A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL NARRATIVES OF COLOURED FEMALES ABOUT HAIR, RACE AND IDENTITY IN POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DEDICATION

To my Daughter

Nevaeh Dimpho Seerane

I dedicate this research to my dearest daughter, who has unknowingly motivated me and kept me grounded throughout my research journey. Your smiles and laughter kept me sane and one day when you are all grown up I want you to read this dissertation and know that you are one beautiful young lady and be proud of your multiracial identity and embrace your afro crown.

DECLARATION

I declare that A critical analysis of phenomenological narratives of Coloured females about hair, race and identity in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication studies has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at thus or any other university, that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

09 September 2025

Full names Date

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Abstract

During apartheid South Africa, one of the imperatives of the Coloured identity was to be White in mind, spirit, and appearance to benefit from the socio-economic privileges associated with Whiteness. This included having Coloured women alter their hair's natural texture to align with Whiteness. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, where regnant Blackness is evident and apartheid injustices and policies no longer exist, how has the Coloured identity in terms of race, hair, and identity changed among people born during apartheid and those born after 1994? Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the phenomenological narratives of 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females regarding identity, race, and hair. Post-colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory guided the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five colonial-born and five born-free Coloured female participants between the ages of 18 and 70. The study's findings showed that both colonial-born and born-free participants are proud of their diverse Coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Another finding is that both colonial-born and born-free participants revealed that straight hair texture is important to them as Coloured females. This implies that if both the colonial-born and born-free Coloured continue to emphasize the importance of straight hair, they still hold onto Eurocentric standards of beauty regarding hair, race, and identity.

Keywords: Coloured female, hair, identity, race Post-apartheid

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Hair has long been a significant marker of identity, race, and social status in South Africa. During the apartheid era, hair texture was used as a criterion for racial classification, with straight hair often associated with whiteness and socio-economic privileges. This practice was part of a broader system of racial segregation and discrimination that sought to maintain white supremacy by marginalising non-white populations. The infamous "pencil test," where a pencil was inserted into a person's hair to determine their racial classification, exemplifies the extent to which hair was politicised and racialised during this period.

The legacy of apartheid continues to influence contemporary South African society, particularly in how beauty standards and racial identities are constructed and perceived. Eurocentric beauty standards, which prioritise straight hair and lighter skin, have been deeply ingrained in the social fabric, affecting how individuals, especially women, perceive themselves and are perceived by others. This has led to a complex relationship between hair, identity, and race, where altering one's natural hair texture is often seen as a means of achieving social acceptance and upward mobility.

The concepts of hair, race and identity are intricately entwined and have important cultural, social, and political connotations. The experiences with hair in the context of a post-colonial South Africa by Coloured females specifically reveal intricate identity debates within a culture shaped by the past and present legacies of apartheid, colonialism, and racial prejudice (Le Roux & Oyedemi, 2021). Using a post-colonial lens to comprehend people’s lived experiences, perceptions, and reflections; this research study seeks to critically investigate the phenomenological narratives of Coloured females about hair, race and identity. Phenomenology investigates relevant experience and the structure of conscious experience as perceived from an individual’s point of view (Smith, 2013). Understanding people’s lived experiences

through their subjective perceptions, feelings, and thoughts are made possible by phenomenological study (Neubauer et al., 2019). The application of phenomenology to investigate the narratives of Coloured females about hair, race, and identity provides a nuanced comprehension of how these intersecting elements influence their self-perception, interpersonal connections, and sense of inclusion in society.

In South Africa, the term Coloured refers to a population group of multiracial descent (Le Roux & Oyedemi, 2021). The term Coloured can be traced back to the apartheid era, where the White supremacy ruling party solidified its use to identify individuals who were positioned between either being Black or White (Pirtle, 2022). Apartheid refers to a political policy of segregation and discrimination against a minority (Ellis, 2019). Apartheid was introduced in South Africa in 1948 by the White supremacy governing party and lasted up until the 1990s (Posel, 2011). One of the key characteristics that were traditionally at the core of the Coloured identity was head hair and texture, which have historically been indispensable for the South African Coloured identity, particularly for women. Assimilation to dominant Whiteness is linked to this fixation with hair and texture (Adikhari, 2006). Therefore, some members of the Coloured minority longed to be accepted into the White supremacy's ruling class so they may enjoy the privileges of citizenship (Brown, 2000). These privileges included socio-economic factors such as employment and housing in upper class neighbourhoods. Hence, for many Coloured individuals, becoming White in spirit and mind was essential to achieving social success and was regarded as the pinnacle of human development (Adhikari, 2006).

In post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa, all South Africans are considered as equals. Nonetheless, it appears that Coloured individuals are still disenfranchised and stuck in an on-going racial and cultural transformation (Le Roux & Oyedemi, 2021). Hence, this study seeks to conduct a critical analysis of the phenomenological historical accounts pertaining to hair, race, and identity among Coloured women living in post-apartheid South Africa, where Black supremacy dominates. Historically, the term "Black supremacy" has been used to describe ideologies that assert the inherent superiority of Black people over other races (Biko, 2004). This concept emerged as a counterpoint to white supremacy, particularly within movements such as the Rastafari movement and the Nation of Islam (Hesse, 2004). However, in the context of South Africa, the term should be critically examined to avoid

oversimplification. Post-apartheid South Africa has seen a shift in power dynamics, with the African National Congress (ANC) leading the government since 1994. This shift has aimed to redress the inequalities of apartheid, but it does not equate to a reversal of racial hierarchies or the establishment of Black supremacy in the traditional sense.

The use of "Black supremacy" in this study should be understood as a reflection of the perceived dominance of Black cultural and political narratives in post-apartheid South Africa. This dominance can be seen in the efforts to promote Black empowerment and rectify historical injustices. However, it is crucial to recognise that this does not imply an overarching supremacy but rather a complex process of transformation and rebalancing of power. Coloured individuals, who historically occupied an intermediary racial category, continue to navigate their identities within this evolving landscape.

Therefore, linked to the analysis is the question: How has the Coloured community's notion of identity and hair texture changed? In the framework of their racial identities, how do Coloured women understand and relate to cultural expectations and conventions about hair? Thus, by exploring these questions, this research intends to shed light on broader issues of authority, representation, and resistance within contemporary society while also contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities of race, hair and identity among South African Coloured females through a critical perspective.

Recent studies have continued to explore the socio-political significance of hair in South Africa. For instance, Matjila's (2020) research highlights how black women in Southern Africa have had to assimilate to dominant Eurocentric beauty standards, which has been a locus of social, physical, and emotional oppression. Similarly, a study by Fernandez Knight and Long (2019) examines how black women use hair as a tool for negotiating and constructing multiple dimensions of their identity in the workplace, revealing the deep-seated racialised notions that deem African hair as unprofessional and inappropriate.

Moreover, Andile Cele's (2025) novel "Braids & Migraines" provides a poignant exploration of the intersecting struggles of race, mental health, and identity through the lens of a young black girl in post-apartheid South Africa. Cele's work underscores

the psychological and social challenges associated with hair and identity, highlighting the on-going impact of colonial legacies on contemporary South African society.

Recent studies based on Coloured hair and identity indicate that Coloured females continue to construct their hair based on the ideologies instilled on them by the apartheid era and feel the need to have their hair altered (Richardson, 2013). Hence, this study will add to the limited literature on Coloured hair and identity and investigate whether or not the ideologies of the past in terms of hair and hairstyles remain in South Africa post colonialism and apartheid.

The study is crucial for understanding the intricate relationship between hair, race, and identity among Coloured females in a post-apartheid society. By focusing on their lived experiences, this research aims to uncover how historical and contemporary social dynamics influence their self-perception and social interactions. The phenomenological approach used in this study allows for a deep exploration of personal narratives, providing rich insights into the subjective experiences of these women.

This research is significant as it addresses the on-going impact of apartheid and colonialism on identity formation. It highlights the persistent struggles for social acceptance and equality faced by Coloured females, offering a platform for their voices to be heard. The study also contributes to the limited literature on this topic, filling a critical gap and providing valuable data for scholars, policymakers, and activists interested in issues of race, identity, and social justice.

Overall, this study is not only academically important but also socially and culturally vital. It promotes a more inclusive understanding of South African society, challenges dominant narratives, and supports efforts towards social justice and reconciliation. By raising awareness and informing policy, the research aims to empower Coloured females and foster a more equitable and empathetic society.

1.2 Definition of key concepts:

Apartheid: translates to "separation" in African dialect, which refers to the racial inflexibility that controls the separation of the Black and White populations (Ayubi, 2023). This policy legally sanctioned the separation of different racial groups into

distinct geographic areas and restricted the rights of the non-white population, particularly Black South Africans, in terms of residence, employment, education, and political participation. Apartheid laws dictated where individuals could live, work, and socialise, and enforced a hierarchy that privileged the white minority over other racial groups. The social and economic repercussions of apartheid continue to affect South African society today.

Colonialism: The direct and general subjugation of one nation by another due to the possession of state authority by a foreign force (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). This often involves the settlement of the colonising country's population in the colonised territory and the imposition of the coloniser's culture, language, and governance structures. Colonialism is characterised by the domination and subjugation of the indigenous population, leading to significant social, economic, and cultural disruptions. Historically, European colonialism from the 15th to the 20th centuries had profound impacts on Africa, Asia, and the Americas, shaping global power dynamics and contributing to long-lasting inequalities.

Coloniality: refers to a number of different forms of dominance, exploitation, and power that emerged during the colonial era and still influence social, political, economic, and cultural interactions today (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). It encompasses how colonial ideologies continue to influence modern social, political, economic, and cultural interactions. Coloniality manifests in the on-going marginalisation and exploitation of formerly colonised peoples and the maintenance of global inequalities through neo-colonial practices. This concept highlights the deep-rooted and pervasive nature of colonial legacies in shaping current global structures.

Colonial-born: individuals who were born during the colonial era till the apartheid era. These individuals experienced the direct impacts of colonial rule and apartheid policies, which shaped their social, economic, and cultural realities. The experiences of colonial-born individuals are marked by the systemic inequalities and racial hierarchies imposed by colonial and apartheid regimes.

Born-free: individuals who were born post-apartheid, from 1994 till present day. This generation did not experience the legal and institutionalised racial segregation of apartheid first-hand, but still grapples with its enduring legacies. Born-frees are often seen as symbols of hope and progress, representing a new era of equality and

democracy. However, they also face challenges related to the socio-economic disparities and racial tensions that persist in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

During apartheid South Africa, one of the imperatives of the Coloured identity was to be White in mind, spirit and appearance in order to benefit from the socio-economic privileges associated with Whiteness. This included having Coloured women alter their hair's natural texture in order to be associated with Whiteness. However, in South Africa post-apartheid, where regnant Blackness is evident, and apartheid injustices and policies no longer exist, how has the Coloured identity in terms of race, hair and identity changed amongst those born throughout the apartheid and colonial era and individuals born after 1994?

Though the issue of hair texture was prevalent during apartheid, in post-apartheid South Africa the issue still remains, according to Le Roux (2020) in her findings, Coloured females still carry the Eurocentric ideology of beauty standards and that the Eurocentric beauty standards were passed down from one generation to the next. Similarly, Oyedemi & Le Roux (2021) state that in a post- apartheid South Africa, Coloured females continue to demonstrate the racist hair and identity concepts of apartheid's colonial historical heritage. Hence, if these notions of beauty standards of hair and identity continue amongst Coloured females it will become an intergenerational cycle and the forth coming generations will never learn to accept their natural features and embrace natural Black beauty. Furthermore, this study aspires to bring about awareness to the issue of hair and identity, and allow the reader to reflect on possible changes to their hair rituals.

The study addresses a multifaceted problem rooted in the historical and on-going impacts of apartheid and colonialism on identity formation among Coloured females. During apartheid, Coloured individuals were pressured to conform to Eurocentric standards of beauty, including altering their natural hair texture, to gain socio-economic privileges associated with whiteness. This legacy has persisted into the post-apartheid era, where Coloured females continue to grapple with these imposed beauty standards.

The persistence of Eurocentric beauty standards among Coloured females is problematic because it perpetuates a cycle of self-alteration and identity suppression. Despite the official end of apartheid, the internalisation of these standards continues to affect the self-perception and social interactions of Coloured females. This issue is compounded by the fact that these beauty standards are passed down through generations, creating an intergenerational cycle of identity struggle and self-rejection

This problem is worthy of attention because it highlights the deep-seated and enduring impacts of apartheid and colonialism on personal and collective identities. By examining the phenomenological narratives of Coloured females, this study seeks to uncover the nuanced ways in which these women navigate their identities in a society that still bears the scars of its racially segregated past. Understanding these experiences is crucial for promoting social inclusion, equality, and the empowerment of marginalised groups.

This study significantly contributes to knowledge by providing empirical data and theoretical insights into the lived experiences of Coloured females in post-apartheid South Africa. By exploring the intersection of hair, race, and identity through a phenomenological lens, it offers a nuanced understanding of how historical and contemporary social dynamics shape individual and collective identities. This research enriches the existing literature on race and identity, highlighting the persistent influence of Eurocentric beauty standards and their implications for social justice and equality.

Additionally, the study raises awareness about the on-going impact of apartheid and colonialism, encouraging reflection and dialogue on these issues. It provides valuable insights for policymakers and educators, informing targeted interventions and fostering a deeper understanding of South Africa's complex social dynamics. Ultimately, this research promotes a more inclusive and equitable society by amplifying the voices of marginalised groups and challenging dominant narratives.

1.4 SCHOLARLY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This section of the study will deliberate coloniality and the historic context of identity, race and hair in South Africa by investigating the historical background of identity and race in South Africa; apartheid and the creation of race and identity; and the effects of colonialism on identity and culture.

1.4.1.1 Historical background of race and identity in South Africa

Long before the Europeans arrived in the southern parts of Africa, indigenous people, now known as the Khoisan people, occupied the land (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). The Khoisan comprises two different tribes, namely; the San people and the Khoikhoi, who were combined as one by anthropologists to distinguish them from the Black farmers from neighbouring lands (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). The people of the San tribe were the first ones to come in contact with the Dutch settlers in the Cape of South Africa (Oliver & Oliver, 2017).

As the migration of Black Africans (the Xhosa tribe) advanced into the southern parts of the continent all the way from the northern parts, the San and the Khoi people were already intermixed as one (Roets, 2020). The Xhosa tribe and the Khoisan people intermarried as a result of Black Africans' migration, creating a "mixed" race that included culture and traditions of both civilisations (Roets, 2020). European settlers came a few years after the different tribes had mixed together to set up a refreshment station, but they ended up staying and creating their own towns and governments (Roets, 2020). Thus, in South Africa, the history of race and identity is a multifaceted structure constructed from centuries of oppression, colonisation and resistance.

1.4.1.2 Apartheid and the creation of race and identity, specifically the Coloured identity

During apartheid, race was classified in terms of the Population Registration Act of 1950. Apartheid officials enforced the Population Registration Act, which classified individuals into four racial categories: Black, White, Coloured, and Indian (Breckenridge, 2014). Apartheid officials employed the Population Registration Act of 1950 as a means to categorise individuals based on their physical characteristics

into different racial groups (Sonn & Fisher, 2003). Hair and skin colour were mainly used in these classifications.

The Coloured race comes from individuals of multiracial descents, which includes offspring in addition to ancestors from unifications of Black and White, Black and Asian, White and Asian, and Black-Coloured people (Brown, 2000). Originally, the Coloured people were found or dominated in the southern parts of South Africa, because of the interactions made in 1652 between the Khoi people and the Dutch settlers in those areas (Brown, 2000). As a result, the Coloured identity has a diverse range of ancestry and physical characteristics. As a result of intentional social engineering and racial categorisation intended to uphold White supremacy and manage South Africa's heterogeneous populace, the Coloured race and identity were created during the apartheid era (Adikhari, 2001).

1.4.1.3 Implications of coloniality on culture and identity in South Africa

Coloniality is "a reference to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism and continues to define culture, labour, intersubjective relations and knowledge production, well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:128). Quijano in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:128) defines coloniality "as one of the specific and constitutive elements of a global model of capitalist power that is based on a racial/ethnic classification of the global population as the cornerstone of that model of power"; hence, present-day colonialism permeates every aspect of daily social existence for humans, operating on all aspects (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Therefore, over the centuries, the impact of colonialism on culture and identity has persisted, encompassing everything from language and religion to social order and economic systems. African civilisation saw tremendous upheaval as a result of colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which disrupted customs and moulded the continent's cultural identity (Rani, 2023). The social, political, economic, and cultural fabric of South Africa has been impacted in a long-lasting way by the complex ramifications of colonialism's effects on identity and culture.

1.4.2 Post-colonial narratives on African hair and identity

African (Black) women's hair is an incredibly potent symbol of identity and resistance, which influences everything from the history of colonialism and slavery to current discussions about representation and beauty standards. . In African culture, hair signifies one's identity and gives a sense of belonging (Hamiodou, 2023). Hair is used as a form of communicating one's social position in society, such as in the West African culture a women who has been recently widowed, has to stop taking care of her hair as an indication of mourning and look unattractive to other men (Hamiodou, 2023).

While hair carried much significance for African women in the past, in present day society, the beauty standards that hair carries seem to have changed, especially among different racial groups. In present day post-colonial society, numerous Black women prefer to embrace their natural hairstyles. This is proven in a study done by Johnson & Bankhead (2014) about Black women's experiences with natural hair and to their surprise the result of their investigation proves that Black women receive acceptance from society of their natural hairstyles and women wearing natural hairstyles have achieved economic success. Thus, the narratives of African hair in a post-colonial era differ from person to person depending on their experiences and society.

1.5 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

This research will utilise Post-colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory. Post-colonial discourse is applied within Post-colonial Theory by examining different facets of colonial and post-colonial society with the knowledge and techniques of post-colonial studies. Post-colonial discourse will assist in incorporating the wide-ranging disciplines and discuss issues related to imperialism and colonialism.

This study will utilise Post-colonial Theory as elucidated by Frantz Fanon (1986) and Edward Said (1978) to evaluate issues of ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, gender, and cultural identity in colonised countries (Burney, 2012). Frantz's view of Post-colonial Theory contends for revolutionary resistance against colonial oppression while examining the internalised racism and identity issues that people in colonised cultures endure. Said's view emphasises how discourse and the creation

of knowledge contribute to the maintenance of colonial power relations. Post-colonial Theory bases its commentary on social histories, ethnic barriers, and democratic marginalisation that colonial and imperial machineries practice and normalise (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007).

This research will also use Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman's explanation of the Critical Race Theory, which first appeared in the latter part of the 1970s. By taking the position that racism is a widespread occurrence and attempting to elucidate the racial context of society's public and private spheres, both authors aimed to demonstrate how racism and race functioned in the legal system and in society at large (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Even though Critical Race Theory spends ample time exploring race and racism, it is mainly founded on legal studies (De La Garza & Ono, 2016). However, what segregates Critical Race Theory from legal studies or any other critique is that the theory instead views race as a premise of hardships and does not treat it as an individual entity (De La Garza & Ono, 2016). Post-colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory are both based on challenging White supremacist ideologies in societies that have been colonised (Richardson, 2013). An in-depth discussion of these theories will be provided in Chapter 2 during the write-up phase of the study.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Research Aim

The aim of the study is to explore the phenomenological narratives of 'colonial-born' and 'born- free' Coloured women about identity, race and hair.

1.6.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- **Research objective 1:** To compare and contrast the phenomenological narratives of race, hair and identity among 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females.

- **Research objective2:** To determine through a critical lens the impact that the historical context of hair and current hairstyle choices have on the identity of ‘colonial-born’ and ‘born-free’ Coloured females.
- **Research objective 3:** To analyse whether there is a change in the perception of hair, race and identity among ‘colonial-born’ and ‘born-free’ Coloured females in post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa.

1.7 Background to the Research methodology

1.7.1 Research design

A phenomenological research design is chosen for this study. Phenomenology is used when the researcher aims to designate the lived experiences of individuals as a phenomenon, as explained by the individuals (Asenahabi, 2019). This study is qualitative in nature and an interpretivist approach is applied to the study to clearly understand the behaviours and decisions of individuals who participated in the study pertaining to hair.

1.7.2 Population

A population is any group of individuals belonging to the same species that coexist and reproduce in a certain region (Tarsi & Tuff, 2012). A population's members frequently share resources, are vulnerable to comparable environmental restrictions, and depend on one another's survival throughout time (Tarsi & Tuff, 2012). Hence, this study focuses on the Coloured female population in Polokwane from a Coloured dominated suburb, Westenburg.

1.7.3 Sampling

Non-probability sampling is utilised for this study. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that uses non-random factors such the respondents’ availability, proximity to the research site, or area of expertise (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Purposive sampling was used for this study because the study was a non-probability in qualitative circles. This sampling technique is used to select a sample or participants

for the study that best fit the criteria and correspond with the study's objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). The sample of this study include two groups of Coloured females consisting of five (5) colonial born, who are the elder participants born before the year 1994 and five (5) born-frees, those who are born after 1994. An appropriate sample size for a phenomenological research might vary from 3 to 25 individuals, depending on the topic and variety intended to be captured (Coolidge et al, 2020). Hence, the small sample size is chosen for this study. Furthermore, Coloured females are chosen for this study based on the history of hair in South Africa, particularly because Coloured females, among other populations, were discriminated against because of their hair texture.

1.7.4 Data collection

Data is gathered using semi-structured interview techniques. A pre-group questionnaire is utilised prior to the semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire's objective is to offer crucial insights into the initial perspectives and traits of the participants and cover a wide range of aspects linked to the study's main points, guaranteeing a comprehensive approach to data collection. Individual interviews are conducted to fully grasp each individual's opinion and personal experiences, and narratives about hair, race, and identity in post-colonial South Africa.

Semi-structured interviews are a sequence of open-ended questions asked that allow the interviewer to gain an in-depth of information from the interviewees (Mathers et al., 2002). This form of interview is advantageous because it gives an interviewer the opportunity to gain more information about the topic of the study (Mathers et al., 2002). The data is collected in face-to-face interviews; and all 10 participants are individually interviewed to avoid any discussion of the questions amongst participants. The information gathered from the participants is recorded and preserved digitally. In addition to the recordings, notes are taken during the interviews as extra material for the study.

1.7.5 Data analysis

The data obtained from the participants is thematically analysed. Thematic analysis is applied when a researcher wants to uncover recurring patterns and themes within

the research (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). These patterns and themes uncover the underlying meaning within the received data (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). A reflexive thematic analysis was applied, which incorporates reflexive and repetitive cycles of data coding, interpretation, and reflection in order to acknowledge and address the subjective aspect of the research process while also delivering nuanced and contextual susceptible perspectives on the study issue (Crosley, 2021). An inductive approach was applied within the thematic analysis technique, which is beneficial when the goal of the research is to use the facts to develop new insights, hypotheses, or understandings without imposing predating theoretical frameworks (Rashid, 2023). With this form of data collection, critical attention has to be paid in the patterns that may recur throughout the process, especially for each individual. This will help the researcher to ascertain if there will be any patterns of similarities in each participant's responses to generalise the study.

1.8 THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to the corpus of literature in the field of race, hair and identity studies. Despite the fact that South Africa's body of work on race, gender, and identity continues to expand, a large portion of it still focuses on the racial classifications of Black and White people. Hence, this study prioritises the experiences of Coloured females, who have a distinctive intersectional position in South African society yet whose viewpoints are frequently disregarded or dismissed. Thus, gaining knowledge on how Coloured women navigate and negotiate their identities in light of societal standards and conventions around race and hair may be extremely beneficial in understanding identity formation processes and the effects of intersecting social classifications. This study aims to fill gaps by providing new information, perspectives, or methodologies in the field of Coloured identity and Coloured history. Therefore, this study will investigate new facets, subtleties, or dimensions related to Coloured hair, race, and identity that have hitherto not been sufficiently explored.

