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Representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show Our Perfect Wedding: A case study of selected episodes of Zulu weddings.



A research report presented

By

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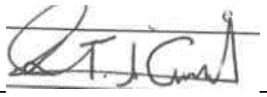
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OPW	**Our Perfect Wedding**
TAMS	**Television Audience Measurement**
TVSA	**Television South Africa (Website)**
DSTV	**Digital Satellite Television**
MNET	**Electronic Media Network**
SABC	**South African Broadcasting Corporation**
BET	**Black Entertainment Television**
BRCSA	**Broadcast Research Council of South Africa**
ES	**Establishment Survey**
SEM	**Socio Economic Measures**
LSM	**Living Standards Measure**
CSoES	**Comparative Study of Electoral Systems**

CSES	**Collective Self-Esteem Scale**
MAC	**Marketing, Advertising and Communications**
RTLM	**Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines or Radio Milles Collines**
EP	**Executive Producer**
PA	**Production Assistant**
DOP	**Director of photography**
RTV	**Radio Television**
TV	**Television**

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to both my parents, especially my mother Zanele Gumede. My mother has always been a hard worker and a persistent individual who not only encouraged me to further my studies but also supported my entire academic career. I would not have been the passionate and enthusiastic academic if it were not for her love and prayers. My mother, uMaDlamini, Mrs G. Z Gumede has been a source of inspiration and strength during the moments of despair, uncertainty, and discouragement. Her everlasting love and support has always been a guidance throughout my life and for that, I am truly thankful. I also dedicate my research report to my late father, Mbusi Gumede, and my late grandmother, Tabitha MaHlubi Gumede. Both of their teachings, eternal love and prayers will always be with me, thank you.

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My mother for her endless support, patience and prayers throughout my years of study. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

Our Perfect Wedding (2011-) is a reality television program during which love, and unity of various families and cultures are celebrated. Using the representation of Zulu weddings on the truth the television show *Our Perfect Wedding* as a medium; the aim of this study is to know the nuanced degree in not only celebrations of weddings but the representation of post-apartheid Zulu weddings perceive realism while watching the show *Our Perfect Wedding*. By engaging identity, representation, and perceived realism scales as variables, the researcher sought to see the degree during which the capacity of Zulu weddings contributed to a difference in perceived realism from each gender. After watching episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*, women and men who identified themselves as *umZulu* or *AmaZulu* specified their perceptions of reality supported depictions of Zulu weddings on the show. The research theoretical framework includes historical research of assorted academic scholars, and analyses important key elements of the research.

The main research question for this study focuses on how Zulu brides and grooms are being represented in post-apartheid television. In addition, the research focuses on the reconceptualization of identity in Zulu weddings.

In this study, a qualitative approach was adopted within the research, data was collected through focus group interviews and viewing episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding* with the participants to gather more data from the participants. The findings suggest that the globe of reality television is linked to current social-political issues of its audience. It is also evident that repeated exposure to reality television content is exposing audiences to the complexness of Zulu traditional values, and presenting western practices as a viable alternative. This further changes their resolve to take care

of Zulu traditional values and practices. Various conclusions about Zulu weddings and media preference are drawn from the findings.

INDEX WORDS: Reality Television, Zulu weddings, Representation, Zulu identity, nationality, identity

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... (I)

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION ..... (IV)

DEDICATION ..... (V)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... (VI)

ABSTRACT ..... (VII)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 13

1.1 PURPOSE 13

1.2 BACKGROUND TO DEFINITION 13

1.3 MOTIVATION AND BACKGROUND TO STUDY 16

1.4 MOTIVATION 17

1.5 BACKGROUND 18

1.6 RESEARCH PROBLEM 20

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 21

1.8 NATURE OF STUDY 22

1.9 SCOPE & LIMITATIONS 23

1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT 23

1.11 SUMMARY 25

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 26

2. INTRODUCTION 26

2.1 EFFECTS OF TELEVISION 26

2.2 VIEWERSHIP OF SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION 28

2.2.1 Television, society culture and everyday life 29

2.2.2 The effects of television on society norms 30

2.2.3 Problematic effects caused by television 31

2.2.4 Talking about television 32

2.3 ZULU AND PRE-ZULU IDENTITY 32

2.4 A "NATION' WITH A NATION - *ISIZWE* 34

2.5 MEDIATING ZULU IDENTITIES – NATIONAL IDENTITY 35

2.6 ZULU WEDDING CEREMONIES 38

2.6.1 Preliminary customs before the Zulu wedding ceremony 39

2.6.2 Ilobolo in Zulu marriages 40

2.6.3 Ilobolo being idealized in a reality show 42

2.7 CONCLUSION 42

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 44

3. INTRODUCTION 44

3.1 REPRESENTATION 44

3.2 STEREOTYPING 45

3.2.1 Social & stigmatised identity 46

3.3 MEDIA CONSTRUCTION FANDOM THEORY AND EFFECTS OF THE MEDIA 49

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 52

4.1 INTRODUCTION 52

4.2 ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH 53

4.3 METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION 54

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN 56

4.4.1 Population and sample 56

4.4.2 Time Frame and location 58

4.4.3 Data gathering and data analysis 58

4.4.4 Use of the focus group as a data collection technique 60

4.4.5 Validity and reliability 61

4.5 CONCLUSION 62

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS 64

5.1 INTRODUCTION 64

5.2 (OPW) OUR PERFECT WEDDING OVERVIEW 64

5.3 RECEPTION THEORY 65

5.3.1 Audience processing media images 66

5.4 AUDIENCE ANALYSIS 67

5.4.1 The audience reception approach - *Our Perfect Wedding* Viewership 67

5.4.2 Perceived Realism Scale & *Our Perfect Wedding* Screening *69*

5.4.3 Participants relating to *Our Perfect Wedding* *69*

5.4.4 Portrayal of brides and grooms on selected episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding* *72*

5.4.5 An actual representation of reality *76*

5.5 CONCLUSION 78

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion 79

6. INTRODUCTION 79

6.1 DISCUSSION 79

6.1.1 Trends and forms of marriages available to the community 80

6.1.2 The dynamic of reality television and gender roles in relationships 82

6.2 THE MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEM 83

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 84

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS 84

6.5 BIBLIOGRAPHY 89

a. Appendix A: Letters of information and consent 95

b. Appendix B: Ethics Clearance forms 101

c. Appendix C: Focus group questions 102

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study investigates the representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding* that premiered in 2011. This chapter consists of various key terms and definitions, which are provided from different scholars, are going to be explained. The problem statement, background, purpose statement and the concept of the study will follow. Before I delve into the problem statement and concept of the research, I want to provide definitions and background that will cover the body of the study. One of the reasons for this discussion was to supply different views from various scholars about their perception of their important questions. The definitions are necessary to impose a foundation for ensuing the debate and to produce the reader a transparent understanding of the key elements which the research centralizes the research.

1.2 Background to Definitions

Reality Television:

The foremost basic description analysed by Hill (2005, p. 11) would be “television programmes during which real people are continuously filmed from various locations, designed to be entertaining instead of informative”. Therefore, reality television is always unscripted, tends to document actual events, and features regular people instead of professional actors. To understand the terminology and meaning of reality television, part of the research coherently provides an outline of the background of reality television by analysing scholars who studied reality television.

According to Howley (2004, p. 26) as a genre, reality television has become the most recent fan favourite has made inroads in Africa. The public assumes that reality television is an intensive type of programmes that features a large range of shows that will be both factual and entertaining to the audience. Yet, there are various definitions of the term reality television per Hill (2005, p. 24), various reality television, shows have had three waves of recognition mainly because of their clock time scheduling. In the late 1980s to early 1990s the primary wave of reality programmes came, because the shows were supported themes of crime and emergency, the second 'wave' included observational documentaries or emotional 'docu-soaps' within the middle to late 1990s, and therefore the third wave during the first 2000s delivered to light 'social experiments' programmes. Reality television derived its popularity from three areas of earlier media productions: Documentary television, popular entertainment and tabloid journalism.

According to Malko (2013, p. 4), the narrative feature of storytelling in reality television documented ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the world Malko (2013, p. 4). Therefore, it does not surprise the viewers that genres such as news and reality television contribute in for example, sharing content, extending their visual content to the audience. Of which according to Hill there is an alternation between tabloid news and reality shows to learn and inform more about the show or the other way around (Hill, 2005, p. 18).

Due to its documentary style and fast-paced scenes, reality television is compelled with 'raw' and 'unfiltered' content, which can be compared to the 90s and early 2000s magazine tabloid package or news programmes, juxtaposing it with commercial tabloid content presents itself as a mode of address to the public Creeber (2008, p. 134). Creeber (2008) revealed in his study that the content of reality television are constructed by actual footage, and the surveillance and observational style of reality television rely on the reconstruction of narrative fiction styles that depend on the participation of a person. Various television programmes that are presented as 'reality television'

attempt to depict aspects of everyday life as entertainment; they are unified by the different kinds of reality programmes (Hill, 2005, p. 40). In addition, various scholars such as Malekoff (2005) and Roscoe (2001) illustrate that people are positioned in situations where their lives are recorded as they react to their environment for the purpose of a reality show (Chikafa, 2011, p. 1). Its association with entertainment information, reality television is a value-laden term; the term is distinctive and has different meanings to different people (Creeber, 2008, p. 135). In the modern society, reality television is also defined as 'popular television' or 'entertainment television', which in retrospect functions as an umbrella term for variety of reality shows which belong to different television formats (Hill, 2005, p. 40).

Representation:

Representation is not only about representing 'reality' but it is the production of meaning through language. According to Hall (1997, p. 1) to represent, something is to depict it or view it in the conscious mind by description of the imagination, to project the likeness of it before the subconscious mind. In other words, representation connects the universal meanings and language to the abstract culture. There is never one ideal meaning in representation, Plantinga's (1997, p. 38) definition: In film, 'Representation' can be constructed in different ways; as a photographic or aural likeliness of an object or person; as a way of projecting views of institutions or organizations; and creating a case of proposition for aspect in the non-fictional world.

Weddings:

The following subsequent elements are contained in a wedding ceremony, which are memorability, magic, romance and perfection Otnes & Pleck (2003, p. 23). In a wedding, couples prefer elements mentioned by Otnes & Pleck, occasionally these elements are mostly emphasised instead of traditional styles. Couples have preferences in a wedding therefore, the concept of wedding themes is unique. Krishnan (2008, p. 11) states that the most important conjoint life event for couples is a wedding. In addition, couples are aware of the imperativeness of planning and deciding on how the wedding will be presented.

1.3 Motivation and background to study

The main aim of the research is presented in the section and three study questions are revealed and considered in further sections.

(OPW) *Our Perfect Wedding* overview**:**

Our Perfect Wedding is a reality show that airs on Sundays AT 19:00 pm on DSTV Mzansi Magic. The reality show premiered in 2011 hosted by a new presenter each season; couples are documented in each episode for the preparations of their wedding as they attempt to pull off a perfect wedding for their guests (TVSA, 2013). *Our Perfect Wedding* is produced by connect TV; Basetsana Kumalo and Clifford Elk are the executive producers of the show. A survey conducted by Television South Africa, in 2018 the television show The Queen had a viewership of 1 571 311 viewers followed by Our Perfect Wedding with 1 082 348 since its premier in 2011.

1.4 Motivation

The focus of the study is the manner in which Zulu weddings are represented in the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding,* focusing on two-selected episodes of the reality show. Since its premier in 2011, the reality show produced almost instant controversy, but also accumulated a large number of audience, between 1.0 to 1.1 million viewers per episode on Sundays, thus making it one of the most watched shows on DSTV. What intrigued me about the reality show is business mogul and former Miss South Africa Basetsana Kumalo is one of the executive producers for the show. Basetsana Kumalo also co-produced a similar show called top billing; a weekly show that included inserts focusing on home décor, travel, beauty, food, fashion and weddings; Top billing aired on SABC 3 from 1996 to 2019.

Our Perfect Wedding focuses on different couples across South Africa; each episode, a female host gets up close and personal with the couple (TVSA, 2013). During the preparations of their wedding, the couple faces numerous challenges and the odds are not always in their favour, their dream is to pull off a perfect wedding (TVSA, 2013). A few researchers have a direct interest in Zulu weddings, therefore investigating the presence of Zulu weddings can be challenging. However, the research does not necessarily gather information to perform its objectives, but it ensures the information is accurate and legitimate to the reader.

The reason for choosing this topic was to find out what could be defined as traditional Zulu weddings and what implications are being portrayed on *Our Perfect Wedding*. With a viewership of over 1 million per episode, *Our Perfect Wedding* attracts a variety of ‘modernised’ individuals who are mostly black. Smit (2016) in her study revealed that in spite of its immense popularity *Our*

Perfect Wedding the weddings featured on the show are often controversial in the way that they are depicted and can be viewed as unrealistic. Dow (2006, p. 36) argues that the construction of images in media determines how people are seen and how they respond to what they see therefore in the domain of media roles, the blackness of black representation in media plays a significant role in framing society and shaping what we believe to be the reality.

1.5 Background

For majority of couples, weddings are the most crucial event to occur in their lives. As mentioned earlier, weddings are important events for couples and that pleasant enduring memories should be lasting (Krishnan, 2008:1). MacVicar (2014, p. 4) explains that in neoliberal western popular culture, the wedding industry uses wedding-related media images to portray a perfect wedding and a perfect bride as one that can be achieved by all women through the consumption of material goods (MacVicar, 2014, p. 4). Before I further delve into the functionality of weddings, I want to explain the political aspects of wedding culture, how weddings navigate into issues of power and identity in society.

According to Rutherford (1990, p. 19-20), the cultural, social and economic relations that we are currently experiencing are conjectured with our past identity. Rutherford further elaborates that the economic and political relations of subordination and domination is the intersection of our everyday lives. The social group systems are created to develop the experience of society however, these systems are increase inequality and social divisions and enforce the groups to be excluded and stigmatized (Rutherford, 1990, p. 19-20). Identities are always contested. For example, Buthelezi's (2008) research mainly focuses on the pre-Zulu identities before colonization and the rule of King

Shaka Zulu. He focuses on the complexity of heritage in the province of KwaZulu-Natal; and how people living in the province identify themselves as *amaZulu* because of the rule of Shaka Zulu. Historically speaking, majority of people living in the province are not identified as *amaZulu* but they identify themselves by their kingship name (*izithkhazelo*), even the language that is spoken is not *isiZulu* but because of the rule of Shaka Zulu and colonization, it identified as *isiZulu* (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161).

The political struggle for recognition of identities leads to history of being constantly contested. Hall (1995, p.42) indicated that the subject of identity displays from a cultural and historical position, this further presents ways of thinking about culture identity in two different ways. Just like Buthelezi (2008), the first way is to unpack the truth about our shared culture and history experiences as a community, which could be presented in a contemporary culture such as films so that identity can be reaffirmed and strengthened (Buthelezi, 2008, p.25).

According to Hall (1995, p.44), the concept of cultural identity refers to the individuality of transforming and becoming as well of being. Hall does not deny the past of the identity rather; he acknowledges that in laying claim to it we reconstruct it, meaning the transformed subject becomes the past (Hall, 1995, p. 44). Thus, the imagined community is part of the past, a community of people who declare as ‘we’.

Traditional and non-traditional weddings are not viewed just as a ceremony for a couple who want share their lives together lawfully because modern society has shifted away from the old thinking and views have changed about weddings. In most cultures, weddings are used as an indicator for

prestige and wealth of the groom, bride, and their respective family members (Adrian, 2003, p. 51). Smit (2016) examines the fantasy, consumption and judgement on the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding*; she unpacks the power dynamics and identity between couples and their struggle to achieve happiness in a marriage (Smit, 2016, p.10). Thus, amplifies the discourse of a fantasy wedding in a modern society. Winch and Webster's (2012) article examines the role of consumerism and branding in wedding media Currie (1993, p. 53) argues that such changes in marriage had been condemned and families should prioritise the planning of the wedding since a sacramental ceremony is important, and avoid displaying wealth and prestige (Currie, 1993, p. 53). According to Adrian (2003, p. 26) in our modern day, wedding arrangements are driven by desire to exhibit the high social status of the families; from designer wedding dresses, to wedding photography, wedding banquet entrances and several others are used as a tool for competitive consumption (Adrian, 2003, p. 26).

1.6 **Research Problem**

Our Perfect wedding attracts mostly black audiences with a variety of identities. The reality television show has been produced at a particular moment in South African popular culture: "The continual expansion of the mass media coupled with the removal & boycott of the cultural boycotts mean that South Africans now can receive any amount of media programming form abroad" (Quintal, 2015, p. 1) highlighting different weddings from different cultures portraying controversial weddings. *Our Perfect Wedding* has been one of the top viewed showed on DSTV since its launch in 2011. Smit (2016, p. 4) also wrote on *Our Perfect Wedding*, her research focuses on the consumption and classism of South Africans on the television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. According to Smit (2016, p. 4) the celebration of a perfect wedding from a family exuberates the fantastical marriage from both the bride and groom, while simultaneously encouraging viewers to

judge the couples onscreen for their conspicuous performances of wealth, and to relish those moments where 'wedding perfection' and, by extension, class mobility fails (Smit, 2016, p. 4). In this case, the show *Our Perfect Wedding* has successfully shown numerous episodes of most weddings ending tragically instead of a perfect ending and not representing the *Our Perfect Wedding* title. For example, an episode, which aired on 20 December 2015, featured Ratanang and Wanda Mhobo, the groom, failed to pitch at his own wedding and allegedly claimed he was attacked on his wedding day. It was later confirmed that the groom was not hijacked instead the Midrand police arrested him, on charges of fraud and forgery. According to Drum (2015), the groom claims that he put under pressure by his wife hence he allegedly committed these crimes (Drum, 2015, p.1).

Against this backdrop, the central research problem is; how are Zulu weddings being represented on the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding*?

1.7 **Research Questions**

The research problem that will be examined through the analysis of the following research questions:

1. How are the Zulu brides and grooms represented in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?
2. How are Zulu themed ceremonies represented on the show?
3. Which traditional customs are used to prepare for a Zulu wedding in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding?*

1.8 **Nature of the study**

A qualitative approach is best suited to answer the research questions in this study. Meaning, a fully detailed discussion which focuses on the audience analysis (reception theory) regarding the representation of Zulu wedding on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. Thus, the qualitative method is often used to increase an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and to grasp the way people act and account for their actions (Gray, 2014, p. 162; Leedy and Ormond, 2001, p. 102). Using thematic analysis for data collection amplified the analysis of the research because it is the most known form of analysis in qualitative research. It highlights pinpointing, recording patterns and examining themes for data. Gathering responses and analysis from participants based on the themes of the research was accessible.

Enhancing trustworthiness from participants with good questionnaires is inevitable, as the participants have answered the questions by themselves, and they did not feel intimidated in any way (Gray, 2014, p. 162; Leedy and Ormond, 2001, p. 103). In conclusion, research questions for this study are addressed.

According to Gravetta and Fornazo (2009), the primary distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is the type of data that is produced for the research. Quantitative research typically produces numerical scores, whereas qualitative research typically produces a narrative report (Gravetta and Fornazo, 2009, p. 146). Gravetta and Fornazo further suggest that qualitative research is based on making observations that is summarized and interpreted in a narrative report (Gravetta and Fornazo, 2009, p. 146). Thus, this research will make observations and compile a narrative report.

1.9 **Scope & Limitations**

This study quantifies responses from Zulu male and female audiences who are viewers of the reality show. In addition, the findings in this study will enlighten Zulu male and female audience members who watch and have an opinion about the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding*. Although this study only survey Zulu men and women who were born in KwaZulu-Natal, the number of participants does not necessarily restrict the results.

1.10 **Chapter Layout**

This research report consists of seven chapters.

The first chapter is where the researcher presents a summary of the study and explains the research problem. The chapter contains a brief introduction of the research; mainly the purpose of the study, background definitions, motivation, background to the study, research problem, research questions and the nature of the study.

The earlier empirical research relating to the review of the subject matters in chapter two are discussed also, viewership of South African television, and Zulu identities and cultural studies are also discussed. In addition, the researcher discusses identity, Zulu identities, and Zulu weddings by critically examining the work of scholars, such as Mbongiseni Buthelezi (2008); Alexa Smit (2016); and Tiema Haji Muindi (2015).

In chapter three, the researcher focuses on the relevant theoretical models, theatrical framework, and the development of propositions of the research. This chapter theorizes, representation.

Woodward (1999, p. 14) defines representation as an inclusive of practices that construct multiple meanings and symbolic systems which position the audience as subjects in their own realm (Woodward, 1999, p. 14).

In chapter four of the research report, the researcher shares the overview of the study's research methodology. This chapter includes the following; data collection methods, analysis, limitations of the study, research design, and methodological orientation. The approach of the study is qualitative methodology, as it primarily focuses on the representation of Zulu weddings in a reality television *Our Perfect Wedding*.

In chapter five, the researcher presents the research results. An analysis of the interviews and/or questionnaires will be discussed, and findings explained. Data is analysed using thematic analysis, because it is the universal form of analysis in qualitative research. Lastly, research questions for this study are addressed.

Chapter six deals with the findings and analysis in terms of how participants have answered research questions from the chapter five, it also focuses on the discourses within reality television and Zulu weddings.

Chapter seven outlines the final discussions and conclusions of the study. Chapter seven outlines the importance of evidence, the main points are summarized and re-stated that the topic is outlined to illustrate the need for further research.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has introduced the proposed study, including its background of definitions and motivation. Research problem and questions were given to establish an understanding of the study. In addition, the nature of the study, hypothesis was addressed in the introduction. The next chapter covers a review of the literature surrounding the effects of South African television, representation of Zulu weddings in television, national & Zulu identity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

The study focuses on the representation of Zulu weddings on *Our Perfect wedding*; this chapter focuses on the literature of the study that rests on the body of knowledge relating to the mandate and the challenges facing representation on the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding.* In this chapter, I discuss identity, social theory, reception theory and draw from the small pool of articles by Alexa Smit (2016) and Tiema Haji Muindi (2015) who have written articles in the field of television shows that focus on Zulu identity related to weddings. The chapter also has drawn from Mboniseni Buthelezi's (2008) work where he focuses on the history of Zulu and pre-Zulu identity. I also consider how the series *Our Perfect Wedding* represents aspects of Zulu culture and the impact this has on communities.

2.1 **Effects of Reality Television**

The purpose of the research is to determine the way in which the Zulu bride and groom and Zulu themed ceremonies are represented in the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. Critics like Appiah (2004, p. 315) indicated that, "specific cultural history uses symbols, values and characters through media messages that target audience members so that they identify with messages that are provided". Appiah (2004, p. 317) further states that, "the awareness of blacks with stronger identities must be exhibited through racial targets that should feel acknowledged by the efforts of the targeted cues". Appiah's (2003) results also concluded that, "People who are not strongly tied to

the black culture or resemble dominant mainstream culture, possess weaker racial identities and behaviour" (Appiah, 2004, p. 318). There, Appiah's findings assists with the hypothesis of the research questions.

Monroe (2015, p. 15) stated, that the history of shared images and messages are sources that originate from television (Monroe, 2015, p. 15). Scholars such as Macey, Ryan & Springer (2014, p. 2) believe that "Television has been the medium in which society is exposed to facets of information on about everything; and it is the source of messaging distribution and cultural storytelling since it was introduced within our living spaces". In addition, television is different from other media platforms, in its "use of coherent set of realistic images and centralized mass production, the television messages are formed for the mass population (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 43). Good (2014, p. 213) indicated that, "As humans we mostly occupied with school, work, sleep and television" it becomes crucial to understand the consumption of television in our living spaces and the effectiveness of consumption (Good, 2014, p. 213).

To grasp the concept of reality television as a genre, it is imperative to unpack what constructs a television programme format. Moran & Malbon (2006, p. 10) believe that television programming is different to what it was two decades ago, because new media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube have surfaced television and developed the distribution of information and communication.

2.2 **Viewership of South African Television**

In a 2017 survey published by The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa found that 37.1 million South Africans viewers mostly represent the black demographic and are fifteen years and older, thus South African television viewing is the most popular form of media consumption.

The television audience measurement universe (TAM) audits and updates the reflected population which shifts in each household that has access to at least one working television digital set, and mains electricity. The populations in the television universe tend to be more complex and changeable than those seen in the general South African population, since the digital universe are affected by unique factors such as electronic, disposable income and the purchase of durables (television audience measurement, 2019).

According to TAM (2019), it has conducted that the largest group of television consumers appeared within the metro areas, which makes; 97% of television viewers watch television at their household followed by mobile phones with the next most used media sitting at 88%. In addition, women between the ages of 25-35, who make up 28% of viewing population, and women ages 15-25 coming in at 24%, contribute to the 90% of viewers that watch television daily.

According to TAM (2019), the establishment survey South African television universe shows a decrease in the white population group of -3.68% (136 928 individuals). An increase is seen in the coloured population group of 3.33% (145 517 individuals).

Table 1: Establishment Survey South African Television consumption, TAMS - television audience measurement (2019).

	ES TV Universe Jan-Dec-2018 #	ES TV Universe Jul 18-Jun 19	Difference #	Difference %
African Black	37 206 819	37 404 628	197 809	0.53
White	3 716 182	3 579 254	-136 928	-3.68
Indian	1 146 109	1 131 114	-14 995	-1.31
Coloured	4 375 105	4 520 622	145 517	3.33
Total Individuals	**46 444 215**	**46 635 618**	**191 403**	**0.41**

2.2.1 Television, society, culture and everyday life

In the broadcast industry, television programmes are organised by schedule producers, commissioning editors, and are standardised by content producers to distribute content for the audience. The audience sets a daily routine to watch television for entertainment, Fiske (1987, p. 66) illustrates television as facets of programmes that produce meanings and entertainment for the audience so that they rely on the consumption of television (Fiske, 1987, p. 66)

In the twentieth century, the introduction and diffusion of television changed and developed many societies. In their studies critics such as McLuhan (1964, p.54) and Fiske (1987, p.66), found that the effects of television has a significantly transformed societies, impacted social policies, changed social-political systems that shape the way communities view each other. Online streaming is dominating the media and communication industry; however, television has managed to hold its position as the primary source of communication, entertainment, and news for the audience. Griffin (2011, p 23) argues that television manages to entertain the majority of the population, providing a picture of surrealism to the audience but television is an institutional storyteller to society;

providing a logical view of what is important and what is supposedly right for the audience (Griffin, 2011, p. 23).

Families and households enjoy watching their favourite television programme together because television has become the focus in the living spaces of each household, depending on the activities people are focused while the television is on. At times certain households share their experiences, critical thinking and arguments while watching television; this proves the importance of watching television to society (Saxbe, Graesch and Alvik, 2011, p. 53).

2.2.2 **The effects of television on society norms**

Using language, image, sound and national conscious to influence the audience, television provides the viewers with necessary medium and aesthetic so that if produces and represent global ideas for its audience (Ives, 2007, p. 54). Television is in a state of transformation, one should expect changes in the nature of television structure. In previous years, television viewers relied on the guidance of television programme; watching television meant just that, tuning in to different programmes and watch whatever was available. Using language, image, sound and national conscious to influence the audience, television provides the viewers with necessary medium and aesthetic so that if produces and represent global ideas for its audience (Ives, 2007, p. 54).

Fiske (1987) and Miller (1988) believe that the basic thematic structure of society's reality is biased towards the formulaic narrative and historical content of television that is still intact; this is due to the increase in the number of television channels and the complexity of developing diverse

programmes for the audience. Although it appears, that television has maintained its global viewership, Hartley (1985, p. 34) argues that the survival of television relies on entertaining and appealing to its viewer's needs, of which there is wide diversity of viewers. In order to attract and reach out to a number of audiences, the media institutions should diversify the content and the modes of address for their audiences Hartley (1985, p. 34).

2.2.3 Problematic effects caused by television

The visuals of television that exposes the viewer's social activities can be problematic (Lazier-Smith, 1989; James, 1990; Beckwith, 1994). These problematic activities affect society and they include; sexism, gender based violence against women and children, sexual harassment, homophobia, xenophobia; any prejudice behaviour towards men and women. Craig (1992) illustrates that this could be found in television where the construction of television commercials reinforces images that are consumed by the audience, making these commercials comfortable and pleasurable experiences for the target audience (Craig, 1992, p. 39).

These commercials expose traditional and universal stereotypes of gender roles, such as femininity, as the expectation of submissiveness. For example, most *Our Perfect Wedding* episodes the groom is portrayed as the strong and dominant person while the bride is submissive and always obeys the groom. With *Our Perfect Wedding,* the portrayal of traditional families on television always reminds the audience that the women's roles are to always obey the man, and the man is the breadwinner and protector of the family. Some television programmes portray successful married women with family and marital issues. Roberts (1982, p. 45) writes that men are unlikely to be

portrayed as central to home and family oriented because they will regarded as not masculine (Roberts,1982, p. 45).

2.2.4 **Talking about Television**

Gray (1992, p. 214) states, “a very important part of the pleasure of television serials is to gossip about them the following day. In addition, we similarly identified the social activity, which derives from watching television as an important aspect of television’s place in everyday life” (Gray, 1992, p. 214). Participant 1 who I interviewed said, “My current favourite programme includes reality shows like Date My Family, Idols SA and *Our Perfect Wedding* because they are exciting and because they’re always coming up in conversation the next day” (Participant 1, 2020).

In a world of programmes, conversations about television create a substantial relationship with television. On a contrary, producers organise important conversations about contemporary social and political issues, which serves and intensify the engagement between the viewer and the broadcaster. This rich relationship with television, and the way in which it creates shared cultural reference points and shared identity reference of which is seen in the show *Our Perfect Wedding*.

2.3. **Zulu and Pre-Zulu identity**

Buthelezi’s (2008, p. 161) research mainly highlights on the pre-Zulu identities before colonization and the rule of King Shaka Zulu. Buthelezi (2008) writes about the complexity of heritage in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal; and how people living in the province identify themselves as *amaZulu* because of the rule of Shaka Zulu. Historically speaking, people living in the province of KwaZulu-

Natal are not identified as *amaZulu* but they identify themselves by their kingship name (*izithakhazelo*), even the language that is spoken is not *isiZulu* but because of the rule of Shaka Zulu and colonisation, it identified as *isiZulu* (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161).

There are few small tribes in the province of KwaZulu-Natal that do not identify themselves as *amaZulu*; but rather their kingship name, and the language is not identified as *isiZulu.* For example, the *Ndwandwe* kingdom are people who do not identify themselves as *amaZulu,* even the language that is spoken is slightly different from the rest of the people living in KwaZulu-Natal.

Before the eighteenth century to democratic rule, many people across the province of KwaZulu-Natal and in some parts of South Africa are not identifying themselves to the Zulu kingdom and being Zulu (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161). Buthelezi elaborates that the history and heritage of 'Zulu people' is determined by the rule of King Shaka Zulu; when seeking to understand the past, people who identify as 'Zulu' and are tracing their history as 'Zulu' will always be directed to the centrality of Zulu-ness and Zulu Kingdom in KwaZulu-Natal (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161). The descendants of earlier inhabitants of KwaZulu-Natal and the current generation of KwaZulu-Natal are dealing with the states land restitution, which was formed under the British colonial and apartheid rule (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161). Buthelezi (2008) argues that people who do not identify themselves as 'Zulu' are attempting to rebuild their dignity that was stripped away from bears under the apartheid rule who claimed chieftainship through the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims. People that intend on understanding their inherited Zulu identity, have to learn how the Zulu Kingdom and Zulu-ness have resulted in defining who they are in this present day (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161).

Groups such as *Qwabe*, *Mbatha*, *Mkhize* and *Buthelezi* tribes are attempting to engage with their past. These groups are also restoring their identities with pre-Zulu politics. Among the *Ndwandwe*, the *uBumbano lwamaZwide* (The People of *Zwide's* Unity Association), an association inaugurated in 2006, is attempting to mobilize people who identify themselves as *amaNdwandwe* to engage with their *Ndwandwe* past (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 161).

Buthelezi's research is important to the aim of my study because it unpacks the identities of pre-Zulu and the historical practices including weddings. As evident from the *Ndwandwe* case, the attempt to (re)construct identities over which Zulu-ness has been emphasised takes the form of mobilizing along the now-faint contours of pre-Zulu politics by promoting the extant motion that people of the same family name historically belonged together in a chiefdom understood as an extended family unit. Therefore, contemporary 'Zulu' identity is in flux as this an unfolding process of identity formation, which emphasizes the current Zulu identity.

2.4. **A 'nation' within a nation – *isizwe***

According to Buthelezi (2008, p. 174), the concept of nation in the Zulu language is unstable. The term *isizwe (nation)* works on at least three levels. On the first level, the South African nation, under the formation since the end of apartheid. On the second level, the Zulu ethnic group continues to be called an *isizwe (nation)* even as its stability and sustainability come under pressure. Thirdly, a group that shares a family name such as *Ndwandwe* – and related names like *Nxumalo*, *Madlobha* and many more – is called '*isizwe samaNdwadwe/sakwaNdwadwe*' (the *Ndwadwe* nation). The *Ndwadwe* is considered a 'nation' within the Zulu nation within the South African nation. However, they also exceed both the Zulu nation and the South African nation: the *Ndwadwe* are descendants

of the *uBhumbano* who, in the 1820's, relocated outside KwaZulu-Natal but together they make one nation. This 'nation' though disjointed for almost two hundred years, but they kept the original language alive.

Buthelezi (2008, p. 148) states that evidence suggests that groups who were incorporated into the Zulu Kingdom continued to refer to themselves as *isizwe* (nations). The *Ndwadwe* kingdom collapsed in the 1820s, indications that the *Ndwandwe* who submitted and were incorporated into the Zulu Kingdom were allowed to continue calling themselves a *isizwe* (nation), they were integrated into expanding the Zulu nation.

2.5. **'Mediating' Zulu Identities - National Identity**

There are South African scholars who have published research and writing about South African history and identity however, some of these research have been challenged. One of the challenges has been dealing with censorship in South Africa that banned a vast array of visual culture and identity of South Africans. The increasing global entrenchment of neoliberalism is caused by the construction of national belonging that has become extremely complicated (Ives, 2010, p. 3). Neoliberalism appears to privilege and orientate universal ideologies of capitalistic gain and automatisation over more community-oriented state practices. Sparke et al. (2005) defines neoliberal as a catchall practice for governmentality, this is associated with the increasing entrenchment of market spaces that are fundamental for globalisation of government power. (Sparke et al, 2005, p. 360).

As earlier suggested about national identities, one identity is created in relation to another. Douglas (1966) suggests that we can only know the meaning of one word in relation to another such as days of the week (Douglas, 1966, p. 4). As people, we understand concepts as part of a sequence. When these concepts are applied to practical social life or when organising everyday life in accordance with these principles of difference and classification, often involving ritualized or repeated social behaviour, which is, a set of shared symbolic practices.

Many new social movements have taken cultural construction of identities and the understanding of the notion of difference is integral in that regard. The marginalisation and segregation of those who are viewed as the 'other' or as outsiders are easily construed negatively. Heterogeneity, diversity, and hybridity are viewed as a source of change and can be viewed as enriching; they are also recognised, celebrated, and viewed positively in society. Dualism is essential to meaning and is expressed in terms of fair oppositions that are a common feature. Binary opposition critics such as Hélène Cixous (1975) would argue that the opposing terms are differentially weighted so that one element in the dichotomy is more favourable or valued than the other (Cixous, 1975, p. 40). The two terms involved in binary opposition operate through power that clarify the imbalance of power and governmentality between the two terms. The most ubiquitous and dominant dichotomy is that of culture and nature. The unequal distribution of power between the two terms can also be applied in gender divisions. Power opposition also applies to social divisions especially between men and women.

The construction of binary oppositions is not only a cause for concern in dualism where one term us more favourable than the other but one is usually viewed as the norm while the other is seen as

outside or deviant. When one thinks of ‘high’ and ‘low’ in terms of culture, opera, ballet and theatre come to mind while ‘low’ culture is associated with soap operas and popular music. This dichotomy is disputed in the school of cultural studies. It is argued that divisions are not equally weighed and that oppositions are gendered. Cixous (1975, p. 32) argues that women are associated with nature, the heart and emotions while men are associated with culture, head and rationality. This tendency to classify the world into an opposition between male and female principles is endorsed by structural analyses that is used by Saussure’s (1976, p.25) emphasis on contrast as a principle of linguistic structure. Feminists such as de Beauvoir (1979, p.33) have argued that these dualisms are meant to construct women as ‘other’ so that women are not what men are.

However, anthropological theory has long equated women with nature and men with culture. Anthropology has played a significant role in destabilising unitary categories such as woman, especially through cross-cultural diversity. Anthropologists Levi-Strass’ (1985, p. 36) addresses inequalities from two standpoints. One argument is that gender inequality is caused by equating women with nature and men with culture. This is Levi-Strass’ (1985, p. 36) fundamental opposition that underpins social life. The second position focuses on social structures. This is represented as equating women with the private arena of the home and personal relationships and men with the public arena of politics production and commerce (Levi-Strass, 1985, p. 36). The anthropological study shows that the division is not universal between nature and culture. This challenge to the binary oppositions of nature/culture leads to looking for specificities of difference (Levi-Strass, 1985, p. 36). The questioning of binary opposition suggests the dichotomy itself has determined to correct the meaning of power; Foucault (1991, p. 241) challenges previous ideas, argues that power is what determines how the world is formed and understood (Foucault, 1991, p. 241). Meaning is present as a ‘trace’; it is not fixed in the relationship between signified and signifier.

According to Muukkonen (2010, p. 18), several movements and ideas have influenced the way identity is looked at. According to Hall (1999, p. 30-31) processes of modern life concentrated around the individual's sense and subjectivity, but this way of understanding acquired more collective and social forms as societies placed and developed the individual more firmly into their structures and modern societies (Hall, 1999, p. 30-31). Hall (1999) argues that identity is a structured representation that can only achieve its positive by virtue of comparing it to its negative. There has to be a recognition of the other before the self can construct itself (Hall, 1999, p. 31). This means that differences are essential to construct identity since we can only know who we are in relation to what we are not (Muukkonen, 2010, p. 19).

Nationality is a modern component of identity. Muukkonen (2010) discusses the key elements that represent national cultures. One of these elements is the nation's tale since it is told in the country's national history books, in the media, in literature and in popular culture (Muukkonen, 2010, p. 19). These all give certain meanings to what it is to belong to that particular country through representations of victories, defeats, disappointments, rituals etc. (Muukkonen, 2010, p. 19). The other element is the notion of origin, continuity, tradition, and timelessness that are used.

2.6 **Zulu Wedding ceremonies**

The Zulu traditional wedding ceremonies attract huge crowds in community, as they are the events where everybody, both invited and uninvited guests feel welcome and treated with dignity. According to Zibani (2002, p. 51), all the guests look at their best; whatever they do is done the best possible way. They dance at their best; they sing the best songs at their best. Zibani (2002) explains that during the ceremony, there are two groups, which perform in a competitive spirit; the first

group comes from the bride's family and friends *(umthimba*) and the other group belongs to the bridegroom's company *(ikhetho)*. The whole ceremony has a religious tone as the elders of the respective families call upon their ancestors to bless and monitor the whole event (Zibani, 2002, p. 51). There are negotiations and preliminaries that precede the actual wedding ceremony.

2.6.1 **Preliminary customs before the Zulu Wedding Ceremony**

There are a lot of preliminaries and precautionary measures that the Zulu people have to go through before the actual traditional wedding day. Zibani (2002, p. 74) describes the preliminary of Zulu weddings as complex, and further describes the range from weaving, knitting and buying the articles for distribution as gifts (*ukwaba*) among the bride's in-laws. *Ukwaba* custom - is the exchange of gifts between the bride and groom's family. *Ukucimela* custom - it is when the bride (*umakoti*) requests gifts from friends and family before the wedding ceremony. *Umbondo* custom - when the bride sends gifts like *umqoboti* (African Beer), food and other gifts to the groom's family. *Umkhehlo* custom - when the groom's family goes to the bride's family with cloths, blankets, and the slaughter a cow in celebration of their marriage. All these customs and other related preliminaries to be discussed here are engaged upon as soon as the *lobola* negotiations are completed. These customs show that everything is heading towards the great event; the traditional Zulu wedding ceremony (Zibani, 2002, p. 74).

To express their gratitude to the bride's family, the groom's family presents a cow to the bride's family, and each member of the family has a role to play. When the groom family arrives, young boys spread or shower the newly arrived lobola cattle with cattle compost (*umquba*) and burnt a dried cow dung (*bazithunqisele amashwaqa*) to incorporate them into the family herd. The bride's

father sacrifices a goat to report their arrival to the ancestors and has a family feasting with friends and neighbours. The bride and her mother brews beer that is poured in clay pots.

2.6.2 *Ilobolo* in Zulu Marriage

Ilobolo involves the family of the bride and groom discussing and negotiating the amount that will be paid for the wife. The *lobola* negotiations partakes at the bride's family house, it involves the elders of both the bride and groom. During the negotiations, the representative of the groom's family presents a beverage to the wife's family as a form of appreciation and chants the bride's family clan names. Both representatives of the family negotiate the agreed payment as a part of customary marriage mandatory requirement and compensated in form of money or cattle. *Ilobolo* plays a crucial role in the interpersonal relationship of the couple and of the two families. *Ilobolo* is regarded as an essentiality to a marriage, and its payment verifies the relationship of the couples. *Ilobolo* accords the status of the groom as *mkhwenyana* and the bride as *makoti* (an in-law, a recognition of the relationship and respect between the two and their respective families) (Ntshangase, 2015, p. 46).

The Zulu people inculcated discipline in their youth by educating them to be honest, conscientious, loyal, respectful, patriotic, and to take their share in the responsibilities and teaching of their nation. These values were seen in all aspects/and spheres of the Zulu people's lives, especially when it came to marriage, home, and family life, and they are still applicable today.

The custom involving the provision of marriage payments in cattle or cash, from the groom's family to the parents of the bride, is widely practised in Southern Africa. Zibani (2002, p. 74) states that "Zulu people love to show their inner feelings by actions; it is for this reason that they sacrifice beasts when communicating to their ancestors.

According to Zibani (2002) when a family prepares for the *lobola* negotiations at the brides house, the custom of shouting the clan praises and wears traditional attires, and description of *lobola* cattle is a way of softening the family head, the father of the bride (Zibani, 2002, p. 75). It is meant to make him proud that he is a man because of addition to the number of cattle he already has in his kraal, in this regard of a good negotiator who is an orator. Zibani and Msimang (1975, p. 254) writes:

"Kuyinto encomekayo ukuba umkhongi amemeze ngezinkomo ezinhle futhi ezisencane, kuthi nemibala kube eyekhethelo."

(It is praiseworthy that the negotiator announces his arrival with beautiful and young cattle, their colours being breath taking.)

The point of young and beautiful *lobola* cattle is very important. It is regarded as an insult or taboo to use aged cattle for *lobola*, as it is also not welcome to use calves. Either way shows that the groom's family is not well to do; it put the *lobola* cattle from tit-bits (*ubecacamezela*) (Zibani, 2002, p. 75).

2.6.3 ***Ilobola* being idealised in a reality show**

The payment of *ilobolo* set into motion a chain of varies factors that include the interpersonal relationships of the couple and families, the manner in which disagreements between couples could be resolved; and duties of the couples are a traditional cornerstone of Zulu marriage practice. The value and principles of the traditional Zulu practice are eroded by the changing nature of the society that we live in and have a positive influence. According to a participant she believes "Shows like *Our Perfect Wedding* shows us how submissive the bride has to be in order to be married to a traditional Zulu man, going as far as changing not only her last name. However, her first name as well. It is also, how proud the groom is of his culture how protective he is of his customs and the dominance the Zulu man has in a marriage situation." (Participant 1, 2020)

What is remarkable from the participant's perspective is the constant references to reality show. Gerbner and Gross (1976, p. 45) views appear to collaborate with the participants, both scholars state that television has transformed into a primary serves to socialise majority of people into standardised roles and behaviours. Gerbner and Gross (1976, p. 45) suggest that through content behaviours, values, and interactions presented in television cultivates people's belief's about how the world works.

2.7 **Conclusion**

Our Perfect Wedding has succeeded in creating an unprecedented level of public debate since its premier in 2011, about the state of the identity, middle class consumption in South Africa, and about the role of television representations of social issues. Much of this debate was sparked by criticism that the series glamourised unambiguous gender roles and classism, presented to black

communities in a negative light, and the representations of consumption in the middle class. Analysing various scholars, and participant's views on reality television influence on gender roles and *ilobolo* practice showed that the practice plays an important role in a Zulu marriage set-up, such as elevating the status of the woman to whom *ilobolo* has been paid, and legitimising the children born in such a union. Smit (2006) argues that although *Our Perfect Wedding* celebrates a fantastical 'perfection' of a wedding, as the confirmation of middle-class success, while simultaneously encouraging the audience to judge the couples onscreen for their conspicuous performances of wealth, and to relish those moments where 'wedding perfection' and, by extension, class mobility fails (Smit, 2006, p. 20). The key issue of contention in public debate about the programme has been the claim that *Our Perfect Wedding* 'shows perfect wedding ceremonies as it is' (Smit, 2006, p.20). This claim has depended on a combination of aesthetic devices (African pop music, fast-paced visuals), and research undertaken in townships by the production team prior to the making of the reality show. Therefore, to its unforeseen goal of stimulating debate about cultural issues, *Our Perfect Wedding* has also served as the occasion for a public debate, about the relationships between media representations and everyday life should be understood.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Introduction

The research is rooted in the following theories, i.e. stereotyping, representation and social identity. Representation is the relevant theories on which I will base my study. The study not only focuses on the use of representation but the stereotyping and social identity which was motivated by the fact that I will be analysing the manner in which Zulu weddings are represented on *Our Perfect Wedding.*

3.1. **Representation**

Woodward (1999, p. 14) defines representation as inclusive of the signifying practices and symbolic systems that produce meanings and position us as subjects. Representation is not only about representing 'reality' but it is the production of meaning through language. According to Hall (1997, p. 1) to represent, something is to depict it or view it in the conscious mind by description of the imagination, to project the likeness of it before the subconscious mind. In other words, representation connects the universal meanings and language to the abstract culture. There is never one ideal meaning in representation, Plantinga's (1997, p. 38) definition: In film, 'Representation' can be constructed in different ways; as a photographic or aural likeliness of an object or person; as a way of projecting views of institutions or organisations; and creating a case of proposition for aspect in the non-fictional world.

Representation is the source of language; representation also uses language to formulate meaning about the world meaningfully to the community. Through representation, meaning is produced, executed, and changed between representatives of a culture. Representation also represents images, signs and language for a community (Hall, 1997, p. 16).

For Blount (1996, p.26); images that are selected by institutions are recognised as reality which have meaning and are tied within a particular environment (Blount, 1996, p. 26).

3.2 **Stereotyping**

According to Mckoy (2012, p. 128) stereotyping is a person's perception of other people are built on how their surroundings and association of people have forged their mind-sets. Mckoy (2012) further states that gender and racial stereotypes exists in every setting, regardless of being positive or negative (Mckoy, 2012, p. 128). The aim of stereotyping is to segregate what is socially acceptable or unacceptable by society (Mckoy, 2012, p. 128).

Hall (1997, p. 56) stated that power affects the psychology of people who do not have power; he defines power as a game that functions as a gross of inequalities of unbalanced power. The construction of power is a norm to society, it excludes and classify a group of people various spaces. In addition, Hall (1997) indicates that the nature of stereotyping is to reduce people's character, and it sets up a frontier to what is acceptable and unacceptable by the community (Hall, 1997, p. 56).

3.2.1 **Social and stigmatised Identity**

The aim of social identity theory is to analyse social comparison, social categorisation, and social perception. Henri Tajfel developed social identity in the 1970s. Tajfel and Turner (1986) he defined it as knowledge that one belongs to a particular social group with significant emotion and value connecting oneself to the group's membership" (1986, p. 292). Scholars like Hogg and Reid defined social identity as a "social-psychological approach that evaluates the self-conception and social categorisation in a group society" (Hogg and Reid, 2006, p. 8). Hogg and Reid (2006) stated that the individual's self-concept is part of social identity, which is briefed by a group of certain people.

Racial and ethnic identity is classified by Hogg and Abrahams (1988, p. 40) as social correlation and self-identification. Racial and ethnic identity are directly linked to social identity. According to Phinney (1990, p. 10) self-labelling or self- definition is also self-identification. Stets and Burke (2000, p. 225) believe "the consequence of self-categorisation is an accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and other in-group members". Hogg and Abrahams (1988, p 41) agree that the contrasting of social categories has power within the community therefore; individuals with power place themselves in existing social categories that change the spaces of the community and their identity (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p. 41).

Phinney (1990, p. 10) explains the social identity survey approach in his self-identification research that will be analysed for this research. He substantiate, "The purpose of the research is to have subjects rate themselves or to match labels of themselves in terms of similarity to individuals from particular social cultural background".

Human behaviour is responsible for making us divide identities into categories. This practice helps us understand each other and work together. Social and moral order are maintained and produced this practice. The main objective of the practice of categorisation in to achieve difference. The systems of cultural differentiation are based on over-simplified differences and stereotypes, which are based upon opposites (Juhila, 2005, p. 25). Binary oppositions through difference produce meanings, just like social identities on *Our Perfect Wedding* being presented to viewers.

Juhila (2005, p. 24) stated that the two effects of social identities and categorising people support in maintaining cultural and societal harmony by creating an environment where the community meet organized assumptions of the public (Juhila, 2005, p. 24). In addition, they can manage biased traits from the group by upholding particular stereotypes of that categorised communal group. Some representatives of a group are stigmatized for their behaviour or social background therefore, stigmatised social identity refers to a category that includes negative representation to a community. Representative of these categories are able to amend and reproduce meanings for their members. Social categories exist despite being misunderstood and invisible however, they construct principles that assist the public to understand the presentation of the information (Juhila, 2005, p. 24).

According to Hall (1999, p. 78-79) the Western world category has been produced in the historical setting where different people met each other for the first time, an example would be during the times of crusades, imperialism, colonialism, and the westward migration of people. However, this category is not a geographic fact, but it is a produced category that is meant to highlight racial difference. The main purpose of this categorisation is to enable us to think of them and us in terms of "The West and the Rest" (Hall, 1999, p.78-79). The portrayal of darker people was primitive,

innocent and overtly sexual. This means that were thought of as childlike or as part of nature and were then compared to and measured against the cultivated, more developed white people (Juhila, 2005, p. 25). The history of racial social categorisation forms part of our cultural "knowledge"; this is also linked to the history of our institutions, particularly law (Juhila, 2005, p. 25).

The construction of our identities are the result of our imagination, of which it is a challenge to fix them, even though the stereotype and their usage tries to overpower this. Stigmatised identity challenges the meaning so that they can construct another meaning for the identities. Talking back could not continue without these identities, and they always occurred against culturally founded categories that would be freely defined (Juhila, 2005, p. 28-29).

It is said that talking back does not necessarily mean that we should have a strong denial of the category, but a delicate negotiation of the assumptions, which are then questioned, and new possible identities negotiated (Juhila, 2005, p. 29). Even though talking back occurs in most situations where stereotypes are being questioned and fought, the most forceful talking back occurs in situations where persistent stigmatised identity exists which the individual is attempting to renegotiate. Sacks (1992, p. 40) has suggested an instrument he calls 'doing being ordinary' when engaged in serious negotiations (Juhila, 2005, p. 21).

This means individuals who are associated to the stigmatised identity category characterise themselves as ordinary people not what is assumed by the viewer, thus distancing themselves from the stigma in their own way. An individual distance themselves from stigmatised identity and values because it is a way of saving face and a way to survive (Juhila, 2005, p. 30). Juhila (2005)

argues that the category of stigmatised identity is not sufficient to destigmatise the cultural assumptions of a group that is presented to the public (Juhila, 2005, p. 30).

3.3 Media construction Fandom Theory and effects of the media

With current and past studies, fandom studies focuses on the audience cultural studies and their behaviour towards media content. Fandom studies also focuses on fan culture and media content, and the consumption of digital content. According to Gillespie (2005, p. 25), the effect tradition media predominately focuses on the effects of television rather than alternative media. There are three effects of television, which are the effects on individuals, the effects of stereotyped and violent programme and the effect on the child audience (Gillespie, 2005, p. 25).

In addition, Gillpesie explains that the exposure to certain media content affects and changes the beliefs and behaviour of the public (Gillepsie 2005, p. 23). Henry Jenkins is one of the notable theorists within the field of fandom studies. Jenkins (2017, p. 3) argues that the characteristics of fandom is exhibited as ‘participatory culture’ groups, which grants individuals to artistically express their views so that they can contribute their views and knowledge to the group.

According to Jenkins (2017, p. 11), the era between pre-digital and digital fandom is defined by fan studies. The convergence culture is where television viewing, connecting on social media and watching programming on any channel, defines the technological sphere of the current digital era (Spanò, 2016, p. 626). The era of digital and internet technology has influenced how we interact as a society and profoundly changed the way fandoms operate and revolutionize fandoms into digital

fandoms where fans can be included in communities regardless of their social background (Baki, 2014, p. 13). Due to its longevity of airing trendy cultural episodes, *Our Perfect Wedding* has remained in the Top five most watched shows on DSTV for six years. This has affected the shows impact on society and the discourses of fandom community by criticising various traditions and practices and thus had an influence in raising certain topics. For example, according to Survey South African Television Viewership (2020) these are the Top five most watched shows on DSTV from March – May:

Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & DSTV Adults **March 2020** Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 2: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2020)

Digital DSTV U:22045 S:5593

Day	**Date**	**From**	**To**	**Station**	**Programme Title**	**Genre**	**AR**	**Viewers**	**Share**
Tue	31/03/2020	2100	2131	MZAN	The Queen	Dram	12.27	2 705 422	31.6
Sun	29/03/2020	1900	1957	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Real	10.17	2 242 036	24.7
Tue	31/03/2020	1931	1958	MZAN	Gomora-R	Dram	9.42	2 075 905	21.2
Sun	29/03/2020	1800	1859	MZAN	Date My Family	Real	9.72	2 143 002	24.5
Sun	29/03/2020	2000	2056	MZAN	The Omen	Movie	8.54	1 882 384	22.2

Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & DSTV Adults **April 2020** Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 3: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2020)

Digital DSTV U:22045 S:5593

Day	Date	From	To	Station	Programme Title	Genre	AR	Viewers	Share
Wed	15/04/2020	1930	1958	MZAN	Gomora	Dram	14.5	3 096 258	29.4
Mon	13/04/2020	2101	2128	MZAN	The Queen	Dram	12.52	2 760 487	30.6
Sun	12/04/2020	1900	1959	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Real	12.52	2 760 487	30.6
Sun	12/04/2020	1800	1859	MZAN	Date My Family	Real	9.72	2 143 002	24.5
Fri	03/04/2020	1930	1959	MZAN	Gomora -R	Dram	9.73	2 145 064	22

Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & DSTV Adults **May 2020** Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 4: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2020)

Digital DSTV U:22045 S:5593

Day	Date	From	To	Station	Programme Title	Genre	AR	Viewers	Share
Sun	31/05/2020	2130	2159	MOJA	Uyajola 9/9	Real	14.6	3 225 401	43.2
Mon	25/05/2020	2100	2129	MZAN	The Queen	Dram	8.44	1 861 519	22.2
Mon	25/05/2020	1930	1957	MZAN	Gomora	Dram	7.85	1 731 000	17.7
Mon	25/05/2020	2032	2059	MZAN	Isibaya	Dram	7.05	1 554 642	17.2
Sun	31/05/2020	1900	2000	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Dram	6.72	1 480 311	16

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the methodological orientation and research design deployed in the study, which links to the research questions and problem. Chapter four deals with the findings and analysis in terms of how participants answer research questions. Chapter four examines the types of research that the study falls under, moreover, the chapter focuses the steps on the methodological process that have been initiated by the researcher; pertain to data collection and data analysis, are explained and focus in the chapter. Chapter four also approaches reliability and validity of the research, also the ethical considerations.

- The research design
- The sample and time frame
- Data gathering methods techniques
- Interviews; questionnaires
- Data analysis methods
- Thematic analysis; visual image analysis
- Ratability and validity
- Conclusion.

My research follows a translation approach to research as it aims an in-depth investigation of the television viewing habits of the *Our Perfect Wedding* audiences, especially viewers who identify and categorise themselves as *umZulu*. Television viewing behaviour has the aspects of being associated with traditional fandom and critical practices therefore the research aims to analyse and interpret the viewing behaviour of the audience.

The viewing habits and behaviour of the participants are analysed through qualitative data; it is collected in the design of a survey where participant's answers questions relating to the frequency and nature of the viewer's behaviour relating to traditional ideals of critical and interactive fandom personalities. The study has qualitative aspects, uses focus groups and questionnaires to gain a better understanding and in depth-analysis of the findings of the survey; the qualitative behaviour aims to describe and interpret the audience's television viewing behaviour ensuring fandom behaviour.

4.2 Elements of research

Research Problem

The main aim of this research study as stated in chapter 1 is to conduct an audience reception analysis concerning representation of Zulu weddings in the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding.* The central research questions are:

1. How are the Zulu brides and grooms represented in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?
2. How are Zulu themed ceremonies represented on the show?

3. Which traditional customs are used to prepare for a Zulu wedding in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?

4.3 Methodological Orientation

Qualitative Research

Babbie and Mouton (1998) state that quantitative research places a great amount of stress on putting a mathematical value on constructs in order to measure the phenomena (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, p. 49). This means that the focus is on the measurability of the phenomena. The disadvantage of the research method is that parts of the data may lose meaning because quantitative research primarily deals with numbers. This means that quantitative research is unsuitable for this study because meanings (numerical figures) cannot be unveiled to fully answer how Zulu weddings are represented. In addition, accessing the selected two episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding* focusing on Zulu weddings from the broadcaster was a challenge; this affected the productivity and functionality of retrieving the appropriate data collection.

A qualitative method is implemented in this research study since it primarily involves the audience reception analysis in terms of Zulu representation in the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 3) “qualitative research is naturalistic, interpretive approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena within their social world”. (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 3).

By understanding the social phenomena, qualitative research seeks to guide and interpret information by gathering into a communal phenomenon in order to understand from within a community (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, p. 53). “It is important to note that a disadvantage of qualitative research is that it requires a lot of time and it is criticized for being “non-scientific and invalid” (Babbie & Mouton, 1998, p. 53). This has been overcome by not being objective, but reference findings and by managing the time allocated to data collection and data interpretation to ensure that sufficient time was given to the research study.

Qualitative research methods are, however, advantageous in that meanings can be unveiled (Berg, 2001, p. 3), which is central to this study in answering research questions that specifically pertain to representation of Zulu Weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. As this study, aims to explore the perspectives (views and perceptions) of people who watch the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*, the use of a qualitative methodological approach is appropriate.

Type of Research

The type of research in this study is qualitative research. According to Keyton (2005) “qualitative research methods emphasise empirical, inductive and interpretative approaches applied to interaction within a particular context” (Keyton, 2005, p. 64). In addition, the information obtained using qualitative approach provides information about the human side of the study, it also selects and emphasizes the value of direct participation and distributes the subjects consciousness and analysis of the particular case (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Priest, 1996, Emerson, 1983; Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009). The approach reveals appropriate views on the research problem; this assists the researcher to engage deeply with the participants so that they can be able to gather more data.

The reason for stating that this research study is qualitative in nature is because the participants' perceptions, views and subjective thoughts on how Zulu weddings are represented on *Our Perfect Wedding* is important for the research.

