



The decoding of menstruation management advertisements by post menarcheal female adolescents in the eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu Natal

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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

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Dedication

I write this a bit disappointed in myself and the outcome of this dissertation. When we start something, we tend to want to create a piece of work that will be the best representations of ourselves. There are so many things I wish I could have done differently and ways in which I wish I could've spoken up ,however this is what life is. We deal with things and I am learning to make lemonade from lemons

To my future self, I hope you can learn from this.

To Sethulo Ezile Hadebe. I applied for this degree while I was pregnant with you and submitted while you were still breastfeeding. You came with me to colloquia's, classes and I remember getting kicked out of the library because I would try to sneak you in so I could quickly take books out for this study. You were there while I was collecting the data for this study and trying to navigate completing this when you would wake up every two hours taught me so much. I love you forever. I hope you know that are such a G!

To friends and family. I love you deep deep! Thank you for tolerating me at my worst while I was writing this

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To Pinetown Girls High and Maris Stella, thank you for gracefully opening your schools to me. A topic like this one is often shied away from in everyday conversation but is widely researched, thank you for seeing how important this topic is. To the young women who were a part of this study, thank you. I was deeply impacted by the brief encounter we had in the focus groups

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to explore the understanding of adolescent girls of sanitary pad advertisements. This study believes that advertisements are a form of social communication and can provide adolescent girls with a means to communicate about a topic that is often stigmatised. Menstruation is a natural occurrence that is highly policed by society and cultural norms. It is a taboo topic that is shrouded in secrecy. There are socioeconomic ramifications for the secrecy around menstruation. Using cultural studies offer a way for those who have been marginalised in a social and academic space to be researched.

This qualitative study wanted to understand the interpretations of the adolescent girls to be understood in depth. The study used focus groups with adolescent girls from quintile five schools. The encoding/decoding model was used as an interpretive framework Hall, 2006; [1980]). It used Libresse and Always advertisements. Semiotics, as an interpretive tool is utilised to uncover the latent meanings o analysis (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 2007).

The results of this study show that menstruation is a taboo and stigmatised topic that requires more conversation in relaxed settings. The participants agreed with many of the dominant readings that are held by society and are encoded in the advertisements.

Keywords: Menstruation, Advertisements, Semiotic Theory, Encoding/Decoding, Communication, Libresse, Always

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Acronyms and abbreviation

MHM	Menstrual Health Management
MHP	Menstrual Health Products
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
UN	The United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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Chapter 1-Introduction

Introduction

The media provides imagery depicting menstruation as a hygienic crisis. It projects cultural beliefs that it is a shameful event that should be kept hidden (Marvan & Molina-Abolnik, 2012). These attitudes of shame and concealment permeate the lived experience of post-menarcheal young girls¹ where the use of language such as "unclean", "embarrassing" that can be found in advertisements becomes self-fulfilling prophecies (Strang, 2005). Looking at how women understand advertisements depicting menstruation is essential (Winkler & Roaf, n.d.).

There is a lack of information around menstruation. Having accurate information and a positive understanding of menstruation may reduce risky sexual behaviour (Morrison et al. 2010). It allows menstruating women to feel a sense of ownership and empowerment over their bodies. An open dialogue on this topic is necessary to assist in managing HIV, high teenage pregnancy rate, and menstruation (Padmanabhanunni & Fennie, 2017) being a regular physiological occurrence because one needs to be able to speak about what is happening in their body openly. Advertisements can be the only form of communication that adolescent girls have about menstruation (Merskin,1999).

Menstruation persists as a stigmatised topic (Merskin,1999). Research states that an open discussion has many benefits for young women who menstruate (Nemane, et al.2009). Young girls are often reluctant to speak about their menstruation to their parents (Nemane, et al., 2009). Even with different efforts to open up discussion on this topic, there is a lack of communication that prohibits girls from learning an accurate base of menstruation knowledge and preparation for menarche (White, 2013). There are not enough resources that girls can learn about menstruation from which allows for the stigma around menstruation to persist. This study seeks to understand how sanitary pads are understood using advertising as a lens to try to understand them

¹ Post menarche is menstruation after menarche. Menarche is the beginning of a menstrual period

Background to the study

Menarche

Menstruation is the loss of the endometrial tissue when a fertilised ovum has been planted in the uterine wall, its function is purely reproductive (Shail & Howie, 2005). This physiological process lasts for 3 – 5 days as blood and tissue exit the body through the cervix and the vagina (Ramathuba, 2015). This physiological process occurs during the adolescent stage of a young girl's life and marks puberty and adolescence. The adolescent stage is also marked by psychological changes, including thinking critically, expanding reasoning capacity, identity formation and sensitivity towards body image (Cebii, n.d.). This allows for menstruation to be seen through one lens. It is seen from different vantage points that intersect and interlink as part of the transition from a girl to a woman. Menstruation has become a theme where gender politics, female hygiene, female health issues and female rights live and are discussed.

The onset of puberty allows girls to reflect on their place in the world (White, 2013) and significantly impacts how they see themselves. Puberty brings the onset of menstruation. The information that one receives in preparation for one's menarche can influence one's attitude towards menstruation and how one sees themselves (Ramathuba, 2015). One's attitude and knowledge towards menstruation can have a lasting impact on how one views menstruation.

There is a lack of communication around menstruation which allows for different narratives that favour a detachment from menstruating. Secrecy around menstruation leads to concealment (Spadaro, et al., n.d.). Research on menstruation seeks to give women a voice on their own experiences. It does this by trying to uncover how women feel about a topic. A study was conducted in Limpopo, South Africa (Ramathuba, 2015). The researcher believes that a lack of sexual knowledge has a detrimental effect on the sexual decisions in adolescents' reproductive life and can affect the sexual decisions in the reproductive life of adolescents (Ramathuba, 2015). This study looked into the menstrual knowledge that adolescent girls within Thulanda Municipality. In developing countries, there is a cultural belief that menstruation should not be spoken about. The study used girls between the ages of 14 and 19 (Ramathuba, 2015). The study found that only 27% of the respondents knew physical changes related to menarche. This means that menstruation happens to girls without understanding what is biologically happening to them, which makes a very personal physiological experience less empowering to young women. Society wants to maintain a virginal, clean, precious view of a girl or woman. It also gives them how to be told what it should be or should mean to them.

Resources and culture could influence the knowledge that girls have when it comes to menstruation. A more modern culture could allow menstruating adolescents to speak openly about their periods. A study was conducted in London using female interviewees between 18–57 years (O' Flynn, 2006). The research explored: the respondent's first period, how they had learned about menstruation and problems they experienced with menstruation. The research found that women did not talk to each other about their period and found that younger women only speak about their period when it concerns not being pregnant (O'Flynn,2006). The need for concealment could become a source of constant stress for women, particularly those with heavy and irregular bleeding in low-status jobs. This shows that concealment and focusing on menstruation's negative side and a lack of understanding start from a young age and persist throughout one's life.

Menstrual hygiene management

Once a young girl has reached menarche, she is faced with challenges around menstrual management (The United Nations, 2014). There are three areas of concern around the management of menstruation and sanitation systems: (1) the availability of privacy and space for women to manage their menses; (2) the existence of adequate washing facilities, including water supply; and (3) the potential for blockages in sanitation systems caused by inappropriate disposal of menstrual hygiene products (Sebastian, Hoffmann, and Adelman 2013).

Technology that targets feminine hygiene has assisted diverse ways to manage menstruation in sanitary pads, tampons, and menstrual cups. Social norms, cost, and availability can limit women's menstrual management options in developing countries (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014) These feminine hygiene products help reduce reproductive tract infections and other health risks which can lead to infertility and birth complications (Inclusive corporations , 2017) by offering different absorbencies.

In countries where young girls have no access to sanitary ware, toilet paper, newspaper, cow dung and other materials are used countries to collect menstrual blood (Inclusive corporations , 2017). Girls report that they are less likely to be absent from school and can concentrate (Girod, et al., 2017). The University of London donated over 1000 menstrual kits and observed girls' attendance Lindquist, 2015. While the study recorded a slight increase in school girls'

attendance to simply say that increasing access to sanitary ware could assist in the menstrual hygiene problem girls face and increase attendance at school is optimistic. Social norms could prohibit the open discourse of menstruation

The discourse around girls missing school days while they are menstruating is geared towards the large number of school days young adolescent girls miss while on their period. Missing school days can harm a school experience. UNICEF estimates that 1 in 10 girls do not attend school during their period (Rueckert,2015).

A school that is a supportive environment for menstruating girls has water and sanitation facilities and spaces that are safe and hygienic (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). An experimental study was conducted in the District of in Kenya (Oster & Thornton, 2011). It asked its respondents to diarise their menstrual cycle while using the menstrual cup. The menstrual cup is a flexible silicone cup that is a reusable barrier cup that collects menstrual blood (Beksinska, et al., 2015). The study wanted to find out how many school days girls missed in the year due to their period and used girls in the 7th and 8th grades. The study found that girl's attendance was only slightly lowered only falling by 2.7%. One would assume that menstrual hygiene management had something to do with it; however, it did not.

A study was conducted in Nigeria looking at how Igbo women understand their menstruation (Umeora & Egwuatu , 2008). While this study's main aim was to study the views that young girls have on menstruation, it also found that the type of menstruation management material that young girls use carries an individual social status to it. Sanitary pads or tampons were unavailable and/or unaffordable to women in the lower echelons. Respondents in a cross-sectional study in Uganda found that women prefer using sanitary pads as though it made them seem modern. They also believe that tampons were for the rich (Crofts & FISHER, 2012).. The preference for sanitary pads over more traditional material like cloth could be because a young girl would have to buy sanitary products.

The lack of adequate sanitation is necessary for discrete and safe menstrual hygiene management. In South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Province is a below average level of access to sanitation (Scorgie, et al., 2015). There are with as many as one in five households within the province that use unventilated pit latrines (South African Human Rights Commission 2014). This causes challenges for women and young girls when changing sanitary ware

Rationale for the Study

Advertisements for feminine hygiene products are created around cultural fear, a lack of education and shame. Advertisements are a rich source of cultural knowledge (Frith, et al., 2005). They allow us to see how culture understands a certain phenomenon and reflects societal norms as their target audience needs to see themselves. They construct it as a natural physical feature of a woman's body that causes fear as well as a hygienic crisis, resulting in guilt, low self-esteem and validation of the supposed inferiority of women (BURITICA ALZATE, 2013) The portrayal of women in ads is a topic that has been explored.

Advertisements have looked at how women's beauty is portrayed like the research that was conducted By Katherine Frith, Ping Shaw and Hong Cheng in 2005. The study compared portrayals of beauty in advertisements in different fashion magazines in Taiwan, Singapore, and the United States of America. The study found that beauty is a cultural construct that the advertisements exploited to their advantage. It found what was considered as beautiful changed with each country. Other research has looked at different ad campaigns like the Dove "Be your own beautiful campaigns" however advertisements on menstrual ads are rarely looked into and it is even rarer to find research on these ads that is not a content analysis.

After the second world war, qualitative research looked into the understanding menstruation to normalise the language and hygiene practices around menstruation (Strang, 2005). Clow believed that the language used by women became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Alice Clow, a medical researcher, explored young girls' attitudes towards puberty and menstruation. Clow wanted to create a new narrative that said women could do anything (Clow,1920). In this research, however, women's activities were women dancing with men, which did not change the narrative. While advertisements now try to follow the let's empower the female empowerment rhetoric with advertisement that have taglines such as "fight like a girl" (Always,2014) or "making periods less embarrassing" they continue to be a source of oppression for women that do not normalise menstruation.

There cannot be a change in the way advertisements show menstruation until there is a cultural shift in how it is viewed. Advertisements can offer an inside look at how a culture views different phenomenon. A content analysis was conducted on advertisements using advertisements from Japan and Columbia (Graham, Kamins, Oetomo. 2020) The study wanted to look at the cultural meaning of menstruation through advertisements. One of the general

themes for the advertisements looked at was absorbency for sanitary ware. The advertisements depicted being stained are a site of embarrassment, a sight that others should not witness. The study stated that “The message that is conveyed from the whole collection of advertisements is not a body that menstruates, but a body that should not. The body is portrayed as discrete, self-contained, and controlled, and this state is achieved through the denial and repulsion of menstrual blood, as that which surpasses the constitutive boundaries of the self. “. This level of body consciousness does not allow for women to view

Research Aims and objectives

Advertisements have the power to influence and communicate a company’s ideologies, repeat and reproduce cultural meaning (Erchull, 2015). They engage with their target market by using advertisements (Leiss, et al., 2010). Advertisements are a way of gaining recognition for one’s product or service they are a cultural artifact. Advertisements also serve as cultural artefacts that play an important role in social construction.

Advertisements use social myths in circulation (Bignell, 1997). They engage its audience by asking them to draw on their own cultural resources when decoding a media text (Livingstone, 2003). The study's main purpose is to explore high school adolescents' views of sanitary pad adverts by Libresse and Always. Furthermore, the study seeks to investigate what the respondents believe the advertisements are saying about menstruation as a cultural phenomenon

The Objectives of this study are:

1. What their cultural and social beliefs are on menstruation based on these ads have
2. Find out what adolescent girls understand about advertisements of sanitary products
3. What are their interpretation of the selected advertisements?

Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: What are adolescent interpretations of sanitary pads' television advertising? How are these related to the girls’ lived experiences and cultural meanings of menstruation and their use of menstrual health products?

The study wants to answer the following questions:

1. How are these interpretations related to the adolescent girls' experiences of using menstrual health products?
2. What are adolescent girls' interpretations of television advertisements for menstrual hygiene products?
3. How are these interpretations related to the adolescent girls' menstruation experiences within their cultural context?

Research Approach

Data Collection

Data collection is guided by the research approach, whether qualitative or quantitative, and ultimately by the type of data used (Neuman, 2014). This study is a qualitative study that will use focus groups to collect data. Focus group is a data collection technique that utilises a discussion guide to analyse predetermined themes by interviewing four or more people (Bryman, 2012).

The number of participants recommended for a focus group traditionally is 10 – 12 participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This study's number of students used in its focus group was seven. This is due to the possibly sensitive nature of analysing advertisements on menstruation. A group larger than this may prove to be too big to allow for generous and honest data attainment.

The study conducted two focus groups and obtained new and meaningful insights. The researcher felt if they would have conducted more than three focus groups, it fails to do that as the data received becomes redundant (Morgan, 1997). A study conducted in North Carolina did a thematic analysis of 40 focus groups with the hopes of uncovering if having more focus groups yielded additional information (Guest, et al., 2017). This study found that over 90 % and 80 % of all themes were discoverable within two and three focus groups, respectively. It also found that the most prevalent themes within the study were found after three focus groups.

The data obtained in the focus groups were recorded using a tape recorder. This was done because writing down what the focus group participants say might prove challenging and could negatively impact the data collection process. The recordings of the focus group will then be transcribed. It also lends itself to allowing the researcher to pick up on nuances such as the type of language used by participants (Bryman, 2012).

The focus groups were held as it will be an environment known by the respondents and allow the respondents to feel relaxed. The study hopes to gain access to the school's students via a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper is someone, who can control access to when and how the researcher and the potential respondent (Lavrakas, 2008).. The researcher also hopes that the gatekeeper will suggest an appropriate school venue for the focus groups. Once gatekeeper approval has been received, the study will give the respondents informed consent forms for their parents or guardians to sign. Once the informed consent forms were signed, data collection in the form of focus groups can commence.

Advertising is a form of communication where the author sends a message to a recipient with the explicit intention to sell a product or an idea to its consumer. Communication is a process that can be often taken for granted. It involves signs and codes that refer to something other than themselves (Fiske, n.d.) These codes are a convenient way of creating meaning that are to a specific group of people (Rose, 2002).Advertisements engage its audience by encouraging them to

The study wanted to uncover adolescent girls' understandings and interpretations on sanitary pad advertisements. The interpretation process involves the assigning of significance or lucid meaning (Neuman, 2014). To unpack the meanings that it will employ a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is a research strategy that employs language to collect data (Bryman, 2012). This study subscribes to the idea that the advertisements' audience does not just passively take in text that is shown to them. Therefore, it becomes essential to examine the reader's social knowledge (Livingstone, 2008). This study design will be an audience reception study. Reception studies focus on the interpretive relationship between an audience and a medium (Sandross, 2011).

This research hopes to find the data will be mapped and interpreted by using a thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) believed that a thematic analysis provides fundamental qualitative research expertise. They said this because they believe that thematic analysis uncovers identification, organisation, description and reporting themes

Thematic analysis is the extraction of key themes within the data (Bryman, 2012). These themes will be extracted from codes from the transcribed focus groups. The themes will be transformed into codes that the researcher will use to gather the information into groups. A thematic framework will be created to assist in by created themes and sub themes and creating a textual motif (Bryman, 2012). This framework will closely resemble a spreadsheet a matrix

Theoretical Location

Advertisements, as a media text, reference culture and can have multiple meanings and can be understood in diverse ways. The media text analysis has evolved with the messages' receivers being perceived as being less and passive in the communication process. The transmission model of communication by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (Schroepel, 2009) was not concerned with interpretation but was more concerned with the flow of communication. It did not take in the audiences the ability to draw from cultural references. Stuart Hall's essay 'encoding/decoding' (1980) essay challenges this simplistic model and highlights the importance of active interpretation within relevant coding. A code is a set of conventionalised ways of making meaning that is specific to a group (Rose, 2002). Applying this to the process of advertising, Hall wrote, "The level of the connotation of the visual sign, of its contextual reference and positioning in different positioning discursive fields of meaning and association, is the point where already coded signs intersect with deep semantic codes of a culture and take additional more active ideological dimensions" (1980, pg 7).

Hall believed that there are four stages to the communication process. Hall does consider the production end (encoding) (Tager & van der Merwe, 2018) and this is the first stage in his model. This stage is where encoding happens where society is reflected to the intended audience. The second stage is where the message is disseminated. If the message successfully reaches its target audience, the circulation has been successful. Content that appeals to its audience allows its audience to think that they need to do something with their message. This is the third stage where the message needs to be meaningful to the audience. The last stage is the reproduction where the decoding happens, this is the response or the reaction to the message.

There are 3 different ways in which decoding can occur. According to Daniel Chandler (2015) Hall's framework lies on the premise that meaning of a text is encoded in the dominant code, thus making the meaning latent. The first is the preferred/dominant reading. This occurs when a text is read in the way the producer preferred. It affirms the hegemonic political, economic, social and cultural order (Rose, 2002). This proves the text to be a success for the producers as they get what they wanted. The second is the negotiated reading. This position involves contradictions as the reader agrees with the dominant reading but only partly (Chandler, 2015). The third is a mixture of the preferred and the oppositional reading (Rose, 2002)

Geographical Location

This study took place in eThekweni municipality. The eThekweni municipality is situated in the province of KwaZulu Natal (which will be called KZN from now onwards) KZN has the 2nd largest amount of homeowners who own televisions with over 2 200 000 households owning a television. Durban largest city in the eThekweni municipality This study will take place in the eThekweni Municipality. This municipality was chosen because of its proximity to the researcher

The socioeconomic background was important for this study. The schools that were used for the focus group do not have a lack of water and sanitation facilities. eThekweni not has a lack of water and sanitation facilities for adolescent girls. This makes it difficult for girls who are menstruating to dispose of their menstrual management products as less than half of the population has access to a flushing toilet. The lack of WASH facilities does not impact the respondents; however, they might be aware of other young girls' problems. Understanding if one's socioeconomic surroundings impact how one receives advertisements and understand if there is any power in contextualisation.

The study was conducted in 2 different schools in the eThekweni municipality, Maris Stella School and Pinetown Girls High School. It conducted a conduct a reception study on female adolescent girls to understand how they decode advertisements. The study wants to use students that attend high schools as study's respondents. The schools that will be used will be quintile 5. The quintile system is a system the Department of education uses to categories schools according to its community's socioeconomic background.

Convenience sampling was used to select a sample for the research. Convenience sampling's primary criteria for selecting meet a certain criterion or are easily accessible (Neuman, 2014). This study will select its sample from a school that is geographically close to the researcher. This will be a school in the eThekweni Municipality. The sample that the study will use school will be post menarchal adolescent high school girls from three high schools within the eThekweni Municipality. The schools have been chosen due to their geographic proximity to the researcher.

Furthermore the researcher will pick the schools used. The quintile system is a way in which the department of education ranks schools from 1-5 quintile (Dass & Rinquest, 2017). The quintile system ranks schools according to the school's socioeconomic status and poverty of the schools community (van Wyk, 2015). The government funds quintile 1-3 schools known as “no fees” schools while quintile 4-5 schools are partially funded. (Dass & Rinquest, 2017).

The schools selected using the Master List. This list is a spreadsheet that contains all the schools within the country and is available on the Department of Education Website. The KwaZulu natal spreadsheet will be used to pick schools that are geographically close to the researcher. The eThekweni Municipality has two quintile one schools. The school's names are Durban Girls High School and Pinetown Girls High School that are situated in Durban and Pinetown respectively. The age that the obtained is adolescent girls over the age of 18. The sample used will be high school adolescent girls. This sample was chosen based on advertisements that will be looked at have young adolescent girls as the protagonist. A theory that was used in the assistance of picking the respondents is Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory. According to Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist, the adolescent phase is when adolescents learn to make values of their own and acquire their identity (Fleming, 2004). He named this stage Identity vs Role Confusion. Erikson believed that there are predetermined stages one goes through and at every stage there is a psychosocial crisis (Boeree, 2006). Using a sample of people who possibly use the product as a means of menstrual management to find out how their customers and target market use the product. In the 1950's menstrual advertisers stopped using mothers in their advertisements and started using young adolescent girls in their advertisements in an effort to build brand loyalty that (Ayers, 2011).

Structure of dissertation

This dissertation comprises of six chapters as outlined below.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides the background on the study. It introduces menstruation and how it impacts different aspects of an adolescent girls. The introduction chapter introduces advertising in relation to menstruation. The introduction chapter the research questions and the approach it used to answer the research question.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter will provide the foundation for understanding menstruation from a cultural and health communication lens. The literature review will reveal that menstruation is not just about blood however that menstruation unites the personal and the political. Gloria Steenheim (1986) said “If men could menstruate and women could not... menstruation would become an enviable, worthy, masculine event... sanitary supplies would be federally funded and free.” Menstruation is a natural occurrence that those who menstruate are penalised for through pink tax (the taxing of menstrual health products), lack of sanitation infrastructure and social taboo and stigma. The literature review will name, describe and discuss the complexities around menstruation, menstrual health management and menstrual health protection.

Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that will guide the findings and analysis. The study utilises Hall’s encoding /decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Representation theory will be used to understand the encoded meanings found in advertisements' signs. A theoretical thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

The methodology chapter provides the methodological outline used to answer the research questions. The methodology chapter will discuss the methodology, sampling procedures, replicability and the limitations of this research.

Chapter 5- Data Analysis

The fifth chapter is the data analysis and findings chapter. This chapter uses the encoding/decoding model and the literature review to discuss the themes that emerge from the data. Focus group interviews will form part of the data analysis process as they provide a comprehensive manner for understanding personal experiences (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004).

