

# Perceptions of diversity and inclusion among South African advertisers

---

By

**Thandolwethu Mafongosi**

Student number: 28175264

A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science,  
University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Business Administration.

11 November 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

Developing and developed countries recognise the importance of the creative industries as a factor of economic development. Literature proposes that there is a common belief that cultural and creative industries are void of traditional discrimination and social inequalities due to their high reliance on employee talent, talent which is not necessarily linked to class, gender or ethnicity; therefore, these industries present a place of equal opportunity for anyone with talent. Literature has for years affirmed the need for diversity in organisations as a means of driving performance and addressing social injustices. In context of the creative industries, inclusion practices are said to not only create environments that support individual employee growth, they also promote the psychological safety that allows employees to experiment, which often leads to innovation and increased creativity

To fully realise the potential within these industries a concerted effort is required in understanding diversity and inclusion. Therefore, this qualitative study, sought to explore the perceptions of diversity and inclusion amongst South African advertisers. This study explored the manner in which these perceptions influenced recruitment and the inclusionary practices adopted in agencies. This study also explored the experience of inclusion within these agencies through the lived experiences of black employees.

While many key insights present in this study correlated with the literature reviewed. A number of new ideas emerged. In this study it was found that diversity in the South African context was an emotionally fueled subject as a result of the apartheid legacy. Added to that was the idea that the production line process that many agency's adopted in producing creative had inherit social injustices that exacerbated the issue. South African practitioners emphasised the role of physical structures in inclusionary practices, an emphasis that was not noted in literature. Finally, identity of the black creative both owned and perceived, plays an extraordinary role in the way these employees experience inclusion.

**Keywords:** South Africa, Advertising, Diversity, Inclusion, Identity.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Thandolwethu Mafongosi

11 November 2019

**Abstract**

Keywords  
Declaration

## List of figures

Figure 1: Translation of model of production into social inequalities p 15

## List of tables

Table 1: Creative industries specialisations p  
13

Table 2: Research questions and interview questions mapping p 28

Table 3: Demographic representation of participants p 29

Table 4: Code Saturation p 30

## Contents

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction p  
3

1.2 Research problem p  
7

1.3 Research objectives p 8

### CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction p  
9

2.2 Diversity p  
9

2.3 Inclusion p  
11

2.4 Creative industries p  
13

2.4.1. Defining creative industries p  
13

2.4.2. Advertising an industry under threat p  
13

2.4.3. Creative industries economical contribution	p
13	
2.4.4. Creative industries and diversity	p
14	
2.4.5. Advertising industry and identity	p
16	
2.5 Social Identity and Optimal Distinctiveness Theory	p
17	
2.6 Organizational Inclusion	p
18	
2.7 Inclusive leadership	p
19	
2.8 Conclusion	p
20	

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

3.1 Introduction	p
22	
3.2 Key research questions and related questions	p
22	
3.2.1 Research question one	p
22	
3.2.2 Research question two	p
22	
3.2.3 Research question three	p.
23	

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

4.1 Introduction	p
24	
4.2 Choice of methodology	p
24	

4.3 Population		p
25		
4.4 Sampling		p
26		
4.4.1 Sampling Method		p
26		
4.4.2 Unit of Analysis		p
27		
4.4.3. Sample Size		p
27		
4.5	Data	Collection
.....		27
4.5.1	Data	collection tool
.....		27
4.5.2	Description	of the sample
.....		28
4.5.3	Data	collection
.....		29
4.6	Data	analysis approach
.....		30
4.7 Data validity and reliability		
.....		31
4.8		Limitations
.....		31

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1.		Introduction
.....		32
5.2.	Role	of the introductory questions
.....		32
5.3.	Key	research questions results
.....		32
5.3.1	Research	question one
.....		32

5.3.1.1 Diversity	defined	
.....		33
5.3.1.2 Inclusion	defined	
.....		35
5.3.1.3 Benefits	of	diversity
.....		36
5.3.1.4 Recruitment		
.....		38
5.3.1.5 Summary		
.....		39
5.3.2	Research	question
.....		two
		40
5.3.2.1 Defining	inclusive	culture
.....		40
5.3.2.2 Cultivating	an	inclusive
.....		culture
		41
5.3.1.3 Accountability		42
5.3.1.4 Authentic Self		42
5.3.2.5 Summary		43
5.3.2.	Research question three	p
	44	
5.3.2.1	Psychological safety	p
	45	
5.3.2.2	Decision making	p
	46	
5.3.2.3	Access to critical resources	p
	46	
5.3.2.4	Authentic Self	47
5.3.3.6	Summary	48
5.4.	Chapter conclusion	49

**CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

**CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

## 1.4 Introduction

Following the first democratic elections in 1994, post-apartheid South Africa (SA) has experienced significant changes. There have been changes in many areas but most significant, are the changes in politics, which have resulted in a shifting reality of what South Africans have always known about status, dominance, and the power bases of the different population groups (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2014). This transformation has resulted in the unbundling of known social identifications and socialisations, with the most prominent of these identity groups in SA being that of race and gender followed by ethnicity and language (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). This type of unbundling, at the rate at which SA has experienced it, comes with many unintended consequences, one being tension among racial and gender groups. In recent times, tension has become more common among diverse groups in South African society which has also filtered into the workplace.

Tension, born in discrimination is a key part of the apartheid legacy that still creates diversity challenges in the workplace (Kamps & Engelbrecht, 2011). While the focus of this study will not be on the legacy of apartheid and how it manifests in the workplace, it is worth understanding this context before progressing into diversity and inclusion as key concepts. The approach of looking at national context first, before one can critically examine the workplace is one that Farndale, Biron, Briscoe & Raghuram (2015) advocate for. In their own study, they conclude that contexts (national, cultural or otherwise) that diversity is studied in, have significant effects on the diversity and inclusion practices that can be actioned within the organisation.

While racial and gender tensions may be deeper in the South African context, having ongoing debates around concepts such as diversity management, multicultural organisations, affirmative action and equal employment opportunities are international norms. What has also become an international norm, is constant updating of legislation as a means of fast-tracking transformation with a view to engendering equality (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2014). In post 1994 South Africa, a significant amount of legislation has been developed and actioned to achieve greater social justice; however, the progress in addressing discrimination in the workplace has been slow and uneven across sectors and industries (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017).

This paper begins by providing definitions of the concepts of diversity and inclusion as they currently exist in literature as a means of forming a common base of understanding. This common understanding is key in how the research need and problem have been developed. Further in this study, the researcher will present how these concepts are understood and defined by advertisers.

This study borrows from the definition of diversity as first articulated by Hays -Thomas and Bendick (2013), who define diversity as the “combination of unique characteristics within a workplace, characteristics that in a significant way affect how people think, feel, and behave at work, these in turn affect their acceptance, work performance, satisfaction, or progress in the organization.” While this definition offers a broad spectrum of characteristics that affect the way people, think, feel and engage at work, in the South African context diversity is often confused with employment equity or affirmative action, which are related concepts but are fundamentally not the same (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). The clear difference is in legislation such as The Employment Act (55 of 1998) and affirmative action under The Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995) being the result of lack of diversity and not diversity itself. Legislation, by nature, focuses on what organisations need to do to comply and does not necessarily explain why compliance is important. The flaw in this, is articulated by Randel, Galvin, Shore, Holcombe Ehrhart, Chung, Dean, and Kedharnath (2017) who suggest that often the limited understanding of the reasons why diversity matter, are not filtered through to the managers who have to implement these initiatives. This leaves managers confused and unclear about the benefits of making significant changes to their team structures and business structures.

Fortunately, studies have affirmed the need for a focus on diversity. Such studies have shown that if workplace diversity is actioned well, it results in an organisation that is more innovative, has improved decision-making processes and outcomes, has a larger pool of talent willing to join the organisation and is attractive to a wider customer base (Guillaume, Dawson, Priola, Sacramento, Woods, Higson and West, 2014). In turn, all these factors can have a positive impact on financial performance.

Diversity is, however, not a silver bullet, it is not without its pitfalls, and while many organisations continue to meet legislation requirements in terms of diverse representation in their workforce, there is growing recognition that bringing people from diverse backgrounds into the organisation may create tension (Guillaume et al. 2014).

More significant, is the realisation that once the 'diversity job' is done, there is actually more work for the organisation to do. In fact, the full benefits of diverse skills can only be realised with the retention and/or promotion of individuals from diverse groups to influential positions in organisations (Randel et al. 2017). While diversity has increased in prominence, studies have also shown that diversity doesn't always work. In some cases, it has been associated with lower employee morale, and the differences these diverse individuals bring can increase conflicts in the organisation. Some individuals may even begin performing poorly as a result of increasing diversity (Guillaume et al. 2014). Diversity scholars and practitioners have had to accept the reality that recruitment, development and promotion of individuals from previously disadvantaged groups is no guarantee that these individuals' potential and abilities can be fully realised or that their voices and perspectives will be heard and used to inform decision-making in a way that can be advantageous for the organisation (Randel et al. 2017).

In response to this realisation, scholars and practitioners are increasingly looking to the concept of inclusion as a means of overcoming the challenges that diversity presents and as a means of achieving the intended goal of increased firm performance (Randel et al. 2017). Randel et al. (2017) describe inclusion to be the employee's self-perception as well-regarded team and/or organisational members, as a result of treatment that satisfies their sense of belonging and understanding of their unique needs (Randel et al. 2017). While diversity initiatives focus primarily on recruiting diverse people in the context of race, gender and other marginalised groups into the organization. Inclusion seeks to ensure equal access to resources is maintained, it is about giving people an equal voice in decision-making, and access to career opportunities (Shore, Cleveland & Sanchez, 2017).

From a business case perspective Offerman and Basford (2014) maintain that a diverse workforce only provides a climate for greater innovation, however, with inclusion the organisation is far more likely to see the benefits. Understanding that, it is not uncommon for diversity and inclusion to be used interchangeably, and while the concepts are closely related, they are different. Winters (2014) offers a distinction of the two by stating that the most salient distinction between diversity and inclusion is that diversity can be mandated and legislated, while inclusion stems from voluntary actions (Winters, 2014). Due to the lack of mandate, the implementation of inclusionary practices is dependent on leadership recognising the need for inclusion and driving it from the top. Winters (2014) adds that this distinction is why diversity is easier to achieve when compared to a concept like inclusion.

This critical leadership component has raised questions about the style and/or qualities required from a leader to be able to recognise the need for and effectively implement inclusion initiatives in an organisation. This gap in knowledge, has led to a field of study called “inclusive leadership”, described by Gallegos (2014) as an intrinsically relational construct that was conceptualised in response to the need from leaders and members of organisations to collectively adapt the ways in which they relate to one another. A way that went beyond basic care and compassion, in an ever-changing context. Gallegos (2014) defines inclusive leadership to be deep and authentic relationships, where leaders are required to model courage and embrace humane ideals. While leaders play a critical role in the development of inclusive organisations, it does begin and end with them. Organisations also need to be geared to foster inclusion. Daya (2014) states that key in building inclusive organisations beyond leadership involves organisational belonging, communication, and transparent recruitment, promotion and development.

Chung, Ehrhart, Shore, Randel, Dean and Kedbarnath (2016) add to this notion by stating that inclusion practices not only create environments that support individual employee growth, they also promote the psychological safety that allows employees to experiment, which often leads to innovation and increased creativity. Using this idea, this study aims to understand how the concepts of diversity, inclusion and inclusionary practices are defined, understood and actioned in the South African advertising context. For a creative industry, like advertising, finding ways to increase employee creativity and innovation has for long been considered the life blood of advertising agencies (Lynch, 2019).

Lynch (2019) builds on this thought suggesting that the advertising creativity is possibly the hardest type of creativity to attain. This is due to the measure of creativity being set by others, she makes specific reference to agency clients, but also because creativity in the advertising context is commercially driven. While possessing complexity, Yum (2016) states that developing and developed countries have begun to recognise the importance of the creative industries to their economies, resulting in national strategies being developed to leverage these industries. Ruth Eikhof (2017) builds on this idea stating that this level of strategizing is due to a misconception. Ruth Eikhof suggest that the belief in creative industries being able to develop economies, stems from the common misconception that cultural and creative industries are void of traditional discrimination and social inequalities. This being a result of organisations competitiveness in these industries, being reliant only on employee talent, talent which

is not necessarily linked to their class, gender or ethnicity, therefore creating an environment conducive to equal opportunity. She dismisses the notion as untrue citing her previous work, Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) as evidence, stating that in the United Kingdom (UK) these industries' workforce participation and advancement is still unequally distributed therefore are unlikely to deliver on the national mandates.

When looking at the South African context literature exists, that acknowledges the role these industries are capable of playing in the national context (Booyens, 2012. Oyekunle, 2017). However, limited evidence exists to whether these industries have created environments that are conducive to equal opportunity.

This study aims to add to business by exploring what the current perceptions of diversity and inclusion are within the advertising industry, as a part of the creative industries. This study aims to understand the inclusionary practices which have been implemented within these agencies as a means of creating equal opportunity. A key contribution of this study to academia, is the context in which it is set, South Africa as an underrepresented sample in advertising literature.

## **1.5 Research problem**

It has been established that there is a need for the South African as a nation, but also the advertising industry to have a vested interest in diversity and inclusion, as it relates to the possibility of positive upswing in creativity and job creation for all. This study is thus interested in the current perceptions of diversity and inclusion, as understood by both leaders and employees in advertising agencies.

Nkomo (2014) states that inclusion of diverse people cannot merely be a case of old wine in new bottles. In this statement she makes reference to the relabeling of long-established diversity management practices whose effectiveness can be questioned. Instead, she lobbies for radical transformation in which organisations are no longer designed for only one population group - the quickly shrinking group - but rather practices that meet the needs of the increasingly diverse people who are employed by these organisations. She acknowledges that this change will not happen on its own, rather will be a result of a clear understanding of what conditions make for an inclusive environment and what leader behaviours and practices are required to facilitate this experience. Simons, Leroy, Collewaert and Masschelein (2015) propose that leaders who fully understand employee inclusion and know how to leverage it, not only benefit from the

organisation offering value by retaining diverse employees, but they also engage with employees in ways that go beyond mere avoidance of bias and discrimination.

According to Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) there is yet to be published literature that compares managers/leaders and non-managers' experiences and views on inclusion the same organisation. Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) identify how such research would be valuable in furthering the collective understanding of inclusionary experiences and practices. Thus, this study aims to gain insight into inclusion as experienced by previously disadvantaged employees. Preliminary results from this study indicate that one cannot have a diversity and inclusion conversation in South Africa without talking about the country's history and how it frames diversity as a largely racial and gendered concept. Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) explain research on diversity and inclusion which considers that the role of historical contexts is critical to the advancement of this literature. Therefore, this study will explore the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies from the perspective of previously disadvantaged employees who identify as black, as a means of truly rooting the study in a South African context. The hope of this study is that between leadership's perceptions of the key concepts and the experience of black employees, it will uncover insight that helps leaders to further develop their inclusion initiatives and fostering equal opportunity. Mazibuko and Govender (2017) state that it is leadership's responsibility to retain and engage talent by establishing an inclusive culture that is positioned to win.

Li, Lin, Tien and Chen (2015) tested the effects of an inclusion climate on creativity. Their findings were as follows; when cultural diversity was high in the team, a high inclusion climate tended to enhance the team's information sharing and employee information elaboration. However, when the inclusion climate was low, a space where a multicultural team was supposed to operate, both information sharing and elaboration were low.

## **1.6 Research objectives**

The key objectives of this study will be to explore the definitions of diversity and inclusion, as defined by South African advertising agency leaders. This study will also explore how those definitions influence recruitment and the inclusionary practices adopted by their agencies. Lastly, this study will explore the experience of inclusion within these agencies through the lived experiences of previously disadvantaged employees.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a literature review of the concepts of Diversity and Inclusion. Within this review, the researcher also explores organisational inclusion and inclusive leadership as sub-categories of inclusion. A key definition of inclusion that has been used in this study is from Randel et al. (2017). Who describe inclusion to be the employees self-perception as well regarded team and/or organisational members, as a result of treatment that satisfies their sense of belonging and understanding of their unique needs. To better understand the need for belonging, this literature review explores social identity theory and optimal distinctiveness theory as psychological concepts that can be used to explain it.

The last component of this literature review borrows from the work of Farndale, et al (2015) who states that contexts; national, cultural or otherwise, that diversity is studied, have significant effects on the diversity and inclusion practices that can be actioned within the organisation. In this chapter, literature pertaining to creative industries, has been explored as a means of understanding the diversity context.

### **2.8 Diversity**

The western workplace has progressively become more diverse over the years, which has resulted in norms that used to characterise this space slowly disappearing. This disappearance or rather re-imagining of norms has sparked growing interest among social psychologists in understanding how these changes influence team-based work within organisations (Walker et al., 2019). Due to the direct implications on output, it is understandable why interest in diversity in the workplace is increasing globally from a practitioner perspective. However, it is key to note that interest in the field has also grown from an academic perspective. What both the lived experiences of diversity and the literature is making abundantly clear is that diversity in organisations can create both challenges and opportunities (Shore, Cleveland & Sanchez, 2017).

Walker et al. (2019) define the concept of diversity as the numerical representation of individuals from varying social and identity groups within one organisation. Whereas, the closely related but separate thought of inclusion is said to emphasise the experiences

that individuals have in an organisational setting (Walker et al, 2019). The writings of Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) also acknowledge the mistake that many often make of referring to diversity and inclusion as interchangeable terms.

Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) suggest that the lack of promotion of previously disadvantaged groups continues to be a diversity challenge for many organisations and societies, one which they continue to battle with.

Mazibuko and Govender (2017) add to the literature about diversity, particularly in the South African context, saying the argument for diversity is complex and should not be seen as pitting differing groups of people against one another, it is rather the recognition and appreciation of each other's uniqueness and how that can be used to contribute positively to the team and the organisation. This idea of it not being a means of pitting one group against another is supported to by Diekmann, Steffens and Methner (2016) when they caution about how diversity perceptions within a group can negatively affect subgroup relations. This relates to where at an organisational level diversity has created an 'us versus them' mentality that makes it difficult for people to work cohesively in their teams. It is at this point that it becomes crucial for organisation that are becoming more diverse to find ways of ensuring that employees feel valued for their unique skills and attributes and are able to fully contribute in within their organisations. (Walker et al. 2019).

Following the introduction of diversity into common language in most organisations, came the question of what value does a diverse workforce have for organisations. Since then, a significant amount of literature has been developed in making the business case for diversity. This literature suggests that leaders require performance-based incentives to establish diversity initiatives within their organisations. Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017) as well as Guillaume, Dawson, Priola, Sacramento, Woods, Higson and West (2014) maintain that if workplace diversity is actioned well, the results are an organisation that is more innovative, has improved decision-making processes and outcomes, has a larger pool of talent willing to join the organisation and is attractive to a wider customer base. All the aforementioned results can have positive impacts on financial performance in the long term. However, as a means of presenting a balanced view, Guillaume et al. (2014) share how other studies suggest diversity is not always guaranteed to work, as at times highly diverse organisations can be associated with low employee morale, more organisational conflicts and even diminishing job performance.

While the business cases for diversity exist, there is yet to be empirical evidence that shows that diversity alone can transform and sustain the performance of an organisation.

While literature and practitioners celebrate the strides legislation globally has made to decrease discrimination against women, people of colour and other marginalised groups. What is still unclear is whether all organisations that claim to encourage diversity are proactively creating inclusive environments that will ensure greater prospects for the diverse individuals after they are recruited, and ensure they are not just being hired to meet quotas (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017)). This is important because without such efforts, the recruitment of individuals from previously disadvantaged social categories is unlikely to ensure business or personal success. This need to push diversity management a little further is how inclusion in the workplace has gained prominence in both the scholarly and practitioner literature and forms the next theoretical lens (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017)).

## **2.9 Inclusion**

Inclusion as a concept owes its roots to Mor Barak and her colleagues in their work within the field of social work, which is where the idea of inclusion is said to have originated (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998). Since this seminal body of work, the amount of literature on inclusion has rapidly increased, which is testament to the growing need to understand this topic and the value it adds to organisational behavioural concepts. Many studies have been built on Mor Barak's ideas, expanding on them and testing the elements of her framework (Cottrill et al., 2014. Waters and Bortree., 2012. Brimhall et al., 2017).

Inclusion as a concept focuses on organisational practices and the treatment of employees, that is built into the organisational culture, which is experienced as inclusionary by employees from all social and identity groups, not just the members of the "privileged" group (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2017)). Inclusion is built on the premise that employing individuals from diverse backgrounds is no longer enough to facilitate successful diversity initiatives, employees must move beyond knowing they are part of, but must rather be made to feel welcomed, understood and valued as members of the organisation (Walker et al. 2019). Inclusive organisations and societies are characterized by people of differing social identities and styles feeling they can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective and are valued members (Ferdman, 2017).

Mor Barak and Daya (2014) add to this idea by stating that inclusive workplaces are based on a pluralistic value frame that acknowledges all cultures that are represented within its workforce. They also recognize that an organisation can be exclusionary. This is when employee perceptions are that all workers need to conform to pre-existing values and norms, which typically only suit and represent one group. This group is often referred to as the mainstream. When referring to the relationship between the 'mainstream' and a diverse group, particularly when one represents supervisors and the other employees, Zheng, Diaz, Zheng and Tang (2017) found that inclusive leadership practices were especially important when deep level similarities (personality, interests and values) were low between the two.

As the concept of diversity in organisations continues to grow, leaders are becoming significantly more conscious of the importance of creating inclusive environments (Nishii, & Rich, 2014). Recent research shows that even though inclusion is increasing in importance for leadership, it is increasing more for those who have historically been excluded as it relates to increased commitment, performance, satisfaction and ability to halt turnover in this particular group (Hwang & Hopkins, 2015).

Unlike diversity, the goal of organisational inclusion is not simple to achieve. However, it has the potential to make a difference for the individuals in the organisation and the organisation (Byron & Post, 2016). The understanding of this fact has compelled scholars and practitioners to attempt to develop tools that make inclusion far more attainable. One such 'tool' can be found in the literature on building a climate of inclusion, this work acknowledges that inclusion in most instances isn't something that will just happen, but rather it requires a concerted effort. For Guillaume et al. (2014) a climate for inclusion is created when the differences among the employees are integrated to alleviate their identity concerns, while still maintaining their distinctive identities. A climate of inclusion is when equitable employment practices are high on the agenda and when practices that facilitate acceptance of performance standards that affect the group become clear. It means previously marginalised groups are included in decision-making to enhance self-efficacy beliefs as a means of moderating the relationship between motivation and work-related outcomes. Boekhorst (2015) adds to these ideas by offering her definition of 'a climate for inclusion', she says it is "a shared perception of a work environment that considers the policies, practices and procedures which guide a shared understanding of what the inclusive behaviors are and fosters a sense of belonging and valued uniqueness, which is supported and rewarded".

## 2.10 Creative industries

### 2.4.1. Defining creative industries

Booyens (2012) describes creative industries to be knowledge rich industries that require specialised human input. Booyens (2012) citing the United Nations conference of 2006 and supported by Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) and Oyekunle (2017) describe these industries to include the specialisations captured in Table 1. Advertising as the key focus of this study, is understood to be the use of creativity to develop innovative ideas that solve client problems (Lynch, 2019).

**Table 1: Creative industries specialisations**

Advertising	Performing Arts	Publishing
Graphic design	Music	Crafts
Product and surface design	Radio and Television	Fashion and jewellery
Industrial design	Film and video	New media
Architecture	Visual and Fine Art	Cultural tourism

Source: Author (2019)

### 2.4.2. Advertising an industry under threat

Discourse is currently taking place within advertising amongst scholars and practitioners. Discourse concerning the relevance of the traditional advertising model. Lynch (2019) believes that due to the evolving landscape the industry does require transformation. Opposing a view shared in Lee (2017), Lynch (2019) suggests that the industry cannot do with merely attempting to adapt to the evolving landscape, if it is to protect its business from the threat of management consultancies. Lynch argues that the industry should look for new ways of operating, including employing different skill sets and talent, with a particular focus on growing strategic ability and digital literacy.

### 2.4.3. Creative industries economical contribution

Yum (2016) states that developing and developed countries recognise the importance of the creative industries as a factor of economic development. Using the example of New Zealand, where the creatives are studied at a national level for the positive effects these industries have on knowledge-based societies, for the limited time and space

required to establish these industries and for the demand for other industries that creative industries create. Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) contribute to this thinking by addressing how creative industries have made it to economic policy level due to the belief that creative industries are able to drive socio-economic development through employment opportunities that are not limited by demographics.

In the South African context Oyekunle (2017) states that Johannesburg and Cape Town are considered the creative hubs and both cities consider creativity as a key driver for economic development. Booyens (2012) adds that it is often assumed that countries south of the globe show less priority and intent for creative industries since they are faced with greater developmental challenges. Booyens (2012) challenges this assumption stating that in fact, many of those countries look to creative industries for job creation, innovation and social inclusion as part of delivering on the greater developmental needs.

Understanding that creative industries contributions rely on diversifying of the workforce, legislation has been imposed on many creative industries globally, through quotas and affirmative action. Morgenroth and Ryan (2018) suggest that it is the quotas and affirmative action policies that keep diversity core to business operations. Arguing, due to the largely voluntary nature of diversity practices that stretch beyond policy and mandate, representation of minorities in these industries may cease immediately should policy be abandoned.

#### **2.4.4. Creative industries and diversity**

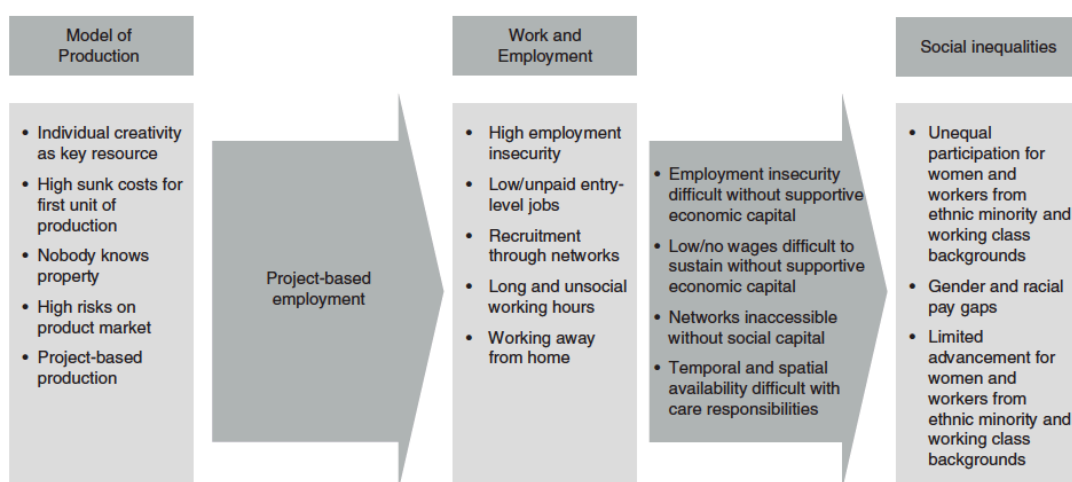
Ruth Eikhof (2017) posits that there is a common belief that cultural and creative industries are void of traditional discrimination and social inequalities. This as a result of an acknowledgement that the competitiveness of organisations in these industries, is reliant only on employee talent, talent which is not necessarily linked to their class, gender or ethnicity, therefore present a place of equal opportunity for anyone with talent. She immediately dismisses the notion as untrue citing her previous work, Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) as evidence that, in the United Kingdom (UK) these industries' workforce participation and advancement is still unequally distributed. She cites the number of women over the age of 50 still within these industries as compared to males, suggesting this to be signs of underrepresentation of women in advancement. She also cites genuine gender pay gaps that result in women getting less for working in these industries and thus leaving in their 30's and 40's. Ruth Eikhof also evidenced the unequal

distribution of participation and advanced by stating that workers from black and minority ethnicities make up 9% of the UK's workforce but only represent 5% of the workforce within the Cultural and creative industries. Brodmerkel and Barker (2019) support this notion stating that in the Australian context. Cultural industries, advertising agencies forming one component of them, are often celebrated as the pinnacle in diverse and meritocratic environments. However, Brodmerkel and Barker (2019) suggest the reality is one of paradoxical inequalities and diversity being just an ideological myth.

This however this does not erase the contributions to literature that support diversity as a method of increasing team and agency performance. Lynch (2019) suggest that greater diversity bring a wider set of skills and knowledge into the problem-solving agencies are required to performance, increasing the probability of success. Building on this thought Lynch (2019) suggests that diversity in agency should not be seem as only demographic representation (age, race, sex) it should include diversity of functional roles, as it delivers on greater perspective across the team.

Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) cited in Ruth Eikhof (2017) suggest that social inequalities in creative industries are a buy-product of the process of producing creative. To illustrate these ideas, the authors developed a model (Figure 1) that endeavours to explain how creative production translates into social inequalities.

**Figure 1: Translation of model of production into social inequalities**



Source: Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012)

Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) propose that in response to market needs, the creative industries have developed a production model that prioritises flexibility and reduces potential losses and sunk costs. Flexibility facilitated by project-based production cycles, where only temporary commitment is required from resources as it relates to a particular creative output. These production cycles affect employment from five key perspectives; high employment insecurity, low/unpaid entry level jobs, recruitment through networks, long working hours and working away from home. Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) suggest that employment insecurity and low/unpaid jobs require economic capital to overcome, capital that minority groups often do not have. It is said that this capital often exists only with individuals with affluent parents. Recruitment through networks requires being part of the network in order to secure employment, thus a level of social capital is required to merely gain access to the industries. The last two are often exclusionary to women as they often have family commitments that require them to work more stable working hours. While distance from work often disadvantages minorities, who live further than their wealthier counterparts. Making use of this model, Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) suggest that the conditions of work in the creative industries have a significant impact on workforce participation, advancement and remuneration.

#### **2.4.5. Advertising industry and identity**

In addressing the issue of identity, particularly black identity, within advertising agencies Boulton (2016) offers insight using data from focus groups with black interns of advertising agencies conducted in New York (United States). It is key to note that all employee participants sampled in researchers' study identified as black and thus insight from Boulton (2016) is considered useful.

Boulton (2016) suggests that black interns in advertising agencies often battled with identity as a result of attempting to balance their uniqueness and adapting to their work environment. He introduces the idea of 'code switching' which makes reference to how the interns would modify their vocabulary and manner of speaking to accommodate the expectations on their listeners or to conform to their new environment. This idea led the researcher to the field of social identity as a means of explaining this phenomenon. Morganroth and Ryan (2018) offers the idea of role models as a means of addressing identity challenges minorities face in the creative spaces. They suggest that increased representation at senior levels, led to a larger pool of role models and thus motivational outcomes.

## 2.11 Social Identity and Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

When individuals become part of an organisation, they join already possessing a unique set of traits often referred to as personalities. Once joined and having gone through the organisation's socialisation process, they get assimilated into their teams' norms and values, and eventually the culture of the organisation (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). The person they ultimately become, develops an identity that is linked to the team norms and values. This process is briefly what social identity theory is concerned with. The purpose of understanding these theories is to understand the extent to which not associating with a social identity within the workplace has an effect on one's level of commitment and sense of belonging.

Hideg and Wilson (2019) suggest that while organizational social identity is often thought of as a unifying concept. There are occasions in which it can create the opposite, particularly when viewed through the lens of employment equity literature.. Having studied the context of the Canadian EE policy, Hideg and Wilson (2019) found that organisations whose social identity was characterized by reminders of past injustices as a means of correcting them, often made the previously advantaged groups defensive. The example used in their literature is of organisations that remind employees of the injustices of the past against women, can often have high amounts of men whose social identity is threatened and thus become defensive.

Shore et al. (2011) cited by Randel et al. (2017) describe inclusion to be the employee's self-perception as well-regarded team and/or organisational members, as a result of treatment that satisfies their sense of belonging and understanding of their unique needs". This definition by Shore et al. (2011) has its roots in optimal distinctiveness theory, which is understood as an extension of social identity theory (Brewer, 2012). Optimal distinctiveness posits that individuals have the need to be both similar and different from others simultaneously (Brewer, 1991). It conceptualises the idea that individuals seek similarity and belongingness with others while maintaining their individual identity. This theory is of particular importance in that Chung et al. (2016) building on Shore et al. (2011) concluded that uniqueness and belongingness are distinct elements of work group inclusion, and that inclusion is associated with supervisory ratings of creativity and job performance. These concepts are important in the context of advertising.

## 2.12 Organizational Inclusion

Walker et.al. (2018) citing Shore et.al. (2011) define inclusion as the perception an employee has of being an esteemed member of the team and/or organisation. Inclusion in the organisation should foster the removal of barriers that prevent individuals from feeling that they bring their best selves and contribute to the organisation in a meaningful way (Roberson, 2006). Inclusion advocates for all individuals to have equal access to organisational resources, be exposed to the ideas being shared and explored within the organisation and to be invited to contribute to problem-solving initiatives (Nishii, 2013). Guillaume et al. (2014) believe that the increasing focus on how leaders can build inclusive environments reflects an increasing recognition within organisations that diversity may come with great opportunities that businesses can leverage. However, it also comes with potential problems of increased conflict, resulting in higher than usual employee turnover that will eventually need to be addressed on a broader organisational level.

Mor Barak and Cherin's (1998) inclusion-exclusion framework doesn't differ much from that of Nishii (2013) as it comprises three components that are key to fostering inclusion in the workplace. The first, is the individual's involvement in team or organisational activities. The second, is the level of participation in the decision-making process and, finally, access to information and shared resources. Building on the ideas she established in 2000, Mor Barak advanced a theoretical model of inclusion which she uses to argue that diversity and organisational culture contribute to perceptions of inclusion-exclusion, which then lead to increased job satisfaction, increased organisational commitment, improved well-being at an individual level and task effectiveness. These are all elements employers want their employees to experience.

Shore et al (2017) and many others support the notion of top management playing a crucial role in creating and sustaining an environment in which members of all social identity groups can be authentic while also being treated fairly and respectfully. The importance of the literature on leadership's role cannot be over emphasised and will thus be unpacked as the last piece of contributing literature.

### **2.13 Inclusive leadership**

Randel et al. (2017) states that Inclusive leadership possess the potential to be beneficial to diverse work groups while also being effective for more homogeneous work groups as it addresses all these needs. Leadership literature features a number of leadership styles which have, over the years, been deemed as effective in addressing the varying needs of employees and businesses. None of which have r sufficiently addressed the basic needs of group members to feel they belong while simultaneously feel their uniqueness is being valued. The need to belong while still feeling appreciated for your uniqueness forms the foundation of inclusion theory, the gap in leadership styles that addresses these needs means a gap in identifying the leadership characteristics required to foster inclusion in organisations.

Randel et al. 2017, suggest that the characteristics and skills of inclusive leaders enable more effective functioning of diverse members of the organisation in ways that are not sufficiently addressed by other leadership styles. Numerous efforts have been made to establish inclusive leadership as a distinct and necessary style of leadership. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), who arguably coined the term leader inclusiveness, defined it as “words and deeds exhibited by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions”. Expanding on the concepts of optimal distinctiveness theory and social identity theory, inclusive leadership is said to be a set of leader behaviours that are concerned with facilitating organisational members feeling part of the team while retaining their sense of individuality (Randel et al. 2017). Winters (2014) adds to this idea by suggesting that inclusive leaders invite diverse thoughts and views by creating “an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences”.

Part of creating this environment requires leaders who are not afraid to address discrimination in the organisation. Leaders are encouraged to have a view on how their inclusion initiatives are used in building a future focused talent pool from previously disadvantaged groups (Shore, Cleveland & Sanchez, 2017). To this end, Gallegos (2014) suggests that leaders who hope to engender a climate of inclusion need to set explicit guardrails for what constitutes suitable behaviour when it relates to people from diverse groups. When done correctly and emphasised by leadership, the diversity and inclusion code of conduct can form the foundation for respectful and inclusive treatment of all employees. Gallegos (2014) also emphasises the need for leaders to not just speak inclusion but rather model behaviour that shows comfort with and support of all

differences that exist within their organisation. Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman (2014) suggest that leaders who are authentic and keep a tight eye on hiring, promotions and resignations of women and racial minorities, in the interest of being more inclusionary, engender a culture of inclusion.

On the matter of inclusive leadership, Ferdman (2014) offers a view on the behaviours that leaders should exhibit. Namely; accountability for creating an inclusive culture – it is not the role of HR to drive diversity and inclusion, engagement and dialogue – leaders should not shy away from engaging with their followers, particularly when being engaged on the topic of inclusion and diversity. Bringing one's true self to work – this is incredibly important as it gives employees permission to do the same. People do not only do as they are told, but rather do what they see. When a group member perceives the leader to be inclusive it is not only relative to how the leader treats them, but it is also influenced by how the group members observe the leader treating others (Randel et al. 2017). Other behaviours, as expressed by Ferdman (2014), include fostering transparent decision-making – decision-making that everyone is part of, understanding and engaging with resistance – not being afraid to call out people who are not living by the organisation's values or building the kind of organisation that everyone is happy to work for and communicating how inclusion relates to mission and vision (Ferdman, 2014).

## **2.14 Conclusion**

In the literature explored diversity was understood to be the numeric representation of individuals from varying social and identity groups. This representation was discussed as a way in which diversity scholars and practitioners believe organisational performance can be improved. As part of that discussion, the pitfalls of diverse environments were presented. What became clear is that key to diversity's success is how well it is managed within the organisation.

Creative industries as the context of this study were also discussed in the literature. Particularly focus was given on the definition of creative industries, as a means of establishing advertising place with the creative industries. The immediate threat that the advertising industry faces was explored, while maintaining that there is a strong economic development role that these creative industries can play, if managed correctly. The literature on creative industries also explored the relationship these industries have with diversity, with many authors believing that progress has been and continues to be

made. While others, believed that diversity in these industries is largely an ideological myth. Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) provided added to literature by providing a model that aims to explain how the production of creative leads to perpetuates social injustices. In the literature review it was put forward, that as working environments become more diverse, and the norms that previously characterised those environments slowly disappear, a new set of practices or norms are necessary in order to ensure everyone who exists in those spaces feels comfortable to contribute to the organisation. It was understood that, with the re-establishing of norms these environments became inclusive in nature, an inclusion that stretched beyond the mainstream. The extent to which individuals from diverse groups want to belong within these organisations, while maintaining their individual identity was explored in social identity theory and optimal distinctiveness theory as links to identity were established in the review of creative industry literature.

The above literature concluded with the critical role that leadership plays in facilitating the above, if they wanted to reap the benefits of diversity. It is therefore the researchers' goal, to arm leaders in the South African advertising industry with tools to facilitate high levels of inclusion, which yield positive business results. In order to do so, the researcher begins with understanding the current perceptions of diversity, inclusion and inclusionary practices among this group, as a base from which future practices will be built on.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **3.3 Introduction**

The key objectives of this study are to explore the perceptions of diversity and inclusion amongst South African advertising advertisers. This study will also explore how those perceptions influence recruitment and the inclusionary practices adopted by their agencies. Lastly, this study will explore the experience of inclusion within these agencies through the lived experiences of previously disadvantaged employees.

### **3.4 Key research questions and related questions**

#### **3.4.1 Research question one**

What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?

The purpose of this question is to understand how leaders perceive diversity and inclusion. While perceptions can be broad and understood in many ways, perceptions in this study will be made up of three main components. Borrowing from the main themes in the literature presented, perceptions will be a combination of definition of the two key terms, perceptions of benefits of diversity and the influence of the definitions on organisational recruitment practices.

#### **3.4.2 Research question two**

How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?

The purpose of this question is to understand what actions have been implemented in the leaders' respective agencies, that make for an inclusion environment. This question will begin by establishing the definition of an inclusive culture from the perspective of leadership. The question seeks to explore how that definition is currently being actioned and who within the agency is responsible for implementing and maintaining those actions. The literature presented in chapter two suggests a need for leaders to take charge and lead from the front, if inclusionary behavior is to become the norm within their organisations. The study is thus interested in whether this notion goes beyond literature and is visible in practical sources.

### **3.4.3 Research question three**

What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

Literature acknowledges the critical role leadership plays in diversity and inclusion practices, however, little mention is made of the role that employees have to play. Leaders are able to implement all that literature has to offer on the issue and still face the possibility of failure. This is largely due to employees being complex in how they interpret leaderships' actions and how they experience spaces. Therefore, this question, aims to understand how the efforts defined and described by leadership in research question one and two are being experienced by employees. Inclusion literature suggested that the context in which inclusion is felt by an employee, involve; the level at which employees feel included in key decision making, the level at which they feel appreciated for their uniqueness, their perceived access to critical resources and the level of psychological safety. This question aims to address all those areas, in developing the overall experience of inclusion from the perspective of the employees.

# CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 4.2 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology choices made in this study. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 demonstrates the limitations in empirical research into the South African context of the advertising industry as it relates to the concepts of diversity and inclusion. This study therefore aims to contribute to this limited body of literature. Saunders and Lewis (2012, p115) describe the aim of seeking new insights and assessing topics in a new light as key components of an exploratory study. It is therefore from this understanding that this study was treated as such. This qualitative research study, and the related research methods enlisted in this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Research question one: What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?
- Research question two: How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?
- Research question three: What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

## 4.2 Choice of methodology

The literature presented in this study demonstrated, that the study of diversity and inclusion is one that deals with organisational complexities. It is concerned with the roles that diverse employees play within the organisation as a means of driving business forward and creating more equal societies. Saunders and Lewis (2012, p109) refer to this as a study of social phenomena in its natural environment, they cite it as a key characteristic of interpretivism research philosophy. Literature also suggested that diversity and inclusionary practices, from the employee's perspective, include an element of interpretation of the roles that are played within the organisation. Interpretivism research philosophy describes this to be the idea of social actors. The study therefore followed an interpretivism philosophy approach.

For this reason, a qualitative research design was adopted, Vaughn And Turner (2016) explain people to be complex in nature and in order to attain depth and fully capture the complexity of people, they recommend a researcher to follow a qualitative research method.

This qualitative study made use of, semi-structured interviews, which are said to be one of the most widely applied methods of collecting data for exploratory research (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). The importance of semi-structured interviews in this study was captured by Qu and Dumay (2011) when they stated that the power of semi-structured interviews sat in their ability to allow participants to respond in their own terms using their own language and following their natural thought process. Components which are valuable when the researcher is attempting to understand the way the participants view and understand the social world that is being studied. The use of only one data collection tool resulted in a mono-method methodological approach.

To ensure the data collected would answer the key research questions, an interview guide was developed. The guide was used to introduce the key purpose of the study and key concepts to participants. Following which, the guide was used to guide the discussion with specific questions. As the study is concerned with the perceptions of the participants, the choice of semi-structured interviews allowed participants the freedom to elaborate on their lived experiences. Cassell (2015) support this notion by stating that semi-structured interviews are useful when the aim is to gain insight into an individuals' experiences. In this study the semi-structured interviews allowed for greater freedom of express among participants, without being cut off by the researcher, which often happens if a strict set of questions is used. Questions, that leaves no room for participants to fully express themselves. The sense of freedom for participants was also further entrenched by the researchers ability to change the flow of the questions in response to the flow of the participant. (Rubin and Rubin 1995:6).

### **4.3 Population**

Research population according to Saunders and Lewis (2012) is the complete set of participants. As the study finds itself rooted in the advertising context, with the intent of researching concepts the way in which diverse groups of people are thought of and operationalised. The population of this study is therefore, advertising professionals. The

study was limited in scope as agencies from only the Johannesburg region were selected due to time constraints.

## **4.4 Sampling**

### **4.4.1 Sampling Method**

A combination of non-probability sampling techniques was used in this study. The study is non-probability nature due to the complete list of the population being unknown to the researcher which meant that the researcher was unable to choose the sample at random. The consequence of this, is the researcher was also unable to account for the probability of each member of the population being chosen (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

The techniques used were quota, purposive and snowballing techniques. Quota; described to be the sampling that ensures the participants selected represent particular characteristics of the population that the research had chosen (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). The researcher selected an equal number of leaders and employees as participants in this study. The researcher also ensured that the employees were all from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, having worked for their current agency for at least six months. Purposive sampling is concerned with the judgement used to selected participants based on a range of reasons (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). The sampling of the leader sub-group followed this technique as the researcher deliberately chose participants that would represent diverse racial groups and both sexes. Within the employee group, purposive was used selecting employees from the same agency as the leader interviewed. The two key reasons this was done, was to allow the researcher access to the participants during working hours. It would also allow for the experiences of the employees to be contextualised within the actions the leaders would have identified. Due to time constraints, particularly of the leaders, snowballing was used. As the sample group ran the risk of not meeting the minimum viable number, the initial sample members identified subsequent members.

#### **4.4.2 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis of this study, was the lived experiences and perceptions of leaders and employees of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. From the data collected through the recounting of the employee experiences the researcher was able to develop themes of how these experienced made for inclusive environment or not. From a leadership perspective the lived experiences were framed in context of perceptions of the key concepts. The exploration of the two allowed the researcher the opportunity to determine the how the perception influenced the practices that were being implemented in their agencies.

#### **4.4.3. Sample Size**

Saunders and Lewis (2012) state that a heterogenous population study, a sample size of between 12 and 30 participants is required. This study meets that requirement. As the findings of this study were acquired using data from 12 face-to-face interviews. Distributed equally among leaders and employees. The study's proposal documented a desire to achieve a number higher than 12, however due to time limitations and availability of the leaders this was not the result. However, Saunders and Lewis (2012) support the idea of 12 participants in a heterogenous study, being viable insight for depth of understanding.

### **4.5 Data Collection**

#### **4.5.1 Data collection tool**

Sunders and Lewis (2012) suggest that key to developing an interview guide is listing the topics the researcher wishes to discuss and the questions in each section that will facilitate this discussion. This approach was used by the researcher in developing the research guide (see Table 2) Shows the key topics identified, which are also the key research questions with the related questions that we answered to facilitate conversation. The full interview guide can be found as Appendix 1.

**Table 2: Research questions and interview questions mapping**

	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
1.	What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?	<p>Q 1: How would you define diversity and inclusion?</p> <p>Q 2: In your understanding, are there benefits to diversity and inclusion for your agency? if so, what are they?</p> <p>Q3: Does your understanding of diversity influence the way your agency recruits? If so, how?</p>
2.	How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?	<p>Q 1: What would you describe to be an inclusive culture?</p> <p>Q 2: What actions do you think are required to cultivate the above-mentioned culture?</p> <p>Q 3: Who is accountable for creating an inclusive culture in your agency?</p> <p>Q 4: What is your view on bringing one's true self to work, do you?</p>
3.	What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?	<p>Q 1: How safe do you feel to share a differing opinion and perspective at work?</p> <p>Q 2: Do you think the ideas you come up with are listened to and considered when Decisions are made in your agency?</p> <p>Q 3: Do you feel you have access to critical resources in the agency that allow you to excel at your job?</p> <p>Q4: Do you feel you can be your authentic self in the office?</p>

Source: Author (2019)

#### **4.5.2 Description of the sample**

Making use of the sampling techniques described in section 4.4.1 *Sampling Method*, the demographics of the sample used are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Demographic representation of participants**

Participant number	Role	Race	Gender	
Participant 1	CEO	Coloured	Male	
Participant 2	CEO	White	Male	
Participant 3	CCO	White	Male	
Participant 4	MD	White	Female	
Participant 5	MD	Black	Female	
Participant 6	CCO	White	Female	
Participant number	Job title	Race	Gender	Number of years experience
Participant 7	Account manager	Black	Female	11
Participant 8	Strategy director	Black	Female	17
Participant 9	Copy writer	Black	Female	3
Participant 10	Creative Director	Black	Male	12
Participant 11	Account executive	Black	Male	1.8
Participant 12	Copy writer	Black	Male	7

Source: Author (2019)

Detailing participants demographically in a small industry, was challenging for the researcher given the confidentiality offered to the participants. Therefore the researcher has purposefully kept the description of the participants in this study anonymised. The description of the leaders was kept to role in agency, race and gender. The descriptor of the employee has been kept to job description, gender and number of years in the industry. As mentioned, all employee participants were employees classified as previously disadvantaged who identified as black when prompted on race identification.

