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# **Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images**

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**M Consumer Science (Clothing Management)**

**Supervisor: Prof HM De Klerk**

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**Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images**

by

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**in the**

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## Declaration

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I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree M Consumer Science (Clothing Management) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Candice Grebe

## Synopsis

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Department: Consumer Science  
Degree: M Consumer Science (Clothing management)

From the clothing theory, it is evident that the mass media as generalised “other”, dictates the opinion of what is acceptable and not acceptable regarding fashion. The role that the mass media play in the clothing consumer’s purchases, and more specifically the decision-making process surrounding fashion products, cannot be underestimated. From a social-cultural and aesthetic point of view, it can be argued that culture or sub-culture can play an important role in the aesthetic ideal of beauty of consumers. It is suggested that consumers of different cultural backgrounds have varying beliefs about what is defined as “beautiful” in each of their cultures. Fashion magazines in South Africa largely convey a global appearance ideal, but individuals often tend to also evaluate their appearances against the cultural or sub-cultural beauty ideal in which they reside. Cultural appearance standards in the form of skin colour, hairstyles, body, style, dress, and cultural artefacts (such as accessories) may differ among different cultures and sub-cultures (Craig, 1991). Magazine marketers should thus aim to provide a specific targeted consumer group with a fashion magazine that contains content that satisfies their particular sub-cultural aesthetic needs, personal appearances and standards. People across cultures have the need to compare themselves to others, and with the focus on fashion, appearance is evaluated and compared by the targeted consumers on the basis of either cultural factors or personal factors (Lennon, Rudd, Sloan & Kim, 1999). Fashion serves as a generalised “other” against whom a person can compare him- or herself with. The targeted consumers may not engage in comparison if the

appearances of fashion models used in fashion magazine advertisements are too different from the person's own appearance and standards.

It seems that the importance of the above mentioned factors in the decision-making process of consumers regarding fashion products and fashion magazines in particular, have not yet been fully realised in South Africa by magazine marketers and the advertising industry. The women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, serving as the target market for this study, fall under the Black Diamonds consumer group, which is one of the most important up and coming consumer groups in South Africa. It is apparent that this consumer group has a lot of potential and could reap rewards if targeted successfully, yet there is not a fashion magazine that is known of in South Africa that specifically caters for them. Unfortunately little is known about their beauty standards and the appearance of a beauty ideal that they would prefer to compare themselves with, and fashion magazines are therefore not able to fully tap into this potential market. The **Purpose** of this study was therefore to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' social comparisons and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. It is envisaged that the results of this study would contribute to fashion magazine editors' and marketers' understanding of this market's beauty standards and preferences for beauty ideals that can serve as a generalised "other" in social comparison, in such a way that it can contribute to a positive self-image and an interest in, and intention to buy a specific fashion magazine or the fashion products that are advertised.

The theoretical approach to the study included a literature review on fashion, the consumer and the role of culture, which include a discussion on fashion magazines and fashion magazine advertisements or images. The literature also covered the role of cultural beauty ideals and aesthetics in self-esteem. In order to address the problem, a cultural perspective and the theory on identity and social identity were combined with the theory on social comparison, and serves as a theoretical perspective, or point of departure for the research, while also directing the research objectives.

The unit of analysis for this study was young adult black women in South Africa (between 18 and 24 years of age), in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment within the Black Diamond consumer group. A non-probability sampling technique was employed. The sample for the study was purposive resulting in

the use of the snowball sampling method, with 200 respondents having completed a self-administered questionnaire.

The study showed that the women in the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment are directed by a strong personal identity and a need to be acknowledged as an African individual with unique personal characteristics. It is therefore also important for them that their appearance should symbolise their personal qualities and not necessarily that of a Westernised fashion style or beauty ideal, or that they belong to a specific social or sub-cultural group. The study further showed that dress, hairstyle and body shape are important features in their beauty ideal, directed by their personal identity. With regard to their aesthetic dimensions that play a role in dress and appearance, for them it is more about the sensory beauty of their appearance and emotional pleasure that their dress and appearance give them, than reflecting that they belong to a specific group or culture - indicative of a personal identity, rather than a social identity. The study further showed that with regard to social comparison, it is not important to the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment to compare themselves, and specifically their dress and appearance to those of others, whether it being to their friends, or an African or Westernised beauty ideal. With regard to appraisals of fashion magazine images, portraying different beauty ideals, specifically a Western, African and Euro-African beauty ideal, the study showed that the targeted consumers prefer the Euro-African beauty ideal because they like it, and it is also the appearance that they can relate to and that they would compare themselves to, although comparison is not important to them. However, if they have to compare themselves, they would compare the beauty ideal feature that is the most important to them, namely their dress style. They also mostly compare just for the sake of comparison and not to feel better about themselves or to feel that they fit into a specific group. In cases where they compare negatively to an image, whether African, Western or Euro-African beauty ideal, they will still accept the standard and will do nothing further. Lastly, the study also showed that most of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, would probably buy a fashion magazine which features Euro-African fashion images to see the latest trends and fashion ideas, but not because the model would inspire them to improve themselves.

This study clearly has practical implications for fashion magazine editors and marketers in South Africa, as well as for the advertising industry, especially when incorporating fashion images in advertisements specifically aimed at the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment.

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE STUDY IN PERSPECTIVE

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Fashion has become an important part in the lives of Westernised society. Fashion helps people from around the world, any country or origin, to be part of the global society. According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:372) “It also helps people to relate to different reference groups, cultures, sub-cultures as well as various social groups”. This can be important to consumers, as it can satisfy the need for belonging and to relate to other people. Fashion also has the ability to showcase who a certain individual is and reflects a person’s identity to others, as well as the role a specific person adopts in society (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). This means that fashion can operate as a symbol of the self, to show others who a person is.

The decision to follow a certain fashion trend can be influenced by various internal and external factors, such as culture, sub-culture, social class, social groups, family, attitudes, motivations and perceptions (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:110). Due to the fact that we live in a global society, many researchers and theorists argue from a social-cultural background, to follow an “emic” point of view when researching people’s behaviour - in this particular study, clothing behaviour, especially purchasing behaviour with regard to local fashion products, such as fashion magazines. From an “emic” point of view, researchers argue that each individual culture is unique and standardisation should be avoided when dealing with them (Kopnina, 2007:363). Marketers should rather adapt their approaches to be consistent to the local values and practices of the culture being dealt with, in this case South Africa. As culture can be seen as the focus of the “emic” perspective, the role that culture or sub-culture plays in the decision-making process of consumers, specifically surrounding fashion products cannot be ignored, and should be understood when targeting a certain consumer group with the aim to reach them effectively.

From the clothing theory, it is evident that the mass media as generalised “other”, dictates the opinion of what is acceptable and not acceptable regarding fashion. The role that the mass media plays in the clothing consumer’s purchases, and more specifically the decision-making process surrounding fashion products, cannot be underestimated. The mass media plays a major role during

the first two phases of the decision-making process, namely problem recognition, and information search (Burns & Sproles, 1994:264). Fashion magazines form part of the mass media and are an important source of information of the fashion industry. Fashion magazines can be seen as the voice of the fashion industry, often giving industry information and providing a platform for brand advertising (Kopnina, 2007:366). Fashion magazines can furthermore be viewed as cultural objects that can reflect cultural values on a visual and textual basis, thereby communicating the dominant cultural trends (Kopnina, 2007:368).

Fashion magazines generally provide three types of services, which include content for readers, advertisements, allowing readers to find out about products that are possibly of interest to them, as well as an advertising outlet providing companies with an opportunity to inform readers about their products (Kaiser & Wright, 2005). Advertising forms a huge percentage of every fashion magazine's title pages, and contributes to the overall financial well-being of the magazine (Moeran, 2002). Directional advertising is known to be synonymous with fashion editorials and is commonly seen in fashion magazines (Moeran, 2002). This type of advertising is important in this study, as the role that culture or sub-culture plays with regard to the target market's evaluation of fashion images in fashion magazines, and how the advertisements influence their decision-making process when purchasing clothing or fashion products, will be researched.

From a social-cultural and aesthetic point of view, it can be argued that culture or sub-culture can play an important role in the aesthetic ideal of beauty of consumers. According to Englis, Solomon and Ashmore (1994) a beauty ideal can be defined as "an appearance that includes not only physical features, but also various other products, services and activities". The notion of "What is beautiful" can be described as a culturally constituted phenomenon that happens because of common socialisation experiences amongst people of a certain culture or sub-culture (Englis *et al.*, 1994). Culture can be defined as "a configuration of learned behaviours and results of behaviour which component parts are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (Shaw & Clarke, 1998). It is suggested that consumers of different cultural backgrounds have varying beliefs about what is defined as "beautiful" in each of their cultures. This is an important consideration in this study, as the mass media (which includes fashion magazines) largely conveys a global appearance ideal, but individuals often tend to also evaluate their appearances against the cultural or sub-cultural beauty ideal in which they reside. This means that magazine marketers should aim to provide a specific targeted consumer group with a fashion magazine that contains content that satisfies their particular sub-cultural aesthetic needs, personal appearances and standards. This is said as cultural

appearance standards in the form of skin colour, hairstyles, body, style, dress, and cultural artefacts (such as accessories) may differ among different cultures and sub-cultures (Craig, 1991). These aesthetic needs and standards should therefore be kept in mind when targeting a certain consumer group with the focus on a fashion magazine, as these factors can help to draw the attention of the targeted consumers, and can lead to further attention being drawn to the product, which could ultimately result in the intention to buy such a fashion product.

People across cultures have the need to compare themselves to others, for self-evaluation purposes and in order for them to know how and where they stand in relation to some standard. With the focus on fashion, appearance is evaluated and compared by the targeted consumers on the basis of either cultural factors or personal factors (Lennon, Rudd, Sloan & Kim, 1999). Fashion serves as a generalised “other” against whom a person can compare him- or herself with. Cultural beauty ideals generally portrayed by fashion models in fashion magazines, may not be relevant to women from non-Western cultures such as the Black Diamonds in South Africa (Lennon *et al.*, 1999), in which case the targeted consumers may not engage in comparison if the appearances of fashion models used in fashion magazine advertisements are too different from the person’s own appearance and standards. This can lead to a negative response to such fashion magazines and fashion advertisements.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION**

It seems that the importance of the above mentioned factors in the decision-making process of consumers regarding fashion products and fashion magazines in particular, have not yet been fully realised in South Africa by magazine marketers and the advertising industry. In South Africa there is a diversity of cultures that are reshaping the county’s mainstream society. A sub-culture can be described as a “group of consumers who are held together by cultural or genetic ties that are common amongst them, and which are identified to be a distinguishable category by the members of the group as well as by others” (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:197). According to Rabolt and Solomon sub-cultural memberships often have an enormous effect in shaping the wants and needs of consumers. In the fashion magazine industry, products and communication strategies that are tailored to meet the needs of the various sub-cultures seem not yet to have been fully explored in South Africa.

The young adult black women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, serving as the target market for this study, fall under the Black Diamonds consumer group, which is one of the most important up and coming consumer groups in South Africa. This consumer group is the black middle class, and accounts for approximately 2 million of South Africa's population, which may seem like a small number, but this group is expected to grow by 50% each year (Rundell, 2006). The Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing described this group as an under-served market that has tremendous opportunity for marketers and entrepreneurs in South Africa (Olivier, 2006). It is apparent that this consumer group has a lot of potential and could reap rewards if targeted successfully, yet there is not a fashion magazine that is known of in South Africa that specifically caters for them. International fashion magazines that are available in South Africa rarely take the needs of this group into consideration, and rarely use models of an ethnic background in fashion magazine images in these magazines. When models of an African heritage are used, they often still convey a Westernised appearance ideal, which is not necessarily the ideal of beauty of the women in this particular consumer group in South Africa.

The women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment within the Black Diamond consumer group will be the target market for this study. The reason being that there are 240000 Black Diamond women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment with a purchasing value of R3 billion, which has increased by 21% between 2007 and 2008 (Black Diamond survey, 2008). This particular group contains young people that are on their way up, and fit the "young adult" description, as they are between 18 and 24 years of age. The group can be summarised as being on the rise, arriving and driven, making them a possible appealing market to target with regard to a fashion magazine. Culture is said to remain an important part in their lives, and the primary brands or products they are interested in falls under "enabling me" (The new black middle class, 2006). Most of the individuals in this group are studying towards their future. Furthermore, this sub-segment contains individuals that are mostly single, childless, and they like to have fun and party in their spare time (The new black middle class, 2006). These attributes should be taken into consideration, when trying to appeal to the women in this group with regard to a fashion magazine specifically catering for them.

Adomaitis and Johnson (2007) noted that a fashion magazine's design, the products featured in advertisements, as well as the models used, should appeal to, and influence their targeted readers. Research conducted amongst African American women overseas found great frustration and dissatisfaction among them regarding the amount of affirming images of black women in mainstream media (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003). This could also be true with regard to the use of

images of black women in fashion magazine advertisements in South Africa. Advertisements in fashion magazines can often reflect and shape the reader's culture, and it is believed that advertisements for fashion products may only hit home with a certain audience if it is communicated that there are actual needs and values that they can satisfy (Kopnina, 2007:368). This means that advertisements featured in fashion magazines may not motivate further action if the advertisement is not relevant to the targeted readers' existing sub-cultural background or beliefs.

Unfortunately there is currently no fashion magazine in South Africa that caters specifically for this sub-segment's needs, while little is known about their beauty standards and the appearance of a beauty ideal that they would prefer to compare themselves with. This leaves fashion magazines in the dark as to the fashion images that should be included in a magazine aimed at this target market, or the fashion images that should be included in fashion magazines currently available in South Africa, and therefore not being able to fully tap into this potential market. Exploring the role of culture in the Black Diamond's social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images, can aid in creating a better understanding of the targeted consumers' wants and needs regarding a fashion magazine that specifically caters for them. This will be beneficial, as magazine marketers should aim to design, implement and maintain a marketing mix that is intended to meet the needs of the particular target market (Lamb & Hair, 2002:151). Exploring these issues will not only help to develop literature in the local fashion magazine industry, but will also provide the magazine field with a more comprehensive understanding of magazine consumption behaviour of the Black Diamond consumer group (and more specifically the Mzansi Youth sub-segment), and provide clothing advertisers with a better understanding of the role that culture plays in the targeted consumer's social comparison and decision-making process surrounding fashion products. This can ultimately result in reaping rewards from the relatively untapped, but emerging black middle class sector of the South African economy (Olivier, 2007).

The **Purpose** of this study was therefore to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' social comparisons and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. It is envisaged that the results of this study would contribute to fashion magazine editors' and marketers' understanding of this market's beauty standards and preferences for beauty ideals that can serve as a generalised "other" in social comparison, in such a way that it can contribute to a positive self-image and an interest in, and intention to buy a specific fashion magazine or the fashion products that are advertised.

### **1.3. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY**

In order to understand the problem, as well as to find a way to address the problem, it was firstly necessary to conduct a literature review, on the main concepts that the research were dealing with, and secondly to choose a theoretical perspective that could serve as point of departure for the research, as well as to direct the research questions. The following discussions give a short overview of the literature that has been consulted as well as the choice of a theoretical perspective for the study. Chapter's two, three and four deals with the full literature review and the choice of a theoretical perspective.

#### **1.3.1. Literature review**

##### **1.3.1.1. Fashion, the consumer and the role of culture**

Culture is one of the primary differentiators between races, and is a factor that cannot be ignored when marketing to the people of South Africa (Mawers, 2006). Fashion and magazine marketers in South Africa can no longer ignore the diversity of cultures that are reshaping South Africa's mainstream society, and should be prepared to devise products and communication strategies that are tailored to meet the needs of the various sub-cultures. Within fashion, there are many different types of identities. These include personal identity, brand identity, fashion identity, social identity, cultural identity, national identity or international identities. Fashion can be used to create an identity and join a sub-culture (Kopnina, 2007:369). International fashion magazines that are available in South Africa do not necessarily embody cultural and racial identities that are related to the country's readership in South Africa. The readers of such fashion magazines are often culturally Western-focused, but this does not mean that all consumers fall in this category in South Africa, and would accept these cultural standards, especially taking into account that the majority of people in South Africa fit into a less Westernised society, which probably includes the Black Diamonds.

According to Rabolt and Solomon (2004:197) a sub-culture can be described as a group of consumers who are held together by cultural or genetic ties that are common amongst them, and whom are identified to be a distinguishable category by the members of the group as well as by others. In a heterogeneous country like South Africa, various different cultures are present in society, which means that people within a specific sub-culture may take great effort in preventing their identification to be submerged into the mainstream society (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:198). It should



thus be kept in mind that the targeted women in the Black Diamonds group may want to maintain and reflect the symbols of their culture and traditions, but at the same time may be adapting to fit into the present day society in South Africa.

With regard to this research, previous research has, for example, found that consumers of an African background respond in a more positive manner towards advertisements that feature black models, than images using white models (Frisby, 2004). This aspect is of great interest in this study, and can be an important factor to consider when wanting to appeal to the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group, as they may react more positively to advertisements or fashion images featuring more African images than Westernised images. Cultural beauty ideals are therefore another important factor to consider in this study.

### **1.3.1.2. The role of cultural beauty ideals and aesthetics in self-esteem**

Most people within their culture strive to achieve a specific ideal of beauty that is currently popular or accepted in their culture (Englis, Solomon & Ashmore, 1994). A beauty ideal can be defined as an appearance that includes not only physical features, but also various other products, services and activities (Englis *et al.*, 1994). These can include the clothes a person wears and the type of magazine they read. It is suggested that consumers of different ethnic backgrounds have varying beliefs about what is defined as “beautiful” in each of their cultures. This implies that what is perceived as beautiful in one culture, may not necessarily be perceived as beautiful in another culture (Englis, 1994). The human body plays an important role in a person’s self-esteem, as it can serve as a symbol of other qualities of the individual, including the identity/s that the individual has adopted and probably wants to communicate to others. The clothes that a person wears serve as a “second skin” of the body and a specific fashionable appearance therefore communicates who the person is and where the individual belongs in a group or society. A personal appearance that compares favourably with a person’s beauty ideal, whether the beauty ideal is culturally-inspired or not, could contribute immensely to a positive self-esteem. Should the personal appearance, on the other hand, compare negatively, the person would have to engage in coping strategies in order to maintain a positive self-image.

The “Zeitgeist”, also known as the spirit of the times (Fiore & Kimle, 1997), is the primary ideology or beliefs within a culture that deals with their aesthetic decision of a product. This shapes an individual’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs, which in turn affect the development, selection and

promotion of expressive and symbolic qualities of a product (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:81). A positive aesthetic response of a consumer often results from a similarity between the formal product qualities of the object (in this case the fashion product or fashion magazine) and the organisational principles of the culture (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:81). This means that the women in the Black Diamond consumer group may have a positive response to a fashion product advertised in a fashion magazine, if the fashion advertisement is parallel to their aesthetic preferences. Their aesthetic preference can further be defined by their culture's definition of aesthetic experience, which leads to differences in consumer behaviour (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). It is therefore important to understand the Black Diamond aesthetic preferences in this study, when wanting to appeal to them successfully.

Aesthetic experience relates to the selection of symbolic, formal and expressive qualities of a product that results in satisfaction on the consumer's part (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:4). Formal qualities refer to the perceived features of the structural composition of a product or object, such as colour, texture, shape and proportion, and have the ability to evoke emotion on the consumer's part. Formal qualities of products may provide pleasure to the senses and can often enhance beauty, and are often evident in the form of emotions that are evoked by the creator in the consumer (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:6). Symbolic qualities on the other hand, originate from content or meaning, and communicate an idea about the world (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:9). As discussed earlier, the Black Diamonds reside within a certain socio-cultural context. They can therefore not be separated from this context for analysis of their aesthetic preferences. Instead, these factors should help to create an understanding about their preferences (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). Research has shown that culture also has a great effect on the importance ratings of expressive, formal and symbolic aspects of a product in aesthetic evaluation (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:85). This means that consumers across different cultures and sub-cultures may view some of these aspects as being more important than others. In this study it is critical to understand the importance given to these aspects by the women in the Black Diamond consumer group, especially when wanting to appeal to them in an effective manner. The idea is that symbolic, expressive and formal qualities of a fashion product should satisfy the consumer on an emotional, sensory and cognitive level (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83).

Fashion magazine advertisements are said to be a point of comparison and to have great impact especially on younger readers (Johnson, 2008). This is of interest in this study, as the consumer group being targeted, consists only of young adult black women, in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. This means that when advertisements are evaluated, the target audience might make either positive or negative aesthetic social comparisons based on the content of a fashion magazine advertisement

(Johnson, 2008). This could lead to the consumers either feeling competent, or incompetent, and could ultimately affect their self-esteem. If magazine marketers could incorporate images in fashion magazine advertisements that will initiate positive experiences surrounding aesthetic social comparison, and provide a platform for the targeted readers to relate to the images in a more positive way, the desired intention of such an advertisement could be reached.

### **1.3.2. Choice of a theoretical perspective for the study**

From the literature review it became clear that fashion and a personal appearance play an important role in how a person perceives the self. Fashion and appearance serves as a “second skin” that could symbolise personal qualities as well as the identity/s a person has adopted. It can also serve as a generalised “other” against whom the person can compare their personal appearance, whether favourably, in which case the result is positive for the self-esteem, or negatively, in which case the result is negative for the self-esteem. It also became clear that culture plays an important role in peoples’ beauty standards and beauty ideals, and that culture in broad plays a role in a person’s identity (who and what that person stands for and where the person fits into the group or society). A person’s appearance and beauty standards can therefore not be separated from the identity/s that the person has adopted.

With the above reasoning and the purpose of the study in mind, the question is: How should one address the problem? In order to address the problem, a cultural perspective and the theory on identity and social identity was combined with the theory on social comparison, and serves as a theoretical perspective, or point of departure for the research, while also directing the research objectives.

#### **1.3.2.1. Cultural perspective**

People in different cultural groups make changes in their appearances in one way or another, meaning that the codes and symbolic systems used by individuals in sub-cultural groups, such as the Black Diamonds, vary in terms of the way they decipher and interpret clothing (Kaiser, 1990:48). People that share the same culture are said to be likely to come in contact with similar networks of tangible products, such as clothing. The ways the clothes are bought, sold and worn contribute to the development of meaning that is associated with cultural products (Kaiser, 1990:48).

There are five basic assumptions of the cultural perspective. These include that collective values are produced and reproduced through cultural forms (Kaiser, 1990:49), meaning that specific appearances can represent shared values within a specific culture such as the Black Diamonds. Secondly, cultural values and beliefs are perpetuated when they are represented on a relatively unconscious level. This means that cultural groups can use clothing and appearance objects, to characterise their specific culture (Kaiser, 1990:51). Thirdly, individuals have the ability to transform their own realities by manipulating objects in their cultural worlds, by using clothes and other tools, such as accessories, provided by culture, to manage their appearance (Kaiser, 1990:51). The fourth assumption of the cultural perspective is that culture provides abstract images of social life. This can be done through media images, and often provides ideas for personal appearance management for people within a specific culture, such as the Black Diamonds (Kaiser, 1990:53). Lastly, people use codes to interpret meanings provided by cultural interpretations of social life. People have the need to compare themselves to others and in many cases the need to communicate to others that they belong to a specific cultural group or sub-group.

### **1.3.2.2. Social comparison theory**

Social comparison originated from the belief that people have the need for self-evaluation in order for them to know how and where they stand in relation to some standard. Festinger (1954) believed that people were more likely to compare themselves to people that are similar to themselves, because it would provide more meaningful information (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). Some other writers on the other hand, suggested that this might not always be true, and people may at times engage in comparisons with others that are not part of their group (Richins, 1991:72).

In social comparison literature, a distinction is made between upward social comparison and downward social comparison. Upward social comparison is the phenomenon where people show an upward drive in their comparisons to others that are better off than them, resulting in people learning from such others (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:5). To some people, upward social comparison may become threatening, even though it may be informative to them. For this reason, upward social comparisons may be avoided when feeling threatened. In such cases, people often engage in downward social comparison. Downward social comparison refers to where people compare themselves with others who are viewed as being worse off than them (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:6). This is especially common where people have a decline in well-being, and in an attempt to improve this, compare themselves to others thought to be worse off (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:6). It is

anticipated that the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group would probably engage in more upward social comparison, but research on them may show otherwise. It is therefore important to understand their patterns of social comparisons when wanting to target them effectively via a fashion magazine.

Another important factor to consider in this study regarding social comparison is that of upward social comparison of the targeted consumers within the same social group. This can result in two differentiating effects. Upward in-group comparisons often make comparison more threatening, leading to the rejection of shared categorisation, meaning that the targeted women may not want to be associated with a specific group (Schmitt, Branscombe, Silvia, Garcia & Spears, 2006:297). In contrast, upward in-group comparisons can result in acceptance of shared categorisation, meaning that the targeted women may want to belong to a specific group. This is due to a high-performing in-group member that enhances the collective in-group identity (Schmitt *et al.*, 2006:297). This is known as the social identity theory. The effect this may have on the Black Diamonds is that the group they belong to may be important to their ‘self’, and the targeted women may compare their ‘self’ to others, but they may also compare the group they belong to, to other groups. This means that they may engage in comparison of the individual self, as well as comparison of the group they belong to, to other groups.

The question arises as to who the Black Diamonds would strive to be like, particularly their cultural and social ideals regarding appearance. With regard to fashion the questions that arise are, what does the fashion and cultural beauty ideal of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group look like, and what do they compare when they engage in comparison. They may focus on comparing skin colour, body, cultural artefacts such as accessories, hairstyle and style or dress. Furthermore, it is of particular interest in the study which people, the targeted consumers tend to compare themselves to.

### **1.3.2.3. Identity and social identity theory**

In South Africa, social, economic, political and legal disparities still exist among cultures due to the former apartheid state. Presently a wide range of identities, which are based on cultural, racial and language lines still exist among the different societies in the country. These identities may be assumed to be associated with varying actions, attitudes and social values among the different cultures (Heaven, Simbayi, Stones & Le Roux, 2000:67). It is therefore important to understand the identities of the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group, and more specifically the concept

of identity. According to Stryker and Burke's (2000:286) identity theory, people possess as many selves as the groups of people with which they interact. This means that the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group may have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships where they play roles and have specific positions. Identities are thus seen as internalised role expectations (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286), which include in this case expectations of how a woman in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment should look.

According to Stets and Burke (2000:224) the concept of identity can be described in terms of social identity theory and (personal) identity theory, where the self is reflected in that it can take itself as an object, where it can be categorised, classified and be named in certain ways with regard to other social categories or classifications. In the social identity theory, this process refers to self-categorisation, whereas in the identity theory it is named identification (Stets & Burke, 2000:224) It is known that there are two prominent processes involved in social identity, namely self-categorisation and social comparison, which is of great interest to explore in this study with regard to the targeted consumers. According to Stets and Burke (2000:225) social identity can be defined as a person's knowledge that one belongs to a certain social category or group. Social identity is said to develop from group memberships on the basis of similar attributes, such as culture (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). In this study, sub-culture will be the primary factor taken into consideration when referring to the social identity of the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group. According to Brewer (1991:476) social roles play a major part in creating a social identity, and the theory involves the extension of the self, beyond the level of the individual, and involves the categorization of the self into more inclusive social units. This means that social identity has a more "we" approach, rather than the "I" (Brewer, 1991:476).

In contrast to the social identity theory, personal identity theory's self-classification involves not the "group", but categorise the self as an occupant of a role in society (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). Such an identity correlates with the typical Western identity where the individual qualities and uniqueness are of importance, rather than belonging to a specific group. Role-based identity formation centres on how a person performs a role, and the emphasis is not on similarity to other groups, but rather on individuality. One can therefore define personal identity as the categorisation of the self as a unique entity, which is separate from other individuals (Stets & Burke, 2000:228). If an individual has a strong personal identity, they act upon his or her own personal goals and desires, rather than as a member of a specific group or certain category (Stets & Burke, 2000:228). This means that the

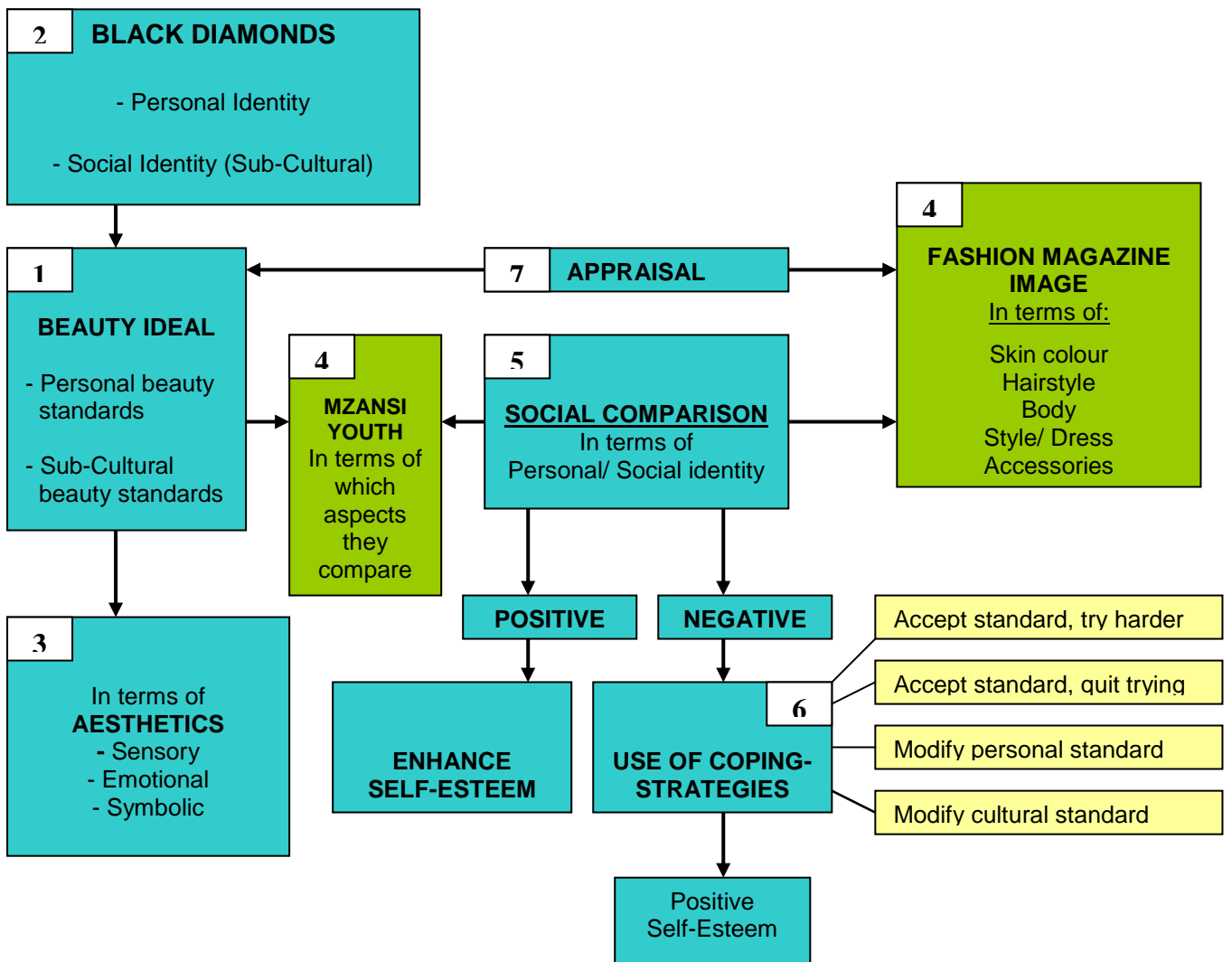
individual person and personal qualities override the importance of belonging to a specific social group or sub-culture such as the Black Diamonds.

It is clear from the above that a person either possesses of a strong social identity or a strong personal identity, which would play a role in social comparison, but also in the beauty standards that the person has. With the problem and purpose of the study in mind, the above literature and choice of theoretical perspective is reflected in the schematic conceptual framework (Figure 1.1), that also reflects the research objectives.

## **1.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

With the purpose of the study and the literature background of the study in mind, the following schematic conceptual framework (Fig 1.1) directed the study:



**(FIGURE 1.1: SCHEMATIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK)**

The schematic conceptual framework suggests that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment have specific personal or sub-cultural beauty standards or ideals (1) in terms of skin colour, hairstyle, body, dress or style and cultural artifacts, such as accessories (4). This beauty ideal plays an important role in how they compare themselves to others (5), as well as how they appraise various fashion images (7), whether they be more African inspired, Western inspired or of an Euro-African nature. The backbone of what they want to portray or compare with regard to an appearance (4), and specifically in terms of aesthetic experience (3), is either a strong social identity or a strong personal identity (2). When the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment appraise a fashion image or compare themselves against a specific image, they would either compare positively, which will then enhance their self-esteem, or they would compare negatively, in which case they will have to use



certain coping strategies in order to maintain a positive self-esteem (6). The ideal situation is that the fashion images should serve as an “other” against which or whom the targeted women could and would want to compare themselves with, resulting in an interest to purchase the specific clothing item or the fashion magazine as such.

#### 1.4.2 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives directed the research:

**Objective 1:** To explore and describe the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in terms of dress, hairstyle, body, skin colour and accessories

**Objective 2:** To explore and describe the role of personal and social identity in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's preference for specific appearance qualities

**Objective 3:** To explore and describe the role of aesthetic dimensions (symbolic, emotional and sensory) of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group's beauty ideal

**Objective 4:** To explore and describe which aspects of the self, the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group, compare with the ideal beauty standard in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, body and cultural artefacts such as accessories

**Objective 5:** To explore and describe the reasons why the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group engage in social comparison, and how it affects their self-esteem (in terms of social identity and personal identity)

**Objective 6:** To explore and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when comparing themselves to the fashion ideal of beauty

**Objective 7:** To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth's appraisals of Western, African and Euro-African fashion images as well as their subsequent reactions

- *Sub-objective 1:*  
To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth like the various fashion images
- *Sub-objective 2:*  
To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' evaluation of the various images
- *Sub-objective 3:*  
To explore and describe how the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment relate to the specific images in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance
- *Sub-objective 4:*  
To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment would compare themselves with the images
- *Sub-objective 5:*  
To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's willingness to buy fashion magazines with the above images
- *Sub-objective 6:*  
To explore and describe the women in the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's intentions to buy similar clothing than in the fashion images

## **1.5. SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

### **1.5.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

#### **1.5.1.1 Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was young adult black women in South Africa (between 18 and 24 years of age), in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. The women fall under the Black Diamond consumer group, which represents an up-and-coming, growing market segment in South Africa. The women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment are mostly still living at home and studying towards their future. The units of analysis are also representative of a group that is large, profitable and accessible enough to draw the attention of marketers (Mawers, 2004).

#### **1.5.1.2 Sample selection**

A non-probability sampling technique has been used in the study, as there was no way of guaranteeing that every element of the population would be represented in the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). The sampling technique could therefore not be presumed to be representative of the entire population, and is only considered to be representative of the sample, and results have only been applied to the latter. The sample for the study was purposive resulting in the use of the snowball sampling method. Purposive sampling occurs when the people or units relevant to the study are selected for a specific purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). The reason for this method being relevant to this particular study is that specific participants with certain criteria and characteristics were needed. This relates to them having to be young, black adult women living in South Africa, studying towards their future and being in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group. By combining more than one sampling method, a better opportunity is created for an effective sample to be formed. Purposive sampling was therefore combined with the snowball sampling method, as only certain individuals with particular characteristics were included in the study.

### **1.5.2. DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

Quantitative data collection techniques were used to capture the data. Data was obtained by means of personally handing out questionnaires to willing participants. Using questionnaires is a relatively easy way of collecting data, and have been used by other researchers when collecting data on reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images (Adomaitis and Johnson, 2007). It enables the researcher to organize questions, and receive responses without actually talking to the participants or conducting interviews, which can often be very time consuming and costly (Walliman, 2005:281).

#### **1.5.2.1 Design**

The design of the questionnaire was centered on the objectives of the study, to be sure that all objectives were met, in order to retrieve the desired results at the end of the study. This was done to draw conclusions relevant to the study and to make possible valuable recommendations at the end of the study. The primary factors measured in the questionnaire were – (1) personal or sub-cultural beauty standards, (2) personal and social identity (3) importance of aesthetic dimensions, (4) social comparison (personal identity/ social identity), (5) coping strategies used in case of negative comparisons, (6) reflected appraisals of the fashion photographs.

### **1.5.2.2 Subjects**

Four hundred and twenty (420) questionnaires were handed out to respondents (Caucasian and African students) and completed, but 200 completed questionnaires were used for purposes of this study, representing young adult black women in South Africa (between 18 and 24 years of age), in the Mzansi Youth sub segment. These women fall under the Black Diamond consumer group, which represents an up-and-coming, growing market segment. Prospective subjects were approached on the campuses of the University of Pretoria (UP) and Tshwane University of Pretoria (TUT), to ensure that students of the desired age group studying towards their future were obtained.

### **1.5.2.3 Stimulus Materials**

Stimuli used in the questionnaire consisted of 3 full colour fashion photographs obtained from fashion editorials, typically seen on the Internet and featured in popular fashion magazines. The fashion images used in the questionnaire were kept simple with no imaginary brand names. This helped to ensure that the stimuli were similar across all fashion images, and eliminate bias in responses. Careful evaluation of the fashion photographs, by fashion experts was therefore needed, before specific photographs could be selected to be included in the questionnaires to be handed out to the respondents. A panel of four fashion experts selected from UP and TUT were asked to evaluate the various fashion images before selecting the three fashion photographs that were eventually included in the final questionnaire. Criteria used for selecting the photographs included in the panel questionnaire were photographs evoking the same amount of attractiveness, the same level of vividness and drawing the same amount of attention. Fashion photographs representative of each of the three beauty ideals, and featuring models of similar sizes, with a clear view of the clothes featured, and featuring only one style (dresses).

### **1.5.2.4 Procedure**

Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire on a voluntary basis. Members of the targeted group were located at the campuses or residences of the University of Pretoria (UP) and Tshwane University of Pretoria (TUT). A few initial individuals were asked if they fit the desired characteristics of the target market. Members that qualified were then asked to direct the researcher to other respondents within the targeted group that could easily be located. This was done until at least two hundred questionnaires were completed (by African students) for analysis. The first part of

the questionnaire included questions measuring demographic information, such as age, culture, occupational status and citizenship. The second part of the questionnaire entailed questions corresponding to the three different cultural beauty ideals portrayed in the three fashion photographs evaluated by the panel of fashion experts. There were therefore one image each included in the questionnaire portraying a typical Westernised beauty ideal, an Euro-African, and African beauty ideal, with a brief set of questions relating to each specific fashion photograph or beauty ideal being portrayed, which were completed directly after viewing each of the different fashion photographs.

#### **1.5.2.5 Measure**

The measurement instrument used in this study, collected information for six dependant variables, namely- (1) personal or sub-cultural beauty standards, (2) personal and social identity (3) importance of aesthetic dimensions, (4) social comparison (personal identity/ social identity), (5) coping strategies used in case of negative comparisons, (6) reflected appraisals of the fashion photographs. Survey questions can typically be divided into two categories, namely structured and unstructured. In this study, mostly structured questions were included in the questionnaire. Questions allowing for options between two possible responses, like “yes” or “no” were used, which was easy to interpret. Various levels of measurement questions were included such as ordinal scales, which allowed respondents to rank their preferences. Here directions were stated clearly, to eliminate confusion. Likert-type scales were also used in the questionnaire, which allowed for a choice between four alternatives; from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). This type of scale has previously been used in research dealing with the measure of culture, and worked well to obtain the necessary responses (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The scores were then calculated as a mean for items in each sub-scale or as the scale as a whole. Some open-ended questions were also used in the questionnaire, allowing respondents to write an answer in the open space provided. Standard statistical coding methods were applied to open-ended questions. For each stimulus fashion photograph, an over-all rating-scale was developed. This were measured by five, 7-point semantic differential scales, namely eye catching/ not eye catching, for me/ not for me, appealing/ not appealing, likeable/ not likeable, and attractive/ not attractive. Questions pertaining to participants’ purchase intentions included bipolar adjective choices, such as unlikely/very likely, and impossible/very possible. Respondents were also asked to indicate their interest in buying the clothing worn by the models in the fashion photographs, as well as their interest in purchasing fashion magazines featuring such fashion photographs.

## **1.6. PRESENTATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

### **1.6.1 Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter 2 gives a literature overview of magazines, and more specifically fashion magazines in South Africa, which includes literature on fashion magazine advertisements, and images featured in fashion magazines. The role of fashion and fashion magazines in every day life is explored. The role of fashion magazines in the consumer decision-making process with regard to fashion products is also considered. Lastly the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Black Diamond consumer group is discussed, as the target market for this study. The chapter then comes to a close with implications the above-mentioned topics have on the research topic.

### **1.6.2 Chapter 3: Literature Review**

In Chapter 3 the literature review continues with fashion, the consumer and the role of culture. An introduction is given, where after fashion, the consumer and the role of culture is explored. The role of culture in a personal beauty ideal and aesthetic experience is then discussed, where after the role of culture and aesthetics in fashion magazine advertisements are taken into account. The chapter ends with implications for the study.

### **1.6.3 Chapter 4: Theoretical Perspective**

After reviewing the literature of the study, a cultural perspective and the theory of identity, social identity and social comparison have been chosen as theoretical perspective or point of departure for the study. The chapter starts with a brief introduction, and ends with the implications the theoretical perspectives have on the study. The cultural perspective is firstly taken into consideration, and secondly the social-comparison theory, which describe social groups, as well as the effects of social comparison and culture. Lastly, social identity theory and personal identity theory is discussed.

### **1.6.4 Chapter 5: Research Methodology**

Chapter 5 opens with an introduction to the research methodology, and is followed by the schematic conceptual framework that was conceptualised with the literature background in mind. The schematic conceptual framework will direct the study and highlights the most important concepts of

the study. The objectives of the study are then stated. Thereafter the research strategy and style are described, as well as the sampling techniques. Sampling includes the units of analysis as well as the sample selection. The choice, description and application of data collection methods are then stated, which include the data collection techniques, data collection method, procedure and measure. The data analysis and operationalisation stages are then given, as well as how the quality of the data was ensured. The chapter closes with a discussion on ethical concerns for the study.

### **1.6.5 Chapter 6: Results and Data Analysis**

Chapter 6 focuses on analysing the data collected from the questionnaires that were handed out to the target market. The findings are discussed according to the objectives of the study. Data is presented in a manageable form, such as tables and graphs, and the calculation of numerical summaries (such as frequencies, averages, mean scores and percentages). In chapter 6 the data will be presented in terms of the seven research objectives and sub-objectives as set in Chapter 5. Additional to the set objectives, the chapter opens with the demographic information obtained from the questionnaire.

### **1.6.6 Chapter 7: Discussion of Results and Interpretation**

In chapter 7, the research results are discussed and interpreted against the viewpoints of the theories that were chosen as conceptual background for this research, the work of previous researchers and other theories deemed necessary for the interpretation of the results. The discussion and interpretation is presented in a specific sequence, as set out by the objectives of the study. The chapter opens with a discussion of the demographic information obtained from the results of the questionnaire, followed by discussions regarding each of the objectives.

### **1.6.7 Chapter 8: Conclusions, Evaluations, Contributions to Theory and Recommendations**

After the discussion and interpretation of results in Chapter 7, overall conclusions are drawn in Chapter 8 in a sequence as set out by the objectives of the study. Implications of the study follow the conclusions of the study, and then the study is evaluated. Thereafter follows a discussion on the contributions the study have to existing theory. Recommendations are then made, and finally the chapter closes with a discussion on the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future studies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITIRATURE REVIEW:**

### **THE FASHION INDUSTRY AND FASHION MAGAZINES**

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#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The study of women's fashion magazines is broad, with the greater part of the research coming from cultural studies (Moeran, 2003:1). Most of the work cited in the research, has however been concerned with women's magazines in England and the United States, and no recent research could be found concerning the research topic with regard to the South African magazine market. This does not mean that nothing has been written about magazines in South Africa, but there appears to be little research conducted with regard to the local fashion magazine market that may provide greater insight into the local industry, as well as the future for potential and growth.

It can be said that the value of magazines, and fashion magazines in particular should not be underestimated, as the creativity and visual aesthetics used in fashion magazine publications could likely capture the imagination of the reader and draw attention to such publications (Pease, 2005). The media in South Africa is well established and sophisticated. Despite having to reach a multicultural community, with a country that has eleven official languages, the media industry remains one of the most diverse and best developed in Africa. South Africa has a flourishing magazine industry, with over 280 titles available that are published locally (Internet: South African Advertising Research Foundation, 2009). The diversity of these titles reflects how all the more magazines are being developed to meet specialised consumer needs and interests, and reflects their appetite for such printed materials. The industry's annual turnover is estimated at around R1.7 billion, which is a huge amount, and tapping into this market, could lead to an opportunity for success (Internet: South African Advertising Research Foundation, 2009).

Taking South Africa's recent history into account, it is not surprising that its magazine market is still being characterised by clear differences in readership amongst the country's different race groups. Over the past few years there has been a rise in magazines that are specifically aimed at black South Africans, which is not surprising, as the Journal of Marketing reports, that about 79,3% of the South African population are indeed black (Mawers, 2006). There is however not a single fashion



magazine that is known of, that specifically caters to young adult black women in the country. This may be seen as odd, as this market seems to have enormous potential. For many years, black presence in mainstream magazines in South Africa was marginal. Rabolt and Solomon (2004) found that internationally, women of an African heritage were not represented among editors, contributing editors, fashion and beauty editors of glossy monthly magazines to a great extent, until recently. This was also the case in South Africa, but has however changed over the past few years and black women are nowadays represented in many of the departments within magazine companies, but this does not necessarily influence the content of the magazines that are currently available in the country.

Many glossy fashion magazines available in South Africa are still from an international origin, meaning that photographic representation of women of African heritage is often limited to some appearances in fashion spreads or occasional features about well-known celebrities like Oprah Winfrey. This leads to the concern that black women may not be presented in fashion magazines and fashion magazine advertisements in South Africa to a great extent, especially considering that there are a great deal of international fashion magazines available in South Africa. This means those mainstream women's magazines that often reflect and dictate appearance, may be reflecting white ideals or internationally accepted black ideals in a predominantly black setting here in South Africa. This may result in black women finding reading these magazines from an international origin frustrating, as most of these magazines probably fail in giving appropriate advice on issues such as style and appropriate hair and skin care for women of an African heritage. A fashion magazine specifically targeting young adult black women in South Africa has the potential to fill the void in the current marketplace, and be the dominant magazine on the shelves that specifically caters for the needs of young, black women in South Africa today.

This chapter therefore deals with an overview of magazines and fashion magazines, where after fashion magazine advertisements will be considered, as well as the role of fashion magazines in everyday life. The role of fashion magazines in consumer decision-making of fashion products will also be discussed. Lastly, the chapter focuses on targeting a consumer segment, and implications for this study.

## 2.2. OVERVIEW OF MAGAZINES

Magazine consumption has experienced rapid growth over the past 10 years (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:209). Growth in the magazine market could be observed not only globally, but also nationally in South Africa. Due to the fact that magazines are seen as a stimulating means of reading, magazines have the power to evoke various cognitive and emotional responses. The superior print quality and comprehensive nature of this medium, makes it a very expressive form of communication (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:210). By exploring magazines, especially those specifically aimed at the target market of this study will not only progress magazine literature in South Africa, but will also provide the magazine industry with a more comprehensive understanding of magazine consumption behaviour in the country.

Whether it is fashion or technology, mainstream news or fitness, a magazine's editorial product focuses on the reader's interests and communicates in a way that is likely to be both informative and entertaining. For almost every human interest there is a magazine. The readers have the opportunity to choose and the publications come in various shapes and sizes. According to Moeran (2002) a magazine can be described as "a printed collection of texts (essays, articles, poems, and stories), often illustrated, that is produced at regular intervals". Magazines are usually noted for their superior production quality and generally sold by subscription or at news-stands. Magazines are usually published on either a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or quarterly basis, with a date on the cover that is later than the date the magazine is actually published. They are mostly printed in cover on coated paper, and bounded with a soft cover, and are composed of a wide range of materials, which includes photos, articles and advertisements. Many different parties, often working in many different locations, produce magazines in many different formats. This means that great technological infrastructure and attention to detail is needed to produce a magazine (Moeran, 2002).

Magazines can further be seen as being to books, what television is to cinema, as they are the sites of commentary. This is said, as magazines may often be the texts to which we resort to discover the moods, feelings and thoughts of people at certain or specific times in the past. These publications are often very effective and can achieve true excellence, as it honours the way in which writing, reporting, editing and design all come together and aims to grab the readers' attention and fulfil the target market's unique needs and interests (McKay, 2008:37). The main focus of a magazine can be consolidated in the editorial philosophy. This defines the reason for a magazine's existence as well as its editorial pattern. In essence, this refers to the focus of a magazine, which in turn gives an

identity and personality to the magazine brand (McKay, 2008:37). Furthermore, it explains what the magazine is intended to do, the areas of interest it covers, and how it will approach these areas and the voice it will use to do so. McKay (2008:48) noted, “Magazines can often fail due to an unclear or unfocussed editorial philosophy”.

Magazines can be classified into two broad categories, either being a business magazine, or a consumer magazine. Consumer magazines are created for the general public, and fashion magazines fall under the latter, being in the female general interest category (Frings, 2005:78). These publications generally generate the majority of their revenue from the sale of advertising space. The placement of advertisements in magazines in modern times, have not only served as a means of financial support, but also led to subsequent developments in the industry. These include more illustrations and vastly greater specialization (McKay, 2008:46).

Generally magazines are intended to be a more casual, less laborious means of reading, and likely appeal to readers as it appears that magazines are easy to glance through, seemingly more user-friendly, portable, and easy to pick up and put down, with texts mostly in columns and/ or the use of plenty of pictures. The pass-along readership is probably also an enticing feature of magazines, because when one thinks about it, it is magazines rather than other forms of publications that are found in public places such as restaurants and waiting rooms of doctors (Moeran, 2002: 12). Due to the fact that reading is only one activity to be fitted into the lives of the women in the Black Diamonds group, among a multitude of other things, magazines may therefore be seen as attractive reading material as magazines generally seems to invite casual reading for people with more pre-occupations and less time.

The magazine industry has undergone a period of significant growth over the past few years, not only internationally, but locally as well. This resulted in increased competition, with new magazines being regularly introduced that attempt to better satisfy consumers’ needs and wants, serving in the growing need of readers to be informed and entertained. It is therefore very important that magazine publishers attempt to make their magazines more relevant to their targeted readers’ lives, to stay competitive and hold a reasonable share in the market (Davidson, Mcneill & Ferguson 2007:209). This may require extensive research and a proper understanding of the target market to be reached, if a magazine wants to target a consumer group in South Africa.

Every magazine is published with the implication that each successive issue represents (within its own field) what is currently under discussion, and happening at the moment. In each issue the magazine should find innovative ways to add something new and exciting to the reading experience, yet still staying in touch with all the previous issues that came before it, meaning that the core editorial “mood” of the magazine should be kept in mind. According to Pease (2005:22) “the publication should strive to be new and different, but anticipate and be familiar at the same time”. The challenge likely to be faced in South Africa is for a magazine to “matter” to their readers, and be important to a core of targeted consumers who won’t be able to wait to receive their next issue and subsequently tap into their passion for, and confidence in the magazine.

People may doubt the future of magazines in this technologically driven world of the present day and age, but the reality is that magazines will probably continue to be popular reading material in the future, and may be a good field to conduct research in. This is said, as new media do not necessarily eliminate existing ones, such as magazines. The only implication it has is that it will probably force magazines to redefine themselves (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:208). It may be anticipated that not only magazines, but all of the current distribution channels, including television, newspapers, radio, and the Internet will continue to co-exist because each of these meets a specific consumer need. Some advantages that magazines may have over these other channels are that magazines aren’t as ephemeral as some of them, and that pleasure seeking can be seen as a top motivator for magazine consumption (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:208). This means that magazines have the ability to have more staying power in the minds of readers (one does not usually throw magazines away immediately after reading it), and it could have amazing impact if a magazine is focused on the targeted readers’ wants and needs. According to Davidson *et al.* (2007:209) “a well-edited magazine should speak clearly to the targeted readers and should have a unique personality that can lead to the magazine becoming an entity in the reader’s life”. This leads to the implication that magazine marketers should have a thorough understanding of their targeted readers, especially when a new magazine wants to be launched or introduced in the market. This is also true for when an exciting magazine wants to position itself better in the competitive magazine market, with the aim to set them apart from their competition.

Consumers approach media with different expectations, and in different frames of mind, and due to the different ways in which magazines are purchased and used among consumers, a relationship may be formed between the reader and the magazine. This is said as they may share the same fundamental characteristics. This means that by reading a magazine, a person may experience a

process that is as intimate as it is involved, which may full-fill the reader's personal needs and possibly reflect the values of that specific reader (McKay, 2008:46). It is therefore important to discuss the role that fashion magazines may play in that regard.

### **2.3. OVERVIEW OF FASHION MAGAZINES**

In general, fashion magazines can be seen as the voice of the fashion industry, often giving industry information and providing a platform for brand advertising. Even more important than this, fashion magazines can be seen as cultural objects that can reflect cultural values on a visual and textual basis. Kopnina (2007:369) states that "fashion magazines are cultural media objects, because they communicate the most dominant cultural trends". Fashion magazines have been changing and expanding over the past few years, and there are currently a lot of fashion magazines on the market, targeting women, men and teenagers, the largest category of fashion magazines being aimed at female markets. According to Lake (2007) "with the problem of clutter in the market, many of these magazines have to continuously redefine themselves by constantly and pro-actively improving on their unique brand identity that sets them apart from the crowd". This leads to the implication that a fashion magazine should constantly compare themselves to other magazines to ensure that they are on trend with the latest offerings, but still keeping in touch with their brand identity, in order to remain dominant in their market segment.

Fashion magazines can further be viewed as one of the organs of mainstream media, which are often a main source of ideas of beauty and style for the general public (Banim, Green & Guy 2001:140). Fashion, as seen in fashion magazines, has multiple social agendas that are concerned with the interpretation of contemporary fashion, as well as the conception of media culture. Fashion magazines on the other hand, accommodate both advertisers, and the consumers (Crane, 1999:545). The primary goal of fashion magazines is to exhibit the latest trends in clothing for women and fashion photographs used in clothing advertisements, attempt to provide some kind of visual entertainment to the readers (Crane, 1999:546). Women's magazines are published primarily for the readership of women and during the past few decades fashion magazines have increasingly targeted young women as a specialty audience (Budgeon & Currie, 1995:173). This is a primary reason for the selected targeted audience for this study, as young women are especially fashion conscious in this day and age, which can also lately be seen amongst the young adult black women in South Africa, as they dress more according to the latest trends and styles. Within the "Women's magazines" genre there are a variety of individual categories that have specific titles, with very

distinct personalities which are unique to their specific brand. These categories include fashion, celebrity, home and health magazines (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:210). All kinds of different players in the fashion field like models, photographers, designers, stylists, and hairdressers, often appear or feature in fashion magazines, to sell and promote their work to others (Moeran, 2002:17). This is very important, as these publications may be seen as the medium used by people in the fashion industry to show their “artistic talent”, “beauty”, and “creativity” to the general public. According to Moeran (2002:17) this is done with the aim to sustain or enhance their names. It is said that fashion magazines generally follow a “tried and tested” formula that makes it virtually imperative to follow a certain “recipe”, but at the same time each brand strives to be unique (Moeran, 2002:16). It is therefore apparent, that great care should be taken when wanting to create a brand new fashion magazine, which rings especially true in South Africa, as a highly competitive market will be entered, consisting of established fashion magazines, most of an international origin, that have been around for quite some time. It is thus imperative to find innovative connection points to the specific target market of a fashion magazine, which could appeal to the intended readers.

Women’s fashion magazines are the focus of this study, and can be seen as both commodities and cultural products. These two aspects about the production of fashion magazines, contribute to what actually makes them sociologically interesting (Moeran, 2006:727). It being a commodity refers to the fact that it is a product of the print media industry, which is a crucial site for the advertising and sales of commodities such as cosmetics, personal care, fragrances and clothing (Moeran, 2003:3). As cultural products, fashion magazines are distributed in a cultural economy of collective meanings. This means that readers can reflect and act upon what they read in the magazines (Moeran, 2006:727). Because fashion magazines are both cultural products and commodities, they address multiple audiences, and the driving force behind the publications is fashion itself. The multiple audience property refers to the advertisers, fashion world and the readers themselves (Moeran, 2006:728). This means that fashion magazines not only appeal to the readers, but also to advertisers, members of the fashion industry, and photographers. It is therefore apparent that fashion magazines are inseparable from fashion in general, and can be viewed as playing a major role in the fashion industry and for all the various players forming part of the fashion field.

Most fashion magazines are available nationwide in the country, in which they are published, with some being distributed only in certain regions and cities. Some fashion magazines are available internationally, with different editions for each country or area of the world, varying to some degree in editorial and advertising content, but not being entirely different. Examples of such magazines in

South Africa are magazines such as the *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, and *Mari Claire*, to name but a few. It should, however, be noted that consumer fashion magazines do not give details about the cut and construction of fashion garments themselves, but rather advise on how they should be worn, thereby translating the latest hottest trends to readers, as most of the writers are not likely to be qualified fashion journalists or fashion historians (Watt, 1999:2). Readers therefore probably rather look to fashion magazines for information pertaining to new trends and styles. The existence of fashion magazines may be seen as to teach the general public the reasons why fashion should be important in their lives, and tell readers what the current trends are, as well as the names behind them and where the fashion items or clothes can be purchased. Fashion magazines therefore legitimize fashion and the world of fashion in cultural terms (Moeran, 2006: 732).

It should be noted that magazines in general, including fashion magazines, provide three types of services. These include content for readers, advertisements allowing readers to find out about products that are possibly of interest to them, as well as an advertising outlet providing companies with an opportunity to inform readers about their products (Kaiser & Wright, 2005:3). Fashion magazine contents may be divided into Fashion, Beauty and Health, Entertainment and Lifestyle, Issues and Culture, Technology and Other (Moeran, 2002:5). Content analysis however shows that the main concern with these types of magazines is appearance. This means that appearance is the primary interest for the readers, and this should be taken into consideration when attempting to communicate with the target market in this study (Moeran, 2002:8). There are various ways in which one can analyse fashion magazine contents. Fashion content includes editorials and articles, while advertisements can be informative or puffing, non-sexual or sexual or have an editorial nature. Types of products shown in advertisements or editorials are also a common use. Research has shown that the largest amount of pages are often used for the placement of advertisements, followed by fashion editorials which includes the display of the latest trends and fashion articles (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:343). Because fashion magazine advertisements play such an important role in fashion magazines, this aspect will be considered in the following section.

#### **2.4. FASHION MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS**

As in the case with women's and various other types of magazines, advertising forms a huge percentage of every fashion magazine's title pages. This is very important, as it contributes to the overall financial well-being of the magazine (Moeran, 2002:6). In general, advertising can be classified into two categories, namely brand building and directional. Brand building tend to be



either product, service, or retailer oriented and the purpose of this type of advertising is to establish a favourable image and creating a demand for a product to eventually result in a purchase (Wang, Zhang, Choi & D'Eredita, 2002:1144). Directional advertising on the other hand is relevant to this study, as it is synonymous with fashion editorials and is commonly seen in fashion magazines. In this research study it is of interest how culture influence the target market when evaluating advertisements or fashion images in fashion magazines, and how the advertisements influence their decision-making process when purchasing clothing. Unique advertisement characteristics can have the advantage of increasing brand awareness, but this does not mean that it would lead to the adoption of the fashion products by the targeted readers (Wang *et al.*, 2002:1145). This can lead to the readers of fashion magazines, merely becoming more aware, or taking notice of the products being advertised, but it does not guarantee that it would play a role in their decision-making to ultimately purchase it. It is therefore important to consider the role of fashion magazine advertisements in the adoption phase of the decision-making process of the targeted consumers, and will be discussed in a later section.

Fashion photographs, as seen in clothing advertisements incorporate clothes in a complex gestalt of imagery (Crane, 1999:560). It is very important for clothing advertisers to ensure that the imagery used, does not overshadow the clothes themselves. This aspect, as well as the models used, should be taken into serious consideration, especially when targeting women of an African heritage, since their responses in general toward clothing advertisements are often more complex, due to the difficulties experienced in identifying with predominantly white images in fashion magazines (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:63). Other research has shown that fashion advertisements are often a point of comparison and can have significant impact on readers, especially the younger generation and should be used in a way that communicate effectively with the targeted readers (Crane, 1999:543). Some researchers argue that high levels of similarity between the viewer of an advertisement and the characters featured in an advertisement often increase the viewer's belief that he or she is the intended audience for the advertisement. (Appiah, 2001:31). This leads to more positive attitudes towards the advertisement and the product being advertised, and is therefore of great interest in this study. This is a very important consideration for magazine marketers, as similarity between the targeted group and the characters features in fashion images in fashion magazine advertisements, could lead to increased sales of such a magazine, as well as products featured in advertisements in the magazine. It is also important to keep in mind that fashion images in fashion magazines may serve as "generalized other" to which readers may look for social comparison, and is an important consideration in this study.



As discussed earlier, there are many facets to a fashion magazine that can aid in making it successful. Some of these may include a highly focused editorial philosophy, or a clearly defined formula, but an essential part of success probably rely on a thorough understanding of and connection with the target audience. It is therefore extremely important for a magazine to clearly define their target audience. By ensuring that one talks directly to a niche market, magazines can assure their advertisers that they are talking exactly to the people who are going to buy their products, which more often than not, greatly impact on the success of a magazine. Fashion and beauty departments are only important to those consumer publications that include beauty and fashion advertisers in their lists of clients, which is the case with most fashion magazines. Marketers often fail to truly understand their target markets; thereby missing the mark when trying to communicate to the consumers they want to reach. Different consumer needs and responses require different marketing tactics or strategies, and once marketers or researchers understand their consumers, then only can they create a basis for targeting them in an effective manner. Each magazine is defined by its reader, and identified by its particular style and approach, making targeting a very important consideration when wanting to appeal to a certain group of readers (Frings, 2005:168). Now that there is a general understanding of magazines and fashion magazines, it is also of interest to explore the role of fashion and fashion magazines in the every day life of consumers.

## **2.5. ROLE OF FASHION AND FASHION MAGAZINES IN EVERY DAY LIFE**

Fashion is a multi-million Rand industry, not only in South Africa, but even more so internationally. The industry employs millions of people across the world, and plays a role in almost all of the lives of consumers across societies (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:4). Fashion has the ability to extend beyond clothing, and can be viewed as playing a major part in reflecting society and culture, meaning the way in which people define themselves (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:4). This means that fashion can reflect the basic social and cultural forces of a specific society. According to Burns and Sproles (1994) “people also use fashion as a form of non-verbal communication, which is often necessary to express factors such as sex, age, status, occupation and ethnicity” (Burns & Sproles, 1994:22). Fashion can therefore be viewed as playing an important role in the lives of many people across cultures, sub-cultures and societies.

Consumers receive a large amount of fashion information through various communication channels. One such channel is promotion and advertising of fashion in the mass media. Fashion magazines form part of the mass media, and have become a major platform for the exhibition of the latest offerings of the fashion industry (Burns & Sproles, 1994:246). Freshness and style is at the heart of fashion, and one of the primary factors that make fashion interesting to consumers is that it is always changing (Frings, 2005:50). This may also be the reason for fashion magazines being popular among consumers. This means that fashion magazines would probably appeal to readers and keep them interested due to the element of “surprise” attached to each new issue (Pease, 2005).

Fashion journalism can be seen as an important part of the fashion industry. Fashion magazines often play a major role in affecting public taste, and are instrumental in establishing social, cultural and behavioral norms in their target readerships’ everyday lives, which are commonly organized around different ranges of goods (such as clothing and accessories), lifestyle and cultural activities (Laden, 2003:194). Magazines in general, are known to be publicly consumed products, and individuals often use the consumption of consumer goods, such as fashion magazines, to create an identity, structure psychological events and build relationships (Shaw & Clarke, 1998:165). This is an important consideration in this study, as consumers may purchase specific magazine brands for reasons such as these. Furthermore, magazines are generally bought as a result of impulse buying, and it is said that impulse purchases have a higher probability to be items that project the preferred or the ideal self of consumers. Kacen and Lee (2002) noted that this “is especially true for female consumers, as women value their possessions more for relationship and emotional related reasons” (Kacen & Lee, 2002:163). This is of interest in this study, as the consumer group being targeted consists of women only.

The way people respond to fashion and use clothing, are important because consumers often use fashionable clothing to express their social identities, making clothing meaningful in their lives (Crane, 1999:543). Generally, fashion is a language that tells a story about the person who wears it, as it creates a way of wordless communication that everyone understands. Fashion magazines may therefore also tell something about the person reading the magazine (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:4). Burns and Sproles (1994:22) argues that “fashion products, like clothing and fashion magazines, are of utmost importance in the process of the formation and exhibition of a persons’ self, as possessions are a major contributor to, and reflection of peoples’ identities”. Possessions may therefore be seen as establishing a relationship between the self-concept and consumer brand choice, which is especially relevant to the fashion industry because of the connection of fashion products (like

fashion magazines) to the formation and expedition of the self (Burns & Sproles, 1994:22). Fashion magazines can thus be viewed as being important to the targeted consumers of this study, as they may view the specific magazine brand they read as an object, to say something about themselves to others. It is therefore necessary to consider fashion and fashion magazines in particular, as “generalised other” in the lives of consumers.

### **2.5.1 Fashion and fashion magazines as “generalised other”**

Traditionally there has been a link between people and their possessions and in the past, it has been argued that what people consume often defines who they are (Belk, 1988:142). The magazines people read may therefore be seen as an important possession in the targeted consumer’s lives, because of the role they play as extended consumption items. According to Belk (1988:142) the concept of the extended self can be seen, as “the idea that a person’s possessions are a large contributor to, and reflection of a person’s identity”. It is believed that people often surround themselves with objects that project their self-concept, or even their ideal self. This is known as their extended self. The term, ‘the extended self’ can be used either literally or symbolically. Literally, it refers to a physical extension of oneself, meaning possessing something that could help someone achieve something, which they could not otherwise achieve without it, like having a weapon (Belk, 1988:150). Symbolically, the term may be used to describe the way in which a person convinces himself or herself, and others that he or she is a different person by means of possessions, for example through the clothes a person wears, or the magazine brand a person reads (Belk, 1988:150).

Furthermore, fashion is known to be revealing in nature, and therefore it can be assumed that fashion magazines also have the ability to reveal something about the reader to others. By reading a certain fashion magazine, it may reveal to what group of people a person belongs to, or wants to be associated with. For instance in school, groups get assigned names according to the style of clothes they wear, like skaters, Goths etc. This means that people may also be classified into groups by means of the type of magazine they read. Fashion magazines can therefore aid in revealing who a person is, and the type of group a person belongs to, implicating that the targeted readers may view the type of magazine they read as an important consideration, because it can reveal something about themselves, as well as the group they belong to, or which they aspire to belong to, to others. In academic research, the influence that a group has on an individual has been recognized for quite some time, and it is anticipated that individuals may act in a certain manner or consume specific products, such as fashion products, that will be consistent with the social group they identify with

(Childers & Rao, 1992:198). This means that the targeted consumer group of this study may only purchase a specific fashion magazine, if the brand is in line with the notions of the social group they belong to, or want to belong to. The clothes people wear often separate people into groups, and therefore the magazines people read, may also separate them into different groups. It is important to consider that when referring to groups, the significant others of the readers may play an important role, as these people may form part of their reference group, or aspiration groups. Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:115) noted that, “in sociology, a significant other refers to a person, which exerts a big influence on an individual’s self-evaluation”. This is seen as important to the individual, and influences the person’s reception of certain social norms (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:115). Reference groups generally refer to all formal and informal groups that influence the purchasing behaviour of a person. These reference groups possess what is known as social power, meaning that they have the power to influence the actions of others, like the consumption of fashion products, such as a fashion magazine (Lamb & Hair, 2002:87). Some of the friends of the targeted consumers may act as opinion leaders, resulting in the consumer being influenced by those persons’ beliefs and opinions. This is said because within a reference group an individual identifies with another person in such a way that he or she tends to use it as a standard for self-evaluation (du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:370). In this study, it is therefore important to understand the influence other people may have on the targeted consumers of this study, and the importance they may place on being viewed as part of a certain group, whether it being a social group or sub-cultural group. This is said, as certain people or groups (if viewed as important), may influence the targeted consumers’ choice in fashion magazines. This is said as it is evident that fashion magazines can be viewed as a possession that form part of the “extended self” of consumers, and which can tell something about themselves to other people.

With the above literature in mind, it is therefore important to understand that individuals “consume” the symbolic meaning of products (such as fashion magazines), and not just the products themselves. By understanding the role of fashion in every day life, fashion products can be used to segment markets better and position it to the products or brands. Each fashion magazine on the market has its own personality, and targeted readers may evidently seek out those magazines that aid in projecting their self-image, or the image they would like to project to others. It is therefore important to understand, that with regard to this study, fashion and fashion magazines may serve as “generalised other” to the targeted consumers of this study, not only to tell others something about themselves to, but also serving as a point of comparison for the targeted group. It is of utmost importance for magazine marketers not to miss the mark when appealing to their targeted readers, and the role that

fashion magazines as “generalised other” may play with regard to social comparison, may be an important consideration in that regard.

Furthermore it is important to develop strategies to communicate effectively with the targeted readers of a fashion magazine. Some approaches that may be considered to reach this goal are to change the beliefs of the readers of existing fashion magazines regarding how well a brand perform, or to revise the communication of importance ratings of the attributes of the magazine. Even more important, a new innovative attribute can be created for the product, or a totally new magazine brand can be developed that may capture the targeted consumers’ attention, fulfilling their wants and needs in that regard. It is said that fashion magazine readers may be particularly brand loyal towards their magazine brand. Friedman (2000) argues that “brand loyalty occurs when a person has a favourable attitude towards a particular brand and purchases that brand continuously”. Magazine marketers should therefore attempt to appeal successfully to the targeted consumers when wanting to introduce a new magazine brand, and it is therefore important to gain insight into the role that fashion magazines may play when the targeted consumers make decisions about clothing. The role of fashion magazines in consumer decision-making will be discussed next.

## **2.6. ROLE OF FASHION MAGAZINES IN CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING**

People of all ages and cultures often find themselves in a position where there is a choice between two or more alternatives, and making decisions can therefore be seen as a universal process (Strohschneider, 2002:1). Generally, decision-making is a cognitive process of making a selection between multiple alternatives and a common example of this may include shopping for magazines or buying clothes. In some cases during a purchasing decision, additional information may be required to make the decision to buy, or not to buy. This can result in the consumer either engaging in internal or external information search, and fashion magazines form part of this (Lamb & Hair, 2002:92).

When consumers buy a product, they generally follow the consumer decision-making process. This process consists of five stages, and moves the consumer from the recognition of a problem or need, to ultimately evaluating the purchase itself (Lamb & Hair, 2002:67). The five steps involved in the decision-making process include problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and, post-purchase behavior (Lamb & Hair, 2002:68). For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on the first three stages of the decision-making process, as fashion magazines play a

role in them. This is said, because when consumers need to choose a new product, such as a fashion magazine or new fashion, it requires a decision-making process by the consumers. The starting point of this decision-making process begins with informational use during an individual consumer's adoption process. This is the first stage of the consumer decision-making process, where consumers use different sources of information at various stages (Burns & Sproles, 1994: 264). This means that consumers use all sorts of different information sources and contents of messages to come to a decision about a product. This study deals with fashion magazines, and it is said that media such as this is an important source to be used during the first three stages of the adoption process. Different levels of use at each of these three stages are evident, ranging from the highest level of use in the first stage, to the lowest level in stage three (Burns & Sproles, 1994: 264). The first stage of the adoption process is known as the awareness stage. Here mass media, including fashion magazines are by far the most important source used to create awareness of a new product, especially when the product is a fashion product typically advertised in a fashion magazine. When referring to the mass media in fashion, it includes women's magazines, reading advertisements on fashion, reading of fashion articles or magazine articles on fashion, watching clothing advertisements or looking through fashion magazines (Burns & Sproles, 1994: 278). Secondly, the interest stage is synonymous with equally using mass media and personal communications to get information. Lastly, the evaluation stage is where the consumer evaluates information in order to make a decision. In this case, although mass media such as fashion magazines are used to some extent, it does not play such a big role as in the first two stages (Burns & Sproles, 1994: 264). This aspect is a very important consideration when wanting to create awareness (especially), interest and evaluation of new fashion products to be adopted, and the role that fashion magazines can play in that regard, should not be underestimated.

It is evident that the consumer's purchase decision-making process is viewed as generally consisting of certain steps through which the buyer passes when purchasing a product or service, but decision-making often also involves a number of internal psychological processes. These may include perception, motivation, attitude formation, integration and learning (Burns & Sproles, 1994: 264). These factors may be important to promotional planners, since they influence the general decision-making process of the consumer. By understanding the target market better and possible external factors influencing their decision-making, specifically focusing on culture, a basis for differentiation may be created to better satisfy the readers' wants and needs. Attention should be given to this, as the apparel industries', and therefore also the fashion magazine industry's main focus is after all to provide an appealing and desirable product to satisfy the targeted customers' wants, needs and

aspirations (Clodfelter, 2003:123). Although consumer decision-making encompasses two types of influencing variables, either being environmental or individual, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the external or environmental influencing variables. External influences include culture, and sub-culture, social class, and social group, family, and inter-personal influences. Other influences, which are not categorised by any of the above six, like geographical, political, economical, religious environment, are also part of external influences (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:110). Due to the fact that culture and sub-culture form part of the external influences on decision-making, and being an important factor that may influence the targeted consumers of this study with regard to exploring and describing the Black Diamond's social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images, it will further be dealt with in the next chapter. Targeting a consumer segment will be discussed in the following section.

## **2.7. TARGETING A CONSUMER SEGMENT**

From a business point of view, many companies may be discovering that previously ignored ethnic groups are growing in market power. Meeting the needs of these groups can result in an opportunity for success (Holland & Gentry, 1999:65). It has been found that a rapidly emerging market in South Africa is the so-called "Black Diamonds". This is the black middle class, and accounts for approximately 2 million of South Africa's population, which may seem like a small number, but this group is expected to grow by 50% each year (Rundell, 2006:1). The Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing described this group as an under-served market that has tremendous opportunity for marketers and entrepreneurs in South Africa (Olivier, 2006). South African marketers however, are yet to recognise the impact of the new potential that may be associated with this market. The young adult black women, (between the ages of 18 and 24 years), serving as the target market for this study, fall under this Black Diamonds consumer group.

According to previous finance minister, Trevor Manuel, race continues to be related to wealth and development in South Africa. Social indicators such as occupation, education, household income, access to human development, and infant mortality may play a role in that regard (Mawers, 2006:1). For any country to achieve a sustainable long-term economic growth, a significant and vibrant middle class is essentially needed in any society (The new Black middle class, 2006). A middle class refers to the group of people that can generally afford key items, such as cars, property, appliances and electronics. The people in the middle class often travel, and are concerned with furthering their education levels and those of their children. Generally people progress into the middle class over



many generations, but in the case of South Africa, an exceptional leap has been taken in a single generation. This happened because of great social disruption that took place due to the instated democracy in 1994, that made the country free for all, thereby giving people equal rights, no matter what race or colour. Before the 1994 social dispensation, the black people in South Africa were viewed as one monolithic mass, which could not be segmented, but this has changed over the past few years (Olivier, 2007:180).

A target market can be defined as a fairly homogeneous group that is most likely to buy a firm's products (Lamb & Hair, 2002:63). The target market of this study, known as the "Black Diamonds", refers to the burgeoning black African middle class. The term only refers to the previously disadvantaged black people of South Africa, therefore excluding Coloureds, Asians etc. The group makes up 10 percent of black South Africans and is responsible for 43 percent of claimed black consumer buying power (and 28 percent of the total South African spending), that adds up to about R130 billion in value, which is a huge amount. A report conducted by the University of Cape Town's Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (2006), stated that the number of "Black Diamonds" has increased in only a year's time with 30 percent (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things). This means that they account for around 2.6 million out of approximately 48 million of the South African population (Le Roux, 2007), and this particular market segment is known to be very driven and goal-oriented in comparison with other race groups in the country, making them an appealing group to target and conduct research on.

Due to the segmented nature within the Black Diamonds group with regard to buying power, attitudes, aspirations, consumption, character and circumstances, the mistake of following a one size-fits-all approach should be avoided (Rundell, 2006:4). This is said as culture, language, and understanding levels can be differentiated among the group, and therefore the relevance of these factors to each sub-segment may be key when wanting to target a specific sub-segment effectively (Rundell, 2006:4). To understand this group and their market potential may therefore require an exploration of their culture and sub-culture, as well as their past, and what they believe (Gelb, 2007:1). This may result in reaping rewards from the relatively untapped, but emerging black middle class sector of the South African economy (Olivier, 2007:1). Magazine marketers' aim should be to design, implement and maintain a marketing mix that is intended to meet the needs of this particular target market, to ultimately result in mutually satisfying exchanges (Lamb & Hair, 2002:151). By recognizing the growing power of this market in South Africa, magazine companies can answer to the need for more research, which may ultimately result in developing solutions for this market, as



this group may have been neglected for far too long- economically, commercially and educationally (Olivier, 2006). The Black Diamonds are said to be largely self-confident, optimistic, aspiring and future focused. They also have a passion and drive for education, making them an appealing group to conduct research on, as they seem to be the market of the future in South Africa. (Olivier, 2007:181).

People of any given generation are linked by the life experiences they shared, but these experiences do not have meaning in themselves. The attitudes and beliefs that developed due to that, are of importance (Snyder, 2002:10). A culture can be divided into sub-cultures. A sub-culture can be described as a homogeneous group of people that share the same elements as the overall culture, but have certain elements unique to their own group (Lamb & Hair, 2002:85). Most markets consist of consumers with specific needs and who are often not satisfied with products that appeal to the masses. These consumers may demand brands or products that specifically cater for their needs. The purpose of market segmentation is to have greater knowledge of the differences, as well as the similarities between the consumers (du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:58). Each market segment can be divided into sub-segments, that may require specialized marketing programs, designed to specifically service each of the smaller sub-segments (Mawers,2006:1). It is therefore important to understand the specific segments within the Black Diamonds' group, as the members of each sub-segment probably share the same characteristics, and differ from members in the other segments within the larger market segment.

In the marketing literature, lifestyle describes the behavior of people, either being in small groups, or large ones like market segments (such as the Black Diamonds) that may serve as potential customers (Kucukemiroglu, 1999:472). Generally lifestyle relates to the economic level at which people live, as well as how they spend their time and money (Kucukemiroglu,1999:472). Once a market segment and sub-segment is identified, marketing strategies and policies can be developed to reach them efficiently. Once marketers or researchers understand their consumers and their way of living, they can create a basis for communicating with them in an effective manner. The Black Diamonds group consists of several different market segments, which depends on income, education, age, life-stage and occupation (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things, 2006). Research Surveys (The New Black Middle Class, 2006) identified four general segments within the Black Diamonds group, the first being the Established's. In short, this sub-segment consists of wealthy or rather high-income people. Secondly, there are the Young families, which are in suitable occupations, but are not as rich as the previously mentioned group. Then there are the Start-Me-Ups that consist of youngsters that are on the upward climb. Lastly, the Mzansi Youth is the sub-segment consisting of mostly younger people

that are generally optimistic and have a go-getting style of living, and are studying towards their future. This group has the desire, energy, drive and the time to better themselves in the future (The new black middle class, 2006).

The Mzansi Youth sub-segment will be the focus of this study. There are 240000 Black Diamond women in this segment with a value of R3 billion, which increased by 21% since 2007 (Black Diamond survey, 2008). This particular group contains young people that are on their way up, and also fit the “young adult” description, as they are between 18 and 24 years of age. The group can be summarized as being on the way up, arriving and driven. Culture is said to remain an important part in their lives, and the primary brands or products they are interested in falls under “enabling me”. Most of the individuals in this group are studying towards their future. Furthermore the sub-segment contains individuals that are mostly single, childless, and aged between 18 and 24, and they like to have fun and party in their spare time (The new black middle class, 2006). These attributes should be taken into consideration, when trying to appeal to the women in this group with regard to a fashion magazine specifically catering for them.

Serving this market not only represents tremendous opportunity, but a challenge as well. Results of the study by Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (2006) showed that Black Diamonds generally lead rather fast paced lives, and they face a variety of demands on their time (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things, 2006). This should be kept in mind, especially with regard to the youngsters in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, as reading is only one activity to be fitted into the lives of the consumers, amongst a multitude of other things. Taking this into consideration, magazines may be seen as attractive reading material by the targeted consumers, as it seems to invite casual reading for people with more pre-occupations and less time (as in the case with the Mzansi-Youth). This time pressure could mean that little attention is given to specific media, such as magazines. It may therefore be difficult to reach the market segment, as it appears that they make use of a wide variety of different media (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things, 2006). Due to this fragmented nature of their media usage, and the diversity within the market segment itself, it cannot be merely assumed that one can easily connect with the Black Diamonds (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things, 2006). An attempt should rather be made by magazine marketers to understand the differentiating factors of the group, to reach them in an effective manner and create a means of sustainable long-term differentiation. An exploration of innovative connection points may be needed to grab the attention of the targeted readers, and this can only be achieved if there is a clear understanding of the

dimensions and characteristics of the group, as well as the factors that possibly influence their decision-making regarding fashion magazines and the clothes they ultimately purchase.

## **2.8. IMPLICATION FOR THE STUDY**

Although some people may doubt the future of magazines in this technologically driven world of the present day and age, the reality is that magazines will probably continue to be popular reading material in the future, and may therefore be seen as a good field to conduct research on. This is said, as new medium does not necessarily eliminate existing ones, such as fashion magazines. The only implication it has is that it will probably force magazines to redefine themselves (Davidson *et al.*, 2007:208). It may be anticipated that not only fashion magazines, but all of the current distribution channels, including television, newspapers, radio, and the Internet, can and will continue to co-exist because each of these meet a specific consumer need. By meeting the needs of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment within the Black Diamond consumer group, it can ensure the success of a fashion magazine specifically targeting them.

It is said that the Black Diamonds' women are especially on the rise, as they are extremely hungry for success and know where they are going (Le Roux, 2007). These women may therefore be an appealing market niche to conduct research on regarding fashion magazines in South Africa, taking into consideration this new market's new-found potential, ambition and entitlement. These consumers have the opportunity to have a voice, demand product and credit, and may therefore be recognised as very discerning individual consumers (Olivier, 2007:181). It is apparent that the Black Diamonds have emerged and are quickly turning into an undeniable force to be reckoned with, and it is anticipated that this phenomenon will continue in the future. Not only have their numbers grown in a year, with over 600 000, but their purchasing power has proven to keep pace (Le Roux, 2007). They can therefore probably be seen as the market of the future. From a fashion magazine marketers' point of view, it may be important to understand the non-homogenous nature of the group in order not to miss the mark when trying to reach the target market. According to the University of Cape Town (UCT) Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, an enormous number of Black Diamonds feel that marketing communications fail to connect with them (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things, 2006). This means that if fashion magazine marketers aim to better understand the consumer group and their preferences, it can create a basis for attracting them efficiently towards fashion products, thereby avoiding miss-communication with them and better satisfying their wants and needs in that regard.

In the marketing literature there seems to be an agreement that culture greatly influences the way consumers behave and perceive, and one of the lessons derived from social psychology, is that culture has a significant impact on the way people generally see the world. These views may ultimately affect their behaviour (Jenson, 2004:1). Research has shown that the black middle class differentiates themselves from the white middle class by means of their culture and roots. According to Mawers (2006:3) black people are more influenced by customs, laws, traditions and social purpose. Taking that into consideration, it means that the targeted consumers of this study may be especially influenced by cultural factors in their decision-making. Individuals who identify strongly with their heritage are likely to be influenced by culture to a greater extent, and it can therefore be assumed that culture may play a vital role in influencing the consumption behaviour of fashion products of the Black Diamonds consumer group (Shaw & Clarke, 1998:165). The question in this study, is what is the extent to which sub-culture play a role in the decision-making surrounding a fashion magazine in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment? This aspect is of great interest to be explored in this study.

Some researchers argue that advertisements are more effective when the symbols, characters, and values portrayed in the advertisements are accumulated from the intended audience's cultural environment (Appiah, 2001:31). This allows increased identification with the message and the source of the message, which is critical when wanting to appeal to a certain group through an advertisement. The importance of culture and the possible role of sub-culture in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' behaviour with regard to fashion magazines will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN FASHION MAGAZINES**

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#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Magazines, fashion magazines and fashion magazine advertisements and images were discussed in the previous chapter. With the literature and background in mind, it is necessary to consider the role of culture in the Mzansi Youths' evaluations of fashion magazines, and more specifically their appraisals of fashion magazine images. This is said as the targeted women of this study reside within a specific culture or sub-cultural group, and this in turn may affect the way in which they appraise images in fashion magazines, and the magazine in itself. Culture is said to be one of the primary differentiators between races, and is a factor that cannot be ignored when marketing to the people of South Africa (Mawers, 2006:1). Cultural factors may have the deepest impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour and often determine a person's wants and behaviour (Mawers, 2006:1). It is thus apparent that culture has an affect on the way that people behave and live and may therefore also affect the way the targeted consumers of this study make decisions surrounding fashion products and purchases. It is therefore critical to understand the role culture plays with regard to the targeted women of this study, especially since it may influence their evaluations and appraisals of fashion magazines and images. If the cultural and sub-cultural factors that influence the decision-making process of the consumers in this study can be identified, it can prove to be effective when attempting to reach them.

#### **3.2. FASHION, THE CONSUMER AND THE ROLE OF CULTURE**

According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:112) cultural influences refer to the customs, laws, values and beliefs that are learnt from society and result in similar patterns of behaviour, underlying and governing conduct in society. The consumption of items such as fashion and fashion magazines can therefore not be fully understood without considering the cultural context from which they originate. Fashion and magazine marketers in South Africa can no longer ignore the diversity of cultures that are reshaping South Africa's mainstream society, such as the Black Diamond consumer group, and should be prepared to devise products and communication strategies that are tailored to

meet the needs of the various cultures and sub-cultural groups. According to Rabolt and Solomon (2004:198) sub-cultural memberships often have an enormous effect in shaping the wants and needs of consumers. The women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment therefore probably share similar patterns of social beliefs and behaviour that may shape their wants and needs and influence their decision-making process when purchasing products, and in this case fashion magazines.

Culture can be defined as “a configuration of learned behaviours and results of behaviour whose component parts are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society” (Shaw & Clarke, 1998:165). It is said that culture gives order to society and according to Lamb and Hair (2002:83) can be defined as “the set of values, norms, attitudes and other meaningful symbols that shape human behaviour, and is environmentally orientated”. Furthermore, it is said that human interaction creates values, and prescribes acceptable behaviour for each culture (Lamb & Hair, 2002: 83). With regard to this study, it may therefore be important to consider specific cultural characteristics among the Black Diamonds. This is said as cultural values are learned behaviours that are both permanent and dynamic; it is socially shared and serve as guidelines to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:398). By researching the effect of culture on specific sensitivity to individual needs and preferences with regard to the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, the targeted consumers may be reached and communicated with more effectively.