Chapter 6 – Discussion of findings

This chapter will apply the thematic analysis and the encoding/decoding model to the data. It will discuss the findings on the study

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

The conclusion chapter will conclude the study. It will offer closure to this study and provide reflection on each chapter as well as the findings of the data. The conclusion chapter will sum

up the important insights of the data. The limitations and recommendations will be in this chapter

Conclusion

The introduction chapter provided the background to the study. It outlined the rationale for the study and named the research objectives and questions. It also provided an outline of the rest of the chapters in this dissertation. The next chapter will present a review of literature around menstruation

Chapter 2-Literature Review

Introduction

Growing recognition of women and girls' difficulties during menstruation has prompted accelerated investment in policies and programmes to improve menstrual health (Sommer et al. 2015; Bobel, 2018). Qualitative research and insights from practice have identified multiple levers for intervention, including access to preferred menstrual materials, improved menstrual knowledge, supportive infrastructures such as girl and woman-friendly toilets, and addressing broader sociocultural contributors such as menstrual stigma and social support (Schmitt et al. 2018; Caruso et al. 2013; UNICEF 2019; Hennegan et al. 2019).

The literature review presents an overview of the research around menstruation and various related concepts and arguments to explore research that has been done in this field. It is hoped that this exposition of the subject of menstruation and menstrual product advertising within an African cultural context will help to demonstrate the research gap that this study aims to fill. This chapter will demonstrate how menstruation has been widely researched, especially in the middle to low-income countries. It has not been researched from the lens that this research study hopes to use.

The literature review will first discuss the various understandings of menstruation and how they have evolved and how some issues around menstruation definitions remain contentious to this day. This contentious view impacts how menstruation has been understood in the medical fields as well as in advertising. There is a silver thread that links taboo and cultural views of menstruation to how it has been reported and understood in the medical discipline. The stigma, shame around menstruation is also apparent in education around menstruation. These three sections will argue that the private body is political.

Successful menstrual health management requires proper menstrual management products and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (also abbreviated as WASH) facilities. These will be the next topics that will be addressed in this literature review. Menstrual health products (MHP) assist in the absorption of menstrual blood. The different methods used to manage menstrual blood will be discussed under the subheading menstrual hygiene product. Water, health, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

While this study does look at advertising, this chapter will primarily focus on menstruation. The literature review will flesh out the different scholars and around menstruation. An undertone to this will be feminism and menstrual activism.

This chapter will begin with show how a medical event has slowly evolved into a socially stigma

Biases in how menstruation is understood

Knowledge about menstruation typically begins with describing the organs that comprise the female reproductive system. The body has an exaggerated presence in society (Oyewumi, 2001) making the personal political. Western conceptualization and states that gender is a western concept. The term "worldview," which is used in Western Society, sums up a society's cultural logic from one lens. One culture can view early menarche as a result of precocious sexuality while in another culture it could be something that "the social construction of menstruation as a woman's curse is explicitly implicated in the evolution of woman as Other". It is causing gender to become a performance rather than a personal choice. Performing femininity is an anxious one that carries self-monitoring, self-discipline and self-surveillance (Gill, 2007). Appearing to be carefree and full of confidence while performing this self-pruning could be exhausting

There are varied understandings of menstruation. The beginning of this section will discuss the different biological definitions of menstruation. It will show that menstruation is not defined and reported without negative bias. This section will then move on delve into socially constructed meanings and understandings of menstruation.

Human biology is researched under scientific, inherently social, and the body (as a social construct) becomes a system of signs to be deciphered and how it is interpreted depends on the person viewing the (Grosz, 1994). The body is the basis of where social order is founded, the body is always in view and on view. In the view of a gendered gaze. (Oyewumi, 2001)

How menstruation is defined can affect how it is understood and experienced. Writers describe menstruation because of not being pregnant (Martin, 2001). The Mayo Foundation (2009) defines menstruation as a marker of fertility and health and recommended tracking menstruation's regularity. It typically occurs once a month during the monthly hormonal cycle and will commonly occur other than when a menstruator has decided to use hormonal contraceptives to suppress or control bleeding during their non-pregnant reproductive year

(Newton,2016). UNICEF (3:2019) defines menstruation as "is the natural bodily process of releasing blood and associated matter from the uterus through the vagina as part of the menstrual cycle". The early medical understanding of menstruation in western medical scripts views menstruation stems from Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen's writings (Shail & Howie, 2005). These writings document the regularity of a period as well as possible reasons for why menstruation occurs. While modern science has brought more empirical knowledge around menstruation, what persists is that menstruation is not only a physiological event.

Emily Martin (1992: 411) believes that menstruation is always represented as a "systems for the production of valuable things', menstruation was described as the death of tissue, implying wastefulness, chaos and 'production gone awry". Humans experience a hormonal cycle of which menstruation is the outermost expression of this hormonal cycle in some women. It can be defines as the process of discharging blood through the vaginal wall an Representation of menstruation in this way leads it to being seen in a negative light even though it is a normal physiological event d other materials from the lining of the uterus at about one monthly" (Davis, 2019) however It (menstruation) has been acknowledged by medical science as a sign of a positive endocrine system, and postmenarcheal women are encouraged to track their cycle (Bobel & Kissling, 2011) as a way of knowing if they are healthy. A natural monthly occurrence in healthy adolescent girls and premenopausal adult women (Sumpter and Tornondel, 2013:1) is often reported in ways that emphasize death and decay with medical definitions of menstruation emphasise sloughing of the uterine wall (Martin, 2001).

Menstruation is a socially understood and how menstruation has impacted how those who menstruate see themselves. Anthropologist Emily Martin has written extensively around health communication about the female body. Martin's work began with interviewing mothers and expanded to interviewing scientists and visual and print media (1991,1992). Her work found that the perception of menstruation is usually unfavourable. The language used around these topics in advertising and linguistically has a cultural gender bias, showing that medical science can be socially constructed in some instances.

Menstruation is often documented as a female problem. Engendering descriptions often turn the opposite gender into the "Other" (Bobel, 2008). Human beings experience a hormonal cycle of which menstruation is the outermost expression of this hormonal cycle in some women. There has been a move towards understanding menstruation in a socially constructed way that

is inclusive. Taiwanese FemCare company, used Harisu a transgender Korean pop star as the spokesperson for their products (Bobel,2010:156). She says the words "Because I am woman,". Harisu does not menstruate; however, she is being used in the advertisement to make a political statement that menstruation not only concerns those who menstruate. The social construction of the body and gender led Kim Ann Hasson to study the text on menstrual suppression products.

Menstrual suppressors are oral contraception that regulate reproduction by suppressing both ovulation and menstruation. Menstruation's close relation to femininity. According to Hasson, technologies that change menstruation challenge the equation of gender and sex. Taking for granted what menstruation is and how it is defined obscures what can be learned by remaining open to menstruation's multiplicity and its relationship to a gendered embodiment. Advertising provides suitable locus where social and gender identities are created, revised and accepted due to the constant portrayal of images of men and women who are perceived to represent a whole population (Saz-Rubio, 2018).

The female body parallels the prison system here where if the female body does not conform, women are punished by shame if their bodies do not fall in line. There is a very narrow view of the body, mostly how the female body should behave and be seen, especially when a woman is in public. In the book "Discipline and Punish," Michele Foucault (1975), Foucault focuses on the micro (every day) level of power relations within society. These power relations are reproduced in everyday life through the modern penal system's history by the internalisation of a prison warden's role, which is replicated in women's internalisation of the misogynist gaze. In a study conducted in Spain using free association with 250 participants the associations around menstruation were negative (Mondragon & Txertudi, 2019). Therefore, the representation of menstruation is understood to be situated within a social, ideological, and emotional context. The study also found that a feminist conception of menstruation provides an empowered and emotionally positive representation.

A feminist perspective will be used in this research not to replicate the prisoner /warden view conceptualisation of the female body. Feminist theorists and writers agree that the female body is highly policed, which often means a view. Feminist theorists and writers agree that the female body is a highly policed which often means a biased view of the. Debra Merskin (1999) calls this "The Public Body" (1999:944) and the Private body (1999:944). The term "public body" also encompasses how feelings beliefs around menstruation are created/dictated to by

society and not the individual menstruating. Menstruation has justified not creating inclusive spaces, like schools and proper water and sanitation systems for menstruators. It has also been the justification to control women's behaviour and create shame and taboos around menstruation. Understanding how young girls understand menstruation could explore if this is indeed true

Early misconceptions around menstruation

Menstruation was a topic of interest to Dr. Bela Schick in the 1920s when he witnessed flowers wilting in menstruating nurses' hands. Dr Schick found that menstruation caused wine, fruit jams, and fruit to spoil (Schick 1920). Dr. Schick said that this was due to menotoxins. (Newton, 2016, pg 118), which created a debate in the medical journal *Lancet* world, went on well into the 1970s. Menotoxins have been disproved, but physicians still advise women not to swim or take cold baths or showers. (Friedenfelds, 2009)

The menstruator is always the subject of their menstruation. The need for control over the body Foucault believes that the body is over-policed and sees discourse as social control by defining a self-identity. Menstruation occurs, and the menstruator has no control over what is happening to them. Aristotle believed that while menstruation is unclean, it is still necessary to shed blood and menstruation to the moon phases. He also believed that menstruation was excess blood that had not yet been created into a foetus (Stein & Kim, 2009). Hippocrates, the father of medicine, theorised that the uterus was the source of female emotions if women had an irritable uterus that decided to go rampaging through one's body and caused a condition called hysteria (Shail & Howie, 2005). Menstruation definitions and understandings and how the experience is understood is more akin to a taboo than to a neutral physiological experience. Junod (1927:573) defines a taboo as "any act, object or person that implies a danger for the individual or the community, and that must consequently be avoided, this object, act or person being a kind of a ban".

Communication around menstruation is not only found in how we define the physiological phenomena that can often be socially constructed. Understanding what this means for adolescent girls and if this impacts menstruation

Adolescent girls' experiences of menstruation

Menstrual practices, perception of these practices and environments, confidence, shame and distress, and bleeding and odour contain all part of the menstrual experience (Hennegan, et al., 2020). These themes were found when reviewing 45 low to middle income sub-Saharan African countries (Hennegan, et al., 2020). These components interlink and contribute to the overall impact on a menstruator's life. Attention to menstrual needs is essential as a menstruator's lack of MHM interventions can negatively impact a menstruator's life (Hennegan, et al., 2020).

Menstruation can evoke both negative and positive experiences in a menstruator's life. A study was conducted to see adolescent girls' experiences to menstruation in . The study used to understand how girls in rural Thirumalaikodi, Tamil Nadu in India (Gold-Watts, et al., 2020). The study used semi structured interviews to understand how girls understand their menstruation. The participants were girls in school who were doing Grade 11. The study found that there is a sense of pride when they first menstruated. This pride was felt because they were told that they are now becoming women. The participants reported that they felt need to behave in more feminine and culturally appropriate ways as they were no longer young girls. Menstruation also brought shame, they felt that they could not go to the store and would isolate and alienate themselves while menstruating. Shame is as an reason to isolate oneself is a topic that needs to be better understood. Understanding where shame for a biological event that can bring a sense of pride in oneself is what this study wants to do

A study was conducted in Western Cape, South Africa with university students. The study was conducted wanted to understand the experiences of isi-Xhosa women in relation to how menstruation is portrayed in sanitary pad advertisements. (Jaffer, 2015) Five participants per focus group was utilised and advertisement from Kotex and Always were analysed. The study uncovered that these advertisements were an educational source. They stated that menstruation is a taboo topic that often no one talks about and believes that advertisements were an educational tool. While educational, these advertisements were not thought to depict what happens in menstruating women's real-life experiences. This stud will explore if adolescent girls feel the same. The study while similar to this one states that using university students who were of one particular cultural group.

Studies using a qualitative approach are common when understanding young girls' experiences when menstruation. This study has used a qualitative approach however, the respondents that this study has used are different as they are not from low-income families. Understanding if socio-economic status impacts how menstruation is experienced and understood. The headings that are going to follow will tackle specific aspects of how menstruation is experienced. These are: cultural taboos around menstruation, education around menstruation, water sanitation and hygiene. Understanding these subheadings allows for a more in depth understanding of the complexities around menstruation

Cultural taboos around menstruation

Menstrual euphemisms and taboos around menstruation condition menstruation to be understood as shameful. Menstruation has been understood as a "curse" since the 1900s (Shail & Howie, 2005). Menstrual hygiene practices were affected by cultural norms, parental influence, personal preferences, economic status, and socioeconomic pressures (Anon., 2017). Societal assumptions influenced any knowledge around the female anatomy as the body's dissection was not yet possible. This led to different hypothesis around menstruation. There is a cultural silence around menstruation, affecting how much information is made available. The lack of communication around menstruation makes it difficult for menstruators to know what is healthy and not. Cultural taboos hinder early access to healthcare (Sommer, et al., 2017) .

Taboos around menstruation are prevalent across societies around the world. The origins of taboos around menstruation are unknown. Menstrual taboos are old and can be found in religious texts like the Quran “go apart from women during the monthly course, do not approach them until they are clean” (2:222). The book *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture* by Chris Knight posits that taboos around menstruation were female-led. Knight states that women chose to stay away from society while menstruating and did not want to be touched, thus creating the taboo. This taboo became something that inhibited female autonomy due to a patriarchal society.

In African tradition rituals the first menstruation is regarded as a sign of entry into womanhood. These traditional rites of passage offer a sense of connectedness to the ancestors (O'Sullivan et al, 2007) and create a self-identity. A study conducted amongst the IsiZulu-speaking girls from a low-income setting tribe found that menstruation was viewed as a shameful, and that it brings about feelings of disgust during the menstrual cycle. This study explored menstrual

hygiene management in South Africa in low-income settings and found that women expended considerable energy hiding their periods (Scorgie et al, 2016). The findings of this study will be discussed later in this chapter; however it is crucial to note that there is a taboo around the topic of menstruation.

Menstruation is cloaked in secrecy and taboo and has been understood as a disruption to the menstruator's daily life (Shail & Howie, 2005), an inheritance of what is viewed socially as an hormonal and unstable female body. Secrecy and taboo around menstruation are internalised before menarche and is categorised by three connotations which are: concealment, communication and activity (Spadaro, et al., n.d.). The concealment is in trying to hide the knowledge that you are on your period, communication is in the euphemisms used to name menstruation and the activity is found in how menstruators are these are reinforced through different media including advertisements

There has been a gradual movement towards the undoing of a misogynistic gaze towards menstruation. UNICEF launched a campaign named #MeronAko it was aimed at combating menstrual taboos and wanted to remove the stigma around menstruation (Mercado, 2019). The initial step They built separate toilet facilities with running water and soap. The initiative introduced lessons to primary school boys and girls about boys and girls' reproductive system. Girls were taught proper hygiene practices as well as how to dispose of a sanitary pad properly. The schools reported girls felt less shame when talking about menstruation. Initiatives like this can assist in alleviating taboos around menstruation. They also show just how complex taboos (and MHM) and that they need greater understanding.

Education

Taboo's bring about a silence around menstruation. This lack of communication around this topic can lead to a lack of education and information around MHM. Education around menstruation can be found in taboos, rites of passage rituals and medical journals. It can be found in between rough conversations with peers, family members and in school. Menstrual literacy and This section will discuss menstrual education and how the lack of it affects those who menstruate Online platforms offer a space to understand better what menstruation is as well as enabling the shame around the topic. Vulvani, Libresse's Vagina Varsity, and mobile phone applications apps such as HelloClue, offer education around menstruation. These

platforms could offer a space place to challenge taboos and false information around menstruation. Vulvani is an online platform with content and courses around menstruation and sexual and reproductive health. Clue, an app that menstrual health.

When investigating the relationship between education and menstruation, studies around menstruation education tend to inspect one aspect of menstruation. A study conducted in Ghana with used a group of adolescent girls in the ages 12 – 18 (Montgomery , et al., 2012) . The study observed if an educational program around menstruation changes how young girls view menstruation. The participants were provided with puberty education and sanitary pads for 5 months (Montgomery, et al., 2012). Many of the girls in the study reportedly used cloth when menstruating. They reported that they missed school 3-5 days a month because they could not wash the cloth rags due to a lack of soap (2010: 4). The study found that "providing the girls with information and allowing discussion of this taboo subject may address factors at the interpersonal level of the ecological model such as management of cloth materials that enabled girls to manage better their periods, which perhaps resulted in increased school attendance. While information can assist with how menstruation is understood, it is not always the case. A study like this one is needed that unearth how menstruation is understood and what it means through interviews.

In studies around menstrual hygiene management, taboo is almost always assumed (Sommer , et al., 2015). Previous research has delved into Tanzanian schoolgirls' experiences found a gap in education around menstruation and sexuality (Sommer, 2009). While the need for education around menstruation, no one sees advertising to offer an informal education around menstruation. The vagina is a self-cleaning organ and menstrual blood is not an unhygienic substance. However, the belief that menstrual blood is dirty still persists. A study in Tanzania wanted to understand women's menstrual and intravaginal practices in Mwanza, Tanzania. The study found that 74.6% of respondents reported cleansing inside the vagina, with 99% of these saying they do this for hygiene purposes (Allen, et al., 2010). Water and soap were the main substances used to cleanse the vagina, which could cause a PH balance of the vagina (Nall, 2018). The qualitative study also found that women are expected to present themselves in a clean condition. The view that the female body needs to be presented in a socially acceptable way aligns with Foucault's view and shows how prevalent the need for the female body to be prim and proper

Traditional institutions that are in place like Inkciyo, (a cultural event that prevents teenage pregnancy, the transmission of sexually transmitted illnesses and uphold moral values through virginity testing, as a way of educating young girls on menstruation (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna, 2014). However, these practices are not as widely practiced as they were, leaving those who menstruate walking into their first menstruation with little knowledge. South African university students viewed menstruation as a natural event that can be anticipated and predicated. However, they also experience it as bothersome and debilitating with the students, using words like "critical" to describe the cultural meaning of menarche, and denying the negative impact of menstruation (Padmanabhanunni & Fennie, 2017). In South Africa historically the ama-Xhosa ethnic group goes through a ritual called Intonjane which marks the transition from childhood to womanhood and marriage eligibility. During this period the young girl is secluded for 8 days in separate dwelling (Sommer, et al., 2015). The lack of practice means silence

During the rise of sanitary pads, menstrual hygiene products saw a gap in the information around menstrual management and began to create pamphlets and information about menstruation. They would send the pamphlets through the mail. Kimberly-Clark (a personal care corporation) hired Dr. Geoffrey Williamson to write a pamphlet for adult women in 1928 (Stein & Kim, 2009). They later hired a nurse, Ellen Buckland, to be responsible for the correspondence of the pamphlets. Using medical professionals gave these pamphlets more credibility. However, the information varied from saying that menstruation leads to physical weakness and that women should not bath while menstruating to encouraging women to work while they are menstruating—each message depending on where they were sent.

Unlike other sex education materials, which were primarily available through schools and in some libraries, these pamphlets were advertised widely and could be obtained for free by mailing in the coupons included at the bottom of many Kotex advertisements. The industry began marketing directly to young girls and cleverly cultivating brand loyalty. Innovative and ubiquitous, the industry's advertising campaigns were (and remain), according to Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, (Shail, Howie, 2010:33) "the most explicit and loudest form of discussion of the menses" and have effectively "secured the tenacity of 'protection' as a set of ideas adhering to the menstrual (and so the female) body, a discourse which demarcates the female body as a danger to itself" (Bobel, 2010).

In the late 1960's, menstruation pamphlets and books began to tell pre-teen girls that they could truly do all activities during menstruation without worrying about their health. These type of campaigns are still done today Procter & Gamble created a campaign in November 2007 five year awareness program with HERO to distribute Always and Tampax products to a small network of schools to protect young girls futures. (Stein & Kim, 2009). More recently menstrual health companies have used well known celebrities or social media influencers. In Sweden Always recruited, Clara Henry a Youtuber for their "Like a Girl" Campaign from 2014 to 2015 to attract younger audiences and align themselves with known for menstrual activism. Henry also in that time wrote a book that aimed to educate its reader on about menstruation. (Griner & Ciambrello,2015; Schultz,2014). Communication around menstruation in the media around menstruation will be explored in the next section of the literature review.

Menstrual Hygiene Management

The way these products are understood and the impact how menstruation is experienced and perceived by menstruators. Menstrual rags have also been women in Europe. The use of cloth became a marker of real poverty, and disposable pads came to be regarded as a necessity even for many of those who did not consider themselves to have made it into the middle class (Stein & Kim, 2009). The 1990s saw the promotion of reusable menstrual products like menstrual cup, reusable sanitary pads and the rise in what is the use of reusable menstrual products (Bobel, 2008) a MHP that could assist young girls who may not have the financial means to purchase disposable MHP

The beginning of the 20th Century came with modern approaches to menstrual management before these menstruators managed their menstruation using ways that they were familiar to them for generations (Friedenfelds, 2009). Kotex created the first sanitary pad using cellulose. A non-reusable option that quickly became a symbol of affluence as throwing away and purchasing sanitary was something only the middle class could do. Tampax tampon with applicator which would also be introduced in 1931. The first beltless pads came in 1972 but material later changed to silicone. There have been many additions to menstrual management period panties, menstrual cups, organic pads and tampons, sanitary pads that use nanotechnology, tampon flow monitors however sanitary pads still prevail as the most widely used menstrual management option . However sanitary pads still prevail as the most widely used menstrual management option.

Another of the challenges menstruators have to deal with is girl unfriendly schools. The African context is fraught with challenges in terms of the use of disposable sanitary pads. This is due to socio-economic challenges. A study conducted in Kenya trained young girls on how to create their own sanitary pads. This was done to see what impact this may have on absenteeism in schools. The cheapest sanitary pad was product named Afripad (Wilson, et al., 2014). The study was conducted in the rural province of Nyanza. The study reported a 68.8% reduction in absenteeism. A great majority of the study participants felt that learning how to make sanitary pads is a valuable skill. Marni Sommer calls schools "girl unfriendly" as Sommer sees schools as a place that is not inclusive of girls' needs, which hinders their progress in school. Schools that do not have pit latrines or have inadequate quality, design, privacy, and safety have lanterns. Schools that have inadequate water provided, inadequate ways to dispose of menstrual hygiene products as well as schools, girls who have to use reusable materials

Reusable MHM products have been suggested to alleviate MHM products' cost on young girls. Reusable products are a long-known means of menstrual management and are sometimes offered as an alternative to tampons and sanitary pads. Papyrus softened was used as a tampon by the Ancient Egyptians. Disposable sanitary pads offer similar absorbency. A quantitative study was conducted in Nepal and found that menstrual cups do not affect school attendance (Oster & Thornton, 2009). While menstrual cups are a sustainable and cheaper option to manage menstruation, sanitary pads still persist as the most used and readily available absorption option for MHM. This study therefore explores advertising related to disposable sanitary pads.

Menstruation was reported as having a variety of negative physical and psychological changes. The study believed that if there was an understanding of the biological and physiological of menstruation. Menstruation is a major taboo worldwide. Taboo's around menstruation can be found in different cultures. In Norse (Viking) mythology Thor (a mythical god) reached enlightenment and eternal life by bathing in a river filled with menstrual blood (Tan, et al., 2017). The river was filled with blood of Giant Principal Matriarchs. The Greeks believed that menstrual blood contains the power to perform miracles (Shail & Howie, 2005). Mayan mythology places menstruation's genesis as punishment the social rules governing marital relationships (Tan, et al., 2017).

Aboriginal Australian female healers treat wounds and bruises with cloth that is seeped in menstrual blood because they believe that menstrual blood has healing properties (House, et

al., n.d.). From North America, Yurok people regard menstruation positively with menstruating women viewed as at the peak of their powers (Sitar, 2018). At the same time, it is clear that there literature and research focuses on the stigma around menstruation. The belief that menstruation is unclean or hygienic is not one that is a worldwide view. In New Guinea menstruation is seen as a process of cleansing (Hogbin, 1990). Young men are encouraged to cut multiple gashes to their penis to experience their "first menstruation," which they will be encouraged to do regularly as is it was a regular period (how menstruation is understood)

MHM products have been taxed as luxury good until April 2019 per pack of MHM good. Sanitary pads and tampons are expensive in South Africa, ultimately costing R600 a year. The tax, known as "the pink tax" and can prohibit those (Beksinska, et al., 2015). Tito Mboweni, the South African Finance Minister, announced that these products would no longer be taxed as it is gender-based discrimination. The pressure was placed on the South African government in the previous year using the hashtag #BecauseWeBleed to stop taxing, which is known as "pink tax" on MHM products. South Africa has recently provided free sanitary pads to low-income menstruators. The fourth president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, passed a bill that would allow for distributing free sanitary pads to menstruators in need. This experience has been widely documented however, there is very little research into how they understand menstruation.

There are other ways that the cost of menstrual hygiene management can affect menstruators. A study was conducted that wanted if alleviating the cost of menstrual products by giving students a menstrual cup in Durban South Africa (Beksinska , et al., 2015) Most women in the study had access to a flushing toilet (83%). The menstrual products were either flushed down a toilet, thrown in a trash can or in a communal ablution block. The results in the study found that there was a positive experience using the menstrual cup and would continue to use the menstrual cups in the future

A review of the studies that looked at the experiences of menstruation in low and middle income countries found that three grouping in the type of research was found that studies focused on menstrual experiences, menstrual disorders and menstrual interventions (Hennegan, et al., 2020). Across studies, the menstrual experience was impacted by internally and externally enforced behavioural expectations, i.e., expectations women and girls placed on themselves or those enforced by others.

There are extremist (labelled by Bobel) called "free bleeders"(Bell,2019) who do not use any form of menstrual. Free Bleeders do this as a way to revolt against patriarchy and the as a form of protest against the taxing of menstrual health products (MHP)(Bell,2019). Interestingly, there is almost a privilege in being able to call yourself a free bleeder. Being able to go without MHP as a form of protest when in some low to middle income countries this act would be so shameful it causes girls to miss school. It may be that socioeconomic status has a role to play in how menstruation is framed

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Menstruation

The inability to properly dispose of menstrual health products can negatively impact the health and psycho-social well-being. Lack of water and sanitation in homes, schools, and workplaces can make it difficult to dispose of sanitary products. Places of work are forced by the law to provide a space where menstruators can dispose of their MHP. The Occupational Health Act (1993) in South Africa states that industrial or commercial waste disposal is not allowed in the general municipal mainstream. The National Regulations on Health Care Risk Waste of South Africa states that a MHP "must be autoclaved and then shredded, or pre-treated to inert status" (2008, p20)

A study aimed to document MHM practices in low-income settings and appraise menstrual hygiene products' acceptability that reduce the waste burden on sanitation systems.18-35 age three sites in KwaHlathi, Marlin Heights and Dassenhoek Durban (Crankshaw, et al., 2020).. The study wanted to see how menstruation was handled in low-income settings.The first menstrual hygiene product purchased for them was done so by a relative who explained what was going on in their bodies. The study stated that pit latrines are an undesirable way to deal with menstrual hygiene products and advocate for distribution to a menstrual cup. This study spills into water and sanitation concerns around menstruation. The research participants mentioned above study mentioned that they dispose of their MHP in ways that their mother, aunts or grandmothers taught them (Crankshaw, et al., 2020). One method was a communal bin that had a brick on top of it to close the bin as a sign that the bin was for MHP. The way that MHP is disposed of is habitual as many of the participants stated that they dispose of their menstrual products in the same way that their parents did. (Crankshaw, et al., 2020).). The quality and access to water impact how a period is experienced. The dominating urban

sanitation system in a country impacts how menstruators experience and deal with menstruation. Latrines are the main sanitation system in Southern Africa. Water-based toilet systems are increasing in other than African and other middle to low-income countries.

Another factor to consider when thinking about WASH and its impacts on menstruation is sanitation systems. Sanitation systems are mostly designed by men who leave the disposal of MHP not catered for. The increased use of disposal menstrual health products can lead to blockages in sanitation systems. Sewerage systems are designed to carry human waste and toilet paper. Any other can cause blockages. The eThekweni municipality reported that blockages arise from the large quantities of tampons, sanitary pads and. Removing blockages takes four hours and makeup 25% of blockages in sanitation systems. MPH can be disposed of by need for the presence of covered bins and that is emptied and covered regularly. (Kjellén, et al., 2012)

While places of work are held to the law, the same can not be said for schools. A study conducted in Sierra Leone wanted to assess eight schools in two communities from 27 June – 27 July 2012. Schools were selected with help from UNICEF and partner organization. The study sought to assess menstrual hygiene management. The schools were divided into schools with "good facilities" and schools with "poor facilities". Schools with good facilities had functioning water points and gender-segregated latrines poor facilities lacked in latrine and water facilities. The study was qualitative and had an in-depth interview, focus group, key informant interviews as well as school observations. The finding of this research was that girls experienced shame and felt a lack of preparation when menstruating. They also felt an inability to manage their menstrual flow, especially in schools with "poor facilities", with only 3 schools in the study having running taps. The inability to practice personal hygiene. Participants reported that they have to go. Girls who used clean rags and wanted to reuse them had problems with how they would do this (Caruso , et al., 2013). They enjoyed disposing of sanitary pads instead of using washing rags. What was also of interest was how relationships between girls and boys changed after menarche. The cost was the greatest barrier for pads. Respondents would bath multiple times a day as they were told to do so when menstruation. Schools often do not have the facilities needed to dispose properly of sanitary pads. The in this study do not have the proper facilities needed. Menstrual waste seems to be a problematic but largely ignored issue in schools in developing countries.

WASH is a complex problem that has gain deserving research attention. A qualitative focus group wanted to find out girls feel about menstruation in Kenya. The respondents reported that the lack of water and sanitation was made it difficult to manage theory menstruation. (McMahon, et al., 2011) When menstruating the girls stated that they were barred from engaging in household chores as to respect mothers and cleanliness in the home. Menstruation was discussed with grandmothers, aunts and mothers. This study exhibits how WASH and taboos impact and effect one another

The inability to change a menstrual rag or dispose properly of a sanitary towel or tampon can cause menstruator to miss days at school and cause them to feel shame. Schools in middle to low-income countries are ablution facilities. Schools that are well funded and have the resources needed to properly handle menstruation may or may not have the same problems. Communication and understanding around menstruation is also linked to WASH when researching menstruation. The taboo's around menstruation cause for it to be seen as a female only problem and more often than not WASH are designed by men leaving little consideration to MHM.

Advertising as social communication

Modern advertisements are a product of the industrial revolution that occurred in the late 19th century (Gorman & McLean, 2003). The broader changes in the economy and communication that occurred during that time were impacted by the consumer culture that was slowly brewing. One of the purposes is to identify the variables and issues related to the research topic (Terre Blanche, et al., 2007). This literature review will show that there is a methodological as well as relationship-based gap in the literature by adopting a historical view.

The modern world is organised around consumption. Consumption economically and in the symbolism found in images and messages saturated in everyday life (Iqani,2012: 2). Understanding consumption allows us to think about how we create recreating the narratives around consumption and directs the way we think about freedom as it becomes the genesis of how we view aspiration, creating debates about equality and inequality (Iqani, 2016). Advertising provides for the facilitation of this consumption and is more than just a selling technique for products and services. Marxist theory views advertising as an integral part of capitalism that mediates commodity fetishism. Commodity fetishism is a theory presented in Karl Marx's book "Capital. Critique of Political Economy" (1867) that explains the buying and selling of commodities and how the exchange of money for the product which produces the .

Marx stated that when a product, a table for example becomes a commodity it turns into to a “thing which transcends sensuousness” (Marx,1897, 163). The “thing” that mediates the exchange of the product for money is when this occurs and makes the consumer treat the item as if it has inherent meaning. The commodity form then exists as a reflection of their labour's social characters objective characteristics (pg 164-165) and views culture that its aim is to pursue others to purchase more and more goods (Goldman, 1992).

Production in media often focuses on middle class (Iqani, 2016) as they have purchasing power. Purchasing power for decades has been in the man's hands however since the second wave feminist movement more and more women have had access to money leading advertisers to follow suit and advertise to women.

The transference of meaning onto the product can also be found in advertising. Viewing advertisements as structured meaning processes can reveal the hegemony in the commodity form. (Goldman, 1992:174). Hegemony refers practices and expectations that shape how we understand and make meaning of the world (Williamson, 2010). It creates a sense of reality for repeated and replicating in everyday language, creating and solidifying meaning.

This thesis understands advertising to be the transformation of “goods into representations” (Falk,1994: 147). It believes that these representations are drawn from a well of cultural representations. Advertising seeks to “draw attention to something’ or notifying or informing somebody of something “(Dyer,1982:1). These signs produce ideologies of commodity fetishism and individuality that become key ingredients in the expression of sign. Ideology is the knowledge that is constructed to legitimise unequal social power relations (Rose,2006:108) and reflects the interests of power that advertisements use to convey their messages.

Modern Advertising

Modern advertising is where the transformation into a key industry in the world of consumption where advertisements began "producing and reproducing the material and ideological supremacy of commodity relations” (Goldman, 1992). This is where goods became representation which was different from early advertisements that were “straight forward and informative” (Falk,1994: 161). Adverts now form and reproduces a structural and narrative logic of the commodity form (Goldman,1992: 174).

Examining and understanding representation through advertising can allow for an examination of discourses around power and inequality (Iqani, 2016). It can also allow us the ability to seeing how commodity signs are assembled and possibly understanding the of consumption. Exploring the ways that advertisements are understood could provide a way to understand what the discourse around this topic is / are. Advertising has two levels of discourses. The first is the messages about product and second are messages are about society (Kissling, 2006). It achieves this by attaching meaning to products that the product does not innately have. This is not how advertisements always were.

Advertising grew in prominence to become a major generator of revenue towards the end of the 19th Century this was thanks to the booming market and mass consumption. The consumer began taking center stage which meant that they had to see themselves or feel like they were represented in the advertisements. Products for the most part remained nameless (Goldman, 1992).

While press advertising produces the most revenue worldwide, television has become the flagship medium for the advertising industry (McRoy, 2009). What television provides that other mediums cannot, is sound and visual stimulation (Gbadamosi, et al., 2012). Allowing for the viewer experience to be more visceral utilising words and images as tools. The camera's perspective becomes a metaphor for self as seen by others (Williamson, 2010). This facilitates the transformation of products into representations with complex meanings conveyed through words and images (Falk, 1994). What the product represents is more important than what it is.

Pasi Falk examines modern advertising in the book "The Consuming Body" using textual analysis of looks different brands and advertisements longitudinally to speak on the history of advertising in the 6th chapter. In this book Falk states that modern advertisements operate almost exclusively with positive register where the individual consumer in the collective audience is always happy with the product (Falk, 1994:154). Williamson adds that advertisements invite its audience to participate in ideological ways of seeing themselves and the world. This creates a positive character that the consumer engages in a relationship between the product and its intended audience that provides a positive experience. Williamson refers to this as a process where the audience becomes emotionally attached to the product and it does this in two ways, through the positive connection is shown through purchasing the product and from purchasing the product because you are happy. Another way to view this positive relationship can be created from being able to purchase the product and engage in the act/process of consumption.

This positive relationship is decoded and understood print advertisements. Williamson decodes a champagne product called BabyCham that has the tagline “BabyCham sparkles, just the way I like it”. Williamson states that this print ad communicates that happiness becomes drinking champagne. A normal act becomes transformed into something positive. The use of the name of the product (BabyCham) transforms the product from an alcoholic beverage to an entity in its own right. Quaker Oats in 1880 is documented as the first product to give itself a name (Falk:16) The name provides a positive product identity that gets created and recreated every time the name is said

One of the most recognised brands is also mentioned by Falk is Coca Cola, a product that was originally advertised as a “brain tonic”. Patent medication played a big role in modern advertising by “naming the deficit” (Falk, 1994:163) and represented themselves as cure all products that exchanges the ominous bad for a good. Coca Cola has changed how it has advertised itself to being associated with good health (What is good health) to deficit of thirst to “Coke is it” (being it is a good thing) shift to positive representation now is “taste the feeling”

South Africa it seems like products almost always arrive already branded, the of advertising has already been done and the industry comes whole and South Africa adopts what is already there. The South African Broadcaster (SABC) receives funding through both (television) fees and advertising (Anon., 2017). It was not always this way as for the first two years advertising was not shown on television. Television was officially brought to South Africa two decades after the rest of the world on the 5th of January 1976 (Bevan, 2008). While television did not receive the warmest of welcomes with concerns that it would undermine the Afrikaner values, character and identity, initially the government agreed as it could be a way of showcasing what the South African way of life. African television shows in 1982 (Teer-Tomaselli , 2015).

Robert Goldman looks at the fragrance industry manufactures and markets “hopes and dreams” (Goldman, 1992). This is done by attaching symbols and signs that would not normally be attached to one another to create (Goldman:176). The positive register in adverts this one-on-one relationship between the audience by giving the product an identity through representation, like a brand name that is recognizable. The product becomes a compliment and being without it equates a deficit in the consumers life where having the product is a positive (Falk, 1994). Purchasing the product suggest only avenue to social success and happiness (Dyer, 1982). It represents a wholeness. Williamson describes the encounter with and advert in a similar way

of creating meaning by making links between the consumer/ yourself and then by attributing meaning, creates a familiarity and a comfort between the ad and the consumer, a process she calls appellation.

Post-modern advertisements

Television is a medium that is both familiar and usually does not offer is no way for the audience to review its material (Fiske: 4). Television advertisements and deceptive in that they it mediates reality using everyday language. The beginning of the 1980's ushered in a form of advertising that used research and communication tools to become a cultural intermediary (Leiss, et al., 2010).

Towards the beginning of the 1990's advertisers were realising that they were not able to connect with their audience using the same tricks from before this led to advertisements that a displayed a hyper reality in television advertisements (Leiss, et al., 2010). They realised that this generation were multi-ethnic with varying interests who were well accustomed to advertisements. Ignoring demographics that were not cisgender, middle class and white. there was an intersectional invisibility in advertisements that failed to show the intersections of historically marginalised group identities in age, sex, race, gender (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015)

As the audience became more knowledgeable about the way that signs are used in advertisements more and more advertisers opted to acknowledge their viewers the nature of the framing process in ads people that lay within a segmented/ ideological group (Leiss, et al., 2010). Advertisements have grown to become an industry of its own, expanding with globalization. Multinational companies began creating global advertising campaigns creating the idea of a homogeneous global culture (Sivulka, 2012). Advertising clutter emerged as a big problem for marketers and fed into disbelief that the younger generation has for commercial messages (Leiss, et al., 2010) .

Products began wanting to differentiate themselves. When wanting to look at how advertisers wanted to differentiate themselves Goldman observe through jean manufacturers advertisements like Levi and Lee covers from 1977 – 1990. These advertisements decided to differentiate themselves from the overtly sexualised jean ads and creating stronger brand name using models who using blurs music and models. The ads hippy self-aware that who understands how to of their self-reflexivity. Lee's apparent message is that individuality, of

course, lies in who we are; used music: inclusivity of different / less popular music as well as including people of different ethnicities and races. The positive representation of the product that leads to the collective and singular

Unlike other disciplines it does not only look at certain topics that are specific to it. It is a broad field of study it is (it is an octopus that has its tentacles in different disciplines it often calls to be looked at with a critical eye. a During states "a set of transactions, processes, mutations, practices, technologies, institutions, out of which things and events (such as movies, poems or world wrestling bouts) are produced, to be experienced, lived out and given meaning and value to in different ways within the network of differences and mutations from which they emerged to start with" (page 6,2005)

Sanitary Pad Advertisements

The modern body that has been envisioned did not need any special attention or treatment during menstruation. Women are expected to be able to play sports, work, and even have sex during their periods, and if these activities caused discomfort, they were supposed to call on their doctors to remedy the pain (Friedenfelds, 2009). Early MHP advertisements featured art direction that were akin to 1920s Hollywood glamour with couture gowns exclusively designed by Balenciaga, Hattie Carnegie, Valentino, Dior, and all shot by the biggest fashion photographers of the day (Stein & Kim, 2009). This view departure proves that what the menstruating body can do is a social construct. Social constructionism is a theory that holds that characteristics typically thought to be solely biological—such as gender, race, class, ability, and sexuality—are products of human definition and interpretation shaped by cultural and historical contexts (Subramaniam 2010). Using this belief it is easy to see that the women's bodies are often treated as objects of beauty to be admired; at the same time, women's bodies are also often reviled with respect to their functional natures (Erchull, 2013).

The first time a MHM product was advertised in a television ad was for a tampon advertisement starring Courtney Cox Arquette in 1985 and the first time the word period was used was in 2000 for Kotex sanitary pads (Laws, 1990). Pro female narratives featured around the same that the second wave got notoriety in 1970 (Stein & Kim, 2009). The process of turning

feminism into sign values fetishizes feminism into an iconography of things (Goldman,1992:132) has been called commodity feminism by Goldman

Feminism has been reduced to the signifier's status that advertisements use and reuse to attach their product to the "feminism signifier". The adverts promise that the women become themselves through purchasing a certain commodity. Commodity Fetishism has represented the process of punning used to double and join the meanings of feminism and femininity. Goldman uses an advertisement in the magazine Ms, a well-known feminism magazine , only had advertisements were white a middle class, a general problem found in the second wave of feminism.

When studied as social communication, they 'read' the messages about gender where women are told to take special care in 'grooming', sleep more, eat 'properly', drink water, do special exercises, and so forth. (Laws, 1990)

Menstruation is a condition that requires women to engage in surveillance and control practices to keep it hidden from others. Instead of explicitly targeting women's shame and embarrassment, menstrual advertisements convey taboos in more subtle ways. Whereas the activity taboo is directly related to women's behaviour by prescribing allowed practices during menstruation (e.g., restrictions in sexual and physical activities, Oxley, 1998). A popular strategy employed from early ads focuses merely on the characteristics of the product and not on the psychological experience of the target

Advertising to women shifted after the women's liberation movement (Gill, 2008). Women's increased buying power meant a serious reconsideration of how advertisements represent them in advertisements. Criticism of the second-wave feminist movement favoured the "issues" of white middle-class cisgender women. The early movement and activism around menstruation was pioneered by feminist-spiritualist. They framed menstruation as a source of female power and an event that can create identification. This view is the opposite of shame, taboo, and a female problem that menstruation is often conceptualised as that is shared in menstrual hygiene products advertisements.

The male gaze is the one which we view the female body from where empowerment is shown in advertising as a women wearing high heels. "Femvertising" is a label used to describe

advertises that question the traditional female gender role stereotypes, putting less on the female complying to these gender stereotypes (Akestam, et al., 2017) There is a vast amount of research on gender stereotyping in advertisements. Gender stereotyping can create a need a negative reaction to an advertisement as they suggest

A shift in advertising in the 1990s has been the construction of a female who is empowered through her ability to constantly be in the mood for sex (Gill, 2008). Contemporary media shifted to representing women in a more empowered light. (Gill, 2007). The term coined was "midriff" which has four tenets : a shift objectification to sexual subjugation, an emphasis upon the body, an emphasis on empowerment, a pronounced discourse around choice

Nature and what is natural can be two different things. What is "natural" can be a social construct, it is a symbol in culture. Advertisers may arouse negative feelings to encourage the purchase of a product meant to help in solving an unpleasant problem (Cotte and Ritchie, 2005). Society works on nature in two ways: with technology and through ideology (Williamson. The manipulation of cellulose to create sanitary pads (technology) and creating a need by making menstruation seem like it is a problem that needs a solution (in the sanitary product) that you need so that you can achieve "freedom" and "freshness" Nature us the meaning given to culture

Sanitary pad advertisements have become a place where adolescent girls can depend on information on menstruation (Christer et al., 2014) The silence around menstruation has resulted in it to become stigmatized among adolescent girls which can follow them into adulthood (Adams, 2009). Menstruation has historically been and is currently used as justification for preventing girls and women from fully participating in society, justifying control over them in general and over their sexuality in particular. Early feminine hygiene advertisements scientifically presented products, focusing on their brand's value and convenience. Facts were presented as inoffensively as possible leaving the reader to conclude the product.

Advertising suggests that a woman can be feminine, sexy, and bleeding all at once, thus offering an opportunity for menstruation to be reconceptualised (pg33, 2012). The products promise a positive ending through purchasing their products. In the ads, these personal qualities were prerequisites for satisfactory performance of the upper-middle-class activities depicted, such as playing golf and tennis, horseback riding, traveling, vacationing, hiking,

skiing, and attending formal evening parties, as well as a few activities that were embraced by college flappers and working girls alike, such as swimming and dancing (Friedenfelds, 2009).

Depictions of menstruation is not only found in advertisement. They are found in television and movies. Lauren Rosewarne in the book *"Periods in Pop Culture: Menstruation in Film and Television Media"*, the book shines a light on menstruation in depictions of menstruation. The depictions of menstruations that Rosewarne discusses are in television shows like *Curb your enthusiasm*, *Sex in the City* and *Roseanne* known for being ground-breaking for their candid depictions of menstruation. The depictions of menstruation in television and film are more realistic, varied, and liberated. These depictions are contrary to how television advertisements represent menstruation. Rosewarne uses 1980 carefree ad geared towards middle-class research, girls' experience in blood on her knickers, and she was so embarrassed she left school. e connections are made between telekinesis and menstruation, or the first period and demonic possession in *Carrie* (1976) and *The Exorcist* (1978), respectively

Advertisements have yet to get to this place. A textual analysis was conducted in Slovenia (Sitar, 2018). It examined the advertisements on menstrual advertisements. Adverts showed that the colour red was not shown in the advertisements. There is a distancing from menstruating's physical activity that occurs in advertisements. Advertisements work in augmenting / shaping / framing nature and what is.

Advertising is not only a marketing tool but a cultural artifact. It offers social communication and can only communicate around specific topics. Advertisements are encoded with the audience in mind. The audience consumes these texts and uses our lived experiences to understand them. The terms audience and reader were adopted to emphasis the active role the audience plays in the interpretation of advertisements.

A content analysis was conducted by Debra Merskin (1999) to understand how Menstruation is shown in advertisements. The content analysis analysed 94 advertisement in the magazines, *Seventeen* and *Teen* magazines over a period of 10 years. A deeper semiotic analysis of the advertisement was conducted and found that exploration of beliefs surrounding the social aspects of menstruation. The study found that unlike older advertisement found that the recent advertisements focused less often on shame, fear, and personal discomfort than was the case in the older advertisements. Girls were encouraged to be physically active, even to wear white clothes, but warned that hygiene crises were possible if they chose to use the wrong product.

The models in the advertisements did not represent the ethnic diversity of adolescents in the United States.

Simes and Berg (2001) analysed over 200 advertisement and used a grounded-theory constant comparative analysis to examine 200 advertisements for menstrual hygiene products. The advertisement was published between 1985 and 1998 in North American magazines for women and girls. The themes that were found in the study advertisements were silence, shame, embarrassment, freshness, security, confidence, and discretion, from which the researchers extracted a core variable that they titled “heightened insecurity.” Similar themes have been identified in studies that used qualitative approach. A correlation between the advertisements (the encoding) and how they are interpreted (decoded).

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, the literature shows that menstruation and MHM are emerging topics for human rights, gender equality and social development. Menstruation is a topic that brings to light how one topic social inequality that young adolescent girls experience due to socioeconomic factors, lack of access to MHP as well as lack of access to adequate water and sanitation, hygiene. The social stigma around menstruation informs how menstruation is discussed and how one should behave when menstruation. These topics were discussed under the themes that emerged out of the literature were: Shame and taboos around menstruation, behaviour while menstruating, experiences, WASH, the price of MH and the portrayal of menstruation in the advertisement.

Chapter3-

TheoreticalFramework

Introduction

This study is located in cultural studies and is concerned with menstruation, a physiological event with cultural meaning. The study will use advertisements as a means to understand how society sees. This cultural view of advertising and menstruation sees advertisements as cultural artifacts and views menstruation as a cultural event that does not. Advertisements are the cultural artefacts that have been chose to be used as a means of understanding communication around menstruation

This chapter will first discuss culture studies. It will look at its history and show why it is a good fit for this topic. It will then discuss the discuss how advertising is more than just a marketing tool but is social communication. It will look at the theoretical underpinnings of the research study which is semiotics and the active audience.

History of Cultural studies

The beginnings of cultural studies can be found in Raymond Williams's (1966) works and Richard Hogart. Both theorised about "everyday life experience" and used their own lives as a means of study. Cultural studies find has its beginnings in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, that is in the University of Birmingham, England. The Centre, which originally was under the English Department, came into its own under Stuart Hall's headship who believed that cultural studies was a discipline that could give a voice to people who are marginalised and his work combined topics around hegemony, the conception of mass media and the audience. This meant paying attention to history development and analysing contemporary forms of popular culture and media (Grossberg, 2010). Cultural studies has developed a body of work that tries to recover and place the cultures of neglected groups (Hartley, 2002).

Cultural studies was concerned with the issues that effected the white middle class male until the 1970's where feminist and black and black people of colour in England. (Grossberg, 2010) There was a boom in the 1990's which Stuart Hall attributed to the feminist movement. Feminism's belief that the personal is political lends itself to cultural research as it believes the everyday can be researched. It has allowed feminist studies to allow social structures to allow feminists simultaneously to acknowledge how social structures variously constrain women but also to recognize their agency as they resist oppression in ways that also enable them to envision alternative (Lennox, n.d.).

Many of Stuart Halls writings and research were conducted while under Margret Thatcher and the reproduction of dominant ideologies. Margret Thatcher was the prime minister of England during Stuart Halls tenure as the head of the CCS. The CCS also developed out of the nexus between power and consciousness and was in identity formation. Hall said that cultural studies was the (Lennox, n.d.). Cultural studies developed a body of work that attempts to recover and place neglected groups' cultures. This, at first, entailed attention to the historical development and forms of working-class culture. As well as the analysis of contemporary forms of popular culture and media. While this happened many years ago cultural studies, Grossberg believes that cultural studies are relevant and matter to the future. He believes that it was about understanding different media texts or looking at power and cultural studies everyday life (Grossberg, 2010).

Under an African gaze, cultural studies seek to understand African Identities based on indigenous wisdom (Oyewumi, 2001). These (identities) are not defined by Western ideologies, perceptions, or biases (Nyamnjoh, 1999). Cultural studies in South Africa was propelled in the 1970's, as the study of Culture and Media Studies (Tomaselli, 2012). Focus was placed on representation and perception of texts. The social and political changes in South Africa were the catalyst for an evolution in the field that focused on text and context. Cultural studies that focused on this and the socio-cultural context was introduced through University of Natal , now known as the University of KwaZulu Natal. This was done in the Centre for Culture, Communication and Media and Society (Tomaselli, 2012)

Menarche has a lot of different cultural practices that and rituals in Africa. It also contains mythical beliefs around it. This also includes the different ways that menstruation has been managed based on culture and the mythical beliefs surrounding menstruation. Culture has been described as civilization (and being civilised) (Grossberg, 2010) which are a general set of

guidelines and the control over women's bodies through different menstrual practices is evident in the different representations, myths and beliefs around menstruation (Lennox, n.d.). Stuart Hall believed that culture forms a way for us to interpret and understand our everyday experience which is usually informed by the dominant culture or the dominant beliefs (Glossenberg, 1992). Advertising tends to reaffirm the dominant cultural ideologies even when it seems not to. This is apparent in how the advertisements try to identify with the ideal collective and individual self. It does this through meaning and representation

Circuit of Culture

Judith Williamson describes an advertisement as creating meaning by making links between the consumer and product attributing meaning (2010). Shared meaning is one of the core tenets of cultural studies according to culture because meaning helps us interpret the world (Du Guy, 1997). This is what informed the circuit of culture model (Du Guy, 1997)

Culture creates meaning through representation by using language to say something meaningful about or represent the world in a meaningful way to others (Hall, 2013). Representation is how culture reproduces shared meanings (Hall, 2013). They create social meaning through mythical concepts they seem to be a part of with a particular social value (Bignell, 1997). It knits society into one way of interpreting the world. Meaning however is not found in one object or person and cannot be fixed to language according to Stuart Hall (Hall, 2013). Stuart Hall (2013) believed that there were three approaches to representation:

1. Reflexive approach – Meaningless in the object idea or event in the real world and language reflects the meaning that already exists in the world.
2. The Intentional Approach: Holds that it is the speaker, the creator who imposes his/her unique meaning on the world through language
3. Constructionist Approach – Recognises the public social character as language

This study subscribes to the constructionist approach which will be discussed later in the chapter 4, the methodology section.

Advertising has two levels of discourses. The first is the messages about product and second are messages are about society (Kissling, 2006). It achieves this by attaching meaning to products that the product does not innately have. This is not how advertisements always were. Advertisements create a shared cultural experience by using shared signs and symbols which

creates a shared meaning for the singular and collective audience. It also does this by creating a that play an important role in the social construction of meaning (Merskin, 1999).The Production of meaning through was one of the way culture can be examined in the book "Doing Cultural Studies".

The circuit of culture model originates from the work of Richard Johnson (1998). Johnson identified a gap in how texts that were concerned with production and consumption (Leve, 2012). Understanding consumption allows us to think about how we create recreating the narratives around consumption and directs the way we think about freedom as it becomes the genesis of how we view aspiration, creating debates about equality and inequality (Iqani, 2016). Advertising provides for the facilitation of this consumption and is more than just a selling technique for products and services. The model believes that reading a text does not reveal the conditions in which the text was produced. It also highlighted the importance of the interrelationship between each moment within the circuit. This was the embryonic version of the model that led to the model by Du Gay et al (1997) that states that culture is understood as shared meaning. This shared meaning can be understood in five central (interrelated) nodes, which are: representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. The use of this model can begin with any one of the five processes and does not have one that outweighs the other

Understanding Circuit of Culture

The culture of circuit states that representation is the process of constructing meaning using signs and symbol. Representation according to the model shapes identity. Du Guy(1997:38) also viewed advertising as a cultural language. Advertisements speak on behalf of the product. To do this they must first appeal to the audience through meaning and representation.

Production is the "Process of decoding meanings constructed by producers, in which consumers engage in an active way to shape the outcome of a situation or product.' In the model consumption to show "While cultural production is 'industrial', so too is industrial manufacturing 'cultural" (p. 76). The Sony Walkman, a portable cassette player which while producing a industrial hardware was also creating a cultural artifact that was used in. Much in the way that this study hopes to use advertising in relation to menstruation.

The next nodes in the model is regulation this is concerned with the norms and values of society. Regulation influences how the products come to exist in society. Identity refers to how

the product is used to construct the individual/group identity. This is often created through sameness and is reproduced through systems of representation.

Culture is continually changing. continually changing according to political change and economic change. This also mirrors the changes of societal beliefs and collective values (Pitout, 2007).

Stuart Hall believed that the circuit of culture is found between television media organisations and audiences. It is used for the analysis of production, circulation and consumption of the television communication process. The model's initial version was elaborated on by Stuart Hall (2006(1989)) when he conceived the Encoding/Decoding model of communication.

Semiotics

Semiology is the study of signs (Rose, 2016), while semiotics is the sign's science (Leiss, et al., 2005). Semiotics is a language within itself that allows the analysis of signs and hopes to uncover the structure of representation (Manning, 2009). The need for a science such as semiotics was predicted by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and philosopher Pierce (Fiske & Hartley, 2005).

Symbolism in signs can be used as a way of differentiating signs (Rose, 2016). A code is a set of conventionalised ways of making meaning that are specific to groups of people (Rose, 2016) Roland Barthes believed there were two ways of distinguishing signs, that they are connotative or denotative(Barthes, 1977: 16-18). The denotative signs are easier to distinguish as they are. Gillian Dyer believes that there is almost no denotative communication in ads. The connotative is the way that society communicates what it thinks it is

Photographic advertisements rely on the signs of humans that symbolize particular qualities to their audience, the same can be said of television advertisements (Dyer, 1982). Gillian Dyer lists the ways that signs of humans can produce certain signified, this list includes which include representations of the body, mannerisms, activity, and props and settings. Gillian Rose in the book visual methodologies explores visual images including painting, pictures, advertisements but does not look at television advertisements. In the book Rose explores the power relations, social practices, and cultural significance of advertisements.

Barthes speaks about the relationship between signifier and signified through the idea of myth. His stance on myth shall be discussed in detail in the coming chapters however it is to know that myth is a language, a sum of signs (Barthes, 1972). "Its connotational process depends on our knowledge of the forms of ideology that advertisements employ (ads as social communication, Dyer). The sign is the system of signification (Strinati, 2000). There are various echelons of meanings or order of signification with the first order of signification being where the sign is self-contained (Fiske & Hartley, 2005). The second order states that meaning can be derived from a sign becomes open to a whole range of cultural meanings that are derived from the way society uses and values both the signifier and the signified. The third order of signification offers a coherent and organised view of the reality and society (Fiske & Hartley, 2005).

The study of advertising has been heavily influenced by semiotics since the 1970's (Leiss, et al., 2018). Culture understood through advertising by interpreting the coded messages encoded in advertising. A great majority of companies utilise signs, symbols and icons in advertising because they are easily recognisable (Berger, 2012). Advertising involves the use of signs and codes. Signs refer to things other than themselves (Fiske, 2011). Semiotics studies the sign itself, the codes or the system into which the sign is organised and the culture within which these codes and signs operate (Fiske, 1982). In semiotics meaning is derived from a sign's relationship to another sign (Leiss, et al., 2018)

There are two main theorists in semiotics: Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand Saussure. Saussure enlarged the concept that a sign. He saw it as the combination of the signifier and the signified. The signified is the mental concept whereas the signifier is the physical object. The sign is the sum of both and all three are determined by our culture (Fiske & Hartley, 2005).

Both theorist believed that signs give meaning, where they differed however was in how they believed a sign could stand for an object (Peirce. 2.274). Peircean semiotic is triadic Peirce believed that a sign is broken up into three categories. The first was called the representamen, the second is the object and the third is called the interpretant. The representamen was the perceivable object that conveys meaning into the mind. It is its "own material nature" or "as in itself" (3334). The interpretant is the meaning of the sign. (Peirce, 2006)

Pierce believed that a sign can either be an icon, an index or a symbol. The icon is the An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a 'sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there;' were no interpretant

Symbolism in signs can be used as a way of differentiating signs (Rose, 2016). A code is a set of conventionalised ways of making meaning that are specific to groups of people (Rose, 2016) Roland Barthes believed there were two ways of distinguishing signs, that they are connotative or denotative (Barthes, 1977: 16-18). The denotative signs are easier to distinguish as they are. A sign moves to the second order of signification when it contains cultural meaning which was called connotation by Roland Barthes. Barthes used semiotic explorations to critique capitalist social relationships (Leiss, et al., 2005). Roland Barthes believed that signs in the second order of signification operate as mythmakers and as connotative agents. A myth is a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspects of reality; it is a way to think and conceptualise about something. Barthes linked semiotic explorations to critique of capitalist social relationships: In his work advertising was exposed as a myth which made ruling class dominance appear natural. Gillian Dyer believes that there is almost no denotative communication in ads. The connotative is the way that society communicates what it thinks it is (Dyer, 1982).

In his work Barthes identified myths as exposing myths made by ruling class. These myths cause dominance appear natural distorting the material relations of capital in a blanket ideology. In his books *Mythologies* (1973) and *Elements of Sociology* (1968) he wrote in depth about the ways that signs can be used in different order of signification

The relationship between the signifier and its signified is explained through denotation and connotation. Connotation and denotation are two aspects of a sign. (Leiss, et al., 2005). At the heart of Barthes theory was two orders of signification: connotation and denotation (Fiske, 1982). Denotation refers to the manifest content of a sign or set of signs (Deacon, et al., 2010). Connotation is the latent content of what a written text, maybe said to signify (Deacon, et al., 2010). Barthes believed that connotation is the primary way that the mass media communicate the mass media communicate ideological meanings (Seiter, 1987

Roland Barthes believed that, Saussure's model of the sign focused on denotation at the expense of connotation and it was left to subsequent theorists to offer an account of this important dimension of meaning (Barthes, et al., 1968) The connotation of a sign is more polysemic and is open to interpretation (Silvertant, 2017)

Representation and Meaning

The commodity-sign is a combination of the signifying unit and signified meaning. The signifying unit or signifier could be a word, a picture, a sound or an object. The signified is a meaning (a mental image, concept of impression) suggested by a signifier (Goldman, 1992).

Advertisements organize perceptions and create meaning structures (Williamson, 2010:12) utilising different signs as forms of representation. Representation means using language to say something meaningful or represent the world meaningfully, to other people (Hall, 2013). This is done to infer the desired feeling of positivity when engaging with the advertisements. To understand an advertisement, it is crucial to understand how the meaning is created or how it can be extracted from the advertisement. Meaning assists in the way that society sets the rules, norms and conventions through how social life is organised and governed regulates (Hall,2013: page 4).

Advertisements create a shared cultural experience by using shared signs and symbols which creates a shared meaning for the singular and collective audience. It also does this by creating a that play an important role in the social construction of meaning (Merskin, 1999). Culture creates meaning through representation by using language to say something meaningful about or represent the world in a meaningful way to others (Hall, 2013). Ads depend on the codes held by its audience. An ad's effectiveness is based on whether the audience knows the sign or not. It is also how social life is constructed (Rose, 2016). A product with no innate cultural meaning is given meaning by the person or an object that already has value to them (Williamson, 2010). This is done through common access to the language (Hall, 1997). A stick can be a sword, a boundary marker or a piece of sculpture, depending on what it means to the viewer.

Symbolism in signs can be used as a way of differentiating signs (Rose, 2016). A code is a set of conventionalised ways of making meaning that are specific to groups of people (Rose, 2016) Roland Barthes believed there were two ways of distinguishing signs, that they are connotative or denotative (Barthes, 1977: page 16- 18). The denotative signs are easier to distinguish as they are. Gillian Dyer believes that there is almost no denotative communication in ads. The connotative is the way that society communicates what it thinks it is

Photographic advertisements rely on the signs of humans that symbolize particular qualities to their audience, the same can be said of television advertisements (Dyer, 1982). Gillian Dyer lists the ways that signs of humans can produce certain signified, this list includes which

include representations of the body, mannerisms, activity, and props and settings. Gillian Rose in the book *Visual Methodologies* explores visual images including painting, pictures, advertisements but does not look at television advertisements. In the book Rose explores the power relations, social practices, and cultural significance of advertisements.

Criticism of Semiotics

One criticism of semiotics is that it is concerned with the sign. It takes little notice of the producers and the audience while focusing on the messages of television (Deacon, et al., 2010). In semiotics decoding involves not simply basic recognition and comprehension of what text 'says' but also the interpretation and evolution of its meaning with reference to relevant code (Chandler, 2007)

The social constructionist view of language and representation which we have been discussing owes a great deal to the work and influence of the Swiss linguist, Saussure, who was born in Geneva in 1857, did much of his work in Paris, and died in 1913. For Saussure, according to Jonathan Culler (1976, p. 19), the production of meaning depends on language: 'Language is a system of signs.' Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc

Media research has argued that mass media serve to transmit the ideas of the dominant groups in society to the mass of the population. The enmeshing of cultural studies with audience research was presented by Stuart Hall's essay on Encoding / Decoding. The encoding/decoding model was a departure from the view that the media was. In creating this model

Passive to Active Audience

Advertisements affect and shape an individual's behaviour, perceptions and opinions (Dyer, 1982). Gillian Dyer observes these effects in the way children sing advertisements jingles instead of nursery rhymes and can remember the representation in an advertisement that led them to purchase the product. The influence that advertising is understood are not a simple sender → receiver interaction. There is an influence that advertising may or may not have on its audience. In Apartheid South Africa the public broadcaster was the government's mouth piece. The influence that media could have on its audience was noticed by the then government. This led to the SABC sharing the same separatist views that the then government had having separate radio and television stations for different race and ethnicities in South Africa (Teer-

Tomaselli,2001). Nation building became one of the main focuses in the media and advertising, creating a national identity which valued with local content being favour (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001) .

The view that communication is a transmission of messages began with Shannon and Weaver's Mathematical Theory of Communication (1949; Weaver, 1949b). This theory was developed during World War 2 in the United States of America. The theory saw represented communication as a linear process. The receiver interpreted the message in the same way that it was sent. The receiver interpreted the message in the same way that was sent.

Mass communication research became preoccupied with the effect that the media had on its audience which led to the critique of mass communication (and advertisements). (Costello, 2007). Germany's descent into fascism brought with it an interest in how the public response to propaganda (Kitzinger, 2004). Theories around mass media and communication perceived the audience as if they were irrational, meek and an easy target. Which left the audience prey to be manipulated of the media (Costello, 2007).

The Hypodermic needle model of media posited that the media had a direct effect on audience. This theory is routed in behaviourism. The theory states that the audience's behaviour and cognition is changed by the media (needle). It (the media) does this by injecting the message into audience mind and it causes changes This theory was by Harry Laswell's book Harold book Propaganda Technique in the first World War (1927). This theory is routed in psychology and was considered to be obsolete. Initially, the theory believed in a two-step communication flow (Laswell, 1927). He conceptualised this after researching the election of Franklin Roseveld in the United States of America (1948). Laswell wanted to observe if there was a causal relationship between voting patterns and the media. Laswell discovered that the public was not impacted by the media as much as they were impacted interpersonal reasons than media messages. This debunked the hypodermic needle model.

Hans-Robert Russ's Reception Theory was the first is an audience reception theory that placed emphasis on the individuals' reception or interpretation of a literary text. However, this theory did not consider that the author is not always likely to have the same cultural experience as author (Silva,2011). Reception theory sees the audience, spectator or reader as having an active role in interpreting and constructing the meaning of a text. Audience research occurred within cultural and communications research.).

The view of an active audience has been taken to mean a politically motivated audience that is able to resist the ideological powers of society (Budarick,2009). Advertisements represent the lived truth, which allows for a difference in interpretation as different groups of people hold different realities. Even people from the same social class can have a different way of understanding. The conceptualisation of ideology through a Marxist lens sees ideology as a fixed, physical reality independent from the media. This ability to resist the media's persuasive techniques due to the polysemic nature of cultural texts (Iqani,2016).

Consumer cynicism around the 1960's meant a shift in advertisements to more emotional and user centred persuasion techniques (Meyers , 2016). A shift from a passive to an active view of the audience is active was seen in the introduction of the uses and gratification approach. Uses and gratification research was a departure from the view of a passive audience. Uses and gratifications perspective sees the audience as seeking to satisfy different individual and social needs through the mass media.). The uses and gratification approach's main emphasis is on social origins of media gratification and on the wider social functions of the media for instance in facilitating social contact and interaction or in reducing tension and anxiety (McQuail, 1997). This focus on audiences consuming media for pleasure risks losing sight of the relationship between mass communication and citizenship (Budarick.,2009) The second main type of behavioural audience research was in many ways a reaction to the model of passive audience.

Within the active audience paradigm, the consumer of advertising is seen as autonomous being has the power and reflexivity to resist the charms of advertising (Chen, 2011). It is assumed, however, that audience members may vary in their level of activity in a continuum from active to passive where people may make rational decisions to reject or accept particular media (Johnson&Yang,2009). A survey was conducted that had 437 respondents. The study wanted to see if twitter users use the app to fulfil the need to connect with others. The study found that users use twitter to fuel their need to connect, belong and be affiliated with someone/something psychological and social needs as well as how media can gratify needs and motives to communicate.

Cultural studies is devoted to understanding the processes through which societies and the diverse groups within them come to terms with history, community life, and the challenges of the future.

Encoding/Decoding

Stuart Hall wrote the encoding/decoding essay in the 1970s and sees the audience as active interpreters of an active interpretation within relevant codes as an element of mass media communication. The model is rooted in economic theory and semiology. It drew from Karl Marx's concepts of commodity production and labour processes as well as Ferdinand de Saussure's circuit of speech (Hall,2006). Saussure's circuit of speech model linked moments of production, circulation, consumption and message. The circuit of speech (seen below) showed sender and receiver involvement in oral communication.

