



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

Sibonelo Makhubu<sup>1,2</sup>, Makgavhala Khumalo<sup>1</sup>, Nokuthula Sello<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

<sup>2</sup> University of Pretoria

<sup>3</sup> North-West University

**Published:** 22 April 2000 | **Received:** 18 February 2000 | **Accepted:** 28 March 2000

**Correspondence:** [smakhubu@yahoo.com](mailto:smakhubu@yahoo.com)

**DOI:** [10.5281/zenodo.18720237](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18720237)

### Author notes

*Sibonelo Makhubu is affiliated with SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.*

*Makgavhala Khumalo is affiliated with SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.*

*Nokuthula Sello is affiliated with North-West University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.*

### Abstract

Visual culture plays a significant role in shaping identities across various societies, including South Africa. Among youth, visual expressions such as clothing, hairstyles, and body art are not only markers of individuality but also reflect broader social dynamics and cultural narratives. The research design integrates both qualitative depth interviews

( $N = 30$ ) and quantitative survey data ( $n = 500$ ) to provide a broader demographic and

. The sample includes participants from diverse urban and rural settings across South Africa, ensuring representativeness of the youth population. Quantitative findings show that approximately 65% of respondents associate certain visual expressions with positive cultural identities, while qualitative data highlight themes such as traditional versus modern influences on identity formation. Notably, participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds reported stronger ties to local cultural traditions in their visual choices. The mixed methods approach reveals a complex interplay between visual culture and identity among South African youth, emphasising the importance of both symbolic meanings and social context in shaping individual identities. Educational programmes should incorporate discussions on visual culture as a means to foster cultural appreciation and promote inclusive self-expression. Additionally, policymakers could consider supporting initiatives that preserve traditional cultural practices while encouraging modern expressions within these traditions. Visual Culture, Identity Formation, Youth, South Africa, Mixed Methods Study

**Keywords:** African Studies, Visual Discourse, Ethnography, Anthropology, Cultural Analysis, Qualitative Inquiry, Quantitative Research

## 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](mailto: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](http://app.parj.africa)



Scan to visit [app.parj.africa](http://app.parj.africa)

**Open Access Scholarship from PARJ**

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge