An exploration of black South African women's negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces

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Declaration

I, Andile Brenda Moyo, declare that the thesis titled: **An exploration of black South African women's negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces** is my own work and has not been previously submitted.

All the sources used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Abstract

South Africa has continued to be divided along racial, gender, and class lines, even since the introduction of democracy. This has resulted in many black African women being marginalised and oppressed at work and in society. A fundamental component of decent work is equal opportunity and treatment in the labour market. Sadly, additional barriers still prevent women from accessing the workforce in South Africa and elsewhere. Once employed, black women continue to face difficulties. This paper explores how black South African women negotiate their gender and racial identities while working in predominantly white work places. The Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) provides the theoretical basis for this study and allows the researcher to explore participants' interactions with co-workers and their professional activities in white-dominated workplaces. The study uses an interpretive paradigm-based, qualitative study methodology. The participants in the study were seven black South African women with workplace experience ranging from one year to eight years. The findings of this investigation significantly show the negative experiences black women undergo in predominantly white work spaces. The findings of this study may be used to create intervention programmes that encourage black women who want to join the changing workforce to feel good about themselves and to succeed professionally and personally.

List OF Acronyms

B-BBEE: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

CGE: Commission for Gender Equality

CEE: Commission for Employment Equity

EEA: Employment Equity Act of 1999

EAP: Economically Active Population

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

SBW:Strong Black woman

Contextual Definitions of Terms

Black women: Refers to a group of persons in this study who share cultural and historical experiences that define an indigenous African origin, including distinctive personal narratives or discourses of being black in South Africa.

White people: Refers to a term used to differentiate people racially. In this case, the term refers to the population of Caucasian origin.

White space: Refers to environments where there are few black people and where culture is used to advance white racial identity.

Professional: An individual with a minimum undergraduate university degree who has a paying occupation in a private organisation.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A workplace is a place where black women are likely to encounter various stereotypes related to their racial and gender identities. Historically, black women have been stereotyped as lazy and incompetent. These "stereotypes about the character and/or competency of black women employees that persist, whether conscious or unconscious, and they cause white colleagues to view black women as significant risks, which results in unfavourable and differential treatment" (Hall et al., 2012, p.226.). As a result, black women feel obliged to negotiate their identities or shift in an attempt to shatter the stereotypes such as 'the lazy, social grant-dependent mother who would rather not work at all', or the unqualified 'token' who obtained her job as a result of the BBBEE quota system.

Dickens (2014, p. 25) states that "working while being a black woman in a predominantly white workspace may elicit the accusation of being angry and difficult, and many black women feel pressured in their behaviour and speech to represent all Black people as a race". According to Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2009), some black women negotiate their identities in the workplace by ignoring the codes of sisterhood that commonly bond black women. Instead, they may distance themselves from those relationships or adopt a more neutral stance to put their white colleagues at ease. Irrespective of the fact that whites still have the most management and economic power, they feel threatened (Booysen,2007). Furthermore, as illustrated, one of the struggles black women face in predominantly white environments is noted in a study by Booysen, who states that "Black women under-perform because the white women refuse to train a black person and support them through the process" (2007, p. 16).

1.2 Background to the Study

Given the uniquely painful legacy of apartheid and segregation, black women have always had to labour extraordinarily hard and continue to do so. Black women have experienced and continue to experience subjugation because of their race, as well as their gender and class (Pala, 2005). As a result, the experiences and struggles of black women are typically unique and separate from those of white women and other women of colour. South Africa has a long history of institutional racism in the workplace, and studies demonstrate that this continues to shape many, if not most, facets of life for black women, including the workplace (Booysen,

2007). White-dominated workplaces, particularly, are a burden and challenge for black women. As a result, black women have had to adopt identity negotiation techniques to adapt as they navigate their black and female identities in these settings (Dickens, 2014).

Black women shift or negotiate their black and female identities in white spaces, often engaging in a grown-up game of 'pretend' as they change their selves, behaviours, attitudes, and postures to meet the cultural codes of predominantly white and male workplaces (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2009). While much of the literature in South Africa addresses the legacy of racism in South Africa, little research has recorded the continued practice of institutional racism in workplaces and the experiences of black women in these settings. Therefore, this research sought to build on this gap in knowledge by exploring the experiences of black women as they navigate predominantly white workplaces and how they negotiate their black and female identities in these environments.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although black women have progressed in attaining higher status positions in the professions, this was not the case previously. During apartheid, workplaces were regulated by formal segregation. This meant no interaction as equals between black people and other racial groups. This system created the notion of 'white space'. 'White spaces' are environments marked "overwhelmingly [by] white people, and where black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalised when present" (Anderson, 2015, p. 1). During apartheid, numerous laws were passed, for example, to control the number of 'non-whites' migrating into white areas to preserve white space. Among these were the "Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act No. 25 of 1945, the Bantu Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act No. 67 of 1952, and the Bantu Resettlement Act No. 19 of 1954" (Nolde, 1991). As a result, most black women had to obtain permits for both residing and working in white areas, experiencing significant challenges in obtaining remunerative work in white areas.

Many economically active black women worked as labourers on farms, mostly owned by whites, or as domestic servants in white households. The number of women who were employed in the professions which were granted to black people at that time, specifically teaching and nursing, were alarmingly small, although:

> "among these women, many were not necessarily illiterate and most of them were reasonably educated women who had been forced out of towns and repatriated or

> resettled in the reserves, the apartheid system denied them an opportunity to pursue any career" (Thompson, 2001, p. 45).

In addition, black women performing the same work as white women did not receive the same payment. Thus, the history of employment for black women in South Africa portrays significant subjugation and inequality as they "constituted the most oppressed group of workers in our labour force and were the most displaced and deprived people" (Maree, 2010, p. 21).

Black women's experiences in current post-apartheid South Africa reflect the continued invisibility and discrimination, as they are constantly undermined for both their gender and race. According to Tolla (2020), young black females stand a higher chance of being discriminated against than young black males in the South African workspace. According to Tolla (2020):

> "Some of the challenges faced by black women in predominantly white corporate spaces include enduring subtle and overt forms of racism examples include shouting, deliberately, refusing to assist black colleagues when they seek help, passing belittling and condescending remarks, not giving constructive criticism, and making them do work but refusing to credit them which is a painful reminder of the long history of black women as slaves and servants" (p. 1).

Furthermore, Chro-South Africa (2019) states that, although many black women might want to address challenging issues that they face, they choose not to speak up due to a fear of how they will be perceived and a belief that this will put their professional relationships at risk. Black women have to negotiate their battles carefully, deciding which encounters to confront versus which to let go of for their mental health and employment security. For Tapela (2018, p. 1), "[m]any black women facing challenges in work rarely voice their discontent at discriminatory treatment from colleagues because of the negative impact it would have on their job".

According to Booysen (2007), white people are showing high levels of social identity anxiety due to their loss of power and the changes in South Africa. On the contrary, Hall et al. (2012) reported that black women constantly feel like they are under a microscope and that their white superiors and co-workers constantly search for behaviours that would confirm their stereotypical beliefs about black women in the workplace. As a result, black women must constantly manage their behaviour and language according to every conversation, meeting, and

task (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2009). This constant alternation of identity makes them feel alienated in the workplace and is a source of stress. The process of altering one's identity has been proven exhausting, dehumanising, and strenuous for an individual's psyche, and enduring these outright inequities daily takes a great toll on black women's careers, personal lives, and health (Dickens,2014). In addition, this constant internal process of identity negotiation slowly chips away at their sense of self and wholeness.

1.4 Rationale

According to Jaga et al. (2018, p. 435), "[b]lack women professionals now form the fastest growing segment of the South African workforce, because of equity legislation and improved access to education and work opportunities; however, their efforts are met with several challenges". The "Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill advocates for equal participation of women in the economy and for equal representation of women in decision-making positions in both the private and public sectors" (Jaga et al., 2018, p. 436). Nevertheless, in spite of all these proactive strides by the state, black women in South Africa are not yet integrated into professional workplaces (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

Over the past decade, "South African society has undergone a major racial incorporation process, during which large numbers of black women have made their way from urban menial-paying jobs to corporate professional jobs previously occupied only by whites" (Booysen, 2007, p. 8). The South African government promoted this transition through a number of strategies and policies; one of the policies is Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) (Booysen, 2007). BBBEE "is a pragmatic growth strategy to realise the country's full potential by bringing the black majority into the economic mainstream" **(**Booysen, 2007. p. 10)**.** Despite the fact that the introduction of this strategy and the government's other declared intentions, inequality in the occupational space has remained and increased since 1994 (Booysen, 2007). Furthermore, in spite of the various policies put in place, white people, especially white males, still dominate management positions, and black women remain the most under-represented at all levels of management (Booysen, 2007). Overall, black females continue to remain the most vulnerable group in society. The "2019 fourth quarter labour force survey revealed that at least 30.9% of black women were unemployed; this figure was higher compared to their male counterparts who, according to the Statistics SA, currently at 27.7%" (Rogan & Skinner, 2019, p. 1).

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the experiences of black women working in predominantly white workspaces.
2. To explore the identity negotiation of the black women's identity and well-being.

1.6 Research questions

1. What are the experiences of black women working in predominantly white workplaces?
2. How do black females negotiate their identities in predominantly white workplaces?

1.7 Purpose of the Study

The concept of identity is based on the importance of understanding individuals as situated in social interaction and rooted within the society. For Stets and Serpe (2013, p. 2):

> "Identity is generally considered to be a shared set of meanings that define individuals in specific roles in society and as well as members of specific groups in society, and as persons having certain characteristics that make them unique from others".

Stets and Serpe (2013) state that individuals have multiple identities. Black females often find themselves in a disadvantaged position in multiple ways: as blacks, they are continuously racially prejudiced, and as females, they are also victimised on sexual and class grounds. Consequently, because of these experiences, black women are often on a quest to 'survive' in various environments and, as a result, tend to adopt multiple identities through which they attach different meanings in relation to the each context they find themselves and manage them accordingly (Dickens, 2014). This is referred to as "identity negotiation, a strategy that individuals, particularly those of colour, in intercultural settings adopt as they navigate environments and interactions where they are the minority" (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 1).

A study conducted by Dickens (2014) revealed that, amongst many other challenges faced by black women working in predominantly white spaces, they felt that they were expected to change who they were to fit in. Many black women felt like they were invisible in their workspace; consequently, this meant being relegated to narrow, limiting, unimportant tasks that offered few opportunities for growth and advancement.

According to Dickens (2014), identity negotiation is a process whereby individuals alter their actions, speech, and appearance to conform to cultural norms in a given environment. This process involves a change in behavioural patterns and other aspects that compose a person's sense of self (Dickens, 2014). Swann and Bosson (2008) state that the survival of an individual's identity depends on numerous factors such as social interactions and drives; therefore, individuals who enjoy a steady supply of nourishment for their identities will retain those identities, and those who repeatedly fail to receive such nourishment will ultimately relinquish those identities or assume new acceptable identities. Due to the subjugation of the identities of black women in South Africa under colonialism and apartheid, they have had to negotiate their identities to assist them in effortlessly blending into various social and professional settings (Hall & Nilep, 2015).

1.8 Outline of Chapters

In this section, the researcher provides an overview of the chapters to follow in this research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The researcher provides a broad overview of what this research study entails. The rationale and background information that is related to the topic are highlighted. The researcher provides the aims, objectives, and research questions that guided this project. The purpose of the study is discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter consists of a review of the current literature on the given topic. Lastly, the Identity Negotiation Theory is outlined as the theoretical framework for the research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 3 focuses on the research paradigm, method, and design that were used in this study. The researcher discusses in detail the steps that were followed for data collection and documentation. The process of how the data were analysed, according to the six thematic steps by Braun and Clarke (2013), and interpreted is explained. The ethical considerations that were adhered to throughout the process are outlined.

Chapter 4: Findings of the Study

The researcher presents the themes and sub-themes derived from the data collection and analysis stage.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Findings

The research compares the study findings to those in the existing literature by providing a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This is the dissertation's final chapter, wherein the researcher outlines the findings and highlights the contributing factors that aided her research findings.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature on how black women view their racial and gender identities and how these identities are negotiated in professional settings. The review of the literature is pertinent to the study to explain why and how black women manage their identities in predominantly white work settings. In order to understand the aspects that contribute to black women's self-concept construction in the workplace, the evaluation of the literature first provides statistics about black women in the South African workforce. The theoretical foundation for understanding the growth of black women's self-concept is outlined in the parts that follow, along with information on how black women negotiate their identities.

2.2 Women's Movement from the Home to the Workplace

In South Africa, women have typically performed dual roles as breadwinners and carers, while displaying great fortitude, commitment, and love. They have overcome centuries of tyranny to the point that they now run businesses and media sources. After years of fighting society's racial and sexist prejudices, hostilities, and unimaginable abuse, these women now serve in military and government positions, as well as provide for families (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). Black women were only permitted to work in low-paying fields such as domestic work and odd occupations in the manufacturing industry, all of which other racial groups avoided (Branch, 2011). Nevertheless, more and more black women can now find greater employment opportunities; despite the hard realities of low-wage work (with its inherent instability and the limited opportunities for advancement over time) and the battle to make ends meet, many black women today, as in the past, remain committed to the goal of self-sufficiency (Smith & Nkomo, 2021).

The status quo is being challenged by South African female corporate executives. These women are reshaping the workplace with their fearlessness, creativity, and wisdom. According to Forbes magazine, the previous chairperson of ArcelorMittal South Africa, Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita, was ranked seventh among the most influential black women in the world; she was surrounded by the likes of Oprah Winfrey, Beyoncé Knowles, and Michelle Obama (Forbes Africa, 2013). She has worked in the financial services, mining, information technology, and telecommunications industries in executive and board-level roles (Forbes

Africa, 2013). Likewise, Ntombozuko Motloung is in charge of Cisco's networking academy as the company's Chief Solutions Engineer in South Africa. She is in charge of creating a network of mentors who will support aspiring technology workers. Motloung overcame extreme poverty to concentrate on and pursue a career in education, technical management and information technology (Goldstuck, 2019).

2.3 Black Women's Move from Unskilled Labour to Professional Spaces in SA

Discrimination against people based on race and gender has a long history in South Africa. One instance of this discrimination is found in the inadequate legal protections for black South African women. As a result, South Africa passed several laws guaranteeing everyone's rights and removing obstacles to realising equity and equality in the workplace. In an effort to address the systemic historical discrimination against black African women in the workplace, South Africa established the Employment Equity Act (EEA) 55 of 1998 (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). When the EEA was passed in 1998, it was intended for South Africa's labour force to represent the nation's demographics. The EEA was implemented in South Africa with the goal of enforcing transformation because it was clear that businesses would not empower enough black employees voluntarily. In essence, it was anticipated that the EEA would contribute to the development of an inclusive workplace where black African women would be able to enjoy equal benefits to those enjoyed by their male counterparts.

Since the introduction of the revisions, efforts have been made to create a workforce that is more inclusive, varied, and demographically representative; yet, in terms of organisational changes and modifications to legal requirements, these improvements appear to be relatively superficial (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021b). Organisations are mandated by legislation to provide EEA reports regularly, yet, in post-apartheid South Africa, the change seems to be slow (Mayer et al., 2019). Racial quotas do not reflect the demographic makeup of society, and larger organisations do not implement demographic representation.

Additionally, employee belief systems against EEA rules apparently impede their efficacy in organisations. Beneficiaries of EEA programmes worry that, if nominated to designated posts, they may be marginalised, fall prey to white manipulation(Mayer et al., 2019). The 'stigmatisation' argument demonstrates that professionals value individual merit and detest EEA's 'less qualified' and 'incompetent' labels. Employees of formerly disadvantaged groups fear retaliation from whites, loss of standards, punitive taxation, and limitations on their career

options, in addition to questioning EEA's moral and political legitimacy (Mayer et al., 2019). Despite the fact that EEA and BBBEE are strategies used to address the injustices committed during apartheid, skilled workers believe they are employing people who are unable to do the work demanded of them (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). In general, employees encounter victimisation, lack of training and growth, and reverse discrimination and racism (Mayer et al., 2019). In addition, the EEA practices are also connected to racism, unfair treatment, and reverse discrimination.

Race-based wage disparities increased even though apartheid was coming to an end, but the widening racial wage disparity did not stop growing until 2005 (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021b). Therefore, research indicates that affirmative action programmes have had little impact, with white men continuing to dominate highly skilled occupations and racial wage inequalities staying greater than in 1997 (Mayer et al., 2019). The average racial wage disparity, perceived company costs, and a disincentive for investment and labour productivity are among the things that existing empirical research suggests that the effects of, particularly the first policy, have been minimal to negligible (Burger et al., 2016).

The findings from Statistics South Africa (2021) indicate that the unemployment rate among women was 36.8% in the second quarter of 2021, compared to 32.4% among men. During this time, the unemployment rate for black African women was 41.0%, compared to 8.2% for white women, 22.4% for Asian/Indian women, and 29.9% for women of other races (Statistics South Africa, 2021). Moreover, to ascertain the obstacles preventing the advancement of black women to managerial levels in the private sector, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) investigations were launched. Section 9 of the Constitution, which calls on the private sector to end racial and gender discrimination, served as the foundation for these investigations (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a).

The following conclusions and suggestions to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE). The department of justice agreed with the commission that black women are under-represented in senior management (CGE, 2021). To prepare for reviewing the Departmental Employment Equity Plan (EE Plan), which was set to expire on June 30, 2020, the department conducted a workforce analysis in February 2020. According to the findings, African women are under-represented at senior management levels (CGE, 2021). Furthermore, Statistics South Africa indicates that, using the targets for

the economically active population (EAP), the EAP targets are for women are 36.2% and African women are at 27%, with the 50/50 target of women not being generally attained (CGE, 2021).

In addition, conclusions from the CEE 2021/2022 investigations indicated that top management positions from 2019 to 2021 were assigned to:

> 'white and Indian population groups, whether male or female, and they were all represented well beyond their Economically Active Population (EAP) range as opposed to the African population group, which was significantly underrepresented in terms of males and females at the top management level" (CEE, 2021/2022, p. 24)

Overall, whites appear to be the most sought-after racial and ethnic groups for employment in top management positions and for promotions and skill development in those positions.

Table 1

Top management by population group

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Foreign National
2019	15.2%	5.6%	10.3%	65.6%	3.3%
2020	15.8%	5.7%	10.6%	64.7%	3.1%
2021	17.0%	5.9%	10.9%	63.2%	3.0%

Table 1 demonstrates that 'non-white' groups continued to be under-represented in top management positions from 2019 to 2021, while the white population continues to be over-represented. It has been noted that black South African women are poorly represented in businesses, despite the EEA's requirement for equitable representation at all occupational levels (CEE, 2021/2022).

Additional CEE research reveals a pattern of white male over-representation in most business types at the top management level. Furthermore, it appears that white people, both men and women, at this occupational level are preferred by the business sector and educational institutions' top management level workforce profile by industry, population, and gender (CEE, 2021/2022). There is evidence that the white population group is over-represented across all occupational levels, and especially, white men appear to be the favoured demographic in most economy sectors (CEE, 2021/2022). There is an indication that white men and women

still dominate management positions in the private sector, excluding black African women, who make up the majority in South Africa (Matotoka & Odeku,2021a). This under-representation of black women reaffirms the view that there has been little transformation for several years, even post-democracy, to reflect the demographics of South Africa.

The Southern Gauteng High Court rendered a landmark decision in Chowan v. Associated Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd., illustrating the bias black women encounter in the workplace regardless of their educational backgrounds (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021b). It was determined that the respondent, the company's CEO, infringed on the applicant's (a female employee) right to dignity in 2018 by referring to the employee in question:

> "…a female, employment equity, technically competent, they would like to keep her, but if she wants to go, she must go; others have left this management and done better outside the company" (Chowan v Associated Motor Holdings, 2018, p.9.)

This indicates that women's access to justice, impartiality, and fairness in the workplace continues to be elusive; some may contend that, although the issue of fairness toward women is developing, behaviour without favouritism or discrimination is yet to become the norm (Mayer, 2017). In this regard, Jaga et al. (2018) state that it is crucial to guarantee the inclusion of South African women and youth in decision-making, as inclusivity and women's representation in top leadership structures are issues of equity and fairness, efficiency, and accountability.The CGE is tasked with evaluating how state and non-state institutions are carrying out the constitutional obligation to advance gender equality in South Africa by giving equal weight to the needs of women and young people (CGE, 2022). The GCE's principal goals are to remove all types of gender inequality and oppression, to advance respect for gender equality, and to carry out its purpose; the commission participates in various activities, including policy formation, legislative oversight, and litigation (Phaswana, 2021). This amply reveals the discrimination against women in the workplace and the prevalent double standards that exist. To achieve equity, the government can enact laws and demand certain practices. However, unless they are applied and there are repercussions for breaking them, these rules and policies are useless.

2.3 The Typical Role of Women in Post-Apartheid SA

Although tied to biological sex, gender is a social construct; the social norms linked with biological sex are referred to as gender and encompass all facets of one's lived experience, including roles, behaviour, appearance, cognition, and emotion (Yacob-Haliso & Falola, 2021). Due to the characteristics of gendered relations that have been previously described, there are clear power disparities between men and women regarding access to resources and opportunities (Anyidoho, 2021).

2.3.1 Black Women in the Home

Yacob-Haliso and Falola (2021) state that patriarchy is a societal structure centred on male dominance, privilege, and control, which is institutionalised in political, legal, and economic institutions and procedures. Patriarchy is based on the presumption that men and women are different, and it portrays men as more deserving of, and capable of keeping, power (Anyidoho, 2021). Thus, patriarchy indicates that younger females are inferior to their male counterparts. As such, the patriarchal culture in South Africa has not changed (Yacob-Haliso & Falola, 2021). In a patriarchal culture, men dominate both the household and the larger society; due to their decision-making and control over how society is structured, men are dominant and dominate women.

In general, women had to struggle against the authority and power of men in this way, and as a result, women were typically given second-class treatment in most households. They are tasked with the responsibility of caring for the house, preparing meals, and watching over the children while complying with their husbands' expectations (South African History Archive [SAHA], 2022). Consequently, most of the time, women are still frequently the victims of severe types of domestic violence without any form of justice (SAHA, 2022). Black women in South Africa, however, have historically been the primary parents and guardians of their young; women were left to take care of the homestead in rural areas, particularly beginning in the early 20th century when males relocated to the cities to work as migrant labourers in the mines (Lalthapersad, 2003). While working in the fields to grow food for their family, they cared for their children. They frequently walked for a significant portion of the day to get water, because their rural villages lacked a source, and they were compelled to carry out this task in increasingly trying circumstances without the assistance of men (SAHA, 2022).

2.3.2 Black Women in the Community

In South Africa, women continue to face poverty, as they are more likely than men to live in poverty; this is not surprising given that women have lower rates of paid work and more responsibilities in the home (Gibbons et al., 2017). Many black women today still feel profoundly unhappy about their place in society (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2009). This process of creating invisibility results in misrecognition that denies the humanity of its black targets; the failure to recognise someone else indicates a serious lack of respect, and it implies, for the misrecognised, a 'loss of identity' and a denial of a place in the social world (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2009).

St Jean and Feagin (2015) narrate that black women often note that they do not get full recognition and respect from many of the whites with whom they deal in the workplace and a variety of other institutional settings, both relatively public and private. White misrecognition of black women and men is very threatening and damaging, for it signals out-of-place-ness and self-worthlessness to its targets (St Jean, & Feagin, 2015). However, black women have had to face multiple oppressions tied to race, sex, and class. Unlike the history of most Caucasian women, from the apartheid era, many black women have had to be financially self-reliant and, particularly in the latter twentieth century, African women have often been the primary provider for their children (St Jean, & Feagin, 2015). Therefore, there is an indication that the lives of South African Black women are marked by intersectionality.

This concept indicates how systemic injustices and socio-economic inequalities manifest on several levels (Lekgau, 2021). Black women, in particular, still have numerous difficulties in society; their experiences in the areas of education, employment, and family vary according to economic level, race, ethnicity, age, living in a rural or urban area, and state of health (Gibbons et al., 2017). These difficulties are often overlooked, especially when men still hold positions of authority in government and corporate organisations, which are predominately male (Lekgau, 2021).

2.3.3 Black Women in the Workplace

According to the CGE (2021/2022, p. 6), "[t], ransformation in the workplace is a process to change the racial, gender, and economic status in the workplace to reflect the South African population demographics". Transformation in the workplace involves changing programmes, policies, practices, and initiatives to ensure that all employees who have been disenfranchised

due to past apartheid practices and patriarchy enjoy equal opportunities, fair treatment, respect, and dignity (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a).
Statistics South Africa (2022) indicates that regardless of race, men are more likely to be in paid employment than women. Still, women are more likely to be engaged in unpaid labour, according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the second quarter of 2021.

Black women are stigmatised and sexualised in representations because they are structurally viewed as having 'lower status' identities (Mayer, 2017). In South African workplaces, tense, ambivalent, and contradictory identities are developed that are more closely related to racial group membership and belonging than to individualised and personal characteristics (Mayer, 2017). The above demonstrates that workplace attitudes toward racial and gender group membership have not yet transformed.

Everyone has a right to equal protection under the law and should be treated equally before the law, according to Section 9(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The State is also prohibited from unfairly discriminating against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth, according to Section 9(3) of the Constitution (CGE, 2021/2022). This is key as black African women are vulnerable and susceptible to economic exclusion and exclusion from participation in decision-making positions in the workplace (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021b). White people have more resources and definitional power to uphold discriminatory practices, policies, and ideologies in occupations where white people predominate. Male-dominated and gender-biased management practices may be to blame for the ongoing lack of visible and practical strategies to empower women in organisations (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Lack of communication and a lack of a common understanding of the EEA, a dominant white male organizational culture, a lack of leadership commitment, employee retention of black employees, the influence of white fear, and a lack of meaningful engagement of white male employees in EEA implementation are all obstacles to effective EEA implementation (Mayer et al., 2019). Additionally, the EEA has limitations in maximising the potential of a diverse workforce, and efficient succession planning is required (Mayer et al., 2019).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The Identity Negotiation Theory by Stella Ting-Toomey was introduced in the late 1980s; the theory posits that all individuals, regardless of cultural beliefs, desire positive identity affirmation in numerous communication settings. Identity Negotiation Theory emphasises particular identity domains that influence people's everyday interactions (Ting-Toomey, 2015). This theory is applicable to the study of black women in predominantly white spaces as they use identity negotiation as a strategy to guide themselves into acceptable behaviour. In this regard, the assumptions posited by Ting-Toomey (2015), which explain the process of identity negotiation, have been converted into three and used to structure this literature review.

2.4.1 Creating Identity through Symbolic Communication

According to Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 4), "[t]he core dynamics of people's group membership and personal identities are created through symbolic communication with others". Through the process of enculturation, individuals in all cultures develop their reflecting self-images, including cultural identification and ethnic identity. The values, customs, and primary symbols of their respective cultural and ethnic groups are acquired through the content of their family, cultural, and ethnic socialisation experiences (Gudykunst, 2005). Therefore, when communicating with people from different cultures, their group- and person-based identities influence their thinking, emotions, and communication styles through the identity content and salience levels.

Human communication is a form of social connection and is a necessary component of our daily lives. It is the process of a sender and a receiver producing, exchanging, and sharing ideas, information, opinions, facts, feelings, and experiences (Abuarqoub, 2019). Individuals, groups, societies, and nations rely on communication to exist and survive. With that being said, language is the most widely used communication and is one of the critical elements that assist people in establishing relationships (Abuarqoub, 2019). Not only is language a tool for communication, but it is also widely recognised as an essential element of one's national identity. Hence, it becomes one of the major factors used to categorise others. In this regard, Harzing et al. (2008) asserts that language is possibly more important than ethnicity, as it is an acquired characteristic and provides a more robust indication of a person's identity.

According to Ting-Toomey(1999), individual ideas of oneself and others are developed through symbolic communication with others. This introspective perspective of oneself is made up of both self-conceptions obtained from individual comparisons and self-conceptions derived from group membership (social identities); it is primarily regulated by culture (personal identities) (Ting-Toomey, 1999). One's identity is ultimately shaped by these self-reflective perceptions of oneself that result from symbolic interaction with others. Identity Negotiation Theory postulates that people desire their self-image to be positively evaluated by others in any social engagement (McGill, 2016).

Identity Negotiation Theory posits that intercultural communication processes can be explained by one's identity or by reflecting on self-concept (Ting-Toomey, 2015). In this regard, mindful communication and identifying important identity concerns in cross-cultural interactions are critical in the workplace. Gudykunst (2005) states people from all cultures share the same fundamental demands for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency in their interpersonal communications. The workforce has evolved into a diversified, multicultural set of workers in today's fast-paced world. As such, it is critical to recognise the ever-increasing workforce language diversity, as communication impacts all parts of work and is critical in the workplace. Growth in the workplace would become an uphill battle if employees did not communicate effectively (Emuze & James, 2013).

The quality of and access to services for a significant percentage of the population in South Africa (SA) continue to be hampered by the language barrier. Abuarqoub (2019) states that the number of words with many meanings creates language or semantic barriers when a sender and a receiver try to communicate in a language in which neither is fluent. As a result, it is not always feasible to communicate effectively. Misaki (2017, p. 1) argues that "[l]anguage barriers usually occur when two people who speak different languages cannot understand one another, and there is a breakdown in language and communication". A total of eleven official languages are recognised in South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The defence of language usage and choice are conspicuously addressed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa from 1996 under Section 6, which also contains provisions relating to the state's duties to conserve (and, in the case of the indigenous languages, to encourage) their usage.

2.4.2 Basic Motivation Needs for Identity Security, Inclusion, and Predictability

A group comprises two or more people who are socially associated with one another; who is in the group and who is not depends on the connections between the individuals. In a psychological sense, a group establishes borders between those acknowledged as members and those considered outsiders (Forsyth, 2018):

> "Group dynamics, then, are the influential interpersonal processes that occur in and between groups over time. These processes not only determine how members relate to and engage with one another, but they also determine the group's inherent nature and trajectory: the actions the group takes, how it responds to its environment, and what it achieves" (Forsyth, 2018, p. 32)

Individuals and society as a whole are connected through groups. Under their acceptance and support, groups give their members a sense of belonging and serve as a source of pride and respect, and from a motivational standpoint, groups are a practical way to meet psychological needs (Forsyth, 2018). Emotions often influence a person's desire to belong to a group rather than remain alone, and despite the fact that a group member is capable of existing separately from the group, the drive to fit in is typically stronger than the desire to avoid being influenced by others.

Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 4 states, "[i]ndividuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and individual-based identity levels". Due to a perceived threat or dread in a culturally alien situation, people frequently feel insecure or emotionally vulnerable. Individuals, on the other hand, feel emotionally secure in a setting that is known to them. Therefore, identity security refers to the level of emotional security pertaining to one's feeling of group-based membership and person-based identities in a certain cultural setting since emotional concerns are directly related to self-concept or identity difficulties (Gudykunst, 2005).

Gudykunst (2005) further states that identity vulnerability depends on how concerned or conflicted one is about group and individual-based identity issues. Most people will inevitably revert to their accustomed ethnocentric nets or routines and remove their stereotypical lens to more effectively adapt to a culturally new situation (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Nevertheless, an increased amount of emotional security will result in tight ethnocentrism, and,

on the contrary side, an increased amount of emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will result in fear of outgroups or strangers; as a result, a white colleague who holds stereotypes about black women might make the workplace less inviting in an attempt protect their white space (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019).

In addition, black African women have experienced discrimination on the basis of race, gender, *and* class, more excessively than women from other racial groupings. They are more prone to additional exclusion in the workplace because of this distinguishing characteristic (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). Black women continued to be treated as second-class citizens who experienced racial and sexist discrimination, despite the post-apartheid Constitution serving as a framework to redress prior unfair discrimination (Mayer, 2017). Rosenthal and Lobel (2016) further express that most studies on stereotypes have concentrated on single identities, including those of minority racial or ethnic groups or gender groups. However, Rosenthal and Lobel (2016) posit that numerous societal preconceptions, such as those relating to race or ethnicity and gender, are only applicable when several identities are present.

Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 5) argues "[p]eople often feel included when their desired group membership identities are positively endorsed, and they experience differentiation when their desired group membership identities are stigmatized". Therefore, this explains why black women tend to try to carry themselves in a manner deemed appropriate for white environments to avoid stigmatisation. The terms 'identity inclusion' and 'differentiation assumption' allude to problems with membership-based boundary upkeep (Gudykunst, 2005). The degree of individuals' perceived closeness (spatial proximity) to their group's ingroups and outgroups is conceptualised as identity inclusion (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Therefore, self-image may be linked to several emotionally important group membership categories, which may be a problem with maintaining ingroup/outgroup boundaries (female and black person). The degree of distance people feel from members of their own ingroup or outgroup while regulating group boundaries is known as identity differentiation (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

According to Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018), being mindful can help to meet demands for intergroup distinction and ingroup inclusion; when compared favourably to other important social/cultural groups, one's prominent ingroup does well. On the other hand, if one's conspicuous ingroup compares poorly, one would pick a different course of action. Options like this include altering one's identifying group (if possible), altering the comparing criteria

and dimensions, reinforcing one's group worth, or degrading the comparative group. Too much group-based inclusion may make people feel unwelcome or excluded; identity demands adequate inclusion and distinction exist as dualistic incentives to the intergroup communication processes (Gudykunst, 2005).

Stereotypes are shaped by the status as well as the competitiveness of the outgroup. Even if stereotypes reflect some reality, they can nonetheless result in erroneous generalisations about the entire group and neglect other significant facts about people, which can have several unfavourable effects (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016). Consciously or unintentionally, stereotypes can influence how people see and act toward others, and their decision-making, including decisions about societal policies, is connected to stereotypes. Greater hostility to affirmative action for black women has been linked to an endorsement of misconceptions about black women's sense of responsibility. Stereotypes and preconceptions have significant repercussions in a variety of spheres of life. Negative stereotypes do not only affect their targets through the discriminatory behaviours of people holding these stereotypes, but harmful stereotypes can affect their targets even before being translated into behaviour (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019)

Individuals tend to experience "interaction predictability when communicating with culturally familiar others and interaction unpredictability when communicating with culturally unfamiliar others" (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 5). Predictability exists when a person can forecast when and how an event will unfold; a more exact definition of predictability is when an event's likelihood of occurrence is higher under one set of conditions than under another (Miller, 1981). People choose predictability over unpredictability and exhibit less anticipatory arousal and impact arousal when things are predictable. Because predictability allows an individual to take action that modifies or lessens the impact of the occurrence, it lessens stress; when an incident happens suddenly (unpredictability), it is impossible to prepare in time (Miller, 1981).

According to this assumption, a trustworthy interaction atmosphere is created to the extent that a person perceives identity predictability when dealing with known persons. When someone encounters interaction uncertainty or unpredictability, anxiety sets in, and a defensive interaction atmosphere may develop (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). People experience identity trust when interacting with familiar people because norms are as expected and routines take place frequently. In contrast, when interacting with strangers, people experience identity

awkwardness or estrangement because behaviours like non-verbal violations take place frequently and intrusively (Gudykunst, 2005). This is the opposite for black women who work in predominantly white places since they are in unfamiliar cultural situations (Ting-Toomey, 2015). The lack of interaction predictability tends to lead to less trust in these women, and they become rigidified stereotyped categories.

Women have historically been compelled to cross boundaries and break down barriers to succeed in the workplace because organisations have historically been built to benefit white males. Given that white males have traditionally occupied the majority of leadership and professional roles in organisations, white male behaviour is instinctively accepted as the standard that all employees, especially leaders, aspire to (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

"Individuals tend to desire interpersonal connection via meaningful close relationships and experience identity autonomy when they experience relationship separations; meaningful intercultural-interpersonal relationships can create additional emotional security and trust in the cultural strangers" (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 5). This presumption refers to the theme pair of identity autonomy and identity connection. Identity autonomy-connection is categorised as a boundary regulation issue in interpersonal relationships. Hence concepts like autonomy and connectedness are interpreted and assessed in light of cultural ideals like individualism and collectivism (Gudykunst, 2005). An in-depth understanding of the cultural, ethnic, gender, and relational value orientations that define the themes of autonomy and connectedness may be beneficial for an individual (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Additionally, Gudykunst (2005) states that paying close attention to the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns used by members of various individualistic, collectivistic, and hybrid cultural groupings is vital.

Individuals tend to experience "identity consistency in repeated cultural routines in a familiar cultural environment, and they tend to experience identity change and transformation in a new or unfamiliar cultural environment" (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 5). Identity consistency is the idea of continuity or stability of one's identity across time, as manifested in recurring daily habits or well-known cultural and ethnic interaction rituals (Gudykunst, 2005). On the other hand, identity transformation refers to a feeling of displacement and stretching in the experiences of spiralling cross-border intercultural encounters (Gudykunst, 2005).

Black women's identity-change procedures can range from subtle to overt changes. Acculturation is the process by which newcomers are conditioned over the long term to incorporate the values, norms, and symbols of their new culture and to adopt new positions and behaviours to comply with its requirements (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). This can be understood as the process by which black women adopt identities in these primarily white workplaces. Moreover, every culture comes with a set of identity expressions that are unique and represents the identity of a person or a culture; this gives an understating as to why black people would 'speak white' because they have adopted the language and culture of white people ,therefore, forming a new identity (Dickens, 2014). Additionally, black women frequently experience a lack of acceptance in these settings, which leads to irritation, misunderstandings, and identity misalignments. The more identity threats or difficulties someone has, the more likely they are to feel they must negotiate their identities.

Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 6) suggests that "[c]ultural-ethnic, personal, and situational variability dimensions influence the meanings, interpretations, and evaluations of these identity-related themes". Hence, the core dynamics of people's group membership identities (e.g. cultural and ethnic memberships) and personal identities (e.g. unique attributes) are formed via symbolic communication with others (Duck & McMahan, 2016).

For Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 6), "[c]ompetent identity-negotiation process emphasizes the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural identity-based knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills to communicate appropriately, effectively, and adaptively with culturally dissimilar others". Being mindful means being willing to adjust one's frame of reference and being driven to use new categories to comprehend cultural or ethnic differences. Additionally, mindfulness helps people become more conscious of the similarities and contrasts between various groups and individuals (Gudykunst, 2005). A variety of interpersonal skills are beneficial in fostering acceptable and proficient identity-based communication. Nonverbal sensitivity, identity support, and conflict reframing are a few of these (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018).

2.4.3 Identity Emotional Security versus Identity Emotional Vulnerability

Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 5) states "[i]ndividuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment". Therefore, black women in predominantly white spaces

might experience identity emotional vulnerability and try by all means to establish behaviours that will make them feel accepted in the workplace. Identity threats are instances that highlight a tension between one's current context and one's marginalised identity (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Lack of belonging might result from more general contextual indicators that show one's identity is incompatible with, or inappropriate in, a particular context (Walton & Cohen, 2007). People who experience identity threats will feel less free to be themselves. As a result, they may become more self-conscious, more self-aware, or change their behaviour in ways that are out of character (Gudykunst, 2005). All of these behaviours could diminish a person's sense of authenticity. A study by Slepian and Jacoby-Senghor indicates that an identity threat evokes feelings of exclusion, and people may experience negative affective states like anger and sadness. Indeed, anger and sadness are expected outcomes of feeling ostracised (2021).

The fear people experience when the favourable perception of their in-group is endangered by the triggering of unfavourable group stereotypes or by the devaluation or stigmatisation of the in-group is known as a social identity threat (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Previous research has shown that social identity threats in the form of negative stereotypes in a particular domain can negatively influence the performance of negatively stereotyped groups, which can contribute to the maintenance of inequality in societies (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019). As a result, when a person perceives their social identity as being challenged, it negatively affects their relationship with the targeted domain, adversely affecting their performance and sense of acceptance and belonging (Ting-Toomey, 2015). As a result, social identity threat causes people to seek fewer social connections with those belonging to the stereotyped domain, which restricts their social network there and has a detrimental effect on their overall mental and physical health (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019). Martiny and Nikitin (2019) further express that a social identity threat may lead to psychological detachment from the stereotype-relevant area and support the empirical finding that a decreased sense of belonging reduces prosocial and cooperative behaviour.

Hence, when a sense of belonging is repeatedly threatened, people often withdraw from social contact to prevent further awkward situations. Social identity threat may lessen social approach motivation in young women since it is likely that they will encounter repeatedly unfavourable preconceptions about their identity (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Secondly, as opposed to those who are excluded due to transitory group membership, those who are socially excluded

due to their permanent group membership (such as gender or race – being female and black) experience emotional recovery more slowly (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019)

People typically prefer belonging to a group to being alone and prefer acceptance over rejection. They have a strong need to establish and maintain a certain number of meaningful, long-lasting, and influential interpersonal relationships, the universal yearning to find and associate with others, which, when unfulfilled, results in a condition of tension and hunger (Forsyth, 2018). Being a part of a group satisfies a general desire to build strong, lasting relationships with other individuals. Forsyth (2018) states that, undoubtedly, groups can cause extremely negative emotions like loneliness, despair, grief, and shame by rejecting and mistreating their members.

People react negatively when a group shuns or avoids them, and this negative response is heightened if the group isolates, rejects, or exiles the individual. Being cut off from people because of events or mishaps is one thing, but being purposefully ignored and alienated by others – ostracism – is far more devastating (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). In today's society, ostracism can take many forms, such as the formal exclusion of a group member, the cold shoulder, or the silent treatment (Forsyth, 2018). In addition, this may result in social loneliness when a person feels isolated from their social network of friends, acquaintances, and group members. In addition, individuals may feel inferior when they believe they lack knowledge that others in the group possess and that it is important to the group's social or work-related activities. As a result, people who do not feel like they belong in the group exhibit more depressive emotions, feel less competent, and are less friendly with the other group members.

Successful "identity negotiation outcomes include the feeling of being recognised, respected, and affirmatively valued" (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 6). Interaction determines whether a successful identity negotiation process is achieved. The concerned individuals, in the case black women should feel a strong sense of identity satisfaction to the degree that communicators consider that desired identities have been truly recognised, and afforded due respect and courtesy.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a history of black women in South Africa's professional sector. It looked at the challenges that black women working in primarily white environments encounter. Racial identity, gender identity, and identity negotiation were all thoroughly covered, and the Identity Negotiation Theory served as the theoretical foundation for the current study. The research structure and methodology used in this study are described in the following chapter.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's research methodology, including a discussion of the research design and justification, participants, data site, data collecting, data analysis, credibility, and reliability.

3.2 Qualitative Approach

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach. This was done to obtain detailed descriptions of the experiences of black women as they navigate predominantly white workplaces and particularly how they negotiate their black and female identities in these environments. According to Denzin and Lincoln, a "[q]ualitative inquiry seeks to discover and to describe narratively what particular people do in their everyday life and what their actions mean to them" (2011, p. 29).

3.3 Interpretive Paradigm

According to Cohen et al. (2018), the interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual. In the context of the interpretative paradigm, the major objective is to comprehend the subjective realm of human experience; this is done in order to preserve the integrity of the phenomenon being studied (Cohen et al., 2018). This paradigm rejects external form and structure to prevent reflecting the spectator's perspective rather than that of the directly involved participant (Cohen et al., 2018). Consequently, this activity has meaning and can be characterised as intentional and future-oriented; actions can only become relevant when one can establish the actors' intentions to communicate the context of their experiences (Ormston et al., 2014).

The interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to observe the social world from the view of the participants rather than from the perspective of an outsider by using procedures like *verstehen* (understanding) and hermeneutics (uncovering and interpreting meanings) (Cohen et al., 2018). This is connected to the notion that social scientists are aware that human conduct is intentional, that individuals perceive the world in unique ways based on who they are, and that the researcher must consider this (Carson et al., 2001).

People interpret the world according to their own perspectives, which consider socio-cultural, socio-temporal, and socio-spatial factors. In order to examine a situation and its context from the perspective of the participants, the interpretive paradigm puts aside the search for generalisations or causal laws, as in the positivists' nomothetic approach. In addition, the researcher suspends their personal presumptions about people, cultures, and contexts (Ormston et al., 2014). Accordingly, the nature of the research becomes exploratory to investigate the interpretations of the situation made by the participants themselves, and to understand their attitudes, behaviours, and interactions (Cohen et al., 2018). The information gathered in this way will also include the meanings and purposes of those who provided it.

For Blanche et al. (2006), "[t]his approach is guided by the notion that research is guided by the researcher's desire to understand and therefore interpret social reality" (p.274). Therefore, the interpretive approach supports the research aims to understand how black women negotiate their racial and female identities in white-dominant occupational spaces. Additionally, the interpretive approach emphasizes how common language and expression can be connected to and expanded upon to further our understanding of the social environment in which we live (Blanche et al., 2006).

The key principles of interpretive research are understanding in context. The goal of the study is to understand black women's experiences in the context of their workspace that is predominantly white. The researcher was the primary tool by which information was collected and analysed, and this was achieved by conducting interviews and analysing the data. This was achieved through a mutually interdependent and interactive relationship between the researcher and her informants (Carson et al., 2001). According to Edirisingha (2012), in interpretivism, reality is multiple and relative. This perspective is in relation to ontology and epistemology; instead of being based on objective criteria, the knowledge acquired in this field is socially produced. For Carson et al. (2001, p. 62), "[e]ssentially, ontology is reality, epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher, and methodology is the technique(s) used by the researcher to discover that reality".

The interpretive approach allows the focus of research to be an understanding of what is happening in a given context. It involves considering various realities, various actor viewpoints, researcher participation, accounting for the circumstances of the phenomena under study, and contextual understanding and data interpretation. To comprehend reality,

interpretivism employs a more introspective method; consequently, the word ‘interpret’ is crucial in this study approach (Edirisingha, 2012). The epistemology of ‘interpretivism’ emphasises the participation and individual interpretive processes necessary to comprehend and make meaning of phenomena in particular circumstances, such as black women working in primarily white workplaces (Carson et al., 2001).

3.4 Exploratory Research Design

According to Stebbins (2001, p. 25), “exploratory research or exploration refers to broad-ranging, intentional, systematic data collection designed to maximize discovery of generalizations based on the description and direct understanding of an area of social or psychological life”. Exploratory research is often carried out when a topic needs to be understood in depth, and the goal of such research is to explore the problem and around it. There has not been much research on this topic in the South African context, hence the use of exploratory research to address this gap. For this study, an exploration of the experiences of black women as they navigate predominantly white workplaces and how they particularly negotiate their black and female identities in these environments was conducted. The exploratory approach allows a better understanding of the existing problem. The flexible nature of this approach allowed the researcher to adapt to changes as the research progressed and helped lay the foundation of research, which can lead to further research.

3.4.1 Sampling

Sampling is the method of selecting data sources from a large set of possibilities for the nature of the study; in this study, the purposive sampling technique was utilised (Given, 2008). Purposive sampling, “also referred to as a judgmental or expert sample, is a type of nonprobability sampling, where the main objective of the sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population” (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 4). Therefore, this method was utilised in identifying and selecting information-rich cases for the most proper utilisation of available resources.

The sampling process involves identifying and selecting participants who are proficient and well-informed about a phenomenon of interest. This sampling technique aligned with the purpose of the study, which was to explore how black women navigate professional spaces that are predominantly white. Therefore, the sample was black professional women employed in predominantly white environments. Furthermore, the snowballing technique was utilised in the

study. This technique "is a useful way to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest" (Ghaljaie et al., 2017, p. 3). This sampling technique utilises a small group of initial participants to contact other individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for research (Given, 2008). In this study, each participant was asked whether they were aware of any other black women who had similar individualities that made them suitable for inclusion in the study (Ghaljaie et al., 2017).

Participants were recruited through 'online networking' using interacting platforms such as LinkedIn; this is "an employment-oriented online service that operates via websites and mobile apps" (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 199). Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that an online social networking site is:

> a web-based service that allows individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (p. 1).

For the purpose of this study, networking was used to enlarge circles of connections on the basis of a particular shared experience that all individuals had in common (i.e. black women working in predominantly white occupational spaces). The LinkedIn post included details about co-researcher eligibility, the goal of the study, and the prerequisites (see Appendix E). The researcher received requests from interested parties for involvement in the study via private messages on her LinkedIn profile.

The participants in the study were approached as individuals and not through their organisations. Therefore, the researcher did not require a gatekeeper's approval for the study. The nature of the study is sensitive; hence, organisations might be hesitant to permit their employees to partake in the study. Furthermore, the target sample might not feel at ease participating in a study that explores racial and sexual identities. Hence, approaching the target sample individually allowed for confidentiality and privacy; therefore, they were able to express themselves away from the gaze of their organisation.

Black women working in predominantly white workspaces, between the ages of 25 and 40 years, and who were working in various industries were recruited. A total of seven participants were obtained; the study aimed to "highlight an in-depth and highly contextualized

understanding of specific phenomena, and such goals are well-suited to small sample sizes" (Patten & Newhart, 2017, p. 19).

3.4.2 Data Collection

Interviewing is a conversational process whereby information is generated through the communication between an interviewer and an interviewee (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Research interviews are conducted for the purpose of exploring viewpoints, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of persons on particular matters. For Given (2008), interviews are "most appropriate where detailed insights are required from individual participants and also to obtain knowledge about a given topic or some area of human experience" (p. 470). For this study, interviews were conducted to explore why and how black women negotiate their gender and race identities (Given, 2008). The aim of conducting an interview for this specific topic was to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena; this enabled the researcher to answer one or more of the research questions (Gill et al., 2008).

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study; this refers to the "qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks participants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions" (Garg, 2016, p.645). The technique allowed the interviewer to explore a concept or response in greater detail, because the questions included numerous important aspects that helped define the themes to be investigated (Garg, 2016) (see Appendix D). As a result, semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and the discovery or development of material that was essential to participants but may not have previously been judged to be pertinent by the research team, in addition to giving the interviewee freedom for more spontaneous descriptions and narratives (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 virus, interviews were not held face-to-face for safety and health reasons. The interviews were conducted via Zoom video. "Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing service" Gray et al., 2020 p. 1292. It allows one to meet virtually with others, with or without video, and allows for the session to be recorded for later viewing. Using online video calling platforms such as Zoom provided the advantage of interviewing participants without requiring travel for face-to-face communication. The interviews were conducted in consultation rooms dedicated to psychology at the UKZN PMB campus. For participants to describe their experiences and provide detailed information, the semi-structured interviews lasted about 50-60 minutes. The duration of the data collection period was four

months; it was intertwined with the transcription process. Each interview (see Appendix C) was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis. To maintain anonymity, all identifying information was removed from each transcript. In compliance with ethical standards, no identifiable data were used, including transcripts and demographic questions.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the data collected was conducted; "[t]hematic analysis can be defined as a process of acquiring themes that appear to be fundamental to the research question" (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The nature of this analysis is particularly "inductive, meaning that the themes will emerge from the data collected and will not be imposed by the researcher" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). This process allowed the researcher to examine and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. This approach was conducted using the six-stage outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2012) (see Appendix H).