A sub-culture can be described as a group of consumers who are held together by cultural or genetic ties that are common amongst them, and which are identified to be a distinguishable category by the members of the group as well as by others (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:197). In a heterogeneous country like South Africa, various different cultures are present in society, which means that people within a specific sub-culture may take great effort in preventing their identification being submerged into the mainstream society (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:198). According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:115) “cultural influences may be driven by moral and ethical rewards within a culture, to convey achievement, exhibit status and success, or for the sake of acting socially responsible”. It should be kept in mind that the targeted women in the Black Diamond consumer group may want to maintain and reflect the symbols of their culture and traditions, but at the same time may be adapting to fit into the present day society in South Africa. The questions that arise with regard to this study, is to what extent the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment are influenced by culture in their decision-making surrounding fashion products, such as fashion magazines and whether culture plays a role when they appraise fashion magazine images?

According to Holland and Gentry (1999:73) cultural groups are part of a larger mainstream culture, with which they share some cultural similarities, as well as differences. It therefore happens that the women in the targeted consumer group of this study probably have to navigate between two cultural forces in order to conduct the business of life. This is said because in South Africa there are many different cultures to be dealt with, meaning that the targeted women may choose what is most important to them from their cultural past, but at the same time maintain and adapt it to meet their current needs in South Africa today. This is an important consideration in this study, and it is of interest to understand the importance or unimportance the targeted consumer group place on their culture, especially when wanting to accommodate them, win their business and gain their approval with regard to a fashion magazine.

A study issued by Research Surveys (2006) found that the Black Diamonds keep close ties with their friends and family, and like to spend their weekends with them and keep cultural traditions alive (Internet: The New Black Middle Class). There is also a strong desire amongst them not to lose their home language and culture (The New Black Middle Class: 2006). In general, family members are more important to individuals, because people identify with their family members to a greater degree. Family-based influences vary across different cultures, and depend on the degree to which the individual identifies with their relatives (Childers & Rao, 1992:199). It is thus evident that this particular consumer group considers their families as important, and may therefore be influenced by them when making a purchasing decision, like buying a fashion magazine or clothing. According to Childers and Rao (1992:199) attention should be given to this, as these people can influence loyalties and brand preferences, media reliance, price sensitivity and information search. People that may give confirmation to the women in the Black Diamond consumer group can likely be their parents, or trusted friends and advisers of a similar cultural background. It is therefore of interest in this study to explore the importance the targeted women place on other people within their culture or sub-cultural group, as these people may ultimately affect their decision-making regarding fashion magazines and their appraisals of fashion images.

Furthermore, it is said that within fashion, there are many different types of identities. These can include personal; brand; fashion; social; cultural; national or international identities. According to Koppina (2007:378) fashion can be used to create an identity. With regard to this study, the concern that arises is that fashion magazines from an international origin and available in South Africa, may not necessarily embody ethnic and racial identities that are related to the country's readership. The readers of such fashion magazines are often culturally Western-focused, but this does not mean that



all consumers in South Africa would accept those cultural standards, especially taking into account that the majority of people in South Africa fit into a less Westernised society, which probably include the Mzansi Youth sub-segment within the Black Diamond consumer group. Furthermore fashion, interpretation and contextual analysis can be analysed in many different ways. Culture and fashion are very closely related, and a major contribution to research within the fashion field is the discipline's attention to changes within culture and fashion that occur over a period of time (Kopnina, 2007:364). According to Kopnina (2007:366) innovations within the fashion field are related to sociological and cultural developments. Identity-bound representations of lifestyle, related to fashion are used in the form of symbols, meanings and values that are communicated by the use of visual media such as fashion shows, design, and especially fashion magazines. Simplified conclusions about cultural stereotypes should therefore be avoided when discussing countries like South Africa and sub-cultural groups in the country such as the Black Diamonds. This is said as previous research on different ethnic or cultural groups has shown that expressions of femininity vary substantially across cultures (Kopnina, 2007:365). This means that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment probably have different views or perceptions on what they perceive as being femininely beautiful, in comparison to other cultures or sub-cultural groups in South Africa. If magazine marketers could identify their perceptions about the feminine ideal of beauty, the targeted group could be targeted more effectively when incorporating fashion images in fashion magazines.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that culture or sub-cultural membership may play a role in the Mzansi-Youths' evaluations of fashion magazines and appraisals of fashion magazine images. It now becomes necessary to further consider the role that culture may play with regard to the targeted women's ideal of beauty, and how culture may influence their aesthetic experience related to fashion images used in fashion magazine advertisements.

### **3.3. THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN A PERSONAL BEAUTY IDEAL AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE**

Adomaitis and Jonhson (2007:182) state that a fashion magazine's design, the products featured in advertisements, as well as the models used, should appeal to, and influence their targeted readers. This means that when a fashion magazine wants to target the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, the magazine should probably incorporate products and models that are in line with their preferences and culture. Research conducted on African American women overseas found great frustration and dissatisfaction among them regarding the number of affirming images used of black



women in mainstream media (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:63). This could also be true with regard to the use of images of black women in fashion magazines advertisements and images in South Africa, and this study will therefore attempt to address the problem in that regard. Furthermore, previous research has found that consumers of an African background respond in a more positive manner towards advertisements that feature black models, than images using white models (Frisby, 2004:324). This aspect is of interest in this study, and can be an important factor to consider when wanting to appeal to the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group, as they may react more positively to advertisements featuring black models instead of white models. In this study it is therefore necessary to consider cultural beauty ideals, and how the targeted women of this study perceive and appraise various cultural beauty ideals portrayed by fashion images typically featured in fashion magazines. It may also be necessary to determine what the personal beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth embodies, because when cultural beauty ideals are correctly portrayed in fashion images aimed at the targeted group of this study, they could prove to be more effective. Many fashion magazines that are currently available in South Africa often portray a more Westernised beauty ideal in fashion images used in advertisements, and in this study it is of interest whether the targeted women appraise fashion images more positively when the beauty ideal is more parallel with their personal beauty ideal or cultural beauty ideal, such as an African beauty ideal or an Euro-African beauty ideal.

Most people within their culture strive to achieve a specific ideal of beauty that is currently popular or accepted in their culture (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). According to Englis *et al.* (1994:50) a beauty ideal can be defined as an appearance that includes not only physical features, but also various other products, services and activities. These can include the clothes a person wears and the type of magazine they read. It is suggested that consumers of different ethnic backgrounds have varying beliefs about what is defined as “beautiful” in each of their cultures. This implies that what is perceived as beautiful in one culture, may not necessarily be perceived as beautiful in another culture. The notion of “What is beautiful” can be described as a culturally constituted phenomenon that happens because of common socialisation experiences amongst people of a certain culture or ethnicity (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). A cultural standard or ideal can only be achieved when people compare themselves to this. This is known as social comparison, and consumers continually engage in the process of assessing their own aesthetic values, as well as those of others (Johnson, 2008:183). The attainment of cultural beauty ideals can result in an increase in self-esteem and embodiment of a strong social identity, whereas a low self-esteem is associated with where these ideals are not met. This can lead to people having to engage in strategies to cope with reaching the ideal (Johnson,

2008:183). The targeted women of this study may therefore use fashion magazines as a “generalised other” for social comparison. This is said as images in fashion magazine advertisements can bring about social comparison in which the targeted consumers might engage in when evaluating an advertisement.

Body image, age, gender, personality and body features are other factors that can influence aesthetic preferences of the young women in the Black Diamonds consumer group (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:91). The factors represent differences within consumers and between cultures, and these characteristics are often helpful when included in marketing profiles of consumers. A market profile contains information about characteristics of consumers serving as a target market for a certain product such as a fashion magazine. These aspects can then be used to advertise or sell a product offering through aesthetic value by the use of a promotional environment, like advertising space in a fashion magazine (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:91). If such a profile could be formulated with regard to the targeted women of this study, it could be very helpful when positioning products (such as fashion magazines) to meet their preferences and needs. From the discussion, it is apparent that beauty ideals play a major part in the field of aesthetics, and become models against which women of different cultures judge, discipline and measure their bodies (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:51). It is therefore apparent that a fashion magazine may serve as a “generalised other” to which the women in the Mzansi Youth may compare themselves when evaluating an image or beauty ideal portrayed in a fashion photograph.

Furthermore, body image and body features should also be considered when discussing cultural beauty ideals. This is said as previous research has revealed ethnic differences in self-concept (which includes body image) and perceived attractiveness of women, and that women of different cultural backgrounds defines beauty in different ways (Frisby, 2004:324). Body image can be defined as “the mental perception of one’s body, and may influence the general desire for aesthetic products” (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:92). The way in which consumers perceive their bodies play a role in the way they attempt to attain beauty and demand products like clothing to enhance their body image (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:92). Cultural representation is said to play a vital role in the formation of aesthetic values, meaning that they potentially have the ability to impact on consumers’ perception of their own beauty and attractiveness (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:68). According to Rubin *et al.* (2003:52) there are culturally based differences in aesthetic body ideals, and that Westernised aesthetic body ideals seem to be especially oppressive to women of colour. This should be taken into account when targeting the women in the Black Diamond consumer group in South Africa, as they probably share a similar view. International research shows that there are important differences in body concepts and ideals

of beauty among white consumers and their black counterparts (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:52), meaning that the way in which women view their bodies, may vary across cultures and sub-cultural groups, not only internationally, but in South Africa as well. It is therefore important to explore these differences in perceptions, as the women in the Mzansi Youth probably have varying beliefs about what they perceive or define as beautiful, in comparison to other sub-cultural groups in South Africa.

With regard to body, it can further be classified into two categories. Firstly, it can be seen as a product, which embodies ethnic, gender and racial identities, and is a visual performance of beauty. On the other hand, the body as a process means that it is a way of knowing and marking the universe and the self (Kopnina, 2007:365). Body size, features and shape of the women of colour in South Africa probably differ greatly to mainstream representations of female beauty from the Western world. Rubin *et al.*, (2003:52) found that cultural identity or sub-cultural (social) membership often plays a vital role in specific strategies that women use to represent the self through the body, and can be a means used by young female Black Diamond's to communicate this. This is said, as there seems to be a link between culture, body aesthetics and self-representation (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:52). However, it is not only the body image of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group that may influence their cultural beauty ideals. Factors such as age, body features, gender, education and personality can also have an impact (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:91). These aspects can be referred to as beauty standards, which form part of a consumers' beauty ideal. It could therefore be important to determine which beauty standards (such as body, dress or style, hairstyle, skin colour and accessories) are important and most important to the targeted consumers of this study with regard to their ideal of beauty. This could help to create a better understanding of what their specific beauty ideal looks like, and to determine whether personal beauty standards or sub-cultural beauty standards are more important to the Mzansi Youth women with regard to their beauty ideal. Furthermore, by understanding the relationship between culture, self and body of the targeted consumer group, magazine marketers can better reach and communicate with the Black Diamond consumer group. It is important to take note that not only body image plays a role in cultural beauty ideals, aesthetic experiences may also play a major part in that regard and should also be considered. The role of culture and aesthetics in fashion magazine advertisements will now be explored.

### **3.4. ROLE OF AESTHETICS AND CULTURE IN FASHION MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS**

#### **3.4.1 The role of aesthetics in fashion magazine advertisements and images**

Fiore and Kimle (1997) noted that the “Zeitgeist”, also known as the spirit of the times, is the primary ideology or beliefs within a culture that deals with their aesthetic decision of a product, for instance to like or dislike a product. This shapes an individual’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs, which in turn affect the development, selection and promotion of expressive and symbolic qualities of a product (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:81). A positive aesthetic response of a consumer often results from a similarity between the formal qualities of the aesthetic object and the organisational principles of the culture (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:81). This means that the targeted women in the Black Diamond consumer group may have a positive response to a fashion product advertised in a fashion magazine, if the fashion advertisement or image is parallel to their aesthetic preferences. According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:83) consumers’ aesthetic preference is defined by their culture’s definition of aesthetic experience, and socio-cultural factors often lead to differences in consumer behaviour. This aspect is very important to consider in this study, because aesthetic preferences may evidently differ across cultures, and the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment probably have unique aesthetic preferences that appeal to them, causing them to make decisions differently as opposed to other consumers.

All products, including fashion magazines, are often bought primarily for a pleasurable experience (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:3). In general, products are material goods that consist of physical features that can be experienced repeatedly during appreciation (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:9). Aesthetic aspects are often related to the perceived quality of a product, especially in the case of apparel. It may therefore be anticipated that aesthetic aspects may also be an important consideration for consumers when purchasing other fashion products, such as a fashion magazine. Magazine marketers should understand aesthetic aspects in order to ensure their consumers’ satisfaction and in turn, the profitability of a fashion product such as a fashion magazine brand, and it is therefore an important consideration in this study.

According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:4) aesthetic experience relates to the selection of symbolic, formal and expressive qualities of a product that result in satisfaction on the consumer’s part. Formal qualities refer to the perceived features of the structural composition of a product or object, such as

colour, texture, shape and proportion, and have the ability to evoke emotion on the consumer's part. Formal qualities of products may provide pleasure to the senses and can often enhance beauty, and are often evident in the form of emotions that are evoked by the creator in the consumer, and are learned responses (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:6). Symbolic qualities on the other hand, originate from content or meaning, and communicate an idea about the world (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:9). As discussed earlier, the Black Diamonds reside within a certain socio-cultural context. They can therefore not be separated from this context for analysis of their aesthetic preferences. Instead, these factors should help to create an understanding about their preferences (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83).

Differentiating factors in socio-cultural factors are important to consider in this study, because it often leads to variations in aesthetic preferences and consumer behaviour across cultures (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). These variations are said to be related to the culture's definition of aesthetic experience, meaning that the Black Diamond's probably define their aesthetic experience differently than consumers in other cultures. Research has shown that culture has a great effect on the importance ratings of expressive, formal and symbolic aspects of a product in aesthetic evaluation (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:85). This means that consumers across different cultures and sub-cultures may view some of these aspects as being more important than others. In this study it is critical to understand the importance given to these aspects by the women in the Black Diamond consumer group, especially when wanting to appeal to them in an effective manner. The idea is that symbolic, expressive and formal qualities of a fashion product should satisfy the consumer on an emotional, sensory and cognitive level (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83).

### **3.4.2 The role of culture in fashion magazine advertisements and images**

Research conducted in the past, revealed that women experience enormous dissatisfaction when faced with fashion images in fashion magazines (Crane, 1999:541). The reason for this is that unrealistic expectations are being created, and most women are not able to live up to. Advertisements can create loads of idealised images, some relating to idealised images of the culture of consumers (Crane, 1999:541). It can be anticipated that cultural and sub-cultural aspects portrayed in fashion magazine advertisements may have an impact on the women in the Black Diamonds group when evaluating fashion images. In this study, it is of interest how the targeted consumers make comparisons with images in fashion magazines, based on culture.

Fashion magazine advertisements are said to have great impact, especially on younger readers (Johnson, 2008:182). This is of interest in this study, as the consumer group being targeted, consists only of young adult black women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and fashion magazines can serve as a “generalised other” for social comparison. This means that when fashion magazine images are appraised, the target audience might make either positive or negative social comparisons based on the content of a fashion magazine advertisement and accompanying fashion image (Johnson, 2008:182). This could lead to the consumers’ feeling either competent or incompetent. This in turn, could lead to an increase or decrease in the targeted women’s self-esteem, depending on the outcome of such comparisons. If magazine marketers could incorporate images in fashion magazine advertisements that will initiate positive experiences, surrounding social comparison, and provide a platform for the targeted readers to relate to the images in a more positive way, the desired intention of such an advertisement could be reached.

Crane (1999:560) found that women view the fashion press in a critical manner, which in turn has the ability to shape the perceptions of women. These perceptions are shaped mostly by images used in fashion magazine advertisements (Crane, 1999:560). Advertisements in general, not only those in fashion magazines, fill their images with symbols that communicate the values of the products being advertised to the target audience. This aspect is especially important when wanting to communicate cultural values to consumers, such as the Black Diamonds. Cultural values can be communicated by means of signals of identity, which can include skin colour, hairstyles, cultural artefacts and ethnic dress (Craig, 1991:35). All of these aspects can play a role when the targeted consumers appraise an advertisement or fashion image in a fashion magazine. These signals of identity could also serve as beauty standards in the targeted women’s beauty ideal. In this study it is of interest to explore and describe the importance of these beauty standards in their beauty ideal, which could help to create a better understanding regarding what the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments’ beauty ideal look like.

Earlier in this chapter, it became clear that sub-cultural beauty ideals, such as how they look and what they stand for, might play a role in the decision-making of the Black Diamonds surrounding fashion images in advertisements. With regard to advertising it is believed that beauty ideals often have greater influence when paired with certain products (Solomon *et al.*, 1992:23). Products such as clothing, advertised in fashion magazines, may be one of them. It is apparent that various definitions of beauty exist across cultures, and these perceptions of beauty, develop from popular culture and the mass media. It is of interest to understand how these beauty standards come to be represented in

the mass media. Due to the fact that fashion magazines form part of the mass media, it can be assumed that fashion and beauty editors of these magazines may represent their views of beauty through the magazines (Solomon, Ashmore & Longo, 1992:24). Fashion and beauty editors can be seen as gatekeepers of media, and the aesthetic decisions made by these people in the industry, often come to define ideals of beauty in the fashion magazines. These include the beliefs of these people surrounding what beauty types they think will appeal to the intended consumers (Englis *et al.*, 1994:51). This can result in stereotyping of ethnical representations of beauty, as gatekeepers may be ill equipped to make such judgments. To avoid stereotyping in advertising communications, the target audience should be well researched, from an objective point of view. This can lead to issues surrounding ethnicity and culture, to be conveyed in a more appropriate and effective manner when incorporated in an advertisement, which is key in this study.

Advertisements in fashion magazines can often reflect and shape the reader's culture, and it is believed that advertisements for fashion products may only hit home with a certain audience if it is communicated that there are actual needs and values that they can satisfy (Kopnina, 2007:369). This means that advertisements featured in fashion magazines may not motivate further action if the advertisement is not relevant to the targeted readers' existing sub-cultural background or beliefs. These aspects should probably be incorporated in advertisements when wanting to communicate effectively to a specific market segment, especially where culture is considered as an important factor to the target audience, as seems to be the case with the Black Diamonds.

### **3.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY**

From the above discussion it is apparent that sub-cultural standards, body image, self-esteem, personal or sub-cultural beauty standards, as well as aesthetics can play a major role in the Black Diamond's evaluation and decision-making process surrounding fashion products and fashion magazine images. Socio-cultural differences include sub-cultural standards, which is said to have a great affect on aesthetic preferences of consumers (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). By tailoring marketing strategies to the preferences of the women in the targeted consumer group, fashion products aimed at them would avoid missing the mark. All the more products should be designed and promoted to meet the needs of specific sub-cultural groups or markets around the globe (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:90). By replicating this in South Africa, especially regarding fashion magazines and fashion products aimed at the Black Diamonds, and specifically the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, the demand for such efforts may be met with great success.



It has become clear that it is important to tailor marketing strategies to the norms and preferences of the specific culture in which the targeted consumers exist. This leads to the implication that an “emic” point of view can be followed when researching the women in the Black Diamond consumer group. An “emic” perspective can be described as the belief that each individual culture is unique and standardization should be avoided when dealing with them (Kopnina, 2007:364). This means that people in different cultures may not necessarily appreciate a similar universal message. Marketers should rather adapt their approaches to be consistent to the local values and practices of the culture being dealt with in this study. By focusing on an “emic” perspective, cultural stereotypes and superficial knowledge can be eliminated (Kopnina, 2007:364).

Unfortunately very little is known about the Black Diamonds, and specifically the Mzansi Youth women’s perceptions of a beauty ideal, and the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in their beauty ideal. Very little is also known about how they appraise various beauty ideals and how they would like to compare themselves with the beauty ideals. In order to address the problem, a cultural perspective, the theory on identity (personal and social identity), and social comparison was chosen as point of departure for this study.



## CHAPTER 4

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the previous chapters it became clear that fashion can play an important role in people's every day life and that fashion magazines which are in line with the specific targeted group's identity and the way that they perceive themselves, as well as with their aesthetic beauty ideal, can play an important role in the targeted group's decision-making. Fashion can serve as an important "generalised other" against whom the consumer can compare herself in order to strengthen a specific identity and to enhance personal self-esteem. However, people differ with regard to whom and what they would compare themselves with, as well as with regard to their beauty standards and a specific beauty ideal. It also became clear that culture plays a major role in people's beauty standards and beauty ideals and that beauty is therefore indeed in the eye of the beholder.

People also differ with regard to how they perceive their own identity and the identity that they would like to portray to others, and that they can relate to. For a fashion magazine to serve as an extended self of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, it is therefore necessary to portray the identity that this group can relate to, and that can serve as an "other" that they can compare themselves with. Unfortunately very little is known about the identity that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment would like to portray, with whom they would like to compare themselves, and the beauty ideal and standards that they prefer.

In order to address the problem, a cultural perspective and the theory of identity, social identity and social comparison have been chosen as theoretical perspectives or points of departure for this study.

#### 4.2. CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Against the viewpoints of the cultural perspective, people in different cultural groups make changes in their appearances in one way or another, meaning that the codes and symbolic systems used by individuals in sub-cultural groups, such as the Black Diamonds, vary in terms of the way they decipher and interpret clothing (Kaiser, 1990:48). People who share the same culture are said to be

likely to come in contact with similar networks of tangible products, such as clothing. The ways in which the clothes are bought, sold and worn contribute to the development of meaning that is associated with cultural products (Kaiser, 1990:48). To understand this better, one needs to consider the five basic assumptions of the cultural perspective.

There are five basic assumptions of the cultural perspective. These include that collective values are produced and reproduced through cultural forms, meaning that specific appearances can represent shared values within a specific culture such as the Black Diamonds (Kaiser, 1990:49). Secondly, cultural values and beliefs are perpetuated when they are represented on a relatively unconscious level. This means that cultural groups can use clothing and appearance objects, to characterise their specific culture (Kaiser, 1990:51). Thirdly, individuals have the ability to transform their own realities by manipulating objects in their cultural worlds, by using clothes and other tools, such as accessories, provided by culture, to manage their appearance (Kaiser, 1990:51). The fourth assumption of the cultural perspective is that culture provides abstract images of social life. This can be done through media images, and often provides ideas for personal appearance management for people within a specific culture, such as the Black Diamonds (Kaiser, 1990:53). Lastly, people use codes to interpret meanings provided by cultural interpretations of social life. Clothing imagery is one way through which meanings are coded and from which shared understandings emerge within a specific culture. Codes provide cultural guidelines of thinking that enable individuals within a culture to interpret appearance messages in a similar way (Kaiser, 1990:54). This last assumption is of great interest in this study, as it deals with clothing imagery, and cultural factors may therefore influence the way in which the targeted women in the Black Diamond consumer group appraise fashion magazine images. The question that now arises is to what extent cultural factors influence the targeted women's' evaluations and appraisals of fashion magazine images?

With the assumptions of the cultural perspective in mind and with the focus on fashion, appearance is therefore evaluated and compared by the targeted consumers on the basis of either cultural factors or personal factors (Lennon, Rudd, Sloan & Kim, 1999:191). People typically create an appearance by means of clothing to decorate, shape and adorn their bodies to be presented to others. Personal factors often affect how people evaluate and compare their own and other's appearance, which are mostly influenced by individual levels of self-esteem and attitudes towards factors such as body image (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:191). Cultural factors on the other hand, affect the way people evaluate their own appearances as well as those of others. It has become clear from the previous chapter that beliefs surrounding cultural factors regarding fashion and beauty may differ among people in

different societies and countries, and to understand this better, it is necessary to consider the notions of the social comparison theory. This is said as people across cultures have the need to compare themselves to others, and the social comparison theory has previously been applied to the evaluations of appearance (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:191).

### **4.3. SOCIAL COMPARISON**

Social comparisons of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group may lead to certain consequences on their self-evaluation and self-perception, which is crucial to understand when conducting research on them regarding fashion magazines and fashion images used in fashion magazine advertisements (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:10). It has been argued that social comparison is a primary feature in human social life, and cannot be ignored when researching the women in the targeted consumer group of this study. Comparisons to others are said to play an important role in constructing and evaluating social reality, and the central quest behind the notion is self-knowledge (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:3). This can be obtained on the part of the Black Diamond's, not only by the use of objective information, but also by comparing themselves to others, such as fashion models in fashion magazines. Social comparison is a phenomenon that generally all people take part in on a frequent basis. Social comparison processes can full-fill important functions. To the targeted consumers, these may include providing a platform for obtaining useful information regarding where they stand in their social world, to learn how they can adapt to challenging situations, and feeling better about themselves (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:16). Social comparisons of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group may lead to certain consequences on their self-esteem, which is crucial to understand when conducting research on them regarding fashion magazines and fashion images used in fashion magazine advertisements.

Social comparison originated from the belief that people have the need for self-evaluation in order for them to know how and where they stand in relation to some standard. Festinger (1954) believed that people were more likely to compare themselves to people that are similar to themselves, because it would provide more meaningful information (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). Some other writers on the other hand, suggested that this might not always be true, and people may at times engage in comparisons with others who are not part of their group (Richins, 1991:72). This is an interesting revelation in the study, especially because fashion images will be considered in this study, and fashion models used in clothing advertisements or fashion images may not necessarily belong to the same group that the targeted consumers belong to. It is said that advertising affects consumers

because, in some way, they compare themselves with the idealised images and lifestyles portrayed in the advertisements (Richins, 1991:72). It is of interest in this study to explore whether the Black Diamond's women engage in comparing themselves to fashion models portrayed in fashion magazines, even if the culture portrayed is more Western-oriented.

In social comparison literature, a distinction is made between upward social comparison and downward social comparison. Upward social comparison is the phenomenon where people show an upward drive in their comparisons to others that are better off than themselves, resulting in people learning from such others (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:5). To some people, upward social comparison may become threatening, even though it may be informative to them. For this reason, upward social comparisons may be avoided when feeling threatened. In such cases, people often engage in downward social comparison. Downward social comparison refers to where people compare them with others who are viewed as being worse off than themselves (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:6). This is especially common where people have a decline in well-being, and in an attempt to improve this, compare themselves to others thought to be worse off (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:6). It is anticipated that the women in the Black Diamond's consumer group would probably engage in more upward social comparison, but research on them may show otherwise. It is therefore important to understand their patterns of social comparisons when wanting to target them effectively via a fashion magazine.

Another important factor to consider in this study regarding social comparison, is that of upward social comparison of the targeted consumers within the same social group. This can result in two differentiating effects. Upward in-group comparisons often make comparison more threatening and meaningful, leading to the rejection of shared categorisation, meaning that the targeted women may not want to be associated with a specific group (Schmitt, Branscombe, Silvia, Garcia & Spears, 2006:297). In contrast, upward in-group comparisons can result in acceptance of shared categorisation, meaning that the targeted women may want to belong to a specific group. This is due to a high-performing in-group member that enhances the collective in-group identity (Schmitt *et al.*, 2006:297). This is known as the social identity theory, which will be dealt with later in the study. The effect this may have on the Black Diamonds is that the group they belong to may be important to their 'self', and the targeted women may compare their 'self' to others, but they may also compare the group they belong to, to other groups. This means that they may engage in comparison of the individual self, as well as comparison of the group they belong to. The significance of this will become clearer after conducting research on the targeted consumers regarding these aspects. It would be useful to determine whether the targeted women view the group (such as the Black

Diamonds) that they belong to as important, and whether they find it important to conform to standards and characteristics of the group.

#### **4.3.1 Social groups**

In general, people compare themselves to other people that are similar to them. Here the social or cultural ideal may become an important consideration when wanting to understand how the women in the Black Diamond consumer group compare themselves to others. All around the globe, society is divided into groups. These groups are often formed by factors such as reference group affiliations, age, class, ethnicity or culture, education and urban-rural orientation (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:194). This means that different groups may have different views of beauty ideals. A social group can be defined as individuals who share a similar social identification or see themselves as part of the same social category (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). Through the process of social comparison, individuals who are similar to the self are categorised as the in-group. People who differ from the self are labelled as the out-group. (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). With regard to this study, the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment may therefore view their group as the in-group against whose standards they would like to compare themselves with, while viewing the Western- focused standards, currently portrayed in fashion magazines as the out-group.

Some authors have however found that some people may at times compare themselves with members of groups to which they do not belong (Richins, 1991:72). Some of these groups or people with whom the Black Diamonds may compare themselves may belong to other social categories. These include people who share similar social status, but with whom there are no social interactions (Richins, 1991:72), such as fashion models from a similar social category as the Black Diamonds who feature in fashion magazines read by the women in the consumer group. The targeted women may therefore compare themselves to fashion models in fashion magazines if and when they perceive them as being in a similar social category as them, but not necessarily in the same social group. Consequences of the social comparison process are seen in the form of self-enhancing outcomes for the self, especially self-esteem (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). The self-esteem can be enhanced when comparisons of the Black Diamonds occur positively regarding their in-group, as opposed to their relative out-groups. It is therefore important to understand their views on social group aspects regarding comparison when targeting them.

The question now arises as to whom the Black Diamonds would strive to be like, particularly their cultural and social ideals, regarding appearance. With regard to fashion the questions that arise are, what does the fashion and cultural beauty ideal of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group look like, and what aspects do they compare when they engage in comparison? They may focus on comparing skin colour, body shape, cultural artefacts such as accessories, hairstyles and dress or style. Furthermore, it is of particular interest in the study to ascertain which people the targeted consumers tend to compare themselves to. From the literature it seems that they may compare themselves to people within their own culture, or sub-culture, but it may come to the fore that they would rather compare themselves to others, maybe to people that are more Western-focused, but of a similar social category.

#### **4.3.2 Social comparison and culture**

Previous research has shown that people create a personal appearance by means of what is considered as culturally favourable, and it is therefore important to consider the influence of culture on social comparison (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:3). Cultural values are commonly manifested in its media. One such source may be fashion magazines read by the targeted consumers. It has been found that women often internalise media images, such as images seen in fashion magazine advertisements and often feel pressured to conform to the goals set by these images (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:3). Very few women of an African heritage have the ideal body type, as viewed by the Westernised society and that are portrayed by most fashion models in fashion magazines. This raises the question of whether the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group compare themselves more with people of their own culture, or whether they engage in comparison with people of other cultures as well, such as Western-focused fashion models in fashion magazines. It has been found that in many situations, it is vital to conform to the socially or culturally acceptable ideal standard of beauty, when wanting to be successful (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:4). In many cases, the cultural ideal of beauty influences an individual to create a personal aesthetic ideal or appearance that is similar to other people in his or her culture (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). This is achieved through the process of social comparison. Evaluation is then done on the basis of comparing the personal aesthetic appearance to the cultural beauty ideal of the person (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). In this study, it is of interest to explore and describe whether the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment engage in comparison with fashion models in fashion magazines that are part of their “in-group” or sub-culture only, or whether they engage in social comparison even when fashion models portrayed in fashion images are viewed as being in the “out-group” or of a different culture or sub-culture. It is further of interest

whether the targeted women prefer comparing themselves to the cultural beauty ideal most closely related to their own personal ideal of beauty, or whether they compare themselves to other beauty ideals portrayed in fashion photographs in fashion magazines as well.

As previously stated, people engage in social comparison to assess their aesthetic value as well as those of others on a continual basis (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When individuals compare themselves to the cultural standard, and come close to reaching the ideal, self-esteem levels can increase, whereas people who are far from achieving the ideal may choose a coping strategy, or experience a decline in self-esteem levels (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When the targeted consumers engage in social comparison and it is experienced as negative, they may use one of four coping strategies. These may include accepting the cultural standard and try harder to reach it, accept the cultural standard and quit trying to attain it, or modify one's personal standard of appearance, or modify the cultural standard by working toward more inclusive standard of appearance in one's local community (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). When evaluations are negative to the targeted consumers, and they feel the need to use coping strategies to come more closely to the cultural aesthetic ideal, success of the coping strategy can either harm or enhance both the social and personal identity of the individual. These aspects will be considered in the following section.

#### **4.4. IDENTITY**

In South Africa, social, economic, political and legal disparities still exist among cultures due to the former apartheid state. Presently a wide range of identities, which are based on cultural, racial and language lines still exist among the different societies in the country. These identities may be assumed to be associated with varying actions, attitudes and social values among the different cultures (Heaven, Simbayi, Stones & Le Roux, 2000:67). It is therefore important to understand the identities of the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group, and more specifically the concept of identity. According to Stryker and Burke's (2000:286) identity theory, people possess as many selves as the groups of people with which they interact. This means that the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group may have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships where they play roles and have specific positions. Identities are thus internalised role expectations (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286).

In this study, a clearer understanding of the way the identities of the Black Diamonds influence behaviour relating to fashion products that express their identities is required. Identity can be used in



a variety of ways. Firstly, Stryker and Burke (2000:284) noted that identity essentially refers to the culture of people. In some cases people use identity when referring to a common identification with a collective social category, or lastly, it can be referred to as parts of the self of people that are composed of the meanings people connect to various roles they often play in differentiated contemporary societies. In this study, all these are of interest when researching the targeted consumer group with regard to fashion magazines and advertisements, as the self of the consumers as well as their culture and the social categories in which the women reside are of interest and may influence their decision-making regarding the fashion magazines they read and clothing advertisements they would take notice of.

Theorists refer to identities as cognitive schemas, meaning that they are internally stored information and meanings, which serves as frameworks for the interpretation of experiences (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286). This is very important in this study, as identities provide a cognitive means for defining situations, which increase sensitivity and receptivity to particular cues for behaviour, like purchasing a certain fashion magazine or clothing preferences (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286). This is an important aspect, because in this study, the ultimate goal is to understand the decision-making and behaviour of the women in the targeted consumer group surrounding fashion, and fashion magazines.

It is said that an identity is formed by means of self-categorisation or self-identification (Stets & Burke, 2000:224). These can be viewed as being two underlying cognitive processes. Self-categorisation is a process that is part of the social identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2000:224). This theory, as well as personal identity will be considered next.

#### **4.4.1 THE SOCIAL IDENTITY AND PERSONAL INDENTITY THEORY**

##### **4.4.1.1 Social Identity Theory**

According to Stets and Burke (2000:224) the concept of identity can be described in terms of social identity theory and identity theory, where the self is reflected in that it can take itself as an object where it can be categorised, classified and be named in certain ways with regard to other social categories or classifications. In the social identity theory, this process refers to self-categorisation, whereas in the identity theory it is named identification (Stets & Burke, 2000:224) It is known that there are two prominent processes involved in social identity, namely self-categorisation and social



comparison, which is of great interest to explore in this study with regard to the targeted consumers of this study.

The social identity theory deals with inter-group relations, group processes and the social self of individuals (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995:259). The central idea surrounding this theory, involves the idea that a social category, such as the Black Diamonds, provides a definition of who an individual is, with regard to defining characteristics of the category, and self-definition that are part of the self-concept (Hogg *et al.*, 1995:259). According to Tajfel (1981) the social identity theory states that people integrate membership of social groups as the social component of their self-concept. This means that the self is partially defined by membership of social groups. Furthermore, social identity explains the reasons why people who are separated into groups, such as the Black Diamonds in South Africa, usually evaluate members who are in their group as better than people that are not part of their group (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). According to the theory the reason for this is because people want to maintain a positive self-image, and social identity is closely associated with self-esteem (Brewer, 1991:476). In this study, it is of interest to explore whether the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment embody a strong social identity, or whether they lean more towards a strong personal identity. This could help to understand the sub-segment better, and may prove to be fruitful for magazine marketers if understood properly, as their stance on identity could be portrayed more successfully in fashion images used in fashion magazines aimed at them.

According to Stets and Burke (2000:225) social identity can be defined as a person's knowledge that one belongs to a certain social category or group. Social identity is said to develop from group memberships on the basis of similar attributes, such as culture (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). In this study, sub-culture will be the primary factor taken into consideration when referring to the social identity of the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group. According to Brewer (1991:476) social roles play a major part in creating a social identity, and the theory involves the extension of the self, beyond the level of the individual, and involves the categorisation of the self into more inclusive social units. This means that social identity has a more "we" approach, rather than the "I" (Brewer, 1991:476). In this study, it is of interest if the women in the targeted group considers group membership, such as being part of the Black Diamonds, as more important than being individualistic, and whether they would want to maintain and reflect characteristics and norms that are synonymous with the group.

With regard to the social-cognitive perspective of this study, it is important to take the underlying socio-cognitive processes of the social identity theory into account. These processes are referred to as categorisation and self-enhancement. Firstly, categorisation refers to the sharpening of in-group boundaries. Producing distinctive group actions, stereotypes and perceptions achieves this. People, as well as their 'self' are then assigned to the relevant category (Hogg *et al.*, 1995:260). Secondly, self-enhancement deals with the social categorisation process, where in-group stereotypes and norms, favours the specific in-group. This means that people in the in-group, view themselves in a more favourable way than they view people in the out-group, and comparisons are made in a way that would positively affect the in-group (Hogg *et al.*, 1995:260). In this study, this might mean, that the women in the Black Diamond consumer group likely view people who are part of their in-group in a more positive light, and may make comparisons with out-group members in a way that would not affect them negatively. These cognitive processes are vital to understand with regard to their engagement in comparison with models in fashion advertisements, as well as their ultimate response to such advertisements.

#### **4.4.1.2 Personal Identity Theory**

Comparison, as discussed earlier, can occur on a physical level, an internal level and on a social basis (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). The physical self and the internal self forms part of a person's personal identity. Personal identity, emanates from individual achievements, and differentiates one individual from another in a given social context based on individual characteristics. It is believed that all people generally maintain some intermediate degree of similarity between the self and relevant others, and should be kept in mind when conducting research on the women in the Black Diamonds consumer group when the goal is to reach them effectively (Brewer, 1991:476). This means that both personal and social factors can influence a person's identity. The degree of importance or significance of the two factors may become clearer after conducting research on the targeted consumers.

In contrast to the social identity theory, personal identity theory's self-classification involves not the "group", but categorise the self as an occupant of a role in society (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). Role-based identity formation centres on how a person performs a role, and the emphasis is not on similarity to other groups, but rather on individuality. One can therefore define personal identity as the categorisation of the self as a unique entity, which is separate from other individuals (Stets & Burke, 2000:228). If an individual has a strong personal identity, they act upon his or her own

personal goals and desires, rather than as a member of a specific group or certain category (Stets & Burke, 2000:228). This means that the individual person and personal qualities override the importance of belonging to a specific social group or sub-culture such as the Black Diamonds. Social identity and personal identity of the women in the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment will therefore be explored and described in this study, as to determine their stance on identity and how it affects their evaluation of fashion images, especially the influence their identity have on social comparison. This is said as social comparison correlates with a strong social identity, and if the targeted consumers have a stronger personal identity, it may affect the way they compare themselves to others, especially with regard to fashion models portrayed in fashion magazine images.

#### **4.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY**

It has become clear that the social comparison processes are key in the evaluation of the self, as well as those of others. The visual representation of the self is generally the foundation of self-representation to others, and results in others forming impressions and then receiving feedback from them. This often leads to enormous amounts of time being spent by people on creating an appearance (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). Cultural beauty ideals portrayed by fashion models in fashion magazines, may not be relevant to women from non-Western cultures such as the Black Diamonds here in South Africa. This raises the concern that the targeted consumers may not engage in comparing their appearance with fashion models used in fashion magazine advertisements if personal and cultural factors are too differentiated. Evaluation of the self of the Black Diamonds may occur in cases where differences do exist, but the differences are not too extensive to be obtained and the self can be manipulated to be similar to those people they compare themselves to. If this is not the case, they may have to engage in coping strategies mentioned earlier in the literature study, which may or may not always have a positive effect on their self-esteem.

Social identity theories highlight the importance of collective membership and the significant effects that group membership can have on behaviour, such as the behaviour of the Black Diamonds surrounding fashion magazines and their response to fashion magazine advertisements (Ethier & Deaux, 1994:243). Both personal and social identity can be compared on the basis of appearance, such as the appearance of fashion models in fashion magazine advertisements (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). In this study it is of interest if the women in the targeted consumer group would engage in comparison with fashion models in fashion magazines who are more Western-focused, or if they

would rather engage in comparison with people who are more similar to them or perceived as being part of their specific group.

It is widely assumed that the main appearance ideal of any culture, including the Black Diamonds, is internalised as the aesthetic standard people use to create their appearance, and compare their appearances to others (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). The identity of a sub-culture such as the Black Diamonds, are characterised by factors such as cultural background, language, social class and political conflict (Ethier & Deaux, 1994:243). The question arises whether the targeted consumers possess these identities relating to their social group (the Black Diamonds), and whether they view the specific role their sub-cultural group play regarding beauty or appearance ideals, as important. Furthermore, it is of interest if their sub-cultural group symbolises their relative social identity, and if this is important to them.

It has become apparent that people tend to compare themselves to others, in order for them to create an understanding of who they are and where they belong in the social environment. In order to engage in social comparison it is however important that differences between those being compared, are not too great. In this study it is of interest to know what the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment looks like, and to whom the targeted group is prepared to compare themselves to. If they are not in a position to compare themselves to a specific beauty ideal or image, they may not give attention to the specific clothing product that is being advertised, or may not buy the specific fashion magazine.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

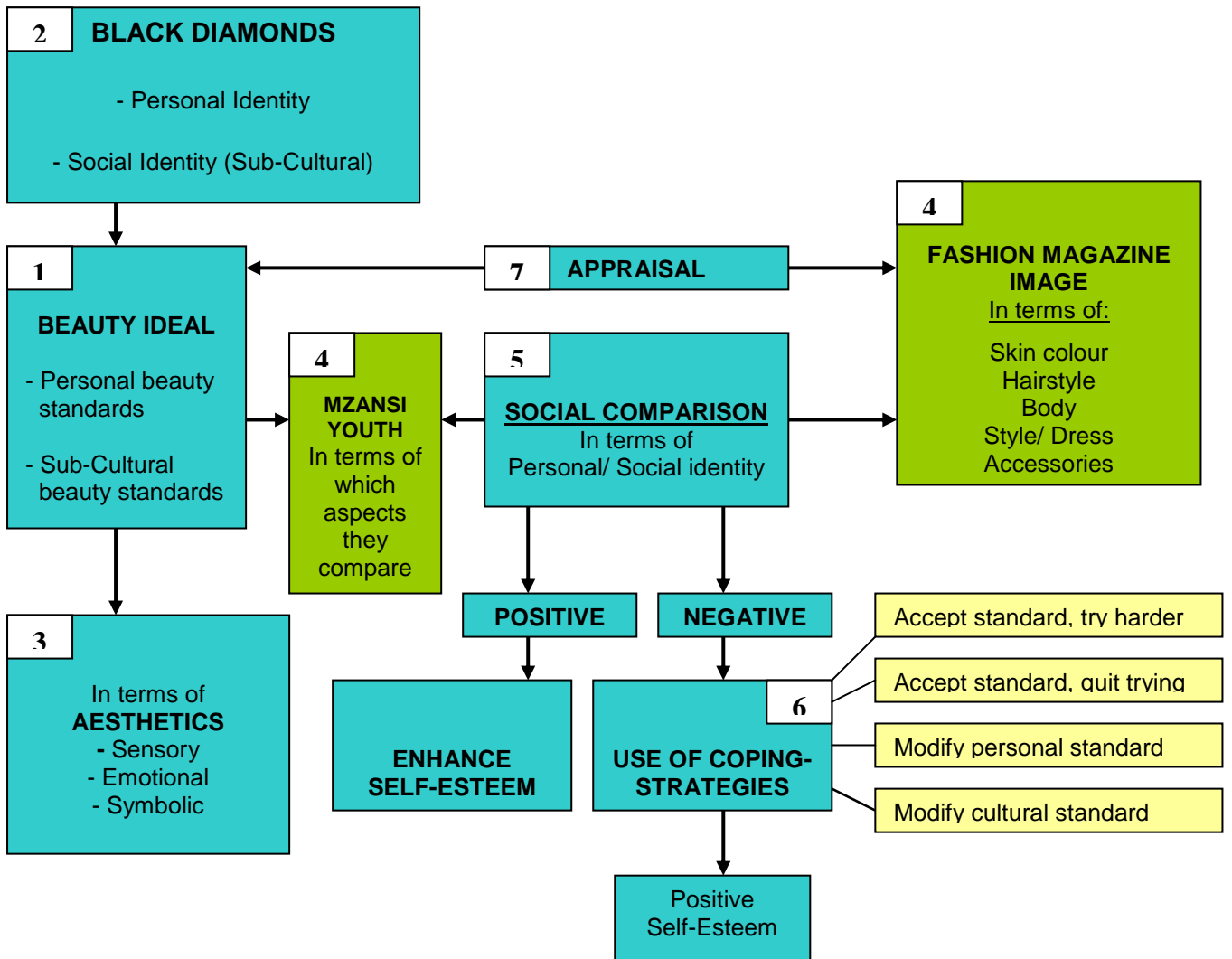
Against the problem statement, the purpose of this study was to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images, with the aim of making recommendations with regard to their beauty ideal that could be portrayed in fashion magazines aimed at this targeted group. This has implications for the choice of a research strategy, sampling and data collection methods and procedures.

In order to obtain results that are reliable and valid, this chapter gives an exposition of the aspects employed for the research, namely:

- A schematic conceptual framework that reflects the literature, important concepts and objectives
- The objectives that were formulated for the study
- The research strategy and style
- Sampling
- The choice, description and applications of data-collection methods
- Operationalisation and data analysis
- A discussion on the quality of the data
- A discussion on ethics

#### 5.2. SCHEMATIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

With the purpose of the study and the literature background of the study in mind, the following schematic conceptual framework (Fig 1.1) will direct the study:



**(FIGURE 1.1: SCHEMATIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK)**

The conceptual framework highlights the most important concepts of the study and shows how the various concepts may ultimately be interlinked and how they may influence each other. By having a framework it helps to ensure that all concepts are considered and included when drawing conclusions and making recommendations at the end of the study. The framework (Figure 1.1) was developed with the objectives and the literature background of the study in mind, and it serves as a means to understand the various factors that contribute to women in the Mzansi Youths’ social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. To ensure validity of the study, all the concepts presented in the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) were specified in a construct definition. This facilitated the development of indicators (questions and statements) from all the parts of the definitions (relating to the objectives of the study), as recommended by Neumann (2000:142-143) and Babbie and Mouton (2001: 122-123).

The schematic conceptual framework suggests that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment have specific personal or sub-cultural beauty standards or ideals (1) in terms of skin colour, hairstyle, body, dress or style and cultural artifacts, such as accessories (4). This beauty ideal plays an important role in how they compare themselves to others (5), as well as how they appraise various fashion images (7), whether they be more African inspired, Western inspired or of an Euro-African nature. The backbone of what they want to portray or compare with regard to an appearance (4), and specifically in terms of aesthetic experience (3), is either a strong social identity or a strong personal identity (2). When the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment appraise a fashion image or compare themselves against a specific image, they would either compare positively, which will then enhance their self-esteem, or they would compare negatively, in which case they will have to use certain coping strategies in order to maintain a positive self-esteem (6). The ideal situation is that the fashion images should serve as an “other” against which or whom the targeted women could and would want to compare themselves with, resulting in an interest to purchase the specific clothing item or the fashion magazine as such.

### 5.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

**Objective 1:** To explore and describe the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in terms of dress, hairstyle, body, skin colour and accessories

**Objective 2:** To explore and describe the role of personal and social identity in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's preference for specific appearance qualities

**Objective 3:** To explore and describe the role of aesthetic dimensions (symbolic, emotional and sensory) of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group's beauty ideal

**Objective 4:** To explore and describe which aspects of the self, the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group, compare with the ideal beauty standard in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, body and cultural artefacts such as accessories

**Objective 5:** To explore and describe the reasons why the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group engage in social comparison, and how it affects their self-esteem (in terms of social identity and personal identity)

**Objective 6:** To explore and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when comparing themselves to the fashion ideal of beauty

**Objective 7:** To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth's appraisals of Western, African and Euro-African fashion images as well as their subsequent reactions

- Sub-objective 1:  
To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth like the various fashion images
- Sub-objective 2:  
To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' evaluation of the various images
- Sub-objective 3:  
To explore and describe how the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment relate to the specific images in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance
- Sub-objective 4:  
To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment would compare themselves with the images
- Sub-objective 5:  
To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's willingness to buy fashion magazines with the above images
- Sub-objective 6:  
To explore and describe the women in the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's intentions to buy similar clothing than in the fashion images



## **5.4. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND STYLE**

An exploratory, cross-sectional quantitative research strategy, focusing on a survey research design was used in the study. Exploratory research is preliminary research conducted to clarify and define a research opportunity. This results in giving ideas and insights about the way the problem at hand can be addressed (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel & Kotze, 2003:28). The study is cross-sectional because it deals with the collection of information from the Black Diamond group at a given time, and allow for a sub-section of the population to be used (Cant *et al.*, 2003:32). In this case it was ideal for this study, as the primary goal was to gain information about a large population (the Black Diamond group consists of a large number of people), and the advantage of such a design is that it is simple in nature (Cant *et al.*, 2003:32). It involves simply stating a few questions to willing participants, summarising their responses by means of percentages, frequencies, statistical indexes, or counts, and thereafter drawing conclusions about the section of population gathered from the responses of the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). Quantitative methods are very valuable in allowing a researcher to conduct a study that consists of enough people to obtain a good cross-section of views. Many variables are considered in this study, which can then be reduced to a manageable size, providing meaningful conclusions and recommendations at the end of the study.

## **5.5. SAMPLING**

### **5.5.1 Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was young adult black women in South Africa (between 18 and 24 years of age), in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. The women fall under the Black Diamond consumer group, which represents an up-and-coming, growing market segment. Mzansi Youth are mostly still living at home and they seek an academic qualification. The units of analysis were also representative of a group that is large, profitable and accessible enough to draw the attention of marketers (Mawers, 2004). The units of analysis had to have certain criteria to be included in the study. These pertain to them being between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and belonging to the African cultural group in South Africa. They also had to be up-and-coming young adult African women, seeking an academic qualification at a tertiary institution, such as a university.

### **5.5.2 Sample selection**

### **5.5.2.1 Sampling strategy**

A non-probability sampling strategy has been used in the study. Non-probability samples, may or may not represent the population well, and as is the case in this study, the circumstances did not make it feasible, practical or theoretically sensible to do random sampling, which are often more accurate (Trochim, 2006). Therefore, non-probabilistic alternatives were considered, as there was no way of guaranteeing that every element of the population would be represented in the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). The sampling strategy could therefore not be presumed to be representative of the entire population, and was only considered to be representative of the sample, and results have only been applied to the latter. A non-probability sampling strategy allows for certain sampling techniques to be applied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206).

### **5.5.2.2. Sampling techniques**

The sample for the study was purposive resulting in the use of the snowball sampling method. In purposive sampling, sampling is done with a purpose in mind (Trochim, 2006), as was the case in this study. In purposive sampling the researcher seeks one or more specific predefined groups (Trochim, 2006), such as the Black Diamonds. Purposive sampling occurs when the people or units relevant to the study are selected for a specific purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). The reason for this method being employed in this particular study was that specific participants with certain criteria and characteristics were needed. This relates to them having to be young, black adult women living in South Africa, and being in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Black Diamond consumer group. By combining more than one sampling method, a better opportunity was created for an effective sample to be formed. Purposive sampling was therefore combined with the snowball sampling method, as only certain individuals with particular characteristics were included in the study. According to Cant *et al.*, (2003) snowball sampling involves “collecting data from a few initial members of the targeted population that can easily be located”. One then seeks information from those individuals to refer the researcher to other respondents within the targeted group (Cant *et al.*, 2003:128). The researcher therefore starts by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study, and then asks them to recommend others who they may know who also meets the criteria (Trochim, 2006). Although the snowball sampling method usually applies to locating members of a population who are hard to find, in this particular study the snowball sampling technique was thought feasible, as it was employed to save time, and to easily locate willing members, as there were many questionnaires that needed to be completed for purposes of analysis.

Members were located at the campus of the University of Pretoria (UP) and the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). A few initial individuals were asked if they fit the desired characteristics of the target market. Members that qualified were then asked to direct the researcher to other respondents within the targeted group. This was done until African students completed two hundred fully usable questionnaires for analysis.

## **5.6. CHOICE, DESCRIPTION AND APPLICATION OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **5.6.1 Data collection techniques**

Quantitative data collection techniques were used to capture the data. Data was obtained by means of personally handing out questionnaires to willing participants. Using questionnaires is a relatively easy way of collecting data, and have been used by other researchers when collecting data on reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images (Adomaitis *et al.*, 2008). It enables the researcher to organize questions, and receive responses without actually talking to the participants or conducting interviews, which can often be very time consuming and costly (Walliman, 2005:281). A brief set of pre-screening questions were asked before participants could complete the questionnaires. Questions asked were to determine if the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age, and if they were currently studying towards their future. This helped to assess whether the participants had the desired inclusion criteria to be included in the study. The questionnaire had been scrutinised by the researcher's study-leader, a statistician and the subject-specialised lecturers at the Department of Consumer Science, University of Pretoria (peer evaluation), and the instruments piloted in advance on a small number of participants. This was done to pre-test the questionnaire to identify any problems of comprehension or other forms of confusion that could occur. It also helped to determine if the questions were relevant to the objectives of the study, and whether the necessary results could be obtained for which the study was intended, and aided in the reliability of the findings and conclusions drawn (Walliman, 2005:282).

### **5.6.2 Data collection method**

#### **5.6.2.1 Design**

The design of the questionnaire was centered around the objectives of the study, to be sure that all objectives were met, in order to retrieve the desired results at the end of the study (Addendum A).

This was done to draw conclusions relevant to the study and to make possible valuable recommendations. The primary factors measured in the questionnaire were as follow – (1) personal or sub-cultural beauty standards, (2) personal and social identity (3) importance of aesthetic dimensions, (4) social comparison (personal identity/ social identity), (5) coping strategies used in case of negative comparisons, (6) reflected appraisals of the fashion photographs.

### **5.6.2.2 Stimulus Materials**

Stimuli used in the questionnaire (ADDENDUM B) consisted of 3 full colour fashion photographs obtained from fashion editorials, typically seen on the Internet and featured in popular fashion magazines. The fashion images used in the questionnaire were kept simple with no imaginary brand names. This helped to ensure that the stimuli were similar across all fashion images, and eliminate bias in responses. According to the research findings of the Black Diamond Survey (2007) some of the favourite magazines of the Black Diamond women include True Love and Cosmopolitan. Fashion images were obtained from those magazines as well as from others, such as Elle and Glamour, as well as from the Internet. Criteria used for selecting the photographs (see ADDENDUM B, p. 194) included in the panel questionnaire were fashion photographs evoking more or less the same amount of attractiveness, the same level of vividness and drawing the same amount of attention. Fashion photographs representative of each of the three beauty ideals were selected, featuring models of similar sizes, with a clear view of the clothes featured, and featuring only one style (dresses). This helped to eliminate bias that could otherwise be encountered when using some images that could possibly be more appealing than others. Careful evaluation of the fashion photographs, by fashion experts was therefore needed, before specific photographs could be selected to be included in the questionnaires to be handed out to the respondents. A panel of four fashion experts, two Caucasian and two African, were selected from UP and TUT, and were asked to evaluate the various fashion images before selecting the three fashion photographs that were eventually included in the final questionnaire.

### **5.6.2.3 Evaluation of fashion photographs by fashion experts –Procedure and interpretation of results**

Before photographs could be selected to be included in the questionnaire intended for the target audience, the photographs needed careful evaluation by fashion experts. This was done to ensure that the photographs included in the questionnaire were bias-free, and to aid in the reliability of the

results. A panel of four fashion experts were selected from UP and TUT (two Caucasian and two African), and asked to evaluate the fashion images gathered before including them in the final questionnaire. Photographs were evaluated in a questionnaire format, handed out to the panel of fashion experts. Each questionnaire were accompanied by a CD, which contained 30 images in total, ten full-colour fashion images portraying a typical Westernised beauty ideal, ten full colour images portraying a Euro-African beauty ideal, and ten full colour images portraying a typical African beauty ideal. The three beauty ideals were chosen in this study, because it is the beauty ideals mostly portrayed in magazines that the targeted consumers of the study, read. The photographs were derived from popular fashion magazines and from fashion editorials on the Internet. The panel was asked to view the first set of 10 photographs, and answer the questions relating to the first category (Addendum B). This was done for all the sets of photographs and categories. In the first question, the panel of experts were asked to evaluate all the photographs in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, style and cultural artefacts such as accessories, and score each construct and thus the photo as such on a 5-point Likert scale. The second question asked them to rate all the fashion images (from 1 to 10), on three rating scales, namely attractiveness, representative and eye-catching, ranging from “most” (1) to “least” (10). A statistician was brought on board to assist in the analysis of the results, and to recommend the appropriate statistical procedures to be employed. A mean and standard deviation were calculated for each factor (dress, skin colour, hairstyle and accessories) in each category (Western, African, Euro-African), as well as for the three rating scales (attractive, representative, eye-catching). Thereafter, an overall mean score was created for each of the categories, pertaining to dress, skin, hair and accessories, to obtain an average score for each photograph. The photo in each category with the highest average was then selected, and compared to the mean score results of the “representative” rating scale. Here the lowest value related to the photograph was scored as the “most representative” of the specific beauty ideal. All the photographs with the highest average in the first question should have compared positively to the “most representative” rating. This helped to verify the results obtained in the first question, and were thus double-checked to correspond to the results obtained in the first section. The remaining two rating scales “eye-catching” and “attractiveness” were then used to ensure that the photos selected in the first section, did not vary to a great extent in terms of “eye-catching” and “attractiveness”. This was done so that all the photographs to eventually be included in the questionnaire, had more or less the same score of “eye-catching” and “attractiveness”, which would eliminate bias when respondents answer the questions about the three different images in the questionnaire, meaning that one image should not appeal to respondents more than another one.

### 5.6.2.3.1 Analysis of results of fashion photographs

**(TABLE 5.1: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF FASHION PHOTOGRAPHS)**

	<b>AVERAGE MEAN</b>	<b>ATTRACTIVENESS MEAN</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>EYE- CATCHING</b>
<b>Western beauty ideal – Picture 7</b>	4.37	2.5	1.75	5.0
<b>African beauty ideal – Picture 7</b>	4.69	4.5	1.5	5.0
<b>Euro-African beauty ideal – Picture 6</b>	4.00	5.75	4.25	4.5
<b>Euro-African beauty ideal – Picture 7</b>	3.25	4.5	3.0	5.25

After the collection of data of the questionnaires handed out to the panel of fashion experts, a statistician was consulted. After analysing all the results from tables presented by the statistician, one fashion image of each category had to be chosen. Within the Western beauty ideal and African beauty ideal categories, results showed a clear indication of the photos with the best scores in each of the two categories. In the Western beauty ideal category, picture 7 scored the best results. The average mean was the highest of all the photos, and clearly corresponded with the “representative” mean, which was the lowest. This means that Picture 7 had the highest average mean score, and lowest “representative” score, meaning that the photograph was also chosen as being most representative of the Western beauty ideal. This indicates that the results obtained in the first question, which determined the average mean, were correct and corresponded to the results obtained of being most representative of the category. For the African beauty ideal category, the same situation occurred. In the African beauty ideal category, picture 7 once again scored the best results. The average mean was the highest of all the photos, and clearly corresponded with the “representative” mean, which was the lowest, meaning that Picture 7 had the highest average mean score, and lowest “representative” score. Picture 7 was thus selected as being most representative of the African beauty ideal, out of all the photos presented. This indicates that the results obtained in the first question, which determined the average mean, were correct and corresponded directly to the results obtained of being most representative of the category. Results from the third category however, did not show such a clear indication of the best fashion image within the Euro-African beauty ideal category. It was more difficult to select the photo with the best scores, and therefore two photos with results closest to the results of the best photos in the other two categories were chosen

and interpreted. This was done to ensure that the fashion image in this particular category did not stand out from the other two photos that were selected. Here the “eye-catching” and “attractiveness” means were important to consider, and were compared to the results of the other two photos. The two photos in the Euro-African beauty ideal category, with results closest to the results of the photos selected in the other categories, were Picture 6 and Picture 7. After comparing the results, Picture 6 was selected as the image with the best corresponding results to the other two pictures selected. The average mean score of Picture 6 was closest to the results of the first two categories, and the “eye-catching” score did not vary to a great extent from the first two selected pictures (please refer to Table 5.1). Although Picture 7 was rated as being more representative (3.0), than Picture 6 (4.25), Picture 6 was still rated in the lower half of the rating scale, meaning that it was scored as “more” representative than “less” representative of the Euro-African beauty ideal. The eye-catching score for Picture 6, was (4.5), which related very closely to the pictures in the first two categories. The “attractiveness” score was however much higher than Picture 7 in the Euro-African category, and did not correspond well to the pictures in the other categories, but because “attractiveness” is subject to personal opinion, it was decided that the “eye-catching” scores could be more important, especially when wanting to eliminate bias when respondents answer the questionnaires. When comparing Picture 6 and Picture 7 in the Euro-African beauty ideal category, it was also noticed that the model in Picture 7 was in a sitting position, whereas the model in Picture 6 was standing. It was therefore decided that it would be better to select Picture 6, as the models in the other two photographs selected, were also in a standing position, which would create a consensus across all three pictures selected in each category to be included in the questionnaires to the target market. The three pictures that were therefore chosen to be included in the questionnaire to the target audience were Picture 7 (Western beauty ideal), Picture 7 (African beauty ideal), and Picture 6 (Euro-African beauty ideal).

### **5.6.3 Procedure**

Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire on a voluntary basis. Members of the targeted group were located at the campuses or residences of the UP and TUT. A few initial individuals were asked if they fit the desired characteristics of the target market. Members that qualify were then asked to direct the researcher to other respondents within the targeted group that could easily be located. With statistical techniques considered with regards to the sample, this was done until African students completed at least two hundred fully useable questionnaires for analysis. The respondents were told that they will be participating in a research project to study social comparison



and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images, and that the results obtained would be used in a dissertation for the completion of a Masters Degree in Consumer Science at the University of Pretoria. It was also mentioned that the results and findings of the study could be helpful to researchers and magazine marketers to better communicate with the target market by improving the look, style and content of fashion photographs featured in advertisements in fashion magazines specifically aiming to reach them. Respondents were asked to sign a letter of consent before instructing them to complete the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire included questions measuring demographic information, such as age, culture, occupational status and citizenship. The second part of the questionnaire entailed questions corresponding to the three different cultural beauty ideals portrayed in the fashion photographs. There was therefore one image each included in the questionnaire portraying a typical Westernised beauty ideal, an Euro-African, and an African beauty ideal, with a brief set of questions relating to the specific fashion photograph or beauty ideal being portrayed, which were completed directly after viewing each of the different fashion photographs. By allowing respondents to view one fashion photograph at a time, and answering the questions directly below pertaining to each fashion photograph individually, the influence of comparisons to the other stimulus fashion photographs were eliminated.

#### **5.6.4 Measure**

The measurement instrument used in this study, collected information for six dependant variables, namely- (1) personal or sub-cultural beauty standards, (2) personal and social identity (3) importance of aesthetic dimensions, (4) social comparison (personal identity/ social identity), (5) coping strategies used in case of negative comparisons, (6) reflected appraisals of the fashion photographs. Survey questions can typically be divided into two categories, namely structured and unstructured (De Vos, 2005:170). In this study, mostly structured questions were included in the questionnaire. Questions allowing for options between two possible responses, like “yes” or “no” were used, which was easy to interpret. A level of measurement question was included such as an ordinal scale, which allowed respondents to rank their preferences (Question 9). Here directions were stated clearly, to eliminate confusion. Likert-type scales were used in the questionnaire, which allowed for a choice between four alternatives; from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). This type of scale has previously been used in research dealing with the measure of culture, and worked well to obtain the necessary responses (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The scores were then calculated as a mean for items in each sub-scale or as the scale as a whole. Assessments of perceived similarity of the self to models in fashion photographs on characteristics such as overall lifestyle, cultural background, dress,



appearance, and basic values have been tested previously (Appiah, 2001; Whittler, 1989). In this study, respondents had to indicate how similar they felt to the model in the fashion photograph using a three-point ordered set of options ranging from 1 (Yes, probably), 2 (Maybe), to 3 (No, probably not). The perceived similarity scale tested by Appiah (2001) and Whittler (1989) was used successfully in this study. Some open-ended questions were also used in the questionnaire, allowing respondents to write an answer in the open space provided. This was done to obtain greater detail in responses and richness of detail, in order for the researcher to learn more about how the respondents think and what are important to them with relation to the research topic (De Vos, 2005:174). Standard statistical coding methods were applied to open-ended questions. For each stimulus fashion photograph, an over-all rating-scale was developed. This were measured by five, 7-point semantic differential scales, namely eye catching/ not eye catching, for me/ not for me, appealing/ not appealing, likeable/ not likeable, and attractive/ not attractive. These are Bi-polar scales, on which not only strength, but also direction of strength could be measured (Desphande & Stayman, 1994), which were valuable in the discussion and interpretation of results in this study. Similar scales have been used successfully in other cultural studies and have shown strong evidence of being highly reliable (Desphande & Stayman, 1994). Questions pertaining to participants' purchase intentions included bipolar adjective choices, such as unlikely/very likely, and impossible/very possible. Respondents were also asked to indicate their interest in buying the clothing worn by the models in the fashion photographs, as well as their interest in purchasing fashion magazines featuring such fashion photographs.

## **5.7. OPERATIONALISATION AND DATA ANALYSIS**

### **5.7.1. OPERATIONALISATION**

Walliman (2005) noted that quantitative analysis allows a researcher to process a large amount of data with efficiency in a format that lends itself to statistical analysis. As seen in the operationalisation stage of the study (see Table 5.2), every objective was related to specific questions in the questionnaire. This helped to ensure that all objectives were measured, and that all necessary questions relevant to each objective were included in the study. In Table 5.2, the relative questions pertaining to each objective are listed, as well as the statistical methods employed for purposes of data analysis and interpretation.

**(TABLE 5.2: OPERATIONALISATION: Objectives and Sub-objectives, relative questions and statistical methods used)**

<b>Objectives &amp; Sub-objectives</b>	<b>Relative question</b>	<b>Statistical methods used</b>
<p><b>Objective 1</b> To explore and describe the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in terms of dress, hairstyle, body, skin colour and accessories</p>	<p>Q9 Q10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of personal beauty ideal (dress, hairstyle, body, skin colour, accessories)</li> <li>- Frequencies (mean scores)</li> <li>- Friedman test</li> <li>- Percentages</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 2</b> To explore and describe the role of personal and social identity in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's preference for specific appearance qualities</p>	<p>Q11 (b, d, f, h, j, l) Q11 (a, c, e, g, i, k)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frequencies</li> <li>- Percentages</li> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of personal beauty standards and sub-cultural beauty standards</li> <li>- Factor analysis (Cronbach Alpha)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 3</b> To explore and describe the role of aesthetic dimensions (symbolic, emotional and sensory) in the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group's beauty ideal</p>	<p>Q15 (a-i)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of aesthetic dimensions (sensory, emotional, symbolic)</li> <li>- Percentages</li> <li>- Mean scores and medians</li> <li>- Friedman test</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 4</b> To explore and describe which aspects of the self the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group compare with the ideal beauty standard in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, body and accessories</p>	<p>Q12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of dress/style, hairstyle, body, etc.</li> <li>- Frequencies</li> <li>- Percentages</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 5</b> To explore and describe the reasons why the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group engage in social comparison, and how it affects their self-esteem (in terms of social identity and personal identity)</p>	<p>Q13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of personal identity and social identity</li> <li>- Frequencies</li> <li>- Percentages</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 6</b> To explore and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when comparing themselves to the fashion ideal of beauty</p>	<p>Q14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coding of constructs in terms of coping strategies</li> <li>- Frequencies</li> <li>- Percentages</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 7</b> To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth's appraisals of Western, African and Euro-African fashion images as well as their subsequent reactions</p>	<p>Q16.1, 17.1, 18.1 Q16.2, 17.2, 18.2 Q16.3, 17.3, 18.3 Q16.4, 17.4, 18.4 Q16.5, 17.5, 18.5 Q16.6, 17.6, 18.6 Q16.7, 17.7, 18.7 Q16.8, 17.8, 18.8 Q16.9, 17.9, 18.9 Q16.10, Q17.10, Q18.10 Q16.11, Q17.11, Q18.11 Q16.12, Q17.12, Q18.12 Q16.13, Q17.13, Q18.13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frequencies</li> <li>- Percentages</li> <li>- Mean scores and medians</li> </ul>

### 5.7.2. DATA ANALYSIS

For purposes of analysis, it became necessary to simplify and organise the data gathered in the study, into a manageable and useful form. It was important to choose the most applicable type of analysis relevant to each variable present in the study (Walliman, 2005:302). Walliman (2005) noted that quantitative analysis allows a researcher to process a large amount of data with efficiency in a format that lends itself to statistical analysis. As seen in the operationalisation stage of the study, every objective was related to specific questions in the questionnaire. This helped to ensure that all objectives were measured, and that all necessary questions relevant to each objective were included in the study. The data gathered was simplified and organised by means of statistical analysis, through the use a computer, after which conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made (Walliman, 2005:302). Most of the questions in the questionnaire were analysed by means of frequencies (mean scores), and coding in terms of specific constructs relevant to the objective (see schematic conceptual framework). Open-ended responses were written down and placed in categories as identified during the exploration of literature (refer to schematic conceptual framework). Coding categories were developed for each open-ended question in the questionnaire, to facilitate the processing of the data.

Factor analysis refers to a range of techniques that aim to describe a larger number of variables by means of a smaller set of composite variables (so-called “factors”) and to aid with the interpretation of the data (Trochim, 2006). For the purpose of this study, common factor analysis was applicable. Common factor analysis focuses on the common variance shared among the original variables and seeks to identify underlying dimensions (known as “common factors”). The Friedman test was also useful in some questions to analyse the data obtained. The Friedman test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between aspects that the respondents had to rank (in questions 9 and 15). The Friedman test is said to be the appropriate test to use when several ordinal-level measures need to be compared to one another (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 1997:194). This was done to find out if the aspects respondents had to rank in question 9 and 15 are equally important. The Friedman test is a non-parametric test, and the results showed that the Friedman test statistic had a P-Value of 0.0000 (Conover, 1999). Furthermore, Cronbach’s alpha was also deemed necessary to determine the most common estimate of the internal consistency or reliability of items in a scale in certain questions. A widely accepted assumption in the social science is that alpha should be .70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a scale, as was the case in this study (where applicable) (Trochim, 2006). Hypothesis testing was done at the 5% level of significance.

The statistical methods used and the boundaries set at the 5% level of significance by specific statistical tests, helped the researcher to determine when the results were statistically significant (Trochim, 2006).

## **5.8. QUALITY OF THE DATA**

Considering the quantitative nature of this study, attention was given to the reliability and validity of the research. Validity and reliability of research refer to the extent to which a person can learn something about the phenomena that are being studied, and the probability that one will obtain statistical significance in the data analysis, as well as the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the data collected in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:27). Measurement scales used in the questionnaires included scales that have been used in other similar research studies conducted internationally, and that have been proved reliable. The structured measurement scales used in the questionnaire of the study include Likert-type scales and various levels of measurement scales, such as ordinal questions and comparative questions. The use of these well-known measurement scales helped to make the results obtained from the questionnaires more reliable.

### **5.8.1 Validity of the study**

Validity deals with the extent to which the instrument measures what it should actually measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:28). Two types of validity exist, namely internal- and external validity. Internal validity refers to the measure of the level of sophistication the design of the study incorporates (Walliman, 2005:434). External validity, on the other hand, deals with the extent to which the results can be legitimately generalized (Walliman, 2005:433). Both of these were incorporated in the research study. This was done by ensuring that all concepts were included in the study, and the nature of the sampling methods used were kept in mind when making conclusions and generalisations beyond the immediate situation at the end of the study. This helped to ensure the quality of the data gained (Walliman, 2005:294). In order to ensure that each measurement accurately reflected the concept it intended to measure (measurement validity), the following different types of validity were deemed necessary in this study:

### **5.8.1.1 Face Validity**

The instruments were pre-tested by a group of experts and were also pilot-tested on a small group of respondents to ensure face validity of the study. This was done to ensure that the measurement instruments actually measured what they purported to measure. Only instruments accurately measuring the set objectives of the study were used.

### **5.8.1.2 Content Validity**

Content validity deals with whether concepts in the study are well measured by the instruments used, and whether the instruments give a good enough sample of items that represent that specific sample (De Vos, 2005:161). One should be sure that the instrument actually measures what it is supposed to measure in the study. A measurement device was used that was adequate and representative of the content of the study. The conceptual framework used in the study also helped to ensure that all concepts were included in the questionnaire and that all the objectives of the study were met.

### **5.8.1.3 Criterion Validity**

Criterion validity refers to whether the instrument used in the study actually measures the concepts being studied (De Vos, 2005:161). To improve criterion validity in this study, more than one question was used to measure some of the concepts or objectives in the study. This validation approach ensured that more than one criterion could be compared to the scores obtained from the data, thereby eliminating bias in findings. Examples of this being used in the questionnaire are as follow: Question 9 asked respondents to rank various aspects (hairstyle, accessories, body, skin colour, and dress) of their feminine ideal of beauty from most important too least important, and Question 10 asked respondents to indicate which aspects of their feminine ideal of beauty are important to them. This means that if respondents indicated in Question 9, that a certain aspect was very important, the aspect should also be chosen in Question 10 as being important to respondents. Furthermore, instruments were pilot tested in advance on 20 respondents. The pre-testing of the questionnaire aided in this regard to ensure that the respondents understood the questions, and that the relevant responses were obtained from each question. There was no standardised criterion known to measure the construct validity accurately, to permit comparison with the measurements for this study. However, some of the questions that had been used successfully in related studies were adapted for this study.

#### **5.8.1.4 Construct Validity**

Construct validity deals with the extent to which the instrument used in the study, successfully measures a theoretical construct (De Vos, 2005:162). To obtain construct validity, it was essential to understand how the measurement instrument operates and how relationships between this and other constructs can be identified (De Vos, 2005:162). This was done by determining what the instrument was in fact measuring in each case, and by ensuring that it measured the intended concept at hand. To ensure that instruments used for this study, successfully measured the theoretical construct they were intended to measure, definitions with clearly specified conceptual boundaries were provided (Figure 1.1 and Table 5.2), in order to isolate the convergent validity.

#### **5.8.2 Reliability of the study**

Reliability of a research project can be defined, as the consistency with which a measuring instrument can obtain a certain result when the entity being measured hasn't changed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:28). Reliability generally refers to the consistency or stability of a measurement procedure (De Vos, 2005: 162). This means that a measure is considered reliable if it would give the same result every time under the same circumstances. Reliability of the study was improved by taking great care when constructing measuring instruments. Cronbach's Alpha is a method that is often used in other studies, and ensured reliability in this study. This method is mathematically equivalent to the average of all possible split-half estimates (Trochim, 2006). By making use of computer analysis to do the random subsets of items and compute the resulting correlations in the study, the reliability was calculated. Usually results above 0,6 show good reliability, as was the case in this study. This test was done in the study to ensure optimal reliability of the data collected (Trochim, 2006), with the help of a statistician.

As Neumann (2000:164) noted, reliability is an indicator of dependability or consistency. It indicates the likelihood that a given measurement technique will repeatedly yield the same description of a given phenomenon (Mouton, 1996:144). In this study, certain strategies were applied to ensure reliability, which included the questions used in the questionnaire to be predominantly closed questions, and some of which had been previously used in related studies. The questionnaire was pre-tested by a group of experts and pilot-tested on women in the target market for this study. A panel of fashion experts evaluated the fashion photographs before including them in the questionnaire. The questionnaire's top page had the University of Pretoria's logo (letterhead) and an

introductory letter stating the purpose of the research, and a consent form also had to be signed beforehand. Well-established methods of data collection were used and standard statistical coding methods were also applied. Hypothesis testing was done at the 5% level of significance. A non-probability sampling technique (purposive resulting in snowball) was used in this study, which used a smaller sample size, but the technique was thought acceptable, due to the nature of this study.

Furthermore, in relation to human intellect and perception, the researcher used the power of memory and reasoning to organise data and ideas present in the study in such a manner as to promote understanding when others read the document (Walliman, 2005: 434). Clear conceptualisation of all the concepts and the development of theoretical definitions for each construct in the thorough literature review conducted, aided in doing this. It also helped to improve the validity of the study. The conceptualisation and operationalisation phase helped to ensure that each measure indicates only one specific concept throughout the study (De Vos, 2005: 163). This makes the study more reliable and easier to read and understand.

## **5.9. ETHICS**

Ethics refer to the rules of conduct, particularly regarding conduct towards other people and organisations (Walliman, 2005: 432). Ethics promote causing no harm, and providing benefits where possible. It is the responsibility of the researcher to be honest and give accurate descriptions on what have been done, and all the steps followed should be described in detail (Walliman, 2005:337). Taking ethics into consideration, it was of utmost importance that the data was not selectively presented, nor the analysis of results. It is always good practice to state limitations and resources of the research project, and this was done in this study.

Ethical issues that relate to the general public and to the participants are of primary concern when researchers conduct research (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:30). Ethical issues may be encountered in human sciences when conflict arises between the values of the community and scientific methods used to perform research (De Vos, 2005:68). An ethical concern that might have come to the fore with the research project at hand is discrimination, due to the cultural diversity in South Africa. The research project might have been seen as only benefiting the black population in the country, as only young black South African women will be included in the research project, and may ultimately benefit from the study. To eliminate this ethical concern, questionnaires were handed out to African, as well as Caucasian students. The responses obtained from the Caucasian students will be used at a



later stage in another research study where both the African and Caucasian responses will be used to make comparisons between the two cultural groups with regard to the research topic at hand. Stereotyping, any form of discrimination, bias and omission were avoided at all times when writing the research report. Every side of the story was reported on, and every fact stated when mentioning race and language were checked thoroughly. The research and reporting were also conducted with full objectivity and skepticism. Care was taken when organising and reporting on information to avoid discrimination, or misinterpretation in that regard. By using multiple sources of information when a statement was made about culture and race also helped to eliminate this.

Another ethical concern that could have been encountered was the informed consent of the research participant. This refers to consent given by participants to take part in the study, based on sufficient information about the nature and purpose of the research (Walliman, 2005: 434). Participation was on a voluntary basis with names of participants remaining anonymous. The data obtained was solely used for research purposes, and was communicated to the respondents in a consent form, which they had to sign before they could participate in the study. The consent form clearly stated the research affiliation, and emphasized the aim and purpose of the study, and also promised confidentiality and anonymity.

The research proposal was submitted to the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences' ethics committee for approval at the University of Pretoria, and was approved before any data was collected from respondents.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

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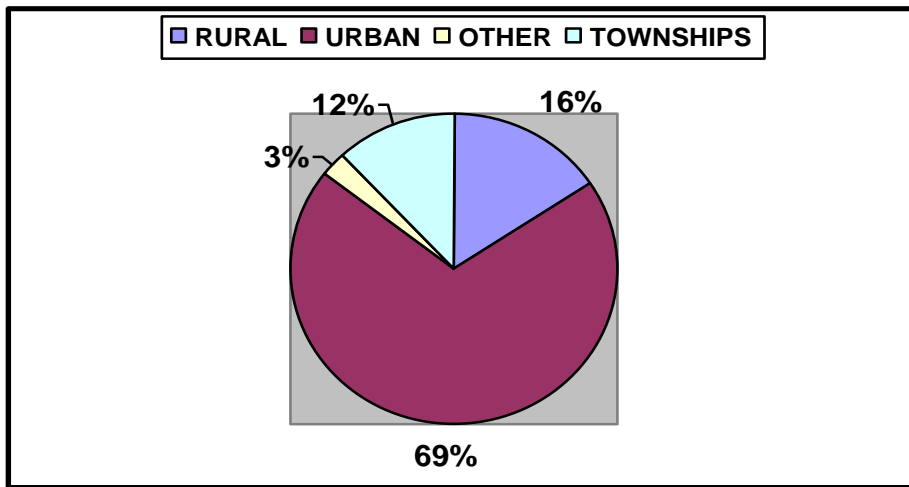
#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on analysing the data collected from the questionnaires that were handed out to the target market. Quantitative data analysis allows a researcher to process a large amount of data with efficiency in a format that lends itself to statistical analysis (Walliman, 2005:302). For purposes of analysis, it became necessary to simplify and organise the data gathered in the study, into a manageable and useful form (Walliman, 2005:302). As seen in the operationalisation stage of the study, every objective is related to specific questions in the questionnaire. This helped to ensure that all objectives were measured, and that all necessary questions relevant to each objective were included in the study. The findings are therefore discussed according to the objectives of the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for purposes of analysis, and descriptive statistics were specifically used to describe specific observations. This was done to present the data in a manageable form, such as tables and graphs, and the calculation of numerical summaries (such as frequencies, averages, mean scores and percentages).

In this chapter the data will be presented in terms of the seven research objectives and sub-objectives as set in Chapter 5. Additional to the set objectives, this chapter starts off with the demographic information obtained from the questionnaire.

#### **6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND OTHER DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE**

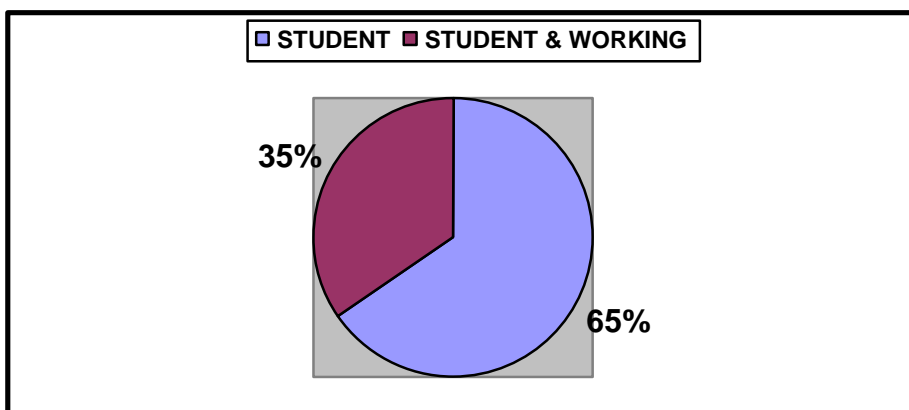
### 6.2.1 Where the target samples' parents live (Q4)



**FIGURE 6.1: WHERE THEIR PARENTS LIVE (N=199)**

Figure 6.1 shows where the parents of the respondents who took part in the study live. There were 199 respondents that answered the question. There were 4 categories, and the results show that 69% of their parents live in urban areas, 16% in rural areas, 12% in townships, and 3% live in other areas. This means that most of their parents (69%) live in urban areas, which indicates that the targeted consumers are not from a primitive background, and have probably been exposed to the influences of modern society in the cities of South Africa. This could mean that they are likely to be interested in modern trends and fashions, as they are part of modern society.

### 6.2.2 The respondents are students and/ working (Q5)

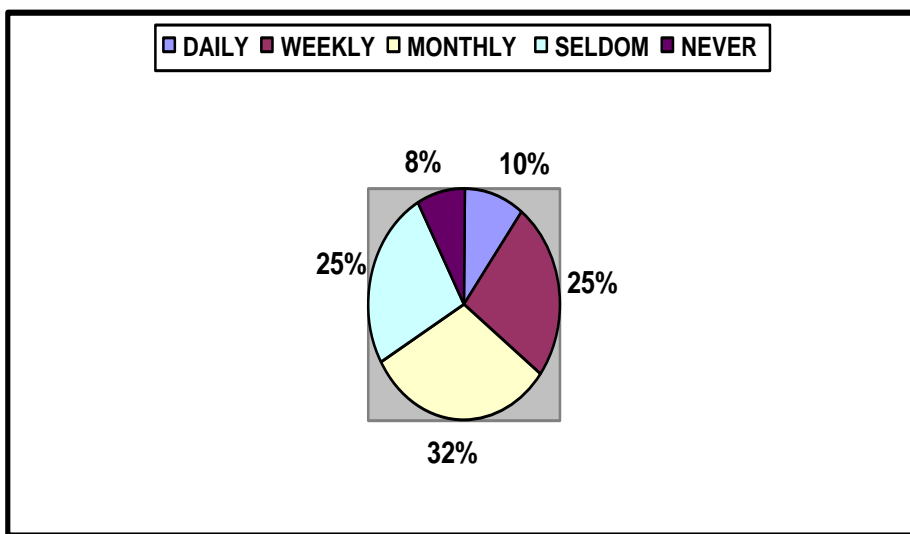


**FIGURE 6.2: STUDENTS AND WORKING (N=200)**

Figure 6.2 shows whether the respondents are full-time students, or if they are students that are currently working as well. Two hundred respondents answered the question. According to the results

obtained from question 5, 65% of the target sample are students only, whereas 35% are students and are working as well. The results are an accurate reflection of the intended target sample, namely the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Black Diamond consumer group, as the description of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment are said to be mostly students that are studying toward their future. It is interesting that 35% of the respondents indicated that they are working as well, which could mean that they have extra money that they could spend on luxury items such as fashionable clothes and fashion magazines.

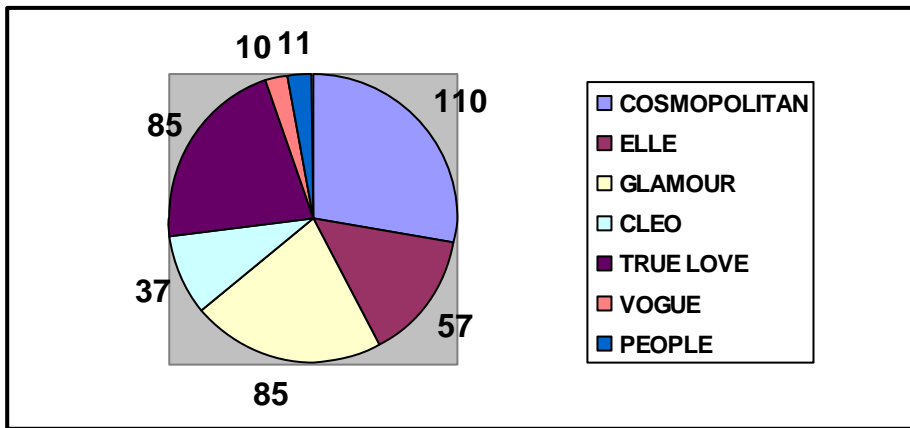
### 6.2.3 How often fashion magazines are read (Q6)



**FIGURE 6.3: HOW OFTEN FASHION MAGAZINES ARE READ (N=199)**

According to figure 6.3, the results from question 6, indicate that 8% of the target market never read fashion magazines, 10% read fashion magazines daily, 25% seldom read fashion magazines, 25% read fashion magazines weekly, and 32% read fashion magazines on a monthly basis. One hundred and ninety nine (199) respondents answered the question, and most (32%) of the respondents therefore indicated that they read fashion magazines on a monthly basis. Only 8% indicated that they never read fashion magazines, which is a small number. It could therefore be anticipated that most of the target market are interested in reading fashion magazines, whether it is on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

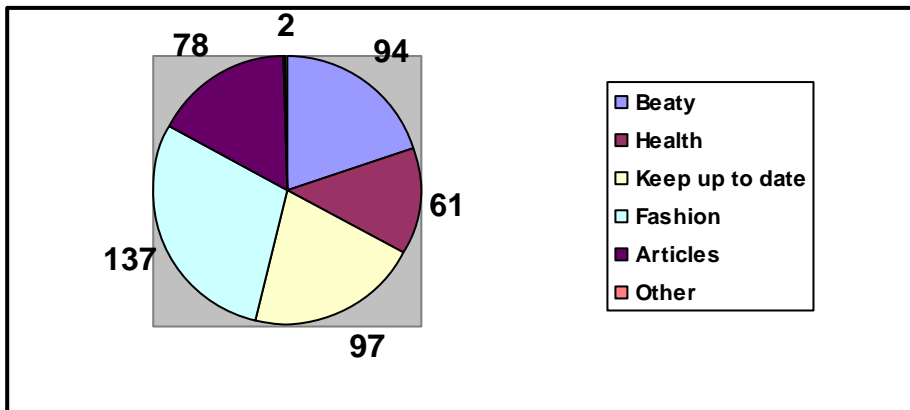
### 6.2.4 Magazines that the target market are currently reading (Q7)



**FIGURE 6.4: MAGAZINES CURRENTLY READ (N=200)**

Figure 6.4 shows the magazine distribution of what the respondents are currently reading. The figure shows only the number of respondents that chose a certain magazine, and not the percentage. Respondents were asked to tick the magazines they read from a list (they could choose more than one option), with an option of “Other” where they had to specify a certain magazine. The option of “Other” was coded according to the answers that appeared most frequently, namely “Vogue” and “People”. One hundred and ten (110) respondents indicated that they read “Cosmopolitan”, 85 respondents “ELLE”, and 85 respondents “Glamour”. These 3 magazines had the highest frequency, which is interesting because this could mean that the targeted consumers are specifically interested in fashion magazines, and not general magazines such as “People” and “True Love”. According to the results of the study conducted by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (2006), Black Diamonds indicated that one of their favourite magazines is “True Love” (Internet: Talent- Bright Young Things). Although 57 respondents in this study chose “True Love”, the other three fashion magazines mentioned above, had higher frequencies. This could mean that the Mzansi Youth women between the ages of 19 and 24 years are more interested in fashion and specifically fashion magazines.

### 6.2.5 Reasons for reading fashion magazines (Q8)



**FIGURE 6.5: REASONS FOR READING FASHION MAGAZINES (N=200)**

Figure 6.5 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for reading fashion magazines. Two hundred (200) respondents answered the question. The respondents were allowed to tick more than one option in the question, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. There were six options given in question 8, with the sixth being “Other” where they had to specify a reason. Only two respondents ticked the option “Other” and none of them stated a specific reason. One hundred and thirty seven respondents indicated that fashion is the reason for reading fashion magazines. Ninety-seven respondents indicated that they read fashion magazines to keep up to date, and ninety-four respondents indicated that “Beauty” is a reason for reading fashion magazines. These three reasons had the highest frequencies, and can be accepted as being their reasons for reading fashion magazines, with “Fashion” being their most important reason, as this option was ticked most frequently. It is therefore obvious that the women in the targeted group are interested in fashion, which was anticipated for this market segment.

## 6.3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

### 6.3.1 RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 1

**OBJECTIVE 1: To explore and describe the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in terms of dress, hairstyle, body, skin colour and accessories (Q9, Q10)**

**TABLE 6.1: RANKING OF ASPECTS IMPORTANT IN IDEAL OF BEAUTY –Q9**

VARIABLE	LABEL	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	Std.Dev
Q9a	Rank hairstyle	159	2.20	2	1.09
Q9e	Rank dress	158	2.26	2	1.16
Q9c	Rank body	161	2.34	2	1.36
Q9b	Rank accessories	154	3.68	4	1.16
Q9d	Rank skin colour	149	3.97	5	1.33

Table 6.1 reflects the ranking of aspects by respondents most important in their ideal of beauty. In question 9, respondents were asked to rank the aspects in their beauty ideal (hairstyle, dress, body, accessories and skin colour) from 1 to 5, (1) being most important, and (5) being least important. A mean for each aspect was calculated, as well as the median. Hairstyle, dress, and body, had the same median, and it was therefore necessary to look at each of those aspects' mean scores. The lowest score in this case was ranked as being most important. Hairstyle was ranked as being the most important, with dress and body following closely in second and third place. One can therefore anticipate that hairstyle, dress and body have the most important influence on the respondents' perception of what is beautiful, and should be taken into consideration when one wants to reach this target market. Accessories and skin colour had the highest mean scores, meaning that they were less important in the respondents' ideal of beauty. Skin colour had the lowest score, meaning that it is least important to the sample. After analysing the results from question 9, it became necessary to determine if there were meaningful differences between the aspects that were ranked by the respondents, in order to create a better understanding of the results obtained thus far.

**TABLE 6.1.1: FRIEDMAN SUMMARY –Q9**

	Aspect	Mean
Q9a	Rank hairstyle	2.20
Q9e	Rank dress	2.26
Q9c	Rank body	2.34
Q9b	Rank accessories	3.68
Q9d	Rank skin colour	3.97

Table 6.1.1 gives a summary of the results obtained from question 9, when the Friedman test was conducted. Question 9 asked respondents to rank aspects (hairstyle, dress, body, accessories and skin colour), from most important to least important regarding the respondents' ideal of beauty. The

Friedman test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the aspects that the respondents had to rank. The Friedman test is a non-parametric test, and the results showed that the Friedman test statistic had a P-Value of 0.0000 (Conover, 1999). Comparisons between all five aspects needed to be made to determine if there were meaningful statistical differences. The Posthoc pair wise test was conducted, which compared each aspect in table 6.1.1 (a-e), with every other aspect. It was found that there were meaningful differences between two groups when the P-value was less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that there could be distinguished between two groups. The first group (as seen in table above in yellow), were hairstyle, dress and body. The second group (as seen in table above in pink) were accessories and skin colour. The mean scores in the yellow group were closely related, and lower than the mean scores in the second group (pink), meaning that they were scored as being more important to the respondents than the aspects in the second group. The mean scores in the second group were higher than the mean scores in the first group, and were therefore scored as being less important than the aspects in the first (yellow) group. The aspects in the first group were therefore considered as being more important than the aspects in the second group, with statistical differences between the aspects in the first group and aspects in the second group. This verifies the results obtained and reflected in table 6.1, as hairstyle, dress and body, had lower mean scores than accessories and skin colour, which had the highest mean scores (therefore being ranked as less important to the respondents regarding their ideal of beauty).

**TABLE 6.2: ASPECTS IMPORTANT IN IDEAL OF BEAUTY –Q10**

<b><u>ASPECTS IMPORTANT IN IDEAL OF BEAUTY:</u></b>	<b>Important %</b>
DRESS	69.50%
SKIN COLOUR	17.00%
HAIRSTYLE	59.50%
ACCESSORIES	24.00%
BODY SHAPE	55.50%
PERSONALITY	7.50%
HEALTH/ BEAUTY	5.00%

Table 6.2 indicates the respondents' answers when they were asked in question 10 to indicate which aspects are important to them in their ideal of beauty. In question 9 respondents had to rank the

given aspects from most important to least important in their ideal of beauty. In question 10 however, the researcher wanted to find out if there were any other important aspects regarding the respondents' ideal of beauty, besides the listed aspects given in question 9 (body, hairstyle, dress, skin colour and accessories). The same aspects were given as options in question 10, (to verify the results obtained from question 9), but in this question an option of "Other" were given, to give respondents the opportunity to write down any other aspects that were important to them considering their ideal of beauty. Respondents could tick more than one answer in this question, and therefore the (percentage %) results listed in Table 6.2, do not add up to a total of 100%, but rather gives a reflection of the number of respondents (%) that choose a certain option.

As mentioned earlier, question 10 gave an option of "Other", where respondents had to specify the aspect important to them in their ideal of beauty. This gave the researcher the opportunity to find out if there are any other important aspects according to the respondents with regard to their ideal of beauty, besides the listed options. The option "Other" was coded in terms of the two answers that appeared most frequently. "Personality" and "Health/ Beauty" were the two aspects that were mentioned most frequently by the respondents, however only 7,50% indicated "personality" as being important to them, and only 5% "Health/ Beauty". Sixty nine percent (69%) indicated that dress was important, which was the highest score. Hairstyle scored 59,50%, and body shape scored 55,50%. These three aspects were also scored as being most important in the previous question with regard to their ideal of beauty. The results obtained from this question, therefore verifies the results obtained from the previous question, and it is therefore clear that dress, hairstyle and body shape, are the most important aspects to the women in the sample considering their ideal of beauty.

### **6.3.2 RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 2**

**OBJECTIVE 2: To explore and describe the role of personal and social identity in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's preference for specific appearance qualities (Q11)**



**TABLE 6.3: IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BEAUTY STANDARDS (Q11 (b+d+f+h+j+l))**

<b>Statement: IT IS IMPORTANT TO ME:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Very important + Important %</b>	<b>Less important + Not Important %</b>
b) that my dress style looks like that of Westernised women	198	35.86	64.14
d) to compare my appearance to Western styles	196	40.31	59.69
f) that fashion magazine models are from a Western origin	197	13.20	86.80
h) to be acknowledged as an individual person	198	89.90	10.10
j) that my appearance shows my personal qualities	198	91.41	8.59
l) that my appearance shows that I am proud of my personal qualities	197	92.89	7.11

Table 6.3. illustrates the responses on the importance of personal beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the respondents. Respondents had to choose an option on a Likert-scale, which allowed for a choice between four alternatives, from very important (1) to not important (4). For purposes of analysis and interpretation, the data was simplified, by adding the results from “very important” and “important” together, and by adding the results from “less important” and “not important”, to obtain a (%) value for “important” and “not important”. Question 11 (b), (d), (f), (h), (j), and (l) were formulated in the questionnaire to measure the importance of personal beauty standards. When respondents were asked if their dress style should look like Westernised women, 64,14% indicated that it is not important. They also indicated that it is not important that their appearance compare to Western styles (59,69%), as well as that it is not important that models are from a Western origin (86,80%). Almost ninety percent (89,90%) of the respondents want to be acknowledged as an individual person, and their appearance should show their personal qualities (91,41%). The respondents also indicated (92,89%) that it is important to them that their appearance shows that they are proud of their personal qualities. It therefore seems as if it is more important for the respondents to be acknowledged as an individual person and for their personal qualities, rather than for a Westernised fashion style or beauty ideal.

**TABLE 6.4: IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL BEAUTY STANDARDS (Q11 (a+c+e+g+i+k)):**

<b>Statement: IT IS IMPORTANT TO ME:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Very important + Important %</b>	<b>Less important + Not Important %</b>
a) that my dress style looks like that of my African friends	199	23.62	76.38
c) to compare my appearance to that of my friends	197	33.5	66.5
e) that fashion magazine models are from my own culture	198	43.43	56.57
g) to feel that I belong to a specific cultural group	196	59.69	40.31
i) that my appearance shows that I am an African women	198	57.58	42.42
k) that my appearance shows that I am an upcoming African student	194	61.86	38.14

Table 6.4 illustrates the responses on the importance of sub-cultural beauty standards of the respondents. Respondents had to choose an option on a Likert-scale, which allowed for a choice between four alternatives, from very important (1) to not important (4). For purposes of analysis and interpretation, the data was simplified, by adding the results from “very important” and “important” together, and by adding the results from “less important” and “not important”, to obtain a (%) value for “important” and “not important”. Question 11 (a), (c), (e), (g), (i), and (k) were formulated in the questionnaire to measure the importance of sub-cultural beauty standards. The respondents indicated that it is not important to them that their dress style look like their African friends (76,38%), neither that their appearance compare to that of their friends (66,50%). They also indicated (56.57%) that it is not important that models are from their own culture. This is an interesting result, as they indicated in the questions relating to their personal beauty standards, that it is also not important that models are from a Western origin (86,8%). Now the question arises, what they prefer models in magazines to look like? If one looks at the results pertaining to Western models, 86,80% of the respondents indicated that it is not important that they are from a Western origin, whereas 56,57% indicated that it is not important that models are from their own culture. If these results are compared, it seems that they would rather prefer models to be more from their own culture than from a Western origin (as the results from the latter are lower), although they were in both instances scored as being not important. It is anticipated that results obtained from other questions to be discussed later in this chapter will give a better indication of what they prefer in this regard.

Almost sixty percent (59,69%) of respondents felt that it is important that they belong to a specific cultural group, and that their appearance reflect that they are an African women (57,58%). Almost sixty two percent (61,86%) also indicated that it is important that their appearance shows that they are an upcoming African student. It therefore seems that although it is important for the majority of respondents that they should be recognised as African women, it is not important to them that their dress or appearance should resemble those of others, in this case their African friends or African models.

The answers from both tables 6.3 and 6.4 therefore indicate that it is most probably more important to the respondents to be recognised as an individual, (for what they personally are), rather than comparing themselves to others, whether from an African or Western origin.

### 6.3.2.1 Factor Analysis and Chronbach

**TABLE 6.5: FACTOR ANALYSIS**

		<b><u>FACTOR 1</u></b> <b>Anti-Westernised</b>	<b><u>FACTOR 2</u></b> <b>Anti-African</b>	<b><u>FACTOR 3</u></b> <b>Enabling Me</b>
Q11a	1	0.17	<b>0.60</b>	-0.17
Q11b	2	<b>0.76</b>	-0.11	0.02
Q11c	3	<b>0.55</b>	0.15	-0.12
Q11d	4	<b>0.89</b>	-0.11	0.03
Q11e	5	0.32	<b>0.48</b>	0.01
Q11f	6	<b>0.55</b>	0.10	0.01
Q11g	7	-0.08	<b>0.58</b>	-0.04
Q11h	8	-0.07	-0.01	<b>0.62</b>
Q11i	9	-0.18	<b>0.81</b>	0.10
Q11j	10	0.10	-0.05	<b>0.84</b>
Q11k	11	0.11	<b>0.70</b>	0.21
Q11l	12	-0.01	0.11	<b>0.72</b>
*Eigenvalue		*(2.78)	*(1.99)	*(1.17)
** % Variance explained		** (0.41)	** (0.31)	** (0.18)

Against the literature of the study, it was anticipated that two factors would emerge from question 11, namely personal identity factor (characteristic of a more Westernised identity), and a social identity factor (characteristic of a more African (sub-cultural) identity). However, factor analysis clearly identified three factors, namely factor 1 (Eigenvalue 2.78) consisting of statements b, c, d, and f, factor 2 (Eigenvalue 1.99) consisting of statements a, e, g, i and k, and factor 3 (Eigenvalue 1.17), consisting of factors h, j, and l. It should be noted that factor 1 consists of (b, c, d and f), which all represented personal beauty-standards, with the exception of (c), which represents a social beauty standard statement. The reason for this aspect to be in the first factor together with statements pertaining to personal beauty standards could be because the statement was formulated as follows: “to compare my appearance to that of my friends”, emphasising the “my” or personal qualities. Although this statement attempted to measure its importance with regard to social beauty standards, it is clear that the statement might not have been formulated clearly enough in the questionnaire, as “friends” does not necessarily mean African friends to the respondents. The term “friends” could refer to friends from any cultural background, and not necessarily only their “friends” from the same culture, while the “my” may emphasise the personal qualities.

Considering the results in table 6.3 and table 6.4 it is clear that factor 1 could be named Anti-Westernised, as all answers indicate that it is not important for the respondents to compare themselves to the Western style. Factor 2 could be named Anti-African, as it is clear from the answers that it is also not important for them that their appearance or fashion models should necessarily resemble an African style. Factor 3 could be named “Enabling-Me” as it is clear from the answers that it is very important for them to be acknowledged for their personal qualities.

Although culture is said to remain an important part in the lives of the Mzansi Youth, for them it is more about “enabling me” when it comes to products, brands and a fashion style (The new black middle class, 2006). From the results it is apparent that “enabling me” form an important part of the Mzansi Youth’s sub-culture. It is therefore suggested that the three factors be named Anti-Westernised, Anti- African and Enabling Me.

**TABLE 6.5.1: CHRONBACH ALPHA**

FACTOR	Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum	Cronbach coefficient Alpha
1	Q11b	193	2.93	0.91	567	<b>0.76</b>
1	Q11c	193	3.02	0.88	584	
1	Q11d	193	2.87	0.86	554	
1	Q11f	193	3.27	0.72	633	
2	Q11a	191	3.03	0.88	579	<b>0.77</b>
2	Q11e	191	2.76	1.01	528	
2	Q11g	191	2.34	0.99	448	
2	Q11i	191	2.31	0.93	443	
2	Q11k	191	2.20	0.97	421	
3	Q11h	195	1.49	0.72	292	<b>0.74</b>
3	Q11j	195	1.52	0.66	297	
3	Q11l	195	1.40	0.63	274	

Table 6.5.1 shows the Cronbach alpha for each of the three factors present in question 11 (a-l). Cronbach's alpha is the most common estimate of the internal consistency or reliability of items in a scale. A widely accepted assumption in the social science is that alpha should be 0.70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a scale (Trochim, 2006). In the table above, the question numbers are arranged according to the three factors they belong to. The Chronbach for factor one is 0.76, for factor 2 it is 0.77, and for factor 3 it is 0.74. It is therefore clear that the items within each factor belongs together, meaning that inter-reliability is good.

### **6.3.3 RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 3**

**OBJECTIVE 3: To explore and describe the role of aesthetic dimensions (symbolic, emotional and sensory) of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group's beauty ideal (Q15 a-i)**

**TABLE 6.6: ROLE OF SENSORY, EMOTIONAL AND SYMBOLIC DIMENSIONS –Q15**

	<b>Very important + Important %</b>	<b>Less important + Not Important %</b>
<b><u>Statement: SENSORY</u></b>		
a) Dress colour should complement my skin colour	85.93	14.07
b) Dress style should fit my body beautifully	94.97	5.03
c) Accessories should be eye-catching	66.33	33.67
<b><u>Statement: EMOTIONAL</u></b>		
d) Clothes should make me feel feminine	80.40	19.60
e) Appearance should give me pleasure	91.96	8.04
f) Appearance should make me feel in command of myself	86.93	13.07
<b><u>Statement: SYMBOLIC</u></b>		
g) My appearance should reflect my cultural values	60.30	39.70
h) My appearance should show others who I am	89.95	10.05
i) My appearance should reflect the group I belong to	49.25	50.75

Table 6.6 (a-c) illustrates the role of the sensory dimension of aesthetics in the ideal of beauty of the respondents in the sample. One hundred and ninety nine respondents answered the questions relating to objective 3. Respondents had to indicate whether they find the statements very important, important, less important, or not important. The scores obtained from “important” and “very important” were then added and an average percentage for the answers was then calculated. The same was done for “less important” and “not important”. This was done to simplify the data, to get more meaningful results that are easier to interpret. Almost eighty six percent (85,93%) indicated that it is important that their dress style should complement their skin colour, and 94,97% said that their dress style should fit their body beautifully. Only 66,33% indicated that their accessories should be eye-catching. Although all of the statements were important to the respondents, it was most important to them that their dress should fit their body beautifully (94,97%). It is interesting that, as was previously indicated by the respondents (Table 6.3), that it is more about their personal qualities, than just being eye-catching, and that the body once again stands out as an important aspect (as indicated in objective 1) in their personal ideal of beauty.

Table 6.6 (d-f) reflects the results obtained with regard to the role of the emotional dimension of aesthetics in the ideal of beauty of the respondents in the sample. All three of the statements (Q15 d-f) were indicated as being important to the respondents, and all of the results had a high score, meaning that they are important to the sample. It is interesting that all the statements pertaining to the emotional dimension were scored as being important or very important, and once again it seems clear that the “me” mentioned in the statements, or the individual comes through strongly, and is important to the respondents.

Table 6.6 (g-i) illustrates the role of the symbolic dimension of aesthetics in the ideal of beauty of the respondents in the sample. Just over sixty percent (60,30%) indicated that it is important that their appearance reflect their cultural values, and 89,95% felt that it is important that their appearance shows others who they are. However, 50,75% felt that it is not important that their appearance reflect the cultural group they belong to. From the results above, it is clear that it is most important to the respondents that their appearance show others who they are, as 89,95% indicated that this statement is important, but that more than half of the respondents felt that their appearance should not necessarily reflect the cultural group they belong to. This means that the individual is once again regarded more important than the group, which was also evident in the sensory and emotional dimensions.

**TABLE 6.6.1: QUESTION 15- MEAN SCORES AND MEDIANS**

VARIABLE	LABEL	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	ST.Dev
<b><u>SENSORY</u></b>					
Q15a	Dress colour should complement my skin colour	199	1.72	2	0.77
<b>Q15b</b>	<b>Dress style should fit my body beautifully</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.61</b>
Q15c	Accessories should be eye-catching	199	2.12	2	0.87
<b><u>EMOTIONAL</u></b>					
Q15d	Clothes should make me feel feminine	199	1.79	2	0.81
<b>Q15e</b>	<b>Appearance should give me pleasure</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Q15f</b>	<b>Appearance should make me feel in command of myself</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.73</b>
<b><u>SYMBOLIC</u></b>					
Q15g	My appearance should reflect my cultural values	199	2.21	2	0.89
<b>Q15h</b>	<b>My appearance should show others who I am</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1.64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.72</b>
Q15i	My appearance should reflect the group I belong to	199	2.51	3	1.00

Table 6.6.1 reflects the results discussed above, in such a way as to obtain a more clear indication of the role of the three aesthetic dimensions in the respondents' ideal of beauty. A mean score was calculated for each statement in the various aesthetic dimensions (Q15a-i), and the median was obtained. The statements that are highlighted were the four statements that scored the lowest mean scores out of all the statements in question 15. Question 15 (b) in the sensory dimension; once again showed to be most important to the respondents, as the mean score for this statement was the lowest. Question 15 (b) was also rated as being most important to the respondents in the previous discussion, which gave a (%) score of the results, meaning that the results of (Table 6.6.1) confirms the results obtained in (Table 6.6), in that "body" is an important aspect (as also indicated in objective 1) in the respondents' personal ideal of beauty.

For the emotional dimension, a mean score was also calculated for each statement (Q15d-f), and a median was obtained. The highlighted statements in Q15 (e) and Q15 (f) were two of the four statements with the lowest mean scores out of all the statements in question 15, meaning that those two statements were indicated as being important to the respondents regarding the role of aesthetic dimensions in their ideal of beauty, and specifically the emotional dimension. It again seems as if it is more important for the respondents to be acknowledged as an individual person and for their



personal qualities, and that the individual may be regarded as being more important than the group. It was also evident in the results from (Table 6.6.) that the “me” mentioned in the statements, or the individual is regarded highly important by the respondents, which is an important theme coming through throughout the results obtained thus far.

Questions 15 (g-i), dealt with the symbolic dimension, but the statements in this section do not have as low mean scores in comparison to the other two dimensions with the exception of 15 (h), which is more closely related to the lower mean scores of the previous two dimensions. Question 15 (h) once again referred to “I”, which is regarded important by the respondents, and evident from the all the previous questions dealt with thus far in the study. If one compares the three aesthetic dimensions, the sensory and emotional dimensions could be regarded as being more important to the respondents than the symbolic dimension with regard to their ideal of beauty.

**TABLE 6.6.2: FRIEDMAN SUMMARY –Q15**

	Aspect	Mean
Q15b	Dress style should fit my body beautifully	1.40
Q15e	Appearance should give me pleasure	1.54
Q15f	Appearance should make me feel in command of myself	1.61
Q15h	Appearance should show others who I am	1.64
Q15a	Dress colour should complement my skin colour	1.72
Q15d	Clothes should make me feel feminine	1.79
Q15c	Accessories should be eye-catching	2.12
Q15g	Appearance should reflect my cultural values	2.21
Q15i	Appearance should reflect the group I belong to	2.51

Table 6.6.2 gives a summary of the results obtained from question 15, where the Friedman test was conducted. The Friedman test was conducted to determine if there were significant statistical differences between the aspects that the respondents had to rate in question 15. The Friedman test is a non-parametric test, and the results showed that the Friedman test statistic had a P-Value of 0.0000 (Conover, 1999). Comparisons between all nine aspects needed to be made to determine if there were meaningful statistical differences. The Posthoc pair wise test was conducted, which compared each aspect in table 6.6.2 (a-i), with every other aspect. It was found that there were meaningful differences between three groups when the P-value was less than 0.05, meaning that there could be distinguished between three groups. The first group is seen in the table above in green, the second group in orange, and the third group in blue. Group 1 and group 2 overlapped with regard to three aspects. The first aspect (Q15b) in the first group (green) was therefore considered as being more

important than the aspects in the second group, as well as the third group, which is a reflection of the results in Table 6.6.1. The last two aspects in the second group (orange) were also indicated as being less important than the aspects in the first group, but were more important than the aspects in the third group. Aspects in both groups 1 and 2 were more important than the aspects in group three. From the results, it is apparent that the respondents indicated that statements with an “I” or “me” were more important than the statements referring to “we” or a group, meaning that the importance of the individual is coming through strongly in their answers. The results from the Friedman’s test therefore substantiate the results previously discussed with regard to Objective 3.

#### 6.3.4. RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 4

**OBJECTIVE 4:** To explore and describe which aspects of the self, the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group, compare with the ideal beauty standard in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, body and cultural artefacts such as accessories (Q12)

**TABLE 6.7: ASPECTS IMPORTANT TO COMPARE IN IDEAL OF BEAUTY- (Q12)**

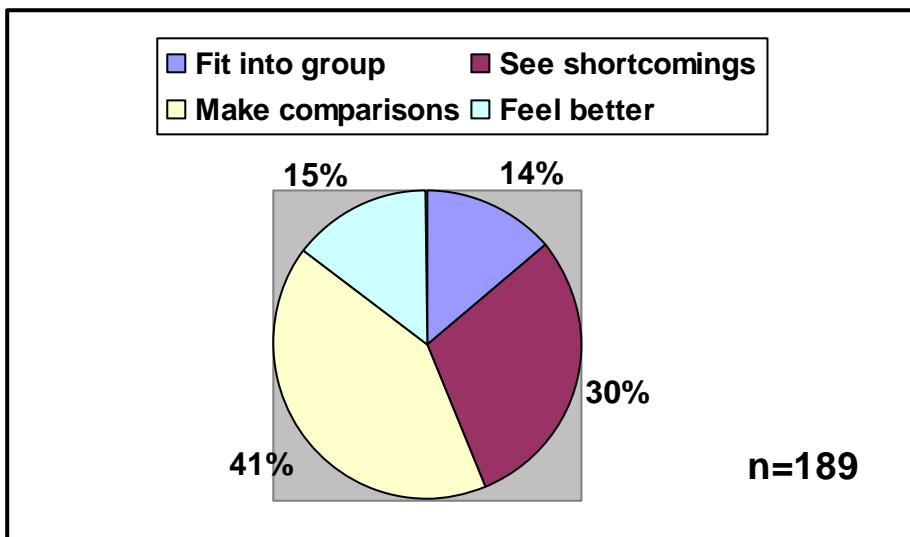
<u>ASPECTS IMPORTANT TO COMPARE:</u>	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage %
a) BODY/ SHAPE/ SIZE	40	20.00%
b) DRESS/ STYLE	64	32.00%
c) HAIRSTYLE	46	23.00%
d) PERSONALITY/ INNER BEAUTY	42	21.00%
e) ENTIRE PACKAGE/ PRESENTATION	24	12.00%

Question 12 in the questionnaire was an open-ended question, and respondents were asked to describe the aspects that are important to them when comparing themselves to their ideal of beauty. Two hundred respondents answered the question. The question was coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently, and the codes were prescribed as seen in Table 6.7 (a-e). The frequency of the answers regarding each aspect was calculated, after which a percentage score was calculated. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that body/shape/size are important to compare, 23% said hairstyle is important, and 21% said that personality and inner beauty are important aspects to compare. Least of the respondents (12%) indicated that the entire package/presentation are important

aspects to compare, while the most agreed that they compare dress/style (32%). This result is once again a reflection of the results obtained from objective 1 (Q9 and Q10), that showed that dress/style are very important to the respondents in their ideal of beauty, and in this objective it is also evident that dress/style is the most important aspect to compare with regard to their ideal of beauty.

### 6.3.5. RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 5

**OBJECTIVE 5: To explore and describe the reasons why the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group engage in social comparison, and how it affects their self-esteem (in terms of social identity and personal identity) (Q13)**



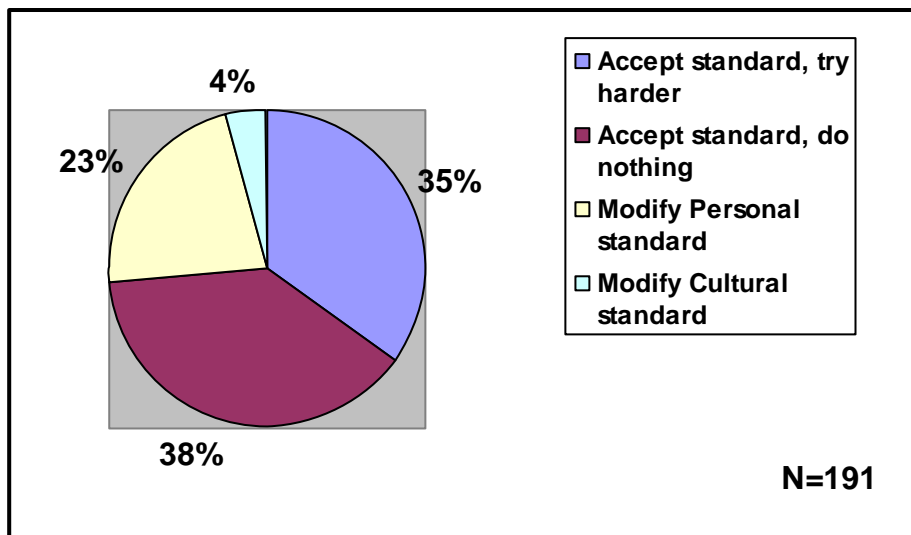
**FIGURE 6.6: REASONS FOR COMPARING TO OTHER WOMEN**

Figure 6.6 shows the distribution of results obtained from question 13. One hundred and eighty nine respondents answered the question. Respondents were asked to indicate the reasons for comparing themselves to other women. Against the literature the question was formulated with regard to measuring the results in terms of social identity and personal identity, however from results obtained in question 11, it became evident that there is a third category to be distinguished, namely the “individual”, when dealing with the women in the targeted group. It is therefore necessary to interpret the results obtained from question 13 in terms of three categories, and not only the two categories, as was anticipated earlier. Most of the respondents (41%) indicated that they compare themselves, to see how they relate in comparison to others, and 30% to see their shortcomings so that they can improve themselves. Fifteen percent (15%) indicated that they

compare themselves to other women, because it helps them to feel better about themselves, while the least respondents (14%) indicated that they compare to see where they fit in and to feel part of a group. With the above results in mind, it becomes clear that most respondents (when engaging in comparison) compare to see how they relate in comparison to others, and to see their shortcomings, while least respondents compare themselves to feel better about themselves and to determine if they fit into a group. It therefore appears that, although a general fact throughout the results was that the respondents would rather not compare themselves to others, because of the “I” or individual person being important to them, most of the respondents, 41% (when forced to compare) would compare to see how they relate to others. Against the social identity theory this could be interpreted as the individual being regarded as more important than the group, and that an individual or personal identity is more important than a social identity (Hogg et al. 1995:260). Results of objective 5 therefore confirm those of objective 2, namely a strong emphasis on the “me” which is a characteristic of the Mzansi Youth (The new black middle class, 2006).

### 6.3.6. RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 6

**OBJECTIVE 6:** To explore and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when comparing themselves to the fashion ideal of beauty (Q14)



**FIGURE 6.7: COPING STRATEGIES WHEN COMPARING NEGATIVE TO THEIR BEAUTY IDEAL**

Figure 6.7 shows the distribution of results (%) when respondents were asked which coping strategies they would engage in when comparing negatively to their beauty ideal. One hundred and

ninety one (191) respondents answered the question. Most of the respondents (38%) indicated that they would accept the standard, and do nothing further to achieve it. However, thirty five percent (35%) would accept the standard and try harder to reach the beauty ideal, while 23% would modify their personal beauty standards. Least of the respondents (4%) indicated that they would modify their cultural beauty standard. It should however be kept in mind, that from the previous results it became clear that comparing themselves to others is not necessarily important to the respondents.

### 6.3.7 RESULTS OF OBJECTIVE 7 AND SUB-OBJECTIVES

**OBJECTIVE 7: To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth’s appraisals of Western-, African- and Euro-African fashion images as well as their subsequent reactions**

#### 6.3.7.1 Sub-objective 7.1:

To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth like the various fashion images (Q16.1, Q17.1, Q18.1)

**TABLE 6.8: EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS LIKE THE FASHION IMAGES**

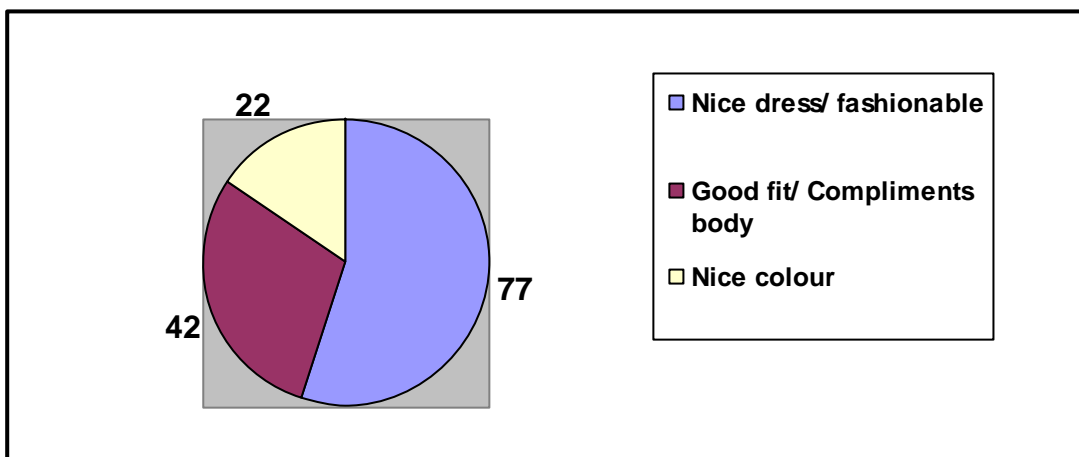
<b>Like the image:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VERY MUCH 1</b>	<b>YES 2</b>	<b>NOT SO MUCH 3</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: YES (1+2)</b>	<b>NO (3+4)</b>
WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL	199	19%	39%	34%	8%	<b>58%</b>	<b>42%</b>
AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	199	12%	31%	39%	18%	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	197	41%	49%	9%	1%	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Table 6.8 illustrates the responses the respondents gave in questions 16.1, 17.1 and 18.1 when asked if they like the fashion images portraying the various beauty ideals. Respondents were asked to tick one of four boxes on a 4-point ordered set of options (yes, very much/ yes/ no, not so much/ no, not at all). The last two columns in table 6.8 show the percentage of responses calculated for each option. The first two options (1+2) were added, and the last two options (3+4) were added to obtain a percentage for “Yes” and “No” responses only. This was done to simplify the results into a more manageable and useful form, making it easier to interpret and to compare the results. Regarding the

Western beauty ideal photograph, 58% of respondents indicated that they like the image, and 42 % did not like the image. Forty three percent (43%) indicated that they like the African beauty ideal, while 57 % don't like it. With regard to the Euro-African beauty ideal 90% of respondents indicated that they like the image, while only 10% did not like the image. The results show that the respondents liked the Euro-African beauty ideal the most, and that the African beauty ideal photograph was liked the least.

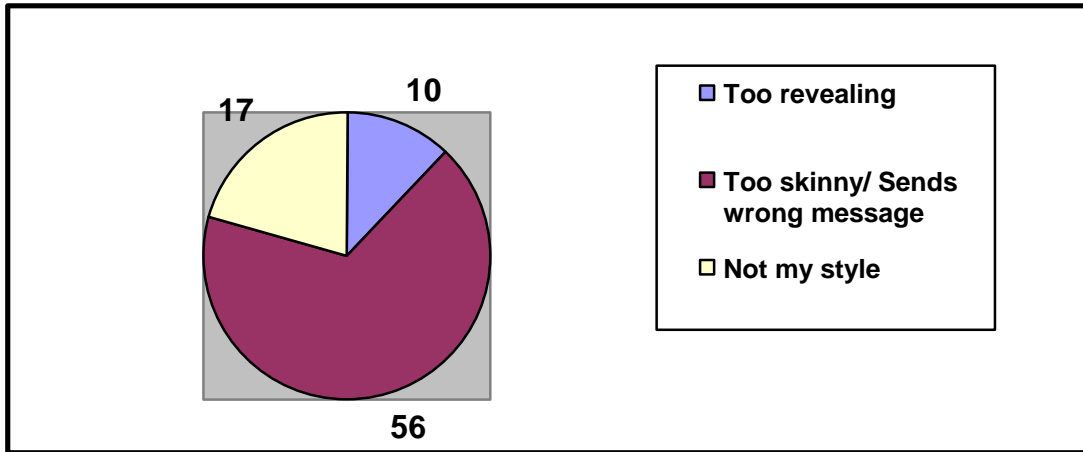
In addition to the results obtained above, it was also of interest to explore the reasons for liking or not liking the various images. Question 16.2, Q17.2, and Q18.2 were open-ended questions, and respondents had to indicate their reasons for liking or not liking the images, depending on their answers in Q16.1, Q17.1 and Q18.1. Responses were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. The results are portrayed in the figures below:

- **Westernised fashion photograph (Q16.2)**



**FIGURE 6.8.1: REASONS FOR LIKING THE IMAGE**

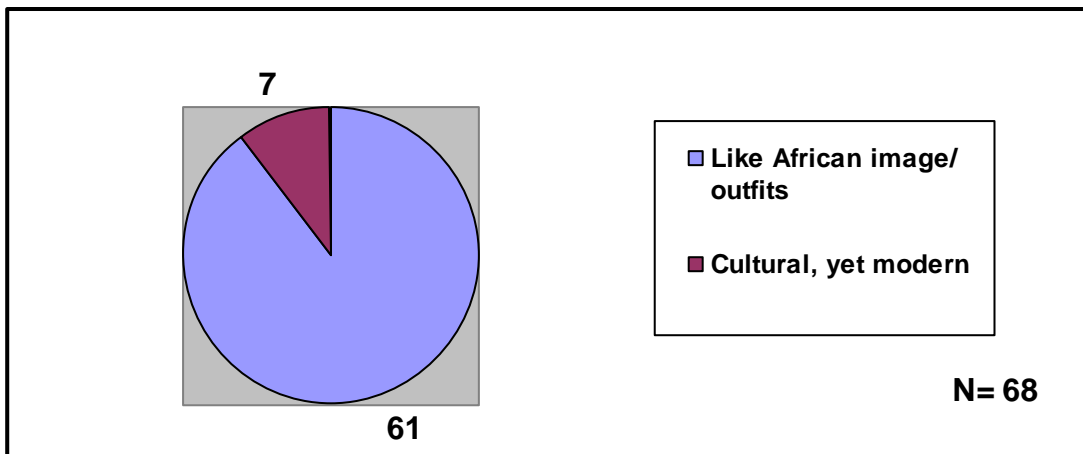
Figure 6.8.1 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for liking the Westernised fashion photograph. Question Q16.2 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for liking the image, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (77) indicated that they like the Westernised image because it is a nice dress or the clothing featured in the image is fashionable. Forty-two (42) respondents liked the images because the style is a good fit for the model, or compliments her body, while 22 respondents liked the colour of the dress.



**FIGURE 6.8.2: REASONS FOR NOT LIKING THE IMAGE**

Figure 6.8.2 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for not liking the Westernised fashion photograph. Question Q16.2 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for not liking the image, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (56) said they don't like the image, because the model is too skinny, and it sends the wrong message, while 17 respondents did not like the image due to the fact that it is not their style. Ten (10) respondents also indicated that the dress is too revealing.

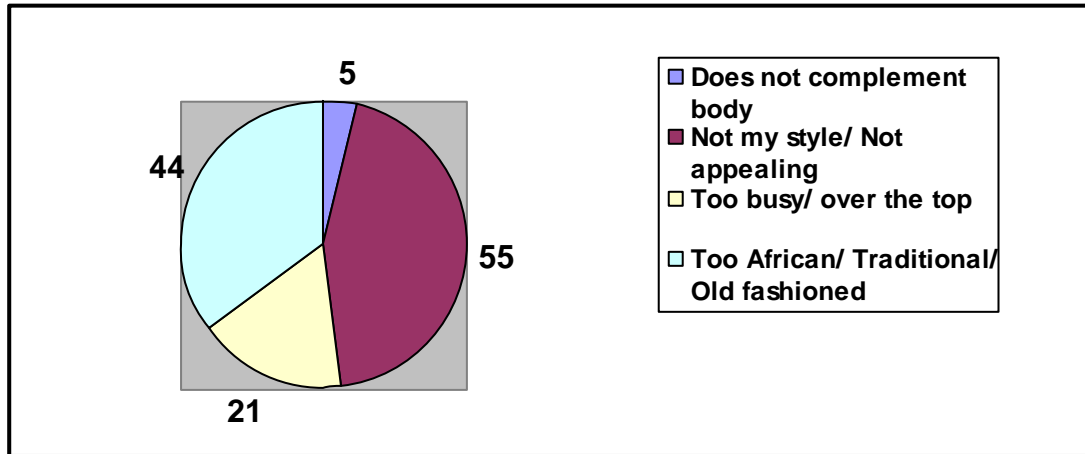
- **African fashion photograph (Q17.2)**



**FIGURE 6.8.3: REASONS FOR LIKING THE IMAGE**

Figure 6.8.3 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for liking the African fashion photograph. Question Q17.2 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that

appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for liking the image, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (61) gave the reason “that they like the African image or African outfits”, while 7 respondents indicated that the image is cultural yet modern, therefore liking the image. In this instance only two reasons for liking the image were coded, as most respondents indicated that they did not like the African image, and gave reasons, which will be discussed next.

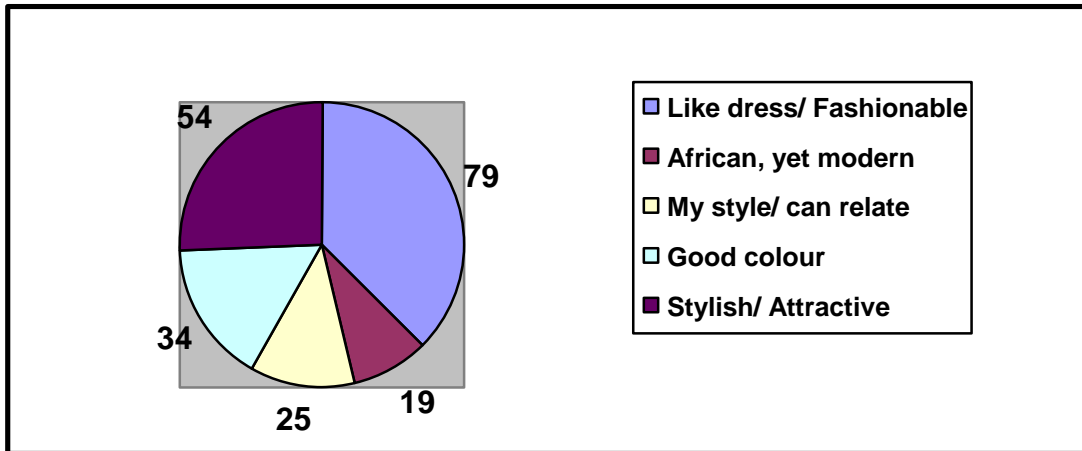


**FIGURE 6.8.4: REASONS FOR NOT LIKING THE IMAGE**

Figure 6.8.4 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for not liking the African fashion photograph. Question Q17.2 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. Most of the respondents (55) said they did not like the image, because it is not their style or the image is not appealing to them. Forty-four (44) respondents indicated that the image is too African or too traditional and old fashioned. Twenty-one (21) of the respondents said the image is too busy or over the top, while 5 respondents indicated that the outfit does not complement the models’ body.



- Euro-African fashion photograph (Q18.2)

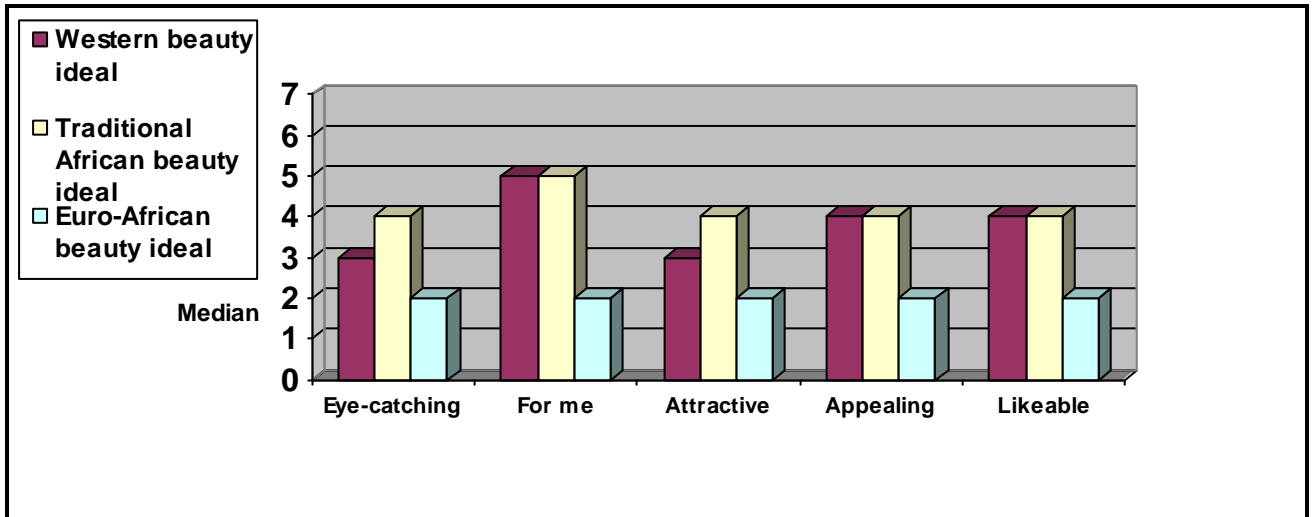


**FIGURE 6.8.5: REASONS FOR LIKING THE IMAGE**

With regard to the Euro-African fashion photograph, figure 6.8.5 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for liking the African fashion photograph. Question Q18.2 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently, depending on whether the respondents indicated in the previous question if they liked or did not like the image. Most of the respondents indicated that they liked the Euro-African image, and gave reasons for their answer. Due to this, most of the answers were coded with regard to reasons given for “liking” the image, and only one reason for “not liking” the image. Most of the respondents (79) said they like the image, because they like the dress or it is fashionable, while 54 respondents indicated that the image is African, yet modern. Thirty-four respondents gave the reason “the dress is a good colour/ they like the colour”, and 25 respondents said the image reflects their style, or they can relate to the image. Nineteen (19) also indicated that the image is stylish/ attractive, therefore they like the image. The only reason given (appearing most frequently) for not liking the image was that the dress is “not my style” (16 respondents).

**6.3.7.2 Sub-objective 7.2:**

To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments’ evaluation of the various images (Q16.10, Q17.10, Q18.10)



**FIGURE 6.9: RESPONDENTS’ EVALUATIONS OF IMAGES**

In questions 16.10, 17.10 and 18.10 respondents were asked to rate each of the fashion photographs portraying the various beauty ideals on five, 7-point semantic differential scales, namely eye catching/ not eye catching, for me/ not for me, appealing/ not appealing, likeable/ not likeable, and attractive/ not attractive. (1) Was the score if respondents agreed with the aspect/ feature of the photograph, and (7) the score if respondents did not agree with the feature/ aspect. Figure 6.9 illustrates the results of each of the 7-point semantic differential scales for each beauty ideal category. To interpret the results in an effective manner, a median for each scale was calculated. The lower the median, the more the respondents agreed with the specific aspect or feature of the photograph, whereas the higher the median, the less the respondents agreed with the aspect or feature of the photograph. The Euro-African beauty ideal scored the lowest median across all five 7-point semantic differential scales, and it is clear that the respondents liked the photograph depicting the Euro-African beauty ideal the best. The African beauty ideal, and the Western beauty ideals’ scores were very similar, however, the Western beauty ideal scored slightly lower medians for “eye-catching” and “attractive”. It can therefore be interpreted that the respondents liked the African beauty ideal the least, when considering the medians across all five 7-point semantic differential scales, and liked the Euro-African fashion photograph the most. The results obtained here; therefore verify the results obtained in the sub-objective 7.1, as the outcome was the same when respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they like the various fashion images.

### 6.3.7.3. Sub-objective 7.3:

To explore and describe how the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment relate to the specific images in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance (Q16.13, Q17.13, Q18.13)

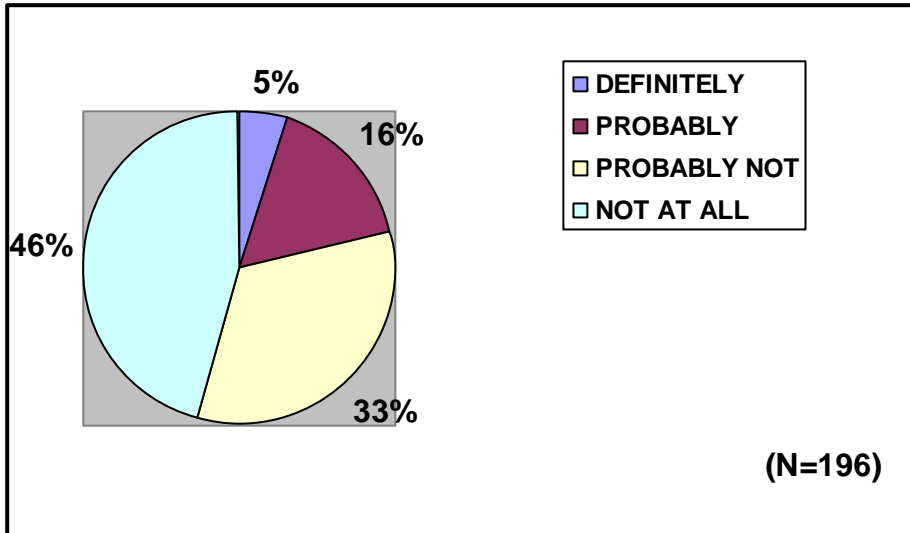
**TABLE 6.9: EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS RELATE TO THE IMAGES**

<u>Do you relate to the image i.t.o. culture, appearance and dress?:</u>	N	VERY LIKELY	MAYBE	VERY UNLIKELY
WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL	198	16%	27%	57%
AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	198	24%	52%	24%
EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	194	51%	38%	11%

When respondents were asked in questions 16.13, 17.13, and 18.13 to indicate if they relate to the three various fashion images in terms of culture, appearance and dress, the perceived similarity scale was used. Respondents had to indicate if they relate to the fashion photograph, using a three-point ordered set of options ranging from 1 (very likely) to 3 (very unlikely). Referring to table 6.9, the fashion photograph that the respondents related to the most, was the Euro-African beauty ideal image, with 51% of respondents indicated that they “very likely” relate to the fashion photograph. The image the respondents related to the least however, was the Western beauty ideal photograph, as 57% of respondents indicated that it is “very unlikely” that they relate to the image.

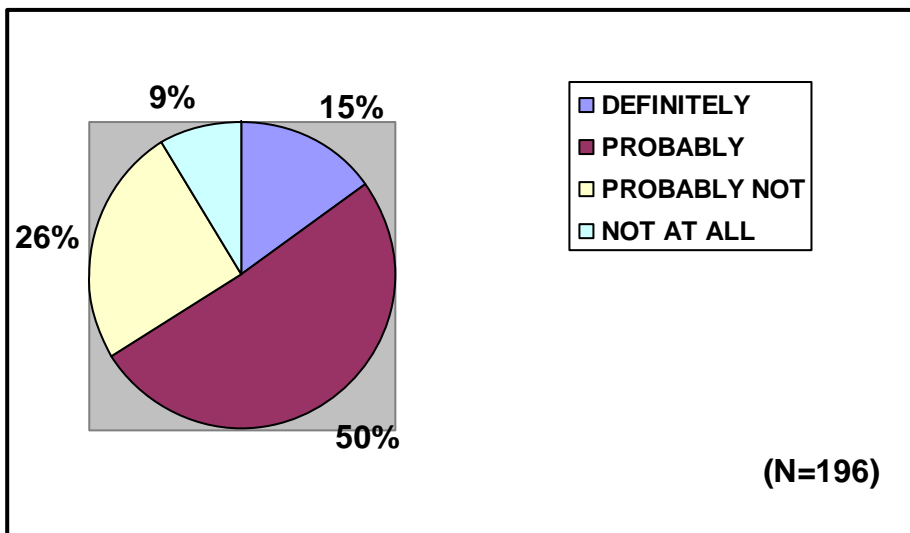
### 6.3.7.4 Sub-objective 7.4:

To explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment would compare themselves with the images (Q16.5, Q17.5, Q18.5 and Q16.9, Q17.9, Q18.9)



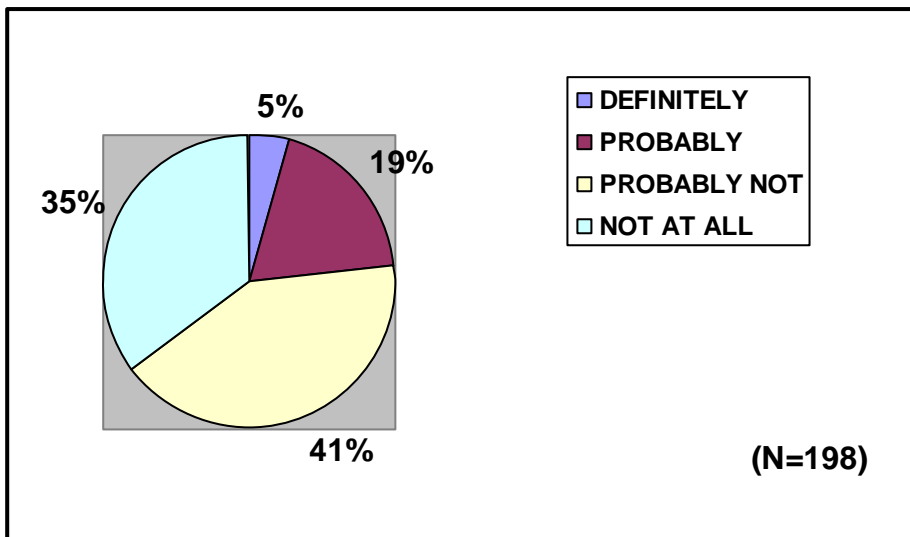
**FIGURE 6.10.1: EXTENT OF COMPARISON TO WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL**

Figure 6.10.1 shows the distribution of results obtained from question 16.5. One hundred and ninety six (196) respondents answered the question. Respondents were asked to view a fashion photograph reflecting a typical Western beauty ideal, and to indicate if they would compare themselves to it, by ticking one of four boxes (definitely, probably, probably not, or not at all). Most of the respondents (46%) indicated that they would not compare themselves to the Westernised fashion photograph, 33% said probably not, 16% said probably, and only 5% said definitely. This result shows that most of the respondents will not compare themselves to the Western beauty ideal.



**FIGURE 6.10.2: EXTENT OF COMPARISON TO EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL**

Figure 6.10.2 shows the distribution of results obtained from question 18.5. Respondents were asked to view a fashion photograph reflecting a typical Euro-African beauty ideal, and to indicate if they would compare themselves to it, by ticking one of four boxes (definitely, probably, probably not, or not at all). One hundred and ninety six (196) respondents answered the question. Least of the respondents (9%) indicated that they would not compare themselves at all, and 26% said probably not. Most respondents (50%) said they would probably compare themselves, and 15% said definitely. This result shows that most of the respondents will probably compare themselves to the Euro-African beauty ideal.



**FIGURE 6.10.3: EXTENT OF COMPARISON TO AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL**

Figure 6.10.3 shows the distribution of results obtained from question 17.5. One hundred and ninety eight (198) respondents answered the question. Respondents were asked to view a fashion photograph portraying an African beauty ideal, and to indicate if they would compare themselves to it, by ticking one of four boxes (definitely, probably, probably not, or not at all). Thirty five percent (35%) of the respondents indicated that they would not compare themselves at all, while 41% said probably not, 19% said probably, and only 5% said definitely. This result shows that most of the respondents will probably not compare themselves to the African beauty ideal.

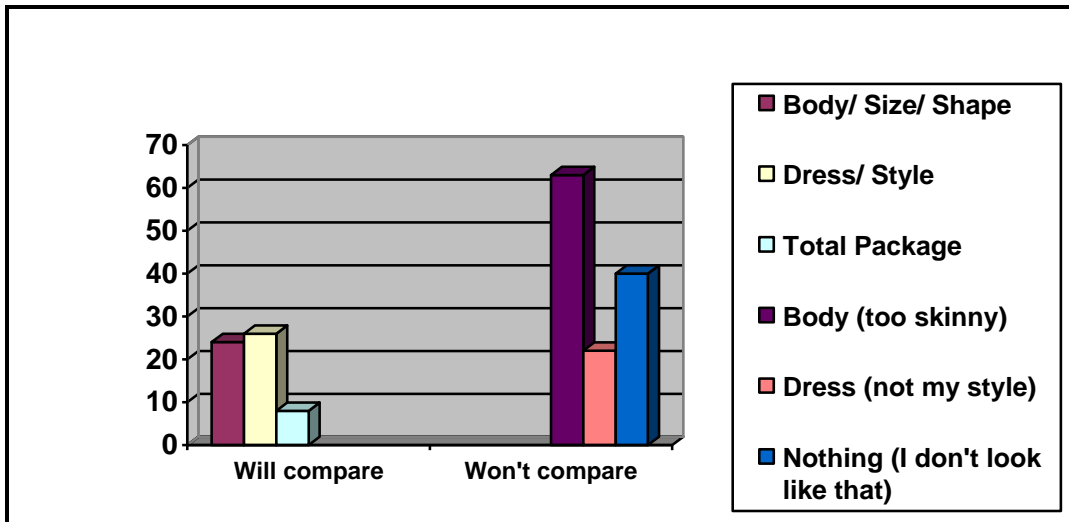
**TABLE 6.10: EXTENT OF COMPARISON TO THE VARIOUS BEAUTY IDEALS**

	<b>Definitely 1</b>	<b>Probably 2</b>	<b>Probably not 3</b>	<b>Not at all 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: WOULD (1+2)</b>	<b>WOULD NOT (3+4)</b>
<b>WESTERNISED</b>	5%	16%	33%	46%	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>AFRICAN</b>	5%	19%	41%	35%	<b>24%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>EURO-AFRICAN</b>	15%	50%	26%	9%	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>

Table 6.10 summarises the results obtained from Q16.5, Q17.5 and Q18.5, in sub-objective 7.4, which illustrate the comparison between the extents to which the women in the Mzansi Youth would compare themselves to the various images. The last two columns in table 6.10 show the percentage of responses calculated for each option. The first two options (1+2) were added, and the last two options (3+4) were added to obtain a percentage for “Would compare” and “Would not compare” responses only. This was done to simplify the results into a more manageable and useful form, making it easier to interpret and to compare the results. When comparing the results in table 6.10, it seems as though the respondents would compare themselves to the Euro-African beauty ideal the most (65%), with the African beauty ideal in second place (24%), followed by the Westernised beauty ideal (21%), although the last two beauty ideals’ scores were very closely related. One can therefore assume that most of the targeted consumers would rather compare themselves to the Euro-African beauty ideal, than to the African or Westernised beauty ideals.

In addition to the results discussed above, it was also of interest to explore which aspects the respondents would compare, and which aspects they would not compare with regard to the various fashion photographs. Question 16.6, Q17.6, and Q18.6 were open-ended questions, and respondents had to indicate which aspects they would compare, and which not, depending on their answers in Q16.5, Q17.5 and Q18.5. Responses were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. The results are portrayed in the figures below:

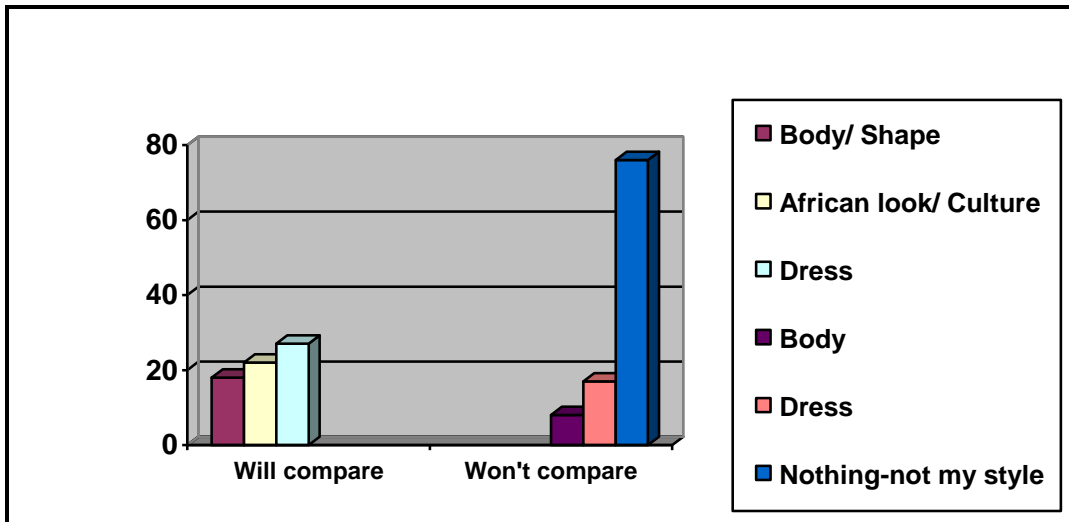
- **Westernised fashion photograph (Q16.6)**



**FIGURE 6.11.1: WHICH ASPECTS THEY WILL AND WON'T COMPARE**

Figure 6.11.1 shows the aspects the respondents indicated that they would compare with regard to the Westernised fashion photograph, and which aspects they would not compare. Results obtained from Q16.6 were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. Twenty-four (24) respondents indicated that they would compare their body or shape or size, while 26 respondents indicated that they would compare their dress or style. Eight (8) also indicated that they would compare the total package. It should be noted that most of the respondents indicated that they would not compare themselves to the Westernised image, and therefore most answers given were with regard to aspects they would not compare. Sixty-three (63) respondents said they would not compare their body, as the model is too skinny, while 40 respondents said they would compare nothing, as they don't look like the model in the image. Twenty-two also indicated that they would not compare their dress style, as is it not their style. Here it should be noted that the body came out as important in the ideal of beauty of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. Although it is probably not important for these respondents to compare themselves to others, they would certainly not compare their bodies to a body that is, according to their beauty standards, not beautiful (too skinny).

- African fashion photograph (Q17.6)

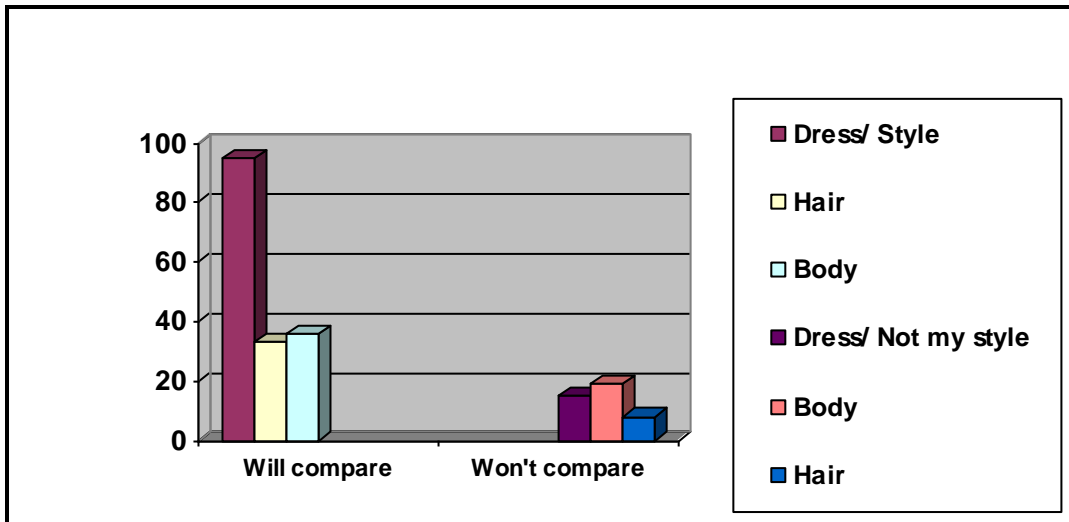


**FIGURE 6.11.2: WHICH ASPECTS THEY WILL AND WON'T COMPARE**

With regard to the African fashion photograph, (refer to figure 6.11.2) shows the aspects the respondents indicated that they would compare and which aspects they would not compare. Results obtained from Q17.6 were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. It should be noted that most of the respondents indicated that they would not compare themselves to the African image, and therefore most answers given were with regard to aspects they would not compare. Eighteen (18) respondents said they would compare their body or shape, while 22 said they would compare the African look or culture portrayed in the image, and 27 respondents indicated that they would compare their dress style. With regard to aspects they would not compare, most of the respondents (76) said they would compare nothing, as it is not their style, while 17 indicated that they would not compare their dress style, and 8 indicated they would not compare their body to that of the model in the African image.



- **Euro-African fashion photograph (Q18.6)**



**FIGURE 6.11.3: WHICH ASPECTS THEY WILL AND WON'T COMPARE**

Figure 6.11.3 shows the aspects the respondents indicated that they would compare with regard to the Euro-African fashion photograph, and which aspects they would not compare. Results obtained from Q18.6 were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. Here it should be noted, that although the targeted group (taking into consideration previous results regarding social comparison), would prefer not to compare themselves to those of others, but with regard to the three fashion photographs in the questionnaire, they indicated that they would rather compare themselves to the Euro-African image, than the other two fashion photographs in the questionnaire. Most answers given in this instance were with regard to aspects they would compare to the Euro-African image. Most of the respondents (95) said they would compare the dress or style, while 36 indicated body, and 33 their hair. With regard to aspects they would not compare to the Euro-African image, 19 respondents said they would not compare their body, while 15 indicated dress, as it is not their style, and 8 respondents indicated they would not compare their hairstyle. From the results obtained here, it is interesting that “hair” came up frequently, which gives the idea that hairstyle is an important aspect to the targeted group, which is also confirmed by the results obtained in Objective 1, with regard to aspects they view as important in their ideal of beauty. Dress style, which was the reason given the most for comparing also came out as the most important aspect in the beauty ideal of this group (Objective 1).

Furthermore, with regard to comparison to each of the beauty ideals portrayed in the fashion photographs in the questionnaire, respondents also had to indicate the reasons for comparing

themselves to each of the photographs respectively (i.e. Western image, African image, and the Euro-African image). The results obtained from Q16.7, Q17.7, and Q18.7 are summarised in table 6.7.4.5 below:

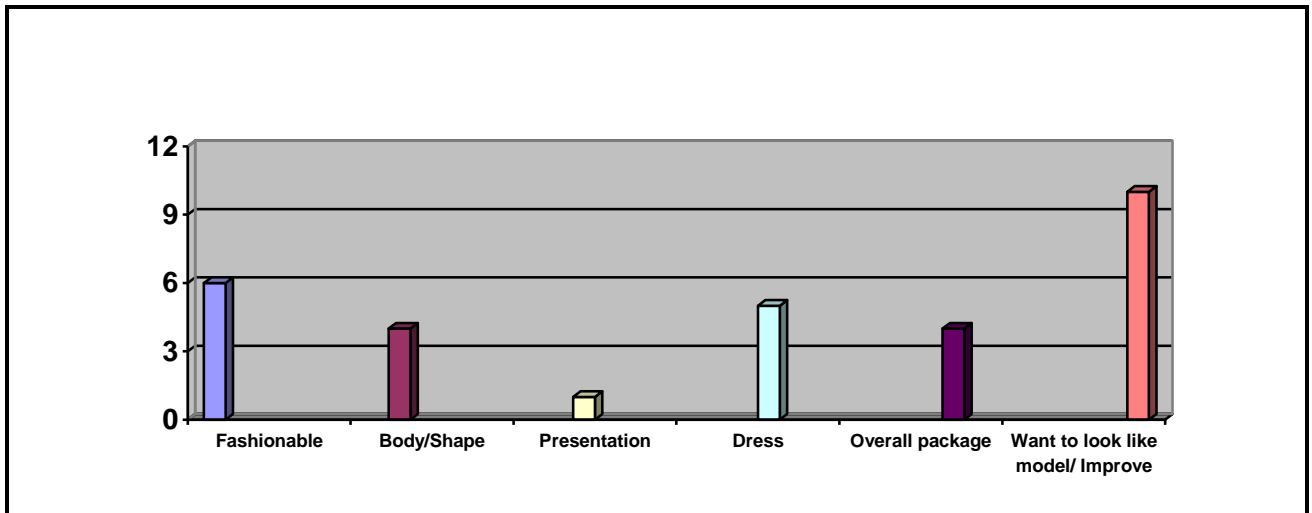
**TABLE 6.11: REASONS FOR COMPARING TO THE VARIOUS IMAGES (Q16.7, Q17.7, Q18.7)**

	To fit into group	To see shortcomings	To make comparisons	To feel better	N =
<b>WESTERNISED</b>	12%	30%	42%	16%	57
<b>AFRICAN</b>	32%	21%	29%	18%	58
<b>EURO-AFRICAN</b>	10%	28%	<b>45%</b>	17%	<b>127</b>

Table 6.11 summarises the results obtained from Q16.7, Q17.7, and Q18.7. Respondents indicating in Q16.5, Q16.5 and Q17.5 that they would compare themselves to the images, had to answer the questions. It is clear from the last column (N=), that most respondents indicated that they would compare themselves to the Euro-African image, as most respondents (127) answered Q18.7, in comparison to the other two images, where only (57 and 58 respondents) answered the questions. One can therefore argue that most respondents would compare themselves to the Euro-African image (as also evident in results discussed previously), more so than to the African or Westernised images. With regard to the Euro-African image, most respondents (45%) indicated that they would compare to the image, to help them see how they relate in comparison to others.

In addition to the answers discussed above, it was also of interest to explore other reasons (not the listed options given above in Q16.7, Q17.7, and Q18.7), for respondents indicating that they would compare themselves to the specific fashion images in question. Only respondents indicating in Q16.5, Q17.5 and Q18.5 that they would compare themselves to the specific image, had to answer the questions in Q16.8, Q17.8 and Q18.8. The results will be discussed below:

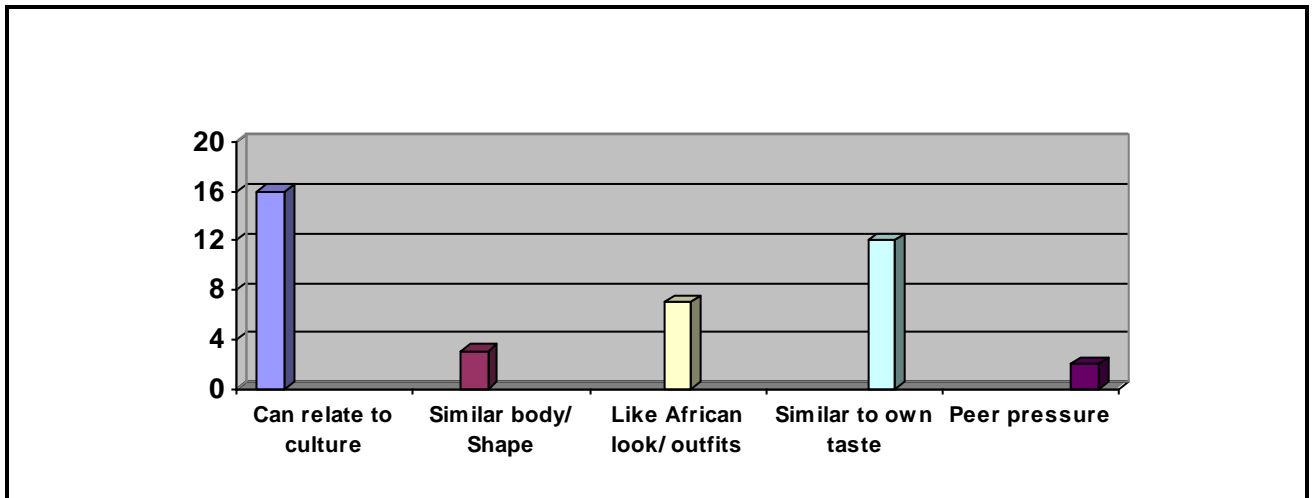
- **Westernised fashion photograph (Q16.8)**



**FIGURE 6.12.1: OTHER REASONS FOR COMPARING TO THE WESTERN IMAGE**

Figure 6.12.1 display other reasons respondents gave for comparing to the Westernised fashion photograph. It should be noted that few respondents answered Q16.8, and answers were coded with regard to those that appeared most frequently. Ten (10) respondents indicated that they would compare to the Western image because they want to look like the model in the image, or want to improve their body, 6 said the reason they would compare is because the image portrayed is fashionable, 5 indicated that they like the dress, others indicated that they would compare because their body or shape is similar to that of the model (4 respondents), and another reason given is they like the overall package (4 respondents). Only one respondent said she liked the presentation, and would therefore compare herself to the image.

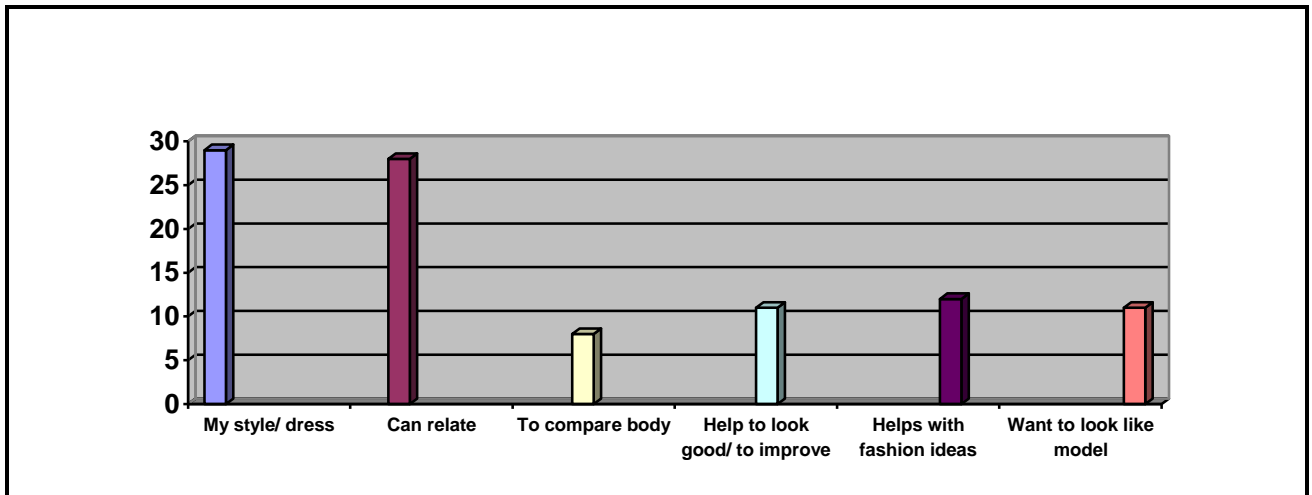
- **African fashion photograph (Q17.8)**



**FIGURE 6.12.2: OTHER REASONS FOR COMPARING TO THE AFRICAN IMAGE**

Figure 6.12.2 display other reasons respondents gave for comparing to the African fashion photograph. It should be noted that few respondents answered Q17.8, and answers were coded with regard to those that appeared most frequently. Sixteen respondents (16) indicated that they would compare to the image because they can “relate” to the image, 12 said they would compare because the style is similar to their taste, 7 said they like the African look or outfit and would therefore compare, while only 3 respondents said that the reason for comparing is because they have a similar body to the model. Two (2) respondents also said they would compare to the African image because of peer pressure to conform to the cultural fashion norm.

- Euro-African fashion photograph (Q17.8)



**FIGURE 6.12.3: OTHER REASONS FOR COMPARING TO THE EURO-AFRICAN IMAGE**

Figure 6.12.3 display other reasons respondents gave for comparing to the Euro-African fashion photograph. Q18.8 was an open-ended question and answers were coded with regard to those that appeared most frequently. Twenty-nine (29) respondents indicated the reason for comparing to the Euro-African image, as “my style or dress”, 28 gave the reason “can relate” to the image, 12 said they would compare to the image because it helps with fashion ideas, while 11 respondents indicated the reason for comparing as “helps to look good or improve their fashion sense”. Another 11 respondents said that the reason for comparing to the image is because they want to look like the model in the fashion photograph, and least respondents (8) indicated they would compare, because they can compare their body to that of the model.

Respondents were asked about their coping strategies when they engaged in comparison with the various images portraying the three different beauty ideals. The results are illustrated in the table below:

**TABLE 6.12: COPING STRATEGIES IN CASE OF NEGATIVE COMPARISON (Q16.9, Q17.9, Q18.9)**

<b>COPING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>Western Beauty ideal (N=110)</b>	<b>African Beauty ideal (N=100)</b>	<b>Euro-African Beauty ideal (N=78)</b>
Try harder to reach standard	17%	8%	31%
<b>Accept standard, do nothing further</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Modify Personal standard	20%	17%	17%
Modify Cultural standard	6%	21%	21%

Table 6.12 illustrates the results obtained from questions 16.9, 17.9 and 18.9. Respondents were asked which coping strategies they would engage in, if they compared negatively to the beauty ideal depicted in each of the fashion photographs. In the case of the Western beauty ideal, one hundred and ten (110) respondents answered the question, and most of the respondents (57%) indicated that they would accept the standard, but do nothing to achieve it. Regarding the African beauty ideal, one hundred (100) respondents answered the question and most of them (54%) said they would accept the standard, but do nothing further to achieve it. Lastly, in the case of the Euro-African beauty ideal, seventy eight (78) respondents answered the question and most of the respondents (44%) indicated that they would accept the standard, but do nothing further to achieve it, however 31% did indicate that they would accept the standard and try harder to reach it. It therefore appears that when they compare negatively to the various beauty ideals, most of the respondents across all three of the beauty ideals would use the same coping strategy, namely “to accept the standard, and do nothing further to achieve it”. The only major difference noticeable regarding coping strategies across the 3 beauty ideals, is that 31% of respondents indicated that they would “accept the standard, and try harder to reach it”, in the case of the Euro-African beauty ideal. This could be due to the fact that respondents scored this particular fashion photograph the highest (most favourable) throughout the various questions in the study, therefore preferring and liking this image, and they would probably attempt to reach the standard portrayed in the fashion image, more so than in comparison with the other two beauty ideals portrayed in the two fashion photographs.

It is interesting to compare these results to the results obtained from objective 6 discussed earlier (refer to Figure 6.7), as both sets of results deal with the coping strategies the respondents would

engage in when comparing negatively. The only difference is that in objective 6, respondents had to indicate the coping strategy they would use when comparing negatively to their own specific fashion ideal of beauty, whereas here, respondents had to indicate which coping strategy they would engage in when comparing themselves to each of the various beauty ideals. In each instance, the results relate closely to one another, as most respondents also indicated in results obtained from objective 6, that they would accept the standard, and do nothing further to achieve it, which correlate to the results obtained across all three beauty ideals. This is in line with the fact that personal/ individual “me” is probably more important to the respondents, than changing their appearance just to compare favourably to others.

### 6.3.7.5 Sub-objective 7.5:

To explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment’s willingness to buy fashion magazines with the above images (Q16.3, Q17.3, Q18.3 and Q16.12, Q17.12, Q18.12)

Two questions were asked to explore respondents’ willingness to purchase fashion magazines with the various images portrayed in the questionnaire. In the first instance (Q16.3, Q17.3, Q18.3), respondents had to indicate on a 4-point ordered set of options, the “extent” to which they would consider purchasing a fashion magazine featuring similar images, whereas in the second instance (Q16.12, Q17.12, Q18.12), respondents had to indicate their “intent” to purchase a magazine with similar images. Both are discussed below.

**TABLE 6.13: EXTENT TO WHICH MAGAZINES WOULD BE PURCHASED**

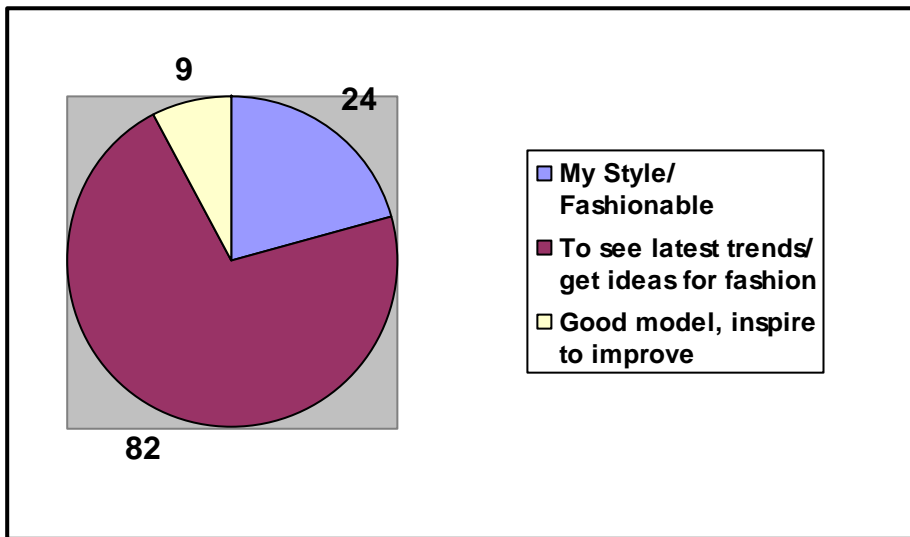
<b>Would you purchase a magazine featuring similar images?:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Definitely 1</b>	<b>Probably 2</b>	<b>Probably not 3</b>	<b>Not at all 4</b>	<b><u>TOTAL:</u> PROBABLY (1+2)</b>	<b>PROBABLY NOT (3+4)</b>
WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL	199	16%	46%	31%	7%	<b>62%</b>	<b>38%</b>
AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	198	8%	42%	33%	17%	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	197	38%	51%	9%	2%	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Table 6.13 illustrates the results obtained from questions 16.3, 17.3 and 18.3. Respondents were asked to indicate if they would purchase a fashion magazine featuring the fashion images portraying the various beauty ideals. Respondents were asked to tick one of four boxes on a 4-point ordered set of options (definitely, probably, probably not, or not at all). The last two columns in table 6.13 show the percentage of responses calculated for each option. Columns (1+2) were added together, and columns (3+4) were added together to obtain a percentage for “Probably” and “Probably not” responses only. This was done to simplify the results into a more manageable and useful form, making it easier to interpret and to compare the results. Sixty two percent (62%) of the respondents said they would probably purchase a magazine featuring Western beauty ideal fashion images, and 38% indicated that they would not. Half of respondents said that they would purchase a magazine featuring similar images portraying the African beauty ideal, and the other half of respondents indicated that they would probably not. Most of the respondents (89%) indicated that they would probably purchase a magazine featuring fashion images portraying the Euro-African beauty ideal, and only 11% said that they probably wouldn’t. This means that the Euro-African beauty ideal photograph once again scored the highest results when asked if they would purchase a magazine featuring similar images, and the African beauty ideal scored the lowest amongst the respondents, as was the case when respondents were asked if they liked the various fashion images in the previous sub-objective. The results therefore correlate with the results from sub-objective 7.1, which gives a clear indication of respondents’ preferences regarding the three fashion photographs portraying the various beauty ideals.

In addition to the results obtained above, it was also of interest to explore the reasons for purchasing or not purchasing magazines featuring the various images. Question 16.4, Q17.4, and Q18.4 were open-ended questions, and respondents had to indicate their reasons for indicating that they would purchasing or not purchase magazines with similar images, depending on their answers in Q16.3, Q17.3 and Q18.3. Responses were coded in terms of answers that appeared most frequently. The results are portrayed in the figures below:

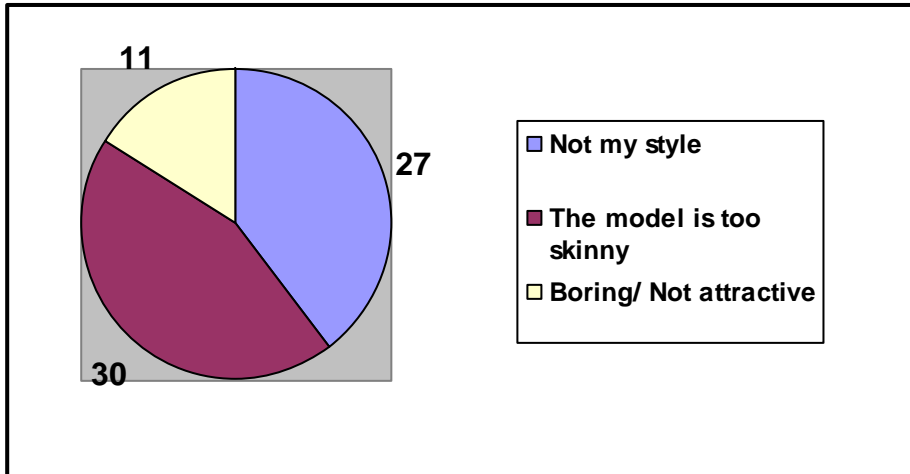


- Westernised fashion photograph (Q16.4)



**FIGURE 6.13.1: REASONS FOR PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING WESTERN IMAGES**

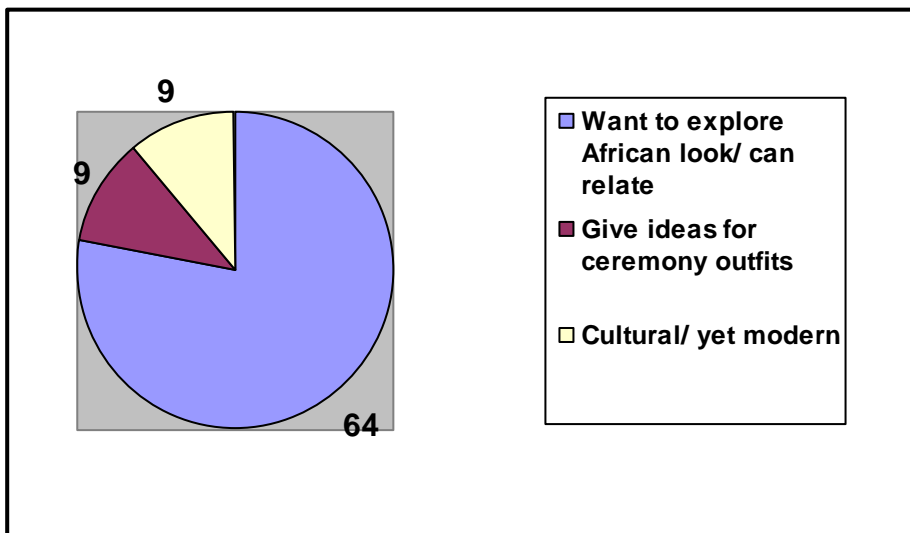
Figure 6.13.1 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the Westernised fashion photograph. Question Q16.4 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for purchasing a magazine with similar images, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (82) said they would purchase such a magazine to see the latest trends or get ideas for fashion, 24 respondents said that it is their style or the image is fashionable, while 9 respondents gave the reason that the image portrays a good model, and it inspired them to improve themselves.



**FIGURE 6.13.2: REASONS FOR NOT PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING WESTERN IMAGES**

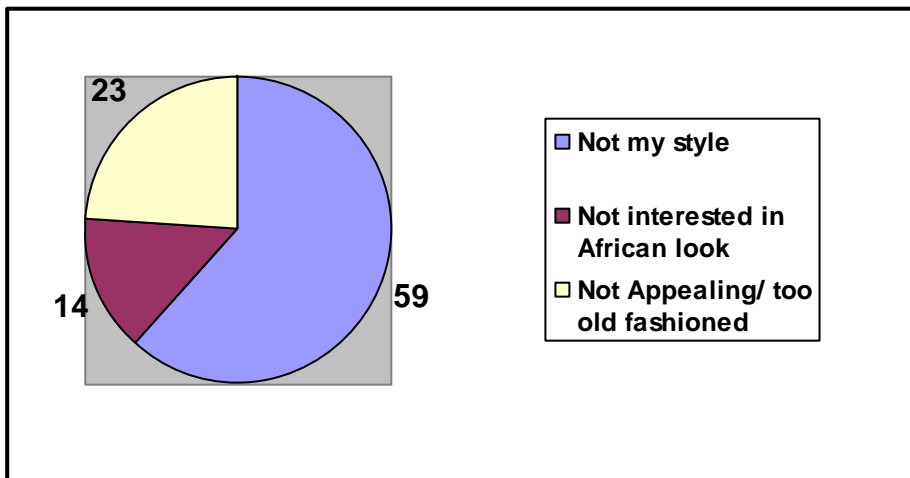
Figure 6.13.2 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for not purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the Westernised fashion photograph. Respondents indicating in Q16.3 that they would not purchase a magazine with similar images to the Westernised fashion image, gave the following reasons: Thirty (30) respondents said the model is too skinny, and 27 said it is “not my style”, while 11 indicated the image is boring or not attractive.

- **African fashion photograph (Q17.4)**



**FIGURE 6.13.3: REASONS FOR PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING AFRICAN IMAGES**

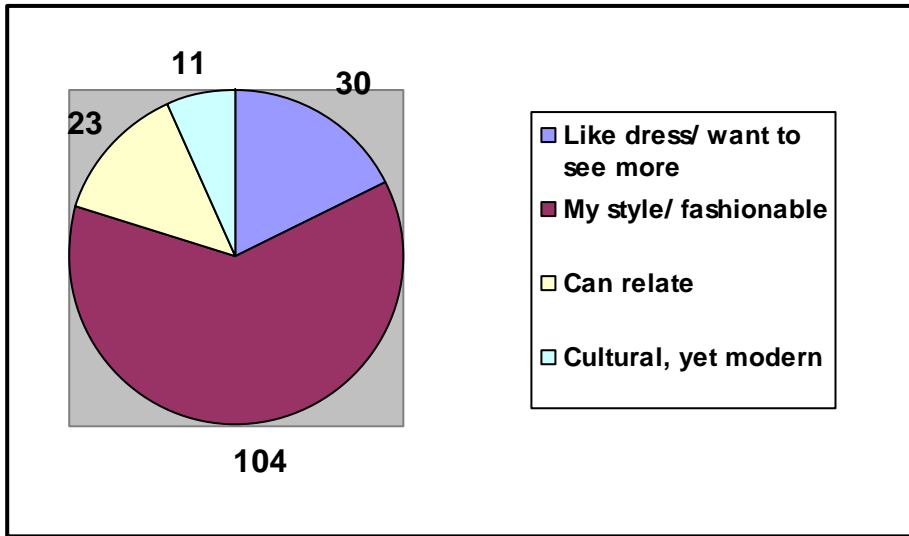
Figure 6.13.3 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the African fashion photograph. Question Q17.4 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for purchasing a magazine with similar images, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (64) indicated that they would purchase a magazine with African images, as they want to explore the African look, or they can relate to the image, while 9 said it gives ideas for ceremony outfits, such as weddings, and another 9 respondents indicated that the image portrayed is cultural, yet modern.



**FIGURE 6.13.4: REASONS FOR NOT PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING AFRICAN IMAGES**

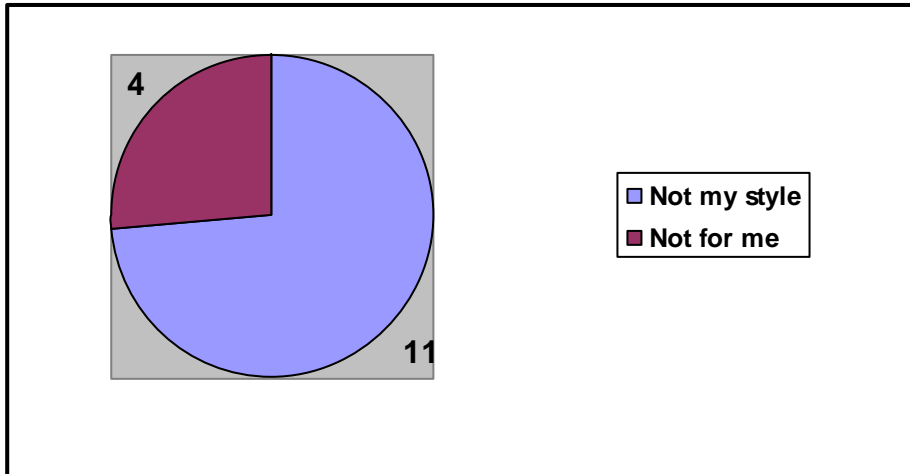
Figure 6.13.4 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for not purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the African fashion photograph. Respondents indicating in Q17.3 that they would not purchase a magazine with similar images to the African fashion image, gave the following reasons: Fifty-nine (59) respondents said it is not their style of dressing, and 14 said they are not interested in the African look, while 23 respondents indicated the image is not appealing or too old fashioned.

- Euro-African fashion photograph (Q18.4)



**FIGURE 6.13.5: REASONS FOR PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING EURO-  
AFRICAN IMAGES**

Figure 6.13.5 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the Euro-African fashion photograph. Question Q18.4 was an open-ended question, and results were coded in terms of the answers that appeared most frequently. The respondents could give more than one reason for purchasing a magazine with similar images, and therefore only values are given, and not percentages. Most of the respondents (104) indicated that they would purchase a magazine featuring Euro-African images, as it is their style, or fashionable, while 30 said they like the dress in the image and would like to see more similar images. Twenty-three (23) respondents indicated that they can relate to the image, and will therefore purchase such a magazine, and 11 respondents indicated that the image is cultural, yet modern. When comparing the results from this question about the reasons for purchasing a magazine featuring Euro-African images, to those of the other two images in the questionnaire (discussed above), it is clear that most of the respondents would consider purchasing a magazine featuring Euro-African images, as most respondents answered this particular question (Q18.4) positively, and gave reasons in that regard. The results obtained here, also relate to the results obtained in sub-objective 7.5, which dealt with the extent to which certain magazines featuring the different images would be purchased, thereby confirming the results obtained here.



**FIGURE 6.13.6: REASONS FOR NOT PURCHASING MAGAZINE FEATURING EURO-  
AFRICAN IMAGES**

With regard to reasons given for not purchasing a magazine featuring similar images to the Euro-African fashion photograph, only few respondents gave reasons, as least respondents indicated in Q18.3 that they would not purchase a magazine with similar images. Figure 6.13.6 shows the reasons the respondents indicated for not purchasing a magazine featuring similar images than the Euro-African fashion photograph. The two reasons coded that came to the fore most frequently were: Eleven (11) respondents said it is not their style of dressing, and only 4 respondents gave the reason “not for me”. This was anticipated, as most respondents indicated that they would in fact purchase a magazine featuring similar images to the Euro-African fashion photograph.

**TABLE 6.14: INTENT TO PURCHASE MAGAZINE FEATURING SIMILAR IMAGES**

<b><u>Would you purchase a magazine featuring similar images?:</u></b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VERY LIKELY</b>	<b>MAYBE</b>	<b>VERY UNLIKELY</b>
WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL	199	29%	50%	21%
AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	197	17%	44%	39%
EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	194	65%	28%	7%

Table 6.14 illustrates the results obtained from questions 16.12, 17.12 and 18.12. Respondents were asked to indicate their intent to purchase a fashion magazine typically featuring fashion photographs portraying each of the three beauty ideals respectively. From table 6.14 it is clear that most of the respondents (65%) indicated that they would very likely purchase a magazine

depicting the Euro-African beauty ideal in fashion photographs. The African beauty ideal fashion photograph again scored the worst, as 39% of respondents indicated that it is very unlikely that they would purchase such a magazine. The results obtained from these questions, therefore verifies the results obtained in the previous version (the only difference being that here the respondents' intent to purchase the fashion magazine was measured, and not the extent, as was the case in the previous question).

### 6.3.7.6 Sub-objective 7.6:

To explore and describe the women in the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's intentions to buy similar clothing than in the fashion images (Q16.11, Q17.11, Q18.11)

**TABLE 6.15: INTENT TO PURCHASE CLOTHING FEATURED IN THE IMAGES**

<b><u>Would you purchase the clothing featured in the image por the:</u></b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VERY LIKELY</b>	<b>MAYBE</b>	<b>VERY UNLIKELY</b>
WESTERN BEAUTY IDEAL	198	20%	44%	36%
AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	197	12%	25%	63%
EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL	194	56%	35%	9%

Questions 16.11, 17.11 and 18.11 asked the respondents if they would purchase the clothing featured in each of the fashion photographs depicting the various beauty ideals. As seen in table 6.15, fifty six percent (56%) indicated that they would very likely purchase the clothing featured in the Euro-African beauty ideal fashion photograph, which scored the highest of all three images. Most of the respondents indicated that they would very unlikely purchase the clothing featured in the African beauty ideal image (63%). The Euro-African beauty ideal photograph once again scored the best in this category, with the African beauty ideal image scoring the lowest of the three fashion images. A very clear theme is therefore being noticed, throughout the results obtained in the study. This is said because the respondents scored the Euro-African beauty ideal the highest, and the African beauty ideal the lowest with regard to almost all of the various questions pertaining to the fashion photographs in the questionnaire.

## **6.4. CONCLUSION**

With the results of the study in mind, the upcoming chapter will focus on the discussion and interpretation of the results against the viewpoints of the theories that were chosen as conceptual background for the study, as well as the work of previous researchers. Other theories deemed necessary for interpretation of the results, will also be considered.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

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#### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of data implies that the broader meaning and the implication of the research results as well as their congruence or lack of congruence with the results of other researchers are sought (Trochim, 2006). Whereas the conceptual definition of interpretation includes both “the search for meaning” and “the search for implication”, this chapter only focuses on the meaning of the research results. The implication of the results is dealt with in Chapter 8.

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group’s social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. In this chapter the research results are discussed and interpreted against the viewpoints of the theories that were chosen as conceptual background for this research, the work of previous researchers and other theories deemed necessary for the interpretation of the results. The discussion and interpretation is presented in a specific sequence, as set out by the objectives of the study.

#### 7.2. DEMOGRAPHICS

Most of the respondents indicated that they live in urban areas, meaning that the targeted consumers are not from a primitive background, and have probably been exposed to the influences of modern society in the cities of South Africa, which could mean that they are likely to be interested in modern trends and fashions, as they are part of modern society. The majority of the respondents also indicated that they are only students at the present time. The results show an accurate reflection of the intended target market, as the description of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment are said to be mostly students that are studying toward their future, aspiring and future focused, with a passion and drive for education (Olivier, 2007:181). Furthermore, the Mzansi Youth sub-segment has been described as consisting of mostly younger people that are generally optimistic and have a go-getting style of living, which is consistent with the results obtained from respondents (being that they are between 18 and 24 years of age) in this study. This sub-segment is said to have the desire, energy, drive and the time to better themselves in the future, which could be the reason for the majority of respondents indicating that they are indeed studying, as was anticipated (The new black



middle class, 2006). It is interesting that 35% of the respondents indicated that they are presently working as well, which could mean that they may have extra money that could be spent on luxury items such as fashionable clothes and fashion magazines.

With regard to magazine consumption of the targeted group, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they read fashion magazines, whether it being on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Thirty two percent (32%) of the respondents read fashion magazines on a monthly basis, while 25% of respondents indicated that they read fashion magazines on a weekly basis. When these two figures are added together, it becomes clear that the majority of the respondents read fashion magazines every week or at least every month. Results obtained from the study by Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (2006), showed that Black Diamonds generally have rather fast paced lives, and they face a variety of demands on their time, which could have been the reason why not more of the respondents read fashion magazines on a daily or weekly basis. From the results however, it is clear that fashion magazines are seen as attractive reading material by the targeted consumers, as most of the respondents indicated favourably towards reading fashion magazines on at least a weekly or monthly basis. A reason for this may be, because magazines seem to invite casual reading for people with more pre-occupations and less time (as is the case with the Mzansi-Youth) (Internet: Talent- Young Things, 2006).

It was also of interest to gather information on the Mzansi-Youths' preference for fashion magazines, as previous research conducted by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (2006), indicated that the women in the Black Diamond consumer groups' favourite magazine most closely related to the fashion magazine genre, is "True Love" (Internet: Talent- Young Things, 2006). One hundred and ten (110) respondents indicated that they read "Cosmopolitan", 85 respondents "ELLE", and 85 respondents "Glamour". These 3 magazines had the highest frequency, which is interesting because this could mean that the targeted consumers are specifically interested in fashion magazines, and not general magazines such as "People" and "True Love", as was anticipated considering the results conducted by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing. It is also interesting that their three favourite fashion magazines are all international fashion magazines (although a national edition) that are available locally here in South Africa. Although these magazines are available in the form of different editions for each country or area of the world, and vary to some degree in editorial and advertising content, they are not entirely different. It should however be noted, that these international fashion magazines that are available in South Africa do

not necessarily embody ethnic and racial identities that are related to the country's readership in South Africa.

When respondents had to indicate why they read fashion magazines, most of the respondents indicated that fashion is the reason for reading fashion magazines, while other important reasons were "beauty" and "to keep up to date". It is known that in general, readers read fashion magazines for information pertaining to new trends and styles (Watt, 1999:2). Fashion magazines tell readers what the current trends are, as well as the names behind them and where the fashion items or clothes can be purchased, meaning that fashion magazines therefore legitimize fashion and the world of fashion in cultural terms (Moeran, 2006: 732).

### **7.3. IDEAL OF BEAUTY**

Most people within their culture strive to achieve a specific ideal of beauty that is currently popular or accepted in their culture (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). Objective 1 was formulated to explore and describe the importance of specific beauty standards in the beauty ideal of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group. Previous research suggested that consumers of different ethnic backgrounds have varying beliefs about what is defined as "beautiful" in each of their cultures (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). The notion of "What is beautiful" can thus be described as "a culturally constituted phenomenon that happens because of common socialisation experiences amongst people of a certain culture or ethnicity" (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). It therefore became necessary to determine which aspects are important to the consumer group of this study with regard to their ideal of beauty.

When respondents had to rank the importance of hairstyle, dress, body, accessories and skin colour, in their beauty ideal, hairstyle was ranked as being the most important, with dress and body following closely in second and third place. One can therefore anticipate that hairstyle, dress and body have the most important influence on the respondents' perception of what is beautiful, and should be taken into consideration when one wants to reach this target market. Skin colour was ranked as being least important to the sample with regard to their beauty ideal, which is very interesting, as it was anticipated that skin colour would affect their evaluations of what is beautiful. This does however not necessarily mean that skin colour is not at all important to them; it could be that the other given aspects are only considered to be of higher importance to them, when faced with

ranking the aspects important in their ideal of beauty. Body, dress style and hairstyle were also the most important aspects respondents indicated that they would compare with their ideal of beauty.

Body image can be defined as “the mental perception of one’s body, and may influence the general desire for aesthetic products” (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:92). According to Rubin *et al.* (2003) there are culturally based differences in aesthetic body ideals. Body size, features and shape of the women of colour in South Africa probably differ greatly from mainstream representations of female beauty from the Western world. This still remains an interesting point in this study, as it seems as though the respondents prefer reading internationally based fashion magazines, which largely convey representations of female beauty from the Western world. However, a reason for this may be, that there is no fashion magazine currently available in South Africa, specifically catering for this market segment, and therefore these readers have to turn to those fashion magazines most closely related to their interests. International research has shown that there are important differences in body concepts and ideals of beauty among white consumers and their black counterparts (Rubin *et al.*, 2003:52). This was the specific reason for wanting to gain insight into the groups’ concept of what is beautiful, and distinguishing those aspects that differ from other consumer groups, especially those depicted in fashion magazines from a Western origin.

#### **7.4. THE ROLE OF PERSONAL- AND SOCIAL IDENTITY**

With the focus on fashion, appearance is evaluated and compared by the targeted consumers on the basis of either cultural factors or personal factors (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:191). People create an appearance by means of clothing to decorate, shape and adorn their bodies to be presented to others. Personal factors often affect how people evaluate and compare their own and other’s appearance, which are mostly influenced by individual levels of self-esteem and attitudes towards factors such as body image (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:191). Cultural factors also affect the way people evaluate their own appearances as well as those of others. It has become clear that beliefs surrounding cultural factors regarding fashion and beauty may differ among people in different societies and countries. Against the background of identity theory (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke; 2000) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000), it was further reasoned that the respondents’ beauty ideal would either be directed by a personal identity (directed by individual qualities and a Westernised emphasis on power), or a social identity (in this case sub-cultural identity, with the emphasis on self-categorisation, social comparison and group-

belonging). Objective 2 was formulated to explore and describe the role of personal and social (sub-cultural) identity in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment's preference for specific appearance qualities.

It was clear from the results that most of the respondents want to be acknowledged as an individual person, and that their appearance should show their personal qualities. Most of the respondents also indicated that it is important to them that their appearance shows that they are proud of their personal qualities. It therefore seems as if it is more important for the respondents to be acknowledged as an individual person and for their personal qualities, rather than for a Westernised fashion style or beauty ideal, as all statements relating to a Westernised style or ideal, were scored as being not important to the respondents.

Although it was important for the respondents to be seen as an African woman and up-coming African student, it was however, not important to them that their appearance or dress should resemble those of others, in this case African friends and models. It became very clear that it is important to the respondents to be acknowledged for who they are as an up-coming African individual, rather than to show others that they belong to a specific cultural, sub-cultural or social group. A factor analysis showed three factors emerging from the results, namely factor 1 that portrays an anti-Westernised viewpoint, a factor 2 that portrays an anti-African viewpoint, and a factor 3 with a strong emphasis on the individual and individual qualities, named “enabling me”. A reason for a third factor to come to the fore here, could be because the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment live in a society here in South Africa that is becoming all the more influenced by Western ideologies, and economic models, which seems to be causing a shift from collectivism to individualism (Stevens, Garth, Lockhat & Rafiq, 1997). Furthermore, according to Stevens *et al.* (1997), this phenomenon can be referred to as the “Coca-Cola” culture, which is said to be the embracing of the American concept of individualism, competition, individualistic aspirations and general worldview. A study conducted on young students in South Africa, also showed that language, religion, culture and ethnicity were mentioned less often when they had to describe their future identity aspirations in comparison to their self-concepts (Franchi & Swart, 2002:219). This leads to the implication that cultural standards could be viewed as becoming less important, in comparison to individualistic standards, as conveyed in the results discussed above. This point was also conveyed in previous research conducted on the Black Diamonds, which showed that the importance of culture is expressed by the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment, as they appreciate the basics, but their commitment and good sentiment regarding culture is declining (Black Diamond survey, 2007:99). This aspect is especially significant when comparing their views on culture in

relation to the other sub-segments in the Black Diamond consumer group (the others still view culture to be very important in their lives). This is an important point to consider when wanting to target the consumer segment of this study. Another important consideration is that the targeted consumers may very well be identifying with more than one reference group, as there are a wide variety of groups and influences in a rainbow nation such as South Africa (Franchi & Swart, 2002). This means that cultural identity and even social identity may become salient, when an individual identifies with multiple reference groups.

Franchi and Swart (2002) further noted from their study, a relative absence of racial or cultural identity markers amongst African students that may indicate that these young people are attempting to define their identity beyond the narrow confines of racial or cultural categorisation. This may also reflect their desire to align themselves with the ethos of a new demographic South Africa, which embodies a future orientated progression towards a unified national or world identity, whilst simultaneously recognising individual differences (Franchi & Swart, 2002). It seems as if individual “enabling me” identity correlates much better with the definition of personal identity, emphasised by identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2002), including a variety of identities over various socialisations (including sub-cultural identity), than a social identity, where the emphasis is on group belonging (Stets & Burke, 2000). It should further be noted that according to the results obtained from a previous study, a category to be distinguished among consumers in South Africa, is the so-called “Wild Child” (Now Project, 2007). They are said to be between the ages of 18 to 24 years, which is the same age category as the target market in this study. This particular consumer group is said to have a tertiary education, they are cool, confident, and celebrate their individuality (Now Project, 2007). Although this group contains mostly whites, it is increasingly becoming more mixed race, and especially taking into consideration that we are currently well into post-apartheid years, this theme is likely to be continued as the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamonds, seems to have many of those characteristics, with the emphasis on individuality.

## **7.5. AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS**

From the literature background of the study, it is apparent that sub-cultural standards, body image, perceived self, personal identity standards, as well as aesthetics may play a major role in the Black Diamond’s evaluation and decision-making process surrounding fashion products and fashion magazine advertisements. Socio-cultural differences include sub-cultural standards, which is said to have a great effect on aesthetic preferences of consumers (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). By tailoring

marketing strategies to the preferences of the women in the targeted consumer group, fashion products aimed at them would avoid missing the mark when appealing to them through fashion advertisements. It is said that all products, including fashion magazines, are often bought primarily for a pleasurable experience (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:3). Aesthetic aspects are often related to the perceived quality of a product, especially in the case of apparel. It may therefore be anticipated that aesthetic aspects may also be an important consideration for consumers when purchasing other fashion products, such as a fashion magazine. It therefore became necessary to explore and describe the role aesthetic dimensions, which are relevant in this study, play.

As apparent from the theoretical background of the study, aesthetic experience relates to the selection of symbolic, formal and expressive qualities of a product that result in satisfaction on the consumer's part (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:4). Formal qualities refer to the perceived features of the structural composition of a product or object, such as colour, texture, shape and proportion, and have the ability to evoke emotion on the consumer's part. Formal qualities of products may provide pleasure to the senses and can often enhance beauty, and are often evident in the form of emotions that are evoked by the creator in the consumer, and are learned responses (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:6). Symbolic qualities on the other hand, originate from content or meaning, and communicate an idea about the world (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:9).

Differentiating factors in socio-cultural factors were important to consider in this study, because it often leads to variations in aesthetic preferences and consumer behaviour across cultures (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). These variations are said to be related to the culture's definition of aesthetic experience, meaning that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group probably define their aesthetic experience differently than consumers in other cultures or sub-cultural groups. Research has shown that culture has a great effect on the importance ratings of expressive, formal and symbolic aspects of a product in aesthetic evaluation (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:85). This means that consumers across different cultures and sub-cultures may view some of these aspects as being more important than others. In this study it became critical to understand the importance given to these aspects by the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, especially when wanting to appeal to them in an effective manner. The idea is that symbolic, expressive and formal qualities of a fashion product should satisfy the consumer on an emotional, sensory and cognitive level (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). Objective 3 in the study aimed to explore and describe the role of aesthetic dimensions (symbolic, emotional and sensory) in the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group's beauty ideal.

Although all the aspects regarding the role of sensory aesthetics in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' beauty ideal was seen as important and very important by the respondents, the importance of the body as a standard in this group, again came to the fore. It was further clear that the emotional dimension of the aesthetic experience also plays a major role in the female Mzansi Youths' beauty ideal. The emphasis is again on the individual and her feelings (in this regard that the clothes should make her feel feminine and give her pleasure and should make her feel in command of herself). The results on the importance of the symbolic dimension underline the unimportance of group belonging and the importance of the individual, as most of the respondents indicated that it is important and very important to them that their appearance should show others who they are (as an individual person), with less than half of the respondents indicating that it is important that their appearance should communicate their belonging to a specific group.

If one compares the three aesthetic dimensions, the sensory and emotional dimensions could be regarded as being more important to the respondents than the symbolic dimension with regard to their ideal of beauty. But in this case it seems of higher significance to consider the fact that the statements that scored the best results throughout the various aesthetic dimensions, referred to the individual person, which seems to be an important aspect to the respondents, because it comes through strongly throughout the results obtained thus far.

## **7.6. SOCIAL COMPARISON**

### **7.6.1. Aspects important to compare in ideal of beauty**

As noted in the literature review of this study, the notion of “What is beautiful” can be described as a culturally constituted phenomenon that happens because of common socialisation experiences amongst people of a certain culture or ethnicity (Englis *et al.*, 1994:50). A cultural standard or ideal can only be achieved when people compare themselves to this. This is known as social comparison, and consumers continually engage in the process of assessing their own aesthetic values, as well as those of others. It is said that cultural values can be communicated by means of signals of identity, which can include skin colour, hairstyles, cultural artefacts and ethnic dress (Craig, 1991:35). All of these aspects can play a role when the targeted consumers evaluate an advertisement in a fashion magazine, or when engaging in comparison with others. The question that arises with regard to this study is, what do the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment compare when they engage in social



comparison. They may focus on comparing skin colour, figure, cultural artefacts, hairstyles and ethnic dress. Objective 4 in the study was therefore formulated to explore and describe which aspects of the self the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group compare with the ideal beauty standard in terms of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, body and cultural artefacts such as accessories.

Most of the respondents indicated that their dress or style, hairstyle and body/shape/size are important to compare. These results reflect the results obtained from objective 1, that also showed that dress/style, hairstyle and body are important to the respondents in their ideal of beauty, the only difference in this instance being that the respondents would 'compare' those aspects to their ideal of beauty, with dress/style being the most important aspect to compare. An interesting revelation obtained through the open-ended nature of this question, was that 21% of respondents, indicated that personality/ inner beauty are aspects that they would compare in their ideal of beauty. This is significant, as this can once again be seen as being about the individual person and personal qualities, which is regarded as very important by the respondents, and evident throughout the results obtained, whether it relates to their beauty ideal, personal-or sub-cultural beauty standards, aesthetic preferences, or as in this case social comparison. Duke (2000) found differences between Caucasian and African-American female students, when comparing themselves to the feminine ideal. She found that African-American female students were uninterested in striving for, or achieving the ideal feminine physique as portrayed by most magazines. They also tended to evaluate themselves and others on character and personality rather than appearance, which also seems to be prevailing in the results obtained from this study on the Mzansi Youth sub-segment (Duke, 2000).

Considering the importance the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment place on the individual person, more so than the group, it is necessary to consider the individualist theory, where behaviour tends to be directed by personal attitudes, more so than by group norms (Voght & Laher, 2009:41). This is demonstrated in the results obtained regarding the respondents' ideal of beauty and comparison, as it seems to be based more on personal preferences (as highlighted by the importance placed on the individual, and the prevailing feeling of not wanting to compare), than what is collectively considered as important in that regard. Individualism is predominantly used to describe general cultures of the Western world, while Africa and Asia are still characterised primarily by Collectivism (Voght & Laher, 2009:42). According to past research however, one of the limitations of research on Individualism versus Collectivism, is that countries are treated as though they are cultures (Fiske, 2002). As discussed earlier, South Africa is faced with a variety of cultures, which



are contained within one political boarder, which may evidently vary in terms of Individualism and Collectivism. Within an individualist society, as seems to be the case with the targeted consumers of this study, people are seen as being independent from the group. This leads to the implication that priority is given to personal goals, more so than to those of the group, meaning that their behaviour lend itself to being based on personal attitudes, rather than group norms (Voght & Laher, 2009:41). This aspect is illustrated by the results obtained from the study, as answers seem to be based more on personal or individualistic views or attitudes. Furthermore, individualists want to have freedom of choice, and have the need to be seen as being unique, which is also portrayed by the results obtained from this study (Voght & Laher, 2009:41).

### **7.6.2. Reasons for comparing to other women**

In the social comparison literature, it is believed that social comparison originated from the belief that people have the need for self-evaluation in order for them to know how and where they stand in relation to some standard. Festinger (1954) believed that people were more likely to compare themselves to people that are similar to themselves, because it would provide more meaningful information (Lennon *et al.*, 1999:192). Some other writers on the other hand, suggested that this might not always be true, and people may at times engage in comparisons with others that are not part of their group (Richins, 1991:72). In this instance however, it became necessary to create a better understanding about the reasons why the respondents' engage in social comparison. The aim of objective 5 was therefore, to explore and describe the reasons why the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group engage in social comparison, and how it affects their self-esteem (in terms of social identity and personal identity).

In question 13 in the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons for comparing themselves to other women (refer to figure 6.6). The question was formulated with regard to measuring the results in terms of social identity and personal identity. Most of the respondents indicated that they compare themselves, to see how they relate in comparison to others, and to see their shortcomings so that they can improve themselves. Least respondents indicated that they compare themselves to other women, because it helps them to feel better about themselves, and to see where they fit in and to feel part of a group. With the above results in mind, it becomes clear that most respondents (when engaging in comparison) compare to see how they relate in comparison to others, and to see their shortcomings, while least respondents compare themselves to feel better about themselves and to determine if they fit into a group. It therefore appears that although, despite

a general feeling throughout the results that the respondents would not engage in comparison with others, because of the “I” or individual person being important to them, most of the respondents, (when forced to compare) would compare to see how they relate to others, and not because it was important to see how they fit into a group. This could be interpreted as the individual being regarded as more important than the group, making the individual or personal identity category more important than their social identity. A study conducted on African students in post apartheid years, showed that they come to define their identity broader than racial or cultural categorisation, thereby aligning themselves with the notions of the new South Africa. They rather seem to embody notions of future-orientated views, which lend itself to progression towards a unified national identity, yet still recognising individual differences (Franchi & Swart, 2002). This seems to also be the case when dealing with the Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group. In a heterogeneous country like South Africa people may face the possibility of multiple and competing social identities, meaning that there is a divide in social identities between sub-national groups and the larger community as presented by the nation-state (Bornman, 2010:238). The women in the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment seem to have a more individualistic approach, rather than regarding a specific group as important/ or wanting to belong to a certain group. It therefore seems that the women in this sub-segment are identifying less with a certain social or sub-cultural group, thereby lacking a common agreement on social identity, even though there seems to be a willingness of progression towards a unified national identity.

### **7.6.3. Extent of comparison to the various cultural beauty ideals (Western, African, Euro-African)**

The targeted consumers of this study fall under the Black Diamonds group. It is said that all their key complexities and conflicts are underpinned by culture, being the one constant in all of their lives (Black Diamond Woman, 2009). As discussed in the theoretical background, the Mzansi Youth is the targeted sub-segment for this study. It was anticipated that the role of culture in social comparison with fashion magazine images could have a significant impact on these consumers, although from recent research, it seems as though culture may not have such a huge impact on the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, as a previous study showed that the importance of culture is expressed by the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment, as them “appreciating the basics, but their commitment and good sentiment regarding culture is declining” (Black Diamond survey, 2007:99). This is confirmed by the results obtained in this study. This seems to be the only sub-segment in the Black Diamond group to which that notion applies, as the others still view culture as important. It therefore became

necessary to gain insight into the extent to which the respondents would engage in comparison to various cultural beauty ideals, to get a sense of how their beliefs on culture influence the latter.

In the marketing literature there seems to be an agreement that culture greatly influences the way consumers behave and perceive, and one of the lessons derived from social psychology, is that culture has a significant impact on the way people generally see the world. These views, may ultimately affect their behaviour (Jenson, 2004:1). Research has shown that the black middle class differentiates themselves from the white middle class by means of their culture and roots. Black people are traditionally more influenced by customs, laws, traditions and social purpose (Mawers, 2006:3). Taking that into consideration, it means that the targeted consumers of this study may be influenced by cultural factors in their decision-making to a certain extent. Individuals who identify strongly with their heritage are likely to be influenced by culture to a greater extent, and it therefore became necessary to create a better understanding how this specifically influences the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment (Shaw & Clarke, 1998:165).

Some researchers argue that advertisements are more effective when the symbols, characters, and values portrayed in the advertisements are accumulated from the intended audience's cultural environment (Appiah, 2001:31). This allows increased identification with the message and the source of the message, which is critical when wanting to appeal to a certain group through an advertisement. This is an important consideration when wanting to appeal to the targeted consumers through fashion photographs or images in advertisements, and it was thus of interest to gain a better understanding of the extent to which the respondents would compare themselves to various beauty ideal typically portrayed in fashion magazines they read. Objective 7 in the study was therefore formulated to explore and describe the extent to which the women in the Mzansi youth sub-segment compare themselves to various cultural beauty ideals.

The first cultural beauty ideal portrayed in fashion photograph 1 in the questionnaire, was the Western beauty ideal. Most of the respondents indicated that they would not compare themselves to the Westernised fashion photograph, with the aspects "body", and "dress/ style" coming to the fore when asked which aspects they would not compare with regard to the Westernised image. Many respondents also indicated that the model in the photograph is too skinny, and that they can't compare to the image because they don't look like the model. With regard to the Euro-African beauty ideal, most respondents said they would probably or definitely compare themselves to the Euro-African beauty ideal, with dress/ style, body and hairstyle listed as aspects that they would

compare to the image. This is in line with the beauty standards the respondents indicated in objective 1 as being important in their ideal of beauty, (which may also be the reason they indicated those 3 aspects to be compared to the image they like most of all the images in the questionnaire). Furthermore, most of the respondents also indicated that they would probably not compare themselves to the African beauty ideal image, with most of the respondents indicating that it is not their style, so they won't compare any aspects in the image. When comparing the summarised results in table 6.10 in Chapter 6, one can therefore assume that most of the targeted consumers would rather compare themselves to the Euro-African beauty ideal, more so than to the African or Westernised beauty ideals.

It is interesting that the respondents indicated that they would compare themselves most to the Euro-African beauty ideal. A reason for this may once again be that the individual is regarded as highly important to this market segment, and the Euro-African beauty ideal seems to promote this, as it seems to reflect a more unique or individual appearance, in comparison to the other two beauty ideals portrayed in the fashion photographs in the questionnaire. According to the literature background on the targeted group, culture is said to be declining, but remain part of their lives to some extent, and the primary brands or products they are interested in, fall under "enabling me" (The new black middle class, 2006). This could be another reason for the Euro-African beauty ideal scoring most favourable when respondents were faced with social comparison, as the beauty ideal still reflects their particular culture (the fashion model is of African heritage), but in a more modern, individual or unique manner.

From the literature background, it is apparent that in a heterogeneous country like South Africa, various different cultures are present in society, which means that people within a specific subculture may take great effort in preventing their identification being submerged into the mainstream society (Rabolt & Solomon, 2004:198). "Cultural influences may be driven by moral and ethical rewards within a culture, to convey achievement, exhibit status and success, or for the sake of acting socially responsible" (du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:115). It should be kept in mind that the targeted women in the Black Diamonds group may want to maintain and reflect the symbols of their culture and traditions to some extent, but at the same time may be adapting to fit into the present day society in South Africa. Cultural groups are part of a larger mainstream culture, with which they share some cultural similarities, as well as differences. It therefore happens that these women in the targeted consumer group probably have to navigate between two cultural forces in order to conduct the business of life (Holland & Gentry, 1999:73). This is especially important to consider in South

Africa, as there are many different cultures in one nation. This means that these women may choose what is most important to them from their cultural past, but at the same time maintain and adapt it to meet their current needs in South Africa today (Holland & Gentry, 1999:67). This is apparent from the results, as the Euro-African beauty ideal seems to invite such notions, as it reflects the respondents' heritage and culture, yet still being modern, trendy and unique.

It is also interesting that with regard to comparison, the African fashion photograph scored higher than the Westernised beauty ideal fashion photograph, whereas in most of the other questions relating to the fashion photographs, the African photograph scored the lowest or worst among the respondents. The reason for this may be, because when respondents are faced with comparing to the images, they may relate more to the African beauty ideal (as they can relate to the physical features and ethnicity or culture of the model), although they don't necessarily like the image or the way in which the model in the image is styled. However, with regard to the Westernised beauty ideal, the respondents may like the way the model is dressed, but can't necessarily identify with the way she looks, thereby making comparisons with the Westernised beauty ideal more difficult.

#### **7.6.4 Coping strategies in case of negative social comparison**

As previously stated, people engage in social comparison to assess their aesthetic value as well as those of others on a continual basis (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When individuals compare themselves to the cultural standard, and come close to reaching the ideal, self-esteem levels can increase, whereas people that are far from achieving the ideal may choose a coping strategy, or experience a decline in self-esteem levels (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When the targeted consumers engage in social comparison and it is experienced as negative, they may use one of four coping strategies. These may include accepting the cultural standard and try harder to reach it, accept the cultural standard and quit trying to attain it, or modify one's personal standard of appearance, or modify the cultural standard by working toward more inclusive standard of appearance in one's local community (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). When evaluations are negative to the targeted consumers, and they feel the need to use coping strategies to come more closely to the cultural aesthetic ideal, success of the coping strategy can either harm or enhance both the social and personal identity of the individual.

In this study, it was of interest to explore and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when engaging in comparison. Firstly it was of interest to explore

and describe the coping strategies the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment use when comparing themselves to their specific beauty ideal, and secondly, to gain a better understanding regarding the respondents' use of coping strategies when comparing themselves to the three various cultural beauty ideals depicted in the fashion photographs in the questionnaire.

In the first instance respondents had to indicate which coping strategies they would use when comparing negatively to their beauty ideal, and the question was formulated with regard to measuring the results in terms of personal and social identity, but from the results obtained in question 11, it became evident that there is a third category to be distinguished, namely the “individual/ enabling me”, when dealing with the women in this targeted group. It is therefore necessary to interpret the results obtained here in terms of three categories, and not only the two categories, as was anticipated earlier. The results show that most respondents would accept the standard and do nothing further to achieve it, which again emphasises the fact that it is not necessarily so important for the respondents that their appearance should be exactly the same as others. It could therefore be argued that, the “individual” is regarded as being more important to the respondents, more so than the group, as the two statements dealing with the individual scored the highest among the respondents.

Respondents were also asked which coping strategies they would engage in, if they compared negatively to each of the various beauty ideals depicted in the three fashion photographs of the questionnaire. To summarise the results, it appears that when the respondents compare negatively to the various beauty ideals (Western/ African/ Euro-African), most of the respondents across all three of the beauty ideals would use the same coping strategy, namely “to accept the standard, and do nothing further to achieve it”. The only major difference noticeable regarding coping strategies across the 3 beauty ideals, is that 31% of respondents indicated that they would “accept the standard, and try harder to reach it”, regarding the Euro-African beauty ideal. This could be due to the fact that respondents scored this particular fashion photograph the highest (most favourable) throughout the various questions in the study, therefore preferring and liking this image, and they would probably attempt to reach the standard portrayed in this particular fashion image, more so than in comparison with the other two beauty ideals portrayed in the two fashion photographs.

When comparing the results discussed in both of the above instances, the results relate closely to one another, as most respondents indicated that they would accept the standard, and do nothing further to achieve it (with regard to their specific beauty ideal), which is the same as the results

obtained across all three beauty ideals. This verifies the results with regard to the coping strategies the respondents would engage in, in case of negative comparison, making the results reliable, once again emphasising the fact that it is not necessarily so important for the respondents that their appearance should be exactly the same as others, but that the individual is more important to them.

## **7.7. APPRAISALS OF THE WESTERN-, AFRICAN-, AND EURO-AFRICAN FASHION PHOTOGRAPHS AND SUBSEQUENT REACTIONS**

Questions 16, 17 and 18 in the questionnaire aimed to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' appraisals of Western, African and Euro-African fashion images as well as their subsequent reactions. Results obtained on the extent to which the respondents like the various fashion photographs, show that the majority of respondents liked the Euro-African beauty ideal the most, and that the African beauty ideal photograph was liked the least. The main reason given for liking the Euro-African image, was that they like the dress in the photograph/ that it is fashionable. Other reasons were that the image is African, yet modern, "my style/ can relate", good colour and that the image is attractive or stylish. Reasons given for disliking the African image (which scored lowest with regard to "liking" the image), were "too busy/ over the top", "does not compliment body" and "too traditional or old fashioned". Most respondents indicated that they dislike the African image, because it is "not my style/ not appealing". In a previous objective, where respondents had to indicate to which fashion photograph or beauty ideal they would compare themselves to, the Westernised image scored the lowest, whereas in this instance, the African image scored the worst results. The reason for this may be, because the respondents can identify with, or relate more to the African beauty ideal fashion photograph when comparisons have to be made, rather than to the Westernised fashion photograph. Whereas when asked if they liked the images, they actually liked the Westernised fashion photograph more than the African photograph when not faced with having to compare themselves, but only having to indicate whether they like the photograph. This aspect is illustrated in the following paragraph, where the extent to which respondents relate to the various fashion photographs, are discussed.

When respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they relate to the three various beauty ideals, results obtained show that the respondents relate to the Euro-African fashion photograph the most, then to the African fashion photograph. The image the respondents related to the least however, was the Western beauty ideal photograph, as most of the respondents indicated that it is "very unlikely" that they relate to the image. Although the respondents gave the African



photograph the lowest scores in most instances throughout the questionnaire, it becomes clear that when the respondents have to compare themselves/ or are asked if they relate to the fashion images, the Westernised fashion image scores the worst among the fashion images. The reason for this may be due to factors such as culture and skin colour, which comes into play in this regard, and probably play a role when faced with questions pertaining to “comparisons” and whether respondents “relate” to the photographs.

Furthermore sub-objective 2 of objective 7, aimed to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments’ evaluation of the various fashion images. Here respondents were asked to rate each of the fashion photographs portraying the various beauty ideals on five, 7-point semantic differential scales, namely eye catching/ not eye catching, for me/ not for me, appealing/ not appealing, likeable/ not likeable, and attractive/ not attractive. (1) Was the highest score if respondents agreed with the aspect/ feature of the photograph, and (7) the lowest score if respondents did not agree with the feature/ aspect. The results obtained, show that the respondents liked the African beauty ideal the least, when considering the medians across all five 7-point semantic differential scales, and liked the Euro-African fashion photograph the most. The results obtained in this instance, therefore verifies the results obtained when respondents had to indicate on a three-point ordered set of options, the extent to which they liked the various fashion photographs, as the outcome was the same, meaning that the respondents indicated in both instances that they liked the Euro-African fashion photograph the most, and the African image the least.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they would consider purchasing a fashion magazine featuring images similar to the various fashion photographs depicting the differentiating cultural beauty ideals. More than half of the respondents said they would probably purchase a magazine featuring Western beauty ideal fashion images, whereas half of respondents said that they would purchase a magazine featuring similar images portraying the African beauty ideal. However, most of the respondents indicated that they would probably purchase a magazine featuring fashion images portraying the Euro-African beauty ideal. This means that the Euro-African beauty ideal photograph once again scored the highest results when asked if they would purchase a magazine featuring similar images, and the African beauty ideal scored the lowest amongst the respondents, as was the case when respondents were asked if they liked the various fashion images. The results obtained here therefore correlate with previous results, which gives a clear indication of respondents’ preferences regarding the three fashion photographs portraying the various beauty



ideals, meaning that they prefer the Euro-African image. The major reason given for purchasing a magazine featuring Euro-African images, were “my style/ fashionable”, with other reasons being that they like the dress and they want to see more, they can relate to the image, and that the look is cultural, yet modern.

Taking into consideration the results discussed in the previous paragraph, another question was asked in the questionnaire to measure the respondents’ willingness to purchase a specific magazine. Therefore, in addition to the ‘extent’ to which respondents would consider purchasing a magazine featuring each of the three beauty ideal images, respondents were also asked to indicate their ‘intent’ to purchase a fashion magazine featuring the various fashion photographs. Most of the respondents again indicated that they would very likely purchase a magazine depicting the Euro-African beauty ideal in fashion photographs. The African beauty ideal fashion photograph scored the worst, as most of the respondents indicated that it is “very unlikely” that they would purchase such a magazine. It therefore once again shows that this market segment prefers the Euro-African fashion photograph the most. The results obtained from the respondents’ intent to purchase, therefore verifies the results obtained on the questions pertaining to the extent that they would purchase a magazine with similar images (discussed in the previous paragraph).

Lastly, respondents were asked to indicate their intent to purchase the clothing featured in each of the cultural beauty ideal fashion photographs. Most respondents indicated that they would very likely purchase the clothing featured in the Euro-African beauty ideal fashion photograph, which scored the highest of all three the images. Most of the respondents however, indicated that they would very unlikely purchase the clothing featured in the African beauty ideal image. The Euro-African beauty ideal photograph therefore once again scored the best in this particular category, with the African beauty ideal image scoring the lowest of the three fashion images. A very clear theme is coming to the fore, throughout the results obtained in the study. This is said because the respondents scored the Euro-African beauty ideal the highest, and the African beauty ideal the lowest with regard to almost all of the various questions pertaining to the fashion photographs in the questionnaire (with the exception of the questions pertaining to social comparison or if they “relate”), as was discussed earlier in this chapter.

## **7.8. CONCLUSION**

With the discussion and interpretation of results of the study in mind, the following chapter will focus on the conclusions of the study, as well as the implications the study have for the fashion magazine industry in South Africa, and the use of fashion images in the country. Chapter 8 will include an evaluation of the limitations and success of the quantitative research style, data collection methods, sample selection, data analysis, the quality of the study, and the achievement of the objectives. The study's contribution to the existing theory will also be discussed, while recommendations will be made to the fashion industry and fashion magazine marketers in South Africa.

## CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUSIONS, EVALUATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Black Diamond consumer groups' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. The theory on social and personal identity, social comparison, as well as aesthetics served as point of departure for the study and the research objectives. In Chapter 7 results were discussed and interpreted in-depth according to each objective.

With the purpose and objectives of the study in mind, this chapter therefore firstly deals with an overall conclusion regarding the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segments' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. It should be noted that this was a purposive and snowball sample. Conclusions can therefore not be generalised to the whole population and therefore refer to the respondents in this study. Attention is secondly given to the implications of the study, the quality of the study justified, possible contributions to theory spelled out and general recommendations, as well as limitations and suggestions for future studies given.

### 8.2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

#### 8.2.1. Demographic background of the sample

The majority of the respondents in the study indicated that they live in urban areas, which means that they have probably been exposed to the influences of modern society in the cities of South Africa, which could mean that they are interested in modern trends and fashions. Most of the respondents were only students at that time, but some were working as well, meaning that they could have extra spending money that could be spent on luxury items, such as fashion magazines. Most of the respondents indicated that they read fashion magazines on either a weekly or monthly basis, which makes the Mzansi Youth sub-segment an appealing target market for a fashion magazine targeting the women in this group, and specifically catering for their needs. Fashion magazines indicated by

the respondents, as magazines they read most frequently, are *Cosmopolitan*, *ELLE*, and *Glamour*, which are all international fashion magazines (although a national edition) that are available locally here in South Africa. However, these international fashion magazines that are available in South Africa do not necessarily embody ethnic and racial identities that are related to the country's readership in South Africa, and does not take the Mzansi Youths' specific needs and characteristics into consideration. A magazine focusing on their specific needs and preferences regarding fashion magazines may reap rewards from this market segment, as it is evident from the results that these women read fashion magazines on a regular basis and are interested in fashion. This was illustrated in the results obtained from the answers given by respondents when asked to indicate their reasons for reading fashion magazines, and most respondents indicated "fashion" as the major reason, with "beauty" and "to keep up to date" also being indicated as reasons by the respondents.

### **8.2.2 Overall conclusions**

It can be concluded that the women in the Mzansi-Youth sub-segment are directed by a strong personal identity and a need to be acknowledged as an African individual with unique personal characteristics. It is therefore also important for them that their appearance should symbolise their personal qualities and not necessarily that of a Westernised fashion style or beauty ideal, or that they belong to a specific social or sub-cultural group. It can further be concluded that dress, hairstyle and body shape are important features in their beauty ideal, directed by their personal identity.

With regard to their aesthetic dimensions that play a role in dress and appearance, it can be concluded that the emotional and sensory dimensions of the aesthetic experience are much more important for them than the symbolic dimension, except that their appearance should show others who they are as an individual. For them it is more about the sensory beauty of their appearance and emotional pleasure that their dress and appearance give them, than reflecting that they belong to a specific group or culture - indicative of a personal identity, rather than a social identity.

It can further be concluded that with regard to social comparison, it is not important to the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment to compare themselves, and specifically their dress and appearance to those of others, whether it being to their friends, or to an African or Westernised beauty ideal. However, when they are forced to compare themselves to their own beauty ideal, they would compare their dress style, and to a lesser extent their hairstyle, body shape and personality. Most of them would do so just to see how they compare to others, but not to feel better about themselves, or

because it makes them feel part of a group. Therefore, when they would compare negatively to their beauty standard, they would accept the standard, and just do nothing further. This again underlines the importance of a strong personal identity with the emphasis on the unique individual and a proud feeling of the self.

Considering the foregoing the question that then arises is, how would they now appraise fashion images with different beauty ideals, specifically a Western, African and Euro-African beauty ideal? It can be concluded that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment prefer the Euro-African beauty ideal because they like the dress style and feel it is modern, yet African. This is also the appearance that they can relate to the most and that they would compare themselves to, although comparison is not important to them. However, if they have to compare themselves, they would compare the beauty ideal feature that is the most important for them, namely the dress style. They also mostly compare just for the sake of comparison and not to feel better about themselves or to feel that they fit into a specific group. In cases where they compare negatively to an image, whether African, Western or Euro-African beauty ideal, they will still accept the standard and will do nothing further.

Considering the above, it can lastly be concluded that most of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, would probably buy a fashion magazine which features Euro-African fashion images to see the latest trends and fashion ideas, but not because the model would inspire them to improve themselves. Although they do not prefer the African and Western fashion images, some of them would probably also purchase a fashion magazine that features these images. Fewer women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment would necessarily buy the clothes that are featured in the fashion magazine images.

With the conclusions of this study in mind, it is important to consider the implications the study may have for the fashion magazine industry in South Africa, as well as the use of fashion images in the country. Implications for the study will therefore be discussed.

### **8.3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

With the results and conclusions of the study in mind, it can be argued that there is a market for a fashion magazine specifically catering for the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in South Africa, as it is clear from the results that these women read fashion magazines on a regular basis, and

that they are especially interested in fashion. A magazine specifically catering for this market segment should incorporate Euro-African fashion images, as results obtained from this study showed a strong preference for the Euro-African image or beauty ideal across many of the objectives of the study. Another option to reach this market segment could be to incorporate more Euro-African images in fashion magazines presently read or available to these women in South Africa, which could result in these magazines reaping rewards from this relatively untapped market segment in South Africa, especially when these magazines want to avoid future competition in the fashion magazine industry. From the theory on the Black Diamonds, it is apparent that this market is quickly becoming an appealing market to target in South Africa. If magazine marketers could act quickly, they could be the first to reap rewards from this market segment, as the Black Diamond consumer group is set to keep growing in numbers and become all the more appealing to target with regard to many products and across many industries in the country.

As is apparent from the conclusions of the study on beauty standards important to the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in their ideal of beauty, three aspects came to the fore, namely body, dress or style, and hairstyle. It can therefore be recommended that careful judgement should be taken when incorporating these aspects into fashion images in fashion magazines, as it may influence their evaluation of an image, or the extent to which they can relate or make comparisons. As previously noted, it is very unlikely that these women receive tips on hair care and hairstyles from fashion magazines of a Western-origin, and a magazine specifically aimed at the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, could incorporate this, as it is evident that this consumer group view hairstyle as an important aspect, not only in their beauty ideal, but also in social comparison, as they also indicated hairstyle as an aspect they would compare, when engaging in comparison. These women also saw body as an important beauty standard, and as noted throughout the study, these women may view their bodies differently than other sub-cultural groups in South Africa, and in turn, to those standards portrayed in images in Western-focused fashion magazines. Another reference made to this in the results obtained in the study, was where respondents gave reasons for not liking the Westernised fashion image, where many respondents said the model in the photograph is too skinny, and that it sends the wrong message. It seems that these women who predominantly read Western-focused fashion magazines at the present time, simply have to turn a blind eye to such images when browsing through magazines. A magazine specifically incorporating images more in-line with their body type and preferences in hairstyles could be even more successful and popular amongst these targeted women, than the fashion magazines they are currently purchasing.

The Mzansi Youth women further embodied a strong view on social comparison, which showed that they do not want to compare to others. For them, it is more about the individual and personal qualities, rather than wanting to compare, to fit into a certain social or sub-cultural group. The women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment therefore have a strong personal identity in comparison to their social identity. The emphasis these women put on the individual and personal qualities, is something that cannot be ignored when marketing and tailoring products to meet the needs of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. Images incorporated in fashion magazines should promote this, and the “enabling me” aspect, should be prominent when wanting to appeal to this group, and should be communicated in an effective manner. An editorial or articles emphasising the uniqueness of the individual could be incorporated in exciting fashion magazines in South Africa, to attract readers in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment.

## **8.4. EVALUATION OF THE STUDY**

Evaluation is necessary for the purposes of follow-up and could serve as a guideline for similar future studies. This study is hereby evaluated in terms of the quantitative research style (sample selection, data collection and data analysis), the quality of the data and the achievement of the objectives.

### **8.4.1 Research Strategy**

Generally speaking, this study was exploratory and descriptive in nature because researching Black Diamonds’ social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazines have not yet been done in South Africa. In quantitative research, reliability is exceedingly important, objective facts are measured with the emphasis placed on certain variables. The research has to be value-free, independent of the context and the researcher has to be detached, thus enhancing the objectivity of the study. The quantitative research style ensured that the researcher was objective when analysing the data.

A structured questionnaire was used to get the broader picture of the respondents’ answers regarding the research topic. The questionnaire measured specific dimensions of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards, social comparison, personal and social identity, coping strategies, aesthetics and appraisals of fashion magazine images as explained in the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3), and clearly indicated in a conceptual framework (Figure 4.1). The questionnaire measured objective

aspects, for instance, rating the importance of personal and sub-cultural beauty standards in respondents' beauty ideal, and variables that are central to quantitative research, which were identified in the literature review and the conceptual framework (Figure 4.1). These variables were measured by using relative dimensions and indicators and were presented in a language that was comprehensible to the respondents to understand.

Being an exploratory study, a structured self-administered questionnaire was the best option to use in the study, as respondents could complete it without any outside influence. The researcher could also solve unclear issues arising from the questionnaire. Although the researcher was available, some of the questions were left unanswered, especially some of the open-ended questions in the latter part of the questionnaire. The respondents felt that the questionnaire was too long, and took up a lot of time to complete. Although this method can be time-consuming, meaningful information can be acquired from many respondents in a relatively shorter time if the questionnaire is much shorter.

#### **8.4.1.1 Choice of the research sample for the study**

Although it is recommended that the sample size for a quantitative research study should be representative of the entire population (Mouton, 1996:136; Wimmer & Domnick, 2000: 94), non-probability sampling techniques could be used in a preliminary or pilot study. In such instance the results cannot be generalised to a larger population, but should rather be viewed as indicative of the specific group tested (Wimmer & Domnick, 2000:82-83). The sampling technique could therefore not be presumed to be representative of the entire population, and is only considered to be representative of the sample, and results have only been applied to the latter. The sample for the study was purposive resulting in the use of the snowball sampling method. The questionnaire had 200 respondents. The sample size was selected using probability sampling techniques and hence was thought to be adequate for data analysis.

#### **8.4.1.2 The choice and application of the data collection techniques**

Since willing respondents increase the reliability of the study, as observed by Mouton (1996:145), no respondents were forced to take part in the study, thereby making the data collection technique voluntary in nature. Theoretical clarity and descriptions of relevant aspects that were identified through the literature search, helped to recognise appropriate measures to facilitate the development of a comprehensive questionnaire covering all concepts of the study. Some questions that had



previously been used in related research were adopted in this study. The questionnaire's top page had the University of Pretoria's logo (letterhead) and an introductory letter stating the purpose of the research, giving an assurance of anonymity, an appeal to participate in the study and an acknowledgement of participation.

Before the research commenced, the questionnaire had been scrutinised by the researcher's study-leader, a statistician and the subject specialised lecturers at the Department of Consumer Science, University of Pretoria (peer evaluation). The questionnaire was also pilot-tested on twenty African students (between 18 and 24 years) enrolled at the University of Pretoria. Before photographs could be selected to be included in the questionnaire, intended for the respondents, the photographs needed careful evaluation by fashion experts. This was done to ensure that the photographs included in the questionnaire were bias-free, and to aid in the reliability of the results. A panel of four fashion experts were selected from the University of Pretoria and Tshwane University of Technology (two Caucasian and two African), and asked to evaluate the fashion images gathered before including them in the final questionnaire. Photographs were evaluated in a questionnaire format, handed out to the panel of fashion experts. This was done to enhance the quality and validity of the questionnaire. It should however be noted, that although great care was taken with the inclusion of the fashion images in the questionnaire, the choice of images could still have influenced the results of this study. Except for some open-ended questions that were answered poorly, the questions were all relevant. Some questions were however later identified as being repetitive and unnecessary, as they measured the same concepts (Questions 16.3 and 6.12; 17.3 and 17.12; 18.3 and 18.12). The participants reported that the questionnaire was too long, giving insight into some open-ended questions left unanswered.

#### **8.4.1.3 Choice of statistical methods employed**

The data was analysed using acknowledged statistical tests that were chosen after examining tests used by other researchers in similar studies. The statistical analysis of data, a characteristic of quantitative research, was adequate for the study. Hypothesis testing was done at the 5% level of significance. The statistical methods used and the boundaries set at the 5% level of significance by specific statistical tests, helped the researcher to determine when the results were statistically significant. The research problem was solved when logical deductions, derived from the theory, were linked to concrete evidence obtained from the results.

The approach of the study was judged to be successful, because the researcher conducted a thorough literature search on specific concepts of the study that guided the researcher to make logical deductions and develop appropriate measurement scales. The first step was to define the concepts that were to be measured, and then potential scale items were created to determine indicators around the concepts. The questionnaire measurement scales included nominal (yes or no) type questions, four-point ordered set of point scales and categorical (Likert-type) scales that directed the decision to use specific statistical methods. Factor analysis statistics were used where relevant, to describe a larger number of variables by means of a smaller set of composite variables (so-called “factors”) and to aid with the interpretation of the data. For the purpose of this study, common factor analysis was applicable. Common factor analysis focused on the common variance shared among the original variables and sought to identify underlying dimensions (known as “common factors”), which was useful in this study. The Friedman test was also useful in certain questions to analyse the data obtained. The Friedman test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between aspects that the respondents had to rank (in questions 9 and 15). The Friedman test is a non-parametric test, and the results showed that the Friedman test statistic had a P-Value of 0.0000 (Conover, 1999). Furthermore, Cronbach’s alpha was also deemed necessary to determine the most common estimate of the internal consistency or reliability of items in a scale in certain questions. A widely accepted assumption in the social science is that alpha should be .70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a scale, as was the case in this study (where applicable) (Trochim, 2006).

## 8.4.2 Quality of the data

### 8.4.2.1. Validity

In order to ensure that each measurement accurately reflected the concept it intended to measure (measurement validity), the following different types of validity were observed in the questionnaire instrument:

- **Face validity:** The instruments were pre-tested by a group of experts and were also pilot-tested on a small group of respondents. This was done to ensure that the measurement instruments actually measured what they purported to measure. Only instruments accurately measuring the set objectives of the study were used.

- **Content validity:** To ensure content validity, all the concepts presented in the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) were specified in a construct definition. This facilitated the development of indicators (questions and statements) from all the parts of the definitions (relating to the objectives of the study), as recommended by Neumann (2000:142-143) and Babbie and Mouton (2001: 122-123).
- **Criterion validity:** Being the pilot study, there was no standardised criterion known to measure the construct validity accurately, to permit comparison with the measurements for this study. However, some of the questions that had been used successfully in related studies were adapted for this study.
- **Construct validity:** To determine the degree to which instruments used for this study, successfully measured the theoretical construct they were intended to measure, definitions with clearly specified conceptual boundaries were provided (Figure 1.1 and Table 5.2), in order to isolate the convergent validity. Evidence obtained from the results, and linked to the theory, indicates the degree to which the instruments were successful.

#### 8.4.2.2. Reliability

According to Neumann (2000:164), reliability is an indicator of dependability or consistency. It indicates the likelihood that a given measurement technique will repeatedly yield the same description of a given phenomenon (Mouton, 1996:144). In this study, the following strategies were applied to ensure reliability:

- The questions used in the questionnaire were predominantly closed questions. Some of them had been previously used in related studies.
- Due to poor answering of open-ended questions, those responses (although discussed in Chapter 6 and 7) were not included when concise conclusions were drawn.
- The questionnaire was pre-tested by a group of experts and pilot-tested on women in the target market for this study.
- A panel of fashion experts evaluated the fashion photographs before including them in the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire's front page had the University of Pretoria's logo (letterhead) and an introductory letter stating the purpose of the research. A consent form also had to be signed beforehand.

- Well-established methods of data collection were used and standard statistical coding methods were also applied.
- Hypothesis testing was done at the 5% level of significance.
- A non-probability sampling technique (purposive resulting in snowball) was used in this study. It used a smaller sample size, but this technique is acceptable in this case because it is a preliminary study. The results therefore are indicative of women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment in the Gauteng region in South Africa.

#### **8.4.3. Achievement of the objectives of the study**

In order to solve the research problem stated in Chapter 1, primary objectives and sub-objectives were set for the study. Each primary objective and concomitant sub-objectives were addressed in the questionnaire used in the study. The results indicate that valuable data related to the primary objectives and sub-objectives was collected. The data enabled the researcher to interpret the results and draw conclusions related to the different objectives. The results, their interpretation and eventually the conclusions drawn also made it possible to make recommendations to the fashion magazine industry in South Africa, so as to serve effectively the needs of the women in Mzansi Youth sub-segment of the Black Diamond consumer group in South Africa.

From the discussion and interpretation of the results, general conclusions and overall conclusions (Figure 1.1), it is evident that the researcher successfully achieved the primary objectives and sub-objectives stated. Information that was obtained from the results can contribute to the existing theory on issues around social and personal identity theory, social comparison theory, and aesthetics.

#### **8.5. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO EXISTING THEORY**

The value of the quantitative research style used in this study is that it enables the researcher to quantify the data and to link the data to the specific concepts used in the study. The value of research can be increased when the results are meaningfully linked to the concepts of the established theory related to the research. The findings of this study can contribute to theory in the following fields:

- Personal and Social identity theory
- Social Comparison theory

- Aesthetics

### **8.5.1 Personal and Social identity theory**

The social identity theory deals with inter-group relations, group processes and the social self of individuals (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995:259). Social identity can be defined as a person's knowledge that one belongs to a certain social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). Social identity is said to develop from group memberships on the basis of similar attributes, meaning that social identity has a more "we" approach, rather than the "I" (Brewer, 1991:476). Results of this study show that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment do not have a strong social identity, because of the individual and personal qualities being more important to them, than merely being part of a certain social or sub-cultural group.

The physical self and the internal self forms part of a person's personal identity. Personal identity, emanates from individual achievements, and differentiates one individual from another in a given social context based on individual characteristics (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). This study proves the importance the targeted consumers place on personal identity, specifically "enabling me", as portrayed in results obtained from factor analysis (table 6.5). Although culture is said to remain an important part in the lives of the Mzansi Youth, for them it is more about "enabling me" when it comes to products, brands and a fashion style (The new black middle class, 2006). This study therefore shows that the "enabling me" aspect, form an important part of the Mzansi Youth's sub-culture that also direct their behaviour, in this case their appraisals of fashion magazine images.

### **8.5.2 Social Comparison theory**

It is said that people engage in social comparison to assess their aesthetic value as well as those of others on a continual basis (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When individuals compare themselves to the cultural standard, and come close to reaching the ideal, self-esteem levels can increase, whereas people that are far from achieving the ideal may choose a coping strategy, or experience a decline in self-esteem levels (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008:183). When the targeted consumers engage in social comparison and it is experienced as negative, they may use one of four coping strategies. (Reilly & Rudd, 2009:2). When evaluations are negative to the targeted consumers, and they feel the need to use coping strategies to come more closely to the cultural aesthetic ideal, success of the coping strategy can either harm or enhance both the social and personal identity of the

individual. This study proves, that the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, do not want to engage in comparison with others, whether it being people similar to themselves, or people from another social group or sub-culture. The reason for this is due to the importance this group place on the individual person and personal qualities, making social comparison salient.

The study did however show that the women (when forced to compare) would choose to compare with the Euro-African beauty ideal, more so than the Westernised- or African beauty ideals. Despite a general feeling throughout the results that the women in the target market of this study would not engage in comparison with others, because of the “I” or individual person being important to them, most of the women would compare to see how they relate to others, and not because it is important to see how they fit into a group. The study also showed which coping strategies the women in the targeted consumer segment would use in case of negative comparisons, being that they would “accept the standard and do nothing further to achieve it”, which again emphasise the fact that it is not necessarily so important for the targeted consumers that their appearance should be exactly the same as others (once highlighting the importance of personal identity over social identity in social comparison).

### **8.5.3 Aesthetics**

Aesthetic experience relates to the selection of symbolic, formal and expressive qualities of a product that result in satisfaction on the consumer’s part (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:4). The idea is that symbolic, expressive and formal qualities of a fashion product should satisfy the consumer on an emotional, sensory and cognitive level (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). Regarding the role of aesthetics in this study, it became of higher significance to consider the fact that the statements that scored the highest results throughout the various aesthetic dimensions, referred to the individual person, and that for the Mzansi Youth women it is more about showing others who they are (as an individual person), than communicating their belonging to a specific group. The results obtained in this study should help to address these aesthetic dimensions correctly when dealing with the Mzansi Youth women, and should be used to create an understanding about their preferences (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:83). Magazine marketers targeting this market segment, should understand aesthetic aspects playing a role in the Mzansi Youth women’s aesthetic experience in order to ensure their consumers’ satisfaction and in turn, the profitability of a fashion product such as a fashion magazine brand.

## 8.6. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the conclusions made in this study cannot be generalised to a broad population, certain recommendations can be made at this stage to the fashion magazine industry and fashion magazine marketers in South Africa. It is recommended that magazine marketers should look into the potential of creating a fashion magazine specifically targeting the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment and catering for their unique preferences in that regard, as there is no fashion magazine available in the country specifically catering for their needs. These women therefore read fashion magazines from a Western origin, which seemingly is most closely related to their interests, for example giving ideas on the latest trends and fashion, which this sub-segment indicated as being interested in. From the results of this study, there seems to be a market for a fashion magazine aimed specifically at them, as it is clear that the women in the market segment of the study are interested in fashion and read fashion magazines regularly. Previous research also showed that the Mzansi Youth want to ‘make a statement’, and have the need to show that they are “with it” and on par with the latest trend at the moment (Black Diamond Survey, 2008:60). A fashion magazine specifically aimed at them, should incorporate this “state of mind” when wanting to target this market segment.

Furthermore, it is recommended that fashion magazine marketers should take into account the strong preference for the Euro-African fashion photograph the women in the targeted group displayed in this study. It could be useful to include more Euro-African images in existing fashion magazines in South Africa, or to create a fashion magazine focusing on the Euro-African beauty ideal, as this particular beauty ideal seems to promote the importance this group place on their personal identity. It is also recommended that the importance they place on personal beauty standards, specifically dress and style, body, and hairstyle, should be in line with their wants and needs in that regard, and portrayed in fashion images accordingly. As was also evident from previous research, the Mzansi Youth women are future focused, and hold high expectations for their future. This future-focused mind set of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group should be taken into consideration when wanting to target them, as it is said that they have a unique-needs mind-set, which includes dominance, superiority, ambitiousness, assertiveness, and a go-getting style of living (Black Diamond Survey, 2008:68). However, the most important needs mind-set of future focused Black Diamond women is the “individualistic” aspect, which is also portrayed strongly in the results obtained throughout this particular study, and should come through strongly in the brand identity of a magazine targeting this consumer segment. It is therefore important that a fashion magazine brand aimed at the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment, should embrace their language and symbols



of their success and enable them to achieve their set goals, as deemed necessary by the Black Diamond Survey (2008).

## **8.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

It should be noted that there are certain limitations to this research that also provide a basis for further research. Studying the Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images is a new phenomenon in South Africa. This is said, because although recent research concerning the Black Diamond consumer group has been conducted over the past few years, this is a relatively new consumer group in South Africa, and more extensive research on the group is required. To fully understand this consumer group, more research regarding the apparel industry and fashion magazine industry is needed, as little previous research has been done on this market segment in that regard. With regard to this study, it is suggested that similar research be conducted on a larger sample, and in all the regions of South Africa, with a more representative sample, as this study is only relevant to one metropolitan area in the country. It is also suggested that a similar study be done on all of the sub-segments in the Black Diamond consumer group, as this study focused on the Mzansi Youth sub-segment only. If a study could be conducted on all four sub-segments, results can be generalised to the entire Black Diamond consumer group, although the segmented nature within the Black Diamond consumer group should be kept in mind when doing so. It could also be useful to conduct research on the differences of perceptions regarding the research topic, on young white South African women and their black counterparts. By conducting a similar study on young adult white South African women, comparisons can be made to the results obtained from this study, to better target all young adult South African women. This could be useful when wanting to understand their similarities and differences, when wanting to appeal to them through a fashion magazine, and to use fashion magazine images accordingly. It could also prove to be fruitful to conduct interviews with respondents, especially with regard to their appraisals of the various cultural beauty ideals portrayed in the fashion photographs in the questionnaire of this study, as open-ended questions attempting to gather information regarding the reasons for their answers, were not up to par. By conducting interviews, a better understanding could be created in that regard.

Finally, the aim of this study was to explore and describe the Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. It was also to assess the void in the fashion magazine market specifically catering for the needs of the women in the Mzansi Youth sub-segment. The study was done to contribute to research in the fashion magazine field in South Africa, and can



serve as a basis for further research to be conducted in the industry, to better understand the wants and needs of the women in the Black Diamond consumer group regarding fashion magazines aimed at them, and the images included in such magazines. In spite of the limitations mentioned, and possibilities for improvement, the results of this study should be used as a pilot study to improve the use of fashion magazine images in South Africa aimed at young adult black women in the country.

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## **ADDENDUM A: QUESTIONNAIRE**

*(Please note: For printing purposes the “For office use (coding)” section was removed in the questionnaire below)*

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SCIENCE**



Dear Respondent,

I am inviting you to participate in my research project on young women's evaluation of fashion photographs. Along with this letter is a short questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about the research topic. Please look through the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete it and please give it back to me. It should take you about ten minutes to complete.

The results of this research project will be used in a dissertation for the completion of my Masters Degree in Consumer Science: Clothing Management.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey and I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. I promise not to share any information that identifies you with anyone outside my research group, which consists of my study leader and me.

I hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it. Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to put your name on the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at 0824143841. The Review Board at the University of Pretoria (Department of Consumer Science) has approved this study.

Sincerely,  
Candice Grebe  
(Student at the University of Pretoria)

I consent to participate in the study about young women's evaluation of fashion photographs.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

The questionnaire consists of 3 Sections. Please complete all the questions in each section and follow the instructions carefully.

**SECTION A:**

1. Please state your age .....

2 Are you a South African Citizen? Yes  1 No  2

3. To which cultural group do you belong?

1 African  2 Caucasian  3 Other (please specify).....

4 Where do your parents live?

1 Rural area  2 City suburbs  3 Other (please specify).....

5. Please indicate whether you are a student and/ or working?

1 Student only  2 Student and working

6. How often do you read fashion magazines? (Please tick the applicable box)

1 Almost every day  2 Once a week  3 Monthly

4 Not so often  5 Almost never

7. Which of the following magazines do you purchase? You may choose more than one:

a)  1 Cosmopolitan b)  2 ELLE c)  3 Glamour  
d)  4 Cleo e)  5 True Love f)  6 Other (Please specify).....

8. Why do you read fashion magazines? You may choose more than one reason:

a)  1 Beauty b)  2 Health c)  3 To keep up to date  
d)  4 Fashion e)  5 Articles f)  6 Other (Please specify).....

**SECTION B:**

*Please answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. We are only interested in your honest opinion.*

9. Considering your feminine ideal of beauty, which of the aspects below are most important to you (Please rank the factors below, with (1) being most important, and (5) being least important):

a)  1 Hairstyle b)  2 Accessories c)  3 Body d)  4 Skin colour e)  5 Dress

**10. When you think of your feminine ideal of beauty, which aspects are important to you? (You may choose more than one):**

- a)  Dress      b)  Skin colour      c)  Hairstyle  
 d)  Accessories      e)  Body shape      f)  Other (Please specify).....

**11. Please indicate the importance of each of the following statements by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block, where (1) indicates very important, (2) indicates important, (3) indicates less important and (4) indicates not important.**

<b>Statement: IT IS IMPORTANT TO ME:</b>	<b>Very Important 1</b>	<b>Important 2</b>	<b>Less Important 3</b>	<b>Not Important 4</b>
a) that my dress style looks like that of my African friends				
b) that my dress style looks like that of Westernised women				
c) to compare my appearance to that of my friends				
d) to compare my appearance to Western styles				
e) that fashion magazine models are from my own culture				
f) that fashion magazine models are from a Western origin				
g) to feel that I belong to a specific cultural group				
h) to be acknowledged as an individual person				
i) that my appearance shows that I am an African women				
j) that my appearance shows my personal qualities				
k) that my appearance shows that I am an upcoming African student				
l) that my appearance shows that I am proud of my personal qualities				

**12. If you compare your appearance and the image that you portray to your specific ideal of beauty, what is important to you to compare? (Please give a detailed description)**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**13. Why is it important to you, to compare yourself to other women? (Select the ONE most important to you)**

- It helps me to see where I fit in and to feel part of a group  
 It helps me to see my shortcomings so that I can improve myself  
 It helps me to see how I relate in comparison to others  
 It helps me to feel better about myself

**14. When you compare yourself to the fashion ideal of beauty, but feel like you fall short of it, what is it you will most likely do? (Please tick only ONE box)**

- 1 I would accept the beauty standard, and try harder to reach it
- 2 I would accept the beauty standard, but would not do anything to achieve it
- 3 I would modify or change my personal beauty standard
- 4 I would modify or change my cultural beauty standard

**15. Please indicate the importance of each of the following statements by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate block, where (1) indicates very important, (2) indicates important, (3) indicates less important and (4) indicates not important.**

Statement	Very Important 1	Important 2	Less Important 3	Not Important 4
a) The colour of my dress should complement my skin colour				
b) The style of my dress should fit my body beautifully				
c) My accessories should be eye-catching				
d) My clothes should make me feel feminine				
e) My appearance should give me pleasure				
f) My appearance should make me feel in command of myself				
g) My appearance should reflect my cultural values				
h) My appearance should show others who I am				
i) My appearance should reflect the group I belong to				

**SECTION C:**

***Please study the fashion photographs below and answer all the questions by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block where applicable:***

**PHOTOGRAPH 1:**



**16.1**

Statement	Yes, very much 1	Yes 2	No, not so much 3	No, not at all 4
I like the fashion image				

**16.2 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**16.3**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would buy a fashion magazine with similar images				

**16.4 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

**16.5**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would compare myself with the image				

**16.6 Please describe which aspects of yourself you would compare and which not?**

.....

.....

.....

**16.7 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 16.5, please choose one of the reasons below**

- 1 It helps me to see where I fit in and to feel part of a group
- 2 It helps me to see my shortcomings so that I can improve myself
- 3 It helps me to see how I relate in comparison to others
- 4 It helps me to feel better about myself



**16.8 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 16.5, please give reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**16.9 If you have ticked block 3 or 4 in Question 16.5, what will your reaction most probably be?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | I will change my appearance to compare more positively        |
| 2 | I won't do anything further to look like the standard         |
| 3 | I will change my view of what I personally think is beautiful |
| 4 | I will change the way I view my cultural beauty standard      |

**16.10 Please indicate with an "X" in the corresponding block, whether you find Photograph 1:**

**16.10.1)**

**Eye-catching**  **Not eye-catching**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**16.10.2)**

**For me**  **Not for me**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**16.10.3)**

**Attractive**  **Not attractive**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**16.10.4)**

**Appealing**  **Not appealing**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**16.10.5)**

**Likeable**  **Not likeable**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16.11 Please indicate if you would purchase the clothing featured in Photograph 1, by marking an “X” in the appropriate block:

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very likely                  Maybe                  Very unlikely

16.12 Please indicate if you would purchase a fashion magazine typically featuring fashion photographs similar to Photograph 1, by marking an “X” in the appropriate block:

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very possible                  Maybe                  Probably not

16.13 Please indicate if you relate to Photograph 1 in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance?

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very likely                  Maybe                  Very unlikely

**PHOTOGRAPH 2:**



17.1

Statement	Yes, very much 1	Yes 2	No, not so much 3	No, not at all 4
I like the fashion image				

**17.2 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**17.3**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would buy a fashion magazine with similar images				

**17.4 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

**17.5**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would compare myself with the image				

**17.6 Please describe which aspects of yourself you would compare and which not?**

.....

.....

.....

**17.7 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 17.5, please choose one of the reasons below**

- 1 It helps me to see where I fit in and to feel part of a group
- 2 It helps me to see my shortcomings so that I can improve myself
- 3 It helps me to see how I relate in comparison to others
- 4 It helps me to feel better about myself

**17.8 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 17.5, please give reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**17.9** If you have ticked block 3 or 4 in Question 17.5, what will your reaction most probably be?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | I will change my appearance to compare more positively        |
| 2 | I won't do anything further to look like the standard         |
| 3 | I will change my view of what I personally think is beautiful |
| 4 | I will change the way I view my cultural beauty standard      |

**17.10** Please indicate with an "X" in the corresponding block, whether you find Photograph 1:

17.10.1)

Eye-catching  $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$  Not eye-catching

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17.10.2)

For me  $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$  Not for me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17.10.3)

Attractive  $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$  Not attractive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17.10.4)

Appealing  $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$  Not appealing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17.10.5)

Likeable  $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$  Not likeable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**17.11** Please indicate if you would purchase the clothing featured in Photograph 1, by marking an "X" in the appropriate block:

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very likely                  Maybe                  Very unlikely

17.12 Please indicate if you would purchase a fashion magazine typically featuring fashion photographs similar to Photograph 1, by marking an “X” in the appropriate block:

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very possible      Maybe      Probably not

17.13 Please indicate if you relate to Photograph 1 in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance?

1	2	3
---	---	---

Very likely      Maybe      Very unlikely

**PHOTOGRAPH 3:**



18.1

Statement	Yes, very much 1	Yes 2	No, not so much 3	No, not at all 4
I like the fashion image				

**18.2 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**18.3**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would buy a fashion magazine with similar images				

**18.4 Please describe the reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

**18.5**

Statement	Yes, Definitely 1	Yes, probably 2	Probably not 3	No, not at all 4
I would compare myself with the image				

**18.6 Please describe which aspects of yourself you would compare and which not?**

.....

.....

.....

**18.7 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 18.5, please choose one of the reasons below**

- 1 It helps me to see where I fit in and to feel part of a group
- 2 It helps me to see my shortcomings so that I can improve myself
- 3 It helps me to see how I relate in comparison to others
- 4 It helps me to feel better about myself

**18.8 If you have ticked block 1 or 2 in Question 18.5, please give reasons for your answer:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**18.9** If you have ticked block 3 or 4 in Question 18.5, what will your reaction most probably be?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | I will change my appearance to compare more positively        |
| 2 | I won't do anything further to look like the standard         |
| 3 | I will change my view of what I personally think is beautiful |
| 4 | I will change the way I view my cultural beauty standard      |

**18.10** Please indicate with an "X" in the corresponding block, whether you find Photograph 1:

18.10.1)

Eye-catching  $\longrightarrow$  Not eye-catching

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18.10.2)

For me  $\longrightarrow$  Not for me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18.10.3)

Attractive  $\longrightarrow$  Not attractive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18.10.4)

Appealing  $\longrightarrow$  Not appealing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18.10.5)

Likeable  $\longrightarrow$  Not likeable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**18.11 Please indicate if you would purchase the clothing featured in Photograph 1, by marking an “X” in the appropriate block:**

1	2	3
---	---	---

**Very likely**

**Maybe**

**Very unlikely**

**18.12 Please indicate if you would purchase a fashion magazine typically featuring fashion photographs similar to Photograph 1, by marking an “X” in the appropriate block:**

1	2	3
---	---	---

**Very possible**

**Maybe**

**Probably not**

**18.13 Please indicate if you relate to Photograph 1 in terms of dress, cultural background and appearance?**

1	2	3
---	---	---

**Very likely**

**Maybe**

**Very unlikely**

---

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION***



## **ADDENDUM B: PANEL QUESTIONNAIRE**

*(Please take note: Photographs for the panel questionnaire were given on a CD to be viewed on a computer by the panel of experts. Here however, the photographs will be attached (printed) at the end of the questionnaire, and the CD is included at the end of the study. Please refer to the photographs attached at the end of the questionnaire or view the photographs on the CD, where references are made to Category 1, Category 2, and Category 3 on the CD)*

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SCIENCE**



University of Pretoria

Dear Respondent,

I am inviting you to participate in my research project to study the role of culture in Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. Along with this letter is a short questionnaire that asks a few questions about a variety of fashion images. Please look through the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete it and please give it back to me. It should take you about ten minutes to complete.

The results of this research project will be used in a dissertation for the completion of my Masters Degree in Consumer Science: Clothing Management. Your evaluation of the fashion images will help to ensure that the fashion images that will ultimately be included in my questionnaires to be handed out to the Black Diamond's consumer group, will include stimuli that are similar across all fashion images, and therefore eliminate bias in responses.

Through your participation I hope to understand the role that culture plays in Black Diamonds' social comparison and reflected appraisals of fashion magazine images. I hope to share my results by publishing them in a scientific journal. I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey and I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. I promise not to share any information that identifies you with anyone outside my research group, which consists of my study leader and me.

I hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it. Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to put your name on the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at 0824143841. The Review Board at the University of Pretoria (Department of Consumer Science) has approved this study.

Sincerely,  
Candice Grebe  
(Student at the University of Pretoria)

**\*\*\*The following criteria were considered when the fashion photographs were selected:**

- Fashion photographs evoking more or less the same amount of attractiveness
  - Fashion photographs evoking the same level of vividness & drawing the same amount of attention
  - Fashion photographs (in my opinion) representative of each of the three beauty ideals, in terms of skin colour, dress, hairstyle and cultural artefacts such as accessories.
  - Fashion photographs with no imagery brand names
  - Fashion photographs featuring models of similar sizes
  - Fashion photographs with a clear view of the clothes featured
  - Fashion photographs featuring one style, namely dresses
- 

### **CATEGORY 1:**

***Please open the folder “Panel evaluation” on your CD, open “Category 1”, and click “view slide show”. The ten fashion photographs are from fashion editorials typically seen in women’s fashion magazines and on the Internet. Please answer all the questions and rate the ten fashion photographs in terms of the guidelines below:***

## Question 1

Please indicate whether you agree with each statement below, by placing an “X” in the appropriate block.

1.1) The fashion photograph portrays a Westernised beauty ideal well, in terms of dress.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Picture 1					
Picture 2					
Picture 3					
Picture 4					
Picture 5					
Picture 6					
Picture 7					
Picture 8					
Picture 9					
Picture 10					

1.2) The fashion photograph portrays a Westernised beauty ideal well, in terms of skin colour.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Picture 1					
Picture 2					
Picture 3					
Picture 4					
Picture 5					
Picture 6					
Picture 7					
Picture 8					
Picture 9					
Picture 10					

1.3) The fashion photograph portrays a Westernised beauty ideal well, in terms of hairstyle.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

1.4) The fashion photograph portrays a Westernised beauty ideal well, in terms of cultural artefacts, such as accessories.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

**Question 2**

2.1) Please rate the fashion photographs from most attractive to least attractive, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most attractive** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least attractive**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.2) Please rate the fashion photographs according to the level they represent an appropriate Westernised beauty ideal, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most representative** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least representative**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.3) Please rate the fashion photographs from most eye-catching to least eye-catching, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most eye-catching** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least eye-catching**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**CATEGORY 2:**

*Please open “Category 2” on your CD, and click “view slide show”. The ten fashion photographs are from fashion editorials typically seen in women’s fashion magazines and on the Internet. Please answer all the questions and rate the ten fashion photographs in terms of the guidelines below:*

## Question 1

Please indicate whether you agree with each statement below, by placing an “X” in the appropriate block.

1.1) The fashion photograph portrays a African beauty ideal well, in terms of dress.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Picture 1					
Picture 2					
Picture 3					
Picture 4					
Picture 5					
Picture 6					
Picture 7					
Picture 8					
Picture 9					
Picture 10					

1.2) The fashion photograph portrays a African beauty ideal well, in terms of skin colour.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Picture 1					
Picture 2					
Picture 3					
Picture 4					
Picture 5					
Picture 6					
Picture 7					
Picture 8					
Picture 9					
Picture 10					

1.3) The fashion photograph portrays a African beauty ideal well, in terms of hairstyle.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

1.4) The fashion photograph portrays a African beauty ideal well, in terms of cultural artefacts, such as accessories.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					



**Question 2**

2.1) Please rate the fashion photographs from most attractive to least attractive, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most attractive** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least attractive**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.2) Please rate the fashion photographs according to the level they represent an appropriate African beauty ideal, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most representative** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least representative**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.3) Please rate the fashion photographs from most eye-catching to least eye-catching, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most eye-catching** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least eye-catching**

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**CATEGORY 3:**

*Please open “Category 3” on your CD, and click “view slide show”. The ten fashion photographs are from fashion editorials typically seen in women’s fashion magazines and on the Internet. Please answer all the questions and rate the ten fashion photographs in terms of the guidelines below:*

## Question 1

Please indicate whether you agree with each statement below, by placing an “X” in the appropriate block.

1.1) The fashion photograph portrays a Euro-African beauty ideal well, in terms of dress.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

1.2) The fashion photograph portrays a Euro-African beauty ideal well, in terms of skin colour.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

1.3) The fashion photograph portrays a Euro-African beauty ideal well, in terms of hairstyle.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

1.4) The fashion photograph portrays a Euro-African beauty ideal well, in terms of cultural artefacts, such as accessories.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>Picture 1</b>					
<b>Picture 2</b>					
<b>Picture 3</b>					
<b>Picture 4</b>					
<b>Picture 5</b>					
<b>Picture 6</b>					
<b>Picture 7</b>					
<b>Picture 8</b>					
<b>Picture 9</b>					
<b>Picture 10</b>					

## Question 2

2.1) Please rate the fashion photographs from most attractive to least attractive, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most attractive** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least attractive**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.2) Please rate the fashion photographs according to the level they represent an appropriate Euro-African beauty ideal, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most representative** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least representative**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.3) Please rate the fashion photographs from most eye-catching to least eye-catching, by placing the numbers of the photographs (1 – 10) in the appropriate blocks below:

**Most eye-catching** \_\_\_\_\_ **Least eye-catching**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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*Thank you for your participation*

## CATEGORY 1: WESTERNISED BEAUTY IDEAL



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



## CATEGORY 2: AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL



1



2



3



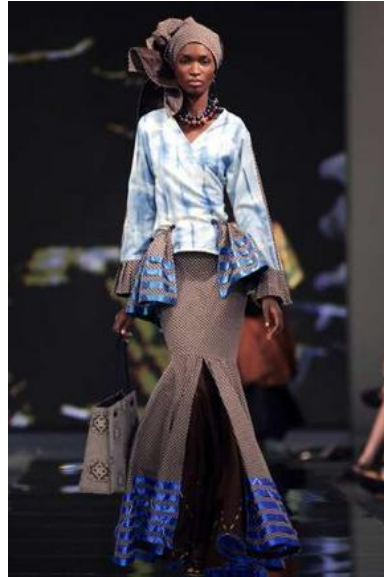
4



5



6



7



8



9



10



### CATEGORY 3: EURO-AFRICAN BEAUTY IDEAL



1



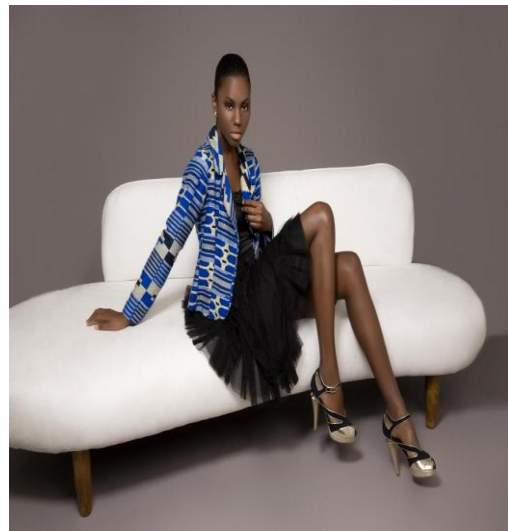
2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10