media and that the way in which businesses have gone about advertising can be misleading. Participants felt that the platforms were being used to post imagery that could be mistaken for that of a friend or person that you follow. They said that this created a false sense of comfort, without one realising that they were actually “being advertised to”. It was specifically stated by one participant that often this misinterpretation was caused by the lack of pricing on all forms of advertising; mentioning that not even magazines had the prices alongside advertised outfits any longer.

This echoes the idea that businesses are using manipulation and effective marketing imagery to play on consumers’ subconscious when advertising their products (see section 2.3, Dempsey and Mitchell 2010).

This topic led to the purchasing opportunities that social media platforms now offer. With Instagram becoming one of the fastest-growing social media in South Africa (Matikiti, Mpinganjira and Roberts-Lombard 2017), it is understandable that most of the participants seemed to focus most of their attention on this platform

specifically. They noted that Instagram now provided the option of 'swiping up' on an advertised image in order to immediately be transferred to the product's website or online shop.

d) Why do you think social media as a platform for advertising has become so popular?

Consistent with findings from the online survey that had been completed, participants felt that one of the most alluring qualities of social media was its accessibility. Not only is it accessible to a vast number of consumers but all businesses have access to these platforms too. One participant specifically noted that with constant online notifications it was almost impossible to avoid these advertisements.

e) Do you think that magazines, newspapers and television, as a form of advertising, has become something of the past?

While participants acknowledged that buying magazines or newspapers would at least allow them the opportunity to choose what types of advertisements they were privy to, there simply wasn't the time to purchase these media any longer. They referred back to the ease of accessibility that online social media offered them, even if it meant they could not control the number or type of adverts they "consumed" on a daily basis.

f) Which media do you instinctively utilise for product information?

Participant feedback reiterated findings from the research chapter (see section 2.3.2), outlining the rapid growth in both the popularity and availability of technology and online platforms. The variety of search information and online options that technology makes available was an important feature for these users. Referring back to the convenience and affordability that technology offered, specifically indicating that the option of delivery right to your door without ever having to leave your home had drastically changed consumer behaviour.

The frequent reference to affordability during the discussion was consistent with findings from the online survey. However, one respondent from the survey noted that while it was thought to be affordable or free this was not necessarily true. It was felt that people did not consider the data costs that were incurred during online use of media. The researcher felt this was an interesting perspective and wanted to discuss it further with the group.

g) The survey found affordability to be a beneficial factor of social media. However, one respondent noted that people were often under the impression that the use of online social media was completely free when it is in fact not. This opinion was solely based on the data charges that are incurred when logging on to any form of media. Further probing revolved around this still being considered an off-putting factor.

It was felt by participants that data, by comparison, was a much more affordable option than media such as newspapers and magazines. The availability of WiFi in most homes and work places also allows for a more cost-effective means of online use. This also permits a wide variety of search subjects, unlike printed media which generally focuses on specific topics.

Psychological aspects were also referred to during this discussion. It was acknowledged that online research and the use of social media did cost money. However, it does not entail the physical aspect of swiping your card and actually being able to see the value deducted. Participants stated that there was an emotional connection when seeing money being deducted from one's bank account and that while data worked in a similar manner one was not constantly notified or reminded of this factor. In short, this feature makes any costs incurred easier to accept.

**h)** According to research, Instagram has been recorded as the fastest-growing social media platform in South Africa (see section 2.7.2). This confirms the findings from the online survey (see graph 4.2). The researcher wanted to know what the participants thought of this fact and why they felt Instagram had grown in popularity so rapidly.

The researcher found the participants' discussion on this topic very interesting. Some viewed it from a social media follower's perspective, while others immediately assessed the platform as a tool for business. Those who initially commented on the influx of advertising that has been introduced as a new feature of Instagram, stating that numerous advertisements were scattered amongst the feeds of those that they followed. This led to a discussion on the connectivity of social-media platforms and how advertising was mostly dictated by what you as a user are searching online. All were in agreement that this was a clever way to advertise your business or products, noting that as a business online your platform of followers would be ever expanding with an increasingly broad age group when advertising on social media.

It was also noted, however, that one of Instagram's most successful features was that it was visually appealing. The platform as a whole is dependent on its followers taking and sharing pictures (Abbott, Donaghey, Hare and Hopkins 2014). It was suggested that usually, along with photographic posts on other platforms, a description would be necessary but that the appeal of Instagram was that you no longer had to concern yourself with words but simply strive to find a "*powerful picture*", something that is known as 'Instaworthy'. The tone of this discussion corresponded with findings from the online survey, with one respondent going so far as to say she experienced anxiety when deciding what to post on Instagram for fear that it would not be 'Instaworthy'.

i) Have you ever noticed celebrities or social media influencers using a product on a social media platform, in which the post has not necessarily distinctly been portrayed as an advert or endorsement?

It was found that all participants had noticed this method of advertising before. The researcher wanted to further the discussion on this topic by referring to findings suggested in the survey (see graph 4.9) and Marcuse's (1964:4) critical theory of the "one-dimensional man". In order to do so she asked if participants felt that these celebrities were selling a lifestyle and if they were under the

impression that if they had the same possessions then they too could have the same lifestyle.

There was general agreement that the adverts celebrities feature in offer an escape from our everyday, mundane lives. It was also suggested that when you are able to possess something that one of your favourite celebrities has then you feel a slight connection to them. The researcher found this interesting as it shed light on aspects of the celebrity cult phenomenon (see section 2.6).

j) Findings from the survey questionnaire suggest that we as South Africans tend to 'trust' international celebrities more than local media personalities. Would you agree with this statement and if so, why do you think that is so?

As suggested from findings in the survey, all participants felt that products advertised by celebrities were held in higher esteem. The association of international equating to quality was made in reference to products and related to that of celebrities as media products. While it was acknowledged that there was a growing interest in South African local celebrities and the '*local is lekker*' movement, it was felt that our country has not had as much time to idealise celebrities and subsequently link their status to a brand. It was suggested that international celebrities were more 'dependable' because of their world renown.

Some participants felt that they emotionally identified with certain international celebrities more, whether it be because of similarities in aesthetic interests or if they followed the same political or activist movements. This indicated the presence of aspects of the celebrity-cult phenomenon, when participants feel a peculiar devotion to these personalities because they have identified with them on a personal level (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010).

k) Have you ever seen something advertised randomly online and chosen to buy it? If so, what makes you trust these websites?

Findings from the online survey suggested that respondents were hesitant to use online sites for purchases. However, participants further explained that while they

were hesitant to buy online from stores that they had not heard of before, there are factors that they feel lend these sites legitimacy. These consumers look for branding and visual impact of the website as a whole, reviews, referrals and familiarity.

Regarding branding and visual impact, participants admitted to taking note of the design and overall appeal of both the brand logo and the website page. It was suggested that when a website had multiple pop-up advertisements or sponsorships they, as consumers, were led to doubt the business's financial stability and questioned whether or not these online stores needed external funding. This caused concern.

On the topic of reviews, referrals and familiarity, it was admitted that, on sites respondents had never purchased from before, the idea of brand familiarity would most likely be formulated by repetitive advertising on social media. However, participants were adamant that even if the brand seemed familiar they would still refer to the reviews before making a purchase.

l) Do you think advertising has become too prevalent in social media?

Participants referred back to repetitive advertising stating that the idea of pop-up ads and the ability for all their social media to link and communicate search histories with one another was a very clever tool for marketing purposes. However, it was made unequivocally clear that they did not appreciate having to be pestered by these materials each time they wanted to use their social media. It was also noted that it was impossible to avoid these unfortunate repercussions of social media use by requiring permission before access to the platforms. This has made it somewhat impossible to evade.

#### ***4.4.1.2 Summary of discussion***

Information gathered during the first focus-group discussion was consistent with those of the online survey. The discussion provided insight into how participants perceived subversive advertising in social media and further clarified what they

felt an effective use of these online platforms was for corporates. Participants seemed to focus most of their attention on the use of Instagram specifically when referring to online platforms. This validates findings from the research (see section 3.4.1.3).

It is interesting to note that all of the participants were aware of advertising and have often observed subversive methods such as endorsement or sponsorship. However, they also acknowledged that, even though they recognised these approaches, the use of such subversive tactics was often effective. The group as a whole agreed that online advertising could be an annoyance because of its repetitive nature but that they understood why corporates utilised these platforms.

Fashion and beauty products were commonly referred to during the discussion, with the majority of participants using these items as examples in their explanations. It was suggested that the use of social media and online advertising kept them up to date with trends and made it easier to do so by providing the opportunity to shop online. Not all participants, however, were comfortable with this aspect, stating that they would rather refer to these platforms for their trend information but shop directly from stores. Lack of confidence in online security played a large role in their concerns as they felt it was difficult to distinguish the legitimacy of a site if they had not used it before.

#### **4.4.2 Focus-group 2 breakdown**

Participants from the second focus group were provided with the same set of discussion points and questions. However, on completion of the first focus group the researcher felt it was necessary to include additional interesting points or topics from these findings (see Appendix F). This section will discuss the findings from the additional discussion points as participants' opinions of the initial questions correlated with those of the first focus group.

Similarly to the first focus group, prior to the discussion, participants were informed of voice recording, assured of anonymity and provided with Durban



University of Technology consent forms to be completed before commencement (see section 4.4.1).

The second focus group took place on Saturday 17 February 2018 with five volunteers present. Preparation for the focus group comprised the 12 establishing questions/topics of discussion with an additional 8 new points that emanated from the findings from the first focus group. Notably these participants also felt that the use of social media for advertising was “clever” but respondents differed from the first group in that they were more vocal about their rights as consumers. Both groups were, however, in agreement about international celebrities being more 'trustworthy'.

#### **4.4.2.1 Outcomes**

a) How does it make you feel when you know that you can now be considered products because corporates have the ability to purchase your information?

This topic sparked a debate amongst the participants with the majority feeling that the use and purchase of personal information was an invasion of their privacy. One participant (Britt) went as far as to state that “you are held ransom because you can't say no, actually I don't want you to access my content”. This was with reference to social media terms and conditions that often do not allow users admittance to their platforms without first providing permission to access their personal contents.

These opinions were debated by one participant who felt that providing permission to access content should not be considered an issue, explaining that it is a matter of risk versus reward. It was felt that as users of social media with the expectation of accessibility to information on all platforms it seemed only fair that they (users) be expected to provide the same. However, it remained a sore point that corporates were making money from their personal information for the majority of the group. This led to a discussion on advertising as a whole, with the suggestion that businesses are only as empowered as we the consumers allow them to be. Relating to findings from research, advertising plays a pivotal role in

consumer purchases because of its ability to create emotional and positive associations with specific products or brands (Du Plooy 2012).

b) Do you think that when your clothing, beauty and fashion choices are more up to date and on trend that people perceive you differently?

Participants displayed mixed opinions on this point. While they felt that they each strove to be unique, they admitted to being concerned with other people's judgments. Acknowledging that for the majority, keeping up to date with trends was of importance, they also said that when they were wearing the latest styles they felt more confident in themselves. It was suggested that this was because of the assumption that when you appear "well put together" people share the same opinion of you. This further substantiates Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory as discussed in Chapter Three and now solidified Marcuse's critical theory when Britt stated, "You still want the acceptance of your peer group" (see section 3.3).

c) Do you think that as South Africans we can be categorised into specific generations of consumers? (e.g. Echo Boomers or digital natives)

An explanation of the different generations of consumers was initially provided in order to thoroughly investigate participants' opinions on the topic. It was explained that, while their age groups technically fell within the generations used to define these consumers, these descriptions were based on American opinion and their applicability to consumers in South Africa has been questioned (Mosupyoe 2014: 41; Duh and Struwig 2015: 91; Thompson 2018: 2).

It was interesting however to find that the participants felt these categories could not be considered specific to Americans, stating that it was human nature to want to be accepted, while still having the ability to reflect themselves as individuals. These findings were comparable to research in Chapter Two, validating the theoretical framework and the description of Echo boomers as a generation of consumers in South Africa.

d) With reference to fashion products, and specifically those sold online, how do you know what social media/websites to trust when making purchases?

Sizing, quality and payment issues were just a few of the concerns participants listed as aspects that contributed to their apprehensions when making online purchases, suggesting that the visual appeal and functionality of an online store played a large role in the perceived legitimacy of the website. It was further explained that if there were reviews on the site, or the webpage stated it was secure, they tended to feel more confident as consumers.

e) What sells you the idea of having a product if you haven't seen it in store or used it before?

When referring to skincare and beauty, Robyn stated that her most important aspects when looking for new products was that they were animal and eco-friendly. I found this interesting because it seems to be a topic that is becoming increasingly prevalent in our society. However, it was felt by the majority that reviews from other users were incredibly beneficial when conducting research on a new product and this was often convincing when finalising their purchases.

Participants' responses to both social media purchases and new product purchases, as discussed above in points d) and e), were of a similar nature. This suggests that consumers, who have the advantage of social media platforms available to them, are still dependent on the aspect of human interaction and reassurance. While it was acknowledged that some of these comments, likes and reviews could be purchased by businesses from online providers to improve their appearance, it was noted that these were most often quite easily identifiable.

f) Do you actually buy fashion and beauty products online?

All participants agreed that even though they felt there was a risk in making purchases online, they had all utilised social media and online shopping services at one time or another.

#### **4.4.2.2 Summary of discussion**

The information gathered during the second focus group was consistent with findings from both the online survey and first focus group. The additional questions which emanated from the findings from the initial discussion provided significant insight into participants' perceptions of online shopping habits and fashion and beauty purchases.

It is interesting to note that participants seemed to focus their attention on how they are perceived by their peers during this discussion. This validates findings from research when discussing Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory (see section 3.3). While all who attended the discussions strive to be unique and consider themselves to have individual styles, they admitted to being concerned that they may not be accepted if they were too different. This is aligned with findings from research which discusses consumer generations (see section 2.4) and simultaneously negates the opinion that these consumer descriptions do not exist in South Africa.

The legitimacy of websites and webpages advertised by social media was highlighted as a concern, which has been a common finding throughout both the survey and first focus group. Participants explained that there is reassurance when being able to interact with a person rather than an entity.

### **4.5 Conclusion**

The results of the online survey and two focus groups have outlined consumers' understanding of subversive advertising in social media and how they perceive these platforms as product providers. The participants acknowledged their awareness of subversive methods of advertising, confirming that while they were aware of these tactics they were still vulnerable to them. This revealed that as research suggests, these methods are an effective means of grasping consumer attention. Subversive approaches, such as corporate humanisation, celebrity endorsement and product placement, were also discussed and participants provided explanations for their success. An indication of consumer behaviour through focus group discussions further validated findings from the research,

which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study set out to come to conclusions as to whether South African consumers were aware of the subversive advertising taking place on social media platforms. Furthermore, it was important to understand the extent to which subversive advertising had influenced consumers to make fashion purchases. Throughout this study research was conducted on social media, methods of advertising and consumer awareness and behaviour. Chapter Four provided a discussion on findings from the data collection which investigated South African females' perspective of subversive advertising in social media. This chapter will discuss key findings from the research process, outlining and discussing results and correlating data attained throughout the investigation. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the study as well as recommendations on improvement of indirect marketing strategies and further research.

### **5.2 Key conclusions**

This research focused on answering the three critical questions below, in relation to consumer behaviour, focusing specifically on fashion products. The following is a discussion on the key findings from both research and data collection.

#### **5.2.1 How can subversive advertising be defined?**

Chapter Two discussed in depth how certain marketing practices can be considered deceptive in that they are misleading to consumers. For the purpose of this study, marketing aspects such as celebrity endorsement, product placement and businesses attempting to humanise their presence on social media have been referred to as subversive advertising.

a) Celebrity endorsement: It has been found that due to the celebrity cult phenomenon, consumers form devotions to public personalities (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010). Social media allows these 'celebrities' to share imagery of

their lifestyles with their followers, which consumers find aspirational. This has introduced an effective means for businesses to advertise to consumers because of the emotional tie that has already been established between the celebrity and their follower (Stone, Joseph and Jones 2003). This culminates in consumers aspiring to attain the glamorous lifestyle these celebrities lead by buying the products these celebrities have (Cashmore 2016).

b) Product placement: This is defined as the inconspicuous paid message of a brand's product (Balasubramanian 1994). It is the use of mass media to advertise products and brands in a seemingly authentic situational environment, without specifying the intention (Stephen and Coote 2005).

c) Humanisation of corporates: This is the interaction of companies with their consumers that creates the appearance of democracy and camaraderie (Tuten and Solomon 2013). It has been found that social media has provided the platform for these corporates to create the impression of a more personal relationship with their followers (Van Dijck 2013).

### **5.2.2 To what extent are participants aware that a product/s are being marketed?**

While research suggests that consumers have been misled or deceived by methods of subversive advertising (see section 2.8), respondents who completed the survey and volunteered to participate in the focus groups disagreed. Participants were adamant that they were very much aware of this form of advertising. Online survey results indicated that only 1 percent of respondents stated that they were not aware of these practices (see section 4.2.4.1). Focus-group discussions showed that although participants were aware of these marketing tactics, they felt that the use of these marketing methods was still effective.

During further discussion with the focus groups, however, participants acknowledged that social media could be misleading. This was in reference to products and memorabilia that celebrities had tagged in posts with the intent of

product placement that consumers did not necessarily realise were sponsored. It was further explained that these posts seemed less like advertisements because there were no prices alongside the images. Participants indicated that this was a practice that they had noticed had been increasing throughout all forms of media (see section 4.4.1.1. c).

### **5.2.3 To what extent are participants influenced to purchase the fashion product/s marketed in this way, and why?**

Participants displayed traits in line with the characteristics of consumers from the Echo boomer generation (see section 2.4). Typically concerned with how they are perceived by their peers, these participants want to be individuals while still fitting in and being trendy. This explains why they are conscious of trends in fashion, the latest celebrity styles and hot topical issues. Results from the online survey found that 53 percent of respondents felt that international celebrities were the most influential type of endorsement personality. Discussions that took place during the focus-group meetings confirmed participants felt that international celebrities held in higher esteem were considered to be more dependable because of their world renown. This further substantiates Marcuse's (1964:4) theory of the 'one-dimensional man' and that it is the entertainment industry made up of celebrities and influencers who 'sell' consumers a prescribed lifestyle, as discussed in Chapter Three. However, while they may feel compelled to acquire the same products and fashion items that the celebrities advertise, this influence does not necessarily always extend to the point of purchase. Rather, participants use these advertisements as aspirational imagery for trend direction, stating that they utilise social media as an online means of research on the products they take an interest in. Participants explained that when they saw attractive items on social media, they followed the associated links to further their information on the product, compare pricing and learning of other consumers' opinions through reviews.

The second focus group, in particular, raised concerns about social media and online shopping such as security issues, size and fit issues and payment



methods. However, they agreed that this did not always deter them from making online purchases, specifically through reputable companies.

### **5.3 Additional discoveries of significance**

Data collected from the two focus groups where participants were allowed to expand on their ideas and opinions led to interesting additions to the conclusions. Discussion focused on topics such as affordability of social media in comparison with traditional media, consumer rights and how the visual appeal of a website can impact consumer buying behaviours.

#### **5.3.1 Social media affordability**

Respondents to the online survey noted affordability as one of the key contributing factors to that of social media popularity, citing the inexpensive nature of these platforms as the main attraction for both corporates and users. However, a respondent from the survey emphasised that users often neglected to consider the data costs incurred when using media and search engines. Further discussion amongst the focus groups found that the convenience and variety of search options that social media provided was more worthwhile. Print media is considered to be targeted at certain topics or markets, where online platforms and the purchase of data allow for the ability to search and reference a wide variety of information, making social media the cost-effective choice.

#### **5.3.2 Consumer buying behaviours**

Social media is thought to have the ability to diminish exploitation opportunities. This is because it provides a communication source that has the ability to expose the good, the bad and the ugly of a business (Evans and McKee 2010). However, findings would suggest that this aspect is not reassurance enough for consumers to feel confident making purchases online from stores that they have not used before. Reliability and legitimacy of online stores was found to be the forerunner of consumers' concerns. This perspective impacts online businesses and how they present themselves in the social media market place. Branding, visual appeal, reviews and referrals were suggested as indicators that lend to online-store legitimacy. Though these consumers felt hesitant when making online

purchases they acknowledged that direct deliveries and efficient return policies were a benefit of using these platforms.

### **5.3.3 Consumer rights**

User privacy policies on social media became a provocative topic amongst participants of the second focus group. Discussion turned to debate as the notion of information accessibility by external parties was deliberated on. Some felt that this was a fair risk to take given the rewards and benefits that social media provide, while others felt it was a gross invasion of privacy that should not be permitted, though both acknowledged that there was very little option in the matter if they wanted to enjoy the use of these platforms. It is interesting to note that these participants disclosed profound concern around the availability and safety of their personal content; particularly in light of Facebook's recent admission that the personal data and content of over 50 million American users has been harvested and improperly shared, with the CEO and founder formally apologising for the breach in trust between themselves and their users (Wong 2018).

## **5.4 Recommendations**

In this section recommendations are made for the improvement of business advertising practices on social media, identification of subversive advertising for consumers and further research in this area.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for the identification of subversive advertising**

This study investigated the extent to which consumers were aware of subversive advertising. Despite consumers feeling as though they were fully aware of these practices, participants admitted that they had not realised that certain posts were likely sponsored by corporates. In order to become more cognisant of this form of advertising, consumers should:

- a) Pay careful attention to corporate hashtags in celebrity or aspirational posts.
- b) Not take celebrity reviews or recommendations at face value.

### **5.4.2 Recommendations for the effective business practice on social media**

In order to take full advantage of advertising on social media, businesses should:

- a) Refine their brand image and visual appeal of online websites.
- b) Focus on customer communications, complaints, reviews and policies.
- c) Ensure that ethical considerations are followed in terms of distinguishing between overt sponsorship/advertising and oblique or surreptitious reference to products.

### **5.4.3 Recommendations for further research**

The following recommendations are made for further research into the 'hidden sell' of subversive advertising:

- a) More surveys need to be sent out via different Instagrammers' accounts in order to obtain a broader respondent base.
- b) Further research is required to find out how third parties obtain personal data, and the ethical implications thereof.
- c) Research is needed into the perceived opinion that South African public personalities are not held in as high esteem as international celebrities.
- d) Research could expand on the '*local is lekker*' movement in South Africa and ways to improve this practice.
- e) Research is also needed into how social media influencers become successful.
- f) Further investigation is needed into the celebrity cult phenomenon's impact on social media.

## **5.5 Personal insights gained by the researcher**

As the researcher I have found that I am more aware of subversive advertising than the participants seemed to be, due to my active exploration of the topic in literature. This has enabled me to be more conscious of the underlying manipulation used by corporates and celebrities on social media platforms such

as Instagram. I have learnt what to look for and take note of, whereas the participants have not and are not as conscious of it.

I have often had the same concerns that my private content is not secure, and in line with the participants, I also find it one of the most off-putting aspects of social media as a whole. I feel this is incredibly pertinent in light of the recent Facebook data breaches. Interestingly, participants raised these concerns prior to the exposure of the data breach, showing the issue was already in the public domain.

What I have learnt through research, observation and discussion on the topic is that South African businesses are not taking full advantage of the platforms social media has to offer. Implementation of these marketing methods could also benefit local media personalities, giving them the opportunity to be perceived as more influential or as dependable as their international counterparts.

## **5.6 Concluding thoughts**

In conclusion it is felt that this study has provided valuable insight into the South African female's opinion on subversive advertising through social media; in particular with regard to that lack of awareness of the extent of this method of marketing. This study also investigated the determining factors of successful online advertising which can assist in further research towards online business and marketing development. It has therefore been a worthwhile exploration of the aspects which contribute towards the phenomenon of the celebrity cult and the growing popularity of the social media influencer. In short, this research provides an informative understanding of the impact social media possess as commercial platforms in current society.

## REFERENCES

Abbott, W., Donaghey, J., Hare, J., and Hopkins, P. J. 2014. *The perfect storm: The convergence of social, mobile and photo technologies in libraries*. Australia: ePublications. Available: [http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=library\\_pubs](http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=library_pubs) (Accessed 15 March 2018).

Abraham, T. 2011. The self esteem act: parents push for anti-Photoshop laws in U.S. to protect teens from unrealistic body image ideals. *Mail online*, 12 October. Available: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2048375/Self-Esteem-Act-US-parents-push-antiPhotoshop-laws-advertising.html> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Akanbi, A. O. 2011. The macroeconomic determinants of technological progress in Nigeria. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 14 (3): 282-297.

Alvi, M. 2016. *A manual for selecting sampling techniques in research*. Munich: MPRA. Available: [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70218/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_70218.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70218/1/MPRA_paper_70218.pdf) (Accessed 08 January 2018).

Amaidas, S. and Chiweshe, N. 2015. Youth consumer behaviour: a case of beauty product consumption. *Journal of social sciences*, 43 (1): 1-8.

Amedie, J. 2015. The Impact of Social Media on Society. *Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections*, March: 1-19. Available: [http://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl\\_176/2](http://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl_176/2) (Accessed 09 January 2018).

Axon Media. 2016. *How you should be using sponsored content* (image). Available: <https://www.axonn.media/the-content-marketer/strategy/kardashian-factor-how-you-should-be-using-sponsored-content> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Balasubramanian, S. K. 1994. Beyond advertising and publicity: hybrid messages and public policy issues. *Journal of Advertising*, 23 (4): 29-46.

Balasubramanian, S., Karrh, J. and Patwardhan, H. 2006. Audience response to product placements: an integrative framework and future research agenda. *Journal of advertising*, 35 (3): 115-141.

Barnes, A. 2011. Celebrity: celebrity and food. *The Lifted Brow*, May: 6-7.

Bauer, R. A. and Greyser, S. A. 1968. *Advertising in America: the consumer view*. Boston: Harvard University.

Baxter-Wright, D. 2017. *24 times celebrities were accused of major photoshops fails* (image). Available:  
<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/g9611327/celebrity-photoshop-fails/> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Becker, D. 2017. Instagram as a potential platform for alternative Visual Culture in South Africa. In: Bunce, M., Franks, S. and Paterson, C. eds. *Africa's media image in the 21st century: from the "heart of darkness" to "Africa rising"*. London: Routledge, 102 – 112.

Belch, G, E. and Belch, M,A. 2015. *Advertising and promotion: an integrated marketing communications perspective*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Blackwell, J. 2006. *Salesmanship and Empathy*. Available:  
<http://ezinearticles.com/?Overview-of-Traditional-Marketing&id=374128>  
(Accessed 14 April 2017).

Brierley, S. 1995. *The advertising handbook*. London: Routledge.

Brown, D. and Hayes, N. 2008. *Influencer marketing: who really influences your customers?*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann publications.

Bryne, J and Humble, A. M. 2007. *An introduction to mixed method research*. Available: <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/MixedMethodologyHandout.pdf> (Accessed 26 April 2017).

Burke, K. E. 2017. Social butterflies: how social media influencers are the new celebrity endorsement. Masters of arts in communication., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Available: [https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/78221/Burke\\_KE\\_T\\_2017.pdf?sequence=1](https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/78221/Burke_KE_T_2017.pdf?sequence=1) (Accessed 08 January 2018).

Business of Fashion 2018. *The state of fashion 2018*. Business of Fashion: McKinsey & Company.

Business of Fashion. 2017. *The state of fashion 2017*. Business of Fashion: McKinsey & Company.

Cashmore, E. 2016. Winning isn't everything. selling is: sports, advertising and the logic of the market. In: Marshall, P.D. and Redmond, S. eds. *A companion to celebrity*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 177-193.

Cebzynski, G. 2006. Lights! camera! product placement! nation's restaurant news. *New York Journal*, 40 (49): 1-5.

Church Gibson, P. 2011. *Fashion and celebrity culture*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. 1980. *Research Methods in Education*. London: Groom Helm Ltd.

Couldry, N. 2016. Celebrity, convergence, and the fate of media institutions. In: Marshall, P.D. and Redmond, S. eds. *A companion to celebrity*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 98-113.

Costantino, T.E. 2008. Constructivism. In: Given, L.M. eds. *The SAGE encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 116-120.

