



Visual Culture and Identity Formation among Youth in South Africa: A Mixed Methods Inquiry

Zola Motsiemane¹, Tshepo Mathee^{2,3}, Mankhwethwa Ngxongo⁴

¹ Department of Advanced Studies, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

² University of Zululand

³ Department of Advanced Studies, African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa

⁴ African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa

Published: 11 February 2008 | **Received:** 30 August 2007 | **Accepted:** 17 December 2007

Correspondence: zmotsiemane@hotmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18872542](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18872542)

Author notes

Zola Motsiemane is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Tshepo Mathee is affiliated with University of Zululand and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Mankhwethwa Ngxongo is affiliated with African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Abstract

Visual culture plays a significant role in shaping youth identity, particularly in contexts of social diversity such as South Africa. This study aims to explore how visual representations influence and define young people's sense of self within their cultural milieu. This study employs a mixed methods design, combining thematic content analysis of visual materials from popular social media platforms with structured interviews using standardised questionnaires. The sample includes a diverse group of urban and rural youth across various socioeconomic backgrounds. Findings indicate that exposure to globalized imagery significantly impacts the self-perception and cultural identity of young South Africans, particularly in terms of their engagement with digital culture and traditional art forms. The mixed methods approach reveals nuanced insights into how visual culture shapes youth identity, offering a comprehensive understanding of its multifaceted influence on social cohesion and individual expression. Recommendation for educators includes integrating visual arts education that reflects the diverse cultural heritage of South Africa to foster inclusive identity development among students. Policy recommendations focus on promoting digital literacy programmes that support critical engagement with online content.

Keywords: *African Studies, Cultural Analysis, Ethnography, Grounded Theory, Identity Formation, Visual Discourse, Qualitative Inquiry*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ **REQUEST FULL PAPER**

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge