

**EXPLORING THE ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF YOUNG,
BLACK, AFRICAN, FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICAN
CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS**

by

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REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The 6th edition American Psychological Association (APA) reference and editorial format, as well as the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology's article layout are used in this mini-dissertation.
- This outline of the study is in the form of a mini-dissertation article. Even though the layout is in the form of an article, no limitation was set on the number of pages it may contain.
- This mini-dissertation is written in the third person and the student is referred to as the researcher.

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DECLARATION

I, Marili Engelbrecht, hereby declare that *Exploring the acculturation strategies of young, black, African, female employees in corporate South African organisations* is my own original work both in content and execution. Where someone else's work was used, due acknowledgement was given as they were cited and referred to in the reference list.

I declare that the content of this dissertation has never been submitted for any qualification at any higher education institution. I did not make use of another student's work and submit it as my own. I also did not allow and will not allow any individual to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.

Furthermore, I declare that the language in this mini-dissertation was edited by Mr MJ de Jager.



Marili Engelbrecht

30 September 2016

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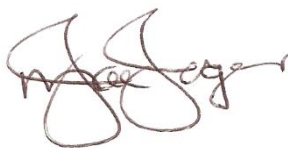
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This is to confirm that I, MJ de Jager, edited the language (excluding the list of references and appendixes) in the research report, *Exploring the acculturation strategies of young, black, African, female employees in South African corporate organisations*. The onus is on the author to attend to the suggested changes and all queries. Furthermore, I do not take responsibility for any changes affected in the document after the fact.



MJ DE JAGER

27 September 2016

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EXPLORING THE ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF YOUNG, BLACK, AFRICAN, FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS

ABSTRACT

Orientation: Acculturation strategies are utilised to overcome the challenges posed to an individual employee's culture by the reigning organisational culture.

Research purpose: The purpose of this research is to conceptualise young, black, African, female (YBAF) employees' ethnic identities, to describe the everyday challenges that they encounter in South African corporate organisations, and to explore the strategies that this particular group employs in order to acculturate in the work place.

Motivation for this study: After the democratisation of South Africa in 1994 organisations were demographically transformed. Tension between the (Westernised) individual culture and the (African) collective culture challenged the successful implementation of an inclusive organisational culture.

Research design, approach and method: Employing a qualitative inquiry strategy, traits of a netnographical design and internet-based research were combined to warrant the electronic focus-group discussions and email interviews as data collection methods to gauge the lived experiences of one specific in-group within the organisation.

Main findings: The findings are discussed according to the in-group's ethnic identity, the cultural challenges they experienced in the organisation, and the acculturation strategies that they employed. The following strategies emerged from the data in this study: managing language as an important acculturation agent; utilising corridor talk by means of obtaining essential information; sharing and voicing beliefs of own cultures with colleagues to ensure mutual respect; actively countering current stereotypes and prejudice in the workplace, employing shifting as a positive strategy to acculturate; and recognising whiteness as an unconscious and privileged position that needs to be dealt with sensitively and effectively in organisations.

Practical/managerial implications: The identified acculturation strategies in this study could assist employers in induction programmes or on-boarding processes and possible interventions to facilitate acculturation of new employees in organisations. It could be possible to develop a general guideline or manual from the findings of this research that would be relevant to everyday practices in the workplace.

Contribution/value-add: The academic value of this study lies in the identification, description and evaluation of one particular in-group: the YBAF employees, which is coined for the first time in this research. This study voices these employees' challenges and experiences in a corporate South African environment.

Keywords: Young, black, African, female employees; organisational identity; ethnic identity; cultural salience; acculturation strategies; South African corporate organisations

1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has a population of 51 770 560 with a diverse composition of religion, languages and ethnicity (Statistics South Africa, 2012). According to Adams (2014), South Africa consists of four ethno-cultural groups, namely black, coloured, Indian and white. The recent census (Statistics South Africa, 2012) found that the largest portion of the population of South Africa is the black ethnic group (79,2%). Although different black cultural groups in South Africa can be identified by their mother tongue (Ndebeles, Pedis, Sothos, Swatis, Tsongas, Setswanas, Vendas, Xhosas and Zulus), all black ethnic groups are generally considered to be collectivistic in nature as they view group membership as a foundation of pride and contribute to the values and norms of the collective group (Adams, 2014; Adams, Van de Vijver, De Bruin, & Torres, 2014; Hofstede, 1980). The reason for viewing these different cultural groups (different mother tongue speakers) as one group called 'black South Africans' in this study, is because they are often referred to as a black community who shared the fight against racial discrimination and oppression in South Africa prior to 1994 and who continuously strive to maintain the black heritage in South Africa (Alleyne, 2004; Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005). This group became politically dominant since the first demographic elections in 1994, which led to more diversity in terms of language and cultural customs within the workplace (Adams, 2014; Marais, 2010). Some legislation was amended in order to diversify the workforce, like for instance the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998, which states that designated groups (consisting of black people, women and people with disabilities) need to be employed by organisations of 50 and more employees in order to comply with the Act (Department of Labour, 2015). Although white females were also marginalised they did have some privileges and experiences because of their race, while black females were confined to domestic work or work which is supportive or un-skilled in nature (Booyesen, 2007; Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010; Oosthuizen &

Naidoo, 2010). Booysen (2007) further explains that, since 1994, the political power has shifted from white males to black males, and that representation in Parliament has shifted to 30% black females.

Even after the diversification of the workforce (where an unequal power hierarchy existed), it seems that other elements from the previous South African political and social history (pre-1994) were retained, like stagnant stereotypes and perceptions which are still evident in many corporate environments, and these may skew the implementation of an inclusive organisational culture in organisations (Adams et al., 2014; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Munich, 2011). Although culture can be managed to be extremely beneficial in organisations, it is also one of the main challenges in South African organisations where Westernised organisational ideologies (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1991) reigned prior to 1994 (Munich, 2011). Therefore, it seems that employees from designated groups (black, coloured and Indian) that enter corporate organisations need to adjust and adhere to the organisational culture by implementing acculturation strategies (Cox, 1991; Moore & Barker, 2012; Munich, 2011). Generally speaking, acculturation strategies refer to those tactics utilised by individuals in order to function in a culture other than, or different from their own (Luijters, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2006; Marais, 2010; Samnani, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012).

In this study, the constructs “**acculturation**” and “**ethnic identity**” are explored in depth by analysing key concepts such as cultural salience and acculturation strategies. Organisations can no longer be viewed as just a place of work, but should be accepted as socially, culturally and emotionally loaded entities supplying individual and collective identities (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2008; Hofstede et al., 1991; Luijters et al., 2006). Triandis (1990) indicates that all individuals are essentially ethnocentric in nature, as their own culture seems to be normal. This bias regarding what is normal may automatically result in the rejection of the different norms of the out-group encountered. In other

words, knowing only one's own cultural system is inevitably ethnocentric. This dilemma may result in the cultural identity of the employee becoming an obstacle in the formation of the organisational identity and in the acculturation process of becoming part of that organisational identity (Pattynama & Verboom, 2000; Perry, 2001; Triandis, 1990).

As a future industrial organisational psychologist (IOP) who will facilitate the acculturation process in organisations, the researcher's interest lies in how young, black, African, female (YBAF) employees experience acculturation in corporate South African organisations as they are becoming a prominent part of the workforce on all the levels of the organisation post 1994. As YBAF employees form part of the designated group according to the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998, they should enjoy equal opportunities and should be equitably represented in the workforce of the employer. The transition from a previously white dominated workforce towards a diversified workforce involve Affirmative Action and more specifically Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). Not only has implementing and managing BBBEE in organisations become an integral part of business strategy and are employers obliged to comply by employing and developing black African employees by means of an Employment Equity Plan, but it also holds a financial incentive for employers. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to focus on the group of YBAF employees as a subgroup of designated employees.

The influence of the employee's ethnic identity on the acculturation process within the corporate organisation is gauged through the perspectives of the participants in this study. This study voices the lived experiences of YBAF employees striving towards acculturation into a previously homogenous organisational environment of which they were not part.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Berry (1997, p. 6) advocates that individuals generally act in ways that correspond to cultural influences and expectations. The question he asks is: “What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context?” Hofstede (1980) categorises two manifestations of culture, i.e. collective and individual cultures. Westernised cultures are perceived as individualistic with the emphasis on personal values, beliefs and goals, while collective cultures (non-Western) serve the principles of an interdependent and collectivistic environment. Today, South African organisations are challenged to amalgamate these different approaches within the corporate environment (Berry, 1997; Booysen, 2007; Marais, 2010; Munich, 2011; Verkuyten, 2005).

Although many national and international researchers (Berry, 1997; Blaka & Filstad, 2007; Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott & Dalton, 2007; Griessel & Kotze, 2010) have conceptualised the necessity and utilisation of acculturation strategies in corporate environments, the focus has not been on the identities of YBAF employees. This study addresses the acculturation strategies of one specific in-group in corporate organisations and how members of the group experience the demands of their own culture as opposed to the requirements of the organisational culture. The study investigates the acculturation strategies within the South African corporate context and tries to recommend ways to avoid the pitfalls in the acculturation process within organisations.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this research is to conceptualise YBAF employees' ethnic identities, to describe the everyday challenges that they encounter in South African corporate organisations, and to explore the strategies that this in-group employs in order to acculturate in the work place.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES / RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The general objective for this study is as follows:

This study aims to better the understanding of acculturation in South African corporate organisations from the perspective of young, black, African, female employees.

The **primary research question** is: How do young, black, African, female employees acculturate in South African corporate organisations?

The study poses the following **secondary questions** to address the primary question:

- How do the literature and the data conceptualise young, black, African, female employees' ethnic identities?
- How do the literature and the data describe challenges experienced by young, black, African, female employees in South African corporate organisations?
- How do young, black, African, female employees utilise acculturation strategies in South African corporate organisations?

1.4 ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The need for successful acculturation strategies has been revealed through many studies on this phenomenon (Alleyne, 2004; Blaka & Filstad, 2007; Booysen, 2007; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Franchi, 2003). Various groups need to be accounted for in organisations, depending on the geographical and demographical realities in the macro-context of these organisations. In South Africa these realities may differ from those in other countries, regarding specific ethnic groups such as black, coloured and Indian in-groups (Adams et al., 2014; Franchi, 2003; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Marais, 2010). All of these groups can be divided into further subgroups, i.e. male or female, and managers or other employees. The academic value of this study lies in the identification, description and evaluation of one such a group – YBAF employees.

It is critical that in-groups (such as YBAF employees) are recognised within corporate organisations (Adams, 2014) not only as employment equity employees (Department of Labour, 2015), but also as valuable assets to the organisation. This study specifically focuses on the acculturation strategies of YBAF employees voicing their challenges and experiences in a South African corporate environment. This research aims at providing a well-rounded, thorough and in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of this specific in-group. Although the result is not generalizable because of its qualitative nature, the fairly large sample (18 participants, three electronic focus groups with probing email interviews) provides ample evidence of these women's acculturation journey.

This research paves the way for other researchers to recognise this in-group (YBAF employees) and explore other phenomena pertaining to this newly defined group. Furthermore, this study opens

the door for future researchers to explore the acculturation strategies of other established in-groups within corporate organisations.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Acculturation:

The definition of acculturation by Berry (2005, pp. 698-699) guides this study:

Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavio[u]ral repertoire. These cultural and psychological changes come about through a long-term process, sometimes taking years, sometimes generations, and sometimes centuries.

Strategies:

In this research the term "strategies" denotes the description provided by Luijters et al. (2006, p. 562):

According to the acculturation theory of Berry and colleagues (e.g. Berry, 1990, 1997; Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1999), individual members must deal with the issue of how to acculturate, hence they usually work out strategies in their daily encounters with each other with respect to two major issues.

Young:

Although the term "young" in itself is broad and open to interpretation, individuals between the age of 20 and 35 are considered as young in this study.

Black African:

The rationale for this term is of a historic nature. During the Apartheid-era in South Africa, all non-whites were regarded as black: “‘black people’ is a generic term which means African, coloureds and Indians” (Department of Labour, 2015, p. 6). Therefore, qualifying black as people of African origin was necessary to describe the specific in-group relevant in this study.

Female:

This indicates the gender of an individual, or as denoted in the Oxford English Dictionary: “denoting the sex that can bear offspring or produce eggs” (Soanes & Stevenson, 2004, p. 522).

Employee:

According to the Employment Equity Act, No. 58 of 1998 the term “employee” refers to: “any person other than an independent contractor who – a) works for another person or for the State who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration; and b) in any manner assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer” (Department of Labour, 2015, p. 8).

South African corporate organisation:

The South African Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 describes a corporate organisation as an employer who employs 50 or more employees, or “an employer that employs fewer than fifty employees, but has a total annual turnover that is equal to or above the applicable annual turnover of a small business in terms of Schedule 4 to this Act” (Department of Labour, 2015, p. 9).

Table 1: Abbreviations used in this document

Abbreviation	Meaning
BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
CIS	Cultural Identity Salience
HR	Human Resources
IOP	Industrial Organisational Psychologist
SIT	Social Identity Theory
YBAF	Young black African female

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Through the literature review, the researcher aims to provide relevant information in order to propose answers to the secondary research questions. The literature review also identifies gaps in the current literature that adds to the significance of this research. The discussion starts with theoretical perspectives from SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957). These form the theoretical lens (conceptual framework) for this research guiding a discussion of ethnic identity in general, and the ethnic identity of YBAF employees. A discussion on the nature of acculturation in corporate organisations follows, and lastly, possible acculturation strategies of YBAF employees in corporate South African organisations are discussed.

2.2 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY (SIT)

Identity can be divided into different categories, such as individual identity, group identity, social identity and organisational identity (Adams, 2014; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Stets & Burke, 2000). Social identity refers to individuals defining themselves by creating a social identity that they can identify with (Adams et al., 2014; Brown, 2000; Collinson, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Tajfel and Turner (1985) pose SIT to extensively explain the understanding of how individuals strive to achieve a positive social identity, based on the identification with an in-group of its choice and then comparing the values and beliefs of this chosen in-group to relevant out-groups. Group membership is what individuals define themselves by (Brown, 2000; Engelbrecht, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). By choosing to become part of a specific group, an individual subscribes to the characteristics of that

group. Ashforth and Mael (1989) provide an example of a Canadian woman who has to be female and from Canadian origin in order to identify with this in-group. Another example would be the in-group explored in this study. YBAF employees in this study have to be young, of African origin, female, and an employee in a corporate South African organisation.

SIT rests on two pillars: **self-categorisation** and **social comparison** (Brown, 2000; Engelbrecht, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Firstly, in **self-categorisation** the emphasis is on the similarities, which an individual recognises in him/herself and other people from the in-group. These similarities of attitudes and interests are the reasons why an individual chooses to be part of a specific in-group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Collinson, 2003; Stets & Burke, 2000). Secondly, **social comparison** focuses on the differences between the individual and the out-group members (Brown, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). The difference between the in-group and the out-group contributes to the positive identification of the individual with his or her in-group. This group formation inevitably leads to stereotypical categories such as “us” and “them” in which “us” can be associated with positive traits, while “they” or “them” denotes the opposite, i.e. negative traits (Brink & Nel, 2015; Hovino, 2008; Verkuyten, 2005; Wekker, 2002).

When “personally experiencing the successes and failures of the group”, social identification becomes evident (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). If the behaviour or activities of an individual correspond with the accepted social identity of a specific in-group, the individual will experience support from members from the in-group (Baldwin, Longhurst, McCracken, Ogborn, & Smith, 2004; Brown, 2000; Collinson, 2003). According to SIT, **social identification** comprises of four phases taking place during this process: the categorisation of individuals, the uniqueness and status of a group, the characteristics of relevant out-groups, and the elements usually connected to group formation

as a phenomenon, such as prejudice or stereotypical beliefs (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

2.3 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Newcomers in an organisation often experience culture shock because of the overwhelming feeling of being alienated from their original culture (Berry, 1970; Collinson, 2003; Cox, 1991; Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2013). The concepts “cultural maintenance” and “contact and participation” should be explained in this regard. **Cultural maintenance** refers to the extent to which cultural identity is considered important and the extent to which individuals become involved in other cultural groups through **contact** and **participation** in formal and informal settings, such as meetings, teambuilding exercises or social events (Baldwin et al. 2004; Ferdman, 1995; Luijters et al., Van der Zee, & Otten, 2006). These two concepts are essential components of the process of acculturation and the acculturation strategies from the non-dominant groups in the organisation (Amoah, 2014; Berry, 1990; 1997; Reid, Romans & Koch, 2014). The **dominant groups** in the organisation refer to those groups who are settled in their ways and are the majority in the organisation, where the non-dominant groups are those individuals whose need to acculturate is greater, as they are in the minority (Alleyne, 2004; Berry, 2005).

According to Festinger’s Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957), cultural differences within a new working environment will cause uncomfortable experiences for the non-dominant employee as an individual. The original cultural values should match the new work environment but because of opposing conditions, factors and social relations, discomfort and tension are caused (Collinson, 2003; Hofstede, 1980; Luijters et al., 2006). Tension or discomfort can originate from many sources,

for example the role that language plays in the organisational culture (Blaka & Filstad, 2007; Lues, 2005; Luijters et al., 2006). Pillay and McLellan (2010) investigated the role of language to mask exclusion. They argue that using language masked as a language of inclusion “can effectively serve to exclude” (Pillay & McLellan, 2010, p. 1) and create so-called “cultural schisms” in organisations in post-apartheid South Africa. Pillay and McLellan also refer to the role of Afrikaans and English being used to facilitate discussions and meetings.

Employees may react in two possible ways if dissonance occurs (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Berry, 1997; Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Luijters et al., 2006). Firstly, employees might attempt to minimise the dissonance. Avoidance behaviour (such as pretending not to hear what was said or not reacting to remarks perceived as insulting) might be the result of trying to uphold self-concept or protecting own identity. Secondly (and to the contrary) employees may adapt values and behaviour in order to neutralise the dissonance, for instance to recognise differences in culture such as making eye contact (Mtshelwane, Nel, & Brink, 2016). As a result of adapting in this manner, identity-restructuring of the individual takes place (Festinger, 1957; Samnani et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2005).

2.4 ETHNIC IDENTITY

In this section the discussion starts with cultural identity that branches into ethnic identity (Griessel & Kotze, 2010; Samnani et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2005). Cultural identity as a construct is defined by Ferdman (1995, p. 37) as “the person’s individual image of the cultural features that characterize[s] his or her group(s) and of the reflection (or lack of reflection) of these features in his or her self-representation”. The ideal of one individual holding more than one cultural identity has been central

in the debate surrounding multicultural effectiveness in the workplace (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Berry, 1980; 1990; 1997; 2003; 2005; 2009; Collinson, 2003; Cox, 1991; Samnani et al., 2012). As a result of repeated acculturation experiences individuals could accomplish an intercultural identity which entails a healthy self-definition and the ability to perceive cultural commonalities instead of stereotyped differences (Hood & Koberg, 1994; Moore & Barker, 2012).

As opposed to Hofstede's (1980) traditional framework focusing on culture as a static construct, Berry (2003) views cultural identity as a concept that is part of a dynamic process. According to Berry (2003), the cultural patterns of the non-dominant group constantly change because of exposure to the dominant culture. Unlearning the original cultural identity was previously the pre-requisite for acculturation into another culture, while the modern approach focuses on adding another culture instead of losing your original culture (Berry, 2005; Luijters et al., 2006; Moore & Barker, 2012; Samnani et al., 2012). The assumption is that an individual might feel at ease in both cultures without compromising the original culture (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

Ethnic identity refers to individuals within various cultures or identities and their commitment to their group of origin (Alleyne, 2004; Moore & Barker, 2012; Stets & Burke, 2000; Verkuyten, 2005). Ethnic identity allows us to ultimately understand how an individual within his/her ethnic group of origin fits into the larger context of his or her world (Adams et al., 2014). In the literature on ethnic identity in organisations, **organisational identification** and **cultural identity salience (CIS)** feature as critical constructs relating to the satisfaction of the individual as well as the effectiveness of the organisation and should therefore be explained (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Berry, 1997; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2007; Griessel & Kotze, 2010; Luijters et al., 2006). **Organisational identity** could be defined as "the way in which organisational members define themselves as a social group and how they understand

themselves to be different from members of other organisations” (Empson, 2004, p. 759). Moore and Barker (2012) and Berry (2003) point out that CIS may come to the fore when the focus of the organisation is on cultural transition.

CIS denotes the importance of the original culture to the individual employee in an organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Collinson, 2003; Ferdman, 1995; Griessel & Kotze, 2010). The identity of the employee depends on maintaining of the employee’s original culture. The individuals’ cultural values, goals, experiences, expectations, and to what extent the employee desires to maintain these in the workplace, inform their identity (Berry, 1997; Samnani et al., 2012). Employees with low CIS will display skills to overcome cognitive dissonance while a high CIS, on the contrary, is associated with resistance to assimilation into a new environment (Berry, 2009; Samnani et al., 2013).

Scholars (Adams, 2014; Human, 1991; Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009; Verkuyten, 2005) agree that the ethnic identity of black African South Africans is more salient than ethnic identity among white South Africans, as the identity of a black African South African is more dependent on external factors as they observe and analyse their collective groups for meaning and significance about themselves. In this regard Matthews (2015) contends that being white is not an ethnic position. It is a norm that all else defers from (Perry, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Vandeyar, 2014; Wekker, 2002). Many scholars have explored the concept of **whiteness** and regard it as not being a racial category, nor refers to racism. It is rather a privileged position characterised by entitlement and so-called common-sense knowledge (Sim & Van Loon, 2002; Wekker, 2002), which indicates that whatever white people say or do is experienced as normal or the way it should be. If white is normal, everything deferring from it, is in a sense abnormal (Baldwin et al., 2004; Perry, 2001; Sim & Van Loon, 2002; Thompson, 2001).

Since the shift of political power in South Africa in 1994, major changes have been implemented in the demographic structure of most organisations by means of affirmative action (Booyesen, 2007; Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010; Department of Labour, 2015; Franchi, 2003; Lues, 2005; Marais, 2010; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Still, black African groups control the political arena in the country while white groups control the economic arena (Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2014; Booyesen, 2007). According to Human (1991), Booyesen (2007) and Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010), the public sector demonstrates much more demographic transformation than the private sector. To bridge the gap between individualistic (mostly white people) and collective (mostly black African people) cultures (that previously have been separated due to Apartheid policies), is now a challenge for many corporate organisations in the South African economy (Booyesen, 2007; Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Despite many changes being implemented in the name of transformation, the power base still remains with white males in the corporate world (Alleyne, 2004; Booyesen, 2007; Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009).

2.5 ETHNIC IDENTITY OF YOUNG, BLACK, AFRICAN, FEMALE EMPLOYEES

According to Brink and Nel (2014), the most prevalent categories in South Africa are those of age, race, gender and occupation. These markers of identity form an integral part of the study as the ethnic group explored is young (age), black (race), female (gender), employees in a South African corporate environment (occupation). As previously discussed, ethnic identity often forms a buffer between individual and group membership in the corporate world (Adams et al., 2014; Collinson, 2003, Moore & Barker, 2012). The importance of ethnic identity as an umbrella construct cannot be overemphasised for psychological well-being within the work context as it is associated with self-

esteem, satisfactory human functioning and social development (Burt & Halpin, 1998; Reid et al., 2014).

The literature contains many in-depth studies on black African managers (Brenner, Blazini, & Greenhaus, 1988; Cox & Nkomo, 1986; Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2011) and managerial studies especially focusing on black African female managers (Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Lues, 2005; Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009). However, not many studies on black African employees in general were found, and none was found on YBAF employees. There is a gap in research that examines the intersection between age, race and gender in South Africa (Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Shields, 2008). Therefore, this study focuses on exploring an in-group in the workplace that has become prevalent in the past few decades, but has not been researched yet. These various categories (in this case young, black, African and female employees) are not experienced by employees as separate entities but as connected to one another and experienced simultaneously (Hovino, 2008). Therefore, this study investigates the identity of YBAF employees in its entirety.

As with the cultural differences explained previously, young adults also utilise ethnic identification as a psychological function to provide them with a sense of belonging (Adams, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Young adults have to bridge this need for belonging to their own culture while simultaneously belonging to a democratic nation that includes ethno-cultural differences (Amoah, 2014; Blaka & Filstad, 2007). Adding to the YBAF employees' strong sense of identity is the concept of "Ubuntu", which means that "a person is only a person through others" (Nel et al., 2012, p. 920). This concept supports the idea of a collectivist membership orientation and is especially salient among black South Africans (Adams, 2014). Ubuntu can also be viewed as an underlying communality across personalities in South Africa (Mtshelwane, 2015). Ubuntu seems to be the

ideal, however, corporate South Africa is still far from the sense of community that Ubuntu entails (Mtshelwane et al., 2016; Nel et al., 2012).

Dickhaus (2006) indicates that same-race racism is another factor to be reckoned with when discussing ethnic identity. Tension between different African ethnic groups is prevalent, for instance between the Nguni group and the Basotho group (Pillay & McLellan, 2010). However, Dickhaus (2006) advocates that same-race racist remarks are not perceived as being as harsh as they would be when voiced by other races.

2.6 ACCULTURATION IN CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS

Berry (2009, p. 9) asks the pivotal question:

If culture is such a powerful shaper of behaviour, do individuals continue to act in the new setting as they did in the previous one, do they change their behavioural repertoire to be more appropriate in the new setting, or is there some complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society?

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to Berry's question as the patterns of continuity and change depend on an individual's experience of adaptation. Adaptation refers to changes in individuals as a response to the demands of their environment. The so called "fit" (Berry, 1997, p. 14) between the individual and the demands from the new context manifests in the ability to deal with daily problems, having a clear sense of own and cultural identity, and experiencing personal satisfaction in a new cultural context. Berry (2005, pp. 698-699) defines acculturation as follows:

Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups. Contact and change occur for a number

of reasons, including colonization, military invasion, migration, and sojourning (such as tourism, international study, and overseas posting); it continues long after initial contact in culturally plural societies, where ethnocultural communities maintain features of their heritage cultures.

The process of **acculturation** refers to changes, which result when people from different cultures come into contact with new cultures and cultural patterns (Berry, 2005; Elsass & Veiga, 1994; Luijters et al, 2006; Samnani et al., 2013). It should be kept in mind though that, although acculturation should ideally result in an equal merging of two different groups, this rarely occurs. There is always one group dominating and influencing the direction of the acculturation (Elsass & Veiga, 1994). Examples in this regard would be the studies done by Booysen (2007), Booysen and Nkomo (2010), and Littrell and Nkomo (2005) in South African corporate organisations. Acculturation and assimilation are mutual processes differing only in terms of the emphasis on either the dominant culture or the non-dominant culture. Acculturation is concerned with the non-dominant culture learning the cultural patterns of the dominant culture while assimilation places the responsibility on the dominant group to accept the non-dominant culture in the structured activities of the organisation (Cox, 1991; Hall et al., 2011; Hood & Koberg, 1994; Moore & Barker, 2012). Three other strategies are introduced by Berry (1997): the reactive strategy (getting to the point where there is resistance towards change in both groups); the creative strategy (stimulating cultural forms that are not part of any of the cultures in contact); the delayed strategy (implementing changes that only bear fruit many years later).

Cox (1991) discusses different methods by which acculturation within organisations can be facilitated: the non-dominant group adapts to the values and norms of the dominant group (where the non-dominant group is usually the minority); a mutual process of adapting between the dominant

and non-dominant group; only some norms and values are mutually adopted (pluralism); not only norms and values, but also certain behaviours from both cultures are encouraged.

According to Reid et al. (2014), the bi-dimensional model of Berry (2003) conceptualises the acculturation process as more fluid than static, describing it as a cycle rather than a straight line in which change occurs according to inputs from the environment and individual interpretations. According to this model, two forms of acculturation may occur: **cultural assimilation** (where there is a high degree of individual cultural maintenance) and **structural assimilation** (where there is a high degree of contact or participation with a different cultural identity) (Berry, 1980; 2003; 2005).

Obasi (2004) created the MASPAD model (Measurement of Acculturation Strategies for People of African Descent) which measures the extent of acculturation strategies according to four techniques. The four acculturation strategies of Obasi (2004) (assimilationist, integrationist, traditionalist and marginalist) signify the possible techniques an individual could utilise to deal with the acculturation process. Obasi based these strategies on Berry's (1980) original model, however, in 2005, Berry adapted his original strategies by replacing the traditionalist strategy with separationist (Berry, 2005). For the purposes of this discussion, Berry's latest adapted strategies are explained.

In the **assimilation strategy** (the so-called "melting pot" (Berry, 1997; 2005)), employees do not want to maintain their own cultural identity at all cost and are open to daily interaction with other groups or cultures. Adams (2014) found that black African South Africans can move easily between their own cultural values and white and Western standards because of their knowledge and use of not only African languages, but also one or two Western languages, such as English or Afrikaans. This

multilingualism allows black African employees in general much broader access to other cultures within the organisation.

When employees value their own culture highly and try to hold on to it and at the same time try to avoid any interaction with other cultures, the **separation strategy** is relevant, which sometimes becomes segregation (Berry, 1997). The **integration strategy** is applicable when there is interest in maintaining the original culture and having daily interactions with other groups (Berry, 2005). In this regard Brink and Nel (2014) urge organisations to implement interventions to construct a clear comprehension of the way in which employees handle and experience labelling or stereotyping people in the workplace as it oppresses the acculturation process (Alleyne, 2004).

When there is little interest in cultural maintenance as well as little interest in having good interaction with other groups, the **marginalisation strategy** becomes an option (Berry, 1997; Reid et al., 2014). As a result of forced assimilation (the so-called “pressure cooker” (Berry, 2009, p. 9)), minority groups become marginalised.

2.7 ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF YOUNG, BLACK, AFRICAN, FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN CORPORATE SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

It is very important to understand that an acculturation process requires specific psychological pre-conditions. These pre-conditions only apply to societies that are multi-cultural and specifically strive to deal with diversity. Examples of these pre-conditions include acceptance of the need for cultural diversity, minimum occurrence of prejudice, positive attitudes among the different culture groups

and a sense of loyalty to the larger society by all groups (Burt & Halpin, 1998; Hall et al., 2011; Reid et al., 2014).

Hall et al. (2011, p. 4), Cox and Nkomo (1986), as well as Nkomo and Ngambi (2009), refer to problem-focused strategies or “active” coping strategies to resolve stress factors for black women who are trying to cope in the workplace. The most common strategies are spirituality, positive thinking, social skills, sister-friends, and money. Black women also strive very hard to counter stereotypical images and expectations by working diligently at the cost of themselves.

Workplace culture can be viewed as a continuous process of change – ironically it can also be highly resistant to change (Cox, 1991; Hofstede et al., 1991; Empson, 2004; Munich, 2011; Reid et al., 2014). Shifting is a coping strategy that black women use to function in the different roles that are expected of them. According to Hall et al. (2011, p. 10), shifting is “an internal process – a chipping away of the black woman’s sense of self, wholeness and centeredness. It is invisible and can have devastating effects”. Shifting is a subconscious activity and entails stress of an emotional, physical and spiritual nature (Hall et al., 2011). When black women change the way they think about things or the expectations they have for themselves, they shift in one direction at work each morning, then in another at home each night (Alleyne, 2004; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Deprez & Vos, 1998; Luijters et al., 2006). They adjust the way they act in one context after another (Hall et al., 2011; Lues, 2005).

The acculturation process is also influenced by the age of the employee (Amoah, 2014; Collinson, 2003; Whitchurch, 2008). The acculturation process is smoother when there is flexibility and adaptability, which are characteristics of the earlier years of a person’s adult life. The older the employee becomes, the greater the risk of not being able to adapt or change for the sake of

acculturation (Berry, 1997). Gender also plays an important role in acculturation (Reid et al., 2014; Shields, 2008). How females are treated in the two cultures (the original culture and the organisational culture), will determine whether there will be a problem with the acculturation process as conflict might arise if there is a significant difference in this regard (Berry, 2009).

2.8 CONCLUSION

In the above literature review, the researcher elaborated on the phenomenon of “acculturation within corporate organisations” through the theoretical lens of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), Festinger’s Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957) and a discussion of concepts such as identity, ethnic identity and ethnic identity of YBAF employees. The nature of acculturation was described through the work of scholars such as Berry (1997, 2005), Cox (1991), Hofstede (1980) and Hofstede et al. (1991) by which acculturation within the organisation can be facilitated. Lastly, the acculturation strategies pertaining to YBAF employees were discussed.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this section the research design (paradigm, description of inquiry, research setting, researcher roles and sampling procedures) and the methodology (data collection and analysis), as well as the quality assurance criteria and research ethics are described.

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM / PHILOSOPHY

In the following section the researcher justifies the choice of the social constructivist paradigm and empirical research.

3.1.1 Social constructivist paradigm

A group of assumptions based on opinions or beliefs about core fragments of reality, enables a particular world view or paradigm (Maree, 2007). According to MacMillan and Schumacher (1989), a constructivist philosophy is multi-layered, interactive, and interpreted according to shared social experience. The social constructivism paradigm perceives knowledge as being created in a social context and that it may change within certain circumstances (Golafshani, 2003). Furthermore, constructivism values the various truths that individuals believe and have been fixed in individuals' mind through reality (Ponterotto, 2005).

With the goal of understanding a specific phenomenon such as acculturation, social construction is constructed through participants' perspectives. In this study, the acculturation strategies of YBAF employees in corporate organisations are explored. The researcher investigates participants' lived experiences pertaining to their acculturation in corporate organisations by using an electronic focus-

group discussion facilitating the construction of knowledge in a social setting, and defining what they perceive to have worked for them in their corporate careers so far. An emic perspective or account (Nel et al., 2012) was used to record the participants' experience from within the specific ethnic in-group.

3.1.2 Empirical research

In this study, the real world is accessed to warrant the research pertaining to a specific group (YBAF employees) within South African corporate organisations. It was, therefore, decided that empirical research is utilised as it implies data from actual participants functioning in organisations.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF QUALITATIVE INQUIRY STRATEGY AND BROAD RESEARCH DESIGN

Terreblanche, Terreblanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) define a research design as a strategic framework to determine the action taken to bridge the research questions and the implementation of the research. One of three research approaches can be chosen for a study, namely a qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method approach. The research approach comprises of the data collection, the data analysis and the report writing (Creswell, 2009). When deciding which research approach to use, the researcher should incorporate his or her assumptions, research practices and research skills, with the manner in which he or she collects the data (Maree, 2007).

The researcher used a qualitative approach for this study in order to gain an in-depth, rich understanding of the personal experiences of people where the focus is on the interaction with one another (Maree, 2007). The researcher investigated what happens, how it happens and why it

happens as the characteristics, qualities and properties of a specific phenomenon were investigated in order to bring personal value to the study (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009; Maree, 2007). People's actions, their thoughts and feelings in a specific environment were studied in qualitative research with the ultimate goal of using the information gathered to bring about social change (Bryman, 2004; Henning, Smit, & Van Rensburg, 2004). In this specific study, the YBAF employees' behaviour was observed and analysed in order to create a thick description of the phenomenon investigated (YBAF employees' acculturation strategies in South African corporate organisations).

3.2.1 Netnographic design

According to Maree (2007), there are six types of qualitative research designs, namely historical research, action research, conceptual studies, case-study research, grounded theory and ethnography. Ethnography has always been conceptualised as being an adaptable method (Bowler, 2010; Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009), and as a result, ethnographic researchers started focusing on the significance of using computer-facilitated resources in order to facilitate communication off-site, while still ensuring observable behaviour. The netnography design was first established in the marketing literature (Kozinets 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2006), and recently in the social sciences as an appropriate research method to understand online cultures (Sujee, 2015).

Before the turn of the century in 2000, ethnography was mostly based on using the observation technique as only data collection method, however, recent research proves ethnography not to be so rigid and focused on conducting the research in the traditional way (Ager, Ager & Long, 1995; Lancioni et al., 2009; Suter, 2000). In instances where it was too difficult for the researcher to conduct observations in a naturalistic setting (whether it was due to time, costs, availability or ethical

considerations), focus group discussions were introduced as data collection technique. Focus group discussions have previously been regarded as a secondary technique in ethnographic research, however, it was recently incorporated as a primary technique due to its growing popularity as data collection technique (Joubert, Hartell, & Lombard, 2015; Suter, 2000). In this study the researcher adapted traditional focus group discussions to electronic focus group discussions (chat rooms).

Kozinets (1998, p. 366) explains that netnography consists of the textual output of field work conducted via the Internet and defines netnography as follows:

Netnography can be defined as a written account resulting from fieldwork studying the cultures and communities that emerge from on-line, computer mediated, or Internet-based communications, where both the field work and the textual account are methodologically informed by the traditions and techniques of cultural anthropology.

Netnography is, therefore, originally derived from ethnography, which is the study of culture and communities, yet it is conducted online (Bowler, 2010; Kozinets, 2002; Sujee, 2015). Netnography is simpler, quicker, and less expensive than the traditional ethnography (Kozinets, 2006), and it is perceived to be even more naturalistic and unobtrusive than traditional focus group discussions or interviews because of participants' online social situation (Ison, 2009; Kozinets, 2002; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Another advantage of netnography is that the researcher is able to return to the original qualitative data set as and when needed during the data analysis phase as data are saved electronically and already transcribed (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006; O'Reilly, Rahinel, Foster, & Patterson, 2007). Due to the impersonal nature of the communication medium (whether it is a computer, laptop, cell phone or tablet), participants are more willing to speak openly about problems or concerns which could have created self-consciousness in a traditional face-to-face focus group discussion, especially with the discussion of sensitive topics (Ison, 2009; Langer & Beckman, 2005).

Even non-verbal behaviour can be observed through the use of, for instance, colons for tears, smiles and frowning faces and other emoticons denoting emotion (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006).

Netnography and associated exploratory internet-based research are economical, effective and unobtrusive (Lugosi, Janta, & Watson, 2012) means of studying naturally occurring online communication and behaviour (Bengry-Howell, Wiles, Nind, & Crow, 2011). The huge development of the Internet over the past two decades has empowered netnography to become an acknowledged form of data collection in various specialised fields, such as management, information systems, marketing, cultural studies, sociology, education and economics (Bengry-Howell et al., 2011; Ison, 2009). Hallett and Barber (2014, p. 307) caution that “the bulk of traditional ethnographers in the twenty-first century often overlook the importance of online spaces in the lived experience and thus miss data that could help them more fully understand the populations they study”. As an example in this regard, Adler and Zarchin (2002) used virtual focus groups as a data collection method in their ethnographical study, which succeeded in accessing pregnant women while on prescribed bed rest. They claimed to have created a natural setting for the discussion by utilising an electronic platform that all the women had access to.

As with traditional ethnography, the researcher in this study addresses the why and how questions and serve to offer a multi-perspective analysis where not just one or two participant’s perspective of a situation are considered or investigated, but rather the views of other relevant characters as well as the interaction between them (Maree, 2007). Kozinets’ (1997; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010) netnography is used in this by means of adapting the ethnographic method to an online environment. In this study, the researcher aspires to gain an in-depth understanding of the situational dynamics, in order to interpret and explain the phenomenon of YBAF employees’ acculturation strategies within

corporate South African organisations in as much detail as possible (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989).

The latter is made possible by means of an internet-based research platform.

Due to the obstacle of not being able to observe 18 participants in their natural environment (which is their workplace), the researcher opted for the online space as a natural setting to obtain valuable data through interaction with the YBAF employees. Hallet and Barber (2014, p. 306) strongly advocate that space should be reconceptualised in ethnological research. They plead for the inclusion of online spaces in ethnographic research:

While traditional methods of ethnography (i.e., in-person observations and informal interviews) continue to be useful, researchers need to reconceptualise space as well as what counts as valuable interactions, and how existing (and new) tools can be used to collect data. We argue that studying a group of people in their “natural habitat” now includes their “online habitat.”

Kozinets (2002) advises researchers engaging in netnography to firstly explain the research to participants, secondly to disclose their presence as observer, thirdly to obtain informed consent to use the participants’ direct quotations in the study’s results, fourthly to ensure the participants receive feedback, and finally to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants are controlled at all times during the data collection process. This research adheres to these guidelines.

This study also follows Kozinets’ (2010) comprehensive explanation of how to conduct netnographic research by setting six criteria for online research: 1) online research should be relevant to the research focus and questions, 2) it should be dynamic – with systematic and timely communications, 3) it should be interactive – enabling participants to interact communicatively with one another, 4) it

should have a substantial amount of users, 5) diverse participants should be involved, and 6) it should be data-rich.

Sujee (2015) recently adapted Kozinets' netnography to an educational setting by collecting data from chat groups, blogs and email interviews of learners in her class. The researcher in this study, although following the procedures and criteria recommended above by Kozinets, utilised internet-based research as a method to collect data. This research, therefore, is a hybrid model as it uses some elements of netnography and others of exploratory internet-based research. Thus, this research is also an adaptation of Kozinets' netnography as it did not use the online platform to observe behaviour on a personal profile, e.g. on Facebook or Twitter. However, Facebook was instrumental in obtaining participants for the study. Electronic chat rooms (instead of traditional focus groups (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2005; Joubert et al., 2015) created an online focus group discussion platform where data were collected in a controlled environment and through web-based applications (WhatsApp and email communication).

A limitation of netnography is that if the communication takes place on a blog or via public media, the information can be defined as public communication, therefore careful consideration should be given to ensure the anonymity of participants at all times (Kozinets, 2006). In this study the online forum was private and a closed group to which one had to be invited by the facilitator of the session (in this case also the researcher) to view the discussion. Identities of participants remained anonymous during data collection as pseudonyms were used.

3.2.2 Epistemology

How individuals know or construe knowledge is known as the epistemological assumptions of a research study. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), these assumptions about the nature of knowledge inform methodologies. The researcher believes that knowledge is created as a result of experience and interaction with specific participants. The socio-cultural view, according to the social constructivist paradigm, asserts purpose, meaning, and audience as all being socially constructed and contextualised (Burke & Hammett, 2009; De Vos et al., 2005; Joubert et al., 2015).

3.2.3 Ontology

Research is concerned with the way in which the world is understood by the researcher, how the researcher views the world, and how what he or she understands influences his/her construction of reality (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Regarding the nature of the investigated social phenomenon, the question is: What is real and what is reality? Maree (2007, p. 54) describes reality as follows:

Reality as portrayed by qualitative researchers tends to follow the constructivist cue that reality is a social construction; it accepts that the researcher cannot be separated from the research; and it asserts that research findings are *created* rather than *discovered*. Truth is therefore not an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher.

The researcher believes that there is no such thing as **the truth**, in other words, no single reality exists as reality is a social construction and can only be interpreted and understood in a contextual manner (Bryman, 2004; Joubert et al., 2015; Lichtman, 2011; Maree, 2007).

3.3 RESEARCH SETTING

As a practical implementation of netnography, the environment of this research study was not limited to one physical setting. The researcher, the co-coders and the participants were all at different physical locations (of each individual's choice) during the data collection period. The benefits of netnography were displayed in the sense that all individuals who participated in this research could contribute from the comfort of their own homes, office or even coffee shop.

It was recommended that participants chose an area where they would not be interrupted during the data collection sessions, that they could join the electronic chat room by means of their cell phones or that they could log in to WhatsApp from any computer by connecting to their personal WhatsApp profile. In the second data collection phase, participants responded by sending emails to the facilitator from a computer or a cell phone.

The only environmental requirement therefore was that participants, the researcher and co-coders needed access to a computer or a cell phone and access to the Internet in order to communicate with each other in real time (live). In the event where there were interruptions or personal circumstances disturbing the data collection, the participants were encouraged to rather withdraw from the chatroom and answer the questions via follow up emails to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data obtained.

3.4 ENTRÉE AND ESTABLISHING RESEARCHER ROLES

Various roles were important in conducting this research. The first role was that of coordinator, fulfilled by the researcher. She was responsible for informing participants of the dates and times that they needed to be available. She had to plan each electronic chat room session, divide participants (who gave written consent to partake in the study) into three main groups, assign pseudonyms to each participant, forward profile pictures that corresponded with the pseudonym assigned to them (e.g. the pseudonym Cinderella was allocated with a profile picture of an animated Cinderella character). The co-coders were also assigned pseudonyms (e.g. Observer 1) with a colour as profile picture (e.g. green background) in order to ensure they remain anonymous.

The researcher also provided each participant with a step-by-step guide on how to change their personal information on their WhatsApp profiles prior to joining their specific sessions (to ensure anonymity). The researcher created each separate electronic chat room and invited participants and co-coders to join the group minutes before each session started. The researcher had to remove participants from each group directly after each session to ensure personal information could not be shared with other members in the group without their consent.

Secondly, the researcher was the facilitator of each chat room where she posed questions, monitored responses, and probed unclear responses or those that required further explanation. A pilot study (consisting of two participants) was used as a preparation for the actual data collection sessions to assist the researcher in her role as facilitator. In order to ensure that the facilitator was the only point of contact for the participants and the observers, the researcher was part of two groups – one consisting of participants and the other consisting of observers/co-coders. The co-coder group

was set up to support the researcher and enable her to let the conversation flow freely, while still focussing on core issues relating to the research questions. As such they suggested possible rephrasing of questions or indicated that the facilitator should probe a specific issue raised by a participant.

In the third place, the researcher coordinated the collection of data and the timeous responses of participants in the second phase of the data collection, ensuring responses to the researcher's probing emails were received within a specific time frame. The researcher's role was also to compile the data collected in one format. She converted the data from the WhatsApp application to a text file, and sorted the responses to the various questions into clear groups). She analysed the transcribed data, proposed categories, themes and subthemes to the co-coders and attempted to remain as transparent in her methods as possible. Lastly, the researcher wrote and compiled the integrated document submitted as the mini-dissertation.

The second role was that of the research supervisor. The supervisor was actively involved in data collection, co-coding of the initial data, and critically reviewing the mini-dissertation on a continuous basis. A third important role was that of second co-coder (a YBAF) forming part of the co-coders group. She assisted during the first phase of the data collection by observing the actual responses of participants and making suggestions to the facilitator during the session on clarifying questions or helping to monitor when a participant became isolated or stopped answering. Using the second co-coder was a deliberate attempt to ensure trustworthy data from the participants and to limit the (possible) white Afrikaans bias of both the researcher and the supervisor.

3.5 SAMPLING

The sampling section describes the way in which the sampling was done and why the sampling choices were made.

3.5.1 Convenience and purposive sampling

A combination of convenient and purposive sampling was used in this study. This means that the researcher drew a sample from the population which was convenient and easily accessible (Cohen et al., 2000), It also means that the chosen participants complied with the specific criteria set for the study (age, gender, race and organisations for which the participants work).

The sampling procedure was convenient for both the researcher and the participants. The researcher used her personal Facebook account to contact acquaintances and requested networking assistance, suggesting possible participants in their professional environment. The convenience sampling method also enabled participants from other geographical regions to be included in the sample, as the importance of distance and location was neutralised by the convenience of an electronic platform (Adler & Zarchin, 2002; Maree, 2007). Individuals could take part irrespective of where they were during the arranged two-hour data collection discussion. The original sample of 21 YBAF employees was furthermore selected on another convenient criterion: the participants had to be readily available and willing to participate in the research study.

The participants for this study were also selected purposefully as they had to meet the specific in-group criteria of the study, which is the identity markers of age, race, gender and occupation (Brink

& Nel, 2014). Each participant had to be younger than thirty-five, of black (South) African origin, female and employed in a corporate South African organisation.

3.5.2 Research procedure

In a nutshell this research procedure can be summarised as follows: In the first place, consent for the research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, after which each participant was contacted and invited to take part in the research. Participants were briefed about what would be expected of them if they decided to take part in the study and the research steps (pertaining to the discussion groups) were explained in detail. The researcher also created three groups of participants according to their availability (three different time slots) and ensured that various corporate industries were represented in each session. Consent forms were sent to and received from participants via email prior to the commencement of the three chat room sessions. A pilot study was first conducted with two participants to investigate whether the necessary information could be generated via the electronic discussion.

Two co-coders, one YBAF and the research supervisor (young, white male), were engaged to support the researcher as facilitator during the data collection and coding phases. The researcher practised consistency across all three data collection sessions. During each of the electronic chat room discussions, both co-coders were observers of the process, and supported the researcher by suggesting probing questions and steering the conversation in a specific direction. The co-coders were also supportive in the sense that they were required to identify when participants did not engage

enough. They would then suggest questions to the researcher (as facilitator) in order to involve such participants.

After the coding of the first phase of data collection (chat room discussions) was done, individual emails (data collection phase two) were sent to each participant as a form of member checking and to probe specific themes that emerged, or questions that were not answered by certain participants. The second data collection phase was coded and categorised according to the themes already identified in the first data analysis. The findings were then described, interpreted and evaluated and presented in the research report.

3.5.3 Describing the participants

According to the purposive and convenience sample explained, the researcher selected the participants who were willing to participate from different corporate organisations. As specified before in 3.5.1, the most important criteria were that the participants had to be YBAF employees in a corporate South African organisation. Table 2 below indicates the various ethnic identities, industries and ages of participants.

Table 2: Description of participants

PARTICIPANT NO	ETHNIC IDENTITY	INDUSTRY	AGE
1.	IsiZulu	Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG)	25
2.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Manufacturing/Construction	29
3.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Automotive	35
4.	IsiZulu	Financial	35

5.	Setswana	Financial	32
6.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Tertiary Education	32
7.	IsiXhosa	Financial	n.s.
8.	IsiZulu	Financial	34
9.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Financial	29
10.	Setswana	Tertiary Education	32
11.	IsiZulu	Financial	34
12.	Setswana	Tertiary Education	34
13.	IsiZulu	Tertiary Education	26
14.	Setswana	Tertiary Education	30
15.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Pharmaceutical	28
16.	IsiZulu	Legal	32
17.	IsiXhosa	Financial	33
18.	Sesotho sa Leboa	Financial	35

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned previously, before the turn of the century in 2000, ethnography was mostly based on using the observation technique as only data collection method, however, recent research proves ethnography not to be so rigid and focused on conducting the research in the traditional way (Ager et al., 1995; Lancioni et al., 2009; Suter, 2000). In instances where it was too difficult for the researcher to conduct observations in a naturalistic setting (whether it was due to time, costs, availability or ethical considerations), focus groups were used as data collection technique. Focus groups have previously been regarded as a secondary technique, however it was recently incorporated as a primary technique due to its growing popularity as data collection technique

(Joubert et al., 2015; Suter, 2000). In this study the researcher conducted electronic focus groups (chat rooms) as this was perceived as more naturalistic (safe, anonymous and convenient) than traditional focus groups. The two data collection techniques were used in collaboration to ensure data saturation was obtained.

The data collection for this study was done by means of a direct text-based copy of the online community members' (participants') computerised communication as well as the online observations of the community and its members, behaviour, interactions and attitudes.

Prior to the data collection each participant received an email which contained all information (dates, times, and other arrangements) regarding their role in the data collection process. A biographical questionnaire (see Appendix A) was completed by each participant. This questionnaire indicated to which ethnic group, age group, language group, and corporate organisation each participant belonged. The researcher also distributed general instructions regarding the process that would be followed during the data collection session, as well as explanations of certain terminology.

3.6.1 Data recording

As a result of using an electronic data collection method, there was no need for the data to be transcribed by the researcher (Kazmer & Xie, 2008; Kozinets, 2010). The electronic chat room discussions and email responses were copied from the electronic platform (WhatsApp group and emails) and pasted into a Microsoft Excel sheet, categorised according to the questions asked during the data collection.

3.6.2 Electronic chat room

The researcher used an electronic chat room platform through an internet-based chat room (a WhatsApp group) which was set up for the duration of the interactive session (for an approximate period of two hours). There were three electronic chat room discussions. The first group consisted of six, the second group of five, and the third group consisted of seven participants. To ensure data saturation and a large enough sample, the researcher decided on three independent electronic chat room discussions consisting of different participants. The participants were purposefully selected to include different ethnic groups in each chat room (e.g. Sesotho, Setswana, isiZulu, isiXhosa).

After the pilot study was concluded, the researcher decided to assign unique fictitious names to each participant instead of using generic names like Participant 1, Participant 2, et cetera. The reason for this was to easily identify (at any point in the data collection phase) from which WhatsApp group the participant was, and also to make it easier for the co-coders to discuss participants and their comments without getting confused. The aim was also to make each session more interactive by allowing participants to address each other by their pseudonyms. This made it easier to remember who said what, given that one could not link a face or other visible personal traits as in normal focus groups. All names were descriptive of females in some way – Group One was the make-up group in which participants were given descriptive make-up related names, e.g. Foundation and Eyeliner; Group Two was given female Disney character names, e.g. Cinderella and Dory; and Group Three was given female beauty house names, e.g. as Versace and Clinique.

Another reason for dividing the participants into three groups was to account for culture-specific contributions from different focus group members in order to establish a collective and holistic

perspective from each chat room group. The researcher (a young, white female) facilitated the chat room discussion. As previously indicated, the two observers acted as a sounding board for the researcher during the facilitation process. The one co-coder, a YBAF employee of the University of Pretoria, was purposefully selected for the study to prevent possible white bias. The observers were briefed in detail about the purpose of the study and their roles within the chat room discussions. When the observers observed something or had a follow-up question for a participant, they would post it on the observers' WhatsApp group. The facilitator (researcher) would then, on behalf of the observer, channel this comment or question to the data collection group and by following this approach, ambiguity and unclear statements were mostly cleared up during the session. The researcher used two observers as part of the data collection process, and primary observer was consulted for the data analysis of the study. This method served to ensure that the data analysis and coding process was accurate as the co-coders were involved and witnessed the data collection discussions in real time. Prior to the sessions the participants were informed of the observers' function and their silent role in the participant's chat room during the sessions.

As the discussions were facilitated electronically, the three chat room discussions took place in three different timeslots of two hours each on Saturday, 20 February 2016. In order to ensure that as many participants as possible could take part in the sessions, the researcher allowed the participants to choose times that would suit them best.

As part of the instructions, the participants were encouraged to talk to each other about their acculturation experiences as YBAF employees in corporate organisations. See Appendix C for questions asked during the sessions. Not all questions were asked in every session, as some groups' responses tended to focus on specific issues, which then required some probing by the researcher.

The questions that were not asked during a specific session were asked in the second form of data collection – individual email interviews discussed later in this section.

The researcher opted for the chat room discussions because of the following reasons. In the first instance, as it is a virtual method, participants could respond to the questions from anywhere. It was not necessary for the researcher to arrange for a specific place for the participants to meet. This minimised the likelihood of participants withdrawing at the last minute (Sujee, 2015). Secondly, the participants were given some time to think about the phenomenon under investigation and the specific questions asked, and were able to respond in as much detail as they liked. In the third place, the participants were not greatly influenced by the interactions, the inputs, and styles of the other participants, as the virtual chat room creates a more comfortable environment where participants are more willing to share their experiences and feelings with the researcher or other participants (Ison, 2009; Sujee, 2015). Lastly, this method freed the researcher from transcribing the information gathered through the chat rooms as it was already available in writing (Kozinets, 2002; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). This enabled the researcher to focus on the discussion and interpretation of the data, rather than on transcribing the data (Bowler, 2010). Another advantage of using this data collection technique is that many logistical issues about venues are eliminated.

3.6.3 Individual email interviews

After the chat room sessions were concluded, the researcher conducted a follow-up individual email interview with the participants as a form of member checking. This created an opportunity for the researcher to ask further questions, to probe for explanations of unclear information and to take the conversation to a higher level to enhance data saturation. McCoyd and Kerson (2006) indicate that intensive email interviews with marginalised social groups is a legitimate data collection technique

and often result in rich data obtained, especially in research dealing with sensitive topics (Ison, 2009). According to McCoyd and Kerson (2006, p. 390), and supported by Ison (2009), the analysis of their data revealed that “the email interviews tend to be more complete ... include more self-reflection by participants, and [are] ... seemingly more candid”.

Conducting the interview electronically neutralises the effect that direct questions could have on participants, i.e. having to respond instantly and not having the opportunity to formulate, re-formulate, and to ponder the questions before reacting to them (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Although electronic responses might generally be regarded as unauthentic (not being part of the real world), the reflections of participants’ real-world experiences are enhanced (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Electronic responses are more authentic, because of the safe and natural environment in which participants are encouraged to consider their responses to their actual realities (Kazmer & Xie, 2008). The problem of participants being placed on the spot to answer without careful consideration is neutralised through the use of electronic interviews (Sujee, 2015).

This form of data collection also served to provide an open platform for any late ideas as well as additional contributions that the participants wanted to share. The follow-up emails were also a form of checking that the communication posted on the WhatsApp group was interpreted and observed correctly by the researcher. When certain information surfaced in one electronic chat room but not in another, it was mentioned in the follow-up emails to other groups to give everyone a chance to respond to all the information received from participants. Each individual email was used as a sounding board for what was said in the electronic chat room discussions. With the individual email interviews, any discrepancies in the data obtained by means of chat rooms could be addressed and

elaborated on. Data saturation was reached with the second data collection method, whereas the themes and categories from the first phase of data collection were confirmed.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Although content analysis originated from quantitative research and still has its roots deeply grounded in quantitative research, qualitative content analysis has become very popular (Bryman, 2004). Different scholars define content analysis in different ways, but they all agree that content analysis involves a set of procedures for systematically collecting, organising, and reporting on data. According to analytical rules, the raw data are categorised into codes, categories and themes. Coding is used to find words, themes, characters and items, which best describe the data. One YBAF employee as well as the researcher's study supervisor co-coded the information to eliminate researcher bias as far as possible. Maree (2007) points out that coding is the key with which raw data is unlocked. Symbols, colours, word or names were used to indicate similarities and differences in texts that indicate or confirm theoretical assumptions. After initial coding, codes were synthesised in order to form categories, which eventually culminated in different themes.

3.7.1 Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data

As previously indicated, the researcher did not have to transcribe the data as the chat room discussion texts were readily available on WhatsApp. In order to create on large database, the researcher copied the text from each chat room group into a .txt-format, after which all the participants' statements were copied into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, categorised by the name of the participant, the group they participated in, and the relevant question asked by the facilitator. The researcher read through the entire dataset and became familiar with the data collected.

3.7.2 Step 2: Searching for themes

The preliminary themes were inductively generated from the raw data and sorted under sub-themes. From the three different electronic chat room sessions, each response was divided into a specific sub-theme, which then formed part of a broader theme. Some of the responses were put in more than one sub-theme as it had bearing on more than one sub-theme. Data that seemed to be insignificant at the time were not disregarded but carefully considered in order to ensure that the data were complete, thorough and accurate.

3.7.3 Step 3: Reviewing sub-themes

The themes were refined by scrutinising each quote to establish the link between what was said and the theme it referred to. At this point the researcher did not do any interpretation, but merely organised the data to be a true reflection of what the sub-themes entailed. The researcher then reviewed the sub-themes and removed those responses that were not applicable to the sub-themes. The researcher checked that all responses were coded and that those responses which did not fit any of the sub-themes already generated, were placed in a separate sub-theme called open comments.

3.7.4 Step 4: Defining and naming themes

Sub-themes were clustered together according to relevant broader themes. The description of the sub-themes and themes was evaluated to ensure that it described the content clearly. A narrative description of each sub-theme was composed (see description of findings). The open comments

sub-theme, which contained only a few random responses, was reviewed once more with the aim to include those comments into already established sub-themes. In order to prevent duplication, related themes were collapsed.

3.7.5 Step 5: Generating initial codes

As this process was inductive, categories were assigned only after the themes and sub-themes had been finalised. One category was assigned to a selection of related themes. Overall, four categories were identified and labelled, namely power hierarchy, social interaction, managing diversity and culture.

3.7.6 Step 6: Producing the report

After analysing the data, the process was discussed with the co-coder and supervisor and the actual writing up of the findings began. Narratives in the description section were analysed by the researcher, evaluated and interpreted in a coherent report by using participants' responses to support the claims made in the discussion of the findings.

3.7.7 Step 7: Reporting style

The different steps in the analysis can be traced by viewing the appendices and examples of the data included in the description phase. The final discussion was presented as an answer to the three secondary research questions. Through the presentation of the findings the researcher attempted to address the main and overarching primary research question.

3.8 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

Trustworthiness refers to what the researcher does to ensure that the research process is transparent and the findings and interpretations are as accurate as possible (Boudah, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use credibility (the accuracy of the description of the subject of the study), dependability (the unpredictable changes which unfold in the research design or the research setting), confirmability (whether another researcher would arrive at the same findings as the researcher) and transferability (whether the findings of the research would be applicable to another context) to describe trustworthiness.

In netnography trustworthiness of a study is assured in different ways. Firstly, the posting of computer text is communicative in nature where the content of the online discussion establishes significant observational data and may be considered trustworthy (Ison, 2009; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006; Sujee, 2015). Secondly, electronic conversations are not publicly available, for instance in this study WhatsApp allowed the researcher to create a closed group with private discussions in text format. Thirdly, the responses of the YBAF employee groups were analysed and not the responses of the individuals (Kozinets, 2002).

The best way to establish credibility is through engagement with the subject matter by utilising member checking, which implies returning to the informants and checking whether they recognise the findings of the study. Creswell (2009) believes that member checking determines the accuracy of qualitative findings by taking the final report back to participants to determine whether the findings are indeed accurate. According to Babad et al. (1995), credibility ensures that all of the complexities

that present themselves in the study are taken into account and that the study deals with patterns that are not easily explained.

In this study, the researcher ensured not only that she represented the participants' views accurately, but also confirmed with her supervisor when she lacked clarity.

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical procedures deal with what is acceptable and what not (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). As human participants were involved in this study, certain specific ethical issues were considered and practiced (De Bod, 2011). These issues are discussed below through practical examples.

3.9.1 Informed consent

According to Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004), the first ethical principle that needs to be in place when conducting research, is informed consent. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria and letters of consent were distributed to participants prior to the data collection. At the commencement of each chat room discussion, the facilitator briefed the participants about the instructions and process that was to be followed during the session and all participants were required to indicate that they understood. The researcher did not deceive or misinform participants about the study in any way and the written consent indicated that participants felt comfortable to continue with the study (Brink & Nel, 2014).

3.9.2 Voluntary participation

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) point out that individuals taking part in research should do so out of own free will. It was, therefore, ensured that participant participation was strictly voluntarily and no individual was forced to take part in the study. Participants could withdraw from the data collection sessions at any time if they wanted to (they could simply leave the electronic chat room group).

3.9.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

The participants' rights to confidentiality and anonymity is viewed as another essential ethical consideration (Whiting, 2008), and in this study, participants were assured of both rights at all times. No information about the participants was revealed through written or verbal communication. To protect participants' identity, pseudonyms were used for the interaction between participants. Participants were requested to upload neutral profile pictures depicting their pseudonyms based on the groups they were in (e.g. a photo of a DKNY perfume bottle or a picture of Mascara) to protect their real identities. They were also requested to remove their real names from the WhatsApp registry page for the duration of the electronic chat room. Each participant's right to privacy was deemed important and was respected at all times (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

Furthermore, the participants did not know for which corporate organisations the other participants worked and their personal identity remained anonymous. The observers' identities were also kept secret, as they were requested to change their names on WhatsApp to a generic format, namely Observer 1 and Observer 2. The observers were also requested to change their profile pictures to a neutral colour to ensure that they could not be identified by the participants. Information obtained

during this study has not been shared with anyone else and was used solely for the purpose of the research (De Bod, 2011).

3.9.4 Fairness

The researcher did not jeopardise the integrity of the data in any way. The researcher consciously tried to avoid bias, and strived to provide facts without misrepresenting the data. The researcher also reported conflicting evidence.

3.9.5 Prevention of and protection from any harm

When applying the appropriate ethical principles, harm can be avoided (Mtshelwane et al., 2016). The researcher ensured that the participants would not be harmed in any way – neither physically nor emotionally (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). All participants were treated with respect throughout this study and prior to the commencement of the research the researcher clearly communicated her expectations to all contributing parties.

4 FINDINGS

In order to structure the findings, categories and themes with their sub-themes, are specified. Responses are displayed by selecting one or two direct citations to support individual themes. The inserted tables contextualise how the data were transformed from raw data to reporting of what was actually said. This is the first level of the analysis and has only one aim, which is the structured display of the actual raw data collected.

The research results consist of two categories. The first category embodies the acculturation strategies that the participants revealed about their specific organisations. These strategies are shown in tables 3 to 6 and in the narratives thereafter, in which the results are described. Secondly, the challenges experienced by the participants in their workplaces are reported on in the same fashion. The second category of results is displayed in section 4.2, where the findings are discussed as a whole.

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF DATA

Appendix D contains a list of the various categories, themes and subthemes deduced from the data and can be used to verify the general categories and subthemes in relation to what the participants said during the data collection phase. The responses quoted directly in the tables were selected as examples to portray the essence within sub-themes. For the sake of transparency all other responses are presented in Appendix C.

The following five categories emerged from the data analysis: power hierarchy, cultural intelligence, managing diversity, culture, and open comments and quotes. The responses presented within the findings section were not edited, but kept in their original format. The pseudonyms are given in brackets to eliminate any possible confusion for the reader.

4.1.1 Category 1: Power hierarchy

Table 3: Power hierarchy: themes, sub-themes and responses

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Power exertion	Using managerial power for personal gain	"...it's more who's in charge and his friends/ family get power." (Foundation)
	Withholding information	"That you almost need to "compromise" yourself in order to have access to information. That the structure of management isn't set up in a way that information is naturally cascaded down to the rest of the team. If you're not part of the club, you get side lined." (Mascara)
	Management lacks diversity	"...diversity has been a huge success in the lower levels of the hierarchy but as you go up, it's a different story." (Dory)
	Favours indebted employees	"The other thing that increases the intensity of the intolerance is partly our black women who are in positions of power. If you get help to the top from a black woman, you best believe you'll forever be indebted to them." (Mascara; Lipgloss agrees)
Linguistic sensitivity	Afrikaans as <i>lingua franca</i>	"It happens we [a]r[e] expected to always speak in English when they are around but they never bother to speak English when we are around they just continue speaking [A]frikaans. And if [yo]u don't understand they would say we need to learn the language and yet they never make an effort to learn any of our languages. I leave the room. [Be]cause clearly I'm not welcomed. Cultural psychology doesn't allow me to even try and understand Afrikaans. When people tell me to learn Afrikaans I tell them it was not [in] my contract that I had to learn the language." (Powder)
	Linguistic adaptability/awareness	"Business language at most organisations is English. If we all revert to our mother tongues, there will be no understanding" (Rapunzel)

4.1.1.1 Theme: Power exertion

i. Sub-theme: Using managerial power for personal gain

The first subtheme that emerged was that managerial power is always used for personal gain. From the discussion it became clear that, although relationships are important in the office, it is a matter of what the manager can gain from the employees. Three participants suggested that it is all about "who you know" (Mascara). The power is centralised in the manager as his or her family or friends are always in a more privileged position in an organisation.

ii. Sub-theme: Withholding information

As a result of the managerial power described above, it is not easy for the average employee to gain access to information. All participants indicated that access to information is blocked if you are not part of a specific in-group and there is a “deliberate exclusion of some groups in decision making” (Gucci). Foundation mentioned the custom of referring questions to the so-called suggestion box and another participant, Mascara, suggested that being part of a specific clique depends on who you know. Withholding information was further ascribed to the “Western way” of doing things and serves as a strategy for “the greater good of the business at large” (Mascara).

iii. Sub-theme: Management lacks diversity

It became clear from the responses that management in organisations are still “white male dominant” (Eyeliner) and “very Afrikaans” (DKNY), although the lower levels of the organisation are perceived as diverse. Puma refers to the problem that EE candidates are placed in executive positions, but are not assigned the power to influence key decisions in the organisation. Another problem, according to Versace, is that both black and white men find it difficult to be managed by women. Mulan goes even further by stating that discriminatory practices and divisions still filter down from management.

iv. Sub-theme: Favours indebted employees

Two different examples were given to illustrate how employees are indebted to management. Firstly, black women were pointed out by three participants as using their positions of power to make it clear that you will “forever be indebted to them” (Mascara) should they help you in any way. Secondly, by

recognising an elder through the appropriate salutation, such as “Ntate Trevor” (Foundation) instead of just Trevor, will ensure reward from him in the future.

4.1.1.2 Theme: Linguistic sensitivity

i. Sub-theme: Afrikaans as *lingua franca*

Participants agreed that Afrikaans is used as medium of instruction in organisations, even when conducting business or meetings (Eyeshadow). Mascara indicated that this adds to the playing field not being level and compared it to a situation where, if a meeting would be conducted in Sesotho, Setswana or Zulu, it would be regarded as being unprofessional.

Many reactions to the above insensitivity towards non-Afrikaans speakers were given. Eyeshadow indicated that she always waited to see how long a conversation would continue before the participants realised that they would have to repeat everything that was said as she did not participate. Another reaction was to respond in your home language “to piss them off” (Eyeshadow). Clinique argued that speaking Afrikaans to Afrikaans speakers made it too convenient for them, “because then they do not need to accommodate you or compromise on what is comfortable for them”. Eyeliner was frustrated by the fact that Afrikaans members of the team were sometimes addressed in Afrikaans with the result that non-Afrikaans speakers could not follow what might have been relevant for them to know.

ii. Sub-theme: Linguistic adaptability/awareness

Most of the participants described language as a challenge. A skill such as being able to speak English or the “Queen’s language” (Mulan, Gucci) is not only important in general, participants also indicated that one had to be “eloquent enough” and speak “good [E]nglish with an acceptable accent”. In the words of Rapunzel: “I have to speak English with “twang” in order to be respected and not be treated like an uneducated person.” Two participants (Lacoste, Versace) stated that they got very upset when other people corrected their pronunciation of an English word and that it was perceived as disrespectful or that such an instance caused conflict. Mascara stated that it was also about how one “commands” the language among people of colour as “the better the twang, the more you’re taken seriously” (Cinderella).

It was suggested that inside the boardroom non-African employees default to their home language, however Foundation tried to counteract this problem by stating at the start of a meeting in which language the meeting would be conducted. Furthermore, there seems to be a tendency to also speak African languages or to “default to vernacular” (Mulan) outside of boardrooms and “fellow African colleagues can make one feel inferior for speaking a language they do not expect to hear” (Rapunzel). In order to dispel the stereotypes, one participant resorted to speaking Sepedi or an African language to “disarm” colleagues so that others can relate better to the problem at hand (Mascara). Mascara and Mulan agreed that if everyone diverted to their mother tongue there will be no understanding. The following strategy was identified by Puma: “...to quickly pick up the organizations buzz words like ‘leveraging’, ‘synergies’, ‘pipeline’, ‘counterintu[i]tive’ etc...in meetings I like to speak the ‘language’ to get buy in.”

4.1.2 Category 2: Social interaction

Table 4: Social interaction: themes, sub-themes and responses

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Corridor talk	Information through small talk	“Like I mentioned earlier, I now drink coffee and can tolerate smoke. I have an ear of my manager and I am getting strategic projects with bigger budgets. I will get the corner office 😊” (Foundation)
	Decision-making and information during smoke breaks	“To get buy in of my idea I have reali[s]ed that the best time to present it to my manager is when he's on his smoke break. I am building a career.” (Foundation)
Identity protection	Voicing beliefs	“Also, I think being bold, being seen. Speaking up, challenging which isn't the norm for a Zulu woman. ...For one, women are to bow their heads. A man[']s word is final and should not be challenged. We are socialised to be submissive. Submission doesn't "fly" in Corporate South African neither will it assist in propelling your career forward. ...It really does. You therefore have to socialise yourself to be bold, else you will go unnoticed no matter how good you are at your job.” (Cinderella)
Shifting	Different identities at work than at home	“...the woman is the caregiver and is expected to take care of her family [a]n[d] cook for hubby. ...it also sometimes becomes a balancing act switchin[g] off the work persona into the home "cultural" persona.” (Mulan)

4.1.1.3 Theme: Corridor talk

i. Sub-theme: Information through small talk

A phenomenon such as corridor talk and the role of cultural hobbies such as rugby talk, braai or recipes and cooking was presented as very important in the responses. The participants recognised that these kinds of conversations are necessary to become part of the inner circle. Cinderella recommended “that you grow your general knowledge in the process too”. She also stated it very clearly that such conversations have limitations: “Suddenly playing rugby because it's talk of the town at the office is another [issue].” Many participants indicated that they use the small talk about hobbies as a strategy (Versace, Lacoste, Armani, Rapunzel, Gucci, Mulan, Foundation). Rapunzel prefers “chit chatting” with English white people as they are “more easy going”. Mulan suggested that she forces herself to keep up with current affairs to be able to contribute on their intellectual level: “...then there is the picking on their [white] habits. [I]nstead of watching [SABC] 1 [yo]u watch [SABC] 3 or

[M]net so [yo]u can relate when they talk ab[ou]t their uniquely white experiences. [B]e able to comment on the rugby, cricket, the latest tv series etc...”.

Rapunzel on the other hand, mentioned that she realised that doing this all the time is not a true reflection of herself. She would rather want “to be honest and hope that they understand.” Lacoste added that conversations with black people were very different from conversations with white people, but that she uses the same topics of conversation with other white people. A comment from Lacoste was that she deliberately includes something cultural in her everyday dress: “I will for example wear a beaded neckpiece (called *ubuhlalu* in my culture) or a beaded bracelet (called *ucu* in my culture) and people at work will ask about those and I will explain to them which I find very interesting.”

ii. Sub-theme: Decision-making and information during smoke breaks

Another issue that was raised was that decisions are made during smoke breaks and rugby socials (Foundation). She mentioned that she had learned to drink coffee and to tolerate smoke in order to establish a good relationship with her manager and “getting strategic projects with bigger budgets.” She added in a humorous way: “I will get the corner office 😊” (Foundation).

Eyeliner, a smoker, said that she did not smoke to be able to fit in, but that it was simply her choice, while Eyeshadow, a non-smoker, claimed that “[y]ou only know what's going on if you smoke”. Foundation, as mentioned previously, uses the smoking club to enhance her career: “There's a lot of corridor talk, mostly from people in the smoker[']s club... I don't smoke, but I've become a secondary smoker to get ahead 😊. To get buy in of my idea I have realized that the best time to present it to my manager is when he's on his smoke break. I am building a career.”

4.1.1.4 *Theme: Identity protection*

i. Subtheme: Voicing beliefs

Although they mentioned that their voices were not always heard, most participants were very strongly in favour of making themselves visible through not compromising or being submissive. Gucci warned against the “passive attitude of entitlement from [w]hite p[eo]pl[e]”. She continued: “...I refuse to be silenced, our parents have been shut up for too long. I will see transformation in my generation. Small steps now, giant leaps ahead.”

Eyelinor pointed out that there was a difference in expressing one’s opinion and imposing it. Armani indicated that she would not let her professional opinion be disregarded and even mentioned that she could sometimes walk out of a meeting “if a person is a jerk”. Gucci responded to Armani’s comment by saying that Armani was “young[,] b[la]ck and oh so vocal”. Also Gucci described herself as very vocal in order to “put p[eo]pl[e] in their place, quickly. And I dare you as my manager to cry insubordination.....”. Jasmine indicated that she never compromised her ethnic identity to become part of the organisational culture. By being vocal as to who she is, she was able to integrate her ethnic identity with her organisational culture.

Cinderella referred to customs surrounding Zulu women. A woman should not challenge a man’s word. Jasmine agreed that she is supposed to speak only when spoken to, while Foundation revealed quite the opposite referring to general responses for black people towards Zulu girls: “there goes the Zulu girl, with the fighting spirit”. She concluded that this fighting spirit is often interpreted as aggression by other African ethnic groups.

4.1.1.5 *Theme: Shifting*

i. Sub-theme: Different identities at work and at home

According to Lacoste, diversity is an asset and a problem in the organisation, however the majority of the participants experienced diversity as a problem in their current organisations. Lacoste explains the complexity as follows: at home she learnt the value of respect, but in the workplace she was exposed to many new and different personalities, and it was a challenge to adopt different personalities on a regular basis.

Armani indicated that she developed a “thick skin” after eight years in the organisation and she chooses to only work with open-minded people. She continued by saying that that she might have lost her “true self” during this process and she asked whether compromising all the time was really worth it. Lipgloss felt that she could “freely be myself at home”, while she had to be professional at work. Armani felt that she was the one who compromised all the time. Cinderella agreed and concluded that “...you go to work switching off what you know to be true ... we therefore also challenge ourselves and not just the organisational norms.” Clinique mentioned the fact that most of one’s time is spent at work, which results in one working within the setting of another culture throughout the day, alienating one from one’s own culture. Adding to this, Foundation and Lacoste called this challenge a “survival of the fittest” as they needed to fulfil multiple roles at home and at work: “We are multiple roles at home- mom, wife, sister to all [the] many siblings we have, daughter, daughter in law etc. The company's work life balance doesn't meet my requirements sometimes” (Foundation). Eyeshadow agreed and indicated that she was louder and more playful at home while at work she constantly had to reflect on how her behaviour would be perceived by her colleagues. Eyeliner also

emphasised that because of one's different identify at home and at work, one is obliged to (unfortunately) put one's cultural practices aside.

Mulan pointed out that this process of shifting posed "a huge barrier in career advancement" as black African women are culturally expected to bow their heads (be submissive). Powder even mentioned a possible "inferiority complex" in this regard about "who we are as a people". Gucci also indicated that at work she was always conscious of the fact that she might be caught out or made to feel inferior, while at home (within her safe environment), she is not challenged in that way. Puma concluded that the answer might lie in not compromising your personal integrity. She said that "playing corporate politics to fit in" should not necessarily "change who you are". Cinderella said that although she was more professional at work, she did not compromise her "bubbly personality" and her "African-ness". Rapunzel mentioned that at home she plays the supporting role of mother and partner, but at work she is "hard[]core and result-driven". Lacoste said that she is more relaxed at home and able to express her feelings while at work she has to be a "strong individual". Jasmine said that at work she needed to adopt a "work orientated identity of responsibility, toughness, etc." Mascara's perspective on the question of employees sacrificing their selves, was: "The only time you sacrifice yourself in any way; it's when you haven't realised your real value, that your organi[s]ation desperately needs someone like you. And this is not predicted by their reali[s]ation of your worth."

Rapunzel said that she "had to learn to look elders in the eye when talking to them" in order to demonstrate her honesty and sincerity despite the fact that it actually means being dishonest in her ethnic culture. Eyeliner agreed and mentioned that she adjusted towards looking elders in the eye fairly quickly. Eyeshadow identified with this example and added that she had to adapt to age difference and treat all colleagues the same in spite of their age, and she also had to learn to respect

people's personal space ("don't talk and touch"). Lipgloss referred to her addressing older people by their first names, "which is something I would n[o]t do at home". Cinderella elaborated on this:

I have had to adapt to looking elders in the eye, which is seen as a sign of disrespect in my culture. I have had to learn to speak up and exude confidence and be bold and vocal, while African culture dictates that women be submissive. I have had to challenge colleagues though senior, whereas African culture requires one not to challenge authority. Outside the boardroom, I do refer to older colleagues as Sisi or Mama depending on their age.

Mascara came to the conclusion that a job was only a job and that it was never intended to be a home to her. According to her, the salary at the end of the month is what she has to earn, a job does not come with the guarantee of acceptance or friendships. Mascara said that there were outside circles that "nourish that part of my life", and she described home as the place where she goes to "recharge and regroup". She even suggested that personal fulfilment is the opposite of what a job requires of employees. If her work environment requires a "different mind-set" that is what she will bring to the table, even if that means that she cannot be the same person as she is at home.

4.1.3 Category 3: Managing diversity

Table 5: Managing diversity: themes, sub-themes and responses

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Transformation	More transformation in public sector than private sector	"I think the private sector is still struggling in this area not so much in the public sector. We are still desperately trying to see transformation in the private sector. Public like Government." (Gucci)
	Transformation focus of current employers	"For compliance and to remain in business they must be diversified. Our shareholders demand that the company be diverse. Diversity is business globally - companies will get marginalized if they don't play along. It's the rules of the game." (Foundation)
	Resistance to BBBEE	"I think it's a tick box exercise in most cases, so it can be seen as an asset if we meet our EE targets. But it can also be a problem if EE candidates are placed in executive positions, but have no executive powers to influence key decisions in the business." (Puma)
	Predominantly black African demographics	"Low level is [B]lack, [I]ndian and [C]oloured. They struggle keeping [B]lack people in middle management. 50% [B]lack, 10% [I]ndian & [C]oloured, [the] rest is white" (Foundation)
	Predominantly white demographics	"Management is definitely lily white and for BBBEE they've put women." (Foundation)
	Demographical transformation	"It can become an asset if it's correctly measured and used for all the right reasons I think we wouldn't have transformation issues. I sit on the transformation committee; I am able to give input to my stakeholders." (Eyeliner)
Assimilation	Whiteness as the norm	"And sometimes I blame certain black people of how they treat the whites they idolise them and I think that's why certain whites don't even think about adapting to other cultures because they think their[s] is the best...for some reason when my child is sick it's not as serious as a white person's child or their dog or cat." (Powder)
	Equal respect for Western and African cultures demonstrated	"I think mutual respect is key. I don't have to like or even understand the nuances of your culture. I just need to respect it." (Mascara)
	Feeling valued in the organisation	"I feel valued when my direct manager appreciates my work and says thank you on a job well done." (Eyeshadow)
	Lack of understanding of other cultures	"We travel outside of Gauteng a lot and my colleagues would refer to Witbank, Middleburg, Nylstroom. And I always exclaim the importance of making sure they understand that those towns now have new names. If they don't acknowledge that Nylstroom is now Modimolle they are disregarding the reason for the change and the history that comes with it." (Gucci)
Discrimination	Black ethnic differences cause conflict	"So beyond fighting the battle with other races, you still have to fight with people of colour. Tswanas generally go to war with any of the Nguni groups (Zulu, Xhosa, [Se]Swati, Ndebele)." (Mascara)
	Cultural traditions limited by company policies, e.g. leave	"There have been instances (not necessarily personal) where I have seen people for e.g. having a hard time getting leave for African functions ...[I]f a family member passed a few months ago and now one needs leave to attend a cleansing ceremony, it becomes challenging to explain and justify why leave is needed vs some employees who easily get leave for e.g., their dog being sick." (Cinderella)
	Stereotyped differences	"And for some reason they think we used to live in the bush or something and for some reason they think we are not used to the lifestyle that they live." (Powder)
	Ethnicity: Beneficial or constraint	"The thing is as an African woman sometimes you just have to work 10 times harder just to prove yourself. While for some being who they are is an advantage from the day they [were] born ☺" (Lipgloss)

4.1.1.6 Theme: Transformation

i. Sub-theme: More transformation in public sector than private sector

Versace, Gucci and Armani agreed that diversity transformation was a problem in organisations, and that the public sector seemed to have transformed much more to date than the private sector. Gucci observed: “We are still desperately trying to see transformation in the private sector.” Although transformation in the public sector is “much better” (Gucci), Armani pointed out that this sector might seem like they have moved forward and should be commended for their results so far, but unfortunately they still follow a “tick box” approach. Armani mentioned that transformation was a much longer process as it was deeper than just “getting the demographic sorted” and that it should be asked whether the individuals were equipped well enough in these positions.

ii. Sub-theme: Transformation focus of current employers

Some organisations face transformation head-on. Lacoste explained how her organisation holds regular meetings where the “issue of diversity” is addressed as a serious issue at a forum. Armani also stated that diversity was an asset in her organisation as there was currently a “transformation movement in S[outh] A[frican] higher institutions”. Foundation suggested that the reason why transformation was taken seriously in organisations was “for compliance and to remain in the business, they must be diversified”. Foundation explained that shareholders demanded that the company should be diverse and that business complied to diversity throughout the entire organisation. She stated that if organisations did not play according to the rules of the game, they would be marginalised. Eyeliner also indicated that her organisation believes in being diverse, that

she worked with employees from across Africa and that everyone's culture was respected in their organisation. Jasmine commented that her manager at work is very transformational and supportive in the sense that s/he is "open to ideas, sharing and is not a dictator".

On the other hand, there were also participants who indicated that their organisations "tries but fails dismally" (DKNY) with implementing transformation. Although Eyeliner stated previously that her organisation was open to transformation and managing diversity, she added that most managers were unwilling to "hire non[-]white [employees] and hide behind 'non[-]white[s] aren't skilled enough or they [are] underqualified' ". Cinderella, said that she agreed that diversity was an asset to an organisation, but that "our history and therefore who we are[,] even at work[,] make it more of a challenge".

Two other participants had different views. Armani referred to "[o]h dear South Africa" as it was "so diverse that in trying to explain its intricate cultures [she is] now ... somewhat confused". Armani goes further when saying: "I still think the true transformation in a workplace is when each group is prepared to meet in the middle. If as a black woman you are prepared to go the length to adapt and excel ... we should expect the same from our colleagues (every one of them in the organi[s]ation)."

iii. Sub-theme: Resistance to BBBEE

Two participants, Puma and Armani, explained the concept "diversity" as a "tick box" exercise. Puma mentioned that organisations only regard diversity as an asset "if we meet our EE targets". Many participants (Puma, Eyeliner, Powder, Lipgloss, Dory, Gucci, Armani and Mascara) perceived

BBBEE negatively for a few reasons. Powder expressed that she thought that “people are being used for BBBEE” and that it was never about the quality of individuals employed, but rather about the “[B]lacks that we employed to make the stats”. Gucci experienced it as that they “are just there for the BBBEE numbers and that [i]s it”. Furthermore, Lipgloss said that the Employment Equity plan was “put in place just for the company’s benefit”. Mascara pointed out that companies needed to utilise BBBEE correctly and that because companies did not understand its potential, it was being abused. She stated that “the very thing that can advance you, can destroy you[,] if abused”. Eyeliner suggested that diversity is an asset “when it suits management and a problem if it suits management”. She explained that a young white person would be hired even if they could not perform the required tasks; however, in order to get the job done for a SETA, the company “conveniently hires an unskilled African” to report to the young white individual.

Lipgloss elaborated on the role of the BBBEE phenomenon in the workplace:

This BBBEE though 🧐 [:] something needs to be done. Same qualifications, same experience, different salaries [-] I have an issue with that. They see a well[-]educated African woman with [a] senior position and they [are] so quickly to thank BBBEE.

Cinderella concluded the discussion by pointing out that skin colour and an African background can be both an asset and a constraint. One might be hired easily because you are a black female, but “moving up the corporate ladder” was still not easy within organisations.

iv. Sub-theme: Predominantly black African demographics

Five participants indicated that there was a majority of black African employees in their organisations, while others indicated that Africans were kept in middle management and in the lower levels of the hierarchy (Versace, Eyeshadow, Foundation). Lipgloss was the only participant who indicated a black majority in dominating senior positions: “30% [w]hites, 40% [b]lacks 10%, [c]oloureds and 20% Indians”. Eyeshadow and Versace claimed that Africans were the majority only in the lower levels. Eyeshadow reported: “More [b]lacks[,] but as drivers and labourers. In the offices though[,] that [i]s where you find all the [w]hite people. I am the only [b]lack person in my office.” Foundation presented her organisation’s demographics as follows: “50% [b]lack, 10% [I]ndian & [c]oloured, [the] rest is [w]hite”. Puma indicated that in her organisation the demographics were: “50% [b]lack, 20% [I]ndians, 20% [w]hite and 10% [c]oloureds”.

v. Sub-theme: Predominately white demographics

Two participants indicated specific representation. Eyeliner: “60% white, 20% Indian, 15% African and 5% [c]oloured”; and DKNY: “70% [w]hite, 5% Indians, 5% [c]oloured, 20% [b]lack”. The others expressed the demographics as 60% white and 40% others (Jasmine); 65% white and 35% African, coloureds and Indians (Cinderella); “70% white, I would say 😊😊” and “almost no Indians and a hand full of [c]oloureds” (Gucci); “Majority white followed by Indians then African including coloured” (Versace); and “[s]omewhat balanced but mostly [w]hite, especially permanent employees” (Lacoste).

Armani reported that although the demographics indicated favourable stats, white people were still in the majority, which, according to her, shows how “we off[t]en push demographics that are only a ‘dream’...” Rapunzel distinguished between black females dominating lower positions and white males dominating the higher positions. Mulan only commented on her own specific business unit, which she said, was fully representative of all races (“until you get to the top”). Powder also indicated that in her organisation most employees were white, but added that they were mostly over 50 years of age, followed by blacks under the age of 45, and the rest (Indians and coloureds) were also mostly middle-aged with the same demographics as the blacks. Mascara indicated that whites were in the majority in her organisation and have been with the organisation for more than 20 years. Lastly, Foundation described management as “definitely lily white and for BBBEE[,] they’ve put women”.

vi. Sub-theme: Demographical transformation

Most of the participants indicated that their companies “are committed to transformation” (Lacoste), “working very hard to transform” (Versace), and “transformation is a huge thing in our organisation” (Eyeliner). Eyeliner served on the transformation committee, which meant that she was able to provide input to her stakeholders. Armani suggested that black employees should be recruited at an earlier age.

4.1.1.7 Theme: Assimilation

i. Sub-theme: Whiteness as the norm

Three participants argued that “whites don’t even think about adapting to other cultures because they think their[s] is the best...” (Powder). Lacoste indicated that “we always strive to acculturate to the

white culture”, while Gucci argued that “[t]here can never be a fair process of acculturation as the status quo is still predominately white. Sadly, as a black person in the workplace you simply adapt to how things are done, we don’t have a voice, we don’t have a say in the change.”

Cinderella further argued that because corporate South Africa was still predominantly white, one had to be knowledgeable about white culture. Powder, on the other hand, sometimes blamed black people for idolising whites as she argued that it might be the reason that whites mostly do not even have to think about adapting to other cultures. Lacoste agreed, mentioning the constant exposure of black Africans to the white culture, while working for Westernised companies. Cinderella explained this behaviour from the belief by their parents that white is superior and mentioned that these beliefs were passed on to their generation. An example is when Powder mentioned: “...for some reason when my child is sick it’s not as serious as a [w]hite person’s child or their dog or cat...” Mulan referred to instances where she had to listen to “their uniquely white experiences”. Eyeshadow even went further: “What I have done, I have adopted [w]hite people’s mentality.” Powder concluded: “For me the [w]hite culture, they don’t make it a secret that we don’t belong where we are.”

ii. Sub-theme: Equal respect for Western and African cultures demonstrated

In general, the participants were aware of (and vocal about) the perspective that they always have to compromise and adapt to white culture, while white people do not meet them half way (Powder, Eyeliner). Eyeliner explicitly stated that she did not compromise, because Africans have compromised for too long in the past. Eyeshadow felt that the main problem is that within organisations, different cultures are not embraced, but all keep to their own culture; “even when conducting business or meetings[,] they don’t accommodate others” (Eyeshadow). Cinderella

supported this notion, referring to the general expectation by white people that all black people understand all black languages, for example: “Being Zulu from K[wa]Z[ulu]-[Natal], working in J[o]h[annes]b[urg], there is an expectation for me to know how to speak Se[S]otho.”

There was consensus on the importance of mutual respect in the workplace. Lacoste indicated that she has worked mostly with females and a few white males and that she generally experienced respect from these colleagues. Mascara, Cinderella, Mulan and Gucci agreed that the right attitude in the workplace should ultimately be one of respect. Mascara even went further by saying: “I don't have to like or even understand the nuances of your culture. I just need to respect it.” Mulan stated emphatically that language was often regarded as the issue, but that the issue was respect. Foundation pointed out that the various African cultures all have one thing in common: mutual recognition and respect.

The conversation addressed the question of how this mutual recognition and respect could be obtained. Many participants indicated that they had no problem interacting with other ethnic groups (Cinderella, Powder, Gucci, Mascara, Lipgloss and Jasmine). Lipgloss assigned this skill to the way in which she was raised, while Mascara assigned it to the fact that she was exposed to many ethno-cultural groups when growing up. She, therefore, is comfortable in any new environment. Both Powder and Gucci agreed, but on the condition of mutual respect and recognition from the other culture. Cinderella stated that being able to engage with other cultural groups plays a major role in organisational activities, such as team building, company year-end functions, training, conferences, et cetera. Clinique mentioned that one should keep in mind that the organisational culture was different from personal culture and that the organisation has to accommodate many different cultures.

Versace concluded that to instil a good culture at the workplace implies that everybody should promote sharing and teaching about culture in order to create a positive attitude.

Versace said that the organisational management tried to enhance understanding among employees. She also referred to small differences such as the use of the air-conditioner. Versace tried to explain the concept of compromising by referring to the fact that in one's life, compromise was necessary to survive, for instance at school where teachers were from different cultures. Furthermore, Versace elaborated on this statement by claiming that their white colleagues did try to compromise and that the black Africans "just need to manage that". For instance, she mentioned that her white colleagues share and initiate lots of conversations about children with her when they discovered that she liked children very much. Clinique asked what was needed from them (white colleagues) to meet us (YBAF employees) halfway? She defended the other cultures by saying that they should be given "some sort of resources to enable them" to meet black African employees halfway.

Gucci felt very strongly that there was not enough respect and recognition from her white colleagues in terms of her language and the socio-political situation in South Africa. With regard to language, she insisted that black Africans give 80% while whites "battle with a mere 20%": "Oh please the other side will never compromise, they get stuck at Dumela! [T]hats it, done...They even still refer to Gauteng as Transvaal. I mean really 😊 Armani, are we met half way tho[ugh]?" (Gucci).

The fact that white people are hesitant to use African first names was a pertinent issue. The participants found it unacceptable that black Africans had to have Western names in order for white people to pronounce those. Puma and Clinique shared their opinions in the following way:

Another thing is names ladies. I only go by my Xhosa name. Whether you are blue, pink or orange you need to address me by that name, just as I address you by yours... I don't think you can quantify acculturation. Same as tolerance, there should always be room to accommodate other people's cultures (Puma).

I agree teaching other cultures how to say your first name whether it be [Z]ulu or [X]hosa without it being trashed or given another meaning. So we need them to meet us halfway when it comes to pronouncing our names properly as we do with theirs. Without having to consider our English names because it's easy for them to pronounce (Clinique).

Another topic discussed was the issue of how to address people, especially elderly people. "I only address blacks with 'Ausi' and whites by their [fir]st names. [Be]cause that's what they prefer they don't want to be called 'Aunty' [because] they say this is not home[,] it[']s work and we should be professional" (Powder). Rapunzel referred to the differences between Afrikaans and English people. Afrikaans people preferred to be called "Tannie", while the English preferred being called by their first names. She said that calling her elder colleagues by their first names, was strange in her culture.

iii. Sub-theme: Feeling valued in the organisation

In the data collection session two participants indicated that they felt valued. One participant (Powder) felt valued by her boss, but not by her other colleagues. Eyeliner felt valued because of changes in some areas. Three participants (Lipgloss, Mascara, Eyeshadow) indicated that they did not feel valued. Lipgloss and Eyeshadow felt used, not valued; Mascara seldom felt valued, especially from the side of her fellow women of colour. Foundation indicated that she needed recognition, a pay raise and more responsibility to feel valued in her organisation.

After probing during the individual email interviews, three important words stood out: recognition, appreciation and acknowledgement (Rapunzel, Eyeshadow, Eyeliner, Lacoste). Lacoste also emphasised that managers who managed in a professional way were always willing to teach, while Jasmine experienced that she felt valued when she made contributions to “teaching, community service and research”. Lipgloss felt valued because of the people in her team, while Mascara did not experience appreciation as a concern.

iv. Sub-theme: Lack of understanding of other cultures

Two participants indicated that they were able to easily mix with people of other cultures (Eyeliner, Lacoste). Lipgloss and Eyeliner, however, preferred interaction with their own cultural group, because of the similarities between them. Lipgloss furthermore indicated that she considered doing research on Western cultures to broaden her knowledge. Mulan expressed the view that what was sometimes offensive in one culture, was not necessarily so in another. Addressing older employees by their names is an example of such a situation. She also suggested that South Africans “do not know how to deal with each other”. She indicated that trying to become culturally accepted within an organisation, should not be an option.

Lacoste on the other hand, referred to her displaying pictures of her heritage in her office as a way “to make sure that my heritage is understood”. Clinique expressed the opinion that misunderstandings in the workplace sometimes have to do with tasks being done in a certain way, not because of culture, but only because of personal preference. When corrected with disrespect it could create conflict as in the example Versace mentioned, where a white male corrected her

grammar in a meeting. Eyeliner suggested that people tended to be overpowered by race and cultural beliefs and that that was the reason for them “struggling so much”.

4.1.1.8 Theme: Discrimination

i. Sub-theme: Black ethnic differences cause conflict

From a Zulu perspective, it was said that being a Zulu girl implies a “fighting spirit” which is interpreted by other black females as aggression (Foundation). Mascara responded to this remark by adding that being a Zulu girl with a fighting spirit is a career limiting move. Mascara also indicated that she seldom felt valued because of her fellow women of colour. She explained that beyond fighting the battle with other races, she was now obliged “to fight with people of colour”, as Tswanas “generally go to war with any of the Nguni groups”. Lipgloss added that Xhosas and Zulus sometimes did not get along. Cinderella also mentioned the expectation from other ethnic groups that she (being a Zulu from KZN) should know how to speak SeSotho, for instance. Mascara indicated that she did speak SeSotho “or whatever language they understand” to relate better with a specific ethnic group. She contributed this behaviour to being a well-educated black.

When probing during the second data collection, participants elaborated on the “usual conflict between the Nguni and Basotho ethnic groups”, although two participants were not aware of this conflict. Eyeliner indicated that the Nguni group could sometimes be “loud” and “dominate the workplace”, but immediately added that this observation could also be true of the Basotho people. Jasmine affirmed that Nguni people were considered to be more extroverted than Setswana people, which might create clashes, for example in meetings. Lacoste subscribed the tension between Nguni

and Basotho people to a personal level rather than ethnicity issues. Mascara disagreed and said that something like “same race racism” definitely existed. She described this disagreement as “historical and cultural as much as Apartheid is”, although she has not experienced such hostility herself. Gucci recognised that Zulu or Sepedi people refused to speak any other language than their own, but the different ethnic groups should always stand together “as allies in the cause for transformation”.

ii. Sub-theme: Cultural traditions limited by company policies, e.g. leave

Cinderella, Foundation and Eyeshadow all mentioned the problems they experienced with traditions around family ceremonies. All three mentioned that it was difficult to get leave for African ceremonies such as funerals. Foundation stated: “I bury my family almost every month” and then goes on to say “I still need leave to take my child to the doctor”. Cinderella agreed and added that it was challenging for her “to explain and justify why leave is needed”. Mulan indicated that respect was the issue at the heart of this, whilst Cinderella pointed out that other employees easily get leave for issues like “their dog being sick”.

iii. Sub-theme: Stereotype differences

Jasmine called language and gender the most contributing factors to stereotyping. Mascara described blacks as being seen as the weaker colleague. Eyeshadow agreed by indicating that the only reason she was hired was for the sake of diversity. Powder referred to the stereotype of black people “living in the bush or something” while Rapunzel refers to herself as growing up in a village and that that challenges employees’ perspectives or views of her competence: “they immediately assume that they can do better than me because I am from a village in Limpopo and I am Pedi”.

Puma, at a social function, experienced an instance where her Head of Department showed her foreign currency collection and started lecturing about the countries she had visited. In return Puma took out all her foreign currency, which silenced the Head of Department. Rapunzel also felt that the stereotype of Pedi people being too submissive worked against her in the organisation.