1.9 Overview and structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

The study's approach is presented in this chapter. Along with providing an overview of the study's history and introduction, it also highlights the study's aim, objectives, and motivations. It also provides a brief overview of the study's literature and methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter will include literature that discusses coloniality, hair, race and identity in South Africa, apartheid and the creation of race and identity specifically the Coloured identity and implications of coloniality on hair, race and identity in South Africa-postcolonial narratives. The researcher also discusses the theories applied to the study namely Post-colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory that are utilized to examine and confront racism and colonialism legacies, structural oppression, and social inequalities.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter covers the study's research methodology, discussion the research design and sampling method. It further discusses how data was collected from ten female participants and how the data was analysed.

Chapter 4: Presentation and interpretation of findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research. It also introduces the participants and provided a bit of background information about the participants. The themes that were discovered from the findings and discussed in this chapter which are supported by literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion, recommendations, limitations and conclusion

The study's results are presented in this chapter, which also discusses the limitations while offering recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section of the study, African hair and identity are critically analysed, with an emphasis on the ways in which these ideas interact with coloniality, race, and identity in the South African setting. In order to investigate how race and identity have been created and challenged, particularly during and after apartheid, it draws on both historical and contemporary research. This section of the literature will discuss the historical background of race and identity in South Africa; apartheid and the creation of race and identity; the significance of hair in pre-colonial and colonial South Africa; and lastly, the implications of coloniality on hair, race, and identity in South Africa's postcolonial narrative.

2.2.1 Historical background of race and identity in South Africa

The intricate interplay between race and identity has shaped South Africa's social, political, and cultural environment over decades. Racial identity formation has always been crucial to the way society is run, how it is governed, and how its varying population interacts with one another. Racial identity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses an individual's degree of identification with their racial group, their sense of belonging to other members of their tribe, their assessment of their group membership, and maybe even actions and attitudes that are specific to that group (Broman, 2015).

The term identity has numerous definitions from various authors; however, identity can be defined as the qualities and attributes, interpersonal relationships, positions, and affiliations with social groups that characterise an individual (Oyserman et al. 2012:69). Identity encompasses both fixed and malleable facets of an individual's identity, such as gender, age, or race, as well as decisions about career, pursuits, and significant others; hence, one may use the concept of identity to refer to both people and groups (Adams et al. 2011). Identity is the result of the intricate

interactions between a person's private, social, and environmental elements, all of which work together to define them as a unique individual (Adams et al. 2011). Identity is essential in bridging the gap between an individual and society, as it encompasses both societal and individual activities (Brunsdon, 2017). Furthermore, South Africa's history, politics, culture, and economics have revolved around race and identity, which is still an intricate web of disparate racial identities, cultural identities, linguistic relationships, and ethnic affiliations (Nengwekhulu, 1986).

Prior to the advent of the Dutch and European colonists, an area now known as South Africa was a complex tapestry of varying societies, cultures, and peoples. These consisted of the Khoikhoi, commonly referred to as Hottentots, the San, referred to as Bushmen, the Nguni tribe, which included speakers of Xhosa and Zulu, and the Sotho tribe, which contained speakers of Tswana and Pedi (Le Roux, 2020). Surrounding the region of the Cape were the San people, who were known as hunter-gatherers, fishing alongside the coast, hunting wildlife, and additionally harvesting vegetables and fruits (Wilson & Thompson 1969). Under the leadership of the herd leader was the Khoi clan, who lived within the Cape of Good Hope; their societies were divided into units where they herded tamed animals, which included cattle and sheep (Le Roux, 2020). The Nguni tribes, on the other hand, were split up into kingdoms, each headed by a recognised monarch; their method of production consisted of farming, herding, and hunting (Ogot, 1992). The Nguni tribes had a hierarchy of leadership, with the king at the top, followed by regional chiefs, clan leaders, and heads of households at the bottom (Ogot, 1992). The Sotho tribe also consisted of a combination of livestock herding and farming, and they would engage in commerce with neighbouring tribes with the crafts they produced from clay, straw, and other raw materials they possessed (Le Roux, 2020). Thus, in pre-colonial Africa, the indigenous peoples could cohabit well with one another.

Colonisation took place in South Africa during the 15th century; however, the first sailors to arrive on the Cape coast were the Portuguese in 1488, but their intention was not to colonise but rather to secure their coastline route to and from India (Suveren, 2019). The Dutch sailors soon arrived after the Portuguese settled. In 1647, sailor Jan van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape with five ships (Suveren, 2029). Jan van Riebeeck was the leader of the first Dutch colonisation voyage to the Cape (Magubane 2001:5). The Cape was premeditated to be a “port town” for the passing

sailors, where the indigenous Khoisan people provided the sailors with fresh meat, vegetables and water (Suveren, 2019). However, a dispute arose between Riebeeck and the Khoisans in 1657 due to the Khoisans' resistance to trade with the Dutch East India Company as a result of the Dutch people's rapid development; the two sides' agreement to trade sheep and cattle was cancelled (Suveren, 2019). The disagreement between the two parties led to the Dutch seizing some of the land owned by the Khoisans since the port needed supplies for the passing sailors, and Jan van Riebeeck established farming areas (Suveren, 2019). The Cape subsequently developed into a colony, and in the 1660s, other European governments began to refer to it as a town (Suveren, 2019).

However, the Khoisan people, who had lost a large portion of their property to new landowners, were at odds with this land ownership system; as a result, they regularly attacked the Dutch, who responded aggressively (Roets, 2020). Following the defeat in two battles, portions of the Khoisans were forced to flee, while others were forced to take up farming labour from the Dutch (Roets, 2020). Consequently, several women became pregnant through their masters, although they and their offspring continued to be slaves (Roets, 2020). Hence, many aspects of segregation had their origins during the Dutch ruling era (Beinart & Dubow, 1995).

Unlike most other African colonial regions, South Africa drew a sizable population of European settlers (Beinart & Dubow, 1995). After two and a half centuries of immigration and growth, little more than twenty per cent of people living in the newly formed country were categorised as European or White by 1910, and up until the 1960s, this ratio was presumably higher than in any other African region (Beinart & Dubow, 1995). White supremacist colonialism was maintained by treating and training the colonised to be inferior, which caused powerlessness and stagnation in the lives of the African people (Le Roux, 2020). The takeover of the region by the imperialists became a disadvantage to the indigenous inhabitants, as they no longer had access to cattle and fresh produce of the land; thus, the indigenous peoples overcame this by becoming servants to the colonists (Magubane, 1990). African societies suffered greatly during the White supremacist era, which ended the historical advancement of African civilization and the African people's status as a degraded race and heathen people (Le Roux, 2020).

South Africa's racial identity was greatly impacted by the apartheid regime's institutionalisation of racism and continued weaponisation of race, which contributed to the nation's extensive history of colonial warfare and the use of power to establish authority and control (Berlein, 2021). The racialised organisation of South African society was initially facilitated by colonisation, but it was the apartheid government that formalised racial classification and segregation, dividing the population into four recognised categories: Black African, Indian, Coloured, and White (Burawoy, 1974).

The concept of apartheid was first used to refer to the regime of systemic discrimination and racial manipulation that the National Party implemented following its election triumph in the year 1948 (Posel, 2011). From 1948 until the early 1990s, South African society was ruled by the apartheid system; however, there were always disagreements over the conditions of this division (Posel, 2011). Although the conditions surrounding the apartheid project remained precarious, there was an unequivocal dedication to White political supremacy and the ideological marginalisation of the Black majority, and all this was accompanied by persistent contradictions and tensions, as well as some degree of strategic fluidity (Posel, 2011). While contemporary Western and colonial powers have long regulated race relations, the apartheid state went a step further by formally establishing the notion of systematic, legalised racial segregation and discrimination (Posel, 2011). In the disguise of a distinct ideology of White supremacy and racial purity, racism and racial prejudice were institutionalised and pervaded every aspect of daily life, whether it be public or private (Posel, 2011).

The apartheid regime prioritised racial "separateness" as its central tenet and was founded on authoritative discrimination and White supremacist beliefs; in practice, the approach meant that all individuals were legally classified into racial groupings that were mutually exclusive (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). Hence, while White people consistently enjoyed far greater opportunities, facilities, subsidies, and welfare transfers, other groups had differing degrees of governmental backing, legal rights, access to healthcare and education, and freedom of movement (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). As a result, a social and economic class structure totally consistent with the apartheid racial hierarchy was established and cemented (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023).

Even though Whites and non-Whites constituted the majority of the discriminatory divide, there were still significant disparities in how various non-White groups were treated (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). Black citizens, in particular, experienced severe discrimination; thus, this racially stratified society was brought about by a number of laws that formally established discrimination as a component of national politics (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). Among these, a few of the most extensive ones were:

- "The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949. This made it illegal for White people and people from non-White race groups to be legally married. This law was followed by the Immorality Amendment Act, 1950 — which prohibited sexual relationships between Whites and members of the other race groups" (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023 p.3).

- "The Group Areas Act, 1950. This provided for separate residential areas for members of different races, which allowed the state to invest heavily in infrastructure in White areas while providing minimal levels of services in Black areas. It also facilitated the geographic exclusion of Black communities by forcing them to take up residences in townships on the periphery of urban centres" (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023 p.3).

- "The Bantu Authorities Act, 1951. This law enabled the development of 'independent' homelands that were effectively rural reservations where Africans of different linguistic groups were forcibly removed to. These were ruled by tribal chiefs, and were used to strip Africans of citizenship rights in the 'White' South Africa" (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023 p.3).

Apartheid's racial classification concept in South Africa was a symbol of human indignity as well as an instrument of tyranny. Rather than relying on objective "scientific" evidence to support each classification, apartheid employed a completely proactive culturalist interpretation of race, reading its cultural significance into physical traits in line with the supposed racial rationality of White South Africans (Posel, 2011). This led to the mass classification of people based on race, which would have seemed unthinkable otherwise (Posel, 2011). The apartheid governance associated race with physical characteristics, in contrast to other racist systems that determined race based on biological markers or lineage; as a result, a person's physical characteristics and social perception were considered significant factors in

identifying their race (Posel, 2011). Thus, the Population Registration Act of 1950 was put into place, and this established a working legal description of the country's races (Posel, 2011).

The Population Registration Act of 1950 is a regulation that compelled all South Africans to be registered and allocated to an official racial group (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). This system of widespread discrimination mandated official racial classification for the entire population (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). Another reason the Population Registration Act of 1950 was implemented is that one of the major challenges the national party had when it ascended to the presidency in 1948 was the large number of individuals who were racially unclear (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). When a person's race is difficult to determine from their physical attributes or other traits, they are referred to as racially unclear (also called racial ambiguity); and in most cases, they are thought of as multi- or bi-racial (Resnick, 2024). The Population Registration Act of 1950 addressed the legal need for clarification regarding the definition of race and the process of determining an individual's racial category by mandating that the entire population be classified and issued with a South African ID card that would officially state their racial group (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023).

Furthermore, the number of persons who were officially classified as belonging to a particular race rose throughout time; hence, offspring born after the 1951 Census had a greater chance of being classified using the official race of both parents (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). Thus, children born to two officially White parents would be categorised as White, children born to two legally Native/Black parents would be categorised as Native/Black, and children born to any other parent from different racial groups would be categorised as Coloured (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023). The speculation was that the offspring's physical appearance would eventually become irrelevant and government documents would provide enough information about the offspring's heritage to create an accurate racial classification (Pellicer & Ranchhod, 2023).

The racial categorisation system of apartheid was a terrible period in South Africa's history that created division based on race and exacerbated injustice and inequality. South African society is still affected by its history, which emphasises how critical it is to acknowledge the past and strive towards a future of harmony and peace.

2.2.2 Apartheid and the creation of race and identity specifically the Coloured identity

In South Africa, race has been an on-going topic that many find daunting due to its extensive history, widespread influence on society, and the lasting legacy of apartheid. Deeply entwined with South Africa's colonial past, apartheid regulations, and the societal implications of race and identity, the concept of Coloured identity has a convoluted and sometimes misinterpreted history. In South Africa, it is efficiently recognised that the Coloured race is a minority class (Bloom, 1967). In terms of population share, Coloureds make up 8.9% of the total, which is second surpassing Indians, as reported by Stats South Africa.

In South Africa, the Coloured identity refers to a population group of multiracial descent (Le Roux & Oyedemi, 2021). The South African apartheid administration labelled a group of individuals who were frequently classified as intermediate between White and Black ethnicities as "Coloured" (Ruiters, 2013). On account of their middle-class status, Coloured people were perceived as racially middle class and as having a weaker identity that was absent, subpar, or non-existent (Le Roux & Oyedemi, 2021). In the context of Coloureds in South Africa, the term "racially middle class" describes people or groups that hold a middle place in the nation's racial hierarchy, especially as it was formed during and after apartheid. White South Africans were at the top of the racial hierarchy created by apartheid, while Black South Africans were at the bottom. Coloured people in the middle were given more privileges than Black South Africans, but they were still subjected to discrimination (Adhikari, 2005). Because of this intermediate status, people who identify as Coloured were conceptualised as being middle class in terms of social access, education, mobility, and state treatment, rather than income (Erasmus, 2001).

The story of the Coloured identity within South Africa appears intricate and multidimensional, entwined with the nation's larger historical narrative of racial inequality, colonisation, and socioeconomic development.

According to official descriptions, "Coloured" pertains to any individual of "mixed blood," which includes offspring from Black-White, Black-Asian, White-Asian, and Black-Coloured conjugal relationships (Brown, 2000). The majority of South Africans who identify as Coloured live in the country's south, with the Cape Province harbouring at least 87% of the country's Coloured population as of 1980 (Brown, 2000). Given that the development of the Coloured population emerged through contacts among Dutch immigrants and the Khoi-Khoi and the San people who were already living in the area in 1652, this preponderance in the southern part of the nation is plausible (Brown, 2000).

On the other hand, the multiracial notion of the Coloured identity dates back to the colonial period when Van Riebeeck landed in 1652, which marked the founding of the first Dutch colony in the Cape (Bloom, 1967). It is believed that during the 1670s, around 75% of the offspring born to female slaves had White paternity due to the numerous extramarital relationships and nuptials between Dutchmen and Hottentot women during the first decades of slavery (Bloom, 1967). This is where the current Cape Coloured population originated, and the initial intermarriage continued in a manner of concubinage, which is comparable to what happens in other countries, such as the USA (Bloom, 1967). Hence, a large proportion of people who identify as Coloured speak Afrikaans as their native language since they are descended from Dutch and European settlers who migrated to the western region of South Africa (Alexander, 2018). Individuals who identify as Coloured typically have a diverse range of ancestry and distinctive physical characteristics. The idea that Coloured identity is genetically set as a result of the miscegenation of indigenous Africans and European immigrants who began arriving in the Cape in the 17th century is thus supported by the essentialist theory (Meadows, 2008). The theory states that some unchangeable traits or attributes define the identity or essence of an individual or group (Mahr, 2023). Therefore, it can be said that racial hybridity is the primary factor that determines "Colouredness" (Meadows, 2008).

In addition, utilising the historical connections between the Coloured population alongside the Black society, Nilsson (2016) examines the various ways in which social and political practices have shaped and altered the meaning and essence of the Coloured identity and how the apartheid officials capitalised on it. According to Nilsson (2016), the majority of the settlers at the Cape were men, and the scarcity of European women eventually encouraged new forms of partnerships between the settlers and the indigenous population, which steered numerous settlers to adulterous affairs with indigenous women. The first known marriage between a European settler and an indigenous Khoi woman took place in 1656 (Nilsson, 2016). Inter-racial unions were not only accepted at the time but rather encouraged by the Dutch United East India Company, or VOC (Ziervogel, 1938). Many of the settlers indulged in adulterous affairs with Khoi and San slaves. The White minority accepted the offspring of such interracial unions, while the Khoi and San remained at the bottom of the social scale; their "half-European" progeny were positioned higher because of their ancestry with the European settlers (Nillson, 2016). These were routine trends, and during the first 20 years after the arrival of the European settlers, 75% of all infants born to slave mothers were the result of extramarital interactions (Marais, 1957; Ziervogel, 1938). The offspring of these alliances were ultimately labelled as “multiracial” due to their mixed genetic ancestry.

The difficulty in defining the identities of "Coloured" people is evident in the several definitions put forth by the government in the years leading up to the 1950 definition (Shame, 2018). During the apartheid era, a significant legislative milestone was the enactment of the 1950 Population Registration Act (Hammet, 2007). Under this law, which was referenced in several later Acts, a "Coloured" person was defined as "a person who is not a White person or a native," with the stipulation that the Governor-General could alter any declaration of identification (Hammet, 2007). This rule effectively solidified the notion of distinct racial categories and legitimised the unofficial hierarchy that existed prior to apartheid, with the White minority at the top, Blacks at the bottom, and Indians and Coloured individuals positioned in the centre (Brown, 2000). The legislation also provided a framework for identifying individuals classified as Coloured by creating bureaucratic divisions to track racial classifications and reclassifications of the population (Brown, 2001). Consequently, due to their varied physical characteristics and loyalty to South Africa's predominant culture and

faith, it was challenging to identify Coloured individuals (Brown, 2000). Although Coloureds spoke Afrikaans as their native language, had complexions ranging from White to very dark, and adhered to the Protestant religion of the White minority, they sometimes caused confusion regarding racial categorisation (Brown, 2000). Hence, the Population Registration Act of 1950 was useful to the apartheid officials.

Wendell Moore (2015) in his study outlines the symbolic meaning he has discovered and understood regarding the Coloured identity. Moore (2015) states that the Coloured identity in South Africa was positioned halfway between Black and White. The Coloured identity is frequently shaped by failure of justice, uncertainty, discomfort, and sexual insufficiency (Moore, 2015). Although there are other groups of people in South Africa with mixed heritage, it is inherent in the country's racial consciousness to see only Coloured individuals as having experienced processes of hybridization and multiculturalism (Moore, 2015). Moore (2015) concludes that there presently exists no single definition of Coloured identity or definition of Colouredness, in spite of the efforts of the apartheid regime thus, this is because the main obstacle in the quest for the Coloured identity lies not as much in the definition of Coloured as in the concept of identity.

In South Africa, the cultural aspects of Coloured identity are multifaceted, steeped in history, and distinguished by a diverse range of customs, dialects, and social customs. With influences from African, European, Malay, and indigenous Khoi and San ancestry, Coloured communities have a varied range of cultural backgrounds. Language (with Afrikaans frequently being used as a home language, albeit with its own dialectical variations), cuisine (such as Cape Malay dishes like bobotie, curry and koeksisters), and religious practices that combine Christianity, Islam, and indigenous beliefs are some of the ways that this hybridity is reflected in day-to-day life (Adhikari, 2005). Cultural expression is also greatly influenced by music and storytelling; genres like as ghoema and klopse carnival acts symbolize both celebration and subtly political resistance (Martin, 2013).

In a culture where Coloured people have historically been excluded and their cultural contributions underappreciated, these cultural practices are not just aesthetically pleasing; they are also intensely political and act as acts of identity assertion. According to Erasmus (2001), Coloured people's cultural identity needs to be viewed

as a lived experience that is influenced by their opposition to racial classification as well as their establishment of independent cultural spaces. As a result, the cultural aspect of Coloured identity is dynamic and always changing, reflecting the community's continuous struggle to define itself, its past, and its place in post-apartheid South Africa.

Therefore, in spite of their stronger links to the White ruling population, some Coloured individuals were able to get advantages over Black people in the areas of housing, education, and employment more especially when they also had the chance to pass for White (Brown, 2000). Pass-Whites are people who were officially reclassified by the authorities as White (Brown, 2000). Reclassification might have presented many people with greater opportunities for advancement, but other factors, such as the need to avert the stigma and annoyance of being non-White and the encouragement of intermarriage with White people, may also have played a role (Brown, 2000). However, Coloured people paid a price for having an intermediate status since they were frequently used as an interim group between Whites and Blacks, even though it allowed them to have a higher status position than Black people or to pass for White people (Brown, 2000).

The Coloured identity is one formed from a multi-racial descent thus; some Coloureds are of a light skin tone, with Caucasian hair and others with a dark skin tone with curly or kinky hair. In early 20th-century South Africa, the term "Coloured" denoted a position between Black and White rather than being a legal classification (Le Roux, 2020). The Coloured identity was defined as a weaker identity—one that was deficient, subpar, and completely non-existent and it was linked to alcoholism and sexualized shame (Le Roux, 2020). The Coloured identity was regarded as ambiguous and equivocal as it was not included within the categories of being Black, White, Asian, or Indian (Le Roux, 2020).

Therefore, The South African Coloured identity is a distinct cultural and ethnic identity that has a history of marginalization and resiliency. It is an outgrowth of the nation's complicated history of colonization, slavery, and racial classification.

The complicated tapestry of Black slave culture, European immigrants, and indigenous Khoi and San communities have all woven together to create the history of the Coloured race in South Africa. The identity of the Coloured people has been

constantly formed and reinvented by this complex fusion of traditions and impacts reflecting the multiplicity of cultural and political variables that have influenced their evolution over time. The way in which the Coloured identity has changed over time highlights the community's flexibility and tenacity in the larger framework of South Africa's turbulent past.

2.2.3 The significance of hair in pre-colonial and colonial South Africa

In the pre-colonial era, discrimination was non-existent, especially towards women, as they were perceived as exceptional leaders and warrior queens (Ogbomo & Ogbomo, 1993). When it came to hair, African women's hair was seen as the essence of African beauty; apart from its natural aspect, hair was an identity to many, as it was also used to identify different tribes, social status, and even one's occupation (Anwar, 2020). The narrative of African hair rises out of the depths of colonial dominance and offers a moving perspective on historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and the continuous struggle for independence following colonial legacies. African communities have valued hair for ages for reasons other than beauty; it has been a means of expressing culture, forming social identities, and fostering spiritual bonds. However, the arrival of colonialism brought about a profound change in the way individuals saw African hair. Indigenous hairstyles and textures were relegated to the status of inadequacy and primitivism as a result of the Eurocentric standards of beauty and culture that came to be considered the gold standard for everything.

Women of colour have always been degraded over their natural hair texture and have been placed in low-grade menial positions in society because of it (Robinson & Robinson, 2020). However, when the European colonisers arrived in Africa, they created an image of how natural African hair is unpleasant to have, in hopes of having the slaves form hate against their own natural hair (Anwar, 2020). Conversely, that did not happen; the slaves still took pride in maintaining their natural hair, as it was part of who they are and where they came from (White & White, 1995). Thus, the slaves would use what they could access to maintain their hair; they used tools such as grease to moisturise their hair and sheep grooming tools to keep their hair intact (Anwar, 2020).

Even though slaves had to endure years of colonisation, oppression, and discrimination, it did not stop there; the discrimination continued during the segregation period. However, Black women decided to fight for their natural hair beauty and facilitated the “Black power” movement that led to many women wearing and embracing their natural hair, especially the afro hairstyle (Green, 2020). During this period of segregation, the oppressors considered natural Black hair as woolly and unattractive, while straight hair was seen as supreme and beautiful (Edwards, 2020). However, this discrimination did not affect the women; rather, it gave them courage to continue with their movement, thus forming the phrase “Black is beautiful,” referring to their natural Black hair (Edwards, 2020). The hairstyle that stood out as a symbol of Black women fighting against oppression and discrimination was the afro; this hairstyle was also a symbol of the women’s pride in their African ancestry bloodline (Edwards, 2020).

The origins of Black individuals' hair can be traced back to Africa, the birthplace of existence, with the societal and cultural value inherent in every exquisite strand of hair being the sole element that many African tribes have in common (Hamidou, 2023). Hair is not only viewed as a physical attribute of the human body in Africa and other countries; it also symbolizes race, culture, and opposition, and it is sculpted and intended to be honoured and kept pure (Koksal, 2020). In African culture, hair gives individuals an aura of identification and kinship (Hamidou, 2023). In the past, hair had a significant influence on how native African women felt about their bodies due to its social, cultural, and spiritual significance. For example, in West Africa, a woman with long voluminous hair was admired, as her hair was a symbol of vitality, prosperity, and the ability to multiply abundance (Hamidou, 2023).

Following the advent of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the significance and relevance of African hair underwent a dramatic shift (Hamidou, 2023). In fifteenth-century Africa, hair served as a symbol of an individual's social class, ethnicity, tribe, history, and marital status in certain tribal societies throughout the colonial era (Tshiki, 2021). African women's hair was significant not just as a symbol of their identity, but also because it allowed them to wear their hair in cornrows, which became particularly prominent when the slave trade started (Tshiki, 2021). The female slaves maintained the cornrow hairstyle as it was an embodiment of agriculture and a reminder of their origins (Horne, 2019). The colonists, however, became aware of this and would

disparage African hair, suggesting it resembled pubic hair and was dirty and immoral (Tshiki, 2021). Furthermore, the colonisers decided to cut off the hair of their slaves as a form of dehumanisation and dispossessing them of their identity (Hamidou, 2023). Thus, African hair started to be perceived as unreal, shaggy, ugly, and a sign of African inadequacy (Hamidou, 2023). However, even though slaves received such ill-treatment from the colonisers or masters, the offspring that emerged from the African slaves and their White masters were born with straighter hair and lighter skin and thus had preferential treatment, which included the ability to work and occasionally reside in their masters' houses despite still being slaves (Hamidou, 2023).

Furthermore, hair was a divisive topic in South Africa pursuant to the rules imposed by the apartheid authorities (Powe, 2009). The apartheid system was legitimised to dehumanise Black peoples, who were viewed as childish and ignorant, and they were physically and psychologically abused (Hamidou, 2023). Throughout the apartheid era, hair became a basis for establishing race in conjunction with skin colour and other physical traits (Hamidou, 2023). Hence, it was determined by the apartheid authorities that race could also be classified by one's hair, in addition to skin colour (Powe, 2009). The hair classification was based on the hair pencil test. The pencil test came into existence to assess Whiteness along with benefits in politics, society, and the economy (Johnson, 2016). The test involved shaking one's head after sticking a pencil into one's hair, and if the pencil fell out, the subject was considered White; if it remained in the head or fell inconsistently, they were labelled as Black or Coloured (Manrique, 2018). Thus, when the Population Registration Act of 1950 was introduced, it classified individuals based on these similar physical traits (Hamidou, 2023).

In South Africa, hair mostly carried much significance during the apartheid era. This comes in terms of the Racial Classification and Population Registration Act, as mentioned previously. In addition to other practices, the culture of passing for White or Coloured involved mechanically and chemically straightening hair in order to conceal one's true identity, as the apartheid government divided families depending on hair texture classifications, regardless of a person's genetic makeup or biological kinship (Hamidou, 2023). Moreover, on account of their socioeconomic

disadvantage, Black and Coloured women often participated in procedures like hair straightening to give the impression that they were Whiter (Hamidou, 2023).

According to sociologist Zimitri Erasmus (2000), hair texture was thought to be one of the most reliable markers of racial descent, in addition to turning the human body into an identification of race, alongside skin colour. Although everything that had related to the Black race was commonly linked to negativity, particularly when it came to appearance; Black bodies were stigmatized, and Black people's hair was devalued despite being the most obvious representation of Blackness (Erasmus, 2000). As a result, this marks the time when Whitening of the skin and hair alterations through chemicals or straightening began (Erasmus, 2000). Furthermore, Erasmus (2000) explains that as a young Coloured teenager, the seventeen-step hair wash routine she had growing up just to have “good hair,” which included applying the straightener to deep condition the hair, overall took an hour to complete; but it did not just end there, as there was still the whole process of swirling the hair for it to stay intact for a while. Erasmus (2000) elucidates that growing up in a Coloured community, “good hair” was of great significance to them; having "good hair" meant having Caucasian hair that is considered to be smooth, flowing, and silky—essentially, hair that pertains to White people. On the other hand, "bad hair" refers to kinky, curly hair that needs to be groomed in order to become "good hair" (Erasmus, 2000).

Thus, with the above mentioned, one may question what indeed in Coloured hair? "Coloured hair" refers to a variety of natural hair textures that are different from those usually associated with either Afro-textured or straight European hair. Given the mixed genetic ancestry of Coloured cultures, it frequently falls between in the middle, ranging from loose curls and waves to tight coils and kinks and because of this, it can vary greatly even within families (Erasmus, 2001; Adhikari, 2005).

Therefore, an identity is formed by various elements, and one’s hair stands out above the rest, as the significance that hair has to an individual’s identity is comprehensive. Hair has a significant influence on one’s life; it may be influenced by past lived experiences or even current trends, but it is overall linked to our identity, our culture, race, and creativity (Kilikita 2019). Previously, for native African women,

hair played an important role in their body image, as it carried with it cultural, social, and religious significance in societies. For Coloured women in South Africa, hair is a significant symbol of identity, history, and personal expression, as it has great cultural, social, and personal value. The Coloured society's varied hair textures and styles are a reflection of its members' nuanced identities and convoluted histories.

2.2.4 Implications of coloniality on hair, race and identity in South Africa-postcolonial narratives

The term "coloniality" refers to various forms of dominance, exploitation, and power that emerged during the colonial era and continue to influence social, political, economic, and cultural interactions today (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The system of colonisation in South Africa was intricate and varied, significantly impacting the country's history, population, and social structures. During the mid-17th century, European settlers, primarily the Dutch and later the British, began to establish colonies and exert influence over the region, leaving a lasting mark on the native inhabitants and the socio-political environment. Long after colonial control ended, the effects of land expropriation, racial inequality, and cultural repression persisted, shaping South African culture to the present day (Larson, 2019).

The socio-political structures of pre-colonial Africa allowed conquered communities to be successfully assimilated and fully integrated into the dominant society (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). However, White people were unable to coexist with the African communities they despised and sought to change. At the same time, Black people could not fit into the racist confines of colonial White society, as the colonial era was characterised by a racial hierarchy of identities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Throughout the colonial period and to the present day, Africa is found at the bottom of the world's political hierarchy, with Europe and America at the top (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). To achieve its objective of ensuring the continuation of Eurocentric power dynamics over Africa and other parts of the globe, colonialism was, and continues to be, driven by a need to dominate labour and its products, nature and its resources, race, its products, and the evolution of the human race (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Race has remained at the core of coloniality, serving as the basis for institutionalising and codifying distinctions between the invading White races and the

vanquished Black races (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Alongside the establishment of a new colonial labour control apparatus, the invaders developed a superiority complex that placed enslaved and colonised individuals in a subordinate position (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Consequently, colonialists employed various strategies to justify their exploitation, oppression, dominance, and mistreatment of Africans, leading to the widespread belief that these peoples were uncivilised and savage (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

On a deeper level, the imperial presumption that Black people lacked a religion served as the foundation for the introduction of Western Christianity to Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Consequently, indigenous Africans were viewed as subhuman and undeserving of dignity, and the concepts of race, religion, and empire served to endorse their perceived inferiority (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). One of the tactics employed by the colonisers to drive the colonised individuals out of the human race was to classify them as subjects devoid of religion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Hence, throughout the colonial era, Africans were subjected to systematic inequality, deep exploitation, and dehumanisation at the hands of their oppressors. Indigenous communities lost their rights, were violently suppressed, and were placed in low-status positions within the colonial economy and society.

Even though colonisation occurred centuries ago, its impact still permeates society, affecting various spheres including culture, religion, race, hair, and identity in the country. There has long been an identity dilemma within South Africa, encompassing issues such as citizenship and the distinction between native and indigenous South Africans (Le Roux, 2020).

Thus, African hair has, for centuries, been and continues to be an important aspect of cultural identity and expression within Africa. The styles, texture, and grooming of hair communicate intricate social, political, and personal connotations, while also symbolising a historical legacy. Madlela (2018) states that African hair possesses unique physiological, anatomical, and structural characteristics. Research shows that the African hair shaft is tightly coiled, resembling a spring; the shafts are prone to breaking because they are densely woven, display knots, and frequently develop longitudinal fissures and fractures along the hair shafts (Madlela, 2018). The terms "kinky" and "woolly" are two examples of phrases used to characterise the curly

texture of African hair (Madlela, 2018). Madlela (2018) further states that hair carried much respect and significance for African women in the past. For example, when a young lady reached her puberty stage, her hair would be styled differently to symbolise her coming of age. Similarly, married women would have a different hairstyle from unmarried women in society.

However, in present-day South Africa, hair discrimination still looms over individuals. This issue has been a concern in society from the colonial era to the present day. Women of colour have consistently been degraded for their natural hair and have been placed in low-grade, menial positions in society because of it (Robinson & Robinson, 2020). Discrimination against African hair is evident in events such as those in August 2016, when a group of students staged a protest at a prominent high school in Pretoria in response to allegedly racist hair restrictions. At the forefront of the protest was a learner named Zulaikha Patel, who personally experienced hair discrimination at the institution, where her Afro hair was labelled as “exotic” (Vilakazi, 2016). Patel, a young female from a biracial background due to her parents' different ethnicities (Bhengu, 2021), is an anti-racism activist; her courageous act made her a representative of the opposition to the hair policy affecting Black girls at Pretoria Girls High School (Vilakazi, 2016). During the same period, another incident of hair discrimination occurred in the Eastern Cape, where a young Black female learner was denied entry to school to write her trial examination unless she changed her Afro hairstyle (Phala, 2016). These incidents were followed by numerous other instances of hair discrimination in society and institutions.

In today's society, the distinction between "good" and "bad" hair based on race is still readily apparent. Another example is the Clicks hair product advertisement that sparked outrage among the Black community. The advertisement, which reviewed a hair product, described Black women's hair as "dry, damaged, frizzy, and dull," while White women's hair was described as "colour treated, fine, flat, or normal" (Planting, 2020). Although the advertisement purported to support and celebrate all hair types, it inevitably came across as highly insensitive to women of colour, as it subtly implied that Black women ought to use that hair product if they desired normal, attractive hair like that of White women (Planting, 2020).

Teiahsha Bankhead and Tabora Johnson (2014) conducted a study on the experiences of Black women with natural hair. They explain the historical significance of natural Black hair to people of African descent, noting that hair carries messages and that its texture allows for a variety of styles and shapes. Bankhead and Johnson (2014) describe how younger women are increasingly moving away from the use of chemicals and straighteners to keep their hair entirely natural, focusing instead on products specifically designed for natural African hair. Consequently, in the 20th century, women of colour are embracing their gravity-defying "self-made crowns" (Dennis, 2021).

An example of this would be South African born model Natalie Githu. The now 25-year-old became a model at a young age for hair products, she is known for her appearance on the Dark and lovely relaxer box hair product (Odhiambo, 2023). Natalie did the shoot when she was four years old, and, in the picture, Natalie's hair is relaxed and straightened to perfection (Odhiambo, 2023).

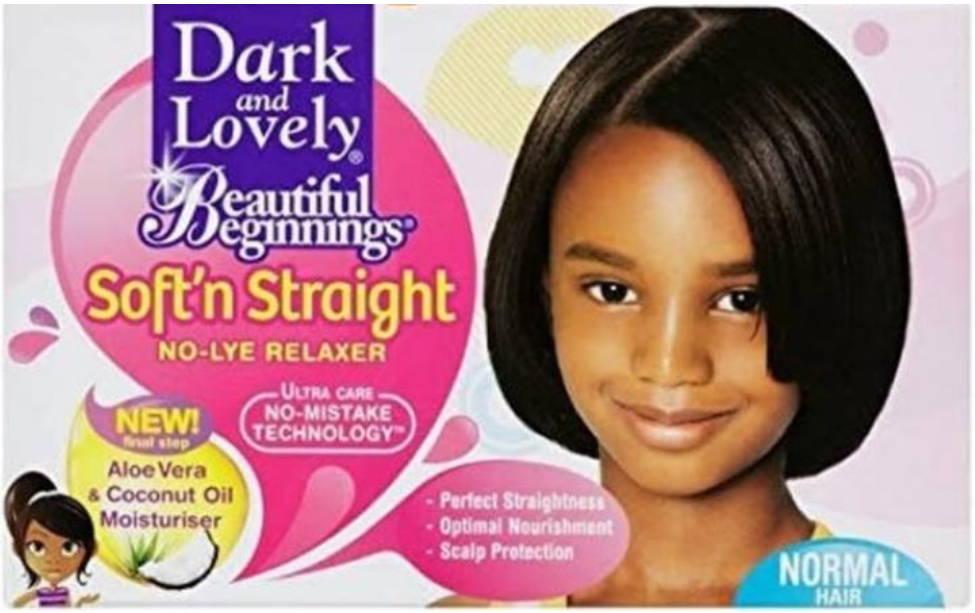

Figure 2.1: Natalie's picture on the Dark and Lovely relaxer

Natalie's mom was in the hair care business and that is how Natalie would get gigs to advertise hair products (Odhiambo, 2023). However, that is not the only reason why she would have to straighten her hair; Natalie was in a predominantly White school that had a no afros allowed policy, so her hair had to always be in accordance with the school policy (Odhiambo, 2023). As Natalie grew up she shifted from the

chemically altering her hair and embraces her natural hair thread, even though her picture still remains on the box of the Dark and lovely hair relaxer product (Odhiambo, 2023). Natalie explains that embracing her natural hair and wearing braids made her feel uniquely beautiful and made her stand out in her modelling career whereas she thought she would receive discrimination she actually received a lot of modelling gigs (Odhiambo, 2023).


Source: TRT AFRIKA

Figure 2.2: Natalie in her natural hair wearing braids in a protective hairstyle

In contrast, Denisha Richardson (2013) conducted a study titled "Getting to the Roots," explores the social construction of hair among Coloured women in Cape Town. Her findings indicate that Coloured women continue to construct their hair based on Eurocentric beauty standards, which were deeply ingrained during the apartheid era. Richardson's study reveals that participants engage in various styling techniques and have differing opinions on their own and others' hair textures, all of which are connected to their identity as Coloured women. The study emphasises the enduring impact of coloniality on Coloured women's hair, with coarse hair often perceived as unattractive. Richardson (2013) explains that their perception of hair is shaped by colonial notions of beauty standards, which were deeply ingrained in their social groupings throughout the apartheid era. Her study revealed that the participants (Coloured women) engaged in a variety of styling techniques and had

differing opinions on their own and others' hair textures, all of which were somehow connected to their identity as Coloured women. Thus, Richardson (2013) believes that the impact of coloniality on Coloured women's hair is enduring, as her study indicated that coarse hair is often perceived as unattractive among Coloured women.

Sociologist Zimitri Erasmus's Work (2000): In her work "Hair Politics," Erasmus examines how hair texture was used as a marker of racial identity during apartheid. She discusses the social pressures on Coloured women to maintain straight hair to align with Eurocentric beauty standards. Erasmus highlights the historical significance of hair in the Coloured community and how these beauty standards have been internalised and passed down through generations.

Similarly, Shirley Tate's Research (2007): Tate's study focuses on the politics of Black hair and its significance in post-colonial identity formation. While her work primarily addresses Black women's hair, it provides valuable insights into the broader context of hair politics in South Africa, including the experiences of Coloured women. Tate discusses how natural hair movements challenge Eurocentric beauty norms and promote cultural pride and self-acceptance.

Thus, in this study titled "A Critical Analysis of Phenomenological Narratives of Coloured Females about Hair, Race, and Identity in Polokwane - South Africa" differs from the aforementioned literature in several key ways:

Geographical Focus: This study specifically focuses on Coloured females in Polokwane, a region that may have different social dynamics and historical influences compared to Cape Town, where Richardson's study is based. This geographical specificity allows for a more localised understanding of hair, race, and identity among Coloured women in Polokwane.

Generational Comparison: This research uniquely compares the experiences of 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females. This generational analysis provides insights into how historical and contemporary social dynamics influence identity formation across different age groups. The study examines whether the ideologies of the past regarding hair and beauty standards persist among younger generations.

Phenomenological Approach: While previous studies have used various qualitative methods, this study employs a phenomenological approach to deeply explore the

lived experiences of Coloured females. This method prioritises the subjective perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of individuals, offering a rich and detailed understanding of how hair, race, and identity intersect in their lives.

Focus on Post-Apartheid Context: This study places a strong emphasis on the post-apartheid context, examining how Coloured females navigate their identities in a society where Black cultural and political narratives are prominent. This focus on contemporary social dynamics provides a fresh perspective on the on-going impact of apartheid and colonialism on identity formation.

*Intergenerational Transmission of Beauty Standards***:** The study investigates how beauty standards and ideologies about hair are passed down from one generation to the next. It explores whether younger generations continue to adhere to Eurocentric beauty standards or embrace natural hair as a form of cultural resistance and self-acceptance.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a localised, generational, and phenomenological analysis of hair, race, and identity among Coloured females in Polokwane, South Africa. It offers new insights into the complexities of identity formation in a post-apartheid society and highlights the on-going influence of historical beauty standards.

Therefore, in present-day Africa, hair still carries significant meaning for Black people, to the extent that they have established a day to celebrate natural hair—World Afro Day (Louw, 2022). This day commemorates all hair types and textures, and most importantly, it aims to teach young girls to love, embrace, and have a positive attitude towards their hair, regardless of its texture (Louw, 2022). In contemporary South Africa, hair plays an even more crucial role in one's self-confidence and self-love than it did during the apartheid era. Furthermore, the embrace of natural hair in twenty-first-century South Africa represents a powerful return to cultural pride and self-affirmation. Natural hair has taken on diverse forms, including media representation and fashion, and has come to signify the reclamation of one's identity and the defiance of Eurocentric notions of beauty. This is evident in the increasing production of natural hair products in the market. For example, products like Afro Curl, created by young Coloured businesswoman Kayla Meiring, advocate for the embrace of natural hair and natural hair growth.

These post-colonial narratives on African hair also highlight the connection between identity and hair, demonstrating how accepting one's natural hair type fosters feelings of authenticity, pride, and belonging. In twenty-first-century South Africa, the adoption of natural hair is a symbol of a complex movement towards social autonomy, cultural authenticity, and ethnic independence.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Introduction

This section of the chapter will discuss the theories applied to the study which includes Post-colonial theory by Edward Said and Frantz Fanon and Critical race theory by discussing Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman's contribution to the theory explained by different scholars/authors. These theories were chosen for this study because both frameworks offer thorough techniques for dissecting the intricate relationships between political, social, and cultural elements that affect representation and identity.

Post-colonial Theory

One of the most influential historical periods in the history of humanity, namely colonialism, had a lasting impression on communities, traditions, and identities all around the world. In order to comprehend and analyse the intricate processes of imperialism, Post-colonial Theory becomes increasingly important as former colonies struggle with the effects of exploitation and dominance. To be able to critically analyse the foundational layers, patterns, and structures that are ingrained in both the colonial past and the postcolonial present, postcolonial theory is employed both within and between disciplines (Burney, 2012). Postcolonial theory has provided a critical prism through which a wide range of themes pertaining to national identity, history, economic status, geography, and international relations are examined (Burney, 2012). Any discriminatory and exploitation-based behaviour, irrespective of place or time, can be confronted through the defiance offered by postcolonial theory (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007).

The critique of postcolonial theory centres on the societal histories, cultural distinctions, and political inequalities that colonised and imperial apparatuses enforce and normalise (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007). The history of colonialism is addressed by the post-colonial critique only insofar as that history has shaped our present power structures and livelihood arrangements (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007). Postcolonial theory's terminology is rigorous as it challenges and rejects the idea that some cultures are superior to others, endangering privileges and authority (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007). This theory's fundamental idea is not one of proclaiming conflict on past events, but rather one of waging conflict on the facts of the present day that are, whether overtly or indirectly, the result of the past (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007). Consequently, the focus of the conflict is on colonialism and its representatives, who continue to be used in post-independent countries to impose economic, political, and social degradation (Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2007). Furthermore, though other prominent writers like Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha are important in this context, Edward Said is regarded as the one who created the foundation for this theory (Hamadi, 2014).

Edward Said's (1978) preference for historical interpretation and pragmatism is characterised by his approach towards post-colonialism (Burney, 2012). Said challenges other writers' claims that the epic perspectives of liberation have come to an abrupt end in the current postmodernist era, therefore casting doubt on the theoretical dogma of postmodernism (Burney, 2012). According to Said, imperialist Western regulations on our minds continue to persist in many ways as great narratives continue to dominate the psychological makeup of colonial nations for a large number of individuals in the non-Western world (Burney, 2012). The theory is mostly predicated on what Said views as the erroneous perception regarding the Orient created by Western intellectuals as an impoverished "other" in opposition to the industrialised West (Hamadi, 2014). According to Said, many former colonies are still plagued by anarchy, dishonesty, civil conflict, and slaughter as a result of colonialism (Hamadi, 2014).

Said's theory of post-colonialism is primarily predicated on what he views as the false narrative of the Orient that has been concocted since 1798 by Western philosophers, political theorists, economists, and colonial administrators (Hamadi, 2014). Said contends that "Orientalism is a school of thought built around an

ontological and epistemological dichotomy created between "the Orient" and "the Occident" in his very popular written piece Orientalism (Hamadi, 2014). According to Said, such rhetoric has been employed as a pretext for invasions and colonialism against the Orient or as an excuse for the atrocities and occupations that go along with them (Hamadi, 2014). However, Said contends that the repercussions of colonisation are mostly to blame for the ongoing effects of colonialism, which are evident in many of these nations today in the form of anarchy, uprisings, corruption, civil conflict, and slaughter (Hamadi, 2014). From this perspective, Said contends that a dominant coloniser has enforced a dialect and a culture, while the Oriental peoples' cultures, histories, values, and languages have been disregarded and even misrepresented by the colonialists in their quest to subjugate the inhabitants and plunder their resources under the pretence of enlightening and developing them (Hamadi, 2014).

Furthermore, post-colonial theory is frequently seen as having its roots in Said's 1978 book Orientalism, as the reliance of colonial authority on colonial knowledge was made clear by Said's Orientalism (Kelly, 2023). Hence, the study of the Orient, or orientalism, has always supported and encouraged European imperial rule (Kelly, 2023). Said argues that, from the point of knowledge, the West has consistently used Western terminology to describe non-Western civilisations and has presented a universal understanding that only incorporates non-Western reality into its own framework (Kelly, 2023). The West has produced one human history that is only seen from a European perspective, rather than appreciating other worlds according to their unique cultural characteristics (Kelly, 2023). Hence, Said's goal in Orientalism was to undermine and denigrate historical events that downplayed prejudice and imperialism, thus opening the door for a new humanism by doing this (Kelly, 2023).

Therefore, Said argues that the present reflects the past and that it would be utterly foolish to analyse it without acknowledging the part colonialists played in shaping it (Hamadi, 2014). Therefore, Said argues that it is impossible to study the histories of the coloniser and those who were colonised from a single viewpoint since they are so intricately linked (Hamadi, 2014). Overall, the main subjects of Said's post-colonial theory are the power relationships amongst colonisers and colonised individuals, as well as the long-term consequences of colonisation for both.

Similarly, Frantz Fanon (1986) examines how colonialism warps the notion of identity and value that is placed on the colonized population. According to Fanon, post-colonialism serves as a tool for illustrating how White dominance has led to colonized people's warped perception of their self (Richardson, 2013). Fanon's conception of identity was predicated on the acrimonious historical ties between colonialist and colonized individuals, and his arguments highlighted how the brutal legacy of colonialism affected the colonized people's process of creating their identities (Dizayl, 2019). Within his theoretical arguments, Fanon describes a more notable goal to the effects of colonization and the transformation brought about by immigration; he examines the phenomenon of donning "White masks" to adapt to life in the West or renouncing one's individuality in order to present the colonizer with a perception that forbids all degraded characteristics that portray those who have been colonized as "primitive" (Dizayl, 2019). Fanon's theoretical argument was demonstrated by his pledge towards the Algerian revolution, whereby his ideas on the emergence of identity emerged via rejection of the racial animosity toward Africans that was a product of colonialism (Dizayl, 2019). Fanon reveals the anxieties of Black men during the postcolonial era's upsurge, where his psychoanalytic approach to racism is a satirical examination of the collapse of the Black man (Dizayl, 2019). Therefore, Fanon's argument aggressively suggests that Black men try to become or resemble White people; however, Black men are unlikely to be accepted in White men's promises; hence, his unfavourable viewpoint stems from an era in which certain people evaluated Black individuals solely based on their skin tone (Dizayl, 2019).

According to Frantz Fanon, identity is a construct of society that has been shaped by cultural and societal encounters, as well as by what is known about and the implications that are assigned to the self (Ceasar, 2021). As described by Fanon, an urge to become White is what drives a Black person's identity (Ceasar, 2021). The social factors that identify a certain place and time, together with a primarily White society, push them to indulge in this compulsive need (Ceasar, 2021). Fanon elucidates that to minimize their Blackness, Black individuals resort to behaviours like marrying White people, Whitening their complexion, taking on White people's accents, and straightening their hair as a means of navigating the complexities of identity in the context of society (Ceasar, 2021). Fanon contends that a "Manichean

world" was created when these pretended norms were upheld, in which Black people are connected to evil, filth, and mortality, whereas White people and justice are connected to pureness and innocence (Ceasar, 2021).

Hence, according to Fanon, the true self is contained inside the contrast between Black and White, your skin tone and veil (Dizayl, 2019). Black men wear veils as a result of colonial influences, which cause Black people to behave in unconventional ways (Dizayl, 2019). Fanon contends that the civilisation and culture of the coloniser has imposed a fundamental lapse onto the Black man, connecting this with the effects of colonialism (Dizayl, 2019). Thus, Fanon's view of post-colonial theory contends that Western power forced this control upon the colonised by deeply ingraining the colonial existence in their customs and in the self-perception of the person, who saw himself as inferior to the colonists or, consequently, as having unmatched insights (Dizayl, 2019).

Therefore, this study agrees with what Edward Said and Frantz Fanon elucidate in their work. To understand the current hairstyle choices of individuals born during the colonial or apartheid era compared to individuals born after 1994, one had to gain insights into their past experiences that led to the choices that they make regarding their hair and lifestyles. However, this will all depend on the values and systems of ideas that were communicated to them, on what is considered to be beautiful hair, depending on which era they grew up in. For example, Coloured females born in the apartheid era may stand on the Europeans' beauty standards of beautiful hair due to their lived experiences in the past of trying to fit into society based on the White supremacy rule and also to have access to better socio-economic privileges. Whereas the born-free generations may prefer natural hair, perhaps to embrace their heritage and stand against White supremacy beauty standards as they did not experience it, or others may still alter their hair according to the European beauty standards, as they were raised to do so, taught by their parents or grandparents through passing those ideologies from one generation to the next.

In addition, post-colonial theory was relevant to the study as it offered a framework for comprehending the ways in which power relations, both historical and modern, influenced cultural practices and perceptions. Post-colonial theory assisted in exploring how colonial legacies such as the European beauty standards have

influenced modern attitudes about hair, including the adoption of altering hair textures or even skin lightening practices. Post-colonial theory also examined how colonised peoples fought and reinterpreted imposed identities by demonstrating the acceptance of natural hair as an act of cultural resistance and identity restoration. The importance of examining how race, culture, and identity intersect in larger socio-political contexts is emphasised by post-colonial theory by making it possible to critically analyse how prevalent narratives and power structures affect marginalised communities' self-perceptions.

Critical Race Theory

A key framework for analysing and comprehending the position of racial and ethnic discrimination in society is Critical Race Theory (CRT). Despite having started as a movement in the legal field, CRT has quickly expanded outside of that field (Delgado & Stefancic, 2006). For example, in recent years, a large number of educators identify as critical racial theorists and apply CRT's theories to comprehend problems with school hierarchy and discipline, tracking, and curriculum and historical controversy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2006). However, the Critical Legal Studies, which particularly criticised how the law was used to uphold existing power structures and the status quo, gave rise to Critical Race Theory however, CRT set itself apart by emphasizing race and the perspectives of underrepresented communities. Hence, according to CRT, racism and race are deeply ingrained in society, and the legal system supports and upholds "White" dominance (Richardson, 2013).

CRT emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, at a time when the prevailing sense was that the law was not at all involved in creating and sustaining racial hierarchies (Bridges, 2018). The development of Critical Race Theory helped to understand why people of colour's lives did not always improve permanently after the civil rights movement's historic legal triumphs (Ray, 2022). The theory was developed by a group of legal scholars including Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. Bell's research and several other authors' works finally came together to form CRT (Bridges, 2018). Bell's seminal civil rights lawsuits and his casebook works on race and the law are what helped shape the theory (Ray, 2022). Bell's research focused on how the law played a crucial role in explaining why Black people continued to rank lowest on almost all social welfare

measures in the years following the civil rights movement (Bridges, 2018). While working on civil rights lawsuits and as a scholar, Bell reached the disturbing conclusion that racism is so ingrained in society that it has managed to resurface despite several waves of change that have been implemented in an attempt to eradicate it thus, he maintained that racism remains perpetual (Cobb, 2021). Bell's views served as the cornerstone for a school of thought that became known as Critical Race Theory in the 1980s (Cobb, 2021).

In contrast to the above, Alan Freeman's contribution to the theory was the opposite of Bell's work. In his publications, Freeman made the decision to focus on finding answers rather than spending time raising awareness of the issue of racist beliefs and behaviours that persist (Kennedy, 2000). One of the most valuable concepts provided for analysing the legal precedent surrounding racial relations was clarified by Freeman in his writings: the contrast between the "perpetrator" and "victim" perspectives (Kennedy, 2000: 563). Freeman stated unequivocally that his desire to help resolve the on-going bigotry against Black people is not motivated by his skin colour, but rather that he can do it (Kennedy, 2000). Thus, Freeman's identity as a White individual who attempted to make an intellectual contribution to the fight against racial inequity should not have caused him to feel inferior, ashamed, or remorseful (Kennedy, 2000).

Consequently, both bell and freeman had significant contributions to the development of the theory even though they had opposing views in their writings. Even though they focused on different aspects in their writings, they both had a main focus in examining the interplay of law, race and power and in the end they both contributed to the development of CRT.

Therefore, Critical Race Theory is a subset of critical postmodern theory, which aims to produce both individual and institutional reform by comprehending the repressive elements of civilisation (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Critical race theory opposes narratives of mastery that seek to decipher every phenomenon or prescribe how people should conduct their lives, and it does not presume the existence of fundamental realities (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). On the contrary, it is predicated on the ideas that race is an ideological construct, race influences every facet of everyday life, and racially-based dogma is woven into the fabric of civilisation (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Critical race theory

practitioners likewise dedicate themselves to promoting equality, finding the voice of the oppressed and utilising interdependence (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Furthermore, critical race theory should be presented as a separate framework rather than as an addendum to an existing theoretical framework. It is a method of perceiving and functioning in the global community (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Hence, Ortiz & Jani (2010) conclude that, by means of social interactions and discourse, this framework enables the modification of interpersonal relationships in society as it works bi-directionally.

As stated, following the civil rights struggle, CRT became known as a branch of legal education, which is the examination and interpretation of the law (Abrams & Moi, 2009). Despite the fact that CRT has become more widely used across a wide range of academic fields, CRT research broadly disputes liberal assertions that legislation is indifferent, objective, and colour blind, and contends that these ideas genuinely regulate and support racism by failing to acknowledge the fundamental injustices that are ingrained in social structures (Abrams & Moi, 2009). A wide range of academic fields, including political science, economics, history, sociology, feminist and postcolonial studies, and ethnic and cultural studies, are incorporated into Critical Race Theory with the main goal of analysing, dismantling, and improving the link between race, prejudice, and power (Abrams & Moi, 2009). In addition to emphasising that revolutionary racial change requires acknowledgment of voices from position and race awareness, CRT categorically declares that legal analysis cannot be considered impartial and unbiased (Abrams & Moi, 2009).

Two main liberal arguments about legislation are refuted by CRT: that it is colour blind, and that colour blindness is preferable to racial consciousness (Abrams & Moi, 2009). Abrams & Moi (2009) state that according to Gotanda (2000) the idea of colour blindness is inherently paradoxical since one must initially embrace the presence of ethnic background in order to dismiss its role in the process of making decisions. He comes to the conclusion that choosing to ignore race, or colour blindness, is really based on race as opposed to being unbiased. Therefore, in accordance with CRT, race is a manufactured concept that divides individuals into groups based only on apparent physical characteristics that are of no bearing on a person's hereditary or biological make-up and despite considering race to be a social construct, CRT recognises the significance and ramifications of race (Abrams & Moi, 2009).

Scholar Wesley Ceasar (2021) elucidates, that being primarily used in legal studies, critical race theory has since been expanded upon and refined as a contemplative instrument that sociologists, historians, and educators may utilise to become cognisant of the power dynamics at play in hierarchies that privilege one group over another. According to CRT, race is culturally manufactured rather than biologically grounded. Under CRT, race serves as a term that was developed to uphold the perspective of the cultural majority and serve the interests of the White people who invented it (Ceasar, 2021). Scholars of CRT contend that CRT offers a unique perspective for illuminating and comprehending privilege, racial powers, White dominance, and oppressive regimes that are upheld across time (Ceasar, 2021). Crucially, CRT opposes the subjugation of individuals of colour to these systems of power and promotes their racial liberation, all of which serve to maintain their inferiority (Ceasar, 2021). However, although Critical Race Theory (CRT) views race through a binary American lens that emphasises Black and White narratives and cultural backgrounds, CRT's intersectional postulate emphasises the multifaceted nature of discrimination, including racism, sexism, colourism, and inequality (Ceasar, 2021). As a result, the critical race theory offers insight into the status of Coloured people in South Africa as well as how that status may be impacted by the image of White supremacist groups (Ceasar, 2022).

Therefore, observing from the standpoint of how racial distinctions are established and perpetuated by social, economic, and political factors, CRT claims that race does not exist as a biological entity but rather an ideological construct used to label and subjugate individuals.

According to this research, CRT is particularly significant since it highlights racism that is concealed in societal relations, physical characteristics, and the ways that styles and textures of hair are utilised to visually represent certain racialised ideas. CRT offers the means to dissect hair's role as a location of racial and cultural importance by emphasising the ubiquitous impact of race and systematic racism. By using CRT to analyse this research involving Coloured hair, race, and identity, one may see how racial and ethnic identities interact, and how these interactions can be a window into larger social phenomena and concerns of advantage, authority, and resistance. Hair is a crucial indicator of identity, especially within racial and cultural settings thus analysing Coloured hair and identity through the perspective of CRT

requires an awareness of the fact that hair is an indicator of either personalised empowerment and societal restriction.

In the instance of hair, natural hairstyles are frequently regarded as inappropriate and unprofessional in educational and work environments, which is a reflection of how popular beauty standards have always favoured Eurocentric features, and discriminating against those who don't. Thus, CRT enables researchers to reveal their racial prejudices and dismantle these prevailing beauty standards. This illustrates how racial hierarchies, which favour some groups above others, underlie society norms and make them anything from unbiased.

However, the deep-rooted and systemic character of racism in society may be understood and addressed using the critical lens offered by critical race theory. Even with all of the criticism it receives, its fundamental ideas nevertheless provide insightful understandings of the nuances of inequality and race. Critical Race Theory continues to be an essential, if contentious, paradigm for questioning the existing quo and imagining revolutionary transformation as societies struggle toward more equality and justice.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature discussed in this chapter dispenses on the formation of the Coloured identity, the history of Coloureds and the impact coloniality and apartheid has left on the society. The highlight of this chapter puts emphasis on how past lived experiences may have influences on current choices made by Coloured females especially with their hairstyles choices. Furthermore, the theoretical framework utilised in this chapter reflect of the power relations within society and how societal and cultural influences have an impact on identity construction.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the research methods used in this study. The study seeks to critically examine the social narratives of Coloured women's hair, race and identity. The study utilised a qualitative approach. Bhandari (2022) explains that qualitative research includes the collection of non-numerical data to understand opinions and experiences of individuals; it is used to gather in-depth information from sources and to understand how individuals view the world. The qualitative approach not only focuses on what people think or what their views are but also why they think so. It follows an in-depth of questioning from one question to another and also question the answers received from the interviewee.

A detailed evaluation of this methodology is be provided below. This chapter provides an introduction to the study's participants as well as an explanation of the data collecting techniques and how the information was obtained. The type of data analysis that was selected, the rationale behind the selection, and the steps involved in conducting the study are described in this chapter.

3.2 Research method

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The primary justification being that qualitative research explores and provides a deeper comprehension of real-world events (Tenny et al, 2022). The goal of qualitative research is gaining a thorough grasp of social occurrences in their authentic settings (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). The qualitative approach is based on people's own perspectives as meaning-makers in their day-to-day existence and emphasizes on the why of social events instead of the what (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). Hence, the qualitative research technique therefore produces a plethora of data about real-life people and situations (Daniel, 2016). The use of qualitative research was advantageous for this particular study as it enabled

the collection of data from the participants' individual experiences and enabled them to provide comprehensive explanations through the use of open-ended questions. This form of research approach was beneficial to this study as it allowed for a collection of in-depth description of participants' attitudes, feelings, and experiences through open-ended questions and this data could be analysed and interpreted (Tenny et al. 2022).

3.3 Research design

A phenomenological research design was chosen for this study. Phenomenology analyses experiences from the perspective of the individual (Tenny et al. 2022). The goal of phenomenology was to explain and interpret an event from the perspectives of those who have experienced it, in order to ascertain how and why, in the participant's opinion, a certain response was brought about (Tenny et al. 2022). Phenomenological research contributes to a better knowledge of the human condition by capturing the complexity of human experiences through techniques including in-depth interviews, first-person accounts, and introspective analysis. Therefore, in this study this research design reveals the intricate nature of identity creation by means of analysing lived experiences, delving into subjective interpretations, and comprehending contextual factors. The intricacies of Coloured hair, race, and identity may be explored through phenomenological study in great detail due to its capacity to capture the essence of human experiences, although it necessitates thorough examination of subjectivity and context.

Hence, this study focused on gaining knowledge on the social narratives of Coloured females about hair, race and identity. Thus, all the questions that participants were asked were open-ended questions in order to gain insight to compare and contrast whether colonial-born and born-free Coloured female's perspectives on hair are similar or differ and what influenced their perspectives.

An interpretivist approach was applied to the study. The interpretivist approach was based on truth and knowledge, and seeking understanding to individuals current beliefs based on their lived experiences (Blackwell, 2018). Interpretivism looks at and evaluates every word, deed, and emotion people do in addition to their

interpretation of the circumstances that are being investigated (Nel, 2019). Interpretivism strives to obtain knowledge by recognizing individuals' various perspectives and the interpretation connected with those ideas and perspectives (Tomaszewski et al. 2020). Overall interpretivism is focused on the arbitrary elements of human experience. Therefore the interpretivism strives for deeper knowledge of a culture or circumstance given that it is vital to interpreting the facts obtained (Nickerson, 2022). An interpretivist method has the benefit of allowing the researcher to get a comprehensive knowledge of items, individuals, or events not just via analysis but also by placing them within their social context (Pham, 2018). An additional benefit is that the researcher can gain knowledge about the beliefs, values, prejudices, perceptions, points of view, and attitudes of the respondent within the study (Pham, 2018). According to interpretivism, meanings and experiences of individuals are best understood from their own viewpoints rather than as facts that are discovered. Hence, with regard to this study to the decisions people make about their hair and how those decisions relate to their racial identities, this method offered a sophisticated and comprehensive investigation of how individuals view and create their racial identities.

3.4 Population

The population group of this study are the Coloured female population, from a small community named Westenburg in Polokwane. Population is an essential concept in the field of research methods. It acts as the cornerstone around which a research study's structure is constructed, directing the sampling procedure and impacting how broadly the research findings may be applied. Population aids in the study's selection of an appropriate sample size that fully reflects the population (Shukla, 2020). Within a particular setting, a population is a broader collection of people who have similar characteristics which provides researchers with a foundational understanding of the administrative or demographic context they wish to explore (Willie, 2024). Fundamental to research technique, a population is a group of people who share certain traits and are located in a certain institutional or geographic area (Willie, 2024). The population enables researchers a thorough grasp of the group they are studying, which makes it easier to explore a range of phenomena (Willie, 2024).

Hence, this notion of population creates the general framework for developing research questions and theories, laying the foundation for future research projects (Willie, 2024).

Target population was applied to this study as well as accessible population. The target population is a portion of the general population under investigation that meets certain parameters or has certain characteristics that are pertinent to the research objective (Willie, 2024). This portion is defined by criteria that correspond with the goals and characteristics of the research project, enabling investigators to concentrate their efforts on population subsets that have special relevance or interest (Willie, 2024). Thus, to make sure that the goals and objectives of the study are met, researchers might adjust their sample plans and research objectives by determining the target population (Willie, 2024). The target population is more filtered than the broader population since it lacks any characteristics that might contradict the context, aim, or premise of the research (Asiamah et al. 2017).

Conversely, the portion of the target population that can easily be obtained in order to carry out the research is known as the accessible population (Thacker, 2020). However, it might not be conceivable to enlist or evaluate every member of the selected accessible population (Thacker, 2020). Furthermore, the degree to which the conclusions may be broadly applied to the target group depends on how well our sample resembles our accessible population, thus generalization can be assured if a good sample is selected from the accessible population (Thacker, 2020).

3.5 Sampling

A non-probability sampling method namely, purposive sampling was applied to this study. Sampling is known as selecting a sample proportion of the population to see if the study's findings may be applied to a larger group (Showkat & Parveen 2017). Sampling is a crucial step in research because it may be impossible and impractical to collect data from every individual in a given population. Non-probability sampling was chosen for this study as there can be no generalizability (Showkat & Parveen 2017). Purposive sampling is applied when the researcher's design is focused on who would offer the greatest facts to achieve the study's objectives (Bala & Etikan

2017). The sample of this study included two groups of Coloured females consisting of five (5) colonial born participants born before the year 1994 and five (5) born-frees, those who were born after 1994. An appropriate sample size for a phenomenological research might vary from 3 to 25 individuals, depending on the topic and variety intended to be captured (Coolidge et al. 2020). Hence, this sample size was chosen for this study. Furthermore, Coloured females were chosen for this study based on the history of hair in South Africa, particularly because Coloured females, among other populations, were discriminated against because of their hair texture.

When choosing a sample for the purpose of study, non-probability sampling takes into account non-random factors such as the subjects' availability, accessibility to the project site, or professional expertise (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The target population's units do not all have the same chance of being selected when using non-probability sampling thus consequently, additional factors, like convenience or a specific attribute, might be used to construct your sample (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Therefore, the study was conducted utilizing the non-probability technique with the aim of learning more about a certain occurrence that may lead to valuable discoveries (Showkat & Parveen 2017). Furthermore, the main benefits of this kind of sampling for most researchers would be its low cost, simplicity, and ease of application (Showkat & Parveen 2017).

This study employed purposive sampling, which is utilized when a researcher's design is centred on identifying the sources of the best information to meet the study's goals (Bala & Etikan 2017). The intent of purposive sampling is to choose participants who are most likely to provide pertinent and helpful data for the research (Campbell, 2020). Employing a purposive technique is justified by the presumption that, in light of the study's goals and objectives, certain types of individuals may have significant and divergent opinions about the concepts and problems under investigation, necessitating their inclusion in the sample (Campbell, 2020). However, there is no assurance that the sample selected for purposive sampling reflects the entire community. As a result, more emphasis is placed on the researcher's capacity to assess the population's numerous aspects (Showkat & Parveen 2017).

Furthermore, the participants of this study all currently reside in Westenburg (Polokwane) in a Coloured dominated community.

For the participants to form part of the sample they were all required to be customers at Senobia's hair salon. All the participants have to identify as Coloured and reside within Westenburg. Individuals who did not form part of the sample would be based on that they don't reside within the geographical parameters of Westenburg and are not regular clients at Senobia's hair salon, as one of the questions in the interviews asked the participants why they alter their hair texture.

3.6 Data management and analysis

The sample of this study consisted of ten Coloured females participants, which included five colonial born Coloured females and five born-free Coloured females. Purposive sampling was chosen for this study to fit the criteria of the study's objectives. The participants selected are all clients that do their hair at a well-known salon in the community of Westenburg, in Polokwane. The participants were also selected in terms of the convenience of having access to them, and the information they would provide in terms of Coloured history and the different views provided by the born free participants.

The data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews, where the participants shared their experiences and opinions about Coloured hair. Each of the participants was interviewed individually, to be able to have a detailed discussion with them and to avoid any data manipulation of the responses. The interviews were electronically recorded and the researcher wrote down notes while collecting the data. The data was transcribed by the researcher, to make it easier to analyse. Some of the participants' responses were in Afrikaans, however the researcher was able to translate the responses to English since she understands Afrikaans, the translations were placed in brackets. The age groups of the participants varied from 19 to 57 of age. Below are the tables of the descriptions of the participants:

Table 3.1 Colonial born participants

Participant number	Age and occupation	Hairstyle during the interview
Participant A1	51- year- old administrator	Straightened hair/blow out
Participant A2	54-year-old nurse	Wearing a wig
Participant A3	33-year-old stay at home mom	Straightened hair in a ponytail
Participant A4	57-year-old retired bank consultant	Straightened hair in a ponytail
Participant A5	44-year-old admin clerk	Natural curly wet-look

Table 3.2 Born free participants

Participant number	Age and occupation	Hairstyle during the interview
Participant B1	24-year-old political analyst intern	Straightened hair in a ponytail
Participant B2	19-year-old student	A natural hair up style with edges and curls
Participant B3	24-year-old student	Cornrows
Participant B4	21-year-old student	Natural curls
Participant B5	22-year-old N/A	A natural hair up-style pony

Furthermore, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. This form of analysis was based off a five-step process. Firstly, the researcher began by familiarising herself with the data that had been gathered. This entails going over the transcribed material carefully to identify any information that could be crucial to

achieving the goals of the study. Secondly, the researcher began generating codes based on the transcribed data; these codes are composed of acronyms or abbreviations that signify significant information that the researcher must retain and identify during the analysis. Thirdly, using information from each participant, the researcher looked for themes in the data. These themes were developed from participant replies that were comparable or shared, as well as any significant data that is relevant to the study. The fourth step involved the researcher going over the themes that had been developed and evaluating them using the codes that had previously been collected. This made it possible for the researcher to confirm that the themes that emerged were consistent with the key findings and did not deviate from the study's primary objective. Lastly, after developing the themes, the researcher began to define each one specifically to highlight its unique qualities and significance. By doing so, each theme in the research was validated by the participants 'responses, which further solidified the theme. The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were based on the following research objectives:

1. To compare and contrast the phenomenological narratives of race, hair and identity among 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females.
2. To determine through a critical lens the impact that the historical context of hair and current hairstyle choices have on the identity of 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females.
3. To analyse whether there is a change in the perception of hair, race and identity among 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females in post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa.

Some of the questions the researcher asked included in the semi-structured interviews included the following;

- What does being a Coloured mean to you?
- As a Coloured female, does the texture of your hair matter to you and why?
- Describe your hair to me. What kind of hair do you have?
- Have your thoughts on hair length and texture been influenced by South Africa's colonial past?
- Why do you think Coloured females alter the texture of their hair?

Refer to appendix C for the full list of interview questions.

3.7 Data collection

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews that follow pre-planned open-ended questions are called semi-structured interviews (Jamshed, 2014). Compared to other interview formats, the semi-structured interview is more effective for qualitative research because it enables researchers to obtain comprehensive data and supporting documentation from participants while keeping the study's objectives in mind and secondly, in contrast to an unstructured interview, when the direction of the interview is not thoroughly explored, it gives researchers flexibility and adaptation to stay on course (Ruslin et al. 2022). Utilising semi-structured interviews, the researcher can examine highly emotive and frequently delicate subjects, gather open-ended data, and look into participant ideas, feelings, and opinions about a certain subject (DeJonckheer & Vaughn 2019). In light of the semi-structured interview's special blend of flexibility and direction, researchers may collect rich, comprehensive information while preserving the spontaneity required to reveal complex viewpoints.

In crucial qualitative studies, semi-structured interviews are portrayed by a number of researched frameworks as essential instruments for gaining information through interaction, discussion, and individuals with a range of life experiences (Kakilla, 2021). Semi-structured interviews has a range of benefits which includes; allowing open-ended conversations that provides surface-level answers and derive complex conclusions (Kakilla, 2021). Semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to uncover hidden information by following up on both verbal and nonverbal reactions, including hunches, laughing, and silence when doing a final data analysis of the many themes gathered from the interview (Kakilla, 2021). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewers to be flexible by synthesising many subjects which allows a researcher to talk about a variety of subjects with several themes and semi-structured interview’s interactive format allows for the interviewee to respond freely (Kakilla, 2021).

The purpose of using semi-structured interviews to gather data is to obtain information from pertinent respondents who possess first-hand knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs on the subject of the research (DeJonckheer & Vaughn 2019). Consequently, whenever a researcher wants to get qualitative, open-ended information and examine people's ideas, feelings, and opinions on a certain subject, semi-structured interviews are a suitable data-collection technique (DeJonckheer & Vaughn 2019). Furthermore, by facilitating prompt explanation and questioning, semi-structured interviews enhance the validity and reliability of qualitative research thus, in order to make sure they completely get the participant's point of view; interviewers might clarify unclear responses, ask follow-up questions, and get further information.

The data collected was electronically recorded with a cell phone. The questions that were asked were aligned with the study's objections, for example the participants were asked;

- Tell me about your ancestry by explaining the racial ancestry of your parents, Grandparents and great grandparents (Are they all Coloured or are there other races that form part of your ancestry?) How did you come to live in Polokwane and where do they originate from?
- What does being a Coloured mean to you?
- As a Coloured female, does the texture of your hair matter to you and why?

Refer to appendix C for all the interview questions.

3.8 Data analysis

This study utilised thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique used by academics to methodically organize and analyse large, complicated data sets (Dawadi, 2020). Thematic analysis is an exploration into themes that might encapsulate the stories found within the data sets' accounts that includes closely examining and rereading the transcribed material to identify themes (Dawadi, 2020). Theoretically, thematic analysis may be used to precisely detect, characterize, and understand patterns, or themes, within a data collection that works effectively with any qualitative study that aims to investigate challenging research

problems (Dawadi, 2020). One way to emphasize the advantages of applying thematic analysis in a qualitative study is that its accessibility, openness, and flexibility increase the validity of the analysis (Dawadi, 2020).

The most crucial element of thematic analysis lies in the fact that the method of analysis should be systematic in order to produce a high-quality end output. Theme analysis is a constant-comparative approach that entails repeatedly reading the transcripts in an organized way (Dawadi, 2020). Authors Braun & Clarke (2012) explain a six-phase approach to thematic analysis which include;

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data – the main goals of this phase are being extremely educated about the content of your dataset and recognising elements that could or might not be relevant to your research question (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Phase 2: Generating initial codes - Codes are shorthand for things that you, the analyst, are aware of; they don't have to be detailed descriptions. These codes point to and identify a study component that might be crucial to the investigation (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Phase 3: Searching for themes – In this instance, a theme includes all relevant information about the study issue and denotes a degree of predictable reaction or interpretation throughout the data gathered (Braun & Clarke 2012). Accordingly, all coded data is examined during this phase to look for areas in which codes are similar to one another and duplicates (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes - In this phase, the emergent themes are assessed in relation to the original codes and the entire dataset through a cyclical process (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes – Identifying and characterising the study's themes at this stage demonstrates each one's distinctiveness and what it comprises in detail (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Phase 6: Producing the report – the research article, journal, or dissertation is given in this last phase thus in order to make the research paper comprehensible

and logically coherent, the topics should have a linking or informational flow that binds them together (Braun & Clarke 2012).

Furthermore, an inductive approach was applied to this study. Inductive approach proceeds from specific facts to generalisations in order to construct a theory (Streefkerk, 2019). Within the framework of the inductive analysis, the data is coded without regard to the researcher's prior study ideas or attempts to fit the findings into an existing coding scheme (Dawadi, 2020). Thus, themes arise naturally from the data itself, independent of the patterns found in previous research rather than stemming from the researcher's theoretical interest in the subject, themes are closely related to the facts (Dawadi, 2020). Inductive approaches help readers understand the meaning contained in complex material by creating summary patterns from raw data (Thomas, 2006).

In addition, the study applied reflexive thematic analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis is a conceptually flexible and generally accessible interpretive method for analysing qualitative data that makes it easier to find and analyse themes or patterns within a given collection of data (Byrne, 2022). The reflexive method of Thematic Analysis emphasizes the researcher's contribution to the on-going creation of knowledge (Byrne, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis serves as an evaluation of the researcher's interpretative analysis of the data carried out at the nexus of the following: the dataset; the analysis's theoretical presuppositions; and the researcher's analytical abilities and resources (Byrne, 2022). The goal of reflexive thematic analysis is for the researcher to engage with the analytic process and their data in a meaningful and introspective manner (Byrne, 2022). Reflexive theme analysis is a useful technique for examining the nuanced link between hair and identity given its emphasis on reflexivity and flexibility, researchers are able to capture the complex and multidimensional ways that hair impacts social identity and self-perception by delving deeply in the participants' experiences.

3.9 Quality criteria

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility was applied to every aspect of this study. Credibility is the degree to which the study's findings may be trusted upon and their degree of accuracy (Cameron 2011). A few techniques must be used in the study in order to attain credibility. These include disclosing any biases that may have occurred during the study, recording all outcomes through transcription or recording, and participant validation, in which the participants are shown the study's final results in order to validate the findings and triangulate the data in a way that incorporates a variety of methodologies and points of view to provide a more thorough analysis of the evidence (Noble & Smith 2015). The researcher made sure that no information was manipulated with and that the study's outcomes are honest and truthful. In the event that the study's findings are deemed to be prejudiced in any manner, all fieldwork records were preserved as proof.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability is applicable to this study. The degree to which a research study may be generalized and used to other studies is referred to as transferability (Lonny 2020). Transferability can be increased by the researcher by clearly outlining the study's fundamental assumptions and research background (Lonny, 2020). As a result, the researcher in this study made sure that every discovery was well described and included references to previous research that is comparable to the study.

3.9.3 Dependability

This study complied with all the requirements to gather sufficient data for other writers to review and replicate (Cameron 2011). Dependability is the degree to which participants' assessments of the research's conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations are bolstered by the information gathered from study participants (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, when gathering data for this study, the researcher made sure that novel topics surfaced. The researcher was willing to adapt and be open to the technique in order to analyse the subject and go back over the data with the newfound understanding.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability was applied to this study. Confirmability is the assurance that every study finding represents the participant narratives and experiences and has not been altered or manipulated to meet the researcher's expectations (Cameron 2011). To ensure confirmability acknowledgment of research participants and findings can be employed as a validation approach (Elo et al 2014). The researcher included all the steps used for gathering the data from the participants. The researcher added related literature as evidence to support the findings of the study and the emerging theories.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are a set of rules that direct the researcher, the investigation, and the techniques used (Bhandari, 2022). Among these ethical issues include safeguarding research participants' rights, boosting the validity of the study, and preserving validity throughout that period (Bhandari, 2022). Therefore, ethical considerations were acknowledged and enforced during the study. The confidentiality of the participants was respected and their identities were kept anonymous throughout the study. Considering the study's primary focus is on hair (physical characteristics) and identity, the researcher was particularly attentive in how the participants responded to certain questions in order to prevent offending them.

3.10.1 Protecting the rights of the participants

The participants of the study were all given consent forms to sign and give consent to partake in the study. Each participant’s identity and any personal information will be protected and kept anonymous throughout the study. Additionally, any participant that may be a minor will be given consent by the parent(s) and interviewed in their presence for their conveniences and comfort. No participant was forced to answer questions that they are not comfortable with nor were the participants asked offensive questions.

3.10.2 Protecting the institution

The name of the institution was only used to support the authentication of the researcher as a student and the research being done. Under no circumstances was the name of the institution be used to force or manipulate individuals to partake in the study.

3.10.3 Scientific integrity of the research

The data provided from this research study was accurate and no bias or manipulation was done. The researcher provided all necessary references to validate the work and the participants were also be given full details about what the study is about and any enquiries were attended to.

3.10.4 Human dignity and respect

The study incorporates the use of human participants; hence respect for human dignity was existent throughout the study. This was done in a way that honours the fundamental value of every person and treats them with the decency and respect they deserve.

3.10.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

The name of each and every participant was kept anonymous in respect of their dignity and privacy. Pseudonym names were given to the participants of the study, in order to respect their privacy and keep their identities safe.

3.10.6 Risk and harm

The study ensured that the risk to benefit ratio corresponds and if the risk outweighs the benefit the study would have been abandoned and redesigned in order to protect participants and society.

3.10.7 Permission to conduct the study

The participants of the study were provide with informed consent to participate in the study. All the participants were fully informed about what the study is about and give permission to partake in the study by signing a consent form. The collection of data was only done once the study has been approved by TREC regardless of whether the participants are human or not, to validate the authenticity of the study.

3.10.8 Plagiarism

Every author mentioned was acknowledged for their contribution in the study and every source used in the study was be referenced in the bibliography. No authors work was used and stipulated as the work of the researcher.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter covered the steps and procedures taken to gather information for this study. The design of the study was used, the methods for gathering data were thoroughly explained, and the participants' rights were always upheld. The following chapter will be a discussion of the research results gathered from the participants.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of how the participants responded to their opinions and perceptions about Coloured hair, race and identity. The data presented in this study was thematically analysed. Each one of the themes observed represents a distinct attribute of the participants' judgement of Coloured hair, race and identity.

4.2 Research results

The thematically analysed data presented in this chapter are an overview of Coloured females' phenomenological narratives of hair, race and identity in a post-apartheid/colonial society. The data presents first hand lived experiences of Coloured females' encounters with the so called Coloured hair. The following themes emerged from the thematically analysed data.

4.2.1 Pride and Resilience in Multiracial Identity Amid Societal Challenges

The first theme that the researcher discovered in the data findings was pride and resilience in multiracial identity amid societal challenges. This theme captures both the pride participants feel in their diverse heritage and the resilience required to navigate societal challenges associated with being Coloured in South Africa. While participants celebrate their multiracial ancestry—valuing the cultural diversity that shapes their identity—they also confront stereotypes and socio-economic disadvantages. This dual experience of pride in their rich, multifaceted identity, paired with resilience in the face of marginalisation, highlights a central tension in the Coloured experience, where diversity is both a source of strength and a basis for societal misunderstanding.

All the participants in the study identify themselves as Coloured while mentioning a whole list of different racial groups from their ancestry in formation of their Coloured

identity. Brown (2000) states that the Coloured race comes from individuals of multiracial ancestry, which includes unification of Black, White, Asian, Indian individuals. Hence the participants were asked about their racial ancestry. Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) from the colonial born group responded and stated;

> Uhm well I come from a generation of mixed races, my paternal grandfather is an Irish from Ireland and my father's mom is Khoison. On my mother's side there is Indian and Portuguese, so you can see my mixed race. Uhm we ended up in Polokwane as my dad was a principal; he was transferred to Polokwane to open the Westenburg high school here. Uh we from Pretoria, my mom is from Rustenburg , my father is originally from Benoni, uh that is how we ended up in Polokwane.

Similarly, another participant A3 stated:

> My pa se ma is originally van Mozambique soos ek gehoor het, or geleer her. En daan my oupa Tomes hulle kom van some type of khoison tribe. En dan van my ma se kant my oupa hulle kom van Duitsland af en dan die ouma hulle kom van Pretoria wes af. So hoe ons in Polokwane uit gekom het, hulle se ouers her hier toe getrek en n lewe hier begin. (My father's mother is originally from Mozambique as I heard, or learned again. And then my grandfather Tomes they come from some type of Khoison tribe, and then on my mother's side my grandfather they come from Germany and then the grandmother they come from Pretoria west. So how we got out of Polokwane, their parents moved here again and started a life here.)

Another participant which described her Coloured identity as a multiracial was Participant A5 (the 44-year-old) and she stated:

> Well, my parents identified as Coloured, my maternal grandmother is Pedi from Ga-mamabolo and her family ancestries are all racially Black and my grandfather was White from Germany, his parents were a mixture of German and Indian. My paternal grandparents, my grandmother was White and grandfather was Coloured, and so their

> children all identified as Coloured. My maternal grandparents ended up in Polokwane for employment and that is where we were born and raised.

Similar to the above participants the born free participants had the following to say about their Coloured ancestry. Participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated;

> Well uhm, I don't really know but I would say the generation I know is my grandparents. From my mom's side my grandfather is Malaysian so he is from Malaysia and my grandmother is Pedi and Coloured from Ga-mamabolo. From my dad's side my grandmother is White from the Eastern Cape and grandfather is Khoison/Coloured from Patterson and my parents moved to Polokwane because of work purposes.

Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> My ancestry goes a long way my great grandparents and many before them, from my mother's side are Dutch and Coloured and from my father's side there's a mixture of races that fall part of my ancestry ... such as Dutch, Coloured, Venda and southern Arabian ancestral descendants. However due to dividends of the past centuries we're classified as Coloured. My dad lived in a small town near Polokwane (Buysdorp) and moved to Polokwane for educational purposes around 1981 and my mom relocated from Beaufort west with her family as a little girl. Years later after getting married my parents moved to Pretoria for better work opportunities after their divorce my mom, siblings and i relocated back to Polokwane

In a comparable tune to the above responses Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Ok well from my grandparents, my paternal grandfather is White not sure from where but they are White and grandmother was Coloured from the Khoison descents. My maternal grandparents were both Coloured but both their fathers were White and mother was Coloured and the other Black. My mother is Coloured and so is my dad even though his father is White, they grew up identifying as Coloured as they

were mixed. But he looked like a White man with blue eyes. But we all identify as Coloured.

In addition to the theme of the multiracial identity, the participants were asked what does being a Coloured mean to them. Though the participants had varying responses, there were some common patterns in their responses. Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) responded and stated;

> Being a Coloured uhm it's quite mixed feelings, diversion of cultures, people don't understand Coloured people, we are always being targeted as people with no culture and it's a bit difficult. Because a Coloured comes from different races in my case there are four different races. So which one do you justify by? Being Coloured for me has been difficult because I don't look Coloured, I have a clear White skin, I have always been judged as being White so it's made my life difficult. So being a Coloured has not been easy, it's difficult but we accept who we are, it's a cultural diversity.

Also emphasising the diversity of being Coloured is participant A4 (the 33-year-old) and she stated:

> Vir my om n Coloured te wee, ek weet nie hoe om dit te se nie, dis n mengsel van culture en dit is n mooi ding. (For me to be a Coloured, I don't know how to say it, it's a mixture of culture and it's a beautiful thing.) I mean we have the opportunity to experience different cultures that we come from. Being Coloured is a diversity, being Coloured is a symbol of diversity and acceptance of all the cultures that we are made of.

Another participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> For me being a Coloured means diversity. Because looking at myself I come from a mixture of different races so being Coloured is a just a beautiful diversity, if that makes sense. Without all these different cultures and racial groups out there, we wouldn't be here or recognised…so being a Coloured is actually special because who gets to have all these different heritage. Like myself every year on heritage

> day I celebrate a different culture every year, I choose which of my cultures ill celebrate each year. As Coloured we are fortunate to have that.it is just a beautiful diversity of culture.

Another interesting observation from the participants' responses to the same question was from the younger born free generation. They had similar opinions to the colonial born participants; however they had few other added opinions to what being a Coloured means to them. Despite the pride in their heritage, younger participants (from the born-free generation) voiced frustrations related to their place in South African society. For them, the label of Coloured is sometimes a source of disadvantage due to social perceptions and economic barriers. Participant B1 (the 24-year-old) responded and stated:

> Well, in this democracy of ours, it's difficult because during apartheid we weren't White enough we weren't accepted and now we are not Black enough. It's difficult due to economic status to be a Coloured. We just appreciate the beauty of it of being a mixture of everything here and there, we appreciate the diversity of different cultures we can't let the bad overshadow the beauty of its diversity.

In a similar tone, participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> Well in this democracy of ours it sucks being a Coloured, we are the forgotten race. However, for me being a Coloured means being unique. In the sense that we have a variety of heritage within us. We are created from a mixture of different cultures and that is what makes us unique. All good and bad mixtures of different cultures is what we are created from.

Another participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> To me being Coloured means not being noticed at times or being categorized as "uncultured" or "violent" because of stereotypes passed on and pushed on to our people. Being a Coloured is having to accept that we don't fit into society at times because we are seen as not having a culture, which is wrong. Because we have a diverse range of culture that we can explore, for example myself, I get to learn about the

> different cultural backgrounds that I come from especially the food from the Indian part of my family, my Coloured/Khoison granny with her weird superstitious believes that she would teach us. Having that privilege of having this diversity in one racial group is what makes being a Coloured a great thing.

The participants seemed to be proud of their multiracial identities; they seem to embrace the different cultures that formed their racial group. The participants were all proud to mention their multiracial ancestry that they descend from, all of them had four or more different racial or cultural groups forming their ancestry. The participants carry their multiracial identities with pride to being a Coloured. The word diversity was mentioned quite a lot when the participants had to describe what being Coloured is, that shows how they embrace and feel proud of how the Coloured race if formed from different cultural/racial groups making it a diversity. However, as mentioned by the younger born free generation there are quite a few disadvantages that come along with carrying the Coloured identity. The born free participants kept drawing attention to how in this democracy being Coloured could a disadvantage especially coming to socio-economic benefits.

Furthermore, the Coloured identity is one formed from multi-racial descents thus; some Coloureds are of a light skin tone, with straight hair and others with a dark skin tone with curly or kinky hair. Pirtle (2021) explains that being Coloured refers to not being White, Black/African. The term "Coloured" was formalised as a legalised racial identity for a group of individuals who were characterised by being neither/nor (Pirtle, 2021). However, Adhikari (2005) contends that Coloured identity is a social construct influenced by both colonial and apartheid-era categorization systems rather than merely the result of racial mixing. Thus, the Coloured identity was placed halfway between White and Black during the colonial era; therefore the Coloured people were forced to make political concessions and thus influenced the way in which they were perceived (Le Roux, 2020). Given the variety of meanings and definitions attached to the term, "Coloured" presently in South Africa it continues to be a contentious political and ideological term (Le Roux, 2020).

Analysing the responses given particularly by the born free generation about being a Coloured, they drew more towards how the Coloured identity is depicted to not fit

into society. The born free participants that had no experience of the apartheid era felt some relation or connection to what it could've been like during apartheid to always being rejected by the dominating racial groups. Erasmus (2001:13) shares her explanation of being Coloured as "not White but less than White, not Black but better than Black". However, the born free generation felt that in this democracy being Coloured is not being Black enough to be able to be given economic privileges. Le Roux (2020:205) explains the "three-tiered racial hierarchical system" that was used in apartheid South Africa where the White dominating minority is at the top, the Coloured in the middle and the Black at the bottom. This system shows how the Coloured racial group has always been the in-between identity, during apartheid and post-apartheid. Erasmus (2001) notes that the Coloured identity has previously experienced marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream racial narratives due to its perception as being "in-between" Black and White.

In spite of this, a large number of Coloured people take pleasure in their multiracial identities and regard themselves as living examples of South Africa's diversity. Their personal experiences serve as a reflection of the complicated history of the country by reflecting the larger racial and cultural dynamics of the country. A more complex view of race, ethnicity, and identity in post-apartheid South Africa is made possible by the Coloured community's on-going investigation of mixed identities, which challenges inflexible racial classifications (Lewis, 2020). The flexibility of race in a culture where race has always been firmly defined is illustrated by the changing nature of Coloured identification, which is influenced through both past and present settings.

Furthermore, the difference between the colonial born and born free generations' response to being Coloured becomes evident where the colonial born focused more on the diversity of the Coloured heritage. Whereas the born free generation focused more on how being a Coloured in the democratic society seems to be at disadvantage to them compared to what it was in the apartheid era. During the apartheid era, the in-between positioning of the Coloured racial group was a societal advantage to Coloured people as they could pass for being White and have economic and societal benefits (Le Roux, 2020). However, in present day democracy an in-between placement does not have such privileges to the Coloured racial groups and thus the born free generation feel that they are not Black enough

now to be given the same economic and societal benefits as the dominating racial group.

Coloured people in South Africa have mixed identities that speak to a rich yet complex past that goes beyond crude racial classifications. Navigating a distinct cultural landscape moulded by African, European, and Asian heritages while embracing the intricacies of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past is what it means to be Coloured. Coloured identity is a real-life phenomenon that entails navigating social, political, and cultural factors in a way that challenges inflexible concepts of race, as opposed to being characterized exclusively by mixed ancestry (Adhikari, 2005). It stands for the adaptability and persistence of identity in a culture that has historically been shaped by racial distinctions (Erasmus, 2001). Being Coloured in modern South Africa is more than simply a racial designation; it's a complex identity that reflects the country's larger progress toward diversity, inclusion, and a more comprehensive knowledge of itself (Lewis, 2020).

4.2.2 The importance of hair texture and hair as a form of personal expression beyond ethnic and social boundaries

In addition to the above, the findings revealed that hair texture is important to the Coloured female's participants of this study. All of the participants namely, eight out of the ten participants stated that hair texture is very important to them as Coloured females. This theme captures the significance of hair texture for Coloured female participants, highlighting how it functions as a key marker of identity and personal expression. For many participants, straight hair (gladde hare) represents not only aesthetic preference but also a connection to certain racial or cultural identities, as seen with participants who desire a texture that aligns with societal perceptions or is easier to manage. Others, however, see natural texture to express their unique heritage and embrace their multiracial roots. This tension reflects broader dynamics within the Coloured community, where hair texture plays a central role in balancing personal identity, societal expectations, and cultural pride. This theme also underscores the participants' shared view that hair does not serve as an indicator of one's cultural, racial, or social background, but rather as a flexible medium of self-expression. Most participants reject the notion that hair texture or style reveals inherent aspects of identity, emphasising instead that hair can be adapted to suit

personal moods or styles. This perspective reflects the diversity within the Coloured community, where individuals may possess a wide range of physical features and hair textures. For them, hair becomes a choice rather than a fixed marker of ethnicity, highlighting the idea that identity is fluid and cannot be easily categorised by appearance alone.

Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> Yes, it does really matter to me since I come from different races and my hair can be coarse at times but once it's been done it looks beautiful. So with my hair I don't really have that big of a problem, because we have hairdressers like Senobia she understands our hair and she knows how to do it. I love my hair, the texture is manageable and for me I choose my hair the way it is.

The response given by participant A1 (the 51-year-old) is a reflection of how many Coloured females alter the texture of their natural hair in order for their hair to be more manageable. However in a different sentiment, participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Ja did doen to be honest. Because soes my hare, ek het in between hair; in between of Caucasian hair and African hair, en ek like my hare glad so it does matter to me. (Yes it does to be honest. Because like my hair, I have in between hair; in between Caucasian hair and African hair, and I like my hair straight, so it does matter to me.)

Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) stated:

> Die textuur van my hare, definetly ja, jy weet hare speel n baie belangike role in enige vrou se lewe, so en ek is geseen met n baie natuurlike curl en gladde hare. (The texture of my hair, definitely yes, you know hair plays a very important role in any woman's life, so I am blessed with a very natural curl and straight hair.)

All of the above colonial born participants stated that the texture of their hair is important to them. With the emphasis on gladde hare (straight hair) included to that being the type of hair texture they prefer and always wanted to have. In addition to

the above, three born free participants had similar responses in terms of importance of hair texture. Participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Yes, definitely it does, because I need that straight manageable hair. If I have to rush somewhere that natural thick hair just won't do it for me.

In agreement with the importance of hair texture, however with a different sentiment to it, participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> Yes, hair texture matters to me because it's the one of the only ways I can express myself and embrace my natural beauty.

Instead of mentioning the gladde hare (straight hair) preference, participant B2 (the 19-year-old) explains that hair texture is important to her especially when embracing her natural beauty. Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) doesn't particularly stated that natural hair texture is important but rather natural beauty. Lastly, also in agreement to the importance of hair texture however leaning to the gladde hare (straight hair) ideology, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Yes, it does sadly. I have a fair skin colour, I look like a White person, people always think I'm White, but the hair doesn't always agree with that, my hair sometimes goes back to its roots and I don't like that, I want gladde hare (straight hair) so that I can look the part. But also just because straightened hair is easier to manage.

Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) explains that for her, her hair texture is important mainly to uphold the image portrayed by herself and society that view her as a White person, thus she feels the need to always straighten her hair so that her hair does not go back to its natural texture. This is an indication that she upholds to the European beauty ideology as she wants to be associated with Whiteness thus she prefers straight hair.

The findings above reveal that the Coloured female participants are very much self-conscious when it comes to their hair texture. For the colonial-born participants it is important to them to maintain gladde hare (straight hair) because of how difficult it is to manage their natural hair. Hair texture seems to be important to the colonial-born

and born free participants and members of the Coloured community. The participants' responses above confirm what Adhikari (2013) when he states that head hair and hair texture have always been critical to the 'Coloured' identity in South Africa, especially for colonial-born Coloured women. The obsession with hair and hair texture is linked to assimilationism to dominant Whiteness, which can be described as one of the essential features that were historically at the heart of the Coloured identity (Adhikari, 2013).

Additionally to gain a clearer understanding of the relation between hair, race and identity, the participants were asked whether they believe that a person's hair could reveal their background? (Class, social standing, culture and ethnicity), for instance? A majority of the participants namely seven out of ten disagreed with this statement. Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> No, I don't believe that. Because like I just said in the previous question, it portrays like who you are and what you want. I can be anything I want to. If I feel today my mood is downward and I want curly hair, ill wash my hair and it will be curly, and if I want it straight I can go to the salon and change it.

In the same sentiment participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> No I don't think so. Because as Coloured we are diverse, in that we physically look different from some having kroose hare (kinky hair) to other having gladde hare (kinky hair) with a dark or light skin colour. So how will that tell which culture or ethnicity someone belongs so. And never mind the class because a person can be filthy rich and yet not take care of their hair so no, I don't agree with that statement.

All of the colonial born participants all had the same sentiment that hair cannot reveal an individual's background, however with the born-free participants only two out of the five also disagreed with the statement and the rest had a different view to it. Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> No I don't think so, because I can literally go from kroose (kinky) hair to silky soft hair and back to kroose (kinky) in one day so what will that say about my background…

Participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> No I don't think so merely because for example you get different types of Coloureds like my cousin, she's dark skinned and yoh has kroose (kinky) hair but she's Coloured, but some people think she's Black because of that. So how will her hair and the way she looks reveal her ethnicity or culture…People always approach her speaking their African languages thinking she's Black and shame she can't even speak the languages, she's Coloured but she looks like a Black person.

Participant B5 (the 22-year-old) implies that it's sad for her cousin who is a Coloured by race and identifies as a Coloured to be mistaken for a Black person, just because in the eyes of society she does not look like a Coloured. This can be linked to a period during the apartheid era when Coloureds through the Population Registration Act could try to pass for being White to be able to have access to better socio-economic benefits, however if they did not meet the criteria of fair skin and straight hair with the use if the hair pencil test, they would be associated with the Black population and had to settle for the harsh apartheid laws (Thompson, 2001).

The seven participants who indicated that hair does not reflect one's ethnicity was additionally endorsed by their contention that hair is not an indicator of race. The participants state that their hair is not a reflection of who they are but who or what they want to be perceived as in that moment or that day. Of particular interest is the viewpoint of the five colonial-born individuals, who all agreed that hair does not convey information about their identity or history. This perspective draws attention to the significant distinction within members of the Coloured race as well as the variety of hair types that exist within this group. In the born-free group there were just two individuals who agreed with the colonial-born participants about the intrinsic variety of the Coloured population. The 22-year-old participant B5, for example, demonstrated this point by pointing out that a cousin who identifies as Coloured had physical characteristics—like skin colour and hair texture—that are more indicative of a Black person. The seven participants' assertion that hair is not a reliable indicator of one's background is supported by this case.

Hair texture was frequently utilised in South Africa's racist past as an indicator of racial categorisation marker; those with kinky or coarse hair were frequently the targets of greater prejudice under apartheid regulations (Erasmus, 2001). However, in the findings of the study hair texture does not indicate racial identity to the participants and the significance of hair texture is mainly associated with beauty and appearance. The work of Denisha Richardson “Getting to the roots” (2013) which explores the social construction of hair amongst Coloured, in her findings she states that the participants in her study revealed that they continue to construct their hair and hairstyles according to the Western ideologies and perceptions of the Eurocentric view.

In addition to the aforementioned, the results showed that the Coloured female participants in this study placed a high value on hair texture. Eight of the ten participants specifically mentioned that their identity and self-perception as Coloured women are greatly influenced by their hair texture. This theme reflects the symbolic and practical relevance of hair, revealing how it acts not just as a marker of identity and personal expression but also as a place of negotiation between cultural tradition and societal expectations. For many participants, straight hair ("gladde hare") signifies not only an aesthetic desire but also a perceived connection to specific racial or cultural identities, typically tied to Eurocentric beauty standards (Zwane, 2019). Straighter hair has historically been linked to social privilege, which supports Erasmus' (2001) assertion that colonial legacies and the enduring influence of racial hierarchies shape the hair practices of Coloured people.

Some participants, on the other hand, held a different opinion, appreciating natural textures as manifestations of their pride in their indigenous and multicultural background. This is consistent with the results of Banks (2000), who contends that women of African ancestry frequently reclaim their natural hair as a form of political protest and defiance of hegemonic beauty standards. Curiously, the Coloured female participants in this study highlighted the fluidity of hair as a cultural symbol, despite the fact that earlier studies (such as Thompson, 2009) have demonstrated that hair is frequently viewed as a fixed indicator of racial identity in Black groups. The majority of participants argued that hair is a flexible medium of self-expression that may change with individual moods, styles, and life stages, rejecting the notion that hair texture or style inevitably indicates cultural or racial heritage.

Therefore, according to the findings in this theme, the Eurocentric beauty in terms of hair which was of utmost importance to the Coloured identity during the apartheid era continues to have importance to the participants who form part of the post-colonial, post-apartheid, democratic South Africa in both colonial born and born free generations.

4.2.3 Intergenerational Beauty Standards and Evolving Preferences in Hair Aesthetics

This theme explores how perceptions of visually appealing hair differ across generations, reflecting both traditional beauty standards and the influence of modern movements toward natural hair. The research findings indicate a clear preference for "gladde hare" (straight hair) among colonial-born participants, who associate straight hair with qualities like class and manageability. This preference persists in special occasions, where straightened styles are seen as elegant and formal.

In contrast, the born-free participants exhibit a more diverse perspective, appreciating natural curls and alternative styles while still occasionally valuing straight hair for formal settings. The younger participants' openness to natural hair textures appears to be influenced by contemporary beauty norms, social media, and the accessibility of products that celebrate and maintain natural hair. This theme highlights how beauty ideals can be both preserved and redefined within communities, with traditional standards coexisting alongside newer, more inclusive views on beauty and self-expression.

The term gladde hare (straight hair) was mentioned often by the participants to describe the hair they like especially the colonial born participants where four out of five mentioned gladde hare (straight hair). The participants were asked what qualities of hair they find visually appealing, participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> Qualities of hair I would normally find appealing is soft type of texture because it’s easy to maintain. Gladde hare as we would call it.

Figure 4.1 Participant A1's hair at the time of the interview

In a similar tune, participants A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> If it's healthy, bouncy and shiny, then that is nice hair, no matter the length. En dit moet n bietjie glad wees (And it should be a little straight.).

Figure 4.2 Participant A3's hair during the interview

Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) similarly stated:

> As die person se hare versorg is en uit geblou is straight. Dis wat ek like in hare. (If the person's hair is well taken care of and blown out straight. That is what I like about hair).

Participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> Gladde hare (straight hair) (with a giggle). Nee maar (No but) any type of hair actually as long as it is strong healthy hair that is well moisturized and shiny from hair oils. I like hair that is just well taken care of.

The above mentioned colonial-born participants all find straight hair visually appealing. The term gladde hare (straight hair) has been mentioned by all of them, even though some participants mention other qualities of hair that they like, straight hair in the end is what they all preferred. Particularly with participant A1 (the 51-year-old) and participant A3 (the 33-year-old) both had blown out straight hair as shows in the figures above, which validated that type of hair they find visually appealing.

However, amongst the born-free generation two out of five mentioned that they prefer gladde hare (straight hair) and the remaining three had a different perspective of the type of hair they find visually appealing. When asked what qualities of hair they find visually appealing, participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> For me hair that is washed and clean and probably blown out and straightened hair.

Similarly participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Honestly speaking I like lang gladde hare (long straight hair) but these days I am also liking these natural curls people have and unfortunately my hair doesn’t curl so that is why I prefer the straight hair.

Figure 4.3 Participant B3’s hair straightened

A few days after the interview participant B3 (the 24-year-old) sent the researcher a picture of her hair after she went to the salon to get her weekly hair wash and blow.

The above participants seem to share some similarities to the colonial born participants in that they prefer straight hair. That could possibly be that, that is what have been passed down to them from their parents; that straightened hair is visually appealing over natural hair. An example of that would be participant A3 (the 33-year-old) and participant A4 (the 57-year-old) that are biologically related as mother and daughter, and also participant B3 (the 24-year-old) that is a first cousin to participant A3 (the 33-year-old). They share similar qualities in the type of hair that they like.

However the remaining three participants had contrasting opinions to the above participants. Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> I love the elasticity of curly hair; i love the thick and "fluffy" look of coily hair. The size or style of someone’s natural hair appeals to me as well.

Figure 4.4 Participant B2's natural curls

Similarly, participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> Just natural healthy hair, no matter the texture honestly. I love afros, I like how I see girls make these curly hair afros with the edges and all that, I totally love that.

Similar to the two previous participants, participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> Uhm I think I said it before that all hair is good. It's all just about taking care of it. Natural or altered hair…it's all good. Just take care of it. But to answer your question I think I would say I like natural hair more than straightened or altered hair. Because I like the styles that we are able to try with our natural curls…have you seen how cute curls are though, so yeah that is how I feel.

The above three born free participants that are of a younger generation had opposing views to the rest of the participants, and that is supported by their hairstyles during the interviews. All of them had their hair in their natural texture at the time of the interview. This could be that in current South African society natural hair is more appreciated and there are more products advertised that promotes natural hair. Social media can also contribute to it, for example, the Facebook group called "Kroeskontrol", that is a social group where the members of the group share

information that promote natural hair; they share the diversity of hair and products that are good for natural hair. Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) showed the researcher her collection of hair care products that are all for natural hair and that are good for curly hair, which included products from Afro curl, which she saw online by her favourite content creator/influencer using and Aunty Jackie's hair products.

Source: Splendid

Figure 4.5 Image of Aunty Jackie's hair products

Source: Tiktok

Figure 4.6 Image of Afrocurl hair products

Additionally to have a more clearer understanding of the type of hair the participants like, they were asked what hairdo do you like most for formal occasions like weddings and graduations. Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) responded and stated:

> I would prefer straight hair, because it's classy and classic**.**

Also mentioning straight hair and another hairstyle, participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> Straight hair, with a bit of that curly wavy bit at the ends of the hair.

Similar to the above participants, participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Straight blown out hair.

Being simply straightforward with what she likes, participant A4 (the 57-year-old) stated:

> Straight gladde hare.

In a similar tune, participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> Uhm, straight blown out hair.

The findings above show that all the colonial-born participants have a common like for straight hair, considering it to be their go to hairstyle for special formal occasions. Straight gladde hare still looms over the minds of the colonial-born participants as a beautiful hairstyles that they choose to wear during special occasions. Furthermore, in the born-free group, the participants did not only have one specific style but were more open to other styles. Asked the same question about what hairdo they like the most for formal occasions, participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Hair that is tonged, I like the curls at the ends, or hair that is straightened out.

Also mentioning straight hair, however with a few more options, participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> I usually lean more towards straight hair. If I feel the need to keep my natural hair out I always look up creative ways to style it like a half up

> half down, sleek bun with two small plaits in the front or coils to show off my natural hair.

In addition, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Well either straight uit geblou or with some curls at the ends some waves, yes.

Participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> Uhm either my natural curls styled in some up-style or straightened hair.

Lastly, participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> My natural hair up-styles, curls or blown out hair straight hair that the wind will be blowing.

Similar to the colonial-born participants, the majority born-free participants also stated that straight hair is an option for them to style their hair for a special occasion. The born-free participants don't only limit themselves to one hairstyle but also find that there are other hairstyles that one can do to also look and feel pretty in. Even though the born-free mentioned other hairstyles, it is important not to overlook the fact that straight hair will always dominate amongst Coloured individuals as the most beautiful hairstyle one can have. As proven by the participants in this study as a majority chosen style for special occasions.

This theme examines how different generations within the Coloured community view visually appealing hair, illustrating the enduring effect of conventional beauty standards as well as the expanding impact of contemporary natural hair movements. The results of the study show that older, colonial-born participants strongly favour "gladde hare" (straight hair), which they typically link with respectability, class, and social mobility. The desire to attain social acceptance through proximity to Eurocentric norms, such as straightened hair, which was frequently viewed as more "neat" and socially acceptable in formal and professional settings, has historically shaped Coloured identity, according to Erasmus (2001) and Adhikari (2005).

The born-free participants, on the other hand—those who were born after apartheid ended—show a stronger acceptance of natural hair textures, valuing coils, curls, and

other types as equally attractive. Their opinions show a shift toward self-acceptance and authenticity, even though they still acknowledge that straight hair is ideal for some formal settings. This shift has been greatly influenced by modern movements like the natural hair revolution, international beauty campaigns, and the visibility of diverse hair types on social media platforms (Zwane, 2019; Johnson, 2014).

4.2.4 Hair as an Evolving Reflection of Identity and Freedom: Generational Perspectives among South African Coloured Women

This theme encapsulates the central ideas from the study, highlighting how different generations approach hair as either a reflection of societal pressures or personal choice. The colonial-born generation appears to carry the weight of apartheid-era beauty standards, often associating hair with societal classification, race, and the past's rigid beauty ideals. In contrast, the born-free generation leans toward personal agency and authenticity, embracing hair choices as self-expression rather than conforming to external expectations.

The theme also acknowledges the on-going tension and transformation in self-perception and identity within this community. As cultural perceptions shift, especially with younger generations embracing natural styles and "I don't care" attitudes, the narrative around hair is moving from conformity towards individual freedom. This shift challenges the legacy of colonial influence, asserting a more diverse, inclusive standard of beauty and identity.

Therefore, for the researcher to have a clearer understanding if the participants' hairstyle choices have an influence of their identity, the participants were asked what impression do they believe their present hairdo gives people about them, participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> Uh I think, it gives the impression of a woman that loves herself that is taking good care of herself. It shows that I maintain the image that i would love to maintain about myself.

Participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> Since I'm wearing wigs more often these days than my natural hair, I think people are pretty much surprised and don't know where to place me.

The above mentioned participant explains that people may be confused by seeing a Coloured female wearing wigs and that would make people uncertain to which racial group she actually belongs to. Another participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> I don't know, right now my hair curly and thick, its short there's no style that I can make…so I don't really know what people think…maybe that I'm old and tired of my hair and decided to cut it I don't know.

The above colonial born participants relate their hairstyles with how they feel and what they are able to do with their hair presently and not who they are. Thus they were not much able to explain what impression their hair gives off. However, participant A2 (the 54-year-old) felt that her hairstyle probably gave a confusing impression to people, as people may not be able to racially classify her because she is wearing a wig as a Coloured female. Furthermore, in the born-free group the participants also had interesting responses when asked the same question, participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Uhm currently I have a ponytail. It's the easiest thing to do, most mornings I'm late, so the to go style. And I actually don't care at this point of time what people think about me.

Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> I believe my present hairdo shows people just how much I love my natural hair and I'm not afraid to explore new things when it comes to my hair and styling it.

Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> I don't know. My hair currently is in cornrows because I'm lazy to do it. So I don't know people think and I don't care but they probably thick that I'm experimenting different hairstyles. Because funny

> enough people are always asking me why do I have cornrows as a Coloured because we have nice hair we don't have to do braidings.

The above born-free participants have different responses to the colonial born. The born-free participants have more of an "I don't care" what people thick boldness to them. Their hair reflect what they want and how they feel. However, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) and participant A2 (the 54-year-old) had somewhat similar responses that their hairstyles gives off a confusing impression in the sense that society does not expect Coloured females to wear wigs and braid their hair.

The participants were then asked another follow up question in regards to how they feel about this statement "Your hairstyle choice says something about who you are"? Majority of the participants namely seven out of ten disagreed with this statement, participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> No I don't agree with it, but people do tend to classify you with your hair, like the type of wig I'm wearing they will classify me either as rich or poor because of the quality of my wig.

Participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Dis n k*k (That is a nonsense) statement. Because hair does not define you, your hairstyle does not define you, I don't agree with that statement.

Participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> No I don't agree. Because hair is just hair. You can change it 5 times in one day. So what would that say about you… hair should not be seen as an instrument of classification or be taken so serious, it's just there to make us feel pretty.

The above colonial born participants gave surprising responses in that they believe that hair does not say who an individual is. These responses could be based off how in the apartheid era people were classified based on their hair texture and that might have been felt as a bit unfair hence these responses. Additionally to the above the born-free participants also shared their views and four out of five from the group had similar views as the colonial born participant. Participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Uhm I don't know, it might or not actually, maybe in between. Not really who you are but probably in the mood that you are in.

Participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> No I don't agree, because what can a hairstyle say about you. It can maybe say that you are a creative person because of the way you styles it, or the mood you are in such as a bad hair day can say that I'm in a bad mood that is all. It says how you feel more than who you are as a person.

Participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> No I don't agree with it. As I said earlier we get different types of Coloured and people in general we can't say if someone if Black or Coloured or Indian based on their hair or hairstyle choice, so what can hair really say about a person. Maybe we can tell if someone was late for work or school maybe the hair wasn't done properly for the day. But no it doesn't.

The responses above from the born-free participants are similar to that of the colonial-born participants. They all agree that one's hair or hairstyle choice cannot say who you are but rather how you feel. The participants argue that their hairstyle choices do not define their identity or character rather they believe that such assumptions may reduce their individuality and overlook the beauty of the their hairstyles.

Moreover, to have a clear understanding of what influences the participants to like certain hairstyles and qualities about hair, they were asked if their thoughts on hair length and texture has been influenced by South Africa's colonial past; and participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> In my case not really, because I always had long hair and it's been easy for me I can choose how to have my hair, long or short, thick or straightened, so it doesn't really.

Similarly mentioning the advantage of her hair type, participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Nee, want ek het maar altyd lang gladde hare gehat as ek nou my hare uit geblow het (No, because I always had long straight hair when I blew my hair out). So I won't say that it has had any influence because I've always had this type of hair and always like it just as it is back then and now it's still the same.

Additionally, participant A5 (the 44-year-old) also stated:

> No, because my hair back then and my hair now differs completely. In my teen years I had an afro, and then in my twenties I started altering my hair texture, and it wasn't for any particular reason. Because till this day I can't even make an afro anymore my hair thread has completely changed.

The remaining two colonial born participants had a different opinion to the question asked, participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> Yes, those years they would put a pencil in your hair and if it can't go through you would stay on this side and if it went through you stayed in a better place than others. We were classified based on hair types, so we all wanted to also stay in better placed or be looked at as beautiful. And being beautiful meant having nice long straight hair.

Participant A2 (the 54-year-old) mentions the dreadful pencil test that was imposed by the apartheid government during reclassification that Coloured females went through in order to have better socio-economic privileges. She mentions that for her to feel beautiful she needed to have long straight hair, and that could've also contributed to her also altering her hair texture; to be able to fit into society. Similarly to the above Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) states:

> ja, soort van. want ek het altyd lang gladde hare gehad en mense het gedink ek is wit. so ook lig van vel het daartoe bygedra. so ek het baie komplimente gekry vir die manier waarop ek destyds gekyk het en het altyd 'n behoefte gevoel om dit te handhaaf. terug om as wit te wees was nie 'n slegte ding nie, dit was 'n voordeel. so ja, ek dink ek hou van gladde hare as gevolg daarvan. (Yes, sort of. Because I always had long straight hair and people thought I was White. so also lightness of

> skin contributed to it. So I got a lot of compliments on the way I looked back then and always felt a need to maintain it. back to being White wasn't a bad thing, it was an advantage. So yes i guess i like straight hair because of that.)

Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) ‘s response was directed at how in the past, hair and also skin colour played a role in the process of identification, and how identifying with a different racial group, being the dominating minority White group was an advantage to them, as stated by participant A2 (the 54-year-old) that it allowed them access to better socio-economic benefits. Thompson (2009) explains that particular races were associated with advantages, people would strive to "pass" for members of other races by straightening their hair. Additionally having long gladde hare (straight hair) came along with many compliments that would make them feel good about themselves.

Additionally, in the born free generation again two out of the five participants agreed that their hair was influenced by South Africa’s colonial past whereas the rest disagreed with that statement and had opposing views. Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> Yes it has, in the area where i grew up in hair texture was defined as the set standard for Coloured girls to have which led to me having the idea that if you don’t have that certain hair texture then you’re not as beautiful but on the other hand I attended a predominantly White school where a lot of girls had long straight hair which created a feeling of inferiority and left me confused on what a woman in south Africa’s hair should look or feel like, because I liked a different type of hair texture than what others liked.

In agreement with the question asked, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) had a different explanation to it, and stated:

> I want to say no but at the same time yes because for me to like long gladde hare (straight hair) it’s because that is what I was taught growing up. And my mother was taught by her mother and so forth. The tradition of doing your hair every Sunday is a generational thing that we

> have been taught it goes way back, and that is what we like till today. My mom and grandmother were probably influenced by the apartheid or colonial beauty standards at the time and carried that ideology over to us, and I hope that I don't carry that onto my kids one day because I want them to accept themselves as they are.

Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) speaks on how certain traditions in her family has been passed down from one generation to another and she would like it to end with her. Erasmus (2000) explains a Sunday ritual where she had a seventeen step hair was routine to get her hair silky straight. This shows how straight hair in the past in the Coloured community was of utmost importance to them and that practice was passed down through generations. However, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) emphasizes how the forth coming generations in her family should rather be more natural and not alter the texture of their hair as a tradition that is imposed on them; they should rather do with their hair as they wish and like.

However, the remaining three born free participants shared a different opinion to the question, participant B1 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> No, for me it's just about what I like. It has nothing to do with the past, or any other influences.

Also in disagreement with the question asked, participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> No, not at all. Because I can decide to do anything with my hair, I can cut my hair anytime and it won't bother me, because my hair grows back fast I can blow it out and it will be straight and silky again or I can do my natural curls hairstyle, I go with my mood actually. My mood influences my hair or hairstyle.

Lastly, participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> No, I don't think so. Well I'm actually influenced by natural hair influencers on social media, like these famous people that promote natural hair curls and hairstyle. They influence me now because that is what I like and what I'm into. I think in the past they like straight hair or

> the rollers, because that is what my granny and mom them like and I'm not for that, so I have to say no to that.

The above mentioned participants have a totally different view from the previously discussed participant. They share that the past or colonial ideology of hair beauty standards does not have any influence on their current hairstyle choices. One may say that they have moved on from what has happened in the past and choose to embrace the opportunity of living in a society that has evolved in accepting natural hair. As that seems to be more common in the younger generation, compared to the colonial generation where they had no choice but to live up to the colonial beauty standards.

However, the responses from the colonial-born generation highlight the significance of hair texture and the appearance of Coloured women's hair during the 1970s and 1980s. This period saw an increased emphasis on physical attributes, such as hair texture, shaped by the apartheid-era framing of identities in South Africa (Le Roux 2020; Erasmus 2001). Thus, some Coloured females especially the colonial generation would prefer their hair texture altered as compared to the born free generation. Coloured women in South Africa who were born into colonial families have traditionally favoured straight or Caucasian-style hair over natural hair, partly because of the pervasive effects of colonialism and apartheid-era beauty standards. During these times, lighter complexion and straight hair were seen as better according to the European beauty standards, which were absorbed by many Coloured communities. According to Adhikari (2005), Coloured women, especially during the colonial era, aimed to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards in order to avoid being labelled as Black, which provided them with limited social and economic benefits. This predilection for straight hair was a manifestation of "respectability politics," the idea that a person's perceived social position may be influenced by their outward look (Erasmus, 1997). Thus, the even-lasting impacts of the pressure to meet the colonial beauty standards may be seen in the fact that many Coloured women prefer hair straightening techniques even after apartheid ended. The intricacies of class and race in South Africa are further highlighted by these rituals, which are a reflection of the colonial era's lasting impact on notions of identity and beauty. Thus Le Roux and Oyedemi (2021) state that the Eurocentric traits,

represented by the White body, continue to dominate this group of Coloured women's ideology of beauty.

Furthermore, the textures of Coloured women's hair vary between coarse to curly and straight; nevertheless, coarse hair was once seen to be shameful and connected to Blackness, whereas straight silky soft hair was connected with beauty (Le Roux 2020; Erasmus 2000). Conversely, as Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) mentioned that presently still in the Coloured community one would be teased for having a certain type of hair texture, therefore one may assume that these colonial beauty standards may still be looming over society. Though, that does not seem to bother the born free generations as they still prefer their natural hair texture and choose to embrace it through all kids of hairstyles.

The acceptance of natural and altered hair by the born-free Coloured generation in South Africa is a potent symbol of their cultural variety and sense of self. Whether natural or altered hair, embracing a variety of hair textures and styles empowers women to express themselves genuinely and challenges historical prejudices stemming from colonialism and Eurocentric beauty standards (Adhikari, 2005). A more accepting culture where uniqueness rather than uniformity defines beauty is one that is fostered by encouraging acceptance of all hair types. This trend toward inclusion embraces the diversity of South Africa's cultural tapestry and gives women the confidence to be proud of their ancestry. According to Erasmus (1997), hair has historically served as a marker of social and racial identity; however there is now a greater latitude for Coloured women to select how they want to portray themselves.

4.2.5 Generational Perspectives on Hair: Tradition, Transformation, and Cultural Heritage

This theme explores the ways in which different generations within the Coloured community approach hair, reflecting broader cultural and historical influences. Key points include:

- Generational Divide in Hair Ideals: The older "colonial-born" participants often follow traditional routines like straightening hair on Sundays, reflecting long-standing societal norms that equate straight hair with beauty and

respectability. In contrast, younger "born-free" participants demonstrate a shift, embracing natural hair and diverse textures as a mark of cultural pride.

- Cultural Heritage vs. Contemporary Expression: For many colonial-born participants, hair practices are tied to deep-rooted traditions and community standards shaped by colonial and apartheid influences. Younger participants, however, see natural hair as a way to reclaim and celebrate their heritage, connecting their hair choices to cultural identity and pride rather than conformity.

- Resistance to Beauty Norms as Cultural Empowerment: By choosing natural hair, younger generations resist Eurocentric beauty norms and engage in a form of cultural empowerment. They reinterpret beauty standards, valuing authenticity over traditional ideals, which supports a broader narrative of decolonisation and reclaiming self-identity.

This theme showcases the complex interplay between tradition, cultural heritage, and the evolving expressions of identity across generations within the Coloured community. It highlights how hair choices serve as a medium for both preserving and transforming cultural heritage.

This theme was chosen based on how the participants mentioned how Coloured females in this generation prefer natural hair over altered hair. Ngwadla (2018) explains how in today's society natural hair is embraced by all, especially by activists such as Zulaikah Patel. The participants were firstly asked about their present hairstyle preference. What made them decide to wear their hair in this particular way, and why? Participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> I wear a wig to save time in the morning when getting ready for work because when I style my natural hair it would take me more than 30 minutes struggling with this Coloured hair.

Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) stated:

> Right now ek is soe besig ek try nie eens tyd vir myself so n pony is al wat ek doen. (I'm so busy I don't even find time for myself so a pony is all I do.)

Participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> Well I don't really have a choice now with my hair style because my hair is so short now that only style I can make is this curls and afro.

From the response given by the colonial-born participants above there seem to be one common factor, convenience, the convenience of a quick and easy hairstyle. Namely four out of five colonial-born participants' hairstyles was chosen because of how quick and easy is and also that was the only hairstyle they could currently manage to do. However, in the born-free participant group two participants' hairstyle was chosen based of convenience and the remaining three based on their love for natural curls. Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> I chose to wear my hair natural because of the pride Black South African woman (and family members) took in their afros and their naturally curly hair, and compliments i received from peers and other girls with curly hair, because of that I decided to embrace my curls.

Participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> I have curly hair right now, because it has just been my go to style lately, as I said I love my natural curl thread.

Participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> My hair is currently in an up-style, with the curls. I did not go to the salon this week yet. So I just made this style because I like trying different hairstyles with my natural hair. To look cute, we are girls we like looking cute.

The above born-free participants mention that their current hairstyle choices are based on their love of natural hair; unlike the colonial-born participants the above born-free participants did not mention anything about convenience. As participant B5 (the 22-year-old) mention that she likes trying different hairstyles with her natural hair, the born-free participants are all about experimenting and exploring all the different types of hairstyles they can do with their natural hair texture. Furthermore the participants were asked why do you think Coloured females alter the texture of their hair, participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> We do because we are always being judged because of our hair textures like I said Coloureds come from different backgrounds and we all have different types of hair. So we want to have the straight hair because that is how people feel that our hair has to be in the Coloured community, and I feel that even other races think that is how our hair has to be.

Validating the above response, participant A2 (the 54-year-old) also provides an explanation and stated:

> Because we want to look like the person next door, we want to fit in. We want soft straight hair. As Coloureds we have made straight hair a trend or a culture amongst ourselves and everyone wants to fit in with that.

In a similar tone, participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Probably to fit in to society, because people see long straight hair as beautiful. Like Black people wear these long weaves. They want to fit in the beauty standard.

Participants A4 (the 57-year-old) also stated:

> Om hulle meer beautiful te maak. Om in te paas, want ons glo moss dat lang gladde hare mooi is , en ons almal wil mooi lyk. (To make them more beautiful. To fit in, because we believe that long straight hair is beautiful, and we all want to look beautiful.)

Lastly giving a fully detailed background explanation, participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> I would say because that is just what we were taught growing up. Every Sunday you blow out your hair and straighten it, and also because that is what we know beautiful, neat and tidy hair to be. On the other hand Coloured people do it to fit in with the standards set by the Coloured community on what is classified as beautiful hair. I mean blow out your hair now and go outside, everyone will be complementing you on how nice your hair looks.

In a surprising development during the analysis, the born free participants had similar responses as the colonial born participants to the question asked. Participant B1 (the 24-year-old) responded and stated:

> I'll say because they want to be beautiful or its just peer pressure from their friends that alter their hair and feel that to be beautiful they need to do that to fit in either way.

Also mentioning the judgement in the Coloured community is participant B2 (the 19-year-old) and she stated:

> I feel like there's so many different reasons and each woman has her own story to tell on why she alters her hair but from what I've witnessed i feel like it could be because of judgement and pressure from other Coloured woman. So we alter our hair texture to fit into the beauty standard to avoid being ridiculed and also the struggle to maintain our natural hair can also contribute to why Coloured alter their hair texture.

Similarly, participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> Because I think in the Coloured community that is what we grew up with, the every Sunday hair ritual, wash and blow your hair. I think it's just something that we were taught and still continue to live by. And as Coloureds I feel that we are just expected to have that type of altered hair, like if you have kroose hare (kinky hair) people are quite judgemental about that. So everyone just feels that need to straighten their hair.

Participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> Well from my experience, growing up in a Coloured community having straight gladde hare (straight hair) is a tradition. And everyone feels pressure to have gladde hare (straight hair), because if you have kroose hare (kinky hair) like those hairs at the back of your head you will be teased so badly by people. So people avoid that embarrassment and choose to straighten their hair. There's this pressure in keeping a certain beauty standard in the Coloured community.

Lastly, participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> Uhm I think because in the Coloured community we have this thing of teasing each other if you have kroes (kinky) hair so we all try to avoid having kroes (kinky) hair and alter the texture a bit.

The findings above reveal how the participants and members of the Coloured community alter the texture of their hair due to pressure from within the community. The participants reveal some type of pressure there is to fit in with the gladde hare standards set within the community. Having coarse hair seems to be a shameful quality to have within the Coloured community that the participants fear to be tormented for not having gladde hare. Le Roux (2020) explains that conversely, Coloured women with kroes hair were socially mocked and shunned, because males were more interested in Coloured women with gladde hare, thus Coloured women with kroes hair endeavoured to acquire and keep gladde hare. Thus, from the findings and analysis above it is undeniably applicable that the colonial/European beauty standards still looms over the Coloured community and has been passed down from generation to generation that straight soft silky hair is more beautiful than natural coarse or curly hair. It is evident that Coloured people still carry the humiliation connected to kroes hair from the apartheid era (Le Roux, 2020).

In addition the participants were asked whether in this society they think Coloured females still see a need to alter the texture of their hair or do they prefer to embrace their natural hair thread, and all ten participants had similar responses to the question. Participant A1 (the 51-year-old) stated:

> I would say we prefer both; it goes according to the occasion. But I see with the younger generation these days they prefer their natural hair thread, most people are going natural these days actually. And I'd say because that is the new trend these days I guess.

Participant A2 (the 54-year-old) stated:

> No these days I've seen Coloured girl embrace their natural hair especially the young generation. Even my son is all about these curls these days using up all my conditioner. Uhm I guess these younger generation obviously grew up in a different era than us golden oldies, so

have the option to embrace these natural hairstyles whereas we did not have that option back then.

Participant A3 (the 33-year-old) stated:

> Most Coloured ladies embrace their natural hair these days as I see out there because there are more products to maintain natural hair than the work of having to always blow out and straighten.

Participant A4 (the 57-year-old) stated:

> Hulle embrace hulle natural hare. Want hulle is natural, they accept their hair these days. I think back in the day natural hair wasn't accepted that much But these days it is well accepted, en daar is meer produkte vir natural hair ook dees dae want in onse dae was daar nie rerig baie nie. (They embrace their natural hair. Because they are natural, they accept their hair these days. I think back in the day natural hair wasn't accepted that much nut these days it is well accepted, and there are more products for natural hair these days too because in our days there weren't really many.)

Participant A5 (the 44-year-old) stated:

> Well with these new generations I see that they prefer their natural thread. They use all these curl activators and gel things. It's all about the afro and curls these days. I see it with both my daughters, I guess because that is what's trending because they will see these natural hairstyles on Tiktok and want to try them out, whatever products they see other people using for curls and edges they also want to try it out. So I guess it's because that is the new fashion these days.

The finding above of the colonial born participants all had a common response that Coloured females these days prefer their natural hair thread especially drawing towards the younger generations. The colonial-born participants refer to the younger generation of Coloured women who embrace their natural however; they do not speak about themselves. The colonial-born participants do not speak about whether they themselves have embraced natural hair or do they continue to hold onto the

Eurcoentric ideology of beauty when it comes to hair. The born free participants also mentioned a common similar response as to the colonial born participants when asked the same question. Participants B1 (the 24- year-old) stated:

> I see these days' people prefer to go natural now. I think it has to do with the self-image and realise who they are and embrace it and accept their hair.

Participant B2 (the 19-year-old) stated:

> Because of the unrealistic beauty standards set by society on how one's curls should look, or which texture, length, style or colour a Coloured girls hair should be a lot of Coloured girls feel the need to alter their hair. However it happens less in my generation since a lot of influencers and companies encourage Black and Coloured woman to embrace and love their natural hair no matter the colour, texture, length or curl type.

Participant B3 (the 24-year-old) stated:

> No, especially the new generations don't. They are all about the natural hair, all over social media you see young Coloured girls embracing their natural curls especially because that is the new trend. Slowly but surely gladde hare won't matter anymore in the Coloured community as natural hair takes over.

Participant B4 (the 21-year-old) stated:

> Well from my perspective I honestly prefer my natural curl thread over straight hair and I think a lot of people do the same. Especially us younger generations, like my social media following is mostly hair influences, like people that promote natural hair products and hairstyles and you will be surprised by the amount of people that actually like natural hair, especially Coloureds. So it's all about the naturals these days because I think people are starting to accept themselves as they are and their roots, proudly so.

Lastly participant B5 (the 22-year-old) stated:

> Well the younger generations like me and my peers, we are all for embracing our natural hair. And I see that a lot lately also…and I think it's because we don't feel pressure to fit in with the whole idea of the Coloured gladde hare beliefs in this generation if I can say that. I actually feel pressure to make sure my curls are in tune man, I carry my bos koppie (thick kinky hair) with pride. And I also feel that my generation is more about embracing our true heritage, as proud boesmans as people will call us, and hair plays a role in that.

The findings above from the born free generation are similar to the responses given by the colonial born participants. All participants are in agreement that the born-free Coloured females are shifting away from the need to alter their hair texture, especially in the younger generation and possibly would be the same in the fourth coming generations. However, this does not seem to be the case with the colonial born generation as they still seem to hold on to their altered hair and hairstyles, in the responses given by the colonial-born participants no one mention that they actually like natural hair or hairstyles they all referred their response to the "younger generation". Thus, reclaiming natural hair and appreciating a range of textures in modern society can be viewed as components of a broader movement promoting self-acceptance and the destruction of racial hierarchies upheld by apartheid and colonialism (Erasmus, 2001).

In South Africa, Coloured women of all hair types embrace different beauty standards and have individual preferences, as seen by their acceptance of both natural and altered hair. In the past, many women altered their hair to make it appear straight in order to comply to Eurocentric ideology and frequently to obtain social benefits during the colonial and apartheid regimes (Adhikari, 2005). Nonetheless as society grows more accepting and forward-thinking, there's a growing appreciation for the importance of expressing oneself via one's hair, whether natural or chemically changed. According to Erasmus (1997), hair has historically served as a marker of social and racial identity, but there is now greater latitude for Coloured women to select how they want to express themselves.

Furthermore, young Coloured women in South Africa are not rejecting Eurocentric beauty standards; they seemingly are just embracing both altered and natural hair. In

the past, apartheid severely enforced Eurocentric beauty standards, which are defined by straight hair, lighter complexion, and slender features, which directed to internalized prejudice and the marginalization of Afrocentric traits within the Coloured community (Erasmus, 2001). These ideals have, however, been increasingly questioned in recent years as young Coloured women have come to embrace their natural body types, complexion, and hair textures as symbols of self-acceptance and pride in their heritage. Erasmus (2001) examines how the emphasis on hair has been political in relation to these beauty standards, and how the shift toward natural hair is a symbol of defiance towards the legacy of colonialism.

The appreciation of natural hair appeal, as opposed to Eurocentric beauty standards, symbolizes a significant change in the way identity, culture, and pride is recognized, especially by marginalised populations such as the Coloured community. This shift from the European ideology represents the reclamation of African history in South Africa as well as the rejection of the repressive colonial ideas that formerly dictated social worth and self-acceptance. People are intentionally eradicating the effects of racism and colourism by embracing their natural hair textures and Afrocentric traits. This is especially true for women, who are doing this to promote a sense of strength and pride in their own identities. This change in culture also fosters a more inclusive definition of beauty, one that prioritizes authenticity and diversity over adhering to antiquated, exclusive standards. The celebration of natural hair has undergone constant change and has come to represent fortitude, defiance, and self-love.

4.3 Overview of research findings

The findings of this study thus far have shown that every Coloured female participant had their own distinctive views and opinions about hair, race and identity. The findings have revealed that firstly the majority of the participants embrace their multiracial background/ancestry. All the participants mention a list of different racial groups that they descend from and where their Coloured identity emerged from; proudly explained by each one of the participants. The participants had varying views on what being a Coloured means to them, with the word diverse/diversity frequently used to describe what being Coloured means. By emphasizing that the

Coloured identity is a diverse identity that is made up of a mixture of different heritage.

The findings also revealed that hair texture is important to the participants as Coloured females, altered hair specifically. It is revealed that the importance of straight hair texture to the Coloured females has been brought about by a standard that has been set within the Coloured community that if one does not have gladde hare (straight hair) the would be mocked, thus the Coloured identity has been linked to a certain type of hair. However, the born-free generation seems to be bringing about the change in society, by embracing their natural hair as often as possible.

The findings also revealed that when it comes to natural and altered hair, the participants have different views especially from the different generations. Seven out of the ten participants stated that they find straight hair visually appealing, and the remaining three chose natural hair. Though majority of the participants find straight hair appealing, they stated that their thoughts of hair texture and hair length have not been influenced by South Africa's colonial past.

As revealed that the participants also expressed that their current hairstyles choices has no relation to their Coloured identity or race, their hairstyles are more linked to how they feel and not who they are as an individual. Though the hairstyle choices are not linked to their identity as Coloureds, it is important to note that the colonial-born participants associate their hair to social status, and the harsh beauty standards of the past, whereas the born-free generation is more inclined to embrace independence and accept hair choices as a means of self-expression than to fit in with social norms.

Lastly, the findings also revealed that even though Coloured females feel the need to alter the texture of their hair there is a shift especially in the younger generation where they are moving away from that ideology and choosing their natural hair beauty over altered hair. However, it is important to take note that this shift does not apply to the colonial-born participants, they still hold on to their European ideology if beauty, as noted in their responses that they do not refer to themselves but rather saying that the "younger generation" prefer to embrace their natural hair in today's society. Therefore, there is a prediction that in the fourth coming Coloured

generations, altered hair will be a thing of the past as all ten participants mentioned that young Coloured females are embracing their natural hair these days.

Thus supported by the post-colonial theory by Frantz Fanon, Fanon (1967) explains that colonisation has a long lasting effect on race and identity. This would be in reference to how the colonial-born participants perhaps have a lasting effect of colonisation or apartheid thus they still hold on to the Eurocentric hair beauty standards in present day society. Thus, Fanon's (1967) idea of "racialised consciousness" clarifies how certain decisions are usually loaded with significance, exposing the battles for acceptability and identity in a culture or society that regularly ignores non-Eurocentric traits. Therefore, this can be seen in the responses given by the colonial-born participants, as they hold on to their preference of gladde hare (straight hair).

However, despite the postmodern elements of the participants' responses, vestiges of colonialism or coloniality continue to be evident in their responses since the importance of hair texture and preferring gladde hare; which was important during the apartheid era continues to form part of the identity of the participants of this study. The implication of this is that the participants' narratives about Coloured hair, race and identity are apparent since both the older and younger generations among the participants hold the same view when it comes to hair texture amongst Coloureds and the colonial ideology may still linger amongst the participants of this study.

Therefore, the researcher concurs with the study's conclusions, especially the discovery that Coloured females have varied and unique perspectives on their race and how it relates to their hair. Existing research strongly supports the idea that Coloured identity is intrinsically heterogeneous, originating from mixed heritage and diverse cultural influences. This is supported by Erasmus (2001) as she highlights how complicated histories of colonialism, enslavement, and cultural blending have formed Coloured identities, which are neither fixed nor uniform. Erasmus's claim that Coloured identity is frequently perceived as a dynamic and flexible category is supported by the participants' pleasure in their multiracial background, which is evident in their individual narratives.

The participants' frequent use of the term "diversity" validates Adhikari's (2005) claim that Coloured South Africans have long negotiated identity through a complex awareness of their historical situation and shows a conscious rejection of simple racial categorizations. The discovery that hair, which was previously inextricably linked to race and social status, is now more frequently used as a means of self-expression, especially among the born-free generation, indicates a generational shift toward postmodern identity politics, where individual meaning supersedes imposed historical standards.

Furthermore, the researcher concur that older generations—more especially, the participants who were colonially born—continue to link straight hair to social status and acceptability, whereas the born-free generation welcomes natural hair as a means of empowerment. This generational gap is consistent with Frantz Fanon's (1967) explanation of racialized consciousness, which holds that colonized people internalize Eurocentric ideals of identity and beauty, frequently leading to a desire for characteristics like straight hair that represent being close to whiteness. According to Posel (2001), appearance was strongly linked to privilege, assimilation, and classification throughout the apartheid era. This is demonstrated by the older participants' persistent preference for "gladde hare."

However, he born-free generation's slow rejection of these values is similar to current natural hair movements, which Zwane (2019) and Banks (2000) define as reclamation of identity and independence. Even though colonial beliefs are still prevalent, particularly among older participants, the younger generation's willingness to accept natural textures points to a shift in culture toward more accepting and free ways of expressing oneself. There is hope that this change will allow Coloured women to continue redefining beauty standards according to their own standards.

Thus the researcher supports the findings of the study as it is supported by old and current literature.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results the researcher collected during data collection from the participant. The researcher broke down the data into four themes that were

picked up from the participants that were common patterns in the participants' responses. These themes were discussed in this chapter in detail. The following chapter will be an overall conclusion of the entire research paper.

Chapter 5
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the phenomenological narratives of colonial-born and born- free Coloured females about hair, race and identity. Therefore this chapter reflects on the results of this study based on the research objectives and theoretical framework which guide the study. It will also provide an overview, as well as a discussion of the results of the study which are supported by the literature from the study.

5.2 Summary and discussion of results

5.2.1 Findings based on research objective 1: To compare and contrast the phenomenological narratives of race, hair and identity among ‘colonial-born’ and ‘born-free’ Coloured females.

The findings of this study revealed that the Coloured female participants take great pride in their multiracial identity and acknowledge the rich history and varied traditions that have shaped their racial identities. The word "Coloured" describes a wide range of individuals of multiracial origins, including those with Asian, European, and African heritage (Erasmus, 2001). A commonly used word by the participants was “diversity/diverse” to describe what being a Coloured means to them which is evident in all the responses given when the participants shared their ancestry and background information. No one individual mentioned less than 2 different ethnic groups that they descend from, thus proving that Coloureds indeed come from multiracial heritage. However, even though the participants carry their Coloured identity in high esteem, the born-free participants highlighted on disadvantages many face in being a part of the Coloured racial group in a post-apartheid society. The Coloured race has always been subjected to a particular kind of racial categorisation during apartheid, stuck between the Black and White populations, and frequently confined to marginalised areas. Coloured communities have been impacted by this long history in a number of ways, including restricted access to socioeconomic

advantages. Despite being closely linked to South Africa's colonial and apartheid past, the Coloured identity has changed in response to the democratic era (Erasmus, 2001). Although this identity has its origins in the colonial and apartheid past of South Africa, it has seen substantial transformations throughout the post-apartheid period, particularly with the end of apartheid and the creation of democracy in 1994. People who were labelled as "Coloured" under apartheid were subjected to a strict system of racial classification that affected their social, political, and economic circumstances. As individuals have begun to re-evaluate and reconfigure what it means to be "Coloured" in a post-apartheid society, the "Coloured" identity has evolved in this context.

According to scholars such as Pirtle (2021) and Adhikari (2005), within the South African context, the Coloured race is a result of South Africa's complicated racial mixing past. The Coloured race had different political and social difficulties under apartheid as they were positioned in a "three-tiered" racial hierarchy between Black and White people (Adhikari, 2005). Thus, the perspectives of the colonial-born and born-free generations about their Coloured identity diverge noticeably. The colonial-born generation celebrated the blending of cultures and the possibilities it provided, emphasising the richness of their history. The post-apartheid born-free generation, on the other hand, expressed more dissatisfaction with the limitations they encounter, especially with regard to social acceptability and economic opportunity.

