

Interpretation and influence of television alcohol advertisements on consumption considerations by youth in Elim, Limpopo: A reception analysis

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR S E RENS

SEPTEMBER 2022

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INTERPRETATION AND INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ALCOHOL ADVERTISEMENTS ON CONSUMPTION CONSIDERATIONS BY YOUTH IN ELIM, LIMPOPO: A RECEPTION ANALYSIS

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I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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DEDICATION

Oftentimes, we keep our dreams, ambitions, and objectives alive due to our hard work and the love, encouragement, respect, and direction we receive from others. Therefore, I dedicate my dissertation to my mother, Johanna Muleya, whose desire to see me in a red gown remains intact. This dissertation is also a present to my wife, Virginia Muleya, and my children, Orifha Muleya and Mpho Muleya. They consistently encouraged me to pursue my academic goals and provided me with extra motivation to complete my project, especially when I showed symptoms of wanting to quit. My wife has put up with my stress, late-night studying, and stacks of research papers all over the house. My supervisor, Dr. Simphiwe Rens, provided me with the necessary academic direction and supervision. I cannot quantify my affection and respect for each of you! Ndaa!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by expressing gratitude to my esteemed supervisor, Dr Simphiwe Rens for giving me moral support and valuable academic guidance in the writing of this dissertation. It was not an easy journey, but I can safely say I did it. I am also thankful to the University of South Africa for providing funding for this study. I would also wish to convey my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Adam Ndou for the assistance and encouragement he has provided me during this journey. In addition, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mpheni Civic and Mr. Jabu Khumalo for assisting me with relevant information.

ABSTRACT

This is a reception study, which explores and evaluates, through in-depth interviews and surveys, how television audiences or consumers interpret alcohol advertisements. The aim is to understand the influence of the genre of television advertising on perceptions around alcohol consumption by youth at Elim community in Limpopo, South Africa. This study attempts to provide additional analysis of the ways alcohol television advertisements are decoded by young people. Particular attention is paid to review alcohol use and its importance in African societies, gender differences in alcohol use and interpretation, and the exposure and reception of alcohol television advertising messages. The paper utilises the encoding and decoding model together with other mass communication theories. The study takes a mixed method sequentially dependent approach, and both the quantitative and qualitative methods are used. Survey and in-depth interviews were utilised, principally employing random and purposive sampling techniques to select 600 respondents (young people between the ages of 18-35) for quantitative analysis, and 10 respondents for qualitative analysis, respectively. Findings indicate that although alcohol has a symbolic meaning and is culturally central or embedded in African cultural systems, young people at Elim decode alcohol advertisements in ironic and inexplicable ways that can hardly be predicted by the encoders of media messages. This study also found that there are differences in how the social and gender stereotypical depictions in the sampled advertisements are received by audiences, who seem to hold a certain stereotypical position when reading media messages and who take the dominant position when an advertisement reinforces certain gender stereotypes they agree with. When certain stereotypes are challenged, there is 'discomfort' and audiences argue against the preferred reading. The study concludes by suggesting that the television medium's power is limited, and that there is no guarantee that the preferred meaning encoded in an advertisement will become the preferred reading. In essence, much of Stuart Hall's theoretical propositions around how audiences decode media texts are notably reinforced in this study; thus, emphasising the relevance of this theory, decades after it was first introduced.

KEY TERMS

Active audiences: Within the scope of this study, it makes reference to people who actively accept and interpret media messages depending on their social and personal settings.

Discourse: in broad terms, is any method in which television presents specific subjects and encourages public conversation.

Hegemony: In this study, it is seen as a process by which certain values and ways of thinking that are spread by the media become the most common in society.

Target Audience: The target audience for a media text is the exact sort of person the producers wish to advertise their product to.

Preferred Reading: The intended meanings or representations of an institution present in a media text

Subjectivity: in the widest definition of the term, refers to a perception of truth or reality that is influenced by personal influence.

Hybridity: It is a common occurrence for the dominant cultures or media products of developed nations to spread to the cultures of less developed nations, invade, and take over them.

Advertising: In this study, refers to a type of communication that is meant to persuade people to do something.

Codes: Within the scope of this study, the term "code" refers to meanings that are structured in a certain way.

Communication: Communication is at its most basic level the act of sharing information and the meaning of that information. Through its iterative nature, communication facilitates the spread of culture as well as its subsequent evolution.

Context: in this project refers to extra-textual elements that might be accounted for in an analysis of advertising and advertising reception. It refers generally to elements outside of the text either in the advertisement's production, presentation or reception.

Consumer: The term "consumer" refers to receivers and viewers in the context of their role as economic participants. This term is frequently used in the media field.

Decoding: In this study, entails making sense of and providing an interpretation of an advertising within the context of a set of codes that are derived from common cultural knowledge.

Demographics: Demographics in this study refer to certain characteristics of a population, such as its age, location, wealth, media consumption patterns, and so on, that are measured and analysed

Denotation: In the field of semiotics, the term "denotation" refers to a component of a sign that has a direct connection with anything in the current world (the referent)

Discourse: Discourse is a type of communication, including visuals that abides by the norms and reacts to a certain social practice or ideological viewpoint.

Effects: refer to the cognitive or behavioural outcomes of advertising reception.

Gender: The concept of gender in this study, refers to the social and cultural structures that cause us to think of men and women in a certain manner. It is not based on a person's basic physiology, so it is a product of culture.

Identity: Refers to the manner in which the receiver or audience internalises meaning; alternatively, and more generally, an identity is created out of the features that a receiver perceives as vital to their self-image or understanding.

Mass media: an environment in which media may be seen as both a one-way and a one-to-many paradigm of communication.

Media effects: The term "media effects" refers to a theoretical approach that posits the existence of a causal link between the media and its audience, in which the media acts as a cause for the audience to behave in a particular manner.

Production: In the context of this investigation, "production" refers to the act of meaning-making.

Representation: The manner in which the media, through a system of codes and indicators, portrays the reality that we live in around us.

Stereotype: The term "stereotype" refers to representations of individuals that are based on preconceived notions about the group to which those individuals are thought to belong.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19: Corona virus diseases

WHO: World Health Organization

TV: Television

NSGR: Non-stereotypical Gender Representation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE, AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction and Rationale

South Africa, like many countries in the world, appears to acknowledge that it has an alcohol consumption problem. The government has, over a decade ago, proposed legislation to ban alcohol advertisements. In September 2011, *News24* newspaper reported on the then Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi's intentions to ban alcohol advertisements. Years later, an article by Business Live (2018) reiterated the government's intention to ban alcohol advertising (Alcohol to be banned, 2011; Hedley, 2018). There have been intense discussions about the government's intention to ban alcohol advertisements in the country. These discussions and lobbying against the bill (the control of marketing of alcoholic beverages Bill), which the government intended to publish in 2013 for public comments made things difficult to the extent that the bill was stalled (Parry, London & Myers, 2014:15). The discussions about alcohol advertising banning have been continuing as experts from different fields (law, human rights, and marketing experts) add their views (see Bertscher & London, 2021; Suping, 2021). In recent times, as the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) worsened, the South African government stated that excessive alcohol use was one of the factors that contributed to the spread of the virus. Due to this, the sale, distribution, and transportation of alcoholic beverages were temporarily halted (Gazzete 44895, 2020; Suping, 2020). According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, South Africa is classified among the top 20 countries in the world with the greatest alcohol consumption. In Africa, South Africa is the third highest drinking nation, with an estimated annual per capita consumption of 27 litres of pure alcohol (World Health Organization, 2012; World Bank, 2018; Conway, 2020; Marx, London, Harker, & Ataguba, 2021).

South Africa has been debating about the banning of alcohol advertising since 2010 after the World Health Organization recommended a global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol (WHO, 2010). One of the ten policy options determined by the strategy is to urge countries to minimise the impact of alcohol marketing, particularly on young people and adolescents. This is perhaps an unsurprising policy strategy, as many young adults have access to some form of media and marketing platforms, such as a television set, for instance.

With the massive economic development, arguably post-1994 in South Africa, the number of people who can afford or access television in their households has increased (Stats SA, 2019:46). Statistics South Africa released a general household survey report which was published on the Stats SA website in 2019. The report highlighted that an estimated 58.78 million people live in South Africa, and 83.3% of households have access to television (Stats SA, 2019). Television remains the market leader when it comes to ad spending when compared to other media. Statista (2021) reported that, globally, TV ad spending amounted to 436 million US dollars in 2021. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the alcohol industry fully utilises the opportunity given by television because they can transmit information to a large number of audiences, and maintain customers' awareness of the current products on the market. Thus, "74% of total alcohol advertising expenditure was spent on television in 2012, and the share of television advertising in total alcohol advertising expenditure has been increasing since 2006" (Van Walbeek, 2014:20; Mackay, 2016:12).

Studies around the world have found that television is a vital marketing tool for advertising as well as a powerful communication medium (see Sokusare, 2013; Patnaik, 2015; Kaur, 2002). The amount of time young people spend watching television is greater than the time they spend reading newspapers and magazines (Van Walbeek, 2014). This marks television as a dominant channel that can be used to convey messages to the youth.

Although the youth are reported to be spending more time in front of television screens and are most likely being exposed to and bombarded with alcohol advertisements that may arguably hold some influence over these young people, Stuart Hall's (1980:131) revelation of a new phase of audience research has opened an interpretative analysis of audience reception. The overall argument is that the audience cannot be fully passive because the media text would then be devoid of any significance (Livingstone, 2007:16-24). In addition, considering South Africa's diverse socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts, audience exposure to and interpretation of advertising messages are – one may assume – also just as diverse and dynamic. Exploring multicultural, multilingual, and socioeconomically diverse audiences in South Africa

and their meaning-making pursuits towards alcohol advertising makes for a valuable contribution to existing literature that has mostly focused on Western audiences.

The connection between the media and audiences has been a matter of debate and analysis among scholars, and keeps on sparking many arguments, particularly regarding the influence of the media on audiences. This is an explanatory reception study from a South African perspective, exploring social factors such as values, gender differences, and sociocultural experiences, and how these may play a role in the interpretation of and meaning-making processes by audiences with regard to alcohol advertisements.

The importance of this current study is that it tackles a research dilemma that is based on one of South Africa's current social challenges: youth and alcohol consumption. As such, this study is pertinent and timely in today's culture and society and also appropriate for the fields of communications, broadcasting, and media studies given its focus on the television medium and the genre of alcohol advertising. Alcohol consumption among young people has been a component of societal interactions in South Africa due to its often-severe repercussions, including criminal violence, gender-based violence, negative effects on mental and physical well-being, and road carnage among other issues. Limiting alcohol use and sales as part of the South African government's COVID-19 management plan was crucial in relieving demands on the health facilities, notably the trauma units that would be overburdened by patients who were involved in alcohol related violent altercations.

Considering the above, this research project expands on ideas about the prohibition of alcohol advertisements, which has been a component of efforts to reduce alcohol misuse. This position was influenced by the efficacy of the earlier ban on tobacco or cigarette advertising in South Africa. The detrimental effects of excessive alcohol use cannot be overstated. Consequently, this dissertation investigates the consequences of alcohol advertisements on the young people of Elim. In addition, the study aims to investigate and assess how television audiences and consumers perceive alcohol commercials. The study employed relevant theoretical lenses from the fields of communication and media studies by focusing on the audience reception theories of the hypodermic needle theory, uses and gratification theory, reinforcement theory, and then centring the main arguments around the encoding and decoding model. This

study clearly defines the process of audience interpretation of alcohol advertisements by a population of South African youth in the Limpopo Province and can be used for future research on this topic. It is this researcher's hope to expand and add to the knowledge base of the media and communication field and offer new opportunities for further study at a national level.

This study employs a pragmatic research philosophy that is sequential and dependent. The main rationale for undertaking mixed-methods research in this study is triangulation. The study uses mixed methods (questionnaires and in-depth interviews) to analyse the interpretation and influence of television alcohol advertisements on consumption considerations by diverse youth in Elim, Limpopo. The research design is triangulation, where findings from survey questionnaires and interviews are compared in accordance with the study objectives.

Researchers in the field of communication and media studies have conducted their studies in different ways over the years. For example, some scholars who studied the media and its influence on audiences used a quantitative perspective to conduct generalisable research, where the ultimate focus was to predict the magnitude or occurrence of some phenomena related to the media and audiences. On the other hand, qualitative research (which comes largely from the field of critical and cultural studies) is not driven by the goal of prediction and generalisation but by the desire to understand some phenomena, the reasons why they exist, and the processes behind them. It is crucial to remember that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have their own flaws, and researchers such as Hussein (2009:16) have proposed combining the two approaches in order to enjoy the benefits of both paradigms while minimising the negatives of each. There has been growing attention in recent years among researchers to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods in studying the same phenomenon, and media and communication researchers have been increasingly using this approach.

1.2 Description of the study problem

There is a perception generated by scholars such as Harold Lasswell (1927) and Lowery (1983) that audiences impulsively consume media content, and that they are

unable to resist stimuli and unwittingly accept the preferred reading that is being presented. It can be assumed that the proposed ban of alcohol advertising in South Africa by the government signals, firstly, an acknowledgement of the notable danger that alcohol abuse poses to the youth and society at large. Secondly, this proposition arguably signals somewhat of an acknowledgement that advertising indeed bears an influence on individuals exposed to it.

The purpose of this study is to explore and evaluate, through in-depth interviews and surveys, how television audiences or consumers interpret alcohol advertisements. The aim is to understand the influence of this genre of television advertising on perceptions around alcohol consumption by the youth in the Elim community in Limpopo, South Africa.

Elim lies in the Makhado local municipality, and its settlement consists of eight villages and the urban township of Waterval, with a population density of 1,160 inhabitants per square kilometre (Makhado Local Municipality, 2018:4; Ntlhe, 2019:2017). Most households at Elim spend a significant portion of their income on food and beverages (such as alcoholic beverages), clothes and footwear, home electronics, and furniture (Ntlhe, 2019:2017). This occurs notwithstanding the fact that the majority of alcohol purchasers are impoverished individuals who rely on government assistance and remittances from family members who work outside the region, as well as low-and middle-income workers and a few high-income earners (Ntlhe, 2019: 211-218). Because of these circumstances, the retail business and other commercial sectors such as the alcohol trade are the major contributors to the economy (see McGaffin et al., 2015:26; Ntlhe, 2019:2017). According to Prinsloo (2016), 69% of the population earns between R9,601 and R307,600 per year. The majority of the population of Elim is between the ages of 0 and 34, hence the majority of alcohol consumers are young adults (Ntlhe, 2019:2017). This shows that the region has a young market with well-defined, ambitious criteria, such as consuming trendy alcoholic beverages and possessing a high degree of brand awareness. With a youth unemployment rate of 49.9 percent in the Makhado municipality, where Elim is located, the city's economy has issues in providing sufficient job opportunities to meet the demands of the economically active people (Stats SA, 2011).

1.3 Purpose and hypotheses of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore and evaluate, through in-depth interviews and surveys, how television audiences or consumers interpret alcohol advertisements. The aim is to understand the influence of this genre of advertising on perceptions around alcohol consumption by the youth in the Elim community in Limpopo, South Africa. As such, the study asks three questions as will be outlined in sub-section 1.4 below.

The researcher made several assumptions at the onset of this study. First, this study is limited to young people from the age of 18–35 residing in Elim who responded to the invitation to complete the questionnaires and 10 in-depth interview respondents. It is hypothesised that: (i) Elim youth are active participants in the meaning-making process when watching television alcohol advertisements; they work hard to make meaning. (ii) Another hypothesis is that Elim youth audiences interpret television alcohol advertisements in a variety of ways and are flexible enough to make their own decisions in relation to the meanings/intentions behind these advertisements. (iii) It is also hypothesised that the participating audiences use previous life experiences in order to decode advertisements texts and will arrive at multiple interpretations of the same text.

1.4 Research questions

Research question 1: In what ways do alcohol-consuming audiences in the Elim community interpret or decode alcohol advertising compared to non-alcohol-consumers?

Research question 2: How do social factors such as values, gender differences, and sociocultural experiences influence the ways in which television audiences in the Elim community interpret alcohol advertising?

Research question 3: Does alcohol advertising play any short-term persuasive or dissuasive role in the alcohol consumption and non-consumption decisions of consumers in the Elim community?

1.5 Study objectives

The objective of this research study is to explore and analyse social factors influencing the audiences' (youth alcohol drinkers' and non-drinkers') readings of television

alcohol advertisements. The study also attempts to establish whether the mass media has determining power on its audience in the reception of messages or if the audiences have an interpretive autonomy. By analysing the effectiveness of television adverts on consumption within society, considering all the cultural, belief and audience experiences, the study serves to understand how an advert can influence motivation towards consumption or non-consumption of alcohol by the youth at Elim, Limpopo. The project, therefore, aims:

- To understand whether or not the visual media (in the form of TV adverts) has the power to impact on audience understanding and behaviour regarding alcohol consumption.
- To examine how the viewing of television advertisements connects with youth experience, socioeconomic and cultural background.
- To propose differences in interpretation of television advertisements based on social factors such as values, gender differences and sociocultural experiences.

1.6 Conclusion and overview of all chapters

This chapter has introduced the study and highlighted the study's objectives and research questions. The study hopes to explore possible factors that influence audiences' interpretations of alcohol messages. As the study started its journey by highlighting its purpose and objectives, the following chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks of the study and reviews research literature that explores the amount and power of television messages on young people. The literature explores the appeals of alcohol promotional messages, and discusses alcohol use in African culture, gender differences and changes in society and the media. In chapter 3, this study presents the methodological procedure employed in this audience reception study of young people at Elim. The mixed methods used are discussed, including the planning and implementation stages. In chapter 4, the overall findings of the quantitative and qualitative collected data are presented and interpreted, and are based on an analysis of survey questionnaires, which were administered to 600 respondents from the Elim community, as well as interview transcripts from 10 in-depth interviews. The study ends its journey with chapter 5, which presents a comprehensive summary of the research findings in relation to the research objectives. The chapter also offers concluding remarks and recommendations based on the key findings that arose from the research. Also provided are brief notes on the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter established the rationale for this audience reception study of young people at Elim, as well as its intended methodology. This chapter explores the theoretical foundations of mass communication. Due to the focus of the study, the research utilised the encoding and decoding model together with other mass communication theories. The chapter also includes a literature review, which illuminates and elaborates on other media scholars' works and related studies about issues that affect young people's interpretations of alcohol advertisements.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This is an audience reception study that is focused on exploring the meanings that audiences draw from alcohol advertising texts that they consume via the television medium. The study also seeks to understand the influence of television advertising on perceptions of alcohol consumption by youth in the Elim region of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. This section will chronologically discuss the 'evolution' of communication theories from 'passive' to 'active' audience theories, with a specific focus on the Hypodermic Needle/Magic Bullet theory as characterising passive audiences, moving to the Uses and Gratification theory, Reinforcement theory, as well as the Encoding-Decoding model as characterising active audiences. This is done to outline key theories of audience reception of media texts in order to situate the study within a theoretical framework that will allow the project to critically explore its target population's meaning-making efforts in relation to television alcohol advertising.

2.2.1 The Hypodermic Needle (Magic Bullet Theory)

The hypodermic needle theory is one of the first theories that media and communication scholars, as well as some behavioural scientists, came up with around the idea of how the media influences audiences (Fourie, 2018:232). The theory was developed in the 1920s and 1930s and was born at a time when the media was gaining popularity (Fourie, 2018:232). The key theorists that are associated with the hypodermic needle theory are part of the Frankfurt School (Davis, 2015:141), which was established in 1923. Its main concern was the rise of "mass culture" (Biana,

2020:42; Baran and Davis, 2015:141). The school opposed how technology contributed to a uniformity in the provision of cultural experiences, allowing the public to participate in cultural content passively rather than actively (Fourie, 2019:127). The hypodermic needle theory suggests that media messages (and their intended meanings by producers of said media messages) are sent straight to the audience like an injection from a needle or a bullet from a gun without any intervention or negotiated meaning from the audience (Menhrad et al., 2020:24). That is to say, audiences uncritically absorb the message without actually thinking about it. Therefore, in this case, the media are imagined as all-powerful and the audiences are passive consumers: they sit in front of the television set and absorb, and that is the entirety of the role of audiences, according to this theoretical paradigm (Fourie, 2018:233).

Proponents of the hypodermic needle theoretical paradigm use a linear model, where the media are said to push messages directly to audiences who do not push back or have any negotiation of what that particular message says (Livingstone, 1998:12). Part of the reason why the magic bullet or hypodermic needle theory gained popularity in the 1930s was because it appeared to explain how audiences might be readily influenced by war propaganda (Livingstone, 1998:12). There is no perfect media theory, and they are all susceptible to critique. The magic bullet theory is criticised for using evidence that is anecdotal, meaning the evidence is not scientifically proven; rather, there is an assumed relationship between the media's message and the audience's reaction to that message (Perdana, 2018:43; Kitzinger, 2004:170). Another critique is that it oversimplifies the connection between media and audiences and fails to take audience participation into account (Salsman, 2022:11).

2.2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory: Four functions of the media

As a reaction to the hypodermic needle theory, Harold Laswell formulated the uses and gratification theory to argue against some of the ideas in the hypodermic needle theory (Baran & Davis, 2015:49). The uses and gratification theory was first developed in the 1940s, but it was not until later in the 1970s that the theory was built upon by Blumler, Katz and Gurevich as well as other theorists (McQuail, 2020:465). The theory suggests that the media do not have linear, unchallenged power over viewers. Instead, viewers are conscious and highly active and engaged in their media consumption, seeking media that will satisfy a certain need and constructing their own distinctive

meanings as audiences (McQuail, 2020:464). According to Elihu Katz in Griffin et al. (2019:346), the name "uses and gratification" derives from the notion that the media performs a function; that it satisfies a need; and that audiences have particular requirements that must be met or gratified by the media content they consume. Laswell wanted to know who the media was, what the message was, and to whom the message was being passed (Kania and Agaththa, 2012:108).

According to Baran and Davis (2015:48), Laswell also wanted to know the channel and the effect, as the effect from the hypodermic needle theory was just assumed. Laswell was one of the first researchers to question the hypodermic needle theory, and questioned whether or not there was in fact an impact, but he was most intrigued by the concept of the audience (Baran and Davis, 2015:49). Given that 'audience' in Laswell's mind carried a much greater influence than the hypodermic needle theory implied, he pondered what draws an audience to the media in the first place. He proposed the four functions of the media (Elihu Katz in Griffin et al., 2019:351).

According to Laswell, the media have four different uses or "categories of needs," and the audience has needs that have to be fulfilled (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392). These four categories of needs are detailed by Pitout in Fourie (2019:392-394). Firstly, these needs include cognitive needs, for example, when audiences consult a television programme for the correct dress code for specific events and how to improve themselves to have a better quality life (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394). This gives audiences a sense of security or assurance that they are informed citizens who make informed choices. Secondly, affective needs, which refer to the emotions audiences experience while engaging with the media, for example, the audience may watch television to relax after a hard day's work (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394). The third function is social integration needs, which are about personal relationships. It is through these that audiences learn empathy through seeing others, build ties with characters, and feel the effect by socialising over media (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394). For example, the media create opportunities to get involved in pseudo-relationships, that is, substitute experiences for real-life companionships (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394). The fourth function of the media is personal integrative needs, which is when audiences use the media to confirm or reinforce personal values. For example, when audiences watch television programmes that strengthen their core

values (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394) This need may be used when audiences identify with valued others, such as sports figures or other celebrities. This helps audiences understand themselves better. By identifying with the core values, these "significant others" give audiences confidence and allow them to expand their lives (Pitout in Fourie, 2019:392-394).

From Laswell's ideas in the 1940s, in 1974, theorists such as Blumler, Katz and Gurevitch (1974) drew on Laswell's research, suggesting viewers or audiences have the capacity to select what the media delivers for their gratification. Theorists of uses and gratification rely on quantitative data, such as television ratings, for their research, as seen with how Blumler, Katz and Gurevitch (1974) approached their studies (Katz in Griffin et al., 2019:351). Just like the hypodermic needle theory, there are some criticisms of the uses and gratifications theory. One of those criticisms is that the theory emphasises the good effects of the media while ignoring the possible negative effects. In other words, it is about the use of media by humans but provides nothing about the effects of the media (Baran and Davis 2015:214). The theory focuses on how people fulfil their needs through media content by getting knowledge and also using media content to interact and relax (Baran and Davis 2015:214).

2.2.3 Reinforcement theory

In response to both the hypodermic needle or magic bullet and the uses and gratification theories and their shortcomings, Joseph Klapper (1960:357) proposed the reinforcement theory (Yang et al., 2015:5). The theory first came about in the 1960's (Diaz, 2007:81). Klapper (1960:16) thought that there must be some sort of media influence, though not as great as that portrayed by the hypodermic needle theory. On the other hand, Klapper (1960) thought that there must be some type of media effect that is not as great as the hypodermic needle theory suggests. The reinforcement theory suggests that the media has very little direct effect (Kinder, 2003:393). The media just promotes or reinforces audience opinion, which is formed by more powerful "socialising agents" such as family, peers, school, and religion (Neuman, 1991:39). Klapper (1960:16) suggests that audiences are active, but they are active within a broader community. They are active in terms of socialising with friends, going to work, and attending church, all of which contribute to the formation of their ideas. Klapper (1960) theorised that the media does not have a direct and powerful influence over

audiences, rather, it is part (and a very small part) of a range of social factors that shape a person's opinion (Kinder, 2003:360). According to this theory, family, friends, education, occupation, religion, and class are far more influential than the media. Klapper (1960:17) suggested that the media can have some influence in situations where it presents a new idea or issue that the audience has no pre-existing opinion about. At the heart of the reinforcement model is the audience, and surrounding the audience is a constant influence from social agents, all those things that are happening around the lives of media audiences (Bergan, 2022: 143). This theory is not a step-by-step model as the previous two theories already discussed in this chapter. Klapper (1960) compiled hundreds of studies over a number of years as evidence to support the theory. In this regard, the reinforcement theory was based on qualitative and longitudinal data. The advantages of qualitative studies in social sciences research are that they examine the behaviour, viewpoints, emotions, and experiences of individuals, as well as the essence of their lives (Haradhan, 2018:3; Trainor and Graue, 2013:48). The advantages of longitudinal studies are that they reveal the nature of growth, tracing patterns of change, and perhaps provide a realistic picture of cause and effect through time (Rajulton, 2001:171).

In the 1980s, theorists and researchers started to move away from attempting to quantify the impact of media on audiences (Lull, 2014:66). They started to care less about a 'if the media does 'A', the audience will do 'B'' kind of mentality (Livingstone, 2018:8). Instead, the emphasis shifted to how media and audiences "work" together, which is known as cultural studies, because it was not looking at the effects of media, but at how media work within culture and society as a whole (During, 1993:46). It was in the 1980's that the Encoding and Decoding Model rose to prominence, and the key figure that advanced this theory was Stuart Hall (1973).

2.2.4 The Encoding-Decoding Model

The encoding-decoding theoretical model of audience reception is the basis of the theoretical framework of the current study. The theory came as an extension of the original century-old semiotics studies, which is the study of signs (During, 1993:97; Procter, 2004:57). The essential premise of this theory is that media texts include vital signals that their producers "encode" in these texts. That is, media producers attribute specific meanings to the media content that they produce in order to encourage a

particular psychological and/or behavioural reaction from receivers of the said content (Baker, 2016:429). However, Hall (1981) in Baker (2016:429) suggests that audiences or viewers arrive at their own particular interpretations when they 'decode' (i.e., interpret/ make sense of) a media text through what he calls the process of negotiation. Hall (1973:87) distinguishes himself from the notion of the behavioural science of mass communication, where viewers' responses are regarded as an instinctive reaction; he does not believe that the communication process is linear, as is suggested in much of the theories emerging from the 'media effects' tradition (also see, Procter, 2004:57; Baker, 2016:429; During, 1993:507).

The crucial aspect of this theory lies in when an audience is decoding the message (Procter, 2004:57). The media (or content producers) are active when they 'encode' the text with a message, but they hold little power over the reception of said message(s) (Procter, 2004:580). Instead, the power is in the hands of very active readers or viewers who are always trying to figure out what a text means (Baker, 2016:430). The encoding and decoding model did not try to explain the effects of the media (compared to the hypodermic needle theory, for instance), but it concentrated on where the meaning is created (Johnson, 2004:37).

Hall identifies four stages in the communication process (Procter, 2004:59). This body of research by Hall discusses these four processes, how they are related, how the message is encoded; and how the audience decodes the message (Procter, 2004:59). The first stage he writes about is that of production; the second one is circulation; the third is the use or consumption stage; and the fourth stage is reproduction (Baker, 2016:429). Hall argues that these are relatively autonomous stages, although they are not completely independent, but are autonomous to some extent (Baker, 2016:432). This means that the stages are related; there is some kind of relationship between each of these stages (During, 1993:98). He identified a structure that dominates or connects these four stages (Wahyono et al., 2020:141). Hall's theory states that "consumption determines production just as production determines consumption" (Baker, 2016:430). What is being proposed here is an articulated model of communication in which meaning does not exist at any specific moment in the production, consumption, and reproduction circuits and cannot be guaranteed at any specific moment (Wahyono et al., 2020:141). Part of Hall's work argues that there is a

complex structure of dominance that comes into play in the process of communication. In the fourth stage, the audience reproduce what the producer wants them to do. Hall terms these stages as "determinant moments in the process of communication" (Procter, 2004:59). If the message is passed as it is, the audience may not receive it. There has to be interesting discourse in a form that will appeal to the audience (Procter, 2004:59). When the message is put into an interesting discourse or encoded, there are other features that come into play, such as technology, setting, clothing style, and use of characters (During, 1993:99).

In the third stage, the viewer decodes the discursive form or message in their own way when they put the message into use or consume it (Procter, 2004:59). In relation to these four stages, Hall says it is not as transparent as it seems to be. The producer produces these meanings and encodes them in the form of a discourse, and the audience decodes them (Procter, 2004:59). That is what is expected. However, most of the time it will not be as symmetrical, and sometimes it will be asymmetrical because of different factors that come into play when a message is being encoded into a discourse: the socioeconomic, political, educational, or religious background of a receiver, for instance. Influenced by prior knowledge and technical capabilities, media producers encode messages into text; similarly, the audience is impacted by their prior information and technical abilities in order to decode that text (Baker, 2016:430). The audience works hard and individually, and they can come up with a range of interpretations when they are decoding a text (Baker, 2016:430). This current study is partly interested in the range of interpretations from a select segment of South African television audiences (based in the Elim region of Limpopo) in relation to alcohol advertisements, specifically, so as to make an argument about the ways in which said television audiences' socioeconomic, political, educational, or religious backgrounds may influence their meaning-making pursuits.

Hall (1973:10) further proposed that audiences may have diverse interpretations of a text based on the reception context in which they encountered it. The only aspect that the encoding and decoding model has in common with the hypodermic needle theory is that the media start off by encoding a message into a text based on their past knowledge and technical abilities (Procter, 2004:59). The difference between the encoding and decoding model and the hypodermic needle theory is that in the encoding and decoding model, the message from the encoder does not go all the way

to the audience, who do not negotiate it (like in the needle or bullet theory), but the audience works hard to make meaning (Shaw, 2017:602).

This sub-section has already discussed the activity and flexibility of an audience when interpreting messages as outlined in Hall's (1973) theory: that the audience negotiates meaning when they decode a message, and they might arrive at multiple interpretations of a text (Procter, 2004:59). As such, there are three main positions that an audience might take when they "read" a text. These are the dominant, negotiated, as well as the opposing positions (Baker, 2016:431).

The dominant position describes how the producer desires the audience to see the media text, and the communication process is assumed to be symmetrical. Audience members will adopt this stance if the messages are clear, if the audience members are of the same age and culture, if the message has an easy-to-follow storyline, and if it addresses subjects that are important to the audience (Baker, 2016:431). **The negotiated position** is characterised by a compromise between the dominant and oppositional readings, in which the audience member accepts some of the producer's perspectives but also has their own (Procter, 2004:69). This audience member accepts the producer's or, in the context of this current study, the advertiser's message even though the message may go against the audience's personal convictions (Baker, 2016:431). The audience negotiates meanings rather than simply accepting them. These meanings are negotiated based on economic and political views, social and religious backgrounds, and personal views on certain things and perspectives (Procter, 2004:69).

Lastly, **the oppositional position** can be noted when audiences reject the connotations of the media producer's message (even though they may still comprehend the denotations) (Procter, 2004:69). That is to say, a receiver of a media message or advertising text will outright disregard the contents thereof for various reasons motivated by the said audience's worldview, which is influenced by their socioeconomic, political, educational, or religious backgrounds (Procter, 2004:70). The current study wishes to critically engage these meaning-making positionalities to demonstrate how television audiences in the Elim region of the Limpopo Province make sense of alcohol advertising and to understand the influence of television advertising on perceptions around alcohol consumption by youth from this

multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious, and class-diverse region of the country. This will help the study to contribute to a fresh and distinctly South African perspective to the literature about Hall's (1973) very influential and widely-adopted theory of audience reception.

This study has detailed four theories, as described above. They are essential because they demonstrate the evolution of theories in the field of communication and media studies in relation to media audiences; some of these theories have been tested, are supported by multiple lines of evidence, and have proven useful in generating explanations and opening up new research areas, demonstrating that the field of communication and media studies is constantly evolving. The heart of this current dissertation is the encoding and decoding model; as such, the reader will find that the analysis of data is underpinned significantly by this influential theory.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1. Television exposure and Young people's critical approaches to alcohol advertising

Linear communication researchers and “magic bullet” theorists like Harold Laswell (1948) and Lowery (1983), together with some early Marxist commentators such as Marcuse (1964), have argued that audiences are directly influenced by media coverage or the content they consume, and as a result, prompt a certain social reaction with regard to their behaviour and attitudes. Furthermore, most researchers who were swayed either by sociological or psychological premises of ideology or by media-effects approaches have concluded that audiences are not critical of television messages. They further described them as impressionable and homogeneous in front of the potent and dominant mass media (Livingstone, 1998:13). Livingstone (1998:5) further argues that there is a paradigm shift from a linear communication view to a communication perspective that is based on the processes of encoding and decoding rather than on ‘actors’, referred to as the sender and receiver concepts. In the same vein, Lindlof and Taylor (2002:24) argue that this shift has changed how the “effects” or “effectiveness” of media messages and audience interpretation is measured in the audience research (Also see Baker, 2004; Baker, 2016; During, 1993; Johnson, 2004).

Data collection in the current study was conducted in the middle of the global pandemic of corona virus (COVID-19), at a stage where the South African government imposed numerous measures, including the banning of the manufacturing, delivery, and sale of alcohol (Gazette 44895, 2020). This may imply that the study was conducted during times when there was less airing or exposure of alcohol advertisements on television (Gazette 44895, 2020; Gazette 44911, 2021). In spite of these facts, South Africa's alcohol consumption does not seem to be decreasing, as reports show that drinkers consumed more alcohol than usual during lockdown restrictions (Theron, Swart, Londani, Parry, Williams and Harker, 2022:76). Furthermore, Theron et al. (2022:67) reported that there was more episodic drinking during the COVID-19 lockdowns or reduced restrictions in South Africa, and the majority of young people bought alcohol illegally.

A report by brewing and beverage company, Distell (2020) indicates that there was an increase and positive growth in Savanna dry cider and Amarula cream liqueur brands during lockdowns. By June 2020, Distell's financial results showed a sustained Savanna dry cider brand growth. Nevertheless, exposure to alcohol advertising among young people remains an important aspect of this study, as it is through exposure to advertisement that medical and health lobbyists have placed alcohol manufacturers and retailers under tremendous pressure regarding the promotional activities they employ to attract young people to buy their alcoholic beverages (Barrie Gunter, 2010:42). Harris and Bargh (2006:57) argue that medical and health lobbyists have associated unhealthy consumption of alcoholic products and the interpretation of brand messages with exposure to television advertisements. Thus, there cannot be an interpretation of messages without first looking at television exposure, which is an important phenomenon in this study. Gunter (2010:94) argues that the formulation of a perception on a given product is a process that starts with television viewers being exposed to alcohol messages.

There has been academic debate amongst researchers trying to establish the source of knowledge of alcohol brands in young people. A vast amount of empirical evidence shows that audiences, especially young people, are exposed on a daily basis to thousands of voices and images on television, and learn more about alcohol from television advertising than any other source (Gabrielli et al., 2021; Rivera, 2021; Tamilnadu, 2012; Vioque et al., 2000; CAMY, 2004; Gunter, 2010:30; Austin & Nach Ferguson, 1995; Lipsitz, Brake, Vincent, and Winters, 1993:439). In South Africa, it was also found that television teaches young people more about alcohol brands than other sources (Matjila, Ameyibor & Saini, 2021:90). Against this background, Austin, Chen and Grube (2015:344) suggest that young people's interpretations would be better if they learned more about alcohol from other sources, for example, family and other institutions such as schools, rather than over-relying on television. Austin et al. (2015:344) further argue that television teaches young people about alcoholic beverages and makes them more knowledgeable about brands of beer than potential health risks and other consequences. On the other hand, other studies cite television, together with personal observation of parents and significant 'others', as the main source of alcohol information to young people (Velleman, 2009:20; Casswell, Gilmore, Silva & Brasch, 1988:66). This socialisation process begins by observing and imitating

the behaviour of close relatives and friends. Other influences include schools, peers, direct media exposure, and more subtle marketing directed at younger audiences, particularly adolescents (Velleman, 2009:20). While this current study tries to establish the socialising agent that introduces alcohol to young people, it will do so cautiously as other studies that have tried to explain the process found that young people's perceptions of how they gain alcohol knowledge are not always accurate (Velleman, 2009:49).

The extensive research on exposure to television advertisements was because hypodermic-needle-inclined researchers believed that a simple exposure to alcohol advertising leads to drinking as audiences were seen as passive participants (see Baker, 2016:180; Strickland, 1982:308). This is an audience reception study, and in its quest to analyse television viewers' reactions to alcohol advertisements, it is guided by Stuart Hall's (1973:5) encoding and decoding model, which views audiences as active decoders who do not automatically accept the "preferred reading" being presented by the text.

Hall's (1973:17) theory of encoding and decoding posits that media producers can "encode" certain signals anchored in their understandings and social circumstances inside the texts they generate. However, Hall (1973:17) suggests that another process kick-starts during consumption when audiences try to 'decode' these texts using their understandings and social contexts (also see Hall, 1981; Baker, 2016, 2004, 2008; Procter, 2004; During, 1993; Brunson, 2014). This highlights the significance of comprehending the meanings and interpretations of the principal players, such as marketers or producers of messages in advertisements, and receivers, who are the audiences (Baker, 2008:288; Abdullah, Wahyono, & Persadha, 2019:499). "The meanings of television are not generated by texts alone but by the audiences who engage with them" (Baker, 2016:429). Thus, when analysing media texts, the encoding and decoding model presumes that audiences should be viewed as participants who are involved in the production of meaning and that "individuals actively shape the meaning of advertising" (Plunkey, 2010: 54).

The encoding and decoding model was later developed by David Morley's (1980) work on the BBC's current affairs programme nationwide project and Len Ang's (1986) work in the 1980s on the television series, Dallas. Ang (1986) and Morley (1980) argued that the cultural context in which reading occurs provides the framework and cultural

resources for a variety of textual interpretations. As a result, meaning resides not in the text itself but in the interaction between the text and the audience. Morley's (1980) study findings painted a more complex picture because it was revealed that decoding cannot be traced solely to social positions because members occupying the same class location or belonging to a particular group had different readings of the same message (Also see, Murdock, 2016:137). Ang's (1986:27) study of women who watched Dallas revealed that viewers actively produce a variety of meanings and pleasures that cannot be reduced to the text's structure, an "ideological effect," or a political project.

Abdullah et al.'s (2019:499) study findings about audiences' reception of presidential campaign messages are in line with Hall's (1981) different stages of communication processes as it extinguishes the notion that media producers can control audiences because audiences have the ability to reduce the media's influence by rejecting or accepting messages. This is despite the fact that the media have the resources to control audiences (Wahyono, Wirasti & Ratmono, 2020:112-123). This indicates that every media message is not only always accepted by the audiences in a polemical manner, but the audiences also demonstrate relative autonomy over television as the processes of encoding and decoding cannot be truly "symmetrical" (Hall, 1973; Baker, 2016; Abdullah et al., 2019). Baker (2004) puts it succinctly: "The audience's decoding is equivalent to the textual encoding". Although the production structures of television originate the television discourse, they do not constitute a closed system (Wahyono et al., 2020; Baker, 2004:429).

There has been a wealthy body of studies since Morley (1980) and Ang's (1986) subsequent elaborations of Hall's (1973) pioneering work on audience studies. Audience message reading 'activism' has been reiterated by scholars such as Baker (2004, 2008, 2016), Plunkey (2010), Murdock (2016), Abdullah et al. (2019) and Wahyono et al. (2020). This is despite criticisms by scholars such as Johnson (2004:248), who used Ricoeur's (1988:166) views to argue that the reading of media messages is both an active and a passive process, and that the text cannot be separated from audiences. Studies in South Africa have mostly avoided an analysis of audiences' reception of media messages, especially with regard to alcohol messages. A vast number of studies in South Africa have often dealt with the health outcomes of alcohol advertising exposure (see Amanuel, Morojele & London, 2017;

Hessari, Bertscher, Critchlow, Fitzgerald, Knai, Stead & Petticrew, 2019; Theron et al., 2022). Others focused on the effects of alcohol advertising, for example, Matjila (2017) and Mapulane (2014). Mapulane's (2014) study in particular is interesting because it was conducted in the same province (Limpopo) as the current study. However, the study used a single method whereby the researcher collected data from respondents using self-administered questionnaires. The researcher suffered from the poor quality of the composition of the sample, as it (the study sample) consisted of one hundred respondents. The sample was not sufficient to represent the majority of the youth in the community. In addition, the questionnaire consisted of more closed-ended questions than open-ended questions. Therefore, the researchers could not obtain in-depth responses and new insights from the respondents (Hyman & Sierra, 2016:2). Furthermore, although a study by Amanuel, Morojele and London (2017), which was conducted across two South African provinces, Gauteng and the Western Cape, included two methods (questionnaire and a face-to-face interview), the study was purely based on the health and social impacts of easy access to alcohol and exposure to alcohol advertisements, and targeted only women.

It is against this backdrop that there is a need for a South African mixed methods research study that will take into account the heterogeneity of South African communities' demographics, diverse cultures, their exposure to alcohol advertising messages and their responses to these messages. Abdullah et al.'s (2019:499) study in particular has made several findings of which the present study uses a different method, different audience, medium and geographical area. This current study will explore whether young people at Elim receive alcohol messages actively or passively and whether there is relative autonomy by the audiences as Abdullah et al.'s (2019:499) study found on their black election campaign messages. Furthermore, Abdullah et al. (2019:498) found that audiences are not homogenous, but rather, they are shaped by their varied subjectivities, which are impacted by their genders and their culturally determined values and beliefs. This topic will be covered in the subsections that follow.

2.3.2. Message intent and audiences' different interests

In the previous sub-section, this study has discussed how television audiences, especially young people, are exposed to and respond to television advertisements. In this section, Maloney (1963: 14) posits that after the exposure, the audience then focuses their attention on the advertisement, trying to find out what it is all about (Also see, Kim and Kim, 2021; Lee, Park, and Jun, 2019; Ismaila and Oziohu, 2021). As this present study deals with young people from different cultural backgrounds, Maloney (1963:17) argues that their views, interests, and attitudes about an advert, as well as their responses to it, will be different. Maloney's seminal work (1963:30) further argues that to evaluate the beliefs of advertising, researchers must have knowledge about target audiences and the advertiser's intentions. That is, to evaluate whether audiences accept the dominant position of the encoded message, this study must familiarise itself with audiences' different interests, cultural beliefs, and attitudes, together with the encoders' 'intended meaning'.

2.3.2.1 Television advertising appeal and perceived rewards by viewers

According to Padon, Rimal, DeJong, Siegel and Jernigan (2018:22), media content is an influential force in shaping young people's perceptions and expectations. Advertising is not about the sale of goods, but rather promoting perspectives on the world (Baker, 2004:4). Therefore, the content of advertising is crucial, particularly when it contains promotional elements and production techniques that may have a specific appeal to young people to the extent that they believe that drinking has positive consequences (Anderson, 2007:40). Advertising has frequently portrayed alcohol consumption in glamorous or pleasurable settings and portrayed alcohol as an integral aspect of sociability, physical attractiveness, masculinity, relaxation, and adventure (Finn & Strickland, 1982; Grube, 1993; Madden & Grube, 1994). This is because owning a brand involves more than just purchasing a product; it also involves purchasing a lifestyle and values. Thus, objects in advertising are signifiers that young people decode within the context of established cultural systems (Hall, 1973:7). Many advertisements for alcoholic drinks use image appeals and celebrity endorsements to get young people to buy them. (Aitken, 1989; Grube, 1993; Jones & Donovan, 2001; Martin et al., 2002; Waiters et al., 2001; Anderson, 2007:40). In a study conducted by Austin (2006:376), it was discovered that young people who watched more primetime television viewed alcohol advertisements as more desirable and had a greater desire to imitate the depicted individuals. This is because of the fact that "television

characters who are depicted as drinkers tend to be high-status, wealthy, successful, handsome, and in senior positions" (Amstrong, 2010:26). Their drinking is frequently associated with joy, social accomplishment, relaxation, and companionship (Padon et al., 2018:67; Noel, Xuan & Babor, 2019:610; Xuan, 2017:91; Hundley, 1995:97; Wallack, Grube & Breed, 1990: 428). These are related to greater positive expectations regarding alcohol consumption, which positively predict liking beer brands and alcohol consumption (Austin 2006:35). However, Gunter (2010:27) criticises the alcohol-advertising literature for its crude and basic understanding of advertising, given that advertising messages can vary greatly in form and content. Thus, alcohol promotion strategies that correspond with the content and topics of advertising campaigns might elicit diverse responses from young people (Gunter 2010:114; Hongcharu, 2018:10; Feng, 2019:300; Shin & Jung Ki, 2018:84). Message interpretation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be limited to only one variable or element (Munsaka, 2013:13).

According to Lass and Hart (2010:621), alcohol advertisements rely on specific attractions to attract consumers' attention. Thus, alcohol advertisers appear to be marketing an alcohol-enhanced lifestyle to young consumers; therefore, it is essential to understand how young consumers of various demographic and cultural backgrounds in Elim respond to alcohol advertisers' supposed intent. Past studies that tried to clarify this matter by scholars such as Gunter (2010), Baker (2004, 2008, 2016), Brunsdon (2014) and Wahyono et al. (2020) discovered that young people perceive alcohol marketing with scepticism and do not demonstrate an unqualified appeal to alcohol advertisements. Young's (2003) study is a perfect point of reference for researchers who want to explore young people's or the audience's awareness of the intention of advertisement messages. Young (2003) conducted a study whereby young people were exposed to advertisement content that was targeted at adult viewers. The objective was to determine whether or not young people could decipher these adverts. It was determined that, despite the fact that young people enjoy alcohol commercials on television, they do so for a variety of reasons. Some were also able to communicate that these messages were not directed at them but rather at grownups (Young, 2003:44). In the course of determining how young people decode alcohol commercials, the present study will also investigate viewers' knowledge of the advertisements' messages.

As viewers of television react to advertisement appeals, Hadi (2008:9) believes that they reciprocate meanings. Hadi (2008:6) goes on to argue that the concept of reciprocal meanings is important when studying how audiences receive meanings because it postulates that the meanings of television programs, including television commercials, are not "inherent" in the programme itself, but are created during the interaction between the viewer and the text. "Meaning is created as the viewer watches and processes the movie" (Hadi, 2008:1). It is for this reason that this current study, using three South African alcohol advertisements, will bring to the fore the kinds of meanings viewers of television advertisements create when they watch and process these advertisements.

Moreover, as audiences try to reciprocate meanings, according to Armstrong (2010:29), they are more likely to be persuaded by the advertisement message when the benefits of buying or using a particular product are clear. These benefits come in many shapes and forms, "both rational and emotional". Television alcohol advertisers entice audiences by showing them a chance to gain quite a number of benefits or rewards, such as relaxation, happiness, togetherness, enjoyment of the outdoors, improvement in the environment, approval of the neighbours, refreshment, and many others (Armstrong, 2010, 28; Ahmed & Riyadh, 2020:136). Armstrong (2010:27) further argues that advertisers must describe meaningful benefits of the product in their advertisements, because this helps audiences quickly see whether the product is relevant to them. "Customers are more likely to be persuaded when they have all the relevant information" (Amstrong, 2010:27).

2.3.2.2 Audiences awareness of television advertisers' intention

Since television messages do not "travel like a bullet from a gun, to an audience's head", literature reviewed in this study has shown that audiences receive advertising messages critically and are able to detect advertisers' intentions (Abdullah et al., 2019:470). Abdullah et al. (2019:499) found that audiences were aware of the aims of advertising in an Indonesian presidential campaign, as all respondents acknowledged that the messages given by the election ads were not neutral, but rather designed to influence their viewpoints.

Furthermore, Ang's (1986:24) research on *Dallas* showed audiences can tell the difference between fiction and reality. Awareness and knowledge about the elements of advertisements determine how much audiences understand a particular advertisement (Frolova, 2014:38). In a study about consumers' responses to persuasion, Harms, Bijmolt, and Hoekstra (2019:5) found that an understanding of the message intent of an advertisement by audiences is a fundamental component of persuasive knowledge (Lawlor & Prothero, 2008:22). While audiences are aware that advertisements are meant to deceive them into buying products, they are also aware of the intended messages encoded by the producers of advertisement messages (Ukaegbu, 2020: 6; Igbal & Siddiqui, 2019:31). In so doing, they are able to identify the rewards and benefits of the advertised products.

However, when audiences begin to understand the how, why, and when of the message's intentions, it may help them respond to advertising by triggering defensive mechanisms that ultimately make them ignore the ad or deny what it says (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Kirmani & Campbell, 2004). Audiences have an understanding that advertisements are placed on media platforms with the purpose of persuading, and young people recognise this concept. According to Abernethy and Franke (1996) in Armstrong (2010:27), they often use it to accept or reject appeals to the message of the advertisement. According to Maloney (1963: 14-30), an audience may "level" the message, "sharpen" the message, add certain meanings to the advertisement which the advertiser never intended, or overlook a portion of a message that he or she disagrees with in order to make the meaning of the message fit in with old attitudes or past experiences (also see Harms et al., 2019:5). In Wahyono, Wirasti and Ratmono's (2020:112) study, for example, some participants were selective about which advertisement messages about the campaign to accept since they did not trust the information. This is because audiences possess the ability to be selective in terms of the content they receive and evaluate and analyse the message.

2.3.2.3 Influence of lived experiences in the act of advertisements reception

Most audience reception researchers believe that audiences see things in the light or lenses of their past experiences. This process is called decoding in communication research (Aminudin, 2019:15; Gassner, 2011:120; Maloney, 1963:14). Barrie Gunter (2010:99) believes that the extent to which young people respond to or interpret

advertising appeals is dependent on a number of important parameters such as their experiences and cultural beliefs, which he categorises as contextual factors (also see Dube, 2020:112-113). The values and lifestyles of consumers also have a significant effect on their overall perception (Ford, Jaccard, Millstein, Bardsley & Miller, 2004:135). This is interesting because communication scholars such as Gerbner (1960) in Fortner and Fackler (2014:118), a theorist who was more interested in the "effects", believe that when readers of television messages have been exposed to television messages over time, they begin to see the world the way it has been formulated on television (also see Shanahan & Morgan, 2004:201).

According to Romer et al in Fortner and Fackler (2014:125), cultivation theory recognises the dominance of television content on people and proposes that this dominance provides a distorted view of the world. Gerbner (1969) also believed that this had slow but long-term negative effects on how people thought and what they believed, as well as on the culture as a whole (Romer et al. in Fortner and Fackler, 2014:125). Gerbner's (1969) theory was heavily criticised by Daniel Chandler (1982:38) because it does not take into consideration what and who is being influenced. Chandler (1982:38) posits that although television has some effect on how we perceive the world around us, the theory takes the lived experiences of viewers for granted, which is an important aspect of how we analyse television messages and react to the world around us (Also see, Madison, 2017:18). Chandler (1982:38) further argues that our lived experiences moderate the media's influence on our perception of reality. If you have personal experience with a certain subject, group of people, or product, you will be less influenced by the media's portrayal. Even a widespread and nearly unavoidable mediated reality will be superseded by your personal experience. The lived experience that can disprove prejudices propagated by the mass media differs greatly from location to location. Lived experiences inoculate readers to the mainstream media's negative messages about something (Chandler, 1982:38; Nacos, 2000; Khan, Iqbal, Gazzaz and Ahrari, 2012; Crowell, 2017; Byron, McKee, Watson, Litsou, and Ingham, 2021).

Research over the years has shown a link or factors that influence or create experiences with regard to alcohol (see Kalb et al., 2017; Schuckit & Smith, 2002; Elliott, Aharonovich, O'Leary, Wainberg & Hasin, 2013:2090). These factors range

from social factors, family history, environmental factors, peer pressure, and many others. Factors that influence actual drinking are highly controversial, whether they are about the advertising of alcohol or family background. What most researchers agree on is that once a person starts drinking and identifies himself or herself as a drinker or is initially made aware of alcohol products, a schema is formed (Markus, 1997:64 in Christian, 2005:787). Researchers also agree that self-schema and identity are important aspects of readers' lived experiences (Lee, 2018:6). An important point to construe from the literature is that drinkers and non-drinkers in African communities can be schematic about alcohol as its use in rituals is an important aspect of what African people are, and this, according to Lee, Corte and Stein (2018:6), is called a self-schema.

Markus (1997) in Lee and Feng (2018:4); and Christian (2005:787) define "self-schema" as "cognitive generalisations about the self that organise and direct the processing of self-related information in a person's social experiences" (also see Lee and Feng, 2021:181). The concept of a self-schema in alcohol advertising is founded on the premise that the interaction between environmental stimuli (messages) and behaviour (reaction to those signals) is mediated by an internal system of memory structures known as schemas (Dimofte, Goodstein & Brumbaugh, 2015:9). Because schemas generate expectations, people react differently to information related to schematic knowledge, particularly when it is about the self or self-schema (Markus, 1977, in Dimofte et al., 2015:9).

What we can construe from Dimofte, Goodstein and Brumbaugh's (2015:10) study on women's appearances and advertising is that individuals pay more attention to and display better recollection of material that is compatible with their self-schemas. Therefore, a message that seeks to reinforce already-held views will be readily accepted. However, Maloney (163:30) describes the consequence when the communication is not intended as a "reminder" but rather as a way to change people's minds: "the persuasive message is sure to run into a conflict or competition with the pre-existing beliefs which the message seeks to change. Since these pre-existing beliefs make up part of the past-experience mechanism used to decode the

persuasive message; these old beliefs have a clear-cut advantage over the newer beliefs called for by the message".

There are very few studies that have looked at the decoding of alcohol messages in Africa that have also taken into consideration advertisement appeals vis-a-vis self-schema (different alcohol use in the African traditional system), values, and lifestyles (Lass & Hart, 2010:612). It is astonishing that South African researchers have contributed so little to this body of study. The globalisation of the market compels multinational corporations to combine their global strategies (Zsomera & Simonin, 2004:24). Advertisers seem to assume that what works in Europe or America will also work in Africa and South Africa in particular, as seen by the similarity of advertising methods for a number of companies and goods in many nations (Zsomera & Simonin, 2004:25).

According to Gianluca Di Tondo, senior director of the global Heineken brand on the marketing week website (2018), Heineken is one of the beer brands that uses a global or standardised marketing strategy, and it has been the case in one of its advertisements called "open your world". The advert's target audience is the millennials globally, which the advertisers thought it were the same typology of people around the world. By Di Tondo's own admission, the brand campaign that started in 2011 got a push-back from audiences who felt that the "open your world" tagline was pressurising them, and this caused the campaign to fail and prompted the advertisers to rethink. The underlying assumption might be that we are living in a global world and certain countries might have consumers with comparable discretionary income, preferences, and lifestyles. Consequently, similar advertising may appeal to comparable customer segments in both countries (Lass & Hart, 2010:611). However, marketers frequently disregard the idea that, despite the fact that customers may have comparable lives, the presentation of lifestyle activities may vary significantly, depending on the culture and conventions of a country, region, province, or territory. This variation in lifestyle expression may also alter consumer impressions of alcohol images in advertising (Lass & Hart, 2010: 612). The rarity in the analysis of advertising appeals in conjunction with viewers' life experiences (which is classified as self-schema in this study) is a gap in the literature that this current study wishes to fill, especially in Africa and from a South African perspective in particular, where alcohol

is not only used for drinking, but also in other critical traditional activities (Murimbika, 2006:45). The sub-section that follows will detail how alcohol is used in an African traditional system.

2.3.3 Cultural variations and the variety of alcohol drinking experiences

According to O'Donnell (2017:37), television programmes such as advertising reflect different segments of a society's beliefs, customs, and practices in addition to its fads, interests, and trends. As a result, viewers' awareness and comprehension of their own society provides them with insight into the meanings conveyed in television alcohol advertisements (Ross, 2019:17). As Stuart Hall in Procter (2004:64) revealed that viewers are armed with interpretive resources, O'Donnell (2017:37) argues that they use these resources to make interpretations of media messages, in this case, television alcohol advertisements.

As alcohol drinking varies from culture to culture, so do meaning-making procedures and the role of television in daily life (Baker, 2004:429). The contexts in which audiences watch television must be understood in terms of both meaning construction and daily routines or practises (Baker, 2016:433). Literature has proved that there are cultural variations in the use of alcohol, which might influence how people perceive alcohol advertising (see Savic, Room, Mugavin, Pennay & Livingston, 2016; Bales, 1946; Beccaria & Guidoni, 2002; Bennett, 1999; Gordon & MacAskill, 2012; Gunter, 2010). According to Cano et al. (2015:1560, cultural diversity refers to the differences in social behaviours that different cultures around the world exhibit, meaning how alcohol is used in Europe, for example, will be different from how it is used or regarded in Africa. According to Mandelbaum (2016:281), alcohol is by far the most significant culturally and was the most commonly used and treasured ritual and societal artefact in antiquity, as well as the most ingrained in varied civilisations. "Alcohol has played a central role in almost all human cultures since about 4000 BC" (Douglas, 1987:76; Pittman and White, 1991:101; Heath, 1998:278).

2.3.3.1 *The use of alcohol in African culture*

In most African tribes, alcohol use is socially sewn into cultural practises and belief systems, and is an intrinsic part of African people's cultural heritage (Usoro, Dorothy,

Ononokpono, Ursula & Nkereuwem, 2018:10). Numerous African societies attach great importance to ritual practises (Murimbika, 2006:21). Moreover, a series of studies that were conducted in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Botswana, Uganda, Nigeria, and Lesotho proved that most of the African cultural activities harbour causal factors for alcohol use, and that people use alcohol in conformity with societal norms and values (Usono et al., 2018:150; Korster, 2011; Murimbika, 2006; Akong'a, 1987; Byaruhanga, 1982:78; Phibion, 2013; Haruna, 1997; Matsuhira, 2013; Huffman, 2012:137; Makuvaza, 2008; Babane & Chauke, 2015; Prins, 1990; Frazer, 1942; Schapera, 1930; Semanya, 2013; Leeuw, 1987; Rafapa, 2008).

Literature has also proved that the use of alcohol in an African traditional system is pre-historic. Archaeological evidence by Huffman (2012:117) reveals that there is evidence of pre-historic rituals and behaviour in pre-colonial societies of Southern Africa, including those of Vhavenda, Vatsonga, Nguni, Sotho, and Shona. Huffman (2012:137) further notes that these rituals at the time were used in times of severe draught and for agricultural purposes. However, the ceremonies vary depending on who performs them, where and when they occur, and for what reason (Ombati, 2017:86). Therefore, the use of alcohol in traditional rites in South Africa differs depending on how it is performed by different tribes, although the ceremonies might look more or less the same at face value (Brown, 1999:225).

As this study analyses how television audiences at Elim interpret television messages about alcohol, it is important to understand the importance of alcohol use in the community (which is mostly populated by Vhavenda and Vatsonga tribes) as its socio-cultural use or practices will shed light on how audiences take certain stances during the decoding of messages. To get an understanding of the Vhavenda tribe and alcohol use, this study reviewed the work of Murimbika (2006), who reveals that alcohol was central and used as a medium to communicate with the ancestors during the times when Chiefs and kings held all the responsibilities in African societies (Murimbika, 2006:56). After harvest and prior to the beginning of the new farming season, the Vhavenda practise a number of alcoholic rites to honour their ancestors. To honour the royal ancestors, the royal family conducts the most sacred ritual, known as the "thevhula" (thanksgiving ceremony). This is one of the most complex and revered

public ceremonies in Venda, and beer is central to this function as it is used as a medium to communicate with the ancestors (Murimbika, 2006:57). The Xitsonga-speaking tribe, on the other hand, performs the rainmaking ceremony (nkelekele) to manage draught; this is the ritual they usually practise when there is a prolonged time of drought. Alcohol beer has always been part of this ritual (Babane & Chauke, 2015:108). Another tribe that uses beer for rainmaking rituals in the Limpopo Province of South Africa is the Pedi tribe (Murimbika, 2006:41).

2.3.3.2 The symbolic nature of alcohol in African culture

The symbolic image of an alcohol product or the process of brewing is important to African people (Ainslie, 2020:349). The amount of time and consideration that is given to choosing the right bottle for a ritual during weddings or the pouring of libation or the fine grain to use during the beer making process for rainmaking events shows how symbolic alcohol is (Ainslie, 2020:350). For example, to show the symbolic power of alcohol for African people during the brewing of the “mpambo” beer for the “thevhula” ritual, Vhavenda ritual leaders ensure that the beer is prepared by pre-puberty girls and elderly women, and that a special sorghum from the royal granary is selected so that the beer becomes whitish. When the “mpambo” beer is whitish, it is seen as a symbol of the ancestors’ fertility because the whitish colour is symbolically linked to semen and fertility (Murimbika, 2006:159; Mikovha, 2002:56). Therefore, besides drinking it, alcohol products symbolise certain things in African traditions. There is a preference for alcohol brands that have raffia lattice wrapped around the bottle, such as a brandy bottle, which is seen as a special gesture during wedding ceremonies (Ainslie, 2020:365). For example, Ainslie (2020:365) and Trapido, (2020:1) found that the wrapped Commando or Richelieu brandy bottle or the images on alcohol products bottle (such as the eleven horses on the Commando brandy bottle) hold special meanings to the Xhosa people, and most importantly, Africans.

The usage of brandy in South African black ethnic groups' wedding ceremonies is widespread (Ainslie, 2020:344). According to Brown (1999:228), the terms Lobola (isiZulu and isiXhosa), Mahadi (Sesotho), Lovola (Xitsonga), and Mahadzi (Tshivenda) are all employed to describe the concept of bride payment in English. This ceremony involves a negotiation between the bride and the groom's family. The degree of complexity of such ceremonies may vary by location, tribe, clan, and particular family;

nonetheless, the ritual can be thought of in basic terms as consisting of seven phases, each of which is accompanied with a bottle of brandy. In this procedure, brandy is produced. Some may be consumed and others may be offered to the ancestors, but the significance lies mostly in the exchange of gifts rather than consumption (Ainslie, 2020:345).

Advertisers use different advertising appeals such as value-expressive (images) or symbolic appeals, which are important (Johar & Sirgy, 2013: 23; Zhao & Lee, 2018:520; Akker, 2001:490). Sarkar, Sarkar and Yadav (2019:190) suggest that the value expressive image or consumption symbols such as commercial brands, can function as cultural carriers. Thus, the significance of brands can serve to present and institutionalise a culture's values and ideas. The fundamental assumption is that cultural values will influence customers' responses to advertising interpretation, and the more negatively the ads are regarded, the greater the possibility that the items and brands will be rejected (Chan, 2007: 39). That is, the meaning embodied in brands can serve to present and institutionalise the values and beliefs of a culture. The underlying belief is that cultural values will influence consumers' response to advertising interpretation, and the more negative the ads are perceived, the higher the likelihood of rejecting the products and the brands (Chan, 2007: 39). So, bearing in mind the symbolic nature of alcohol or alcohol brands in African culture, this study seeks to find out whether alcohol brands have an appeal to young people at Elim.

2.3.3.3 The impact of colonialism and globalisation on African traditions

Prehistory rituals such as rainmaking were practised without fear prior to the emergence of colonialism in South Africa (Babane & Chauke, 2015:108). According to Baker (2004:191), although the cultural imprint of European colonisation can be found in many parts of the world, out of all the countries that were affected by colonialism, this mark is more convincing when you look at apartheid in South Africa. "Here a white God and the European sword combined to enforce and justify domination" (Baker, 2004:191). Barker (2004:191) further argues that European culture is observable in South Africa through language, sport, architecture, music, food, painting, film, and television. Furthermore, Fanon's (1963:210) in Hall (1996:222) observation of colonialism can be seen as a true reflection of what transpired in many South African communities: "Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people

in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it". According to Mapara (2011:16), colonial authorities considered that African ceremonial practises in general, and Vhavenda and Vatsonga in particular, were barbaric and superstitious (also see Babane and Chauke, 2015:108). However, there are other rituals that feature alcohol products that are still being performed by most South African tribes, including weddings, 'stokvels', ceremonial rites and the pouring of libation to propitiate the angry gods or ancestors, and celebrations of birth, initiation, death, victory, naming, mothering, success and achievements. These ceremonies or rites, according to Usoro et al. (2018:150), influence alcohol use in Africa.

There is a growing number of literature stating that religious affiliation has a bearing on people's orientations towards alcohol, that religion influences the lives of many people, and that it defines ways of doing things in terms of particular axiological principles (Hirschman, 1983; Delener, 1994; Bonne et al., 2009:6; Belk, 1983; Ross, 1991; Ger, 2005:79). This literature also suggests that religion connects consumers to a lifestyle that affects what, how much, and why something is consumed (Hirschman, 1983; Delener, 1994; Bonne et al., 2009:6; Belk, 1983; Ross, 1991; Ger, 2005:79). Foreign religions, such as Christianity, played a big role in South African culture when they were introduced by missionaries (see Mapara, 2011:16; Babane & Chauke, 2015:108).

According to Babane and Chauke (2015:109), colonialism had a negative impact on traditional African culture, and for the purposes of this study, Vhavenda and Vatsonga. African traditional systems pertaining to ritual practises have evolved steadily under the influence of colonial rule. This led to confusion among the Vhavenda and Vatsonga due to the invalidation of some of their cherished values. Their original ethnic religions were severely undermined by the effects of colonialism, which must be mentioned. This has thus far resulted in a religious vacuum which has been carelessly filled by Christianity, which contradicts virtually every part of African culture (Babane & Chauke, 2015:109). According to the South African Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) (2011/12:4) pocket guide (a South African yearbook that informs South Africa and the world about the people of South Africa and government efforts), Christianity is a major religion of the people in South Africa, with 80% of

followers. However, there has been resistance by some of the South African communities against missionaries and criticism by colonial administrators. This saw them continue with their ritual practices despite condemnation (Schmidt, 1992:198). For this reason, South African churches typically have a blend of Christianity and traditional African religions (Brown, 1999:228; GCIS, 2011/2012:4).

Furthermore, this is what Stuart Hall elaborated on during an interview with Grossberg (1986:55), as he suggested that culture can be transformed, but that it cannot be totally erased and started afresh. Hall gave the example of Rastafarians in Jamaica, who have seen changes in their culture and in their language affected by the Bible. In the process, Rastafarians had to "get a meaning which fit their experience, they remade themselves; they positioned themselves differently as new political subjects; they reconstructed themselves as blacks in the new world" (also see Morley and Chen, 1996:143). This is because there is no such thing as a tight border of culture; "all are porous" (George, 2016:522), meaning all cultures borrow from each other all the time, and although Tshivenda and Xitsonga cultures may have changed due to colonialism, they still continue to exist with a tweak here and there (Murimbika, 2006: 45; Babane & Chauke, 2015:109). Hall in Grossberg (1986:132) suggests that different cultures always define themselves as separate from one another.

South African indigenous people and their cultural systems have faced many challenges from colonialism to globalisation (Babane & Chauke, 2015:108; Baker, 2004:191). According to Baker (2016:31), culture is a facet of place, constitutive of place, and that its borders are mostly determined by nationality and ethnicity. However, Baker (2016:31) further argues that globalisation has rendered the concept of culture as a whole way of life bounded by clear boundaries more problematic. Baker (2016:32) further argues that researchers in a global world must now look at culture as a "hybrid" and "creolised" aspect in a global space rather than be understood in terms of "locations" and "roots". However, Baker (2016:32) also argues that it is still important to locate culture in a place because it helps scholars to originate, attribute, or distinguish certain practices, behaviours, or characteristics to a certain place. For example, certain alcohol practices such as rainmaking can be traced to certain tribes in Africa, such as the Balobedu (Murimbika, 2006: 33). So culture, according to Baker (2016:32), is dual; it is "in-place" and of "no-place".

2.3.3.4 Culture as a resource to audiences' understanding of media text

The tradition of cultural studies (especially the Birmingham school) has been associated with enthusiastic debates and challenges that have helped to shape it (Hall 1980; Grossberg, 1983, 1984; Morley, 1980). According to Grossberg (1983:164), despite these challenges, the school has remained firm and organised: “in each of these debates, cultural studies has moved onto the terrain in order to both learn from and draw back from the differences, in each case, it has taken something from the other position, reshaped itself, its questions (empirical as well as theoretical) and its vocabularies” (Grossberg, 1983:164).

Since David Morley's (1980) findings, there has been debate about whether factors such as culture, class, and gender have any influence on how audiences make meanings. Morley (1980: 270) found that “while the apprentices, the trade unionists, and the further education black students all shared a common class position, their decodings appeared to be inflected in different directions by their specific institutional settings and the situated discourses to which these gave access” (also see Murdock, 2016:137). This was refuted by Sujeong Kim (2004:84), who suggested that Morley refrain from investigating the influence of other social factors, such as gender, race, and age, on the decoding of television messages. Kim added that Morley's results look ambiguous.

A recent study by Abdullah et al. (2019:495) recognises Morley's (1980) study as it gave a heterogeneous perspective that challenged the homogeneous viewpoint, that dominated contemporary media studies for quite some time. Abdullah's study found that audiences are not homogeneous; rather, they are shaped by their varied subjectivities, which are impacted by their genders and culturally determined values. Furthermore, Baker (2016) argues:

The audience is conceived of as socially situated individuals whose readings will be framed by shared cultural meanings and practices. To the degree that audiences share cultural codes with producers/encoders, they will decode messages within the same framework. However, where the audience is situated in different social positions with different cultural resources, it is able to decode programmes in alternative ways (Baker, 2016:430).

Thus, given the weight that alcohol has on the African traditional system, this study will try to find out how viewers of television alcohol advertisements interpret messages

about a product that is intrinsic to their cultural system. The following sub-section will discuss the impact of gender differences in decoding television advertisements.

2.3.4 Gender differences in decoding television advertisements in a changing society

According to Eisend, Plagemann and Sollwedel (2014:105), gender differences have been used by advertisers for the last five decades to communicate a product and brand image. The interest by researchers in gender studies stretches back to at least the 1950s in Anglo-American countries and arose within fields such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, and anthropology (Eisend et al., 2014:10). Insights from these fields were crucial in establishing gender studies in mass communication, particularly in the 1970s and beyond. This saw communication researchers such as Tuchman (1978:57) beginning to be interested in gender issues, especially the equality of gender roles in media representations (also see Kunjen, 2020:2). Researchers began to distinguish clearly between sex and gender (Tuchman, 1978:57; Epstein, 1978:36; Hyde, Bigler, Joel, Tate, and van Anders, 2019:171). At the time, researchers were concerned that despite the reality that women were the majority and their numbers were beginning to rise in the labour market, the media was still portraying women in terms of inferiority (Eisend et al., 2014: 105).

Furthermore, most of the researchers at the time were influenced by Gebner's (1972) theory. They focused on Gerbner's (1972:44) argument that a representation 'signifies social existence.' In other words, the media are believed to communicate with audiences whose roles and behaviours are most valued and approved by society. As a result, researchers were deeply concerned that if the media continued to portray women the way they were doing, they (women) would eventually be impacted by those representations, and this would affect their lives in the future (Krijnen, 2020:3). As a result, media portrayals of women have been viewed as contributing to their second-class status in society, thereby limiting their participation in broader democratic discourse and their individual life opportunities (Cater, 2012:365; Dobson & Kanai, 2018:771). Most of the findings revealed that the media did not correctly portray the social and economic developments in women's lives over the past century (Kunjen, 2020:2).

So, a significant portion of gender research has been based on assumptions about the individual's acquisition of gendered attitudes and behaviours and the ways in which socially constructed gender roles can negatively impact an individual's life opportunities, particularly in terms of one's sense of self-worth, social perceptions of women, and career prospects (Tuchman, 1978; Epstein, 1978; Tabassum and Nayak, 2021:192). Such research work defined gender as a social creation, in stark contrast to sex as a biological phenomenon (Lorber & Farrell, 1991:68). According to Baker (2016:286), gender is frequently discussed in relation to or as being part of the broader sociocultural context and other aspects of identity and social position, such as class, ethnicity, age, and physical ability, and is often used in communication research for sociocultural analysis.

Jackson (2015:59) argues that gender relates to "socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men." It refers to the social characteristics and possibilities that come with being female versus male. These traits, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes that are context and time-specific and change over time (Amin, Kgesten, Adebayo, and Chandra-Mouli, 2018:147; Fongkaew, 2020:164; Fry et al., 2019:638; Khera et al., 2022:14; Jackson, 2015:59). Gender determines what men and women are expected, permitted, and valued in a given setting or context. In the majority of civilizations, there are disparities and inequalities between women and men regarding their responsibilities, activities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making chances (Briandana & Azmawati, 2020:63; Kwas, 2019:92; Rose & Friedman, 2019:614; Perdana, 2019:86).

Understanding gender as socially constructed is critical because it allows scholars to recognise that perceptions and expectations of masculinity and femininity emerge from certain historical times and cultural contexts (Haslanger, 2017:299). This implies that gender is the social meaning associated with sex within a specific culture and era (Wood, 2006:13). While most people are born either male or female, according to Amin, Kågesten, Adebayo and Chandra-Mouli (2018:147), they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours, including what kinds of beverages are appropriate for a certain gender. Consequently, when people or groups do not conform to the established gender norms, they may experience stigma, discrimination, or social marginalisation

(Ussher, 2022:79; Filice et al., 2020:387; Portsmouth, 2021:19; Ewart & Snowden, 2012:62).

So, when males and females have learned these social gender attributes, they start to develop identities, which is the make-up of gender differences (Karatsoli & Nathanail, 2020:9; Hou, Bi, Jiao, Luo & Song, 2020:11). According to Worthy et al. (2021:23), gender differences between males and females can be based on abilities, gender roles (for example, differences in how men and women are supposed to act when confronted with advertisements), or gender stereotypes. For example, (differences in how we think men and women are), which might in turn influence our decoding of advertisements. Gender identity refers to the psychological sexual identification of an individual, as opposed to their biological sex (Stets and Burke, 1999 in Neal and Martin, 2016:2). Furthermore, gender identity is generally regarded as the most important social identity a person possesses, due to the ongoing reinforcement of gender by numerous social and media institutions (Neal & Martin, 2016:2). These reinforcements may be because of gender stereotypes in the media (Res, 2020:398). Gender stereotypes, sometimes simply referred to as gender roles, have a long history in advertising, where they are still frequently used (Eisend, 2010:15). In recent years, the possible detrimental effects of utilising stereotypes in advertising have been highlighted by both advertising research and the actual advertisement industry content (see Windels, 2016; Eisend, 2019). This section has so far highlighted gender differences and the history of gender roles or stereotype portrayals on television and how these have been constructed in society and their effects on the audience. The next sub-section reviews research literature from the 1990's to the present, exploring the changes in societies such as South Africa and the media portrayals of gender identity and differences in alcohol use or how audiences individually or collectively in communities such as Elim identify with certain stereotypes in the media about alcohol.

2.3.4.1 The shift in gender identity and differences in alcohol use

The 1980s to the 1990s were a watershed moment in gender studies, as many studies that were carried out at the time were influenced by Laurites's (1987) and Butler's (1990) revelations. Laurites (1987:19) has pushed for the theorisation of gender beyond sexual differences. Furthermore, Laurites (1987:21) termed the media and gender theories as "technologies of gender", which perpetuate the status-quo, and

asserted that a far more drastic step is required to alter the relations of gender, as opposed to merely the relations of representation. Two years after Laurites' (1987) study, Butler (1990) made a startling revelation that changed researchers' perspectives. Butler's (1990:6) study is dismissive of gender as a sex that defines men and women, because she suggests that gender can be fluid, meaning that both sexes can interchange these gender roles. Butler (1990) ushered in a new chapter in gender research and suggested that gender roles were not fixed. This kind of thinking by researchers saw a shift in research and in the advertising industry in particular, where we started to see researchers such as Fischer, Reuber and Dyke (1991) appropriating this kind of thinking to alcohol advertising research. Other researchers such as Liljedal, Berg and Dahlen (2020:179), Putrevu (2004:51) and Torelli et al (2011:91) revealed that some women identified themselves as men rather than women using men's products.

Evidently, the gender studies perspective has seen changes over the years, which, according to Fugate and Philips (2010) in Neal and Martin (2016:10), were a result of a transition in societal roles and meanings between males and females. Fugate and Philips (2010 in Neal and Martin, 2016:10) argue that there has been a shift in roles and connotations that were formerly exclusive to men or women. Significant modifications in the usual gender identification patterns of men and women have occurred as a result of an increase in societal tolerance for people participating in roles traditionally associated with the opposing sex (Inglehart, Norris & Welzel, 2003:91-115).

In western countries, evolving gender identification trends, according to Neal and Martin (2016:11), indicate that males increasingly identify as feminine, females increasingly identify as masculine, and people in general increasingly identify as both masculine and feminine. Neal and Martin (2016:80) also found that consumers favour masculine brands and react adversely to feminine products, whereas feminine consumers are unexpectedly more receptive to masculine brands. Neal and Martin (2016:458) explain this finding as being constituted by the fact that male and female television audiences have different tastes, and advertisements that appeal to male readers may not do so to female readers. Neal and Martin (2016:1) suggest that gender identification is the degree to which a person or reader identifies with

masculine or feminine personality qualities. However, they warn that sex roles will continue to change. It will be interesting to see how young people of different genders identify themselves in African societies, particularly in the Elim community, which is rich in diverse cultures, and how these gender differences affect their interpretations of television alcohol advertisements, if at all.

Kervin (2016:53) believes that advertisement constructions are built from media producers' social knowledge, meaning the producers of alcohol television advertisements use the changing ideas and values within society, including definitions of gender, to create advertisement content. Drawing from findings by Chu, Lee and Kim (2016:114) as well as Wilsnack, Vogeltanz, Wilsnack and Harris (2000:253), it is safe to assume that as society changes, so does advertising. This affects how they (advertisers) craft their content in terms of gender role portrayals and many other tactics that may be employed to capture viewers' attention.

Gender roles in contemporary society continue to shift. This shift is frequently discussed in NSGR (Non-stereotypical gender role) research (Chu, et al. 2016: 114; Elizabethth, et al. 2011:55). Non-stereotypical gender roles as a tactic used by media advertisement producers to represent gender in a way that contradicts and challenges traditional stereotypical gender roles (Chu, et al. 2016: 113). There is an increase in non-stereotypical gender role advertising in the media, which shows the change in how producers of advertising messages are doing things (Jung & Lee 2006; Yeo, Yoon et al., 2010; Ulrich 2013). A significant number of non-traditional gender role studies were carried out, including Chu et al. (2016), Nelson and Vilela (2011), Eisend et al. (2014), Noseworthy et al. (2011), Lien et al. (2012), Ulrich (2013), Kervin (2016), Eisend (2019), Tuncay Zayer et al. (2020) and Windels (2016). Similarly, there is a growing usage of non-stereotypical gender role advertising techniques by the advertising industry, where traditional gender stereotypes are challenged (see Åkestam et al., 2017; Bukszpan, 2016; Tuncay Zayer et al., 2020; Liljedal et al., 2020; Azar et al., 2018).

A content analysis by Paek, Nelson and Vilela (2011:117) revealed how media producers somehow changed the way they advertised from the 2000s, as the industry has seen cross-gender advertisements where a male character can be shown promoting female-oriented products. Wilsnack, Vogeltanz, Wilsnack and Harris

(2000:253) suggest that if gender differences in alcohol use have socio-cultural causes rooted in gender roles, then as women gain access to traditional male roles and environments, and differences between gender roles diminish, women's and men's drinking behaviours should converge. This would affect their orientation towards alcohol and the interpretation of alcohol advertisements.

Traditionally, different brands were and still are for different genders (Lyre & Debevec, 1986; Lien, Chou & Chang, 2012), as advertising portrays gender as distinct, meaning there were products for the feminine image, such as wines, ciders, and cocktails, whereas masculine-perceived products such as hard liquor like beer (Iyer & Debevec, 1986; Lien, Chou & Chang, 2012). Noseworthy, Cotte and Lee (2011:108) suggested that when viewers are confronted with advertisements that are exclusively male, featuring female characters, for example, they go through a process of elaboration and attempt to construct an associative relationship between the models and the items being advertised. According to Chu, Lee and Kim (2016:130), advertisers employ gender role depictions to convey a product's and brand's image. Noseworthy, Cotte and Lee (2011:108) also found that in situations of 'gender-exclusive' products, an individual may be unable to comprehend, despite attempts at explication, why a male character is included. Noseworthy et al.'s (2011:108) findings date back eight years. This study will test this finding to see if it is still relevant today, and whether viewers who are confronted with male-oriented alcoholic products that feature female characters would understand or fail to understand the advertisements.

It is clear that in the last three decades, there have been conflicting studies on gender studies, pertaining to whether there are differences in how male and female audiences interpret media messages (Butler, 1990; O'Cass & Clarke, 2001). These conflicting views on gender roles in advertising developed most especially after Buttler's (1990) study. Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005) conducted research in the Netherland, Amsterdam to investigate the development of young children's brand awareness and the relative influence of environmental factors on brand awareness. Valkenburg and Buijzen's (205) interest in gender differences as one of the aspects that may affect the interpretation of television messages was stimulated by earlier research conducted by Fischer, Rapkin and Rappaport (1991) that did not yield gender differences in brand recognition and recall by young children versus a study that was conducted 11 years

later by O’Cass and Clarke (2001), which found that although boys and girls do not differ in the number of brands they are able to recognise or recall, they do differ in the types of brands they recognise or recall.

Results by O’Cass and Clarke (2001:96) further revealed that brand logos that were more appealing to girls were better recalled by girls, whereas logos that better suited the tastes of boys led to superior recall memory in boys. Faced with these two conflicting results between Fischer et al. (1990) and O’Cass and Clarke (2001), Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005: 94) conducted their own study trying to discern potential differences. They found that boys had better brand awareness and recall. This surprising discovery contrasts with past research on children's brand awareness, in which no gender differences were seen (Fischer et al., 1991; Goldberg, 1990).

Furthermore, when looking at the two studies by Fischer, Reuber and Dyke (1991) and Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005), an outstanding fact is that these studies were conducted in two different countries: America and the Netherlands, respectively. A content analysis by Meulenaer, Dens, Pelsmacker and Martin Eisend (2017:85) shows that the usage of gender role stereotyping in advertising varies significantly among countries, and that there have been attempts to explain these differences by variations in culture-related values by researchers (e.g. Furnham & Faragher, 2000; Moon & Chan, 2006; Paek, Nelson & Vilela, 2011). Although there is a shift globally, South African studies are still lagging behind.

In a study that explored the ways in which male and female characters are portrayed in South African advertising content, Pillay (2008:9) found that female characters are still stereotyped and portrayed in accordance with traditional roles associated with women, while male characters have undergone a more significant shift (Pillay, 2008:9). As a result, this study will contribute to this debate by adding the African perspective on the matter and by trying to find out how males and females are being portrayed in alcohol advertisements and whether there are differences in audiences’ interpretations when they are faced with stereotypical gender role advertisements and non-stereotypical gender role advertisements. Researchers have looked into both non-stereotypical and traditional (gender) role tactics separately. To the researcher’s knowledge, there is no study that has investigated both of these tactics of advertising

and used them as stimulus to collect in-depth interview data. This is an unavoidable phenomenon (Chu, Lee & Kim, 2016:135).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the theories of mass communication that guided this study. The theory that directs this study is the encoding-decoding model of reception theory. The reinforcement and uses and gratification theories act as supporting theories given the scope of this study. The literature review revealed that television audiences are active participants in meaning-making. There are determining social factors such as lifestyles, beliefs, gender and socio-cultural aspects that influence how young people interpret television alcohol messages. The chapter also traced alcohol use in African traditional systems and highlighted its importance in young people's lives. The literature reviewed in this chapter has revealed that, as advertising always reflects change in society, there have been changes in how recent advertisements are produced, although advertising still seems to be predominantly masculine. The chapter also discussed the rarity of researchers' interest in and focus on changes in gender roles, the tactics used by advertisers in alcohol advertising, and the impact of these portrayals on viewers' interpretations of messages. The following chapter will discuss steps that have been taken during the development of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological procedure employed in this audience reception study of young people at Elim. This study utilised a mixed methodology design, with a combination of survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews. This chapter discusses the planning and implementation stages of the mixed method research. This section explains questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and how the data was analysed. Research sampling procedures are also discussed in this section, as well as important ethical considerations and the field experience of the study of this nature. But first, a discussion of the research paradigm follows.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This study employed a pragmatic research design, which was sequential and dependent. “Pragmatic research design implies that the overall approach to research is that of mixing data collection methods and data analysis procedures within the research process” (Creswell, 2003:209). “Employing both approaches enhances the integrity of findings” (Bryman, 2006:97-113).

Researchers or scholars in the field of communication and media studies have conducted their studies in different ways over the years. For example, some scholars who studied the media used a quantitative perspective to conduct research, where the ultimate focus was to predict the magnitude or occurrence of some phenomenon. On the other hand, qualitative research (which comes largely from the field of critical and cultural studies) is not driven by the goal of prediction; but by the desire to understand some phenomenon, the reasons why it exists, and the explanation of processes behind it.

It is crucial to remember that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have their own flaws, and researchers such as Hussein (2009:16) have proposed combining the two approaches in order to enjoy the benefits of two paradigms while minimising

the negatives of each. For instance, researchers such as Livingstone (1990:12), who argue for convergence, have recognised difficulties with the quantitative side, which tends to concentrate on elements that influence the reception of media content without attempting to account for the step-by-step process of reception. In addition, the focus on factors is based on the researcher's beliefs regarding what constitutes a factor and less on empirical data regarding what audience members perceive as a factor.

There has been growing attention in recent years among researchers to utilise both quantitative and qualitative research methods in studying the same phenomenon, but media and communication researchers have been sluggish, if not stagnant. A joint quantitative and qualitative methods usage is a growing research position that has claimed its place in research methodology and has been assigned different names. Some of them are multi-strategy (Bryman, 2004), multi-methods (Brannen, 1992), mixed methodology (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The advantages of mixing data sets is that it can result in a greater understanding of the issue and more comprehensive evidence, and that the researcher acquires both breadth and depth. In addition, combining statistics with thematic approaches can help avoid an over-reliance on the former, as well as capture soft-core perspectives and experiences and the subjective aspects required to elucidate complicated social circumstances (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011:687). Triangulation, which was used in this study, can also reinforce findings. On a more philosophical level, mixed methods research mixes paradigms, permitting exploration from both inductive and deductive viewpoints, and so allowing researchers to combine theory formulation and hypothesis testing within a single study (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011:689). Researchers at an early point in their careers benefit greatly from the opportunity to strengthen their abilities through the use of mixed methodologies.

Mixed methods are not devoid of disadvantages, the most evident of which are the needed resources and skills for collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as identifying and training data collectors, especially for quantitative research, which might increase costs. Fortunately, the University of South Africa financed this study, which made it easier for the researcher to do the research.

There is a standard type used by researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in order to study research phenomena in the social sciences. It is called triangulation (Timans, Wouters and Heilbron, 2019:193), and is defined as the use of multiple methods, mainly qualitative and quantitative methods, to study the same phenomenon for the purpose of enhancing the credibility of the study (Jick, 1979:59). This suggests that triangulation can be a combination of two or more methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives, data sources, investigators, and analysis methods to study the same phenomenon. This leads to five types of triangulation: methodological, investigator, theoretical, analysis and data triangulation (Denzin, 1978:76). This study, as an explanatory sequential mixed method design, has used methodological triangulation and data analysis triangulation to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, to increase the validity, and to ensure the quality of the study.

3.2.1 Methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation is defined as the use of more than two methods in studying the same phenomenon under investigation (Mitchell, 1986:41). This type of triangulation may occur at the level of research design or data collection (Bums & Grove, 1993:105).

Combining the two paradigms in the same study has its own challenges. Morse (1991:121) suggests that there are possibly two ways that the two methods (quantitative and qualitative) can be triangulated. The first one is when the qualitative method is used as a preliminary inquiry in a quantitative study, whereby qualitative methods are regarded as complementary methods. Secondly, quantitative methods precede as a preliminary inquiry in a qualitative study in the sense that quantitative methods are regarded as auxiliary methods (Morse, 1991:121; Hussein, 2009:4). This study has used a strategy where a quantitative method precedes as a preliminary inquiry.

3.2.2 Data analysis triangulation

Data analysis triangulation is described as the use of more than two methods of analysing the same set of data for validation purposes (Kimchi, Polivka & Stevenson, 1991:93). In addition, analysis triangulation can be described as the use of more than two methods of data analysis in qualitative and quantitative paradigms within the same

study for both validation and completeness purposes (Kimchi et al., 1991:93). This study has collected and used both qualitative and quantitative data, which necessitated the need for two methods in the analysis towards attaining data validation within the study; and extended the analysis between the two paradigms for completeness purposes.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed separately in the study. Then, the researcher combined the two databases in the form of integration called connecting the quantitative results to the qualitative data collected.

3.3 Study approach and design

The study has used a mixed methods approach to try to answer the research questions. The first research question aims to find out the different ways that alcohol-consuming audiences interpret or decode alcohol advertising compared to non-alcohol-consumers. The researcher used both quantitative (using the survey questionnaire method) and qualitative (using in-depth interview method) approaches to answer the question. The survey questionnaire provided a response to study research question one by emphasising pertinent facts such as the number of young people in Elim who consume alcohol and those who do not, as well as their level of pleasure from alcohol commercials on television. Then, this information was incorporated into a qualitative, in-depth interview method to further investigate these issues.

The second research question of this study aims to find out how factors (such as learned values, gender differences, and sociocultural experiences) influence the ways in which television audiences interpret alcohol advertising. The researcher also used both quantitative (using survey questionnaire method) and qualitative approaches (using in-depth interview method) to answer the question. The in-depth interviews were also used to answer elements of the research question that deal with experience, meaning, and perspective from the viewpoint of participants. The quantitative approach was used because factual data was required to answer the research question about opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or preferences. The quantitative survey questionnaire has given the study the necessary strength to answer the second research question by providing background information on the Elim community and demonstrating the community's diversity, including its language, religion, gender

differences, experiences with alcohol, and cultural rituals involving alcohol. Using this information, the second part of the research data collection (qualitative in-depth interviews) was conducted, which investigated these concerns.

The third research question aims to find out if alcohol advertising plays any short-term persuasive or dissuasive role in the alcohol consumption and non-consumption decisions of consumers. The researcher again used both methods of a survey questionnaire and an in-depth interview to answer the question. The quantitative survey questionnaire was also utilised to emphasise concerns such as television viewing frequency, knowledge of alcohol advertisements on television, the attention span audiences devote to television advertisements, and the persuasiveness of television. These then provided the necessary incentive to investigate these concerns in further depth through a qualitative interview method.

3.4. Study setting, population, sampling and sample size

3.4.1 Study setting

Elim has many residential sections, but this research focused on young people from the age of 18 to 35 who reside in the Mpheni and Waterval residential sections, which have a combined total of 9,314 residents, which is more than half of the total population of Elim. The reason the researcher chose Mpheni (an area the researcher resides in) and Waterval is that these two sections are closely located and easily accessible (terrain and distance), which is critical for data collection considering the budget constraints of the research. Moreover, Mpheni is a village at Elim, while Waterfall is a township. So these two sections have provided the study with quality and diverse views because they were sourced from participants from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The study population for this research included all Elim South Africa young people aged 18-35, both drinkers and non-drinkers.

3.4.2 Sampling and Sample Size

Since this study is based on a mixed methodological approach, two parallel sampling techniques using both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to select participants. The samples for the qualitative and quantitative components were different but drawn from the same population. For the quantitative approach, a probability random sampling technique was used to collect survey data from 600

participants. For the qualitative approach, a purposive sampling technique was used to collect interview data from 10 respondents who were involved in an in-depth interview (five males and five females).

In line with the quantitative approach of the study, random sampling was employed. This gave every individual (aged 18-35) within the targeted community a chance to participate, which means the quantitative results of this study can be generalised to the broader population of Mpheni and Waterval residents aged between 18 and 35 years. According to Statistics South Africa (2011), Elim population is around 16,538. Calculator.net, an online website that helps to calculate the sample size, was used in the study to compute the minimum number of necessary respondents to meet the desired statistical constraints in line with the total population of Elim as noted above. The online calculator website suggested that only 376 surveys were needed to have a confidence level of 95% (which is the commonly used confidence level) out of a population size of 16,538, which is the population of the whole of Elim (Calculator.net, 2021). This number was realised after using the statistics formula that put the confidence level at 95%, with the margin of error at 5% and the population proportion at 50%. The confidence level is a measure of certainty regarding how accurately a sample reflects the population being studied within a chosen confidence interval. This study used 600 questionnaires to collect quantitative data, a number that is above the required minimum of 376, which was suggested by the calculator.net sample calculation platform.

The qualitative method of this research used purposive sampling, which is a judgemental sample that allows the researcher to select participants based on his knowledge of the study and population. This sampling technique has enhanced the study's effectiveness because participants were selected according to the needs of the study. Purposive sampling is when a researcher samples with a purpose in mind, and the selection is based on certain characteristics identified by the researcher (Cresswell, 2007; Kitzinger, 1995).

Ten (10) interview respondents participated in this part of the study. An extremely large number of articles and books (see Morse, 2000; Zucker, 2002) suggest that 5-50 interview participants are adequate for an in-depth interview. According to Dworkin (2012:41), a "how many" question can be the wrong question because researchers

can use different numbers of interview participants in a qualitative-aligned exploration depending on different factors. One of those factors is the study design, which is important in this study, because it employs two methods, and the 10 in-depth interviews were an addition to the 600 questionnaires, which improved the overall quality of the data. Furthermore, the sample size of the qualitative method in this research was smaller because, according to Dworking (2012:41), a qualitative inquiry is often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon that is focused on meaning and not with generalisations to a larger population.

Participants were selected when they fit a certain profile, and the maximum variation technique of the purposive sampling approach was used. The researcher tried to include all extremes in the population. For example, a young person who drinks alcohol every day and another young person who does not drink alcohol at all.

Before the researcher could embark on the data collection (quantitative and qualitative) process, consent from all gate-keepers was obtained. The awareness campaign was carried out through posters (which included all critical details of the study) in all key areas where potential participants got exposure to the information (this ranged from local supermarkets, taverns, and churches, among others). This was an important process for both quantitative and qualitative methods as it made the collection of data somewhat smooth-sailing.

Participants' recruitment for the qualitative method was taken further since, unlike the quantitative aspect, which was random, the researcher had to find suitable respondents in order to explore the phenomenon and control bias. Therefore, the researcher had a preliminary brainstorming session with local informants such as civic organisations over the phone (due to COVID-19), so that they could assist the researcher with a list and type of people who were suitably modified for the purpose of the study. The informants were not respondents to the actual in-depth interview session of the research. The maximum variation technique gave most people in the community a chance of being included in the sample because it was sourced from different informants who were asked to suggest people with specified characteristics.

3.5 Data collection method(s) and procedure

This study mixed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect and analyse data in the form of a survey and an in-depth interviews sequentially. The data

collection was carried out in two distinct phases with rigorous quantitative sampling in the first phase and purposeful sampling in the second qualitative phase.

3.5.1 Phase One: self-administered questionnaire

In this phase, the researcher constructed surveys that probed the respondents about their television viewing habits and asked them about alcohol-related television advertisements they had recently seen on TV, how often they had noticed them, what alcohol brands were advertised, and if they could recall the content of the advert. Rose, McKinley, and Baffoe-Djan (2020:291) define questionnaires as a written means of presenting respondents with a series of questions or statements to be answered, either by writing down their answers or by selecting from existing answers. The questionnaire was used in this study because it made it possible to contact many people who could not otherwise be reached. This study sampled 600 respondents who were diverse and spread over a large territory in Elim. The method could cover a large group at the same time. Rose et al. (2020: 295) state that when a researcher covers a widely dispersed set of respondents, the questionnaire can be used to save expenses. A questionnaire can be used as a preliminary instrument for performing a subsequent in-depth investigation using any method.

Despite the numerous advantages of questionnaires as a data collection tool, questionnaires prepared and delivered without the necessary attention can provide very low-quality data. The researcher took all procedures and principles of developing and administering questionnaires into account as recommended by Rose et al., (2020:296), since the researcher designed the questionnaire that was used to collect data in Elim, which comes with its own challenges compared to adopting an already designed questionnaire. For example, during the design of the questionnaire, the researcher took the format of the questionnaire into consideration, and items in the questionnaire were arranged in a format that is clear and engaging for the intended population. Items were usefully grouped by topics. Once a sample size and strategy have been decided, the success of questionnaire-based research hangs on its administration. The questionnaire was administered to the target sample in a manner that maximised the response rate while minimising any threats to the validity or reliability of the findings. Due to the fact that the questionnaire included a large number

of items, the researcher applied data reduction techniques so that there were a smaller number of more concentrated variables to work with in the data. The applied questionnaire data reduction technique was factor analysis, which is a statistical procedure that seeks to identify patterns in responses to questionnaire items on a given construct (Rose et al., 2020:296).

The responses to these statements helped the researcher to get an idea of whether audiences at Elim are indeed significantly exposed to TV advertising about alcohol. It was then determined which adverts were popularly referred to by respondents, and then the three most mentioned adverts became the sample of adverts that the study used in the in-depth interviews. The three most mentioned advertisements by respondents in a survey questionnaire were played for the participants in the interview session.

Also, using these surveys, the study probed respondents' demographic information: gender, income level, employment status, religious beliefs, cultural affiliation, and languages spoken. This information helped the researcher to purposefully approach the ten interview participants. The researcher was then in a position to strategically approach a very diverse group of people based on their demographic information as per the surveys. The distribution of these questionnaires was done under careful social distancing wherein no large group gatherings were called at any time with regard to the completion of the questionnaires. Respondents completed the questionnaires in the comfort of their homes or workplaces and returned them to a 'drop-off-box' near them that was emptied daily by the researcher during the duration of the data collection phase. Since the study was dealing with big data of 600 questionnaires in a geographically vast area of Elim (Mpheni and Waterval) and in the middle of a pandemic (COVID-19), research assistants were used to recruit data collectors, and solve problems encountered by data collectors. The assistants played both leadership and supportive roles in the project during the quantitative data collection.

3.5.2 Phase two: In-depth semi-structured Interviews

After analysing the quantitative data from phase one, the researcher was then able to move into phase two in the form of in-depth interviews where the audience's perceptions, experiences, and opinions were probed more deeply regarding alcohol

advertising, and whether or not it bears any influence on said participants' consumption or non-consumption decisions, and to establish whether the mass media have the power to determine its audience in the reception of messages or if the audiences have an interpretive autonomy. According to Rose et al. (2020:114), an interview is a qualitative research method that relies on asking questions in order to collect data. Interviewers can establish rapport with participants to make them feel more comfortable, which can generate more insightful responses, especially regarding sensitive topics. They also have a greater opportunity to ask follow-up questions and probe for additional information.

However, interviews also have their disadvantages; the researcher considered the procedures and practicalities outlined in Rose et al. (2020:114) to yield rich data for the study. The disadvantage of interviews as an instrument for data collection is their reliability. According to Rose et al. (2020:114), a threat to data collection methods is a lack of reflexivity. The interview reliability improved as the researcher became more reflexive and problematised the design and theory underpinning the data collection instrument. Reflexivity was achieved by acknowledging both the researcher and social influences in the research, which in turn informed the researcher and the research. Another way that helped the researcher improve interview reliability was with the use of interview schedules. The uniformity of questions was maintained with question forms, and the order helped to provide more evenness in the data collected from different interviewees.

The snowballing technique was partly relied upon in this study to recruit interview participants as prominent leaders in the community were asked to suggest their names. In these interview sessions, the researcher used the three adverts that were most popularly referred to by survey respondents to play in the interview, and then probed how audiences decoded and made meaning of the contents of the adverts. The researcher visited participants and allowed them to view the three TV commercials on a laptop. The in-depth interview followed subsequently after the respondent had watched the alcohol commercials.

These ten separate sessions were equally conducted under strict social distancing conditions, wherein each participant was interviewed in a well-ventilated room or a

very quiet outdoor area away from large crowds. Both the interviewer and the interview participants wore masks throughout the session, and a hand sanitiser was made available. The interviews were voice-recorded with the permission of the research respondents.

3.5.3 Demographic data of interview respondents

Respondents	Location	Age	Gender	Drinking Status	Employment Status
Respondent 1	Mpheni	25	Male	Drinker	Unemployed
Respondent 2	Mpheni	29	Female	Drinker	Unemployed
Respondent 3	Waterval	34	Male	Non-drinker	Employed
Respondent 4	Mpheni	19	Male	Non-drinker	Unemployed
Respondent 5	Mpheni	35	Female	Non-drinker	Self-employed
Respondent 6	Waterval	18	Female	Non-drinker	Unemployed
Respondent 7	Waterval	23	Female	Non-drinker	Unemployed
Respondent 8	Waterval	35	Male	Drinker	Employed
Respondent 9	Mpheni	34	Male	Drinker	Employed
Respondent 10	Waterval	30	Female	Drinker	Employed

3.6 Data analysis methods

As this study was based on the explanatory sequential mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed separately as mentioned earlier. Then the researcher combined the two databases in the form of integration, called connecting the quantitative results to the qualitative data collected. This is the point of integration in an explanatory sequential design.

3.6.1. Quantitative data

The quantitative data from the survey questionnaires was entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet, and then transferred to, and analysed using, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) by means of descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.6.2. Qualitative data

Qualitative data that was collected through in-depth interviews was transcribed, and analysed, summarised and organised into thematic categories and subcategories. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) whereby statements of participants were identified with codes in order to describe the content and discourses emerging from them. Then, the researcher searched for themes in the codes, defining and naming them. The researcher paid close attention to the data to ensure that important things were not obscured. The study used an inductive thematic approach to code the data, which means the themes were strongly linked to the data since they emerged from it. According to Caulfield (2022:8), an inductive approach involves creating themes from data without any preconceptions. Therefore, the researcher went into analysis without an idea of what themes would emerge, and thus allowed themes to be determined by the data (Caulfield, 2022; Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.7. Interpretation of the data

The researcher interpreted the results in a discussion section of the study. This interpretation was also sequential by firstly reporting on the quantitative results from phase one and then the qualitative, second-phase results. Moreover, the design of this study employed a third form of interpretation, which details how the qualitative findings help to explain the quantitative results. The researcher was cautious during interpretation not to make a direct comparison of the two databases because “the qualitative database questions narrow the scope of the quantitative questions, a direct comparison of the overall results of the two databases is not recommended” (Caswell and Creswell, 2018:305).

3.7.1 Descriptive statistics from quantitative data

The first step of statistical analysis was to describe characteristics of the responses, such as the average of one variable (for example, age), or the relation between two variables (for example, age and alcohol drinking). Descriptive statistics were generated and used to describe the basic features of the data, and to provide summaries of the sample and the measures. This was done by providing simple graphic analysis, for example, charts or graphs.

3.7.2 Frequency statistics from quantitative data

The researcher used frequency statistics to count the number of times that each variable occurs. According to George et al. (2020:116), frequencies is one of the simplest yet one of the most useful of all SPSS procedures. The frequencies command sums the number of instances within a particular category. Frequencies has listed the following information: value labels, the value code (the number associated with each level of a variable), the frequency, the percent of total for each value, the valid percent (percent after missing values are excluded), and the cumulative percent.

3.7.3 The Bar chart and pie chart

The bar chart in this study has been used to create a visual display of frequency information. “A bar chart should be used only for categorical (not continuous) data” (George et al., 2020:116). Pie charts have been used in this study to show the relationships of parts to the whole for a variable. Each slice of a pie chart has represented the counts and percentages of the observations of a level for the variable.

3.7.4 The alpha level of the study

Many communication or social science researchers agree that deviations in the data with a chance probability of more than 5% are not statistically significant and can cause researchers to assume that something other than chance was at play. Therefore, researchers often use the 5.0% value ($p < 0,05$) to determine if the observed deviations are significant. This study used an acceptable alpha level of .05, which means that the study used a confidence level of 95%. An alpha level of 0.05 means that a potential deviation accounts for a mere 1 in 20 people. If 0.05 is multiplied by a hundred $0.05 \times 100 = 5$ (5%), which then means that there is 5 in hundred people to potentially account for potential deviations should any be observed.

3.8. Ensuring rigour

3.8.1. Quality criteria in quantitative research approaches

To ensure rigour in relation to the quantitative research data, the researcher ensured that there was internal validity, which is the extent to which observed effects can be attributed to the independent variable. This was done by calculating the sample size that is needed for sufficient statistical power. The online calculator website (Calculator.net, 2021) that uses the statistics formula that puts the confidence level at

95% with a margin of error at 5% and a population proportion at 50% was used. In addition, rigour was sustained by ensuring that the study had enough participants and avoiding loss of participants or providing information on non-responses. The researcher used a random sampling technique to ensure that the results could be generalised from the research sample to the population. The researcher developed a questionnaire that is based on established theory and the findings of previous studies. The questions were carefully and precisely worded. Respondent identities were anonymised and the researcher ensured that personal biases were removed and value-free information was gathered. A copy of a survey questionnaire is attached in the appendix.

3.8.2. Quality criteria in qualitative research approaches

As this is an explanatory sequential mixed methods study, additional validity concerns may arise. “The accuracy of the overall findings may be compromised because the researcher does not consider and weigh all of the options for following up on the quantitative results” (Caswell & Creswell, 2018:305). The researcher considered all options to identify results to follow up on from the quantitative method. Caswell and Creswell (2018:305) warn that researchers may focus only on personal demographics and overlook important explanations that need further understanding. The researcher ensured that all phases of the study (survey and in-depth interviews) were drawn from the same sample to avoid invalidating the results.

3.9. Ethical consideration

The researcher has gone through the Ethical Clearance policy. Therefore, participants were assured of their right to privacy and were informed that their identity would remain anonymous. The researcher kept the nature and quality of participants’ responses strictly confidential. Moreover, participants were assured that the survey and recorded materials would be used for research purposes only. A copy of the letter that was shared with each participant to sign is attached in the appendix.

3.10 Field experience

This study was conducted amid the global pandemic of the Corona Virus (COVID19), which is causing the most devastation around the world. The researcher used two

methodologies, which are quantitative and qualitative through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews, respectively. The field-work was tiresome as there were no certainties as South Africa was under lockdown and the country was constantly being moved between different levels depending on the state of infections. All ethics were observed, including the stages of when and how to collect data as prescribed by the University of South Africa (Unisa) ethics policy. As the study sampled young people from two different areas, Waterval (which is a township) and Mpheni (a village), the reception by respondents, especially during quantitative data collection, was not the same. It was much easier to distribute questionnaires in the village (while observing COVID-19 protocols) than in the township. It was not easy to access the township households as gates were mostly locked, but the visibility of the research assistants, as they were always in their “uniform”, made things easier to gain access in the township.

The use of snowball sampling was convenient for the researcher as prominent leaders were used in the communities to suggest interview participants, but the researcher had the added difficulty of trying to shortlist only people who fit a certain profile for the research; that profile being that the participants needed to be between the ages of 18-35, and be full-time residents of either Mpheni or Waterval.

Conducting an interview outdoors was the most difficult thing to do because, although the place was quiet, the interviewees were mostly distracted by natural things such as birds or movements in the branches of trees due to wind. So interviews had to be conducted indoors in a set-up that is not destructive, open and with proper ventilation. The social distance made things worse outside, especially for the voice-recording device.

Conducting a study of this nature in a state where there are uncertainties in the sale of alcohol and the presumed poor government performance also made some respondents shun the data collectors, as they were mistaken for government workers. People were not prepared to talk about alcohol after level a 5 lockdown, where it was totally banned. The research assistants had to explain in detail the purpose of the research once they were given a minute of people’s time during the distribution of the survey questionnaires.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological design and methods of the study. As explained earlier, the study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in the form of survey questionnaires as well as in-depth interviews. The chapter also elaborated on purposive and random sampling techniques, which were used to collect data for analysis. Descriptive (where the quantitative data is concerned) and thematic (where the qualitative data is concerned) content analyses were used to analyse the data. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodological approach used in the study. The discussion included an exposition of the data collection and analysis processes. In this chapter 4, the overall findings of the quantitative and qualitative collected data are presented and interpreted. The following section is based on an analysis of survey questionnaires, which were administered to 600 respondents at the Elim community, as well as interview transcripts from 10 respondents. The chapter is divided into two sections: section A, which presents and interprets the quantitative data; and section B, which presents and interprets the qualitative data.

SECTION A: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative data analysis will present the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the television viewing pattern of young people, and highlight young people's awareness of alcohol and its consumption. The section has used numbers and percentages to complement the presentation of the results, including graphs and pie-charts.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

4.2.1 Language used as the home language at Elim

The pie-chart below shows the proportion of the languages used as home languages at Elim. Six hundred (600) respondents answered the question about their home language. Out of the 600 respondents that were sampled, Tshivenda has the largest proportion, as 350 (58.33%) of the young people at Elim use Tshivenda as their home language, 216 (36.00%) Xitsonga, 23 (3.83%) Pedi, and 11 (1.83%) indicated that they use other languages. The lack of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity at Elim can be explained by Villanova's (2018: 246) findings that the disregard for the historical, cultural, and linguistic affinity of African people by the imperialists in Africa (who partitioned many states in Africa), and the apartheid government at Elim during the

forced removals created extremely mixed populations and very complex and varied language situations.

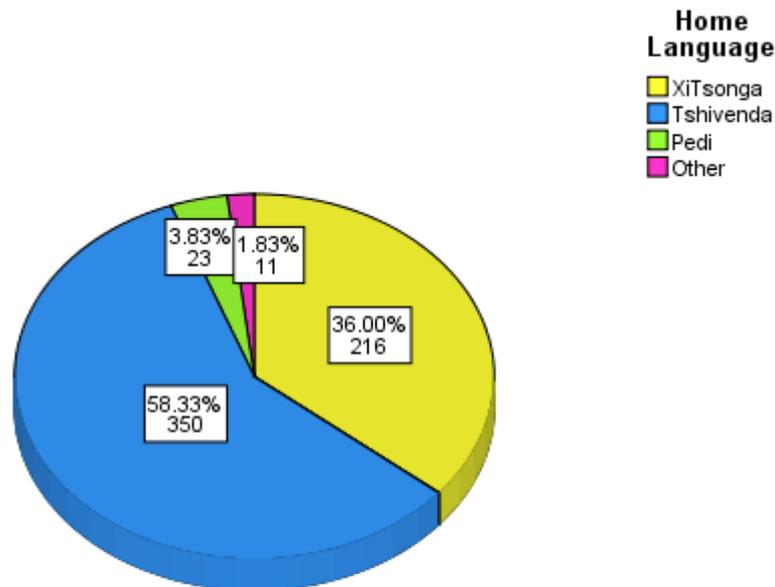


Figure 1: Languages used as a home language at Elim

The pie chart above shows that 11 (1.83%) out of 600 respondents who were asked about their home language indicated that they used other languages in their homes. It was interesting to find that other languages that are used as home languages at Elim include IsiZulu (2 respondents), siSwati (1 respondent), Sesotho (2 respondents), English (2 respondents), isiNdebele (1 respondent), Amharic (1 respondent) and Shona (2 respondents). This shows that Elim is linguistically diverse.