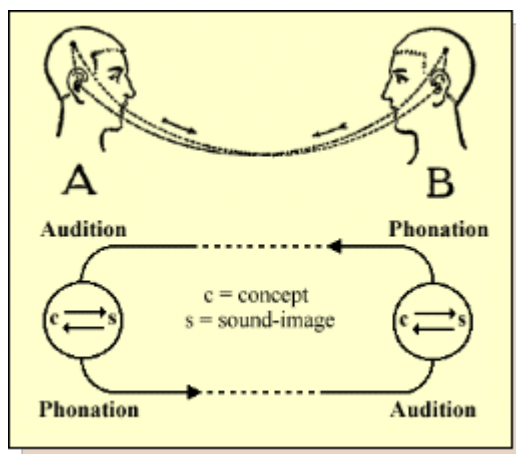
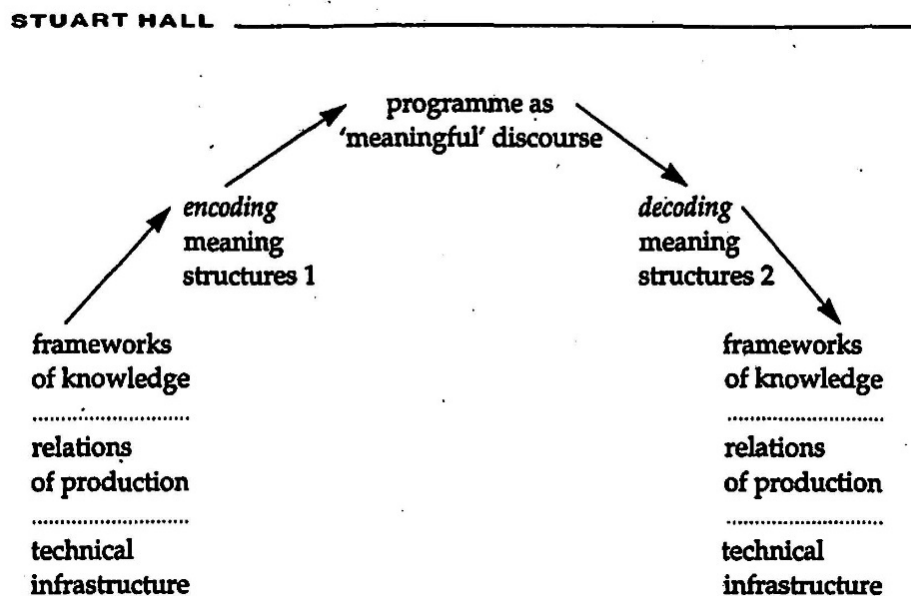


Figure 1;Adapted from: (de Saussure, 1983: 11-12)

This model demonstrates the process of encoding. Stuart Hall borrowed the circuit of speech model and expanded it to be used in mass communication between television and television



(Hall, 2006 [1980]) Figure 2

The model wants to showcase how television programmes are portrayed as meaningful communication, encoded according to media organisation structures of meaning (Ngcobo, 2018 (McQuil2005:73)). It also focuses on the interpretation (decode) the messages thereby creating their own meaning.

The Encoding/Decoding model is understood as a guide to meaning centred semiotic study of mass communication (Nightingale, 1996). The essay about this model presented the model which was then seen as revolutionary as a linear models / theory were understood then. These theories saw the audience interpreting the sender as the receiver as intended. Stuart Hall argued that cultural meaning is not innate to it and linear. Hall, 2006 [1980]; Greer, 2010). Hall believed that there were "moments" in a circuit of culture and each moment was not dependent on the next to be articulated. These moments were referred to as production, circulation distribution and reproduction (Hall,1980). He also did not believe that the meaning is in the text but that it is the active product of the texts social articulation of the web of connotations and codes into which it is instead (Sonia Livingstone; Audiences and interpretations).

The realisation that the sender of a message and the receiver of a message can differ was also noticed by media studies theorist Umberto Eco. Eco coined the term aberrant decoding in a television study regarding semiotics (Munteanu, 2012), the study of signs. Aberrant decoding

states that the sender and reader must share the coding system of the text (Hartley , 2012). This work by Eco influenced Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding theory.

Stuart Hall emphasised the importance of an active audience that interprets media text using relevant codes (Fiske, 1990; Hall, 2006 [1980]). What television provides that other mediums cannot, is sound and visual stimulation (Gbadamosi, et al., 2012). Allowing for the viewer experience to be more visceral utilising words and images as tools. The camera's perspective becomes a metaphor for self as seen by others (Williamson, 2010 The audience interprets a text from their social group and because of the encoded message is different from the decoded interpretation. This model will be used as part of the analysis of the study. The encoded message can "pre-fer" but cannot prescribe or guarantee the decoded message the audience will have (Hall,1980). In the essay Halls tests three components of mass communication model arguing that (Hall, 2006):

1. Meaning is not simply fixed or determined by sender
2. Message is never transparent
3. The audience is not passive recipient of meaning

Frank Parkin (1972, pp. 79–102) was the first to write about how responses can be categorised into meaning systems. He used three distinguishable:

1. Dominant system. This presents what might be called the official version of class relations
2. The subordinate system. This defines a moral framework which while prepared to endorse the dominant systems claims to overall control of economic processes , nevertheless reserves the right to negotiate a better share for particular groups at any time
3. The radical system. The source for this is the mass political party based on that section of the subordinate class whose

of interest is expressed in working class solidarity

Stuart Hall discussed the implications of Parkins three system and believes that both the encoder and the decoder are a part of the meaning creation process. For Hall decoding is the most significant but most neglected aspect of the communication process.

Hall believed that there are "moments" in the communication process (Hall, 1980: 128-129). Each of these moments is important to the communication process however it does not guarantee how the next "moment" will be understood. that the previous and that there was more to mass communication. Hall expands it to a four-stage model of communication which is a process of production, circulation, consumption and reproduction, seen below.

The above model shows how television programmes are portrayed as meaningful communications, encoded according to media organisations' structures of meaning (McQuail, 2005: 73). Hall believed that encoding was when the institutional societal relations of production must be under rule of language (Stuart Hall ; James Porter). Williamson argues that the most influential ideological forms in contemporary capitalist societies advertising. Hall believes that an audience that comes from the same cultural background must understand signs and symbols the same way this leads to decoding texts in the same way (Hall, 1997). According to this model the audience does not decode aural visual text in the same way that it was encoded. Stuart Hall believed that a text can be decoded in three positions (Hall, 2006).

1. The dominant hegemonic position: This is the perfectly transparent communication the viewer who matches the dominant. The message is received as the sender had intended it to be.
2. The negotiated position: This position states that the audience his position is a mixture of accepting and rejecting elements.
3. The Oppositional Position: This reading would take an oppositional position

Reception theory believes that the decoded meaning of a text can be polysemic, by that it means that the message can hold many meanings. Hall states that the dominant hegemonic position will be encoded by the producers / senders of the television text. However, while this might be the producers intention, the audience can decode it in a way that suits their cultural beliefs.

Limitations of encoding / decoding

Stuart Halls encoding/decoding model has been criticised by David Morley with Halls model provided the framework for the Nationwide study by Morley. In this study Morley wanted to

see how people from different cultural and social cultural backgrounds understood the British variety show Nationwide. In his study Morley's findings led him to believe that social subjectivity is more influential in decoding than textually produced subjectivity (Fiske, 1987). This postulates that the social background of a viewer is more influential in how meaning is created for the reader. Halls model states that class position is a crucial factor in decoding process. Morley's study revealed that the viewers class position does not correlate with Halls decoding frameworks. Another one of Morley's critiques of the model was its linearity. Much like previous communication models

John Corner critiqued the model for its over emphasis on the polysemic properties of a text. This, according to Corner, renders the idea of media power as being naïve. Television articulates the responses of people to their class condition, not the class condition itself (Fiske).

The model suggests that the decoding process was a single act instead of a mixture of attention, recognition, choice, and competence (Fiske, 1987). The three reading positions of Halls model did not allow for variations or sub variations of reading. (Gray, 2003).

This chapter looked at the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The history of cultural studies was explored in this chapter. By doing this it wanted to show why this study is a part of the cultural studies. It then looked at the theories that will be used as a the lense the study will look at which are Stuart Halls encoding/decoding model and

Chapter 4-Methodology

Introduction

Research methodology refers to the data collection tools and techniques used to collect the data (Hughes , 2017). The methodology is the philosophical underpinnings that refer to the approach and the paradigms that inform the research. Thus, the methodology section refers to the research study's methods and methodology. The methodology explains how a researcher practically probes their research problem (Neuman, 2014). It is the framework for solving problems (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Research Design

The main aim of this research study is to understand how adolescent girls decode sanitary pad advertisements. The study believes that advertisements communicate dominant ideologies. These dominant meanings are understood by the audience using their cultural context. This process occurs without the audience being completely cognisant of the process (William, et al., 2005). The analytical tool to extricate the dominant meaning will be semiotics for this reason. The four elementary beliefs of the role of the audience within research are (Costello & Moore, 2007):

- The importance lies in the audience's response and the medium's content.
- The audience are co-authors in the construction of meaning.
- Qualitative and ethnographic methods are used to process and look at the viewing experience in ordinary lives and in familiar settings.
- Interpretation varies from one individual to the next

Reception theory believes that audience members can refashion dominant meanings without any cognition of the process (William et al., 2005). The encoding/decoding model served as the framework as the study believes that audiences are not passive when reading texts. The previous chapter discussed the theoretical underpinnings of the research study. This study is a

reception analysis. This view challenges the empirical social scientific audience research methodologies that have failed in considering the audience's power (McQuail, 2010).

The research approach is the set of plan for the research. It lays out the research steps that include the data collection, data analysis and data interpretation (Neuman, 2014). These three terms allow the research to become a narrower procedure method (Cresswell, 2014). Quantitative research is framed by a positivist, empirical social scientific approach to research. It seeks to quantify and measure social phenomenon. Qualitative research uses methodologies that are of an interpretivist paradigm that emphasizes interpretation over measurement. Both qualitative and quantitative research have been used to understand media output.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research paradigm views the world as interpreted, constructed, and experienced by people in their interactions and broader social systems (Ullin, 2005). Methodologically, audience research attempts to capture experiences concerned with meaning rather than overt practices (Livingstone, 2004). Audience research also wants to situate the individual's responses within a larger cultural context (Nightingale, 2011). It believes that advertisements are a cultural artifact that produces and reproduces cultural meaning. Quality refers to what, when, where, and why of things, their essence and ambiance. (Lune & Berger, 2016). Qualitative research refers to meanings, symbols and descriptions of things. This study seeks to explore how adolescent girls translate advertisements that are intended for them. Quantitative research utilised numerical correlations to measure and analyse causal relationships (Brennen, 2013). In contrast, qualitative research provides the researcher with the ability to elaborate textual descriptions of how a particular issue is understood and seeks to explore phenomena (Mack, et al., 2011).

To assist in unpacking the decoding of the audience, this study will use a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research seeks to acquire means of accessing unquantifiable information (Berg, 2009). Qualitative research methods examine social research data without converting them to numerical material (Babbie, 2007). It is a non-numerical investigation that helps discover underlying meanings and patterns in relationships (Babbie, 2007). The qualitative research paradigm views the world as interpreted, constructed, and experienced by people in their interactions with broader social systems (Ullin, 2005). In contrast qualitative

research provides the researcher with the ability to elaborate textual descriptions of how a particular issue is understood and seeks to explore phenomena (Mack, et al., 2011).

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Qualitative research emphasises how individuals interpret their social world (Bryman, 2012). Advertisements tend to draw from their audience's social world and create a public space where ideas about the social world can be constructed (Goddard, 1998). The lack of communication around menstruation leaves a gap that has been filled in advertisements.

Audience research within the cultural discipline seeks to understand its audience and its activities (Ang, 2006). Joseph Maxwell (2009) believed that there are five academic goals for qualitative research. The first of these is that qualitative research wants to understand its participants' meaning. The second is understanding the context within which the participants act and their influence on their actions. The third is identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences and generating new theories. The fourth is understanding the processes by which events and actions take place. The fifth is developing causal explanations. These academic goals will be implemented in this research study to understand how sanitary pad advertisements are understood.

Critique of qualitative research

The main criticism of qualitative research is its lack of generalisability. Generalisability is the degree to which the findings can be applied to an entire population (Neuman, 2014). The aim of this research study is not necessarily generalisability. MHM is a complex topic that cannot only be understood through using quantitative methodologies.

Generalisability has led to most research on menstruation health communication based on WASH's topics, adolescent girls missing school days due to lack of access to menstrual management products (UNICEF,2019). Mixed method approaches have been used as well as

studies that use quantitative or qualitative methodologies due to the different aspects around menstruation. It (this study) wants to explore menstrual literacy through advertisements, which through the literature review is under-researched

Qualitative researchers are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and can sometimes not be as generalisable (Babbie, 2007). While not general, it is crucial to understand topics in depth. When looking at generalization in qualitative research. Qualitative research that research must use that speaks to people using words and illustrations. It is necessary as it provides depth and a richness in the data that it gets

Research Paradigm

Interpretivism

This research aims to create insight into the interpretations that young adolescent girls have around sanitary pad advertisements. Therefore, this research aims to create insight into the interpretations that young adolescent girls have around sanitary pad advertisements. This is situated within the qualitative research paradigm.

The world is understood through different lenses. A research paradigm is a set of beliefs shared about how a problem is understood (Kuhn, 1970). A research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking, defining a model of the inquiry's nature (Neuman, 2014). It represents the worldview of the researcher. These paradigms can be categorised into three fundamental dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ontology deals with the nature of existence, and epistemology is interested in knowledge sources. Both ontology and epistemology are concerned with the worldview. When wanting to answer a research question, we refer to the knowledge outside of the researcher; this is the ontology of the research study. Whereas epistemology is how we go about looking into the research, this is internal to the researcher.

Research paradigms are based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions (Babbie, 2007). A paradigm is a set of beliefs representing a worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They serve as a guiding framework for answering the research questions (Guba

and Lincon, 1999; du Plooy, 2009). It is concerned with meaning (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). Due to the study believing that the audience are co-authors in constructing meaning, this research is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism concerning epistemology and ontology believes that reality is relative and can come in different forms (Neuman, 2014). It is a paradigm that seeks to understand its participants' subjective worldview (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Audience reception studies emphasise the interpretive relation between audience and medium (Alasuutari, 1999) and attempt to grasp social action's subjective meaning (Bryman, 2012). The interpretivist epistemology believes that social meaning is created during interactions (Hesse- Bieber & Levy, 1990). This (interpretivism) research emphasises socially constructed meaning and value relativism (Neuman, 2014). It harnesses the power of everyday language and expression to understand the social world (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). Interpretivist researchers want to discover what actions mean to people who engage in them (Neuman, 2014).

Interpretivism looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of social life. This approach has been what Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist and German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). In Dilthey's book "Introduction to the Human Sciences", he argued that there are two "Naturwissenschaft" and "Geisteswissenschaft" (pg 103). The former rests on abstract explanations, and the latter is rooted in an empathetic understanding. Weber embraced this and believed that personal motives and reasons should be studied as a primary object of an "interpretive sociology." This study will take an empathetic, inclusive approach to view the world from.

Positivism is widely viewed as a research approach to natural sciences and interpretivism came as a critique to positivism. It seeks to formulate abstract and universal laws on the social world (Neuman, 2014). Positivism paradigm values predictability, determinism, an explanation that govern generalisations, and cause and effect relationships (Brennen, 2013). This research seeks to explore rather than explain the audience's reception of advertisements. Its ontological position is that the audience is a part of the creation of their reality.

Sanitary pad advertisements can be the only means of communication around menstruation and can contribute to how menstruation is viewed. Interpretivism adopts a unique and flexible research structure. It is not just a single paradigm but a large family of diverse paradigms (Burrell& Morgan ,1979) such as social constructivism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently

of consciousness (Collins, 2010). Social constructivism is under the larger umbrella of interpretivism and thus this study adopts a social constructivist view.

Interpretivism is often just referred to as qualitative research, as most researchers use field research and participant observation (Neuman, 2014). This research type requires the researcher to be in close contact with the people they are studying, and this is what this study did.

The first part of a research approach is an interpretivism philosophical worldview. The second is research design and the third is research methods. Research design is research inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Research design identifies the parameters of reality that the research study wants to study. It stipulates the purpose that is informed by theory and a systematic way of collecting data (Kvale, 1987; Jensen, 2012).

Sampling

Qualitative research uses "soft data" like words (Neuman, 2014). Soft data comes in textual and pictorial form and is descriptive and unstructured. This lends qualitative research to yielding richer, more descriptive data. Qualitative data usually makes sampling choices that allow for a deepening understanding of the research phenomenon being studied. These inferences succeed or fail based on how well the sampling was conducted. The main concern in sampling is representativeness (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). Representative samples are used when the research findings to generalise the research findings to the whole population (Lewin, 2006).

The study used a small sample size to replicate the experience of watching television when one is at home. Sanitary pad advertisements can be seen as a form of social communication and to understand in depth what is being communicated a small sample size is needed. Sampling in qualitative research is done with the study's needs as its motivator (Babbie, 2007). Interpretive, qualitative research, which calls for in-depth research, do not draw representative samples (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). An in-depth driver for inquiry usually produces a small sample that will generate a large amount of information (Boeije, 2010).

Sampling is the process of selecting research participants from an entire population that involves decisions about which settings, people, and social systems (Neuman, 2014). There are three sampling strategies: i) probability sampling, ii) quasi-probability, and iii) nonprobability

(du Plooy, 2009). Probability sampling relies on mathematics and probabilities to create a representative sample (Neuman, 2014).

This study will use non probability sampling. In probability sampling, each member has an equal chance of being selected. This research study is less concerned with representativeness and wants to explore audience reception. Probability sampling can be time-saving and save on money and is often used in qualitative research. Quasi probability sampling is less reliant on probabilities. Nonprobability sampling seeks to generate a particular sample that can be difficult to reach.

Purposive Sampling

This study employed two types of sampling. It used purposive sampling first then convenience sampling. Purposive sampling chooses a sample for theoretical reasons (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). The sample in purposive sampling is selected according to characteristics that will be the most useful to the research study (Babbie, 2007) Some research samples offer more in-depth knowledge than others and can provide deeper insight and understanding to the researcher (Marshall, 1996).

This study selected post menarche adolescents as the menstruation pad target market. The advertisements on sanitary protection have a long history of exploiting the shame, awkwardness, and embarrassment that adolescent girls experience during their menstrual cycle (Merskin, 1999). The researcher chose adolescent girls to be the sample group because they are used in MHP advertisements. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to obtain a sample that is available from a sample of people who are willing to participate and that can articulate, express, and reflect on the research topic (Etikan, et al., 2016).

The type of purposive sampling used is homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling is a type of purposive sampling that selects respondents based on specific or similar traits (Etikan, et al., 2016). In the 1950's, menstrual advertisers stopped using mothers in their advertisements and started using young adolescent girls to build brand loyalty (Ayers, 2011). This sample group has been chosen due to the advertisements that were reviewed. The advertisements have young adolescent girls as the protagonists. A theory that has been used in the assistance of picking the respondents is Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory. According to Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist, adolescents learn to make values of their and acquire their own identity (Fleming, 2004). He named this stage Identity vs Role Confusion. Erikson believed that there are predetermined stages one goes through and at every stage there is a psychosocial

crisis (Boeree, 2006). The way that menstruation is understood impacts how menstruators see the experience until they reach menopause

Convenience Sampling

The first sample strategy was purposive sampling; the second is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used to choose the schools used in the study. Convenience sampling is known as the least rigorous sampling technique (Marshall, 1996). As the word "convenience" implies, the sample that this sampling technique generates is usually based around the researcher's suitability and are based on a practical criterion such as geographic proximity and accessibility (Etikan, et al., 2016). The schools in this study were chosen using convenience sampling as both schools were in the eThekweni Municipality.

The schools chosen were Pinetown Girls High School and Maris Stella. Maris Stella is a private school. Private schools are usually funded by a private trust, community, or a for-profit organisation. Pinetown Girls High is a public school that is funded by government.

The research aims to conduct a reception study on female adolescent girls to understand how they decode advertisements. The study wants to use students that attend high schools as the study's respondents. The quintile system is a system the Department of Education in South Africa uses to categorise schools according to the socio-economic background of its community (van Wyk, 2015). The quintile system ranks schools according to the school's socioeconomic status and the poverty of the school community (van Wyk, 2015). The government funds quintile 1-3 schools known as "no fees" schools, while quintile 4-5 schools are partially funded (Dass & Rinquest, 2017).

The schools were selected using the Master List. This list is a spreadsheet that contains all the schools within the country and is available on the Department of Education Website. The KwaZulu Natal spreadsheet was used to pick schools geographically close to Durban, which is the researcher's location in KwaZulu Natal.

These schools are based in Pinetown and Durban, respectively. Both schools are Roman Catholic Schools. The age group that was targeted for this study was young adolescent girls in matric and who are over the age of 18. This age group was selected because the researcher

believed that there would be a greater chance of obtaining postmenarcheal girls in this age group.

The researcher recruited the students within their Life Orientation class. In grade 12, learners look at media's role in a democratic society in the Life Orientation class. This class is also mandatory for every learner within grade 12, which will make this class a great place to choose participants from. This allows for a certain level of advertising literacy in the sample.

The principals of each school played the role of gatekeeper. The first point of contact with both schools were the school's receptionist. Upon reaching the schools, the researcher was asked to send the Department of Education documentation. An email was sent to the secretaries which was forwarded to the principals. The email detailed the research and contained the indemnity forms, informed consent, the letter from the Department of Education as well as the ethical clearance form.

Once the secretary read the email, they forwarded it to the principal. The principals responded and set up a meeting with the researcher. Once this meeting had taken place, a date was given for the researcher to come to the school and conduct the focus group discussions. The Life Orientation teacher at Pinetown girls high selected the group of students who would be a part of the focus group and in Maris Stella, their Life Orientation teacher, spoke to the grade 12 student representative. Both became the main points of contact. Maris Stella had chosen the student to be the school's gatekeeper as they believe that their matric class are adults and should be treated as such. The schools allow their grade 12 students autonomy. Once the focus group discussions were set up the students were given consent forms to sign (see appendix).

Data Collection

Data are the research materials that researchers utilise and are derived from observations, conversations and numbers (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). Data can be collected in a multitude of ways. In empirical research, data is necessary to provide evidence and justification for what will be presented in the findings (Boeijs, 2010). Visual and audio, textual media output has been analytical objects in qualitative studies (Jensen, 2012).

The research seeks to understand the students' view on sanitary pad advertisements. There are four methods that can serve as data collection tools in qualitative research: participant

observation, qualitative interviewing, focus group discussions, and visual material (Boeije, 2010). This research study used focus group discussions to find significant themes in a topic (Patton, 2002). Focus groups were chosen as a data collection tool so as to explore an often-ignored aspect of menstrual literacy and communication around menstruation. Focus group discussions were chosen instead of conducting interviews as they can encourage fully articulated accounts that can often be missed in interviews. Focus groups also allow for a collective sensemaking which happens when watching television with others.

The subjects are chosen on the basis of relevance to the topic of the study (Babbie, 2007). The focus group discussion method of collecting data is qualitative. It is a qualitative research technique in a group setting (Neuman, 2014). The focus group is typically 5 - 15 people who have a guided discussion (Babbie, 2007). There were five students in the Maris Stella focus group and 8 in the Pinetown Girls High Focus group. They had all experienced their first period. The subjects are chosen based on relevance to the topic of the study (Babbie, 2007).

Advantages to focus group (Hesse- Bieber & Levy, 1990):

- The technique is a socially orientated research method capturing real-life data in a social environment
- It has flexibility
- It has high face validity
- It has speedy results
- It is a low cost

One of the disadvantages of a focus group discussion is that it must be conducted in a conducive environment that allows the participants to speak freely (Babbie, 2007). The researcher conducted the research at the students' schools as it was an environment familiar to them. The room was picked by the gatekeepers and were approved by the principals.

The focus group discussions were conducted using a focus group guide (appendix 2). A Focus Group Discussion guide lists the questions that are to be explored in the discussion. The guide was approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and is attached as appendices. Focus group interviewing was developed in recognition that many consumer decisions are made in a social context, often growing out of discussions with other people (Patton, 2002)

Focus groups have been employed in reception (Jensen, 2012). Focus group discussions are group interviews that emphasize on interactive patterns among group members (Boeije, 2010). Focus group discussions are user-friendly and help participants express themselves openly about sensitive topics (Brennen, 2013). While a focus group about advertising may not seem to be a sensitive topic, menstrual pad advertisements might be taboo.

The basic components of focus groups are (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006):

1. Procedure. This is the systems and structures that govern the group processes
2. Interaction. The facilitator needs to be aware of intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics. The interviewer started with lighthearted question to create safe, comfortable relationship with the participants. The interviewer also shared her own stories around menstruation but was careful sway the respondents in one way or another
3. Content. This is what is spoken about in the focus groups using a semi-structured interview. This study used a focus group discussion guide that contains eight questions. The questions were created by expanding on the research questions.
4. Recording. This focus group discussions were recorded using an audio recorder.

The purpose of this study was to explore rather than to predict. Focus groups can be based on homogeneous groups (Patton, 2002) that have shared intersubjective experiences (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). The facilitator found that the discussion made the participants open up and talk about menstruation.

A focus group has a facilitator who is the focus groups moderator (Brennen, 2013). The moderator facilitates the focus group session. A focus group moderator must be flexible, communicate effectively and have excellent listening skills (Brennen, 2013). The moderator must create an environment of openness and trust. The researcher asked the participants a set of "warm-up" questions. These questions were asked about their demographic. The reasons for wanting to conduct the research was discussed and the interviewer spoke about her experience menstruating

A focus group has a moderator who facilitates the focus group session. A successful moderator should have great interpersonal skills, be flexible, have excellent listening skills as having great short-term memory (Brennen, 2013). The focus group moderator must remain neutral stance and be careful about their body language (Brennen, 2013). Which was noted when conducted the focus group. The

Ethical Considerations

When designing research, three aspects are helpful (Gorden, 1969; Jensen, 2012). The first is having a general plan and a strategy for entering a social setting. This assists with creating social relations, which is needed when speaking about a topic that can be taboo like menstruation. The researcher hoped to build social relations with the research respondents through creating an open dialogue with the gatekeeper and adolescent girls from the respective schools. The researcher obtained clearance from the Department of education, which allowed the researcher to conduct research. This is required legally to conduct any research in a school. The researcher encountered some obstacles that made caused a delay in data collection. The second aspect of research design is a tactic. The tactic refers to the researcher's ability to anticipate social interactions that will produce evidence. The researcher hopes to speak to the gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are responsible for referring respondents (Boeije, 2010). The third is the techniques. Techniques are how the data is collected. The ethical accuracy of their empirical inquiry should always be considered by the researcher (Boeije, 2010). There are no prearranged rules for what is ethically accepted in communication research however, each respondent's participation should be consensual (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Informed consent is crucial in qualitative research (Brennen, 2013). Informed consent allows the participant to know that their participation in the research study is voluntary. A detailed email was sent to each school's gatekeeper during the recruitment phase. The email included an attachment of the ethical clearance form, which explained the research design. It also contained the focus group questions and the informed consent form. The consent letter informed each respondent that participation was voluntary and requested permission to record each interview. The number for a psychologist from the University of KwaZulu Natal was given to them if they felt that they required counselling.

Permission from the Department of Education was received on 25 October 2018 (Appendix 1) to conduct research in the relevant schools. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu Natal on the 19 August 2019. The protocol reference is HSS/03050/019M. Data collection commenced on in September 2019 and ended in the month of October (2019).

Data analysis

Qualitative researchers build and analyse themes embedded within transcripts (Hesse- Bieber & Levy, 1990). Data analysis is the iterative process that involves segmenting data into their relevant categories with codes while generating categories from the data (Boeije, 2010). In qualitative research, data analysis is a process of rephrasing and retelling long and short textual elements (Jensen, 2012). Data is segmented according to what is thought to be relevant and meaningful to the research study. Data segmentation is the first amendment to the data after data collection (Boeije, 2010). This process becomes clear what themes and topics appear in the raw data. As the analysis progresses, reassembling of the data occurs. Reassembling should result in a coherent model or an explanation that provides an in-depth view of the social phenomenon being studied (Boeije, 2010). Reception studies focus on the interpretive relationship between an audience and a medium (Sandross, 2011). There are two main approaches to analysing focus group data that Wilkins (1998) and Morgan (1988: 64) identify: 'systematic coding and ethnographic' analysis. This research mapped all the data using thematic analysis.

Menstruation has cultural significance and marks the transition from childhood to womanhood (Padmanabhanunni, et al., 2018). This is partly due to how gender norms are shaped and identity that is shaped around this normal bodily occurrence (Tellier, et al., 2017). While menstruation is a normal part of life it is a subject that is private and secretive (Development, 2016). This has seeped into the world of advertising for sanitary products. The use of blue gel instead of red which is the colour of menstrual blood, the use of euphemised language to describe menstruation as well as the constant worry of the general public finding out that they are on their period have all been found in sanitary pad adverts.

The research questions were used as a frame for the data analysis. The research questions were created into the main headings for the data analysis. They will serve as over arching themes These headings were :

- Adolescent girls' experiences of menstruation
- Adolescent girls' interpretation of MHP advertising
- How MHP advertising is linked to girls' experiences of using menstrual health products

The researcher analysed the data who used Braun and Clarke's (2006). Thematic Analysis. The thematic analysis codes were developed using the encoding/decoding model and the literature. The codes that were uncovered were: shame, behaviour while menstruating, experiences while menstruating, WASH, the price of the portrayal of menstruation in advertisement. They were drawn from the encoded reading from the advertisement as well as the themes that were prominent in the literature. Thus, making this a theoretical thematic analysis was led by the theory and the literature

The 6 phases or stages to a thematic analysis help find themes that lead a report of the final analysis. There are 6 phases or stages to a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step was to become familiar with the data collected in both focus group discussions. This was done by reading and rereading the data that was transcribed from both discussions. The discussions created rich data that delved into gender, relationships and inclusivity in advertisements. The beginnings of consolidating the discussions into preliminary codes was the second stage of the thematic analysis. The analysis's foundation where the preliminary codes will be identified occurred in the second stage of the thematic analysis. Once the initial codes were consolidated leads to the third stage. The third stage was to begin with the interpretive analysis of the initial codes that combined the codes into larger, overarching themes. This process was where the relationship between codes, themes and subthemes was implied. The fourth stage was to review themes to define and naming themes. The theme names were how products are used, shame, behaviour while menstruating, experiences while menstruating, products used when menstruating, WASH, the portrayal of menstruation in advertisement that were provided were. The fifth stage was to define and name the themes in a unified story. The sixth and final stage is to produce a report after conducting the final analysis. This will be spoken about in more depth in the results chapter.

Once the data has been analysed it will be interpreted and the theory will be applied in the discussion chapter. The raw data under the overarching themes will be presented below . Each code/theme has excerpt(s) from the transcripts to support the qualitative data.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a systematic method of organising, identifying, and offering insight into meaning patterns across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to make sense of shared experiences and meanings. This study takes an inductive and deductive approach to thematic analysis. This required the researcher to use the data to locate themes and subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Thematic analysis is the extraction of critical themes within the data (Bryman, 2012). These themes were extracted from the transcribed focus groups. The themes were transformed into codes that the researcher used to gather the information into groups. A thematic framework was created to create themes and sub-themes and create a textual motif (Bryman, 2012). This framework will be a coding matrix. This entailed creating an Excel spreadsheet and writing the data in a matrix built on a hierarchy of themes and sub themes. The summarised data reduces the volume of data so that it was able to maintain a direct link to the primary data and is thoroughly grounded in the context, language and meanings captured in the primary data.

The first step of thematic analysis was to collect the data (Aronson , 1994). The data was collected using an interview schedule. Interviews were conducted at PGHS and Maris Stella and were recorded using the app Rev Voice Recorder on the interviewer's cellular phone. Once the interview was completed, the recording was uploaded to the interviewer's iCloud account.

The researcher listened to the recordings until the researcher felt familiar with the recordings then transcribed the data verbatim. The second step was to identify all data related to already classified patterns. This was done by highlighting the transcribed data sections and creating codes / labels for the content.

The third step was to combine and catalogue related patterns into subthemes tabulated in a coding matrix. Then once this was done, a pattern emerged. The next step was to build an argument as to why the relevant themes were chosen. The next step is to build a valid argument using the themes this was written in the results chapter of the dissertation.

A theme is a repetitive pattern that showcases something about the respondent's inner world. The themes that may arise in advertising will come from the literature review and the semiotic analysis. The themes that this study will look at will be :

- How adolescent girls understand the way that menstruation is depicted in advertisements
- The euphemistic language used in advertisements
- How adolescent girls decode these advertisements
- What do these advertisements convey about cultural beliefs of menstruation
- Feelings that arise when watching the advertisements
- What cultural and societal beliefs are being exposed and exploited by these advertisements

Themes were selected by seeing if they are important and key to answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study used a theoretical thematic analysis to analyse the data. This thematic analysis this type of analysis is driven by the researcher's interest in the topic or area of research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are 6 phases or stages to a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step will be to familiarise oneself with the data that has been collected in an interview or focus group. This is done by reading and rereading the data. The second stage is the production of the initial codes. The third stage will be to combine the codes into larger, overarching themes. The fourth stage is to review themes to define and naming themes, the fifth stage. The sixth and final stage is to produce a report after conducting the final analysis. This will be spoken about in more depth in the results chapter

Limitations

The study's initial aim was to conduct a total of 6 focus group discussions from 6 different schools in the eThekweni municipality. The hope was to obtain 2 schools from quintile 1, 3 and 5 schools. The researcher wanted to explore how social background impacts how an advertisement is viewed and if an advertisement can be viewed as a form of health communication.

The socioeconomic background was an important consideration for this study as schools in different quintiles have unequal access to water and sanitation, which makes it difficult for

some girls who are menstruating to dispose of their menstrual management products. Understanding if one's socioeconomic surroundings impacts how one understands menstruation and receives advertisements was an important factor to explore.

Unfortunately, this was not possible, and the research could only be conducted in the two schools mentioned. This was due to the academic school year for matriculants coming to a close. Ten schools were contacted in the area, but only two quintile five schools responded, one is a private school and the other being a public school.

Conclusion

The methodology chapter detailed the data collection and analysis process. It highlighted the interpretivist paradigm and explained why this paradigm was the best fit for the research. It detailed the data collection method, the sampling as well as the participants that will be a part of the study. The chapter ended with the limitations that came across while trying to recruit schools to be a part of the research study.

Chapter 5

Results

The previous chapter discussed the paradigm, research design, and sampling methods that underpin this study. It explored how it hopes to uncover how young girls understand sanitary pad advertisements using Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding model. The chapter described the interpretive nature of qualitative research and how the paradigm, study design, and data collection will unearth rich data. In this chapter the key themes and topics that emerged from analysis of the data will be brought up.

This study uses focus group discussions as a means of primary data collection. It does this to unearth rich data. This chapter will utilise transcripts from the focus group discussion to uncover how the focus group participants decoded the Always and the Libresse advertisements. Focus groups have proven to be useful in examining how social knowledge is produced (Green & Thorogood, 2010). The previous chapter went into detail on how the focus groups will be conducted and how the transcripts will be turned into tangible data. This chapter will identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning through a thematic analysis. This will be done by obtaining key themes and sub themes from transcripts of the focus groups.

The encoding decoding model states that an audience plays an active role in decoding messages and meaning creation. These messages are decoded by the audience using their own social contexts to discover how the sanitary pad advertisements were decoded the researcher believes that an understanding of how the advertisements were encoded is important. Furthermore, the model was used as an analytical tool

Culture has been described as motives, identities, beliefs and values that are shared by a collective of people (Saleem , 2016). These shared beliefs are used by advertisements who rely on the audience's shared cultural knowledge to create meaning for themselves. As mentioned in chapter two, semiotics and the encoding/decoding theory will assist in helping to contextualise focus group transcripts in a theory. Semiotics in advertising is used often to

signify an advertiser's message (Lewis, 2016). The analysis adopts Saussure's dyadic model of signifier-signified to understand how meaning is created by the audience

Using the encoding/decoding theory by Hall to understand advertisements it is clear that these advertisements can offer both a dominant and an oppositional position. Viewing advertisements as structured meaning processes can reveal the hegemony in the commodity form. (Goldman, 1992. The opening frame sees an adolescent boy tell his father that he that he thinks he got his period.



1. Frame from Thinx advert showing a man handing a tampon to another man in a bathroom



2. Another frame from the Thinx advert. Two men are seen walking down a corridor. One man asks another if they have a tampon

While the ad represents an alternative reality and might be seen as an oppositional position, one cannot be quick to assume that based on the advertisement's content. The encoding of a message also contains its own meanings and ideas. It draws from the dominant ideologies of society (Hall, 1973). The encoding of an advertisement will not always solicit the wanted decoding.

A base for which we can compare how the focus group participants decoded the advertisements is needed to understand the encoded message of the advertisement. It is crucial to have an encoding using a semiotic analysis to uncover the dominant ideologies that Always and Libresse believe about menstruation through their advertisements. "Semiotics highlights the way that we see ourselves take part in the creation of meaning in messages suggesting that we are not mere bystanders in the advertising process but participants in the creating a code that unites us the designer and the reader" (Leiss, Kline, Jhally, Botterill; 164).

his process seeks to investigate codes of a text and not how it is interpreted or constructed. Advertisements use signs with great intention and detail, and a semiotic analysis is a great way to disseminate these. How signs are put together to create meaning. Advertisements use signs to communicate their point to the consumers. They align themselves with their target audience by using certain cultural norms and values. A semiotic analysis in this research allows us to investigate the process of creating the message Semiotic approach is employed in interpreting the sign, symbol, icon, and index in the television advertisements.

The researcher observed that these advertisements aired over a period of a year during the *SABC 1 shows Skeem Saam and Uzalo*. The Always advertisement played often during the Uzalo omnibus that plays on Sunday. During the focus group discussions participants viewed the Always advertisement first, and then the Libresse advertisement.

The Libresse Advertisement

The Libresse advert is a humorous, ad campaign trying to make menstruation "unembarrassing" by using hyperbole and different analogies to talk about menstruation. Their adverts also talk about how sanitary pads offer odour protection and keep a menstruating person dry for 8 hours.

Papculture is a YouTube blog that consist of three Cape Town based young women Nwabisa Mda, Thembe Mahlaba and Bongeka Masango. Their vlog has topics that range from politics to how to find a partner. The advert has Nwabisa Mda and Thembe Mahlaba.



3Nwabisa Mda and Thembe Mahlaba of PapCulture

The first frame of the advertisement opens with two young women Ms Mhlaba says, "Some people, not us don't like to talk about..." Ms Mda finishes the sentence by whispering the word "period". Ms Mda whispers this with her hand on the side of her mouth as if she is whispering a secret to a close friend. Ms Mda is seen in a yellow round neck loose shirt with short hair while Ms Mahlaba wears loose glitter purple top with what could be a black skirt. Her hair is in black /silver ombre braids and both have on a light mauve lipstick. In this first frame Libresse is communicating that they are relaxed, casual and want to be . This is communicated in their very simple and relatable wardrobe for adolescents. By stating that they are not deterred by menstruation this shows that they want to be seen as a friend by its audience. This frame continues with Ms Mda saying, "So this ad for Libresse maxi pad with odor control has been made "unembarrasing". The word "unembarrasing" is whispered in the same tone as the word "period "was and is written in a blue text.



4The word unembarrasing is highlighted in blue

In the next frame Ms Mda and Ms Mahalaba are seen in different clothing. Their faces have gold and silver make up on respectively and the background of the ad has now changed and shows that they are in space. Ms Mda is shown to be in what looks like the milky way and only her head is showing. Ms Mahlaba is dressed in a black catsuit that has pointy shoulder pads that later become jet wings. Ms Mahlaba is seen with silver eye shadow and black lipstick and with a black gold and silver space suit



5The second scene sees Ms Mda and Ms Mahlaba in intergalactic costumes



"When a woman is on a galactic quest every month. Lasers and stuff come out of her home planet ". This briefly touches on the monthly hormonal cycle goes through that results her experiencing their menstruation. Referring to the body as the home planet allows for it to be less intimidating to the audience by using the term "and stuff like that". It also allows it to be somewhat humorous about menstruating by using speech that is used by adolescents.

The next frame sees Ms Mda saying, "Wearing a force field for the whole day can cause odours." Continuing with the galactic analogy the reference to a forcefield refers to wearing a sanitary pad as a means of protection. Libresse the tells the audience that it offers odour protection. While this is being said Ms Mahlaba is seen shooting off into space and has a forcefield around her is protecting her from oncoming meteors. While the ad shows both women in empowering positions, it also seems to show menstruation as something that happens to women that they need protection from.



Libresse sanitary pad and packaging

"Unembarrass your galactic quest Libresse maxi pad odour control technology". Here is where offers the answer to a women's "home planet" having "lasers and stuff like that" that seems to be an uncontrollable occurrence. Libresse offers an answer to protect a menstruating women. Their pad appears and it is protected by a blue forcefield. This blue forcefield seems akin to the blue gel that most sanitary pad advertisements use to euphemise red menstrual blood. Libresse products are shown floating around the product and

The next frame we hear Ms Mda say, "Don't be embarrassed sign up for some real talk at vagina varsity". Vagina varsity was a four-week long course that provided those who signed up with weekly email that provided information for the consumer that would allow them to move from "vagina haver to vagina expert (Anon., 2017).

Summary of symbolic communication

Table 1

Symbolic Communication	Examples
Symbols	Words like "unembarrassing"
Colours	Purple, Blue, Pink.
Language in Advert	Relaxed, Friendly, humorous, lighthearted
Ambiance of Advert	Upbeat
Brand Personality	Youtube vloggers known for feminist views

Libresse wants to break the conservative view that advertisements have when portraying advertisements. Their online free course “Vagina Varsity” addresses the lack of knowledge menstrual literacy while also addressing the stigma around menstruation. Online platforms and applications mentioned in the literature review like *Vulvani*, HelloClue and Essar Foundation offer knowledge to learn about menstrual health without stigma and shame. The creation of the Vagina Varsity and the advertisement shows that the main paradigm informing this advertisement is to remove the stigma around menstruation.

Advertisements reproduce social taboos and stigmas that already exist in society about menstruation (Fusaro,2016). The advert utilises humour and light-hearted banter throughout the advertisement to break from seriousness that usually surrounds menstruation. It acknowledges that by stating that they want to make periods “unembarrassing”. The use of metaphors around planets to explain the process discharging of blood and mucosal tissue from the inner lining of the uterus through the vagina. Providing some menstrual literacy for the audience however this omission reaffirms the stigma around menstruation.

The advert refers to menstruation is a substance that should not be near the body. It should be treated as a foreign substance that the menstruator needs protection from. The “odor protection” tag used in the advert also iterates that the menstruator needs protection from menstrual blood. The odor protection is the signifier for the sign that is menstruation. There is no sign of blood or any reproductive organs in the advertisement. The campaign was conceptualised and created by women however still these stereotypes by not mentioning or showing anything that is related to menstruation.

Menstrual blood has a slight smell and has been likened to the smell of “death” (Cherney,2018). The odour that menstruation emits was noted as the second concern around menstruation. Libresse stated that their products can offer protection the advert by highlighting how their product provides odour control for those who use it. The advertisements thus assuming that menstruation has a odour and that this odour concerns menstruators. The advertisement communicates to its audience that when menstruating there should not be an odour even if the odour is natural and is not alarmingly unpleasant. Libresse says that they encourage to “Live Fearlessly”. Pointing out that there is a taboo around a topic without speaking about the topic does not. This supports the structural and ideological view that menstruation is a taboo and

shameful event. Thus the preferred reading for this advertisement that has a to have a more liberal approach to menstruation it also proves the belief that menstruation does not belong in everyday conversations in life and should be communicated about discreetly

Always Ultra Advertisement

Always is the femcare market leader in sanitary products in South Africa (Anon., 2017). The main theme in this advertisement is linked to absenteeism in schools due to not having adequate protection when someone is on their period. Always has been basing their advertisements on this problem since 2011 (Anon., 2012).

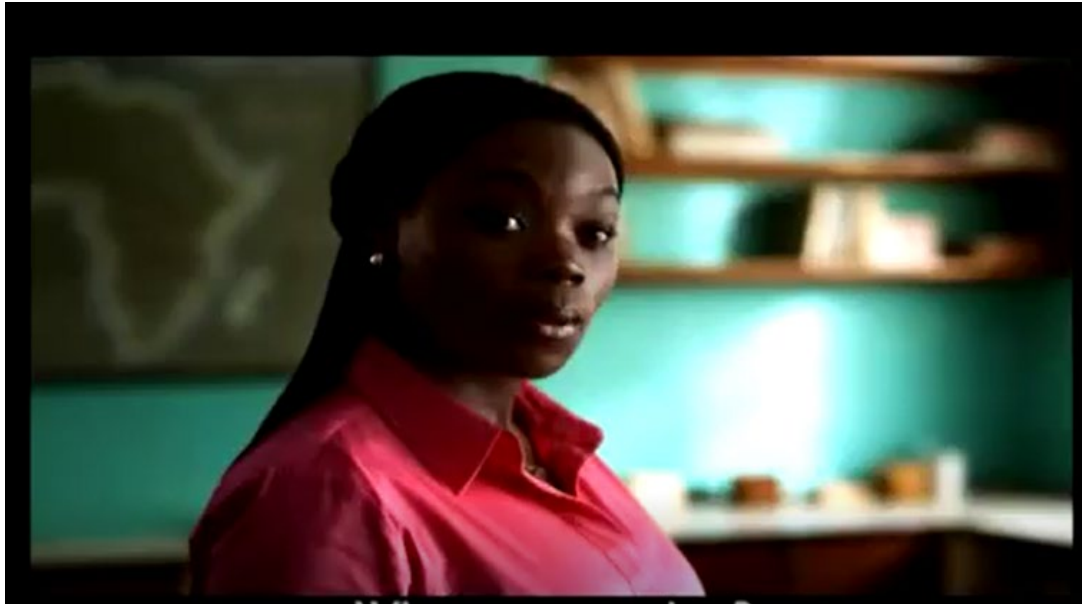
A transcript of the words of the song has been added as an appendices



7First frame of Always Advertisement

This ad in a school that is much like most schools in the country. The advertisement opens to a classroom with adolescent girls only. They all have their heads down, in their individual desks and are busy with school work. Their school uniform is blue, and they are all wearing blue shirts with a blue skirt and a blue tie.

The classroom has a female teacher walking up and down between the desks.



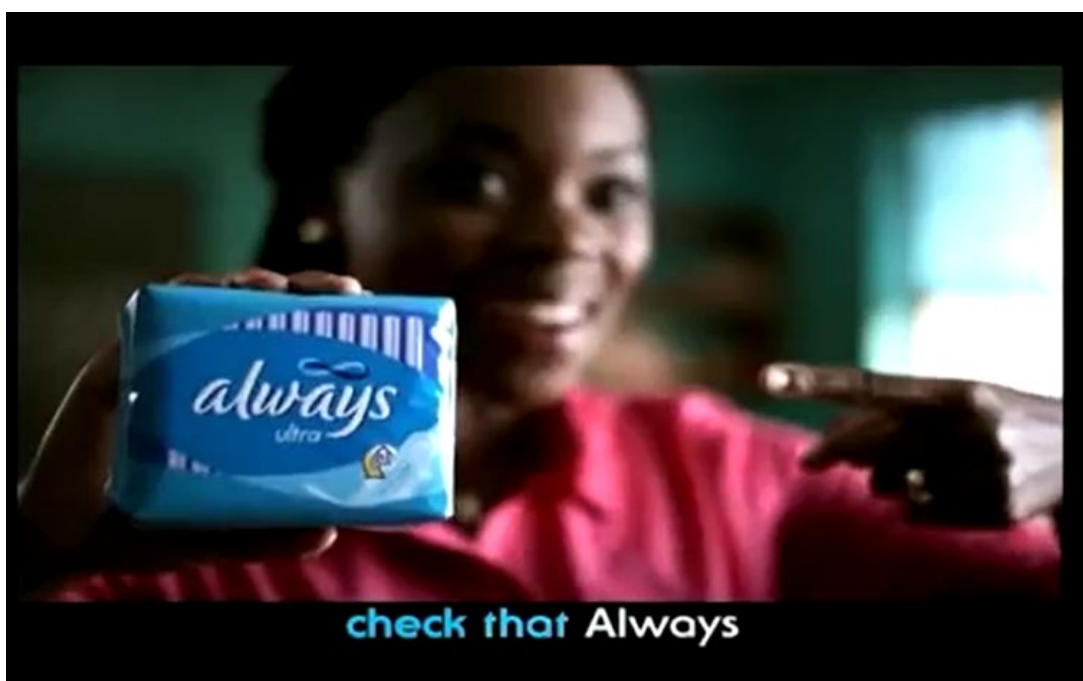
8 Female teacher who is seen in class

A clock can be heard melodically ticking as if it is a metronome. One of the adolescent girls reaches into her desk to pull out a roll of toilet paper. She stands up and the teacher asks her “where are you going, and she responds by singing. The teacher is wearing a brown A Line skirt and a pink shirt. The song starts with one student saying “I check, check”. This becomes a signal to start the song where all the students in the start dancing and singing in unison.



9 Class Room Students seen dancing in classroom

With every “Check check “that is sung the school girls demonstrate how they check to see if their school skirts have been soiled by menstrual blood. The first move shows the adolescent girls pointing to the bac of their skirts with their hands over their shoulders. They drop to the floor and crouch then stand back up again to lift their one leg while leaning on their desks in a flamingo stance as they look back at their skirts to see if there is a stain. The schoolgirls then walk towards their teacher twisting their skirts. The final move while in the classroom is the school girls pairing up , standing back to back with their faces turned to their teacher as their sing their last “I check ,check”. The teacher responds with a “Check that Always” as if she is offering the answer to all their constant checking.



The next scene sees the girls moving out from their classroom to symbolize how menstruation keeps them locked inside, constantly worrying and checking due to inappropriate sanitary products. The song has mainly been sung by one girl, almost symbolising the personal internal worries that adolescent girls have when they are on their periods. Once the teacher mentions Always the class of girls sing “Check” unanimously together.

10 Teacher showing Always Product



11 Students seen throwing toilet paper

The class leaves their classroom and are seen in the corridors of the school and start to throw their rolls of toilet paper over the railing. It's no longer a secret that Always is the best product to use for their checking woes. The adolescent girls are seen throwing toilet paper over the school almost as a sign that they are free from inadequate absorption of toilet paper. This can be taken literally as toilet paper is used in many developing countries as a means of management for menstruation (Development, 2016).



*12*Students seen dancing in school

The song then starts to state that Always offers eight hours of protection when a young girl is on her period. The whole school is now singing in unison in an elaborate dance routine. While they describe how regardless of where they are, Always sanitary pads always protect them and they no longer have to check.



*13*The last frame of the advertisement.

Table 2

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Symbols	Words like “I check I, I check Repetition of 8 hours	Constant checking when menstruation; anxiety
Colours	Blue, Pink	Lack of colour red signifies the
Metranome	Ticking, back and forth	Anxiety
Ambiance of Advert	Upbeat	
Brand Personality	-	-

Analysis of Always Ultra Pads

Checking to see if menstrual blood has soiled your clothes is the main theme around the Always sanitary advertisement. This signifies that menstruation is a that brings about worry and anxiety about your clothes being soiled. The worries around menstrual also symbolise how menstruation should be kept hidden from the rest of the world. Always ultra-advertisement has a humorous tone to it. The advert is set on school grounds sees teenage girls singing and dancing and their problem that they have with sanitary product that do not provide retention of menstrual blood. The teacher offers Always sanitary pads as a solution to their problem and says that it provides 8 hours of protection.

The advertisement communicates that menstruation is something that can lead to anxiety. Anxiousness around menstruation and others finishing is illustrated further by the songs repetition of “8 hours” as well as the constant checking of their school uniform skirts. They will not experience any s leaking. The flipping of skirts shows that the ad is more concerned with the leakage. It also shows that there is a lack of options for the menstruating girls as the only option they have is to turn their skirts around or to use toilet paper.

There is an omission of the socio-economic challenges that face menstruating adolescent girls. Toilet paper has been shown as a substituted that is used when respondents not able to get a hold of proper menstrual health products (Beksinska , et al., 2015). The reason for could be economical as one study showed using participants in India or due to lack of access. Always is

aware that adolescent schoolgirls cannot afford or access MHP and provide 13 000 free sanitary pads a year and offers puberty education through their Always Keeping Girls in School programme (No Author, 2019). The company is aware of the challenge's adolescent girls face however it does not show them in their advertisements.

There is no mention of menstruation, menstrual blood or period in this advertisement. The product seems to be advertising to an audience that is already aware of their products or of menstrual hygiene products. The audience is assumed to know what the product is going to protect you from. The checking occurs is for an unknown substance. This leads one to assume that Always assumes their audience has knowledge of their product and why it is used. This is one of the functions of a taboo is the concealment of knowledge as (Sporado et al, 2018)

Dominant Hegemonic View

This study believes that the audience are active participants in the dissemination of meaning when reading a media text. The encoding/decoding model was used to understand the meanings. There are three main ways a media text can be read: the dominant reading, the oppositional reading and the negotiated meaning (Hall, 1973) In order to According to the encoding/decoding model dominant hegemonic occurs when the audience shares the ideological code and reproduces the preferred reading. In such a stance the dominant code seems natural and transparent and suggests that Libresse and Always share the same ideological view on menstruation. The negotiated reading understands the meaning and the connotation of the text but does not completely agree ideological view of text. The oppositional reading occurs when the ideological view of the encoder is rejected.

Advertisements are not received passively but are actively involved in making sense of the everyday life (Munday, 2011). They (advertisements) have a positive register where the audience is always happy and happiness is acquired using their products (Falk, 1994). Thus making the product that could more palatable

The dominant view would essentially agree with that the advertisement by using their own social understanding. Adolescent girls use their cultural experiences to understand media text. Using the Libresse and Always advertisements as a lens to understand menstruation through. Menstruation is mentioned as an anxiety inducing event that requires the menstruator to constantly check themselves. There is no real mention of what menstruation is or why it is embarrassing and why you check your skirt when menstruation. This leads one to believe that menstruation is seen as a taboo topic that should not be spoken about. It is an occurrence that women know about but do not openly talk about. Menstruation is the subject of the advertisements. Both advertisements are about menstruation and not the which is commodity fetishism When menstruating blood is how the ovary is expelled by the body however there is no menstruation of blood or ovaries.

The aim of this study is to explore the meanings adolescent attach to the portrayal of menstruation in television advertising. An understanding of what the advertisement believes about menstruation is needed to understand whether the participants in the focus group discussions agree with how the advertisements communicate about menstruation. The data analysis will look at

Adolescent girls' experiences of menstruation

The results that will be presented in this theme will be experiences of the adolescent girls while menstruating. This was from the research question and used to frame the results section. The themes that emerged from the data that address this question were: behaviour when menstruating, shame and stigma, the products used . These themes encapsulate the data around the menstrual experiences of adolescent girls

Behaviour when menstruation

The discussions unearthed feelings of anxiety and self-consciousness when they menstruated. This feeling of anxiousness was shown in the Always advertisement, The participants expressed that they constantly check if there is any menstrual blood that has soiled their clothing a concern that the advertisement showed the school girls in their advertisement.

MS: "all the checking whenever you go out. I do that a lot" page 2 of transcript 1

Constant checking becomes a normal way of a menstruator's life. The data shows that eventually they can manage their own body and understand their menstrual flow. There seems to be an understanding of one's own body that allows the participants to be able to anticipate what MHP they may need and when to use it. Menstruation seems to present

" Especially when you start like your first few years of menstruating and you're checking all the time and then after some time you get used to it" page 4 of transcript 3

Eating often

There were behaviours exhibited in the advertisement that the participants did not report experiencing. data shows that the participants changed their behaviours while menstruating. They stated that they feel moody, dirty and that they experience an increase in appetite

"I eat more, I wanna eat more" p8

Products used

The advertisements did not make any mention of other MHP that menstruator can use other than their own. The advertisements mentioned that their products were the best , that they offered superior absorbency and discretion The advertisements do not show how their products are used which leaves one to assume that the believe the audience knows how to use the sanitary pad products.

The focus group offered insights into what participants knew about how to use MHM products. When discussing which products to choose the greatest factors was the price of the products as

mentioned above. Both focus groups had experiences with the products and Always was mentioned as offering superior absorbency. Education around the use of different MHM arose during the focus groups that proved to be an opportunity to speak about the different ways that MHM products are used.

When participants in focus groups learnt of new ways to assist in the insertion of a tampon. One participant stated that inserting a tampon is painful and they do not see themselves using a tampon after having an experience they labelled as painful and impeding their ability to walk. The advice that was given about different ways to lubricate the tampon using Vaseline or a lubricant. People who menstruate can find safe space to speak about the taboo topic of menstruating. During the focus groups, the participants also discussed different menstrual hygiene products to use and how to use them. One participant shared that they used Vaseline as a lubricant while they were answering other participants query about tampons

PGHS: Student 1: But for me the first time I put a tampon on it was so sore that I was actually shaking. I couldn't walk (experiences menstruating)

Student2: Weeeeeeh angicabangi!(No! I don't see myself doing that)

Student 3: Personally I have to lubricate it with Vaseline or a lubricant (educating on use of tampon)

Student 2; Why?

Student 3: Sometimes you have to lubricate!

Student 3: The tampon is dry and you have to put on a dry thing and I just have to lubricate it (Page 2)

The discussion unveiled how the participants find safe space where they can speak about the taboo topic of menstruating. During the focus groups the participants also discussed different menstrual hygiene products to use and how to use them

"Yes and obviously I will be trying it because they'll understand. They go through what I go through "

Long Lasting protection

The Always advertisement was set in a school. The advertisements stated that they offer odour protection and protect those who use them from menstruation spoiling their clothes. This communicates that young girls use their products at school. The raw data shows that the participants used the products. Odour protection and protection from leaking was a great concern for the participants.

"That's the thing it smells sour with like blood and lucky star "

The need for odour protection means that Libresse believes that menstrual blood has an odour. The participants agreed with this assertion with one participant stating that it smells fishy/

MHP was once a taxed good and is expensive for some to purchase. The price point of MHP determined what they participants purchased and when. While the participants did not seem to have a problem with access to the products, they were still aware of how much the MHP cost.

MS: *"Sometimes there are sales and you're like "I have to buy Always" and other days when it costs more "*

PGHS: *"I use reusable pads at night and I think the cheapest one is like R16" . Page*

Participants stated that they used had both always and Libresse sanitary pads. They stated that Always was the superior product and that while they liked Libresse sanitary pads however they don't use them anymore due to their price.

MS: *"ey but Libresse isn't always cheap" page 20*

MS: *"Well Always has those ones that are like longer and thicker pads and you can use them at night cos you don't wanna wake up "*

Student: *Well I use Always because of the size, its really big*

Always Pads seemed to be the most popular sanitary pads used in both focus groups.

PGHS: *Student4: Do they have thinner pads?*

Student:3 *Yes they do. Most of them are thin.*

Student5: *and there's the one, you know the long one. Then there's the biggest one which is the night one*

Stuent : I don't find it to be thin. I just cant use them, I cant, I cant

Student : Kotex is thin as hell. I will tell you that there is a Kotex that is thin as hell

Student : And its long (page 3)

Shame and stigma

While this sisterhood is powerful it does not allow for inclusion of men. Menstruation is almost assumed to be exclusively for and about women. Some transgender men and non-binary people menstruate and not all women menstruate (Bobel, 2012). The topic keeps women in and keeps the world out. Participants in the study felt that they were not allowed to show that they were menstruating when they were. They felt that they had to keep it from everyone around them. Reasons for this were feeling dirty and fears that they had an unpleasant odour

"I feel like there's moments like at home I am the only girl and there are two boys and my gran and ngihlala ngedwa (I isolate myself) cos I feel like ngiyanuka (I smell) and I end up just wanting am gonna be teased if they found out that I am on my period "

Menstruation is a topic that some students felt they could not speak to their fathers about. Participants recalled stories of being told by their aunts or mothers that they should not share that they are menstruating and that their fathers should not know when they are menstruating. The focus group discussion contained adolescent of single fathers. These participants who lived with their fathers only. This surprised the other participants as they were not exposed to the of this sort of candour in their own home with regards to their periods.

PGHS: "because that's not my reality. Like I said... Okay so my mom passed away and when she passed away, I went to live with my dad, and he buys my pads for me. Like sometimes he will ask me if I need pads and like I can even ask my brother to get me pads if I need them so the whole embarrassing thing doesn't really exist in my home"

While others felt that they would not speak to men other than those in their family, some

Hygiene

Hygiene when using MHP was discussed. Beliefs around what is and is not hygienic when menstruating. The belief that menstrual blood is dirty and unhygienic is an old one. Menstrual blood is not less sanitary than other types of human blood (Anon., 2016). Menstrual blood has

been believed to be used for black magic, that its dirty and polluting (Kuar, et al., 2018) One participant felt that they used tampons as an alternative to sanitary pads because they believed that sanitary pads were unhygienic because when using sanitary pads, one comes into contact with menstrual blood:

PGHS: Like be you put pressure on a sponge and the liquid comes out and then it's on you and its chilling there and that's where the grossness comes from but with a tampon for me like the blood gets sucked up in the body and it doesn't get the opportunity to swim outside and be oxygenated . (Page 1)

When describing the smell of menstrual blood, there was a general concession that the smell was not pleasant and that it smelt like fish. The participants felt

MS: "That's the thing it smells sour with like blood and lucky star" page 12

Participants in both focus groups have used or had exposure to . menstrual cups, reusable sanitary pads and tampons. Reusable pads are non-disposable sanitary pads that are washable and can be used again (SUBZ, 2019). While these pads seem to offer those, who use them great protection this does not come without any apprehension. Participants felt that reusable pads were unhygienic. Touching menstrual blood and having to wash it was something that most participants say as unhygienic to reuse a sanitary product.

"How would you keep it with you for that long ? Like its unhygienic. Its unhygienic " p13

When speaking about menstrual cups :

Student 3: Whats the deal with these (menstrual) cups?

Student 5: where do you get them? Like online?

Student 4: they are so expensive

But why do I have to touch it when I can just fold a disposable pads" p14

Summary Of Readings of

This table summarises the view that the has according to the encoding/decoding model. The respondents have an oppositional view in some categories. A dominant view is shared when looking at the shame and hygiene.

	Dominant	Negotiated	Oppositional
Behaviour When Menstruating			X
Products Used			X
Shame and Stigma	X		
Hygiene	X		

Experiences with MHP

Knowledge of a product before being exposed to its ad campaigns offers a base for how research participants will decode the advertisements. It assists because they will use their knowledge on the product to understand the signs that are in the advertisements as well as what the advert is trying to communicate to them.

Both adverts claim that they provide effective protection for eight hours and provide odour control. While Always is the industry leader it has not been as innovative in the last few years (Anon., 2017). Libresse after this ad campaign went from being the fifth to the fourth most purchased sanitary pads in the country (Anon., 2017).

The focus groups had participants that used Always pads. With one participant stating that they use the product due to its ability to keep them dry. This was a claim that the advertisements made. The product was as thicker and longer in length. One participant stated:

"Well Always has those ones that are like longer and thicker pads and you can use them at night cos you don't wanna (want to) wake up "

The advertisement stated that their product lasts eight hours and was set in a school to Another participant agreed with this by saying :

PHGS: "when I first started what I found at night time with the Always in the night time is that it would last me. What I found with the thin one was that I would have to wake up in the middle of the night to go change"

Always showcases young girls dancing and moving around freely

"and some pads you know you can think that you're okay and stuff and you can dance and dance but when it you go to the bathroom to check you'll find that the blood missed the pad. ' P10; ": you can make sure that you've placed your pad on properly and you'll think that you'll stay fresh but then when you try to pull the pad and you'll find that you've messed your

The focus group offered an insight into what participants knew about the ways to use MHM products. When discussing which products to choose the greatest factors was the price of the products as mentioned above. Education around the use of different MHM arose during the focus groups that proved to be an opportunity to speak about the different ways that MHM products are used. When participants in the Maris Stella focus groups learnt of new ways to assist in the insertion of a tampon. One participant stated that inserting a tampon is painful and they do not see themselves using a tampon after having an experience they labelled as painful and impeding their ability to walk (pg 2). The advice that was given about different ways to lubricate the tampon using Vaseline or a lubricant. People who menstruate can find safe space where they can speak about the taboo topic of menstruating. During the focus groups the participants also discussed different menstrual hygiene products to use and how to use them. One participant shared that they used Vaseline as a lubricant while they were answering another participant's query about tampons

“Student: The tampon is dry, and you have to put on a dry thing and I just have to lubricate it”

Products used other than sanitary pads

The advertisements mention the use of their products only. Pasi Falk mentions that modern advertisements want the audience to presume that the product is their long-lost friend who has everything they need (Falk, 1994). The advertisements portray that they are the only product, the superior product that the audience will need without explaining why or how their product works. Participants also reported a MHM strategy that used different MHP for one menstrual cycle. The reasons this was done was because certain menstrual products were better for nighttime and would offer greater absorbency while some reported they use reusable sanitary pads at night because of absorbency, convenience and to save money.

Tampons were preferred by some during the day as the discussion participants stated that they felt less self-conscious and free when they used tampons. They also used tampons at night for their great absorbency and ease of use.

PGHS: “Its like been in you for a long long time and like no I don't wanna put a tampon on at night. I don't want to. I use tampons during the day but I use reusable pads at night. I cant imagine wearing that thing at night” page 16

PGHS: “I just wear tampons because they are easier to use” page 3

The soiling of clothing was not shown however it was insinuated. Soiling of clothing while menstruating was mentioned. The adolescent girls stated that they worry about soiling their pants when menstruating. They mentioned that they have contingencies if they happen to soil their clothing

underwear with period blood. It's the worst feeling ever" p9; I bring two pairs of underwear when I'm on my period... Just in case. I bring soap as well so that I can wash the messed panty. I also change my pads often because pf the odor ' p9

The data found different accounts of experiences that caused the participants to be more aware of if they have soiled their clothes with menstrual blood.

" you can make sure that you've placed your pad on properly and you'll think that you'll stay fresh but then when you try to pull the pad and you'll find that you've messed your underwear with period blood. It's the worst feeling ever"

To mitigate further embarrassment from soiling pants, participants felt that they need to take extra precaution while they were menstruation

"I bring two pairs of underwear when I'm on my period... Just in case. I bring soap as well so that I can wash the messed panty. I also change my pads often because pf the odour"

"Yes like when you're sitting in class and you're too scared to stand up and usubheka ngama angeli (you try to secretly check) "

Summary of Reading for Experiences with MHP

	Dominant	Negotiated	Oppositional
Experience with MHP			X
Education on how menstrual Products are used			X
Products used other than sanitary towels			X

How MHP advertising is linked to girls' experiences of using menstrual health products.

The participants believed that while the sanitary pad advertisements did not have an impact on whether they bought the products or not that they did serve as a way to break the silence around

menstruation. How menstruation is viewed culturally was found in the data. How it is seen culturally by the focus group participants will be explored in this section. The Libresse advertisement mentions the word vagina which the participants relished in as they stated they do not hear the word often. Most menstrual advertisements do not mention the word vagina, menstrual blood as well as show red blood or anything that alludes to menstruation.

n

There is no mention of menstruation in the Always advertisement while the Libresse advertisement does mention the word “period” and “embarrassed”. It alludes to that menstruation being seen as a taboo topic. The participants agreed that menstruation is an embarrassing topic for the (dominant)

Embarrassing

MS: "People don't wanna talk about periods and that its embarrassing, it makes it real " (page 18)

The advertisement The word “vagina” is mentioned in the Libresse advertisement. The participants felt happy to hear the word in the advertisement as they it was not a word that they heard being said openly. One pupil state that she felt that hearing the word felt as is they were being sworn at While it did shock them, they found it be refreshing:

PGHS: "We are happy about it but the first time you hear it its shocking. You're not used to hearing someone saying "vagina"

MS: "Ngathi uyasithuka (Its as if they are swearing at us) " (page 18)

Thus owing that they agree with the advertisement that the word vagina is embarrassing

Light-hearted tone

The disregarded is that this allows girls to be able to understand their bodies in a way that they may have not before. Menstruation and menstruating are a taboo topic and once adolescent girls are told that they have now moved to womanhood. The singing in the advertisements was viewed as a way of making a topic that is taboo light-hearted. The analogy that was given in the Libresse advertisement was enjoyed and the made the girls feel like they were powerful. (dominant)

"It kinda made a women feel powerful like that was a superpower that you have. Like youre a Nasa astronaut "

The power light heartedness for some was not received well as they felt that they do not feel this way when they are menstruating. Having an oppositional reading to the advertisement

PGHS: "but I feel like it would be cool because it would be an accurate representation like I know that maybe half of the people out there don't feel like that when they are on their period. Some people are actually happy when they are on their period. Like some people feel really have a tough time when they are on their period "

Representation

Television advertisements are a powerful vehicle for the transmission of social representations of what is culturally acceptable (Spadaro, et al., 2018). The focus groups participants were confident in their knowledge of advertising and how The representation of what a menstruating girl looks like is a young girl, who is anxious about menstruation , are aware the menstruation is a taboo subject. They however they also do not want to take the topic too seriously and want to students felt that they were represented in the this is the dominant reading of representation of a menstruating adolescent girl. They agreed with being anxious while menstruating and saw themselves in the advertisement

MS: "Yes like when you're sitting in class and you're too scared to stand up and usubheka ngama angeli (you try to secretly check to see if your) "p2;

"and the things and stuff about lasers and stuff coming out of the home planet "p5

The represented where humours, female and using Youtuber from Pap Culture shows that Libresse wants to align themselves with what Ms Mahlab and Mda represent. The participants believed that they were represented and could see themselves

MS: "okay I just wanna say that I get the whole inclusivity thing and how like in every movie there's like a third of black people but I feel like to move forward they shouldn't try inclusivity while excluding people I felt like it would've been better if there was a group it would've been more integrated" "Indian girl she's thinking "oh there's only black people" and the white girl is also thinking "oh there's only black people. So I would've preferred if it was more diverse. Promoting integration would have been a better strategy " p5

Taboo in advertisement

The taboo around menstruation has been ingested into the homes of many of the pupils in the focus group. While all the students have experienced menarche and are females with vagina's they stated that:

"and when you're watching tv with your dad and you hear the word "vagina". You have to act dumb "

The respondents agreed with the dominant view that the Libresse advertisement wants to represent of wanting to break the stigma around menstruation.

MS:Student4: They are trying to normalise it. Not that they havent in the past but now they are really trying to push that narrative. Like they really want us to have a conversation around it

Student3: Especially the whole vagina varsity part. That was cool

Student:3 I think they want to educate us around issues about periods

Student5:Vagina varsity!" (Page 20)

The duality in being told that they are now a women through having their period with having to be seen as a child that came up in the data. The students believed that this was the norm in black households that they believe that they need to almost ignore that they are menstruating and that they have a vagina:

"I don't feel and I think that we are more educated about tv and adverts like we've been analysing ads since what.. I think grade 8"

The participants felt that they could see their experiences while watching the advertisement. This means that they dominant hegemonic meaning. When the of constantly checking while menstruating came up participants felt that that there were instances where they could recount feeling the same way:

"Well at the beginning. Its like oh I also do that"

With one high school pupil adding that she is explaining how she tries to check if menstrual blood has stained her clothes.

Mirroring their physical experience while menstruating

There was no real indication of what menstruation is in the advertisement. Their experiences while menstruating vary and a great majority of participants spoke of menstrual cramps, an increased appetite and general nausea. The advertisements lack of showcasing what menstruating. They did say however that they don't feel that these menstrual would be inappropriate to show in an ad.

PGHS: "I think that they are telling us that you shouldn't be scared about it. They were open about it especially the second one about the planets. They were open about it like from the start the ad they just said like"

They did not want to see it as it would put them off the advert and the product. The participants felt that there may be people who would not appreciate:

"yes, I would relate to that, but I wouldn't want to see that on tv"; "But it would put me off if I saw people who were sad while they were on their period because it would be like that's how you'd feel if you use their products"

"but I feel like it would be cool because it would be an accurate representation like I know that maybe half of the people out there don't feel like that when they are on their period. Some people are actually happy when they are on their period. Like some people feel really have a tough time when they are on their period "

"Like it's a sensitive topic for them like they are sensitive about it "

While the students enjoyed how the advertisements tried to make the topic "unembarrassing" and create discussion around this topic:

"the fact that they want to make the whole period thing not embarrassing and they want to. The fact that they mention the word "periods" is great as well "

They also felt that this word was not allowed in the home and that they were not allowed to share that they are on their period.

The topic of inclusivity has been previously discussed. They felt that the libresse advertisement was more inclusive then advertisements that they had known. The student raised the topic of the advertisements only having females in them. Some students saw this as a symbolising that

menstruation is a girls and women’s only club. This theme filtered through in many of the statements that the students made on periods like:

“It kinda made a women feel powerful like that was a superpower that you have. Like youre a Nasa astronaut”

Summary of Reading for Interpretation of Advertisement

	Dominant	Negotiated	Oppositional
embarrassing	X		
Light hearted Tone		X	
Representationx	X		
Mirroring their physical experience while menstruating		X	

Conclusion

This chapter looked at the Results that were found from the focus group and used the thematic analysis and the encoding/decoding model to understand the data.

Discussion

The previous chapter detailed the results from the focus group. This section will focus how this study fits and compares with the literature around this topic. The first portion of this chapter will interpret what these results through the lens of the Encoding/decoding model and will talk about the implications of this. The Limitations of the study as well as the Recommendations will be discussed after this

In the process of encoding a message, the sender may use either verbal (words, signs, images) or non-verbal (body language, facial expressions) symbols to help the receiver better comprehend the message that is given. This process allows the opportunity for the audience to reconstruct the idea by giving meanings to symbols and to interpret the message as a whole. However, the receiver of the sender's message won't always get the expected response the producer was expecting. Stuart Hall believed that there were three ways a could be decoded: Dominant reading, Negotiated Reading and Oppositional

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand how adolescent girls decode sanitary pad advertisements. This chapter includes a discussion of major findings as related to the literature on menstruation and the thematic theoretical framework. Menstruation is a taboo topic and how it is shown in advertisements could offer a view into how menstruation is understood. This qualitative reception analysis offered and exploration into how audiences' sense-making of media content in context.

Advertisements depict themselves as its audiences' friend (Falk, 1994). Libresse and Always were able to communicate this friendship through assumed familiarity in their product. They both state that they offer protection different beliefs around menstruation in the way that they have chosen to represent themselves in their advertisements. Libresse is striving to be more liberal and represent a taboo-less period and by using the word "Vagina" and acknowledging they are shout. Using PapCulture Vloggers to question the tradition view of menstruation while it may seem as a more liberal view and trying to break taboo.

The literature shows this change in advertisements occurred after the second wave of feminism. Pro female narrative featured in advertisements began in the 1980 (Stein & Kim, 2009). with the Always, due to its exclusion of any mention of menstruation in the advertisement. The “feminist’ view was noted by the focus group participants and they thoroughly enjoyed this as they believed that words around menstrual hygiene and the female body. Through speaking more about “freshness” and the technology that their products offer the advertisement seem to be changing what is viewed as natural. Both advertisements want to be read as wanting to maintain the taboo and stigmatised belief around menstruation. Technology and ideology in advertisement speak to how society sees manipulates nature and what is natural (Williamson, 2010). The body and what is natural is turned into something that should not be spoken about. The respondents felt that the omission of words like “vagina” and “period” in other advertisements made the Libresse advertisement a liberal breath of fresh air. The word “vagina’ is taboo in their families and they stated that it was almost a swearword and using the word opened for conversation around menstruation and the female body.

Research studies that used content analysis (Merskin,1999; Simes and Berg,2001) these studies found that more recent advertisements focused less on shame and personal discomfort. The respondents reported that same and stigma in the Always and Libresse advertisements. Qualitative research offer a more in-depth understanding on certain topics, based on a specific cohort of people. The adolescents in this study believed that what the advertisement represented was their own personal experiences of menstruation with the constant checking that was seen in the Always advertisement. The discussions that the researcher saw around menstruation showed that advertisements can offer a space for young adolescent girls to talk about and share their knowledge and experiences around menstruation. Research around menstruation showcased how little information there is around this topic and

The interpretations that the participants in this study agreed with some of the interpretations that the advertisement showed. Unlike the study conducted in the Western Cape where the respondents felt that the advertisements (Jaffer, 2015). The research participant in this study agreed with many of the dominant reading of menstruation. They agreed that menstruation was a taboo topic that caused them a lot of anxiety. This sentiment was share in literature in menstruation (Sommer, et al., 2017; O’Sullivan et al, 2007; Mercado, 2019). While menstruation is seen as a taboo topic, the respondents in this did not internalise the taboo around menstruation

The oppositional reading of menstruation based on this data showed that menstruation is a provides sisterhood when menstruating. Menstruating becomes an event. The respondents mentioned asking their friends to check to see if they have soiled. The literature showed that menstruation taints the fragile view of femineity (Gill, 2007). They judged products based on what they had heard from close family members or they had experienced themselves. There was lack of prior knowledge about menstruation and they had to figure it out themselves.

Always represented a tried and trusted brand. The great majority of the participants had used the products and due to this they knew that they lasted the eight hours and were a trusted product. These products were the main products used and none of the participants had seen or used Libresse which was due to the pricing of the product.

While they perceived advertisements as a marketing too it as a tool this did not prohibit the participants from opening and talking about menstruation and their own experiences and interpretations while menstruating. It allowed for a safe space to share their experiences and

Students had a wide experience with MHP. Unlike girls from previous studies in the literature (Oster & Thornton, 2009); who were provided with different options of MHP to use, the participants in this study were well versed in using different. The participants did not have a problem with accessing MHP. Access to WASH is a well-researched topic in middle to low-income countries like South Africa (Caruso , et al., 2013) The word embarrassing was used to describe menstruation. At school they use euphuisms to describe their vagina and hearing the word being said was refreshing as they don't usually hear that and that even at school it was a taboo subject. Admitting that hearing the word was shocking saying that it is a swear word.

This choice and the ability to use products based on their preference or the price of the products. Participants from these seemed to have more freedom in what they used and spoke more about using certain products at a certain time. The schools they attend have multiple bathrooms where each stall has Menstrual cups, reusable pads and tampons were used and discussed as MHP. Missing school due to a lack of protection is not something that the participants are exposed to.

The dominant view on the price point of the sanitary pad products. The price points of products were discussed. They admitted that they purchased the product that was the cheapest and often bought the products themselves. They didn't care for the ad and didn't feel that it persuaded

them in what they chose to buy. The biggest was price. Having the freedom and the knowledge to buy what you want in a small way. They purchased their own products and said they chose to do so most of the time as they felt shame when writing the on the shopping list or reminding their parents or siblings that they menstruate. Menstruation seems to be a secret that should be whispered in the same way that the Libresse ad talks about period. The thinness of the products was touched on and they mentioned how they are aware of brand packaging and advertisements, but it hardly sways them in what they are trying to do

The biggest concerns may be around hygiene but it's a perceived hygiene. Sanitary pads were referred to as dirty and that was why a respondent said they preferred tampons. Absorbency meant that the menstrual blood stayed in the sanitary pad. The forcefield mentioned in the libresse ad alludes to menstrual blood staying in its place and keeping the menstruator protected while they menstruate. Hygiene was based on feeling and not on what was known based in science.

There was more learnt about menstruation in the discussion then from the advertisement. Focus group participants shared stories of why and how they use the different sanitary products. While they had mentioned that they kept menstruation to themselves in this setting the words vagina, menstrual blood and menstruation were spoken about freely.

The singing in the ad was a contested as either making menstruation seem less shameful and a way of talking about periods without mentioning the word. Is there a need to mention the word important to be said or spoken about in the first place? The lack of shame around menstruation was interesting as shame was a exhibited and could be attributed to the various

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Introduction

This study endeavoured to explore how adolescent girls understand sanitary pads television advertisements. It aimed to unearth their understandings of menstruation and use sanitary pad advertisements as a means of social communication. It also wanted to determine what young adolescent girls understand about sanitary products, their interpretations of these advertisements and if cultural beliefs on menstruation are viewed in the advertisements.

Advertisements contain images and words that reflect the cultural codes (Barbara Czarnecka et al., 2018; Hong et al., 1987; Khairullah & Khairullah, 2003). These codes are placed in the advertisements to be recognised and interpreted by the audience. In hopes of aligning with and influencing their value and behaviours. Thus providing a lens that this study was able to understand communication about menstruation. The theoretical framework used semiotics to unpack the cultural meaning behind the signs. The encoding and decoding model was used to gauge what the dominant reading for the advertisements were and to compare those to the decoded understanding that the participants arrived to. These theories provided a gateway to view advertisements as social communication, they also assert the view that the audience are active participants in the meaning process. Using their own cultural understandings to create meaning

Cultural taboos from a patriarchal society often stigmatise menstruation (Merskin,1999). The stigma around menstruation conceptualises menstruation as a female-only problem with socio-economic ramifications like missing days at school, not being able to access menstrual hygiene products and hygiene problems. Adolescent girls were used as participants in this study due to their proximity to the researcher. High School girls who were 18 and over were used as a way of trying to minimise and emotional harm to the participants. The focus group discussions were robust. The study wanted to see if advertisements can be seen in social communication that young girls can use. A focus group guide was used as a data collection tool. The study found that while the study participants felt that advertisement was a marketing tool, it did offer a way to understand menstruation and the cultural themes around it

This concluding chapter will begin with summarising the contents of the previous chapters. It will show how this research has answered the research questions. The research questions were created from the research objectives and were relevant to the research topic

Each chapter had an objective to meet, which assisted the study to answer the research question. The conclusion will then summarise each chapter showcasing how the research study was conceptualised, analysed and what the findings of the research was. Below a summary if the study results will be summarised to show that the research questions were answered. This will take into consideration each chapter as well as how each chapter built on the last and how the research questions were answered. This chapter will conclude by demarcating the strengths and the limitations of the study and will give a brief suggestion for further recommendations for future research

Summary of Key Findings the research

Chapter 1 – The introduction

The introduction chapter created a foundation for which the study would built on. It did this by introducing menstruation and advertising as the variables that this dissertation will be researching. Menstruation is significant in a young girl's life as it signifies the transition from being a girl to a women (Ramathuba, 2015). Advertising was shown to be understood not only as a marketing tool but as a social communication (Leiss, et al., 2010).

The introduction provided a background for the stud where menstruation was first familiarised as more than a biological event. Menstruation is the onset of puberty (Committee Opinion No. 651, 2015) and culture signifies the transition from a girl to a woman. How a young women sees herself during this period can impact how they view menstruation for now until they are. Menstruation is a stigmatised event which leads to a lot of secrecy around it.

The introduction used two studies to showcase how menstruation is a taboo topic. The research studies were set in Limpopo, South Africa (Ramathuba, 2015) and London, England (O'Flynn 2006). Both studies uncovered that society tell young girls what menstruation means to them.

The challenges women experience due to lack of menstrual care was introduced in introduction. Once a girl has reached menarche she must learn how to use different menstrual care. Lack of menstrual care can lead to young girls missing days at school. UNICEF estimates that 1 in 10 (Rueckert,2015) girls miss school days due to their menstruation. Lack of access to adequate sanitation cause managing menstruation to become challenging for menstruation young girls.

The introduction touched on the research approach that assisted in answering the research questions. It spoke to the data collection which was focus groups and the theoretical and geographical location of the research. These topics were introduced with the help of research studies.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review discussed of menstruation and advertising. It used this by how the female body is highly policed. It is expected to be presented in a certain way that is socially acceptable. The main literature that informed the literature review was the Emily Martins work on how women's bodies are studied, *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies* as well as research conducted by UNICEF(2019).

The biases in how menstruation is reported. Female reproductive health and used Emily Martin's work whose research tackled how. The next section looked at the misconception of menstruation and Adolescent girls experiences of menstruation was the topic that was spoken about. Studies from India , South Africa were discussed and the studies found that

Cultural taboos around menstruation are fueled by lack of education around menstruation and the education around menstruation exasperates the taboo around menstruation. These topics were discussed using research studies that were conducted in South Africa (O'Sullivan et al, 2007). A lack of education around menstruation leads to a hinderance in healthcare. This is due to menstruation. Campaigns like #MeronAko (Mercado, 2019) provided schools with education around menstruation. The literature review went on to expand on menstrual health management and explored the how inadequate menstrual care led to missing school days and anxiety over spoiling your school clothes. The anxiety, taboo and stigma around menstruation was used by menstrual health product advertisements

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chapter was used to acquire the themes for the thematic theoretical framework. The themes were and concepts with the assistance of semiotics and the encoding/decoding model (Hall,1980). This model states that a can be understood in three ways the dominant hegemonic reading, the negotiated reading and the oppositional reading. This chapter discussed the cultural studies as it the broad discipline who's roots stems from studying marginalised groups (Hartley, 2002) and a study like this one that see's the personal as political

fits well under the cultural studies discipline. Advertisements create meaning by encoding signs and symbols in their text from the audience to decode. The next step the reproduction of meaning through the circuit of culture. Advertisements represent a dominant hegemonic reading and to understand the encoded reading a semiotic analysis conducted.

Chapter 4

Methodology

The methodology chapter delineated the qualitative research methods utilised in this research. The methodology section outlined the paradigm, the data collection method, sample and the ethical process that was needed to for the study. This study was a qualitative study that had an interpretive paradigm. Focus Groups were conducted as a means of data collection with the sample group. The sample was adolescent girls from Pinetown Girls High School and Maris Stella.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis

A textual analysis was conducted to understand the encoded message in the advertisement. Once the semiotic analysis was done a summary of the dominant hegemonic was conducted. Once the dominant reading was established the study used a theoretical thematic analysis to the theory. A coding matrix was created from the transcribed interviews. The results were reported, and the results were discussed

The results have been tabulated as a summary of the data that was found

Table 3

Interpretations of television advertisements for menstrual hygiene products	Negotiated Reading	They agreed with the
How are these interpretations related to the adolescent girls' experiences of menstruation within their cultural context?	Dominant	Agreed with the advertisement
How are these interpretations related to the adolescent	Negotiated	They agreed with stigma however felt that menstruation is a sisterhood

girls' experiences of using menstrual health products?		
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Limitations

This study was based on an adolescent group of girls from Durban and was qualitative. The participants attended all girls' schools, quintile 5 schools. Participants came from different background the school acts as a cultural world that they acclimatise too. The study had a small group of girls in each focus group. The findings in the study are relevant a small subset of adolescent girls. Conducting a similar study in a different geographic location, using a different data would yield a different set of outcomes

Recommendations for further Research

The study looked at television advertisements. A study that used a broader set of advertisements from different media could yield data that is richer. Conducting a study that would look at online platforms. The online platforms provide accurate and stigma free information on menstruation. While data prices may be a problem, it would be interesting to see if there would be any change to how they view menstruation once conducting the study.

This study utilised a small group of adolescent girls from quintile five schools. They did not experience the problems of access to menstrual health products. A quantitative study using a simple random sampling as well as a questionnaire as a data collection tool would acquire broader and be able to create a more representative map on how menstruation is viewed.

The advertisements used made no mention of menstruation or showed how to use the product. The recent advertisements that have been done by Libresse and Always that show blood unlike the research that was conducted in this study. Using advertisement that shows blood could impact the way that the advertisement is understood

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Appendices

Appendix 1

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Luyanda Makoba from from the University of KwaZulu Natal.
I am a masters student with the Centre for Communication and Media in Society (CCMS). My contact details are : 062 472 0733 or luyandamakoba@gmail.com

Your child is being invited to consider participating in a study that involves a focus group. The aim and purpose of this research is to understand how young girls decode menstrual hygiene product advertisements. The study is expected to enrol 5-7 learners from 2 schools in the eThekweni Municipality which is a possible total of 14 learners. It will involve 1 focus group in each school. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study is expected to be 45-60 min long focus group.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts:

1. It may bring up a topic that is taboo
2. It could make the participant feel uncomfortable speaking about this topic

We hope that the study will create the following benefits :

1. We hope that the study will create the following benefits:
2. A deeper understanding of how one views advertisements
3. A place to communicate about a subject that is usually taboo

4. An understanding of how communication through advertisements is perceived

The researcher must disclose in full any appropriate alternative procedures and treatment etc. that may serve as possible alternate options to study participation.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 062 472 0733 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this study is voluntary and the participants are welcome to withdraw at any point during the research process. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. There are no consequences for the participants should they decide to withdraw from the research process. Should the researcher feel that the participants are under psychological distress the researcher will stop the research process

The recordings from the focus groups will be transcribed by the researcher. The researcher will use pseudonyms for the participants in the study. The names of the participants will not be mentioned in the recording or in the transcriptions of the focus group. This will be done to ensure the identity of the participants is kept private. The recording of the focus groups will be kept by the researcher and their supervisor. Once the focus groups have been transcribed the researcher will delete the recordings.

CONSENT

I _____
have been informed about the study entitled “*The decoding of Libresse and Always Ultra sanitary pad adverts on television by post menarcheal female adolescents in the eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu Natal*” by Luyanda Makoba.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which will be a focus group..

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 062 472 0733 or email luyandamakoba@gmail.com

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

Appendix 2

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Demographic information (How old are you ? What grade are you in ?
2. Do you use the products advertised in these advertisements?
3. What do you like ?dislike about the advertisements
4. Does the tagline match with the entire advertisements
5. How do you feel when you watch these advertisements
6. What themes do they touch on ? Do you agree with how these themes/beliefs have been shown in advertisements
7. What topics do you think advertisements discuss/ touch on
8. Does the advertisement touch on any cultural or personal beliefs you may have on menstruation

Appendix 3



00,

13 August 2019

Ms Luyanda
Makoba
(207515107)
Applied Human
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Protocol reference number: OSS/0350/019M

Project title: The decoding of Libresse and Always Ultra sanitary pad adverts on television by post menarcheal female adolescents in the eThekweni Municipality

Full Approval

- Expedited Application In response to your application received on 04 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

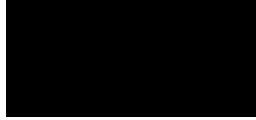
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical **clearance certificate is only valid** for a period of **3 years from** the date of issue. Thereafter

Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the

best with your study. Yours faithfully



Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/dd

Cc Supervisor: Dr Sarah Gibson
Cc Academic Leader Research:

Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli Cc
School Administrator: Ms Ayanda
Ntuli

**Humanities & Social Sciences
Research Ethics Committee**
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki
Building**

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: xi@ukzn.ac.za



Website: www.ukzn.ac.

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- Hoxha College Medical School



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063
Ref.:2/4/8/1665

Ms LO Makhoba

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Dear Ms Makhoba

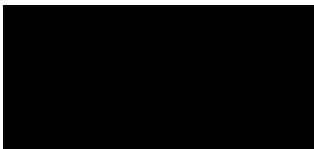
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT

**RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE
INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“THE DECODING OF LIBRESSE AND ALWAYS ULTRA SANITARYPAD ADVERTS ON TELEVISION BY POST MENARCHEAL FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN THE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU NATAL”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 16 October 2018 to 01 March 2021.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private BagX9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Umlazi District



Dr. EV Nzama

Always Ultra Lyrics

I check check

at the bus I check , check check

In the class I check , check check

Every hour I check, I check I check

When I walk I check, check check

I twist I check check check

I cover, I check, I hide I check

Every hour I check check

Check that always (said by teacher)

Check days are gone no check

Check days are gone

I study, I sit , I stand

No check

Eight, eight

No check

Eight, eight

No check, no check

Up to 8 hours long

On the bus, in the class

I study, I walk, I play

I dance, no stains, no check

Eight, eight

No check, no check

Eight, eight

No check, no check

Up to eight hours long

Eight, eight

Eight, eight

No check, no check

Up to eight hours long

Stay happy Always