Additionally, the participants mentioned the cultural importance of hair texture to them as Coloured females especially straight hair; however, it is not frequently directly linked to their sense of self. The participants made it clear that their choice of hair texture or hairstyle does not have any relation to who they are as an individual. Straight hair is sometimes viewed as the epitome of beauty in a society where Western beauty standards have long reigned. The importance of hair texture is demonstrated by the role it serves, which is to provide a versatile outlet for individual self-expression. This viewpoint is indicative of larger historical and socio-political phenomena. Hair texture served as a means of racial categorisation and discrimination during the apartheid era, with those with coarser hair frequently facing discrimination (Erasmus, 2001). However, the study's participants stressed that hair texture is now a personal preference affected by practicality and beauty standards rather than a strict indicator of racial identity in present day post-apartheid society.

Therefore, Coloured women have mixed African and European ancestry, and their hair may naturally be straight or wavy, which is more acceptable within the European standards than tightly coiled hair. However, even if straight hair is often emphasised as a sign of attractiveness or accordance to social norms, the participants do not associate their hair texture or hairstyle with their race or identity.

5.2.2 Findings based on research objective 2: To determine through a critical lens the impact that the historical context of hair and current hairstyle choices have on the identity of 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females.

The study revealed that the participants have varying responses both colonial-born and born-free about whether the past has had any impact on their current hairstyle choices. From the colonial-born participants four out of five said that their hairstyle choice is not influenced by South Africa's colonial past and from the born-free generation three out of the five also said that their hairstyle choice is not influenced by their colonial past. The participants that disagreed with the statement explained that their hair has always been straight in the past and presently and thus there is no link. It has nothing to do with the past but to maintain a certain image. However, the participants that agreed with this statement based their explanation on how past practices such as the hair pencil test played a role in their choice of hairstyles and how growing up having straight hair is what they were taught to have as young ladies. According to Adhikari (2005), the Coloured population in South Africa has historically utilised appearance, especially hair texture, to manipulate racial and identity boundaries. He emphasises the profoundly ingrained Eurocentric beauty standards of apartheid, but he also notes that for certain people, there isn't always a clear or obvious link between colonial ideals and contemporary beauty practices (Adhikari, 2005). This speaks to the research participants who, although being aware of past standards of beauty, believe their present hairstyles are more a product of personal taste or upholding a certain image than a direct result of colonialism.

Therefore, while some view natural hairstyles as a potent show of resistance and recovering cultural pride, others have historically viewed straightening or changing the texture of their hair as a means of conforming to prevailing norms.

The study in addition revealed that both colonial-born and born-free participants once again prefer straight hair as an appealing hairstyle and as a go to hairstyle for

special occasions. The participants highlighted that they prefer straight hair mainly because of how manageable it is for them, one participant even explained that having to style her natural hair every morning is time consuming and that would make her be late for work. Thus the convenience of straight hair is what the participants prefer than to deal with struggling with their natural hair. However, with the born-free participants, they seem to be more open to the fact of spending time to style their natural curly hair, and embrace natural hair hairstyles. One of the participants from the born-free group showed the researcher all the products that she uses when doing her natural curls up-styles, products such as styling get, curl activator creams, mouse and leave in conditioners. The born-free participants are more open minded to different hairstyles than the colonial-born participants as they just stick to the blown out straight hair.

5.2.3 Findings based on research objective 3: To analyse whether there is a change in the perception of hair, race and identity among 'colonial-born' and 'born-free' Coloured females in post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa.

The findings of this study revealed that the women in this study particularly prefer convenience in hairstyle choice, particularly the colonial-born participants. The participants' current hairstyle were chosen based on what they were able to do with their hair in that moment, or they just found a ponytail to be a convenient quick and easy style to do and the type of hairstyle their hair allows them to wear presently. One interesting response that stood out from the born-free group was from the youngest participants and she highlighted that she chooses to wear her natural hair because of the pride of Black South African women. Thus, Black women's pride in their natural hair has grown into a powerful cultural movement that reflects a strong feeling of self-acceptance, individuality, and defiance of past beauty standards that have frequently overlooked African traits. To embrace one's natural hair is a sturdy way to regain control over one's appearance and resist the urge to have straight, Eurocentric hair. The work of Shirley Tate (2007) provides substantial documentation of the revival of natural hair among Black women, especially among younger generations. In opposition to the historical pressure to adhere to Eurocentric beauty standards, the natural hair movement is viewed as a manifestation of cultural pride (Tate, 2007). Thus, the youngest participant in the study, who proudly displays her

natural hair as a sign of her identity as a Coloured South African woman, voiced a perspective that is consistent with this.

Therefore, with the growth of natural hair salons, social media influencers, and hair care products made especially for textured hair, women are now able to get creative with and embrace their natural curls and afros. According to Byrd and Tharps (2014), the popularity of natural hair care products, salons, and social media influencers has greatly aided in the acceptability of natural hair textures. They point out that women are now more emboldened to accept and experiment with their natural curls thanks to the availability of products designed especially for textured hair, which has caused a change in the standards of beauty (Byrd and Tharps 2014). Hence, the findings in the study revealed that all of the participants colonial-born and born-free mentioned that the younger Coloured female generations do not see the need to alter their hair texture anymore, they all about embracing natural hair these days as it is accepted more in society. There seems to be a shift in the Coloured community by the younger generations and it can be predicted that the coming generations may totally eliminate the Eurocentric beauty standards from society. A societal change has been brought about by the popularity of natural hair, and women now feel more comfortable accepting their waves, kinks, and curls. This shift is about more than simply appearances; it's about eradicating the old stereotype that natural hair was inappropriate or imperfect. Thus, pride in natural hair in its authentic, unaffected state is gradually replacing the urge to alter or manage it. According to Thompson (2009), the natural hair movement has become increasingly popular, especially among millennial, who are more inclined to see natural hair as a pride and identity statement than just a fashion statement. However, this shift and changes do not apply for the colonial-born participants as they still hold on to the Eurocentric beauty standards of straight hair.

Therefore, it can be said that there seem to be a slight change in the perception of about hair race and identity amongst the participants. In the colonial-born group the perception of race and identity has changed as the participants choose to see the good in the Coloured identity and racial heritage, however the born-free participants focus more of how there seem to be no change as the Coloured identity is still at great disadvantage in present day democracy. The same applies to hair, though hair texture is seen to be of importance to all the participants, the colonial-born

participants still hold on to the Eurocentric hair beauty standards of choosing straight hair and so do the born-free participants, but mainly because of the convenience of having their hair being more manageable.

5.3 Theoretical framework

Post-colonial theory by Edward Said (1978) and Franz Fanon (1986) was utilised to support this study. By providing alternative frameworks for comprehending how colonialism affects, distorts, and manipulates racial identities, Frantz Fanon and Edward Said's postcolonial ideas complement one another in the study of race and identity. Therefore, in this study, this theory was utilised to have a clear understanding to what influences colonial-born and born-free Coloured females'' hairstyle choices and why they maintain it in that way in a post-colonial society. This theory allowed the researcher to validate whether the participants current hairstyle choices and decisions are anyhow influenced by their past.

> Therefore the findings of the study revealed that the past has some form of influence especially on the colonial-born participant's hairstyle choice, because the participants still prefer straight hair to make their hair more manageable or feel beautiful. Said (1978) in his work wrote about how colonial powers created stories that portrayed Western culture as better than that of the colonised. These narratives created a hierarchy where European traits and beauty standards were seen better, and they went beyond political and economic dominance to include cultural and aesthetic norms (Said, 1978).Thus, the study's colonial-born participants' continued preference for straight hair can be explained by Said's argument. The desire for straight hair among the colonial-born participants is a direct result of colonialism, which associated straight hair with elegance, professionalism, and beauty. This preference is a reflection of an internalised Eurocentric standard of beauty. According to Fanon (1952), those who have been colonised frequently have a "colonised mentality" in which they try to imitate the coloniser in an effort to be accepted and validated. This phenomena may be seen in the colonial-born individuals'

preference for straight hair, where straightening their hair is a means of fitting in to colonialism-shaped cultural norms.

However, there seems to be a shift in the born-free generation as they are more open in embracing their natural hair and hairstyles, thus Said (1978) highlights the necessity for postcolonial populations to recover their identities and narratives from the distortions of colonial authority, as well as the significance of cultural resistance. The findings also demonstrated the importance of hair texture based on the preferences that participants had about straight hair. The majority of the participants namely eight out of ten stated that hair texture is important to them; this may be because it's easier to manage straight hair as some of the participants mentioned or because of societal opinion, as stated by the participants that, they would be judged and made fun of within the Coloured community for not having straight hair.

The importance of hair texture could be a reflection of beliefs that influence how society thinks as a whole, bringing up phenomena that contradict traditional ideas and cause conflict in society (Hoijer, 2011). The importance placed on hair texture can be interpreted as a component of a larger identity negotiation within the Coloured community, where people may continue to struggle with the issue of their place in South Africa's socio-racial hierarchy. In this situation, hair takes on the meaning of identification and inclusion. The desire for straight hair might be a sign of a persistent conflict between accepting one's roots and fitting in with colonial-era social norms. However, in present day society the born-free generation do not seem to have fear of the opinions that others may have about their choice to move away from European beauty ideology, thus evidently showing cultural resistance as mention by Edward Said (1978).

The second theory Critical Race Theory (CRT) by Alan Freeman and Derrick Bell was utilised to support the findings of this study. Bell's (1992) main contention on CRT is that racism is a persistent, long-lasting aspect of society. He contends that racial oppression and inequality are not transient aberrations or issues that will ultimately go away, but rather are ingrained in the legal, social, and economic structures (Bell, 1992). Therefore, the findings of the study revealed that especially for the colonial-born participants their choice for upholding the Eurocentric ideology of beauty in terms of hair may have been influenced by their past lived experiences.

Therefore, during the apartheid era and straight hair was considered beautiful and also allowed individuals to better socio-economic privileges. Thus, the tradition of the importance of straight hair continues to loom over Coloured communities as CRT contends that racism has a lasting effect on society. Therefore, the idea of internalised racism, in which members of oppressed groups may embrace and uphold the repressive norms that the dominant group has imposed (Pyke, 2010). Hence, the colonial-born participants' inclination for straight hair in this instance is a reflection of their adoption of Eurocentric beauty standards that were historically upheld as superior throughout the apartheid era.

5.4 Limitations

5.4.1 Limitations of the qualitative approach

The limitation the researcher encountered by making use of the qualitative approach was that this approach frequently employs small, non-random samples, which makes generalization of the results to broader groups challenging (Guba & Lincoln 1985). Reliability issues may also arise because qualitative research frequently includes subjective interpretation. The same data may be interpreted differently by various researchers, producing conflicting results.

5.4.2 Limitations of the sample population

The first limitation experienced by the researcher in this study was the availability of participants. The initial plan of the data collection was to be from a salon where the participants go to do their hair weekly; however, the salon was not a convenient place to conduct the interviews as there was a lot of background noise from the hairdryers to the customers having conversations. Thus, the researcher decided to rather go to the participants' homes to conduct the interviews.

The second geographical and sample availability constraint was that, although the participants lived in the same community, they were spread out across different regions and were available at different days and times. As a result, the researcher had to make numerous, financially strapped trips during the three days of data collection. Traveling from one participant's home to another in order to gather data

required the researcher to make concessions in order to accommodate each participant's requests. This may be quite expensive for researchers, particularly if they don't have funding.

5.4.3 Limitations of sampling method

The limitation of using non-probability sampling is that the findings cannot be applied to the whole population of Coloured women. It is only possible to use the information gathered from the 10 Coloured females in relation to the participants and not to other Coloured females. This information cannot be used to represent the opinions of all Coloured women or guarantee that they will share those of the participants.

5.4.4 Limitations of semi-structured interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews requires the participant and the researcher to have a two-way open discussion, as it allows in-depth responses. However, some of the participants would give one word response and not have an explanation to the given response, leaving the researcher with loops.

Another limitation of semi-structured interviews is that they are extremely time consuming, the long sets of questions and conversations did not sit well with the participants as they wanted to get done with it faster.

5.5. Recommendations for future studies

Given the aforementioned limitations and the study's result, the study's recommendations would be to investigate other data gathering techniques, including focus groups or online surveys. By using this type of data collection, the researcher would also be able to have a bigger sample group, which would enable the members in a focus group to openly discuss topics like the significance of hair texture. Thinking about using a bigger sample will also benefit from having access to a variety of age groups and generations.

A second recommendation would be to look into another sample population of Coloured females, to increase reliability and reduce any biasness from the study.

Also to include Black women in the study to see if there are any similarities in their opinions about hair, race and identity.

Lastly, another recommendation would be to have a limited number of questions in the interviews as participants do not always have the patience to sit through the long questions asked to them and end up responding for the sake of just getting it done.

The researcher strongly believes that this study has set the foundation for further discussions among other researchers and further exploration on this topic can be done

5.6 Significance of the study

This research study carries significance with the already existing literature on Coloured hair and identity, as it provides knowledge about the symbolic meaning hair carries for Coloured females. The relationship between hair, race, and identity is examined in this study, emphasising the significant role that hair plays as a symbol in the formation of racial and cultural identity. The study highlights the ways in which hair serves as a symbol of social status, resistance, and self-expression by investigating the historical, sociological, and psychological ramifications of hair texture, style, and maintenance among various racial and ethnic communities. The study provides insight into more general discussions about race, power, and identity formation by illuminating how people deal with racial discrimination, social expectations, and hair-related prejudices.

5.7 Conclusion

This research study analysed the phenomenological narratives of Coloured females about hair, race and identity. The findings of the study revealed that even though it has been over 20 years post-apartheid, the colonial-born and born-free participants still hold on to the past Eurocentric beauty standards. The participants still believe that hair texture is important to them and how Caucasian hair is still considered to be beautiful hair. Therefore, coloniality is still clearly evident in the Coloured female participants' modern hairstyle choices (Le Roux, 2020).

Therefore, the Eurocentric ideals of seamless, straight hair have long been seen by many colonial-born women as a sign of acceptance and status, which frequently causes them to lose touch with their natural hair textures. However, with the rise of the born-free age attitudes about accepting natural hair as a sign of pride and cultural identity have significantly changed. Thus the born-free generation today are defying these out-dated ideals more and more, reclaiming and applauding the variety of African hair textures as representations of strength, individuality, and defiance of restrictive beauty standards.

This chapter addressed the general conclusion of the research paper, including how its objectives and findings aligned and how the literature supported the study. This chapter stated that the research's goal had been met and offered additional advice and ideas for scholars who wish to continue this discussion.

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APPENDIX A

Consent form

Project Title: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL NARRATIVES OF COLOURED FEMALES ABOUT HAIR, RACE AND IDENTITY

I …… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study

1. I agree to be interviewed by the student for the purpose of the research.
2. I agree that the interview be electronically recorded.
3. I agree to truthfully and honestly answer the questions.
4. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me.
5. Any questions that I asked about the purpose of the interview have been answered to my contentment.
6. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
7. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
8. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous.
9. I understand that I am not obligated to answer all questions that I am not comfortable with.
10. I understand that the student may wish to pursue publication at a later stage and my identity will remain anonymous.
11. I understand the research study and the implications of being interviewed to and I believe that the consent is informed and that I understand the implications of participation for this study.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT…… ……..

SIGNATURE OFPARENT/GUARDIAN……

Signed at_____ this ____ day of _____ 20_

Participant number ……

APPENDIX B

Pre-group questionnaire

How old are you?

.....
.....

.....
.....

What is your mother tongue?

.....
.....

What is your highest level of education?

.....
.....

What is your monthly income?

□ R1, 000 – R4, 999

□ R5, 000 – R9, 999

□ R10, 000 – R14, 999

□ R15, 000 – R19, 999

□ Above R20, 000

Please state your religion.

□ Christianity

□ Islam

□Other (please specify)

……

What is your favourite hairstyle?

……

Why do you like it?

……
……

Appendix C

Semi-structured interview questions

Phenomenological narratives of race, hair, identity

Objective 1

1. Tell me about your ancestry by explaining the racial ancestry of your parents, grandparents and great grandparents (Are they all Coloured or are there other races that form part of your ancestry?) How did you come to live in Polokwane and where do they originate from?
2. What does being a Coloured mean to you?
3. As a Coloured female, does the texture of your hair matter to you and why?
4. Describe your hair to me. What kind of hair do you have?
5. Could you describe a time in your life when you had to alter the texture of your hair? (Hair; for example, you made use of hair a relaxer or straightener? Explain why you had to change your hairstyle.
6. In your life, what purpose does hair serve?
7. Do you believe that a person's hair could reveal their background? (Class, social standing, culture and ethnicity), for instance?

Objective 2

8. What distinguishes appalling hair from nice hair? / What qualities make hair good or bad?
9. Could you briefly clarify what you understand by the term “Coloured hair” in your own words?
10. What kind of hair care regimen do you follow? (Natural, chemically altered, length, colour)? / Why do you continue to keep it that way? What or who gave you the inspiration to make that decision?
11. What kinds of products are you using? Why? How frequently? What is your monthly budget for hair supplies and styling?
12. Has the texture or style of your hair affected anything in your life, such as your ability to find a spouse or your employment prospects? Kindly provide an explanation.

13. Do you have any preferences for certain appearances or hairstyles? / Which hairstyles are your favourites? Wigs and weaves: chemically changed, natural? Why?
14. How do you feel about this statement: “Your hairstyle choice says something about who you are”?
15. What impression do you believe your present hairdo gives people of you?

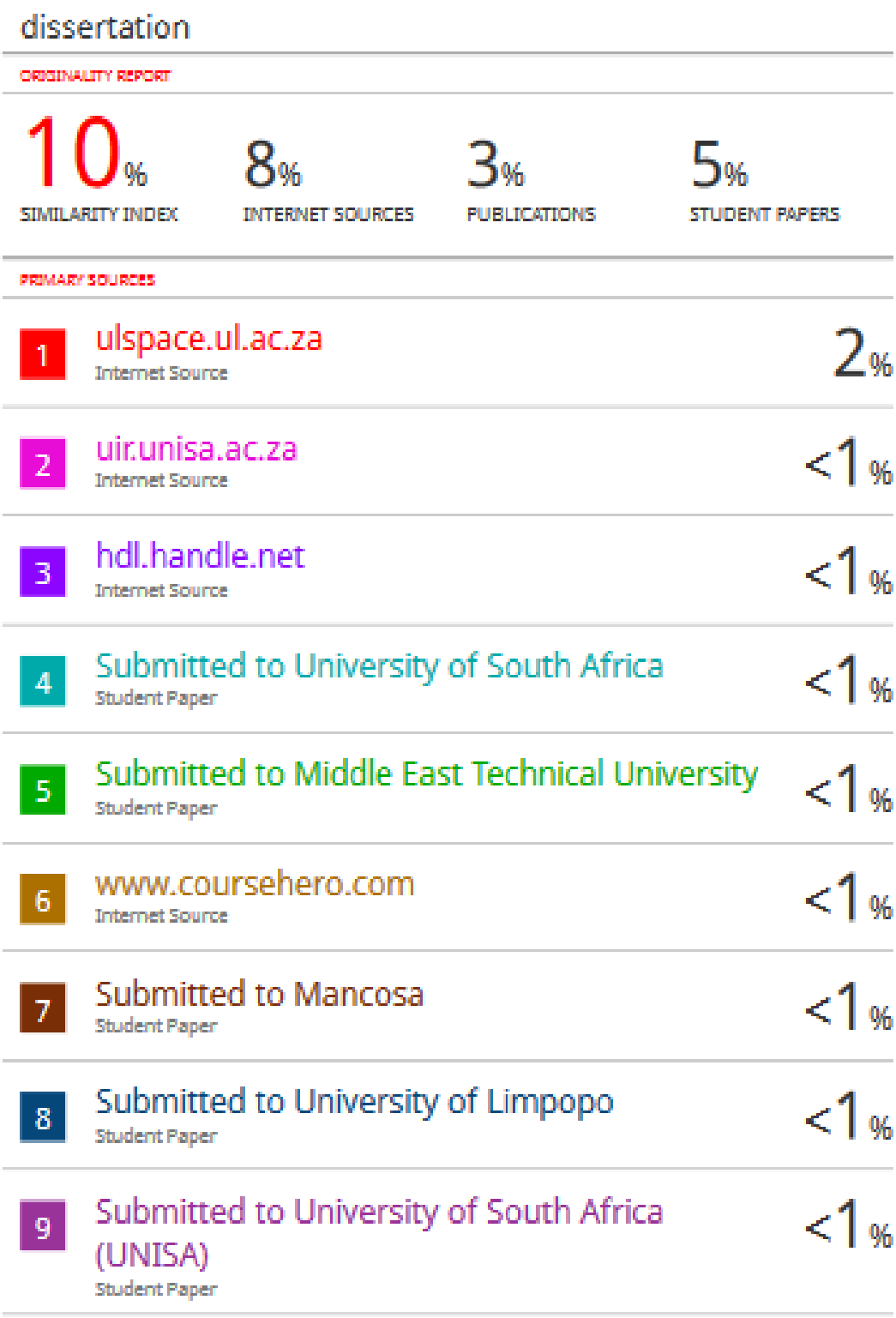
Historical context of hair and current hairstyle choices have on identity and change in perception of race, hair and identity

1. Have your thoughts on hair length and texture been influenced by South Africa's colonial past?

Objective 3

2. What impressions of Coloured beauty have you had from society, your family, and your peers?
3. Do you recall any childhood hair-related incidents, whether they happened at home, at school, or on the playground? Maybe it was something your mother, aunt, or grandmother would constantly comment on or notice? What remains in your memory from what they said or what happened?
4. Let us discuss your present hairstyle preference. What made you decide to wear your hair in this particular way, and why?
5. How frequently do you alter your hairdo, and why?
6. What qualities of hair do you find visually appealing?
7. What hairdo do you like most for formal occasions like weddings and graduations?
8. Why do you think Coloured females alter the texture of their hair?
9. In today’s society, do you think Coloured females still see the need to alter the texture of their hair or do they prefer to embrace their natural hair thread any why?
10. How do family members, colleagues or friends influence your hair styling routine?

Appendix D



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Appendix E

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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 19 September 2024

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/1626/2024: PG

PROJECT:

Title:	A Critical Analysis of Phenomenological Narratives of Coloured Females about Hair, Race and Identity in Polokwane - South Africa
Researcher:	D Reineke
Supervisor:	Dr J Le Roux
Co-Supervisor/s:	N/A
School:	Languages and Communication Studies
Degree:	Master of Arts in Communication Studies

PROF D MAPOSA
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.

ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.

iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Appendix F

SAGIT EDITORIALS SOUTH AFRICA

29/11/2024

Dear **Ms Domanique Reineke**

It is our pleasure to render to you this editing service of your Masters Thesis titled:

"A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL NARRATIVES OF COLOURED FEMALES ABOUT HAIR, RACE AND IDENTITY IN POLOKWANE - SOUTH AFRICA".

Our proofreading and editing services spans over few years with proposals, dissertations, and thesis from Honours to Doctoral degrees, play scripting, novels, local and international journal articles, short plays etc. Our clients are from institutions such as University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), University of South Africa (UNISA) and University of Limpopo (UL), University of Ibadan (UI), African Journal of Rhetoric and others.

Our aim as concerns your thesis is the assurance that it is your thought, arguments as well as your message that features through the entire work and not your errors. Through in-text reading and analysis as well as a personalized structure check report, our editorial services has helped to improve the organization of your thesis, making sure important chapters/sections/topics or sub-topics are not, in any way, side lined. Additionally, we have provided correctional feedback on repetition and redundancy, paragraph structure, and the content and weight of titles and headings.

We are, therefore, presently satisfied with the editing and we advised that these should be looked into by your promoter/supervisor since she/he has the final take on it.

Good luck and thank you for trusting us with your work.

Dr O.C. AKINOLA

Kristopher

SAGIT, South
Africa