#### **4.5.3 Data collection**

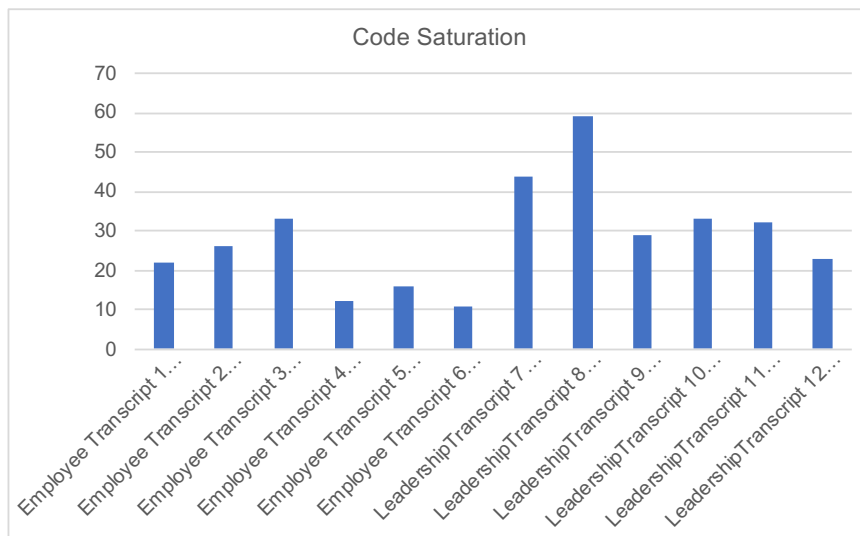
As previously established, the study is that of an exploratory nature and data collection through face-to-face semi – structured interviews was selected as appropriate in capturing the lived experiences of diversity and inclusion amongst advertising agency leaders and employees. An interview guide was used to introduce topics and questioned asked that facilitated responses to those key topics. Prior to conducting the interviews the researcher offered the participants the opportunity to consent to their data being utilised to answer the study’s key research problem (see Appendix 2). Following the consent to data usage the participants were asked to consent to the interview being recorded, in order for the researcher to capture their contributions in full without misrepresenting it. The consent to record was captured physically and electronically. In addition, participants were offered confidentiality. Interviews were conducted over a number of weeks as availability, specifically among the leaders, proved hard to secure. In four of the six cases, employees were interviewed on the same day as their respective leader.

## 4.6 Data analysis approach

Following the data collection, the researcher followed a themed approach to analysing the data. Codes were generated from the document data from which themes were built. (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The initial codes generated were structured against the interview guide, which was developed from the researchers understanding of the literature, the additional codes generated came as a result of responses that were, part of the contributions offered by the participants but sat outside of any direct questions from the interview guide. The researcher found that once the topic of diversity and inclusion were introduced, many participants would begin sharing opinions and thoughts before questioned were even posed.

The interviews with the participants were recorded. The audio recording were then transcribing using transcription software. Following the interviews, the software electronically generated transcripts using the audio recording. As a quality measure the researcher manually checked and amended transcripts where necessary. The software proved incapable of interpreting words due to accents, thus the researcher completed this check manually, developing a second set of transcripts. The researcher made use of Atlas.ti to create codes from the transcript data. These codes were later grouped into themes. A total of 126 codes was developed from the 12 documents of transcript data. The 126 codes contained 386 quotations (see Appendix 3).

**Table 4: Code Saturation**



Source: Author (2019)

#### **4.7 Data validity and reliability**

Saunders and Lewis (2012) explain that qualitative research is often thought to be subjective in nature as it can be affected by numerous biases. Biases that may appear during the interview and analysis stage of a study are; interviewer, interpreter and response bias. In order for maintain the integrity of this the study, the researcher ensured that any factors in the data collection process that may have affected the subjects. One such way, was a greater emphasis of confidentiality was given to employees as the researcher understood the possible affects being interviewed after their leaders could have on the employee's perceived freedom to be open and honest. The researcher ensured that the participants interviewed had no need to impress the researcher with their responses. Lastly, the researcher ensured that the participants were reassured that due to the exploratory nature of the study, there was no right or wrong answer, instead the researcher purely wanted their unfiltered and natural responses to the questions posed. These reliability and validity measures were all captured by the researcher in the interview recordings.

#### **4.8 Limitations**

- From an employee perspective only previously disadvantaged employees were interview. While the case for adding a race filter was discussed in introductory chapters of this study. A more robust understanding of the lived experiences of inclusion within agency could have been ascertained had employees been representative of all social identities present in agencies.
- This study was only limited to leaders and employees in the Johannesburg, Gauteng region. While this region currently holds the largest pool of advertising agencies, advertising agencies are not limited to this region. A understanding of how the perceptions come to life in other regions such as the Western Cape could have proved useful in giving greater insight. However the scope of this study, was not of regional differentiation.
- The 12 interviews used to generate the findings that will follow, were said to be viable for a heterogenous population (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). However a larger sample size would have generated greater insight.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESULTS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter begins by discussing the role of introductory questions. Following which, the findings from the interviews are explored. These findings and results are presented as they appeared in the research questions in chapter three; the same flow and structure has been followed.

- Research question one: What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?
- Research question two: How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?
- Research question three: What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

### **5.2. Role of the introductory questions**

While different in content, a number of introductory questions were asked to both the leaders and employees. The purpose of the inductor questions is twofold; first as a method of easing the participants into the key research questions. Secondly, it allows the researcher the opportunity to group responses against the sub-groups created by the introductory questions. Making it possible to group observations against the self-identification groups created in response to these questions.

### **5.4. Key research questions results**

#### **5.4.1 Research question one**

What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?

The purpose of this question is to understand how leaders perceive diversity and inclusion. While perceptions can be broad and understood in many ways, perceptions in this study will be made up of three main components. Borrowing from the main themes in the literature presented, perceptions will be a combination of definition of the two key

terms, perceptions of benefits of diversity and the influence of the definitions on organisational recruitment practices.

#### **5.4.1.1 Diversity defined**

The leaders expressed their understanding to be rooted in a South African context and thus spoke of these concepts from that perspective. Diversity was broadly defined as the idea of getting different people from different demographic classifications together in one organisation. Leaders expressed an understanding of diversity in the South African context, as often addressed in context of only race and gender. Participants acknowledged the existence of other demographic classifications such as age, sexual orientation, physical disability, backgrounds and mindset. However, analysis showed that leaders mentioned race and gender more frequently. Participants felt that South Africans and South African businesses found it easier to deal with the other classifications over race and gender. This belief largely associated with perceived legislation efforts aimed at addressing race and gender.

*Diversity for me is literally having different types of people in a team or an organisation. By that I mean, jeez, the plethora is growing as we become more and more liberated in the world - participant 5.*

Leaders perceived diversity to be a significant legal issue for business, seen as something that was mandated and often treated as just that.

*It's a mandate. It's the right thing to do. Absolutely. But we're not going to be sustainable and we're not going to win new business without it. So, our mandate is at the moment we don't have enough black employees here, and our mandate is to get more and as senior as possible – Participant 4.*

In supporting their perceptions of diversity leaders articulated the necessary steps required to address diversity in agencies. It was expressed that diversity often becomes emotionally fueled, which limits conversation about it. Lack of dialogue leads to lack of actionable steps being tabled in agency forums. As a resolve, participants suggested that agency leaders needed to make the dialogue less emotional and political but rather common place and thus actionable. Turning the diversity narrative into an economic one was an idea shared across the group, with lived experiences to support it. The leadership

participants defined diversity as a business imperative, seen as a necessary response to client needs and market conditions, with linkages to a higher order country benefit.

*In a game where it's about relationships, it becomes material as our clients transform we need to transform and that's now no longer about race. Now it's become a matter of casting and business – participant 1.*

For the leaders, diversity was expressed as a concept that required deliberate action to achieve. Participants discussed leadership strategies as key to addressing diversity. Strategies that were constantly monitor for progress in collaboration with the assistance of the human resources function. Leaders expressed the extreme caution they had to exercise in diversifying their agencies. As they had experienced instances where these efforts quickly turned into reverse discrimination. Stating that, as leaders they had to constantly ask themselves if they had gone too far.

*It's so difficult to compare ourselves to any other continent. We have our own problems, particularly in South Africa, and we cannot escape them. Therefore, you need to actively do something about that. So things like the transformation strategy. – participant 5.*

Expanding on the idea of diversity in South Africa being slightly different, contextually to other geographies, the legacy of apartheid was attributed to the unequal distribution of skills and the lack of attractiveness of the industry for black people.

*The gap is in skills and representativeness – participant 3*

Two resolves were presented by the leadership group to overcome the historic lack of skills amongst black people within the industry. The first involved going into high schools and presenting advertising as a potential career path. Once exposed and recruited, leaders acknowledged that these students would require training which would ultimately make them desirable to other agencies. An ending that proved uncomfortable for the leaders, however across the group there was an understanding that it had to be done, in the interest of a socially relevant industry.

*If I rewind 20 years, 30 years ago, this was not something that people spoke about, an industry that people spoke about or promoted, and your parents definitely were*

*not investing the little money that they had for you to go and do drawings. – Participant 5.*

The second resolve focused on finding ways of including smaller black businesses in the development of work, as they had access to a different skill set from the traditional agencies. A skill set that would help diversifying the work and economically distribute money further than the traditional agencies could.

An idea that emerged while interviewing participants within this theme. Was the idea of advertising having become less of a creative process and rather closer to a production line. Advertising agencies depended on this production line to produce work on time for multiple clients, simultaneously. The consequence of that was in order to stay true to production lines, it relied on mass standardisation of the component parts, which was proposed as what could be attributed to the slow pace of diversity efforts.

*It's something I've just thought of now that standardisation is part of the production line process, which means you hire people like you all are, we probably all have an unconscious bias anyway to hire people like us. But you want people that are going to fit in – participant 6.*

As part of the defining diversity, leaders shared their perceived pitfalls of diversity. Legislation was highlighted one, the belief was that the relaxed approach government had taken at legislating the industry was a key pitfall in agency implementation. Sighting self-governance as an enabler for lack of pace within the industry. There was also a sense of confusion created by legislation. While transformation was the key outcome the ways in which leaders could address it, felt limited.

*We are not as legislated as probably the financial services industry is. And that has allowed the industry to get away with murder, actually is what it is. So I definitely think that legislation actually has something to do with it – Participant 5.*

#### **5.4.1.2 Inclusion defined**

Leaders spoke of inclusion as a concept that they perceived to be different and more involved than the idea of diversity. Inclusion for the leaders was the idea that diversity

guaranteed a room full of different people, but inclusion made sure those people felt comfortable and respected for their differing views.

*Inclusion would be a willingness to facilitate that diversity as opposed to resisting it. It's about how easy or hard has it made for people whose backgrounds are different to the majority, to take part in the industry or the agency – Participant 3*

*I think it is comfort. It is comfort and peace of mind as well, or rather taking down barriers so that you're able to just to do what your primary reason you are here is actually to conduct your role – Participant 5*

### **5.3.1.5 Benefits of diversity**

There was strong consensus among leaders of there being real benefits to having a diverse organisation. In analysing the data, the researcher found that these benefits identified by leaders exist on five levels. The first, the personal level. This level centers on the notion that people tend to grow and become better fuller beings, the more exposed they are to diversity.

*I think being surrounded by diverse people; you grow because you're exposed to different things. So, you grow, whether it be empathy levels, whether it be knowledge, factual knowledge. You will grow by being surrounded by a diverse group of people – participant 5.*

The second is an agency/business level. The understanding here was that diverse agencies are often more insightful agency. Diversity for the leaders was seen as a key trait of agencies that generated better ideas, which was considered fundamental to the business of creativity. The quality of ideas an agency was able to produce was linked directly to amount of money the agency stood to make.

*It's researched to the nth degree in a global context, never mind the local context. Diverse groups just generate better ideas. Just a fact. And the reason for that is quite simple as that if you have the same people talking to each other, you're getting an echo chamber effect. It's about insight and generally people who come from the environment contextually get it better – Participant 1.*

*It's glaringly obvious because if you have, if 80% of your consumers are black. To have a white agency, it's absurd to try, when our job is to speak to those people on behalf of clients. It's absurd, not to have that black majority represented inside the agency. You can hear that sort of that tone-deaf thing that comes through in like the H& M – Participant 3.*

*If there are four people like me, exactly like me in a brainstorm, we're going to come up with the same solution every single time – Participant 4.*

*I would say they definitely are. If you look at the creative department, people with different backgrounds and come from different places, have different stories to tell. They have insights that I wouldn't necessarily have. Our clients benefit from the diversity of virtue of the different thinking that we can bring and apply, because we ultimately put work into our diverse country. So, we need diversity to be able to make that work – Participant 6.*

The third benefit level was a client level. Key to this benefit was agencies being able to meet clients' market requirements and to meet clients' 'casting' requirements. Casting was introduced as the idea that clients typically felt more comfortable dealing with people who looked like them. The understanding was without a diverse workforce, the agency would be unable to meet this need.

*In a game where it's about relationships, it becomes material as our clients transform that we need to transform that and that's now no longer about race. Now it's become a matter of casting and business – Participant 1.*

The fourth is at an industry level, this was resolve presented under the definition of diversity. It involved the finding, recruiting and training of black students. Even though they would leave soon after being trained, due to scarcity of skills in the industry. The leaders believed it was a hard pill to swallow but a necessary one if the industry was to grow.

*In a way that's how transformation works I think if you train someone, you have to accept that because of the legacy of apartheid, they're gonna now be in very high demand and they'll move on and then you train another one. And you can look on that as a negative thing or you can look on it as a positive – Participant 3*

The fifth and final level is, a country level. The leaders interviewed concluded that the benefits of addressing diversity had the power to impact the country in a positive way.

*The more right the work is, the more impactful it's going to be to the right market. So if you don't have the person or it's not to say that you even have to be that specific person, but exposure and knowledge that you can then contribute to the value chain of our work is bound to have a bigger impact into what we produce. And therefore, our clients' businesses and obviously the betterment of the country – Participant 5.*

The leaders showed a positive mindset towards diversity and its benefits at every level. They did however share what they believed stood in the way of realising these benefits. Leaders believed that the advertising industry, was under immense financial strain which made the fight for diversity incredibly challenging.

