

The use of Elaboration Likelihood Model and Brand Identity Model: The Effects of African  
Visual Elements on Fashion Branding

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I certify that I have read this thesis and, in my opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Professional Communication

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**Abstract**

The current study examined the effect of advertising design and product involvement on brand interest, purchase intention and attitude towards fashion while focusing on African aesthetics and western elements. In general, Individuals with African cultural background show a higher level of involvement and would purchase both African aesthetics and western elements more than their Caucasian counterparts. There's main effect for race, brand attitude, purchase intention and fashion attitude and also for level involvement with brand attitude, purchase intention, and fashion attitude.

## The use of Elaboration Likelihood Model and Brand Identity Model: The Effects of African Visual Elements on Fashion Branding

Culture is one of the major markers that distinguish individuals, and it is also a way of life. It is broad and entails a lot of characteristics, traits, and peculiarities that makes people of a particular culture stand out from other people or society (Idang, 2015). Traits such as language, dance, music, clothing, religion, work of arts and so on are what makes the African culture distinct. These traits are passed down from one generation to the other by giving the younger generations the opportunity to watch and participate in cultural events and activities (Idang, 2015).

Aesthetic are cultural patterns such as refer food, costumes, dance styles, jewelry and communication styles considered unique and beautiful to a specific group of people. African Aesthetic is considered as the way Africans perceives and appreciates nature, art and beauty (Shava, 2015). These aesthetic values inform designs, arts, and crafts created in the continent of Africa.

Africa has a rich aesthetic value, and embodies a variety of forms and styles peculiar to Africans living in Africa or in diaspora and could be visual or verbal spanning from rhythm, to poetry, to crafts, hairstyles, clothing materials and dress or African architecture and decorative designs etc. (Shava, 2015). Many popular brands such as Louis Vuitton, Burberry, and Valentino have used designs that depicts Africa, such as the style, color, prints, and design (Durosomo, 2017). For example, Stella McCartney spring/summer 2018 collections featured African prints, Louis Vuitton debuted a range of Masaai inspired clothing in 2012 and Basotho

blanket in 2018, these clothing designs is of deep cultural meaning to the Basotho tribe of South Africa and Masaai tribe of Kenya respectively (Durosomo, 2017).

Although slave trade and colonization ended many years ago, however, both cultures have mixed and this is evident with cultural appropriation that has been going on for centuries. Blacks still possess Caucasian traits, which are exhibited through fashion. It is not until recently that Africans started embracing their racial identity and all that comes with it.

## **Literature Review**

### **Representation of Culture**

The understanding of African culture is deeply rooted in its arts, African sculpture is the product of ancient civilization and years of artistic tradition (SMA, 2013). These artistic traditions are symbolic arts that play an important role in everyday life of Africans and religious rituals (SMA, 2013). African art has been in existence before recorded history, it is an important part of economic, social and African political institutions. However, due to the inability and lack of effort to preserve these aesthetic materials, the materials declined in value (Evans, 2010).

According to (Zimmermann, 2017), the American society is believed to be one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world as it is made up of different ethnicities that have influenced and contributed greatly to the American culture, especially from Native Americans, Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians. Immigrants are not only influencing the American culture but are also slowly losing their identity by emulating American culture in terms of language, arts, fashion, food, and lifestyle (Zimmermann, 2017). That is in addition to colonization that has disrupted and submerged Africans cultural heritage and Africans has since forgotten the bulk of their cultural identity and find it difficult to return to traditional pattern of existence Along with

African Americans. Whom according to history, are believed to have been Africans extracted from the continent during slave trade, that lasted for approximately four centuries (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century) and happen to be one of the greatest tragedy in human existence that vitimized black men, women, and children. Forcefully taking them from their homes and separating them from their ancestral traditions (Henries A, 1977).

Culture on it's own is a means of identification. In Africa, the type and design of clothing indicates the part of the continent or specific tribe an individual belongs to. African culture is a strong brand and it's acceptance in the western world is dependent on its representation and presentation.

### **Brand Identity Model**

Brands play an important role in the decision-making process of customers. Research shows that the stronger the brand, the higher the level of customer loyalty (Khodadadi, et al, 2015). According to (Kapferer, 2008) a brand is a powerful name that influences buyers and it is hugely dependent on representation and relationships.

Identity is one of the major elements in branding. Brand identity can be defined as the way a brand is presented to the world. It is the first step in creating a sustainable image and it is the original and perfect representation of the brand Khodadadi, et al (2015).

The study of brands and branding date back as the 1920's, however, brand image did not become popular until the 1950's (Bastos & Levy, 2012) and has since grown gradually with various researchers building on the foundation. Raymond Fisk and Stephen Brown, were one of the researchers who studied marketing theory and focused on brand loyalty (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Since its evolution, there has been practical applications and studies, as brands are now directly linked to commodities and an increase in growing body of contemporary research

(Bastos & Levy, 2012). (Chernatony, 1999) studied brand management through narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation, and discovered that employees play a significant role in organizations brand identity. (Amujo & Laninhun, 2013) studied the importance of organizational brand identity management to nonprofits and argues that brand identity management is capable of promoting competitive advantage and also proposes brand identity management specifically for nonprofit organizations. (Khodadadi et al, 2015) Studied structural equation model of brand identity and it's impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty while focusing on Iranian league fan. And discovered that brand identity has significant effect on brand loyalty, behavioral loyalty, but not on attitudinal loyalty on Iranian league fans.

Kapferer (2008) introduced the idea of brand identity model in Europe in the year 1986 and came up with brand identity prism, a six-sided prism. Physique: This represents the physical characteristics of the brand. It is the first thing that pop up in peoples mind when the brand is mention. Personality: The character of the brand, it is how the organization choose to communicate with the world and this is reflected in their design and copywrite. Culture: System of rules and value that governs the brand behavior, it is everything the organization stands for and want to be known for. Relationship: Customers expectation from the brand apart from products and services. In form of extra pecks that comes with being a valued customer. Reflection: A source of identification, it refers to a particular subset of their target market or group they use in their ads and messaging. Self-Image: How the customers want to be seen, it is an image the target group has created that reflects their ideal self.

The researcher used brand identity model in creating stimulus designs, focusing on African aesthetics. Each stimulus material has a subtle African aesthetics to say the least, the brand name is drawn from a Swahili word, Swahili is one of the most spoken languages in

Africa. Pictures are considered to be attention getting devices, and have proven to enhance the impact of persuasive communication (Paul W. Miniad, et al. 1991), therefore the pictures and colors used in the stimulus materials are vibrant, showcasing African aesthetics and depicting the vibrant nature of the African culture.

### **The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion**

Elaboration Likelihood model was developed by (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). The model provides a framework for understanding consumer behavior, and indicates the different procedures by which source, message, channel, and settings influence these behaviors (E.Petty, Heesacker, & N.Hughes, 1997). Elaboration Likelihood Model proposes that there are two routes to persuasion, which are the central route and the peripheral route, also that various factors, such as the credibility of message source and one's mood, influence the amount of effort a person devotes to processing a message. However, depending on a person's ability to process a particular message, the central route of persuasion is characterized by a keen attempt to evaluate the information present in a message, while a simple inference based on basic and simple cues is considered the peripheral route of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Due to its extensive utility for understanding the results of various resulting attitudes and behaviors.

Elaboration likelihood model has been used by various researchers in diverse fields, cutting across psychology, medical, communication, and mass media. Petty, Berden, & Wheeler (2009) studied The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion: Developing Health Promotions for Sustained Behavioral change. (E.Petty, Heesacker, & N.Hughes, 1997) studied the elaboration likelihood model: Implications for the practice of school psychology (Allison & Lucy, 2015), (Dianne, Milena, Eric, & Agnis, 2018), (Tam & Ho, 2005) and a host of others has also used the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion to explain and back up

their claims on persuasion, branding, web design, advertisement, purchase intention and consumer attitude.

Research has shown that product involvement influences the route of persuasion, it serves as a moderator or external variable to influence people's elaboration level (Bian & Moutinho, 2011). When there is a high level of product involvement, the consumers decision making process are thought to go through the central route. Consumers with a low level of product involvement do not exert enough effort to process information, hence the message is thought to go through the peripheral route.

Based on previous studies, the following research questions are proposed

**RQ1:** What are the differences between the ads with African visual elements and the ads without African visual elements, in terms of their impact on (a) brand recall; (b) attitude-toward-the-advertisement; (c) brand interest; and (d) purchase intention?

**RQ2:** Product involvement moderates the effects of advertising format on (a) brand recall; (b) attitude-toward-the-advertisement; (c) brand interest; and (d) purchase intention?

**RQ3:** Personal relevance moderates the effects of advertising format on (a) brand recall; (b) attitude-toward-the-advertisement; (c) brand interest; and (d) purchase intention?

### **Method**

A 2 (Participant: Black vs. Caucasian)  $\times$  2 (Types of Ad: African Element vs. Traditional Element)  $\times$  2 (Level of Involvement: high vs. low) mixed between (type of advertisement and ethnicity) and within (level of involvement) factorial design was adopted to explore the effects of participants, types of ads, and level of involvement on attitude towards brand, purchase intention and fashion attitude.

### **Participants**

One-hundred-and-fifteen undergraduate students, within the ages of 18 and 30 years, studying at a University in the United States served as subjects in the experiment. Each subject was first assigned based on ethnicity and later by random selection to one of the four experimental conditions: African participation for African poster, (n =31), African participation for random poster (n = 22), non-African participation for African poster (n = 38), non-African participation for regular poster (n = 24).

### **Stimulus Materials**

Africa is a complex social and historical entity, and fashion is one of the ways the continent chooses to speak to the world. Each African aesthetic expresses individuality of each culture in a way that is completely unique. The American fashion on the other hand has evolved over the years and keeps evolving. However, it is no longer news that many of the recent styles are inspired by previous trends (Kass, 2011).

The researcher searched the web for pictures of both random and African aesthetics that could be used in fashion. The pictures were used to create colorful fashion posters using fake brand. Research has shown that color is important in fashion, in fact, throughout fashion history, class, power, consumerism, and self-expression has always been depicted using color (Ana Cuba, 2018).A fake brand was used because the researcher wanted an honest and genuine response from the participants. Research has shown that brand name and image is one the major tools that has significant effect on purchase intention and buyers' attitude (Umer Shehzad, 2014).

### **Measures**

Measurements used in this study, although adapted from previous studies, it was modified for the purpose of this research.

Brand interest: Brand interest was measured using 5 semantic differential scale adapted from previous research by (Muehling & McCann, 1993). Participants were asked to indicate whether they thought the brand was bad/good, not likable/likeable, unfavorable/favorable, uninteresting/interesting, unappealing/appealing.

Attitude towards product: Attitude towards product was measured using 5 semantic differential items used by (Machleit et al, 1990) and modified for the purpose of this research. Participants were asked to indicate if the product was unexciting/exciting, unappealing/appealing, mundane/fascinating, worthless/valuable, not needed/needed.

Purchase intention: Purchase intention was measured using 3 semantic differential scale adapted from previous research (Machleit et al, 1990). Participants were asked to indicate if they would purchase a product from the brand as unlikely/likely, improbable/probable, impossible/possible.

Fashion Attitude: Attitude towards fashion was also measured using 5 semantic differential scale adapted from previous research by (Zaichkowsky, 1994). Participants were asked whether fashion products were Unimportant/important, boring/interesting, mean nothing/mean a lot, worthless/valuable, not needed/needed

### **Procedure**

The materials used in the survey was approved by IRB before exposing the participants to the materials. I sent the survey link to the president of the black student Union and African student Union and also went to different undergraduate classes to ask them to participate in the survey. And sending reminder emails every week for about 3 weeks.

The participants were divided into two major groups based on ethnicity and subdivided into 4 groups. Group 1 consists of Blacks exposed to African aesthetics, Group 2 consists of Caucasian exposed to African aesthetics, Group 3 consists of Blacks exposed to Western

design, and Group 4 consist of Caucasians exposed to western design. Each group was presented with a particular poster containing either African aesthetics or westernized fashion pictures. Each participant from each group was asked questions that measured brand interest, attitude towards brand, and attitude towards fashion. The survey data was analyzed and interpreted using SPSS.

## Results

### Participants

Result showed that ethnicity (Black and Caucasian) has significant main effects with attitude towards product,  $F(1,89) = 12.04, p < .001$ ; purchase intention  $F(1, 89) = 15.63, p < .001$ ; and attitude towards fashion  $F(1,89) = 12.18, p < .001$  (see Table 1).

The blacks show high product involvement with attitude towards product ( $M = 4.83, SD = 0.70$ ), attitude towards fashion ( $M = 4.03, SD = 1.22$ ), and purchase intention ( $M = 4.50, SD = 1.06$ ) (see Table 2).

### Level of Involvement

Result also showed that level of involvement has significant main effects with attitude towards product,  $F(1,89) = 81.42, p < .001$ ; with ( $M = 4.35, SD = 0.97$ ), purchase intention  $F(1, 89) = 46.28, p < .001$ ; ( $M = 3.03, SD = 1.31$ ) and attitude towards fashion  $F(1,89) = 11.44, p < .001$ ; ( $M = 3.87, SD = 1.17$ ).

### Type of Advertisement

Type of advertisement has no significant effect on attitude towards brand,  $F(1,89) = 0.65, p = 0.42$ , with  $M = 4.06, SD = 1.01$ ) purchase intention,  $F(1,89) = 1.57, p = 0.21$ , with  $M = 2.86, SD = 1.16$ ) and fashion attitude,  $F(1,89) = 3.00, p = 0.87$ , with  $M = 3.49, SD = 1.07$ ) however, Black group show more interest in African element than Caucasian group, and there are no interaction effects between any of the dependent variables and independent variables.

Table 1: Multivariate Measures

Factors	Measures	df (N-1)	F	p
Between	(89)			
Subjects				
Race	Brand Attitude	1	12.04	.001***
	Purchase	1	15.63	.000***
	Intention			
	Fashion Attitude	1	12.18	.001***
Type of Ads	Brand Attitude	1	0.65	.422
	Purchase	1	1.57	.214
	Intention			
	Fashion Attitude		3.00	.087
Level of	Brand Attitude	1	81.42	.000***
Involvement				
	Purchase	1	46.28	.000***
	Intention			
	Fashion Attitude	1	11.44	.001***

Note \*p<.05; \*\*p<.005; \*\*\*p<.001

Table2: Statistically Significant Responses

Types of Ad	Participants	Product	Product	Fashion	Purchase
			Involvement	Attitude M, (SD)	Attitude M, (SD)
African	Black	High	4.83 (0.70)	4.03 (1.22)	4.50 (1.06)
Traditional	Caucasian	Low	4.06 (1.01)	2.86 (1.16)	3.49 (1.07)

Table 3: Participants Responses in Different Groups

		M(SD)			
Type of Ads	Participants	Level of Involvement	Attitude	Purchase Intention	Fashion Attitude
African Element	Black	High	5.38 (0.46)	4.67 (1.43)	4.67 (1.39)
		Low	4.16 (0.46)	3.62 (0.70)	4.51 (0.96)
	Caucasian	High	5.10 (0.58)	4.17 (0.35)	4.43 (0.43)
		Low	3.39 (0.98)	2.40 (1.00)	3.55 (1.02)
Traditional Element	Black	High	5.34 (0.43)	4.80 (0.67)	4.96 (0.75)
		Low	4.38 (0.42)	2.92 (0.92)	3.80 (0.84)
	Caucasian	High	5.03 (0.47)	3.62 (1.35)	(3.83) (1.17)
		Low	3.74 (0.73)	2.44 (0.81)	3.04 (0.98)

## Discussion

The current study investigated the effect of African visual elements on purchase intention, brand interest/attitude, and attitude towards fashion. Main effect was reported for race and level of involvement on brand interest/attitude, purchase intention and attitude towards fashion. Although, type of ads has no significant effect on attitude towards fashion, brand interest/attitude, and purchase intention. However, product involvement does moderate the effects of advertising format on attitude towards fashion, brand interest/attitude and purchase intention.

## Theoretical Implication

The current research shows that race play a significant role in purchase intention, brand attitude and fashion attitude, it is however not surprising as race is one of the markers that distinguish individuals. The consumption of products and services by individuals is largely determined by ethnic identifiers that reinforces their commitment to their ethnicity (Rexha & Kingshott, 2001). Also, (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2008) view that the consumption of certain social products such as ethnic clothes, foods, music and art is influenced by that individual's ethnic identity. This current research supports (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2008) argument, as Black group show higher level of involvement and purchase intention than the Caucasian group.

In addition, a larger majority of participants were able to recall the brand, however the few that did not remember the brand are Caucasians, these group also have lower level of involvement. Black group who show higher level of involvement also recalled the brand. Clearly, the messages present in the Ad is of importance to the black group hence the higher level of involvement which is evident in brand recall. Black group analyzed the messages present in the Ad more carefully with active participation. The caucasian group on the other hand showed weak

involvement and did not analyze the messages present in the Ad cognitively and also did not elaborate the messages extensively. Going by the responses given by Blacks in the open ended questions, “I am always interested in learning about new things, especially when it’s about my culture that I don’t know about”. Another person also said, “I like African easthetic because it’s diversity. It is different from north to south Africa”.

Consistent with elaboration likelyhood model, (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) which proposes that every message undergoes the process of persuasion through either central route or peripheral route. Going by this model, Black groups processed the Ad via central route while Caucasians processed the messages present in the Ad via preripheral route. The caucasian group have less information about African easthetics, making it dificult for them to process the message even if they desired todo so. The high level of involvement exhibited by the Black group is also reponsible for their ability to process the messages present in the Ad via the central route. According to Petty, Cacioppo,& Schumann (1983), when involvement is high consumers are more motivated to give the effort required into analysing and processing information present in Ads due to personal relevance.

Another theory that explains the result is Individualism and collectivism nature of race and ethnicity. The western culture is considered to be highly individualistic (Abalkhail, 2015), while collectivism is a key character of Africans and African-American racial identity (Triandis, 1989).

Furthermore, type of Ad has no significant effect on attitude towards brand, purchase intention and attitude towards fashion as the researcher expected. This shows that type of advertisement, doesn’t influence Africans and Caucasians purchase intention to talk less of their attitude towards brand and fashion. Although people are attached to their culture which influences

their decision-making process. Regardless, they would still consider other fashion products from other cultures.

This may be attributed to globalization, loss of cultural identity, or acculturation. As one of the survey participants clearly wrote “I think nowadays, Africans don’t really pay attention to their aesthetics because they are greatly influenced by western culture” and various scholars backed up the claim. (Khairullah & Khairullah, 1999), (Intharacks, 2016), and (Abalkhail, 2015) agrees ethnic/cultural identity changes as a result of environmental influence and the level of acculturation of an individual determines the level of influence exerted by information source. (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) when motivation or ability to process a message is low, popular or known sources are effective. In this case the brand is new and the participants have never heard of the brand nor seen the add in the past.

### **Theoretical Implication**

For fashion brands and advertising professionals who plan to use African aesthetics in their designs, the findings suggested race and ethnicity should be considered, along with other variables such as age, gender, product involvement and attitude towards fashion and products. In general, having a strong brand identity may be helpful in building stronger brand interest and purchase intention. This is especially true as people are more likely to buy from reputable brands.

### **Practical Implication**

This research suggests that people in the fashion business should make sure African models are used for modeling African designs, both clothing and embellishments, to avoid cultural misappropriation, they should also consider the environment and cultural orientation of the target audience before designing advertising materials. In addition, new and upcoming brands should

focus on building positive brand image and reputation, which can be achieved by making clothing designs and ad materials consistent with the brand image and an actual representation of brand.

### **Limitation and Future Research**

The sample size used for this research is relatively small and is not enough to account for an entire Race. Also due to time required to carry out this research, the researcher used college students as research participants for easy access and direct contact.

Further research should be carried out in this area using a larger sample size and comprising different people from all works of life not just focusing on college students. The questionnaire should also be designed to capture some underlying fashion preferences of participants.

The current study has joined numerous researches already carried out in the area of fashion, branding, and advertisements, and supports that racial or ethnic diversity should be considered when developing advertising strategies and material. However, this study has room for improvement, this study did not examine differences and similarities between Blacks at home and abroad and Caucasians at home and abroad. Environment and culture could play a significant role in peoples cultural dressing orientation.

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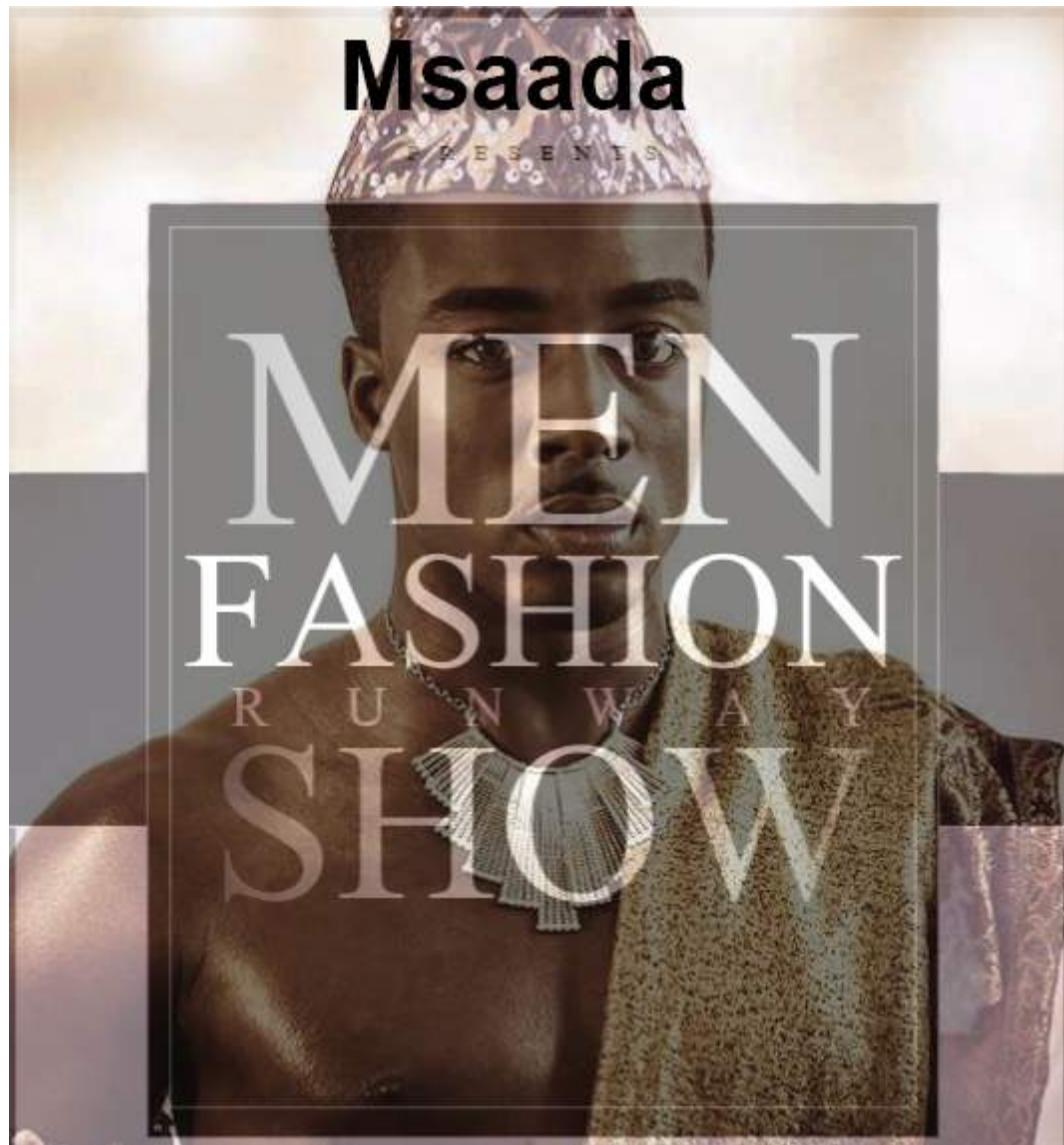
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Appendix A





**Msaada**

ON WOMEN'S NEW SPRING ARRIVALS,  
DRESSES, FOOTWEAR AND ACCESSORIES



**Appendix B**

Thank you for your participation in this survey. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time. The survey is completely anonymous and you can skip any questions or opt out at any time. This survey has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Southern Utah University. The purpose of this survey is to understand how Msaada brand is viewed in market.

Contact [adetounalarape@suumail.net](mailto:adetounalarape@suumail.net) for further questions.

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Q1 Please study the poster before answering the following question

Q2 See appendix 1 for posters

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Q3 What is the name of the brand in the above poster?

- Aldo
- Prada
- Gucci
- Apple
- Msaada
- Zara
- Micheal
- Alien
- Jordan
- Adidas

Q8 Do you think the brand is:

Q4 To me, this brand is:

Q5 If you have money would you purchase products from this brand?

Q6 Do you think fashion products are:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	Important					
Boring	<input type="radio"/>	Interesting					
Mean Nothing	<input type="radio"/>	Mean a lot					
Worthless	<input type="radio"/>	Valuable					
Not needed	<input type="radio"/>	Needed					

Page Break

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## Q7 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Choose not to answer

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## Q8 Age

- 18-20
- 21-22
- 23-24
- 25 and above

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## Q9 Ethnicity

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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## Q10 Marital Status

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

## Q11 Class Standing

- Freshmen
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Level

Q12 What personal feelings or attachment do you have towards African aesthetics and why?

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Q13 You may get extra credit for participating in this survey, however it is optional.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Professor \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C



Institutional Review Board  
351 W. University Blvd., GC 308  
Cedar City, UT 84720

(435) 586-7889

*Institutional Review Board*

**To:** Adetoun Alarape & Lijie Zhou (PI)

**From:** Michelle Grimes, SUU IRB Chair

**Date:** 25 February 2019

**RE:** IRB Exemption Consideration: *The use of Brand Identity Model and Eye Tracking Technology: The Effect of African Visual Elements on Fashion Branding*

Your recent IRB application has been reviewed by the SUU Institutional Review Board and has been approved pending modifications. You may begin your research once the following information is received. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Modifications

- a. Please provide a copy of the stimulus materials.
- b. Please provide a copy of the survey questions administered in the study.

Please notify me immediately should any unexpected risks to the participants become evident.

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*Michelle Grimes*  
Full Approval

2/25/2019  
Date

PROTOCOL CONTINUING REVIEW DATE:  
IRB APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE:

One year from approval  
One year from approval

If data collection is not completed by the expiration date, the researcher must seek IRB approval for a continuation.

IRB APPROVAL #25-022019b

L E A R N I N G L I V E S F O R E V E R