4.4 Research Design

4.4.1 Population and Sample

According to Du Plooy (2002, p. 100), it is imperative to realise that when selecting a population target, the researcher must be aware that population refers to all units, social artefacts, organizations, social interactions, and groups. Thus, the main goal of the research is not to stigmatise the whole population, but to map out an experiment that represents the target population. The population for this research study is South African viewers, who identify themselves as *umZulu*. The reason for the chosen viewers who identify themselves as *umZulu*, is because they are born in Kwa-Zulu Natal and have lived in the province most of their lives. They are more knowledgeable of being *umZulu* and Zulu weddings.

There are two types of sampling, one is probability sampling and the other is non-probability sampling (Du Plooy, 2002, p. 113). It is necessary to draw a distinction between probability sampling and non-probability sampling since these two sampling methods are considered binary oppositions to one another. This means that in defining what the one term is subsequently leads to defining what the other term is not (Du Plooy, 2002, p. 113).

Non-probability sampling involves the researcher controlling the choice of the analysis. This means that not every unit in the population has a probable or an equal chance of being selected (Du Plooy, 2002, p. 113). Non-probability sampling does not make use of mathematical procedures that can be used to infer to the general population. There are different types of non-probability sampling. However, for the purpose of this research study, purposive sampling is deployed. This non-probability sample is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study.

Patton (1990, p 46) defines purposive sampling as subjective sampling, judgmental and selective. The population is purposive; the purpose of the research is to gather views of a specific target, that is, Zulu speaking people. The participants are chosen with a specific purpose in mind, their knowledge of, and background with, ideology, identity, and cultural studies. Participants are approached through email (a request is made and those interested will be asked to participate). The intention is to get ten participants however, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic I have managed to get less than ten participants. This helped to get various perspectives on representation of Zulu weddings. However, participants must meet a criterion for the research.

The mandatory criteria is that they must meet the criteria as follows:

- All participants must be from a Zulu background;
- Residents of KwaZulu-Natal residing in Gauteng for school (University) or work purposes;
- Formally married either through traditional or civil marriage, or in a cohabiting relationship (i.e. as well as single participants);
- All participants must have watched the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding.*

4.4.2 Time Frame and Location

The research utilizes a cross-examination duration in that the views of participants are explored at a specific point in time, which means that the duration for this research was six months. The process commenced in February 2020, starting with three then later two participants, and completed in February 2021 due to Covid-19 outbreak and government restrictions. Multichoice was the chosen as the main location before the global outbreak for group discussions and interviews; this was convenient for participants who are taking part of the research study, while viewing episodes that are only available at Multichoice.

4.4.3 Data Gathering and Data Analysis

I used two data collection methods for my research study: One is group discussions while watching episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding* and the other is answering questionnaires after watching the selected episodes. The reason behind the utilisation of individual interviews is that it enables the researcher to directly observe the social production of meaning as participants read media material in a conducive environment. Questionnaires were deployed for convenience in the case of participants who do not identify as *umZulu* but were welcomed to take part in the study. The use of questionnaires also helps participants in responding to questions that may be deemed sensitive. This ensures validity and reliability in the research study.

The questionnaire for the participants contains essential information such as;

- Name and Surname;
- Age;
- Gender,

- Race,

During the research interview, the researcher used a cell phone device to record audio for data gathering, while the researcher asking questions and participants responding to the questions.

The study utilises audience reception theory; the study seeks to understand Zulu weddings represented on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding.* Viewers are frequently interpreted through media texts because the audience reception study is always interested in analysing the audience. Fourie (2001, p. 23) illustrates that the audience interprets different media texts (e.g. television programmes) which are defined through the process of negotiation and understanding viewers social cultural contexts (Fourie, 2001, p. 23). The research provides an audience reception investigation of *Our Perfect Wedding* from the viewpoint of South African citizens who identify themselves as Zulu. By using reception theory, the study explores to grasp how the reality show *Our Perfect Wedding* is illustrated from the students and working citizens' viewpoint."

I approached students and working citizens and asked them to participate in the research. I compiled questionnaires for the participants. Focus group discussions are ideal for the research however; it is logistically challenging to gather people who live in different areas and have a complex schedules to gather the appropriate information for the research.

Viewers of the show are given questionnaires, which they filled out in their own time (within the timeframe given to them). This makes it easy for them to respond honestly to the questions time without pressure of buying face if interviewed. Questions asked would be:

1. What do you think of the portrayal of the brides and grooms in each of the selected episodes of the show, *Our Perfect Wedding*?
2. Do you think the way the bride and groom portrayed in selected episodes is an actual representation of reality?
3. Do you think the representation of the Zulu wedding ceremony of the show is accurate within your cultural experience?

These questions will be open ended so that participants are free to express their views without being confined to a yes/no.

4.4.4 Use of the focus group as a data collection technique

One of the methods used is focus group discussions, which are the primary source of the research's data. According to Rabiee (2004, p. 28), a focus group normally consists of between five to twelve participants, and there could be more than one group depending on the nature of the research. The focus group of the research is informal (Rabiee, 2004, p. 28). For this topic, intimate discussions in focus groups while watching an episode of *Our Perfect Wedding* are imperative since the show also focuses on the diaspora of cultures and identities, so having intimate discussions will be beneficial for the research. Rabiee (2004) suggest that the informal group might provide information about a range of ideas and feelings that individuals have about certain issues, as well as illuminating the differences in perspective between groups of individuals (Rabiee, 2004, p. 28).

4.4.5 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are prominent for the researcher; it is also crucial for the researcher to be aware that the research is credible. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998, p. 122), the phenomena of validity studies the process of the research and accurately represents the information presented by the researcher. “Different groups are measured through the validity measurement system which is a requirement in research” (Mouton, 1996, p. 144).

In other words, the findings should consistently lead to the same results in different times. Face validity is key, and it is achieved by examining the measurement device (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 5). One way that can help achieve face validity in this research, study is by ensuring that all procedures in the research design are implemented in a correct manner (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 5).

Reliability in research applies the same outcome when repeated by the researcher (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, p. 119). The research requires the researcher to be attentive; the interpretation on the content is crucial and requires the research to be clear. The interpretation of the audience responses is weighed and against media critics in order to perpetuate reliability and validity.

The research questions are associated with the themes of the research that are patterns across data collection and are crucial to the description phenomenon of the research. These themes are used from the feedback collected from the participants and are carefully analysed. It is crucial to employ

ethical and principled questions to participants so that they able to respond and do not feel intimidated by the questions asked by the researcher.

Questionnaires are used after the group discussion, so that the participants answer the questions freely and honestly. Questionnaires are important for data collection because the participants are able to answer more questions after the group discussions. In addition, group discussions are used in the research while viewing the selected episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding.* This helps the researcher to interact with the participants and to receive appropriate answers for the research. For the research, five participants within the age group of 19 – 35 are collected to participate on the study.

In this study, I undertake to understand the audience. I employed a research approach propagated by (Henning and van Jansen, 2004) known as 'critical framework paradigm'. Research adopting this paradigm sets out to promote critical consciousness and breaking down the institutional structures and arrangements that reproduce oppressive ideologies, and the social inequalities that are produced, maintained and reproduced by these social structures and ideologies (Henning and van Jansen, 2004, p.44).

4.5 Conclusion

Sampling for the survey segment of the research, I have used media sites to search for one of the most viewed episode of *Our Perfect Wedding*. I approached the participants by individually sending them an email and asked to spread the word through their social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. A population of 18.5 million people use smartphones in South Africa; they use their

smartphones mostly to connect to the internet and social media sites, which are efficient because of the high rate of cell phone usage in the country (Statista, 2018; The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa, 2017). Thus, by approaching participants on email and WhatsApp it was easy to share the information with the participants and easily shared the research information with their friends and family on their social media pages.

The qualitative method is employed in this research; the findings of the research are transcribed from the focus group interviews, and the discussions are categorised through existing theory, according to the essence of media viewing and audience practices contradicting findings sorted separately from existing designs as analysed by Jenkins (2017) and Stamps (2011). According to Golafshani (2003, p. 599), the gravity of the study "whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 599), is covered through the use of methodology, "a process of qualitative cross-validation" (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006) therefore, methods of collection such as focus groups and questionnaires validate the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five focuses on the overview of reception theory which produces data that is collected from participants through questionnaires and interviews, and it transcribed, decreased to be evaluated and discussed. The data is divided into five categories: namely, how people who identify as *umZulu* relate to the representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*, the portrayal of the Zulu bride and groomsman in relation to identity, and wedding themes that were identified from *Our Perfect Wedding*. In addition, cultural interpretations and accuracy of Zulu wedding representations in the show. Due to the global pandemic and national lockdown I managed to interview five participants; all five were interviewed while watching the *Our Perfect Wedding show* while they were sent questionnaires to write down their responses. Numbers (from P1 to P5) will mark the participants. The data directly obtained from the participants are answers in italics.

The research also draws on Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model and Hall's Model of Preferred Reading (Hall, 1980, p. 507). Limitations of this study as well as suggestions for further research will conclude this chapter.

5.2. (OPW) *Our Perfect Wedding* overview:

Our Perfect Wedding is a reality show that airs on Sundays AT 19:00 pm on DSTV Mzansi Magic. The reality show premiered in 2011 hosted by a new presenter each season; couples are documented in each episode for the preparations of their wedding as they attempt to pull off a perfect wedding

for their guests (TVSA, 2013). *Our Perfect Wedding* is produced by connect TV; Basetsana Kumalo and Clifford Elk are the executive producers of the show. A survey conducted by Television South Africa, in 2018 the television show The Queen had a viewership of 1 571 311 viewers followed by *Our Perfect Wedding* with 1 082 348 since its premier in 2011.

5.3 Reception Theory

According to Gillespie (2005, p.10) the media 'mass' communication has influenced popular culture and academic, and has changed the ideas of the audiences. Gillespie (2005, p. 10) states that audiences are seen as mindless and naïve and as manipulated or exploited by the 'Mass Media'. Gillespie further explains that majority of the mass audience do not analyse or criticize the content, which is presented to them rather they prefer watching it (Gillespie, 2005, p. 10).

Hall (1980, p. 57) illustrates that mass communication has expanded over the years. "From the linear model that is sender-message-receiver, to the articulation of linked but distinctive moments whereby, there is a production, circulation, consumption and reproduction of meaning making". This means the stages of production-consumption is relatively autonomous and circuits the meaning of production. Therefore, the consumer interprets the subliminal message and information that is produced by the producer (Hall, 1980, p. 57). The information aired to the public is determined by the limits and possibilities that are controlled by the reception.

Hall (1980, p. 57) emphasises that the institutional power-relations that are imprinted through social existence are dominated by the complex power structures of society (Hall, 1980, p. 57). The

message influences the power-relations between the consumer (receiver) the producer and (sender); an explanation for this is that the receiver and the sender are shifting power in their message. Thus, the power-relations of the communication circuit reproduces a pattern of influence through production (Hall, 1980, p. 57).

5.3.1 Audience processing media images

Hoijer (1989, p. 200) states that cognitive psychologist researchers have been concerned with the media active audience research and the way individuals are processing information. Hoijer further states that, "cognitive processing of a television program is a dynamic and complex process that displays great variability" (Hoijer, 1989, p. 200). This means that, information processing is a complex cognitive and psychological process that is mainly concerned with taking in information, processing it, storing it and connecting the new information to the individual's prior knowledge to interpret a particular news item. Audiences are active processors of media content, if they are able "to compare the external information to [their] existing structure of beliefs and values" (Wright, 1973, p. 54). Thus, reacting to a media message guarantees an active processing of that content, whereas the absence of that reflection indicates a passive processing on the part of the audience. In addition, "information-processing theory uses mechanistic analogies to describe and interpret how each of us takes in and makes sense of the flood of information our senses encounter every moment of each day" (Baran & Davis, 2012, p. 263).

5.4 Audience Analysis:

5.4.1 **The audience reception approach - *Our Perfect Wedding* viewership**

According to Gillespie (2005, p. 42), a range of audience, reception studies have explored how audiences interpret and use different media, mainly focusing on variety of television genres. Audience interpretations or decoding's have been found to diverge depending on viewers socio-economic position, gender, ethnicity etc., while the possibilities for critical or oppositional readings are anticipated, enabled or restricted by the degree of closure encoded into the text or genre (Gillespie, 2005, p. 151). For example,' with *Our Perfect Wedding's* viewership the study of audience decoding's of weddings, found audiences to diverge as a function of their social-economic and cultural positions which affect their daily lives. Below are the top five television shows airing on DSTV including *Our Perfect Wedding,* which influence the social-cultural position of the audience (Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS, 2019)**:**

October 2019 Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & **DSTV** Adults October 2019 Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 6: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2019)

Adults 15+ years U:35830 S:8557

Day	**Date**	**From**	**To**	**Station**	**Programme Title**	**Genre**	**AR**	**Viewers**	**Share**
Sun	13/10/2019	1700	1900	MZAN	Idols SA	Real	3.8	1 359 839	13.9
Thur	31/10/2019	2102	2129	MZAN	The Queen	Movie	3.38	1 216 597	10
Sun	13/10/2019	1900	2054	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Real	3.35	1 201 000	10
Sun	13/10/2019	2000	2054	MZAN	Ifalakhe	Dram	3.08	1 104 906	9.4
Sun	06/10/2019	2130	2130	MOJA	Uyajola 9/9	Real	2.13	764 713	9.8

Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & **DSTV** Adults November 2019 Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 7: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2019)

Adults 15+ years U:36011 S:8530

Day	Date	From	To	Station	Programme Title	Genre	AR	Viewers	Share
Sun	17/11/2019	1700	1859	MZAN	Idols SA	Real	3.7	1 331 030	13.8
Wed	13/11/2019	2101	2131	MZAN	The Queen	Movie	3.57	1 284 360	10.8
Sun	17/10/2019	1901	1959	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Real	3.17	1 242 330	10
Sun	17/11/2019	2000	2057	MZAN	Ifalakhe	Dram	2.76	993 356	8.8
Sat	02/11/2019	1045	1343	SUP1	Rugby World Cup 2019: England vs South Africa	Sport	2.33	839 382	10.2

Top five Programmes All Adults 15+ & **DSTV** Adults December 2019 Prime Time 17h30 - 22h00

Table 8: Establishment Survey South African Television Viewership TAMS (2019)

Adults 15+ years U:36011 S:8530

Day	Date	From	To	Station	Programme Title	Genre	AR	Viewers	Share
Mon	23/12/2019	2100	2129	MZAN	The Queen	Dram	3.51	1 265 214	10.3
Sun	29/12/2019	2000	2059	MZAN	Ifalakhe	Dram	2.74	986 668	9.1
Sun	29/10/2019	1900	1958	MZAN	***Our Perfect Wedding***	Real	2.34	842 785	8.2
Tue	03/12/2019	2031	2059	MZAN	Isibaya	Dram	2.03	731 773	5.7
Thur	05/12/2019	1902	1932	MZAN	The River	Dram	1.73	622 126	5.7

5.4.2 Perceived realism scale & *Our Perfect Wedding* Screening

The participants viewed two episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*, which are Zulu themed weddings: Mr. and Mrs Mncube, aired on 15 September 2019 and Mr. and Mrs. Sikhosana, which aired on 8 December. The participants answered questions based on the episodes that were viewed.

5.4.3 Participants relating to *Our Perfect Wedding*

<u>Question:</u> As a South African, how do you relate to the selected episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*?

Participant 1:

1. **Answer:**

   Episode no 1: **Ntombifuthi Dlamini** and **Vusi Sikhosana**

   Their traditional wedding was very relatable to me, personally. As a Zulu person, I have witnessed some of the moments I saw on the episode, from "Umembheso", through to "Ukwaba." Their attire was in line with what many Zulu couples wear on their wedding day, including some of the topics covered via the speeches by the guests.

   Episode no 2: **Siya Mncube** and **Ayanda Mngomezulu**

   The episode was very relatable. From the weddings that take place over two days, to the practises observed during the ceremonies; Zulu culture makes a point of making sure that the couple is introduced to everybody in the family, including, which is probably the most important aspect of all the weddings, introducing the bride to the groom's ancestors.

An interesting read on P1 when he mentions that one of the reasons Zulu weddings have more than a day ceremonial event is to introduce the bride to the family & ancestors, thus uniting both families and bring luck onto their marriage. Such views further illustrate the extent to which the selected commands a strong, relatable following and a grip on its audience. In addition, what is significant in the participants comments are the references to *"Umembheso" and "Ukwaba"* which is explained in chapter two, all these customs and other related preliminaries discussed are engaged upon as soon during *ilobola* negotiations, which are important for the unity of both families. Zibani (2002) states that the *lobola* negotiations are important before a wedding, because the Zulu customs will prepare for a prominent traditional Zulu wedding ceremony (Zibani, 2002, p. 74).

Participant 2:

2. **Answer:**

With the few Zulu weddings I have attended, OPW depicts the true events of traditional weddings. Most of the practises are the similar and relatable as I have first-hand witnessed the ceremonies that make up a Zulu wedding.

Participant 3:

3. **Answer:**

In South Africa, the idea of having two weddings is common, the white and the traditional wedding. Seeing this in OPW makes me relate.

Participant 4:

4. **Answer:**

Because it documents the life of ordinary people. It celebrates black love and tells their story and educates me in the other traditions and ways of life that are not mine. It tells stories of people who look and sound like me.

Participant 5:

5. **Answer:**

I relate very well to the episodes of Our Perfect Wedding as they reflect my

Zulu culture and what goes on when tradition wedding ceremonies are

Performed

Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 relate to the Zulu themes of the reality show because they depict true events of weddings and celebrate love. What I gathered from the participant's answers is that representation is matters and it is crucial to watch content/shows that portray ones culture.



Our Perfect Wedding, 2019. Connect TV. Mr & Mrs Mncube. Episode 25, Season 9. Johannesburg: M-Net, 15th September 2019.

5.4.4 Portrayal of brides and grooms on selected episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*

This section attempts to answer one of the research question, that is, what do you think of the portrayal of brides and grooms in each of the selected episodes of the show, *Our Perfect Wedding*? The participant's views contradict the role of reality television and mirror the different methods of genre that influences and illustrates their norms and set of values, it further questions the portrayal of gender equity amongst married couples and individuals in relationships. The analysis of the findings indicate that the reality show's portrayal of assertive and strong minded grooms is a form of value and norm in the families of the groom and bride, and influences traditional gender roles of the Zulu marriage practices. While the timid and passive wife who depends on the husband is accepted and a norm in the families.

<u>Question:</u> What do you think of the portrayal of brides and grooms in each of the selected episodes of the show, *Our Perfect Wedding*?

Participant 1:

1. **Answer:**

Siya *and* ***Ayanda*** *were a young couple and their wedding ceremonies portrayed their ages and their want to be fashionable, and perhaps even "flashy". They were very honest about their relationship on camera, even revealing aspects that you would not think they would reveal – in their interviews; it became evident that the couple had some trust issues. How hectic these are is not really divulged*

Ntombifuthi Dlamini *&* ***Vusi Sikhosana*** *were portrayed as a simple couple. They were 56 and 60 respectively, so the respectability of their wedding is to be expected. The bride looked beautiful and comfortable in her gown and traditional attire and they both enjoyed their special days.*

Participant 2:

2. **Answer*:***

There is definitely evidence of unconditional love between the two couples. Both couples stated the hardships they have experienced however, they have managed to stay committed to each other. The couples are respectful to one another and others, as per African culture. The bride usually portrays a timid and shy character during the wedding ceremony, while the groom shows off his strength.

Participant 3:

3. **Answer:**

Vusi and Ntombifuthi: they portray the idea of being patience and all shall be well in the end. I don't think it is a good gesture because people have silently suffered either emotionally or physically or both, all in the name of being patient because whatever they're going through will pass, when that is not guaranteed, meanwhile the suffering prevails, involving losing yourself in the process.

Siya and Ayanda: portrays that you should know the person you are marrying, and accept their flaws. They both kept emphasizing how they lie and have accepted that they both lie, so they are aware and know what to expect.

Participant 4:

4. Answer:

I liked how it portrayed their relationship as pure and joyful however, it portrayed the man as a voiceless person who just agrees with everything that is said. Not once did he have his own opinion. The other episode, Siya and Ayanda: the episode portrayed Siya as a cheater and a man who never admits to his flaws and mistakes. He is also portrayed a womaniser which is a stereotype of how man and relationships can be or should be

The participants had different answers regarding the portrayal of the bride and groom on the show. Interestingly, Participant 2 and 4 highlighted the characteristics of the bride and groom, Participant 2 highlighted the bride portrayed as shy and timid, while participant 4 highlighted the groom (Siya) as a cheater and a womaniser. Participant 4 also mentions the stereotype being portrayed on the show.

In addition, according to the participants interviewed, Zulu Culture contributes to the stereotyping and generalization of gender roles. Buthelezi (2004) notes that the Zulu language and phatic interactions reinforces “wifehood role” of a woman and the man is the head of the house. Therefore, in early stages of their lives a girl learns a man is important part of her identity as a woman through language.



Our Perfect Wedding, 2019. Connect TV. Mr & Mrs Sikhosana. Episode 37, Season 9. Johannesburg: M-Net, 8th December 2019.

5.4.5 An actual representation of reality

<u>Question:</u> Do you think the way the brides and grooms are portrayed in the selected episodes is an actual representation of reality?

Participant 1:

1. **Answer:**

Yes. As stated earlier, Ntombifuthi Dlamini & Vusi Sikhosana ages had a lot to do with the way their day was portrayed. It would have been highly unrealistic, in my opinion, to have a couple of their ages have a wedding that would be deemed "high society" wedding. Nothing in the way they live their lives would fit into that narrative. Siya and Ayanda are a young couple who are starting out their lives together. You see this from where they live, to how young their kids are together.

Participant 2:

2. **Answer:**

Yes. The episode is a reflection of reality. We see the various preparations and challenges any couple goes through during their wedding. African weddings have many processes and customs that need to be followed like the lobola. OPW tries to show us these customs and celebrations, without disrespecting and disturbing the wedding ceremony.

Participant 3:

3. **Answer:**

Contemporary reality, yes. In both episodes, the brides make most of the wedding decisions and the groom agrees to them, which is what happens in reality.

According to Bourdillon (1976) and Chigwedere (1982) *ilobolo* is the art of blending two families together and appreciating the crucial role played by the in-laws in bringing up the bride, as expressed by participant 2 that African weddings have many processes, values and customs that need to be followed including *ilobolo*. Participant 3 mentioned that brides in the selected episodes make the decisions for the wedding, arguably in reality; women are torn between culture and gender equality, and responsibilities, although some seem to favour the custom of a traditional wedding. Participant 1, 2 and 3 acknowledge the portrayal of the bride and groom as an actual representation, they also cited gender roles of married couples. Participant 4 highlights the treatment that women go through when entering a marriage and acknowledges the patriarchal system treating women, also the participant highlights that some women are not in favour of traditional roles assigned to a women by Zulu culture but instead prefer shared roles.

Participant 4:

4. **Answer:**

In the first episode (Vusi and Ntombifuthi), yes. It is the actual reality. The way she was treated by her in laws is something that exists in society. It showed and exposed the truth of what women go through. In the second episode (Siya and Ayanda), it did show the reality of what young relationships go through, the cheating, lies and dishonesty about what they have been through, and their likes and dislikes about each other is evident that they are honest towards each other.

Participant 5:

5. **Answer:**

I think it is an accurate representation of both the Bride and Groom as in both episodes they show the similar customs that are done when Traditional weddings are done in the Zulu culture, such as the receiving of a cist and the exchange of blankets



Our Perfect Wedding, 2019. Connect TV. Mr and Mrs Mncube. Episode 25, Season 9. Johannesburg: M-Net, 15th September 2019.

5.5 Conclusion

Views of the participants of this study exhibit different views and perspectives of the Zulu community; this includes the cultural and traditional practices that appears to support and respect the Zulu community. The portrayals of reality television are seen as offering better alternatives or solutions on certain matters related to their interpersonal relationships. Participants acknowledged the role and portrayal of Zulu weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*, they also indicated that the images and messages portrayed in the reality show offered viable alternatives to the couples social and interpersonal problems. According to them, the reality show on its own does not directly portray or demean Zulu weddings portrayed on the show.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6. Introduction

The purpose of the research is to determine the Representation of Zulu Weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding.* The research report seeks to understand the manner in which the Zulu bride and groom are represented in the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*.

The research question that guides this study is as follows:

1. How are the Zulu brides and grooms represented in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?
2. How are Zulu themed ceremonies represented on the show?
3. Which traditional customs are used to prepare for a Zulu wedding in the selected episodes of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?

6.1 Discussion

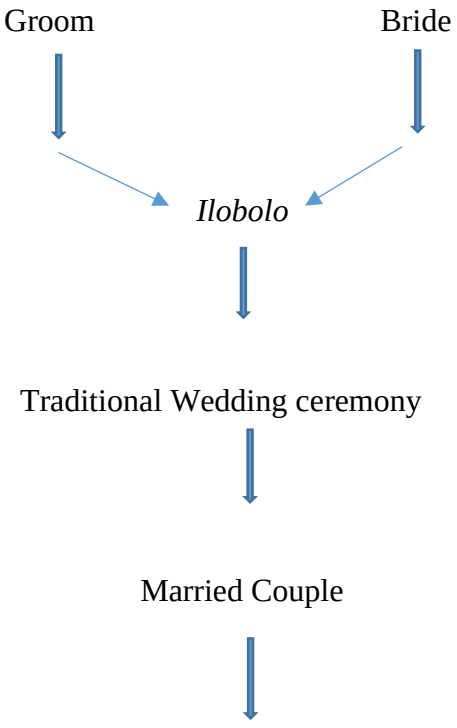
Representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding* were the central focus of this research report. Theories such as reception theory, identity, identification, representation and cultural studies were used to illustrate an audience study of the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*. The study used sampling to select five participants and get a qualitative analysis on what their perceptions are on the representation of the Zulu bride and groom. These participants were sampled with an intention to find out if they related to the people showed on the show, if their cultural experiences are represented.

After starting with a description of the role of reality television's role in participants social life generally an account is given of the role reality television have played in influencing trends in Zulu marriage practices. The chapter also looks at the impact of such changes on marriage practices.

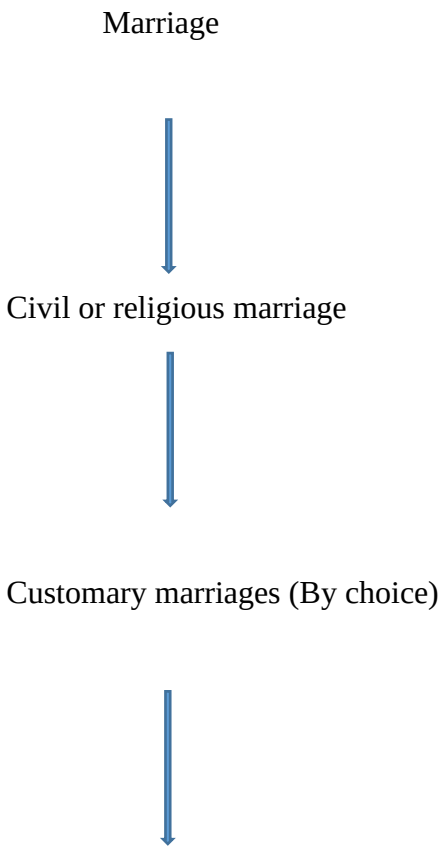
6.1.1 Trends and forms of marriages available to the community

Figure 6.2 illustrates the union between two individuals from the opposite gender, which in the Zulu community is important. Bonding the two families is an important tradition that is stressed in society. However, media exposure challenges the traditional values and practices through content, and continuously influence the value systems, behaviours, and knowledge of the community (Moswang 2009, p. 16). The manifestation of this influence has reached South Africa's legal system in the form of legal provisions accommodate emerging formation.

Figure 6.2



In the past, religious or civil marriage was described as the union between couples, and it is governed under *The Marriage Act, 1961*, the other form being customary marriage, which falls under *The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998*. Thus, Figure 6.3 demonstrates the South Africa's law on marriage that recognises three types of marriages: religious or civil marriage, civil union or customary marriages. The recent act is the religious or civil marriage or a civil partnership between two people; it falls under as the *Civil Union Act, 2006.*



In the context of this study, the term “marriage” would refer to those three types of marriages as recognised by South Africa’s law. However, there are other forms of personal relationships and union formation, such as cohabitation, which are influenced by society. Trask and Koivunen (2006, p. 23) refer to such an (informal) relationship as a shared union between two individuals based on private feelings, and marriage as being a public institution governed by overt rules and laws about the rights and responsibilities of its individual members (Trask and Koivunen, 2006, p. 23).

6.1.2 The dynamics of reality television and gender roles in relationships

According to Ahmed and Khalid (2012, p. 43), the content, presentation and production of television have seen rapid changes in recent years. For example, a programme might succeed in lessening the stigma previously attached to issues such as extra-marital affairs, cohabitation, alcoholism and violence. Issues previously considered “taboo” to be discussed in public discourse have earned acceptance in the social setup of our country. In an era of social media, people who are active on social media have an option to discuss trending issues that aired on television, which sometimes result to the popularity of a specific episode or the show itself. For example, an episode of *Our Perfect Wedding*, which aired on June 14, 2015 on Sunday, featured Wesley and faith. The couple stole the show with a kiss that had social media in a whirlwind since the episode aired on Sunday. Comments on twitter such as “the kiss is disgusting”, “I put up the video of OPW kiss on Instagram and they took it down because it was inappropriate. And I agree.” Are amongst the few that populated the conversation.

Because of the rapid transformation of genres in television, assertions such as the one by Marx (2008, p. 80), reality television, and soap operas were narratives on television created specifically for women however, that has changed. The reality television genre has transformed its image and

now appeals to its target audience, irrespective of gender, race, class, culture or religious beliefs, with considerable influence on its viewers. Reality television can be realistic or manipulated on its own representations of the world that we live in. In fact, the genre now presents the world to its viewers rather than representing it. This is evident in local shows such as *Date My Family* and *Sengikhathele, which* deals with relationships and couples. This gives the viewers the image of a genre not detached from the every activities of their world.

6.2 The main research problem

The findings are that some participants felt that the representations were stereotypical, people have come to expect Zulu men as aggressive towards their wives and oppressed their spouses because of traditional believes. The marginalization of a few Zulu brides was also an issue because women did not have major significant roles to play in their marriages and, family members mistreat brides. For example during the group discussion participant 1 mentions that woman are seen as timid “In African culture, women were and still are, in some African societies, expected to be patient, which is exactly what Vusi mentions he admired Ntombifuthi for. In addition, Ntombifuthi’s sister-in-laws were not accepting and welcoming. It is stereotypically expected that the sisters of the groom will not like the bride, sometimes because they prefer another girl for him.” In addition, being objects of sex, male gaze in the sense that Zulu women are just there to provide entertainment for men, and their identity being stripped.

There is also a consensus that Zulu women are not as naïve, stupid and fragile as the show portrays them to be. There is a belief from the majority of participants that some of the traditional key themes that the show addresses still exist even today and that is how most of them relate to the

show. There seems to be an agreement on the exaggeration of events but that does not take away from the fact that Zulu traditional weddings are always evolving.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The survey design of this study was employed during the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020; this affected the availability of participants and delayed the research. The research quantifies responses from Zulu male and female audiences who are viewers of the reality show, thus decreases the generalizability of those who are not Zulu. In addition, some items in the demographic survey limits the conclusion. For example, the survey asks if participants are Zulu and watch *Our Perfect Wedding* but does not ask if they watch other wedding shows that are similar to the show. Although this study only surveyed Zulu men and women who were born in Kwa Zulu-Natal, the number of participants did not restrict the results.

6.4 Recommendations

Culture is what defines one community from another. Such an identity becomes the fabric of the lives of the individual members of the community. It is important to remember, though, that culture is a vehicle through which traditional gender structures are reinforced, often resulting in gender inequality (Tong 1998, p. 66). Although a viewer's continuous exposure to a specific television genre is claimed; according to cultivation and fandom theory, to have an influence over a person’s perception of the real world (Ahmed and Khalid 2012, p. 48). Such an influence may tend to serve in reinforcing the viewer's beliefs and practices, such as *ilobolo* or gender roles as indicated by the extract, during the focus group for *Our Perfect Wedding* episode participant 5 stated that:

"In African culture, women were and still are, in some African societies, expected to be patient, which is exactly what Vusi mentions he admired Ntombifuthi for. In addition, Ntombifuthi's sister-in-laws were not accepting and welcoming. It is stereotypically expected that the sisters of the groom will not like the bride, sometimes because they prefer another girl for him."

This research has shown the potent nature of reality television and its reception theory effects on cultural practices and individuals' social lives. There is a need for the Zulu community to preserve its identity, and one of the recommendations is the need to produce and promote reality show, similar to Traditional wedding show, that are indigenous in both form and content. Traditional Wedding is a multilingual reality show broadcast twice a week by a DStv channel, Moja Love 157, Reality wedding show hosted by television personality Kamohelo Bombe, which explores different cultural and traditional practices of *lobola* negotiations and wedding ceremonies in South Africa.

Another recommendation is to have television channels that display positive content, which is equipped towards the promotion of cultural values of individual communities.

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APPENDIX A: LETTERS OF INFORMATION AND

CONSENT AND ETHICS CLEARANCE APPLICATION

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Ethics Application Form* for *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical)

(SCHOOL ETHICS COMMITTEES)

Title of project: **Representation of Zulu Weddings on the Reality Television Show Our Perfect Wedding**

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The research intends to look at *Our Perfect Wedding's* role in the representation and propagation of emerging traditional values of Zulu Weddings and the possible influence of Zulu couples, their gender roles and marriage lifestyle.

Name of researcher: **Lungelo Gumede**

Student Number: **388916**

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO

…… (Signature)

…… (Name of participant)

…… (Date)

…… (Signature)

…… (Name of person seeking consent)

…… (Date)



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

1. I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _____ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
2. I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
3. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
4. In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
5. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
6. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

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

…… (Signature)

…… (Name and Surname of participant)

…… (Date)

I, _____ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

…… (Signature)

…… (Name and Surname of researcher)

…… (Date)

…… (Signature)

…… (Name and Surname of Witness)

…… (Date)

APPENDIX B:

ETHICS CLEARANCE FORMS

THE WITS SCHOOL OF ARTS

INTERNAL ETHICS CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM (HONOURS AND MA BY COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH REPORT

ETHICS CLEARANCE FORM A:

This is to certify that no human subjects are involved in the research that will be undertaken for the purposes of this research essay/research report.

Please note: Handwritten submissions are **NOT** acceptable

Research essay/ research report title	The Representation of Zulu Weddings in the reality television show Our Perfect Wedding
Student Name	Lungelo
Student Number	388916
Degree	Master of Arts Coursework and Research: Film & Television studies.
Tel Number	071 232 8276
Email	388916@students.wits.ac.za
Student Signature	

Date	24/01/2020
Supervisor Name	Dr. Lieza Louw
Supervisor Signature	
Date	24/01/2020

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Questionnaire (Question guide) for Focus Group Discussion

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to investigate the representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*.

Participant Consent: Participants will sign a consent form to participate in the focus group discussion. One copy of the informed consent form will be given to participants and the focus group facilitator will keep a second copy. Participants will be informed if any audiotaping will be used for data collection.

Initials	
Occupation	
Sex	
Race	
Age	
Location	

Guiding Questions for the participants to answer while watching episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*:

1. As a South African, how do you relate to the episodes of *Our Perfect Wedding*?

2. How often do you watch the reality television show *Our Perfect Wedding*?

3. What do you think of the portrayal of bride and groom in each of the episode of the show, *Our Perfect Wedding*?

4. Do you think the way the bride and groom portrayed in both episodes is an actual representation of reality? Why? Why not?

5. Which particular family / couples do you identify with? Why?

6. Do you think the representation of the wedding ceremonies in both episodes of the show are accurate within your cultural experience?

7. What did you like about the show/episodes?

8. What did you dislike about the show/episodes, relate to above?

9. Which scene do you think portrays cultural stereotypes and why?

10. Lastly, how does *Our Perfect Wedding* portray the way couples treat each other in reality?