A study on Capetonian individuals who wear vintage fashion and how they are perceived according to their peers and industry experts.

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I hereby declare that the research report submitted for the Honours in B.Com Strategic Brand management degree at The Independent Institute of education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another university or higher education institution for degree purposes.

ABSTRACT

Vintage fashion is a global trend. Little is known about the perceptions that exist of the individuals who choose to wear vintage, as well as about the personal brand identity that these individuals create for themselves by wearing vintage fashion. Based on previous studies it is put forward by the Association for Consumer Research that vintage purchases require expertise that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury purchases (Morgan Ward, 2015, p. 143).

This research approaches the perceptions of students as well industry experts in Cape Town to examine their perceptions on the knowledge and expertise of fashion of individuals who choose to wear vintage. Data was collected using semi- structured interviews and questionnaires as it allows respondents to elaborate on their responses and provide more detail on their opinions. It was found from this research that individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived as being stylish by their peers and industry experts. They appear to create a distinct personal brand identity through what they wear. These individuals are perceived as knowledgeable about fashion, however they are not necessarily perceived as having a higher expertise of fashion because all fashion choices are said to require the same level of expertise.

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1.   CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research paper reports on an exploratory, qualitative study into the perceptions of Capetonian students and fashion industry experts on individuals who wear vintage fashion. The aim of this study was to draw conclusions on the perceptions of these individuals, their personal brand identities that they create as well as on whether individuals who wear vintage fashions are knowledgeable about fashion. The fashion and style knowledge of these students and experts was used to draw conclusions on the fashion and style knowledge of the individuals who wear vintage fashion.

1.1 Background and orientation

Fashionable teens seem to be feeling a nostalgia for a time before any of today's style pin-ups were born, with looks that are presented via sports cultures and the reappropriation of labels that seem to be past their prime. Individuals today are seen combining designer brands with retro sportswear and vintage pieces to create looks that represent a different era. Combinations of limited edition Adidas track tops from the Nineties with 2017 ready-to wear pieces are the choices of the urban youth today (Rixhon, 2017:32-33).

Vintage in terms of fashion refers to clothing that is twenty years or older, that has been produced in the period between the 1920s and the 1980s. (Cervellon, 2012:4) Vintage clothing is being worn by individuals over and above the latest fashion trends currently being sold in stores. Vintage fashion is not necessarily being worn because individuals cannot afford new fashions, but rather as a style choice which sends a message about the individual who wears the clothing.
 This study has investigated the perceptions held by Capetonian students, aged 19-24 years, as well as fashion industry experts on individuals who wear vintage fashion and how they are perceived.

Within existing research, it is revealed that individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived as having a higher expertise of fashion when compared to individuals who purchase current fashions or luxury clothing items- as the wearer thereof has limited options of choice. Former studies have found that the purchase of vintage fashions requires an expertise of fashion that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury

purchases. It then follows that wearing vintage fashion offers a signal not of status or of wealth, but of area-specific cultural capital. (Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, 2015:142-146)

Ultimately this research aimed to draw conclusions on whether wearing vintage fashion achieves the goal of creating a personal brand identity for the individuals who wear it, as well as assessing whether or not people wearing vintage fashion are perceived as having a higher fashion expertise than those who simply purchase the latest trends from stores. The research has also investigated the type of message that is being sent by individuals who choose to wear vintage fashions. Vintage fashion is a trend that is followed by individuals globally and it has been evident that the trend is being followed in Cape Town as there are many individuals who are sporting vintage fashion daily in the streets of this city.

1.2 Rationale

Vintage fashion trends and brands in everyday outfits and clothing are becoming noticeably more popular. Vintage has been a large trend in clothing since the last decade all over the world, leading to major fashion brands launching collections inspired by vintage pieces or luxury haute couture houses digging into their archives to revive past designs. As the market for vintage fashion or vintage inspired fashion develops, little is known on the profile of the consumer and the motivations to purchase vintage (Cervellon, 2012:4). Personally, the researcher was interested to understand how individuals perceive vintage fashions as the topic was of relevance to the researchers' fashion choices and interests.

This study was based on consumer perceptions and is of industry relevance to any brand managers who are considering brand extension techniques to remain relevant and target what customers are looking for in terms of vintage trends. The study is also important to any individuals who wish to develop their own personal brand identity as well as explore different fashion trends and understand the message that they are portraying through their fashion choices, thereby generating new knowledge in terms of how vintage fashion is perceived. Through understanding the perceptions of students and industry experts in Cape Town with regards to vintage fashion the study will also be of industry relevance to any person situated in Cape Town who is looking at starting a vintage store, online business or who wants their brand to remain relevant to vintage trends over time.

1.3 Problem statement

Vintage fashion and branding has a unique aspect not only to the individual garment and brands that reflect them but also to the individuals who wear them. Modern vintage consumers' fashion sense may be misunderstood by their peers as being tacky, poor, lazy or even backward as they seem to be oblivious to the latest fashion trends and styles that are currently being worn.

Based on previous studies conducted it is put forward by the Association for Consumer Research that vintage purchases require expertise that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury purchases (Morgan Ward, 2015, p. 143).

With relevance to this academic theory the researcher found it important to additionally understand vintage fashion and vintage trends to clearly understand what it is that propels consumers to wear vintage fashion, as well as how their personal brand identity that is created through the wearing of these clothes is perceived by others.

1.3.1 Why is the problem worth investigating?

Through the research of vintage fashion the researcher aimed to explain and understand how individuals who express themselves through vintage styles and fashions are perceived by students and industry experts in Cape Town in terms of their knowledge and expertise of fashion. Through this research, the researcher has clarified how individuals who wear vintage fashion are perceived by other individuals, if they are misunderstood, and how their fashion choices reflect their personal brand identities. Ultimately, the research aimed to discover whether individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived as having a higher expertise of fashion by the industry experts and Capetonian students, as well as what their personal identity that is being created is.

1.3.2 Research question

According to their expertise of fashion and style, how are Capetonian individuals who wear vintage fashion perceived by their peers and industry experts?

1.3.3 Objectives

1.   To discover the perceptions of Capetonian students aged 19-24 as well as industry experts on individuals who wear vintage fashion.
2.   To discover the perceptions of Capetonian students aged 19-24 as well as industry experts on the identity created by individuals who wear vintage fashion.
3.   To draw conclusions on whether or not individuals who wear vintage fashion are misunderstood, or are perceived to have a greater expertise of fashion and style through the curation of vintage fashion ensembles.

1.4 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to explain and understand how individuals who express themselves through vintage styles and fashions are perceived by students and industry experts in Cape Town in terms of their knowledge and expertise of fashion.

1.5 Overview of Research Methodology

The research used a methodological paradigm, and was conducted in Cape Town using respondents from private higher educational institutions as well as fashion industry experts. Qualitative data was collected by means of semi-structured individual interviews and questionnaires. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. A detailed discussion on methodology will follow in Chapter 3.

1.6 Structure of the paper

This paper will be structured in chapter format. Each chapter will contain a separate stage of the research process that was conducted.

The chapter that follows, chapter 2- outlines the literature review of the study. The theoretical foundation of the study is explained in the literature review, and the prior literature that is available on this research is analysed.

Chapter 3 contains the research methodology that was used to carry out the primary data collection and analysis for this study. Chapter 4, findings and discussion, provides the details of the findings of the primary research that was conducted and links it to the prior literature that was collected. Finally, chapter 5, conclusion, provides answers to the research question, as well as a conclusion to the study. The ethical considerations of this study are addressed in this chapter as well.

2.   CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Paradigm

As this is an exploratory study on the perceptions of students as well as industry experts in Cape Town on individuals who wear vintage fashion and why they wear it, this study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm (Thomas, 2010: 295-298). This paradigm assumes that reality is a state of flux, dependant on individuals' internal experiences of reality. Interpretivists aim to gain an in depth understanding of multiple realities, which is in line with the study- aimed at gaining an understanding of the perceptions of students in Cape Town as well as the perceptions of industry leaders in Cape Town on individuals who wear vintage fashion.

Due to the nature of this study, a methodological approach to the research will be taken. The methodological approach is suitable as the data collected is subjective and of a qualitative nature, as it deals with the perceptions of students and experts in Cape Town (Thomas, 2010: 298).

The research methods will also approach questions through an anti-positivist view, as it relies on the understanding and opinions of respondents to draw conclusions.

2.1 Theoretical foundation

Firstly, in order to understand the main aspects of the study, it is necessary to understand the notions of consumers' buying motives, as well as that of personal branding and cultural consumption.

CONSUMER BUYING MOTIVATIONS

Motivation is defined as the driving force within individuals that impels them into action. (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1994) It is important to understand the motives for purchasing items in order to understand why individuals would be motivated to purchase vintage fashion items.

Joannis proposes three main categories of motivation: Joanis (in Kaufmann, 1993)

-Hedonist motivations

These motivations drive individuals and if positive allow them to enjoy life's pleasures. The consumer seeks to meet their personal satisfaction in order to comfort themselves.

-Oblation motivations

The consumer aims to do good and give pleasure to others, such as through charitable gestures or buying gifts for others.

-Self-expression motivations

These motivations drive the individual seeking for personal accomplishment adding to their search for a meaningful and satisfactory existence. They drive the consumer to express who they are. (Chaigne, 2014:17)

PERSONAL BRANDING

Personal branding was brought forward by Tom Peters in 1997. Tom Peters published an article titled 'Fast Company' in which he stated "We are CEO's of our own companies: Me Inc. He then went on to emphasize that in order to be in business today, our most important job is to be the head marketer for the brand called 'You!' (Peters, 1997:83) Personal branding is a process through which individuals are able to differentiate themselves from others by identifying and expressing their unique value proposition, and then leveraging it with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific personal goal. In this way, individuals can enhance their recognition, reputation and credibility, as well as build self-confidence. (Schawbel, 2010)

The following three steps are proposed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler in order to build, manage and enhance a personal brand in the business context:

1. Self-evaluation: The text encourages individuals to take an honest look at themselves. Look at your skills, personality and unique selling proposition. Ask yourself a few questions, such as what you value above all else? What you represent? What is unique about you?

2. Visual Identity: What channels will be used to convey your brand, and how will you express and live your brand?

3. Brand Positioning: In order to position yourself, the following questions should be answered: Who needs to know about you? What differentiated you from others in your field or space? Decide how you would like others to see you. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2011:425)

While these steps propose methods to enhance personal brands in the business context, they could be applied to almost any context to enhance an aspect of an individual's brand. When applied to an individual's brand identity with regards to fashion and what they wear, a clear understanding of the motives as to why people wear the clothing that they choose can be found.

CULTURAL CONSUMPTION

Cultural consumption is considered a social activity where what and how we consume may be an indication of who we are or who we would like to be. It can be used to create and maintain a certain lifestyle. It may provide a symbolic means to celebrate success and show achievement and can show and maintain social differences and social conditions. (Catalani and Chung, 2014:4)

As the buying of vintage clothing can be a form of cultural consumption, it is necessary to understand this theory as individuals who are purchasing vintage fashions are doing so in order to portray who they are and prove their social conditions and social differences.

2.2 Review of current literature

2.2.1 FASHION

According to Catalani and Chung, fashion is considered to be clothing that carries social power and so is subject to change both in terms of aesthetics but also in terms of perception (2014:3). This statement has been proven in many ways; through the development of clothing from a utility-based necessity, to a statement carrying accessory that is easily disposable, and easily replaceable, as well as through the changing trends and social depictions associated with what individuals are wearing.

Fashion is a way through which both personal as well as class identity can be expressed. Fashion can be seen as a form of class identification, as well as a form of self-expression. (Guy, 2015:10) As stated in this source, class identification implies conformity, whilst self-

expression implies individualism. This contradiction poses an accurate suggestion about fashion, stating that fashion consists of a double function of revolving with a given circle, whilst at the same time adding emphasis on yourself as being separate from others.

The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard posed that the idea of making oneself unique or moulding oneself to be different is founded on a 'code of differences'. This code of differences is composed of marginal differences which establish signs according to a hierarchy. These signs are not based on objects or on goods, but are based on differences (Baudrillard, 1998:90). When applied to fashion, it is not necessarily the fashion or a trend that is the 'code of difference', but rather it is the expression of an understanding of the fashion or trend that is the code of difference. (Guy, 2015:11)

By understanding this concept, it can be applied to the trend of vintage fashion. It is not the actual items of clothing that are worn that depicts the difference, but rather the understanding of vintage fashion expressed through the way the items are worn that creates the difference in individuals. This difference will be explored through qualitative research interviews of Capetonian students on their perceptions of individuals who wear vintage fashion.

2.2.2 VINTAGE VS. SECOND-HAND

Vintage fashion has been a large trend over the past decade. Through research of previous literature, it is apparent that there is a misconception between the term vintage and second-hand.

The word vintage was previously used to in wine making to represent a year's wine harvest, as well as the age of the wine with the year in which it was made. The term Vintage has now been largely recognised by the fashion industry and is used to define a rare and authentic piece that represents the style of a particular couturier or era (Gerval, 2010).

Another definition that is more widely used, defines clothing as vintage if it was produced between the period of the 1920's and the 1980's. Vintage clothing is usually clothing that is 20 years old or older. Clothing produced before the 1920's is considered antiques, while clothing produced after the 1980's is not considered vintage yet but are considered to be contemporary fashion (Cornett, 2010).

Vintage carries the following two characteristics which add to the popularity thereof.

A vintage product is a rare product which satisfies the need for distinction. This is especially true as vintage items have been produced a long time ago and so are not available in large numbers or in many places. This makes the items found distinct as others cannot find them. A vintage product is also characterised as being an authentic item. Authentic goods from a consumer's perspective are when the consumer perceives the goods as real, genuine and true- assuring they are not only claimed as authentic for the purpose of a profit (Chaigne, 2014:21-22).

With this in mind it is clear that second-hand clothing is a completely different type of fashion or trend. Second-hand clothing is as it is stated, clothing that was previously owned by other people. The difference between second-hand clothing and vintage clothing is the time element. Vintage clothing can be second-hand, but second-hand clothing is not necessarily considered vintage. Whether second-hand clothing is considered to be vintage or not, is determined by its age, and not by the fact that it has been used. Second-hand clothing can be passed on from the previous year but still represents modern fashion. When looking at vintage fashion, it is important to remember that it should be authentic, produced between the 1920's and 1980's, and should represent the style of a particular era.

At the same time, it is debateable whether clothing produced in the 2000's is considered to be vintage or not. If applied to the above definition, which is almost 7 years old, it would not be considered vintage. However, as the 2000's had a very specific fashion trend to it, with identifiable styles and clothing that screamed its era, it would be almost ignorant to not consider the fashions of the 2000's as vintage as well.

2.2.3 THE VINTAGE CONSUMER

The consumer of vintage fashion is what this research aims to understand. The vintage consumer does not belong to a particular market segment, but rather is any individual seeking to find clothing that represents another era and that is authentic.

Vintage is consumed by young individuals following fashion trends, by stylists and designers using it as a reference point for inspiration, and by old customers who are looking for a good price or who are focusing on nostalgia and history (Meraviglia, 2014:15).

A study conducted on fashion signals and symbols shows that the vintage fashion consumer signals status through the wearing of vintage fashions. It is said that through their non-conforming behaviour and even through the intentional targeting of non-luxury products, vintage consumers are showing a status alternative to just purchasing luxury items. Status is therefore implied by the potential social cost of wearing vintage fashion, rather than the monetary cost of the product (Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, 2015:144).

When comparing vintage fashion to luxury fashion items, it was found that vintage fashion signals a stronger area-specific fashion cultural capital than the purchase of luxury items. Area specific fashion cultural capital refers to the social assets of an area, being their intellect, speech, dress and more that promote social status relative to others' social location.

When contrasted to purchasing luxury fashion items, it was found that confidence in fashion knowledge is a key distinguishing factor between the consumers of the two. Through these findings, it is claimed that when buying vintage fashion, consumers cannot rely only on trends and price to determine what is fashionable and what is not. For these reasons, it is said that consumers of vintage fashion require an expertise of fashion that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury items, leaving vintage fashion consumers to feel more confident in their fashion cultural capital (Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, 2015:144).

2.2.4 MOTIVES TO PURCHASE VINTAGE
There are many motivations to the purchase of vintage clothing, while many motivations are personal to each individual, they can be categorised into 5 motives to purchase vintage items as brought forward by the study of specific antecedents to consumers' purchase of vintage fashion vs. second-hand or recycled fashion by Marie-Cecile Cervellon.

-Fashion involvement
Fashion involvement is defined as the extent to which the consumer views fashion clothing as personally relevant. The more important fashion is in an individual's life, the higher the fashion involvement in the product. Fashion involvement has a direct link to being informed and up to date on fashion trends. It then follows that, as long as vintage fashion is a trend, fashion involvement should motivate the intention to purchase vintage fashions (Cervellon,

Harms and Carey, 2012:5). When selecting respondents to interview for the study, I will select them based on their perceived fashion involvement from the outset. This will ensure that the respondents are interested in the topic and will provide insightful and relevant responses.

-Nostalgia

Many sources refer to nostalgia being a motivation for the purchase of vintage fashion. Many individuals call back good memories when presented with vintage products produced during their lifetime (Cervellon, Harms and Carey, 2012:7). As vintage clothing usually represents the fashion of a particular era, feelings of nostalgia can be set off just by looking at a particular style of coat or sweater. Therefore, it is said that the greater the nostalgia proneness, the higher the motivation to purchase vintage items.

-Uniqueness

As individuals, people seek to stand out and to differentiate themselves from others; each individual seeks to enhance their social and self-image through the acquisition and use of consumer goods.

In a study on vintage clothing and contemporary consumption, individuality was pointed out as one of the main reasons for wearing vintage clothing (Cervellon, Harms and Carey, 2012:8). Individuals who wear vintage fashion do so not because they have to, but because they have the desire not to conform to the trends of modern fashion. Through not conforming to these fashion trends, individuals seek to communicate their individual identity. Not only is it the desire to be unique as an individual, but it is also the aspect of each garment being unique that motivates the purchase or vintage items-as others cannot replicate it from stores as it is an item from a different era.

-Reaction to mass production

Vintage fashion can also be seen as a reaction by consumers to the mass production of modern fast fashion. Fast fashion and mass production does not have the aspect of individuality to it that vintage fashion has, and as a result fast fashion has ultimately caused the problem for the search for personalisation (Meraviglia, 2014:14).

However the reaction to fast fashion and mass production of clothing is also based on the ethical concerns of the fashion industry. Fast fashion is associated with negative aspects such as sweat shops, underpaid and overworked workers, as well as the pollution caused

by mass bleaching, dyeing and printing. For some consumers, the purchase of vintage fashion is a reaction against such unethical practices associated with fast fashion.

-Environmental-friendly proneness

The eco-fashion movement as well as an increased concern for the environment and how it impacts the environment, society and their health can motivate consumers to purchase vintage clothing. Unless there is a deeply engrained motive to save the environment, it is not a primary driver of the purchase of vintage fashion; however it does motivate consumers, or at least causes a feel-good motive that accompanies the purchase of vintage clothing.

With these motivations in mind, this study will better allow the reader to understand what it is that drives the purchase of vintage fashion, and as such will allow the researcher to determine if the perceptions of Capetonian students on the individuals who follow this fashion trend, will correlate with the motivations as stated above behind their purchases of vintage fashion.

2.3 Conclusion

Vintage fashion is a multifaceted trend of the past decade. Individuals are motivated to self-express, and through these self-expressive motivations purchase fashion items of clothing. Every individual desires to be noticed and identified a certain way. This identification is communicated through an individual's expression of their own personal brand which they create and maintain. Specifically, this study applies personal branding to the personal brand that an individual wishes to portray through the clothing that they choose to wear, more specifically to this study, through vintage clothing.

The vintage consumer is said to signal status not through the purchase of luxury items, but rather through the purchase of vintage fashion. The vintage consumer also seeks to portray non-conforming behaviour through their choice of vintage fashion, creating an identity of individuality through non-conformism. Not only is the vintage consumer perceived to have an expert knowledge on fashion, but the vintage consumer is also said to have a higher fashion confidence than others who choose to follow modern luxury fashion trends and fast fashion trends.

There are five motives behind the purchases of vintage fashion. These motives provide the reasons why individuals choose to wear clothing of an alternate era. The first motive is the

consumer's fashion involvement, showing that the higher the fashion involvement of the consumer the more likely they are to purchase vintage clothing. Secondly, the more nostalgia proneness present in the garment, the more likely the consumer is to purchase vintage fashions. Uniqueness, one of the main motives for vintage fashion, appeals to the consumer's desire to find unique pieces that are not available to the masses, as well as their desire to be perceived as a unique individual that does not conform to modern trends and the fast fashion culture that is currently emerging in all department stores. Other motivations to the purchase of vintage fashion include environmentally friendly proneness, as well as purchasing vintage as a reaction to the mass production of clothing.

It is clarified from the above literature that vintage fashion is a growing trend which appeals to consumers' desire for individuality. The vintage consumer is perceived as being knowledgeable in fashion, as well as having a distinct individuality through their confidence in not following the norm with which modern trends are aesthetic now. Vintage consumers successfully achieve their own personal brand identities with regards to how they visually present themselves.

3.   CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to their expertise of fashion and style, how are Capetonian individuals who wear vintage fashion perceived by their peers and industry experts?

This research aims to understand the perceptions of Capetonian students and industry experts on individuals who wear vintage fashions. The research additionally aims to discover if these individuals that are wearing vintage fashions are misunderstood. Finally, the research investigates whether these students and industry experts perceive the individuals who wear vintage fashion to be knowledgeable in fashion, and whether they have a higher fashion expertise than individuals who select luxury items or the latest modern trends.

3.1 Research paradigm

Paradigm

As this is an exploratory study on the perceptions of students as well as industry experts in Cape Town on individuals who wear vintage fashion and why they wear it, this study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm (Thomas, 2010: 295-298). This paradigm assumes that reality is a state of flux, dependant on individuals' internal experiences of reality. Interpretivists aim to gain an in depth understanding of multiple realities, which is in line with the study- aimed at gaining an understanding of the perceptions of students in Cape Town as well as the perceptions of industry leaders in Cape Town on individuals who wear vintage fashion.

Due to the nature of this study, a methodological approach to the research will be taken. The methodological approach is suitable as the data collected is subjective and of a qualitative nature, as it deals with the perceptions of students and experts in Cape Town (Thomas, 2010: 298).
The research methods will also approach questions through an anti-positivist view, as it relies on the understanding and opinions of respondents to draw conclusions.

3.2 Research approach

This study will use a qualitative conceptual approach to address the research purpose of this study. Qualitative research is naturalistic, meaning that it attempts to study the everyday life of groups of people or communities in their natural setting (Thomas, 2010;303). Qualitative research involves an interpretivist approach to its subject matter and attempts to understand and interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meaning that people bring to them; Domegan and Fleming in (Thomas, 2010;302). The research that will take place requires the opinions of individuals in Cape Town on their personal interpretations and perceptions of individuals who choose to wear vintage fashion. To reach conclusions on each of the objectives, I will need to interpret all of the opinions and perceptions received from these individuals in the context of the meaning that the individuals bring to them.

Qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts in which they live; Myers in (Thomas, 2010;302).
As I aim to understand the perceptions of individuals on people who choose to wear vintage fashion in Cape Town, I aim to understand the social context in which these individuals choose to live, or rather dress in. It is for these reasons that the research is suited to a qualitative conceptual approach.

3.3 Research design

This study will be situated within the methodological paradigm as the researcher wishes to explore the perceptions of Capetonian students and industry experts on individuals who wear vintage fashion. As my study will be of a qualitative nature, an interpretive approach will be taken as vintage fashion will be perceived differently by each respondent that I will be interviewing. This is also true as my research method will approach questions through such an anti-positivist view as it relies on the understanding and opinions of respondents. Through discovering how people make sense of their social worlds in their settings as well as with research that will be based on the nature of reality and the belief that there are multiple realities; this research will be carried out in the context of an ontological position as the researcher understands that many social realities exist due to varying human experience (Thomas, 2010; 298).

The perceptions of Capetonian students and industry leaders on individuals who wear vintage fashion will be an exploratory study as there are very few earlier studies to refer to and the aim is to gain insights and further investigation into the perceptions of individuals who choose to wear vintage fashions (Lynn-library.libguides.com, 2017). A deductive approach to the research will be taken, as this research is aimed at testing the theory put forward in the literature review by Ward, Townsend and Nowlan (2015); that individuals who wear vintage fashion have a higher expertise of fashion that is not necessarily required when purchasing luxury fashion items.

However, when addressing the research objectives that deal with the perceptions of the personal brand identity created by the individuals who wear vintage fashion, as well as the message that is portrayed by them, an inductive approach to the research will be taken. This holds as this approach is concerned with the generation of a new theory from the data (Gabriel, 2013).

The use of survey research will be the most appropriate research design for this study as it allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the specific respondents for the study. Through interviews consisting of a specific set of questions the perceptions and opinions of respondents will be recorded and analysed.

An empirical study will be executed through this research. This is because of the collection and analysis of primary data that will take place based on direct observations or experiences in the field of study- being the observation of people on individuals who choose to wear vintage fashion (Betterthesis.dk, n.d.). The data that is required will be collected from a representative subset of the Capetonian student population as well as the industry expert population; making this a cross- sectional research design.

3.4 Population and sampling

A sample of about forty students will be taken at each of the institutions and can range of students between the ages of 19-24 years. The specific course matter that the students are studying is not applicable as the research deals with the opinions of students in Cape Town and so can be any student at either of these two selected institutions specialising in branding, fashion, design and business. The institutions are also selected through convenience sampling as they are easily accessible to the researcher.

The interviews with fashion industry experts will make use of convenience sampling as well. Whichever industry experts in Cape Town are accessible to the researcher and agree to be interviewed by the researcher will be used and selected using convenience sampling. A sample size consisting of the expertise of two fashion industry experts is required for this research and will be gathered using interviews between the researchers and the respondent.

POPULATION

The population of this study will consist of two broad populations which will be refined through sampling. The first population, will be that of students studying branding, design, business or fashion at a private higher education institution in Cape Town, ages 19-24, living and studying in Cape Town. The second population will be that of fashion industry experts living and working in Cape Town.

The sample will be chosen using the sampling method of choice and will consist of 40 students in total. The researcher aims to interview a sample of at least two fashion industry experts on their opinions and perspectives on the research.

SAMPLING

The unit of analysis in this research will be the individuals whose perspectives and opinions are being recorded. More specifically, the students aged 19-24 as well as the industry experts living in Cape Town. The research is based on their individual perceptions and opinions and so the unit of measurement will be the individual.

The sampling method that will be used is a non-probability sampling method. This means that the likelihood for the selection of candidates is unknown and for this reason the sample is not necessarily a representative of the larger population (Blackstone, 2017). The research will be executed using the convenience sampling method. This sampling method allows the researcher to collect data from people or elements to which they have the most convenient access, and is most useful in exploratory research (Blackstone, 2017).

Convenience sampling will be most appropriate to this study as it allows the researcher access to any student studying at any of the given institutions and who are willing and able to complete the questionnaire that will be handed to them. As there are time constraints to this research and because the research will deal with the opinions of individuals, convenience sampling will be the most appropriate sampling method as it allows the

researcher access to the sample at any convenient time to the researcher. The researcher seeks to understand the perceptions and opinions of students in Cape Town, and so the sampling is open to any and every student who wishes to take part in the study.

3.5 Data collection

Two data collection methods will be used in this study namely; hardcopy questionnaires as well as semi- structured interviews recorded with sound recorders.

Interviews

Two interviews will first be conducted with fashion industry experts in Cape Town. These experts will be sourced from universities who focus on fashion, and will preferably be a lecturer with a higher qualification in fashion. Another expert will be sourced directly from the vintage industry and will preferably own a vintage store in Cape Town or collect vintage clothing for sale. The researcher will ask the respondents a series of questions relating to fashion in Cape Town, vintage fashion in the fashion industry as well as on their perceptions of individuals who choose to wear vintage fashion and the image that it portrays of the individuals. An appendix of images of individuals wearing vintage fashion will also be handed to the respondents to refer to if they wish to do so. The use of interviews is applicable to this research as it allows the researcher to engage with the respondent and discuss the subject matter in depth, providing a clear understanding of the responses as well as opinions of the respondent.

Questionnaires

40 students will be handed a questionnaire each along with an appendix of images of individuals wearing vintage fashions. The questionnaires ask the respondents on their opinions as well as perceptions of the individuals who wear vintage fashions. The questionnaires will be simple and should consist of around 10-15 questions each, making the questionnaires quick and convenient for respondents to complete. The questions will be aimed at understanding the perceptions of the individuals who complete them. Questions will range from asking respondents their opinions on what vintage fashion is, how people relay their personal identity through fashion as well as on opinions of the ensemble choices in the images provided, to asking the respondents how they perceive the fashion expertise of the individuals who wear vintage fashion. The questions will lead

on to the final and ultimate question relating to the perceptions of respondents on the fashion expertise of the individuals in the images.

Questionnaires are best suited to this research as they allow the researcher to guide the questions into the desired direction, and they are convenient to complete as well as analyse.

3.6 Data analysis

The data analysis method that will be used by the researcher to analyse the qualitative data collected is the thematic approach to data analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as: "A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Sites.google.com, 2017:79). This method will allow the researcher to move from a broad reading of the data collected towards finding patterns of themes within the data and framing the specific research question (Balkissoon, 2017). This method is causative as themes emerge from the data collected and are not imposed on or predetermined by the researcher.

Thematic analysis aims to analyse and draw common themes from the narrative materials of the data collected. The thematic approach forms itself on the philosophical background of a realist perspective, this is because it leaves room for interpretation by the researcher and is analysing human scenarios. The analysis process uses description and interpretation, both of inductive and deductive natures. The method emphasizes context and links it to the highlighted themes, drawing a non-linear analysis with which to answer the research question (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2017:399). This method is best suited to this research as it allows the data to lead the themes which are used for analysis. This guides the researcher to summarize the findings in a logical manner, from the responses gained.

3.7 Limitations and delimitations

The limitations to this study include the time constraints given which do not allow the researcher to use a representative sample of the population. Due to the non-probability method of convenience sampling used, the data collected cannot represent the entire population. The study is also limited to such a specific region, being the Cape Town region. If the study could be applied to the entire South African population it would impact more greatly on the field of knowledge that it is adding to. Further research into the topic

potentially at master's level could lift this limitation. Another limitation to the conclusion was the misunderstanding of the vintage as a brand question in the questionnaire that was distributed for the purpose of this study. This misunderstanding could cause the data to be misinterpreted and wrong conclusions to be drawn in the study.

For this study, the researcher investigated the perceptions of educated individuals, and not of uneducated individuals. This was because the responses would be more coherent and better understood by educated respondents. Uneducated respondents may struggle with many of the concepts highlighted in the study, and so their responses would not necessarily be useful.

4. CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter details the findings from the data collection described in chapter 3. The interviews, as well as 40 questionnaires were analysed using thematic analysis, and the findings are discussed below.

Findings

The data below is analysed using the main themes that are prominent in both previous literature as well as in the data collected.

These main themes are fashion, vintage vs. second hand, motives to purchase vintage and the vintage consumer.

4.1 Interview findings

The findings below are extracted from the responses of the two semi-structured interviews that were held with fashion industry experts in Cape Town. The full interviews can be found under appendix D.

The first expert, Marinella Avvakoumides, is a fashion design history lecturer and head of department at a private higher educational institute in Cape Town, with a bachelor's of technology degree in fashion design and technology. Marinella has been in the fashion education industry for 11 years.

The second fashion industry expert, Barbara Talbot, is the creator and owner of Babette clothing boutique which has been open in Cape Town for about 7 years. Babette stocks a wide range of vintage and new clothing items, however it started off with only stocking vintage fashions. Barbara has a degree in fashion design.

Fashion

The first industry expert stated that she herself would not wear vintage fashion "As she is not invested in those history pieces", however she added that she feels that an individual has to have a particular flair about them in order to pull an outfit with vintage together.

The second industry expert responded that she herself does wear vintage fashions.

As stated in prior literature, fashion is clothing that carries social power (Catalani and Chung, 2014:3). It is a means of creating both personal, as well as class identity (Guy, 2015:10). Both industry experts added that individuals who wear vintage fashions have a distinguishing flair, or look about them. This agrees with prior literature that fashion is

clothing that carries social power, that it created a personal, as well as a class identity for the individual who wears it.

"…but vintage people tend to have a certain look and you can pick it up."

"…You have to have the ability to take a 1960s dress and wear it with your current bag, and current shoes and make it work- and that comes with a specific persona, with a specific type of person who can make it work."

As stated I prior literature the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard posed that the idea of making oneself unique or moulding oneself to be different is founded on a 'code of differences'. This code of differences is composed of marginal differences which establish signs according to a hierarchy. These signs are not based on objects or on goods, but are based on differences (Baudrillard, 1998:90).

When asking both industry experts if they feel that individuals who wear vintage fashions are misunderstood, they both had varying responses. The first industry expert stated that it is highly dependent on context whether the individuals will be misunderstood or not. The audience is the key determining factor of whether they will be misunderstood or not.

"…It depends on where you are with that outfit. Go to a Berlin fashion show and you will look fancy as you are wearing something so unique. Go to a small town high school reunion and people will wonder what you are wearing as it is so strange."

The second industry expert stated that she believes that not only individuals who wear vintage fashions are misunderstood, but that fashion in general can be misunderstood depending on what the individuals' taste is.

"…some people just won't understand it ever. So I think that there is a fine line in wearing vintage fashions… I think that people will always be misunderstood just because there are so many different types of people."

Applying these responses to prior literature allows clarity that the 'code of differences' that are used when making oneself unique may almost always lead to the social cost of being misunderstood.

Both industry experts believe that individuals can create a personal brand identity through what they wear.

"…Absolutely, whether it is done subconsciously or consciously, you create a brand identity by what you wear and by what you do not wear."

"…Whether you are aware of it or not, everybody has a personal brand identity that they create for themselves by fashion."

Both industry experts believe that fashion can create a personal brand identity for the individual who wears it. The experts additionally added that individuals can be classified into a class due to what they are wearing as specific people are prone to wear specific types of fashions. The experts stated that all individuals in terms of fashion are misunderstood, and that it is highly dependent on the context as well as the audience whether or not that individual will be misunderstood for their fashion choices.

Vintage vs. Second hand

Being industry experts, both respondents were fully aware of what vintage fashion is. The contrast between vintage fashion and second hand fashion was drawn upon by both experts.

"…Vintage can be anything …well it is supposed to be anything that is 20 years or older and from a certain era usually but I think that these days because it has started being more and more trendy a lot of people call second-hand things vintage-which isn't actually correct."

The industry experts stated that if an individual is wearing vintage, it may be difficult to tell which items are vintage unless a closer look is taken. One expert added by stating that usually the individual that is wearing vintage has a certain look about them, and so it makes it more obvious to see which items are truly vintage.

The industry expert stated that to develop an eye to distinguish vintage pieces from retro or modern pieces, the first clue would probably be in the fabric used- the cut, and the design as well. As an example, the expert used an 80s-bomber jacket, which would originally have exaggerated shoulder pads, whereas the modern version would probably be more diluted.

It was brought to light by one of the industry experts interviewed that we are currently living in a generation where 'anything goes'. This makes it even more acceptable for individuals to wear whatever it is that they like without questioning. It is then stated that this makes it even more difficult to distinguish authentic vintage pieces.

As is stated in prior literature, a vintage product is a rare product which satisfies the need for distinction (Chaigne, 2014:21-22). The increased difficulty to distinguish vintage pieces, combined with modern pieces that have been produced to look vintage, could influence

the need for distinction that is present in individuals who are wearing vintage fashions. Without this distinction, vintage may become less satisfying for the wearer thereof.

Motives to purchase vintage

Both industry experts touched on the motives as to why individuals purchase vintage fashions. The experts stated that they find that individuals purchase vintage fashions due to the uniqueness associated with the items, as well as that it created for the individual wearing it. Vintage pieces are not mass made and so the wearer has the luxury of knowing that they are the only individual wearing such a piece.

"…I think it's usually about finding yourself and expressing yourself through fashion and I think that one-of-a-kind pieces allow you to do that."

"I think it's price that also plays a role. It's usually the younger people still trying to express themselves and they usually need to save a buck here and there and vintage can sometimes be affordable, however not always."

Another factor brought forward was that individuals purchase vintage fashions because of the price as well. One of the experts interviewed states that the great thing about vintage fashion is the price, however, she adds- that with the rise in popularity so too is there a rise in the price.

Another motive touched on by the industry experts was that vintage is worn as a response to fast fashion.

"This brings light to the opposite of fast fashion, people considering things that already exist, rather than buying into fast fashion because people today wear clothing for one occasion only and they do not realise what the impact is of this fast fashion."

Nostalgia too was touched on by the industry experts, stating that even if some people are very nostalgic, that they express it in different ways. Some people collect trinkets of the past and some people wear vintage fashion. Nostalgia would be a motivation for some individuals to wear vintage fashion.

These reasons agree with prior literature as motivations to purchase vintage fashions. From individuals seeking to differentiate themselves with unique pieces, to nostalgia, to price and as a reaction to mass production. It is evident that each motivation is dependent on the individual and their beliefs and priorities. However, if an individual is wearing vintage fashion, then it is probably motivated by one or more of the above reasons.

The vintage consumer

When asked if they think that individuals who wear vintage fashion are knowledgeable about fashion, the industry experts both implied that even though they do think that these consumers may be knowledgeable about vintage fashion, that it is not specific only to this group of consumers. One fashion industry expert stated that not everybody is knowledgeable about fashion. She states that some people have a natural flare to put things together. She continues about how she meets people who do not have an idea about the fashion industry but who have an amazing ability to put things together.

"…It's just about having a creative eye."

Another response was "Yes I guess so- it does depend though there is such a variety of people out there."

As is stated in previous literature, vintage consumers are showing a status alternative to just purchasing luxury items. Status is therefore implied by the potential social cost of wearing vintage fashion, rather than the monetary cost of the product (Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, 2015:144). These interview results imply that even though vintage consumers are signalling a status of knowledge in fashion through the non- conforming behaviour of wearing vintage fashion, it does not necessarily make them knowledgeable about fashion. They could just have a creative eye; however, they do definitely have some knowledge of fashion if they are able to curate their ensembles in a fashionable way. These consumers are still signalling a status alternative through the potential social costs of wearing vintage fashions.

When asked if they think that the level of expertise in fashion of individuals who choose to wear vintage fashion is higher than that of individuals who choose to purchase shop ready or luxury brands, the responses were similar. Both industry experts did not necessarily think that the level of fashion expertise is higher for these individuals for the following reasons.

"In the world of social media, it is impossible to not have access to information. If you want to start wearing vintage fashion you are able to follow all of the bloggers on social media, all of the pages etc. You are going to explore it. The stores will give you an idea of how to wear it. It depends on how much people are open and acceptable to learning. Some people, however, are just lucky with knowing how to put all of those things together."

"…It depends. Obviously, it's a different kind of expertise, it's your taste. Maybe those people will be more on trend with what is on the main designer catwalks right now. Vintage fashion people may be more fashion conscious in the sense of what is unique and

different. It really does depend on your taste and what you are into. It does not mean that they are necessarily of a higher expertise than the others. But it does usually mean that they do like fashion more."

Stated by one of the interviewed experts was the fact that we are in an information overload era. Some people may adopt vintage fashion as a fad, but some people may invest in it more, and in such it will become a part of their way of life. They can develop a knack for vintage. She then continuous that it is not necessarily a higher expertise, but a higher willingness to learn.

"…Expertise comes from learning and practice."
These responses do not necessarily agree with the prior literature stated by Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, stating that vintage consumers cannot only rely only on trends and price to determine what is fashionable, and it is for those reasons that consumers of vintage fashion require an expertise that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury items (2015:144). The industry experts believe that while there definitely is a different level of fashion expertise involved in wearing vintage fashions, that it is not necessarily a higher expertise than that of individuals who choose to buy luxury or other types of fashions. The expertise is different, but not necessarily higher.

4.2 Questionnaire findings

The findings below are extracted from the responses of the 40 questionnaires that were distributed to students studying fashion, branding, business or design at a private higher educational institute in Cape Town.

<u>Fashion</u>

- 33 of the respondents stated that they would or do wear vintage fashion, while 7 stated that they do not, or would not wear vintage fashions.

As stated in prior literature, fashion is clothing that carries social power (Catalani and Chung, 2014:3). It is a means of creating both personal, as well as class identity (Guy, 2015:10). The respondents are therefore, in the majority part, willing to create or add to their personal identity through vintage fashion. This additionally, classifies a class identity of the respondents questioned, as they in majority are open to, or are wearing vintage fashions. This attributes a class identity through vintage fashion to majority of students

who are studying branding, design, fashion or business at a private tertiary educational institute in Cape Town.

- 30 respondents do not think that individuals who wear vintage fashion are misunderstood, with 10 stating that they do think that they are misunderstood. Common reasons for being misunderstood were described.

"Often we are told we dress too old, and in an unattractive way."
"Because it is not mainstream."
"Stereotypes- They are mistaken for hipsters."
"It is viewed by many as being backward."
"Not sexy"
"Many people prefer modern garments and judge older aged fashion."
"They can be perceived as old-fashioned."

The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard posed that the idea of making oneself unique or moulding oneself to be different is founded on a 'code of differences'. This code of differences is composed of marginal differences which establish signs according to a hierarchy. These signs are not based on objects or on goods, but are based on differences (Baudrillard, 1998:90).

As stated by Baudrillard in prior literature, the idea of making oneself unique is founded on a 'code of differences' (1998:90). When applied to fashion, it is not necessarily the fashion or a trend that is the 'code of difference', but rather it is the expression of an understanding of the fashion or trend that is the code of difference. (Guy, 2015:11) The respondents who describe individuals who wear vintage fashions as misunderstood may feel that their understanding of the vintage fashion trend, which is their 'code of difference', is not fully appreciated. If all individuals understood the 'code of difference' that is present in vintage fashion, which is their deeper understanding of the vintage fashion trend, then the individuals who wear vintage fashion would not necessarily be misunderstood.

- 10 respondents consider vintage fashion as a brand in its own, while 30 do not consider it as a brand in its own. The reasons are stated below.

Through personal branding, an individual aims to portray a personal brand through the clothing that they choose to wear. Specifically to this study, through the vintage clothing

that they wear. Majority of the respondents, however, do not feel that vintage fashion creates a brand of its own. The respondents stated the following reasons why they do not think that vintage fashion creates a brand of its own.

-"It comes in all variations of style."

-"I see it as a trend rather than a brand."

-"It is a genre of fashion."

-"They are items of clothing not fashion houses."

-"It is a concept or a trend, vintage fashion is a collective term."

-"It is too broad."

-"I believe it is a category, not a brand."

Due to the formulation of this question, it could be possible that the respondents misunderstood the purpose of this question. The researcher is trying to gain insights into whether the respondents feel that vintage fashion creates a personal brand for the individuals who wear it.

The respondents that seemed to have understood the question gave the following reasons for why they thought vintage fashion can create a personal brand for the individual who wears it.

-"It portrays individuality like a brand."

-"It creates a brand for the individual wearing it."

-"Often individuals who wear vintage fashion continuously wear these items and it becomes the brand associated with them."

-"It creates a brand identity for the individual."

-"Personal statement of interest."

Due to the interpretivist paradigm, the researcher is able to allow their own personal feelings and learnings throughput the process to be factored into the research process, and thus conclusions to be drawn through a combination of the results compiled and experience gained. The researcher will draw appropriate conclusions from the above responses to the misunderstood questions through the experience gained from the study as well as from the responses that were understood by the respondents.

Vintage vs. second hand

- Of the 40 respondents asked, only 1 respondent was unaware of what vintage fashion is, the other 39 were aware of what it is.

This result portrays the understanding of respondents of what vintage fashion is. This result provides evidence that the sample of respondents that was selected is aware of and understands what vintage fashion and the trend of vintage fashion is. Without a clear understanding of what vintage fashion is, respondents would not be able to continue with the rest of the questions. For this reason, the researcher provided a brief explanation after the response clarifying what vintage fashion is. This was to provide clarification to all respondents on what vintage fashion is, even if the respondent had already marked that they are aware of what vintage fashion is.

- 35 of the respondents are able to tell which of the garments are vintage or vintage inspired when combined or worn with modern fashion garments, while 5 respondents stated that they were unable to tell these items apart.

As is stated in prior literature, a vintage product is a rare product which satisfies the need for distinction. This is especially true as vintage items have been produced a long time ago and so are not available in large numbers or in many places. This makes the items found distinct as others cannot find them (Chaigne, 2014:21-22). If individuals wear vintage fashion to satisfy their need for distinction, then this need can only be met if these distinct items are recognized, or are apparent to those who the individual is trying to form a distinction from. In the sample selected, the respondents are able to tell which items that the individuals are wearing are vintage, even when combined with modern fashion garments. This would then prove to satisfy the need for distinction through garments that is evident in individuals who wear vintage fashion.

Motives to purchase vintage

- 38 of the respondents admitted that they do take notice of the individuals who are wearing vintage fashions, while 2 stated that they do not take notice of these individuals.

In a study on vintage clothing and contemporary consumption, individuality was pointed out as one of the main reasons for wearing vintage clothing (Cervellon, Harms and Carey, 2012:8)

Based on previous literature it is evident that individuals wear vintage fashion not because they have to, but because they have the desire not to conform to the trends of modern fashion. Through not conforming, individuals seek to communicate their individual identity. This is confirmed by the respondents as the majority do take notice of individuals who are wearing vintage fashion. This confirms to vintage consumers that they are communicating an individual identity which is noticed by their peers.

- Respondents described the personal brand identity that is being created by individuals who wear vintage fashions from a list of potential words as suggested by the researcher. 'Stylish' was the word chosen by the majority of respondents, followed closely by 'alternative'. 8 respondents described the brand identity as 'cool'. 4 respondents described the brand identity as 'impressive'.
- Other words used to describe the personal brand identity of individuals who wear vintage fashion were suggested by respondents and are as follows.
  -individualistic
  -edgy
  -trendy
  -expressive
  -statement
  -unique
  -attention catching

Fashion involvement is defined in previous literature as the extent to which the consumer views fashion clothing as personally relevant. The more important fashion is in an individual's life, the higher the fashion involvement.
Fashion involvement has a direct link to being informed and up to date on fashion trends. It then follows that, as long as vintage fashion is a trend, fashion involvement should motivate the intention to purchase vintage fashions (Cervellon, Harms and Carey, 2012:5). From the previous literature above, it is evident that through following the vintage fashion trend, vintage consumers have a level of fashion involvement. This fashion involvement implies that fashion clothing is personally relevant in the consumer's life. With the combination of literature above relating to personal identity, uniqueness and the vintage consumer, it would greatly affect and please the consumers of vintage fashion that their peers describe them as being, amongst other words, stylish, alternative, cool,

individualistic as well as expressive. These words all have positive connotations and are the responses of the majority of respondents.

- Only 4 respondents described the personal brand identity as 'trying too hard', which has a negative connotation to the brand identity that is being created by these individuals.

Additionally, only one of the respondents who described the identity created as 'trying too hard' stated that they will not, or do not wear vintage fashion. Another negative phrase that was suggested by a respondent to describe this personal brand identity that is created was 'at times not original'. These responses can be linked to the point of whether consumers of vintage fashion are misunderstood. The minority of respondents stated that the consumers of vintage fashion are misunderstood, and these results could be additional reasons as to why they are misunderstood.

The vintage consumer

- 37 respondents do think that individuals who wear vintage fashions are knowledgeable about fashion, while 4 respondents do not think that they are knowledgeable about fashion. These 4 respondents however, still described the individuals who wear vintage fashion in a positive light.

Majority of respondents in the sample selected do think that individuals who wear vintage fashion are knowledgeable about fashion. This implies that vintage consumers portray in the majority part to their peers that they know what fashion is all about, not only in terms of vintage fashion but in terms of fashion in general. Vintage consumers are showing a status alternative to just purchasing luxury items. Status is therefore implied by the potential social cost of wearing vintage fashion, rather than the monetary cost of the product (Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, 2015:144). The results confirm that vintage consumers are signalling a status of knowledge in fashion through the non- conforming behaviour of wearing vintage fashion, as their peers perceive them to be knowledgeable in fashion, and in such the social costs of wearing vintage fashion are achieving the desired signalling results.

- 26 of the respondents do not feel that the level of expertise in fashion is higher than that of those who choose to wear luxury brands or the latest fashion styles available. 14 of the respondents do, however, think that the level of fashion expertise is higher than that of individuals who choose to wear luxury brands or the latest fashion styles available.

While most respondents do feel that consumers of vintage fashion are knowledgeable in fashion, majority of respondents do not feel that the level of fashion expertise required is higher than that of individuals who purchase luxury brands or the latest fashion trends available. The following main reasons are given.

"Everyone has a style that they choose, and they choose a style they know about."
"An individual will need a level of knowledge about current trends and fashion whether they wear luxury brands or vintage fashion."
"It is based on personal preference and expressing yourself. Therefore, no expertise are required."
"It is just a preference."
 "Expertise is not determined by style."
"Any individual can wear the latest fashion and vintage clothes and not have knowledge about fashion. What people wear is based on their own individual taste and what they can afford."
"Trends are trends. Whether high fashion, vintage or street. Knowledge on how to put which garments together and making it suit a body or personal style is expertise."
 "A person may wear vintage fashions but that does not mean they have a higher understanding of fashion. It's all about your identity and expressing yourself through fashion."
 "Same level of fashion expertise."

These responses are in the majority, and are in contrast to the prior literature. Respondents believe that consumers who wear vintage fashion do so due to personal preference and choice, and that it does not have to do with a higher fashion expertise.

Those respondents that do feel that the level of fashion expertise required is higher than that of individuals who purchase luxury brands or the latest fashion trends available had the following reasons.

"Yes, they are better able to style it to accommodate the latest street style fashion."
"People who wear vintage often have knowledge about different eras in fashion."
"It takes a specific type of individual to master vintage fashion."
"To make vintage pieces work takes a good eye for fashion, whereas luxury goods you 'buy the fashion' and don't necessarily make it work for yourself."
"They can spot fashionable pieces. They don't just see a trend and follow it."
"These individuals have the ability to identify with past fashion trends and keep them relevant by combining them with modern fashion items."
"Understanding fashion influence is more difficult than just following what is on trend."
"They know the worth of their clothing and have a much broader vision of clothing."
"Ability to search and find pieces that aren't marketed as currently fashionable."
"Keeping old trends relevant."

These responses do agree with the prior literature stated by Ward, Townsend and Nowlan, stating that vintage consumers cannot only rely only on trends and price to determine what is fashionable, and it is for those reasons that consumers of vintage fashion require an expertise that is not necessarily required when selecting luxury items (2015:144). Having additional expertise to another individual implies having a higher expertise. These 14 respondents agree with the prior literature.

Due to the majority of respondents disagreeing that individuals who wear vintage fashion have a higher level of fashion expertise to those who are wearing the latest fashion trends and luxury brands- the findings are not in agreement with the prior literature, even though there is some level of agreement from other respondents.

4.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness and rigour will be enhanced throughout this research by ensuring credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability throughout the study. Credibility refers to the internal validity of the research, or rather the truth value of the research. Triangulation- analysing the research question from multiple perspectives- will

be used to ensure and prove that the research findings are credible and accurate (Statistics Solutions, 2015).

Transferability refers to the external validity of the data. To ensure applicability of the data to other contexts, circumstances or situations, the researcher will make use of thick description. Thick description of a human behaviour is one that explains not only the behaviour, but the context in which it is situated as well. In this way making the behaviour meaningful to an outsider, as well as applicable to other contexts (En.wikipedia.org, 2017). Conformability refers to the neutrality in the research study's findings and aims to ensure that there is no personal bias present from the researcher that could skew the interpretation of the data. To ensure conformability the researcher will provide an audit trail throughout the research, where every step of the data analysis that is made will be highlighted to prove the rationale for the decisions made (Statistics Solutions, 2015).

Lastly, dependability refers to the consistency of the research and the extent to which the research can be replicated and the findings consistent. Dependability is being ensured throughout the research process using an inquiry audit which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and data analysis. This is done in collaboration with the research supervisors provided to the researchers.

5. CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter will provide an answer to- and address the research question and objectives. A conclusion will be drawn on the study. The implications of findings for future practices will be addressed, followed by the ethical considerations of this study.

5.1 Concluding answers to the research questions

According to interviews with industry experts in Cape Town, as well as students studying fashion, branding, business or design at a private higher educational institute in South Africa the following answers to the research question can be found.

Individuals who choose to wear vintage fashions are perceived to be stylish and alternative by their peers. This is because they are able to curate different pieces that are difficult to find and that are not in line with the latest modern fashion trends.

The personal brand identity that is created by individuals who wear vintage fashions is perceived in a positive light by their peers, as well as by industry experts. A personal brand identity is created by any individual through what they choose to wear or what they choose not to wear, according to industry experts. Individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived to usually have a distinct personal brand identity about them because of the way that they dress, achieving their need for distinction that is present in the way that they dress.

Individuals who wear vintage fashions are not perceived as misunderstood by their peers, however it is dependent on who their audience is as well as the context of the situation according to industry experts. Industry experts also believe that all individuals are misunderstood and for that reason context and audience are the most applicable when analysing this.

Ultimately, individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived as being knowledgeable about fashion by their peers and industry experts. This however, does not mean that they have a higher expertise of fashion than individuals who choose to wear luxury brands or the latest fashion trends. Industry experts as well as students in Cape Town disagreed that a higher level of fashion expertise is needed to wear vintage fashions. The reason for this response is mainly based on the views that all fashions require the same level of expertise, leaving the rest down to personal preference, style and individuality. Willingness

to seek information, practice and learn was another reason given for this response, stating that in this information age, any individual can become an expert on a fashion industry or trend if they desire to do so enough through learning and practice.

According to their peers as well as industry experts in Cape Town, individuals who wear vintage fashions are perceived as stylish and knowledgeable about fashion. They are not, however perceived as having a higher expertise of fashion than other individuals who choose not to wear vintage fashion, and are understood to create their own distinct personal brand identity through the vintage fashion that they choose to wear.

5.2 Implications of findings for future practices

This research will provide a deeper understanding of vintage fashion as well as how individuals enhance, create and portray their own individual identity using fashion. This research can be built upon by other studies to establish why trends reoccur and why it is that we as individuals choose to dress from other or previous eras.
This research can be used by vintage stores to establish how their target consumers are perceived by individuals in Cape Town and they could use this study to enhance their offerings as well as for the marketing and campaigning of their vintage stores.

5.3 Conclusions

Vintage fashion appears to be a growing trend in South Africa, and it is important that these individuals understand the effects that vintage fashion has on their identity, as well as on their perceived fashion knowledge. Vintage fashion has a positive effect on the wearer, through the satisfaction of their desire to be distinct and unique. It has a positive effect on the environment as is used to combat fast fashion and the harmful effects that fast fashion has on society and the environment.

This study concludes that individuals who wear vintage fashion are seen in a positive light by their peers and industry experts in Cape Town. They are seen as knowledgeable as well as having a distinct personal as well as class identity that they create through the wearing of vintage fashions.

This study has been successful in specifically understanding the perceptions of industry experts as well as students in Cape Town on the level of knowledge and expertise that individuals who wear vintage fashions have on individuals who wear vintage fashions. The study has also successfully explored the perceptions of industry experts as well as students in Cape Town on individuals who wear vintage fashions.

The study could be more specific in analysing the motives behind why consumers of vintage fashion purchase these items and could possibly have explored these motives in more detail. Future research could explore in more detail why it is that individuals seek to be unique and distinct from other individuals through their fashion and what it is that drives that distinctiveness. This study could also be done on a much larger scale to see if other cities in South Africa have the same or contrasting responses, and eventually could be carried out globally to see if globally all perceptions on individuals who choose vintage fashions are similar.

5.4 Ethical considerations

As this study involves the perceptions and opinions of human participants, voluntary participation is required from respondents. The students at either of the private higher education institutes were informed of the study and were then asked if they would like to fill in a questionnaire.

With the research requiring interviews with industry experts, the researcher informed the experts of the study and asked to set up a voluntary meeting in which to conduct the interview. Permission was asked to record the interview solely for referring to it when analysing the data, and this was agreed to by both industry experts who were interviewed. An important aspect to the questionnaires was to ensure the respondents anonymity and ensure confidentiality in the responses. Anonymity was ensured when issuing the questionnaires to students, as the form did not ask for their names or any form of identification. With the permission of industry experts, the researcher has disclosed their identities to add trustworthiness to the study. The researcher has additionally disclosed the qualifications of the industry experts. This will ensure greater credibility in their responses to the reader.

Confidentiality was practiced throughout the research that was conducted. Student respondents were ensured the confidentiality of their responses, as the researcher had informed the respondents that their responses as well as identity had not been disclosed or used by any unauthorised individuals. Had the researcher wished to discuss the

responses with any person other than the assigned research team, they would need to ask permission from the respondents to do so. In this way ensuring confidentiality for the respondents.

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