In contrast to this, Eyeshadow experienced a cautiousness from her manager to criticize her directly, because of her race. Mascara pointed out that being of the same race as one's manager might bring in too much familiarity and might result in her being treated differently to her white, Indian or coloured counterparts. Eyeshadow described an incident where she was perceived as the office cleaner, because she was the only black employee in the office. Mascara said that as long as the colour of one's skin and your gender were used to indicate your capabilities and intelligence, one was going to experience some sort of a disadvantage at some point.

The general sentiment about gender stereotyping was that black females were seen as "the weaker counterpart" (Mascara) or "less skilled" (Eyeliner), or "not good enough because you are a woman" (Foundation). Gucci stated that there were three types of stereotyping experienced: you were either stereotyped because you were black, or because you were female, or as "a combo" (suggesting black female stereotyping). White males were mentioned in this regard. Lacoste indicated that her first boss was a white male who scrutinised her work, but that she later found out that he did that with everybody, not only with her. Armani, working with older white men, experienced stereotyping every day. Versace indicated that both white and black men did not appreciate working under a black woman. She, as their boss, handled it by assigning them key responsibilities to "boost their ego".

iv. Sub-theme: Ethnicity: beneficial or constraint

All but one participant described ethnicity as a constraint. Four participants (Eyeliner, Armani, Rapunzel and Lipgloss) indicated that as an African female one had to work harder to prove one self. Lipgloss complained that "...as an African woman sometimes you just have to work 10 times harder just to prove yourself". Eyeliner added that managers in general didn't want to appoint black people as they believed that they were not skilled or qualified. Powder complained about the education system, which did not prepare them for "all the various careers that are out there". She said that they were taught "...for the sake of being at school, not for the sake of achievement". Only one participant, Eyeshadow, believed that background was an asset as she had learned to work hard for everything she wanted and that quitting was never an option.

4.1.4 Category 4: Culture

Table 6: Culture: themes, sub-themes and responses

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Cultural Identity Saliency (CIS)	Serious about maintaining culture	"[M]y culture is part [o]f my identity and [I] take it seriously" (Eyeliner)
	Relatively serious about maintaining culture	"I'm serious about maintain[in]g my ethic culture, but also has adapted largely to western ways of doing business or professional thinking" (Armani)
	Not priority to maintain culture	"I respect my culture, but do not follow it" (Powder)
Organisational culture	Value-driven organisation	"We are all committed to the same values we have a value statement which everyone respects. Even though we have different teams within the company i[.]e[.] teams which deal with different fields of law, we all have the same commitment to our values and these values are only in relation to what we do and not really related to our ethnic backgrounds." (Lacoste)
	Individualistic (Western)	"One thing that stands out for me is the fact that there is no sense of cohesion. Teams, though seemingly efficient, work in silos. There is no sense of "family" but rather individuals working towards a common goal." (Cinderella)
	Collective (African)	"There is a sense of togetherness (unity) and the environment is family orientated. unity and family orientation: Coming together as one, respecting each other regardless of coming from diverse backgrounds, having a mutual goal, understanding and ensuring that as a unit we provide the best service to our clients." (Jasmine)
	Individualistic and collective	"It's punted as collective, but in reality very individual[i]i[a][s]tic . Management only there to look out for no1. There's no genuin[e] top down sponsorship of a culture of inclusiveness or one that's focused on building and growing ALL of it's employees." (Puma)

4.1.1.9 Theme: Cultural Identity Saliency (CIS)

i. Sub-theme: Serious about maintaining culture

Eleven participants indicated that they were serious about maintaining their culture. Eight of the eleven literally used the word "serious" in their answers (Eyeliner, Dory, Jasmine, DKNY, Gucci, Lacoste, Puma and Versace), while Clinique said that she had high regard for her culture and Lipgloss reported her culture to be very strict, but that she did her best to "follow it through". Dory also said that she was "passionate" about her culture, while she also clearly stated that she did not compromise or adapt her culture in any way and would not accept an offer of employment if it would not allow her to "live by strong standards".

ii. Sub-theme: Relatively serious about maintaining culture

Five participants (Mascara, Rapunzel, Cinderella and Armani) indicated that they were relatively serious about maintaining their culture. Armani, although serious about maintaining her culture, “has adapted largely to Western ways of doing business”. Jasmine “acclimat[is]ed” herself to the majority culture. She first tried to understand “where they come from [and] how they do things” and then she would introduce them to her culture.

iii. Sub-theme: Not priority to maintain culture

Eyeshadow, Foundation, Powder and Mulan indicated that maintaining their culture was not a priority to them. These four participants mentioned that they did respect their culture but were not very familiar with it (Eyeliner), don’t necessarily follow it (Powder, Foundation), or it was never a priority (Mulan). Foundation referred to herself as “I’m generation ‘create own culture’”.

4.1.1.10 Theme: Organisational culture

i. Sub-theme: Value-driven organisation

Many participants mentioned respect as the core value in their organisation (Dory, Foundation, Rapunzel, Jasmine, Versace). Dory added the values of accountability and client centricity, while Rapunzel also mentioned integrity, service, excellence and stewardship. Jasmine indicated her organisational culture to be one of family values and unity in the workplace. Rapunzel reported that these values formed part of all performance evaluations, which supported living by these values.

Almost everybody said that these values guided them from day to day (Mulan, Lacoste, Lipgloss, Eyeliner, Jasmine, Rapunzel). Lipgloss elaborated on this by saying that these values guided everyone in terms of decision-making. Lacoste referred to a value statement to which employees in the organisation were committed in relation to what they do. This commitment did not actually relate to the different ethnic backgrounds. Armani's organisation, being traditionally white and Afrikaans, also had strong values and a tradition built over the years. Foundation also mentioned values in her organisation, but added that "decisions are during the smoke breaks and rugby socials". Eyeliner pointed out that her company's culture was based on values rather than on individual culture. Two participants indicated that theory and practice did not always come together and that the values were not necessarily upheld or practiced (Mascara, Eyeliner).

ii. Sub-theme: Individualistic (Western)

Six participants described their organisation as individualistic (Mascara, Lipgloss, Gucci, Eyeshadow, Cinderella, Powder). Mascara mentioned that "on paper it is collective" but it is actually "a masquerade of individualistic culture". The participants explained individual culture by pointing out that there was no cohesion, "no sense of collective stance" (Gucci). Cinderella expressed the opinion that teams "work in silos" and consisted of individuals working towards a common goal. The individualistic culture was characterised as Afrikaans (Armani, Eyeliner, Eyeshadow, Powder) and white male dominant (Eyeliner). Puma also mentioned that there was no inclusiveness or focus on "growing all of its employees". Gucci described the culture in her organisation as a "look out for yourself culture" and that she "hate[s] it".

iii. Sub-theme: Collective African

Five participants described their organisation as collective (Rapunzel, Eyeliner, Lacoste, Jasmine, Versace). They generally described collectiveness as communal (Lacoste), familiarity (Jasmine), and relying on one another to get the job done (Rapunzel). Jasmine referred to a sense of togetherness, "...respecting each other regardless of coming from diverse backgrounds..." and "having a mutual goal, understanding and ensuring that as a unit we provide the best service to our clients". Mulan mentioned that her company was "99% black" and, therefore, found it easy to relate to each other in a family-like way. Lacoste linked the collective culture of her organisation to their commitment to the organisation's values. Versace also identified collaboration as the "name of the game" and added: "There will be individuals working in silos but it's guarded against".

iv. Sub-theme: Individualistic and collective

The participants who indicated their organisation to be both individualistic and collective (Powder, Eyeliner, Clinique, Lipgloss, Puma) described the organisational culture as "diverse" (Powder, Eyeliner), "to work together to get certain tasks done" (Clinique) and "working with all kinds of people" (Lipgloss). Powder mentioned that in spite of being diverse, employees "cater for their own culture". Puma put it as follows: "It's punted as collective, but in reality [it is] very individual". Lastly, Clinique referred to the expectation to work together but also mentioned many individual tasks such as supervising students in research matters.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this section the captured data are presented as findings. Firstly, ethnic identity is discussed to answer the research question: How do the literature and the data conceptualise young, black, African, female employees' ethnic identity? Secondly, the challenges experienced by the participants in their acculturation into organisations are discussed to address the second research question: How does the literature and data describe challenges experienced by young, black, African employees in South African corporate organisations? Thirdly, the acculturation strategies that YBAF employees employ in their organisations are presented to address the third research question: How do young, black, African, female employees utilise acculturation strategies in South African corporate organisations?

4.2.1 How do the literature and the data conceptualise young black African female employees' ethnic identity?

The formation of the YBAF group mirrors the SIT lens used to theorise this research. During the three chat room discussions, the groups named YBAF employees in this research, evolved as a strong collectivistic in-group. The social identification of the in-group on the grounds of the similarities between the participants led to the self-categorisation as described by Tajfel and Turner (1985). The uniqueness and importance of this group became evident in the data when these YBAF employees recognised that "there are issues around the group" (Lacoste) and when participants in two of the three chat room discussions indicated that they were so engaged during the discussion that they wished to continue the discourse until fully explored. Two of the four concepts of Social Identification as indicated by Ashforth and Mael (1989) were applicable in the formation of this in-group, i.e. the categorisation of individuals as well as the uniqueness and status of the group. The three groups

displayed an interesting cohesion as they were motivating each other (“Do you your thing Puma! do your thing giiiiir!” – Gucci) and entertained each other to the extent that they even made plans to socialise with each other in future (“that question needs a big bottle of wine🍷” – Armani; “Agreed Armani 🍷 O will join 🍷” – Versace; “It’s a date Armani 🍷” – Gucci).

Social comparison also took place when the YBAF employees in-group, sharing similar attitudes and interests (Stets & Burke, 2000), compared themselves to the out-group members, which they perceived as the majority of white employees in the organisation. The literature on whiteness clearly states that white is not an ethnic position (Ferree & Hall, 1990; McIntyre, 1997; Matthews, 2015; Pattynama & Verboom, 2000; Wekker, 2002). It is a norm that “all else” defers from (Baldwin et al., 2004; Brown, 2000; Hooks, 1994; Mok, 1999; McIntyre, 1997; Perry, 2001). The participants echoed these sentiments as they mentioned that “whites don’t even think about adapting to other cultures, because they think their[’s] is best” (Powder). One participant described the phenomenon as “entitlement from white p[eo]p[e]” (Gucci). Therefore, it is not surprising that the conversation about their ethnic identity was characterised by how their ethnic identity differed from the white cultural identity. Firstly, it was stated that, because generally organisations are still predominantly white, all employees simply had to adapt to “how things are done” (Armani). Secondly, it was said that non-white employees did not have a voice, because they constantly tried to acculturate to the white culture. In the third place, participants complained that their parents idolised the white culture and that this belief was passed on to their generation.

One participant substantiated this by explaining that there is a constant exposure of the black Africans to the white culture as they mainly worked for Westernised companies. Specific issues about their own identity were also emphasised. Firstly, the statement was made that what was

offensive in one culture was not necessarily offensive in another. Two examples were given in this regard: Firstly, the way in which older people are addressed in the black African culture (for instance by calling them “Ntate” (Mascara), which translates to uncle). The second example was that to look someone straight in the eye could mean that you were dishonest, while it was a prerequisite in the white culture to make eye contact to show respect.

Differences between African groups were also discussed. The fighting spirit of Zulu girls was mentioned and also possible confrontations between Zulu and Tswana people, and the Nguni and Basotho people (referred to as understanding how individual ethnic groups fit into the larger context of his or her world (Adams et al., 2014; Pillay & McLellan, 2010)). Also, there was an outcry from one of the participants that the YBAF employees should stick together to obtain a voice or identity in the workplace.

The concept of CIS depending on the importance of ethnic culture in the workplace for a specific employee is relevant to this theme (Samnani et al., 2012). Opposing or resisting assimilation into a new environment can be a sign of low CIS, while high CIS demonstrates the individual’s ability to combat cognitive dissonance. The participants in this study revealed eleven women who showed high salience, five who showed medium salience and four who had a low salience. Those with high salience were very serious about maintaining their culture. They underlined that they would not compromise or adapt their culture. One participant even said that she would not accept a job offer if she was not sure that she could live by her “strong standards” (Dory). The five participants with medium salience were all relatively serious about maintaining their culture, but have also adapted largely to the organisational culture of their workplace. The four participants with low salience, indicated that maintaining their culture was not a priority for them. One participant proposed that she

respected her culture, but was not very familiar with it. Another indicated that she did not follow her cultural traditions and yet another stated that it has never been a priority to her. One participant described herself (and her generation) as “Generation create own culture” (this corresponds with the so-called creative strategy (stimulating cultural forms that are not part of any of the cultures in contact) (Berry, 1997)).

4.2.2. How do the literature and the data describe challenges experienced by young, Black, African employees in South African corporate organisations?

Employees in an organisation may experience certain overpowering emotions when perceiving themselves as being separated from their personal ethnic culture within the working environment. This “culture shock” (Berry, 1970; Samnani et al., 2013) could slow down or prevent individuals to acculturate successfully into the organisational culture. In the process of analysing the data obtained in this study, multiple challenges for the YBAF employees emerged.

According to Elsass and Veiga (1994) there is no equality in the acculturation process. One group is always dominant and demands more compromises and concessions than the other group (Brown, 2000). Thus, the dominant group always influences the direction of the acculturation process so that more contact and participation are required from the non-dominant group. In this data set this was the case pertaining to power exertion, language, shifting, stereotyping and whiteness as norm.

The first challenge identified was that managerial power was used for personal gain and it was all about “...who’s in charge and his friends/family get power” (Foundation). It was pointed out that information from management was not “naturally cascaded down” (Mascara) and participants

emphasised that what you knew was largely dependent on who you knew. One participant questioned the effectiveness of management diversity by stressing that even when black Africans were appointed in executive positions, they were still not granted the power to impact on important decisions in the organisation. Booyesen (2007) confirms that despite the recent diversification of management in South Africa, the power base still resided with white males.

A second challenge that emerged from the participants' responses was the inconsistent use of language within organisations. Participants felt strongly about the inconsiderate use of Afrikaans in the workplace, e.g. speaking Afrikaans in meetings, Afrikaans spoken to certain team members in the presence of non-Afrikaans speakers and Afrikaans still being the language of instruction in many organisations (Harvey, 2000; Pillay & McLellan, 2010). In this regard Pillay and McLellan (2010, p. 17) warn about "cultural schisms created through language". Not only was Afrikaans in the workplace a distinct challenge, but the use of the English language was also identified as a challenge for the YBAF employee participants. Participants considered speaking English as an obstacle, because one needs to speak "eloquent enough" (Mulan) in order to be respected and not treated like "an uneducated person" (Rapunzel). It was also raised that there was a tendency for people to "default to vernacular" (Mulan) and that fellow African colleagues could make one feel inferior if speaking another African language than expected around them. Conversations YBAF employees had had with white employees were regarded as challenges as these differed from discussions within the black African in-group. One participant elaborated by indicating that decisions were made during smoke breaks and rugby socials, and that she was not a smoker or naturally interested in talking about 'white sports'.

The literature-defined concept of **shifting** (Deprez & Vos, 1998; Bhavnani & Phoenix, 1994; Hall et al., 2011; Whitchurch, 2008) was also underlined in the YBAF employee's responses. Participants rejected pieces of their ethnic identity by switching off the way they thought about things at home and switching on their work mode (Hall et al., 2011). The way YBAF employees behave seem to be in accordance with what the situation at work or the situation at home requires of them (Lues, 2005). Participants explained how they adopted different personalities between home and the workplace as they could "freely" (Lipgloss) be themselves at home, but had to be professional at work. It was mentioned that they would "go to work switching off what you know to be true" (Cinderella) and that it was a challenge of "survival of the fittest" (Armani, Lacoste) to fulfil the different roles expected of YBAF employees.

Not only was "whiteness as the norm in the workplace" (Brown, 2000; Matthews, 2015; McIntyre, 1997) indicated as an obstacle for YBAF employees, but also that mutual respect for other cultures was experienced as a challenge. It was seen as disrespectful for white people to call YBAF English names instead of using their African first names, because those were "easier to pronounce" for Whites. Although not evident in the literature reviewed for this study, participants strongly indicated how important this aspect was for them feeling valued in the organisation. This is an indication that participants might have experienced that the acculturation mainly comes from one side, which is the non-dominant group (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

Another observation was that white employees did not seem to respect name changes of cities or provinces in the country and ignored the history that went with these name changes (for instance, reference was made to the use of Transvaal instead of Gauteng). It was pointed out that it was difficult to accommodate the different preferences of the English and Afrikaans white cultures, as

Afrikaans employees might prefer being called “Tannie” while English Whites preferred being called by their first names. Once again, the YBAF employees felt that they compromised all the time and that the white employees did not try to meet them halfway or accommodate them. A general lack of understanding between all South African cultures in the workplace was evident in the data and contributed to YBAF employees “struggl[ing] so much” (Eyeliner).

Another challenge highlighted was that black Africans experienced conflict and cultural differences between their own cultural groups, for instance the Nguni and Basotho people “go[ing] to war with each other” (Mascara) (Pillay & McLellan, 2010). One participant even went so far as saying that there was something like “same-race racism” (Mascara) that they had to deal with on top of other challenges in the workplace. This corresponds with Dickhaus’ perspective (2006) that same-race racism is another factor to be reckoned with pertaining to ethnic identity.

Diversity transformation was also identified as a challenge. According to the responses, the public sector in South Africa has to date managed to transform much more than the private sector. Human (1991) agrees with this statement. One participant emphasised that instead of “getting the demographics sorted” (Armani) and organisations following a “tick-box approach” (Armani, Puma), the focus should rather be on preparing individuals well enough for these new positions. The problem was raised that organisations need to be diversified in order to comply, however a challenge was that managers were still not willing to recruit non-white candidates as the general belief remained that those individuals were not skilled enough or underqualified (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010).

Furthermore, the YBAF employees experienced BBBEE as a challenge rather than a benefit. It became evident that participants felt used as they were merely the “blacks that make the stats”

(Powder). This corresponds with the view of Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010). Should an African woman be well educated and in a senior position, companies seem quick to thank BBBEE, but overlook the potential or the hard work of the individual in order to get there. Overall, participants regarded BBBEE in a negative light and it was said that it could get one a job, but that it did not enhance or enable the promotion of EE candidates within a specific organisation (Lues, 2005). There was consensus among participants that black Africans were restricted to middle management positions and in lower levels of the organisation in accordance with the findings in the literature that Whites still dominated the economic sector (Adams, 2014; Booyesen, 2007; Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009).

Various participants criticised the leave policies within organisations, stating that their cultural traditions were limited as they had to explain and justify mostly why leave was needed even though they buried a family member “almost every month” (Foundation). It was referred to that white employees could easily get leave when their dog was sick, but that the time needed for African ceremonies was not recognised or respected by employers.

The YBAF employees also experienced racial and gender stereotypes as serious obstacles. Cinderella claimed that “[c]orporate SA is a sea of stereotypes across race, gender etc[.]”. It was also stated that men, in general, resisted being led by a woman and even more so, that black African females were placed in the box of being the “weaker counterpart” (Mascara) (Lues, 2005; Matthews, 2015), and that the perception was that Africans “lived in the bush” (Powder) and were not used to “how things work around here”. In an attempt to counteract some of these stereotypes, YBAF employees viewed themselves as working “10 times harder” (Lipgloss) than the average employee. The outcome of the education system was regarded as another challenge as YBAF employees were not schooled to achieve anything, but that the emphasis was merely on “being at school” (Powder).

Finally, the lack of cohesion and inclusiveness in organisational cultures was pointed out. Some participants described their organisational culture as being collective (meaning that there was a common goal), but the way they described the working environment was still a “look out for yourself culture” (Gucci) and can thus be interpreted as being an individualistic culture after all. In terms of Hofstede’s (1980) categorisation of collective and individual cultures, the South African organisations are perceived as individualistic with the emphasis on personal values, beliefs and goals and not on the Ubuntu principles of an interdependent and collectivistic climate.

Another challenge that emerged was that according to the participants’ ethnic culture, women needed to be submissive (Booyesen, 2007; Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010) and not contest with others. However, should YBAF employees stay silenced in the workplace, there would be no motive for employees from other cultures to acculturate to the African culture and the “Western way of doing things” would remain the norm. One participant continued by saying that she puts people in their place quickly and that she dares her “...manager to cry insubordination”. From this, the deduction is derived that if (or when) YBAF employees voice their concerns or stand up for themselves, managers might often respond by using the disciplinary code to indicate that their authority was disrespected by the individual. YBAF employees may be constrained even further by management’s resistance to hear what they have to say.

4.2.3 How do young, black, African, female employees utilise acculturation strategies in South African corporate organisations?

According to Hood and Koberg (1994), acculturation is concerned with the non-dominant culture learning the cultural patterns of the dominant culture, while assimilation is described from the dominant culture's premise and how they accept the non-dominant culture in the organisation. From the findings it became clear that acculturation rather than assimilation was the phenomenon described through the data. The data clearly considered the uncomfortable experience of the YBAF employees' as individuals from a different cultural background and underlined the tension and discomfort created by opposing conditions, factors and social relations (as discussed earlier in the literature review, section 2.3). From the data set the deduction could be made that the non-dominant group adapted to the values and norms of the dominant group (Cox, 1991).

In order to propose the acculturation strategies of the participants in this study, the researcher now discusses the strategies that emerged from the data set. These strategies refer to the following concepts derived from the themes and subthemes of the analysis: managing the language, corridor talk, counter-stereotyping, voicing beliefs, shifting, and whiteness.

4.2.3.1 *Managing the language problem*

In the first place, language was one of the major challenges described in the previous section (Pillay & McLellan, 2010). The participants dealt with a situation where Afrikaans was used as *lingua franca* in different ways. Some of the participants were fluent in Afrikaans and therefore, they have acculturated well in this regard. Others started speaking their own language "just to piss them off" (Eyeshadow) when, for example, a meeting was conducted in Afrikaans. One participant used an

avoidance strategy, i.e. she would simply not participate in the discussion “till they realised” that she did not understand and “they had to do it all over again” (Foundation). One of the participants, being a manager, started a meeting by indicating in which language the meeting would be conducted. These strategies did not include black colleagues speaking another African language. In order to relate to them, they had no problem to speak the African languages of these colleagues, which might be an indication of their resistance to (further) accommodate speakers of Afrikaans.

To address the challenge mentioned in the previous section about the level of speaking English “eloquent[ly] enough” (Mulan) to be respected, one participant (Puma) suggested that the strategy she used was to pick up on the organisation’s “buzz words” like “leveraging”, “synergies”, “pipeline”, “counterintuitive”, et cetera. She confessed to using this strategy “to get buy in”.

4.2.3.2 Corridor talk

Many participants claimed that they had to compromise themselves in some way to get information that was not “naturally cascaded downward” (Mascara). To become part of the inner circle, several strategies were highlighted, such as small talk about hobbies like cooking, braai or rugby. One participant acknowledged that “you grow your general knowledge in the process too” (Cinderella), while two other participants indicated that they used this strategy to “pick up on their habits” and “their uniquely white experiences” (Mulan). Another participant dealt with this aspect by being “honest and hope that they understand” (Rapunzel) – her strategy seemed to be to present herself as she truly was and not pretending to be interested in the so-called white hobbies.

A very interesting strategy from one of the participants was to deliberately include something cultural in her everyday dress: “I will for example wear a beaded neckpiece (called *ubuhlalu* in my culture) or a beaded bracelet (called *ucu* in my culture) and people at work will ask about those and I will explain to them which they would find very interesting” (Lacoste).

A lot was said about how one could obtain information from corridor talk by sharing nuances about both cultures and concentrate on similarities rather than differences. There was general consensus that the best way to obtain information was to join the smoker’s club, even if you were not a smoker. One participant claimed that she deliberately presented her ideas to her manager when he was on his smoke break. In the same vein, another advocated that she “enhanced her career” (Foundation) through the smoker’s club and that she used it to establish a good relationship with her manager so that she was “getting strategic projects with bigger budgets”.

4.2.3.3 Voicing beliefs

With regard to the voice of the YBAF employees as a group, it became clear that they regarded themselves as having one voice and that they were “allies for transformation” (Gucci). The plea from this participant relates to the Ubuntu concept that supports the idea of collectivism between black Africans (Adams, 2014; Collinson, 2003; Littrell & Nkomo, 2005) and in this case specifically the cohesion between the YBAF employees. This cohesion is clear from the following excerpt: “...thank you... everyone around the table - you ladies are fierce ... Am really enlightened now and excited for this study topic. Thank you to you ... 2 hrs went by too quick...” (Armani).

The YBAF employees were all in favour of making themselves visible through not compromising to the extent of being submissive. One participant insisted that she “refused to be silenced” (Gucci), while another endorsed this by stating that she would not let her professional opinion be disregarded, even if that meant that she had to walk out of a meeting “if a person is a jerk” (Jasmine). She emphasised that she would never compromise her ethnic identity to become part of the organisational culture; by being vocal about who she was, she believed that she was able to integrate her ethnic identity with the organisational identity. This is an example of the integration strategy, which is characterised by maintaining one’s own culture, while opening up to daily contact with the other culture (section 2.7).

One participant indicated that expressing her opinion instead of opposing other opinions, had been her motto. This is indicative of another strategy mentioned by Berry (2005) – the integration strategy. Another participant indicated that she had to develop a thick skin over the past eight years working in a predominantly white organisation and that she deliberately only mingled with “open-minded people” (Armani). The last example from the data set corresponds with the separation strategy (Berry, 1997) where employees simultaneously hold on to their own culture and in the process try to avoid interaction with other cultures.

4.2.3.4 Counter-stereotyping

Brink and Nel (2014) and Alleyne (2004) advocate interventions to assist employees to counter labelling and stereotyping in the workplace as it oppresses the acculturation process. Referring to stereotypical practices in their workplaces, one participant mentioned that men did not like working

under a female manager and that her strategy in such a situation was to give them key responsibilities to “boost their ego” (Armani).

Seeking to understand before insisting on being understood, was the strategy presented by another participant. Yet another added that her boss was a white male who scrutinised her work, but that she later found out that he was like that with everybody – in other words, she recognised that she too was actually stereotyping in this situation. It was only then that she could manage and understand this specific incident and not take his behaviour personally. Eyeshadow omitted speaking “negatively or commenting about religion and other cultures” in order to prevent unnecessary conflict or stereotypical perceptions.

4.2.3.5 *Shifting identities*

Shifting, described as a challenge in the previous section, also evolved as a strategy used to acculturate into the Westernised corporate world. Hall et al. (2011) refer to strategies like shifting as “problem focused strategies or active coping strategies” (section 2.7). Participants dealt with their shifting roles in various ways. One dealt with the problem by constantly reflecting on her own behaviour. Another said that she always tried to act in a professional manner, but would not compromise her “African-ness” (Cinderella). Many indicated that they were “hard[-]core” and “result-driven” (Rapunzel) or that they played the corporate politics to “fit in” (Puma) or even that they lived by characteristics such as toughness, responsibility, and “being a strong individual at work” (Lacoste). At home they could just be themselves or shift to their supportive role as mother or wife. One mentioned that her strategy was to remind herself of the fact that her job was not supposed to make her “feel at home” (Mascara), as it was just a job. Pertaining to demands in the workplace that

were different from their ethnic upbringing, participants gave examples of having to establish eye contact with senior colleagues in order to instil respect. Another example was that addressing older colleagues by their first names took time to adjust to, but that they had adapted to the custom.

4.2.3.6 *Dealing with whiteness*

Lastly, dealing with the challenge of white entitlement, participants were all conscious of the problem. They suggested that constant sharing and teaching to create a positive working environment had an advantageous impact on the organisational culture. They also acknowledged that whites were “trying” (Clinique) and should be encouraged in this regard. This might indicate the so-called delayed strategy (Berry, 1997) where the sharing and teaching might bear fruit only years later.

An example of the so-called reactive strategy (Berry, 1997), where resistance towards change is evident in both groups, is Gucci’s very strong feeling that there was not enough respect and recognition from her white colleagues for the role that African languages played in the post-Apartheid socio-political situation in South Africa. With regard to language, she insisted that black Africans give 80% while whites “battle with a mere 20%”: “Oh please the other side will never compromise, they get stuck at Dumela! [T]hats it, done...They even still refer to Gauteng as Transvaal. I mean really 😊 Armani, are we met half way tho[ugh]?” (Gucci).

One participant shared her heritage by displaying pictures of her ethnic identity to facilitate conversations with her white colleagues. Another simply said that she “adopted to the white mentality” (Eyeshadow) or became knowledgeable about them. Rapunzel acclimatised herself to the majority white culture that she encountered. Firstly, she tried to understand where they come from

and how they do things and only then she introduced them to her culture – what it is and how they do things in her culture.

A few participants contributed their acculturation strategies to their upbringing, for instance:

I consider my background as an asset, since I work in a predominantly white Afrikaans environment, I contribute by informing and making my colleagues aware of the differences of where we come from. Hence they get to know me and also learn how different or similar our backgrounds are and I believe it makes them understand some of our clients better (Jasmine).

One participant was comfortable in any new environment as she was used to encounters with many different ethnic cultures. Gucci claimed that being in a good Afrikaans school helped her to acculturate easily; she assigned the ease with which she adapted to intercultural situations to her upbringing and schooling history:

I have been very privileged in my upbringing and education. Having gone to one of the best Afrikaans schools in Pretoria in 1994, during a turbulent time in SA, saw me as one of two black children in the whole school. I had to grow a thick skin quickly and learn the language even quicker. Although I finished High school with English as my primary language, it's my primary school years that have given me a great advantage in life and work. I have a huge advantage simply due to being able to speak the Afrikaans language. It has helped me land my first job and has through the years seen me connect with a lot of my clients and colleagues. I have a huge asset in that I grew up with 'white' people and even now I am able to speak and connect with them with such ease. I am able to adapt in any situation another asset because from a small age I had to learn to adapt or die.

This strategy mirrors Adams' (2014) finding that black African South Africans are able to move with ease between their ethnic values and Western behaviour due to their command of Western languages such as Afrikaans and English. This competency provides them with “broader access to other cultures within the organisation” (section 2.2). It also is an example of what Moore and Barker (2012) express as “adding” another culture instead of losing your original culture.

In the following section the practical implications of the research are discussed.

4.3 LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations of this study are discussed below.

Researcher bias is always a problem, especially in qualitative studies (Joubert et al., 2015; Maree, 2007; Terreblanche et al., 2006). The fact that the researcher in this study is a white female would definitely influence the analysis of the data and to some extent influence her perception of the literature. To address this researcher bias, the researcher involved a YBAF employee to assist with the data collection. She was present in all three electronic chat rooms, but was not involved in the co-coding and analysis of the data.

Secondly, the sample for this study was relatively small (18 participants), which means that the results found in this study cannot be generalised to the larger South African population. Furthermore, two participants were not actively involved for the duration of the session. One's cell phone battery went flat and the other asked to answer the questions by email instead as she had to leave the group. One participant was present for the entire conversation in the chat room, however at the start of the session, the researcher realised that she did not adhere to the set criteria for the group, as she was not a YBAF employee, but of Portuguese origin. The samples were therefore smaller than originally planned.

Not all participants responded to the second data collection, i.e. the email interviews, in spite of the researcher reminding them on three occasions and giving them ample extended time to respond.

This could imply that important data might have been lost, although data saturation was reached through the remainder of the responses.

The second data collection was done only after the coding and categorising of the first data collection was completed. This might have influenced the categorisation of the second data analysis as it was mainly used to enrich the already existing categories and themes.

One of the disadvantages of focus groups, whether electronic or in a natural setting, is the influence of the group dynamics on the participants' responses. Surely, in this case it might have been intimidating to some of the participants when others, for instance, took the lead in the discussion. The researcher was aware of this possible disadvantage, and therefore the co-coders constantly assisted the researcher to involve individuals who were unresponsive.

Lastly, the researcher experienced frustration regarding the fact that very little literature on acculturation in South Africa, and none on YBAF employees, was available. As not many studies on acculturation strategies in South Africa were found, the researcher's evaluation of the findings was mostly based on previous research done in the United States of America.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This is the first South African study done on acculturation strategies of YBAF employees in corporate South African organisations. From the closing remarks of the chat room sessions, it emerged that the participants were "excited" and "enlightened" (Armani) because of the discussion and one participant even said that she "...[does not] wan[t] [to] leave the group" as there were issues that

need to be discussed around the black and female group in South African organisations (Lacoste). These closing remarks echoed the need for further research on the role of YBAF employees in the organisational context.

It is recommended that other racial, gender and age groups such as Indian, white and coloured employees' acculturation strategies within corporate South African organisations should be investigated. The same kind of study could be conducted in other post-colonial countries where similar racial tensions as in South Africa exist. Many studies about acculturation have been done in America, but none were found with regard to the age group that was sampled in this study. Young upcoming professionals' views on the corporate environment could present interesting research results.

It is suggested that further research is done on the acculturation strategies of YBAF employees in corporate South African organisations. This study could be replicated by using a quantitative research approach with a larger sample, which could then also be generalised towards to larger population within South African corporate organisations.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study aimed to bring understanding and insight to managers, Human Resource practitioners and IOPs by exploring the ethnic identity of YBAF employees in order for them to facilitate the acculturation process of the employee within the established culture of organisations. Managers and employers should be cognisant of acculturation strategies employed by employees and deliberately create interventions to facilitate the acculturation process in organisations. It became evident from

the responses that South Africans “do not know how to deal with each other” (Mulan), and thus this should be prioritised. A general guideline or manual that could be useful in practice, could be developed from the findings of this research.

The success of interracial working relationships in organisations depends on successful acculturation and assimilation between the majority and minority groups (Franchi, 2003). The acculturation strategies found to be successful in this study could assist employers in induction programmes or on-boarding processes of new employees in organisations. The following strategies emerged from the data in this study: managing language as an important acculturation agent; utilising corridor talk by means of obtaining essential information; sharing and voicing beliefs of own cultures with colleagues to ensure mutual respect; actively countering current stereotypes and prejudice in the workplace; employing shifting as a positive strategy to acculturate; and recognising whiteness as an unconscious and privileged position that needs to be dealt with sensitively and effectively in organisations.

5 CONCLUSION

Given South Africa's social history and the devastating impact of Apartheid's skewed perceptions and prejudice on interracial relationships, this study attempts to understand the challenges experienced and the strategies employed by a very specific in-group to acculturate into the South African corporate environment. This environment is still characterised by an individualistic organisational culture in which competition, goals and profit are the main values that drive the organisation (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1991).

The fact that diversity can be an asset rather than a problem and that cultural and ethnic identity need not be a limitation, but rather an advantage to organisations, is the challenge that this research poses. Managers and IOPs in South Africa should be cognisant of the strategies used by YBAF employees and intentionally seek planned interventions and training on acculturation strategies in the workplace in order to enhance the assimilation of minority groups in organisations. The outcry by one participant during the data collection concludes this study: "Whenever such dialogues come to an end, I always feel like we haven't even scratched the surface. We have a long way to go and until we start having the right conversations at the right levels with the right people, that road ahead will continue to be long" (Cinderella).

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APPENDIX A
- Biographical Questionnaire -



**Biographical Questionnaire for participation in an academic
research study**

Dept. of Human Resource Management

**EXPLORING THE ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF YOUNG BLACK
AFRICAN FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATE
ORGANISATIONS**

Research conducted by:

Ms. M Engelbrecht (04419464)

Cell: 082 333 7431

Please mark the appropriate block pertaining to the below biographical information:

Gender	
Male	
Female	

Age	
-----	--

Educational Level	
National Senior Certificate (Grade 12)	
Certificate/ Courses completed after Grade 12	
National Diploma	
Degree	
Honours Degree	
Master's Degree	
Other (please specify)	



Ethno cultural group	
White	
Black (African)	
Coloured	
Indian	

Mother tongue language	
isiZulu	
isiXhosa	
isiNdebele	
siSwati	
Setswana	
Sesotho sa leboa	
Sesotho	
Tshivenda	
Xitsonga	
Afrikaner	
English	
Other (please specify)	

Job Title	
-----------	--

Employer	
----------	--

Number of staff in organisation	
0-50	
50-100	
100-150	
150-200	
More than 200 (please specify number of staff)	

Period with the organisation	
Months	
Years	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTAKE IN THIS STUDY!



APPENDIX B
- Informed consent form -



**Informed consent for participation in an academic
research study**

Dept. of Human Resource Management

**EXPLORING THE ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF YOUNG
BLACK AFRICAN FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICAN
CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS**

Research conducted by:

Ms. M Engelbrecht (04419464)

Cell: 082 333 7431

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Marili Engelbrecht, a Masters student from the Department Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to conceptualise young Black African female employees' ethnic identities, to describe their experience of acculturation in South African corporate organisations, and to recommend possible acculturation strategies for corporate organisations in South Africa.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous electronic chatroom as well as an individual based email interview. Your name will not appear on the chatroom and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions posed in the interactive electronic chatroom as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 3 hours of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisor, Professor Jan Alewyn Nel (012 420 3434) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Participant's signature

Date



APPENDIX C

- Data collection instrument -

Electronic chat room questions to facilitate the discussion

CODES	
1.	As an introduction, please state the industry you are working in (to ensure anonymity, please do not mention the name of your employer), how long you have worked at your current organisation, your ethno-cultural group, and how serious would you say you are about maintaining your ethnic culture?
2.	Briefly, how would you say are the racial demographics of your organisations? How many whites, blacks, Indians, coloureds in relation to each other?
3.	How would you describe the organisational culture in your organisation? (E.g. Collective or Individualistic; perhaps the values and behaviours that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of the organization) Please elaborate on why you say so.
4.	In your opinion, is diversity within your organisation regarded as an asset or a problem? Please elaborate.
5.	Do you feel like there are any constraints between your ethno-cultural group's culture and the organisational culture? If so, how would you describe such constraints or differences?
6.	How have you dealt with possible stereotyping mechanisms, in other words, how have you managed to counter existing stereotypes of your ethno-cultural group? Please give an example of such stereotypes and how you reacted to it?
7.	Are there specific acculturation strategies that you can think of that you have used to become 'culturally accepted' within the organisation?
8.	Has there been any instances of conflict or tension where you were involved in at this organisation? Mention the culture with whom you had conflict and what was outcome of the situation (did you adapt to their "way of doing things", or did they adapt to "your way"?).
9.	In your opinion, do you feel that you have had to sacrifice your ethnic identity in any way to become part of the organisational culture? Please elaborate.
10.	Are there other employees with the same ethno-cultural background (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Pedi, etc.) as you in the organisation? If so, would you say that you interact mostly with these employees from the same ethno-cultural origin on a social level? Or do you mostly interact with people from other ethno-cultural groups (Coloured, White Afrikaans, White English, Indian, etc.)?
11.	How would you describe the managerial style (either imposed by you as a manager, or being imposed on you from your manager) with regards to your race and gender?
12.	Does your identity at home differ from your identity at work, and if so, explain?
13.	Open comments
14.	Do you consider your personal background (how and where you were raised, education, personal circumstances, etc.) as an asset or a constraint for you in your adaptation to your current work environment? Please elaborate on why you say so.

15.	In referring to a collective organisational culture or behaviours, the focus is on communal (African) as opposed to individualistic (Western) cultures or behaviours. Would you describe your company's organisational culture as collective or individualistic, and why do you think so?
16.	Please provide examples of typical "western ways" and how you had to adapt or deliberately chose not to adapt (being from your ethnic group)?
17.	After the chat room session earlier this year, could you think of any other acculturation strategies that you have used (or perhaps intend to use) in order to adapt to challenges in the workplace? You are welcome to illustrate your answer with real life examples should you wish to.
18.	Are there other employees with the same ethno-cultural background (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Pedi, etc.) as you in the organisation? If so, would you say that you interact mostly with these employees from the same ethno-cultural origin on a social level? Or do you mostly interact with people from other ethno-cultural groups (Coloured, White Afrikaans, White English, Indian, etc.)?
19.	How would you describe the managerial style (either imposed by you as a manager, or being imposed on you from your manager) with regards to your race and gender?
20.	Nguni (Zulu, Ndebele, Swazi, and Xhosa) and Basotho (Southern Sotho, Setswana, and Northern Sotho) groups usually fight with each other or disagree often. Would you agree with this statement and if so, please indicate why you say so? Should you disagree with the statement, kindly explain why you disagree?
21.	Does your identity at home differ from your identity at work, and if so, explain?
22.	When do you feel valued in your organisation?
23.	Any last comments?



APPENDIX D

- Data collection raw data -

Transcription of electronic focus group discussions and individual based email
interviews

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CATEGORIES	THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Power hierarchy	Power exertion	Using managerial power for personal gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...it's more who's in charge and his friends/ family get power." (Foundation) • "Management only there to look out for no1" (Puma) • "It truly is a matter of who you know." (Mascara) • "I just feel that at work we are there for a specific perpose and we shouldn't idolise individuals in the organisation." (Eyeliner) • "Relationships are still important in the office" (Foundation)
		Withholding information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "That you almost need to "compromise" yourself in order to have access to information. That the structure of management isn't set up in a way that information is naturally cascaded down to the rest of the team. If you're not part of the club, you get side lined." (Mascara) • "there are cliques and it's all about who you know; otherwise you get side lined" (Mascara) • "They usually refer you to the suggestion box." (Foundation) • "There is deliberate exclusion of some groups in decision making." (Gucci) • "If i am not inclined into something I don't do it and I am very vocal about it. Until it is well explained to me. Its just my personality." (Jasmine) • [Examples of Western ways] "This is revealed in simple things such as individuals who believe in holding onto information for instance. It's as if, it's far more important and deemed 'shrewd' to hoard crucial information that is for the greater good of the business at large." (Mascara)
		Management lacks diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Very Afrikaans- in management" (DKNY) • "very white male dominated" (Eyeliner) • "...diversity has been a huge success in the lower levels of the hierarchy but as you go up, it's a different story." (Dory) • "...it can be seen as an asset if we meet our EE targets. But it can also be a problem if EE candidates are placed in executive positions, but have no executive powers to influence key decisions in the business." (Puma) • "the biggest contributor to the problem is that the "powers that be"continue to divide the various groups through their discriminatory practices." (Mulan) • "The problem is men white and black finds it difficult to b led by a lady. We deal that daily and for performance sake I give them some key responsibilities. Just to boost their ego. 😊😊" (Versace)
		Favours indebt employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The other thing that increases the intensity of the intolerance is partly our black women who are in positions of power. If you get help to the top from a black woman, you best believe you'll forever be indebted to them." (Mascara; Lipgloss agrees) • "But sometimes recognising Trevor as an elder will get you some extended deliverables from him one day." (Foundation)
	Linguistic sensitivity	Afrikaans as <i>lingua franca</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In some areas it's very white male dominated and borders on an afrikaans culture - where non whites would sometimes be addressed in afrikaans or meetings conducted in afrikaans . It's a huge concern because people get away with it and opinions are not recognised." (Eyeliner)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Afrikaans is their medium of instructions and I am always left out.” (Eyeshadow) • “I also find that non African language speaking colleagues also default to their home language, at times IN the boardroom.” (Cinderella) • “Even when conducting business or meetings they don't accommodate others. Afrikaans all the way.” (Eyeshadow) • “I agree that not speaking afrikaans limits acculturation but the fact that a language not understood by everyone in the room was used to begin with, already the playing field wasn't leveled anyway... Imagine if we all got into the room and conducted the meeting in Sesotho, Setswana, Zulu or any of the languages we speak, it would be considered unprofessional.” (Mascara) • “It happens we r expected to always speak in English when they are around but they never bother to speak English when we are around they just continue speaking afrikaans. And if u don't understand they would say we need to learn the language and yet they never make an effort to learn any of our languages. I leave the room. Cause clearly I'm not welcomed. Cultural psychology doesn't allow me to even try and understand Afrikaans.When people tell me to learn Afrikaans I tell them it was not my contract that I had to learn the language.” (Powder) • “I agree with Powder and leave the room. I respond in Setwana to piss them off. They start realising that they don't understand me and switch back to English.” (Eyeliner) • “I understand and manage to follow but never make them aware of it. I always wait to see how long or who will make them change the language. And make them start all over again. They see you and they can't just assume that you speak afrikaans. I just don't participate.” (Eyeshadow) • “I agree with Armani on the language part(Afrikaans) when you speak the language you are easily understood and it elimates room for people you work with to try am accommodate you. Meaning if you speak and understand their language its good for them because the do not need to accommodate you or compromise on what is comfortable for them.” (Clinique) • “I think speaking the language comes to mind - like when you speak Afrikaans to now predominantly Afrikaans speaking work place....” (Armani) • [Managerial style] “sometimes its not always the same and I find myself being frustrated because sometimes she would address some of the team members in Afrikaans, however in general its not that bad” (Eyeliner)
	Linguistic adaptability/awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “of the top of my head i can think of language issues. being in a 99% African environment we tend to default to vernacular when communicating to each other outside the boardrooms.” (Mulan; Rapunzel agrees) • “Language is a big issue. I was born in Polokwane but grew up in Johannesburg. Everyone always laughed at me for speaking Sepedi. To this day, fellow African colleagues can make one feel inferior for speaking a language they do not expect to hear.” (Rapunzel) • “The better the twang, the more you're taken seriously. I have seen it happen.” (Cinderella) • “Amongst people of colour, it's always the issue of the English language. The accent, how I command the language. To most I come across as snobbish. To dispel these stereotypes, I've

			<p>resorted to speak Sesotho or whatever language they understand. This disarms them and for some reason they relate better.” (Mascara)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I also find that non African language speaking colleagues also default to their home language, at times IN the boardroom.”(Cinderella) • “Language as well is a challenge.”(Versace) • “Since my first language is not the universal language English or the second most spoken language Afrikaans.” (Clinique) • “It [conflict] was around the pronunciation of an English word. I pronounced it the way I normally pronounced it and then one white lady laughed and corrected my pronunciation. I felt so angry and almost cried because it had not been the first time that such had happened. I just said ' thanks for the correction I will say it right next time' but m sure she could feel the sarcasm but I was really cross.” (Lacoste) • “Business language at most organisations is English. If we all revert to our mother tongues, there will be no understanding” (Rapunzel) • “I speak my language freely if I am around my people. I can't relate [to afrikaans problem].” (Lipgloss) • “I try to teach my white friends my language and I also ask them to teach me Afrikaans.” (Lacoste) • “I make it known when I start d project what language will be used in communications.” (Foundation) • “but what im saying is a sad truth. if you are not eloquent enough int he queens language [English] you can very quickly be ostracised.” (Mulan) • “yes, definitely, good english with an acceptable accent.” (Mulan) • “Conflict yes. I refered to a lady as he in a meeting and this white guy corrected me with disrespect, I told him where 2 get off unfortunately and was very bad.” (Versace) • “I am a very quiet person and some people normally find it difficult to break through in getting to know me. I used to speak only zulu with my friends at school and so adapting to English in the company was a bit difficult but I got to become friends with white people and by engaging with them helps in engaging with the other white people in the company. So yes agreed speaking the language is a strategy.” (Lacoste) • “My usual strategy is to quickly pick up the organizations buzz words like "leveraging", "synergies", "pipeline", "counterintuitive" etc...in meetings I like to speak the "language" to get buy in.” (Puma) • “...the one thing that will continue to divide us is the lack of understanding of each other. case in point is that this study is being conducted in English.” (Mulan) • “What I have kept is not compromising my language. So I engage African colleagues in an African language.” (Cinderella)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I mostly interact with White English or fellow Pedi colleagues... Pedi people simply because of the language. I love my home language and enjoy speaking it. Tswana is more common than Pedi in Pretoria and my whole family is spread in all parts of Limpopo. I do get the longing to speak my home language without having to compromise, or say a joke in a way that only another Pedi person will understand, so it makes feel good inside each time I interact with Pedi colleagues.” (Rapunzel) • “I have to speak English with "twang" in order to be respected and not be treated like an uneducated person.” (Rapunzel) • “We adapt everyday by having to speak the Queen's language. At times colleagues forget we are in a meeting and they start speaking Afrikaans, doesn't bother me but I can see my other black colleagues getting irritated and start chatting away in an African language.” (Gucci) • “...Must say though, here in Gauteng the situation is better, I am able to speak to a Nguni speaking person in my home language which is Sepedi and I am able to hear them and they are able to hear me. There is no time to only converse in one language here in Gauteng, you have to adapt.” (Gucci)
<p>Social interaction</p>	<p>Corridor talk</p>	<p>Information through small talk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The values are there (framed) but d decisions are during the smoke breaks and rugby socials” (Foundation) • “Corporate SA is predominantly white, therefore if you are going to be part of the inner circle, you must be knowledgeable on an array of things...that aren't necessarily to your likes etc. ...This not necessarily a bad thing though. You grow your general knowledge in the process too. ...Being informed is not a bad thing. Suddenly playing rugby because it's talk of the town at the office is another.” (Cinderella) • “Like I mentioned earlier, I now drink coffee and can tolerate smoke. I have an ear of my manager and I am getting strategic projects with bigger budgets . I will get the corner office 😊” (Foundation) • “...then there is the picking on their habits. instead of watching sabc1 u watch sabc 3 or mnet so u can relate when they talk abt their uniquely white experiences. be able to comment on the rugby, cricket, the latest tv series etc...” (Mulan) • “Yes you try to pick up on their habits so you can have something to say during social events and also in the corridors, but I realized that its not a true reflection of myself. The only way to do it is to be honest and hope that they understand.” (Rapunzel) • “Education, keeping up with current affairs, you have to be able to contribute with everyone on their level/intellect.” (Rapunzel) • “also drinking beer or braai together.” (Armani) • “Armani and Versace 😊😊😊😊😊😊 I do the same, knowing that its Rugby world cup time and stuff like that helps.” (Gucci) • “Funny enough the conversations I have with black people are different from the ones I have with white people. I know the types of conversations that some white people like to have by

		<p>having white friends. So I use the same topics I converse with my white friends when engaging with the other white people.” (Lacoste)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding the teams hobbies quickly helped. like if someone likes rugby, checking on and asking specifically about it helped. Or golf. Or new recipe if like cooking. etc. I invested a lot in understanding my teams hobbies, it works like a charm 😊” (Versace) • “I mostly interact with White English or fellow Pedi colleagues. Simply because I find White English to be more easy going and mostly not "stuck up"...ha ha, I know, it is another stereotype, but in my experience they are more welcoming and open to a chit chat, grabbing a bite together lunch time etc.” (Rapunzel) • [Acculturation strategies?] “Keeping up (trends, tv shows, news etc.) so that I can fall into any conversation and give input” (Rapunzel) • [Acculturation strategies?] “I normally include something from my culture in my dressing. I will for example wear a beaded neckpiece (called ubuhlalu in my culture) or a beaded bracelet (called ucu in my culture) and people at work will ask about those and I will explain to them which I find very interesting.” (Lacoste)
	Decision-making and information during smoke breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There's a lot of corridor talk, mostly from people in the smokers club... I don't smoke, but I've become a secondary smoker to get ahead 😊” (Foundation) • “To get buy in of my idea I have realized that the best time to present it to my manager is when he's on his smoke break. I am building a career.” (Foundation) • “You only know what's going on if you smoke. And I don't smoke.” (Eyeshadow) • “I was a smoker by choice and not to be able to “fit in” or get ahead.” (Eyeliner)
Identity protection	Voicing beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It's difficult to have an opinion because you feel you won't be recognized.” (Foundation) • “I don't compromise because I feel that it's been going on for too long, that Africans have "compromised ""” (Eyeliner) • I agree with Cinderella about being bold and speaking up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Also , I think being bold , being seen. Speaking up, challenging which isn't the norm for a Zulu woman. ...For one, women are to bow their heads. A mans word is final and should not be challenged. We are socialised to be submissive. Submission doesn't "fly" in Corporate South African neither will it assist in propelling your career forward. ...It really does. You therefore have to socialise yourself to be bold, else you will go unnoticed no matter how good you are at your job.” (Cinderella) • “[Agrees with Cinderella] ...A women is suppose to speak only when spoken to, your role is there as an assistant and not to be dominant.” (Jasmine) • “I comment and express my opinion however i don't impose it.” (Eyeliner) • “If i am not inclined into something I don't do it and I am very vocal about it. Until it is well explained to me. Its just my personality.” (Jasmine) • “...they will often disregard my professional opinions or just ignore me during a board meeting... I often let my work speak louder and can immediately see change of attitude.” (Armani)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...I find that when I voice out and point out an injustice -d response from black people is 'there goes the Zulu girl , with the fighting spirit '. This is then interpreted as aggression - which they say is not a good time trait for management." (Foundation) • "i can easily walk out of a meeting if a person is a jerk." (Armani) • "I am very vocal so I put ppl in their place, quickly. And I dare you as my manager to cry insubordination....." (Gucci) • "Armani= young balck and oh so vocal" (Gucci responds to comment on Versace's conflict comment) • "I've had to deliberately choose NOT to adapt to the western culture of what seems to me to be a lack of interest in working together. In my culture we believe that 'one hand washes the other'. I cannot fuller reach my potential without understanding the very important role of others in my activities. And the western culture doesn't always openly embrace this very real and equally beneficial way of life and potentially doing business." (Mascara) • [Did you have to compromise your ethnic identity to become part of organisational culture?] "Not necessarily. I feel that by being vocal as to who I am, where I come from I was able to integrate my ethnic identity with my organisational culture." (Jasmine)
	Shifting	Different identities at work than at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ideally diversity would be an asset to an organisation, but our history and therefore who we are even at work make it more of a challenge." (Cinderella) • "...then there is the picking on their habits. instead of watching sabc1 u watch sabc 3 or mnet so u can relate when they talk abt their uniquely white experiences." (Mulan) • "Yes you try to pick up on their habits so you can have something to say during social events and also in the corridors, but I realized that its not a true reflection of myself. The only way to do it is to be honest and hope that they understand." (Jasmine) • "After 8 years you develop a thick skin and only choose to work with open in minded people - i can easily walk out of a meeting if a person is a jerk." (Armani) • "So along the way we try a d impose our cultures into an organisation's culture." (Eyeliner) • "Now that we talking about all these - i can't help but think maybe just maybe in the process of adapting we might have lost our true self is this the case of compromising or survival of the fittest?... is it really worth it - how about we each meet half way?" (Armani) • "Seem more like survival of the fittest Armani and that's very sad." (Lacoste) • "We are multiple roles at home- mom, wife, sister to all d many siblings we have, daughter, daughter in law etc. The company's work life balance doesn't meet my requirements sometimes." (Foundation) • "Ture Cinderella! (for one women bow their heads) this poses a huge barrier in career advancement!" (Mulan) • "...ld also like to add, for married women, because of the often long hours, now you have to hire help with the household chores. this speaks to your work affecting your personal life. in that culturally as well. the woman is the caregiver and is expected to take care of her family n cook

			<p>for hubby. ...it also sometimes becomes a balancing act switchin off the work persona into the home "cultural"persona." (Mulan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We have an inferiority complex and LSE issues about who we are as a people." (Powder) • "Ture Cinderella! (for one women bow their heads) this poses a huge barrier in career advancement!" (Jasmine) • "...So you go to work switching off what you know to be true. ...We therefore also challenge ourselves and not just the organisational norms." (Cinderella) • "to some extent most of your time is spent at work with a setting of another culture, so you work with those people and speak the language most of the time. So we are somewhat alienated from our own culture." (Clinique) • "We need to put context around it. I personally believe as long as you not doing anything that compromises your personal intergrity, it's fine. Nothing wrong with playing corporate politics to fit in, just don't change who you are." (Puma) • "I think I've adapted addressing elder people by their first names,which is something I wouldnt do at home" (Lipgloss) • "I have had to adapt to looking elders in the eye, which is seen as a sign of disrespect in my culture. I have had to learn to speak up and exude confidence and be bold and vocal, while African culture dictates that women be submissive. I have had to challenge colleagues though senior, whereas African culture requires one not to challenge authority. Outside the boardroom, I do refer to older colleagues as Sisi or Mama depending on their age" (Cinderella) • [identity differences between home and work?] "Not necessarily. I am 1 person. I am however more professional at work, though I do no compromise my bubbly personality and my African-ness." (Cinderella) • "Yes, at home I am Mommy and Daddy's littler girl, In my house, I am the mother and partner so I am more soft. At work, I am hardcore and result-driven" (Rapunzel) • "I had to learn to look elders in the eye when talking to them in order to show that I am being honest and sincere, whereas in my culture it means being dishonest" (Rapunzel) • "I have adapted by looking everyone in the eyes when speaking. When I am at work age don't matter as we are all colleagues and we need to be treated the same. I also respect peoples personal space (don't talk and touch)" (Eyeshadow) • "Yes it does differ, as at home I am more louder and playful. While at work I tend to ask myself how the next person will take my action and hence discourage myself from doing or speaking" (Eyeshadow) • "Typical western ways would be looking at the person talking to you straight in the eyes, however I had to adapt because I wouldn't normally address someone senior or 3 older than me straight in the eyes. At first it was uncomfortable but adjusted quickly" (Eyeliner) • [different identity at home than work] "yes because at work you are expected to carry your self in a certain way (Western Ways) and you some what give put your cultural practices aside,
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			<p>which shouldn't be the case - at home I am very comfortable because i am surrounded by my own" (Eyeliner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Personal background – asset or constraint?] “I think it is both an asset and a constraint. Asset in the sense that I am able to apply the values that I was taught at home such as respect to the work environment. This is an asset because I am able to respect everyone that I work with. It is a constraint in the sense that there are things that I was not exposed to at the time that I was raised, ie, I was so only exposed to the community which I grew up in and got so used to the different personalities of the people from my community. It became difficult when I started working because now I had to deal with new and different personalities which I was not exposed to in my community. It was a tough time flexing to those different personalities.” (Lacoste) • “Yes. At home I am more relaxed, I am able to express whatever feelings I have but I work I have to be a strong individual.” (Lacoste) • [acculturation strategies?] “It has personally been the ability to welcome in the realization that the only thing my job owes me is a salary at the end of the mind. And the thing I owe my job is to ensure I remain faithful to the commitments I made to it when I signed my contract. If at any point, I require my job to give me things that it has not been designed for, I will continue to frustrate myself. For example, I have had to accept that my job is not a place where I go to created friendships or be accepted. In fact, I don't have to demand respect or appreciation. I have outside circles that nourish that part of my life, and this is in the form of personal relationships, family and etc. My job was never designed to make me “feel at home”. That's why I have a home to go to for that. To recharge and regroup. In essence what I am saying is, when we require something that has been designed to perform a certain task, to do the opposite of its nature, we end up abusing (the abnormal use) it. It's critical to understand that fine line for ourselves, and this understanding extends even into our personal spaces.” (Mascara) • [identity different at home than at work?] “No my identity, meaning self, my character is consistent in and out of work. However, my disposition is different based on settings. There is no way I can be the same person in the work place as I am at home. The environment is not the same and requires I bring a different mind-set, otherwise I run the risk of soiling my work environment.” (Mascara) • [Do you feel you had to sacrifice your ethnic identity to become part of the organisation?] “No I haven't. The only time you sacrifice yourself in any way; it's when you haven't realised your real value, that your organization desperately needs someone like you. And this is not predicated by their realization of your worth.” (Mascara) • “Mmmmmh! I am definitely different. At work I am hard, have my back up and tough. I am the total opposite at home coz its a safe environment with my husband and family. They are not out to catch me out or make me feel inferior in any way.” (Gucci)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Western ways you had to adapt to?] “Look people in the eye when communicating, i am still trying to work on that.” (Lipgloss) • “Work – Professional; Home- There i can freely be myself” (Lipgloss) • “Well at home I am more of a daughter to my mother and obedient whereas at work I have to assume a more work orientated identity of responsibility, toughness, etc. So yes, there are differences when I view my work and home identity.” (Jasmine)
Managing diversity	Transformation	More transformation in public sector than private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Yes pvt sector still a challenge. I agree things might be better in public.” (Versace) • “I think the private sector is still struggling in this area not so much in the public sector. We are still desperately trying to see transformation in the private sector. Public like Government.” (Gucci) • “I suppose public sector as we said it's another tick box and without a doubt a move forward & round of applause for try...but transformation is a long process and its not only about getting our demographics sorted - it's deeper than that...there questions becomes are people well equipped...let me stop here (am getting carried away)” (Armani)
		Transformation focus of current employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transformation is a huge thing in our organisation but most mangers / senior managers are reluctant to hire non white and hide behind " non white aren't skilled enough or their under qualified" (Eyeliner) • “We have meetings which asks people to address the issue of diversity. We have a committee which deals with the issues of diversity and is taken seriously” (Lacoste) • “My org tries but fails dismally.”(DKNY) • “For our organisation it's definitely an assert given the current transformation movement in SA higher institutions.” (Armani) • “Ideally diversity would be an asset to an organisation, but our history and therefore who we are even at work make it more of a challenge.” (Cinderella) • “Definitely an asset - that's why they hired me. For compliance and to remain in business they must be diversified. Our shareholders demand that the company be diverse. Diversity is business globally - companies will get marginalized if they don't play along. It's the rules of the game.” (Foundation) • “Oh dear South Africa - it's so diverse that in trying to explain its intricate cultures am now honestly somewhat confused.” (Armani) • “i still think the true transformation in a workplace is when each group is prepared to meet in the middle. If as a black woman you are prepared to go the length to adapt and excel...we should expext the same from our colleagues (every one of them in the organization).” (Armani) • “Ideally as everyone has mentioned it would be an asset, however I agree that it is a problem.” (Jasmine) • “It can become an asset if it's correctly measured and used for all the right reasons I think we wouldnt have transformation issues.” (Eyeliner)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the group shared a lot which are challenges and currently the organisation I am working for are is very diverse and we have individuals from Africa are working with, and based on those cultural differences - everyone's cultures are respected and have made sure that these are respected.” (Eyeliner) • “The managerial style I experience at work is more transformational and supportive. I consider myself blessed to have a manager who is open to ideas, sharing and is not a dictator but corporative in the way I have to conduct my tasks. Listens to ideas I have and incorporates them to my job description.” (Jasmine)
	Resistance to BBBEE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think it's a tick box exercise in most cases, so it can be seen as an asset if we meet our EE targets. But it can also be a problem if EE candidates are placed in executive positions, but have no executive powers to influence key decisions in the business.” (Puma) • “It's [diversity] an Asset when it suits management and a problem when it suits management. The reason I say this is because white junior would get hired in a particular role even if they don't fit the job, however to be able to submit to the services Seta we conveniently hire an unskilled African that gad a dotted reporting line to the junior” (Eyeliner) • “I think people are being used for BBBEE, I listen when they talk in meetings about how they are reaching the stats but never about the quality of people they are employing ... most people will always see us as the blacks that we employed to make the stats.” (Powder) • “This BBBEE though 🤖 something needs to be done. Same qualifications, same experience different salaries I have an issue with that.” (Lipgloss) • “i think just in General there are always plans and policies but are never really implemented.diversity has been a huge success in the lower levels of the hierarchy but as you go up ,it's a different story.” (Dory) • “Its like we are just there for their BEE numbers and that's it” (Gucci) • “I totally agree with Puma & Gucci...it is another tick box (sadly).” (Armani) • “And all these EE plan they put in place just for the company's benefit.” (Lipgloss) • “I find that the old people are still the ones resisting change.” (Powder) • “They see a well educated African woman with senior position and they so quickly to thank BBBEE” (Lipgloss) • “It needs to be utilized correctly. And the fact that companies don't seem to understand its potential, it is being abused. The very thing that can advance you, can destroy you if abused.”(Mascara) • “I consider my personal background to be both an asset and constraint. With the introduction of EE, being a black female is advantageous in the sense that one is given a slight reference for roles etc. However, the colour of my skin is not really conducive to steady progress in Corporate SA. So while companies might be hiring black females, moving up the corporate ladder as a female is quite challenging. I am simply not the right skin colour or gender to accelerate up the corporate ladder.” (Cinderella)

	<p>Predominantly black African demographics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’d think the issue obviously would be in terms of who are mostly dominating the senior positions. 30 % whites, 40% blacks 10%, coloureds and 20% Indians.” (Lipgloss) • “More blacks but as drivers and labourers. In the offices though that’s where you find all the white people. I am the only black person in my office.” (Eyeshadow) • “Low level is black, indian and coloured. They struggle keeping black people in middle management. 50% black, 10% indian & coloured, d rest is white” (Foundation) • “I would say 50% black, 20% indians, 20% whites and 10% coloureds.” (Puma) • “...but lower level majority is Africans 😊” (Versace)
	<p>Predominantly white demographics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “More whites who’ve been with the organization for more than 20 years+.” (Mascara) • “Management is definitely lily white and for BBBEE they’ve put women.” (Foundation) • “We have a diverse split however, it’s always difficult to get it right. I would say 60% White 20% Indian, 15% African and 5% coloured” (Eyeliner) • “More whites and mostly over 50, Second on the list blacks mostly under 45 then Indians and coloured probably the same numbers mostly middle aged” (Powder) • “60perc white and 40 perc ACI [African, Coloured or Indian]” (Dory) • “ive honestly never taken the time to observe. i can only comment on my specific business unit. which i can say is fully representative of all races (until u get to the top).” (Mulan) • “It is mainly dominated by black females in lower positions, then mostly white males in higher positions...” (Rapunzel) • “I would say 60% White, 40% others.” (Jasmine) • “Relatively mixed. However, the higher you go up the chain, the whiter it gets. The lower you go, more blacks. I’d say in terms of percentages, overall 65, 35% ACI- this is just the SA leg of the organisation.” (Cinderella) • “Eish! There are more white people in my town and naturally my work place... look the demographics indicates favourable stats but when you combine blacks, Indians and coloureds white people are still in majority. The eish is not negative but just how things are and how we ofen push demographics that are only a ‘dream’...” (Armani) • “70% white, 5% Indians-5% coloured-20% black permanent Staff” (DKNY) • “Oh gosh, the Pharmaceutical Industry is still very much white dominated. Almost no Indians and a handful of coloured. 70% white I would say 😊😊” (Gucci) • “Somewhat balanced but mostly white especially permanent employees.” (Lacoste) • “Majority white followed by Indians then African including coloured.” (Versace) • “I interact mostly with people from other ethno-cultural groups as I find myself Surrounded by them most of the time, it’s not a conscious choice I make.” (Eyeshadow)
	<p>Demographical transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The company I work for is very committed to transformation.” (Lacoste) • “Still a long way to go but hey my organisation working very hard to transform.”(Versace)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transformation is a huge thing in our organisation but most managers / senior managers are reluctant to hire non white and hide behind “ non white aren't skilled enough or their under qualified” (Eyeliner) • “I sit on the transformation committee; I am able to give input to my stakeholders.” (Eyeliner) • “So, Marili your study is v important - you should sommer take it further and share with little ones...if we can start them young - 20 yrs from today we won't have this same conversation...we need to accommodate our differencea with your whole self intact (i don't know how you do that)” (Armani)
Assimilation	Whiteness as the norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “instead of watching sabc1 u watch sabc 3 or mnet so u can relate when they talk abt their uniquely white experiences.” (Mulan) • “For me the white culture , they don't make it a secret that we don't belong where we are.” (Powder) • “What I have done I have adopted white people's mentality.” (Eyeshadow) • “Corporate SA is predominantly white, therefore if you are going to be part of the inner circle, you must be knowledgeable on an array of things...that aren't necessarily to your likes etc. ...This not necessarily a bad thing though. You grow your general knowledge in the process too. ...Being informed is not a bad thing. Suddenly playing rugby because it's talk of the town at the office is another.” (Cinderella) • “I have worked mostly with females and the few white males I work with respect my work especially for someone as junior as me.” (Lacoste) • “And sometimes I blame certain black people of how they treat the whites they idolise them and I think that's why certain whites don't even think about adapting to other cultures because they think their is the best...for some reason when my child is sick its not as serious as a white person's child or their dog or cat.” (Powder) • “...We are also in a position where our parents were told that white us superior and in turn passed his thinking to us.” (Cinderella) • “I guess it all goes back to the fact that we have been so much exposed to the white culture, we work for westernised companies and so wat we can only expect is for the white people to acculturate to the different cultures. In other words we always strive to acculturate to the white culture and so that's why we expect so much from the whites to acculturate to our culture.” (Lacoste) • “Acculturation is meant to be a two-way process of change, adaptation and learning to accommodate each other. Sadly in the workplace adaptations are made by the minority (black) in response to their contact with the dominant majority (white) employees. There can never be a fair process of acculturation as the status quo is still predominately white. Sadly as a black person in the workplace you simply adapt to how things are done, we dont have a voice, we dont have a say in the change.” (Gucci)
	Equal respect for Western and African cultures demonstrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I don't compromise because I feel that it's been going on for too long, that Africans have ‘compromised” (Eyeliner)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The African culture has pretty much similar culture - mutual recognition and respect.” (Foundation) • “I only adress blacks with "Ausi" and whites by their 1st names. Cause that's what they prefer they don't want to be called "Aunty" chase they say this is not home its work and we should be professional.” (Powder) • “Build relationships. Meet everyone where they are comfortable. After some they realise I'm actually smart and most deserving of my role. Try. Seeking to understand before insisting that you must be understood” (Foundation) • “We are expected to adapt to their culture when will they meet us halfway.” (Powder) • “it is like that for South Africans of different ethnic groups too. Being Zulu from Kzn, working in Jhb, there is an expectation for me to know how to speak Sesotho for eg. ...I think the right attitude in the workplace is ultimately one of respect.” (Cinderella) • “the university might say they are being diverse but when it gets to the faculties they don't all live by the university plans they tend to cater for their own cultures.” (Powder) • “Yes you try to pick up on their habits so you can have something to say during social events and also in the corridors, but I realized that its not a true reflection of myself. The only way to do it is to be honest and hope that they understand.” (Jasmine) • “I just don't speak negatively or comment about religion and other cultures. Although I would think it is ridiculous.” (Eyeshadow) • “We travel outside of Gauteng a lot and my colleagues would refer to Witbank, Middleburg, Nylstroom. And I always exclaim the importance of making sure they understand that those towns now have new names. If they don't acknowledge that Nylstroom is now Modimolle they are disregarding the reason for the change and the history that comes with it.” (Gucci) • “Top mngmt tries to embrace it that we understand each other and learn 4rom each other however fights are there for small things such as aircon cause we r different. cool conditions mayb cold for other and not addressed properly in some departments.” (Versace) • “Another thing is names ladies. I only go by my Xhosa name. Whether you are blue, pink or orange you need to address me by that name, just as I address you by yours... I don't think you can quantify acculturation. Same as tolarence, there should always be room to accomodate other peoples cultures.” (Puma) • “Oh please the other side will never compromise, they get stuck at Dumela! thats it done..They even still refer to Gauteng as Transvaal. I mean really 😊 Armani, are we met half way tho? or are we giving 80% and they battle with a mere 20%.” (Gucci) • “When other cultures meet us half way there needs to be some sort of resources to enable them to. We learnt these languages through school and English is widely spoken. It depends on what we want us to meet us half way with? Language , understanding our culture ? What what do we need from to meet bus half way with ? I agree teaching other cultures how to say you first name whether bit be zulu or xhosa without it be trashed or given another meaning. So we need them to meet us halfway when it comes to pronouncing our names properly as we do with
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			<p>theirs. Without having to consider b our English names because it's easy for them to pronounce. But then the organisation culture should then be different to personal cultures since we try to accommodate to many cultures in the workplace.” (Clinique)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What I struggle with is addressing older people in the organization by their first names. Typically I would say "Ntate Trevor" instead of "Trevor". Many frown upon it but I have kept at it and now everybody knows I don't use first names to address older people. It's a cultural thing for me. I have not known anything different. And this is the part where you decide if you're going to be affected by the environment or you are going to affect the environment... Me being his boss doesn't take away from the fact that he's still older than me. I don't have to be rude/disrespectful to be firm and get my point across do I?” (Mascara) • “On that topic - Mascara - we have this new old lady at work I didn't know how I should I address her after long thought I just called her by name and it actual became an issue to one of my colleague.” (Lipgloss) • “I have worked mostly with females and the few white males I work with respect my work especially for someone as junior as me.” (Lacoste) • “I acclimatized myself to the majority culture. Trying to understand where they come from how they do things and then I introduced them to my culture, what it is and how we do things.” (Rapunzel) • “I think mutual respect is key. I don't have to like or even understand the nuances of your culture. I just need to respect it.” (Mascara) • “language is not the issue. its respect!” (Mulan) • “Diversity is a problem at my company because we don't embrace the different cultures but tend to keep to our own. Even when conducting business or meetings they don't accommodate others.” (Eyeshadow) • “@ Armani remember compromise is not a bad thing for what you like. Just think of how many times u have comprised 4 ur family to succeed.It's not a bad thing I believe, even in rural areas 4 example at schools, teachers being same culturally there are differences and stereotypes . Think about that. Yes , I think they also try hard to meet us half way and we just need to manage that. my white colleague realised I like kids and have little kids talks with me and that she initiates and share info in that line... I believe attitude is everything and its up to us to instill a good culture by not being tired of sharing and teaching. SA belongs to us all and let's b 2gether in this . We need to invest in African companies and b diverse hire whites to know us better” (Versace) • “ What I have learned is that you have to share information about each other's cultures, so that you learn more about each other and you can be able to accommodate each other in the work environment. It is difficult but if and yes you make sacrifices at times like adopting habbits of others and having to work hard to prove your abilities but if you constantly share nuances about each others culture, its a step forward. In my department this strategy is working and I have
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			<p>learned at the end that we all have the similar problems that we sometimes never share thinking that the others will not understand.” (Jasmine)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The organization itself is pretty diverse. I find that I can engage with any ethno cultural individual depending on the circumstances, i.e. Team building, company year end, training, conference etc. I am privileged in the sense that I am comfortable with any ethno-cultural group.” (Cinderella) • “Calling my elder colleagues by their first names. It is a bit strange and as much as the Afrikaans Aunties might prefer to be called Tannie, the English mostly prefer their first names period...I think it is very important to acknowledge and learn other cultures. That way, we will be able to treat each other in a manner that is acceptable in all cultures.” (Rapunzel) • “I interact with everyone regardless of culture if they are accomodating.” (Powder) • “I interact with everyone. I have been exposed to many ethno-cultural groups growing up, so this is not a new environment for me. I am comfortable.” (Mascara) • “I have been very privileged in my upbringing and education. Having gone to one of the best Afrikaans schools in Pretoria in 1994, during a turbulent time in SA, saw me as one of two black children in the whole school. I had to grow a thick skin quickly and learn the language even quicker. Although I finished High school with English as my primary language, its my primary school years that have given me a great advantage in life and work. I have a huge advantage simply due to being able to speak the Afrikaans language. It has helped me land my first job and has through the years seen me connect with a lot of my clients and colleagues. I have a huge asset in that I grew up with 'white' people and even now I am able to speak and connect with them with such ease. I am able to adapt in any situation another asset because from a small age I had to learn to adapt or die.” (Gucci) • “I interact with everyone regardless of their ethnic group. If you respect me as a person then we can interact on any level. I am simple, dish out what I get.” (Gucci) • [personal background – asset or constraint?] “Asset, because of [how] i was raised i am able to relate with people from all backgrounds” (Lipgloss) • “I consider my background as an asset, since I work in a predominately White Afrikaans environment, I contribute by informing and making my colleagues aware of the differences of where we come from. Hence they get to know me and also learn how different or similar our backgrounds are and I believe it makes them understand some of our clients better.” (Jasmine)
		<p>Feeling valued in the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel valued by my boss but not other colleagues” (Powder) • “Problem – people shouldn’t be used but valued ... Currently I do feel valued.” (Lipgloss) • “Quite honestly, I seldom do feel valued, especially from my fellow women of colour.” (Mascara) • “I never feel valued..... I always feel used.” (Eyeshadow) • “I feel valued because there has been changes in some areas.” (Eyeliner) • “For me it's recognition and a pay raise being given and trusted with more responsibility” (Foundation)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When I get recognition, anything from a simple thank you to a gift from my boss ha ha ha” (Rapunzel) • “I feel valued when my direct manager appreciates my work and says thank you on a job well done.” (Eyeshadow) • “In my previous job I wouldn't always feel valued because used to feel unappreciated and this was because of the business I was supporting and clients that are just never happy - demotivating (just started in a new company)” (Eyeliner) • [Managerial style] “It is a very professional style. My managers are never personal when it comes to giving instructions or giving feedback. They acknowledge the fact that I am a junior and they are always willing to teach.” (Lacoste) • [When do you feel valued?] “When my managers ask me to do work for them and when my efforts are appreciated.” (Lacoste) • [When do you feel valued?] “This is particularly difficult for me to answer. It's as difficult as answering “what would you do if you weren't in the profession you're in?” it's a probability. I don't know and chances are I will never know. I'm made to answer something I'm not faced with as if I am faced with it. It throws me off completely. Because I have a different outlook on what my job is designed to do for me and what I'm supposed to do for it. So issues like being valued and appreciated are not much of a concern to me.” (Mascara) • [When do you feel valued?] “Almost every day because of the people in my team.” (Lipgloss) • [When do you feel valued?] “When I make a contribution in relation to teaching, community services and research.” (Jasmine)
		Lack of understanding of other cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...i have experienced that sometimes what is offensive in the one culture is not necessarily offensive in the other. for eg, addressing older colleagues by their names or referring to them as "mom" / aunt / sis so and so. then there is male/female dynamics as well.” (Mulan) • “I think all companies in the perfect world would like to think of diversity as an asset but the reality is , it is a problem because as south africans we do not know how to "deal" with each other.” (Mulan) • “...we tend to get over powered by our races and cultural believes, and I think that's why we struggle so much...” (Eyeliner) • “Sometimes I put pics of my heritage in the office and some white people will come into the office and start asking questions about those pictures and then when they ask I just give it all to make sure that my heritage is understood.” (Lacoste) • “I personally have had cultural related conflict in my workplace. It was outside culture it was just work specific and bit related to culture. It was regards to a misunderstanding with regards to certain tasks that had to be done in a certain way and was not done in that way. Its a personal thing and believe it has nothing to do with culture” (Clinique) • “Conflict yes. I referred to a lady as he in a meeting and this white guy corrected me with disrespect, I told him where 2 get off unfortunately and was very bad.” (Versace)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We travel outside of Gauteng a lot and my colleagues would refer to Witbank, Middleburg, Nylstroom. And I always exclaim the importance of making sure they understand that those towns now have new names. If they don't acknowledge that Nylstroom is now Modimolle they are disregarding the reason for the change and the history that comes with it.” (Gucci) • “...Accepting it [referring to facilitator’s question regarding becoming culturally accepted within an organisation] is not an option. we have progressed as a people and such views hold us back” (Mulan) • “I could say both because my background taught me how to be firm and be able to stand on my own, as well as become street smart - it can at times become a constraint because of cultural differences in the work place and being misunderstood” (Eyeliner) • “I mostly drawn to staying with people of the same ethno - cultural background because we understand each other and there is a lot of similarities - I meet these colleagues on a social level as well.” (Eyeliner) • “Yes. I interact with different ethno-cultural groups on a social group. I have friend who are Xhosa, Ndebele, Sotho., Indian and white.” (Lacoste) • [Personal background – asset or constraint?] “I consider it a fantastic asset. For the simple reason that the story, experiences, failures, triumphs and challenges I bring are not a copy of someone else. They are authentically me. Pure, untainted and certainly not disingenuous in any form, shape or size. Only I know what it’s like to have the history, background, experiences and education I’ve had. Only have a clear understanding of what it’s like to walk in my shoes.” (Mascara) • [other acculturation strategies?] “Do more research with regards to Western Cultures perhaps that would broaden my knowledge.” (Lipgloss) • [interactions with other ethno-cultural groups?] “Interact mostly with the same etchno cultural origin on social level.” (Lipgloss)
Discrimination	Black ethnic differences causes conflict		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it is like that for South Africans of different ethnic groups too. Being Zulu from Kzn, working in Jhb, there is an expectation for me to know how to speak Sesotho for eg.” (Cinderella) • “Quite honestly, I seldom do feel valued, especially from my fellow women of colour.” (Mascara) • “No I don't. But I find that when I voice out and point out an injustice -d response from black people is 'there goes the Zulu girl, with the fighting spirit '. This is then interpreted as aggression” (Foundation) • “And the common line is "that was a career limiting move".” (Mascara responds to Foundation’s comment of “Zulu girl”) • “So beyond fighting the battle with other races, you still have to fight with people of colour. Tswanas generally go to war with any of the Nguni groups(Zulu, Xhosa, swati, Ndebele).” (Mascara) • “I know Xhosas and Zulus also sometimes they don't get along.” (Lipgloss)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’ve resorted to speak Sesotho or whatever language they understand. This disarms them and for some reason they relate better. Strangely it’s an issue for the well educated blacks.” (Mascara) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “I think managerial style is more of an individual thing vs race. I do however find that I relate better to male managers than female managers. Female managers are stereotyped in corporate, though I have found my current manager who is female to not fall into the stereotype.” (Cinderella) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “I agree with this statement. In my experience, the Nguni think that they are superior” (Rapunzel) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “I wouldn’t know as I have no experience of such” (Eyeshadow) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “i have not experienced it” (Powder) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “To some extent yes because usually if you are from the Basotho - the nguni’s would class us and say that we are loud and we dominate the workplace. However the same could also be said about the Nguni and the Basotho feeling that they are loud - there is always going to be that cultural difference” (Eyeliner) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “I disagree. The only fights that I have seen between Nguni and Basotho has always been on a personal level, ie, between those particular individuals pertaining to a particular thing and not because of their ethnicity.” (Lacoste) • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “I disagree. Unfortunately this is a misleading stereo-type that should not even have a place in our society. It’s like ‘same race’ racism. The often visible disagreements between the Nguni and Basotho tribe is historical and cultural as much as apartheid is. However, I still believe it’s also a people issue. From the interactions I’ve had with the Ngunis, I’ve realised that their dislike is not linked to any particular situation they’ve experience. It mostly seemed to be an old reaction and feel inherited from others in their space. At some point we would need to leave the historicity of our parents and cleave to something new that has meaning to us. It is not enough for me to dislike someone and have an awkward and silly reason such as “ugh! I just don’t like Zulus. They have a violent demeanour about them”. But the truth is, I haven’t experienced it myself. I am owning the experience of someone else and in the process, robbing myself of the possible healthy and thriving connections.” (Mascara) • “Ag, we should all just grow up hey. There are Zulu people who simply refuse to speak any other language than their own and same can be said about Sepedi people, so yes, the two groups do clash often. This is our biggest downfall as black people because we are so busy saying 'that one doesn't speak my language' that we forget that the veterans who had to fight the apartheid regime simply didn't have time for such childish games - they simply couldn't have. If we can only stand together over and above who speaks what we could do better with relating to each other in the workplace and also act as allies in the cause for transformation. The ANC wasn't playing when they said 'together we stand, divided we fall'” (Gucci)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Nguni vs Basotho conflict] “Agreed, because of different backgrounds and the way they were raised.” (Lipgloss) • “Yes there is a tendency of disagreement which is perpetuated by different personality. Nguni’s are considered more extroverted than Setswana, hence this might create clashes (if not understood) at times (i.e., meetings, etc.)” (Jasmine) • “There were conflicts previously with a member from my culture. They were in relation do a misunderstanding and it was all resoved and cleared out.” (Jasmine)
		Cultural traditions limited by company policies, e.g. leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “we can all the policies we want bt if we do not have respect it will all be no use. as it currently is.” (Mulan) • “I bury my family almost every month, I still need leave to take my child to the Dr” (Foundation) • “Family comes first don’t mater if it is dog or cat. I attend to my family” (Eyeshadow) • “the attire we wear. culturally pants are a nono for females, but we have comes to accept it as a norm. they are sometimes more practical depending on the job that you do.” (Mulan) • “There have been instances (not necessarily personal) where I have seen people for eg having a hard time getting leave for African functions. i.e. if a family member passed a few months ago and now one needs leave to attend a cleansing ceremony, it becomes challenging to explain and justify why leave is needed vs some employees who easily get leave for eg, their dog being sick.” (Cinderella)
		Counter-stereotyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Language, gender are the most contributing factors.” (Jasmine) • “And for some reason they think we used to live in the bush or something and for some reason they think we are not used to the lifestyle that they live.” (Powder) • “...I find that when I voice out and point out an injustice -d response from black people is 'there goes the Zulu girl , with the fighting spirit '. This is then interpreted as aggression - which they say is not a good time trait for management. When white girls do it, everyone congratulates a passionate touf cookie.” (Foundation) • “I think that the only reason I was hired...for diversity” (Eyeshadow) • “black men have it easier than us.” (Foundation) • “Absolutely [to Foundation's comment about blac men having it easier]! We are seen as the weaker counterpart across the spectrum.” (Mascara) • “Because I was the only black in the office.. The depo manager assumed I was the cleaner and game me instructions 😊 I had to calm my self for a good five minutes before I could answer. I had to understand where he was coming from. I told him (in afrikaans) that I was not the cleaner but would gladly pass on the message for him.” (Eyeshadow) • “it’s supposed to be an asset and it should be. But when your intelligence and capabilities are measured based on the color of your skin and your gender, at one point or the other you are going to experience some sort of a disadvantage.” (Mascara) • “Zulus are known to be rude and stubborn...” (Lipgloss)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “black women are undermined and thought to be less skilled or you can't be black and have a younger boss than you.” (Eyeliner) • “We were at a colleagues farewell party and our head of department took out all of their foreign currency collection and started "lecturing" us about each of the countries they were from, shifting everyone's attention to her. So, I opened my wallet and took out all of my foreign currency. When she saw this, she quickly changed the subject...” (Puma) • “I haven't experienced it.” (Eyeliner) • “I haven't experienced that.” (Powder) • “and then you will get comments such as "you are not that kind of black".” (Mulan) • “...You're not like them....” (Cinderella) • “The problem is men white and black finds it difficult to be led by a lady. We deal that daily and for performance sake I give them some key responsibilities. Just to boost their ego. 😊😊” (Versace) • “How I deal with it is simply by responding honestly to that situation. For example, a white person in conversation will go on about all their travels assuming that you as a black person has never travelled in your life. I would respond by telling them about all of my travels. I do it to simply break the trend of stereotyping.” (Puma) • “I mean the first white male I worked for was very strict and scrutinised all the work I did for him I initially thought that it because I was a black female but I later found out that he was like that to everyone even to white females.” (Lacoste) • “I deal with stereotypes on daily bases. As a young woman I often work with older white men and even some women” (Armani) • “I have not seen any such Stereotyping happening within the company...” (Lacoste) • “There is stereotypical behaviour because I'm black and then there is stereotypical behaviour coz I'm female and then a combo.” (Gucci) • “U're not good enough because you are a woman” (Foundation) • I think managerial style is more of an individual thing vs race. I do however find that I relate better to male managers than female managers. Female managers are stereotyped in corporate, though I have found my current manager who is female to not fall into the stereotype.” (Cinderella) • [personal background constraint or asset?] “I find it as a constraint, I grew up in a village. I see myself as being a strong employee who pays attention to detail and performs all tasks timeously and faultlessly. However, the moment others hear where I am from, they start to question my competence. They immediately assume that they can do better than me because I am from a village in Limpopo and I am Pedi. There are a lot of different stereotypes within African cultures. e.g. Pedi people from Limpopo are too submissive, so in the workplace, I have experienced lack of cooperation from some of my subordinates simply because I am a pedi woman from Limpopo” (Rapunzel)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The managerial style imposed on me by my manager I would say it’s more defensive as I feel like they are scared to criticize me directly compared to my colleagues. I sometimes feel like they are too scared to criticize me because of my race and I would maybe take it personally. I still stand to be corrected” (Eyeshadow) • “I personally feel that there will never come a time where genders of different cultures will get the same treatment in the work place from management.” (Eyeshadow) • “In terms of race, I tend to think there’s too much familiarity that isn’t necessary. It’s one thing for a boss to relate to me by virtue of the fact that we share the same race and it’s another thing when a boss thinks that because we are of the same race, I can be treated differently to my white, Indian or coloured counterpart. In regards to gender, one always finds themselves caught between a rock and hard place. A boss may view my gender as a point of contention as far as my intelligence and capabilities are concerned but it is not to me. The task of continuously having to prove oneself can affect one’s morale. Personally, I have committed to seeing all the things that the world is telling me are a disadvantage as magic! My gender is not my disadvantage, or my drawback or my hindrance. It is not even my weakness. My gender is a necessity. It walks into a room and says “I am a spoken solution! I have a contribution to make!” Until we begin to see our gender as an essential and not something to be sorry about, or humble or polite about, we will be in a better position for our male counterparts to see us as much capable contributors as them, without us needing to call a news channel or set up a press conference just to announce ‘I am a woman’. Subliminal teaching is a very credible and powerful tool.” (Mascara) • “Having been in a sales environment, where my success is the manager’s success, I have found most managers being supportive. There is not a deliberate emphasis of incompetence due to my skin colour or my gender. There have been plenty of times in other roles where the coin was flipped though.” (Gucci) • “You get a silly comment like; ‘for a woman, you are quite good’ , ‘ for a black person.....whatever! Bullshit. All I ever want is for my colleagues to describe me as fair, honest with integrity and simply good at what I do. I do not want any connotation of being a woman or black to be associated to the work I do. I am simply good OR not...done!” (Gucci) • [Managerial style] “10/10 I have no issues with this regards.” (Lipgloss)
		Ethnicity: Beneficial or constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “most mangers / senior managers are reluctant to hire non white and hide behind " non white aren't skilled enough or their under qualified” (Eyeliner) • “I always feel used.I am always the first the get more work.” (Eyeshadow) • “I do get tired though to always have to work extra hard to gain their confidence so there have been cases when I tell my director I’m not prepared to deal with whoever if they treat me like I don’t know my work or I can’t possibly be an expert in my field.” (Armani) • “...Education, keeping up with current affairs, you have to be able to contribute with everyone on their level/intellect. ...Yes Jasmine, which goes to show that by being black, you have to work twice as hard to prove yourself and your abilities.” (Rapunzel)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The thing is as an African woman sometimes you just have to work 10times harder just to prove yourself. While for some being who they are is an advantage from the day they born :-)” (Lipgloss) • “Because of Bbbee, we've worked to get here. black men have it easier than us. Double tax for black ladies.” (Foundation) • “We've worked to get here alright but our salaries compared to our white counterparts. That's why I always have an attitude (if you can call it that) at work.” (Eyeshadow) • “I believe my background is an asset for me cause it taught me that you have to Work hard for everything you want and nothing is for free. With the little that we had , quitting was not an option . I always tell myself that I've come this far and I can still keep pushing” (Eyeshadow) • “I consider it constraint - our schools did not equip us for all the various careers that are out there and the education was not top standard . We were being taught for the sake of being at school not for the sake of achievement.” (Powder)
Culture	Cultural Identity Salienc (CIS)	Serious about maintaining culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “my culture is rather strict I try my best to follow it though” (Lipgloss) • “my culture is part [o]f my identity and [I] take it seriously” (Eyeliner) • “I maintain my ethnic culture very seriously nd am passionate about my culture” (Dory) • “I ... would like to seriously maintain my ethnic culture” (Jasmine) • “I have high regards for my culture” (Clinique) • “Quit[e] serious” (DKNY) • “Very serious” x3 (Gucci, Lacoste, Puma) • “Proud african – pedi[,] and very serious to maintain” (Versace) • “I do not adapt.” (Eyeshadow) • “...I don't compromise and live by strong standards hence before I accept an offer of employment I make it a point to undescended the companies culture and if it will work for me” • “My culture is a big part of who I am and as such, I do not compromise it for anyone or anything. I am who I am because of my culture, it forms a bit piece of the puzzle of me. what I try do is not impose it onto other people and adapt to the organisations policies etc., however, if I had to take leave for a cleansing ceremony for e.g., I would. And if I have to justify why, I would not hold back.” (Cinderella)
		Relatively serious about maintaining culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “partly entrenched... for the most part, I am still getting to know and understand its nuances” (Mascara) • “I would like to maintain my culture as it is important to me but it is a bit difficult to do so at times” (Rapunzel) • “I am relatively serious about maintaining my ethnic culture” (Cinderella) • “I'm serious about maintain[in]g my ethic culture, but also has adapted largely to western ways of doing business or professional thinking” (Armani)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I acclimatized myself to the majority culture. Trying to understand where they come from how they do things and then I introduced them to my culture, what it is and how we do things.” (Jasmine)
	Not priority to maintain culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I respect my culture but not that familiar with it” (Eyeshadow) • “I respect my culture but don't necessarily follow it. • I'm generation 'create own culture' “ (Foundation) • “I respect my culture, but do not follow it” (Powder) • “I am realising in my old age that is quit important but it was neva [never] a priority for me and also not how I was raised” (Mulan) • “western ways are the same as the way I was brought up they are not different or any special that the way my life is” (Powder)
Organisational culture	Value-driven organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Accountability, client centricity, respect” (Dory) • “The African culture has pretty much similar culture - mutual recognition and respect. I see our companies are trying to create similar org cultures.” (Foundation) • “Respect, integrity, service, excellence and stewardship.” (Rapunzel) • “Our values include respect and integrity, which also forms part of our performance evaluations. Meaning you can be very good at your job, but if you do not live by the values, your performance will be low.” (Rapunzel) • “i would like to say that my experience is slightly different in that we are a business within a business. ...if i extend to the bigger business unit, even though we also have values we live by, they barely practiced” (Mascara) • “There is a sense of togetherness (unity) and the environment is family orientated. unity and family orientation: Coming together as one, respecting each other regardless of coming from diverse backgrounds, having a mutual goal, understanding and ensuring that as a unit we provide the best service to our clients. Some of the values I have mentioned are also enshrined in our organisation as a whole and in my specific department are implemented.” (Jasmine) • “We have values that guide us and sometimes assist however you can't really control of [if] everyone is upholding them.” (Eyeliner) • “The values are there (framed) but d decisions are during the smoke breaks and rugby socials.” (Foundation) • “We have a very strong culture, we have values in place to guide everyone in terms of decision making.” (Lipgloss) • “The values look good on paper, but nothing is put in place to hold anyone accountable for them.” (Puma)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I haven't experienced that [conflict]. I think that companies culture are based on values and not an individuals culture...” (Eyeliner) • “...it's traditionally white and Afrikaans organisation so there is also strong values and tradition build over the years.” (Armani) • “We are all committed to the same values we have a value statement which everyone respects. Even though we have different teams within the company ie teams which deal with different fields of law, we all have the same commitment to our values and these values are only in relation to what we do and not really related to our ethnic backgrounds.” (Lacoste) • “Very good organisational culture with great values and are well respected.” (Versace) • “we also have values we live by, they barely practiced.” (Mulan) • “One of the values is Growth, my organisation is the type that believe strongly in growing internal talent.” (Lipgloss)
		Individualistic (Western)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “on paper it is collective but actually it is a masquerade of individualistic cultures.” (Mascara) • “No team buildings or socialising.” (Eyeshadow) • “It's really hard to say, it certain situations one is stringer. But I'd say individualistic” (Lipgloss) • “Mine is very individualistic. Simply no cohesion and no sense of a collective stance” (Gucci) • “It's everyone for themselves hence I say individualistic.” (Eyeshadow) • “One thing that stands out for me is the fact that there is no sense of cohesion. Teams, though seemingly efficient, work in silos. There is no sense of "family" but rather individuals working towards a common goal.” (Cinderella) • “it's traditionally white and Afrikaans organisation so there is also strong values and tradition build over the years.” (Armani) • “Very diverse culture, however it varies from each business unit. In some areas it's very white male dominated and ... borders on an afrikaans culture” (Eyeliner) • “Management only there to look out for no1. There's no genuin top down sponsorship of a culture of inclusiveness or one that's focused on building and growing ALL of it's employees.” (Puma) • “[organisational culture] I'd say it's more individualistic.” (Cinderella) • “I think my company's organisational structure is individualistic because they say it's an English company but everything is in Afrikaans.” (Eyeshadow) • “Individualistic with language being the biggest problem.” (Powder) • “I have a strong believe that it is mostly western.” (Mascara) • “The organisation I work for is very Individualistic, no sense of community at all. I must say the only organisation which gave me a sense of community and was <i>Insurance Firm</i> [name omitted]. My current employer simply has a look out for yourself culture - hate it.” (Gucci)
		Collective (African)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “as far as my experience goes within my business, we are 99% black therefore we find it easier to relate to each other. we are a family.” (Mulan)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Collective, we have 5 strong values that our organisational culture is based which in my opinion represents all cultures.” (Rapunzel) • “There is a sense of togetherness (unity) and the environment is family orientated. unity and family orientation: Coming together as one, respecting each other regardless of coming from diverse backgrounds, having a mutual goal, understanding and ensuring that as a unit we provide the best service to our clients.” (Jasmine) • “It’s collective. We are all committed to the same values we have a value statement which everyone respects. Even though we have different teams within the company ie teams which deal with different fields of law, we all have the same commitment to our values and these values are only in relation to what we do and not really related to our ethnic backgrounds.” (Lacoste) • “Very good organisational culture with great values and are well respected. collaboration is the name of the game, team work helps us achieve the goals set. Hey there will be individuals working in silos but it’s guarded against” (Versace) • “Collective. Most of the departments rely on one another to get the job done.” (Rapunzel) • “I have since left my previous organisation and started with a new one - previously it was collective because we had strong values and in Financial Services there is a lot of unions representing individuals therefore it had to be collective” (Eyeliner) • “The company I work for is very communal. There are teams within the same company and the company itself one big team which is why I think that the company is very communal.” (Lacoste) • “I would describe it as a collective culture in a sense that there is a close nit familiarity in terms of who we are, where we come from and also taking care of each other should there be a need.” (Jasmine)
		Individualistic and collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Diverse [but]...cater for their own cultures." (Powder) • “Very diverse culture, however it varies from each business unit.” (Eyeliner) • “To some extent it can be both collective and individualistic, since there's an expectation to work together to get certain tasks done for example, in research, collaborating with other colleagues to get the work done. Individualistic you are expected to also do certain work on your own like giving class and leading your own students in research” (Clinique) • “It’s punted as collective, but in reality very individuallia[s]tic. Management only there to look out for no1. There’s no genuin[e] top down sponsorship of a culture of inclusiveness or one that’s focused on building and growing ALL of it’s employees.” (Puma) • “I think a bit of both, because working for an International Company we work with all kinds of people.” (Lipgloss)
Open comments and quotes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “ Whenever such dialogues come to an end, I always feel like we haven't even scratched the surface. We have a long way to go and until we start having the right conversations at the right levels with the right people, that road ahead will continue to be long.”(Cinderella)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “ This has been insightful thank you to the facilitator and every one around the table - you ladies are fierce...Am really enlightened now and excited for this study topic. Thank you to you...2hrs went by too quick...” (Armani) • “ Closing comment: The private sector is still very white dominated. there is a passive attitude of entitlement from white ppl, not all. I refuse to be silenced, our parents have been shut up for too long. I will see transformation in my generation. Small steps now, giant leaps ahead.” (Gucci) • “ I just wanna say this is a good study that u doing. Thanks for identifying this group (black and female) because there are issues around the group. Wishing u all the best in the rest of ur study. Thanks to the ladies too very interesting comments u made. 😊 Don't wanna leave the group lol jus kidding 😊” (Lacoste) • “ Thanks ladies and wishing all the best. good research. 🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌” (Versace) • “Thank you for choosing this topic for your studies. I think a lot of people who will read your study will better understand our experiences at our different work environments. All the best.” (Lacoste)
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