

https://dspace.org/

Perceptions about different shades of skin colour and attitudes towards pigmentation in the 'black' African community

Nkwadi, Palesa

2016
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/19694

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

If you're white you're alright.
If you're yellow you're mellow.
If you're brown stick around.
If you're black get back.

(Unknown, as cited in Parrish, 1944, p. 90)

This dissertation explores the perceptions about different shades of skin colour and attitudes towards pigmentation in the 'black[1]' African community, addressing issues around skin tone, skin tone preferences and self-esteem. I draw inspiration from a subject that is un-researched in South Africa.

Perhaps more than any other physical characteristic, skin tone is a multi-faceted phenomenon that has vast social meaning. The colour of the skin has opened doors for some and has closed doors for others and it has created social hierarchies whereby a group of the same skin colour were afforded a better lifestyle than the rest. Therefore the values attached to various complexions are important to understand in terms of human development. This has been linked with the Americanised term 'colourism' which is the discrimination on the basis of lightness or darkness of a person's skin colour mostly within the same race (Okazawa, Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987).

Colourism is therefore an important component of how individuals perceive value and what is more important, in this regard lighter being seen as better and has more value than its counterpart, a darker or dark complexion which is devalued and negatively branded. Skin tone preferences can also contribute to risk factors, particularly for people of colour. For instance if lighter is valued in our communities, marginalising the dark complected individuals, this group might want to bleach their skin, which might pose a fatal threat to their health, they might engage in promiscuous behaviour to be accepted or abuse substances like drugs and alcohol due to their frustration that society has a certain standard of beauty and preference and reaching it is almost impossible.

[1]Throughout this report, the racialised terms and categories of the previous Apartheid regime are used, namely 'black', 'white', coloured' and 'Asian' in order to refer to groupings of people affected by the issues raised. These terms are however contested, especially since race itself is a contested category.

Since skin colour has always been a controversial subject, particularly on matters of racism, a person's skin colour has always been associated with charged meanings, thus it was important to address how black people experience skin tone among themselves.
Skin colour has always been a determining factor of social hierarchy and status and that has been married with the historical and societal meanings placed alongside lightness and darkness and the highly visible nature of skin tone.

The visibility of skin colour makes it the most used and identifiable racial marker.
Unlike facial features and hair texture, which can be changed, skin tone cannot be easily modified, making it more striking. However in-depth discussions about the discrimination that happens based on skin tone within a racial/ethnic group, is often unacknowledged despite the impact it has. "Issues of skin tone bias are typically eclipsed by or subsumed within more general issues such as racism and race relations (Herring, 2004 as cite in Elmore, 2009, p.5). However, scholars have started to look into the implications and experience of skin colour, particularly within communities of colour.
Research done earlier has studied individuals', particularly young children's, skin tone attitudes using completely different stimuli (i.e., Black vs. White). The popular studies were done using the Clark Doll Study (Clark & Clark, 1947). Elmore (2009) has explained this study stating that the "Clark studies and those using a similar format that involved using Black/dark and White/light stimuli, children were asked multiple questions to garner their views of colour. The doll studies were important because they allowed researchers to gather information about skin colour more directly. Overwhelmingly, the children in the Clarks' studies attributed more positive characteristics to the light/White doll and more negative attributes to the dark/Black doll" (p.5). The issue of the colour dark has many negative connotations that go beyond just skin colour but includes also, concepts, language and symbols. An example can be that with the term dark or darkness or black is in most cases associated with evilness, witchcraft, and dark souls which symbolise negative spirits. If one were to ask for the definition of 'dark', the following terms appeared: disconsolate, drab, dreary, gloomy, moody, night, sinister, sorry, sour, wickedness to name a few. Another example taken from, Williams (1996) pointed out that language and literature reflects the dynamics of skin colour, where phrases such as "black sheep of the family," "black humour," and "blacklist" have negative or perverse connotations.

It has been argued that at the institutional level, a couple of studies have shown links between skin colour and educational attainment, occupational and economic opportunities, and psychosocial adjustment (e.g., Hughes & Hertle, 1990, Keith & Hering, 1991; Hall, 1996), thus illustrating the structural effects of colourism (Elmore, 2009). At the individual level, academics have researched the implications of individuals' own skin tone and skin tone biases related to light and dark skin tones by using, for example, dark and light-skinned stimuli and asking participants to indicate which one is good, pretty, a good friend, someone you would like to marry, etc. (e.g., Parrish, 1946, Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001), therefore bringing to the fore the individuals' understanding of skin colour bias.

It is evident that even in societies that consist of a majority of dark(er) skinned individuals, the devaluation of dark(er) skin tones is still evident in the various aspects of the human experience, including physical attractiveness, intellectual and social competence, social and economic power, and sexuality in that particular community (Cramer & Anderson, 2003). However in some studies it has been shown that some individuals were comfortable with own skin tone. Low self-esteem has been argued to be linked to people with the skin tone that individuals would not prefer to have (Fegley, Spencer, Goss, Harpalani, & Charles, 2008).

This research report examines how perceptions about different shades of skin colour in society impacts on the lives of black South Africans living in the Soweto area in 2014. South Africa's history is shaped by apartheid and colonial legacies, which have contributed to the formation of perceptions that have formed around what should be seen as a better skin tone.

1.2 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

Historically through slavery, colonisation and later apartheid, the perceptions of what is regarded as beautiful within South African society were largely influenced by white, western standards and norms (Spencer, 2009). Thus perceptions formed and currently held today cannot be separated from the past. Therefore when analysing notions of beauty and self esteem it is important that issues around identity, ideology, culture and social construction also be explored. Recently there has been an issue around both men and women bleaching their skins to look lighter which caused a stir in South Africa. On the 17th of November 2011, a pop artist from Soweto opened up about her bleached skin and how "she was tired of being ugly" among other things (Drum, 10 November 2011). Two years after the story in a local magazine, another local musician, Kelly Khumalo was suspected of lightening her skin (Drum 19 September 2013). Months thereafter, a local gospel singer Lundi appeared also with a pale complexion (Move magazine, March 2014). These celebrities and the

communities that surround them are then faced with what their particular culture regards as physically attractive or appealing. Self-concepts furthermore seem to be influenced by institutions such as the media, culture, religion, family and friends. A term made popular by the media, the "yellow bone", means the lightest type of light skinned black female or male. According to Cheng (2000, p.121) "beauty has always provoked unrest", and this is evident in a society like South Africa with its contested notions of "beauty". It is argued that black Africans generally tend to conform to western perceptions of beauty, which then form the basis for development of negative or positive self-esteem and identities (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Self-concepts furthermore seem to be influenced by institutions such as media, culture, religion, family and friends. Therefore the effect of what was seen as physically attractive during the colonial and the apartheid eras are still felt. Social perceptions regarding physical appearance have a profound impact of the formation of the self-concept of black Africans (Ribane, 2006). Such views formed in crucial stages of development could dramatically affect the decisions and behaviours that they make in their future.

Colourism is a global issue and not just an African and African- American issue. It is an issue that is happening globally all over the world especially in countries where cultures are very diverse. Cultures such as the Asian, Latin and Caribbean are all affected by colourism (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Colourism is also common in the Asian culture as fair skin is more desirable than darker skin. Women are getting plastic surgery to achieve the "Westernized Look" such as double eyelids, defining jaw lines, and narrower noses, to name a few. The India community also views white as better, white as rich, and to a larger extent fair complexion as equating to success in one's life. Dark skinned brides are not taken to local festivals or weddings due to the discrimination of their skin colour. Fair skinned brides are seen as more attractive and are married quicker. Bleaching creams are used to make the skin fair and is a common practice in the Indian culture (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

In Latin America, the term Mestizo was historically a person of European Ancestry known today as someone with mixed ancestry. Being either Light skinned or dark skinned has an impact on how you are viewed in the culture. In the Dominican Republic, men and women are pressured to marry a fairer skinned mate so that their off spring can be light (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Colourism in Africa and the Caribbean - In both South Africa and Jamaica, there is an obsession to lighten one's skin. Lighter skin is seen as more attractive. In Jamaica, a person's beauty is defined by how light or dark their skin is and how close your features are to European features, a person is described first by their complexion. In South Africa and Nigeria, several stores sell bleaching creams over the counter. Many women are getting these creams to achieve a lighter complexion (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Psychological effects of Colourism

Colourism has left a lasting effect on millions of people, both male and female of all nationalities. One is made to feel unattractive because of the complexion of his/her skin, constantly comparing one's self, doing different things to change one's appearance. Colourism has caused many to think that if you are lighter or near white then you will have more success in life. Depression, self-hate, low-self esteem, internal oppression are all results of colourism.

Social work is continuously trying to become more relevant within the South African context, thus exploring and attempting to understand issues around race and western hegemonic discourse. In this way engaging around views relating to skin pigmentation and perceptions will enable social workers to engage with clients on a more empathetic level. It is imperative for social workers to understand clients' perceptions and experiences in order to plan and implement appropriate intervention strategies that could enhance their social wellbeing.

This study therefore intends to help the social work profession gain an understanding surrounding the issues underlying the perceptions on different shades of skin tone also looking at the attitudes about skin pigmentation. According to Vontress (1976) the goal of counselling is to assist directly or indirectly the clients in adjusting to or otherwise negotiating the various environments which influence their own or someone else's psychological well-being (Vontress, 1976). Peoples' perceptions and attitudes can somewhat affect the therapeutic communication between the client and the counsellor (Vontress, 1976).

Thus gaining an understanding on the perceptions on different shades of skin colour and the

attitudes that surround issues of skin colour will help social workers when counselling as it will provide avenues for better engagement and thus improved interventions.

The purpose of this study is to gain better understanding around the diversified landscape issue of colourism focussing on peoples' perceptions about different shades of skin colour and their attitudes towards pigmentation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to gain better understanding around the diversified landscape issue of colourism focussing on peoples' perceptions about different shades of skin colour and their attitudes towards pigmentation, within a racially determined South African context.

1.4 Definition of key concepts

Colonialism

It is argued that colonialism is a form of domination; it is basically when a group of individuals control a particular territory and/or behaviour of other people (Horvath, 2006). He has further mentioned that colonialism has also been a form of exploitation, placing emphasis on the economic variables, has been argued in Marxist-Leninist literature (Horvath, 2006).

Racism

During the Apartheid era people were separated based on their physical characteristics, which then moulded and determined the interaction process that occurred within society based upon these physical features (Masina, 2010). This then brought about an ideal representation of what is good and acceptable in society. Race is an essential aspect to examine when representation of black people are brought to the fore. The perceptions of what is regarded as a superior or grandeur race within South African society has been largely influenced by white, western standards and norms (Spencer, 2009).

Colourism

Discrimination based on skin colour, or colourism, is a form of prejudice in which human beings are treated differently based on the social meanings attached to skin colour (Jones, 2001). Colourism is a term coined by Alice Walker in a 1982 essay as a process whereby preference is given to people of a certain skin tone (Walker, 1982). Colourism is a specific

form of discrimination based on the shade or tone of one's skin (Psychology today, 2013). There was a study conducted that found that lighter-skinned African Americans had higher chances of getting hired for a job as compared to their dark-skinned counterparts even when their resumes were identical (Harrison & Thomas, 2009).

Social perceptions

Media is a "social institution" (Masina, 2010, p.68) that has influence through television and cinema (Croteau Hoynes, 2003). Mass media productions often perpetuate discrimination based on skin colour. African Americans possessing lighter skin complexion and "European features," such as lighter eyes, and smaller noses and lips have more opportunities in the media industry (Hodge, 2011). For example, film producers prefer to hire lighter-skinned African Americans more often, television producers choose lighter skinned cast members, and magazine editors choose African American models that resemble European features (Woodard, 2000). As a result the media then sends a message to African people that the closer one appears as "white" the more acceptable the person is. In regards to the magazine industry, African women are rarely showcased in most popular magazines. Therefore, African girls have difficultly identifying with the models showcased in these magazines, because they do not represent the type of women that they come into contact with in their own communities.

Black Consciousness

Black consciousness encouraged the black nation to take pride in their culture and themselves and not aspiring to adopt the white culture or pursue 'whiteness' (Biko, 1987). Black consciousness aimed to achieve a society whereby black people are comfortable in their own skins, heritage and a promotion of dignity among black people. Biko echoed what Cesaire termed as Negritude, which implies not only a struggle for political emancipation but also decolonization of the African mind, a refusal to view oneself through the eyes of the dominant culture (Cesaire, 1972).

Whiteness

The issue of skin colour is still prevalent within society. Biko (1987, p.23) states (about the white person) that "colour of his skin- his passport to privilege- will always put him miles ahead of the black person". It will therefore take a lot of drastic measures to achieve that level they will be comfortable at. Being white came with ample opportunities and access to

resources while being black afforded nothing but oppression, thus there was a need to be white, if not inside then outside.

1.5 Limitations

- Due to the small sample the research cannot be generalised. However the intent of the study was to explore in qualitative manner and not to generalise to all black South Africans.
- The study only explored the perceptions of different shades of skin colour from only the black community-specifically around the Soweto area- thus no other racial groups' input was gained. However, the study only sought to explore the views of black people as this was the particular area of interest.
- Participants might have felt the need to please the researcher by reporting that which they assumed the researcher would like to hear. This was however was overcome through utilising the various interviewing skills that enabled me to build rapport with the participants. The importance of honesty was explained to each participant.

1.6 Organisation of the report

This report has been organised into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research briefly through discussing aspects such as the problem statement, rationale, defining concepts and discussing the limitations experienced throughout the study. Chapter two provides the literature review which covers themes such as shade of skin tone and the importance of theories of prejudice development, skin tone and privilege: The Historical Contexts, skin tone and Race: Views on Colourism, black psychology, effects on skin tone: Psychosocial Outcomes and social perception, media influence and theoretical framework. Chapter three provides a description of the research design and methodology. This was achieved through covering topics such as the primary aim, secondary objectives, data collection, data analysis, sampling procedures and limitations surrounding this particular methodology. Chapter four provides the analysis and discussion of the findings regarding the research. The last chapter, Chapter five, summarises the main findings and provides conclusions, as well as discusses recommendations emanating from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

This chapter explores literature and theory about various aspects surrounding black South Africans' lives regarding skin tone preference and attractiveness. The chapter begins with an introduction to the literature review, followed by a description of various themes to discuss relevant concepts. A summary of the literature review is then provided, followed by the theoretical framework. The chapter is concluded with a chapter summary.

The literature review provides an overview of the issues that black South Africans are faced with. Outlines the concept of skin tone and privilege and discusses the various perceptions that are present within society. Various authors are used to demonstrate the similarities and differences in views around concepts discussed. These are aspects such as important theories of prejudice development, the historical context, effects of skin tone on psychosocial outcomes and other influential aspects which contribute to the formation of various perceptions within society.

2.2Shade of skin tone and the importance of theories of prejudice development

2.2.1 Social learning theory

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) is one of the theories that provide explanations of how social development comes to the fore as well as give a comprehensive account of the development of prejudice and this can be explained in three learning processes: direct teaching, observational learning and vicarious learning (Whitley & Kite, 2009).Direct teaching is when an individual is positively reinforced for behaving in a certain way, the example that Whitley and Kite (2009) make is that of a white child being smiled at by his/her parent for not playing with a black child in the playground. Bandura (1977, as cited in Whitley & Kite, 2009, p.299) argued that learning can be done indirectly through observation. An example can be of a dark skinned child observing her mother treating her light skinned siblings better than her and other dark-skinned siblings, that in the child's mind might be interpreted as 'light skin-ness' is better than 'dark skin-ness' through observing her mother's behaviour. Vicarious learning is when an individual is reinforced for a particular attitude or behaviour (Whitley & Kite, 2009).

Whitley and Kite (2009) argue that direct teaching is actually not a common practice; they make reference particularly in white parents who rarely discuss prejudice with their children. Whitley and Kite (2009) found that in a particular research 26 percent of white parents have discussed racism with their children (Katkin, Katz & Downey, 1995). They further push their argument by stating that parents rarely teach gender stereotypes directly (Gelman, Taylor &Nguyen, 2005). However in some instances one does find direct teaching, for example in a community whereby the parents are part and parcel of hate groups, are likely to expose their children to direct teaching of prejudice (Whitley& Kite, 2009). Based on a research done by Kathleen Blee (2002) of women who were members of organized racist groups, she discovered that the children were taught about the religious and racial hatred from an early age. Blee (2002) mentions that this direct teaching of prejudice does not only happen at home but in these racial hatred organisations and at times schools that perpetuate the same ideas. An example of such white and black supremacist organisations include the Klu Klux Klan (KKK), Nation of Yahweh (Intelligence report, 2001), United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors (Mors, 2002) in the States and Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) in South Africa.

Whitley and Kite (2009) argue that direct teaching of prejudice particularly happens in extremely racist families and Phyllis Katz (2003) suggests that most prejudice teaching is indirect, through modelling, imitation and vicarious learning. Indirect teaching sources include parents, peers, media, school and cultural background. John Feagin and Hernan Vera (1995) interviewed a young lady in her 20's who described an incident that happened to her when she was young and how that illustration was a good description of being taught prejudice indirectly:

"I'm playing with my black paper dolls, having a good time. Then somebody comes to visit my parents, and they saw these dolls. And they say, 'oh, you let her play with nigger paper dolls? You let her do that?' Later when this person leaves, my parents come over, and its 'She bought nigger paper dolls! What's with her?' And they took my paper dolls away. To this day there's this little something in me that, I want those paper dolls back. Because that was just wasn't where my head was at, I wasn't about being black or white, I just wanted those paper dolls. (p.159)

The paper doll incident was an indirect message to her that it was inappropriate for her not to play with black paper dolls and taking it further, not to play with black children (Whitley & Kite, 2009).

Bob Altemeyer (1981) argues that early childhood experiences is not as prominent as the adolescent exposure to teachings of prejudice since at the adolescent stage, the cognitive development reaches a stage where an understanding of political and social issues are comprehended and based.

2.2.2 Piaget's theory

A theory that best explains the thinking of a child is Piaget's theory (1932) which argued that children go through four stages of cognitive development. In the sensory-motor stage (birth-2years) babies at this stage cannot internally represent people and objects, thus they do not hold attitudes, whether good or bad, thus prejudice does not exist (Whitley &Kite, 2009). In the preoperational stage (2-7years), children at this stage focus their attention to themselves and are unable to take the next person's perspective and at around 7 years the children move into the concrete operational, whereby the thinking is more logical and concrete, however the children still struggling with abstract thinking until the formal operational ages of 11-12 right through adulthood (Whitley & kite, 2009). Elmore (2009) argues that Piaget (1932) when egocentrism fades, then abstract thinking as part of the formal operational stage is introduced. As the child moves into the adolescent stage, she/he becomes aware of the other's perspective and how they view the world and are able to take the other's feelings, thoughts and actions into consideration (Elmore, 2009).

2.2.3 Erikson's theory

Elmore (2009) goes a step further, bringing to the fore Erikson's (1963) identity formation which encapsulates reflections and observations; this part of this theory is adolescent related. Adolescents at this stage are beginning to take in the 'others' observations about themselves and adjusting their self-concepts accordingly (Elmore, 2009). This is a stage whereby self-awareness and cognitive dissonance are rife and at this stage, identity is beginning to form, therefore how adolescence perceive themselves becomes largely influenced by how the rest sees them, that can either create dissonance or consonance (Elmore, 2009).

The theories covered above focus more on the development of the child and the correlation of the child's thought and age and most importantly how the thought processes can be influenced by what the child observes or is taught directly or indirectly to the child by his/her immediate surroundings. On the theories below, there is a shift from the developing thought

of a child to theories that explain prejudice development, for the sake of this report the focus has been narrowed down to skin colour issues.

2.2.4 Relative deprivation, dissatisfaction and resentment

In relative deprivation theory, people become dissatisfied when comparing their current situations with a particular standard, if they however feel that they are getting less than the standard they feel deprived (Whitley & Kite, 2009). According to James Davies (1969, p.342), people might feel deprived when their expectations are not met based on their personal experiences. An example can be of dark-skinned and light-skinned African men who are applying for the same job, with exactly the same or identical curriculum vitae. If the light-skinned African man is employed and the dark-skinned man is declined, he might feel deprived due to his expectations not met, his background might have been that he grew up in an environment whereby light-skinned individuals were treated better, and thus he might feel deprived based on his personal experiences as well. When people want something that others have, that is social comparison, and not having it will lead them to feel deprived relative to the comparison other (Whitley & Kite, 2009), skin bleaching can illustrate that phenomenon. If light skinned individuals seem to have everything and dark skinned individuals are aware of that, they would want to also get that and for them to have that, they will be aware that they need to be light skinned to also be part of the privileged group, and not to feel deprived, resorting to bleaching their skin.

Feelings of relative deprivation are similar to feelings of unfairness or what is known as low distributive justice (Greenburg, 1996, as cited in Whitley & Kite, 2009, p.344). The perception here is that low distributive justice is not based on the notion that peoplewho deserve more must receive more but rather on an unfair assessment such as in-group favourites and such feelings of unfairness lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment (Whitley & Kite, 2009). Robert Folger (1987, p.344) proposed that those feelings are "exacerbated if they feel that the procedural justice," which is the fairness of the process, was low. If feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction are aroused, that leads to hostility towards the group perceived to benefit the most and those feelings can be expressed in a form of prejudice (Duckitt&Mphuthing, 2002; Taylor, 2002). Another theory that will explain prejudice development is the theory on stigmatised groups.

2.2.5 Stigmatised groups

Individuals belonging to a privileged group decided which group shares or do not shares the same status (Whitley & Kite, 2009). Usually the term used in social psychology is stigmatised groups, which is the group that is viewed as different from the privileged or dominant group with different appearance and behaviour (Whitley & Kite, 2009). In this analogy, there is usually the *markers*and the *marked,* marked individuals belong to the stigmatised group while the markers are from the privileged group and since the marked are said to violate the norms of the markers, they are usually devalued and flawed in the eyes of others (Crocker, major & Steele, 1998). Being devalued may include being dehumanized, threatened and treated negatively, which all subtle ways of discrimination (Whitley & Kite, 2009). For a group to be stigmatised there should be something that the privileged group despises and sets them apart from the group and regardless of the source of the stigma, there is shame associated with being marked (Goffman, 1963, as cited in Whitley & Kite, 2009, p.420).

2.3 Skin tone and privilege: The historical context

2.3.1 Racism, apartheid and colonial legacy

The apartheid regime based its principles on separating people based on the physical characteristics of the individual, in the "process shaping and determining the interaction within that society which was based upon these physical features" (Masina, 2010, p34). This type of separation brought about the representations of what people regarded as acceptable and good. Focussing the attention on women, physical attractiveness was then determined by what was acceptable to be broadcasted in television and therefore "who" was regarded as physically attractive. Race issues, such as which race is supposedly superior to others has always been an integral part of South Africans lives, particularly the ones that were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Race is an imperative phenomenon to note when examining the representations of black people. Therefore skin colour preference has a "political connotation" as the colour of your skin was a success factor when it came to South Africa post-apartheid, the lightest being ideal (Masina, 2010, p.34).

2.3.2 Black consciousness

The South African society has built this unattractive, ugly, sinful image around being black. It was this mentality that black consciousness was hoping to curb. One may conclude that

apartheid played an important role in how people view the colour of their own skin. Biko (1987 as cited in Gibson, 2004, p.2) argues that for the oppressed to be free from the oppressive chains of the oppressor they need to liberate their minds and this in itself is a weapon for the oppressed against the oppressor. Black consciousness therefore aspires for black people or any person of colour to be proud of whom they are and not desire the white culture or pursue 'whiteness' (Biko, 1987 as cited in Gibson, 2004, p.2). Black consciousness "intends to achieve a society where everyone is equal and promoting pride and dignity among black people, including perceptions of black beauty". In this way there is respect for each other's culture and race, which in turn unshackles the oppressive structures around what is perceived as beautiful or attractive within society.

2.3.3 Colonial influence

Apartheid was not the only the cause of the construction of people's identities. Colonialism also contributed to how people perceive themselves and one another and had an important role in the construction of the 'inferior Other' (Molebatsi, 2009). It played a significant role in sculpturing the discourse of the lives of black people, simply by structuring society according to skin colour. The Population Registration Act of 1950, one of the laws that were passed during the apartheid era, which accorded people with a lighter skin colour and straighter hair to be yielded a pass into a higher social status through a definition of being 'coloured' (Molebatsi, 2009). "*The lighter your skin was and the straighter your hair was the greater social value you had in South African society"* (Masina, 2010, p.88). To Fanon (1986) this would be seen as oppression, as social value was granted to those who fitted into western hegemonic definitions of what was acceptable. Fanon (1986) further uses the borrowing or acceptance of language in the dominant culture as an example of accepting those structures in place as common-sense and correct. English has been viewed as a language of privilege and accords people opportunities to become successful in current society (Molebatsi, 2009). Therefore as the "white" man's language is adopted; all aspects accompanying white western culture are also embraced. This therefore also includes perceptions of the ideal skin colour from a white western perspective. "The native constantly compares and analyzes his ability to speak like the colonizer and dominant culture. Upon comparison, the native is in a state of high proclivity to develop an inferiority complex, one that resides at the root of multiple psychosomatic consequences for the colonized individual" (Hilton, 2011, p. 50).

It is almost impossible to discuss skin colour bias or discrimination without discussing racism and its effects on society and individuals. On the following paragraphs, there will be a discussion on the impact of racism, looking at the various exposure levels and possible explanations of the existence of racism.

2.3.4 Impact of racism

In order to adequately examine the central role of skin tone in the developmental process, it is important to consider its connection to the history of racial categorization. Among the first to "codify" humans by race was a man named Johan Friedrich Blumenbach at the end of the 18th century (Wheeler, 2000). His method included using craniometrical research (which is the analysis of human skulls), he described five so-called "racial" groupings: in his analysis he classifies the groups into the Caucasian (or White) race, the Mongolian (or yellow) race, the Malayan (or brown) race, the Negroid (or Black) race, and the American (or red) race (Wheeler, 2000). These conclusions based on the grouping system included the cranial size as well as elements such as skin colour, hair texture, size and physiological features (e.g., nose, lips, shape of eyes).

As research methods became better this form of biological analysis of race has been widely challenged, as non-discrete and conceptually unmeaningful, and repeatedly debunked (Gould, 1996).

The more contemporary view is that race is a social, cultural, and even political construct (Haney-Lopez, 1996). No longer viewed simply as a matter of biology, racial categories are instead believed to be largely formed by more complex political, legal, economic, and social contexts (Omi & Winant, 1994). Omi and Winant's (1994) racial formation theory "emphasizes the social nature of race, the absence of any essential racial characteristics, the historical flexibility of racial meanings and categories, and conflictual character of race at both the "micro-" and "macro-social" levels, and the irreducible political aspect of racial dynamics" (p. 4). In other words, race needs to be understood as a complex intersection of multiple social and contextual layers.

Racism is soaked in a history that has privileged White people as a group deemed as the most intelligent race and of the highest morality. Black people, by contrast, were labelled by 17th and 18th century scientists as the least intelligent and least moral. Primitive or uncivilized racial groups (such as Native Americans) fell in between (Wheeler, 2000). Individual attitudes regarding race and racism, in turn, operate in combination with each other to

maintain the status quo. With notable exceptions, therefore, Whites remain at the top of our institutions with privileges that are largely unavailable to or unattainable for people of colour (Elmore, 2009).

This next section discusses Fanon's discourse on the difficulty of black identity in the racial divided, colonial context. There's a usage of different theoretical dimensions to help analyse this multifaceted colonial experience.

Race was a prominent factor to the oppressor of the time (Masina, 2010). It gave them power to dictate terms on how certain people should be treated and how others were expected to behave (Masina, 2010). Everything that denoted being black was said to be inferior and the analysis of this inferiority extended to the texture of hair. This was used as some kind of racial classifications. Long, silky, straight hair has always been seen as better as and sexier than short, coarse, kinky hair. Molebatsi (2009) argues that even in shampoo adverts kinky hair, which is supposedly undesirable, is transformed to 'beautiful' silky straight hair. The question that I am posing is if hair seems to cause such a debate, what about the colour of your skin?

Fanon mentions that there are at times degrees of unawareness or unconsciousness when it comes to race issues (Hook, 2004). Fanon points out that in the colonial setting; blackness was equated with sin, ugliness, darkness, immorality (2004). Fanon also points out the fact that as much as a person can be black physically or from the outside, some consoled themselves by noting that they divorced themselves from their 'blackness', speaking about the purity of their moral sense and the 'whiteness of their soul' (Fanon, 1986, 193). As much as this was on the fore, it was important to mention that as much as those thoughts divorced them from the physical blackness, the continued reaffirmation of being black brought with it pain (Hook, 2004).

Hook (2004) mentions that the distinction of the races wasn't only based on the physical appearance but also moral and cultural reasoning, that Fanon referred to as the Manichean thinking. Racism in this instance is based on higher levels of thinking that also encourages and motivates the difference between races and which one is more superior to the other (Hook, 2004). For example when the missionaries came in different African states, they came with the mentality that God did say that they will eventually arrive in dark places where there are savages, 'teenage races' that needed to be nurtured and fathered by the 'master race',

which is the white race. In other words, they already had moral reasons, rationalising the difference between white and black.

According to Hook (2004), Fanon possesses a question, "what does a black man want?" which also echoed a question that Freud hadasked, 'what does a woman want?' Fanon answeredhis question by arguing that a 'black man wants to be white'. For Hook (2004) it was imperative to mention the significance of viewing Fanon's answer in a colonial context. A context that being white at those times meant privilege and prestige, while being black was the opposite. The drive of wanting to be white, Hook (2004) argues that it wasn't trans-historical; rather it was based on the specific results of who possessed the power, had the economic advantages, real material and a constant celebration of being white while slandering the black man or woman. Fanon carefully magnified the answer of wanting to be white, looking at it, in a broad spectrum, focussing on the language, sexuality, dreams and behaviour. Hook (2004) relates on each instance, that Fanon saw the persistence of wanting to be white, for example taking on the white man's language and practices, the eagerness of wanting to have a white spouse or sexual partner, skin bleaching and hair straightening, and the dream of wanting to be white. Hook (2004) points out the fact that Fanon mentions that these 'pathologies of affect' may be found in the unconscious processes, however it is imperative to zoom in the wider society with its dozens of inequality, of which such processes stem from it.

Hook (2004) argues that 'neurosis of blackness' that Fanon has pointed out was this dream of wanting to be white. Neurosis according to Barlow and Durand (2009) is a psychological disorder that is thought to have stemmed from unconscious conflicts and anxiety.

Therefore the above mentioned pathologies of affect relates back to this definition, of course having its roots from inadequate structures of society. The above mentioned dream is not only a matter of the physical appearance but also whiteness prevailed as a step forward to 'humanity' given to the white community in racial/colonial contexts. The dream of wanting to be white was one impossible to reach and came into conflict with one's being since wanting to be white, trapped in a black body, in a racist community made it gruelling. Fanon took the social psychological stance when it came to neurosis as stemming from a particular historical and political setting of colonisation (Hook, 2004), therefore as mentioned earlier the pathologies of affect in the unconscious processes, has their bases on the historically

unequal situation of the environment. Let's take a look at how age matters in this development of neurosis discussed earlier.

In most cases, childhood experiences and exposures to different societal and environmental factors influence greatly the personality of the child which also takes a similar shape in adulthood. Hook (2004) mentions Fraud as saying that childhood background is the breeding phase of neurotic of the individual and that it is mostly intertwined with some kind of psychical trauma. He further argues that at times the trauma may have not manifested physically or 'in the real' but rather fantasised therefore curative efforts must focus on the fantasised rather than the reality. Hook (2004) references Fanon's (1986) example of not needing to see as a black man or woman the lynching of one's father but rather from fantasised experiences or ' indirect cultural forms of oppression', which are also by the way detrimental in understanding infantile trauma (Hook, 2004, p.119). An example can be that of a black child born post 1994 in South Africa, born in the democratic era, however despite the child born post-Apartheid regime, he might feel that he's not as capable to do well at school compared to his other white classmates at school, he might have a feeling of inferiority or that he will never be as good as the other white learners, even though he never experienced racism head-on or as Hook (2004) mentioned, 'in the real' however such thoughts are internalised in the unconscious, causing pathologies that have originated from the historical and political setting of the child. However a counter example can be a study done with young children, they were shown different coloured dolls and most black children preferred the white doll as compared to the black doll. The argument is that the children used for this study were too young to have heard or experienced any infantile trauma. In other words, preference of whiteness has been shown to being evident even on a young age. Therefore this concept might not be as useful to explain a preference of a particular race.

There's an interesting question that Hook (2004) reveals, that if there are no real events then what is the cause of this neurosis? For Fanon (1986) it seems to stem from the infantile trauma that has been caused by the child's exposure to racial oppression in the colonial environment. There is a mention of cultural forms in the colonial context that add immense value in devaluing black people, affairs such as characters in a play or television, comics, film ,the media seems to display the black race in a savage, evil, dark manner (Fanon, 1986). There was a cartoon around the 1899's called Black Sambo. The cartoon was pitch black complected, had red lips and displayed stereotypes that were then 'fitting' for black people. The name Sambo turned into a racial slur and some black children were upset with the

cartoon because they were referred to as Sambo. His physical appearance was not pleasing and in the cartoon, his intellect together with his parents' was made a mockery off. Another example are beauty products, especially skin lightening creams and lotions, that have the before and after images. The 'before' image usually appears dark and unhappy, mostly with 'nappy' hair and the 'after' image usually is lighter, happier and with straight hair, mostly the model used will have European features. Movies also usually portray black men as savage thugs that are mostly blood thirty and always looking for trouble, that also causes some form of racial trauma that, that one particular skin colour epitomises success and attractiveness while the 'other' seems to represent the opposite.

The black man and woman are constantly reminded of their inferiority relative to their white counterparts, thus making it impossible for them to put to bed such thoughts. An example can be taken during the Apartheid regime where laws were passed to oppress people of colour, especially black people. Any means to succeed as a black man or woman were slim, black people had restricted time in towns, they had to carry a reference book, also referred to as a 'dompas' wherever they went to identify themselves, they were not allowed to have any sexual relations with white women or men and their education system prepared them for menial jobs, these were just a handful of such laws that devalued black people and were constantly reminded of their supposed inferiority, leaving no room for such to be hidden in the unconscious.

2.3.5 Trauma, scape-goating and fear

It has been documented that racism perpetuated by individuals outside your racial/ethnic group has effects on the psychological life of a person (Daniel, 2000). Discrimination against darker skinned individuals or in short colourism has been evident in the society that we live in, at our schools, professional institutions and social interactions (Tummala-Narra, 2007). In their view, racial trauma changes identity, relational ability in groups, and worldview" (p.40). These racial traumas that people experience disturb the formation of the consistent, positive sense of self (Tummala-Narra, 2007). Racial traumas can range from the constant exposure of media, showing a more one-sided part of society, this inclusive of adverts that are dominated by one race, movies that portray different races stereotypically and music videos that depict a particular race as more favourable, more attractive. This trauma can also extend to policies and governance, which is socio-political and reaches a large number of people. During

slavery there were certain racial groups that were excluded from the slavery system; slaves were usually non-whites, dominantly black people. During colonialism, Europeans, who have more white prevalence, had a system in place that allowed them to own large portions of land in different continents including Africa. They came with the aim of enriching their mother land, meaning that their main purpose was to extract resources from these continents to enrich their own land. Apartheid is another system that caused racial trauma with its laws and exclusion governance.

When we look closely at these examples, there's one race that benefits and two or three races that suffer the consequences. The race with the power and financial backing does the policies and the laws meaning that the 'other' race(s) then must bow down to them and if they don't they will be met with harsh punishment. Therefore it is easy to conclude that having the knowledge that you don't have the power to change a particular situation without locking heads with a powerful opponent can cause distress, some form of trauma. There is also a sense of one race blaming the other race for unfortunate instances that the one race experiences. An example can be that of black men accused of having a large sexual appetite opening them up for being called sexual predators. If an incident of rape in a dominantly white community occurs, if there are few black people staying around the area they might be the first accused of the act. If the white men in that community act and decide to kill the few black men in the area, they will blame the black men to have driven their actions to where it ended up, punishing the victim for what the punisher is guilty of, that is what racial scape-goating is about.

Scape-goating is basically blaming the next person or object, and that person then becomes punishable for something the 'punisher' is guilty of (Hook, 2004). Hook argues that Fanon's hypothesis of racial hatred stems from the 'need to deal with feelings of guilt that have emerged from the act of violence, injustice or oppression that one has perpetuated on a particular racial grouping' (2004, p.121).

According to Hook (2004) 'a phobic reaction is one that is by definition, irrational, excessive in nature' (p.124). The above mentioned example of the black men and white men apply in this context as well. Phobic reactions increase the danger of that specific object and have been thoroughly turned into something with evil intent (Hook, 2004). The black men mentioned above have been turned to have evil intentions due to stereotypes that have been created by society.

Hook (2004) argues that Fanon wanted to understand where the hatred and the irrational fear that the Europeans or white thought to have towards black men or women. To attempt to explain this phenomenon Fanon found solace in Jung's collective unconscious, which are thought to be universal innate ideas 'produced in the symbolism of different cultures and times' (p.125). This collective unconscious seemed to give an understanding of how racism may work unconsciously in Europeans. However Hook (2004) mentions that Fanon rejects Jung's account due to its 'naturalisation of racism' (p.125).

As much as Fanon disputes that there may be any" innate reduction of the black race, he does points out that there is the 'negro myth', which is a racist system where white people deposit any of their lower emotions to a black man or woman" (Hook, 2004, p.125). Fanon emphasis that 'negro myth' is nothing more than social and political representations and not innate blueprints of blackness as evil.

Later in his work Fanon had suggested that the working class in Europe, in essence should have embraced the oppressed marginalised colonised dozens, however it didn't seem to happen that way. Instead the working class further oppressed and scapegoat them (Hook, 2004). Fanon described this as 'racial distribution of guilt', which seems to be the perking order of bias. In the case of the colonial environment, the opportunity for the one oppressed group to further oppress the other was not possible since the inferiorisation of that group makes it impossible. During slavery in the US, dark-skinned blacks usually worked outside in the fields and light-skinned blacks, who mostly were descendents of their white masters as a result of white men having sexual relations with their black women slaves, they usually, worked in the houses and as much as they were light-skinned, they were still considered as slaves, house slaves. The dark-skinned blacks had the harshest treatment and the light-skinned had their own punishment, both these groups were oppressed however instead of understanding each others' struggles and standing side-by-side to fight against slavery, instead there was an opposite effect, the light-skinned blacks didn't want to associate themselves with the dark-skinned blacks and further oppressed them.

2.3.6 'Racial jealousy'

Hook (2004) begins the discussion with making an example on the Europeans belief that Muslims are fond of violence, unwrapped a hidden admiration. In terms of white racism Hook (2004) mentions that blacks are perceived to have a 'massive sexual potency' that white are anxious about. Hook (2004) states that Fanon (1986) argues that it was unrealistic

for whites to think that blacks possess some kind of sexual powers, because there wasn't any evidence pointing to that. Fanon (1986) quotes a study done using 500 associations' tests with Europeans and he found that with 'the Negro', a series of sexuality, vitality, strength and athletism emerged (Hook, 2004). Hook further mentions that sexuality is mostly the root cause of instinctual impulses and neuroses as coined by Freud's psychoanalysis (2004).

Fanon views that the jealousy and the hatred the racist other has towards the racial other due to what he/she possesses and is desired is through stereotyping (Hook, 2004). An example can be that of a black man who is judged to have natural sexual strength, instead of acknowledging that as vitality and health, some may stereotype the black man as being immoral, a pervert, a savage and an animal that always preys on women, therefore this tract that may have been seen as a healthy desired attribute, it has been reduced to irrationality and being exaggerated.

Hook (2004) states two ways that the perceived sexuality of a black man or woman may cause anxiety to their white counterparts. First the black man represents all the un-admitted and concerning sexual perversities. Secondly, the supposed sexual potency of the black man is enough to create a sense of insecurity in his white counterpart, concerning his very own sexuality (Fanon, 1986 as cited by Hook, 2004). Fanon makes accounts of the US lynching and hangings conducted by the Ku Klux Klan group that seemed to emerge from the belief that the black man has made some 'assumed' inappropriate sexual conduct towards a white woman (Hook, 2004).

Hook (2004) mentions that, desired attribute is not only exaggerated but also seen as a dangerous threat to the other. Hook (2004) further argues that the root hatred of racism stems from the belief that the racial other is taken something of importance away from the racist other, something of value to their existence. This can be seen as paranoid behaviour since the threat mentioned above is amplified and the racial other is seen to have malicious intent (Hook, 2004).

The supposed threats need to be constantly amplified so that the racist other has a reason to continuously defend against his own insecurities (Hook, 2004). Therefore their reasoning is that their anxieties are not based on personal dissatisfaction but rather a 'real' dangerous threat.

2.4 Skin tone and race: views on Colourism

Hunter (2002) describes colourism as the privilege given to light skinned individuals as compared to dark skinned individuals within a community of colour. Hunter (2002) argues that as much as she has differentiated racism and colourism, the two are intertwined. She further states that without racism, colourism would not exist, since colourism basis its criteria on the privileging of whiteness (2002). It is imperative to separately evaluate the two concepts, since black people might experience racism completely different from colourism or discrimination based on the tone of their skin within their communities (Hunter, 2002). Harris (2008) rubberstamps what is said by Hunter (2002) explaining that colourism and racism are linked, yet distinct. "Racism involves discrimination against persons based on their racial identity, which in turn is traditionally designated through a complex mix of self-identification and other-identification through appearance (including colour) and ancestry" (Harris, 2008, p.54).

The simplistic definition of racism is discrimination based on race; however Harpalani and Spencer (2005) argue that this definition does not fully explain the many ways that this phenomenon is manifested. Racism can be found in a lot of societal structures, our intimate relationships, the workplace and the social environment. As Harpalani and Spencer (2005) argue, "these structural and ideological components are highly institutionalized, thus affecting individual experiences and life trajectories, not only by disadvantaging people of colour but also by privileging White people" (p.34). We therefore must be aware of the many ways in which is privileged structurally, institutionally and politically (Mcintosh, 1989).
Racist beliefs and the institutional arrangements they sustain are most based on the noticeably physical appearance, in this case the skin colour. Colourism, which is the bias based on skin colour, therefore has strong links with racism (Elmore, 2009).Colourism reflects some of racism ideologies, which are the devaluing of darker skinned individuals, while the light and the pale hold strong social value in society (Elmore, 2009). As Hunter (1999) points out, "[c]olourism is part and parcel of racism and exists because of it. Without a larger system of racial oppression that whites have imposed on various peoples of colour, colourism based on skin tone would not exist" (p.8). An important difference that is worth mentioning is the fact that racism exist between groups, while colourism happens both within and between racial groups (Elmore, 2009).

As Harris (2009, p.40) puts it, "if the study of racism alerts us to the 'big picture' of class struggle, the study of colourism shows us the fine-grained details of how everyday body practices, abetted by everyday technologies of knowledge and exchange, help to make and remake racial difference."

Light skin is mostly associated with “Europeans and a higher status, than darker skin, which is associated with Africans or indigenous people who are assigned a lower status” (Hunter, 2002, p.176). This type of thinking has been extracted from the colonial value systems, which were forced down by the colonisers to the colonised, causing the colonised to internalise such thinking (Fanon, 1986). As much as colonialism as a system doesn’t exist anymore, people of colour have internalised it (Hunter, 2002, p.176).

Women have traditionally been the ones concerned about the physical appearance however men seem to have become more aware of their physic also. For women light skin has been associated with beauty, the two have seemed to be blended. The light skinned and European features have been seen as ideal, particularly for women of colour. “Since beauty is highly racialized, and informed by ideals of white supremacy established during slavery and colonialism, beauty operates as a tool of white supremacy and a tool of patriarchy by elevating men and whites in importance and status” (Hunter, 2002, p.178).

Leeds (1994) called the hierarchy of women of colour by lightness a “pigmentocracy.” In her study of African American adolescent girls, she found that black men’s preference for light-skinned women as well as a desire on the part to have European features. Bond and Cash (1992) reported similar findings in their study of African American women college students. This is an example of how the ideology of beauty is used to organize women into a “beauty queue” where the pigment of one’s skin and the texture of one’s hair determines how socially desirable one is in the marriage or dating market (Hunter 1999).

Harris (2008) states that colourism is a global phenomenon, therefore it might not be accurate to say its cause lies purely on ideological African slave trade. There is much evidence that point’s colourism to East and South Asia and other African regions that had little to no exposure to slave trade and yet a preference of lighter skin is prevalent (Harris, 2008). Usually dark skin is linked to the African indigenous heritage, yet still undesirable and light skin is mostly associated with European features and holds high standards for beauty and desirability (Harris, 2008).

Through an analysis of colonialism and racism, such phenomenon can help us understand the power associated with light skin (Tummala-Narra, 2007). Even in the post-colonial era, skin colour hierarchy has dominated the attitudes, behaviour and global policies, shaping the worldview of different shades of skin colour and the views being internalised by whites and people of colour (Hall, 2003, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.256). Skin colour has been shown to have social implications in different ethnic groups; much literature has focussed on the African American community. Tummala-Narra (2007) goes on by stating that "despite the political preference for dark skin tones in the Black awareness movement of the 1960s, African Americans with light complexion tend to hold several economic and personal advantages" (Thompson & Keith, 2001, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.257). Light skin was associated with high levels of schooling, employment and high income jobs. The lighter women usually would marry men of higher status as compared to dark skinned women (Hunter, 2002, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.257).

Thompson and Keith (2001) have argued that skin colour plays a big factor in ones identity and about the self. During the apartheid era, skin colour was a determinant of whether you belong to the privileged or not and thus skin colour was a contributor to identity. In South Africa, being black or a darker skin tone meant that you didn't deserve the privileges that the lighter or white people had. Black meant ugly, not deserving, dangerous and intellectually inferior. It was as though being black was the worst punishment a person would have. Thompson and Keith (2001) stretch their argument to say that skin colour was a predictor of self-esteem for black women. Colourism or judging someone based on their skin colour is stereotyping according to Wilson and Eckel (2006). And this has had dire results since self-concepts are largely influenced by the commonly held beliefs.

2.4.1 Colourism and the family context

Family is mostly responsible for shaping the experiences and help form the identity of individuals through socialisation. The process of socialisation varies from culture to culture, however in the black African race, child-rearing entails race socialisation (Wilder & Cain, 2010). As family scholar Shirley Hill (2001) has maintained, the "socialization work" of Black parents "reflects their lived experiences, their definitions of social reality, and their efforts to equip their children with the beliefs, values, and resources needed for success" (p. 505). Some scholars have argued that feminist theorizing on motherhood has left women of

colour out of "traditional discourse" (Wilder & Cain, 2010, p. 3). For instance, Collins (1994) has concluded that the experience of Black mothers is quite different from conventional and traditional White, middle-class representations of mothering. Unlike Eurocentric norms that identify motherhood as a full-time activity or occupation that is privatized within the home and segregated by sex roles, parenting by Black women is oftentimes shared between "blood mothers" and "other mothers" (pp. 265-267).

Blood mothers, or biological kin, and other mothers, extended family, play inherent parts in the child rearing and child care of Black children (Collins, 1997). Grandmothers, especially, have played a crucial role in providing child care and economic support (Boyd-Franklin, 2003).

According to Wilder and Cain (2010) there is a shortage of detailed scholarly research on how colourism operates within families. However it is important to note that, Coard, Breland, and Raskin (2001) have brought forward the importance of "family ideals" with respect to self-perception and self-esteem about skin colour. They argue that family "ascribes or projects roles, expectations, and acceptance onto an individual based on appearance" (p. 2268). Similarly Bond and Cash (1992) have reported, "Regardless of how one's skin tone compares with that of peers, being the 'light child' or 'dark child' may carry special significance, either favourable or unfavourable, in the context of specific family dynamics" (p. 884).

Greene (1990) has supported the idea that skin colour variation can create difficulty among family members. She has suggested that when the issue is raised, therapists should explore it with sensitivity. She has paid attention to issues between mothers and their children, such as the possibility of preferential treatment toward light-skinned children or a "heightened sense of protectiveness" toward darker-skinned children (pp. 205-225). Boyd-Franklin (2003) has argued that all families "project characteristics onto their children based on their appearance" (p. 42). For Black families, this practice takes place within a socio-historical racialized hierarchy of skin colour, hair texture, and facial features (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). It's worth mentioning that these practices were highly gendered.

A handful of clinicians (Boyd-Franklin, 1993; Fortes De Leff, 2002;Williams, 1996, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.262) have written extensively on intra-familial colourism, whereby certain members of the family are valued or devalued based on their skin colour,

however noting that they belong to the same race group (Tummala-Narra, 2007). In the States, the issue of skin colour seem to be a complicated matter, where in these ethnic groups some members of the family are treated better because they are lighter in complexion and in some families, yet in some families you are more valued because you are darker (Tummal-Narra, 2007). "This is in keeping with the idea that a dual sense of self operates in bicultural individuals (Roland, 1996, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.263), where onetries to maintain his or her sense of ethnic identity and pride in the presence of white individuals, and at the same time expresses internalized images of skin colour stereotypes and biases within their similar ethnic contexts" (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.263).

"The lowest status was reserved for the darkest skinned people" (Masina, 2010, p.58). This lowest standard was accorded to black South Africans, their beliefs were seen as inferior and what the white man usually accepted was completely different for black Africans. An example can be that of physical attractiveness, for a white man the epitome of beauty is European-looking and yet if that is accepted and shown on television as the desired beauty how then does a dark skinned individual shape his/her positive self-concept. Ribane (2006) argues that if Africans are made to feel uncomfortable in their own skin then it is almost impossible for them to be content with their appearance. Being white was associated with success and prosperity, while black was intertwined with poverty and suffering (Ribane, 2006). Therefore individuals didn't want to be associated with being black, because the lighter you were the better opportunities you had (Ribane, 2006).

2.5 Racism and Psychology

The Association of Black Psychologists was formed in 1968, as a protest towards the American Psychological Association's lack of interest in African American Psychologists. They then created the first official journal called "The Journal of Black Psychology" in 1974. This journal was directed towards the understanding of experiences and behaviour of African American populations. It covers many issues in the African American society, such as, HIV, racial identity, African American children, and substance abuse prevention. Psychology fields that are covered in this journal are counselling, clinical, social, cognitive, educational, and organizational psychology (Holliday, 2009).

Black psychology's birth place has been the USA, around the 60's. Its initial development was influenced by black political struggles. There is interconnectedness between black

psychology and the historical conditions as well as the development of African American politics of identity and self-definition (Ratele, 2004). These include slavery, white racism and segregation that of course have largely contributed to the experiences of African Americans. The creation and development of this discipline was more than just a theoretical framework, it was a kind of 'safe haven 'for the struggled men and women whom wanted to be true to themselves and their lived experience (Ratele, 2004). When the birth of the Association for Black Psychologists came into being in 1968, their outlook of this institution was guided by the principle of self-determination, a platform that would address the long neglected needs of black people and professionals (Rowe, 2015).

An article that appeared in a black glossy magazine *Ebony*, by Joseph White (1980) that addressed the disappointment black people had with how psychology over-refined the experiences of being black in the USA. Given the above argument White saw this disillusion as a central point to develop a psychology that will address the authentic life experience of black US-Americans. As White (1980, p.5) explained, "it is impossible to understand the life style of black people using traditional psychological theories developed by white psychologists to explain white people.

Robert Guthrie (1980) once stated that there are dozens of evidence that proves that psychometric tools are not only biased but also lack tools that would help to predict talents, or skills for the majority of young black people. Guthrie further argued that early research contributed to the biases that correlated black US-American with physical features such as skin colour differences, hair texture and the size of lips to psychological conditions (1980).

Hayes (1980) argued that black psychology must broaden its approach to two overlapping waves; the first is questioning conclusions made by white psychologists basing most of their results on the deficit theory and deforming the psychological make-up of black people as compared to whites. The second one was based on the body of beliefs upon which white psychologists based their work on. The alternative is to adopt a more African philosophical and value system.

The Clarks were an example of black psychologists, who took a different approach in the 40's in trying to understand the phenomenon of skin tone preference in African American children using a doll technique experiment. They used a number of dolls with different colours to determine the development of racial awareness and preference. They found that children by the time they reach seven years, they are aware of race differences and similar

results were found for white children (Aboud, 1988). The results that were found by the Clarks, assisted the courts to declare the segregation of white and Negro school children to be unequal and unconstitutional, it seemed as though the separate education was skewed in favour of white people (Aboud, 1988).

Psychology has historically stood against black people, poor people, women, sexual deviants, workers and everyone else who didn't fit the criteria of the white-collar, white, heterosexual working male.

In South Africa psychology has presented a concise and historical account of its science and practice, from its early origins in the late nineteenth century to the present and it had played a pivotal role in the South African polity and larger society. The impact that apartheid racism had on key aspects of psychology's development is important to mention, and the influences that previous ruling party politics had on professional psychological organizations (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012).

The Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) was a whites-only psychology committee and it broke away from the progressive South African Psychological Association due to the fact that the latter association was to allow black people into its ranks, however the two later joined forces and it is important to mention that PIRSA was led by known members of the Afrikaner Broederbond. There were a couple of individuals who did some scientific work in supporting apartheid such as W.A. Willemse, G.Cronje, E.G. Malherbe and R.W. Wilcocks, some of them were key in the South African race science. There was also Fick, LaGrange. Robbertse, Van Rensburg, De Ridder, Roux and others who were the champions of proving the 'inferiority, backwardness and difference of black people' (Nicolas, 1993).

There was also works of Simon Biesheuvel who was more of a liberal psychologist and amongst other things pointed out that black people were also to be blamed for their poverty Another prominent member of the field of psychology was H.F. Verwoerd who was the Minister of Native Affairs and then Prime Minister. He was the key role player in writing the key laws of the policy of apartheid (Ratele, 2004).

It is therefore sad to conclude that little research and even fewer theoretical insights have come out of South Africa and local researchers have depended overly on work produced overseas (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991).

Donald Foster (1991) once posed a question, asking if whether psychologists have contributed somewhat to racism. Bulhan and Nicolas (1981) have argued that psychology has focussed its attention more on the individual and has functioned within a positive science framework and that psychology's support for anti-black discrimination and racism has been obvious from the onset.

Psychology was dominated by whites, up until 1920's, even though this is not much of a case today however a great deal of psychology is still ruled by whites (Ratele, 2004). As much as Sumner was an intelligent man, he had a lot of respect for Booker T Washington's ideas of which Washington was the most acknowledged black political leader.

It is important to realise that critical black-conscious psychology must encourage us not to allow white racism on black psyches to restrict what is significant in psychology, which is to help people, to create useful theory and to engage in fair practice, in other words this psychology must look into the pain and obstacles as well as go beyond the trauma, and seek practical interventions for people to live (Ratele, 2004).

Conclusion

Black people or Africans have gone through much suffering and struggle historically: slavery, segregation, colonialism and apartheid and ongoing racism. It will be therefore important for psychology to move away from its traditional white theory, because it might not be useful in attempting to understand the lives of black people. What is truly needed are socially and politically aware psychologists that are critically conscious in their thinking and those that will be able to think outside of the box, being aware that not all psychological theories may not be universal when implementing them.

2.6 Effects of skin tone: psychosocial outcomes

Most of the time black women are far off the mark of beauty standards that society has placed and may exhibit negative body image (Hall, 1997). Such dissatisfaction with their body image was a root of a lot of psychological dysfunction, such as self-hate, depression and eating disorders (Thomas & James, 1988). The theory of relative deprivation, dissatisfaction and resentment does explain that when people want something that others have, that is social comparison, and not having it will lead them to feel deprived relative to the comparison other (Whitley & Kite, 2009), skin bleaching can illustrate that phenomenon. If light skinned individuals seem to have everything and dark skinned individuals are aware of that, they

would want to also get that and for them to have that, they will be aware that they need to be light skinned to also be part of the privileged group, and not to feel deprived, resorting to bleaching their skin.

Boyd-Franklin (1991) has argued that unhappiness towards skin colour, hair texture, body image and race has been evident in the black community, particularly black women during their adolescence continued through adulthood. Hall (1997) points out that mental practitioners must be aware that dissatisfaction with your body image may be expressed in a variety of ways, such as eating disorders, the use of skin bleaching creams and body enhancing surgeries. “In order to increase self-esteem, to promote positive ethnic identity, and to foster cultural pride, the elements of poverty, racism, sexism, and power must be addressed” (Hall, 1997, p.133).This is where the concept of Black Consciousness must apply, were a promotion of black pride and positive ethnic identity is encouraged.

Many writers from the United States treat Atlantic slavery as the origin point of colourism, colourism is in fact global, and it is not clear that it is always and everywhere purely an ideological or material product of the African slave trade (Harris, 2008). There is a handful of evidence, for example, that light skins are also preferred to dark skins in East and South Asia, regions where African slavery had little or no presence and where the valuation of light skin predates the slave trade. And in some regions, "whiteness" as an aesthetic ideal is not represented bya European body, but a Japanese or Chinese one (Harris, 2008).
In the Americas, however, there is no question that colourism is inextricably intertwined with the histories of slavery and indigenous conquest that gave birth to race thinking. Sometimes dark skin is linked to African heritage and sometimes to indigenous heritage, but in either case it is undesirable. Light skin and European features are the gold standard for beauty and desirability, and individual and collective action has proceeded accordingly (Harris, 2008).

Colourism is furthermore a complex yet ignored issue.
Freeman et al. (1966) did research on black couples residing in Boston and concluded that there was a correlation between light skin and the wife’s education, the husband’s education and occupation. Another study by Ransford (1970, p.765) found that “black males in the Watts area of Los Angeles occupation’s and income status were higher for light-skinned males at all levels of education below college graduation. Furthermore, among those with the lowest levels of educational attainment, the probability of being employed was lower for

darker males. Among darker males, only those scoring low on subjective powerlessness were able to overcome the skin-colour barrier. Ransford concluded that, because the returns to education were greater for lighter males, darker males' still encountered greater discrimination in the larger society. Both studies, therefore, revealed that skin tone continued to affect socioeconomic status among blacks" (p.765).

A study done by Wallace, Townsend, Glasgow and Ojie's (2011, as cited in Rowe*)* found that girls who had attained the same standard of beauty with colourism reported to have high levels of substance abuse. Skin bleaching is another risk behaviour that people have embarked on, regardless of the negative effects it has on the user. Individuals still use dangerous skin lightening creams that contain chemicals that are harmful to the body, which include permanent thinning of the skin, premature aging of the skin, increased risk of skin cancer and skin infections that at times might have fatal consequences.

Research has shown that people from inside and outside of the black community still attach meaning to complexion and that impacts on the number of opportunities (Rowe, 2011). Colourism has an effect on your self-esteem and self-concept and how at times you behave in certain situations. Self-esteem is a major one in black women because it is mostly associated with lower self-worth (Thompson, 2001) and unfortunately both adults and the youth are affected by this.

It has been argued that internalizing colourism may contribute to risky sexual behaviour and the use of substance abuse particularly in black African Americans (Rowe, 2011*)*. This might be also relevant in South Africa, on the 17th of November 2011, a pop artist from Soweto opened up about her bleached skin and how "she was tired of being ugly" among other things (Drum, 10 November 2011). Soon after the reports she was reported to be seen in bars and having multiple partners by her husband. This regardless of her skin bleaching, has shown that she has internalized how dark and ugly she felt, even though after her procedure she looked different, her unresolved issues still manifested in her actions.

2.7 Social perception and media influence

The media plays a major role in our perception of skin colour and that view is different for males and females. Colourism for women plays a role in the workplace as well as in the media due to ideologies surrounding attractiveness (Harrison, 2010). It is argued that the more an African possesses Eurocentric physical features the more they are deemed more

attractive rather than African ancestry (Harrison, 2010). Hall (1995) argues that black men are portrayed in the media to be violent and threatening, something that the general public seem to believe also. Dark skinned men are associated with incivility, crime and misconduct and many people have misconceived ideas when it comes to a dark skinned man (Hall, 1995) "Sociologists have drawn our attention to the ways in which the social capital of skin colour has eased light-skinned Black men and women's access to social and economic mobility, thus exacerbating inequalities within communities of colour" (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009, p.21). It has been argued that like matters of weight, skin colour has been a gendered phenomenon, affecting black women more than their male counterparts (Falconer & Neville, 2000). Hunter (2000), stated that light skinned black women supposedly had higher education, earned higher incomes and married men of higher economic status. Thompson and Keith (2001) further argue that black women experience a 'quadruple' oppression due to multiple marginalities along the axes of race, class, gender and skin colour.

Magazines and 'comic books'

The content of magazines and 'comic books' regarding colourism and portrayal of images of black woman have been analysed by various researchers. For example, Keenan's (1996) analysis of popular magazines such as Fortune, Black Enterprise, Glamour, and Essence reveal the fact that black female models in advertisements were much lighter in skin tone than black male models. Furthermore, black women are often portrayed as lacking morals. The idea that black women always desire sex, are promiscuous, that they lure men into it. If black women always desire sex, even burning issues such as addressing rape then become an impossibility (Glass & Graff, 2010).

Three different studies of Indian immigrants in the United States and Canada have shown that dark-skinned women report strong feelings of discrimination, and a majority of these women have created a link between light skin with attractiveness and increased opportunities in the heterosexual romance and marriage market (Grewal, 2008).

Matrimonial classified advertisements in Indian newspapers specify modus operandi that prospective grooms prefer women with "fair" or "wheatish" complexions. Most female actresses in Bollywood are light-skinned women, and the few dark-skinned women actors who have somewhat overcome the restrictive norms of skin colour conceal their faces with

thick make-up that evidently reduces the darkness of their skin (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009). Interweaving colourism into a .seamless package of physical attributes, the faces of Indian models in advertisements are almost universally light-skinned with smooth complexions, shining black hair, and slim bodies. (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009, p.22). It seems as though the beauty industry seems to be booming in India because the most prominent products are the cosmetics sector since 1998, ten years after India‘s initial incorporation into the global economy, are chemical and herbal products that promise to reduce darkness and preserve light skin by preventing further tanning (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009, p.22).

It has been argued broadly that media‘s coverage focuses more on the lighter skinned, European look-alike figures. Most cartoon protagonists are usually portrayed as whitish-lightish in complexion and then the friend or the antagonist of the protagonist is usually brownish or has features that aligns themselves with other racial groups that are not light skinned or white. Parameswaran and Cardoza, (2009) evaluation of comic books' covers reveals the positive treatment that both light skinned females and males receive or are given, who are also more often cast as the chief protagonists of these stories. In their evaluations they found that 160 out of 195 (82%) covers of Amar Chitra Katha comics show a light-skinned individual (with the exception of blue-skinned gods).

Parameswaran and Cardoza (2009) analysed some Indian comics and showed that racism and colourism go hand in hand, since the heroic and mostly royal characters resemble a community of fair individuals which can be thought to belong to a different race as compared to the characters displayed as evil, ugly and intellectually challenged, who are dark-skinned and their leader who appears to belong to the same race as them but because he holds a much higher position and social status, he is light-skinned. This means that even if you may belong to the same race as other individuals, however if you are lighter than the rest, then the preference scale tilts more on you and accords privilege.

Of the thirty comic books Parameswaran and Cardoza (2009) analyzed, which included a total of 960 pages, the dark brown human and animal characters (excluding male gods painted in blue) occupied only 36% (345 pages) of the total number of pages. More pages are occupied by these “white” characters than dark skinned characters and that may speak of the value placed on these two characters.

As an example that Parameswaran and Cardoza (2009) make in their analysis is that, the comic book The Churning of the Ocean features virtually no dark-skinned women, nevertheless, dark-skinned female figures are pushed to the side across the entire sample of thirty comics' evaluated (p.27). In the comics that do feature dark-skinned male and female characters, female characters painted in dark brown occupy only 15% of the total pages (sixty pages). Furthermore, it was found that in 90% of the pages that a reader first encounters figures painted in brown would be male rather than a female character (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009, p.29).

Rap music videos

Ever since the introduction of rap music in the 80's, this kind of genre has grown greatly in popularity. However, rap music has found itself in sticky situations addressing controversial topics (Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009, p.134). There has been ambivalent feelings when it came to rap music since previous research has suggested that rap music encourages negative behaviour, however on the other side of the coin it is said to not only bring controversy but also community promoting themes (Dixon & Zhang, 2009, p.134).

The results of the study done by Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang (2009) suggest that there are gender differences in the prominence of Afrocentric features. Male characters are more likely than female characters to have Afrocentric features. Female characters are more likely to have Eurocentric features including thinner noses and lips, and straighter and longer hair.

This finding insinuates the ideal image of beauty as Eurocentric. Male characters, however, do not face this same pressure and tend to vary more in their appearance. (Maddox &Gray, 2002, as cited in Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009, p.137).

The perpetuation of Eurocentric features may have a negative effect on Black female viewers. Research has found that negative associations made with Black individuals in media do not lower their self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989, as cited in Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009, p.137). It usually occurs because of "attributional ambiguity" and self-protecting properties used in curbing the influence of negative stereotypes in the media (Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009).

When black music videos perpetuate this western standard of beauty then it becomes difficult for black viewers to have self-protective properties (Crocker & Major, 1989, as cited in Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009, p.137), since this is being done by other black people who you would have expected to encourage blackness. For male viewers, identification with these images may persuade African American males to seek out women with more Eurocentric features as potential mates (Conrad, Dixon & Zhang, 2009), while African American's experience of such colourism decreased their self-esteem because of the idealised beauty that they cannot reach.

So-called black and white magazines in South Africa

Several magazines in South Africa seem to be directed towards racialized audiences. Magazines are not specifically written for white or black however some people have referred to them as such. The content of most magazines target the minority, white and wealthy. On the other hand, there are black/African magazines that are relatively cheaper than the so-called 'white-magazines. For example, the True Love magazine, which is one of the 'black' magazines describe themselves as:

"As the iconic South African fashion, beauty and lifestyle magazine for black women. It is the recommended handbook and style guide for women who believe that their magazine should be stylish and thought provoking. True Love is an indispensable accessory that inspires comments, entertains and advises modern African women." (Media 24, 2013)

In Åkerlund's (2003) analysis, the representation of ideal, and consequently representation of race is mostly evident in magazines and in advertisement. The white race, as may be seen clearly, seems to be overrepresented in most magazines, especially ones that have high price ranges, that further attach meaning to the levels of worth of those magazines and the people they represent. "Thus this makes it hard and sometimes impossible for black and other people of colour to relate and identify themselves to what they see in the magazines. This separation of ideals contributes to and enhances the segregation between women of different races in the society of South Africa" (Åkerlund, 2003, p.54).

Åkerlund (2003) further argues that a society can become that complex and wrong when media enhance the already problematic state of a society. "South Africa struggles towards a

more integrated society between the races of the population. However, the fact that apartheid is still being so freshly dealt with makes this development difficult and requires many years to come until equality will reign in South Africa" (Åkerlund, 2003, p.54).

2.8 Identity

Identity is consciously and unconsciously influenced by the mental activities of significant others (Socor, 1997) and more broadly, the individual is a societal being that lives and is influenced by particular systems. When an individual is beginning to form their self-concept they are in the identity versus role confusion stage (Hook, Watts & Cockcroft, 2004). It is during this stage that everything that an individual has experienced thus far will be considered in the formation and further shaping of identities. During late adolescence a person begins to make decisions around the adult life that they will be living (Specht & Craig, 1987). An example can be a black South African adolescent child born in the post-Apartheid era who might have negative self perceptions on intellectual ability relative to white counterparts. The question arises about how a black child born post-Apartheid can hold such psychologically damaging views of himself and how that which society portrays unconsciously forms his identity. Perceptions formed and currently held today cannot be separated from the past.

An identity is largely formed by the basis of socialization. Thus the way people are socialized into society and amongst family is how one begins to form one's self-concept. Masina (2010, p.30) states that the "radicalised discourse of identity that structured apartheid continues to inform and structure popular discourse today".

When the individual is starting to form their self-concept they are in the identity versus role confusion stage (Hook, Watts & Cockcroft, 2004). At this stage the individual's identity starts taking shape based on what they have experience. Furthermore the adolescent is beginning to make decisions around the adult life that they will be living (Specht & Craig, 1987). This stage is dependent on success and failure of tasks (Palm, 2003). Therefore it is important to note that an experience throughout life cannot be separated from a person's childhood. Development builds upon experiences that have been gained. Therefore negative perceptions of dark skin among Africans can be traced back to early socialization into mediums such as family and school. The environment and culture that black Africans are

exposed to play a pivotal role in the way they develop their sense of feeling good. Thus a healthy self-esteem is linked to the exposure of life events that are experienced.

Specht and Craig (1987, p.150) state that "The process of development is always deeply affected by the social and economic forces of the time". Thus the various influences such as apartheid, culture, media and so forth have a pivotal role in how development occurs for the black African. Skin colour can be seen as a visible way of defining individual or group identity (Hansen, 2004). Therefore the dark skinned and light skinned phenomenon is brought to the fore when it comes to the formation of one's identity. This was reinforced by the apartheid era and the effects of this era can still be felt in some instances.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review has discussed various themes that have summed up vital issues that surround black people. The history of South Africa has contributed tremendously to the perceptions that are present within society. Media is a tool utilised to portray the accepted ideal skin tone. Media dictates the way people form their perceptions around what is regarded as attractive or even so better. The realities experienced by most people black encourage the aspect of conformity to the western culture to "fit" in. Thus measures such as using weaves, make-up and skin lighteners are used to achieve the western ideal type.

2.10 Theoretical framework

The 'person-in environment' perspective views the client as part of an environmental system. It encompasses reciprocal relationships and other influences between an individual, relevant others and the physical and social environment (Mizrahi & Davis, 2008). This perspective is based on the notion that an individual and his or her behaviour cannot be understood adequately without consideration of the various aspects of that individual's environment (social, political, familial, temporal, spiritual, economic and physical). Person-in environment is a system for identifying and recording problems that people experience in the social functioning in relationships with others and in relation to community institutions that generally serve to help social functioning (Mizrahi & Davis, 2008). A person-in-environment perspective provides a more adequate framework for assessing an individual and his or her

presenting problem and strengths than an approach that focuses solely on changing an individual's behaviour or psyche, or one that focuses solely on environmental conditions.

The person in environment offers a platform for wider investigation into a person's well-being taking into consideration the environmental interaction of black South Africans whether dark or light skinned. Gitterman and Germain (2008), propose that the person in environment perspectives thus allows for investigations into the person's well-being, in particular the participants whose reality change once they are aware of the skin colour issue. Important considerations from this point of view thus include accepting that the person might experience changes in their daily life, so does their environment where they are situated. Therefore, it is quite important to understand the person in environment, bearing in mind the stance adopted by the framework, that, 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts' (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, p.12). The person in environment therefore allows for an attempt to understand the person-environment interaction without separating the two. For example, the framework enables the social worker to look at the participants and assessing their social functioning in the context of their immediate environment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology that was utilised during this study. The research questions, aims, secondary objectives will be first outlined. Thereafter a detailed account of the strategy, design, instrumentation and sampling procedures are discussed. A detailed overview regarding data collection and analysis is then provided. The chapter then will discuss the ethical considerations adhered to throughout the research study. Then there will be a provision of a summary of the above mentioned discussion.

3.2 Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of black Africans regarding a dark complexion and variations in skin tone?

2. How do historical and social structures such as racism and Apartheid impact on attitudes around skin tone?

3. What are the perceived effects of perceptions around skin tone and cultural attitudes on the development of identity in the black African community?

3.3 Primary aim

The aim of this research is to explore perceptions and attitudes about different shades of skin colour and pigmentation.

3.4 Research objectives

i. To explore views and perceptions around skin tone, beauty and attractiveness
ii. To explore the impact of societal structures such as apartheid and racism on perceptions around skin colour.
iii. iii. To explore how attitudes about different shades of skin colour may impact on self-esteem and identity development

3.5 Research strategy

A qualitative strategy was utilized as this allowed for an in-depth exploration of perceptions different shades of skin colour and how this may affect self-esteem and identity. 'The aim of qualitative research design was to learn how and why people behave, think, and make meaning as they do, rather than focussing on what people do or believe on a large scale' (Ambert, Adler, Adler & Detzner, 1995, p.880). This research strategy was therefore appropriate as it allowed for personal feelings and opinions to be explored. The way participants felt regarding skin colour and self-esteem could be explored both verbally and non-verbally using face-to-face individual interviews as a qualitative research strategy (see Appendix F, Appendix G and Appendix H for consent form, participant information sheet and consent form for audio-taping respectively).

3.6 Research design

The design that guided the research is an exploratory and phenomenological approach, which "describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon" (Fouche, 2005, p.270). The phenomenological strategy focuses on the perceptions that people have regarding a particular phenomenon (Fouche, 2005). Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) state that the phenomenological research design seeks to understand and interpret the meaning that participants give to their everyday lives. It is seen as a study that "describes the meaning that experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept, has for various individuals" (p.273). When a researcher utilises such a strategy he/she reduces the experiences to a central meaning or what the experiences encapsulate and the end product of the research then becomes the description of the" essence of the experience being studied" (p.273). For the researcher to achieve this he/she needs to place themselves in the participants' life setting, in other words, in the participants' shoes. Researchers mainly utilise participant observation and long interviews (with up to ten people) as methods of data collection (Strydom et al., 2002). Individuals who have been identified to have experienced the particular phenomenon will be interviewed and data systematically collected.

The research study sought to explore the perceptions and meanings attached to different shades of skin colour and attitudes surrounding that particular issue. The nature of the study was exploratory and descriptive in order to gain insight into the perceptions of adults

regarding what is seen as an attractive or desirable skin tone and how it has an effect on self-esteem. Descriptive research allowed for details to be outlined and it helped answer "how" questions, thus allowing further understanding of how these perceptions are formed.

3.7 Research methodology

3.7.1 Sampling procedures

De Vos (2005) argued that volunteer sampling in qualitative research allows the process to be accelerated as the participants are then motivated to be part of the research as they usually have or share a particular view within the research and want to get their opinions across. Therefore the non-probability sampling method utilised was volunteer sampling. The researcher made a list of the characteristics the participants should have. These included age, they should be between the ages of 20-35 years, either male or female, and that they were from the Soweto region, fifteen (15) participants were recruited.

Invitations to participate in the form of an A4 pamphlet and personal verbal invitation, explaining the aim of the research, were distributed outside Diepkloof Square complex and Maponya Mall at the parking lot on a number of consecutive days. Appointments were made for the same day for at least five participants on that day, at a time which would be convenient to the participants, with personal safety of the researcher being taken into account. Neither recruitment nor interviews occurred in the evenings, although one participant contacted the researcher via email and asked for the questions since they were only available in the evenings and were eager to participate. The interviews were conducted inside the mall, at a public restaurant, and private enough to prevent any disturbances. The method was be used to recruit and select 15 participants. Some did not arrive for the interviews as planned and further efforts were made to recruit further numbers of participants. Snowball sampling was also used, one participant informed the researcher about one individual who was interested in this topic and asked to be part of it. A snowball sample is a non-probability sampling technique that is appropriate to use in research when the members of a population are difficult to locate. A snowball sample is one in which the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate, then asks those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of that population whom they know (Babbie, 2001).

The Maponya Mall management and Diepkloof square complex management, granted the researcher verbal permission to recruitment participants, although this recruitment was to occur outside the mall for instance at the parking lot. However interviews were conducted inside the mall for the sake of the participants' safety as well as the researcher's.

In the event of any emotional or psychological distress occurring, participants were informed that counselling would be available at the Family Life Centre, situated in Pimville, Soweto. The researcher, who is also a qualified social worker and has worked in the field of counselling, family therapy and couple counselling was also skilled in conducting interviews in a sensitive manner.

Participants were informed about voluntary participation and that if they agreed to participate; they would have to sign a consent form. The first fifteen prospective participants that agreed to participate were included in the study. Appointments were organised for interviews at times that suited the participants.

3.7.2 Research instrumentation

A semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix E) was utilised. The semi-structured interview helps the researcher to gain a more detailed picture of a "participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic" (Strydom et al., 2002, p.303). Semi-structured interviews contain a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, its important to note that the schedule does not dictate to the researcher but rather is guided by it. The participant heads to the direction the interview takes and he/she can introduce a topic that the researcher hadn't thought about (Strydom et al., 2002). It is therefore argued that the participant becomes the expert on that field and must be granted maximum opportunity to express themselves (Smith et al., 1995, as cited in Strydom et al., 2002, p.302).

Semi-structured interviews take up some time and are considerably intense and involved, depending on the topic. When the participant is made to be comfortable and at ease facilitation and guidance is preferred as compared to dictating to him/her (Strydom et al., 2002). The researcher can also hand out the interview schedule so as the participant can also go along with what the researcher is asking, this will help the participant to the choose which order he/she would like to follow when he/she has access to the questions (Strydom et al., 2002), this empowers the participant and it will make him/her feel that he/she is part of the research. Not every question needs to be asked and the interview may well move away from

the questions on the schedule, however the researcher must decide how much deviation is acceptable (Strydom et al., 2002).

In terms of language and translation, the researcher was fully multilingual and knowledgeable of the language and culture of the participants and fluent in the language of the write-up. Most participants however were able to answer most of their questions in English and very few sentences in their native languages of which the researcher was able to understand clearly and translate.

3.7.3 Method of data collection

In depth face to face interviews were conducted using a tape recorder as this allowed for better engagement as well as observation of non-verbal ques. Smit et al., (1995, as cited in Strydom et al., 2002, p.304) stated that a tape recorder allows a much dense record than notes taken during the interview. This also helps the researcher can concentrate on how the interview is proceeding and where to go next. "The tapes can later be transcribed for close analysis" (Strydom et al., 2002, p.304). It is argued that the participant can ask for the tape after the interview (Strydom et al., 2002). Tape recording has been criticised to make participants uneasy with being recorded especially if the recorder is placed in front of the participant's face, thus it must be placed inconspicuously so as not to unnerve the participant. Semi-structured interviews were used as these types of interviews allow for more flexibility even though they provide structure, they allow for more open responses as well as more elaboration on matters (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004). The interviews were conducted on an individual basis, at a time which was convenient for each of the participants.

The use of open-ended questions is best as they allow for the person to have more freedom with regards to the way in which they respond to questions. There were on right and wrong answers when utilising the interview schedule as a method of data collection as the answers that were obtained were largely based on the individuals being interviewed. In an interview one can also be observant of the non-verbal behaviour and it allowed for one to note whether or not the verbal behaviour matches the verbal. Questions were clarified and further elaboration could occur with the person being interviewed unlike with questionnaires, which avoids ambiguity (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004). The individual interviews were conducted using a tape recorder so data needed to be transcribed after every interview so that it could be analysed and themes identified. Subsequent to the analysis of the interviews, the

same kind of analysis was utilised for the answers provided by the one participant that requested a questionnaire via email.

In terms of language and translation, the researcher was fully multilingual and knowledgeable of the language and culture of the participants and fluent in the language of the write-up. Most participants however were able to answer most of their questions in English and very few sentences in their native languages of which the researcher was able to understand clearly and translate.

3.8 Rationale for inclusion of items in interview schedule

Table1: Rationale for interview schedule

Questions	**Rationale**
Group identities How would you describe your: Race Ethnic group Religious group Nationality Language	To explore these factors so that responses can be compared and similarities or differences relating to these various categories may be identified.
Physical appearance What are the various views on skin pigmentation?	To explore whether or not the participant recognized and was aware of the different views of skin pigmentation within society.
How would you describe an attractive skin tone?	To explore the various views of the participants about an attractive skin tone.
How do people with whom you associate see different variations of skin colour?	To see whether or not the views of the participant was conflicting or congruent with other members of the community, as well as if they agreed with those views or not.

Where do you think your views about an attractive skin tone come from?	To get a better understanding of how participants formed their opinions around what they regard as attractive.
What are some of the factors that influence the way you portray yourself physically?	To explore what factors participants take into consideration when deciding on matters of external portrayals of themselves
What factors in your opinion contribute to how people form their opinions on desired skin pigmentation?	To explore their views on how other people formed their opinions, which would allow for further themes to be noted.
How do you think your exterior outlook influences the way people are attracted to you?	To explore whether they believed that their outer look had any effect on how people engaged with them
What are your opinions about skin lightening and tanning?	To get a sense around what their thoughts were around enhancements and it would provide a better sense around their views on natural beauty.
Race and its effects What impact do you think historical racism has had on the views about the colour of your skin? (E.g. colonialism and apartheid).	To see whether or not participants felt that the history in South Africa contributed to the current perceptions that people have of what is regarded as an attractive or better looking skin tone.

What impact does the society in which we live and its history, have on perceptions of skin tone, blackness and whiteness?	To explore the effect that the above views have on their perceptions of what society's outlook is on this subject.
How has this had an impact on you if any?	To explore the effect that historical racism has on them and how they felt about it.
What are people's perceptions on self-esteem and beauty? What are people's perceptions on looks and one's self-concept?	To get to explore their views and how they thought perceptions of skin tone affected people's self-esteem.
Media's influence How do you see the media's influence on how perceptions of different skin tones are formed?	To explore how strongly they felt about the media's influence on perceptions formed and what their views were on the matter.
What impact do you think the media has or may have had on your future perceptions concerning skin tone?	To gain a sense of whether or not the media will continue to have an impact in their perceptions and what they view as an attractive skin tone. This would also give a better understanding around how much media has influenced them
How do you view western media's influence?	To see if they thought there was a difference with regards to western medias influence and how much difference they felt there was.
General Any more suggestions?	For any additional information.

3.9 Pre-Test

Pre-testing the interview schedules refers to the interviewing participants to test if the interview schedule to see if it will elicit necessary responses needed to address the research objectives (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003). A pre-test was conducted before the actual interviews were conducted. This allowed for the testing of the questions to assess whether or not it was appropriate and would achieve the necessary results for the research study. The pre-test was done using two participants that were not included in the study. They were recruited in the same manner as the participants in the study. No changes to the questions arose from the pre-test and the interview schedule remained unchanged.

3.10 Data analysis

All data was transcribed and thereafter analysed by the researcher. Findings were reported in an ethical manner. No deception occurred whilst analyses and reporting occurred. Findings were noted and analysed using thematic content analysis, this type of analysis allows for the data to be coded and then organised into various relevant themes. The names of participants in the research were coded to ensure confidentiality. The data that was collected during the research process was managed in a professional manner so that it would be easy to provide both the descriptive and the exploratory information that were provided by the participants. Data analysis involved various steps and processes to arrange this data into purposeful categories so that it was easily accessible for drawing the findings of the research. Thematic content analysis allowed for the data to be coded and organised into themes (De Vos, 2005). The steps involved in the analysis of data according to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durheim (2006) are as follows:

Step One: Familiarisation and Immersion

This step involves having an understanding of one's data. This is achieved whilst collecting data as one becomes familiar with the themes that are present. Continuous reading and re-reading of data allows for this step to be achieved.

Step Two: Inducing Themes

This is a bottom up approach, which allows for data analyses and allows the researcher to

Examine the underlying principles of the material collected. One needs to move the mere

summarizing of the data. This step can be achieved through grouping themes together and then discussing it.

Step Three: Coding

Coding involves coding ones data as the themes develop. Pseudonyms were applied to participants and themes were grouped.

Step Four: Elaboration

Elaboration of themes allows for the data to be elaborated on in an in-depth manner. This step was achieved through analysing themes and discussing them in depth and linking possible themes were possible.

Step Five: Interpretation and checking

This is the final step involved in the research process. In this step contradictions, over simplifications or over-interpretations of the data will be noted and explained (Terre Blanche et al., 2008).

3.11 Trustworthiness

The researcher considered the trustworthiness of data which is crucial in assessing the quality of research that is of a qualitative nature. To also maintain the validity of the study, the researcher kept a research diary where feelings, thoughts and whatever necessary processes occur during the study were recorded.

Trustworthiness refers to the establishment of rigor in this qualitative study. The research is said to be trustworthy if it is conducted in such a way that it ensures strictness and accuracy (Babbie, 2007, p.62-78) when presenting the participants' experiences. Therefore the trustworthiness of this research is ensured by adhering to the criteria identified by Guba (as described by Babbie & Mouton, 2001, pp.277-278; De Vos, 2005, pp346-347). These criteria include the following strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as described below.

- **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth of the findings. The researcher used reflexivityto reflect on her role as researcher in order to avoid possible biases and making sure that her own behaviour and preconceptions did not influence the findings of the research in any way.In terms of language and translation, the researcher was fully multilingual and knowledgeable of the language and culture of the participants and fluent in the language of the write-up. Most participants however were able to answer most of their questions in English and very few sentences in their native languages of which the researcher was able to understand clearly and translate.

- **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be transferred or applied to other similar contexts or other participants according to Lincoln and Guba (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p.277). Literature exploration, interpretation and integration with the results of the individual interviews were done to provide a clear description to ease transferability. The researcher provided a rich description of research methodology, the background of the research, participants and the research context to enable another interested researcher to conduct a similar study in a same context.

- **Dependability**

This confirms that the results are consistent and could be trusted as valid. This was reached through clearly describing the exact method of data collection and analysis in line with the parameters of qualitative research methodology; reaching consensus in terms of coding on the common themes that emerged throughout the discussion.

3.12 Ethical considerations

When conducting social research it is important to ensure that the participants are respected and that ethics are adhered to as it provides some protection for both the researcher and the participant. By adhering to ethical procedures one shows respect and professionalism (Ross, 2010).

3.12.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from participants through first providing them with an information sheet to explain the research. It was also explained verbally and participants were given the opportunity to clarify any discrepancies they had. According to Israel and Hay (2006), informed consent allows the participants to have all the necessary information regarding the research and what it will entail, and enables the participant to make the best informed choice. The participant information sheet explained that there is no reward, financial or otherwise albeit while conducting the interview in a public place yet private space such as a food outlet the researcher purchased something to drink for the participant, whether during the interview or after the interview through participation in the study. There wouldn't be any negative consequences if they choose not to participate. They were also told that their identities will not be disclosed in the report. The individuals participating in the interviews were assured of complete confidentiality and that only the participants, the researcher and her supervisor, will have access to the information. However, codes rather than their names were used for purposes of recordkeeping. Thereafter they were provided with a consent form to sign, which would state that they have agreed to voluntarily participate in the research. They were also provided with a consent form to tape record the interviews. Participants were made aware that they may be contacted for a follow-up interview and even though quotes will be used, participants were anonymised in the write-up of the report.

3.12.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality according to Israel and Hay (2006) is when the researcher takes measures to ensure that whatever the participant has divulged in an interview will remain confidential and will not be of access to everyone. As described above, this was achieved through informing participants that all demographic details provided were not used and that the raw data was only privy to the researcher and the supervisor. The researcher however will not disclose any information in reporting and responses and did not link their identities. Even though quotes were used, participants were anonymised in the write-up of the report.

3.12.3 Voluntary participation

Participants should never be forced into the research and they should always be given the option to remove themselves from the research if they are not comfortable with it, therefore

their participation was always voluntary. No participant were forced into the research at any point, and if participants decline any follow up interviews, this was be respected.

3.12.4 Emotional distress and counselling

Given that the study focuses on perceptions and experiences of different skin tones and issues surrounding that, it can lead to psycho-social challenges, the researcher acknowledges that participation might evoke feelings of distress or cause psychological harm, participants will therefore be referred for counselling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) if the need arose, however it didn't, participants rejected the offer of being referred for counselling. It was evident that the participants were not adversely impacted, however if they were they would've been referred to Family Life Centre for Counselling at Pimville, Soweto, next to Maponya Mall (See attached referral letter and letter of relationship to Family Life Centre for Counselling- Appendix D and Appendix H).

3.12.5 Non maleficence

This ethical principle speaks to the fact that no harm should be brought onto clients, thus any risks that are involved in the research should be kept to a minimal level (Ross, 2010). Participants were encouraged to seek counselling if any emotional distress incurred as a result of the information being sought during the interviews or after.

3.12.6 Beneficence

This ethical principle states that the research should be some benefit (Ross, 2010). The participants were helping the social work profession gain insight into the development of the self-concepts of black people. Thus enabling social workers to provide better services as they would be able to better understand where the low-esteem concerning the skin tone originates from, therefore enabling social workers to empathise with clients on a deeper level.

3.12.7 Feedback to the research participants

Participants were offered a chance to get feedback regarding the research results if they so wished.

3.12.8 Ethics clearance

An Ethics Clearance certificate (see Appendix B) was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Ethics Committee before this research was undertaken. This ensured that local standards for ethics would be adhered to during the research project.

3.13 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the methods undertaken to gather the data for this research. It has outlined the aim and objectives of the study, the research strategy, research tool and sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis. There was a discussion about the ethical considerations that were adhered to whilst conducting the research. The chapter that follows is discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

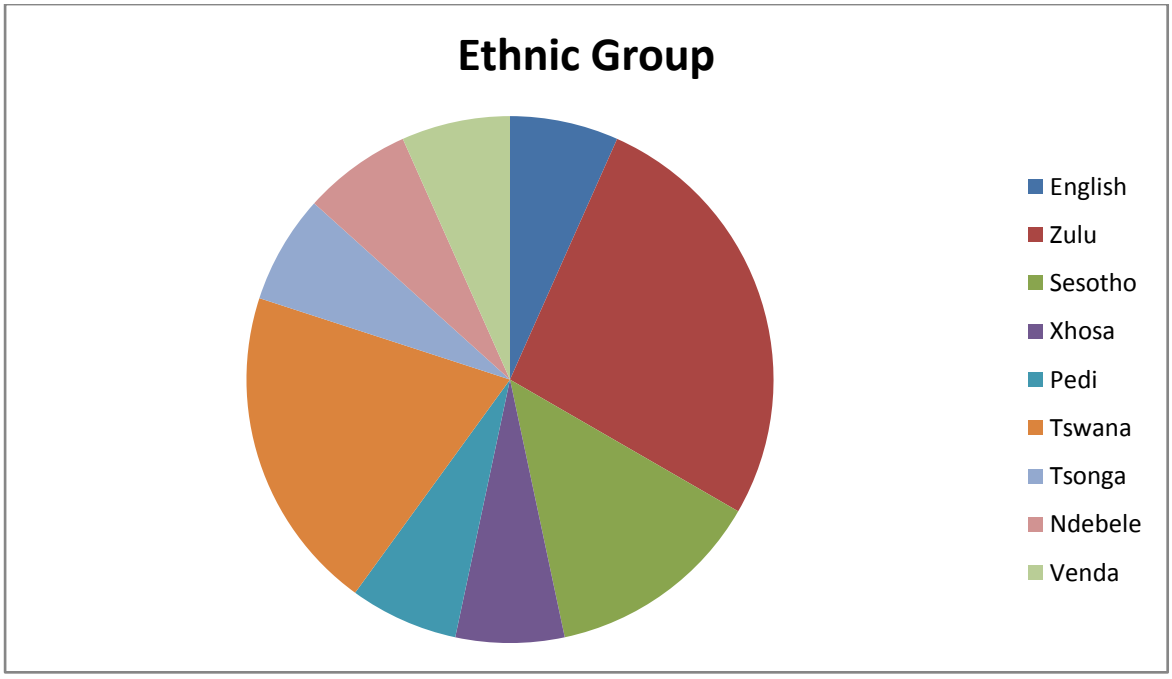
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the findings of the research study. The results are discussed in accordance with research questions and objectives of the research. Various themes and sub-themes that emerged through data analysis are also described. The first part of the chapter outlines the demographic details of the participants through the utilisation of pie charts. Thereafter, themes and subthemes are presented, illustrated using verbatim responses from the participants, coupled with theory where appropriate.

4.2Table 2: Demographic Details

Age	Number of participants
23	**1**
24	**1**
25	**2**
26	**1**
27	**2**
28	**1**
29	**1**
30	**1**
31	**1**
32	**1**
33	**0**
34	**1**
35	**2**



4.3 Figure 1: Showing the different ethnic groups that participated in the research

4.4 Summary of categories and themes

Table 3: Categories and themes

Category	Theme	Sub-themes
4..1Beauty and Attractiveness	4.4.1.1Views around pigmentation	4.4.1.1.1 Need for acceptance in society
		4.4.1.1.2 Reaffirming already existing ideas about colour consciousness and transforming the old ones
		4.4.1.1.3 Skin tone and stigma around variations of skin tone
	4.4.1.2Perceptions on body image	4.4.1.2.1 Size and facial features
		4.4.1.2.2 Black women and their association with sexuality
		4.4.1.2.3 Hair type as a factor in discrimination

	4.4.1.3Perceptions about the ideal	4.4.1.3.1 The association between beauty and self-esteem
		4.4.1.3.2 What can be seen as the epitome of perfection
4.4.2Psychosocial Factors	4.4.2.1Historical factors	4.4.2.1.1 Personal preference: lighter skin vs. darker skin
		4.4.2.1.2 Effects of apartheid, colonialism and slavery
	4.4.2.2 Economic factors	4.4.2.2.1 Socio-economic status, skin tone and employment prospects.
	4.4.2.3Socialisation	4.4.2.3.1Family: Point of origin of colour consciousness
		4.4.2.3.2Childhood trauma
		4.4.2.3.3Religious influence
		4.4.2.3.4Conformity to what the society expects
4.4.3 Colourism	4.4.3.1 Name-calling and internalised shame	4.4.3.1.1 Internalization of the shame of your skin tone
		4.4.3.1.2 Projection of own traits and emotions attributed to someone else
4.4.4 Interaction Analysis	4.4.4.1 The role of the media	4.4.4.1.1Television
		4.4.4.1.2Adverts
		4.4.4.1.3Movies

4.4.1 Perceptions regarding beauty and attractiveness

This section explores participants' views around what is constituted as being beautiful and the attitudes around skin tone, whether dark, light or medium.

It was clear that some participants felt that light is better and others felt that their environment was more welcoming to lighter complexion. Some strongly desired to be lighter or to have companions that are lighter in complexion. However, some participants felt that although society tends to prefer lighter-complected individuals, they were quite comfortable with being dark skinned. Participants felt strongly that the general physical appearance rather than only skin-tone was more important. It was indicated that the physical is what is presented first before even one gets to know the person, therefore it's more likely that the person is mostly judged based on appearance.

4.4.1.1. Views around pigmentation

Views around pigmentation- (includes need for acceptance in society, reaffirming already existing ideas about colour consciousness and transforming the old ones, and skin tone and stigma on variations of skin tone). In this research pigmentation focuses on the colour of the skin and whether that has any influence in the way people relate to them or not. For the sake of this research, pigmentation in this regard focuses on the group identified as black

4.4.1.1.1. Need for acceptance in society

The general view around this matter was that lighter is better and it epitomises beauty and attractiveness. Some participants noted that they would rather prefer to be light in complexion than dark since that guarantees attention from the opposite sex as well as popularity from peers. For them being light is seen to be a privilege and thus an advantage. However some are against skin bleaching or lightening and refers to it as un-African. Most participants felt strongly about the impact that a light skinned person makes as compared to a dark skinned individual in the community; for them society embraces light skin-ness or rather it is easier to be adored when you are a shade or shades lighter than the rest. Hook (2004) argues that the 'neurosis of blackness' that Fanon (1967) pointed out was the dream of wanting to be white. This dream in that case is not only a matter of the physical appearance but also whiteness as a step forward to 'humanity' given to the white community in racial/colonial contexts. This can be linked with low self-esteem and unhappiness. Some examples of what participants said about needing acceptance included:

P#7

"...I'd say that my dark skin is a disadvantage for me, I would've loved to be light skinned. Most people that I know prefer light skin and for you to be light skinned means that you can

get girls and be popular and as a guy I would like that also. I am happy about myself but feel that I could do better if I looked in a certain way..."

P#12

"...I am talking as someone who loves weaves and would lighten my skin, but love being black and am proud to be black and to even use my African name, when I can use my English name..."

Black consciousness therefore encourages black people or any person of colour to be proud of whom they are and not desire the white culture or pursue 'whiteness' (Biko, 1987).

4.4.1.1.2 Reaffirming or transforming existing ideas about colour consciousness

The debate around whether being light rather than dark skinned is seen as being more beautiful is ongoing. Western media uses mostly lighter skinned individuals therefore leaving little opportunity for dark skinned individuals to be viewed as either attractive or belonging to the big screens (Åkerlund, 2003). Most participants affirmed that what was created by history, media and society was that light is best and light is privilege. Examples of what participants said are:

P#1

"We had good movies and we had romantic movies being played by white people. On TV they don't just take any face, they set the bar high. I recently went to Holland, you see on TV the flight attendants are 'hot' and in real life they are just average people. Like we believe that Jesus is white and we later find that he was from the Middle East countries, he's skin colour might have been brown. Music videos play all day and you see more light than dark. "

P#7

The media pushes light skin, most adverts that you see have light skinned people, whether males or females. Most of the time they use light skinned people and I don't understand why."

Colonialism also contributed to how people perceive themselves and one another and had an important role in the construction of the 'inferior other' (Molebatsi, 2009). It played a

significant role in sculpturing the discourse of the lives of black people, simply by structuring society according to skin colour.

The Population Registration Act of 1950, one of the laws that were passed during the apartheid era, which accorded people with a lighter skin colour and straighter hair to be yielded a pass into a higher social status through a definition of being 'coloured' (Molebatsi, 2009). "*The lighter your skin was and the straighter your hair was the greater social value you had in South African society"* (Masina, 2010, p.88).

Many people believe that light skin does not only represent beauty but also privilege and a higher intellect. This was brought about through regimes of slavery and colonialism. In South Africa, apartheid furthermore reinforced the ideology of white as a paternalistic and superior race and other race groups as the 'children'. Within those different race groups there was also a hierarchy, with black people being at the lowest level.

P#2

"...Beauty kentho e tlangkabo different, o tlatholamotho o mosweu a le montlehape o thole le o montsho a le montle (beauty comes in different forms, you will find a beautiful light skinned woman and again a beautiful dark skinned woman). As a man, you interact with different people all the time, its fifty-fifty and it will depend on which mood you in. So it depends on the person..."

P#3

"For me I prefer dark skin..."

Most participants 'reaffirmed' such perceptions and ideas about colour that lighter is better. Only a few participants had 'transformed' this old way of thinking, and felt that black is attractive. Some participants had transformed such perceptions of colour, mentioning that as much as dark skin is not popular it is beautiful and people are warming up to that idea.

4.4.1.1.3Skin tone and stigma around variations of skin tone

Stigma is attached to how dark or how light skin tone is. 'Black' has been associated with crime, mental inferiority, immorality and ugliness, therefore any dark complexion has been stigmatised along those lines. Ribane (2006) argues that if Africans are made to feel uncomfortable in their own skin then it is almost impossible for them to be content with their

appearance. Being white was associated with success and prosperity, while black was intertwined with poverty and suffering (Ribane, 2006). Therefore individuals didn't want to be associated with being black, because the lighter you were the better opportunities you had (Ribane, 2006). One of the participants noted that:

P#7

"...I think for me or most people it starts with your skin colour and then that's all... people conclude, your fate has been sealed, like they always say , 'a black man is always a suspect..."

4.4.1.2Body Image

4.4.1.2.1 Size and facial features

Western culture views body type differently when compared to traditional African cultural views. In traditional African views, being slim is associated with being unhealthy and sick. However in western culture being overweight is seen as unattractive. Therefore in the western context beauty regarding body weight is seen as being tall and thin. In this regard Schuler (1999) states that Africans are forced to try and achieve the western ideal of attractiveness, being a thin and pale look. Participants stated that when a person is light skinned then there is no need to look at other facial features however when you are dark skinned there is more to look for, like the size of the nose, mouth, etc. One of the quotes from the participants spoke about the light skin-ness being the most important determinant of attractiveness:

P#1

"...Sometimes you see light skin people and you see beautiful, you don't check other features, like eyes and nose and all that. Then when you look at them again, you start noticing bad features that you missed..."

4.4.1.2.2 Black women and their association with sexuality

Some participants stated that black women were often associated with a high sexual appetite and that they are said to be more adventurous sexually.

P#12

"...Interesting enough, dark skinned people are now seen as more attractive and more appealing (sexy) but only if they have long flowing hair (if they are women)..."

"...I think this has a lot to do with the misconception that dark skinned women are more sexually adventurous and experimental, and that dark skinned men are better endowed (hence the saying "the darker the berry, the sweeter the juice) compared to their lighter skinned counter parts..."

It is argued that people have a misconception that blackwomen are more promiscuous than other women from different races and that early twentieth century constructions of black men as savages and rapists were embedded in the construction of African American women as immoral, and their immorality is what produced brutish black men (Glass & Graff, 2010).

4.4.1.2.3 Hair type as a factor in discrimination

Hair appearance and nature is seen as important and greatly valued within society, especially given the representations put forward by media (Molebatsi, 2009). Hair seems to be an important factor in this research study in the sense that having natural hair is simply not beautiful enough. Thus hair weaves, extensions and braids are mostly utilised to look more physically attractive. Having long straight hair was cited by the participants as allowing one to feel good about themselves. Molebatsi (2009, p.25) notes that "good hair is perceived (and represented) as the hair closest to white peoples' long, straight, silky, bouncy, manageable, healthy and shiny. The following quotes from the participants illustrate the hair discussion:
P#12

"*...Interesting enough, dark skinned people are now seen as more attractive and more appealing (sexy) but only if they have long flowing hair (if they are women)..."*

"...I think my view of skin tone comes from my exposure to the different people and seeing them in their natural state, without make up or the fake hair..."

"...I think the way we see ourselves is slowly changing, putting on a weave or bleaching your skin doesn't mean you hate being black, but that maybe you just want to enhance your looks somehow – let's not complicate it..."

"...The hair I have on my head comes off some lady in India. I love traditional food but can cook a mean pasta. Do all things mean I am ashamed of being black? Certainly not, I love being black but enjoy jazzing it up a bit. So yes, it has impacted me in a very positive way..."

"...Western media definitely believes that to be beautiful or successful you have to be light skinned, thin with straight hair, it leaves no room for the darker skinned people to feel beautiful and intelligent..."

P#14

"...If we look at black influential celebrities, especially women, we notice to start with their hairstyles looking like those of the white women. That in its self already means or implies to my fellow black people [especially Black women] that with hair such as the white's "that floats when the wind blows"; you are perfect. So it has become a norm that one should get such kind of hair..."

Straight long hair that is so much desired is not something a black South African is generally born with. For the hair to be long and straight, either chemicals in the hair to straighten it or the addition of hair extensions is required. Both of these practices are also harmful. While interviewing some participants, as much as they were against skin bleaching and were pro-black, their discourse implied something else. The use of the word perfection coupled with the lighter skin tone and the long straight hair was evident in their responses and was an indication that what they were saying was probably not how they actually felt about the matter.

4.4.1.3. Perceptions and attitudes

4.4.1.3.1 The association between beauty and self-esteem

The natural self is generally not appreciated. This is due to the fact that the "ideal beauty is packaged narrow-mindedly" (Molebatsi, 2009, p.21). The ideal beauty image that is presented to women is often the unattainable image, which causes havoc on a person's self-concept (Frisby, 2004; Reisher & Koo, 2004). This constant questioning of how one can be seen as beautiful must take its toll, as it requires a lot of time and energy to keep up the look that one has presented to the world. The using of skin bleaching creams to fit in with western society and can be viewed as a form of self-hate (Christopher & Charles, 2001), and thus having a very low-self esteem.

P#5

"...For me a lot of people who ooze confidence are beautiful and those who see themselves as less attractive or society looks down on them have little to no confidence..."

P#8

"...I think there's a connection, because if you have a low self-esteem then you won't see yourself as beautiful, you won't have the confidence. So in other words there is a connection between beauty and self-esteem..."

Participants perceived confidence to be related to physical attractiveness. Being complimented according to Baumeister at al. (2003) affects self-esteem, as insults contribute to having low-esteem.

4.4.1.3.2. What can be seen as the epitome of perfection?

Perfection was loosely used in conjunction with light skin, hair and body type. The lighter you are the more closer you are to perfection, and one of the participants mentioned that Michael Jackson was probably aiming for perfection by seeking whiter complexion

P#4

"...Media plays a role, because there are few people on TV, it's always the lighter ones. They make these people appear perfect, like perfect skin and for the dark skinned people, you will always see few of them and when I say dark I don't mean like very dark, they take a medium chocolate dark person. So in other words even when they choose someone who is dark, they make sure they don't take too dark..."

P#12

"...A lot of people define who they are by the way they look, some, like Michael Jackson will spend lots of money and time trying to "perfect" their looks, as much as there is nothing wrong with doing some work on yourself, I do think that some people take it too far..."

"...The media gives the perception that lighter skinned people are more beautiful, smarter and generally positioned as the look everyone should strive for..."

P#14

"...What the media depicts as "Perfect" and way of life feeds a lot of ideas to the general public regarding beauty and so on. Being light skinned is associated with being pretty and part of the 'elite'. So we all want to be somebody, usually that someday is a figure..."

"...If we look at black influential celebrities, especially women, we notice to start with their hairstyles looking like those of the white women. That in its self already means or implies to my fellow black people [especially Black women] that with hair such as the white's "that floats when the wind blows"; you are perfect. So it has become a norm that one should get such kind of hair..."

Research has shown that people from inside and outside of the black community still attach meaning to complexion and that impacts on the number of opportunities (Rowe, 2011). Colourism has an effect on your self-esteem and self-concept and how at times you behave in certain situations. Self-esteem is a major one in black women because it is mostly associated with lower self-worth (Thompson, 2001) and unfortunately both adults and the youth are affected by this.

4.4.2 Psychosocial factors

In numerous accounts participants maintained that lighter is better and that this extends to the views of their own families and communities. This is not a matter of just one person having that idea but has become a shared fact to the broader community. Some people were raised with the notion that being black is not desirable and to a larger extent, a curse because some would question the events of the past, stating that if being black was a blessing or black people were meant to prosper as well, then why did they have to go through the hardships that they endured in the past and still do? Why were they always overpowered by the white race? Why do scientific knowledge stem from the white community?

Most participants indicated that they were more content with lighter skinned individuals, some were uncomfortable to answer the question however it was seemed clear that the preference was towards lighter skin. Some participants would easily answer for the society and what their peers think however difficult to take an individual stance.

4.4.2.1.1 Personal preference: light skin vs. dark skin

It was clear that some participants felt that light is better and others felt that their surrounding was more welcoming to the lighter complexion than the darker skin tone. Some strongly desired to be themselves lighter or have companions that are lighter in complexion; a few participants felt that as much as the society is for lighter-complected individuals, they were quite comfortable with dark skinned individuals. Participants felt strongly that the physical appearance was more imperative. It was indicated that the physical is what is presented first before even one gets to know the person, therefore it's more likely that the person is mostly judged based on appearance.

P#8

"...It comes from me, how I feel about it. Nothing has influenced me, like I said I prefer light because I am light and I think it looks better..."

P#7

"...Yellow bone is better... I'd say according to the beauty that I see let's say in a woman it will differ, so I'd say the lighter skin is better... what I do know is that lighter is better..."

P#13

"...for me an attractive skin tone is a Smooth skin, flawless skin which is gleaming skin. the more flawless and cleaner skin is, the more beautiful it is, for me doesn't matter what the skin colour looks like...light"

P#1: "...The general views are that light skin is better..."

P#15: "...I think that generally, people see you as more attractive if you have a light skin tone..."

Leeds (1994) called the hierarchy of women of colour by lightness a "pigmentocracy." In her study of African American adolescent girls, she found that black men's preference for light-skinned women as well as a desire on the part to have European features. Bond and Cash (1992) reported similar findings in their study of African American women college students. This is an example of how the ideology of beauty is used to organize women into a "beauty queue" where the pigment of one's skin and the texture of one's hair determines how socially desirable one is in the marriage or dating market (Hunter 1999).

4.4.2.1.2. Effects of apartheid, colonialism and slavery

Historically through slavery, colonisation and later apartheid, the perceptions of what is regarded as beautiful within South African society were largely influenced by white, western standards and norms (Spencer, 2009). Thus perceptions formed and currently held today cannot be separated from the past. Apartheid has not been the only formative influence on the construction of people's identities. Colonialism also contributed to how people perceive themselves and one another and in the creation of the 'inferior Other' (Fanon, 1967). It played a significant role in sculpturing the discourse of the lives of black people, simply by structuring society according to skin colour. Colonialism brought the advent of the western world view around what constituted an 'advantageous skin tone'. Participants felt that the consequences of apartheid still had intense effects on the perception of skin colour and what is attractive.

P#11:

"...There's a saying that goes, " Black is beautiful" although nice and encouraging for dark skinned Africans, it is just a saying most people put in a room to choose a woman or man they would rather go for a light skinned person which they consider beautiful..."

P#9:

"...Well it's not my personal view, just generally most people prefer light skinned people, but it's not my personal view..."

"...that ideology came from the white boeres, that the lighter you are the better but if you are a black person then you are considered a nothing, I'm not sure if this has become a genetic thing or what but its the way it is. The white people who instigated apartheid are the ones who started with this idea..."

P#12

"...Apartheid has definitely impacted the way black people see themselves and other black people – but we cannot blame just apartheid, I think media contributes but also xenophobia. Apartheid has made black people see themselves as inferior and ugly. Yes apartheid has died in theory, but in reality, we are still enslaved in the mind as black people..."

P#13

"...Views and inspection for me all emanate from the apartheid regime, racism, and our history, due to the fact that most whites people were rich in Africa, The whiter or lighter you are in South Africa you were perceived as more privileged and never disapprovingly prejudge..."

"...the older generation (people impacted by apartheid) still perceive whites as superior due to an impact the apartheid regime had on them. Black people who were basically affected by apartheid still perceive a WHITE PERSON as superior than a black person, E.G, that's why in stores and in long queues they still give white people first preference or 1st priority compared to a black person..."

4.4.2.2 Economic factors

Skin colour was linked by participants to socio-economic aspects such as employability and privilege. Leeds (1994) called the hierarchy of women of colour by lightness a "pigmentocracy." In her study of African American adolescent girls, she found that black men's preference for light-skinned women as well as a desire on the part to have European features. Bond and Cash (1992) reported similar findings in their study of African American women college students. This is an example of how the ideology of beauty is used to organize women into a "beauty queue" where the pigment of one's skin and the texture of one's hair determines how socially desirable one is in the marriage or dating market (Hunter 1999).

Harris (2008) states that colourism is a global phenomenon, therefore it might not be accurate to say its cause lies purely on ideological African slave trade. There is much evidence that point's colourism to East and South Asia and other African regions that had little to no exposure to slave trade and yet a preference of lighter skin is prevalent (Harris, 2008). Usually dark skin is linked to the African indigenous heritage, yet still undesirable and light skin is mostly associated with European features and holds high standards for beauty and desirability (Harris, 2008).

In keeping with these trends, participants felt that a lighter complexion opens doors for employment and opportunities. The predominant perception amongst participants was that in order to be guaranteed to succeed financially the colour of the skin is important.

Someparticipants compared themselves with lighter complected individuals, that complexion determines how far one will go. In relative deprivation theory, people become dissatisfied when comparing their current situations with a particular standard, if they however feel that they are getting less than the standard they feel deprived (Whitley & Kite, 2009). According to James Davies (1969, as cited in Whitley & Kite, 2009, p.342), people might feel deprived when their expectations are not met based on their personal experiences.

P#1

"...Some people get jobs because of how they look and do their perceptions are positive to people with good looks. For example you came recruiting participants for your research because the way you look, we paid attention besides the fact that you come from Wits..."

P#11

"...As you can see most people would rather be light skinned than dark as the skin colour can often open doors for you in workplaces..."

of their skin they are trapped in, the philosophy is the whiter you are the more networks and the more it is easier for you to get successful..."

P#13

"...*most people associated success based on the colour or tone of your skin, the lighter you are it was believed it's easier to get richer because of the network that everyone presumed a lighter skin will have, since white people were predominantly rich, now being successful was associated with the colour of the skin, most people believed you had to be white to be successful..."*

4.4.2.3 Socialisation

The perceptions of participants should not be seen in isolation from their context. The environments in which participants have been raised and socialised into are key components in allowing for the understanding of these perceptions that have been formed. A holistic understanding in this regard is thus a necessity. The participants noted family, friends and community as key factors in their socialisation as to what is regarded as attractive. The constant exposure they had whilst growing up was influential. Various clinicians (Boyd-Franklin, 1993; Fortes De Leff, 2002;Williams, 1996, as cited in Tummala-Narra, 2007, p.262) have written extensively on intra-familial colourism, whereby certain members of the family are valued or devalued based on their skin colour, however noting that they belong to

the same race group (Tummala-Narra, 2007). In the United States, the issue of skin colour seems to be a complicated matter, where in these ethnic groups some members of the family are treated better because they are lighter in complexion, yet in some families you are more valued because you are darker (Tummal-Narra, 2007).

P#2

"... For me it comes from my mother because the first person you fall in love with is your parent, so obviously when you looking for someone, you will look for someone who resembles your mother, therefore the first line of beauty is your mother before you even go further, so that's where most of my views originate from..."

"...As I said before, 'charity begins at home' that's where most attitudes come from, obviously if someone feels that a particular person is attractive because they are light, then that perception comes from home, like sometimes at home while growing up older people would be saying, 'wow you pretty, because you are light', so it comes from there. Everything we do comes from home..."

P#6

"...I come from a family of light skinned individuals and so at home they are always competing about whom is the lightest among the lot, so light goes at home..."

P#7

"...Like most old people think that when you are light, you are treated better. Its uncomfortable but what can I say..."

4.4.2.3.1 Childhood trauma

Participants expressed the view that they had been socialised at a young age that lighter is better or more attractive and light means clean. Some participants mentioned that being teased as a child because of a dark skin, also created that self-hate and low self-esteem issues. Therefore due to those childhood traumas, a lighter skin is viewed in a more positive light. In most cases, childhood experiences and exposures to different societal and environmental factors influence greatly the personality of the child which also takes a similar shape in adulthood. Early childhood is seen as the breeding phase of the neurotic and that it is often linked intertwined with some kind of psychical trauma (Hook, 2004).At times the trauma may not have manifested physically or 'in the real' but rather fantasised therefore curative efforts must focus on the fantasised rather than the reality for example Hook, (2004, p.119)

cites Fanon's (1986) example being traumatised by the lynching of one's father through fantasised rather than visible experiences.

P#3

"...I personally don't feel bad because that's what those people want, whether to bleach their skin or darken it. These people who bleach or tan want their skin colour to be in a particular way, maybe when they were young they used to be told that a particular colour was better than the rest and grew up wanting that colour that has privilege..."

P#9

"...The reason we don't like a person, its not a natural thing its something that was instilled in our heads from as long our grandmothers, great grandmothers, they were the first ones that told us that a dark child is ugly..."

P#11

"...As mentioned above, I think I was indoctrinated as a child...for instance my mom whenever she wanted you to take a bath as a kid she would say "Otlanna o montsho" meaning you'd be darker if you don't bath and she would show you a random dark skinned kid on the street and blame dirt, therefore you grow up not wanting to be dark skinned..."

4.4.2.3.2 Religious influence

A few participants felt strongly that there should be no form of body modification. The overall perception was that people should accept themselves the way they are and stop trying to 'fix' what God has created, others took a step further to mention that changing oneself is like the dissatisfaction that a person has towards God's creation, therefore changing it is as close to blasphemy as using God's name in vain.

P#1

"...Ahhh, I believe in inner beauty, I believe that skin tone is a colour, uuuhhmm, I have reason to believe that the original colour, is important and I believe that I shouldn't look at yourself as better because you are light skinned or ugly because you dark skinned, its about confidence, if you know what have and you know what you have inside , I think that will shine out to the world and they will see how beautiful you are and they will find you attractive. People were made in God's image..."

"...God created you that way and if you don't find that beautiful, you are kind of saying that God created a mistake or something, so you trying to fix what he made, its not a problem to have make-up on, that's like accessorising yourself, its cool, but then bleaching has its deep..."

P#2

"...People must know we are different and we are all beautiful and whatever you do you must remember that you are the image of God..."

P#6

"...If you are black stay black and stick to how you were made..."

4.4.2.3.3 Conformity to what the society expects

There seems a high level of conforming to western ideals of beauty. Participants felt that in order to be accepted and recognised to the current society, then conforming seems to be imperative. It is easier to conform to what society wants than to fight against it, it will take more energy to try to prove to society that beauty or attractiveness can be defined differently for different people. Conforming is going ahead with what people think has been tried and tested, and that is usually the easy route to take. As social comparison theory states, that people have the need to compare themselves to others as a form of evaluation (Baron, Byrne & Branscombe, 2007). Thus this could provide an explanation why black South Africans have this need to conform to the 'accepted' western ideal.