*Advertising is a business that's under a lot of economic pressure at the moment. So it is, it's hard for agencies to be doing the things that they need to be doing when they are where they are economically, there's no fat there at all. A highly skilled black person will get paid literally twice as much as a white person at the same skills level. But the problem is there aren't enough of them. That's why they're in such high demand. It's supply and demand – Participant 3.*

### **5.3.1.6 Recruitment**

A consistent theme amongst the leaders was that of diversity having become a critical part of recruitment in all agencies represented in this study. Either by choice or in response to a mandate. Leaders believed that recruitment required a leadership team that was deliberate

*Absolutely, and I think all agencies these days are very cognisant of the need to bring on people from different backgrounds and different groups. I think agencies fall over themselves to bring in people of colour because they're not stupid and it's glaringly obvious. There isn't a single agency in town that would prefer to hire a white person over a black person, not one, for a single job, just because it doesn't make business sense. And that's all they care about. But the problem is finding the right people. And that's the pipeline into the industry. That's where the problem is – Participant 3*

*Our mandate is at the moment we don't have enough black employees here, and our mandate is to get more and as senior as possible – Participant 4.*

*The more brands are shifting towards the bottom of the pyramid, the more we need people who can talk to that market – Participant 1.*

*I think the word is deliberate, we are too in our infancy to not be deliberate about it. Some people are shy about it, not me. I have to be deliberate and as a leader, I need to give everybody a north star for the culture to be embedded. For it to be embedded into the greater organisation. I need a strategy, something that's going to keep us honest as well – Participant 5*

### **5.3.1.5 Summary**

Research question one was interested in the perceptions of diversity and inclusion among advertising industry leaders. Perceptions that dominated were that diversity in the South African context were often spoken about in relation to race and gender. diversity was understood to be a legal matter and business imperative that had potential positive spillover at a country level. Leaders expressed a belief that actional steps toward diversity would only be taken once the emotional and political narrative was changed into an economic one. The idea of advertising as a production line was introduced. This was presented as a possible explanation for the slow rate of change. Diversity relied on many representations, while production lines only worked with identical or similar component parts. The self-governing nature of the advertising industry was also cited as a possible enabler of the lackluster approach to transformation. The apartheid legacy of South Africa was also identified as contributing to the issues associated with lack of diversity. Leaders believed the legacy of apartheid caused an unequal distribution of skills within the industry, thus having fully representative agencies proved difficult. Two resolutions were proposed to address this skills shortage caused by legacy issue. One was creating an appetite for the industry at a high school level. The second, involved traditional agencies being more collaborative with smaller black owned agencies as a means of tapping into richer insights and distributing money beyond the elite structures of traditional agencies.

When explain the benefits of diversity, leaders explored the idea that benefits existed on five levels. The personal, as it relates to how experiencing different people, had the ability to grow a person. The agency, more diverse agencies were understood to produce better and more insightful ideas. The client level, this was concerned with agencies being able to fulfill market requirements on behalf of their clients and the notion of casting. Industry, referred to a training intensive approach directed at young black talent entering the industry. Lastly, country level, which remained undefined but acknowledged for its existence.

In defining inclusion leader's contribution amounted to the idea of making people from differing backgrounds feel comfortable and respected for their uniqueness within these agencies. In addressing recruitment, while the motivations varied what was consistent was the view that diversity was currently a critical part of recruitment efforts.

### **5.3.2 Research question two**

How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?

The purpose of this question is to understand what actions have been implemented in the leaders' respective agencies, that make for an inclusion environment. This question will begin by establishing the definition of an inclusive culture from the perspective of leadership. The question seeks to explore how that definition is currently being actioned and who within the agency is responsible for implementing and maintaining those actions. The literature presented in chapter two suggests a need for leaders to take charge and lead from the front, if inclusionary behavior is to become the norm within their organisations. The study is thus interested in whether this notion goes beyond literature and is visible in practical sources.

#### **5.3.2.3 Defining inclusive culture**

From the contributions provided by leaders four key themes emerged, the themes span four dimensions. Dimensions the researcher categorized as; the said, the unsaid, the seen and that which doesn't exist.

The said, is the manner in which ideas are shared and the verbal responses to these ideas amongst colleagues, that come from a different world of understanding. As it relates to ideas an inclusive culture is said to be one that has a deep respect for all. Employees need to feel comfortable to contribute differing ideas without the fear of being disrespected or judged harshly.

*I think it's the one where people's points of view are respected – Participant 6.*

*I think it's where everyone's values and ideas are respected. Um, and that there's no wrong and right – Participant 4.*

The unsaid, is the idea that places of work are characterised by a set of ideals, a belief system that need not be communicated but can be felt in the things that are accepted or

rejected by the environment and its people. It is said to be subtle in how it makes people feel welcomed or unwelcomed. It is intrinsically linked to what is tolerated and the level at which things are tolerated. The leaders suggested that an inclusive environment is one where the belief system allowed different people to feel welcome and comfortable with staying.

*Culture is something that we believe in. And with those beliefs come a bunch of practices and those practices are usually, signals of acceptance or rejection. Culture is what we say no to – Participant 1*

The third dimension addressed the need for physical things within the environment that made it easy for different people to exist.

*If you have stairs, there's some sort of way that somebody in a wheelchair can get up them. Even things like lactation rooms. Maybe there's even quiet spaces where people who don't like noise can go. The whole open plan thing isn't very inclusive, it doesn't allow people who don't like noise – Participant 6.*

The last dimension is that which does not exist. This dimension suggests that an inclusive environment is not a standardised list of things but rather, it is whatever best reflects the people that work in that agency.

*I think there should be respect. I don't know, it might well be, that it doesn't look like anything in particular because it just reflects whatever people who work there are – Participant 6.*

#### **5.4.2.2. Cultivating an inclusive culture**

In cultivating the inclusive culture, leaders felt that first and foremost one had to meet the minimum requirement of the physical spaces. Going beyond the physical leaders believed that the rest was down to leadership behavior, consisting of what leaders said about inclusion in their agencies combined with who the leaders surrounded themselves.

Behaviour expressed as the notion that leaders could not ask their employees to be tolerant, if they did not demonstrate it themselves. Leaders were to be cautious about what they said in the company of their employees and how often an inclusive message was communicated.

*As a leader, I have the responsibility to demonstrate empathy, EQ, respect, those for me are characteristics, they're not just values. Characteristics that you need to be able to demonstrate, and actively so. I think we also have a powerful role to play in education, in educating people because they are simply not exposed. Then beating that drum, over and over again - Participant 5.*

### **5.3.2.3 Accountability**

When discussing accountability of creating inclusive cultures, all the leaders identified as being part of a team that was accountable for the culture. The most frequent answer to this question was “Exco” making reference to the full executive committee the word ‘gate keepers’ was also used to describe this team. The leaders did, however acknowledge that accountability began with their executive teams but should never end there.

*The gatekeepers of an agency are the most important because you have to make sure there's a constant equinox of the right type of people – Participant 2.*

*I say Exco is responsible. But obviously we don't do it on our own. And one of the key things that I drive is making sure we cascade, and we share the responsibility – Participant 5.*

### **5.3.2.4 Authentic Self**

A majority of the leaders felt that there was a business need that each person is called to fulfil daily and requirement should dictate which version of one’s self is brought into the office. The belief was that people are complex, made up of many sides. And while whole beings are appreciated, not every side is necessary or appropriate for the job and thus the leaders tended to bring to work what they feel was required of them.

*I don't think it's possible. I think that we have different sides to ourselves. As human beings we are allowed to morph. We are allowed to be multiple people. That's what makes us complex human beings. It's just when they contradictory, right? If I sit at home and at home I am a racist bigot and at work I'm trying to drive transformation. There are fundamentals that need to be, you need to be consistent but not the same – Participant 1.*

*I don't think I do, I bring myself to the agency, no. I bring whatever is needed at the right time. So, I will change myself the way I dress, it depends on the situation that I need to be at. I will but because I understand the temperature of a room and I think because if you understand the temperature of the room, you change your personality to it. And I think that's the right thing to do – Participant 2.*

*I think that in any industry, people want the you that benefits the business and generates revenue – Participant 3.*

*It's tricky balancing. I think. You do need to bring yourself to work because, there's a competency angle, which is the first thing that you've ticked. So you need to just deliver firstly on your competency. Now bringing yourself, you should be free to bring yourself, but then I still underpin that with respect as well. So you can't bring your bitchy self to work every day – Participant 5.*

A smaller opposing theme was created from the remaining leaders, who felt bringing anything but your true and full self, effectively robbed one's colleagues of the opportunity to experience the uniqueness that characterized one. These leaders believed that employees could often read when a leaders was not being authentic.

*I think it would be exhausting trying to be someone else, I spend so much time here, I think it'd be absolutely exhausting trying to be someone here and someone outside of here. It's like going on your first date and wearing high heels and tons of makeup and whatever and you're not that person. And then you're going to have to deliver on that forever. It gets exhausting – Participant 4.*

*I do think as a leader you should actually be able to be vulnerable and own your weaknesses, own your shit. The thing is everyone can see through you. That's actually the crux of it, everyone can see through you Yes. So you're not fooling anybody, so like actually just be - Participant 6.*

### **5.3.2.5 Summary**

The purpose of this question was to understand what actions have been implemented in the leaders' respective agencies, to make for more inclusion environments.

When asked about what defining characteristics of an inclusive culture, the leader's contributions were categorized into four key themes. The first was the said, this is the way opinions, ideas and feedback are shared and treated once shared in these agencies. The point was that inclusive cultures were those that vocally respects one

differing ideas and contributions no matter how different they were from the norm. The next theme was that of the unsaid, was agencies had belief systems that were responsible for making people different feel welcome or unwelcome. An inclusive culture was said to be one where the belief system welcomed and accommodated difference. The third theme was that of things that can be seen, many of the leaders felt that the physical structure signaled an inclusive culture. The examples given were ramps for the physically impaired and lactation rooms for new moms. The fourth, and final theme of inclusive cultures, was an idea contrary to what had been previously shared, that there were no boxes to be ticked. But rather the idea that an inclusive culture was whatever best represented the people that worked at a particular agency.

When probed about the actions required to cultivate inclusive cultures and environments. The leaders reiterated that the physical structures were key. Moving beyond that required action from leadership. It was suggested that inclusive cultures were a result of leaderships' behaviours – showing empathy, what they say, how often they say it – and who they bring along on the journey. All participants in the leaders group took held themselves accountable for driving inclusive behaviour in their organisations, alongside their executive teams.

As it relates to the question of bringing one's authentic self to work. The group proved divided for the first time in this study. The majority believed that leaders, had the responsibility to bring whichever version of the self that met the business requirements. The opposing group of leaders felt being anything but yourself was inauthentic and would prove exhausting.

#### **5.4.3. Research question three**

What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

Literature acknowledges the critical role leadership plays in diversity and inclusion practices, however, little mention is made of the role that employees have to play. Leaders are able to implement all that literature has to offer on the issue and still face the possibility of failure. This is largely due to employees being complex in how they interpret leaderships' actions and how they experience spaces. Therefore, this question, aims to understand how the efforts defined and described by leadership in research question one and two are being experience by employees. Inclusion literature suggested that the context in which inclusion is felt by an employee, involve; the level at which

employees feel included in key decision making, the level at which they feel appreciated for their uniqueness, their perceived access to critical resources and the level of psychological safety. This question aims to address all those areas, in developing the overall experience of inclusion from the perspective of the employees.

### **5.3.3.1 Psychological safety**

Pertaining to questions of psychological safety, there was no consensus among the employee group. Each participant gave a differing reason for their perceived safety or lack thereof. Responses were a range. There were participants who expressed their safety as intrinsically linked to the environment fostered within their agency. Other participants felt completely unsafe stating that the lack of comfort and safety resulted in them constantly questioning whether their contributions were even worth sharing. With the participants that felt unsafe the researcher noted visible despondence when this particular question was posed. Among the participants in this group were individuals who did not feel safe but consistently shared differing reasons, nonetheless, owning it to personality and maturity. This safety was created positions held in the agency and a lack of dependence on agency for an income, which empowered the participant.

*I'm fairly comfortable, they're very open to suggestions here, an eight out of ten. everyone has the floor. If you have an idea that could possibly save a campaign or just add something, even if it's just to make someone think – Participant 11*

*No, but it won't stop me from even speaking the next time. It's just, I think I'm more prepared to speak or say something, it's a lot more calculated now. I mean I'm at work, I want to be peaceful and okay with my colleagues. So sometimes I find myself holding back a little bit cause you're going to make people uncomfortable – Participant 9.*

*I can't say I'm safe, but then I'm the type of guy, I would probably say let's go, even though I know I'm not safe. Even though sometimes it does bother some people, but I'm a very outspoken person, I say what I like. We do actually get scared of our superiors every now and then, but I'm trying not to be like that – Participant 12*

*I'm not afraid. I'm not really into job security though. So that eliminates many things... Like the family, the house, the bonds and all those things, that almost informs how vocal you would be in certain situations – Participant 10.*

*I think it comes with the position. So I think the reason I can say what I say to the people here is because they've been on the journey and they know that I am not angry when I bring something to the table, its valid – Participant 8.*

### **5.3.3.2 Decision making**

An overwhelming response to this interview question was that the employees' felt their contributions weren't considered in decision-making or were re-interpreted in ways in which they felt, did not stay true to the initial idea.

*I want to be able to make these decisions. I remember at one point my, biggest issue was that I don't understand why I'm not making decisions about the work that I produce and somebody else has to make the decisions. So in a way, your ideas end up dying with you or in the space that you are in. It often makes much more sense when it's coming from a different group, which is white – Participant 10*

*So it's very nuanced. The looks or when you're sitting in a brainstorm and you bring up something that's a bit uncomfortable, it doesn't make it to the creative review – Participant 9.*

### **5.3.3.4 Access to critical resources**

The participants felt they didn't have access to all the critical resources they required. They acknowledged the existence of some but felt that more could still be done within agencies. A theme that emerged was the idea of role models within agencies. Participants expressed that the standardised tools were there, tools that assisted employees in presenting better. However, participants felt the lack was with there not being anyone who looked like them in senior positions. People who they confide in about the challenges they face daily. The need was for someone who could resonate with their journey and would understand their work without the employees having to over explain it. A senior employees also cited the need for young employee they could be trained and developed to one day fill those senior positions.

*I have access to most, but not enough. It's not enough. They've got global tools. They've got this, it's very kind of processes and stuff. But I think we live in a country where we also forget that as black people, we are constantly playing three or four roles. And I just think from a mental health and handling the actual*

*industry point of view, I think we missing that part. So the more softer stuff that enables you to handle the stresses and the curve balls that come with the industry. That for me is what is lacking. So we don't have enough mentorship and mentorship is not about skill because at a certain level every agency has its own tools – Participant 8*

*I mean, there's no one senior to me who is going to actually help – Participant 9.*  
*When you're not really sure what you doing and nobody's coming to you and saying, what you doing right now is actually the right thing. You just stuck just doing whatever you feel will work – Participant 10*

### **5.3.3.5 Authentic Self**

In contributing to this question, the researcher observed participants struggling to articulate their thoughts and feelings. As a result, participants often led with the justification of the person they brought to work as the answer for whether or not they felt they could bring their authentic self to work. These justifications ranged from acts of defiance, they were attributed to personality traits.

*Putting on an accent because now the room is more white. And then when you're talking to your black colleagues, it's like it goes out the window. – Participant 8*

*It's almost like my act of defiance actually. We're not all gonna be like, you know, fit into this mould. It's almost like you have to be a certain brand of person to be taken seriously – Participant 9*

*I think my personality allows – Participant 10*

*I say how I feel, I dress how I like and what I mean for some people maybe it's not like a very traditional thing and kind of get uncomfortable on this. – Participant 12*

*I feel like everyone here is themselves. And you get to see the person for who they are, whether they having a bad day or a great day – Participant 11*

As a means of explaining these responses and perhaps useful in explaining all the responses. The participants engaged the researcher on ideas of identity and what it meant to be black in the South African advertising industry. As part of these contributions, key themes that emerged were; the idea that one represented the whole. This was made with reference to the notion that only one black creative could get ahead at a time and that one was made to feel as though they represented the whole population. Therefore that one often feared making any mistakes or creating any type of discourse about race.

The participants felt that the identity of black creatives was preconceived and left no room for individuality. Identity was also linked to whether black employees felt deserving of their position within the industry. The senior participants constantly found themselves battling the idea of being there as a result of quota. Black creatives felt their identity could not distinguish personal battles over the battles of the social group, a luxury that their white counterparts had. These complexities with identity were identified as the 'politics' that often led black creatives out of the formal structure of traditional agencies. They would leave to freelance or attempt to establish their own spaces.

*I also think that what advertising is very bad at in terms of a white to black view is that I think a lot of the leaders in creative, strategy and executives have a very unified view of black people. I think there's preconceived ideas of what being black is. The view of black people that work in advertising have a certain style, a certain image. They talk a certain way and they kind of free flowing. They're not expected to not have the accent and to be militant or question – Participant 8.*

#### **5.3.3.6 Summary**

Question three was concerned with employee's experience of inclusion in their relevant agencies. The total experience of inclusion explored against four key themes.

Psychological safety, it was found that the experience was different for each employee for different reasons. Some felt safe to share, either as a result of the safety their agency had created for them, or a feeling they had created for themselves through lack of income dependence. Others did not be often, challenged themselves to share, regardless. The participants generally did not feel their contributions were considered in decision-making. Access to critical skills became a conversation about the need for minority role models within the industry.

The component about authenticity of the self, employees brought to work revealed critical insight into struggle for identity that black creatives had to contend with on a daily basis. This identity struggle housed many ideas. From the notion of one representing the whole. Which referenced the notion that only one black creative could get ahead at a time and that one was made to feel as though they represented the whole population. Therefore that one often feared making any mistakes or creating any type of discourse about race as a means of securing their position. The participants felt that the identity of black creatives was preconceived and left no room for individuality. Identity was also linked to whether black employees felt deserving of their position within the industry.

The more senior participants were, the more prevalent idea of being there as a means of quota became a pressing thought. Black creatives felt their identity did not allow them the freedom to choose personal battles over the battles of the social group, a luxury that their white counterparts had. These complexities with identity were identified as the 'politics' that often led black to creatives out of the formal structure of traditional agencies.

## **5.5. Chapter conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher presented the findings from interviews conducted with advertising agency leaders and advertising agency employees, as they relate to the concepts of diversity and inclusion. Following the key research questions presented in chapter three, leaders were asked to share their perceptions of the concepts and some of the ways in which these concepts show up in their agencies. Advertising agency employees were questioned more about their experience of inclusion from the perspective of four key components; psychological safety, value, access and whether they felt they could bring their true and authentic self to work. The chapter that follows explores these findings in the context of existing literature.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher uses of the data and results presented in chapter 5 to discuss the literature that was presented in chapter 2. This discussion aims to answer the key research questions presented in chapter 3 and as inputs into better understanding the problem identified at the beginning of this study.

The aim of the introductory questions was not to uncover any insights but rather to make categorising and grouping easier. The introductory questions of the employees became a signal of the responses that would follow. The researcher found that the number of years of experience and number of agencies worked for affected the amount of unsolicited feedback on diversity and inclusion they got from the participants. The years' experience and number of agencies also drove the level of passion in how participants approached their responses. The amount of data gathered that went beyond the key reason questions was immense.

Among the leaders, while no additional insight was present in the introductory questions. What was interesting to note, following the preamble by the researcher describing the purpose of the study, is that many of the leaders remarked on either their passion for the topic of diversity and inclusion or how the territory was such fertile soil for them. For the researcher, this response signalled an even deeper need and appetite for this study than they had anticipated.

## **6.2 Discussion of research question one**

### **6.2.1 Research question one**

What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?

The purpose of this question was to understand how leaders perceive diversity and inclusion. While perceptions can be broad and understood in many ways, perceptions in this study were made of three main components. Borrowing from the main themes in the literature presented, perceptions were a combination of; definitions of the two key terms, perceptions of benefits of diversity and the influence the definitions had on organisational recruitment practices.

#### **6.2.1.1 Diversity defined**

When defining diversity leaders began with expressing that their understanding was rooted in a South African context and thus would speak of these concepts from that perspective. Diversity referred to, as the idea of getting different people from different classifications together in one organisation. This understanding of diversity's broad definition is in line with the literature of Walker et al. (2019) where the concept of diversity is described as the numerical representation of individuals from varying social and identity groups within one organisation.

Leaders expressed an understanding of diversity in the South African context, as often being spoken about in context of just race and gender more than any other classification. The country filter was a key and necessary call out as Farndale, Biron, Briscoe and Raghuram, (2015) assert that it is important to note that the contexts (national, cultural or otherwise) that diversity is studied in has a significant impact on the diversity and inclusion practices that can be actioned in the organisation. The idea that the leaders are conscious of the country-level implication shows great signs of them being able to deliver contextually relevant practices in their organisations.

In defining of diversity by classifications, race and gender were the most frequently mentioned. The leaders did, however, acknowledge the existence of other classifications that fall into the definition of diversity such as; age, sexual orientation, physical ability, backgrounds and mindset. The leaders interviewed expressed a belief that South Africans' and South African businesses seem to find it easier to deal with the other classifications better than they do with race and gender. This belief is largely driven by the perceived legislation effort put behind race and gender as opposed to the other classifications. For the leaders interviewed, diversity was also largely seen as a legal issue, as something that is mandated and often treated as just that. This finding supports the notion of Morgenroth and Ryan (2018) who suggest that quotas and affirmative action policies were critical in keeping diversity at the core of business operations. Arguing, due to the largely voluntary nature of diversity practices which stretch beyond policy and mandate, representation of minorities in these industries would cease immediately if policy was abandoned.

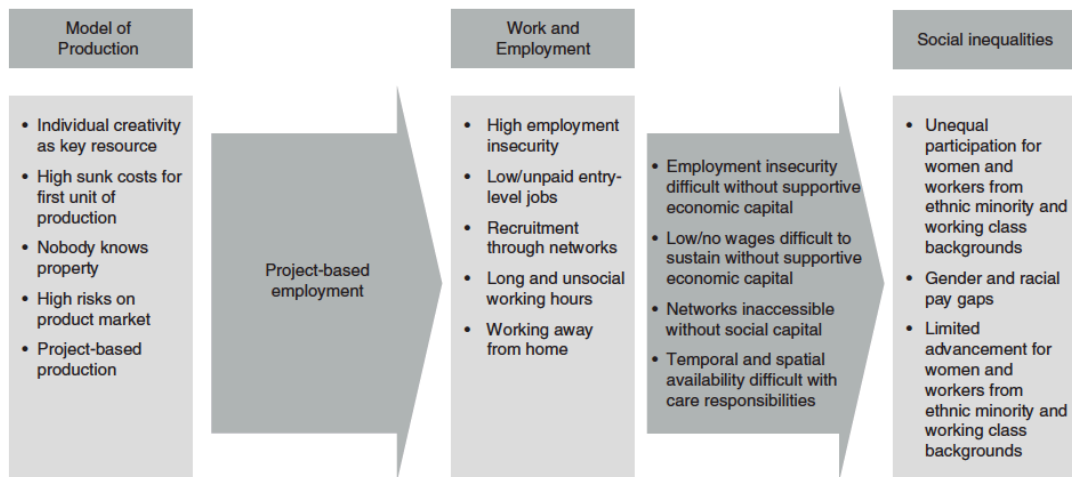
The strong focus on race and gender, while it aims to address issues created by history, if not managed correctly can also create new issues. Diekmann, Steffens and Methner (2016) caution about how diversity perceptions within a group can negatively affect subgroup relations. This is case in organisations where the diversity efforts have created an 'us versus them' mentality that makes it hard for people to work cohesively in their teams. Data collected showed the prevalence of an us versus them mentality when the employees were being interviewed. A code titled 'colour imbalance' addressed the number of times black employees spoke of 'us and them' or the number of times they addressed issues associated with a perceived difference in the treatment they experience and that of their white counterparts. Walker et al (2019) suggest that it is at this point that it becomes crucial for organisations that are becoming more diverse to find ways of ensuring that employees feel valued for their unique skills and attributes and are able to contribute fully to their organisations. If this is not done at the right time, advertising agencies might suffer the negative effects of diversity, which Guillaume et al. (2014) say includes lower employee morale, more organisational conflicts and even diminishing job performance by certain individuals.

Leaders expressed how conversation regarding diversity often became emotionally fueled, which limited possibility of dialogue concerning the issue. Lack of dialogue led to lack of actionable steps being taken by agencies. As a resolve, participants suggested that agency leaders needed to make the dialogue less emotional and political but rather common place and thus actionable. Turning the diversity narrative into an economic one

was an idea shared across the group, with lived experiences to support it. The leadership participants defined diversity as a business imperative, seen as a necessary response to client needs and market conditions, with linkages to a higher order country benefit. For the leaders, diversity was expressed as something that required deliberate action to achieve.

The idea of advertising as a production line was introduced. This was presented as a possible explanation for the slow rate of change. Diversity relied on many representations, while production lines only worked with identical or similar component parts. The self-governing nature of the advertising industry was also cited as a possible enabler of the lackluster approach to transformation. This notion follows the thinking of Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) cited in Ruth Eikhof (2017) who suggest that social inequalities in creative industries are a buy-product of the process of producing creative. To allow ease of visualisation the authors developed a model (Figure 1) that endeavoured to explain how creative production translated into social inequalities.

**Figure 1: Translation of model of production into social inequalities**



Source: Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012)

When prompted to define diversity in their own words, leaders did not complete their contribution without explaining the pitfalls they associate with diversity. The first being legislation, one of the leaders interviewed expressed how they believed that the relaxed approach of government at legislating the industry was part of the problem. The fact that the industry was largely self-governed allowed it to move at its own pace. This was an idea that was also captured by Mazibuko and Govender (2017) when they expressed

how in post 1994 South Africa, a significant amount of legislation had been developed and actioned to achieve greater social justice; however, the progress in addressing discrimination in the workplace has been slow and uneven across sectors and industries.

In fact, legislation in this study was seen to be confusing; as it told leaders to transform their agencies and the industry which meant increasing the number of black people in these spaces. However, because those positions were not vacant leaders needed to address the number of white people who were currently occupying those positions, but it was illegal to do so. Agencies were then left looking for alternative ways of delivering on the mandate. In relation to the above point, leaders acknowledged how quickly efforts to diversify agencies and the industry often turned into reverse discrimination thus found themselves constantly needing to ask themselves if they had gone too far with all initiatives.

The apartheid legacy of South Africa was identified as contributing to the issues associated with lack of diversity. Leaders believed the legacy of apartheid caused an unequal distribution of skills within the industry, thus having fully representative agencies proved difficult. Two resolutions were proposed to address this skills shortage caused by legacy issue. One was creating an appetite for the industry at a high school level. In this regard, the model by Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) suggests that should these scholars be recruited they will still face key challenges in the production process of creative. The second, involved traditional agencies being more collaborative with smaller black owned agencies as a means of tapping into richer insights and distributing money beyond the elite structures of traditional agencies. This view on smaller businesses supports Booyens (2012) when he challenges the assumption that countries south of the globe show less priority and intent for creative industries since they are faced with greater developmental challenges. This resolution shows how creative industries are facilitating job creation, innovation and social inclusion as part of delivering on the national developmental needs.

#### **6.2.1.2 Inclusion defined**

In defining inclusion leader's contribution amounted to, inclusion being the business of making people from differing backgrounds feel comfortable and respected for their uniqueness within their agencies. This understanding is in line with the work of Walker et al. (2019) as they describe inclusion as a concept built on the premise that employing individuals from diverse backgrounds is no longer enough to facilitate successful

diversity initiatives, employees must move beyond knowing they are part of, but must rather be made to feel welcomed, understood and valued as members of the organisation.

### **6.2.1.3 Benefits of diversity**

When explain the benefits of diversity, leaders explored the idea that benefits existed on five levels. The personal, as it relating to how experiencing different people, had an ability to grow a person. The agency, the understanding was the more diverse agencies were, the better and more insightful the ideas produced were. The client level, this was concerned with agencies being able to fulfill market requirements on behalf of their clients and the notion of casting. Industry, referred to a training intensive approach directed at young black talent entering the industry. Lastly, country level, which remained undefined but acknowledged for its existence.

These levels are more captured in the literature presented by Shore et al. (2017) and Guillaume et al. (2014) who all maintain that, if workplace diversity is actioned well, the results are an organisation that is more innovative, has improved decision-making processes and outcomes, has a larger pool of talent willing to join the organisation and is attractive to a wider customer base all results that can have positive impact on financial performance – long term. What the literature doesn't account for is the personal and country level that the interviewed leaders mention.

While the leaders showed a positive mindset toward diversity and the benefits of it, at every level. Leaders did introduce the idea that advertising as an industry, was under immense financial strain which made the fight for diversity even harder. This difficult was in addition to that which was already highlighted by Lynch (2019) who suggested that the industry could not do with merely attempting to adapt to the evolving landscape, as faced immediate threat from management consultancies. Lynch proposed the need for the industry to look at new ways of operating, which included employing different skill sets and talent, with a particular focus on growing strategic ability and digital literacy.

### **6.2.1.4 Recruitment**

In addressing recruitment, while the motivations varied what was consistent was the view that diversity had fast become a critical part of all recruitment efforts. This is an idea supported by Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman (2014) when they suggest that leaders who are

authentic and a keep a eye on hiring, promotions, and resignations of women and racial minorities, in the interest of being more inclusionary, engender a culture of inclusion.

### **6.3 Research question two**

How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?

The purpose of this question was to understand what actions have been implemented in the leaders' respective agencies, that make for an inclusion environment. This question begun by establishing the definition of an inclusive culture from the perspective of the leaders. The question sought to explore how those definitions were being actioned and who within the agency was held accountable for implementing and maintaining those actions. The literature presented in chapter two suggests a need for leaders to take charge and lead from the front, if inclusionary behavior stood any chance of becoming the norm. The study thus explored whether this notion was only literature based or was visible in practice.

#### **6.3.1 Defining inclusive culture**

When asked about the defining characteristics of an inclusive culture, the leader's contributions were categorized into four key themes. The first was the said, this is the way opinions, ideas and feedback are shared and treated once shared in these agencies. The point was that inclusive cultures were those that vocally respects one differing ideas and contributions no matter how different they were from the norm. Guillaume et al. (2014) explains this to mean that previously marginalised groups are included in decision-making to enhance self-efficacy beliefs as a means of moderating the relationship between motivation and work-related outcomes. The next theme was that of the unsaid, was agencies had belief systems that were responsible for making people different feel welcome or unwelcome. An inclusive culture was presented as a place where the belief system welcomed and accommodated difference. This idea is supported by Walker et al. (2019) as they describe inclusion to be built on the premise that employing individuals from diverse backgrounds is no longer enough to facilitate successful diversity initiatives, employees must move beyond knowing they are part of, but must rather be made to feel welcomed, understood and valued as members of the organisation The third theme was that of things that can be seen, many of the leaders felt that the physical structure signaled an inclusive culture. The examples given were ramps for the physically impaired and lactation rooms for new moms. Boekhorst (2015)

definition of an climate for inclusion does not include physicality, she suggestions it is “a shared perception of a work environment that considers the policies, practices and procedures which guide a shared understanding of what the inclusive behaviors are and fosters a sense of belonging and valued uniqueness, which is supported and rewarded. This definition supports the fourth, and final theme of inclusive cultures, was an idea contrary to what had been previously shared, that there were no boxes to be ticked. But rather the idea that an inclusive culture was whatever best represented the people that worked at a particular agency.

### **6.3.2 Cultivating an inclusive culture**

When probed about the actions required to cultivate inclusive cultures and environments. The leaders reiterated that the physical structures were key. Moving beyond that required action from leadership. It was suggested that inclusive cultures were a result of leaderships’ behaviours – showing empathy, what they say, how often they say it – and who they bring along on the journey. All participants in the leaders group took held themselves accountable for driving inclusive behaviour in their organisations, alongside their executive teams. Zheng, Diaz, Zheng and Tang (2017) study support this notion, as they found inclusive leadership practices were especially important when deep level similarities (personality, interests and values) were low between the leadership and employees. Gallegos (2014) adds to this idea by stating, leaders who hope to engender a climate of inclusion need to set explicit guardrails for what constitutes suitable behavior, when it relates to people from diverse identity groups.

### **6.3.3 Accountability**

All participants in the leaders group took held themselves accountable for driving inclusive behaviour in their organisations, alongside their executive teams. Gallegos (2014) adds to this idea by stating, leaders who hope to engender a climate of inclusion need to set explicit guardrails for what constitutes suitable behavior, when it relates to people from diverse identity groups.

### **6.3.4 Authentic Self**

As it relates to the question of bringing one’s authentic self to work. The group proved divided for the first time in this study. The majority believed that leaders, had the responsibility to bring whichever version of the self that met the business requirements.

The opposing group of leaders felt being anything but yourself was inauthentic and would prove exhausting. Ferdman (2014) view on the behaviours that leaders should exhibit, are closer aligned to the ideals of the second leadership group. Citing these behaviours to be accountability for creating an inclusive culture – as not the role of HR to drive diversity and inclusion, engagement and dialogue – leaders needed not shy away from engaging with their followers, particularly when being engaged on the topic of inclusion and diversity. Ferdman also encourages leaders to bring one's true self to work – as it gives employees permission to do the same

#### **6.4 Research question three**

What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

Literature acknowledges the critical role leadership plays in diversity and inclusion practices, however, little mention is made of the role that employees play. Leaders are able to implement all that literature has to offer on the issue and still face the possibility of failure. This is largely due to employees being complex in how they interpret leaderships' actions and how they experience the agencies. This question was positioned to explore how the efforts defined and described by leadership in research question one and two are being experienced by employees. Inclusion literature suggested that the context in which inclusion is felt by an employee, involve; the level at which employees feel included in key decision making, the level at which they feel appreciated for their uniqueness, their perceived access to critical resources and the level of psychological safety. This question aims to address all those areas, in developing the overall experience of inclusion from the perspective of the employees.

##### **6.4.1 Psychological safety**

Psychological safety; it was found that the experiences were different for each employee for different reasons. Some felt safe to share, either as a result of the safety their agency had created for them, or a feeling they had created for themselves through lack of income dependence. Others did not often feel safe but challenged themselves to share, regardless. The danger with the lack of unified response to this theme, is in the role psychological safety plays in driving innovation and increasing creativity as explained by Chung, Ehrhart, Shore, Randel, Dean and Kedbarnath (2016). They suggest that inclusion practices should create environments that support individual employee growth,

which consequently promote the psychological safety that allows employees to experiment, which often leads to innovation and increased creativity. Without the psychological safety the intended results are likely to not be realized.

#### **6.4.2 Decision making**

The participants generally did not feel their contributions were considered in decision-making. Inclusion advocates for all individuals to have equal access to organizational resources, be exposed to the ideas being shared and explored in the organisation, finally to be invited to contribute to the problem-solving initiatives (Nishii, 2013).

#### **6.4.3 Access to critical resources**

Access to critical skills became a conversation about the need for minority role models within the industry. This is an idea Morganroth and Ryan (2018) offered in literature as a means of addressing identity challenges in the creative spaces. They suggested that increased representation at senior levels, led to a larger pool of role models and thus motivational outcomes.

#### **6.4.4 Authentic self**

The component about authenticity of the self, employees brought to work revealed critical insight into struggle for identity that black creatives had to contend with on a daily basis. This identity struggle housed many ideas. From the notion of one representing the whole. Which referenced the notion that only one black creative could get ahead at a time and that one was made to feel as though they represented the whole population. Therefore that one often feared making any mistakes or creating any type of discourse about race as a means of securing their position. The participants felt that the identity of black creatives was preconceived and left no room for individuality. Boulton (2016) addresses part of the battle with identity. Suggesting it is a result of black talent attempting to balance their uniqueness and adapting to their work environment. He introduced the idea of 'code switching' to this study, which makes reference to how the black talent would modify their vocabulary and manner of speaking to accommodate the expectations on their listeners or to conform to their new environment. Identity was also linked to whether black employee's felt deserving of their position within the industry. The more senior participants were, the more prevalent idea of being there as a means of quota became a pressing thought. Black creatives felt their identity did not allow them

the freedom to choose personal battles over the battles of the social group, a luxury that their white counterparts had. These complexities with identity were identified as the 'politics' that often led black to creatives out of the formal structure of traditional agencies.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher will reflect on this project, from intent to findings and ultimately the contributions this study has made to literature and to business. While the findings have already been presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6, in this Chapter the findings will be presented with a consolidated view as it builds to conclude on the key research objective which was uncovering insights into perceptions of diversity and inclusion amongst advertisers in the South African advertising agency context. In Chapter 6, the manner in which the findings relate to current literature was discussed. In this chapter the hope is to isolate the findings that literature does not accommodate for, as yet. To conclude this chapter, the researcher will present limitations of this study, followed by recommendations for future research.

### **7.2 Key findings per research question**

The key objectives of this study were to explore the perceptions of diversity and inclusion amongst South African advertising advertisers. This study explored how those perceptions influenced recruitment and the inclusionary practices adopted by the agencies, driven by leadership. The study also explored the experience of inclusion within these agencies through the lived experiences of previously disadvantaged employees, self-identifying as black.

#### **7.2.1 Research question one**

What are the perceptions of diversity and inclusion by leaders in the advertising industry?

This question concerned with understanding how leaders perceive diversity and inclusion. Perceptions, being a rather broad term, in this study it was contextualized within three main components. These themes borrowed from the literature presented in Chapter two. Perceptions were framed as a combination of definitions of diversity and inclusion, perceived benefits of diversity and the influence the definitions had on organisational recruitment practices

### **7.2.1.1 Perceptions of Diversity**

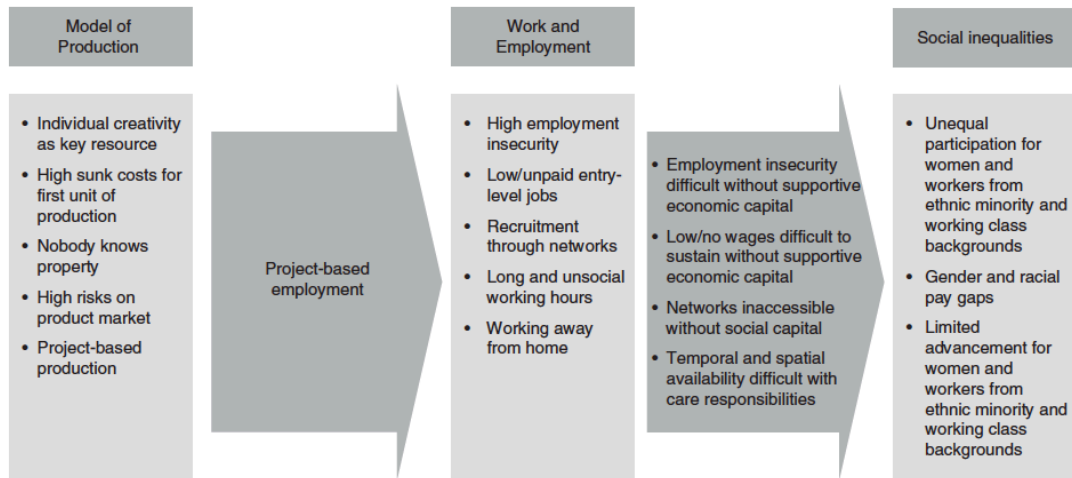
Diversity is referred to, as the idea of getting different people from different classifications together in one organisation. Diversity is perceived to be a legal issue, often referred to as a mandated. Diversity is perceived to have a cultural and contextual component that cannot be ignored. In the South African advertising context, diversity is in context of race and gender more than any other demographic classification. Diversity as it relates to race and gender, was perceived as a challenge that South Africans' and South African businesses still needed to overcome. It is believed that as a country, South African possessed the ability to deal with other demographic classifications of diversity, better than they did race and gender.

The strong focus on race and gender is perceived to be an issue created by history. However, it is one that still persists as evidenced in the frequency of black employees identifying the presence of an 'us' and a 'them'. The Us and Them is perceived to be in difference of treatment experienced by black employees, that they do not perceive to exist for their white counterparts.

Diversity is perceived and experienced to be an emotionally fueled topic which limited possibility of dialogue concerning the issue. Lack of dialogue is perceived to lead to the lack of actionable steps being taken by agencies. Driving diversity was recognised as an issue that required deliberate action to achieve. Therefore, as a means of escaping the emotional trap, leaders are turning the diversity narrative into an economic one. This is largely because diversity is perceived to be a business imperative and a necessary response to client needs and market conditions, with linkages to a higher order country benefit.

As part of the perceptions of diversity was a recognition that advertising as a production process was created with elements that were contrary to the ideals of diversity. This was perceived to be part of the slow rate of change. The self-governing nature of the advertising industry was also perceived to aid lackluster efforts toward transformation. This notion was evidenced in a model by Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst, first developed in 2012.

**Figure 1: Translation of model of production into social inequalities**



Source: Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012)

Diversity is perceived to have pitfalls, one being legislation, legislation in this study was seen to be confusing; as it told leaders to transform their agencies and the industry, however left little option in the ways in which agencies could deliver on the mandate. This inconsistency in legislation made compliance a slippery slope, as often efforts to diversify agencies and the industry were perceived to just turn into reverse discrimination.

The apartheid legacy of South Africa was perceived to be a key contributing factor to the issues associated with lack of diversity. Apartheid was identified as the cause an unequal distribution of skills within the industry which was what diversity was aiming to correct. In resolving this issue, leaders believed there was a need to create an appetite for the industry at a high school level. Second to that was the role traditional agencies had in being more collaborative with smaller black owned agencies as a means of tapping into richer insights and distributing money beyond the elite structures of traditional agencies.

### **7.2.1.2 Perceptions of inclusion**

Inclusion was perceived to be, the business of making people from differing backgrounds feel comfortable and respected for their uniqueness within their agencies.

### **7.2.1.3 Benefits of diversity**

Benefits diversity were seen to exist on five levels. The personal, related to how experiencing different people, had an ability to grow a person. The agency, the perception was that more diverse agencies were able to produce better and more insightful the ideas. The client level was the perception that agencies had to fulfill a market requirement on behalf of their clients. Industry is a perception, that the only way the industry will grow, is if a training intensive approach directed at young black talent is followed. Lastly, country level, which remained undefined but acknowledged for its existence. While a positive mindset toward diversity and the benefits of it was perceived at every level. An acknowledgement of advertising as an industry, being under immense financial strain which made the fight for diversity harder for leaders.

### **7.2.1.4 Recruitment**

The unified perception amongst leaders was that diversity had fast become a critical part of all recruitment efforts.

## **7.2.2. Research question two**

How do leaders in the advertising industry foster inclusion in their organisations?

The purpose of this question was to understand what actions have been implemented in the leaders' respective agencies, which make for an inclusion environment. This question begun by establishing the definition of an inclusive culture from the perspective of the leaders. The question sought to explore how those definitions were being actioned and who within the agency was held accountable for implementing and maintaining those actions.

### **7.2.2.1 Defining inclusive culture**

The defining characteristics of an inclusive culture were categorized into four ideas.1). An inclusive culture was one that vocally respected differing ideas and contributions, no matter how different they were from the norm. 2) An inclusive culture was presented a place where the belief system welcomed and accommodated difference. 3) An inclusive culture had physical structure that signaled inclusivity. 4) An inclusive culture was whatever best represented the people that worked at a particular agency.

### **7.2.2.2. Cultivating an inclusive culture**

In this study it emerged that cultivate inclusive cultures and environments, involved a move beyond physical structures. It was perceived as something that required action from leadership. It is perceived that inclusive cultures area result of leaderships' behaviours.

### **7.2.2.3 Accountability**

Leadership perceives the building of inclusive cultures as something they are largely accountable for.

### **7.2.2.4 Authentic Self**

Leaders perceived the question of bringing once authentic self from two distinct perspectives. One perspective highlights the idea that as leaders they had the responsibility to bring whichever version of the self that met the business requirements. The opposing group of leaders felt being anything but yourself was inauthentic and would prove exhausting.

## **7.2.3. Research question three**

What is the experience of inclusion within advertising agencies amongst previously disadvantaged employees?

This question was positioned to explore how the efforts defined and described by leadership in research question one and two were being experience by employees. Inclusion literature suggested that the context in which inclusion is felt by an employee, involve; the level at which employees feel included in key decision making, the level at which they feel appreciated for their uniqueness, their perceived access to critical resources and the level of psychological safety. This question aimed to address all those areas, in developing the overall experience of inclusion from the perspective of the employees.

### **7.2.3.1 Psychological safety**

The perceptions of psychological safety were varied across the employee group. Employees felt safe to share differing views, either as a result of the safety their agency had created for them, or a feeling they had created for themselves through lack of income dependence. Others did not often feel safe however challenged themselves to share, regardless.

### **7.2.3.2 Decision making**

Employees within agencies perceived their contributions as not considered when decision are being made.

### **7.2.3.3 Access to critical resources**

Amongst employees' critical resource needs that weren't being met, were that of minority role models.

### **7.2.3.4 Authentic self**

The question of the self, employees were bringing to the office. Revealed critical insight into struggle for identity that black creatives contended with on a daily basis. This identity crisis housed many ideas. From the notion of one representing the whole. Which referenced the notion that only one black creative could get ahead at a time and that one was made to feel as though they represented the whole population. Therefore that one often feared making any mistakes or creating any type of discourse about race as a means of securing their position. The perception among employees was that their felt identity was preconceived and left no room for individuality. Identity was also linked to whether black employee's felt deserving of their position within the industry. Black creatives felt their identity did not allow them the freedom to choose personal battles over the battles of the social group, a luxury that their white counterparts had. These complexities with identity were identified as the 'politics' that often led black creatives to opting out of the traditional agency structure.

### **7.3 Recommendations for business**

Following the discussion and concluding of the key research questions, the researcher offers three key areas that the advertising industry still needs to account for, in the way diversity is perceived and inclusion actions.

- The findings suggest that the industry needs to make a more concerted effort in separating the emotion of the historical baggage that birthed diversity. It should rather focus on the economic threat of consultancies and make use of the diversity already in the agencies as a means of re-scripting the narrative of diversity for greater growth.
- Agencies should consider if recruitment is even useful in addressing diversity issues, if the presiding business model and process of creative production does not allow black creatives to participate. It could prove useful for the focus to be redirected at the work and employment issues, as presented by Ruth Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) as a means of driving transformation and as a retention philosophy.
- In this study it was evidenced that key to the experience of inclusion by black creatives, was linked to their identity. Therefore greater efforts need to be made in managing this identity challenge as a means creating environments that feel more inclusive.

### **7.4 Research limitations**

Limitations of this study are understood to be;

- From an employee perspective only previously disadvantaged employees were interviewed. While the case for adding a race filter was discussed in introductory chapters of this study. A more robust understanding of the lived experiences of inclusion within agency could have been ascertained had employees been representative of all social identities present in agencies.
- This study was only limited to leaders and employees in the Johannesburg, Gauteng region. While this region currently holds the largest pool of advertising agencies, advertising agencies are not limited to this region. A understanding of how these perceptions come to life in other regions such as the Cape Town,

Western Cape could have proved useful in giving greater insight. However the scope of this study, was not of regional differentiation.

- The 12 interviews used to generate the findings are a viable sample for a heterogenous population (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). However a larger sample size would have generated greater insight.
- The perceptions of inclusion and diversity in this study were framed against existing literature used to contextualise the concepts. This may have limited the parameters of the view on these topics.

## **7.5 Recommendations for future research**

This study reveals great insight into the perceptions of diversity and inclusion amongst advertisers. Opportunity for future researcher exists in three components.

- The study can be broadened to a larger pool of employees who represent more social identities. Scoping the study beyond black employees.
- This study can be explored in other geographies within South Africa, such as Cape Town and Durban, which are also considered creative hubs. Opportunity also lies in the emergent creative industries of other African nations.
- Due to limitations captured in Chapter 4 only 12 participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, it is the suggestion of the researcher that this study be quantified with larger samples.
- This study viewed diversity and inclusion from a selected set of theoretical parameters, the perceptions of diversity and inclusion within the South African advertising industry could be explored using a different set of definitions and parameters.