4.2.2 Age group of the respondents

The bar graph below shows that all respondents were interested in answering the survey question about their age, as 600 out of 600 respondents were able to answer the question. The graph also shows that the largest proportion of young people who reside at Elim is between the ages of 18-25, that is, 331 (55.17%) respondents in total. Interestingly, the results paint a different picture from the findings by the Limpopo Department of Social Development (2013:66) that there is a high concentration of

youth between the ages of 26-35 in Limpopo Province. At Elim, in particular, it is evidently a different matter.

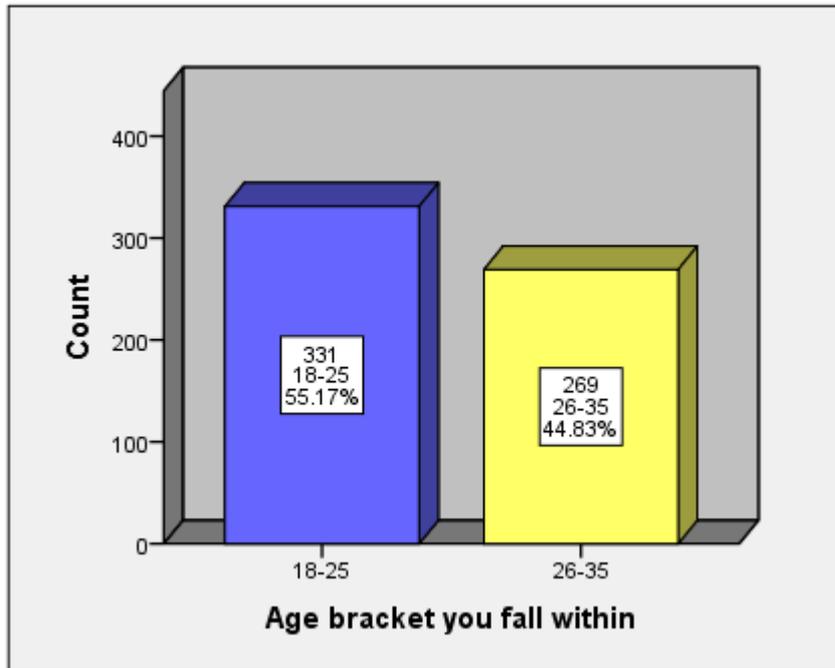


Figure 3 An illustration of an age group breakdown of respondents at Elim

4.2.3 The educational qualifications of the respondents

The pie chart below shows that young people at Elim were comfortable with engaging about their educational background, as all respondents (600 out of 600) were able to reveal their highest level of formal education. The chart further shows that the largest proportion, 250 (41.67%) of young people who live at Elim have completed matric; however, there is also a large number of respondents (31.50%; 189 respondents) who have never matriculated. The number of respondents with post-matric qualifications makes up the smallest proportion, at only 161 respondents in total (26.83%). This confirms the Limpopo Department of Social Development's (2013: 67) findings that the majority of young people in the province hold a matric certificate. However, Elim in the current study also has more respondents who have never matriculated. The findings also suggest that there is a very high number of South African students leaving school before matriculation. This is in line with the findings by Maddock (2018:192), Wilmot and Merino (2015), and Oosthuizen and Cassim (2016). Tertiary qualification attainment is low in the Elim community. This confirms the OECD indicator (2019) report that higher education attainment is still low in South Africa.

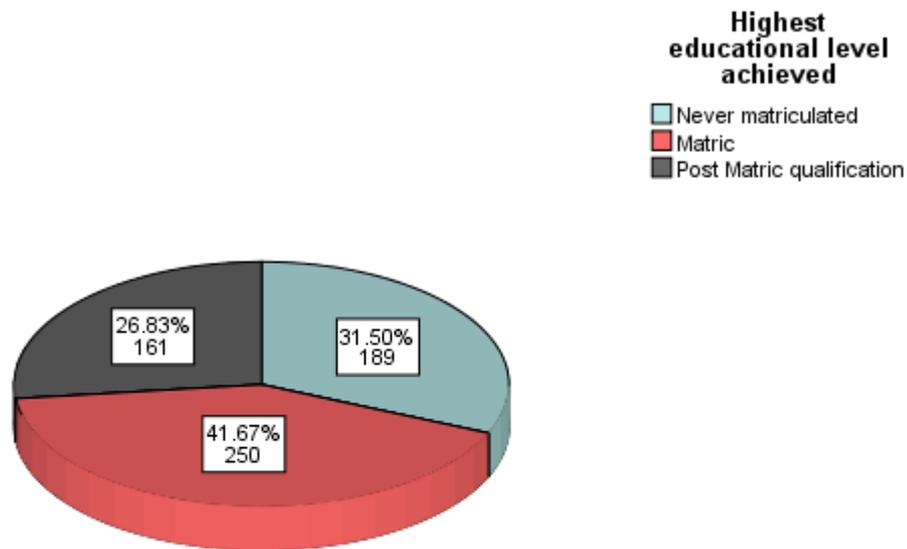


Figure 4 Educational qualifications of respondents at Elim

4.2.4 The gender makeup of the respondents

The bar graph below shows that all 600 sampled respondents were interested in engaging about their gender, with 310 (51.67%) who indicated that they are male, 289 (48.17%) indicated that they are female, while 1 (0.17%) indicated Other. The fact that the largest proportion of young people who participated in this study were male also shows an interesting observation that male respondents have a higher interest in alcohol-related engagements. Similarly, this was shown in a study by Mapulane (2014: 111) in Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province, which indicated that more respondents who were interested in research about alcohol were male respondents.

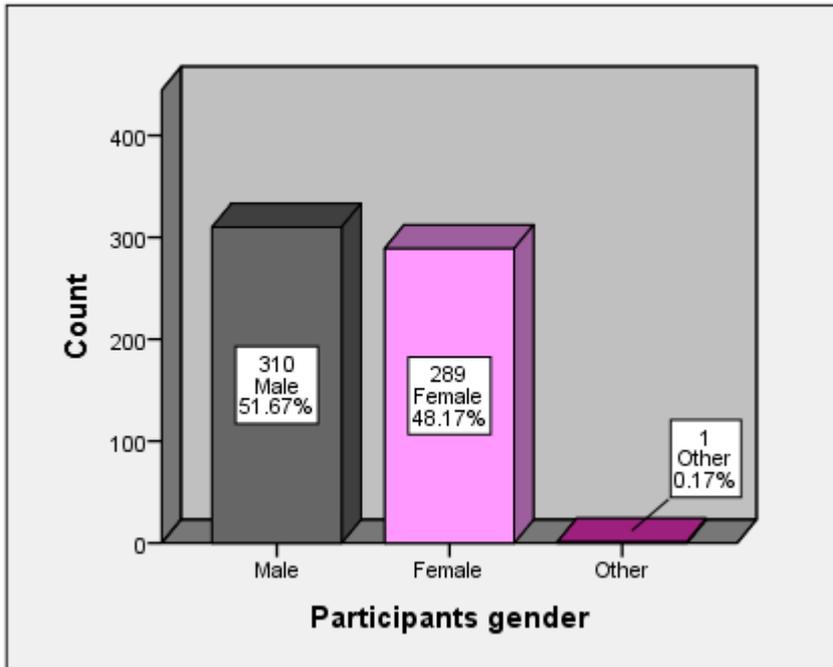


Figure 5 Gender make-up of the respondents at Elim

4.2.5 Marital status of the respondents

The largest proportion of the pie chart in Figure 4.2.7 below represents young people who are not married (487 respondents; 81.17%), young people who are married at a total of only 87 respondents (14.50%), while 26 respondents (4.33%) are divorced. The pie chart also shows that young people at Elim were willing to engage about their marital status, as all 600 respondents revealed their marital statuses. The high number of unmarried respondents can be associated with the high drinking rate at Elim, as has been documented by studies such as Trangenstein, Morojele, Lombard, Jernigan and Parry (2018), Prescott and Kendler (2001:589) and Stack and Wasserman (1993:1018). These studies have found that in South Africa and elsewhere, single people substantially have higher odds of heavy drinking, because they spend most of their time with friends in nightclubs and sports clubs.

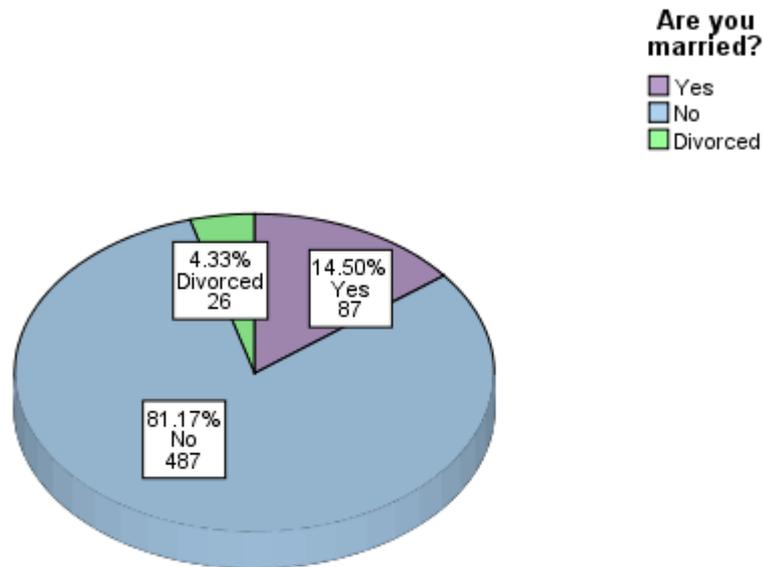


Figure 6 Marital status of the respondents

4.2.6 The religious denomination of the respondents

The graph below shows that the largest proportion of young people who took the survey (45.58%; 273 respondents) follow the Protestant religion; this is followed by those who follow African tradition (258 respondents; 43.07%). The two smallest proportions of the graph represent young people who follow the Roman Catholic religious belief system (32 respondents; 5.34%) and Other religions (6.01%; 36 respondents). This shows that the Protestant religion and African tradition share the biggest stake in a richly diverse Elim, which has many religions. These results reflect the national statistics reported in the South Africa Annual Book (2002; 2018).

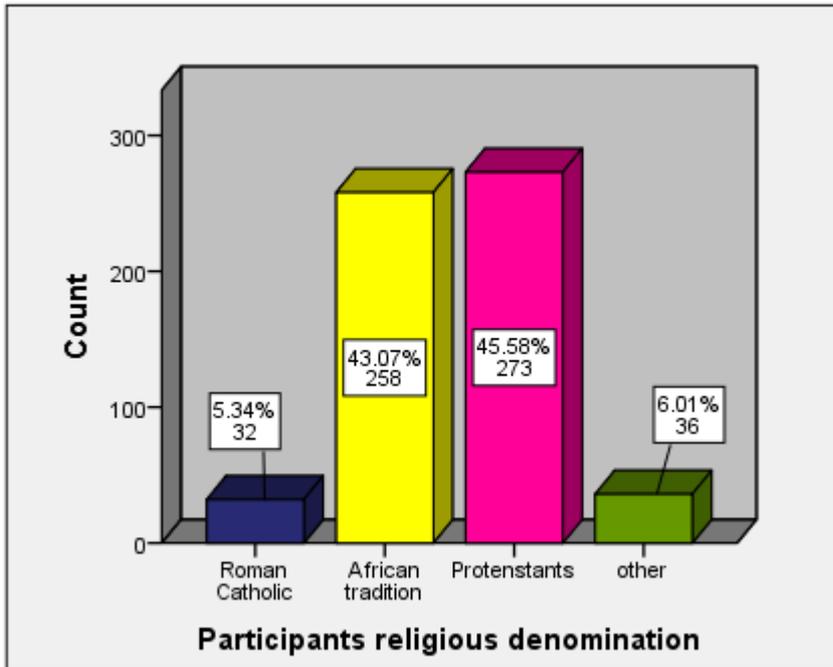


Figure 6 An illustration of the religious denominations of the respondents

It is evident, thus far, that the Elim community in Limpopo is made up of a demographically diverse population of young residents who speak a variety of South African languages, including Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, and Sesotho, among others. These residents, who are mostly between the ages of 18-25, are also most likely to hold a matric certificate, while a significant portion of them have never matriculated. Additionally, most of these residents are unmarried and mostly follow the Protestant religion.

4.3 Television viewing pattern of young people at Elim

4.3.1 Television access at Elim

The pie chart below shows that respondents at Elim are interested in engaging in discussions about their viewing patterns. It also shows that a total number of 423 respondents (70.5%) at Elim have access to television, which might expose them to alcohol advertisements, while 177 respondents (29.5%) do not have access. The very nature of television viewing, at times, includes shared viewership by people who do not own a television set but gain temporary access while being in the homes of those who do own a television set. The 29.5% of respondents with no television set in their home have presumably come into contact with a television set outside of their own home and are thus still relevant respondents in this study.

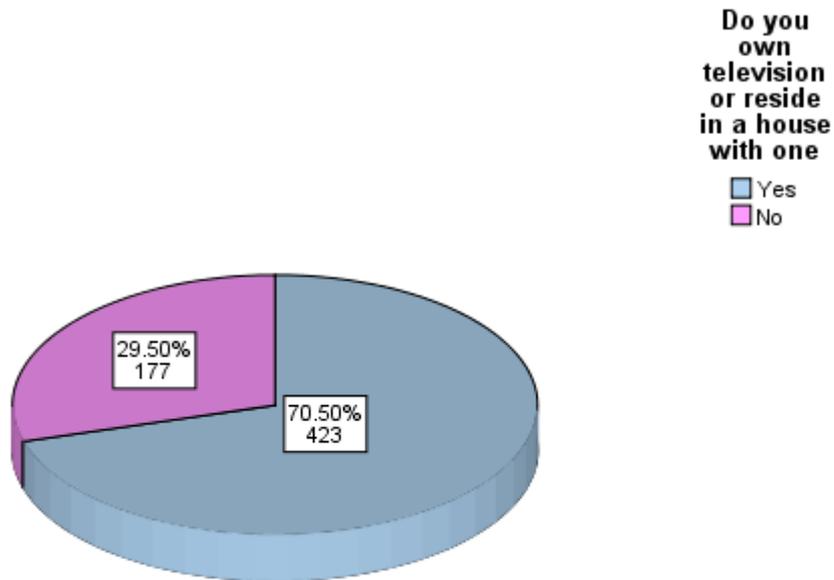


Figure 8 Television access at Elim

4.3.2 Young people's enjoyment of television

The graph below shows that the majority of young people at Elim enjoy watching television (434 respondents; 72.33%), confirming that television viewing is enjoyable for them, and 165 respondents (27.67%) indicated that they do not enjoy watching television. Thus, we can assume that the television programmes enjoyment rate that respondents at Elim have shown also means that undivided attention is given to television during viewership.

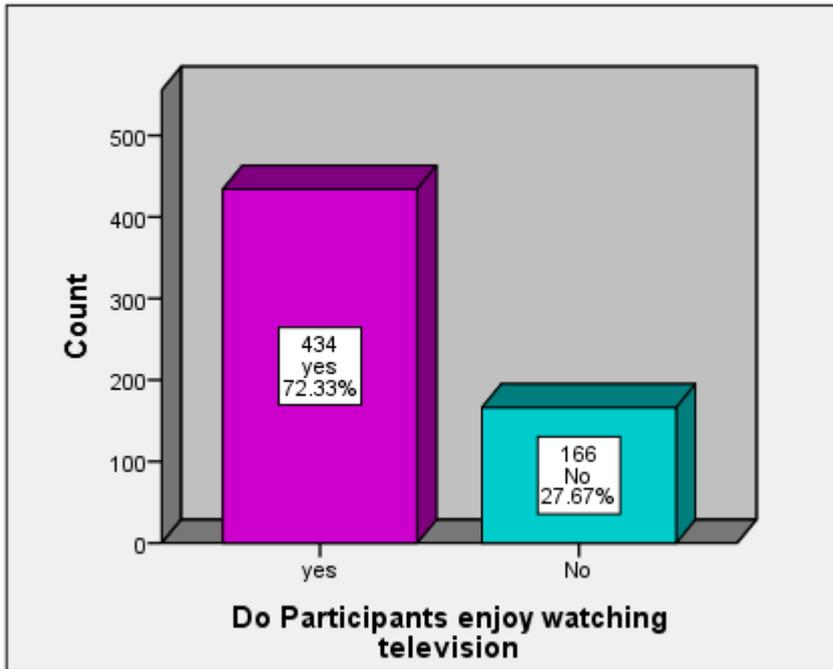


Figure 9 An illustration of whether young people at Elim enjoy watching television programmes in general

4.3.3 Young people's television viewing frequency

The pie chart below illustrates that the majority of young people at Elim (226 respondents; 42.09%) mostly watch television for two to five hours per day. Only 147 of the respondents (27.56%) indicated that they watch television for less than an hour per day. The results of the pie-chart also show that over 30% of respondents actually watch TV for more than five hours a day. This means that about 72% of the respondents watch television for two hours or more a day. Looking at the number of hours per day that young people watch television, these results confirm findings by Tamilnadu (2012) and Vioque, Torres-cantero and Quiles (2000:1686), that young

people are more likely to be exposed to countless voices and images on television.

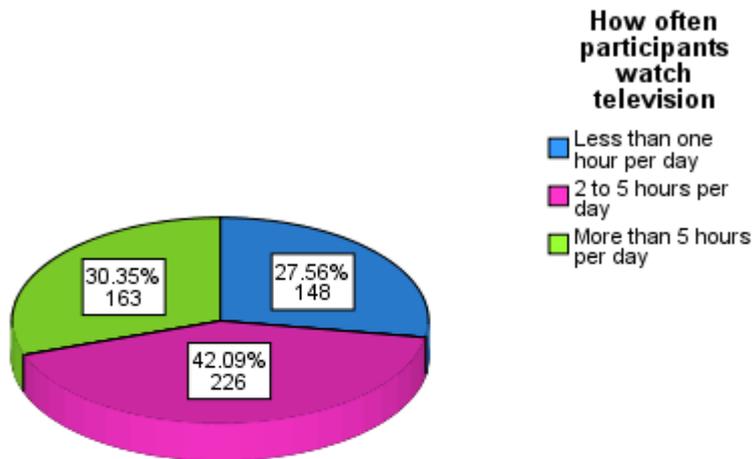


Figure 10 An illustration of respondents' television viewing frequencies

4.3.4 Times in the day when young people mostly watch television

The graph below shows that television at Elim is mostly watched in the evening (203 respondents; 37.80%), which is the largest proportion of the graph. We also have a large proportion of young people (126 respondents; 23.46%) who watch television during the morning and 109 respondents (20.30%) who reportedly prefer watching it late at night. Some (96 respondents; 17.89%) young people watch television in the afternoon, while only three respondents (0.56%) reportedly watch it the whole day. These results show that although television at Elim is mostly watched in the evening and in the morning, the number of young people who also watch it in the afternoon and late at night cannot be statistically ignored. Television is mostly watched in the evening. This confirms Stoll (2021:9) and Oztunc (2013:16), who found that young people seem to watch television mostly in the evening.

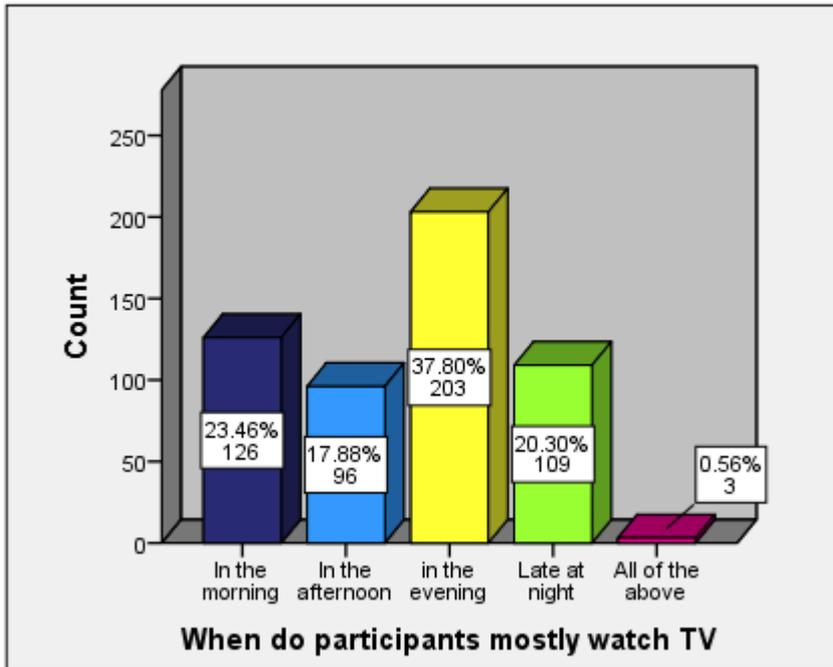


Figure 11 A bar-chart depicting the frequency of television viewing.

4.3.5 Young people's attention to advertisements between the programme

The bar graph below shows that respondents were interested in engaging about their interest in television advertisements, with all 600 having responded and no missing values noted in relation to the question about whether or not they pay attention to advertisements while watching television. It also shows that young people pay attention to advertisements between television programmes given that 411 respondents (68.50%) indicated that they pay attention between the programmes, while 189 respondents (31.50%) indicated that they do not. These results potentially reveal how important television advertisements are to young people at Elim, and they are also in line with Mapulane's (2014:115) findings that the majority of young people in Limpopo Province, South Africa, notice alcohol advertisements when watching television.

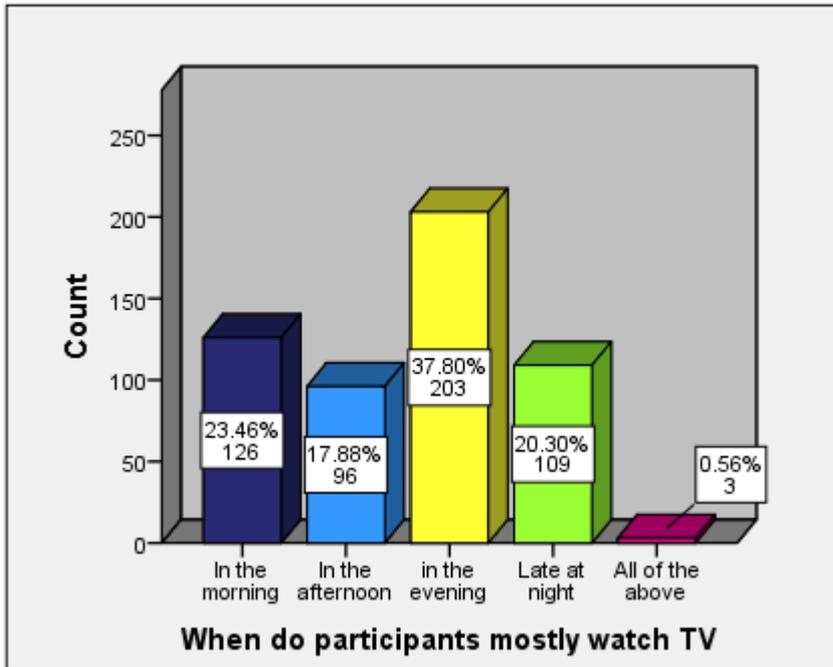


Figure 12 Graph showing young people’s attention to advertisements

4.3.6 Respondents’ reasons for not paying attention to advertisements while watching television

The graph below shows that, of the people who reported to not pay attention to advertisements, most of them (56.50%) reportedly prefer to switch to other channels during advertisements. Seventy-two (72 respondents) (40.68%) feel that advertisements are boring, while 2.82% have other reasons for not paying attention to television advertisements. The results imply that a noteworthy portion of young people at Elim does not have a positive perception of television advertisements, and others feel that advertisements are boring. The results show that young people at Elim do not watch advertisements passively. There are certain things that they look for in an advertisement, and if the advertisement does not meet those expectations, they find it boring and uninteresting. This is supported by Jones, Phillipson and Barrie (2010:355).

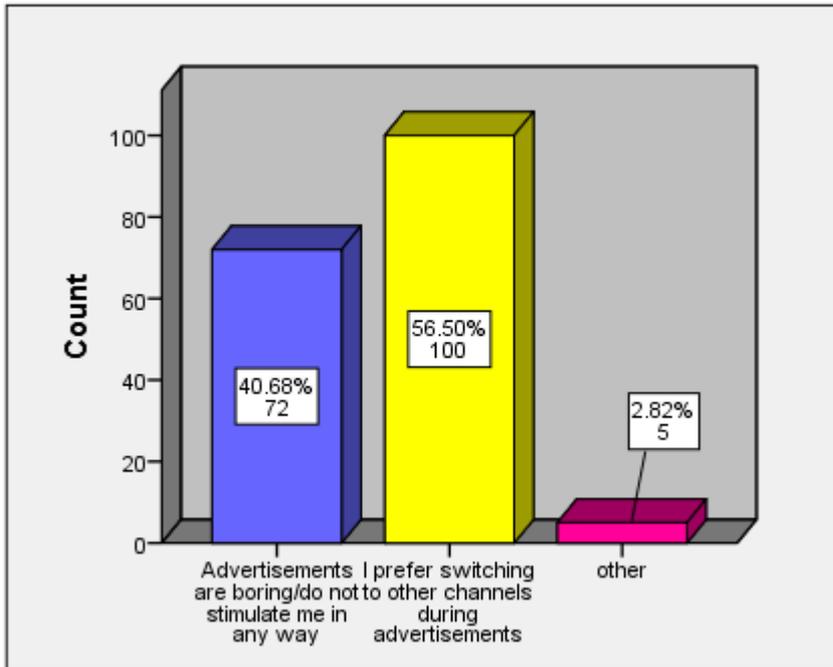


Figure 13 Reason why young people do not pay attention to advertisements

4.3.7 Young people's expectations of a good alcohol advertisement

The graph below shows that the majority of respondents at Elim (38.17%) expect advertisements to have humour, while others (221 respondents; 36.83%) expect them to contain information about the advertised product. It is surprising that fewer people (only 145 respondents; 24.17%) expect price information about the product on the television advertisement, given the high youth unemployment rate (49.6%) in Makhado municipality, in which Elim is located (Stats SA, 2011). That said, this confirms findings by Aitken et al. (1988), Chen et al. (2005), Nash, Pine and Messer (2009), Waiters and Grube (2001) and Chen, Grube, Bersamin, Waiters and Keefe (2005:554) that humorous advertisements are mostly highly rated by youth of all ages. The young people at Elim seem to respond positively to advertisements that have elements of humour.

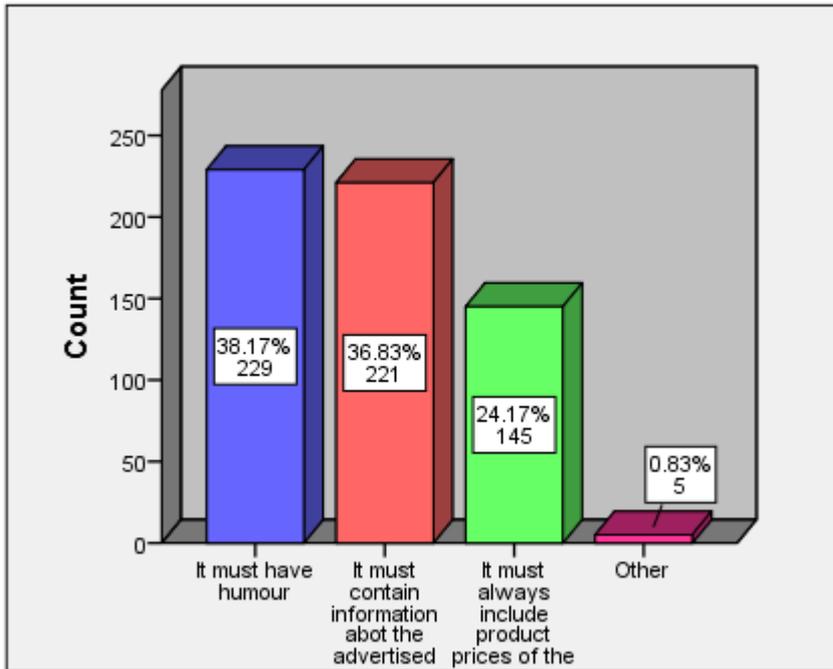


Figure 14 Graph illustrating respondents' expectations of a good advertisement

4.3.8 Non-drinkers' enjoyment rate of alcohol advertisements

The majority of the non-drinking respondents, as depicted on the pie-chart below, indicate that they care less about advertisements on television, with 121 respondents (43.84%) reporting that for them, alcohol advertising does not really matter. This is perhaps an expected indication that the majority of alcohol non-drinking young people at Elim seem to have low regard for alcohol advertisements. Notably, though, some respondents (6.52%) who are non-drinkers indicated that they do enjoy alcohol advertisements, whereas the rest (18.48%) indicated that they enjoy them sometimes. The results in the pie chart below show that the young non-drinkers at Elim exhibit the "don't care attitude" when it comes to television advertisements about alcohol, as they seem not to pay much attention to such advertisements.

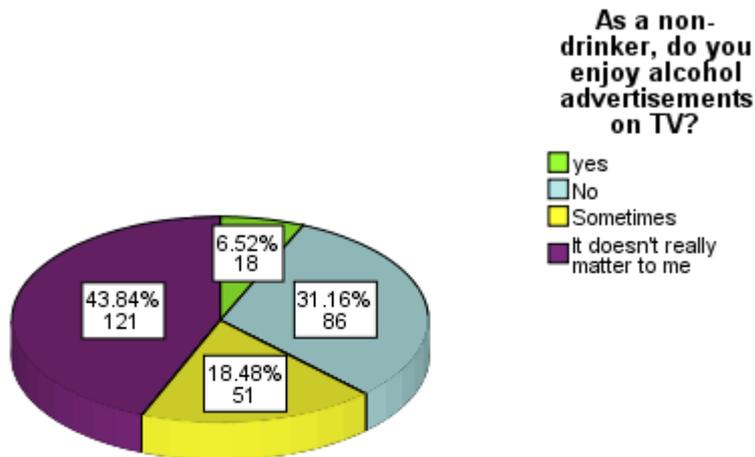


Figure 15 Pie-chart showing non-drinking respondents' interest in alcohol advertisements

4.3.9 Persuasion of a television alcohol advertisement on respondents

The graph below shows that the majority of young people at Elim are not convinced by the brand or product usage in television advertisements, with 261 respondents (43.50%) saying “no” to the question about whether or not they are convinced by the usage of the brand or product being advertised on television. On the other hand, 34.17% of young people (205 respondents) indicated that they are convinced, while 134 (22.33%) indicated that they are sometimes convinced. Here we can begin to notice a relationship between the persuasive and/or dissuasive ‘power’ of television alcohol advertising on young people at Elim. It seems that such advertisements are not significantly persuasive to the majority of young people in question, given that over 43% of respondents were not convinced to try out the alcohol brands/products that they come across in television advertisements.

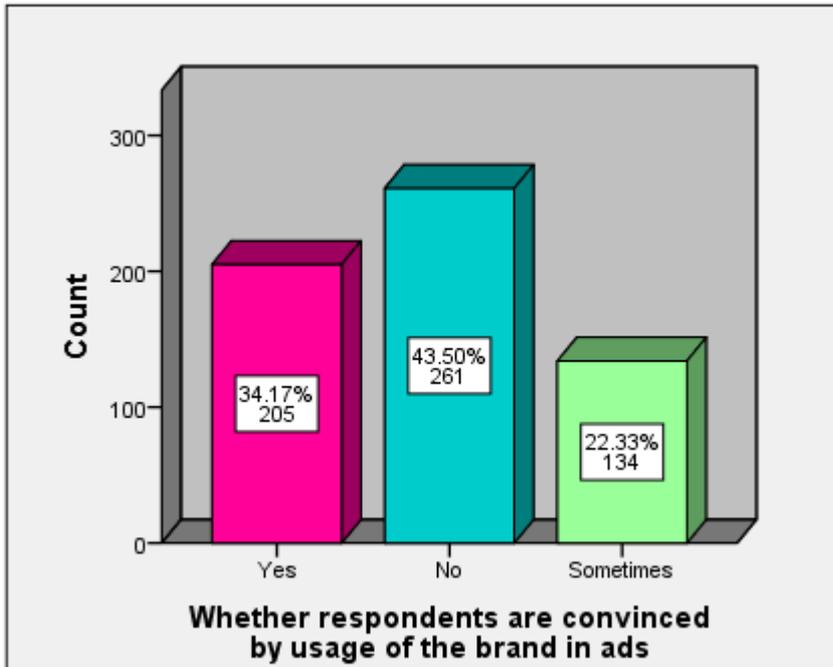


Figure 16 Graph showing the persuasiveness of an advertisement

Viewers' responses at this stage provide significant insights regarding the extent and nature of television viewing patterns by Elim residents. It can be noted that the Elim community in Limpopo is exposed to television alcohol advertisements as a majority of the residents (70.5%) indicated that they have access to television. It is also notable that Elim residents watch television for two hours or more a day, mostly in the evening. When the residents watch television programmes, they notice advertisements when they play on television. However, the non-drinking respondents seem to care less about alcohol advertisements. Again, it is evident that Elim residents harbour certain expectations from the alcohol advertisements they are exposed to on television. Most importantly, they expect alcohol advertisements to have humour. Moreover, the data also shows that alcohol advertisements are not significantly persuasive to the residents.

4.4 Young people's awareness of alcohol and alcohol consumption

4.4.1 Respondents' alcohol knowledge development

The results in the table below show that the majority of the surveyed young people (241 respondents; 40.2%) were initially introduced to alcohol by their friends. Parents are the second most significant contributors to these young people's initial knowledge about alcohol, with a total of 198 respondents (33.0%). Surprisingly, a relatively smaller percentage of young people (100 respondents; 16.7%) believe that they were

introduced to alcohol by television advertisements, while some (61 respondents; 10.2%) believe that other sources played a role in exposing them to alcohol. The results are not a new finding in research as they are notably in line with Casswell et al.'s (1988) and Velleman's (2009:20) observations that there are multiple external influences on the development of knowledge in young people. However, in light of the above findings, it is an insightful finding as most researchers, such as John Shacks (1990:60) have fingered parents or the media as the top and usual culprits that introduce young people to alcohol, instead of friends, as is the case in this instance. This finding must be taken with caution since Velleman (2009:20) warned that knowledge of alcohol can be acquired in many ways and that youth's perceptions of how they acquire such knowledge are not necessarily correct.

Awareness of alcohol

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid My parents	198	33.0	33.0	33.0
My friends	241	40.2	40.2	73.2
TV advertisements	100	16.7	16.7	89.8
Other	61	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	600	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the initial sources of alcohol knowledge of the respondents

4.4.2 Respondents' memory of alcohol advertisements

The bar graph below shows that all respondents were interested in answering the question that inquired about the advertisements that they had recently seen on television, with all 600 respondents answering the question. The results show that the majority of young people at Elim have the ability to remember the advertised alcohol brands that they have seen on television, with 64.17% of young people (385 respondents) being able to specify the advertised brands. However, there is also a notably smaller number of young people (115 respondents; 19.17%) who indicated that they could not remember at all, the alcoholic brands that were recently advertised on television. These results may be an indication that the young people at Elim have a good memory of the advertisements that they watch on television and can recall advertisements after watching them. However, a percentage of young people who indicated that they could not remember advertisements that they had recently seen

can be explained by borrowing from Vaughan et al's study as cited in Geoffrey Precourt (2016: 78), which found that brand users systematically remember advertising for that brand more than non-brand users. The proportion of respondents who reportedly could not recall any alcohol-related advertising that they had recently come across on television are most likely non-drinkers of alcohol.

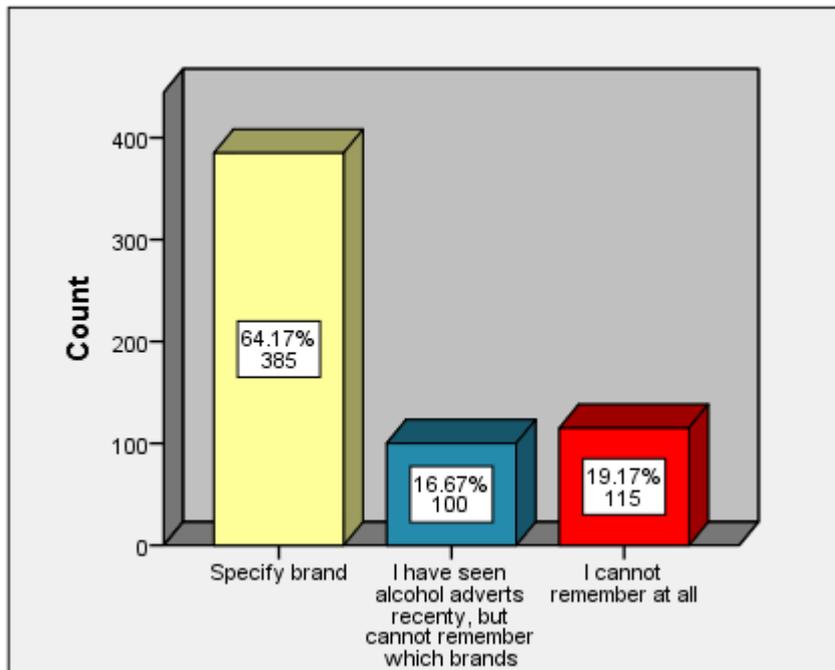


Figure 17 Graph showing respondents' advertisements' recall

4.4.3 Top five alcohol brands specified by young people at Elim

The table below shows that 385 respondents were able to specify the alcohol brand that they recall being recently advertised on television, while 215 were not able to specify the brand because they could not remember. This means that all the brand names provided in this sub-section were named only by a total of 385 respondents out of the 600.

Alcohol brands recently seen on TV

N	Valid	385
	Missing	215

Table 2 shows respondents' interest in the question asked (valid responses versus non-responses)

The table below shows the top four advertisements that were mentioned by young people at Elim in their questionnaire surveys. The advertisements mostly mentioned were the Savanna Dry Cider advert with 60 responses (15.2%), the Carling Black Label advert with 52 responses (13.2%), the Heineken Lager advert with 47 responses (11.9%), and the Flying Fish advert with 27 responses (6.9%). However, there were a total of 31 other advertisements that were mentioned by respondents. This study selected the top four, and the rest of the advertisements were grouped as 'other' (203 respondents; 52.2%), as seen in the table below. The ability of young people at Elim to recall 31 advertisements is explained by Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005: 457), who argue that they have more content knowledge about alcohol that they have grasped from different sources in their lives.

Name of the brand	Frequency	Percentage
Savanna Dry Cider	60	15.6%
Carling Black Label	52	13.5%
Heineken Lager	47	12.2%
Flying Fish	27	7.0%
Other	199	51.7%

Table 3 shows the brands that were mentioned by the respondents.

4.4.4 The frequency of respondents' exposure to alcohol advertisements on television

The respondents were questioned about the frequency with which they see alcohol advertisements on television. The majority of them (43.86%) indicated that they see alcohol advertisements almost every day, while 138 (27.77%) respondents recalled seeing the advertisements on a weekly basis. This means that 71.64% of the surveyed respondents have seen at least one alcohol advertisement in one week's time-frame. The results imply that young people at Elim are repeatedly exposed to television advertisements. This confirms Tamilnadu's (2012:102) study findings that viewers, especially young people, are exposed to thousands of voices and images on television on a daily basis.

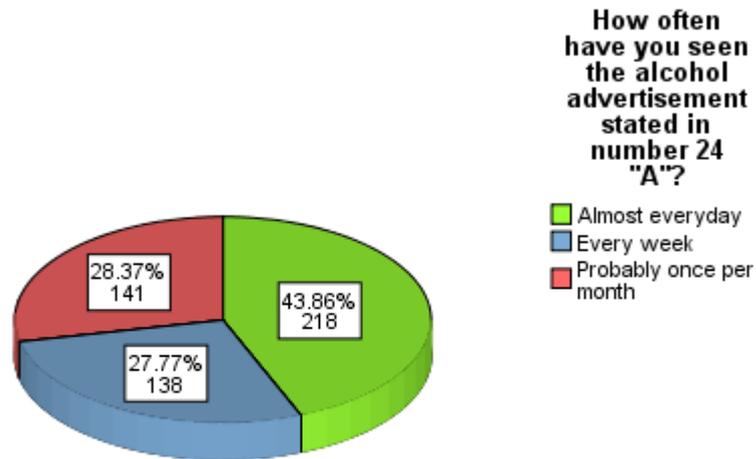


Figure 18 Pie-chart showing respondents' advertisements' exposure frequency

4.4.5 Respondents' alcohol drinking status

The research respondents were asked about their drinking status. All 600 sampled respondents were comfortable disclosing their drinking status. The pie chart below shows that there is a bigger proportion of young people who drink alcohol at Elim (322 respondents; 53.67%), and a smaller proportion of those who do not drink (278 respondents; 46.33%). The results paint a bleak picture, as the number of young people who drink at Elim surpasses that of those who do not drink. This confirms a finding carried out by the Limpopo Department of Health (2013) and by Moyo (2014), who found that the majority of young people in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape drink alcohol.

**Acohol
consumption
by
respondents**

yes
No

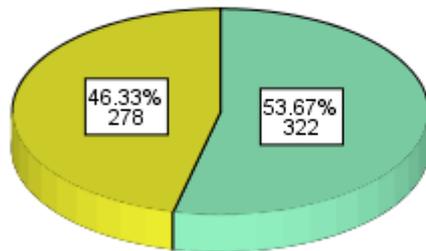


Figure 19 Pie-chart showing respondents' drinking statuses

4.4.6 Respondents' drinking frequencies

The graph below shows that the majority of young people who drink alcohol at Elim do so during the weekends (129 respondents; 40.06%). It is worth noting that there are a number of young people who reportedly drink daily (50 respondents; 15.53%) and 3-5 times a week (66 respondents; 20.50%). Data from Parry (1998:45) as well as Smuts (2009:66) and Mafa, Makhubele, Ananias, Chilwalo, Matlakala, Rapholo, Svinurai, Hasheela, Tiberia and Freeman (2019:87) confirm this study's findings as they show that alcohol consumption occurs mainly on weekends among the youth.

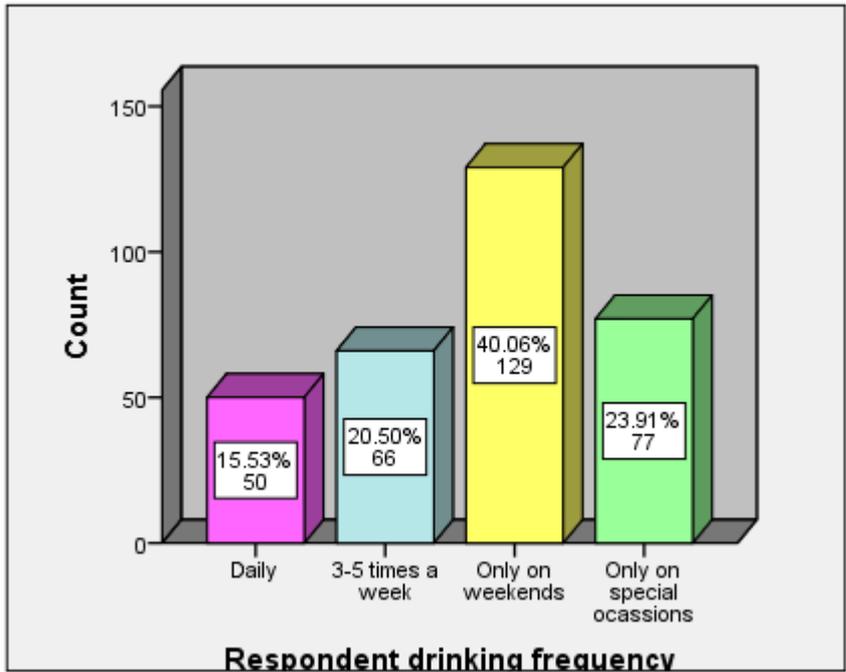


Figure 20 Graph showing respondents' drinking frequency

4.4.7 Binge Drinking at Elim

The pie chart below demonstrates that the majority of young people in Elim (363 respondents; 60.50%) do not indulge in binge drinking; nonetheless, it is important to note that 237 young people (39.50%) reported engaging in binge drinking. According to Ramsomar and Morojele (2012), this is due to the fact that binge drinking is not yet widespread in South Africa but is on the rise annually.

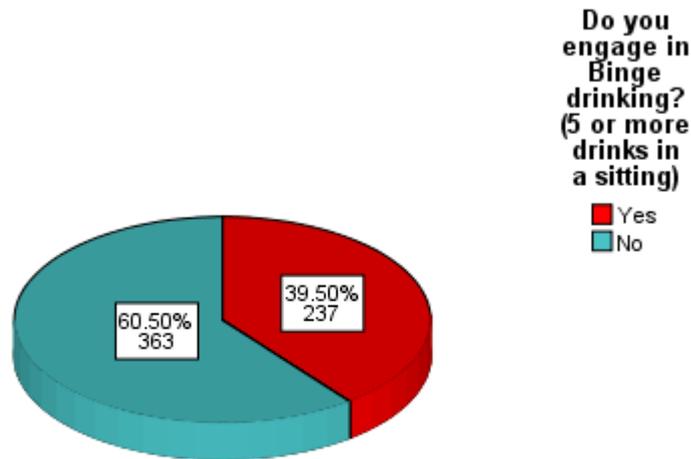


Figure: 21 Pie-chart showing binge drinking engagement of respondents

4.4.8 Alcohol importance and use in other activities by respondents

The graph below illustrates that 307 survey respondents (51.17%) representing young people at Elim use alcohol in other life activities (such as traditional rituals), as opposed to using alcohol merely to become intoxicated, while 293 respondents (48.83%) reported that they use alcohol just for the sake of intoxication. These results show that the status of alcohol at Elim goes beyond the purpose of becoming intoxicated and is valued even for African traditional practices, for instance. This is in line with Babane and Chauke's (2015:109) and Murimbika's (2006:159) findings that alcohol is central in African traditional practices such as rain making, weddings, pouring libations, and initiations.

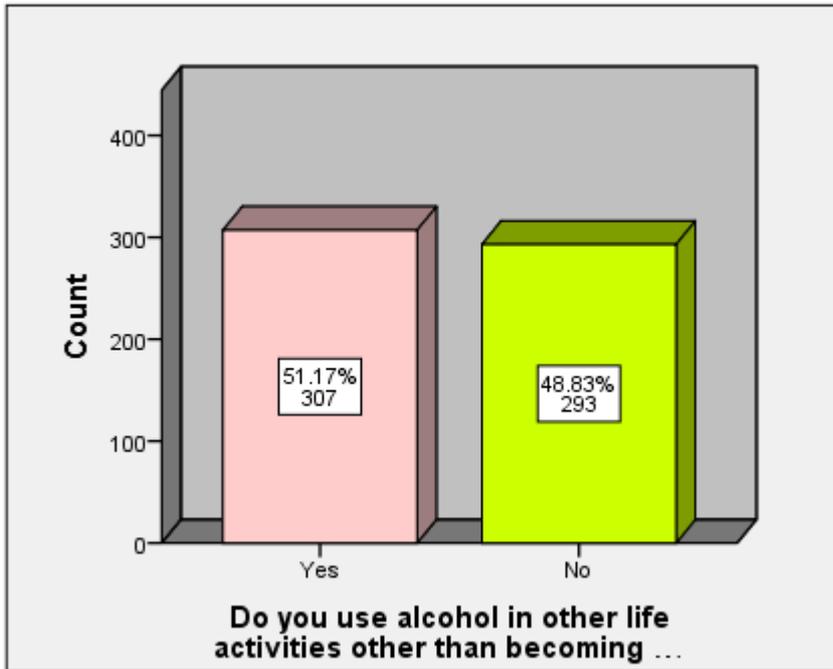


Figure 22 Graph showing the usage of alcohol in other activities

4.4.9 Respondents' perceptions about alcohol drinking

The pie chart below shows that although alcohol drinking is generally regarded badly (322 respondents; 53.67%), there is also a large number of young people who perceive it in a positive light because they associate it with good times (276 respondents; 46.00%). These results show that young people at Elim (although not all) are aware of the more negative consequences of drinking alcohol, as is widely captured in the mass media and education system (Life Orientation/Life Skills subjects) in the country. This is in line with Danton, Misselke, Bacon and Done's (2003:57), who found that young people are aware of the potential risks of drinking alcohol.

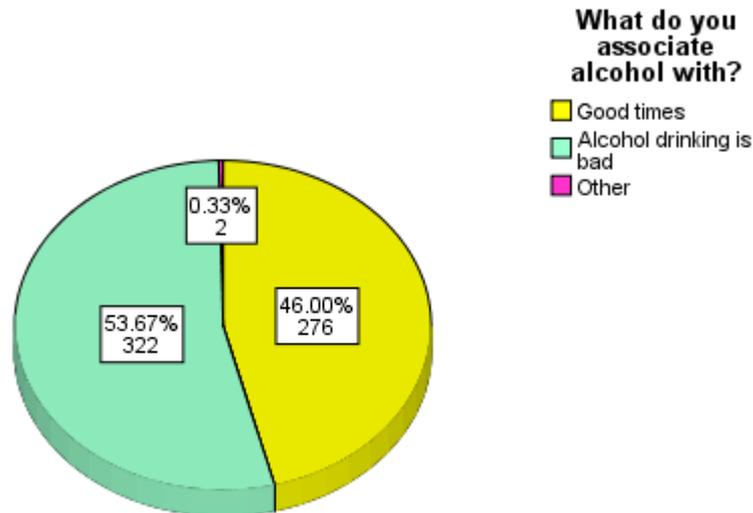


Figure 23 shows respondents' perceptions about alcohol drinking.

4.4.10 Alcohol category preferences by respondents' gender

The results of the graph below show that 129 (21.50%) of the male respondents prefer to drink beer, 34 (5.67.0%) wine, 11 (1.83%) spirits, and 27 (4.50%) prefer fabs and ciders. 108 (18.00%) of the male respondents indicated that they do not drink alcohol, while only 1 (0.17%) indicated that they prefer other drinks like African beer (umqomboti). With regard to the female respondents, 86 (14.33%) prefer beer, 27 (4.50%) wine, 14 (2.33%) spirits, 30 (5.00%) fabs and ciders, while 132 (22.00%) of them do not drink alcohol. What is disturbing about these results is that some of the non-drinking respondents (38), for some strange reasons, went on to choose their preferred alcoholic categories on the questionnaires that were distributed to them. Perhaps this indicates their inclination or expectancies towards alcohol drinking. It is important to highlight that 8.7% of male respondents have indicated that they prefer fabs and ciders (drinks that are stereotypically associated with women), while a staggering 14.33% of female respondents showed a preference for beer (a drink that is stereotypically associated with men). Although these findings are somewhat in line with Jimborean (2021:89), Podstawski, Wesolowska and Choszcz (2017:145) and Walbeek and Blecher's observations (2014:94) that men prefer heavy drinks such as beer, and women prefer light drinks such as cider, there seems to be a significant and interestingly high percentage of women at Elim who prefer beer.

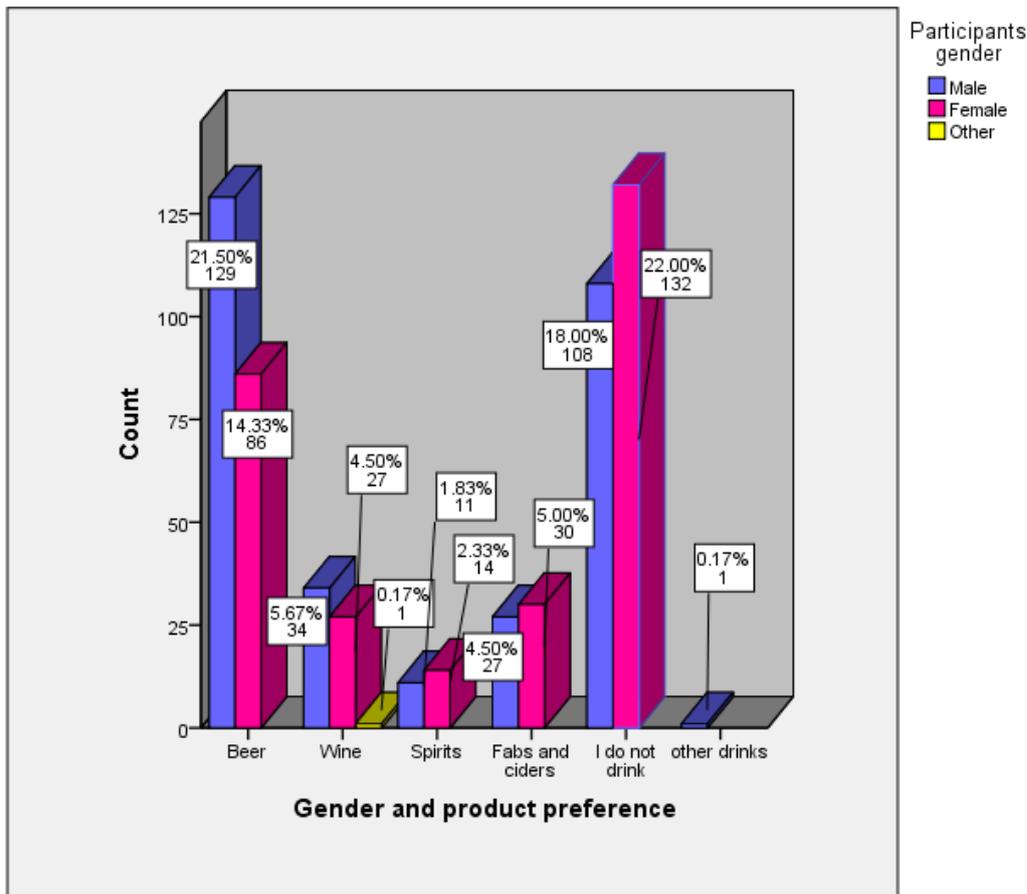


Figure 24 Graph showing alcohol preferences by gender

4.4.11 Perceptions about alcohol by respondents based on spiritual/religious affiliation

The chart below shows respondents from different religious denominations and their perceptions about alcohol. The religion that mostly believes that alcohol drinking is bad appears to be the Protestant religion (181 respondents; 30.17%), while the religion that mostly associates alcohol with good times is the African tradition (140 respondents; 23.33%). Although the Protestant and Roman Catholic respondents believe that alcohol drinking is bad, not all of them do so, as there are respondents from these denominations who believe that alcohol is for good times. There are 90 (15.00%) Protestant respondents and 15 Roman Catholic respondents (2.50%) who associate alcohol drinking with good times. The results show that the African tradition views alcohol consumption in a positive light.

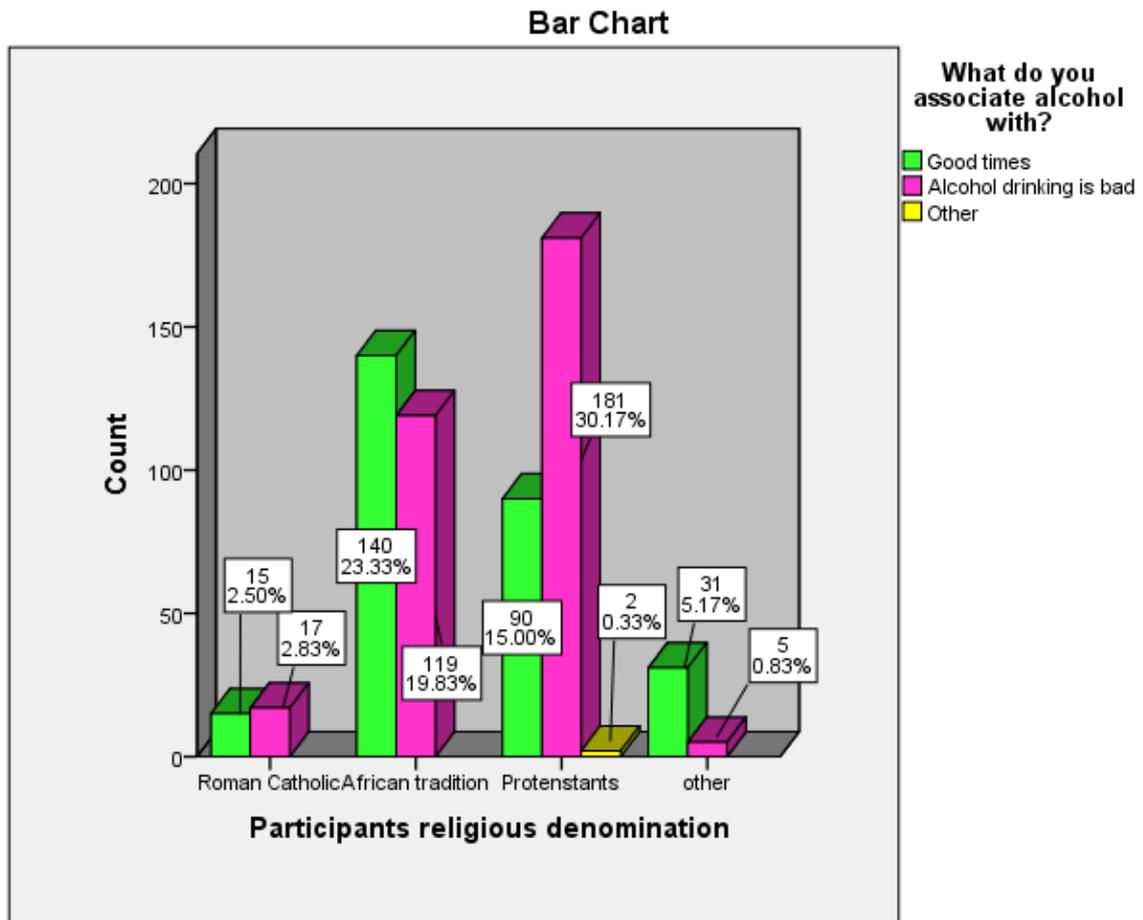


Figure 26 shows the significance of culture on alcohol consumption.

It is evident that most young people at Elim drink alcohol (53.67%), and believe that their initial knowledge about alcohol come from their friends. It can be further noted that the majority (64.17%) of young people at Elim have the ability to remember the advertised alcohol brands that they have seen on television. The researcher additionally notes that weekends are the most suitable times when young people drink alcohol the most. Elim residents use alcohol in other life activities (such as traditional rituals), and African religion is most interestingly the religion that mostly associates alcohol with good times. Additionally, the researcher has noticed a significant and interestingly high percentage of women at Elim who prefer beer. The data presented in the next section is a qualitative in-depth interview data as this paper used a mixed method in an attempt to provide a more rounded picture so that more conclusive answers can be drawn.

SECTION B: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.5 INTRODUCTION

In this section, results from the qualitative findings of this research project will be described in detail. As outlined in chapter three, the data that captures the findings discussed in this section was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with a total of ten participants. With the adoption of thematic content analysis, this section is able to make further progress towards responding to the research questions of the study. This will be reflected in the diverse expressions given by the consulted audience members.

The interviews with the ten participants produced a rich set of data that is very closely interpreted in this part of the dissertation, to arrive at five overarching themes. As mentioned in Chapter 3, each interview session began with the screening of three alcohol television advertisements on a laptop. Therefore, this section will start by describing the three advertisements that were used during the interview sessions. These are the Carling Black Label advertisement, the Heineken advertisement and the Savanna advertisement.

4.6 DESCRIPTION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTS USED IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

4.6.1 Heineken advert

The Heineken “Cheers to all” advertisement (Heineken, 2020) takes a light-hearted view on the social stereotypes associated with ordering certain alcoholic drinks. Through this campaign, Heineken appears to encourage viewers to look at life with a fresh perspective. The advertisement shows that beer is for everyone. The campaign seeks to challenge the status quo, and break down stereotypes in relation to alcohol and gender identity. It features a montage of men and women in different social contexts (bars, pubs, and art galleries, for instance) being served the wrong drinks by bartenders, waitresses, and waiters who seemingly assume that the Heineken beer orders were made by men, and the cocktail orders by women. The different drink servers wrongly assume what each belongs to, and as the drinkers look around

puzzled, they swap drinks so that they can enjoy their real drinks of choice. The advertisement shows, for example, men choosing a fizzy pink cocktail with a candy cherry that has a little umbrella in it with a tropical pattern over the option of an ice-cold Heineken beer. On the other hand, plenty of women are shown choosing Heineken beer over the cocktail option. Although the advertisement mainly shows that alcoholic drinks have no gender limitations, it also shows waiters mistaking orders of food. In one scene, a waiter is also seen bringing hamburgers and fries together with a green salad order, and giving these to the wrong people by assuming that the salad order belonged to the woman and the burger order belonged to the man; the food is also seen to be swapped by the two customers eventually.

4.6.2 *Savanna my friend advert*

Savanna “my friend” advert (Gray's Casting Directors, 2021) is an advertisement that is overloaded with dry humour; the advertisement suggests that people do not need to know each other’s names to be friends. Through this campaign, the Savanna brand brings a light-hearted perspective on life amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, trying to tap into everyday situations in social settings. It is suggested in the advertisement that people should be happy to see their friends, even the ones whose names they do not know. The advertisement shows two people in a bar who are happy to see each other, and everything seemed to be all good and well during their brief interaction with one another, until one of the guys turns back towards the bar; and the bartender asked one crucial question, which is “What is his name?”. The question leaves the guy dumbfounded as he appears to have no idea what the other gentleman’s name is. This awkward moment is immediately interrupted by a voice-over saying the line “*Siyavanna, South Africa*” (broadly meaning, ‘We get you, South Africa’; ‘we are on the same page, South Africa’). The advertisement also has the COVID-19 social distancing message, together with the drinking age restriction written on the screen.

4.6.3 *Carling Black Label advertisement*

The Carling Black Label “siya sebenza” advertisement (carlson madz, 2011) is about hard work and beer. It shows men working hard to build a soccer stadium from scratch. Men are shown burning steel, welding, and bringing all the essential parts together. After all the components of the stadium are ready, they are then transferred to the site where the stadium will be built, and the combination of these components begins as

workers weld them together. Different techniques are used, such as the use of cranes and hands to lift some of the equipment. When the stadium is done, a man is shown removing his helmet in disbelief of the amazing structure that they have just put together. A crate full of black label quarts is shown being pulled out of a cold drum, and men are shown celebrating their achievement with ice-cold beer. The advert has a background song that talks about sweat, steel, and dreams, working day and night; and the phrase '*siya sebenza*' (we are working) underscores the background song.

4.7 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA FINDINGS

Following the screening of the three advertisements described above, the interview sessions started off by using these advertisements as a point of departure into conversations that were held with each of the ten participants privately. These conversations were insightful in terms of allowing the researcher an opportunity to deeply explore the perceptions, thoughts, and opinions of the interviewees in relation to these advertisements and their content, as well as the interviewees' broader thoughts about alcohol and alcohol consumption. From these conversations, five key themes are identified and discussed below.

4.7.1 Alcohol and alcohol consumption as emotionally rewarding and physically refreshing

During the interview sessions, thoughts around the idea of rewarding and refreshing came up quite often in the conversations. This especially happened in relation to the Carling Black Label advertisement. The ideological perspective of the advertiser or the encoder on the Carling Black Label advertisement was to associate the beer with hard work and reward, as men were shown working hard, building a stadium, and at the end of the project, drinking Carling Black Label beer. There appears to be a consistent theme of 'freshness' and 'rewarding' in the participants' interpretations and reflections about this TV advert in relation to their own consumption of alcohol (for the respondents who are drinkers). See some of the respondents' comments below:

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, drinker): There is no part of the advertisement that I disagree with. There was this one day that I worked hard, and after working hard, I took a bath and went to refresh myself by drinking at a tavern.

After drinking beer, I had even forgotten that I just came from work by the way how I felt refreshed.

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, drinker): I agree with the part that you can have a refreshing beer after a long day's work. I think there the advertiser is right because practically if you can look at most hard-working people, you will find out that they drink; maybe the advertiser is right and I agree with the advertiser. I do not disagree, I agree fully.

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, drinker): I think this advert is relevant to me. When you are working hard and sweating there must be a way that you reward yourself after work. I reward myself after working hard. If I feel like drinking alcohol, I do so, and if I feel like drinking a cool drink, I drink a cool drink.

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, drinker): I agree with this advertisement 100%. I agree that if a person works hard and get tired, they can gets refreshment from anything that is cold.

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, drinker): Yah I do, let us say I am coming from work, and I am very tired and I have been doing some hard work, when I go to the counter, I do not think I can buy Heineken, I will have to buy Black Label because siya sebenza.

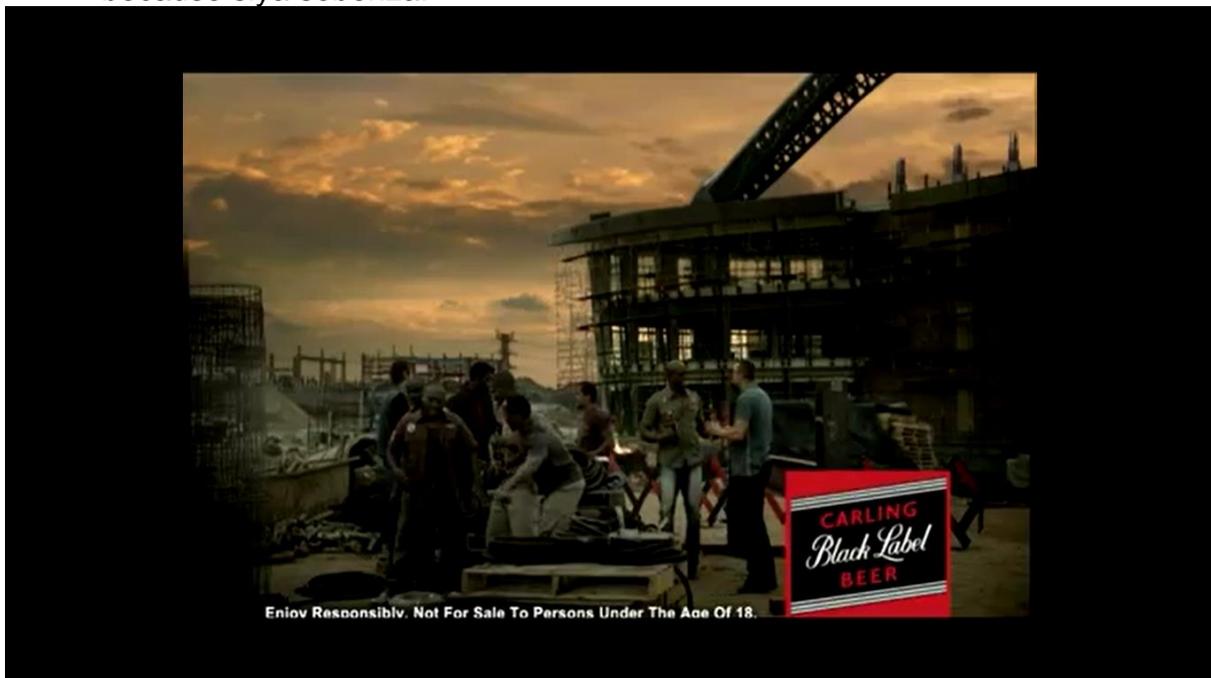


Image 1 showing construction worker refreshing with a carling black label beer after a hard work of building a stadium

Alcohol or alcohol consumption is regarded as a rewarding thing that 'hard working' adults 'deserve' as they tackle their day-to-day lives. This presents quite a positive

attitude towards alcohol and its consumption. This observation is in line with Padon, Rimal, DeJong, Siegel and Jernigan (2018:67) and Anderson (2007:40), who found that the content of alcohol advertising may have a special appeal to young people to the extent that they believe that drinking has positive consequences.

By looking at the responses of the respondents above, it is clear that they seem to take a dominant position, by looking at the positive regard that they seem to have about the advertisement that was shared with them. Respondents evidently agreed with the hegemonic position of the encoder of the message (that alcohol, especially Carling Black Label, 'refreshes' and is a 'reward' after a long day's work). Most of them seem to cite not only their own drinking experiences; but also their other life experiences as a reference to their understanding of the advertisement. The advertisement seems to connect with viewers' drinking life experiences, as seen in the responses above. For example, respondent 2 argues that she totally agrees with the advertisement because there was this other day that she went to a tavern to refresh after a long day's work. This finding highlights Çelik's (2011:50) and Raftopoulou's (2007) propositions that viewers connect the emotional appeals of advertisements with their life experiences when taking the dominant position of the advertisements.

4.7.2 Alcohol and alcohol consumption as fostering friendship, teamwork, and togetherness

In our conversations about the screened advertisements and alcohol consumption in general, participants generally appear to reiterate this positive sense about alcohol or alcohol consumption in their readings of the advertisements shared with them. In this respect, this study found that the lived experiences of audiences evidently play a critical role in how they decode alcohol advertisements. This is because participants who have experienced friendship, teamwork, and togetherness (including non-drinkers who have experienced it in other areas of their lives) were mostly associated with a dominant position in their decoding of the three advertisements by claiming that they personally relate to the sense of friendship, togetherness, and teamwork that they observe in these advertisements. This was especially the case in relation to the Savanna advertisement about friendship and the Carling Black Label advertisement about teamwork. See comments below from the respondents on the theme of friendship and togetherness:

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, Drinker): I have never experienced something like this in my life [referring to the experience shown in the Savanna advert where the two characters were happily interacting without even knowing each other's names], but what I do know is that Savanna can bring happiness and it is on top of the list of my favourite beers.

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, Drinker): I agree with the fact that people can make friends when they are drunk. Usually when you are drinking with someone, you can easily make a friendship, but tomorrow you won't remember the person you were with, or the person can come and greet you and tell you that you were doing this and that yesterday, things that you don't even remember.

Respondent 4 (Male, 19, Non-drinker): I agree with the greeting part (in the Savanna advert); when you see people, you must greet them. It is good to live happily and be friendly with other people, especially in your community. I am also a friendly person, and I live in harmony with other people.

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, Drinker): I agree that it is easy to make friendship at a place where alcohol is drunk. When you are busy drinking, it is not easy to remember all the people that you have met because you are tipsy. You might find that you meet that person again and then you don't know where you know the person from; that is the sad part about the advertisement. You may find that when you meet these people, they greet you with a smile to show that they know you. I have also met people and then forgotten their names. I like how he greeted the other guy [referring to the character in the Savanna advertisement], he didn't show that he did not know him or that he did not remember his name, you know.

Respondent 7 (Female, 23, Non-drinker): I agree that people can form friendships through alcohol, maybe when they are at the bar.



Do the right thing, my friend. Always wear a mask and keep 1.5m apart.



DRINK RESPONSIBLY. NOT FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.

Image 2 from Savanna “my friend” ad showing a warm elbow greeting of two character in a bar

From these quotations, we can see how the interviewees demonstrate ways in which the content of the Savanna advertisement resonates with them and their own life experiences as far as friendship and bonding is concerned. Some interviewees seem to reinforce the idea that alcohol consumption is good for friendship building in social contexts because strangers may easily get along while they are engaging in alcohol drinking even if they do not know each other’s names.

Participants further expressed views around the teamwork and togetherness that was displayed by the Carling Black Label beer advertisement. These views were also in concurrence with the dominant position that the advertisement seems to encourage: that alcohol can foster teamwork and bonding. See some participants’ responses in this regard:

Respondent 9 (Male, 34, Drinker): I agree with the part that says if people come together and work as a team, they can accomplish any task.

Respondent 8 (Male, 35, Drinker): The team work, and drinking and socialising are relevant to my life.

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, Drinker): Yes, because most of the things that were shown are who I am as a drinker and a hard worker (regarding the teamwork and togetherness displayed by the advert).

Respondent 8 (Male, 35, Drinker): I agree with teamwork that I have seen. I am a team player myself.

Respondent 5 (Female, 35, Non-drinker): I like how those people are working. That contractor the way it's working, it brings this positive energy.

Respondent 9 (male, 34, Drinker): The team work part, I am the person who likes working with other people and communication; if you can look at the advert, you will see that when it starts, there is a part where they pull a big building block by a crane while others are pushing it on the ground to join it with other parts. The two people who are pulling it and the one who is on the crane shows that there is communication among them, and afterward, there is also an understanding.



Image 3 showing team work in a Carling black label advertisement

Interestingly, with many of these responses in relation to interviewees' thoughts and reactions about the alcohol advertisements that were screened at the start of the interviews, it is noticeable that most of them seemed to adopt the dominant position without much disagreement with the events taking place in the advertisements under consideration. This is in line with the reception analysis related work by Aminudin (2019:15) and Gassner (2011:120), who found that audiences see things happening in advertisements in the light or lenses of their past experiences.

4.7.3 TV alcohol advertising as disingenuously/dishonestly mobilising upward mobility and class aspiration

Another theme that was evident from an analysis of the interview data was that there seems to be a very strong awareness from participants that alcohol advertising is more than a mere entertainment but also strongly related to the 'selling' of particular 'high class' lifestyles. See some comments from interview participants below:

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, Drinker): [...], it would depend whether you follow that lifestyle that is being portrayed on the advertisement. Not everyone can afford a lifestyle that is shown on TV, like when people are shown in suburbs or in mansions. You may find that when I want to chill, I go to the park or go to the pub.

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, Drinker): I think in this sense when we are talking about beer (alcohol), as you can see with the Carling Black Label compared to Heineken and Savanna, the advertisements are being taken in very different settings. The one with the black label is showing hard-working men, sweaty people like is not that of classy lifestyles, but with the Heineken beer, they are showing people in restaurants wearing suits, like nice people. I think that is what they are showing there. And with Savanna, they are showing people in a bar, so they are different settings, so advertisements really do show different lifestyles and they influence people in different ways.

Respondent 5 (Female, 35, Non-drinker): Even when the ads show a celebrity that I like so much, it does not change me in any way because I know that they are trying to sell their products.

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, Drinker): Even if Savanna can be portrayed in a particular setting or shown to be used by a particular type of person, it does not affect me in any way because I do not believe there is a special place where one is supposed to drink Savanna. You can drink it anywhere.

Respondent 4 (Male, 19, Non-drinker): Advertisements portray a certain lifestyle of which they want us to adopt. Some (adverts) are useful because they provide us with product information (awareness of lifestyles).

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, Drinker): I think so (when probed if he admires certain lifestyles portrayed in advertisements), because they show different lifestyles, and I think these brands are very strict on that. It's hard to find black label advertisement, with a different lifestyle than hard work and all that.



Image 3 portraying classy people wearing fancy clothes in a Heineken beer ad

There is awareness from interviewees that alcohol advertising is aspirational and sometimes seems not to fully capture people's (at Elim) actual day-to-day realities. Harms, Bijmolt and Hoekstra (2019:5) and Maloney (1963: 14-30) found that when this happens, an audience may "level" the message, "sharpen" the message, adding certain meanings to the advertisement which the advertiser had not really intended; or the audience member may overlook parts of the message that he or she disagrees with.

The selling of particular kinds of 'lifestyles' in alcohol advertising seems to be interpreted in interesting ways by participants. Some brush it off as a mere profit-making pursuit to attract certain demographics of people so as to sell their products. Others interpret it as a much-needed 'inspiration' to also work towards that kind of 'soft life'. See some respondents' comments below in relation to a more negotiated reading of the advertisements with regard to the 'selling' of a particularly upper class lifestyle:

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, Drinker): I do not change my lifestyle, maybe because I can't afford to, but when I see people living a good life, I yearn.

Respondent 4 (Male, 19, Non-drinker): Some (alcohol advertisements) make me to be emotionally involved to the point where I wish to be the person who is in that particular advertisement.

Respondent 6 (Female, 18, Non-drinker): I like those advertisements, but I do not like the drinking part per se. I like how people are shown living a good life, clothes that they wear that signify the money that they have. I just don't like the drinking part.

Respondent 8 (Male, 35, Drinker): To my side, I appreciate them, somewhere somehow, they can motivate you in life so that you can achieve more. In life, everyone has wants and the direction of things that they want. Like I am saying, it is not always about alcohol, the lifestyle that those characters in the advertisements are shown to be living, for example if I drink a twenty rand drink and those people in the advertisement are shown drinking something around a hundred rand. So, it won't be like I would like to drink that hundred rand drink, it will be like, 'those guys are living a fancy lifestyle, they can afford almost everything that they want' then that thing. I think it is everyone's wish that they can afford everything that they want. So, some adverts, like I have already alluded that we don't see things the same way. An advert might be about a fast car, and someone sees a nice colour. It is not like when they are advertising alcohol, mainly I see alcohol.

Respondent 9 (Male, 34, Drinker): Most of the time I admire to live that particular lifestyle, I'm more attracted to the background of an advertisement than the product that is being advertised or alcohol.

There seems to be an intersection of a 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' reading in that viewers seem to disagree with some parts of the advertisement but agree with other aspects. Thus, although participants acknowledge the legitimacy of the dominant view, they seem to incorporate exceptions and alternative views; interestingly in alignment with Woodstock's (2016:399) observations that affirm Stuart Hall's (1980) theoretical propositions about active audiences.

The findings above also confirm Digout and Tayeh's (2015:49) findings that audiences who are inclined to the lifestyle that is being sold by the advertiser would find it more appealing, but may reject the advertisement message because they do not like the advertised product. This would imply that young people at Elim who are inclined to a 'soft' lifestyle as depicted in the advertisements would find the advertisements more appealing, which then would have them possibly experience an increased intention to purchase the product. But it seems that in this case, they somehow do not like alcohol or the product that is being advertised, but appreciate the idea of a 'good life', as Respondent 6 emphasised in the interview.

From some responses, there appears to be a stance from participants that alcohol advertising problematically lacks nuance and truthfulness because they sometimes

neglect to tell the 'full story' with regard to alcohol consumption and the repercussions thereof. See comments below:

Respondent 6 (Female, 18, Non-drinker): Alcoholic advertisements do not necessarily give you the information that tells you about the negative consequences of drinking, but most of them, if not all, have age limit information, which tells us at what age people are allowed to drink alcohol.

Respondent 7 (Female, 23, Non-drinker): Aah, I think alcohol advertisements don't have enough information, I think the only information that is there is about drinking, and that people who are underage should not drink. I think that is all, but they don't show us what drinking responsibly is all about, I think there should be a limit shown on television that a person should drink this much.

Respondent 1 (Male, 25, Drinker): Usually, they (advertisements) do not include useful information.

Respondent 5 (Female, 35, Non-drinker): They (advertisements) do not include information that discourages buyers of a specific product from purchasing it; I do not believe they have a message; they are only for selling.

Respondent 9 (Male, 34, Drinker): Alcoholic advertisements give us age restriction information, but I continue to witness underage drinking. Adverts just show people having fun; they do not show what happens when you have too much fun. They only show the positives. The "drink responsibly" statement does not show us how one can drink responsibly; they don't explain what responsibility is, they even put it at the bottom of an advert and some people may not see it. Advertisements are there to sell a product. Most of the adverts when you taste the product, it will not be the same as you saw it in the advert.

Some participants appear to believe that alcohol advertising merely brushes over what these participants think are the negative effects of alcohol consumption. This stance by participants makes them to make an oppositional reading, because they are rejecting the advertiser's intentions in messages that portray alcohol consumption in a good light, or their 'noble' way of including warning messages to drinkers. In rejection of the advertisers' messages, participants argued that alcoholic advertisements do not explain what "drinking responsibly" is during these advertisements, and that the placement of these messages is usually at the bottom of the screen. This is an oppositional position because audiences are sceptical of messages in alcohol advertisements, and have a forgone conclusion that they will not find what they

assume 'valuable' information in the advertisement. So they watch it with the aim of rejecting the advertisement's appeals.

The findings in this regard are in accord with other research studies by Wahyono, Wirasti and Ratmono (2020:112), Spangenberg (2013:311), Homer (1990), Miniard, Bhatla and Rose (1990) and Zhang (1996), who found that audiences possess the ability to be selective about the content they receive. They will reject the encoded messages when they are sceptical, when they do not trust the message, and when they find the claims made in the advertisements less believable, less influential, and less informative.

4.7.4 TV alcohol advertising as counter-cultural: disrupting conservative (African) cultural ideologies

In relation to the fourth theme that was noted from the interview data, there seems to be an interesting line of thought from the respondents that television alcohol advertising goes against their cultural ideologies by promoting the consumption of alcohol which, according to some of them, goes against certain cultural expectations. The following thoughts highlight this observation:

Respondent 9 (Male, 34, Drinker): [...] the way I was raised is not the way I am at the moment. You see, so many things have changed. Some are the things that I was told not to do (drinking alcohol). Some of those things strictly in my Tswana culture are not allowed. For example, if you are in a tavern and you are under the influence of alcohol, you see, you feel like you can do anything, you have those powers and you are not scared of anything. Then, according to my culture, it does not allow a person to have more than one wife, but when you are under the influence of alcohol, you tend to forget about those things. Most alcohol advertisements have nakedness, which I don't think any culture allows, because like people will be naked touching each other. Remember, those people who are on the advert are other men's wives, and now they are being touched by other men on the advert. I really don't understand adverts that show people touching each other. It is not right because whoever the character on the advert is dancing with, if ever there is music, there will be too much touching and if those characters have partners, at the end of the day, there will be a divorce.

Respondent 7 (Female, 23, Non-drinker): When I grew up, I was told that alcohol is bad. I grew up in a family that does not drink alcohol. I was told that when people drink alcohol, they do bad things like fight and so on, so everything my parents told me about alcohol, I saw in my community as I grew up. So,

when I am confronted with an alcohol advertisement that has been well represented, I think when I compare it with real life, there is that contradiction. Yeah, I just watch (advertisements) and do nothing about it.

Respondent 4 (Male, 19, Non-drinker): This advert is not relevant to me, it is not important. I totally lose interest when an advert involves alcohol. Anything that is alcohol related is not meant for me. The way I have been raised and the way I am now affect the way I react to television alcohol advertisements because everything that deals with alcohol is already in conflict with who I am or my background.

Respondent 2 (Female, 29, Drinker): To be honest, the way that I have been brought up is not what I can say today that it is what I am. I was raised in a strict Christian background (ZCC), but as I grew older, I decided what kind of life I wanted to live. I decided to live the life that I am living now because I do not view alcohol as problematic.

Respondent 3 (Male, 34, Non-drinker): Yes, yes, culture plays a big role in people's lives and how they make decisions in buying, their purchases. There are some cultures where people are not allowed to drink alcohol. That is another barrier that is there. It does not mean that when your culture says you must not do this, it means it is ok. If I was not the person I am now, I would be perceiving things through my cultural background but education has taught me a lot about culture, how we can tolerate each other's cultures, and before you judge something, you need to have more knowledge about it.

The study found this interestingly ironic because 'beer' is part and parcel of so many African cultural practices. These include mqombothi for cultural ancestral ceremonies. Whiskey and other hard liquors are incorporated into cultural processes such as Lobola negotiations; alcohol is also used in "Stockvels" or "Setlamo", traditional weddings, funerals, and other events (Usoro, Dorothy, Ononokpono, Ursula & Nkereuwem, 2018; Korster, 2011; Murimbika, 2006).

This is an interesting finding, but the result contradicts findings by Usoro et al. (2018:150), Obot and Room (2005:143), Moyo (2014:54), Topouzis (1994:91) and Çelik (2011:64). These studies have implicated culture in Africa, and South Africa in particular, in alignment with high level of alcohol consumption because they found that many African traditional activities cannot be complete without the drinking of alcohol. This reality influences how people react when confronted with alcohol messages. The results also contradict findings by Kim (2004:84) in a study that reviews Morley's (1980) nationwide study that touted that audiences see advertisements in the lenses of a dominant culture. When an advertisement relates to their culture, they would take the dominant position. This does not seem to be the case here, as the participants

quoted above seem to argue that alcohol consumption goes against their cultural values and lessons that they received in their upbringing.

4.7.5 TV alcohol advertising as challenging gender-stereotypical depictions of men and women in relation to alcohol consumption

Thoughts and opinions around gender expectations also made their way into the conversations during the interview sessions. This was perhaps not unexpected considering that one of the advertisements that were screened in the individual interview sessions (the Heineken advert) makes humorous commentary around gender stereotypes in relation to alcoholic beverages, as was described at the start of this sub-section. In relation to the Black Label advertisement, for instance, interviewees comfortably aligned with the dominant reading in relation to beer and gender, where they unreservedly associated beer with men. See some interviewee comments below:

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, Drinker): [...] yes, like the black label advert, it targets men, I don't feel offended it depends on the message that it is conveying to the people. When we grew up, we knew that there were drinks for men and women. I learnt that this beer is for men and this one is for women through observation; seeing people drinking, no one taught me that this is for men and this is for women.

Respondent 1 (Male drinker, 25, Drinker): I do believe that some advertisements are for certain genders, just like for example with the black label one, there is this other advertisement now, I have never seen a black label advertisement showing a woman, so I think their target market is men.



Image 4 showing a woman drinking Heineken beer in an advertisement

Audience readings of the Heineken and Black Label adverts appear to highlight an interesting awareness about gender stereotypes in the media and media content. Some of the participants seemed to experience an unavoidable sense of 'discomfort' at the fact that one of the alcohol advertisements they were exposed to in the interviews somewhat challenged their pre-conceptions about gender and alcohol consumption (this will be further discussed later on in this section). Gender-stereotypical ideologies about which alcohol type (beer, ciders, spirit, wine) is meant for which gender appear to be reinforced as well as challenged at the same time in these adverts. The Black Label advertisement reinforces the stereotype (only men drink beer). Female respondents seem to be in agreement with the intended meaning of the advertiser, and respondents took a dominant position: they liked how the manual hard labour and celebratory beer drinking is associated with men.

As was described at the beginning of this sub-section of the chapter, the Heineken advertisement challenges the stereotype in relation to alcohol consumption and gender. Male respondents, in particular, were uncomfortable seeing women drinking beer, which to them is supposed to be a drink for men. Interestingly, female interviewees' reactions were divergent in that although there were those who felt awkward to see another woman drinking beer in an advertisement, there were those

who embraced change, were more liberal in their responses, and only showed 'discomfort' in some parts of the advertisement that they thought undermined women. See some interviewee expressions below:

Respondent 1 (Male drinker, 25, Drinker): It just confuses me this one, it is very strange. The waiter brought hamburgers and fries and also green salads, and at first, the waiter gave the green salads to the women and the burger to the man, then then they switched because most men eat junk food, and women are the healthy ones. I think it is the part that I disagree with. As you can see, the woman is skinny. I do not think she can eat junk food, she looks like a model.

Respondent 8 (Male, 35, Drinker): Personally, I have issues with women drinking beer, beer has a lot of acid and it might affect women's womb. I do not support men drinking Cocktails, there is too much sugar, I have tasted cocktail drinks and there is too much sugar, even my drinking (male) friends do not like sugar drinks. I have witnessed a lot of women who drink beers in my community and I think it is not right.

Respondent 9 (Male, 34, Drinker): The advert shows cocktails competing with lager (Heineken) and which means it can push more women into lager (Heineken). I feel like it has weakened men and has given more power to women. I once experienced it once or twice where men preferred ciders or something like that. When I asked them why they were not drinking lager because it's for men, they would tell me that it has an aftertaste and stuff like that. I have never tasted a cocktail, maybe because they are expensive or because I think they are meant for women.

Respondent 5 (Female, 35, Non-drinker): What I do not like about that clip is how women are being undermined. What I like about this advert is that it truly reflects modern life and the lives of modern women. It brought to bear how modern life is all about. It is not something out of nowhere, this is a real life situation.

Respondent 10 (Female, 30, Drinker): I agree with the advert. They say everybody is free to do whatever they want. If a woman wants to drink Heineken, she can do so, as long as she feels free to do it.

Respondent 5 (Female, 35, Non-drinker): Yes, I'm looking at the present moment, women and men are equal. Looking at my community that I am living in, it is not surprising to see a woman drinking. It is part of modern life, and these women seem to enjoy it when they are drinking. I do not agree with those who were serving alcohol, who thought beer was only meant for men. I think they undermined those women.



Image 5 from Heineken advert depicting stereotypes, where the waiter serves cocktail to a lady who prefers beer

It is evident that male respondents, in relation to the Heineken advertisement, took an oppositional position, showing a strong rejection of the advertisement's non-stereotypical depiction. This is evident in how some of the male interviewees indicated that the advertisement confused them, especially the part where men are shown drinking cocktails. They found it strange. They (some of the quoted male interviewees) also felt weakened by the advertisement, saying that it gave more power to women. On the other hand, female respondents took a negotiated position. They seem to welcome the advertisement, but were irritated by certain stereotypical depictions on the advertisement; for example, when the bartender mistakenly gave the cocktail orders to women and the beer orders to men.

These results appear to be in accord with Ebrén and Çelik (2011:60), whose findings revealed a difference in interpretation of gendered-related depictions of alcohol by television audiences based on the gender of the respondents. Moreover, the results of the Heineken advert are in line with Holtzhausen's (2010:55), who found that confronting respondents with an advertisement that portrays women in a powerful position can cause a lot of debate and controversy among respondents.

4.8 Study's hypotheses testing

This study will now test the hypotheses that were stated in chapter one using the null hypothesis H₀ and the alternative hypothesis H₁ approach. The null hypothesis is the status quo, or the assertion that the majority of people accept as true, and H₀ is its symbol. The competing hypothesis is the alternative hypothesis, which contradicts the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis is denoted by the symbol H₁, which reflects the researcher's effort to refute the null hypothesis. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018:196), the researcher makes a forecast on the projected outcome based on prior literature and studies that indicate a likely outcome. This shows that the null hypothesis is likely true if the researcher is unable to disprove it. The researcher employed a typical procedure used in the social sciences and the field of media and communication, namely, hypothesis testing that necessitates the use of a null hypothesis.

H₀: Television audiences are passive participants of meaning and consume everything they see without thinking.

H₁: Audiences are active participants in the process of meaning-making in relation to television alcohol advertisements; they work hard to make meaning.

The results indicate that viewers are critical and make some effort to interpret alcohol commercials on television. This was evident when viewers attempted to tie some of the advertising's contents to their own experiences and also criticised advertisements for being dishonest and ignoring key, crucial "real-life" information. These results demonstrated that viewers actively attempted to decipher alcohol advertisements that were displayed to them, as well as their efforts to do so. The results of this study refute the null hypothesis that audiences are passive, and that the television medium is more potent with regard to directly influencing audiences.

H₀: Television alcohol advertisements have unlimited power to influence young people's decision-making.

H₁: Audiences in Elim interpret television alcohol advertisements in a variety of ways and are flexible enough to make their own decisions regarding the contents of the advertisements.

Results of this study showed that youth audiences in the Elim community take multiple positions when decoding alcohol television advertisements, ranging from the dominant position, where they agree with prevailing meanings; for example, in the Carling Black Label advertisement, to the negotiated position and the opposition position. The research also reveals that young people are selective in terms of the lifestyle they wish to lead and that what they see on television advertising does not necessarily reflect into their daily lives. Therefore, these data results refute the null hypothesis suggesting that the media has unbounded influence.

H0: Audiences' daily life experiences do not influence their interpretations of alcohol television advertisements.

H1: Audiences in Elim make use of previous life experiences in order to decode the text and will arrive at multiple interpretations of the same text.

These results reveal a difference in the interpretation of gender-related depictions of alcohol by television audiences based on the gender of the respondents. The results indicate that the surveyed audiences were impacted by certain stereotypical depictions that were shown in advertisements. This enables the study to reject the null hypothesis, which suggested that audiences were uninformed prior to seeing alcohol commercials on television and confirms that audiences' prior experiences are crucial when decoding media texts or television advertisements. It must be acknowledged, however, that consumers do not always use the dominant culture to interpret television commercials. The evidence provided by the research provides a solid foundation for rejecting the null hypothesis.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter interpreted both quantitative and qualitative data, harmonising the findings of both methods with the theoretical framework and the literature review. The quantitative data painted a demographic background of the respondents, and revealed that young people at Elim live in a diverse, multicultural, and multilingual community that is exposed to television advertisements. It also highlighted young people's drinking statuses and frequencies of consumption and viewing of television. The qualitative method revealed the active nature of audiences when confronted with

alcohol advertisements, their differences in interpretations, and their unpredictability when it comes to reading alcohol television advertisements. The following chapter discusses the findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the research findings in relation to the research objectives. The chapter also offers further concluding remarks and recommendations based on the key findings that arose from the research. Also provided are brief notes on the limitations of the study, as no research is without limitations. The purpose of this study was to explore and evaluate, through in-depth interviews and surveys, how television audiences or consumers interpret alcohol advertisements. The aim was to understand the influence of advertising on perceptions around alcohol consumption by youth in the Elim community in Limpopo, South Africa.

In particular, this mixed-method study employed the encoding and decoding model, originally proposed by Stuart Hall, to investigate the meanings that the audience creates and their perceptions of messages in television alcohol advertisements. However, other media and communication theories have been used to offer a thorough exploration of the research problem. For this study to achieve its aim, empirical findings collected from the audiences have been analysed and presented in the preceding chapter and will now be synthesised to bring the dissertation to its conclusion, so as to make sense of all the findings. But first, below is an overview of the chapters of the study.

5.2 Overview of all chapters

5.2.1. *Chapter 1: Introduction, rationale, and background*

This chapter contains both an introduction to the research study that was to be presented as well as an explanation of the context within which the study was conducted. The chapter provided an overview of the study by posing the research questions. Most importantly, it included the exposition of the statement of the research problem, research objectives, questions, and the background to the study. A brief

contextual background of the Elim area, where this study was conducted, was also included to provide the reader a better understanding of this community.

5.2.2. Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

This chapter provided the study's theoretical framework and literature review, in which concepts such as gender, culture, and television exposure were examined. The move from passive to active audiences is framed primarily by the mass media theory of the encoding-decoding model, whilst the uses and gratification theory, hypodermic needle theory, and reinforcement theory are also integrated. The encoding and decoding model draws analytical insights from cultural studies, and was selected as the most productive framework for an understanding of advertising and from which an enquiry into the nature of advertising reception should proceed. By combining multiple theories and existing studies, the researcher has a clearer understanding of how consumers may have interpreted alcohol-related television advertisements. The goal of the literature review was to learn more about how audiences in South Africa interpret alcohol advertising messages. The researcher explored many materials from local and international communication scholars. The literature revealed that alcohol is an integral part of the African cultural system.

5.2.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter focuses on the study's research methods. Included in these sections were the identification and specification of the research design, research methodology, sample procedures, data analysis, and interpretation. The research employed sequentially mixed methods. The researcher gathered and analysed quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data. The study employed a mixed methods approach, with survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews as data collection methods.

5.2.4 Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation

This chapter provided and evaluated the findings collected from survey and in-depth interview research methodologies. The primary findings of this chapter are comprised of questionnaire and in-depth interview data. The findings were then interpreted in light of the theoretical framework and literature review. This chapter's key conclusions address the questions that the study sought to address. An exposition of the descriptive statistics from the quantitative data is first presented before a thematic

analysis is applied to the research results from the qualitative data in order to walk the reader through the key findings of the study. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings relating to each of the study's research objectives in the form of a summary of findings.

5.3 Summary of findings

This discussion section combines both qualitative and quantitative results in order to answer the research questions of the study. More specifically, in-depth interviews were conducted to more closely explore the meanings that the participating television audience members from Elim created for television alcohol advertisement messages. Questionnaire surveys were conducted on the target population to give this study a clearer demographic background of the audiences at Elim between the ages of 18 and 35, their television viewing patterns, as well as the relationship between their viewing of alcohol-related television advertisements and their consumption considerations.

This study's primary objective was to explore and analyse social factors influencing the audiences' (youth alcohol drinkers' and non-drinkers') readings of television alcohol advertisements and to establish whether the mass media has determining power over its audience in the receipt of messages or if the audiences have interpretive autonomy. By analysing the effectiveness of television adverts on consumption considerations within society, considering all the cultural, religious, belief and other such diversities in audience experiences, the study serves to understand how television advertisements can, if at all, influence motivation towards consumption or non-consumption of alcohol by the youth at Elim, Limpopo.

Furthermore, the study aimed to achieve several secondary research objectives. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Section 1.5), the level of measurement applicable in the current study is descriptive statistics together with thematic analysis. As such, specific descriptive statistics are appropriate, namely frequency tabulations, pie charts and bar charts. The applicable descriptive statistics for many of the variables that were coded were discussed next, in combination with the thematic analysis of the interview findings. Furthermore, the study sought to accomplish many secondary research objectives. As stated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.5), descriptive statistics and thematic analysis are the levels of measurement suitable for this study. Therefore, particular

descriptive statistics, such as frequency tabulations, are appropriate. The descriptive statistics related to several of the variables that were coded were then reviewed with the thematic analysis of the interview results.

Objective 1: To understand whether or not the visual media (in the form of TV adverts) has the power to impact on the audience's understanding and behaviour regarding alcohol consumption.

Quantitative results show that Elim arguably has an alcohol drinking problem as the majority of young people (56.6%) are alcohol drinkers. Results also highlight that the majority of young people at Elim (70.5%) have access to television and are exposed to television advertisements almost every day, as 72% of respondents reported watching television for two hours or more on a daily basis. In relation to alcohol advertisements on television, the results indicate that young people at Elim mostly remember the advertisements that have been repeated more often on television. The television media's ability to repeat advertisements seems to have considerable power when it comes to brand recall, as a majority of young people at Elim (64.17%) (drinkers and non-drinkers) were able to remember the advertised alcohol brands that were often repeated.

Alcohol advertisements that young people are exposed to appear to have some effect on young people, as qualitative data shows that alcohol advertisements seem to offer a positive attitude towards alcohol and its consumption by emphasising emotional ties of refreshment and reward for adults who work hard. This is an emotional ideology that some of the participants said they related with and aspired to. As such, it became apparent in some of the interviewee responses that they positively reiterated and regarded alcohol as 'rewarding' and refreshing after watching the advertisement clips screened at the beginning of each interview session.

The quantitative results further show that all young people at Elim (100%) view television advertisements with certain expectations, amongst others, and expect a good advertisement to have humour and contain information about the advertised product. Moreover, the responses of young people at Elim to alcohol advertisement clips reveal their strong awareness that alcohol advertising is more than mere entertainment but also strongly related to the 'selling' of particular lifestyles. Interviewees were also aware that alcohol advertising is aspirational, and the selling

of particular kinds of 'lifestyles' in alcohol advertising seems to be interpreted in interesting ways by the participants. Some brush it off as mere profit-making pursuits to attract certain demographics of people, while others interpret it as a much-needed 'inspiration' to work towards that kind of 'good life'. The qualitative results also show that, from some responses, there appears to be a stance from some participants that alcohol advertising problematically lacks nuance and truthfulness because they sometimes neglect to tell the 'full story' with regard to alcohol consumption and the repercussions thereof. In this sense, this study finds that the visual media (in the form of TV adverts) have some limited influence on the understanding and behaviour of audiences at Elim regarding alcohol consumption. Audiences at Elim appear to be critical of alcohol advertisements instead of passively accepting them (the advertisements) to convince them to consume the alcohol brands being advertised.

Objective 2: To examine how the viewing of television advertisements connects with youth experience, socioeconomic and cultural background

The quantitative data presentation showed that Elim is linguistically, religiously and culturally diverse, with more than six languages recorded in the data presentation, including Tshivenda (58.33%), Xitsonga (36.00%), Pedi (3.83%), Other languages which constitutes 1.83% such as IsiZulu, Sesotho and English, and two major ethnic groups (Vhavenda and Vatsonga). There is a diversity in religious affiliations, including Protestants (45.58%), African spirituality (43.07%) and Roman Catholic (5.34%). Qualitative results show that these individuals use these different life experiences to discern different appeals used in alcohol advertisements. The appeals of the advertisements seem to connect with viewers' lived experiences, which seem to play a critical role in how they decode alcohol advertisements. This is because participants who were involved in the study and have experienced friendship, teamwork, and togetherness (including the non-drinkers who have experienced it in other areas of their lives) mostly decoded the featured advertisements along a dominant position as encoded by the producer of the advertisement. However, the qualitative results show that alcohol advertisements sometimes seem to not fully capture people's (at Elim) actual day-to-day reality. Interviewees called these advertisements out for this perceived disconnect with their own lived experiences in relation to the romanticised lifestyles in the advertisements.

The quantitative results also show that young people at Elim use alcohol in traditional practises other than drinking for the sake of becoming intoxicated (51.17%). However, the qualitative results were unexpected and ironic in that the interviewees, after watching the advertisement clips that were shared with them, felt that alcohol advertising goes against their cultural ideologies by promoting the consumption of alcohol, which, according to them, goes against certain cultural expectations and how they were raised. This study found this interestingly ironic because 'beer' is part and parcel of many African cultural practices.

Objective 3: To propose differences in the interpretation of television advertisements based on social factors such as values, gender differences, and sociocultural experiences.

Quantitative data showed that the majority of male respondents (21.50%) prefer to drink beer, but what was unexpected is the female respondents (14.33%) who showed more preference for beer than sweet drinks. This goes against social stereotypes about beer drinking in relation to gender, because traditionally, different brands are for different genders. There are feminine and masculine-perceived products. The three different advertisement clips used in the interview sessions for the collection of qualitative data seem to invoke gender-stereotypical ideologies about which alcohol types (beer, cider, spirits, and wine) are meant for which gender. As the study used two different gender-relational advertisements: the Carling Black Label advertisement (which reinforced gender stereotypes) and the Heineken advertisement (which challenged gender stereotypes), the study found mixed reactions from the interviewed audiences/viewers. There have been differences in how male and female participants decoded the Heineken advertisement, as males rejected the notion that women also drink 'hard liquor', while females were irritated by how the advertisement represented women in ways that undermined them.

5.4 Limitation of the study

This study was conducted at Elim, an area with more than six languages where respondents are predominantly Xitsonga and Tshivenda speaking. The study using the quantitative method employed a self-completion questionnaire to collect data, where respondents go through the questionnaires alone and complete them without

being pressured or assisted by the researcher. The sole use of the English language in a questionnaire is a limitation of this study, as some of the respondents of the linguistically diverse Elim might not be more proficient in English.

5.5 Recommendation for further studies

It is evident that the encoding and decoding model of Hall's (1980) theory of audience reception is still relevant in linguistically and culturally diverse areas like Elim. The study recommends that further studies conduct an ethnography in conjunction with a netnography to deal with possible hybridity of culture, which can also be used to get a detailed and holistic analysis of young people's cultures online (new media) and in their communities, and their responses towards alcohol advertisements based on intensive fieldwork. Netnography is a specific set of interconnected data, analysis, ethical, and representational research practises in which a large amount of the data collected and participant-observational research done comes from and is shown through data freely shared on the Internet and mobile applications. It investigates consumer behaviour and digital community culture. These inquiries may take the form of textual, graphics, photographs, audio-visual presentations, or musical compositions for analysis (Kozinets, 2015:173; Bartl, Kannan & Stockinger, 2016:165). This must also take into account the implicit and unstated beliefs that are inherent to cultural life, including participant observation.

The demographics of audiences may change, as well as the content of the commercials. To get a clear idea of the images portrayed in advertising, scholars must re-examine this topic again in the future and use a more urban and economically wealthier context to compare the findings between semi-rural and peri-urban contexts.

5.6 Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to explore and evaluate how television audiences interpret alcohol advertisements, with a view to understanding the influence of advertising on their perceptions of alcohol consumption by youth in Elim, Limpopo. The study suggests that although alcohol has a symbolic meaning and is culturally central or embedded in African cultural systems, young people decode alcohol

advertisements in ironic and inexplicable ways that can hardly be predicted by the encoders of media messages.

This study also suggests that there are differences and changes in gender stereotypical roles in the portrayals of television alcohol advertisements (there are adverts that reinforce certain stereotypes and those that challenge certain stereotypes), and in how these stereotypical depictions are received by audiences at Elim. Television audiences at Elim seem to hold certain stereotypical positions when reading media messages; they take the dominant position when an advertisement reinforces certain gender stereotypes that they agree with. When certain stereotypes are challenged, there is 'discomfort', and audiences argue against the preferred reading.

The study concludes by suggesting that television or the media has the power to create advertisement content that is stereotypically and culturally loaded, which is then sent (or exposed) as messages (as a discourse) to audiences. However, in alignment with Hall's ground-breaking propositions, the media do not determine any favourable outcome, as there is no guarantee that the preferred meaning will become the preferred reading. Although these messages from advertisements can be recalled by audiences or might stimulate positive attitudes in terms of sparking liking towards the advertisement and stimulating a desire in audiences to emulate certain depicted lifestyles, the study found that audiences are not dupes or simply passive as predicted by effects studies. Audiences at Elim are actually active in interpreting and selectively constructing meaning from alcohol media messages, and can choose which message to accept or reject. The study found that audiences are aware of the intention of alcohol advertisers, have their own expectations of media messages, and advertisements sometimes seem to not fully capture the actual day-to-day realities of young people at Elim. Young people construe media messages mostly guided by their lived experiences, values, preferences, understanding, ideologies and social identities, and sometimes find themselves in the dominant position, negotiated or oppositional, as has been predicted by the body of work in the area of reception analysis.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Participants consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, Makhumisane Phathutshedzo confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

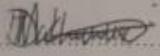
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the In-depth interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname : Makhumisane Phathutshedzo

Participant Signature..........Date 19-03-2021

Researcher's Name & Surname: Tshimangadzo Muleya

Researcher's signature.....Date... 18/03/2021.....



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Appendix B: Questionnaire Survey

PRILIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE: INTERPRETATION AND INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ALCOHOL ADVERTISING ON CONSUMPTION BY YOUTH IN ELIM

Research question 1: In what ways do alcohol-consuming audiences in the Elim community interpret or decode alcohol advertising compared to non-alcohol-consumers?

Research question 2: How do social factors such as values, gender difference and sociocultural experiences influence the way in which television audiences in the Elim community interpret alcohol advertising?

Research question 3: Does alcohol advertising play any short-term persuasive or dissuasive role in the alcohol consumption and non-consumption decisions of consumers in Elim community?

Please answer the following questions. Choose the appropriate answer by ticking/circling the letter corresponding to the option best describing your experience. Where indicated, please explain further

Demographic information

1. Please indicate your current location
 - A. Mpheni
 - B. Waterval

2. Please indicate your home language
 - A. Tsonga
 - B. Venda
 - C. Pedi
 - D. Other please specify.....

3. Please indicate the age bracket you fall within
 - A. 18-25
 - B. 26-35

4. In terms of educational background, which best describes your highest level achieved
 - A. Never matriculated
 - B. Matric
 - C. Post matric qualification

5. Gender
 - A. Male
 - B. Female

- C. Other
- 6. Do you stay with your family?
 - Yes
 - No
- 7. Are you married?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Divorced
- 8. Religious denomination
 - A. Roman Catholic
 - B. African Tradition
 - C. Protestants
 - (i) Christianity
 - (ii) Muslim
 - (iii) Jewish
 - D. Other (please state.....)
- 9. Does the religion you chose in number 8 allows you to drink alcohol?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

Your television viewing patterns:

- 8. Do you own a television, or reside in a house with one?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
- 9. How often do you watch television? Choose the response that best describes your viewing durations...
 - A. Less than one hour per day
 - B. 2 to 5 hours per day
 - C. More than 5 hours per day
- 10. When do you mostly watch TV?
 - A. In the morning

- B. In the afternoon
- C. In the evening
- D. Late at night

11. Do you like/enjoy watching television?

- A. Yes
- B. No

12. If "no", what is the reason?

- A. There is no television set where I reside
 - B. I do not have time to watch television
 - C. I do not enjoy the programming options currently on offer
 - D. Other, please briefly explain:
-
-

13. Would you say you pay attention to advertisements in between the programs you watch?

- A. Yes
- B. No

14. If "no", what is the reason for not watching/paying attention to advertisements?

- A. Advertisements are boring/do not stimulate me in any way
 - B. I prefer switching to other channels during advertisements
 - C. Any other reason, please briefly explain.....
-
-

Alcohol consumption and alcohol advertisements:

15. Do you drink alcohol?

- Yes
- No

16. If "yes", how often do you drink alcohol?

- A. Daily
- B. 3-5 times a week
- C. Only on weekends

- D. Only on special occasions
17. Who introduced you to alcohol?
- A. My parents
 - B. My friends
 - C. I learnt about alcohol from TV advertisement
 - D. Other Please specify.....
18. As a non-alcohol drinker, do you enjoy alcohol advertisements on television?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. It doesn't really matter to me
19. What is your expectation of a good alcoholic advertisement on a TV
- A. It must have humor
 - B. It must contain Information about the advertised product
 - C. I always look for product prices of the advertised product
 - D. Other please specify.....
20. How important is alcohol to you, describe the role of alcohol in your life?
- A. Important
 - B. Least important
 - C. Very important
 - D. Not important
21. What do you associate alcohol with?
- A. Good times
 - B. Alcohol drinking is bad
 - C. Other please specify.....
22. Do you engage in binge drinking? (5 or more drinks in a sitting)
- A. Yes
 - B. No
23. Do you use alcohol in other activities other than drinking, such as rituals?
- A. Yes
 - B. No

24. Please name one alcohol brand that was advertised recently on Television.

- A.
- B. I have seen alcohol advert recently, but cannot remember which brand was advertised
- C. I cannot remember at all

25. How often have you seen alcohol advertisements stated in number 24?

- A. Almost every day
- B. Every week
- C. Probably once per month

26. Do you often get convinced by the way of usage of the brand or product in a TV advertisement? Or by claims made by companies in an advertisements?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Sometimes

27. Which alcoholic category do you prefer to drink?

- A. Beer
- B. Wines
- C. Spirits
- D. Fabs and Ciders
- E. I do not drink
- F. Other please specify.....

28. Are you a loyal customer for the products you buy?

- A. Yes always. I stick to the same products
- B. Never. I keep experimenting with new products that I
- C. Only for quality products. Where it is commodity, I choose the least priced product

29. Would you try an advertised alcoholic product, or switch brands after watching an advert?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW GUIDE

After analysing the quantitative data from phase one (questionnaires), the researcher will then move into phase two where audience perceptions, experiences and opinions will be probed more deeply, regarding alcohol advertising and whether or not it bears any influence on their consumption or non-consumption decisions. “Interviews may be useful to follow-up with individuals’ respondents after questionnaires, to further investigate responses”. (McNamara, 1999).

Thank you once again for taking the time to meet with me today, the purpose or goal of this study is to explore and evaluate how television audiences or consumers interpret alcohol advertisements, and also to understand advertising’s influence on perceptions around alcohol consumption. I am going to show you three video clips of advertisements that were shown on television recently, and then after each and clip, I will ask you few questions relating to the clip.

I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Outline of Topics to be addressed in interviews:

Part A: In what ways do alcohol-consuming audiences interpret or decode alcohol advertising compared to non-alcohol-consumers?

- I have shown you the advertisement clip, I am going to pause now and allow you to react.
- What is your reaction to the advertisement I have just played to you now, do you think advertisements show the truth?
- Can you explain what the advertisement is about or its message?
- Please name or list anything you can remember about the advertisement you have just seen?
- Are you familiar with the advertisement or the brand that I have just shown you?

Part B: How social factors such as values, gender difference and sociocultural experiences influence the way in which television audiences interpret alcohol advertising?

- Gender identity is perceived to be part of who we are and play a role in our lives
 - What is your gender, and how does it influence your consumption decisions?
- People have a number of different motives for drinking, can you tell me:
 - Why do you drink alcohol, if you do not drink why?
- Who introduced you to alcohol?
- Do you discuss advertisements with your friends or other family members after seeing them?
- Do your friends or family have any influence on your consumption decisions?
- What do you associate alcohol with?
- Are you aware of any harmful effects of alcohol?

Part C: How advertising play a role in the alcohol consumption and non-consumption decisions of consumers?

- What do you like or dislike about advertisement that you have just seen?
- Do you think that advertising influence your drinking behaviour, for example would you drink more or sooner after watching this advert?
 - Would you try the advertised product, or switch alcohol brands after watching this advert?