P#1

"...I'm going to say is because you grew up under that general view, its really hard to see someone who is very dark as beautiful, 'ya bona' (you see), its rare. Lighter skin is like beautiful instantly but with black you have to pay attention..."

P#4

"...A lot of people like the light skinned people, and then that is followed by dark and then people who are albinos. Yeah that's what I think..."

P#5

"*...People like the lighter skin, the darker is undesirable, they think light is beautiful. They even use certain chemicals to make their skin lighter..."*

4.4.3 Colourism

This section will look into participants' views around shaming, naming and common terminology.

4.4.3.1 Name-calling and internalised shame

Internalisation is a form of integrating certain values, attitudes, standards and opinions of others to one's identity or that sense of self (Corsini, 1999). There were aspects of internalisation in participants' responses. Many participants were aware of the highly racialised society South Africa is, thus some of them have taken what has been believed about the black race deep into consideration and to some extent find truth in it. The constant reminder that black is like a curse, black is ugly and black is negative, then internalisation is bound to happen. Even the use of certain terms can be detrimental to ones sense of self. For example one participant was referred to by a lot of people as 'blackie' and that had negative connotation to it since it was said to tease or to discriminate against, therefore the term black has been closely associated with all that is wrong and undesirable. There is another common terminology that is associated with skin tone and yet that one is more glamorised and most people seek to be classified under that term. The term is yellow bone and will be discussed below.

P#4

"...I remember when I was young, I used to want to also bleach my skin to be lighter because I am a dark woman and dark has always been shamed upon in this community, sometimes I was called 'blackie' because of the colour of my skin. I think you should be happy with the colour you have..."

P#10

"...I took that from long ago, I have seen and interacted with a lot of people and of course taking their opinions into consideration, that's how I came to my conclusions..."

P#11

"...I really do not care no more if I am dark skinned or light toned, however it gets to me when someone says geez why you so dark was you sun basking? Then it seems I am now unattractive, this is particularly true when my girlfriend says such..."

There should not be a simplistic assumption that Black people automatically suffer from low self-esteem because White society devalues Blackness. A study by Coard et al., (2001), indicated in their findings that the more satisfied darker skinned individuals were with their skin colour, the lower was their self-esteem reflects the complexity of this issue

4.4.3.2 Projection of own traits and emotions attributed to someone else

Projection can be defined as a process by which "specific aspects of self, or certain wishes or impulses, are imagined to be located in something or someone else. This can mean that the individual is able to avoid confronting certain truths about himself or herself and hence functions as a means of avoiding guilt" (Hook, 2004, p.121). Due to undesirable internalised feelings about self and negative attitudes towards blackness, there may be a projection so as to avoid confronting issues about themselves. Participants emphasised what society and media is perpetuating however in their own use of words, terms such as yellow bones are used loosely to describe a desirable woman or man. Some participants were unhappy with this term but most of them used it and it was always put in a good light.

P#1

"...comments from hommies (friends) and around and we talk about it. The looks and all..."

"...we associate thoughts with colour too, for instance I grew up in an environment whereby my father was a reader, an academic so he taught me to be disciplined in those areas but then my other friend who also analyse how I behave, who wants to be like that, has this opinion that I behave 'white'..."

P#11

"...They very aware of it, you often hear them being proud of being or dating light skinned people whom they refer to as "Yellow bones" yeah as weird as that term sound, it is what they would rather have than dark skinned guy or girl..."

P#13

"...Society Norms- society has now conformed to certain western ways of dressing and physical ways of looking, so society plays a big role in how we portray ourselves..."

"...the older generation (people impacted by apartheid) still perceive whites as superior due to an impact the apartheid regime had on them. Black people who were basically affected by apartheid still perceive a WHITE PERSON as superior than a black person, E.G, that's why

in stores and in long queues they still give white people first preference or 1st priority compared to a black person...”

4.4.4 Interaction analysis

4.4.4.1 The role of the media: television, adverts and movies

Participants stated that media did play a role in perpetuating the superiority of lighteness. Most people used in adverts, movies, music videos are those that are light skinned and have European features. The general feeling was that the media has an enormous role to play in perpetuating skin colour differences. They strongly felt that the media has its own preferences and it fell more on the lighter skinned individuals, that perception was based on the observation that more lighter skinned individuals appeared on TV and print media than their dark skinned counterparts.

Media’s role in the formation of the current perceptions held has been noted greatly. It is seen as the force that holds the most power. It dictates the way people should live in every aspect. It dictates the ideal body weight and figure, the most accepted skin colour and so forth. Participants strongly feel that media is the most influential when it comes to skin tone preference. The media plays a major role in our perception of skin colour and that view is different for males and females. Colourism for women plays a role in the workplace as well as in the media due to ideologies surrounding attractiveness (Harrison, 2010). It is argued that the more an African possesses Eurocentric physical features the more they are deemed more attractive rather than African ancestry (Harrison, 2010). Hall (1995) argues that black men are portrayed in the media to be violent and threatening, something that the general public seem to believe also. Dark skinned men are associated with incivility, crime and misconduct and many people have misconceived ideas when it comes to a dark skinned man (Hall, 1995). The role of media is to present the perfect ideal skin tone, hiding all the possible flaws of celebrities or models. Constant exposure to these images according to Frisby (2004) can be negatively affect ones self-confidence and perception regarding body image and physical attractiveness.

Example of quotes from participants:

What is said about television:

P#1

"...Uuhhmm, I think maybe, television plays a role..."

"*...Again I'll say media. Media plays a major role in our perceptions and it has even gone deep into the way we think..."*

P#4

"...Media plays a role, because there are few people on TV, its always the lighter ones. They make these people appear perfect, like perfect skin and for the dark skinned people, you will always see few of them and when I say dark I don't mean like very dark, they take a medium chocolate dark person. So in other words even when they choose someone who is dark, they make sure they don't take too dark..."

P#5

"...definitely, because when you turn on the television you will always see the white skin and products also promise the white skin than the dark skin, which then means that the white skin is promoted..."

P#14

"...The media plays a huge factor. By media, I am referring to celebrities and people who are idolised by the general public as being an example or figure..."

"...The media has led me to believe that light skinned women are the prettiest and most beautiful..."

What is said about adverts:

P#13

"...advertising products using light skinned individuals has created an ideology that light skin is the best skin to have for individuals..."

P#6

"*...Of course they do, they are marketing themselves knowing that people are fond of the white skin. Media is for the light skin..."*

P#7

"...The media pushes light skin, most adverts that you see have light skinned people, whether males or females. Most of the time they use light skinned people and I don't understand why..."

What is said about movies and music videos:

P#1

"...Not just the way we see things, because the way we see a trend probably on twitter now influences the thought about something. A trend on anything, on MTV, you see dress codes and stuff and the way people talk. Media plays a major role whether we like it or not. I believe if we going to change the way we think, the way we view the world, we have to change what we put on our media and what is portrayed in our media, because media is our surrounding..."

"... Like we believe that Jesus is white and we later find that he was from the Middle East countries, he's skin colour might have been brown. Music videos play all day and you see more light than dark..."

P#9

"...: I think its just general conception, from TV, from community, something we all grew up knowing, in South Africa and globally. Its like the more lighter you are, fairer like white people, that's the more you considered beautiful and black people or dark skinned are the least prettiest..."

"...That question is simple to answer, media has a major effect, like light skinned women are called 'yellow bones' and those are the ones that are beautiful and the trophies unlike the other ones. Even when you look at rap music videos you will see all these light skinned exotic women being featured there. Most programmes we see are produced from the western side, there's a lot of racism in what and how they portray certain things. Like some cartoons would portray a black person as this ugly creature with pink or red mouth and an extremely black complexion. And the white cartoon is portrayed so beautifully..."

4.5 Summary of chapter

This chapter outlined the different views that participants held regarding attractiveness. It also examined the effects these perceptions have on the self-esteem of black people. Homogeny among black South Africans and conformity to what is said to be attractive is

essential for participants as they felt it was the only way to be accepted within society. The media holds immense power towards how people carry themselves, media influences what is trending, fashion and even the most complicated issues such as who deserves privilege and who does not.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of main findings

Attractiveness is a much debated concept, which encapsulates a variety of meanings for participants within this study. The idea of western beauty became apparent throughout the course of the study. This was evident both through analysing literature as well as interviewing participants. It can also be concluded that the accepted perception of beauty and attractiveness amongst participants seemed to be that of so-called western culture, with the predominant feeling that western culture is most attractive and desirable. Participants therefore felt that in order to be recognised as beautiful or attractive within society, conformity and adapting to the western lifestyle was imperative.

Most participants reported the desire to be lighter skinned due to the advantages that came with light skin tone. There was a sense of envy towards lighter skinned individuals and this was equated with cleanliness and beauty. Being black and proud was emphasised, however it is still preferable when an individual looks white or light. The thinking is that people should take pride in their black heritage but at the same time the individual should have a light skin tone as that is what society requires and desires. A lighter complexion is regarded as better looking than the dark complexion and the majority of the participants affirmed that only a handful felt that dark can be attractive or that what people could believe to epitomise beauty could be transformed. It was also revealed that certain skin tones had stigmas attached to them, as a darker skin was associated with ugliness and most disturbingly with mental inferiority. Light skin on the other hand has been closely linked to high intelligence and physical attractiveness.

There were very strong emotions around body size and facial features when it came to skin tone. The common feeling was that with light skin having a particular body size and facial features were just an addition to an already existing desired physical tract, while it is important for a dark complected individual to have a particularly desired body shape and almost perfect facial features. This means that with a dark complexion people are seen to need extra features that will enhance beauty while with a light complexion this is not necessary as the complexion accounts for the positive rating of beauty. There seems to be a connotation of greater sexual prowess associated with dark women and men, being seen as

more adventurous and sexual, with a large sexual appetite or being promiscuous. Sexuality was then also associated with longer and straighter hair. Straight long hair was coupled with perfection, success and beauty. Although the study research was concerned more with skin tone, the hair concept was an important facet that participants felt strongly about. Light skin was associated with long straight hair and both were seen to epitomize beauty which dark skinned individuals did not. Beauty was perceived by participants to have an effect on self-esteem.

It was acknowledged that once an individual is seen to be, or feels beautiful or attractive then there are greater chances of a higher self-esteem than in someone who is not deemed to be attractive. Self-esteem is a core issue that needs to be considered as it affects many aspects of the well-being of an individual. The less comfortable a person feels about themselves, the less likely it is that they will exude confidence. It is more likely that they will continue to question their worth. This could hamper them from developing their full potential. Being complimented according to Baumeister at al. (2003) affects self-esteem, as insults contribute to having low-esteem. Thus the necessity to conform to fit in can be understood, from this particular stance. Colonialism and apartheid were seen as key factors in perceptions amongst participants. Even though South Africa is regarded as having moved on from apartheid and as having transformed, the consequences and the legacy of apartheid are still evident. 'White' is still highly regarded and the dominant perception of beauty or attractiveness is largely dictated by these structural realities. It was felt that being light skinned opened doors to success.

This was perceived as having nothing to do with mental capacity but as having everything to do with the outer physical appearance. It was argued that the darker the person is, the less chances of employment, while the lighter the person is, the more opportunities for employment there are. It was also felt that there were lighter skinned individuals in management positions. Participants also equated 'whiteness' with wealth. Participants expressed that there are various factors that influence the perception of the person, family, peers, institutions and society. Family as an institution includes the primary care givers that are the first people a young child interacts with followed later by peers and the community. If the family views a lighter skin complexion as beautiful or better than the darker skin complexion, those messages will be transferred to the child whether by direct teaching or indirect learning or observations. Constant exposure to the same opinion or piece of information from a source as close as family, rubberstamps what is being said over a number

of times and one starts believing what is always said to them. The origin of colour consciousness was seen to begin at home and was followed by other interactions and relationships.

Childhood trauma also seemed to have an influence on perceptions. If the person was dark in complexion and was calls names or shamed, they would closely associate the dark complexion and ugliness and unpleasantness. Many participants felt strongly that the general population is in favour of a light skin. Media seemed to be an important the dominant factor contributing to the opinions formed by participants through the way it presents what is beautiful to people, especially to black people. The importance of media came through both in literature and in participants' views around how they form their opinions on what is accepted or ideal.

5.2 Conclusion

It is evident that participants had strong opinions concerning different shades of skin colour and pigmentation and how this influences the way that people view and interact with one another. The commonly accepted perception of what is seen as attractive, beautiful or desirable within society is the norm and depiction of what Western society and culture determines. These perceptions around what is attractive when it comes to skin tone and pigmentation in terms of western norms and values, was a source of woundedness and internalised inferiority for participants, particularly for dark skinned women. There seems to be a constant questioning about levels and ratings of beauty and desirability. Being acceptable and part of what is portrayed as the ideal image portrayed by society through avenues such as media seems to be of great importance. It is clear that the media depicts the western ideal, even though that is slightly changing but there is still a long way to go. It can therefore be seen that 'blackness' as a skin colour tone still goes unacknowledged within society.

The desired or ideal skin tone that is mostly presented is usually hard to obtain for a black person. Some people cannot afford to bleach their skin in legitimate dermatological settings and thus settle for the cheaper method which is more dangerous and even fatal in the long term. However, weighing the positives of having a lighter skin rather than a darker complexion forces them to ignore the risks they might be exposing themselves to. Media can therefore be seen as the most influential aspect in how people form their perceptions regarding what are constituted as the ideal. The reality of being confined to a particular skin

tone evokes immense feelings of distress and depression, which leads to the questioning of self worth. The constant desire to be acceptable, desirable and beautiful pushes individuals to take extreme measures such as skin bleaching.

South African society created a concept of blackness being unattractive and undesirable. It is this construction that black consciousness was to address. Apartheid thus played an important role in the perceptions that people hold around blackness. Biko (1987) states that for the oppressed to break free from the oppressive chains of the oppressor they need to first liberate their minds and this in itself is a weapon for the oppressed against the oppressor. Black consciousness therefore encouraged the black nation to take pride in their culture and themselves and not aspiring to adopt the white culture or pursue 'whiteness' (Biko, 1987). Biko echoed what Cesaire termed as Negritude, which implies not only a struggle for political emancipation but also decolonization of the African mind.

Fanon (1967) also uses the adoption of language in the dominant culture as an example of accepting those structures in place as common-sense and correct. English is seen as the language that affords people with opportunities to become successful in the current society. Therefore as the white man's language is adopted so as all aspects accompanying white western culture are also embraced on the eyes of the dominant culture (Cesaire, 1972).

Skin colour bias is multifaceted phenomenon, with deep roots in our nation's history. In the post-apartheid society, to say that blacks started thinking differently about their blackness, however, is not the same as saying that the consequences of having a particular skin shade disappeared. Indeed, this study found that complexion continued to be a significant predictor of such outcomes as finding the ideal partner, which can also lead to saying they had better marriage prospects, epitome of beauty and attractiveness and income among blacks. These facts suggest that the effects of skin tone are not only historical from a legacy of slavery in America, colonialism around the world and apartheid in South Africa, but present-day mechanisms that influence who gets what in South Africa.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Social work practice

This part of the report is on some of the recommendations for social work practice that the researcher formulated while conducting this research project and they are as follows:

The oppressive nature of racism and the dominance of western ideals of beauty need to be explored in therapeutic interventions with clients with low self-esteem regarding their own sense of attractiveness.

Attempts should be made to facilitate greater conscientisation among client systems regarding their perceptions of what is attractive or beautiful.

Social workers should be sensitive to the differences between women and men and their perceptions around what is attractive and how this affects their self-esteem.

People should be made aware of the ongoing consequences of apartheid and colonialism on internalised racism and inferiority and how these relate to the internal mental frameworks that people hold.

Social work should work at exploring and understanding issues around race, colourism and western hegemonic discourse. Social workers need to engage with clients on a more empathetic level. It is imperative for social workers to understand clients' perceptions and experiences in order to plan and implement appropriate intervention strategies that could enhance their social well being.

Social workers should develop more understanding of issues around perceptions of skin pigmentation and the phenomenon of skin lightening in order to assist people with difficulties in this regard

5.4 Further research

Future research should explore family relationships and intergenerational transmission of trauma and internalised inferiority as well as the role of mothers, grandmothers, fathers, and other parental figures in socialisation around issues of skin colour, internalised racism and colourism.

Experiences and perspectives of other 'races' regarding their experiences and attitudes around skin colour bias should be further explored. Histories of colonial rule and inferiorisation as well as perspectives and experiences of 'whiteness 'may contribute to greater understanding of the dynamics around taken for granted and hegemonic knowledge. Studies should also pay close attention to the role of social class in colour socialization.

Further research on the suppressive nature of skin colour bias within black families should be conducted in order to provide more solutions for their transformative role as a buffer against skin tone bias and stratification.

Additional research is needed on how the personal and emotional meaning of skin colour, as well as other facial attributes, may be related to racial or ethnic identity.