Cowen, T. 2016. *Kardashian-Jenner family could be in big trouble over Instagram endorsements*. Available:  
<http://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2016/08/kardashian-jenner-family-trouble-instagram-endorsements> (Accessed 24 February 2017).

Creswell, J. W. 1994. *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. and Plano Clark, V. 2007. *Designing and Conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. Gutmann, M. and Hanson, W. 2003. Advanced mixed methods research designs. In: Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. eds. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 209-240.

Crocker, L., and Algina, J. 1986. *Introduction to classical and modern test theory*. Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Czerniewicz, L and Brown, C. 2010. Debunking the 'digital native': beyond digital apartheid, towards digital democracy. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 26 (5): 357-369.



Dittmar, H. 2008. Understanding the impact of consumer culture. In: Dittmar, H. ed. *Consumer culture, identity and well-being: the search for the 'good life' and the 'body perfect'*. Hove and New York: Psychology Press, 1-23.

Douglas, K. 2016. Fashionomics 101: An African industry that could be worth \$15bn by 2021. *Africa Business Insight*. Available: <https://www.howwemadeitinafrica.com/fashionomics-101-african-industry-worth-15bn-2021/57043/>

Ducoffe, R.H. 1996. Advertising value and advertising on the web. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36 (5): 21-35.

Davidson, D. 1987. Knowing one's own mind. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association*, 60 (3): 441–58.

Dempsey, M. A. and Mitchell, A. A. 2010. The influence of implicit attitudes on choice when consumers are confronted with conflicting attribute information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (4): 614-625.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 2005. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Dickey, J. and Sullivan, J. 2007. Generational shift in media habits. *MediaWeek*, 17 (7): 10.

Diedrichs, P. C. and Lee, C. 2010. GI Joe or average Joe? the impact of average-size and muscular male fashion models on men's and women's body image and advertising effectiveness. *Body Image*, 7 (3): 218-226.

Donovan, K. 2012. Vanity fair: the cost, controversy, and art of fashion advertisement retouching. *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy*, 26 (2): 581-620.

Duh, H. and Struwig, M. 2015. Justification of generational cohort segmentation in South Africa. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 10 (1): 89 – 101.

Duncan, T. 2005. *Using advertising and promotion to build brands: in principles of advertising & IMC*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Du Plooy, A.T. 2012. A framework for the planning and integration of OOH advertising media in South Africa. Thesis, University of Pretoria. Available: <http://nca.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02500167.2013.837598?needAccess=true> (Accessed 09 January 2018).

Easey, M. 2009. *Fashion marketing*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Eriksen, K. and Hemmingsen, C. 2008. *Online marketing: new models of advertising*. Available: [http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/16056831/081103\\_speciale.pdf](http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/16056831/081103_speciale.pdf) (Accessed 12 April 2017).

Evans, D.S. 2009. The online advertising industry: economics, evolution, and privacy. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 23 (3): 37-60.

Evans, D. and McKee, J. 2010. *Social media marketing: the next generation of business engagement*. Indianapolis: Wiley publishing, inc.

Evans-Cowley, J. and Hollander, J. 2010. The new generation of public participation: internet-based participation tools. *Planning Practice and Research*, 25 (3): 397-408. Available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02697459.2010.503432> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Falkow, S. 2010. PR trends 2010: branded content. *The Proactive Report*, 30 December. Available: <http://www.proactivereport.com/c/pr/pr-trends-2010-brandedcontent/> (Accessed 10 April 2010).

Federal trade commission (United States). 2016. *The FTC's endorsement guides: being up-front with consumers*. United States of America Federal Trade Commission. Available: <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/media-resources/truth-advertising/advertisement-endorsements> (Accessed 28 February 2017).

Festinger, L. 1954. A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, May: 117–140.

Fischer, R. N. 2015. The savings behaviour of baby boomer and echo boomers. *Undergraduate economic review*, 11 (1): 12-46.

Fowler, F. J. 2002. *Survey research methods, applied social research methods series*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Frith, M. 2012. *Teenage bulimia and the warped world of fashion magazines*. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/9350904/Teenage-bulimia-and-the-warped-world-of-fashion-magazines.html> (Accessed 28 December 2017).

Furedi, F. 2010 Celebrity Culture. *Society*, 47(6):493-497.

Gatawa, N.G., 2008. The emerging role of the fashion industry in Johannesburg's tourism development strategy. Doctoral dissertation in Tourism Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Ginosar, A. & Levi-Faur, D. 2010. Regulating product placement in the European Union and Canada: explaining regime change and diversity. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 12 (5): 467-488.

Girimaji, P. 2013. *Misleading advertisements and consumer*. New Delhi: New United Process.

Gluck, M. 2009. *Why Y Women?*. UK, USA: Popsugar Media. Sugar Inc. Radar Research.

Goldbart, J. & Hustler, D. 2005. Ethnography. In: Somekh, B. B. and Lewin, C. eds. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. London: Sage Publications, 16-23.

Gosling, S.D., Vazire, S., Srivastava, S. and John, O.P., 2004. Should we trust web-based studies? A comparative analysis of six preconceptions about internet questionnaires. *American Psychologist*, 59(2): 93-104

Green, C.A., Duan, N., Gibbons, R.D., Hoagwood, K.E., Palinkas, L.A. and Wisdom, J.P. 2015. Approaches to mixed methods dissemination and implementation research: methods, strengths, caveats, and opportunities. *Adm Policy Ment Health*, 42(5): 508–523.

Greenhalgh, T. and Taylor, R. 1997. Papers that go beyond numbers: qualitative research. *BMJ Clinical Research*, 315 (7110): 740 – 743.

Greenwood, S. Perrin, A. and Duggan, M. 2016. *Social media update 2016*. Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/> (Accessed 20 January 2017).

Gregory, R. J. 1992. *Psychological testing: history, principles and applications*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 163-194.

Ha, L. and McCann, K. 2008. Integrated model of advertising clutter in offline and online media. *International Journal of Advertising: The Review of Marketing Communications*, 27 (4): 569-592.

Hanson, W.E. Creswell, J.W. Plano Clark, V.L. Petska, K.S. Creswell, J.D. 2005. Mixed methods research designs in counselling psychology. *Journal of Counselling Psychology* 52 (2): 224-235.

Harvey, L., Allen, K. and Mendick, H. 2015. We can get everything we want if we try hard: young people, celebrity, hard work. *British Journal of Educational studies*, 63 (2): 161-178.

Hawkes, S. 2013. Debenhams breaks ranks and vows to ditch airbrushed models. *Telegraph*, 12 June. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10115980/Debenhams-breaks-ranks-andvows-to-ditch-airbrushed-models.html> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Hearn, A. and Shoenhoff, S. 2016. From celebrity to influencer: tracing the diffusion of celebrity value across the data stream. In: Marshall, P.D. and Redmond, S. eds. *A companion to celebrity*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 194-212.

Hedgren, V. and Persson, A. 2015. *Swedish consumers say: "subliminal marketing is smart marketing"*. Available: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:873780/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Accessed 15 April 2017).

Himmel, B. 2008. Different strokes for different generations. *Rental Product News*, 30 (7): 42-46.

Howie, S.J., Muller, A. and Paterson, A. 2005. *Information and communication technologies in South African secondary schools*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Jan, K. and Martina, K. 2013. Product placement: a smart marketing tool shifting a company to the next competitive level. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 5(4): 98-114. Available: <http://www.cjournal.cz/files/153.pdf> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Johnson, B. 2013. *10 things you should know about the global ad market*. *Advertising Age*. Available: [http://adage.com/article/global-news/10-things-global-ad-market/245572/?utm\\_source=Webbiquity.com](http://adage.com/article/global-news/10-things-global-ad-market/245572/?utm_source=Webbiquity.com) (Accessed 13 April 2017).

Jones, A. T., Malczyk, A. and Beneke, J. 2011. *Internet marketing: highly practical guide to every aspect of internet marketing*. Available: <http://opencontent.uct.ac.za/Commerce/Information-Systems/Internet-Marketing-A-highly-practical-guide-to-every-aspect-of-internet-marketing> (Accessed 14 April 2017).

Kaijansinkko, R. 2003. *Product placement in integrated marketing communications strategy*. Available: <http://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/35143/nbnfi-fe20031411.pdf> (Accessed 14 April 2017).

Kasteler, J. 2016. *8 companies doing social media right and what marketers can learn from them*. Available: <http://marketingland.com/8-companies-social-media-right-marketers-can-learn-198228> (Accessed 28 December 2016).

Kates, S. and Shaw-Garlock, G. 1999. The ever entangling web: a study of ideologies and discourses in advertising to women. *Journal of Advertising*, 26 (3): 214-257.

Keller, K. L. 1993. Conceptualising, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (1): 1-22.

Keller, K. L. 2008. *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Khamis, S., Ang, L. and Welling, R. 2016. Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of social media influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8 (2): 191-208.

Khatri, P. 2006. Celebrity endorsement: a strategic promotion perspective. *Indian Media Studies Journal*, 1 (1): 25-37.

Khedher, M. 2014. Personal branding phenomenon. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 6 (2): 29-40.

Klein, K.M. 2013. *Why don't I look like her? the impact of social media on female body image*. Available: [http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses/720](http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/720) (Accessed 28 December 2017).

Kong, S. 2015. Instagram: the real stranger danger (2015). *Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections*, October: 1-19. Available: [https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl\\_176/2/](https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl_176/2/) (Accessed 27 February 2017).

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. 2001. *Principles of marketing*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall International.

Kotler, P. 2001. *A Framework for marketing management*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P. 2003. *Marketing insights A to Z: 80 concepts every manager needs to know*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Kuchler, H. 2015. Instagram unfiltered. *The Financial Times*, 26 June: 1. Available: <https://www.ft.com/content/e56964b0-1a22-11e5-a130-2e7db721f996> (Accessed 8 January 2016).

Kumar, A. and Lim, H. 2008. Age differences in mobile service perceptions: comparison of generation y and baby boomers. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 22 (7): 568-592.

Labrecque, L. I., Markos, E. and Milne, G. R. 2011. Online personal branding: Processes, challenges, and implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25 (1):

37-50. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2010.09.002> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Lages, L. 2004. The STEP Scale: a measure of short-term export performance improvement. *Journal of International Marketing*, 12 (1): 36-56.

Leech, N. and Onwuegbuzie, A. 2008. A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality and Quantity*, 43 (2): 265-275.

Leedy, P.D. 1993. *Practical research: planning and design*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Mackmillan Publishing Company.

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. 2010. *Practical research: planning and design*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New Jersey: Pearson education inc.

Leung, L. and Pei Zheng, C. 2012. The net generation. In Zheng, Y. ed. Encyclopaedia of cyber behaviour. *IGI Global*, 200-211.

Lilti, A. 2017. *The invention of celebrity*. Cambridge: Polity Press

MAGNA. 2016. Global advertising forecast. Available: <https://www.magnaglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MAGNA-December-Global-Forecast-Update-Press-Release.pdf> (Accessed 16 April 2017).

Matikiti, R., Mpinganjira, M. & Roberts-Lombard, M., 2017, Social media in tourism: Establishing factors influencing attitudes towards the usage of social networking sites for trip organisation. *Acta Commercii – Independent Research Journal in the Management Sciences*, 17 (1): 1 -13.

Marcuse, H. 1964. *One-dimensional man*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Maree, K. 2007. *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria: Van Schalk Publisher.

Mason, J. 2002. *Qualitative researching*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.



Meenaghan, T. 1995. The role of advertising in brand image development. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4 (4): 23 – 34.

Miller, M. 2012. *The 5 w's of social media marketing: industry survey and insights*. Available:

<https://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2166552/ws-social-media-marketing-industry-survey-insights-study> (Accessed 18 April 2017).

Mosupyoe, S. S. I. N. 2014. Generational differences in South African consumers' brand equity perceptions. Master of Commerce in Marketing Management, University of Pretoria.

Neikova, D. 2014. *The fashion advertising campaign: bid business & brand identity*. Available: <https://www.notjustalabel.com/editorial/fashion-advertising-campaign-big-business-brand-identity> (Accessed 25 January 2017).

Nightingale, S. J., Wade, K. A. and Watson, D. G. 2017. Can people identify original and manipulated photos of real-world scenes?. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 2 (30). Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s41235-017-0067-2> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

O'Barr, W. 2008. Global advertising. *Advertising & Society Review*, 9 (4): 1-33.

Olsen, W. 2004. Triangulation in social research: qualitative and quantitative methods can really be mixed. *Developments in sociology*, January: 103-118.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Collins, K.M. 2007. A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in Social Science research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12 (2): 281-316.

Omenugha, K. A., Uzuegbunam, C, E. and Ndolo, I, S. 2016. Celebrity culture, media and the Nigerian youth: negotiating cultural identities in a globalised world. *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural Media Studies*, 30 (2): 200-216. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2016.1187791> (Accessed 05 April 2018).

Osterrieder, A. 2013. The value and use of social media as communication tool in the plant sciences. *Plant methods*. 9 (26). Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3716900/> (Accessed 08 January 2018).

Owen, R. and Spencer, R. M. 2013. *Body ideals in women after viewing images of typical and healthy weight models*. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23722050> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Oxford English dictionary. 1994. Great Britain: Oxford university press.

Pál, E. 2013. *The generation Z*. Available: <http://rainmakerthinking.com/assets/uploads/2013/10/Gen-Z-Whitepaper.pdf> (Accessed 12 April 2017).

Patton, M. Q. 2001. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Saint Paul, MN: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. and Cochran, M. 2002. *A guide to using qualitative research methodology*. Paris: Medecins Sans Frontières.

Picard, R. G. 2014. The humanisation of media? Social media and the reformation of communication (lecture notes). Australia & New Zealand Communication Association 2014 Conference, Swinburne University of Technology, July 9 2014.

Picard, R. G. 2015. The humanisation of media? Social media and the reformation of communication. *Communication, Research and Practice*, 1 (1): 32-

41. Available: [doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2015.1042421](https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2015.1042421) (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Pocklington, R. and Moon, R. 2016. *Biggest celebrity photoshop fails from Kim Kardashian to Beyonce, after Kendall and Gigi are caught out with missing knees* (image). Available: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/biggest-celebrity-photoshop-fails-kim-9094521> (Accessed 04 April 2018).

Ponsonby-McCabe, S. and Boyle, E. 2006. Understanding brands as experiential spaces: axiological implications for marketing strategies. *Journal of strategic marketing*, 14 (2): 175-189.

Pope, D. 2003. *Making sense of advertisements*. Available: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/ads.pdf>. (Accessed 10 April 2017).

Prensky, M. 2001. Digital natives, digital immigrants: part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9 (5): 1-6.

Pullig, C., Simmons, C. and Netemeyer, R. G. 2006. Brand Dilution: When Do New Brands Hurt Existing Brands?. *Journal of Marketing*, 69 (2): 130-142.

Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P. and Chinnathambi, V. 2013. Research methodology. *Physics ed-ph*, October: 1-53.

Riezebos, R., Kist, B. and Koostera, G. 2003. *Brand management; A theoretical and practical approach*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Rocamora, A. 2016. Pierre Bourdieu: the field of fashion. In Rocamora, A. and Smelik, A. eds. *Thinking through fashion*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Roettgers, J. 2016. *Kardashians in trouble over paid product endorsements on Instagram*. Available: <http://variety.com/2016/digital/news/kardashians-instagram-paid-ads-product-placements-1201842072/> (Accessed 25 January 2017).

Rogers, E. M. 2003. *Diffusion of innovations*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Free Press.

Rumsey, N. and Harcourt, D. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Safko, L. 2010. *The social media bible: tactics, tools and strategies for business success*: 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

Saladino, M. P. 2008. The proliferation of product placement as a means of advertising communication. *Journal of Internal Business Ethics*, 1 (1): 100-106.

Saumure, K. and Given, L.M. 2008. Nonprobability sampling. In: Given, L.M. eds. *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 562-563.

Sawyer, R. 2011. *The impact of new social media on intercultural adaptation*. Available:  
[http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1230&context=srhonor\\_sprog](http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1230&context=srhonor_sprog) (Accessed 28 December 2016).

Seo, Y. and Buchanan-Oliver, M. 2015. Luxury branding: the industry, trends, and future conceptualisations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27 (1): 82-98.

Sherry, L. and Gibson, D. 2002. The Path to Teacher Leadership in Educational Technology. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 2 (2): 178-203.

Shih, W. and Allen, M. 2006. Working with generation-D: adopting and adapting to cultural learning and change. *Library Management*, 28 (2): 89-100.

Shima, A and Varfan, M. 2008, Traditional marketing vs internet marketing. Bachelor dissertation., Mälardalen University. Available: <https://www.diva->

<portal.org/smash/get/diva2:121411/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Silverman, D. 2015. *Interpreting qualitative data*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.

Sisk, M. 2010. Web banking: Dexia gives kids their own bank; Brussels-based axion features a 'youth index' and streams concerts in banner ads to appeal to teens and 20- somethings without turning off older consumers. *Bank Technology News*, 23 (4): 21-56.

Skarda, E. 2012. Israel bans 'underweight' models. Available: <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/03/21/israel-bans-underweight-models/> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Smirnova, Y. 2012. Perceptions of corporate social responsibility in Kazakhstan. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 8 (3): 404-417.

Smith, C. 2017. Moloi-Motsepe: Why SA fashion must be nurtured. Available: <https://www.fin24.com/Companies/Retail/moloi-motsepe-why-sa-fashion-must-be-nurtured-20170804-2>

Solomon, C. and Druin, A. 1996. *Designing multimedia environments for children: computers, creativity, and kids*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Soltan, M.A.A. 2015. *An investigation into the history of the airbrush and the impact of the conservation treatment of airbrushed canvas paintings*. Doctoral thesis., Northumbria University. Available: [http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/27304/1/soltan.mohamed\\_phd.pdf](http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/27304/1/soltan.mohamed_phd.pdf) (Accessed 15 March 2018).

Spry, A., Pappu, R. T. and Cornwell, B. 2011. Celebrity endorsement, brand credibility and brand equity. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45 (6): 882-909.

Statistica: The Statistics Portal. 2018. *Fashion*. Available: <https://www.statista.com/outlook/244/112/fashion/south-africa> (Accessed 15 August 2018).

Stephen, A.T. and Coote, L.V. 2005. Brands in action: the role of brand placements in building consumer-brand identification. *American Marketing Association*, Chicago, 16 (28): 1-21.

Stephen, A. T. 2015. The role of digital and social media marketing in consumer behaviour. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, December: 17-21.

Stone, G. Joseph, M. and Jones, M. 2003. An exploratory study on the use of sports celebrities in advertising: a content analysis. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12 (2): 94–102.

Stone, M. A. and Desmond, J. 2007. *Fundamentals of marketing*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Strauss, J. and Frost, R. 2001. *E-Marketing*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Strugatz, R. 2014. The sales science of Instagram. *WWD*, 207 (16): 8-21.

Struyk, T. 2013. *An introduction to application software*. Available: <https://www.techopedia.com/2/28350/personal-tech/software-applications/an-introduction-to-application-software> (Accessed 25 January 2017).

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. 2003. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Thanasegaran, G. 2009. Reliability and validity issues in research. *Integration & Dissemination*, March: 35-40.

Thinyane, H. 2010. Are digital natives a world-wide phenomenon? An investigation into South African first year students' use and experience with technology. *Computers & Education*, February: 406-414.

Thompson, J.K. and Heinberg, L.J. 1999. The media's influence on body image disturbance and eating disorders: we've reviled them, now can we rehabilitate them. *Journal of social issues*, 55 (2): 339 – 353.

Thompson, R. 2018. The 'ennial tribes: understanding Generation Y and Z South Africans. *redzone* (Blog). Available: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/redzone/news-insights/2018-03-13-the-ennial-tribes-understanding-generation-y-and-z-south-africans/> (Accessed 14 March 2018).

Thrift, N. 2008. The material practices of glamour. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, s1 (1): 9–23.

Thurman, P. 2013. Traditional and social media marketing comparison. Bachelors degree. Lahti University in Applied Sciences. Available: [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/65873/Thurman\\_Robert\\_Patrick.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/65873/Thurman_Robert_Patrick.pdf?sequence=1) (Accessed 04 April 2018).

Turow, J. 2011. *The daily you: how the new advertising industry is defining your identity and your worth*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tuten, T, L. and Solomon, M, R. 2013. *Social Media Marketing*. Boston: Pearson.

Tuzzolino, F. and Armandi, B. R. 1981. A need-hierarchy framework for assessing corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 6 (1): 21-28.

Uzuegbunam, C.E. 2017. Between media celebrities and the youth: exploring the impact of emerging celebrity culture on the lifestyle of young Nigerians. *Journal of African Studies*, 6 (2): 130-141.

Valentine, D. B. and Powers, T. L. 2013. Generation Y values and lifestyle segments. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30 (7): 59-69.

Van Dijck, J. 2013. *The culture of connectivity: a critical history of social media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Van Waterschoot, W. and Van den Bulte, C. 1992. The 4P classification of the marketing mix revisited. *Journal of Marketing*, 56 (4): 83-94.

Veltri, N.F. and Elgarah, W. 2009. The role of national cultural differences in user adoption of social networking. In: Proceedings of the *Southern Association for Information Systems Conference*. Charleston, SC., 169-174.

Verhoef, B. 2017. Brand and product awareness in a post TV advertising world (online). Available:

[https://www.utwente.nl/repository/utwente-data/ut\\_central/en/press%20department%20-%20widgets%20bij%20news%20items/2017/volume-1-essays-on-msi-themes-ut-class-2016-17-jan-2017.pdf](https://www.utwente.nl/repository/utwente-data/ut_central/en/press%20department%20-%20widgets%20bij%20news%20items/2017/volume-1-essays-on-msi-themes-ut-class-2016-17-jan-2017.pdf) (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Vithal, R and Jansen, J. 2010. *Designing your first research proposal: A manual for researchers in education and social sciences*. Claremont: Juta and Company Ltd.

Wan, W., Luk C-L., and Chow C. W C. 2014. Consumer responses to sexual advertising: The intersection of modernization, evolution, and international marketing. *Journal of International Business Studies*, August: 751–782.

Weisman, A. 2016. *The 23 worst celebrity Photoshop fails* (image). Available: <http://www.thisisinsider.com/worst-celebrity-photoshop-fails-2016-6> (Accessed 21 March 2018).

Williams, C. 2007. Research methods. *Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 5 (3): 65 – 72.



Williams, K. C. and Page, R. A. 2011. Marketing to the generations. *Journal of Behavioural Studies in Business*, 3 (1): 1-17.

Wood, S. 2013. *Generation Z as consumers: trends and innovation*. Available: <http://iei.ncsu.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/GenZConsumers.pdf> (Accessed 11 April 2017).

Woodward, E. 2014. *The most WTF celebrity photoshop fails of all time* (image). Available: [https://www.buzzfeed.com/elliewoodward/the-most-wtf-celebrity-photoshop-fails-of-all-time?utm\\_term=.kdOo8aLR9v#.ml246Bxgmo](https://www.buzzfeed.com/elliewoodward/the-most-wtf-celebrity-photoshop-fails-of-all-time?utm_term=.kdOo8aLR9v#.ml246Bxgmo) (Accessed 04 April 2018).

Wong, E. 2010. Exploring the origins and information processing differences between men and women: implications for advertisers. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, July: 12-32.

Wong, J. C. 2018. Mark Zuckerberg apologises for facebook's 'mistakes' over Cambridge analytica. *The Guardian*, 22 March: 1. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/mar/21/mark-zuckerberg-response-facebook-cambridge-analytica> (Accessed 22 March 2018).

Worthington, P. 2014. One trillion photos in 2015. Available: <http://blog.mylio.com/one-trillion-photos-in-2015/> (Accessed 21 March 2017).

Yarrow, K. and O'Donnell, J. 2009. *Gen buY: how teens, teens and twenty somethings are revolutionising retail*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Zick, C. D., Mayer, R. N. and Glaubitz, K. 2012. The Kids Are All Right: Generational Differences in Responses to the Great Recession. *Journal of Financial Counselling and Planning*, 23 (1): 3–16.

Zikmund, W. G. 2003 *Business research methods*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Ohio: Thompson South-Western.

# Appendix A

## eSurvey and focus-group letter of information:



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

Thank you for volunteering to be a participant in my master's research project!

#### **Title of the Research Study:**

“The hidden sell: subversive advertising of fashion products in social media”. What I am trying to do is establish whether you as a consumer are aware of indirect advertising methods being utilised in social media and what your response to this kind of advertising is.

#### **Principal Investigator/s/researcher:**

I, Helen Smith, am the researcher in this project: BTech: Fashion

#### **Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:**

**Supervisor:** Michaela Cavanagh: MTech: Fashion

**Co-supervisor:** Prof Deirdre Pratt: DTech: Language Practice

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

The research will involve an investigation into subversive marketing by means of social media such as Facebook and Instagram, in which celebrities present themselves as ‘friends’ of the general public in order to sell products. The following questionnaire aims to explore your response to this method of marketing. It is hoped that the result of this research will assist with the marketing of fashion, beauty and health products through the use of social media.

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

The research procedure will be as follows: You will be asked to take part in completing the online survey in which your experiences of marketing through social media will be explored. This online survey will be available for completion during the month of September 2017. A smaller number of volunteers from those who respond to the survey will be offered the opportunity to participate in a focus group discussion, which will be entirely voluntary. The focus group discussion will take place in private, informal and comfortable surroundings (e.g. a venue in the Fashion and Textile Department) in November 2017. You will not spend more than one hour in the focus group discussions and online survey. You will also be invited to comment on the results of the project when these are communicated, but this is optional.

#### **Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:**

There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort for you or others participating in the project.

#### **Benefits:**

You may benefit by gaining a richer understanding of social media marketing strategies. Based on this project, I will produce a master's dissertation, to which you will have full access once it has been examined and submitted to the university library (an online option will be available).

**Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:**

There will be no adverse consequences for you should you choose to withdraw, which is entirely up to you.

**Remuneration and Costs of the Study:**

While you will not receive any monetary or other types of remuneration for taking part in the project, you will not be expected to cover any of the costs of the project.

**Confidentiality:**

Information will be collected from you and other participants, and not shared, except in the case of focus-group discussion, which are purely voluntary. Pseudonyms (false names) will be used in all written documents to protect your identity. The data will be stored in a securely-locked cupboard by the head of department and destroyed/deleted after 5 years.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or**

**Queries:**

In the event of any problems or queries, the person to contact is my Supervisor, Mrs Michaela Cavanagh on 031 373 3724 or at [michaellag@dut.ac.za](mailto:michaellag@dut.ac.za). You could also contact the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator, on 031 373 2375. Any complaints can be reported to the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor: Engagement, Professor Sibusiso Moyo, on 031 373 2576 or at [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za) .

Best regards

Helen Smith

Date:

## Appendix B

### Focus-group letter of consent:



### INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (IREC) LETTER OF CONSENT

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Project:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Helen Smith, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this project - Research Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 54-17
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the project.
- I am aware that the results of the project, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a research report in the form of a master's dissertation.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this project can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the project.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the project.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

|                                 |             |             |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____                           | _____       | _____       | _____                               |
| <b>Full Name of Participant</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Time</b> | <b>Signature / Right Thumbprint</b> |

I, Helen Smith, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above project.

|                                |             |                  |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| _____                          | _____       | _____            |
| <b>Full Name of Researcher</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Signature</b> |

|   |             |                  |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| _____                                       | _____       | _____            |
| <b>Full Name of Witness (If applicable)</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Signature</b> |

|  |             |                  |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| _____  | _____       | _____            |
| <b>Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Signature</b> |

## Appendix C

### eSurvey Creator screenshots of the online questionnaire.

Inbox - helismith24@gmail.com x 52 Burnham Dr to House x Edit survey x Subversive advertising in x

tps://www.esurveycrator.com/s/08f7616&preview=1&DO-NOT-SEND-THIS-LINK-ITS-ONLY-PREVIEW

### Subversive advertising in social media: the hidden sell.

0 %

#### LETTER OF INFORMATION

Thank you for volunteering to be a participant in my master's research project!

Title of the Research Study:

"Subversive advertising in social media: the hidden sell". What I am trying to do is establish whether you as a consumer are aware of indirect advertising methods being utilised in social media and what your response to this kind of advertising is.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher:

I, Helen Smith, am the researcher in this project: BTech: Fashion

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:

Supervisor: Michaela Cavanagh: MTech: Fashion  
Co-supervisor: Prof Deirdre Pratt: DTech: Language Practice

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

The research will involve an investigation into subversive marketing by means of social media such as Facebook and Instagram, in which celebrities present themselves as 'friends' of the general public in order to sell products. The following questionnaire aims to explore your response to this method of marketing. It is hoped that the result of this research will assist with the marketing of fashion, beauty and health products through the use of social media.

#### Outline of the Procedures:

The research procedure will be as follows. You will be asked to take part in completing the online survey in which your experiences of marketing through social media will be explored, this online survey will be available for completion during the month of October 2017. A smaller number of volunteers from those who respond to the survey will be offered the opportunity to participate in a focus group discussion, which will be entirely voluntary. The focus group discussion will take place in private, informal and comfortable surroundings (e.g. a venue in the Fashion and Textile Department) in November 2017. You will not spend more than one hour in the focus group discussions and online survey. You will also be invited to comment on the results of the project when these are communicated, but this is optional.

#### Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts for you or others participating in the project.

#### Benefits:

You may benefit by gaining a richer understanding of social media marketing strategies. Based on this project, I will produce a master's dissertation, to which you will have full access, once it has been examined and submitted to the university library (an online option will be available).

#### Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:

There will be no adverse consequences for you should you choose to withdraw, which is entirely up to you.

#### Remuneration and Costs of the Study:

While you will not receive any monetary or other types of remuneration for taking part in the project, you will not be expected to cover any of the costs of the project.

Taskbar: File Explorer, Microsoft Store, Skype, Google Chrome, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Edge, Task View, System Tray (Network, Volume, Battery, Time)

Confidentiality:

Information will be collected from you and other participants, and not shared, except in the case of focus discussion groups, which are purely voluntary. Pseudonyms (false names) will be used in all written documents to protect your identity. The data will be stored in a securely locked cupboard by the head of department and destroyed/deleted after 5 years.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

In the event of any problems or queries, the person to contact is my Supervisor, Mrs Michaela Cavanagh on 031 373 3724 or at michaelag@dut.ac.za. You could also contact the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator, on 031 373 2900. Any complaints can be reported to the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor: Engagement, Professor Sibusiso Moyo, on 031 373 2375 or at moyos@dut.ac.za .

Best regards

Helen Smith

Date: 04 September 2017

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (IREC)

LETTER OF CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Project:

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Helen Smith, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this project - Research Ethics Clearance Number: [Pending],

I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the project.

I am aware that the results of the project, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a research report in the form of a master's dissertation.

In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this project can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.

I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the project.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the project.

I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

BY CLICKING TO PROCEED I ACKNOWLEDGE ALL ABOVE STATED INFORMATION AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY FURTHER.

Next

(change text)

Age: \*

- ☐ Younger
- ☐ 18 - 23
- ☐ 24 - 29
- ☐ Older

Gender: \*

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Country in which you live? \*

- ☐ South Africa
- ☐ Other

How regularly do you log onto social media per week? \*

- ☐ 1 - 3 times
- ☐ Once daily
- ☐ Never, what is social media?
- ☐ Countless times/ too many to keep track of.

Prev

Next

(change text)



Inbox - helismith24@gmail.com x 52 Burnham Dr to House x Edit survey x Subversive advertising in x

tps://www.esurveycreator.com/s/08f7616&preview=1&DO-NOT-SEND-THIS-LINK-ITS-ONLY-PREVIEW

## Subversive advertising in social media: the hidden sell. 50 %

**Which social media app/s do you use frequently? \***

(select as many as apply)

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter

☐ Snapchat

☐ Pinterest

☐ Other

**What do you use this app/ these apps for? \***

☐ Following favourite celebs

☐ Keeping up to date with trends

☐ Finding inspiration (fitness, fashion, beauty, health)

☐ Following friends

☐ Buying products or services online

☐ Other

**What impact does the imagery conveyed in these apps have on you and why? \***

**How often do you use this app/ these apps to obtain information on a service or product? \***

☐ Regularly

☐ On occasion

☐ Never

File Explorer Shopping Cart S Chrome N P W X Mail K



Inbox - helismith24@gmail.com

52 Burnham Dr to House

Edit survey

Subversive advertising in

tps://www.esurveycrator.com/s/08f7616&preview=1&DO-NOT-SEND-THIS-LINK-ITS-ONLY-PREVIEW

**Do you think this app/ these apps could be beneficial as an advertising tool in business? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Please further explain your answer? \***

**Did you know that it has become common practice for many businesses to use social media networks such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as a means of product advertisement and creating new customer awareness? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Have you ever noticed product advertising on social media? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**If "yes", which social media have you noticed containing product advertising?**

☐ Instagram

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Other

**Were you ever attracted to purchasing a product advertised on social media? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Please explain further?**

If "yes", which media:

If "no", say why not:

**Have you ever actually bought a product from an online provider advertising on one of the social media? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Please explain further?**

If "yes", say what product/s and why you made the purchase:

If "no", say why not:

**Have you ever noticed celebrities endorsing products on Instagram? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Which do you find the most influential, celebrity or local media personality? \***

(please explain why)

**How do you feel about the use of social media for advertising? \***

☐ It's a clever use of technology.

☐ Doesn't bother me.

☐ Do not agree with it.

☐ Other, please explain:

**Do you feel apps such as Instagram, Facebook and others are an effective way to market a product? \***

(please explain your answer)

Do you feel apps such as Instagram, Facebook and others are an effective way to market a product? \*

(please explain your answer)

Prev

Next

(change text)

## Subversive advertising in social media: the hidden sell.

75 %

Thank you for participating in my survey. Your response is very important to the outcome of this study.  
If you are living in and around the Durban area and would like to further contribute by taking part in a focus group discussion please be sure to include your email address OR you can contact me directly at [helismith24@gmail.com](mailto:helismith24@gmail.com) for further information.

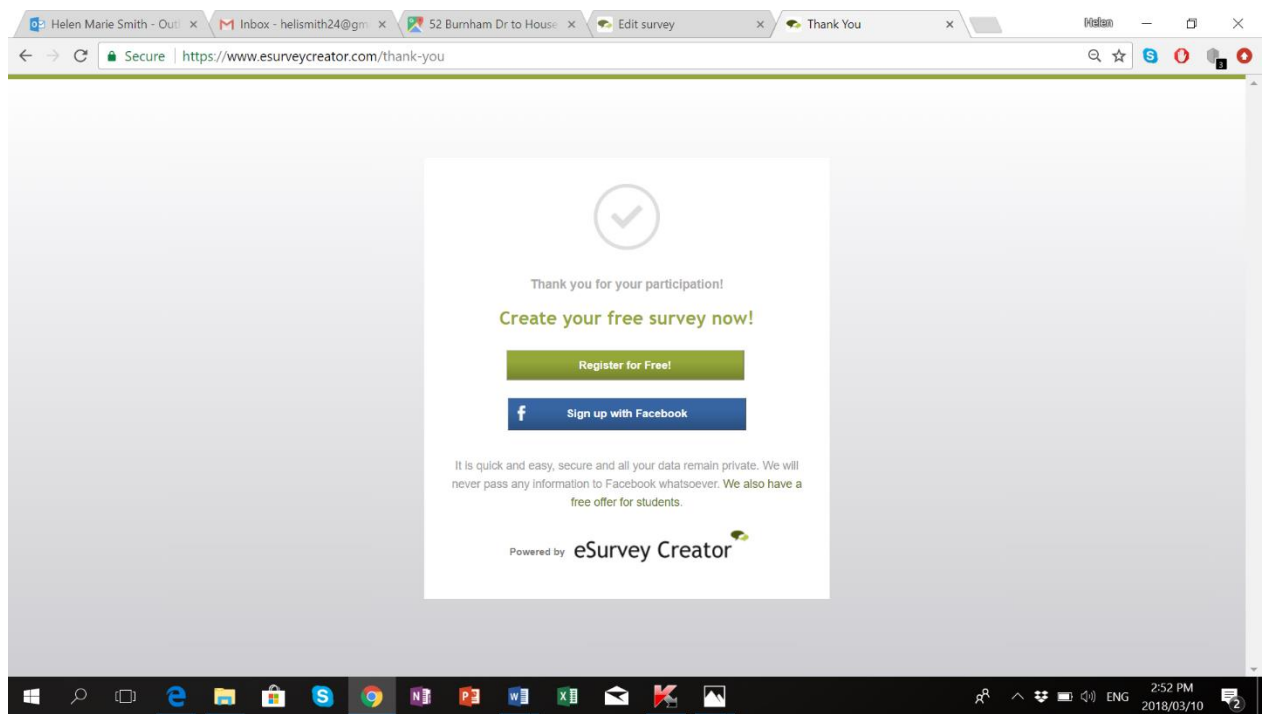
(optional)

Email Address:

Prev

Done

(change text)



## **Appendix D**

### **Proposed focus-group discussion points**

#### Focus group 1

- a) How would you define subversive advertising?
- b) How often do you notice advertising taking place on social media?
- c) Corporate humanisation: Do you think this is a clever use of social media?
- d) Why do you think social media as an advertising platform has become so popular?
- e) When looking for product information, which platform do you instinctively go to? Traditional or online?
- f) Which platform do you feel is the most effective for advertising?
- g) The role of celebrity endorsement in advertising: Have you ever noticed celebrities using a product on a social media platform, that has not necessarily distinctly been portrayed as an advert or endorsement?
- h) Do you feel that celebrities are advertising a lifestyle to you when they advertise products?
- i) Findings from the survey suggest that South Africans place more value on international celebrity opinions rather than those of a local media personality. Why do you think this is?
- j) Have you ever seen a product for the first time in an advertisement online and chosen to purchase it?
- k) How did you know that you could trust the website?
- l) Do you think that advertising has become too prevalent on social media?

## Appendix E

### Transcript breakdown of focus-group discussion 1

This study comprised two focus groups. All participants were female, between the ages of 18 and 29 years old, had completed the online survey and volunteered to participate further in an informal discussion. Participants were contacted via email in order to arrange a meeting time and place that suited the randomly-selected groups.

The focus-groups meetings place on Sunday 21 January 2018 and Saturday 17 February 2018.

---

Total participant time required: 30 minutes – 45 minutes

*Focus groups took place during weekends and I felt that if they were kept short respondents were more likely to take the time to participate.*

Mediator: Helen Smith

Participants: Due to the anonymous nature of this study, participants will be referred to by pseudonyms.

Group 1: Jill, Laura, Kim, Angela, Carla, Sandra

Group 2: Kath, Robyn, Sally, Lauren, Britt

---

General introduction:

The focus group commenced with a brief informative introduction to the study. This outlined what the study aimed to achieve and why they, as participants, were suited to such research. Participants were informed that the discussion would be recorded on both a phone recorder and Dictaphone and that they had the right to leave without consequence at any stage of the discussion should they feel uncomfortable. At this point participants were asked to sign a consent form or given the opportunity to remove themselves from the discussion if they were not happy with the aforementioned terms and conditions.

---

Focus Group 1: total focus group time: 31 minutes

Mediator: How would you define subversive marketing?

Jill: I think it's more to do with an association, an underlying association so they try to get you to associate products with positive things whether it's a celebrity you like or if it's a colour you like or something. They try to associate a brand or a product with something positive behind it to endorse it without you consciously realising it.

Mediator: Would you say it could be described as a form of marketing that we don't initially recognise? It is discussed that celebrity endorsement plays a large role in subversive advertising simply because it is felt that we as human beings connect personally with celebrities; we feel a sense of loyalty to them when we like them. Have you ever, on any platform of social media, noticed celebrities using a product that is not necessarily distinctly portrayed as an advert or an endorsement?

Laura: Yes, yeah, well I've seen it. I've never really thought very much about it though. So, if I see, for example, a celebrity wearing a fossil watch and you think to yourself what a great watch, look how cool they look. I would never have thought until it is pointed out that they are advertising to myself as the consumer.

Kim: It's like the same thing on Instagram, I've got Serena Williams on Instagram because she had a new baby and it's so cute so I followed her, and then she dresses her baby up in clothes that she has obviously been sponsored with and you think ah, it's such a cute baby and such nice clothes but below it is tagged Nike, tag, tag, tag, tag.

Mediator: So, they are ultimately selling you things...

Kim: Without you even realising it.

Mediator: Or at least trying not to make you realise it. Another thing that has become popular is corporate humanisation. You find that businesses almost humanise themselves on social media; they tend to make their adverts very basic as if they are almost just another person on social media that you can discuss queries with or speak directly to, giving you the option of direct messaging and actually receiving a response. Do you think this is a clever use of social media as a tool?

Angela: Yes, because it is making you more comfortable in the situation.

Jill: Oh yeah, definitely.

Kim: I also think a lot of companies now days are using Facebook and Instagram and they'll upload a casual photo.

Carla: So that it looks like one of your own followers and friends, so you associate their advertising with a post that one of your friends would maybe post.

Kim: And because they're in your feed they are people you feel closer to because the people in your feed are generally people you know or optionally follow.

Sandra: They have also taken, or a lot of them, have taken the prices off of things. Like when we were younger you'd go to a store and there would be a picture of the product advertised with the price underneath and the price used to be the selling point. So, you would open a magazine even in one like Cosmo and it would be the picture and then the price was predominantly featured. They've kind of like



wiped out that entire pricing section and if it is there its tiny; referenced at the bottom. It's now more just the picture.

Jill: And if you're interested like on Instagram you swipe up or you know, click here and then suddenly it takes you to the page with the price and everything on it. It seems like its become less about trying to sell you on the price and more about trying to sell you on a look first.

Angela: You become invested so you want to see the price, so the price doesn't automatically put you off to start with. You see the picture and then you see the price but by the time you see the price you either like it enough that your like, ah well, I'll pay for it or yeah.

#### *General participant agreement*

Mediator: Why do you think social media as a platform for advertising has become so popular?

Angela: It's easily accessible, its right there, you get pings and emails and notifications. It's always flooding in on your phone or emails.

Jill: Yeah, you're not really given a choice of whether its what you want to see or not because its all just there and you get constant notification of it.

Mediator: Do you think that magazines, newspapers and television as a form of advertising has become something of the past?

Sandra: I think often people are just too busy to go out and buy a newspaper or a magazine whereas with media easily available on your phone you can just refer to that.

Angela: The ability to buy a newspaper makes it easier to choose what you want to see but technology has already taken that option away.

- Mediator: Do you feel that you depend mostly on online versus traditional or vice versa? What do you instinctively go to for product information?
- Kim: I would definitely say social media, just because we are living in a technological world and everything is online.
- Laura: Even newspapers these days are now moving to online formats. So even the traditional forms of advertising are moving in that direction. Technology is moving and improving so quickly I think everybody wants to jump on the train you know?
- Carla: I think everything is going to be online eventually.
- Jill: I think online also offers you variety. You have the ability to compare similar things to one another rather than having possibly one set option in the newspaper.
- Laura: You have a variety of options without having to move so its really convenient because you get to see the full spectrum of things and see exactly what everyone has. So, you can be like well I'm looking for a pair of black heels. You can go onto their pages, you can check who has what, who has the best and which you like most and size availability. Then you can just go straight and buy it online rather than ever having to go to a shop or even having to open a newspaper.
- Jill: Yeah and then they even deliver it to your house; you don't even have to leave.
- Angela: And if you go onto the local Facebook or twitter pages you'll know whether there is a special or a sale or something on and you don't have to actually go out or leave your house and you don't have to

have the expense of buying three different magazines if you want to have a look at what's going on.

Kim: It's just more convenient and its cheaper.

Mediator: Affordability was one of the factors that was felt to be hugely beneficial in the survey. However, one thing that was commented on is that people are under the impression that the use of online social media is free when it is in fact not, solely based on the data charges that are incurred when logging onto any form of media. Is this an off-putting factor or is it still, to you, better than making purchases of magazines or newspapers?

Carla: I think that the amount I spend on data would still work out as less than what I would spend on a magazine anyway, so um, especially if I spend R180 for 2gigs of data which will last me about three months then one email isn't going to use very much and a lot of the time I do receive adds through email of things that I haven't even signed up for in the past.

Sandra: Yeah, a lot of these emails we aren't choosing to get. I have a whole folder full of spam and there must be at least 100 new ones coming through every day.

Carla: Yeah and every one of those is advertising and they'll catch you out with like 25% off sales, ag...

Kim: Then you end up spending money you don't have.

*General laughter*

Laura: The thing about Wifi and data is that you don't see it. When you have to swipe your card to buy a magazine you physically see your money being deducted and there is an emotional connection to that.

With Wifi and data you don't see it disappearing, you know that you are using your data but it does not have as much of an effect because it is not visibly obvious when there are deductions.

Jill: Things are also developing where you are getting better data plans and stuff. So, like when internet was newish and it like started to take form then data was flippen expensive but now you buy a package or with your contract you get like 2gigs and then everyone has Wifi, so, you are sitting at home and it is costing you no more to look online at home and receive that stuff at home and a lot of people only set things to download when they are in Wifi zones.

Sandra: Yeah and inevitably at work and home you have Wifi, so it's just pretty much when you are in the car or out that you are using your data. So, it's not really that much of a cost. I wouldn't say it was substantial.

Mediator: What do you think of survey findings that suggest that 85% of respondents felt that Instagram was the most effective platform for advertising?

Kim: So, what I have found lately is that Instagram never used to have this option but recently what I have noticed is that, inbetween the people I follow their feeds, is blocks of advertising from people who I have never followed, so Instagram is using all these sponsors and they are all advertising,

Angela: Yeah, they're always either clothing or something I've probably googled that has now come up on my Instagram. Which catches your attention but I mean you go on Instagram for like five minutes and you have already received like ten adverts that not even... and they come up on your stories too. You can't avoid them.

Carla: The thing with those are because Facebook has bought out Instagram and so now everything you like and look at on Facebook links to your Instagram. Everything you search for on either site will pop up as a sponsored ad somewhere.

Jill: Whatever you are constantly looking at will pop up on your feed. So, you might be looking through and you see a pair of shoes from Zando and you're, like, those are really cool because they are something you have looked at before and then you'll tap and it'll take you through to the website and before you know it you're almost buying a pair of shoes that you didn't initially want to buy.

Angela: They try to make an image so that it appeals to a target group and they know exactly who you are, how old you are, everything about you because they follow you. You are linked; everything is linked; so they'll know exactly what you like and they create ads that are focused to that target group. It's exactly what we do where I work; we have targets and we design to attract those target groups and it's a success rate of like 90% every time.

Laura: I think Instagram is also successful because it's very visual, whereas Facebook and everything else, Facebook, Twitter, as much as you can add photos there is generally words involved, whereas Instagram, the idea is to get a powerful picture and put that on there. Like, noone goes and puts, like, a shitty Instagram picture on. Everyone is, like, OK, I'm going to put this on Instagram because it's, like, very 'Instaworthy'.

*General laughter and agreement*

Laura: It's like when you have gone to a vineyard and everything looks cool and you're, like, oh I'll put this on Instagram because it's visually powerful. So, everyone kinda finds visually-powerful advertising and puts that on there so that the picture is a thousand words in

itself. They are selling you on an idea of an ideal picture, and that's what you're buying. So, you are buying the picture and every five or six things is advertising and because it's just on your feed, it's there and it's visually powerful and appealing. That's what you go into Instagram for, so that you don't have to read anything; you just looking at pictures.

Kim: Basically, it's like a highlights reel and your going through the highlights of things and going, cool, well, this is super appealing because it's only the highlight.

Sandra: Yeah, and like the big thing with Instagrammers is that they are selling a lifestyle or an ideal life. And like you say, Kim, it's because you want the good stuff.

Jill: You want to live like that too.

Sandra: Yeah, so there'll be a picture of someone on the beach in, like, the Bahamas and they're wearing Nike shoes or whatever and you like that because you want to be on the beach in the Bahamas. You might not necessarily need those shoes. So, it's like that lifestyle idea and then when you are wearing them around town and you, like, think somehow you have that lifestyle. Even though you're not in the Bahamas but you have those shoes.

Carla: It's clever as well because a whole lot of young people, like, literally from about 11 years old and up use Instagram now, and we all know it's easy to convince a kid to buy your stuff. Because it's not their money it's their parents' money and usually if they see adverts online and think, oh, that's pretty, I'm going to ask my parents to get it for me. They see an advert and they don't question whether or not they should trust the site; they like, oh, ok, pretty costume, I should ask my mom.

Mediator: So, when it comes to somebody who is of celebrity or social-media-influencer status, when you look at things they advertise online because sometimes they do make it quite blatant and if you didn't know American brand ambassadors are legally required to state that they are being sponsored, endorsed or advertising. Which is why you will see at times it says #ad or #sponsored. Do you think that because of the lifestyle they live; that if you possess the same product or goods that they have you will have the same lifestyle?

Angela: Yeah, that's exactly the mindset behind those ads.

Mediator: Do you think that they are selling you a luxurious lifestyle or saying if you want a glamorous lifestyle like mine, all you have to do is wear this watch. All you have to do is buy this dress, you can look as fantastic as me.

Kim: They're trying to catch you when you're looking through and you see your favourite celebrity wearing, like, I dunno, some outfit from somewhere and you're just, like, ah, if I wear that I'll be just like whoever. Then you buy it and you feel so great because you like you know this is in some way connected to them. I am now the same as this person, you know.

Angela: And also, because everyone generally doesn't have the most amazing life. You go to your mundane job and you live in an area that's not picture perfect and so it's like an escape and it's, like, you know, maybe I can't get out of my job or whatever...

Kim: But if I buy these shoes, I'll be living a luxury life.

Mediator: Ok, findings from the survey questionnaire suggest that we as South Africans tend to 'trust' international celebrities more than local media personalities. Would you agree with this statement and if so, why do you think that is? Why do you think people tend to trust

celebrities who are on an international forum; they don't even live in or experience the same country as us or kind of live the same lifestyle. Why would it be easier to trust them rather than someone who is actually a local from our country?

Carla: Probably because media puts these celebrities on such a pedestal that you almost brain washed into trusting them and believing that they have the right choices in mind and that they... you know, meanwhile they have no idea what they're doing half the time and they are just told by their PR people, just smile for this photo and then boom they're on the cover on some kind of thing that's sort of protesting something...

Jill: They're endorsing a product that they've never heard about.

Carla: Exactly and then you get this false belief that they're standing for something they are not and then you support, say, the wildlife because the celebrities support the wildlife.

Kim: It's all false advertising to get you to believe it, whereas 90% of celebrities don't even know what they're doing. They don't know the campaigns that they're in half the time, and then you'll have to read the article where they apologise for some offence because they didn't even know that's what they were doing. Then you get those celebrities who do know what they are doing and do know what they are sponsoring and then when you see that you're, like, ok so there are celebrities that do that so you get this trust in these people that you don't know. You just see them on a T.V. screen but because they are flooded in magazines and all that kind of stuff you kinda, you know, build a trust with them.

Mediator: So, what you are saying is that it is when they are advertising towards something that you believe in?



Jill: Yeah, you feel like a kindred spirit-ness with them.

Mediator: For example, the women's rights movement is quite predominant at the moment, because as women we can identify with a movement like this that it could build a trust between yourself and some of the celebrities at the forefront of this movement because they stand for the same beliefs as you?

Laura: I also think people support international celebrities and look up to them more because they are international; they are more universal. So, like our local celebrities, let's be honest, most of them are actually pretty much a joke.

*General laughter*

Laura: So, people would be, like, well, do I want local acclaim or do I want international acclaim? So, if you are wearing something that say, um, like, one of the South African guys is wearing a South African soccer player's jersey, like most of the people here don't even know one of the South African soccer players. I personally don't know any of them by name. So they are not universal because we don't go to the movies and see them on the big screen. You know we might listen to, you know, everyone will know DJ fresh and stuff because they hear them on the radio all the time but even then they are not like an international brand and most of the brands that are backed by international celebrities are the ones that are actually marketed to us constantly. Like, Nike is an international brand, so if a local celebrity markets a local product then it's more likely that you would buy it but as an international celebrity they are not really marketing your local products; they are marketing international things.

Angela: So, it's kind of just, you are more likely to get acclaim... like if you go and wear a local designer overseas, no one is going to recognise it but if you go wear an international designer overseas on holiday

then everyone is going to recognise it. So, I think that's why it's given more acclaim and the international guys are given a higher status locally than our local celebrities.

Jill: But also, the whole idea of local is lekker and actually being proudly South African is quite a recent thing and I think before it was just generally the norm that everything international was better and it was kind of glamourized and it was all we really got on TV and in the movies and in magazines. Because we didn't have that culture of local celebrities and it's very new so people are still trying to figure out, like, is it actually cool to follow the local celebrities or should we just stay with what we are used to. Which is the international, cos lots of countries around the world have really big local celebrities and people love it and everything but that's just been their culture and it's been there a really long time.

Carla: Yeah with South Africa it's all still very new to be into the South African thing; the local is lekker movement, it's very new.

Laura: Yeah, it's like you watch South African fashion week on E, you don't know, I mean everyone knows Gert Johan Coetzee but no one knows anyone else. Anyone else pops up on there and you're like well, you don't know but if you watch fashion week in, like, New York you gonna know like a whole bunch of the designers. You gonna Versace, you know... because they just, it's constant and it's come through over years and years and years of international acclaim. It's become the universal go to and known whereas the local is unknown.

Kim: I mean it's everything; it's what we wear, it's what we eat it's what we watch. Our phones, our cars; I mean none of that is local or the majority of it is not local. So, you are brainwashed; you watch international, you have devices that drive international. I mean it becomes such a part of your life that you don't even think about it.

Like even to think of it, I don't have anything South African on me, I'm not wearing anything South African, like, its yeah...

Sandra: You also associate international with quality. It's like German cars, you're, like, German cars, quality. You know French food like you know that's upmarket sort of thing; it's, you know, and Italian food has a certain... It's just like everything has an association. Like if you think of German cars straight away you think of Audi and it's like quality you know and here we don't have that same association. We don't even think of our celebrities as quality because we associated everything foreign as being quality and everything local as being inferior.

Jill: It's because they've had years of knowing how to brand themselves and South Africa is really late to the, well, knowing-how-to-brand-themselves game.

Sandra: Yeah, and they've had years to develop and be tried and tested whereas South Africa hasn't.

Carla: Yeah, South Africa is just behind.

Angela: I also think the difference between... I'm trying to think of a big international brand, like, we've used the example of Nike. If they were to use an international celebrity versus a local celebrity I think for most people it actually wouldn't matter because for most people who are brand loyal to Nike are going to buy it, whoever is endorsing it. They like the product, so, I think it's very dependent on the product and...

Mediator: The brand stability?

Angela: Yeah, where I think some brands it really wouldn't matter, they could have a cute dog wearing their stuff and it would still sell.

Mediator: When it comes to purchasing products online, I am going to assume all of you have done so from what has been discussed. Have you ever seen something advertised online and chosen to buy it? So, you have scrolled through a social media site and seen something and thought, I want that, followed the link and made the purchase.

Laura: Yes! ALL the time!

*General laughter.*

Laura: Ok, it's where I bought my last holiday so... *laughter.*

Mediator: What makes you trust those sites?

Laura: Well I think it's how they are branded as well. So, it's like, Mango has probably about six happy-day sales a year. But they kind of, it's how they do it, so, if its selling out quickly or it's only so many seats left and then you're, like, incentivised to move it up. You like oh well and then because you can follow it and see the price, you, like, OK well that's actually quite affordable. Then I'll go and compare with, like, Kulula and I'll be, like, OK, well, this is not a bad price and it motivates you to move on it. But it really is a visual thing, so it's how they advertise it to you.

Kim: Yeah like when I booked accommodation online and um, the, cos I had googled it recently and I dunno, I exited and, whatever, and went into Facebook and then it popped up on Facebook... which I find really creepy.

*General laughter.*

Kim: Anyway, so I thought OK, well, let me just go back and look at it and then it ended up having the app for that site already downloaded on

my phone. So, it then went straight to the app and I was, like, you know, well, this is so easy; they have everything here; this is great. Then this was like the fourth time they've caught me so, like, they had in these big red letters, like: one space left or selling out quickly or one has just been bought... So now you feel this urgency to, Yoh, I maybe should purchase this and I ended up booking it and there was nobody there and it was so shitty and I was so upset.

*General laughter.*

Kim: But that's the thing. Then you stop and think and you're, like, oh my goodness, I would never have bought this if it didn't come up on Facebook.

Mediator: Or, if you didn't feel an urgency to, because they suggested you weren't going to get a spot.

Carla: Yeah, it's always like, book it, book it, book it!

Jill: They make you think you are special to be the one involved in it; you have to be there; everyone is there.

Carla: Also, with um online websites, if I go onto one... I look there and then if there are lots of pop-up ads then I don't trust it cos I associate pop-up ads with lots of sponsorship and lots of sponsorship and lots of help for finance. So, then I just assume that because they need advertising help then they obviously not making enough. And if they rely on external advertising to function their website, what are they doing with their products? Also, it's just irritating... you go into a website and then you accidentally click on something and it redirects you to another website and then so I just... yeah...

Mediator: So, would you say it's an off-putting factor to have constant advertising?

Carla: Oh yeah, very off-putting.

Kim: And then you get onto a site like H&M and there's nothing, it's like ah, so nice.

Carla: Yeah nothing, like vintage lover clean... I could just purchase the entire web page.

*General laughter.*

Sandra: Also, the thing with how, like, if you google something and it will pop up on your Facebook or your Twitter or your Instagram is actually really clever because with that repetitive advertising. Cos they have seen that you have some interest in it and then they constantly want to remind you of it because in a way that breeds familiarity. And then you feel like, oh, I can trust this website and from the first time you see it to like the tenth time, nothing has changed with your knowledge of the place but you have seen it like ten times now so it feels familiar with you. So, you are like hmmm maybe I can use this website and trust it but nothing has changed except the number of times you have seen the ad. You feel more comfortable with it just for nothing other than repetitiveness.

Jill: And even stuff you haven't searched, like, cos I know we have google ad words so you have, like, oh for us we will put in like 50 words that are somehow related to our brand. Then you'll go into google and you will be searching for something completely different but then our brand pops up because you used one of our search words. Then before you even know it, you didn't even know anything about the brand but because it has come up on all your social media, you're the brand's biggest fan. You're, like, oh my word, spread the word to everyone about this brand and then,

boom, you have, like, all of their products in your kitchen. So, it's very clever advertising these days.

Laura: Well, you're forced to give those permissions over though, so, like, when you download Facebook on your phone or if it comes with it or when you go onto your google play if you on Android, or the iTunes or Playstore or whatever it is. When you download an app and you click "install" and there is a little box that pops up, you are clicking your permission for it to do that. You are sinking everything; you are sinking your contacts list; you are sinking all your google searches.

Kim: Pictures, camera...

Jill: Emails and messages...

Laura: Yeah, so, if you type in: looking for holidays in 2018 your Instagram feed and your Facebook feed is going to be full of advertising for that, because it is exactly that, its ad words. And then all of those people who are paying for advertising on google, that is automatically going to pull through. Or the worst is if you are looking at something on Takealot, flip! If you look at something on Takealot on your Instagram and Facebook feeds for the next few weeks you are going to see that damn Takealot thing. If it was a bird feeder or whatever it is, you are going to see it for three weeks! That same Takealot advert or that same Mango flight that you looked at will just keep popping up because you have shown the initial interest. So, then they kind of bombard you with it and before you know it you just give in and think, well, I obviously need to buy it; it's a sign. And you go and buy the bird feeder.

Mediator: So, how does it make you feel that you are now considered products because the advertisers are consumers and they are buying your information?

Kim: I need to leave this place!

*General laughter.*

Carla: The entire universe; I just need to build a home somewhere else.

*General laughter.*

Mediator: Maybe we all should...

I would like to thank you all for your time. The information you have provided me with has been very enlightening and will be useful to furthering my study.

*With nothing further to say the voice recorders were switched off.*

---



## **Appendix F**

### **Proposed additional focus-group discussion points**

#### **Focus group 2**

- a) Corporates now have the ability to buy your information from online service providers. How does it make you feel knowing that you could be considered as a product?
- b) Which platform do you feel is the most effective for advertising?
- c) Does it make you feel uncomfortable knowing that because of your choice to use social media you cannot control what information of yours people can access?
- d) Would this deter you from using social media platforms?
- e) Does this affect your trust in these platforms?
- f) What do you feel defines you as a consumer?
- g) Example of different generations of consumers: Research suggests that South Africans do not fall into specific generations. Do you think this is true?
- h) Specific to online consumerism: How do you know who to trust when buying online?
- i) Do you often purchase any fashion or beauty products?

## **Appendix G**

### **Transcript breakdown of focus-group discussion 2**

Total participant time required 30 minutes – 45 minutes

Mediator: Helen Smith

Participants: Due to the anonymous nature of this study participants will be referred to by pseudonyms.

Group 2: Kath, Robyn, Sally, Lauren, Britt

---

General introduction:

Having had the opportunity to meet with the first focus group a few weeks prior to this I was able to use some of the information gathered to lead discussion points in the second group. I specifically wanted to start by focusing on the idea that we, as social media consumers, are now considered products by companies who advertise online. This is because the ability to purchase information about all social media users has been made available. I wanted to know how this made my respondents feel. Participants were asked the same establishing questions. The findings from these were comparable to those of the first group, therefore what follows is the discussion of the additional points and questions.

The focus group again commenced with a brief informative introduction to the study. This outlined what the study aimed to achieve and why they, as participants, were suited to such research. A short overview of the discussion points from the first focus group was given.

Participants were informed that the discussion would be recorded on both a phone recorder and Dictaphone and that they had the right to leave without consequence at any stage of the discussion should they feel uncomfortable. At this point participants were asked to sign a consent form or were given the opportunity to remove themselves from the discussion if they were not happy with the aforementioned terms and conditions.

---

Focus group 2: total focus group time: 42 minutes

Mediator: Does it make you uncomfortable that people that you don't know are buying your information and you are the ones giving them permission to do so? Does it bother you that you can't control what other people now know about you?

Britt: I think what's creepy is a lot of the time a robot or an algorithm will actually know you better than you know yourself. And it spits out the ads that appeal to you.

Robyn: And you're, like, ooh I love that! And the computer is, like, I know that already.

Britt: Or you scroll past and you're, like, I need to clear browsing history and re-install my phone right now.

*General laughter.*

Lauren: Yeah but you can do that and it'll still know you because it will have it all stored up.

Sally: Which is frustrating because it's, like, you can't avoid it unless you become a hermit in the woods and avoid the internet. Because you know, you want to install Facebook and it pops up with: give all your permissions away and then you are like OK, well, I don't want to do that but I want to be able to keep in touch with all of my friends that are, like, all around the world. Then you are in this catch 22 situation.

Britt: You are held ransom because you can't say no, actually, I don't want you to access my contents.

Sally: Which then shuts you off from the world.

Britt: Yeah.

Lauren: You could, like, limit it to very minimum things; you can give your permission, sure, but then when you on Facebook you just can't search anything or like anything. And then nothing will pop up because you haven't actively looked at stuff but if you search anywhere else that is linked to your email then you will be flooded with stuff. So, you can try as hard as you can to avoid it but it's just always there because nothing escapes being noticed.

Kath: I don't mind it at all; its risk versus reward. So, the reward is convenience and you know the great thing about the internet is that it is the great unifier; it makes everything accessible. Which is fantastic but you must realise in so doing that the risk of that is that you are now entirely accessible as well to the rest of the world. So, you can't expect everyone else to be accessible and everything else to be accessible and not in return be accessible. I mean you can limit, like, with Facebook you can limit your profile to a certain extent so that the creepos don't find you.

*General laughter.*

Kath: But at the end of the day, it's like Google earth. If anyone really wants to find you then they can find you. I mean there are some good stalking tactics out there so, at the same time you have to weigh the two together and if you really are or it upsets you that much then you gonna have to just...

Britt: Go and live in the woods.

Sally: And it's also, like, is it so great that it's accessible for you? Like, is it this great thing for your life or is it great for the people who are

actually benefitting from it? The advertisers and the people in the big companies and they make you think now your life is better because you have all this accessibility but is it actually benefitting you or is it benefitting everyone who is making money from you?

Kath: People are going to make money from you regardless. So, there is always going to be and there always has been some form of advertising. So, people always value what they don't have and whether its, like, back in the day, the peasants would value a horse or a donkey. And they would have donkey but the lords would have horses and they would be like sheesh, I want to have a horse. It's always going to be like that; it's just human nature. So, they are only empowered to do what your nature allows them to do and it's always going to be the case; it's just the way we are programmed and the way we think. You can either be one of those people who is very brand and materialistic or you can be, like, well, I'm not that brand conscious or materialistic. It's kind of like an individual thing but you only give people the power over you that you allow them, so, if you really aren't a brand-conscious person then that's not going to bother you. Like, if you are happy to shop at Pep like I am then it's fine. You can see as many adverts for Levis jeans and you'll be, like, the risk of buying those is not worth the reward of having them so I'm not going to bother with it. But if you someone like me and I like prefer to go on holiday. If I see a holiday advert I am ten times more likely to want that than the jeans people. But some people are, like, they will stay in South Africa their whole lives and have every pair of Soviet jeans and whatever they want so, it's, like, it really depends on the person as an individual and what, what is a reward for them as such.

Sally: But then it's not always about brands because, like, how many of us only have five outfits in our cupboards? Because technically you only really need that many clothes and you just wash and re-wear

them but how many of us actually do that? Because you know, you can't wear the same thing all the time.

Robyn: You have to have multiple outfits.

Sally: Even if you walk into pep and you, like, this dress is nice and you'll buy it because you think it will be nice to have in your cupboard and then you end up having, like, twenty dresses and, really, how often are you going to wear twenty dresses? You know so, it's just like the mindset and the concept of consumerism and everything being readily available. Whether it's branded or not, this is the age of consumerism and everyone has stuff in their house they don't need.

Robyn: It's that idea of people remembering what you have worn. You don't want people to remember it; you want to look like you just bought it.

Sally: Yeah, and why are people so scared of being caught in the same outfit as someone else. You walk into a room and someone's wearing the same shirt as you and everyone is, like, oh my gosh, the horror. Where does that mindset come from? That's to encourage you to buy from different places or have more clothes or more variety.

Lauren: It's all the, the idea is that you know overseas, the international brands; they put it into your mind with movies and um, series and stuff where you will see a girl walk into a club in the series and there will be another girl wearing the same dress and then it's this huge problem. I mean even we were watching news bloopers the other day and there was, they were interviewing these three women and all of them were wearing white. And it turned into a massive argument because they wanted one another to change. It was this massive drama but it's just this news thing you know. Then you'll start to think, OK so it's weird to wear the same colours as other people and its weird. You just think you are wearing normal colour

and then you will see someone else in the same colour in a small group of people and all of a sudden you start feeling ooh, I'm wearing the same colour as someone else. It's what you have seen so often in movies and series and even just in news channels. And then before you know it, you are on your way home to change because you don't want to be wearing the same colour as someone else. It's this whole brain washing that we have been fed from every angle of media.

Robyn: I think it's that idea that someone is going to pull it off better than you do. You don't want to wear the same shirt because you are worried that the person wearing the same shirt as you looks better than you do. So, you don't want to wear it because you think, ah, I look fatter in this shirt than she does; I'm going to change.

Mediator: So, you're scared of people's judgement?

Robyn: Yeah, which is just a vicious cycle. That's all consumerism really is, just a vicious, endless cycle that they trap you in. This cycle of complete control and the moment you start feeling bad about yourself then you feel like you need to change. And the question is: What do I need to change? Do I need to buy more things? Ah I can't afford them; I feel shit again.

Lauren: Then you look online for the most common trends so that you fit in with people; you, like, ah, like, let me look at some trend going at the moment so that I can change my look to match what everyone is doing because that's what happy looks like at the moment. Then you buy the stuff and you still feel shit so you look online again. What else can I do? Before you know it, you're in that cycle.

Mediator: So, do you think when your clothing, beauty and fashion choices are more up to date and on trend you feel like people think you're

better than possibly you may think you are? Do you think you are perceived as...

Sally: Someone who has their shit together.

*General laughter.*

Kath: I think that there are two different kinds of people: I think a lot of people don't want to wear the same top as someone else because everyone likes to think of themselves as being an individual. No one likes to think of themselves as a sheep. You know and if you are wearing the same thing as someone else you, like, oh jeeze, like, I'm not special in any way. You know, like, I'm not an individual and a lot of people take fashion and what they are wearing as a part of themselves or a reflection upon themselves. So, what they wearing they associate with how they are so. No one wears anything they don't like to wear. I mean you buy something because you like it; you associate it with who you are. If you are someone who is upbeat you'll probably wear, like, a lot of bright colours and that becomes your identity in clothes. So, people see it as well. If I am wearing like, if I'm a very feminine girl I'll wear dresses and skirts and you know, if some girls are more tomboyish they'll wear like boyfriend jeans and T-shirts. So, I think that people take fashion and what they are putting out as a reflection of who they are.

Robyn: Which is also so ironic because everybody thinks that they are so individual and I'm not like anyone else; I don't want to be like anyone else but, again, like you said you can't be wearing the same things. I want to be an individual but at the end of the day society has these trends that are selling to everyone so everyone wants to buy them but what are they? They are exactly the same and you end up buying the same trends, feeling the same way and I just find it so ironic.



Lauren: And also, everyone feels this way. When you buy something, you like and it looks good on you, you'll walk around feeling so confident. You know, it just boosts your confidence. I dunno, you'll walk into um, Mr Price and you'll see a really cute top or something but then, OK I don't know about anybody else but I like to go to other shops and see what else is around and then you'll walk into, like, H&M or somewhere else and you will see the exact same top but because it's a better brand your brain automatically thinks, ooh I have to buy it from here. Even though it is exactly the same top, pretty much the same colour and patterns and everything but because everyone is always H&M is better, H&M is better, H&M is better, Mr Price is cheap, your brain just wants to go there. But it is the same top and it will probably last exactly the same amount of time but you just automatically feel as though you should buy it from there.

Robyn: It goes back to that international thing, like, Forever New and Mr Price comparison. It's, like, look at my nice plain vest but it's from Forever New...

Lauren: Yeah, H&M are everywhere but Mr Price, well, it isn't. You wanna follow the trends, and trends are H&M and Forever21 and Forever New and all those fancy brands that everyone is wearing. You know, because you want to feel important and you want to feel as though you have your life together and you can follow all the crowds. You know, even though you want to be an individual, you still want to have that, you know, I'm with those kinda people.

Britt: You still want the acceptance of your peer group.

Lauren: Yeah, so that's another thing because no one knows about Mr Price overseas.

Mediator: You see it's an interesting thing because from my research what I've found is, obviously, internationally, generations are categorised. So, you've got Baby boomers, Eco boomers, digital natives and we as a generation, the years that we are born in, are categorised as Echo boomers and they are described as people who like to be known as individuals but they still feel the need to be accepted by their peers. Which is almost contradictory because they want to stand out from the crowd but they want to be accepted for it. However, there is a debate that South Africans cannot be categorised so simply because of our differing consumer history. Would you feel that, possibly, going by what you have been describing to me, we could actually be considered individuals that fall into an Echo boomer generation?

Robyn: Yeah, but I feel it's like just human nature. I mean it's not just, for example, a South African thing. As a human being you want to be accepted. You want to have this feeling of being an individual but at the same time you want to fit into society; you don't want to be left out. So, I think they definitely can be categorised into that but I think it's just human nature, not necessarily consumer history. I mean I know for me, my clothes, the clothes I like, they're kinda hippy and full of colour. When I wear them out I feel conscious about it because everyone else is wearing, you know, the mass-produced everything else. Then you do stand out and then you almost like, this is too much of a statement, I need to calm down. Do they think I look weird. Do I look like a stoner?

Kath: Well it's like you want it to reflect who you are as an individual but at the same time you don't want to receive negative feedback for that. Because in the same sense you are worried that people are going to judge you as an individual. That's because if this is a reflection of you and people are judging it negatively, then does that mean that there is something wrong with you? As opposed to just, hey, these are just the clothes I'm wearing and I like bright stuff,

and I'm sorry nude is in fashion at the moment, but I like bright yellow you know.

*General laughter.*

Kath: But it's just one of those things I suppose. It's the risk and reward of it. Either you are going to wear it and people are going to say 'oh that's so awesome' or you're going to wear it and everyone is going to give you negative feedback.

Mediator: And finally, when it comes to fashion products, specifically online. How do you know who to trust when it comes to buying online? What sells you on the idea of a product if you haven't seen it in-store or used it before? Do you actually buy fashion and beauty products? And when I say beauty products, I mean make-up and anything to do with skincare. Would you make these purchases online or would you prefer to walk into a store and be able to use it or experience it before making a purchase?

Robyn: I think with clothes especially I would prefer to buy it directly from a shop, unless I have a piece of clothing already that I know fits me and I know the size. Because do know they give you those size charts but sometimes, especially maybe more with South African companies, I can trust more because I know the sizes. Overseas companies though can be a bit iffy. Make-up and jewellery though I don't mind it, cos I find, especially with jewellery, it is quite universal. What you were saying about what sells you though, lately if I see anything that is animal friendly or eco-friendly that will catch my attention immediately and I will 95% of the time buy it. It's also the state of their webpage, the colours they use, the style; if its minimalist then it sells really well. And I feel it makes you look more professional, like the Skoon skincare website; it looks so good because they've used basic colours; it's very neutral and there is just a neat photo of the product with its price. It's very simple but

the webpage is easy to use and payment, if the companies they are associated with are trustworthy, then you are usually, like, OK. Also, word of mouth; if someone has tried it and they mention it to you and they say 'ah it was really good, their sizing guide actually fits' yeah. I mean Vintage Lovers Cape Town, a friend saw it, she went to the shop and that's how I know that I can trust it. And I have bought from there before and it worked out, so I mean then you recommend it to everyone.

Mediator: Would you say that you could see it online but until you have someone else's testimony or feedback on the product you are less inclined to trust it. Would you trust other people's reviews on it? People that you didn't necessarily know; the ones you read on sites.

Kath: I think it really depends on how many reviews they have. If there are two or three reviews you are, like, well. It depends though; if it's on Takealot and there's, like, three reviews I will trust it more and because it's a bigger site. If it's one person's individual site, so say they are selling their own product and they are only selling their own product, it's not like an Amazon or Takealot and they have reviews then it's, like, well how do you know it's not their mates going and reviewing it. But if it's like Takealot then I would read those reviews and I would trust it because it's like actual feedback; no one would be invested in going and reviewing random little things on Takealot. You know, but if it's one person selling their own product and they had two reviews, but if they had, I think it also depends on the quantity of reviews. So, if there are, like, fifty reviews, then you like, OK well, fifty positive reviews, mixed in with a few negative ones; it's OK.

Mediator: So, proof that these people have actually received their products they ordered online. It's not just going to disappear in the post.

- Kath: Yeah, I also think it depends on then you are going to check out. If it has one of those verified sites and a proper mechanism like Paypal or something backing it, or like an approve-it thing with the bank or something then I am more likely to purchase from it. Or if it is something like Takealot or Amazon or...
- Robyn: Also, at the top of the webpage if it says "secured".
- Kath: Or if like on Ebay or whatever or BidorBuy, if it's like one of those verified by then you, like, OK it's safe.
- Robyn: But also, I don't know if I trust reviews because I have this belief that the computer does them.
- Lauren: You can buy likes, comments and followers. You can buy all of that so for me I would go for the comments that have or the reviews that have not too many and not too few. So, like a balanced amount. When you buy likes or you buy followers there is always a bulk; you don't just get three or five. You get between twenty to fifty to one hundred and that's why for me I will never trust a site or a Facebook page that has a hundred thousand followers and then each post only gets, like, three or four likes. Because the majority of the time they've bought their likes and followers, you know, none of it is real and then you don't know that product will be like a good product. Most of the time it's just a computerised coding thing where it will literally just have the generic thing on every single product. If you go onto certain websites and you look at the reviews, you will find that most of them are literally word for word exactly the same. That makes me feel like it seems too good to be true.
- Robyn: And they are always all so positive.
- Lauren: Then what I will do, let's say, whatever I am looking for. If it's say, a mug, I'll see it on one website and if the comments look a little bit

too good to be true then I will go onto Google and I will type the name of whatever it is and I'll see what Google says. Then I'll go onto other websites that sell the same things. It does take a long time but you know I don't like to buy things with the risk of it being the wrong thing. You know, cos it happens a lot with people where they buy stuff online but it's not what they wanted but the reviews said: 'It's amazing it fits me perfectly' or whatever.

Kath: But I think you can also get a feel for reviews as your read them, like, you know you get the generic ones but inevitably no one is going to like the same thing. You could give one person a meal and you could give another person a meal and one person will be, like, this is the best thing ever and the other will be, like, this was terrible. It's really to peoples taste so if you see reviews and, like, if there are five reviews and one is negative, I am more likely to believe that is a legitimate thing. Because not everything is to everybody's taste. Like with clothing, everyone's got a different body shape so not one thing is going to fit everyone perfectly so, if there is one 'oh, bit on the small side' you know size too small and one person is like size too big then you can kind of get a, if you have bought on wish before, you can kind of get a happy medium. So, like fifty people say the sizing was big and twenty people say the sizing is small, it's more than likely on the big side not on the small side. And all the fat people are just saying hey, it's too small.

Britt: I haven't accepted my size yet; it's too small.

*General laughter.*

Kath: I haven't accepted that I'm round.

*General laughter.*

Kath: You know but so it's generally as you read them and you can see what people are, like what is a legitimate review and what isn't. So, you get a feel for it.

Britt: I think personally for, like, shopping, especially for things like clothing and make-up, I think I'll use their website more as a lazy shopping guide. I will go on there, see what they've got and then kind of go with OK I like these things and write down the product number and then I would prefer to go into the store. Then see if they've got it in the store, try it on or try it out if it is some kind of cosmetic product and then rather purchase it through the store. So, I start the shopping sometimes on the website but I don't complete the purchase there. I then go into store and prefer to have that more personal experience.

Lauren: The thing about going into a store is that you have that communication with people you know. It's not just like you're looking at a computer screen. You can ask more personal questions. Like for me, I have eczema so if I go online, nowhere on the websites will it say on the product it's not ideal for people with sensitive skin or it's not ideal for people with eczema. If I go into a store, I can say I have very fragile skin; if I use certain products my face will flair or it will seep in and flair up somewhere. Then you learn and you can speak to them and they can say, well, this is something you can use because it is for sensitive skin. Websites might say it's for sensitive skin but then they don't narrow it down to certain things. So, for me I would never buy online products and clothing because I have bought off of Wish before and it came in a completely wrong size after reading all the comments, the reviews, the product reviews you know the actual...

Kath: But Wish is dodge, let's be honest.

*General laughter.*

Lauren: I know, that's why I was, like, you know what I have read everything about the product; seemed great and a friend of mine bought the exact same thing and it worked for her and then it didn't work for me. So, I was, like, I would rather go into a shop and try on the clothes, make sure it fits because I have a weird shape. It's easier for me to try on something. Then see if I can either change it to fit me or if I can, you know. So, for me, I prefer going into a shop and having that actual communication with people. It freaks me out not speaking to people. I don't like buying online.

Mediator: But you are still influenced by what you see online, so for example, if I were to start up a clothing brand and I advertised it. If you didn't know me, it's a totally new brand. If it started popping up in your Instagram and Facebook feed between the images and information of the people that you follow. If I had a store in Durban and kept popping up in your feed and you liked what you saw, do you think you would be inclined to come and look at it because I had sparked your interest? Even if you and your friends hadn't seen or heard of it before.

*General yes in agreement.*

Robyn: Especially if there are store photos. I don't know what it does but it kind of assures that you actually exist. Because I mean not many clothing online stores are not going to have a store, so, to not see photos of the store it almost...

Lauren: Yeah, seeing photos of the store almost gives you a comfort.

Robyn: Yes, because then you think OK, well, if it doesn't fit me, I have someone to go talk to.



- Mediator: So, you appreciate the reassurance that you are not going to end up in the middle of nowhere.
- Robyn: Yeah, again it just takes you back to visual. To have a good photo on Instagram of their store, you're, like, cool, cool.
- Sally: Or even of the people who work there. You know when they post a picture of themselves, like, 'hey, we just opened a store'. You feel a lot more inclined to go take a look and see because it's not all just computerised.
- Kath: Yeah, it legitimises it.
- Lauren: Yeah, it's not like you go onto a website and it's just the clothes; it's not actually on a model and everything is just very technical and you don't see human interaction at all. It's a lot more inviting and comforting to know that if you go into the website and you see people and a store. It helps to know that you can speak to someone, you can phone them or email or go to them. It is a lot more welcoming.
- Robyn: Yeah, that interaction.
- Kath: That doesn't bother me in the least though, to be honest. I shop for clothes and stuff online and if I don't like it everywhere now has a returns policy. Initially they didn't but now they do. So, like with Takealot you just book a return, you buy it, you don't like it, you book a return and it gets refunded straight back onto your card. So, it's actually less hassle to return it than if you go to the shop, buy it, change your mind and then have to go back to the shop to return it to the shop. So, I would rather just buy everything online, try it on at my leisure and you have thirty days to return whatever you don't want. Then you just book a return and it goes back. But a lot of people do still like to go into store and see what is there but I'm too

lazy, I'd ten times rather it come to me and then I just return what I don't like.

Lauren: A lot of people still crave the human interaction.

Britt: I also personally just prefer to go into the store and try it on or know that I don't have to, if it comes to me because I have had to wait five days for it to be delivered. Then I get it and get the great disappointment that it doesn't fit. Then you have to wait another five days to send it back and another couple of days after that to get the next size. So, for me you are wasting two weeks whereas if you just got in your car, if the store is local and you go sort it out, it takes you two hours. Or if you have a problem you can always go to the store and say, this is my problem, what do we do to fix it, rather than having to wait for people to respond via email or messenger or whatever system that company uses for its returns.

Lauren: Also talking to people online you get miscommunication. I mean, like, I have had to re-install software on my computer and to deal with people online. It took me almost three hours to just get my point across and they just didn't get it.

Robyn: It's just easier when you actually show someone.

Lauren: Yeah, if I can go in and speak to someone and show them and say look this is the problem, this is this. How can I fix it? But it wasn't something I could do, I couldn't do that because then I would have to go to wherever Adobe headquarters are. And then, it's frustrating, and then, like, I contacted this one lady who makes swimsuits for you. So, I was, like, you know, talking to her about it and, you know, I just couldn't get what I wanted out over messaging. She kept reading it wrong and I kept explaining it was wrong and then I went to her store and I showed her what I wanted and then, like, we looked at a few options. And she showed me things and it

was much easier to get my point across and her to get her, explanations across in person as it would have been over email because you can get more into a conversation, more indepth into what you are explaining. Whereas in an email you don't want to send someone an entire six-page essay trying to explain yourself. When in a conversation would take 10 minutes.

Robyn: Which also brings back to the fact that visuals are universal. Like, you could explain something for hours and hours and nobody would get it and then you could show them the picture of the button that you are trying to explain and it's, like, oh, OK.

Mediator: Great! Thanks everyone. Does anybody have anything else they would like to add on the topic?

Robyn: No...

*General laughter.*

Mediator: Ok, thanks again everyone. I appreciate the time you have taken out of your days to help further my research. Your responses and discussion have been really informative and thought provoking. It is much appreciated.

*With nothing further to say the voice recorders were switched off.*

---

## Appendix H

### Turn it in report

Helen chapters turn it in

---

ORIGINALITY REPORT

---

**2**%

SIMILARITY INDEX

**2**%

INTERNET SOURCES

**0**%

PUBLICATIONS

**0**%

STUDENT PAPERS

---

MATCH ALL SOURCES (ONLY SELECTED SOURCE PRINTED)

---

< 1%

★ [wiredspace.wits.ac.za](http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za)

Internet Source

---

---

Exclude quotes      On

Exclude bibliography      On

Exclude matches      < 4 words