## **7.6 Conclusion.**

This exploratory study was designed to uncover insight of the perceptions of diversity and inclusion among South African advertisers. The study explored dimensions three dimensions of the perceptions. How the concepts are defined, how they are actioned and the experience of inclusion in Johannesburg agencies. While many of the results were evident in literature a number of new insights were generated. Diversity in the South African context was an emotionally fueled subject as a result of the apartheid legacy. Added to that was the idea that the production line process that many agency's

adopted in producing creative had inherit social injustices that exacerbated the issue. South African practitioners emphasised the role of physical structures in inclusionary practices, an emphasis that was not noted in literature. Finally, identity has always been a key part of the South African historical narrative and it seems to have found to become the core of the diversity challenge for black creatives in the advertising industry.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Boulton, C. (2016) Black Identities Inside Advertising: Race Inequality, Code Switching, and Stereotype Threat, *Howard Journal of Communications*, 27:2, 130-144, DOI: 10.1080/10646175.2016.1148646
- Boekhorst, J.A. (2015). The role of authentic leadership in fostering workplace inclusion: a social information processing perspective. *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 241-264.
- Booyens, I. (2012). Creative Industries, Inequality and Social Development: Developments, Impacts and Challenges in Cape Town. Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-012-9140-6>
- Booyesen, L.A.E., & Nkomo, S.M. (2014). New developments in employment equity and diversity management in South Africa. In L.A.E. Booyesen, A. Klarsfeld, E. Ng, and A. Tatli (Eds.), *International handbook on diversity management at work: Country perspectives on diversity and equal treatment*, Vol. 2 (pp. 131–182).
- Brimhall, K. C., Mor Barak, M. E., Hurlburt, M., McArdle, J. J., Palinkas, L., & Henwood, B. (2017). Increasing workplace inclusion: The promise of leader-member exchange. *Human Service Organizations*, 41(3), 222–239. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1251522>.
- Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17, 475–482.
- Brewer, M. B. (2012). Optimal distinctiveness theory: Its history and development. In P. A. M. VanLange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.). *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 81–98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brodmerkel, S., & Barker, R. (2019). Hitting the glass wall: Investigating everyday ageism in the advertising industry.
- Byron, K., & Post, C. (2016). Women on boards of directors and corporate social performance: A meta-analysis. *Corporate Governance*, 24(4), 428–442.

- Cassell, C. (2015). *Conducting Research Interviews for Business and Management Students*. CPI Group Ltd, UK.
- Chung, B., Ehrhart, K., Shore, L. M., Randel, A., Dean, M., & Kedharnath, U. (2016). Work group inclusion: Scale validation and relationship to outcomes. Presented at the society for industrial and organizational psychology (Anaheim, CA).
- Cottrill, K., Lopez, P. D., & Hoffman, C. C. (2014). How authentic leadership and inclusion benefit organizations. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 33(3), 275–292.
- Daya, P. (2014). Diversity and inclusion in an emerging market context. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 33(3), 293–308.
- Dieckmann, J., Steffens, M.C. and Methner, N. (2016). Back to the roots: when diversity evokes increased group-based conventionalism, *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 1-17, doi: 10.1177/1368430216670245.
- Farndale, E., Biron, M., Briscoe, D. R., & Raghuram, S. (2015). A global perspective on diversity and inclusion in work organizations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(6), 677–687.
- Ferdman, B.M. (2014), The practice of inclusion in diverse organizations: toward a systemic and inclusive framework, in Ferdman, B.M. and Deane, B.R. (Eds), *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 3-54.
- Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of inclusion: Understanding and managing the tensions of diversity and multiculturalism. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 53(2), 235–263.
- Gallegos, P. V. (2014). The work of inclusive leadership. In B. M. Ferdman, & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 177–202). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Guillaume, Y. R., Dawson, J. F., Priola, V., Sacramento, C. A., Woods, S. A., Higson, H. E., West, M. A. (2014). Managing diversity in organizations: An integrative model and agenda for future research. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 23(5), 783–802.

- Hideg, I. Wilson, A. E. (2019) History backfires: Reminders of past injustices against women undermine support for workplace policies promoting women, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 2019.
- Hays -Thomas, R., & Bendick, M. (2013). Professionalizing diversity and inclusion practice: Should voluntary standards be the chicken or the egg? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 6(3), 193–205.
- Hwang, J., & Hopkins, K. M. (2015). A structural equation model of the effects of diversity characteristics and inclusion on organizational outcomes in the child welfare workforce. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 50, 44–52  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.01.012>.
- Kamps, J.M., & Engelbrecht, A.S. (2011). The influence of emotional intelligence on diversity complexity cognition and the attitude towards diversity. *South African Journal Business Management*, 42(3), 37–48.
- Lee, J. (2017, July). Meet the new breed of ad agency chiefs. Retrieved from <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/meet-new-breed-ad-agency-chiefs/1434107#9YRI66j4gRt0uWBX.99>
- Li, C. R., Lin, C. J., Tien, Y. H., & Chen, C. M. (2015). A multilevel model of team cultural diversity and creativity: The role of climate for inclusion. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 51(2), 163–179. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jocb.93>.
- Jacqueline Lynch (2019) Advertising industry evolution: agency creativity, fluid teams and diversity. An exploratory investigation, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35:9-10, 845-866, DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2019.1635188
- Mazibuko, J.V., & Govender, K.K. (2017). Exploring workplace diversity and organisational effectiveness: A South African exploratory case study. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 15(0), a865. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v15i0.865>
- Mor Barak, M. E. (2000). The inclusive workplace: An ecosystems approach to diversity management. *Social Work*, 45(4), 339–353.

- Mor Barak, M. E., & Cherin, D. A. (1998). A tool to expand organizational understanding of workforce diversity. *Administration in Social Work*, 22, 47–64.
- Mor Barak, M. E., Cherin, D. A., & Berkman, S. (1998). Organizational and personal dimensions in diversity climate: Ethnic and gender differences in employee perceptions. *Journal of Applied Behavior Science*, 34.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021886398341006>.
- Mor Barak, M. E., & Daya, P. (2014). Fostering inclusion from the inside out to create an inclusive workplace. In B. M. Ferdman, & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 391–412). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2018). Quotas and affirmative action: Understanding group-based outcomes and attitudes. *Social & Personality Psychology Compass*, 12(3), 1. <https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/spc3.12374>
- Nishii, L.H. (2013), The benefits of climate for inclusion for gender-diverse groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 6, pp. 1754-1774
- Nishii, L. H., & Rich, R. E. (2014). Creating inclusive climates in diverse organizations. In B. M. Ferdman, & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 205–228). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nkomo, S. M. (2014). Inclusion: Old wine in new bottles? In B. M. Ferdman, & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 580–592). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Connor, H. Kilgour, M. Koslow, S. Sasser, S. (2017). Drivers of Creativity Within Advertising Agencies. *Journal of Advertising Research*. DOI: 10.2501/JAR-2017-015
- Oyekunle, O.A., (2017) The contribution of creative industries to sustainable urban development in South Africa, *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 9:5, 607-616, DOI: [10.1080/20421338.2017.1327932](https://doi.org/10.1080/20421338.2017.1327932)

Qu, S. and Dumay, J. (2011), The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 238-264. <https://doi.org/10.1108/11766091111162070>

Randel, A, E. Galvin, B, M. Shore, L, M. Holcombe Ehrhart, K. Chung, B, G. Dean, M, A. Kedharnath, U. (2017) Inclusive leadership: Realizing positive outcomes through belongingness and being valued for uniqueness. *Human Resource Management Review* 28 (2018) 190–203. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.002>

Randle, K., Forson, C., & Calveley, M. (2015). Towards a Bourdieusian analysis of the social composition of the UK film and television workforce. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(4), 590–606. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014542498>

Rubin H, J. and Rubin I, S. 1995. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. – Chapter 6, London, Sage Publications

Ruth Ruth Eikhof, D. (2017). Analysing decisions on diversity and opportunity in the cultural and creative industries: A new framework. *Organization*, 24(3), 289–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508416687768>

Saunders, M., & Lewis, P. (2018). *Doing research in business and management: An essential guide to planning your project* (Second ed.). Harlow: Pearson.

Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Ehrhart, K. H., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, 37, 1262–1289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385943>.

Shore, L, M. Cleveland, J, N. Sanchez, D,.(2017). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review* 28 (2018) 176–189. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.003>

Simons, T., Leroy, H., Collewaert, V., & Masschelein, S. (2015). How leader alignment of words and deeds affects followers: A meta-analysis of behavioral integrity research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132, 831–844.

- Vaughn, P., & Turner, C. (2016). Decoding via coding: Analyzing qualitative text data through thematic coding and survey methodologies. *Journal of Library Administration*, 56(1), 41-51. doi:10.1080/01930826.2015.1105035
- Waters, R. D., & Bortree, D. S. (2012). Improving volunteer retention efforts in public library systems: How communication and inclusion impact female and male volunteers differently. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 17(2), 92–107.
- Walker, S, S. Ruggs, E, N. Morgan, W, B. DeGrassi, S, W. (2019). Diverse perspectives on inclusion: Exploring the experiences of individuals in heterogeneous groups. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 38 Issue: 1, pp.2-19,
- Winters, M. F. (2014). From diversity to inclusion: An inclusion equation. In B. M. Ferdman, & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 205–228). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Zheng, X., Diaz, I., Zheng, X., & Tang, N. (2017). From deep-level similarity to taking charge: The moderating role of face consciousness and managerial competency of inclusion. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 38(1), 89–104.

## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

---

Name:

Organisation:

Title:

Date:  
time:

Start time:

End

---

*Before we begin, I would like to express my appreciation for the time you have made to see me and offer your contribution to my research project. My research is about diversity and inclusion in the South African advertising agency context. The aim of the study is to explore the understanding and perceptions of leaders in advertising when it comes to the concepts of diversity and inclusion. The study also endeavours to uncover how this understanding translates into action in their agencies. Then we finish off with insight into how inclusion is experienced by racially previously disadvantaged talent within the various agencies. The aim is first and foremost, to add to the knowledge that currently exists about these concepts, in a slightly different context. Second to that, is to arm leaders with insight that will help craft their actions as it relates to diversity and inclusion by providing a better understanding of how the current actions are experienced in their agencies.*

*Before we start, please could you sign this consent form, to indicate your voluntary participation in this study and as written permission for the researcher to use the data gathered in this interview. Please can you also indicate whether or not you give me permission to record this conversation as a means of capturing your contributions in full. This study is exploratory in nature and it is my wish for it to remain conversational where you feel free to contribute as much as you want to a question.*

*Please note your identifying details will remain confidential. They will only be made available to GIBS faculty should they require validation of this interview*

*having taken place. Please also note, you are well within your rights to opt out of the interview at any point should you feel uncomfortable to proceed.*

### **Leadership only**

Introductory questions:

- What race do you identify as?
- What gender do you identify as?
- How long have you been in your current role?
- How many direct reports do you have?
- How many of these people were you responsible for hiring?
- Are you responsible for any hiring decisions?
- Who is responsible for the talent management and career development of your reports?
- Other than your direct reports are you responsible for any talent management and career development in your agency?

Question 1: How would you define diversity and inclusion?

Question 2: In your understanding, are there benefits to diversity and inclusion for your agency? if so, what are they?

Question 3: Does your understanding of diversity influence the way your agency recruits? If so, how?

Question 4: What would you describe to be an inclusive culture?

Question 5: What actions do you think are required to cultivate the above-mentioned culture?

Question 6: Who is accountable for creating an inclusive culture in your agency?

Question 7: What is your view on bringing one's true self to work, do you?

*That is all the questions I have for you. Thank you again for your time and contributions.*

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

---

Name:

Organisation:

Title:

Date:  
time:

Start time:

End

---

### Talent only

Please note: Talent will receive the same introduction, however, will not be asked the preceding questions.  
Talent to be reassured that their contributions will not be shared with their leadership at any point

Introductory questions:

- What race do you identify as? black
- What gender do you identify as? female
- How long have you been in your current agency? 9 months
- How long have you been in the advertising industry? 3 years
- In that time, how many agencies have you worked for? 3 agency

*Speaking specifically about your current agency:*

Question 1: How safe do you feel to share a differing opinion and perspective at work?

Question 2: Do you think the ideas you come up with are listened to and considered when

Decisions are made in your agency?

Question 3: Do you feel you have access to critical resources in the agency that allow you to excel at your job?

Question 4: Do you feel you can be your authentic self in the office?

*That is all the questions I have for you. Thank you again for your time and contributions.*



## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

I am conducting research on the ***Perceptions of diversity and inclusion among advertising leaders in South Africa***, with a particular focus on the Johannesburg region. While the perceptions of the leaders is the core of the study, I am also interested in finding out how these perceptions inform the way inclusion is fostered in their respective organisations. Our interview is expected to last about 45 mins. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be reported without identifiers. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me.

Our details are provided below.

**Researcher name:** Thandolwethu Mafongosi

Email: 28175264@mygibs.co.za

Phone: 071 078 9299

**Research Supervisor name:** Zukiswa Mthimunye

Email: MthimunyeZ@gibs.co.za

Phone: 011 771 4316

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Code list**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Groundedness</b>
a dream delayed	2
access to critical resources	8
act right to get ahead	9
Ad people are open minded	12
Addressing diversity needs	4
Advertising agencies as employers	3
Alternatives to paying for expensive talent	2
an industry for all	5
an industry under financial pressure	2
Angry black	5
As deverse as we can be	2
benefit of the doubt reserved for others	2
benefits of diversity	13
benefits of diversity - country level	2
beyond compliance	4
Bringing authentic/true self to office	25
bringing small agencies in	1
Calculated risk	2
Casting	4
changing agency culture toward diversity	5
Client influence	4
close to my heart	1
Colour imbalance	19
Comfort with sharing different views	11
confidence to stand up for yourself	10
creating a bigger pool	8
creating diversity	3
cultivating an inclusive culture	13
Cultural influence	11
delayed action	1
Demand making leaving easy	4
desire career planning	3
diluting our power	2
direct reports	6
diversity and inclusion	28
diversity management can be emotional issue	1
diversity South African struggles	9
dreams driven by colour?	1
duty to share our diversity	2

Earned my voice	9
enriching the industry	4
Equation has two sides to it	4
everyone has their own agency	1
Experience - Staff	5
feeling comfortable is key	5
Full agency talent management and career development	5
hiring decisions beyond direct reports	4
Identity of black creatives	7
if i was allowed to be myself	5
input not always used	5
inclusive culture	14
info sharing: silence over disappointment	3
Insecurity: deserved or token	5
It starts with me	5
Knowing the person	2
lack of diversity	2
Leave the system to escape the politics	8
Less colour more insights	6
less fear, more ideas	3
making space for new talent	1
Meaning lost in translation	7
more diverse room better ideas	4
Need to be deliberate	7
new agency owners	1
No offense	2
number of agencies	4
old agency owners	3
One representing all	14
Output is still key	2
output vs diversity	2
ownership dream	5
part of your own growth	2
paying your dues	4
percieved attitude linked to promotion and progression	1
personal battles vs group battles	4
Power to choose environment	3
pressure to conform	2
pretend to be happy to get by	1
Psychological safety	11
Re-looking how to recruit	4
relationship with authority	4
Resources	3
respect for others	1
Responding to a market need	1
responsible for hiring	6
responsible for talent management and career development	6
responsible/accountable for building inclusive culture	8
Role models	10
scarcity fast-track	4

Self re-assurance	1
similar people reinforce each other's ideas	2
societal need for diversity	3
start up/entrepreneurial mentality	1
Starting points arent the same	2
staying to be trained	6
succession planning	1
systemic issue	3
talent pipeline	5
Talent stuck in the belly little at the top	1
the advertising production line	6
the business of creativity	16
the difficulty with diversity	4
the dream vs realism	1
the economical barrier of advertsing as a career	2
the price of black talent	8
The right representation	4
titles and years of experience matter	3
Transparency	2
Truly inclusive work	5
Understanding of diversity influences recruitment	5
unknown industry	3
value of my opinion	20
Wanting a system we dont understand	4
wanting empowerment but not sure what it looks like	5
we all part of the issue	2
We are divided	2
we want to see a change	2
what diversity isnt	3
what i benefit vs what the business benefits	2
when is it enough?	1
who i am is not enough	3
who is staying to change the system	2
Work twice as hard to keep job	4
workforce planning	5
You are who you hire	3
Youthful outlook less jaded	3

## APPENDIX 4: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



06 August 2019

Thandolwethu Mafongosi

Dear Thandolwethu

*Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.*

*You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.*

*Please note that approval is granted based on the methodology and research instruments provided in the application. If there is any deviation change or addition to the research method or tools, a supplementary application for approval must be obtained*

*We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.*

*Kind Regards*

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee