



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

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Abstract

Visual culture plays a significant role in shaping identities among youth globally, with South Africa's diverse cultural landscape further emphasising this impact. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, integrating online surveys with semi-structured interviews. Data collection spans urban and rural areas across South Africa, ensuring broad representation. Findings indicate that exposure to digital media platforms significantly enhances recognition of cultural identities among youth in both urban (78%) and rural (60%) settings. The study underscores the importance of integrating visual culture into identity education programmes for South African youth, particularly in underserved regions. Recommendation is to integrate visual literacy curricula in schools and community centers to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural identities.

Keywords: *Cultural Studies, Identity Theory, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Analysis, Visual Discourse Analysis, Ethnography, Intersectionality*

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