- Stage 1: Familiarising oneself with the data. This process involves immersing oneself in the data by listening to audio-recordings and rereading textual data more than once; this may include transcripts of interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In order to acquire a basic idea of the information being provided, the researcher first read all of the transcripts, noting associations and interpretations as she went. The researcher then reviewed and reread each transcript, making notes in the left-hand margin about the meaning of the various sections in relation to the language and any contradictions or amplifications of the co-descriptions.
- Stage 2: Generating initial codes. This process entails "the systematic analysis of the data through coding. Codes are the building blocks of analysis, and they identify and provide a label for a feature of the data that is potentially relevant to the research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 61). The thickest and richest interview answers were chosen, and the researcher collected assumptions and perceptions that could be used meaningfully in addressing the study questions. These initial codes were then used to enable in-depth analysis.
- Stage 3: Searching for themes. This entailed "[p]robing for themes [which] is an active process, meaning themes are generated or constructed rather than discovering them" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 63). The researcher highlighted emerging themes; each theme was colour coded. Emerging themes were created from the initial notes, and this process was carried out throughout the full transcript.

- Stage 4: Reviewing potential themes. This phase "comprises a recursive process whereby the developing themes are reviewed in relation to the coded data and entire data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 65). The researcher determined connections between the themes and assigned the same colour to themes that were comparable. Alternatively, certain ideas were divided up even more into sub-themes. A colour-coding system was utilised after a list of four themes was compiled, and the researcher then went back to the transcript to cross-reference the themes with specific text quotes. The themes were compared to the text with other transcripts in this stage until they were distinguishable and representational of the text.
- Stage 5: Defining and naming themes. This process involves defining the themes that emerged from the data and being able to clearly state the specific uniqueness of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012). On a different Microsoft Word document, the researcher created a collection of themes in a logical order and with a colour scheme. The themes were given appropriate names, and each theme was connected to the original text by changing the text's colour to match the related theme.
- Stage 6: Producing the report. The report needs "to provide a compelling story about the data based on the analysis", and the "themes should connect logically and meaningfully and, if relevant, should build on previous themes to tell a coherent story about the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 69). The researcher was able to develop the themes after collecting all the data materials related to each category and doing an initial analysis to ensure the reliability and authenticity of the report. Four emerging themes were created from the data categories. Sub-themes were consequently formed from the main themes.

3.5 Trustworthiness of the Study

According to Lincoln and Guba, "the aim of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are worth paying attention to" (1985, p. 73). According to Elo et al. (2014), four criteria can be used to determine a study's trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility "is rooted in the truth value; this will be an exercise in making sure that the researcher will develop and articulate a certain level of confidence in the findings based on the phenomenon under investigation" (Lincoln & Guba,1985, p. 75. Truth value is derived from

an in-depth exploration of the human experience as the participants perform it, and it derives from the participant's lived experiences, which does not necessarily lead to universal truths, but rather an in-depth understanding of that person's unique reality (Treharne & Riggs, 2014). In the present study, credibility was established through the process of member checks by asking participants to review the data collected during the interviews and the researchers' interpretations of that data. Elo et al. (2020, p. 7) note that "[p]articipants generally appreciate the member check process because it gives them a chance to verify their statements and fill in any gaps from earlier interviews". Trust is a significant facet of the member check procedure and making sure that the participants feel that the findings represent their experience.

Transferability refers to the "potential for extrapolation and is concerned with the extent to which the findings from the study could apply to other contexts and settings and therefore provides a detailed description of participant's responses" (Lemon & Hayes, 2020, p. 4). Transferability was ensured through detailed recording and transcription. The findings of the study can thus be transferable, as specific data relative to the context of each participant was obtained. Lemon and Hayes (2020) further note that naturalistic transferability occurs when the findings are in harmony with the experiences of the person assessing the research and, therefore, will appear transferable in the eyes of the reader.

Dependability "refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions, and this phenomenon asserts that findings are distinctive to a specific time and place, and the consistency of explanations are present across the data" (Kyngäs et al. (2020, p. 42).To address the issue of dependability, the research methods were reported in detail, such that a similar study could be done elsewhere, without necessarily attaining similar findings.

Confirmability "gets to the objectivity of the phenomenon under investigation and addresses whether the interpretations and findings are from the participants' lived experiences and do not include the researcher's biases" (Given, 2008, p. 275). Therefore, auditing was utilised to determine the confirmability of findings. An audit trail is "where an independent reviewer is allowed to verify the research process and interpretations of the data as consistent on both the literature and methodological levels" (Given, 2008, p. 274).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Human Social Science Research Ethics Committee at UKZN (see Appendix G). The researcher adhered to strict ethical standards and complied with the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) guidelines in accordance with the principles of research ethics.

Autonomy: Given (2008, p. 309) asserts that "[a]utonomy means that individuals have a right to self-determination, that is, to make decisions about their lives without interference from others". To support this principle in the study, the participants were not coerced into participating in the research. The right to autonomy ensured that participants had the right to withdraw from the study should they choose to refuse an invitation to participate in the research. Participants did not face any consequences should they have decided to withdraw from the study (Given, 2008).

Informed consent: The intention of informed consent is that individual participants "can enter a research [study] freely and voluntarily with full information about what it means for them to take part and that they give consent before they enter the research" (Given, 2008, p. 279). Participants were given information about the nature and aims of the study so they could reflect and make their decision (see Appendix A). The terms of the research were reiterated to enable the participants to give clear consent before agreeing to partake in the research (see Appendix B).

Confidentiality: "Confidentiality pertains to the understanding between the researcher and participant that guarantees sensitive or private information will be handled with the utmost care" (Bos,2020p.154). In more detail:

> "Confidentiality is important for several reasons; it helps to build and develop trust, it potentially allows for the free flow of information between the client and worker, and acknowledges that a client's personal life and all the issues and problems that they have to belong to them"(Given, 2008, p. 279).

This was achieved by password protecting the meetings; this ensured that any person who joined a meeting had to enter a password; secondly the 'waiting room' feature on Zoom permits a host to view who is attempting to join the meeting and deny or allow access to that meeting,

and lastly, data-sharing by the app was protected by clearing all browser cookies before and after each call (Gray et al., 2020).

Privacy: The handling of personal data is related to privacy protection in research. Since personal integrity, privacy, and responsible use and storage of personal data are fundamental data protection issues, the research was carried out in accordance with these principles (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The right to privacy and anonymity was assumed, and all the participants were made anonymous. Their real names or any identification were not utilised. The data collection method was in the form of interviews; therefore, all recordings were protected in an encrypted device, and the recordings were used with the participants' permission (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Non-maleficence: The participants were protected from both psychological and physical harm (Given, 2008). The study was conducted in a manner that minimised risk to participants. Anticipated risks or discomforts to the participants during the research process were few. The researcher was aware of the possibility of participants being uncomfortable or wary of sharing information as it relates to their professional work. Participants who withdrew from the study at any given time were not coerced into participation or discriminated against, this was applied to one participant who withdrew from the study. Participants who required counselling for trauma or psychological distress were referred to appropriate service providers, however, none of the participants indicated a need to seek counselling, (see Appendix F). All information collected from participants who withdrew from the study was not used.

Beneficence: This refers to actions or rules aimed at benefiting others. The study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge by exploring this phenomenon from a South African perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). There was no compensation for participation. The anticipated benefit of this study includes the advancement of knowledge in the topic area. As stated previously, there is limited research conducted on the experiences of black female professionals in South Africa. This research contributes to knowledge that may help address institutional racism in corporate environments.

3.7 Conclusion

The research methods and study design were covered in this chapter. The study's methodology and design were both qualitative. The chapter further discussed the procedures and methods used to collect the data. In this study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to gather data. The importance of ethical issues that governed the data collection methods and procedures were then discussed in the chapter. The findings of the data analysis, as well as some discussion of the findings, are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4
Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the study's findings, derived from the interview transcriptions using thematic analysis. The transcripts were perused, and data were coded. Themes were generated, and supporting extracts were presented. The findings are grouped into four core themes in relation to the research objectives. Each theme is supported by verbatim quotes from participants' responses. These themes explain and relate to the experiences of black women who work in environments with a predominance of white people and who must negotiate their identities regarding race, class, and gender.

4.2 Study Participants

The study consisted of seven participants who were all black South African females. All the participants were employed at workplaces that are predominately white; hence that matched the sampling criteria used. All the participants used pseudonyms and not their real names, as demonstrated in the table below.

Table 2

Demographic Data of the Study Participants

	Name	**Position**	**Age**	**Years of Experience**
1	IA	Intelligence Analyst	24	3
2	Metric	Psychometric	28	2
3	IntelA	Intelligence Analyst	26	2
4	Pharma	Pharmacist	32	4
5	Teac	Teacher	39	8
6	SCP	Student Counselling Psychologist	26	6
7	CA	Candidate Attorney	28	1.5

4.3 RQ1: What are the Experiences of Black Women Working in Predominantly White Workplaces?

The Identity Negotiation Theory was used to aid the analysis of data. The four core themes derived from the data presented by the participants are: a) personal identities through symbolic communication; b) the desire for interpersonal connection; c) the need for identity security; and d) the need for a competent identity negotiation process. The first two themes refer to the first research question (RQ1), and the second two refer to the second research question (RQ2). Below is the presentation of the themes, supported by verbatim excerpts.

4.3.1 Personal Identities through Symbolic Communication: Language Barriers in the Workplace

In accordance with Alshammari's (2018) argument, there is a close connection between culture and language, identity, and cultural diversity. Language is, therefore, a tool that serves as a representational system used to show culture as a collection of shared meanings. In general, language gives a broad framework for the interaction between culture and representation. However, language barriers have grown commonplace, as many South Africans do not speak English or Afrikaans. In predominantly white workplaces, the effects of the language barrier have essentially excluded co-workers. The study's findings point to language discordance as a major barrier to communication between black women and their co-workers in settings where white people make up the majority of the workforce. According to Hunter-Adams and Rother (2017), the language barrier is a representation of more pervasive prejudice and discriminatory attitudes in South Africa, to the extent that the linguistic barrier may be imposed with the purpose of excluding others.

Three participants emphasised that the language barrier was of great concern for black women working in a predominantly white setting, as captured by **IA**:

> *Of course, everyone just tries to make you feel welcome* [when she first joined her workplace]*; they try to ensure that as much as possible, but another problem with that place is the language barrier. Because it's predominantly white, not just English white people but Afrikaans white people, there is a huge language barrier; l mean, one of the black females hired there is very fluent in Afrikaans because she went to school like that. The language barrier is a like serious problem for me.*

The effectiveness of verbal communication between people suffers from a lack of proficiency in a shared language. Language becomes a restricting barrier because of this lack of linguistic mutuality, and like any barrier, the language barrier prevents and obstructs efficient communication (Hussey, 2012). It represents the profound and interconnected differences in South African society brought about by unequal educational opportunities, dissimilar socio-cultural upbringings, and diverse historical legacies (Hussey, 2012). **IntelA** also expressed how the language barrier in the workplace was an issue of concern:

> *As a black person working in that company, I felt like I didn't belong. I was expected to assimilate into a culture to which I didn't belong because most of the time, they would speak their language, Afrikaans, in a work environment where we were expected to speak in English.*

Abuarqoub (2019) affirms that language also serves as a destroyer of human relationships since it divides people from one another. Language hurdles prevent effective communication, which is the fundamental cause of many issues or obstacles in the workplace.

On the other hand, **Metric** indicated that she experienced a language barrier at her workplace; however, her approach to the issues sets her apart from others:

> *One other thing I forgot was the issue of language. My company is primarily Afrikaans-speaking people, so for me, it's not an issue, because that's like an opportunity to learn other people's language.*

Language learning methods, which include the special ideas or behaviours that individuals use to help them acquire, absorb, or retain new knowledge, can be applied to increase effective communication in the workplace. Language learning strategies can be defined as those processes that individuals consciously choose and which may lead to action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language through the storage, retention, recall and application of information about that language. Gavriilidou and Psaltou-Joycey, (2009) state that one of the 'primary determining factors' in language learning is motivation.

4.3.2 A Desire for Interpersonal Connection

Identity Negotiation Theory postulates that individuals across all cultures desire positive group-based and positive person-based identities in any communicative situation (Holtgraves, 2016). However, the participants' responses in the present study show how black professionals

are frequently dissatisfied or even uncomfortable in their surroundings, due to a lack of acceptance from their white co-workers. **IA** states that:

> *You feel a bit side-lined at times because it's like, okay, I mean, are you only hiring people of your race and of your language, and sometimes l ask myself that question … like, why?*

Although others could counter that her co-workers might not be purposely ignoring her, she nonetheless feels undervalued at work, which could lead to other negative emotions. **IA** continued:

> *I feel like I do not fit in; we are living completely differently; sometimes, I feel under-represented. l feel misunderstood because sometimes even simple conversations about food, you know … you can't even talk about chicken feet, and they are like, it's so disgusting; who eats that.*

Similarly, **IntelA** stated:

> *It kind of felt like I was being taken advantage of, like that they hired me because I'll be able to speak with the protesters in an African language. So, it kind of feels like they are only putting you there because you serve their interests. And yeah, most of the time, you are not understood … like the things that you do. And one other thing, which is so weird. I felt like that was racist when they told me that they couldn't give me a laptop to work at home because I live in a township; I asked myself, What does that mean? Is it because townships are not safe for that laptop … so that's kind of, I don't know, are you assuming that black people steal?*

As soon as COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns were implemented in the spring of 2020, remote work swiftly became the new norm. If a business required its employees to use particular devices, such as computers or phones, they should be directly allocated such resources so the necessary equipment is available to staff (International Labour Organization, 2020).

One participant (**Teac)** felt that she was undermined in her role as a skilled professional:

> *They mean well, they give you respect, and they recognise you. But somehow, somewhere, I think subconsciously, they seem to think that you need extra support; they might think that they need to give you more attention. Sometimes they make assumptions that as much, as you are a professional, maybe you lack a skill here and there … a black woman*

is not recognised 100% as a fully competent person; they will always think that you might need support, you might need that and that they don't see you as fully independent, in your thinking in your skill sets. In the early days of my arrival, one white male said I was so good; I had such a good personality it seemed I was so good at my job that he wished that I would be his maid. But he doesn't realise that he has just told me I'm good enough to be a maid. So, when he sees a black woman, he sees a maid, even though I am a good and highly skilled professional.

In addition to the above-mentioned struggles, black women also face a lack of support and exclusion in these predominantly white work environments, as affirmed by **CA**:

I'm trying to think of safety, like a safe space … That's not necessarily what I feel for myself; there's no safe space to make mistakes. And regardless, we make mistakes, but this is an undermining moment where it's like, okay, you're not worthy of this position. It's been this X amount of time. I'm not going to give my time to you because, like, it needs to be perfect. Otherwise, what are you doing here? Other people could have taken this opportunity. There's always this like psychological warfare, where it's like you don't have that safe space to learn as one should learn in their environment.

Employees might suffer traumatic consequences from the majority of behaviours that can have negative impacts on them, such as accidents, emotional and sexual harassment, and unjust treatment at work. Anger develops in the employee when the environment fails to show proper sensitivity or simply ignores an issue.

4.4 RQ 2: How Do Black Females Negotiate their Identities in Predominantly White Workplaces?

Two themes were generated in the present study in relation to this research question. Both themes indicate that racial demographics affect how space is used, by whom it is used, and how it is perceived (Anderson, 2015). People frequently consider how they appear to others or the possibility that they could be viewed as social objects by others (Duck & McMahan, 2016). These considerations influence people to make decisions that are more in line with what they believe others will approve of rather than what they would prefer to do. Therefore, an individual's identity is not entirely theirs and is partially influenced by society, which impacts their credibility (Duck & McMahan, 2016).

4.4.1 Needs for Identity Security: Dealing with Stereotypes in the Workplace

Participants expressed views that being a member of a numerical minority at work was usually related to unpleasant experiences that brought their own stressors**. IA** stated:

> *In terms of race, I know there are only two black females and one black male. There are two or three mixed-race females; I'm not really sure if they are coloured or Indian or somewhere in between. But now, one of the mixed females and a black male have resigned, so obviously, the numbers are dropping*.

Being a member of a minority race can make one feel isolated from other members in the workspace. In this situation, it is crucial to represent other black women. Being a role model for black citizens can help other black women in difficult situations; however, it can also put one's comfort level at work in jeopardy. Black women are often highly distinct, given their numerical under-representation, which incurs greater scrutiny and exploitation, as **IntelA** indicated:

> *Well, there were only two black women in the company as a whole. The company consisted of, like, 25 people; it was a very small company. And out of all those people, they only had two blacks. And yeah, so that was the work environment.*

Teac confirmed the above by saying:

> *I work in a primary school; by school, I mean it is a school that starts from grades one to seven. It is what we call a former Model C school. So that means it's a predominantly white school, and it is in a suburb. Yes, we would call or would refer to them as white, middle to rich. That is my teaching part. And then my aftercare …. aftercare responsibility just means I look after the children, myself and two other colleagues who are also white. Among the teaching staff, there are only two of us. Okay, and then the other black staff, your general workers, your cleaners, your security. But amongst educators, it's just two ladies, myself and another lady.*

SCP had a similar experience:

> *Well, I'm in a class that I would say is predominantly black, or it's just multiracial. The lecturerers are primarily white. And yeah, but then if we do have, like, combined classes, then it's, then we like us as the black people become the minority.*

The representation of black women in companies remained very low despite black women being the majority in South Africa. In this regard, **CA** expressed the following:

> *The main legal team consists of 90% white, and I would say it is split 50-50 between males and females. Now on, the legal team* [candidate attorneys] *consists of two males. And then the rest are six females, but only one female is of coloured Indian descent from Cape Town, but everyone else's white and Afrikaans. And then when you take in the candidate attorney, three of us are black females, yes. And then we have one female who's white, who works with us.*

Black women are more likely to encounter barriers that keep their successes hidden from the rest of the organisation. **Pharma** expressed the following notions that support this view:

> *In my particular department, I would say, what you call it, females are more dominant. If we are talking about like high-level management, I can definitely say the males are more than the females. Well, in my sight, together. I'd say throughout the whole site; the predominant race is black South Africans. Yes, I would say that, and even in my department, I would also say that, but when it comes to the heads in my department, though, the predominant race is white females. And then, if I'm talking about the heads of my site, they are the predominant race; there would be black, South African males.*

These findings presuppose that the continued lack of demographically diverse staff and work experiences for black women still largely reflect those of apartheid with a predominately white workforce. This also illustrates a lack of success in promoting inclusivity and demographic diversity (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). Due to under-representation, black women may experience pressure to negotiate their identities or conform to departmental norms and meet perceived cultural standards for their race and gender (Dickens, 2014).

4.4.2 The Renegotiation of Black Women's Professional Identity

Identity Negotiation Theory assumes that people negotiate their identities to make a good impression and lessen harmful cultural misconceptions (Dickens et al., 2019). Identity loss happens when people's assertions about their identities are directly or indirectly contested or disregarded. Repeated identity loss may result in spiralling conflict or a deadlock in the

negotiating process (Holtgraves, 2014). The findings in the present study suggest that, due to negative experiences of discrimination, black women have tended to develop coping mechanisms that allow them to negotiate their identities and to avoid or skirt the emotional effects of stereotypes, racism, and discrimination (Dickens, 2014). However, these strategies have proven to be harmful as they undermine the sense of self of these women. **IA** elaborated on some of the challenges she faced:

> *So, l feel like women have to be fighters, you know, literally every day and fighting for something or for someone because that's just how our society is set up; a black woman is somebody who has to fight the system, has to fight beliefs … Black women have to so many things. So black women are just fighting a battle, literally every single day. Definitely, not even at some point … every single day, you have to be kind like, this group doesn't relate to this. Now, l have to change everything. This is what they understand better, so you have to conform to their standards, l guess.*

According to Nia et al. (2021), when new employees join an organisation, they typically start by adhering to its principles. They watch for cues that indicate what is appropriate and follow suit. The modification of behaviour in the workplace may involve imitating people in similar jobs to themselves, expressing 'proper' and conformed thoughts, dressing suitably in agreement with others, and in extreme circumstances, compliance with poor decisions in organisational groupings (group thinking) or even resistance to the minority and the suppressing of differing viewpoints. Others experience exclusion, difference, or loneliness at work, and they sometimes experience pressure to live up to social norms and expectations to fit in better. However, conformity may also lead to greater psychological stress, work-family conflict, job stress, and reduced employee 'voice', job satisfaction, and work engagement (Perrigino & Jenkins, 2022).

Metric indicates that, although she has a positive view of herself, she is not, however, immune to the challenges in the workspace:

> *Being a black woman in South Africa, for me, basically means that I'm just like any other human. It's unfortunate that history played a role in so many things in life or work, school but being a black woman means that I could basically do what other people do. Unfortunately, we are the ones that get discriminated against because when you're black and especially when you're a woman, you might not get the*

position that you want at work because, for example, you are regarded as someone who might not be consistent.

Intel A said:

You kind of made me a minority because some of the tasks I would need to do were because I'm black. It felt like I was being taken advantage of as they hired me because I'm black.

This suggests that black women feel obliged to negotiate their identities in an attempt to shatter the stereotypes, as **Pharma** states:

It's kind of like, it's like you have to work ten times harder, and you have to put your foot down ten times as much, you know what I mean, before you get respected. People often cross boundaries. I don't understand very easily, so sometimes you often feel like putting your foot down in the workplace is to be that tough so that you earn space and don't get like disrespected or like people think they can overstep boundaries.

The participants indicated that black women might feel pressured to uphold the idea of a 'strong black woman', and if they do not, it may lead to psychological problems. **Teac** posited that:

So, being a black woman, I think that you need to work your butt off; you need to work very hard to prove yourself. I mean, historically, black women are seen as uneducated and not as competent as our male counterparts.

Similarly, **SCP** expressed the following:

I realised that, as a woman, in general, you experience South Africa very differently from a man. And then, as a black woman, it's even more different than every other ... just every other race, basically, because of this, this invisible hierarchy. And so, I mean, nobody says that, but we know, we see a black woman has to work extra hard, in order to prove that she's worthy of being in any place, basically. And I think I understand why. You know, like, in a family, for black women, graduates are such a big deal. I get it because it's just to be a black woman in South Africa. It's not easy. There are so many things that are almost placed against you. I feel as though, like as a black woman, most of the time, we just don't have it easy. Yeah. We have to start like right at the bottom.

CA expressed a similar view:

> *It's tough to get into the workspace. I initially thought it would be more empowering. You would think that, with the history of South Africa and so forth, there'd be more accommodation for open-mindedness. But to be black in the workspace is just, in my opinion, no space to be different. Suppose I could do it that way. You have to give yourself 100%, not try and make mistakes … being a black woman in South Africa means you have to be strong. You have to be strong yet delicate, mindful of every encounter. And you always have to, as the black person, just in general, you always have to have different masks, if I could be honest, because you need to present yourself in a way acceptable to society. Yeah, if I'm being dead honest, yeah. Okay, just to sum that up, then I'd say being black is being able to assimilate into every environment for your benefit to get further ahead if you have to, or to make others comfortable around you so that you're able to stay in that space.*

The 'strong black woman' schema, which emerged in reaction to the harsh reality of intersectional oppression during enslavement, is a collection of cultural expectations of unwavering resilience, independence, and strength that direct black women's sense-making, thought processes and behaviour. Many black women have mastered the skill of projecting strength while hiding pain as a result of consistently summoning resilience in reaction to physical and psychological adversity. This balancing act is frequently regarded highly among black women (Abrams et al., 2019). Insincere social and professional relationships, as well as workplace marginalisation, can result from people's opinions of black women being portrayed in stereotypical ways (Dickens et al., 2019). This balancing act is an example of an independent mindset which resolves to continue constructing strong black women after centuries of neglect and abuse inflicted upon them by variations of patriarchy relative to family and other institutions.

4.4.2.1 Psychological Impact of Identity Negotiation

The findings in the present study show that identity negotiation can result in critical self-judgment and a decline in physical and psychological well-being when people feel they have to behave in a way that is not real or that is at odds with their cultural values (Dickens et al., 2019). **IA:**

At an emotional level, I definitely feel affected because I usually have the feeling of being like I'm not good enough, you know, and then pressurised like to work harder, and that's obviously like putting pressure on myself. When l get home [I] *am tired, I'm overworked, I'm feeling stressed, in a bad mood, you know I'm sour, and it's just, you know, not nice.*

IntelA has discovered a coping strategy that serves her best in this kind of setting; this involves withdrawing into seclusion:

I go, and I was always sit alone. Because, yeah, I find it easy to be alone. Like, it's not hard for me. So, I've started looking for another job and other things that I can do.

Pharma explained:

I guess one of the frustrations of being like black and female is that you must always be proactive and always be the one to go in and ask questions. In comparison, I wonder if, like other people, it's like that too. Or you must be the one to go and demand respect. And I think that I think other people are just given.

Teac chooses not to confront people when they make derogatory comments about black women**:**

I am very emotionally resilient. I thank my background in counselling because I understand human behaviour, people's assumptions, and what people sometimes do, unaware of what they're doing. So I don't; I hardly confront those situations.

SCP also admits to engaging in particular behaviours to prevent adhering to stereotypes about black women, such as changing her tone of voice, to avoid the sense of prejudice and isolation. She changed her voice tone to avoid confirming the stereotype of black women as aggressive.

I try not to say too much. And not to say too little, like, just stay in the middle. Just be mindful of, like, your experience. I just feel like you just always have to be 100% on the right. But also, I think there's also just frustration of the fact that I have to prove myself, and also that insecurity; there's, you're just unsure of yourself, you

are insecure. Also, l have to please tone it down; I think there are people in other cultures or religions, not religions, or races that are quite loud, too. But to be black, you're associated with being loud. And so there's a thing of having to work extra hard to not be, extra to not be, all over the place. I mean, even though, like, I'm not like that, I have my moments. So just tone it down.

CA expressed the emotional toil that is connected to her work environment; she expressed the following feelings:

And I think for me having to be able to sit from the days of being [a] *28-year-old, to try to trace back; it's been a series of events that have taken place to almost in a way break down my confidence, my ability to trust myself, and other people. And that has contributed to, how can I say this, when you've lacking confidence; you're not trusting your environmental situation. It really impacts how you think and feel and interact with other people, whether you think you're acting normal or not. I've come to see that, with your withdrawal, you become more paranoid; you're more reactive. You have to verbally and mentally coach yourself in every interaction or every office that you step into, which is not normal.*

The present findings indicate that black women's psychological well-being can deteriorate from identity negotiation because it can be an extremely hard process to go through. Social transformation can therefore be viewed as a necessary step in addressing the problems black women confront, in terms of their identity in the workplace (Dickens, 2014).

4.4.2.2 The Need for Social Change

The participants' responses show that improper implementation of policy contributes to the difficulties now present in several South African workplaces. **IA** expressed the following sentiments:

Adequate presentation of like everything, hire enough males, hire enough females, hire enough black males, hire enough black females, hire enough mixed race. Definitely, we need to change the medium of communication. So that there can be just one mode of communication. I mean, we all want to speak our home languages at some point, but you know, being in a professional place, let's keep it English.

Metric held similar views**:**

> *I think we need to realise that we're different, and we have to understand our differences and the fact that we are diverse … we cannot box an individual into this particular box or category. For an environment to be healthy, I'd assume, I think that, if people get to realise their differences and other people understand they come from different backgrounds and that we are not this, everything is the same. Also, provide policies and regulations that should it be that* [if] *someone is discriminated against, these policies address things in an effective way.*

Similarly, **IntelA** also emphasised the importance of acceptance:

> *We are a very diverse country. You ... We just need to accept each other and not try to change each other. Yeah. Because if I speak English in this, like accent, please accept that and don't make fun. Yes, if I'm from a township or a rural area, don't make me feel embarrassed about it. So, accept people and people's situations, because we are not all the same.*

Teac expressed that black women need to be comfortable with themselves:

> *The problem is within* abantu *(people). It's about their beliefs; it's about their perceptions, towards a certain group of people. Now, I don't know if one would say we need to educate people. I think black women need to realise they need to be comfortable with who they are, which I am, then they'll be confident in the environment.*

SCP stated the following:

> *Black women are the experts in their experience. If the people in those high places would actually take into consideration that black women have struggles.*

Concerning the above, similar sentiments were shared by **CA:**

> *Let's have more educated black women in senior management. Allowing people to actually voice what's happening and also to be heard. Have people on your team who are receptive. Have an independent representative in the company that works for the company to account for employee's wellness.*

4.5 Conclusion

There is a strong indication that most women aim for an environment that strives for change in institutionalised relationships, norms, values, and hierarchies. Identity shifting has particularly high stakes for individuals who have multiple marginalised identities, such as black women. Negative stigma is attached to these identities due to power differentials and stereotypes. It is critical for the development of future theories to enhance the understanding of identity negotiation such that employers and others can encourage black women to express their authentic selves in work settings to promote genuine careers and relationships.

Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore how black South African women negotiate their gender and racial identities while working in predominantly white workplaces. The findings from the in-depth interviews revealed the importance of race, gender, and embodiment to black women's experiences in the workplace. Through the embodiment of these identities, they are subject to excessive monitoring, emotional abuse, marginalisation, and scrutiny at the confluence of overlapping oppressive systems. Concerning the objectives, the overarching themes constructed from the data include personal identities through symbolic communication, the need for identity security, the desire for interpersonal connection, and a competent identity negotiation process. Overall, the findings provide insight into the phenomenon of complex, intersectional identity negotiation in white workplaces. This chapter concludes by discussing the study's limitations and making recommendations for further research on the experiences of black women working in primarily white companies.

5.2 The Experiences of Black women Working in Predominantly White Workspaces in South Africa

Hymer (2021) states:

> … managers should be aware and sensitive to workers' repertoire of identities. Cultures around authenticity and bringing your whole self to work can help managers be more aware of workers' set of work and non-work identities within their intrapersonal identity network. Managers can proactively help workers to realize enhancing work and non-work identities to establish the foundation for an intrapersonal identity network that is dense in terms of enhancing relationships. (pp. 110-111)

On the contrary, the findings of the current study demonstrate that racialised interacting mechanisms in the larger South African social context continue to suggest that being white denotes higher psychosocial and socio-economic competencies in comparison to their black counterparts (Magubane, 2019). This refutes arguments made by post-racialist, non-racialist, and gender-equality advocates that South Africa's modern social culture has changed due to racialisation and gender inequality in the workplace (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). This means

that the widespread experience of race and gender in South Africa reflects modern social cultures that use strategies of mass suppression to overtly reject the intentionality of post-racialist and colour-blind social orientations that perpetuate oppressive interactional processes (Magubane, 2019).

Working in largely white workspaces places pressure on individuals to balance other facets of who they are with how they differ from and resemble those around them; despite the perceived success of obtaining esteemed work positions, it can be challenging to satisfy one's need for belonging. However, being a member of a racial or ethnic minority group can give people a diverse range of cultural and social resources that can be used to successfully navigate their identity in various contexts and situations, facilitating positive outcomes and mitigating the negative effects of marginalisation and discrimination in those situations. However, this is not always the case, as identity negotiation strategies often occur in response to perceived identity threats **(**Chatman et al., 2005**).** Members of racial and ethnic minority groups frequently experience such threats, either directly or as a result of being exposed to unfavourable preconceptions about their group.

Identity negotiation tactics can be seen through two different lenses, those that affirm identity and those that negate identity. An experience that is evaluated as signalling possible harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity is referred to as an identity threat (Hymer, 2021). Individuals who feel their identities are under threat from the possible harms mentioned above may restructure their identities to remove the threat by altering the significance or meaning of the identity or by abandoning it entirely (Dahm et al., 2019). Since identity threats can have undesirable effects, it is likely that employees want to address them as soon as possible. Hymer (2021) outlines techniques people can use to manage a threatened identity in order to reduce identity injury. These include engaging in actions that target the threat's origin, such as derogation, positive distinction, and concealment. Restructuring strategies, on the other hand, are directed against the threatened identity and involve modifying the significance or meanings attached to an identity or, in the most severe case, departing an identity.

Identity creation is the process of adopting or changing specific facets of identity. The ability to respond to identity threats and make positive adjustments to one's identity, such as giving a threatened identity good connotations, is provided by identity building. Identity construction

can thereby lessen identity harm. Identity construction might involve developing a new identity or making changes to one that already exists (Hymer, 2021).

Identity negation techniques include abandoning one's personal identity, believing one can avoid classification, rejecting a label placed on them by others, or downplaying the significance of identity without giving it up completely. With identity negotiation strategies as responses to situationally specific instances of threat, respondents revealed the ubiquity of ethnic stigma in their everyday lives, regardless of ethnic salience in the immediate context (Chatman et al., 2005).

5.2.1 Language Barriers to Effective Communication

One of the difficulties black professionals encounter in the largely white corporate environment is language issues**.** The participants in the present study indicated that some of their colleagues communicated in Afrikaans, and the black women who were not fluent in Afrikaans found this discriminatory as it made them feel excluded in most office interactions. While the majority of black South Africans can speak one (or more) of the nine African languages that now make up, along with English and Afrikaans, the eleven official languages in South Africa, there is a significant preference among the populace during the post-apartheid period for education in English over Afrikaans (Hammond et al., 2009).

Furthermore, given South Africa's history of apartheid, the perceived oppressive usage of the Afrikaans language in the workplace produces the intimidating presence of blurred borders in the level of professionalism that black employees are required to demonstrate when witnessing what they believe to be instances of ongoing racism (Musgrave & Bradshaw, 2014). In addition, findings from the present study showed that the linguistic processes of workplace communication indicate a racialised operant role that language assumes in the hierarchical designation of social spaces. Magubane (2019) expresses that people's perceptions of race and racialisation are significantly influenced by language, in particular. In the workplace, language is seen and utilised as another means of exclusion.

Because racial discrimination is a significant and distinguishing characteristic of South African society, this is reflected when language processes specify the usage of social spaces in a multicultural society. Black and white South Africans alike employ communication processes to operationalise language as an inclusive social instrument to build collective and individual

racial identity; racialised interactional tensions exist in South African society (Magubane, 2019). Moreover, the institutionalised power dynamics provoke conflicts between black and white employees and the operant use of language and its connotations. As a result, the post-apartheid South African society's use of liberal-practical politics demonstrates a widespread propensity to stigmatise black employees' communicative patterns that are considered atypical. In addition, language is similarly operant as a tool of psychosocial exclusion in the regular interacting processes of black employees where tribal, intra-, and inter-group affiliations are present. In both inter- and intra-racial interactions, linguistic communication processes in the South African workplace demonstrate psychological complexity (Magubane, 2019).

According to Prah (2018), Afrikaans and English, spoken mostly by white minorities in South Africa due to their socio-economic dominance, continue to be the dominant cultures and languages in the country today. In these circumstances, it is challenging to envision how black women may successfully participate in an organisational culture when the vast majority of people speak a language that is challenging to grasp. In addition, there is an indication that black employees believe that the usage of the Afrikaans language is an institutional effort to curtail perceived individual control and critical consideration of their post-apartheid linguistic working context, in addition to impeding their general well-being through its limitations on progressive career options.

The hierarchical demarcation of social spaces indicates that the linguistic processes of workplace communication are profoundly racially biased. As communicative processes operationalise language as an inclusive social tool to construct employees' collective and personal racial identities in the workplace, racialised interactional tensions result. This illustrates a verbal power struggle to establish social dominance, for example, when white employees use the stereotype of 'loud blacks'. The linguistic strategies used in inter-racial contacts at work show the frantic efforts of white employees and media to preserve a fragmented social environment of inter-racial engagement where communicative normalcy is equated with white culture.

Individuals become frustrated, stressed out, and dissatisfied in environments where communication barriers are present. According to a survey by Casale and Posel (2012), only 1% of working-age Africans (those between the ages of 25 and 65) claimed to speak English at home, and even fewer claimed to speak Afrikaans. The vast majority, however, claimed to

speak one of the official African languages. The few Africans in this age bracket who speak English or Afrikaans at home are probably a very small number of individuals who may have had access to private education. Madera et al. (2014) state that poor communication can affect a person's decision to stay within an organisation; also, a person's decision to stay with a company can also be affected by other issues that arise in a setting where there are communication gaps, such as uncertainty, contradictory misunderstandings, and exclusion.

Various participants indicated that the presence of language barriers makes some tasks at these companies much more difficult. Communication problems frequently cause absenteeism and burnout (Madera et al., 2014). Thus, the psychosocial and existential impacts of a typical racialised experience are exacerbated by racial inequality and discrimination in South African society as a whole (Magubane, 2019). Due to the subjective nature of identity construction, it is crucial to understand how language and discursive structures contribute to story development, retrospective sense-making, and in-the-moment identity construction. Language and discourse changes reflect and repeat sense-making regarding circumstances relating to unequal identities (Farmer, 2021).

5.2.2 Identity Scrutiny versus Identify Security

Another significant theme that emerged was 'the need for identity security/dealing with stereotypes in the workplace'; this relates to the phenomena of identity scrutiny versus identity security. Individuals' identities and the way they describe themselves are malleable, changing in reaction to social cues and environmental feedback. The findings of the present study show that black women encounter stereotypes daily in the largely white work environment.

When asked to characterise black women, the most frequent response from the participants was 'strong'. Evans and Burton (2017) posit that the 'strong black woman' (SBW) stereotype, which portrays black women as powerful and invincible with an unlimited capacity to help or 'rescue' others, was reinforced through exploitative actions. The SBW stereotype portrays black women as 'servants', 'mammies', and 'superwomen'; this affects how people view them when they make mistakes, ask for assistance, or require resources to do a task (Rabelo et al., 2021). Due to their racial and gender identities, black women professionals are viewed as being easily exploitable. This is a result of the perception that they pose less threat. These superhuman women have not been allowed the 'luxury' of failure, nervous breakdown, leisurely lives, or

anything else that may indicate they are complex, multifaceted people. They must overcome their suffering, arm themselves against peril, and persevere in the face of difficulty.

Although the ideal black woman is viewed as being strong, this perceived empowerment damages black women both physically and mentally. Black women are particularly prone to struggling with their mental health, constantly expressing higher levels of melancholy, hopelessness, and worthlessness, according to Brewer (2021). According to studies, the SBW schema can lead to symptoms of sadness, anxiety, loneliness, discomfort, exhaustion, emotional dysregulation, and obesity. The traits of the SBW persona, such as being nurturing, selfless, and concealing one's own feelings while anticipating those of others, are also in line with this gendered expectation. Black women's emotions at work may be impacted by this because they may not feel comfortable expressing their feelings fully, out of concern for how it will influence their relationships at work, especially with co-workers and members of dominant groups in positions of power.

The findings indicate that black women are stereotyped as being incompetent, unwanted, or disposable because they are a minority among employees. Examining black women's feelings, appearance, and behaviour demonstrates how their opinions are filtered via biased perceptual lenses. The stereotypical perspectives are formed through these lenses, and the skewed perceptions are motivated by white supremacy (Rabelo et al., 2021). As a result, black women may find that their identities, especially those who work as minorities in predominately white work environments, might be the subject of intense scrutiny and that they may be confronted with others' impressions of their identities, which may be incorrect. Therefore, they might feel under pressure to spend time, energy, and effort regulating others' perceptions and develop coping mechanisms to deal with this experience (Meister et al., 2017). Individuals may come into conflict between how they self-identify and how they think others identify them, as they participate in identity negotiation procedures in their companies. This could be in relation to a particular identification (such as gender or race), or it could be an overall experience encapsulating the degree to which people believe a significant person misidentifies them.

While everyone in an organisation has the potential to have internal identity struggles, black women face a particular set of difficulties. Due to unconscious social bias and expectations, black women striving for more adept roles may already be at a disadvantage in a country where they historically have been viewed as domestic workers. For women who are frequently

defined as women first and blacks second, negotiating, claiming, and receiving equal identities proves difficult (Farmer, 2021). One type of internal identity threat is when a woman feels categorised or stereotyped based on her gender, despite the fact that she may not see herself in that way.

Despite the fact that there are now more women in the workforce than there were 20 years ago, black women are still under-represented in predominately white workplaces. Women's abilities to aspire and succeed in such environments are undermined by covert and frequently undetectable factors, such as identity-related barriers. Since these contexts frequently attribute inaccurate or undesirable identities to black women while overlooking identities that may be highly salient to them, black women frequently face emotions following misidentification by their colleagues throughout their careers. The findings of this study highlight the persistence of racism and sexism in black women's working lives. Those who work with black female employees need to address the complex issues of racism that are pervasive in the workplace and how these affect the psychological health, self-concept, and interpersonal relationships of black women.

Black women have practically become associated with strength in the minds of the public. But this strength has a very high price for its performance. The paradox of the SBW schema is that although it was created as a deterrent to institutional oppression, black women who embody it are more likely to experience a variety of mental and physical health issues (Evans & Burton, 2017). Black women often conceal their vulnerability by projecting an image of strength. The primary distinguishing trait of the SBW is emotional control and strength, specifically related to the ability to endure suffering (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). The SBW is expected to be able to face life's challenges without displaying any signs of 'weaknesses'. She must constantly manage her image, controlling her emotions, especially those that suggest weakness, such as sadness, grief, helplessness, hurt, shame, anxiety, or fear. Crying is considered inappropriate and is perceived as a sign of weakness rather than a normal emotional experience, especially when done in front of others (Evans & Burton, 2017). As a result, to be a strong black woman, one must travel the well-trodden and illustrious path of diligence, compassion, loyalty, and generosity – the most palpable and admired example of black womanhood. Tenacious black women are rarely concerned with their own success or well-being (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). They are powerful for others but frequently find it difficult to act with the same passion when identifying and pursuing their own needs.

5.3 Negotiation of the Black Woman's Identity and Well-Being

Eriksen (2002) views ethnicity as a feature of the social ties between groups whose members view themselves as culturally unique from other groups. Kenny and Briner use the term ethnicity to "denote group differences based on shared ancestry, traditions and categorizations by those within and external to the group" (2007, p. 439). As a result, ethnic diversity can be defined as the relative differences that exist between people who belong to the same group but are classified as belonging to different groups based on shared ancestry, culture, traditions, and classifications (Ossenkop et al., 2015). This emphasises the significance of ethnic identity (construction) at work in general and in relation to professional career experiences in particular. Assimilation into the dominant culture rather than being able to bring one's whole collection of identities to work continues to be a crucial organizational indicator of racial inequality.

According to Chatman et al. (2001), ethnic identity is one's experience of belonging to an ethnic group and the portion of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behaviour that is related to ethnic group membership. Ethnic identities have several facets, and each facet of ethnic identity is linked to different behavioural and psychosocial traits. Chatman et al. (2001) identified six ethnic identity typologies for the concepts associated with race and ethnicity:

1. Low identification: Individuals with a lower identification show less involvement in ethnic practices and portray fewer extreme ethnic attitudes.
2. Personal pride: Individuals who display personal pride place a high significance on their race and ethnicity in their sense of self, beyond physical characteristics like skin tone, ancestry, and self-categorisation. Despite being proud of their racial identity and understanding its cultural and social significance, black women might not view their race as a crucial component of their sense of self.
3. Nominal identification: Unlike the less malleable biometric identity, which is often based on physiological or behavioural traits that do not change much over time, nominal identification is flexible (Li & Jain, 2015).
4. Socially embedded identification: This places significance on the normative principles of equality, justice, and the freedom to strive; these are examples of socially embedded normative principles emphasising connections between people (Davis, 2015).
5. Culturally embedded identification: This entails how being a member of an ethnic group gives one access to a wealth of social and cultural resources that can be used to successfully navigate oneself in many contexts. Hence, individuals desire a sense of

belonging to recognisable social groupings in order to achieve a sense of identity that is distinct yet not too dissimilar from others as to be perceived as abnormal in their environments (Chatman et al., 2001).

6. Socio-culturally embedded identification: This indicates that the socio-cultural context is always a part of one's racial and gender identity. Hence, people can be understood to develop their sense of who they are in response to the actual and fictitious opinions of others, as if society as a whole serves as a mirror reflecting each individual's social status and identity (Risman et al., 2018).

The 'renegotiation of black women's professional identity' is, therefore, a central theme in the present study. The findings reiterate that identity is a dynamic process of negotiating self and situation through which people establish, assess, reassess, and re-establish who they are and are not in relation to others in their contexts (Chatman et al., 2005). People are constantly exposed to new situations and experiences, which must be somehow blended with their current selves. Some of these encounters involve significant life changes, such as moving into a new environment where people may hold attitudes, beliefs, and values that are dissimilar to their own. These encounters are usually brief and include learning something new that may contrast with their pre-existing beliefs and ideals (Chatman et al., 2005).

Black women are tasked with reassessing aspects of their selves under such circumstances, and they then engage in a variety of negotiation techniques in an effort to maintain their feeling of continuity while adjusting to the new environment. An individual's sense of positive well-being is maintained when they are able to resolve conflicts between the self and these shifting settings (Chatman et al., 2005). They enter a condition of conflict when they are not. Aspects of identity, such as social and racial or ethnic identities, are difficult to separate or distinguish from a broader identity because they result from people's affiliations and identification with social groups or categories. Members of racial and ethnic minority groups, such as black women, are, according to Chatman et al. (2005), frequently burdened with the added developmental responsibility of taking race and ethnicity into account when constructing their identities.

The South African legal system aims to give black African women the same employment chances as their counterparts who are white, and people of both genders. Regarding proper black female representation in professional structures, race and gender equality issues have not been fully addressed in South African society through legislation or social discourse (Osituyo, 2018). The present findings showed that, despite strong legal frameworks, black African women lack representation in management positions, which indicates that access to managerial opportunities is limited (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). Presently, white males and females dominate predominantly white workplaces, and as a result, they enjoy greater benefits, from high recruitment rates to promotion opportunities.

Osituyo (2018) states that racial and gender equality involves more than just the proportion of black women in various professions; it also involves the kinds of professional positions they hold, the expectations placed on them as appointees, and their experiences in those positions. An individual's ethnic and racial identities are constantly formed, negotiated, and modified throughout their lives. However, Ossenkop et al. (2015 p. 522) caution: "[w]hen interacting with minority ethnics, dominant ethnics experience their ethnic identity from their dominant position and thereby reproduce rather than challenge their privileged position".

5.3.1 Resilience, Resistance and Fear of the 'Rebel' Label

The present study's findings revealed that discrimination against women based on gender makes black women more vulnerable and frequently seen as having weaker intelligence and morals. Farmer (2021) states that the conundrum for the black woman is that if she succeeds in the white domain, she is judged as being complicit with white and male dominance. It is felt that she does this at the expense of the intersectional cause for equality, on the one hand. On the other hand, she is still seen by those in the institution, and possibly herself, as not good enough; thus, she always bears the burden of proof, qualifying her to occupy her seat in predominantly white spaces.

The present findings also show that organisations frequently prioritise white employees' comfort when managing diversity but fail to address underlying disparities that affect black employees, especially Black women. In agreement with Dickens (2014), the black women in this study appear to have developed 'bi-cultural and bi-dialectical' traits due to having lived and worked in two different worlds that expected them to think, behave, and react in a particular way, depending on where they found themselves. In this study, black women explored how to

maintain professionalism in workplaces with a predominance of white employees. The issue of identity negotiating in mostly white surroundings is crucial because it addresses how context affects identity negotiation (Dickens, 2014). Participants talked about the challenges of working in a white environment, where identities are constantly and unconsciously negotiated according to how people see them and react to their actions. One participant talked about how she ignores racial comments made to her at work; for her, they can believe something as basic as: "*Black folks don't know how things are done here*". The present findings show that black women in the study face uncomfortable work environments, which they typically adapt to or ignore their marginality. Few people in the workplace are aware of their discomfort.

A need to belong is a fundamental human motivation; the need to belong can provide a point of departure for understanding and integrating a great deal of the existing literature regarding human interpersonal behaviour. Baumeister and Leary (2017) posit that the belongingness hypothesis is that humans have a pervasive drive to form and maintain lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships. Thus, there is a vital need for equal representation and participation of black women in the workforce (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021a). Any discussion of the workplace and social transformation must centre on finding regional and national solutions for resolving these problems, as the present study suggests that black women need more fortitude and support. Black women rely on 'individual agency' to 'survive and progress' as professionals; the development of this sense of identity comes from resilience and the ability to identify the necessary enablers (Farmer, 2020, p. 9).

In primarily white workplaces, black women may experience pressure to uphold 'professional' expectations in order to avoid being seen as rebellious or lacking because they do not adhere to prevailing norms. Thus many black women choose silence as a survival strategy out of fear of being seen as a rebellious employee who does not want to fit in with the workplace culture. However, according to Farahbakhsh and Jahanbani (2015), silence can negatively impact someone's identity. It can result in misunderstandings, unfair judgments of others, and monologism by the surrounding environment. When these things happen together, they invalidate a person's identity and cause abnormality, such as being stereotyped. The effects of silence at work are likely to be more harmful than beneficial since silence might reinforce authority and cause someone to question their identity as an employee of that authority. This is because interpersonal communication serves as both our most effective socialiser and storehouse of personality. Communication can be seen as "the essential medium of dialogue

and self-formation", for "the healthy growth of any consciousness depends on its continual interaction with other voices, or worldview" (Emerson 1997, p. 29 as cited in Farahbakhsh & Jahanbani, 2015). Therefore, the process of creating a self will be impeded in situations where there is silence, no one to have dialogical conversations with, or someone who projects their identity onto others. Silence and a lack of communication between the people put identity in danger of being negated.

> "The loss of identity makes people passive and socially infertile and degenerating, and all these intermingled elements pave the way for the tyranny to take control of everything by airbrushing the past to control the future so that questions and issues that might be raised are mocked out of existence" (Farahbakhsh & Jahanbani, 2015, p. 184).

Black women's emotions at work may be impacted by this because they may not feel comfortable expressing their feelings fully out of concern for how this will influence their relationships at work, especially with co-workers and members of dominant groups in positions of power.

5.3.2 Self-Management and Self-Care

Goal-setting, decision-making, focus, planning, scheduling, task monitoring, self-evaluation, self-intervention, and self-development are all examples of self-management techniques that help people effectively control their own actions toward achieving their goals (Omisakin & Ncama 2011). However, the term 'self-management' can also apply to a kind of workplace decision-making in which the workers come to a consensus on options (for issues like customer care, general production methods, scheduling, and division of labour) (Farmer, 2021). Self-management is regarded as both a process of education and a product. Self-management programmes serve as educational processes that prepare people to manage their health conditions daily, practice particular behaviours, and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lessen the physical and emotional effects of illness, with or without the assistance of the medical team.

Self-management helps black women because it enables some of them to escape unwarranted criticism for non-normative, culturally distinctive behaviours (Brewer, 2021). Black women are required to compromise their authenticity so that dominant group members can feel at ease and they can have a better chance of succeeding in the organisation. Strength was a tool utilised by black women for self-management (Brewer, 2021). As the black women made the decision

to manage their image by restraint of emotions and awareness of their communication – a sort of emotional labour – in order to survive their toxic work situations, this strength appeared in the shape of self-management (Brewer, 2021). The idea behind self-management is to be able to hide one's genuine feelings and behaviours while acting in a way that dominant group members judge to be appropriate and morally correct.

According to Omisakin and Ncama (2011), self-care is a behaviour that individuals undertake on their own behalf to safeguard their lives and enhance their health. Self-care involves adopting a good attitude and increasing willpower, courage, and optimism to enhance overall health. High levels of stress and burnout may be caused by the expectations that people face when working in professional environments. Regular self-care routines can help to lessen the effects of high levels of stress while also providing coping mechanisms for when things get very tough. Self-care involves the ability to balance one's personal, professional, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects in order to live in a balanced, invigorated way that helps one cope with daily challenges (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011).

Self-care may often lead to wellness; focusing on wellness, therefore, includes focusing on coping with and effectively managing the demands of personal and professional stressors. According to Collins, "self-care is an integral part of multiple aspects of a person's life, including health and wellness" (2005, p. 264). One's overall well-being is impacted by implementing proper self-care routines. In contrast, neglecting one's own needs and appropriate coping mechanisms usually leads to a lack of sleep, emotional tiredness, lowered spirits, a sense of hopelessness, and a high staff turnover rate. Black women can benefit from a holistic understanding of self. By practising mindfulness, one can have a deeper knowledge of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and emotions and develop an openness and non-judgmental attitude toward oneself (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011).

5.4 Recommendations

This study focused on the experiences of seven black South African women who navigate their racial and gender identity in predominantly white workspaces.

- The findings from the current study can be extended in future studies to examine the association of racial socialisation with the development of identity negotiation among black males in South Africa. Devoting research to understanding the complexities of

identity negotiation for black people is critical to the efforts of workspaces to diversify their employees.

- Another area that could be studied is how important a person's corporate or professional identity is to their sense of self, particularly for black women.
- Reviewing current policies aimed at black women, organisations should start to make improvements to their gender policies, working with the women in question, and they should incorporate gender-race sensitivity training into all employee induction and orientation programmes.
- The senior management should make a commitment to creating a work environment free from disagreements and conflicts. Increasing employee cross-cultural competency by providing cross-cultural knowledge training and upholding the mutual benefit policy is advantageous for the diverse workforce as a whole.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

- The first limitation is the small sample of participants. The experiences of a few participants are not representative of the entire population of black women. The nature of this qualitative research means that the findings will not be generalisable due to a non-representative sample; the researcher cannot claim that all black women in predominantly white workplaces have negative experiences which lead them to negotiate their identities. Nevertheless, an in-depth exploration of the phenomena was conducted.
- The study only includes professional black women. There is a chance that there are also black men with comparable experiences working in a largely white environment.

5.6 Conclusion

The study explored the experiences of black South African women navigating their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces. Black women, among others, have successfully negotiated political spaces, such as the workplace, through a process known as identity negotiation. For people with multiple marginalised identities, such as black women, identity negotiation carries exceptionally high stakes. According to the study's findings, hidden and ingrained racial and gender bias exists within white-dominated workplaces, making it difficult for black women to find employment that meets their specific needs. These women have few resources in the way of supportive organisational practices, and organisations

frequently leave them to struggle on their own in the white-dominated fields in which they work. Given the continued social and political significance of race in South Africa and the study's workplace racial inequality, it was impossible to avoid being aware of the unequal power dynamics that favoured white co-workers. In post-apartheid South Africa, it is feasible for black women to hold high-level jobs; however, a more active role can be played by management in organisations to implement activities that foster an environment where black women are welcome to join and stay in predominantly white workplaces. The findings of the current study shed light on black women's experiences with identity negotiation along racial, socio-economic, and gender lines in predominantly white environments. As such, positive and authentic racial interactions are necessary for black and white South Africans to benefit equally from socio-economic possibilities.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet

Information Letter

Title Of Research Study: An exploration of black South African women's negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces.

Dear participant

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study that I am conducting as a master's student at the University of KwaZulu Natal. Before you decide, I would like to make you understand why the research is being done. The following information will provide you with an understanding of what the research study is about. Please take time to read it carefully and discuss it with others if you wish; please be sure to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Purpose of the study. The aim of the research is to explore how black women negotiate their identities in predominantly white spaces and to understand their experience of this phenomenon and how it affects their identity and perceptions of self. Most often, women negotiate their identity as a strategy to racially adjust to our different environments. The phenomena of identity negotiation are linked to other behaviours such as switching between two dialects, sometimes known as code-switching, a tone of how one speaks, presents themselves, moves their hands, dress or even choose to wear their hair and even the activities they engage in. Therefore, many black women learn to deploy all these kinds of different tactics to achieve a certain social mobility and navigate a very male-dominant and white-dominant professional environment. Therefore, this leads to them sacrificing their identity and unique personalities, and they are most often caught in a quandary of choosing between their emotional and mental well-being and their professions. To investigate this phenomenon, a series of semi-structured interviews will be conducted with different black women in different professions to understand their individual experiences in these diverse contexts and the possible effects it had on their living experiences and how they perceive themselves and also how people around them perceive them. The benefits of this study to the community exploring this phenomenon from a South African perspective, understating black female experiences from a south African derived

perspective To give women a work environment where they can strive and not constantly stress about alternating identities. Moreover, it is not psychologically healthy to be denied full expression of your Blackness

Why have you been chosen? We would like your help with a research study; as a south African black female woman, we believe that your experience will be very vital to the study and its objectives. Therefore, as a research participant, we would like to conduct an interview with you, discussing you're your experience working in a predominantly white work environment. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to give consent. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse to take part or to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason

Confidentiality

Any information collected during the course of the study will be maintained on a confidential basis, and access will be restricted to people conducting the study. Your name will not be disclosed, nor will details of your answers be given to anyone. With your permission, the telephone interviews with the researcher will be recorded and typed up as a written document or transcript. The transcripts will then be examined to ensure that all of the important information has been captured. The transcripts will not contain your name or any information about you that would allow you to be identified. The only people who will have access to the transcripts are the researchers. Some of your comments may be included in a report on the study, but these will be completely anonymous.

What will happen to the findings of the research study?

The overall findings of the study will be submitted to the university, but you will not be mentioned in any way. If you would like to receive information about the findings of the study, please let us know, and we will forward a summary of the findings to you at the end of the study.

If you decide to participate, a sample of the questions and a consent form will be attached for your convenience. Your participation would be highly appreciated,

Yours sincerely

Andile

Appendix B1: Consent for participation

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Andile Moyo. I am a Masters's candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. The title of my research is about: **An exploration of black South African women's negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces.**

The aim of this study is to explore how black women navigate their racial and gendered identities while working in predominantly white spaces and give an understanding of their experiences in these work environments. I wish to interview you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 30 – 40 minutes.
- The record, as well as other items associated with the interview, will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed of by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg.

Email: andilebrenda@gmail.com/217015493@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Cell:0614797993

My supervisor is Ms Sindiswa Shezi, who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email shezis1@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: 0312606180

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 8350/4557/3587, Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I …… *(full name of Participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

I consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

Appendix B2: Consent for participation (isiZulu)

Ukwaziswa ngocwaningo nanye nesivumelwano

Igama lami ngingu Andile Moyo (217015493). Ngingimfundi osesigabeni semfundo i-Masters eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali ePietermaritzburg. Isihloko socwaningo: **Ukuhlolwa kokuthi abesifazane abamnyama baseningizumu Africa bazibona kanjani ngokobuhlanga nobulili babo ezindaweni zokusebenzela eziqhakambise uhlanga lwabamhlophe.** Inhloso yalolu cwaningo ukuhlola ukuthi abasifazane abanmnyama bazizwa kanjani futhi yizithi izimo ababhekana nazo ezindaweni zabo zokusebenzela eziqhakambise uhlanga lwabamhlophe. Ngifisa ukuba nenhlolomvo nawe ukuzwa okwakho ukuqonda nezimo oke wabhekana nazo noma wazibona mayelana nalendaba.

Bhekisisa lokhu:

- Lemininingwane ozosinika yona izosetshenziswa kulolucwaningo lwezemfundo kuphela.
- Awuphoqelekile ukuba ubeyingxenye yalolucwaningo. Kuyisinqumo sakho ukuba ingxenye noma ungabi ingxenye futhi uvumelekile ukuba uhoxe kulolucwaningo. Angeke ujeziswe ngokuthatha lesisinqumo.
- Imibono yakho kuphela ezokhishwa, igama lakho lizogodlwa. Igama kanye nemininimgwane yakho angeke ikhishwe kulolucwaningo.
- Lenhlolomvo izothatha isikhathi esingeqanga kwimizuzu angama -45.
- Umakwenzeka umhlolwa efikelwa imizwa yokuphatheka kabi nengcindezi, uyobe esedluliselwa kumeluleki wase Child and Family Centre e-UKZN.
- Okuqoshiwe kanye nokunye okuhlangene nale nhlolomvo kuzogcinwa kwifayela elivikelwe ngenombolo eyimfihlo engeke ikwazi ukuvulwa nanoma ubani ngaphandle kwami nomqeqeshi wami. Ngemuva kweminyaka emihlanu, ngokomthetho wenyuvesi, imininingwane izoshabalaliswa ngokushiswa noma ngokudatshulwa.

Uma unemibuzo mayelana nalocwaningo, noma uthanda ukwaziswa mayelana nemiphumela, ungakhululeka ungithinte nge *email* ku 217015493@stu.ukzn.ac.za (Ucingo: 0614797993). Umqeqeshi wami, uSindiswa Shezi wase UKZN (M.Ed- Educational Psychology) angathintwa nge email ku Shezis@ukzn.ac.za (Ucingo: 0312606180). Uma uthanda ukwazi mayelana nocwaningo noma inini, ungathinta i- HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 8350/4557/3587, Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za**.**

Uma uvumelana nokuba ingxenye yaloluncwaningo, sayina ngezansi

……. …..……

(Sayina lapha) (Usuku)

Uma uvumelana nokuba inhlolo mvo yalolucwaningo iqoshwe ngesiqopha mazwi, sayina ngezansi

……. …..……

(Sayina lapha) (Usuku)

Appendix C1: Audio-Recording Consent Form (English)

AUDIO-RECORDING CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO AUDIO-RECORDING & TRANSCRIPTION

Dear Participant,

My name is Andile Moyo. I am a Master's candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: **An exploration of black South African women's negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces.**

The aim of this study is to explore how black women navigate their identities while working in predominantly white spaces and give an understanding of their experiences in these work environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

This study involves the audio- or video-recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio- or audio-recording or the transcript. Only the research team will be able to listen to (view) the recordings.

The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

The record, as well as other items associated with the interview, will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed of by shredding and burning.

If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg.
Email: andilebrenda@gmail.com/217015493@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Cell:0614797993
My supervisor is Ms Sindiswa Shezi, who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
Contact details: email shezis1@ukzn.ac.za
Phone number: 0312606180
The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows:
HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 8350/4557/3587, Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za
Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I …… *(full name of Participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

I consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

Appendix C2: Audio-Recording Consent Form (isiZulu)

IFOMU LEMVUME YOKUQOPHA

IMVUME YOKUQOPHA INKULUMO NOKULOTSHWA KWAYO

Sawubona Mhlanganyeli wocwaningo,

Igama lami ngingu Andile Moyo (217015493). Ngingimfundi osesigabeni semfundo i-Masters eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali ePietermaritzburg. Isihloko socwaningo: **Ukuhlolwa kokuthi abesifazane abamnyama baseningizumu Africa bazibona kanjani ngokobuhlanga nobulili babo ezindaweni zokusebenzela eziqhakambise uhlanga lwabamhlophe.** Inhloso yalolu cwaningo ukuhlola ukuthi abasifazane abanmnyama bazizwa kanjani futhi yizithi izimo ababhekana nazo ezindaweni zabo zokusebenzela eziqhakambise uhlanga lwabamhlophe. Ngifisa ukuba nenhlolomvo nawe ukuzwa okwakho ukuqonda nezimo oke wabhekana nazo noma wazibona mayelana nalendaba.

Lolu cwaningo lubandakanya ukuqoshwa kwegxoxo yakho nomcwaningi.Igama lakho nemininingwane ephathelene nawe siqu angeke iqoshwe futhi ivezwe. Umaqeqeshi wami kuphela ozoba nalolulwazi futhi alalele ingxoxo eqoshiwe.

Igxoxo eqoshiwe izolwatshwa phansi bese iyasulwa kwisqopha mazwi emva kokuba sekuhloliwe ubunjanjalo bokulotshiwe. Konke okulotshiwe noma inxenye yakho ingasetshenziswa kwezinye izingxoxo noma imibhalo engase isungulwe yilolu cwaningo. Igama lakho kanye nemininingwane yakho siqu (izwi noma isithombe sakho) ngeke isetshenziswe kulezi zingxoxo nemibhalo esungulwe yilolucwaningo.

Ingxoxo eqoshiwe kanye nemininingwane eqondene nenhlolomvo izogcinwa iphephile nge-password ezobe yaziwa yimi nomqeqeshi wami. Emva kweminyaka eyi-5, ngokomthetho wenyuvesi, izogaywa noma ishiswe.

I-imeyili: andilebrenda@gmail.com/217015493@stu.ukzn.ac.za

umakhalekhukhwini:0614797993

umqeqeshi wami uNks Sindiswa Shezi ofunda eSikoleni seSocial Sciences, eMgungundlovu, eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal.

Imininingwane yokuxhumana: i-imeyili shezis1@ukzn.ac.za

Inombolo yocingo: 0312606180

Imininingwane yokuxhumana neKomidi leZimilo loCwaningo lweHumanities and Social Sciences imi kanje: HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 8350/4557/3587, Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za.

Uma uvumelana nokuba ingxenye yaloluncwaningo, sayina ngezansi

Mina …… (amagama aphelele ababambe iqhaza) ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe kulo mbhalo kanye nohlobo locwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kulolucwaningo noma kunini, uma ngifisa. Ngiyayiqonda inhloso yocwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza.

……

Ngiyavuma / angivumi ukuthi le nhlolokhono irekhodwe (uma ikhona)

ISIGINISHA YOMHLANGANO USUKU

……

APPENDIX D1: Interview Questions (English)

Interview questions Introduction: allow the participant to tell us more about herself and what work she does

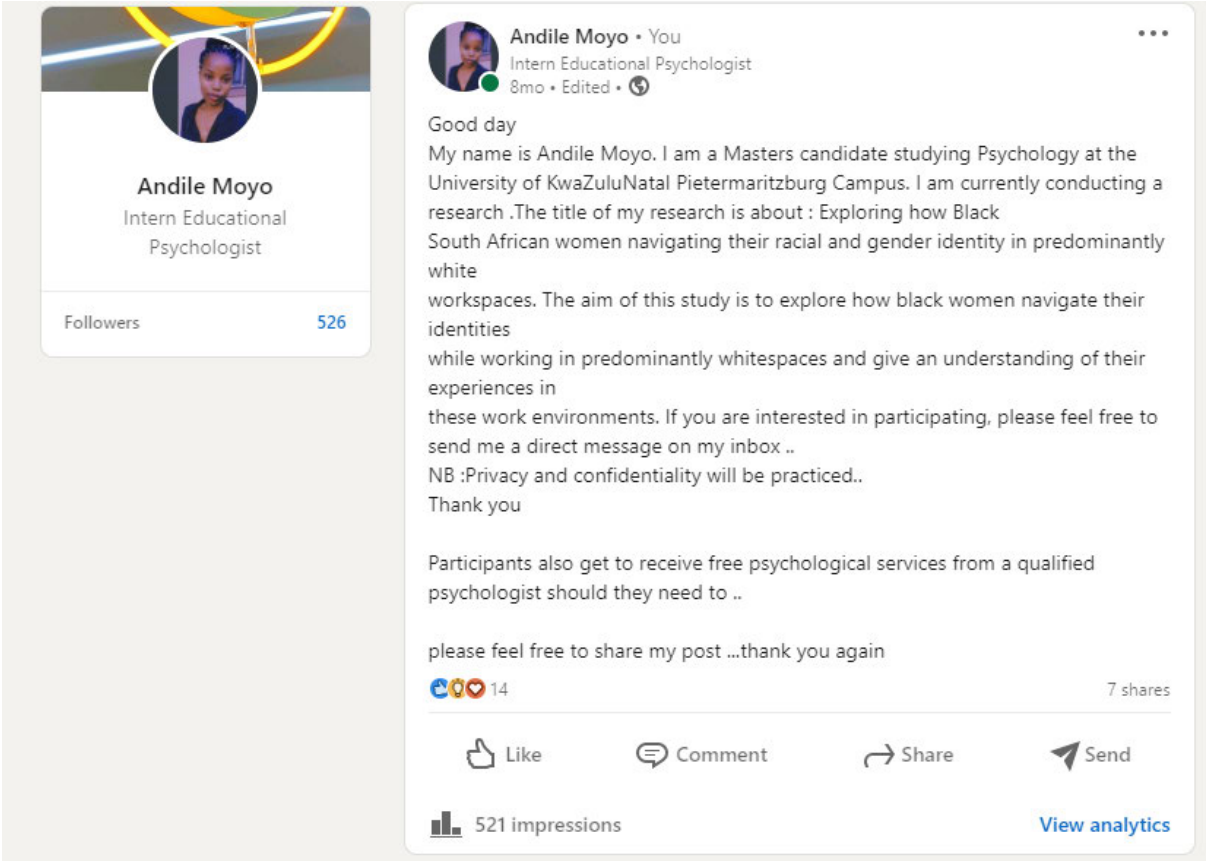
1. What work do you do?
2. Can you tell me more about your work environment?
3. What does it mean for you to be a black woman in South Africa?
4. Do you think black women face difficulties in the workplace? Yes or No? Please explain
5. What are some experiences you go through as a black woman in South Africa?
    - How do these experiences translate to your workplace? can you expand and share some of these experiences?
6. What challenges do you think are faced by black women working in predominantly white spaces?
    - Do these hardships affect you indirectly? Yes or No? If yes, can you expand and share some experiences?
    - How do these hardships make you feel? (probe; emotionally, psychologically)
7. What are some of the reasons you think to make people change in the workplace?
    - Do these hardships/ experiences make you feel like you have to change yourself? Yes or No? Please explain.
    - How do you cope with these hardships in the workplace?
8. What can make the workplace a comfortable environment for you?
9. Is there anything you would like to add to this interview?

APPENDIX D2: Interview Questions (isiZulu)

Imibuzo yenhlolokhono

1. Isingeniso: umhlanganyeli angachaza kabanzi ngaye nokuthi yimuphi umsebenzi awenzayo
    1. Wenza muphi umsebenzi?
    2. Ungangitshela kabanzi ngendawo osebenzela kuyo?
    3. Kusho ukuthini ukuthi ungowesifazane omnyama eNingizimu Afrika?
    4. Ucabanga ukuthi abesifazane abamnyama babhekana nobunzima emsebenzini? Yebo noma cha? Ngiyacela ukuns uchaze kabanzi.
    5. Yiziphi izigameko obhekana nazo njengowesifazane omnyama eNingizimu Afrika?
    - Lokhu kuzizwisa kuhumusheka kanjani endaweni yakho yokusebenza? ungakwazi ukwandisa futhi wabelane okunye kwalokhu okuhlangenwe nakho?
    - Ingabe lezizimo zivela ngayiphi indlela emsebenzini wakho? Ngicela uchaze ngezinye zalezi zimo.
    6. Iziphi izinselelo ocabanga ukuthi abesifazane amamyama abasebenza ezindaweni eziqhakambisa ubuhlanga babamhlophe babhekana nazo?
    - Ingabe lobu bunzima buthinta wena ngokuqondile? Yebo noma cha? uma kunjalo, ungakwazi ukwandisa futhi wabelane ama experiences athile??
    - Ingabe nawe ubheke nalobu bunzima. Yebo noma cha? Ngicela unabe ngezimo oke wabhekana nazo.
    - Lobu bunzima bukwenza uzizwe kanjani? (ngokwemizwa, nangokucabanga).
    7. Yiziphi ezinye zezizathu ocabanga ukuthi zenza abantu bashintshe emsebenzini?
        - Ngabe lobu bunzima/ izigameko zikwenza uzizwe sengathi kufanele uziguqule? Yebo noma Cha? Ngicela uchaze.
        - Ubhekana kanjani nalobu bunzima emsebenzini?
    8. Yini engenza indawo yokusebenza ibe indawo enethezekile kuwe?
    9. Ngabe kukhona ongathanda ukukwengeza kulenhlolomvo?

Appendix E: Recruitment Sheet



Appendix F: Letter of Psychological Services

LifeLine
Building Community Heart

LifeLine Pietermaritzburg
Incorporating Rape Crisis
14 Princess Street
P.O. Box 2075
Pietermaritzburg
3200
Tel: 033 342 4447
Fax: 033 3453946

LifeLine PMB: Newcastle Satellite Office
26 Paterson Street
Newcastle
2940
Tel: 033 3424447 Ext 226
Fax: 086 600 2007

www.lifelinepmb.co.za

26 November 2021

Research Participant Access to Psychological Support

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter serves to confirm that individuals who are participating in the research study that is conducted by Ms Andile Moyo (217015493) may be referred to LifeLine Pietermaritzburg should they require psychological support as a result of their participation in the study entitled: *Exploring how Black South African women navigate their racial and gender identity in predominantly white workspaces.* Psychological support, should it be required, will be provided within context of voluntary access by the participants. Further, it is my understanding that ethical approval has yet to be obtained for this study and that Ms. Moyo, under the supervision, Ms. Sindiswa Shezi (shezisl@ukzn.ac.za) will ensure that the study is undertaken in a manner that adheres to the ethical guidelines for social science research. I request that a copy of the ethical clearance be forwarded to me for my file once the study has been approved.

Kind regards,

Michael Hardie

LIFE LINE P. M. BURG
14 PRINCESS STREET
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201
TEL: 033 342 4447

NPO: 002-128 VAT: 4170240388 PBO: 390 003 027

rape crisis

Director: Mrs S Bijoux Chairperson: Mr N Mkhize

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

DISCIPLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY
20 Golf Road
Scottsville 3209
PIETERMARITZBURG
033 260 5166
cfc@ukzn.ac.za

26/11/2021

Dear Ms Moyo

Thank you for showing interest in our services. I am acknowledging receipt of your request to refer study participants for your research, should they require counselling services. The Child and Family Centre grants you permission to refer these participants. You can use the details above for the referrals.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Nozipho Ndlazi (Acting CFC Director)

[redacted]

Appendix G: Ethical Clearence

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

19 January 2022

Miss Andile Brenda Moyo (217015493)
School of Applied Human Sc
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Miss Moyo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003463/2021
Project title: Exploring how Black South African women navigate their racial and gender identity in predominantly white workspaces
Degree : Masters

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 27 September 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has 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.

This approval is valid until 19 January 2023.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Appendix H:Amended Title Ethical Clearence

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

17 November 2022

Miss Andile Brenda Moyo (217015493)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Miss Andile Brenda Moyo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003463/2021
Project title: Exploring how Black South African women navigate their racial and gender identity in predominantly white workspaces
Amended title: An exploration of black South African women s negotiation of their racial and gender identities in predominantly white workspaces
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 10 November 2022 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

Appendix I : Table of Analysis

Question 1 • ***Can you tell me more about your work environment?***	
Participant 1	It's a friendly place, l mean you everyone greeting everyone, you know, friendly, respectful, you just sit in your corner, obviously the people that you will interact with most other people who share the office with and that is your specific team that you are in. There's probably, like maybe, 100 of us like employed in total. The ration is almost even but l think males are a little bit fewer but it's almost equal, maybe you can say 60 /40 in terms of the gender were the females are more dominant Because even the CEO is female and our deputy the people that are right under her are also females. The gender cut are good. l feel very comfortable like that… its good . In terms of the race, what I know is they are only two black females and one black male. There are 2-3 mixed race females, I'm not really if they are colored or Indian or somewhere inbetween. But now one of the mixed females and a black male have resigned so obviously the numbers are dropping. When I first worked there, I mean it's a bit weird, you know… like where's everyone else… like I'm feeling a little bit underrepresented. Of course, everyone just tries to make you feel welcome, they tried to ensure that as much as possible but then another problem with that place is the language barrier. Because its predominantly white, not just English white people but, its Afrikaans White people, so there is obviously a huge language barrier, l mean one of the black females that is hired there, is very fluent in Afrikkans because she went to school like that. Language barrier is a like serious problem for me. Even the black male is fluent in Afrikaans because they went to like such schools. You feel a bit side-lined at times because it's like

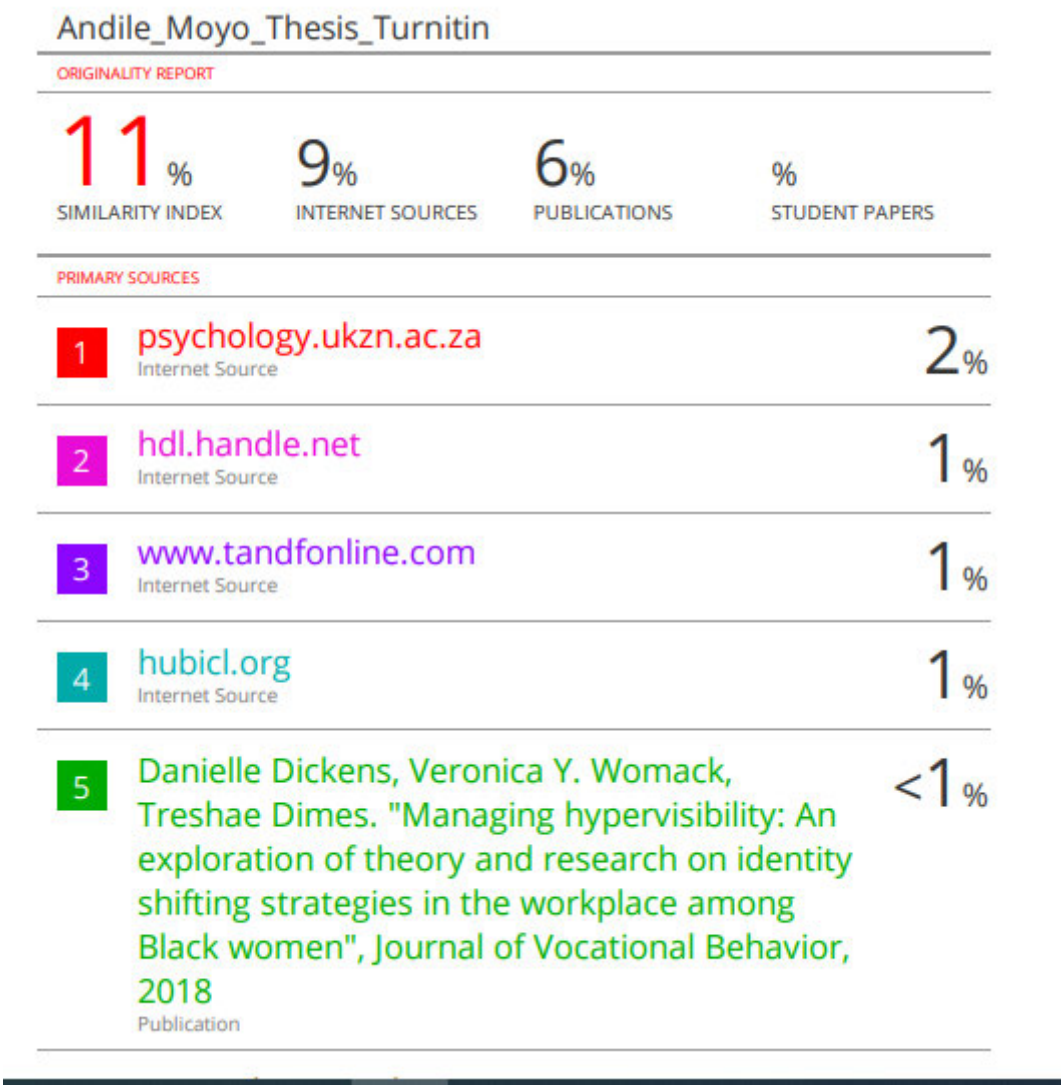
	OK I mean, are you only hiring people of your race and of your language and sometimes l do ask myself that question like why. I sometimes like having inconvenience because they have to kind of relay the same message twice and it makes me feel like why not just use English as a medium of communication… it's just simply because literally anyone can understand English.
Participant 2	….it's mostly white individuals there are 2 black people in the company if am not mistaken and that others are coloured's, then the majority of the people are white... There are approximately 20-25 people 17 are white and 6 are coloured, and 2 are black. There are mostly males 18/19 males and the rest is females . one other thing I forgot the issue of language yeah well my company is mostly Afrikaans people speaking so speak for me it's not really an issue because that's like an opportunity for me to learn other people I guess they might find that you know I'm saying but yeah alright so I understand some of the challenges you may face I understand so I also fluent in Afrikaans not yet fluent but I I can't speak there are you getting there alright that's interesting
Participant 3	I worked with a lot of young people. Yes. I was, well, there were only two black women. In the company in the whole of the company. The company consisted of like, 25 people, it was a very small company. And out of all those people, they only had two blacks. And yeah, so that was the work environment.
Participant 4	I think we're about 400 Odd….. In my particular department, I would say what you call it, females are more dominant. ….if we talking about like high level management, I can definitely say the males are more than the females. Well in my sight together I'd say throughout the whole site, the predominant race is black South Africans. Yes, I would say that and even in my department, I would also say that, but when it comes to the heads in my department, though, the predominant race are white females.

	And then if I'm talking about the heads of my site they are the predominant race there would be black, South African males
Participant 5	I work in, in primary school, by school, I mean, it is a school that starts from grade one to grade seven. It is a former model C school, what we call a former model C school. So that means it's a predominantly white school, and it is in a suburb. Yes, we would call would refer to as white middle to rich. Yeah. White middle class to rich. Yes. So it's kind of a suburb. And the environment. Yeah, the school itself is quite a relaxed environment. So obviously, my key responsibilities include teaching and in the subject area that I specialize in That is my teaching part. And then my aftercare…. aftercare responsibility just means I look after the children, myself and two other colleagues who are also white Among the teaching staff, there's only two of us. Okay, and then the other black staff, your general workers, your cleaners, your security. Yeah. So But amongst educators, it's just two ladies, myself and another lady.
Participant 6	Well, I'm in a class that's, I would say, predominantly black, or it's just it's multiracial. The lecturers is mostly white. And yeah, but then if we do have like, combined classes, then it's, then we like us as the black people become the minority. And yeah, but it's just, it's a very good work environment, as far as I can tell.
Participant 7	So we have the legal team, then the support team, the legal team, the makeup of that, I would say is literally if you're not taking in the full candidate Attorneys, including myself, the main legal team consists of 90% white, and I would say it is split 50-50 between males & females. Now on, the legal team (Candidate Attorneys) consists of two males. And then the rest are six females, but only one female is of coloured Indian descent from Cape Town, but everyone else's white and Afrikaans. And then when you take in the candidate attorney, three of us our black females, yes. And then we have one female who's White, who works with us. So we all started together. And then when it comes to support team, I would say there's around about 15 staff members who make up the support team

	which is more mixed, but it's predominantly people of color. So it's a mixture of Indian black, and colored. And then we only have four white staff members within the support team. And the support team, how we distinguish from each other is that the legal team focus literally on legal matters, and legal drafting. We also have separate lunch breaks, and so forth. And separate offices except us as the Candidate attorneys who work in this space of where the support team work. But the legal team are basically inside of the office and support team basically does be it from the cleaning staff, the drivers, the pickup delivery guys, the assistants, and the Finance Group who just assists with payments, they make up the support team.
Comment: There is an indication of inequality in the demographics , majority of the participants indicate most dominant race of employees in their respective companies are white .	
Question 2 • ***What does it mean for you to be a black woman in South Africa?*** • ***Do you think black women face difficulties in the workplace?*** • ***What are some experiences do you go through as a black woman in South Africa?*** - ***How do these experiences translate to your workplace?***	
Participant 1	black women in South Africa firstly when I see when I think about just a black woman in south Africa and the first few words that come to mind are strength, perseverance because on the food chain honestly feel like black women are at the bottom ..you know we have some kind of like fight harder than everyone else ..yes because of our history as a country you know it has definitely brought us back but black woman in a particular are l think more back , more backwards than everyone else 'cause I mean as man you do have some sort of head start you know in life like 'cause we do live in a patriarchal society ,so l feel like women have to be fighters you know literally in the everyday and fighting for something for someone because that's just how how our society is set up a black woman is somebody who has fight system has to fight beliefs you know has to fight so many things so

	yeah black women are just fighting a battle literally every single day and I think I'm actually one of the very privileged black women to be able to be exposed to so many things and I am not as backwards as many others and but there are some battles that you have to fight silently and you're like OK yeah this is going to be a bit difficult but you know its not impossible to reach there , but l have to fight two times harder than the person sitting next to me you know.

Appendix J : Turnitin Report



Andile_Moyo_Thesis_Turnitin

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11%	9%	6%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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5	Danielle Dickens, Veronica Y. Womack, Treshae Dimes. "Managing hypervisibility: An exploration of theory and research on identity shifting strategies in the workplace among Black women", Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2018 Publication	<1%