2017

An Enquiry into afro hairstyle from the perspective of feminine identity

Brenda Ndekei
School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS)
Strathmore University

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BRENDA NDEKEI

Master of Applied Philosophy and Ethics

2017

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BRENDA NDEKEI

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Applied Philosophy and Ethics at Strathmore University

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Strathmore University
Nairobi, Kenya

June, 2017

Declaration

I declare that this work has not been previously submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Approval

The thesis of Brenda Ndekei was reviewed and approved by the following:

Dr. Catherine Dean,
School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Strathmore University.

Prof. Christine Gichure,
Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Strathmore University.

Prof. Ruth Kiraka,
Dean, School of Graduate Studies,
Strathmore University.

Abstract

Women from all societies around the world often feel the struggle of hair styling from time to time. However, not all hair is the same and some women encounter more challenges when it comes to styling their type of hair as well as pressure from the rest of society to conform to certain beauty standards that may not be suitable to them as persons and as women seeking to be more feminine in their own right. The issue of hair for women of African descent is particularly complex due to the history of the black race being enslaved and forced to imitate western standards, hair being among them, in order to fit in and adapt to a new world. The question arises of why so many black women feel unsure of how to deal with their natural hair and why black hair that is altered and "tamed" seems to be more acceptable to many societies around the world even in Africa. How these and other perceptions regarding natural afro hair shape a woman's feminine identity are investigated. This study on Strathmore University full time female staff and female evening masters' students looks at whether there is a link between how women understand or develop their [sense of] feminine identity and how positively or negatively their natural hair is perceived in the workplace. The study uses Cormac Burke's theory of feminine identity to ground it in philosophical anthropology. A qualitative research methodology was employed in this descriptive study, questionnaires were distributed and focus group discussions were carried out among various black women from different categories in the university while themes derived from the research objectives and Burke's theory of feminine identity were utilized to analyze the information. It was found that feminine identity was understood to be a more non-material quality of womanhood rather than a physical one. It was also discovered that the perceptions (mostly positive) of afro hair in Strathmore University were different from organizations elsewhere while the effect this had on the women was to raise their confidence and dignity when their freedom of expression was supported and lower self-esteem when the freedom was denied.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the background to the study is discussed, making reference to previous research at the global and local levels on the history of hair perceptions in the workplace and the challenges faced by black women on how they wear their hair at work. The extent to which these studies have investigated the problem is examined, noting in particular where gaps exist which this study attempts to address. The problem statement is outlined in this context along with the resulting research objectives and questions. The scope and significance of the study are also highlighted.

1.1 Background

The struggle of hair styling is often felt by women from all backgrounds, whether one is black, white or Asian. However, not all hair is the same. The hair found among people of black African descent is usually thicker, curlier and frizzier or coarser than the hair of other races. This contributes to it being more challenging to groom and requiring a different set of styling techniques to Asian and Caucasian hair (Thompson, 2008).

The issue of black hair is often very personal for most women and given the history of black hair, it is easy to see why it can quickly become a complex problem. Since the mid fifteenth century African civilizations have often used hair to indicate a person's social rank, marital status, ethnic origin, age, religion, wealth and even geographical origins (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). From the beginning of the slave trade in the late 1400's however, black Africans were taken from their native homelands to the new world and were made to cut their hair on arrival as a sign of their slavery (Brisbon, 2009a). As Brisbon further confirms, this served to eliminate the slaves' former culture and make them more obedient as they were not only losing their freedom, homes and families but indeed a part of their identity as well, given how important hair was to an African at the time.

In the new world the key determinant for how a slave styled their hair was based on their work assignment. If they worked in the fields and lived in separated slave quarters then they often shaved their heads and wore head rags to protect their scalps from the sun. However if they worked in the house or in close quarters to their owners then they styled it in imitation of their Caucasian owners hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). This was due to the fact that African hair was found to be "unattractive" and was often described as "unruly", "unkempt" and more derogatorily as "wool"(Brisbon, 2009; Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Patton, 2006). As a result, many Africans in the new world took measures to straighten their hair using oftentimes harsh and harmful processes that severely and irreversibly damaged their hair and scalp in order to avoid the criticism and disdain of the ruling Caucasian class (Brisbon, 2009a; Byrd & Tharps, 2001a; Thompson, 2008).

During the 1960's the "Black Power" movement caused a rise in the number of African American women who wore their hair in an afro style as a political statement to protest against the treatment of black and colored people in the United States at the time (Thompson, 2009). As a result, many people came to think that natural hair was too militant, radical and aggressive and therefore not suitable for the professional environment. Thus began the suppression of natural hairstyles for black women in the workplace (Thompson, 2009). Since then to the present, the appearance of a black African woman with a natural hairstyle is likely to evoke opinions such as "not consistent with a conservative image", "inappropriate with formal or business attire" or "un-businesslike", to name but a few. This has led to more and more black women adopting Caucasian-imitating hairstyles in order to fit in and excel in the workplace (Patton, 2006).

The culture of black women being afraid to wear their natural hair unaltered as opposed to straightened and "tamed" has persisted among women of African origin in the West. Mass media has largely contributed to the pervasive, widespread and negative perceptions regarding black African hair that exist today (Thompson, 2008). The Caucasian standard of beauty regarding hair has been so popularized that its influence has taken quite a hold in the West. The effect has been that how a woman wears her hair

may determine what sort of a job she can hold. Due to the fact that straight hair and silkier curls are considered to be more professional, and natural hair is seen to be coarse and unkempt, (King & Niabaly, 2013) black African women in the West try to appear more professional by often straightening their hair temporarily using heat, or straighten (relax) it permanently with a chemical called a relaxer that can cause damage to the hair and scalp. Those who choose to wear dreadlocks, braids or afros have sometimes been labelled as radical and inappropriate as they are seen not to be adhering to the "corporate grooming policies" that are the norm in most workplaces (King & Niabaly, 2013).

In her article, *Black women and identity: What's hair got to do with it?*, Cheryl Thompson (2008) discusses the need for black women to discover how to care for and wear their natural hair, as well as learning to accept themselves in their natural state. She further states that the choices that they make about their hair leads to a self- acceptance that is grounded in how they identify themselves as women in their communities and appreciate their personal feminine identity.

This kind of self-acceptance and sense of identity is especially important at this time when young girls' hair choices are being policed even in African society. Take for example the most recent case of hair policing of black pupils in Pretoria High School for Girls- a private school in South Africa- that took place in September 2016. Krista Mahr writing for the Washington Post noted that the implementation of certain school rules had been inappropriate when it came to black pupils and their hair (Mahr, 2016), with students claiming that they had been harassed by teachers and other school administration members on account of their afros and curly hair being "untidy" and not in keeping with the standards of the school. Added to this there were also claims that the African students had been banned from speaking African languages such as Xhosa and Zulu on the school premises while the speaking of Afrikaans, which is predominantly spoken by white South Africans of Dutch origin, was allowed. These claims led to a protest that was aimed at getting the school to refrain from enforcing rules that were deemed to be unjust and

unfavorable to a particular race and were geared at separating black students from their African heritage and identity (Gaffey, 2016).

Personal identity deals with philosophical questions about ourselves and how we live as persons (Korfmacher, 2015). That is, we contemplate who we are and our existence while trying to understand our "self" and the implications for our future actions (Olson, 2015). Personal identity involves sexual identity according to Burke (2013a). He defines it as the degree to which a man or woman see themselves as masculine or feminine according to what it means to be either man or woman in society (Burke, 2007a). To be feminine is not just something that a woman is born as but something that can increase or decrease as she goes through life (Burke, 2013). Feminine identity can be sought after and thus can also be affected negatively or positively depending on the environment and circumstances in which the woman finds herself (Burke, 2013a). Burke further explains that for a woman to develop a true feminine identity she needs to accept and respect herself and also hold in reverence her body and mind. The working definition of feminine identity in this study will be derived primarily from the writings of Cormac Burke and in particular from *Man and Values* (2007a). Burke focuses on understanding womanhood from the philosophical perspective and is among one of the few contemporary writers on the subject in the English language, making him a great choice in the research of this topic.

Thompson (2008) insists that for a black woman, hair is not something to play with and that it can be laden with messages that determine how others in society treat her as well as how she feels about herself. Hair can be said, then, to be a determinant of a black woman's sense of identity and yet it is dictated by a Caucasian beauty standard that is extremely different to the black one. What is clear is that there exists a conflict between how black women view themselves and how they want to be seen versus how the present society still views them especially at the workplace. Little has been recorded on how women in African countries such as Kenya are affected by this culture of promoting Caucasian beauty standards regarding hair in professional environments.

This work aims to find out if there is a link between how women understand or develop their [sense of] feminine identity and how positively or negatively their natural hair is perceived in the workplace. As Burke states (2013a) for man to fully achieve his masculinity he is more dependent on a woman achieving her femininity than vice-versa. In this context the discussion of feminine identity and what influences it – such as perceptions about hair- are important for modern society. Since sexual identity is also relational (Burke, 2007a), the way a woman develops her feminine identity to some extent has an impact on how she relates with others in her environment. Therefore, the importance of a positive working environment for women cannot be denied.

The research involved a case-study of fulltime female staff members and evening Masters' students (who have full time employment elsewhere) in Strathmore University who are of African ancestry.

1.2 Problem statement

African women have historically been put under pressure by society to conform to standards of hair grooming and styles that were naturally un-African. The concern is that due to this pressure, African women may have formed negative perceptions about their hair which is key to their identity. Investigating what those perceptions are specifically helped to further highlight the effect they have on a woman's feminine identity. The study was focused on Strathmore University female staff members and evening Masters' students who have full time employment elsewhere.

To establish how the perceptions of women regarding afro hair in the modern workplace affect their personal feminine identity using a case-study of black Kenyan fulltime female staff members and evening Masters' students in Strathmore University.

1.3 Research objectives

1. To investigate the understanding of 'feminine identity' among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University.

2. To examine the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University.

3. To explore the effect that perceptions about afro hair in the workplace have on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the understanding of 'feminine identity' among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?

2. What are the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?

3. What is the effect of perceptions about afro hair in the workplace on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?

1.5 Scope of the study

The scope of this study was to investigate the meaning of 'feminine identity' for black Kenyan women and how this relates to their perceptions about afro hair in the workplace. The study was carried out among black Kenyan women with afro hair who are fulltime staff members in Strathmore University, along with evening Masters' students at Strathmore University who have full time employment elsewhere. The research was focused on those who were working and studying at the time of the study, that is, those who were not on leave and in session on campus respectively.

1.6 Significance of the study

Around the world several studies have found that there are differing perceptions on what is professional at the workplace in as far as hair grooming is concerned for black women (Brisbon, 2009a; Patton, 2006; Thompson, 2009). There is a concern that afro haired

women face subtle discrimination and negative perceptions for wearing their hair natural in the working environment. That being the case however, there have been no studies on how this phenomenon has affected their Kenyan counterparts. This study established the link between feminine identity and the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women. The study thus contributes to existing literature in the field from the perspective of Kenyan women.

The findings would also be beneficial to the Strathmore University Human Resource Services. It was established that there is an influence on feminine identity due to afro haired women's perceptions about how they should wear their hair at work; thus the department can use the information to make policies that can improve the working environment depending on the outcome of the study.

This study also helped to bring voice to the issue of natural hair for African women that may be largely ignored in Kenya and at the same time raise awareness and spark positive discussion that may influence attitudes and consequently behavior in future surrounding the issue of afro hair in Kenyan workplaces.

The study could also have some benefits for the women who participate in the research as it required them to give answers about how they identify themselves and the perceptions they have regarding their hair, which may prove enlightening to some.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion on hair perceptions among working or career women in various regions in the world and how this influences their sense of feminine identity. It also reviews literature on the debate about "good hair" and "bad hair" and looks at the origins of these perceptions. Feminine identity is discussed as a basis on which to establish the influence that hair perceptions have on black working women in Kenya. This is covered under the theoretical framework.

2.2   Perceptions about afro hair in Africa

Hair has always been an important part of African culture and heritage. Dating from before the mid 1400's when the slave trade began to the present times, hair has always been an indicator of a person's health, wealth, social status or the cycle of life they are in (Sieber & Herreman, 2000a).

For many Africans their hair is an important part of expressing who they are culturally. In addition the styling of hair historically and at the present is an art form that depicts the times, the ethnic group and the social status or even the occasion. In the Akan tribe from Ghana the hair of a young girl announcing their eligibility for marriage was usually adorned with gold ornaments in a special ceremony annually (Sieber & Herreman, 2000a). During a mourning period, in the same tribe, the hair was left purposefully unkempt and disheveled and regular coiffuring was omitted. The young girls from the Wolof culture in Senegal usually shave a part of their hair in order to show that they are not ready for marriage yet, while the young men braided their hair while going into war (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). There was also a spiritual aspect whereby many tribes all over Africa believed that due to the location of the hair on top of one's head and nearest to the skies, it was a conduit for communication with God (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a).

Apart from the social significance of hair for African people, there was another importance as well. In many West and North African communities, a woman with long, thick and healthy hair was found to be more aesthetically pleasing and possessing more life force, capable of multiplying more and of bearing healthy children (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a) thus giving her a higher status in society. According to Burke (2013a) a woman can never establish a true sense of feminine identity unless she understands the greatness of her potential for maternity and holds it in reverence. This is what gives her the power of the feminine and not just of the female. The power of the female is derived from the sexual power that women have over men with regard to physical desire. It is also the same power that is common to animals. On the other hand the power of the feminine is evoked by the humanizing role that sexuality has with regard to sexual attraction that inspires admiration and respect in men towards women. The power of the female alone would lead to a simple physical attraction or lust while the power of the feminine would lead to veneration and respect (Burke, 2013a). Thus the idea that a woman's hair had more significance than just as a decorative instrument in African societies highlights the awareness that her hair was a manifestation of her feminine identity.

Just as in many African cultures, as mentioned above, in Indian and East Asian cultures also (Hershman, 1974) hair has been an important indication of their femininity for women. This study tried to discover whether this holds true for the modern woman and more specifically for the black working woman in Africa.

2.3   Perceptions about afro hair in America

Perceptions about black hair in the West have their beginnings in incredibly tough circumstances. When slaves from Africa were taken to North America in the 1400's and forced to submit to Caucasian standards of beauty, they had incredible strain placed on them to look and behave in a certain way. The texture of their native hair was referred to as 'wool', while their native culture was systematically erased (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). The smoother textures of Caucasian and mixed-heritage hair were seen as more favorable

and oftentimes those with the acceptable type or standard of hair were given more privilege than those with coarser hair types. Some of these privileges included working in less strenuous conditions such as in the slave owner's house doing chores like cooking, cleaning and childcare, as opposed to the more back breaking field plantation work. This led to the opinion among black people in America that natural kinky black hair was inferior (Brisbon, 2009a).

From the early twentieth century when black slaves were emancipated up to the start of the twenty first century, many black people in America argued that the way they wore their hair was representative of the dominant white culture that they were forced to live under (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). They realized that they needed to conform to the more acceptable standard of beauty that required women with kinky and curlier-textured hair to straighten it. The practice served the dual function of not just fitting into society but also that of survival as most free black women could not get jobs without straightening their natural hair (Brisbon, 2009a; Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). As a result the market for black hair care was formed and expanded greatly among newly freed slaves around the 1880's. Hot combs, also known as "pressing combs," were created by the French in 1845 and arrived in America in 1880. The combs were heated on stoves and gas heaters and used to temporarily straighten and smooth black hair. Later, in the 1900s, Madame C.J. Walker, an African American woman, developed a line of (hair-care) products for African-American hair. She revolutionized the press-and-curl style, and in 1910, The Guinness Book of World Records listed her as the first female American self-made millionaire (Brisbon, 2009a).

Garrett A. Morgan, a sewing machine repairman in Kentucky, discovered how to create a hair relaxer from a solution used to reduce needle friction on wool in 1909. He founded the G.A. Morgan Hair Refining Company, which created the first chemical hair relaxers (Robinson, 2011). George E. Johnson followed by founding the Johnson Products Empire, which introduced the first permanent hair straightener for men, the Ultra Wave Hair Culture in 1954. The female version of the relaxer soon followed the next year, and sales

skyrocketed with the promise of straighter, more Caucasian-like hair texture (Robinson, 2011). Again, the success of these innovations shows the need for these products and the size of the market. This highlights the fact that truly, black Americans were not accepted in society or in the workplace unless they adapted their natural hair to Caucasian standards.

Meanwhile at the height of the slave trade during the 1500's, the attention and respect given to African hair changed and the perspective on it was severely altered, even damaged. Although the Caucasians at first admired the complexity of style, texture, and adornment of the afro hair of slaves from Africa, something had to be done to rid them of their identity as they entered their new world (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). Slaves' heads were shaven -an unspeakable and highly disrespectful crime from their perspective (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a)- and their diet was less than favorable, which affected the health of the body and hair. When their hair eventually grew back they wore rough makeshift headscarves and did not have the time to care for it and so it became thickly matted, and tangled, and often they had to deal with unsightly scars from ringworm and other scalp diseases (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). However, the slaves who worked indoors were able to carry on the tradition of incorporating various braid patterns in the form of plaits or cornrows, as they were required to have a neat and tidy appearance. The laundry workers, barbers, cooks, and chauffeurs who worked closely with the white population often imitated their white owners by wearing wigs or by shaping their hair to look like that of a wig (Brisbon, 2009a).

For generations afro hairstyles have reflected the history of American race relations and the way blacks wore their hair reflected the dominant white culture. African hair was straightened, combed, or parted to mimic Caucasian coiffures. The need for black Africans to imitate Western hairstyles indicates an implicit lack of respect by the West for the fact that many African slaves saw their hair as having special cultural importance. Aside from the cultural aspect, hair for African women was especially important to highlight their identity as women coming from their various tribes and communities. By

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not allowing the hair and grooming rituals that the Africans had grown accustomed to at home, the white slave owners symbolically stripped them of their culture. And women in particular, were stripped of their feminine identity (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a).

Some authors have suggested that perceptions about afro hair, especially among the afro haired communities themselves, have not improved in the present time. For example Robinson (2011) mentions in her paper *Hair as Race: Why "Good Hair" May Be Bad for Black Females*, that generations of black women have been taught to value hair types differently, with coarser and kinkier hair types being the least valued among black women. This research study attempted to discover whether or not similar perceptions are present among black women of African origin, especially in Kenya.

2.4 The politics of hair: "Good hair" versus "Bad hair"

During the era of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade it was very common for Africans to procreate outside of their race, creating a huge mulatto presence. These people would oftentimes try to avoid slavery by "passing for white", but the one thing that gave a clue to one's African ancestry was their hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2001a). Before the days of relaxers, one could not truly hide all signs of thick, course, wavy, or as they often called it "nappy" hair, no matter what you "mixed" an individual with. The idea that Caucasian hair was better began to warp the minds of black people as well as their self-perception. They saw themselves as inferior and this is how the idea of "good hair or bad hair" sprouted. Cynthia L. Robinson (2011) defines the term "good hair" as being that hair type whose texture does not need straightening as it is wavy and has loose curls and tends to be long. Usually the individuals with this type of hair have an ancestor of Caucasian, Native American or Asian descent (usually with straight or wavy and fine textures). This minimizes their African ancestry by giving the individual afro hair that it is mixed with a straighter or fine texture. Hence, the person with "good hair" is often of biracial or mixed heritage. On the other hand an individual with "bad hair" is defined as one whose hair texture is composed of tightly coiled curls or kinks and it tends to be short or closer

to the scalp, clearly depicting a pure African ancestry (Robinson, 2011). Thus the phrase 'good hair' made its way into the dictionary and the cultural stigma continued, even after slavery officially ended in 1865 (Brisbon, 2009a).

In the present day, this culture of separating individuals based on whether they have "good hair" or "bad hair" is not so prevalent among black men. However, among many women of African ancestry this distinction is often made in a variety of ways. From hair salons charging customers with kinkier hair more than a customer with silky hair for the same service (Thompson, 2008), to professional institutions banning certain afro-specific hairstyles such as dreadlocks, braids and afro puffs, the categorization of hair based on texture is still rampant with many women feeling victimized due to their hair. It is not uncommon for a friend or co-worker to advise a woman deemed to have "bad hair" to cover it up with weaves, wigs or braided styles that hide the natural curl pattern (Ebron, 1999; Thompson, 2008).

In the workplace we find that black men and white women may face racism or sexism, but black women face an intersection of the two that is completely different to either one (Robinson, 2011). While black men may find themselves facing discrimination because of their race in their workplace, black women also face the same. Similarly, white women may encounter discrimination based on the fact that they are female in a mostly male-dominated corporate world and black women would also be subject to the same due to their being female. Thus black women in the workplace face the double challenge of being black and being women. This refers back to the issue of how women form a sense of their feminine identity at the workplace and how their femininity can be affected by the predominant culture. While it is clear from the above that an exploration has been carried out on black women's experiences in professional situations, this study sought to see how the experiences of black women working in Kenya fared against other black women working in the West.

2.5 A woman's hair and her Feminine Identity

Women identify themselves as feminine based on many factors, key among them is hair, due to the fact that it distinguishes them from men in most societies (Hershman, 1974; McAlexander & Schouten, 1989). This awareness of being feminine can however increase or decrease based on how a woman views herself and her identity. Consequently, women may feel that their femininity is affected by how they style their hair due to the intrinsic way in which hair influences their identity (Hershman, 1974).

Some researchers have found that hair plays a very significant role for both men and women in terms of their self-image and the way they present themselves to the public. One such is Rook (1985) whose article on grooming rituals found that the daily practice of taking care of hair on the head such as shampooing, conditioning and styling allowed both men and women to feel they had control over their self-image internally and externally. The concept of hair playing a role in being able to bring about or highlight a change in the inner self was further developed by McAlexander and Shouten (1989) in an article on hair style changes as transition markers. By studying young adults in their twenties they found evidence to show that a new phase of life could often be signaled by a new hairstyle. McCracken (1996) went further to study the role that not just hairstyles but hair color played in providing women with cultural meaning in his book *Big Hair*. He noted that red, blonde, brunette, black and gray hair all have their own unique cultural meanings. In addition to this Mazur (1993) in his article on status signs in bridal portraits, found that hair was a signifier among brides of social status. The working (lower) class women such as secretaries were found to have more elaborate styles to be more alluring while the upper class women such as young corporate executives chose styles that were more conventional and understated. As Synnott (1987) had earlier found by analyzing women in the workplace and their choice of hairstyles, women's hair that is large or elaborate was seen to be unprofessional and too alluring for a business environment.

The link between how a person views themselves as manifested in their personal hair care and how in turn they are viewed by society is found among most races and communities. As Herschman (1974) notes in his essay *Hair, Sex and Dirt,* among the Punjabi, when a loved one died they left their hair unkempt and unwashed as a sign of respect and important loss of themselves in unity with the deceased. Thus, the identity of a person, and especially of women, is closely tied to their hair and it's grooming. This study aimed to discover whether women's hair care manifests a deeper understanding of herself as a woman and her feminine identity.

2.6   Feminine Identity from a philosophical perspective

According to Plato (360 BCE), man is a spirit in extrinsic union with matter, meaning that the matter is not a specific human reality but rather, something like a man and his clothes. Plato's understanding of the union considers that man's body is a distinct and autonomous dwelling place for the spirit, and that the soul has properties that are peculiar to it and not to the body (*Phaedo* 65c; 66a-67d). For Aristotle (350 BCE), there is an intrinsic union between form and matter in man such as an object and its color. Aristotle's view supposes that man's spirit and body are inseparable to ensure the proper functioning of each (*De Anima* 408b18- 24).

Aristotle (350 BCE) thought of '*psyche*' as a fundamental principle that animates all living beings (*De Anima*, 401a1). Due to its nature of finding its particular expression in the body, it is inseparable from the body for all its functions are found in a body (*De Anima*, 403a11). Similarly, Aquinas (1225-1274) asserts that man is not just a soul but is composed of both body and soul in intimate union with each other (*Summa Theologica* I, 75, 4). For him, even the most spiritual realities can only be grasped though the understanding of a sensitive reality. Thus, a human being cannot develop intellectual knowledge, which is a spiritual operation, without a bodily (physical) faculty that facilitates this process. For example, the knowledge gained though sight can only be achieved through the eyes whose proper

object is light (or colors). Therefore to have an understanding -a spiritual operation- of colors we need the eyes, a physical faculty (*Summa Theologica* I, 75, 4).

Based on the anthropology of Aristotle and later Aquinas, the material dimension of man is acknowledged and is found to be in harmony with his spiritual dimension (Lauand, 1997). The understanding of man from the perspective of a unity of body and soul forms the basis on which we begin to seek out the understanding of man's, and more specifically woman's, identity (Mimbi, 2007).

There are many questions that may be asked about the difference in the sexes as part of humanity. Some of these have been raised since the time of the pre-Socratics: are male and female opposites or the same? Are men and women wise in the same or in different ways? Are men and women virtuous in the same or in different ways? What is the relation between a mother's and father's contribution to generation and sex identity in a person? (Allen 2006). Authors such as Edith Stein have tried to answer these questions.

According to Stein, "the inquiry into the essence of a woman has its logical place in philosophical anthropology" (1987, p. 163), because anthropology makes clear the distinctions between the sexes while proving that 'woman' has substance as part of the species of humankind. As a Jewish woman she faced particularly blatant sexism in the male dominated world of philosophy. She however overcame these obstacles to leave her work immortalized for future generations. Stein studied women from a phenomenological point of view and concluded that despite the fact that men and women shared a "common humanity" they are "marked by duality"(Stein, 1987, p. 161). This connection is revealed in Stein's argument that, men are more predisposed to individual tasks while women are more intuitive by nature (Stein, 1987, p. 162). By individual tasks the author means the man is able to separate himself from others in carrying out his duties to society and gain fulfillment in this way without any form of validation being necessary. On the other hand a woman is more often motivated by the needs of others and their appreciation of her efforts and gains fulfillment from knowing that she is of help to the society. However, Stein claims that men and women share the same capacities, some

examples being - to understand, to create and to enjoy (Stein, 1987, p. 71). Thus, despite their differences in nature both man and woman are able to act together in their mutual duties towards each other and the rest of the earth by understanding similar realities in life, creating life together and by enjoying the earth as granted to them.

Furthermore, Stein suggests that women's singularity- this being that women are different from men- is self-evident and that in this singularity lies an intrinsic feminine value (1987, p. 247). Thus, a woman is seen as a valued member of society because of the very fact that she is different from a man. Some of these differences can be the fact that man seems to be more objective while woman appears to have an attitude that is personal. This means that man is able to more naturally dedicate his faculties to disciplines more specifically, whereas woman is able to be naturally more concerned about her own and others' personal affairs (Stein, 1987, p. 248). Within this singularity it is possible to debase and lose the value of the woman. A woman who does not bring out the value of her character through her singularity, such as her affinity for being personal, can turn this uniqueness into something that is not of value by being overly interested in her own and the affairs of others. On the other hand this singularity can be harnessed to showcase the value of a woman by her carrying out more objective work, such as a man would naturally tend to do, while infusing the technique with her own feminine uniqueness of personalizing it. Therefore, the very difference between women and men is where their value as persons lies.

2.7   Theoretical framework

This section reviews Cormac Burke's theory of femininity and feminine identity. His ideas help us to form a more humane perspective of not just women but men as well and how their healthy interaction consequently leads to the development of an awareness of their respective sexual identity and sexual roles. The idea of feminine identity according to Burke (2013a) is an approach that looks at men and women as diverse and complimentary parts of a whole, each of whom finds their fulfillment in the other. As

such it forms the theoretical framework for this study grounding it in the ancient ideas of philosophical anthropology.

2.8 Feminine identity and Femininity according to Cormac Burke

This study is based on Cormac Burke's book *Man and Values.* The book touches on the feminine identity of woman and her femininity as the expression of this identity. For Burke the concept of sexual identity in men and women is one that allows the different sexes to find fulfillment in each other as complimentary parts of a whole human experience. Since the person has a need for others, he can achieve this through a healthy sexual interaction in order to perfect him or herself and reach their true human potential.

 The sexual identity of man lies in the man's capability of increasing his masculinity. He can achieve this by being enthusiastic about woman through protecting and respecting her and admiring her virginity and motherhood. Through his interaction with women he is able to develop his true masculine character. The same is true for sexual identity in women. A woman is capable of increasing her femininity and developing her true feminine character by caring for others and surrendering herself in service to them. For her, this is how she grows as a woman and develops her femininity as her sexual identity. This then means that human sexual identity is necessarily expressed through femininity and masculinity (Burke, 2007a). Consequently, a man or woman's masculinity or femininity is an expression of how they identify themselves as either a man or a woman.

Cormac Burke describes femininity as a value that is manifested and appreciated more though it spiritual and characteristic expressions and less through its physical or material expressions (Burke, 2007a). He asserts that "feminine grace" is a quality that all women should seek to embody and possess. For him it is an outward bearing that is suggestive of the interior qualities of self-possession and robust character. To possess feminine grace therefore has little or nothing to do with physical beauty or natural endowment and more to do with an inner cultivated quality that is within reach of all women despite not having conventional physical beauty. He further argues that a woman who fails to cultivate her

femininity (feminine grace) suffers a greater limitation in sexual identity than a man who is weak or lacks drive, qualities that are critical to acquiring masculinity (Burke, 2007a).

Modern society puts pressure on the woman to cultivate her looks and to be "sexy" in order to be more feminine, but in so doing takes something away from her femininity. The over-preoccupation with beauty and physical attractiveness overtakes the noble pursuit of acquiring more feminine grace through qualities such as gentleness, tenderness, modesty and feminine tact (Burke, 2007a, p. 107).

Feminine identity as understood by Burke is not different from his take on femininity. The concept of feminine identity moreover has its manifestation in femininity. Those characteristics that signify femininity in a woman such as gentleness and tenderness to name a few are the ones that give a woman her singular identity as woman.

What is interesting to note is that masculinity and femininity are not distinguished so much by the apportioning between them of qualities and virtues, such as we can say men embody this or that virtue and vice versa, but how each sex assimilates all the values in their own peculiar way (Burke, 2007a, p. 100). Virtues are a human concept that both sexes should aim to develop.

This leads us to appreciating that when women are appraising their own identity they need to use general parameters that are not peculiar to their sex. So to develop and thus fulfill one's self in the feminine mode means to relate with others; to connect rather than to separate as opposed to the masculine mode of making one's self independent of others (Burke, 2007a, p. 104). In agreement with this analysis some psychologists such as David McClelland (1951) and Erik Erikson (1968) hold that feminine identity is actualized from having relationships of intimacy with others in contrast to masculine identity which is to forge a relationship with the external world. A good example that McClelland points out is the way that both sexes exhibit the virtue of strength or fortitude. Where men tend to represent strength as aggression and assertion, women on the other hand find acts of nurturing others to portray the same quality.

The importance of this theory for this study is that hair is an important anthropological component due to the fact that all human beings have hair and it has not just biological significance but social and cultural meanings as well. According to Leach (Leach, 1958), Hindus in India and Buddhists in Sri Lanka wear long hair to symbolize their sexuality whereby long hair represented unrestrained sexuality, short or bound hair restrained sexuality and shaved hair meant celibacy. Hair has also been a gender identifier for the past few centuries with women choosing more elaborate and long coiffures while men keep it simple and shortened in many cultures in the west and in Africa. Burke's theory on femininity therefore cuts across the areas of feminine identity and hair by highlighting the importance of how a woman develops her personality through her peculiar feminine expressions such as her individual hairstyles and also the concurrence with anthropological discoveries on hair and personal identity (Pergament, 1999).

Burke however does not discuss the issue of hair and how it plays directly into feminine identity and therein lies the limitation of his theory for this study.

The findings of the study were analyzed using this understanding of feminine identity and its expression in femininity. The findings on what women understand by feminine identity were contrasted with Burke's understanding. Likewise, the way in which women gain or diminish their femininity as described by Burke's work formed a guide for the discussion of the findings on how their hairstyles affect their sense of feminine identity.

2.9   Conclusion

In this Chapter the literature relating to the perceptions of hair has been reviewed, and the politics of hair discussed. The concept of feminine identity has been reviewed particularly from a philosophical perspective. Cormac Burke's theory of feminine identity has been explained and presented as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the research findings.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design for the study, population and sampling, data collection and analysis. Research quality and ethical considerations are also discussed.

3.2 Research design

A research methodology is the way in which research is done scientifically, emphasizing the steps that are considered in the research process to get insight or identify a solution to a problem, along with the logic behind those steps (Kothari, 2004). This study focused on establishing the effect of perceptions of afro hair in the workplace on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women among fulltime Strathmore University staff members as well as evening masters' students working in other environments. The study employed a mixed methods research methodology as it allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data which were used to enhance the findings for this study (Creswell, 2014).

A research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation took place. It typically includes how data was collected, what instruments were employed, how they were used and the intended means for analyzing collected data (Creswell, 2013, p. 166). A descriptive study is one that is conducted in a community to discover the extent of a range of issues such as health, nutrition, education, crime, etc. (Mugenda, 2008, p. 66). Applied philosophy aims at using philosophy to understand real world problems or practical affairs of everyday life (Sirswal, 2008). As such the research design for this study was descriptive with a philosophical analysis of the findings. Based on this design the research study looked at a real world philosophical problem, the perceptions that Kenyan women have about afro hair in the workplace and their sense of feminine identity, by gathering information from Strathmore University fulltime female staff members as well as female masters' students working in different environments. The findings were

descriptive of a certain phenomenon, that of understanding the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace and its effect on the feminine identity of the black working woman.

The researcher applied the tools of philosophical analysis to the findings and made recommendations. Philosophical analysis, more specifically concept analysis, involves clarifying the complex meaning of a term or concept by stating its simpler component meanings (Daly, 2010). The findings were analyzed to identify key concepts / ideas raised by the respondents and discuss them from the perspective of feminine identity and afro hair at work.

As required by mixed methods research, both quantitative and qualitative tools were used. The quantitative data collection tool was a questionnaire. Mugenda (2003) describes this tool as being able to obtain important information about the population without manipulating the research in a particular direction. The qualitative data collection tool used was focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were helpful in providing insight into the perceptions, needs, wants and thinking of participants (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). The questionnaires were answered by the female full time staff members of Strathmore University as well as by the female evening masters' students who work elsewhere. The same sample groups also took part in the focus group discussions.

The researcher used the data gathered from the questionnaire and focus group discussions to describe the lived experiences of individuals about a situation, occurrence or condition as explained by the participants. This narrative then culminated in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all gone through the said situation, occurrence or condition (Creswell, 2014). The situation, occurrence or condition was the perceptions that black Kenyan women have about their natural hair and whether this has any effect on their personal feminine identity at the workplace.

3.3   Population and Sampling

The study population comprised all black Kenyan Strathmore University full-time female staff members on duty at the time of this study and female Strathmore University masters' students who were working in various organizations in Nairobi and its environs. Only black Kenyan women participated in the study due to the need to collect information on the effects of perceptions of afro hair possessed by black women in the workplace on their feminine identity. As per the Strathmore University Human Resources Department, the population of female full time staff members was a total of 187 women across the Schools and Faculties in the University at the time of the study. Of those the total number of black women were 178 working fulltime in the university. In addition, according to the various schools and departments with masters' students currently enrolled at the time of the study, the population of black female students was 105. This brought the total population of the study to 283.

Ethnicity	Female staff members
Black	178
White/ Asian	9
Total	**187**

Table 3.1: Female fulltime Strathmore University staff on duty April 2017

Job type	Black female staff members
Administrative	104
Academic	74
Total	**178**

Table 3.2: Black female fulltime Strathmore University staff on duty April 2017

School/ Faculty	Master's degree	Student Numbers	
		F	**M**
SHSS (School of Humanities and Social Sciences)	MAPE (Master of Arts in Philosophy and Ethics)	7	23
	MEM (Master's in Educational Management)	8	16
SIMS (Strathmore Institute of Mathematical Sciences)	MScB (Master of Science in Biomathematics)	2	0
	Master of Science in Statistical Sciences	2	1
	Master of Science in Mathematical Finance	3	1
SMC (School of Management and Commerce)	MComm (Master of Commerce)	55	39
FIT (Faculty of Information Technology)	Master of Science in Information Technology	21	44
	Master of Information Systems Security	7	17
TOTALS		**105**	**141**

Table 3.3: Currently enrolled masters' student numbers according to gender

The sampling design for the quantitative data collection was stratified random or probability sampling. In this type of sampling items for the sample were selected at random systematically according to the different strata identified by the researcher. This type of sampling is more appropriate when the population is stratified according to some criteria and thus the sample needs to be stratified as well (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The identified criteria for stratification was as shown in the table below:

Strata	Numbers

Female full time SU Administrative staff	104
Female full time SU Academic staff	74
Female enrolled masters' students	105
TOTAL	283

Table 3.4: Stratified sampling strata

For each strata the researcher used simple random sampling to generate a sample that was used to collect data quantitatively (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, p. 48). The researcher approached various masters' students of the evening classes just before their classes started at 5.30 p.m. in order to gain access to them while they are in session and request them to fill out the questionnaires.

To calculate the sample size, the following formula below was used as the most appropriate for populations that are less than 1000 individuals (Kothari, 2009).

$$ss = \frac{z2 * (p) * (1-p)}{C2}$$

Where:

ss = Sample size

z = z value for the confidence interval

p= percentage picking a choice

c= confidence interval

The result is a sample size of 37 women drawn from a population of 283 (Strathmore University, 2017). A sample of 37 women was achieved according to the strata outlined in Table 3.5 below.

To generate a stratified sample the following formula was used to calculate the proportion of people from each group (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003): The sample size for

each strata is proportional to the size of the strata hence the simplest formula to achieve this was used.

Sample size of the strata = size of entire sample / population size * layer size)

Strata	Population	Sample
Female full time SU Administrative staff	104	(37/283)*104= 13.43 **13**
Female full time SU Academic staff	74	(37/283)*74= 9.67 **10**
Female enrolled masters' students	105	(37/283)*105= 13.72 **14**
TOTAL	283	**37**

Table 3.5: Stratified random samples

For focus group discussions, it is recommended that the researcher stop the total number of focus group discussions at the point where they can fairly accurately anticipate what the next group is going to say, meaning no new material is being generated. This is also known as the saturation criterion (Kumar, 2005). In fact because the main aim of qualitative inquiries is to explore or gather extensive information, even information obtained from one individual or group (for focus groups) is valid (Kumar, 2005). The researcher therefore proposed 3 focus group discussions with about 8 participants each which are 24 total participants. The actual sample achieved was 8 participants each for the staff strata and 6 participants for the masters' student strata as a result of 2 respondents who failed to appear for the scheduled appointment. The method of sampling used was snowball sampling. Snowballing is the process of recruiting research respondents by finding one or more participants who fit the researcher's criteria and asking them to recommend other people (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). In this case, the researcher identified participants who filled in the questionnaires and asked them to recommend other people who fitted in the same criteria. Each focus group consisted of

participants of the same strata, one of female SU Academic staff, female SU Administrative staff and one of female masters' students. This was in order to facilitate openness and positive dynamics within the group.

The participants that took part in the focus group discussions were different from the ones answering the questionnaires. Therefore the total number of respondents was 61.

3.4   Data collection tools

The researcher proposed to reach out to black Strathmore University female fulltime staff members, both faculty and administrative staff, who were willing to participate in the study through permission granted by the director of research at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The researcher also proposed to reach out to school heads and faculty heads to obtain permission to facilitate the distribution of the survey to masters' students currently enrolled in Strathmore University during class breaks. Respondents were asked to fill in the self-administered questionnaire which took not more than 15 minutes while the researcher was waiting in order to maximize on time and efficiency(Creswell, 2014, p. 155).

In this study the questionnaire comprised both structured and open-ended questions in Appendix II (for staff) and Appendix III (for students) while the focus group discussions comprised of only open-ended questions using the schedule in Appendix IV.

Questionnaires can be very helpful in speeding up of data collection turnaround time and identifying key attributes of a large population from a small group of individuals (Creswell, 2014). The questionnaire had sub-questions based on the research questions, which were phrased in a way the respondent could easily understand (Creswell, 2013). The questions were split into five sections, with the first section collecting the respondent's demographic data and each section of the other four focused on a particular theme that was also used in the data analysis.

The data was collected by handing out questionnaires to staff members approached in their offices or at the cafeteria and other common areas of the university. Another set of questionnaires designed for the evening masters' students were also handed out just before the students settled in for their class at 5:30 pm. The researcher waited as the respondents filled in the questionnaires and was also on hand to answer any questions and clarify any terms. The reason behind this approach was to reach as many respondents as possible and also maximize on prompt feedback being achieved. The responses from the three questionnaires would be used to compare and contrast experiences of the distinct strata.

Through the focus group discussions the researcher was able to achieve greater depth in exploring the research topic through probing the perceptions, experiences and understandings of even more members from the target population (Kumar, 2005a). The researcher was also able to study how the participants respond to each other's ideas and build up a view based on the interaction that takes place within the group of staff members (Creswell, 2013). The focus group participants were not the same as those who participated in the questionnaires. This was to ensure more varied information was gathered. The researcher used a focus group discussion guide containing open-ended questions to lead the discussion (Appendix IV). The discussions were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy in reporting and ensure that no information was lost. The data collection tools gave numerical and textual feedback for the structured and open-ended questions in both the questionnaire and focus group discussions.

3.5   Data analysis

A thematic analysis was used for feedback gathered from both the questionnaire and the focus group discussions. This means utilizing the procedure of reporting the results using descriptions and themes from the data (Creswell, 2014). The themes to be used were based on the research objectives and questions as outlined in Chapter 1. A breakdown of the themes is given in Table 3.6.

Research Question	Theme
1. What is the understanding of feminine identity among black Kenyan women in the workplace?	Femininity
2. What are the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women in Strathmore University?	Perceptions of black women regarding afro hair Hairstyles worn in the workplace
3. What is the effect of perceptions about afro hair in the workplace on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women?	Feminine identity and afro hair

Table 3.6: Main themes as per the study research questions

Mixed methods approach employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyze the collected data (Creswell, 2014). The data from the self-administered questionnaire was entered into Microsoft Excel for purposes of producing graphs and charts that visually presented the data for easier interpretation. The data from the focus group discussions was reported using the themes and objectives of the study.

The data gathered from the different strata (administrative staff, academic staff and masters' student) as identified during the sampling procedure was analyzed separately and compared and contrasted to find similarities and differences which aided in understanding the research questions and enriching the discussion of findings.

The findings were further discussed from the perspective of feminine identity as explained by Cormac Burke (highlighted in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2) to draw out their deeper philosophical meaning and possible implications. Conclusions were then drawn and recommendations made to address any gaps that emerge.

3.6 Research quality

Research validity refers to the accuracy, meaningfulness and usefulness of the research findings (Mugenda, 2008). In this case the use of two data collection and analysis tools of mixed methods guaranteed the validity by improving accuracy of the findings.

Research reliability refers to the consistency of the results over time although without the researcher needing to collect data more than once to prove this (Mugenda, 2008). This was ensured by following an appropriate survey method as suggested by Creswell (2014, p. 155) in addition to conducting a pilot test of the questions in the questionnaire with 3 respondents (one from each strata i.e. administrative staff, academic staff and masters' student), in order to check that the questions provided the required feedback. A pilot of the focus group discussion questions was also conducted with 3 people for the same reason.

Accurate and complete data was collected to ensure objectivity (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed and a written record of the interviews were kept to ensure that what is reported is what was said by the interviewees (Kumar, 2005a).

3.7 Ethical considerations

The respondents were above the age of consent as this study was carried out among Strathmore University female staff members who were of the age of 21 and above at the time of the study.

Confidentiality was of paramount importance. All the data gathered for this study was protected and only accessible to the researcher by storing it in encrypted files in the researcher's personal computer and password protected hard drive and it was only used for purposes of this study. The physical filled in questionnaires were also kept locked in a drawer in the researcher's safe office. The questionnaire included a clause stating the purpose of the research and assuring respondents of the confidentiality of any

information provided along with the bio-data of the respondents. The participants in the focus group discussions were also assigned numbers or aliases in order to further protect their anonymity (Creswell, 2013, p. 174). After the respondent had read the information regarding the study it was assumed that willingness to respond indicated their voluntary and informed ethical consent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, p. 192).

Before the focus group discussion begun, the researcher clearly informed the interviewees of the purpose of the interview and assured them of the confidentiality of the information they provided. Their willingness to proceed with the discussion was once again taken to indicate their voluntary and informed consent. Their consent to recording the discussion for the purpose of accuracy was also obtained verbally before starting the discussion and recording. Participants were also allowed to withdraw from the study at any time they wished had they desired not to proceed.

The researcher also sought written approval from the Dean of Research to carry out a survey on the Strathmore University female fulltime staff members and the masters' students (Appendix I).

3.8   Conclusion

This chapter discusses the research design for the study and describes the quantitative and qualitative data collection tools that were employed. The sample size was explained and the type of data analysis was clarified. The research quality and ethical considerations for the study were also presented. The findings gathered from the data collected provided a generalized understanding regarding feminine identity among black Kenyan Strathmore University female full time staff members and evening masters' students linking it to their perceptions about afro hair in the workplace.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains results from the research survey as well as the focus group discussions that were carried out to answer the research questions. The data from the quantitative data contains results from the survey carried out among female academic and administrative staff members and female evening masters' students at Strathmore University. The quantitative data was analyzed using an excel sheet and presented by use of bar graphs, pie charts and area graphs. The second set of data presented is the results carried out from Focus Group Discussions carried out with Strathmore University female full-time staff members and female evening masters' students who work elsewhere. The qualitative data was used to complement the findings of the quantitative data and answer the research questions. The data presented was gathered and then processed in response to the research questions presented in Chapter one.

4.2 Overview of the research process

Research for this study was conducted through surveys presented to a study population through physical distribution (copies of the survey can be found in Appendix II, III & IV). The data was collected by handing out questionnaires to staff members approached in their offices or at the cafeteria and other common areas of the university. Another set of questionnaires designed for the evening masters' students were also handed out just before the students settled in for their class at 5:30 pm. The researcher waited as the respondents filled in the questionnaires and was also on hand to answer any questions and clarify any terms. The reason behind this approach was to reach as many respondents as possible and also maximize on prompt feedback being achieved. The responses from the three questionnaires would be used to compare and contrast experiences of the distinct strata.

Section one of the questionnaire requested respondents to rank their agreement to a list of statements regarding feminine identity/ femininity. Responses to the statements ranged from "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree." They were also asked to include, their understanding of what feminine identity/ femininity.

Section two required respondents answer "true" of "false" to a list of statements regarding afro hair at work and the importance of perceptions about afro hair at work. Responses here ranged from "not important", "slightly important", "important" and "very important". This section also included statements on afro hair at work that needed a ranking of agreement, as well as a rating on certain hairstyles based on professionalism ranging from "least professional", "neutral" and "most professional".

Section three included more "true" or "false" statements regarding afro hair at work and its effect on femininity as well as a ranking of hairstyles based on femininity, ranging from "least feminine", "neutral" and "most feminine". At the end of the survey were three questions regarding the extent of their freedom to express their femininity and how this affects them either positively or negatively. The difference in the three different questionnaires was in their background information.

4.3 Questionnaire findings

The questionnaire was based on the three research objectives of the study, which are: feminine identity/femininity, perceptions of afro hair in the workplace and the effect of those perceptions on feminine identity/ femininity. The data was analyzed using an excel spreadsheet and the responses were presented in pie charts and bar graphs. This section has been divided following the order of the three research objectives.

4.3.1 General Background of Respondents

A total of 37 surveys were completed and posted. The staff respondent profile showed a departmental distribution of 57% from FIT (and iLab), 26% from SLS, 9% from SHSS and 9% from SMC (Fig. 4.1). The respondents' age categories were represented by (Fig 4.2 & Fig 4.3) and the number of years worked within the university and elsewhere (for masters' students) as seen in Fig 4.4 & Fig 4.5. The masters' students' course distribution is seen in Fig 4.6.
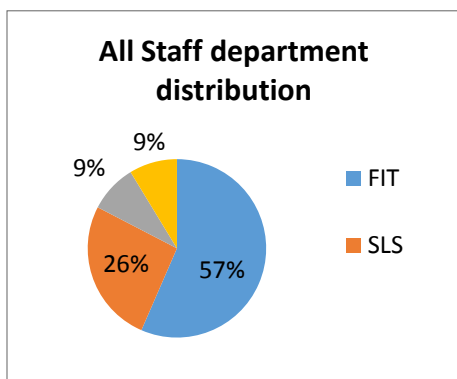
Figure 4.1: Departmental distribution
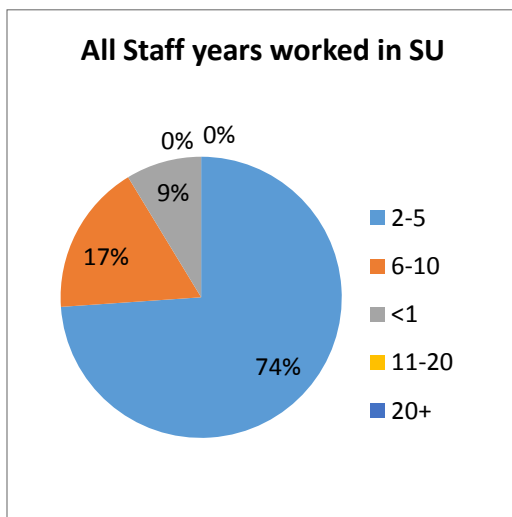
Figure 4.2: Years worked in SU
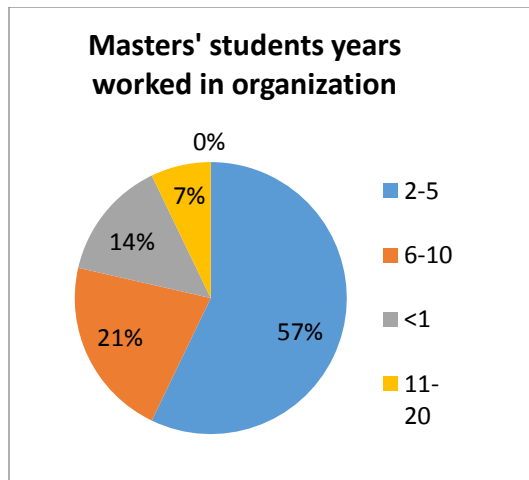
Figure 4.3: Years worked in other organizations
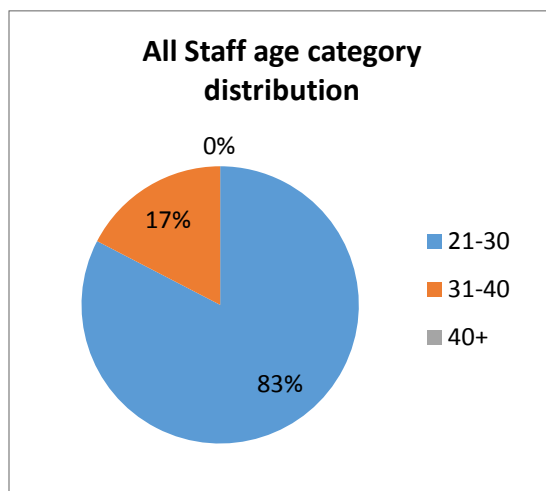
Figure 4.4: Staff age categories
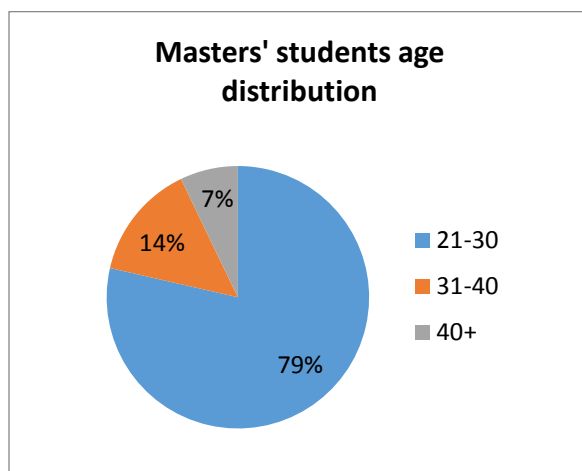
Figure 4.5: Students' age categories
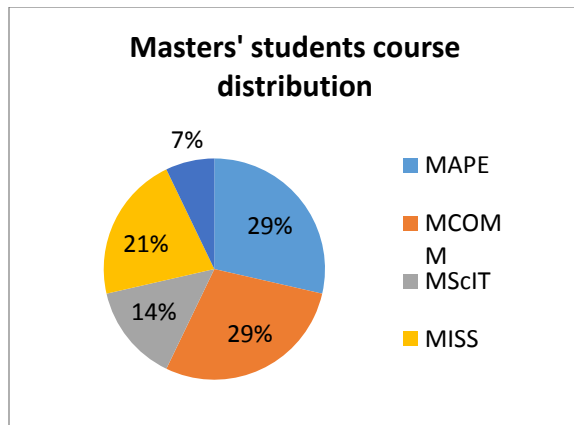
Figure 4.6: Students' course distribution

4.3.2 Feminine identity/ femininity

Burke describes feminine identity/femininity as a value that is manifested and appreciated more though it spiritual and characteristic expressions and less through its physical or material expressions (2007b).

To investigate the understanding of this concept, the respondents had to rank and respond to 21 questions, seeking to find out the way that women themselves view their own femininity. They were divided into three parts with the first part having 5 questions, the second part having 10 questions and the third part included 6 questions with the last one being open- ended. The distribution of the responses to all the questions is shown in the Figures 4.7 to 4.15 below.
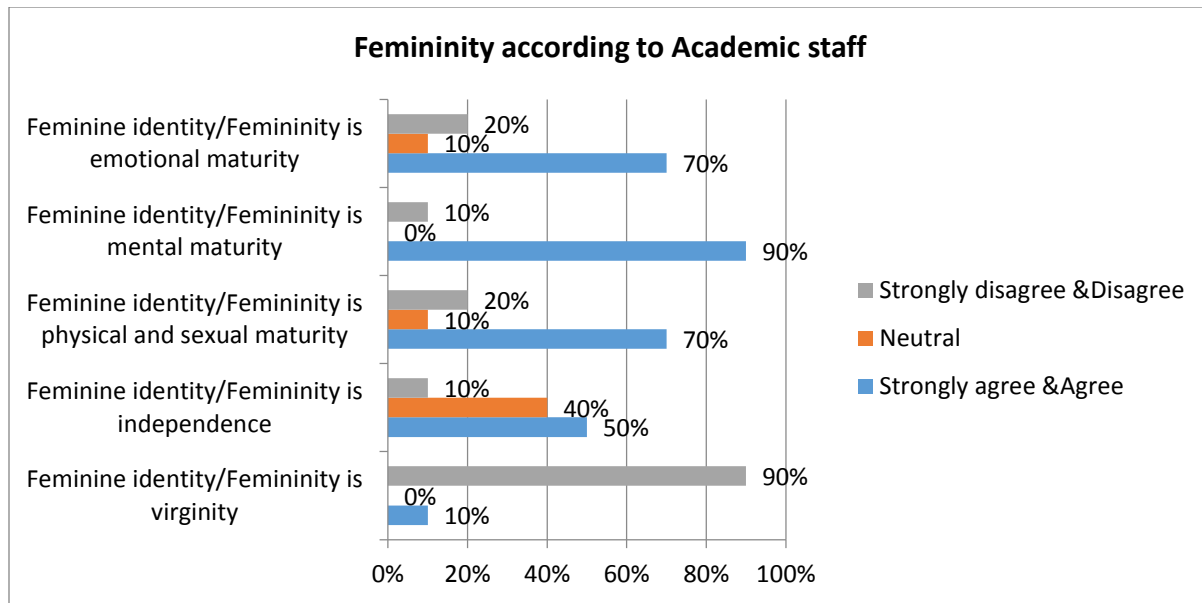
Figure 4.7: Feminine identity/ femininity according to academic staff

The academic staff respondents mostly felt that femininity was not related with virginity (90%). 70% thought that femininity was correspondent with emotional, physical and mental maturity, while 90% felt that mental maturity was the most related to femininity. Independence was split with 50% agreeing it represented femininity and 40% being neutral.
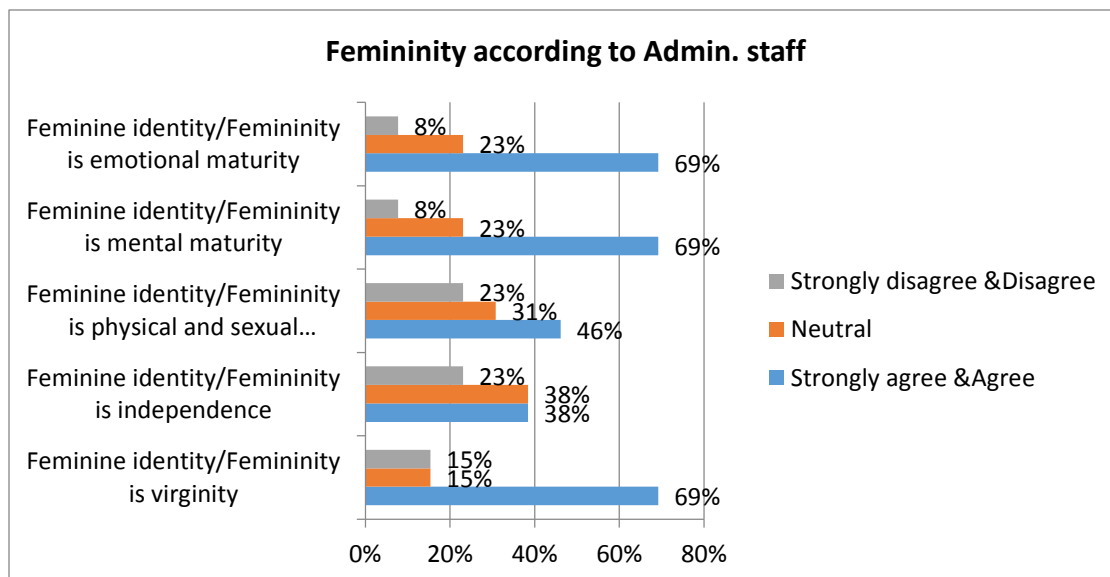
Figure 4.8: Feminine identity/ femininity according to Administrative staff

Combining strongly agree and agree, 69% of the administrative staff respondents thought that femininity was related to virginity, emotional and mental maturity. 46% felt that physical and sexual maturity was correspondent with femininity while the opinion on whether femininity was related to independence was tied at 38% agreeing while 38% felt neutral about it.
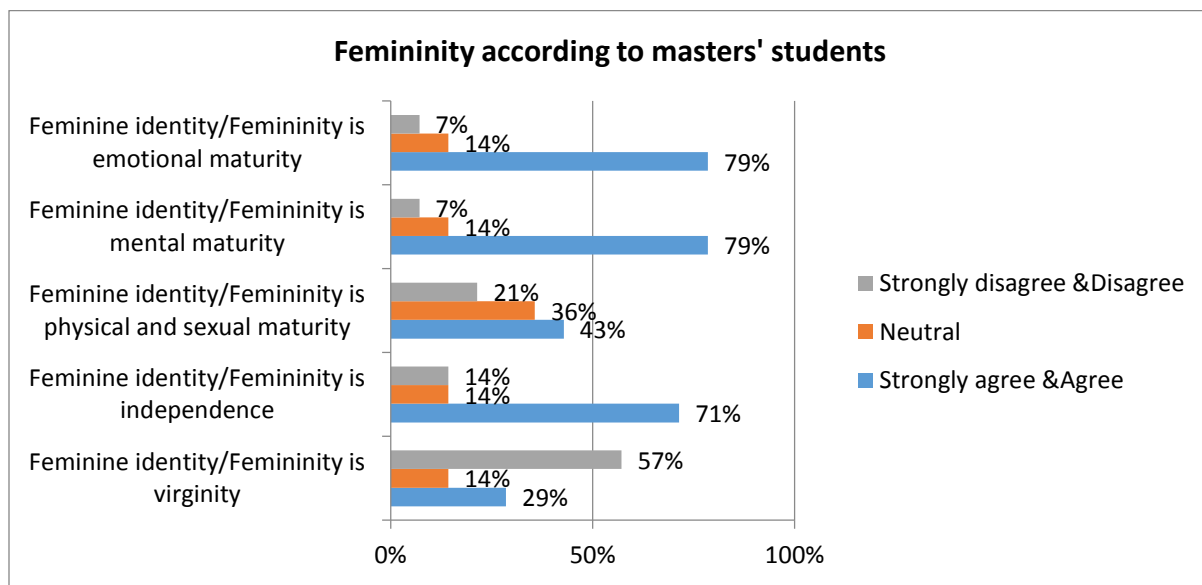
Figure 4.9: Feminine identity/ femininity according to masters' students

Of the masters' student respondents, 57% didn't agree that virginity was related to femininity. Meanwhile with regards to emotional and mental maturity and independence 79% and 71% agreed that they mostly related to femininity. Only 43% felt that physical and sexual maturity were representative of femininity.

Femininity descriptors' ranking (Academic staff)
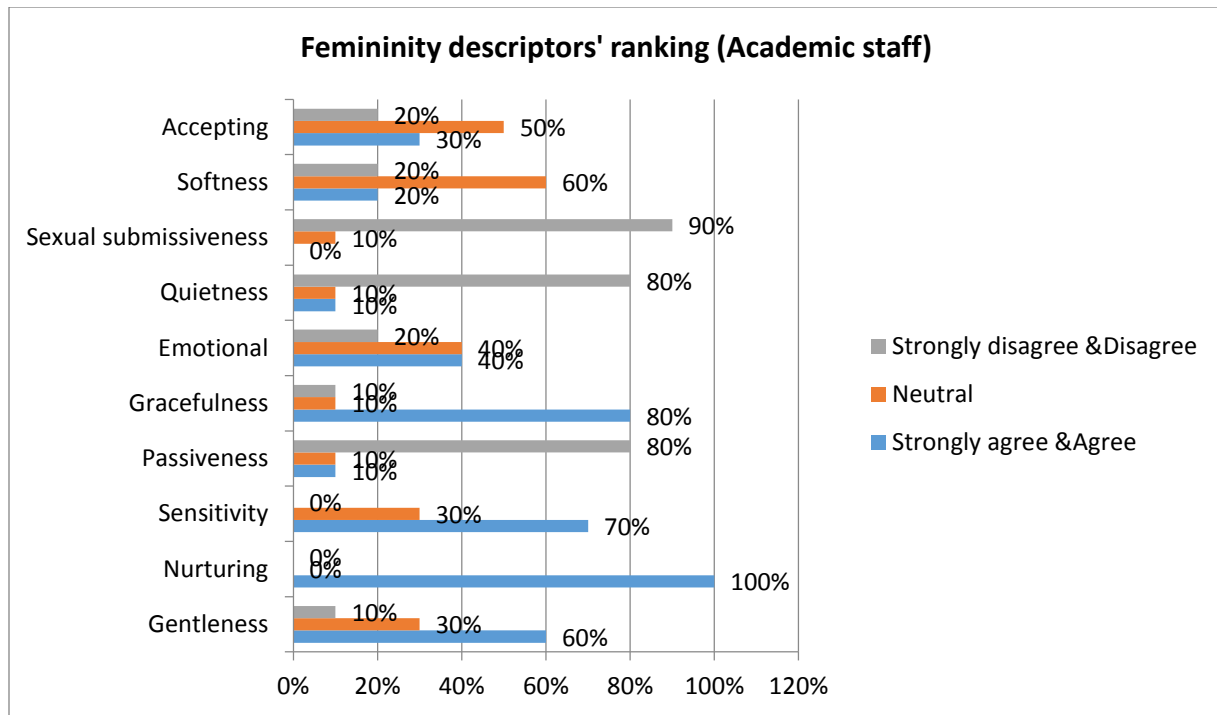
Figure 4.10: Femininity descriptors according to academic staff

The academic staff found that nurturing, gracefulness, sensitivity and gentleness were most descriptive of femininity with 100%, 80%, 70% and 60% agreeing respectively. On the other hand, sexual submissiveness, quietness and passiveness were found least descriptive of femininity with 90% and 80% disagreeing with the terms. Accepting, softness and emotional were split with most people feeling neutral about them.

Femininity descriptors' ranking (Admin. staff)

Accepting: 62%, 23%, 15%
Softness: 38%, 31%, 31%
Sexual submissiveness: 62%, 15%, 15%
Quietness: 92%, 8%, 0%
Emotional: 23%, 54%, 23%
Gracefulness: 15%, 15%, 69%
Passiveness: 92%, 8%, 0%
Sensitivity: 15%, 31%, 54%
Nurturing: 15%, 23%, 62%
Gentleness: 15%, 15%, 69%

Legend: Strongly disagree &Disagree; Neutral; Strongly agree &Agree
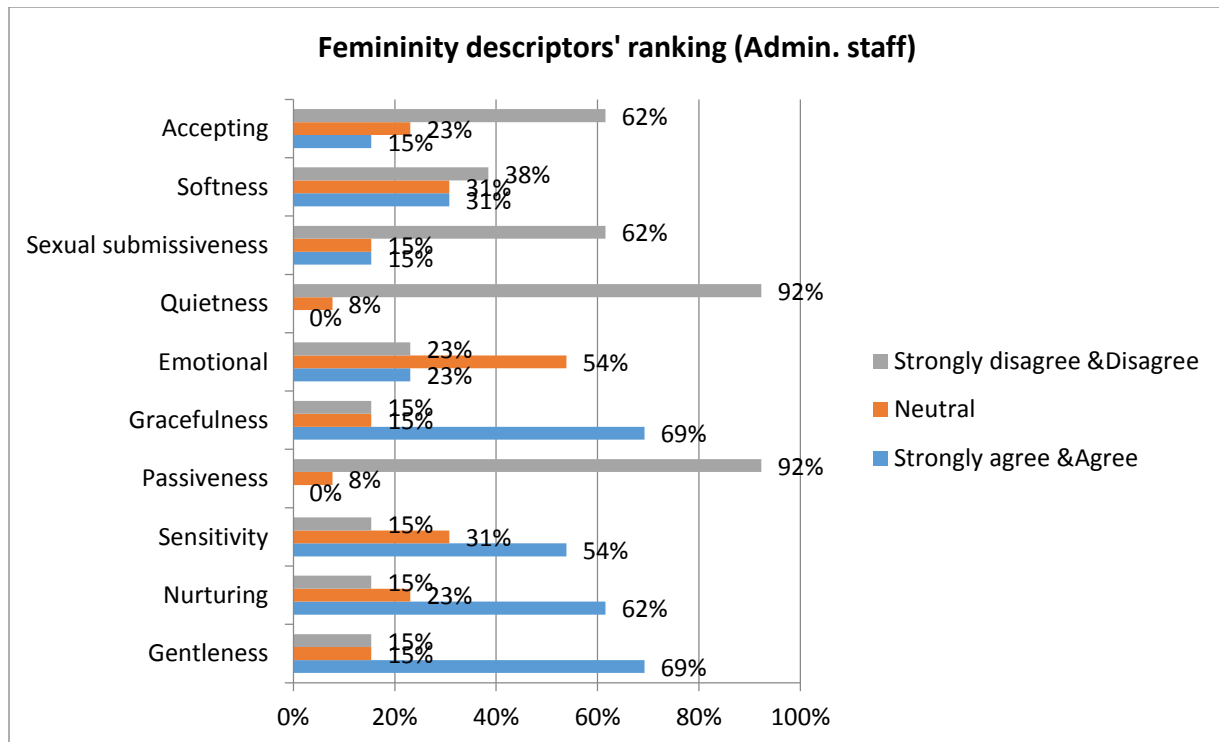
Fig 4.11: Femininity descriptors according to administrative staff

The administrative staff found that gracefulness, gentleness, sensitivity and nurturing were most descriptive of femininity with 69%, 69%, 62% and 54% agreeing respectively. On the other hand, quietness, passiveness, accepting and sexual submissiveness were found least descriptive of femininity with 92% and 62% disagreeing with the terms. Softness and emotional were split with most people feeling neutral about them.

Femininity descriptors ranking (masters' students)

	Accepting	Softness	Sexual submissiveness	Quietness	Emotional	Gracefulness	Passiveness	Sensitivity	Nurturing	Gentleness

Accepting: 29%, 29%, 43%
Softness: 36%, 29%, 36%
Sexual submissiveness: 50%, 29%, 21%
Quietness: 64%, 29%, 7%
Emotional: 29%, 36%, 36%
Gracefulness: 21%, 29%, 50%
Passiveness: 86%, 7%, 7%
Sensitivity: 7%, 21%, 71%
Nurturing: 14%, 21%, 64%
Gentleness: 29%, 21%, 50%

Legend: Strongly disagree &Disagree / Neutral / Strongly agree &Agree

Fig 4.12: Femininity descriptors according to masters' students

With the masters' students, sensitivity, nurturing, gracefulness and gentleness were found to be the most feminine descriptors with 71%, 64% and 50% agreeing with them respectively. Meanwhile, passiveness and quietness got the most disagreements with 86% and 64% respectively and emotional, accepting and softness getting almost neutral responses.

41
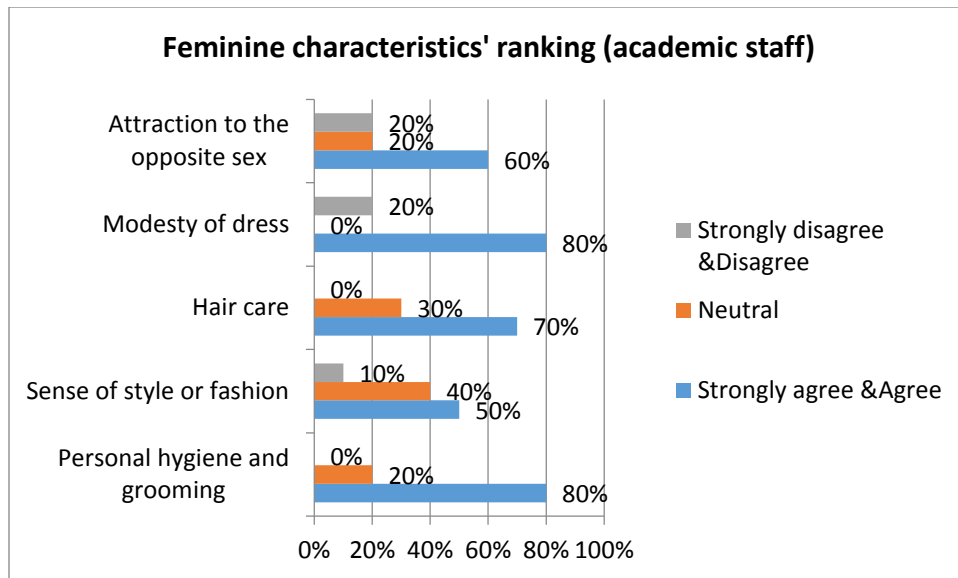
Fig 4.13: Ranking of feminine characteristics according to academic staff

80% of the academic staff respondents thought that modesty of dress and personal hygiene and grooming best demonstrated femininity. Hair care, attraction to the opposite sex and sense of style were also agreed upon to be feminine behavior with 70%, 60% and 50% respectively.
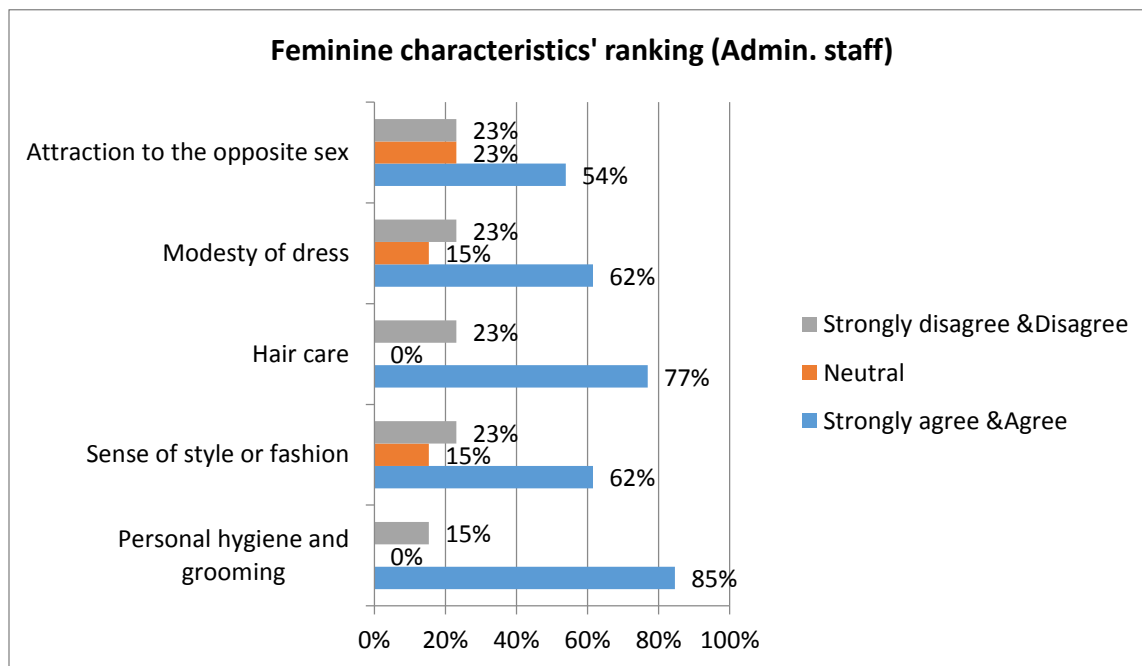
Fig 4.14: Ranking of feminine characteristics according to administrative staff

85% and 77% of the administrative staff thought that personal hygiene and grooming and hair-care best demonstrated femininity. 62% were in agreement that modesty of dress and sense of style or fashion were also descriptive of femininity.
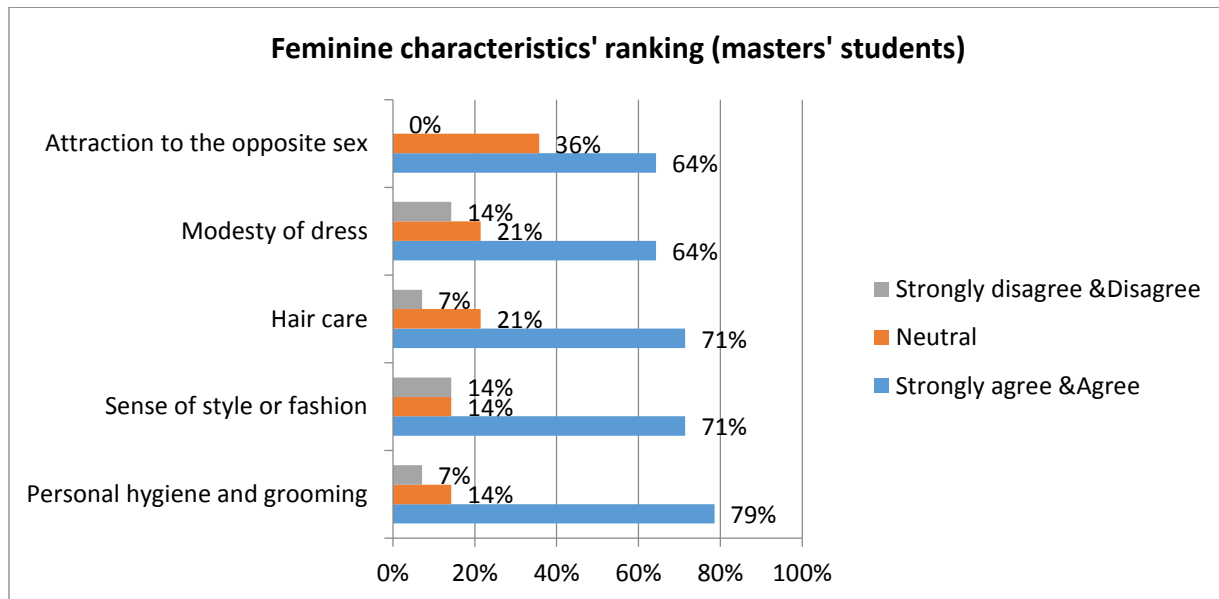
Fig 4.15: Ranking of feminine characteristics according to masters' students

The masters' students' responses also indicated a similar distribution to the academic and administrative staff responses, with 79% agreeing with personal hygiene and grooming. 71% also agreed that hair-care and sense of style or fashion were also demonstrative of femininity, while 64% agreed with attraction to the opposite sex and modesty of dress.

4.3.3 Afro hair at work

The second research question was focused on discovering the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace from the black women themselves. The second section of the questionnaire therefore was aimed at finding out these perceptions using a total of 23 questions. It was divided into four parts with the first part having 4 questions, the second part had 6 questions (1open- ended), the third part had 3 questions and the last part had 10 questions. The distribution of responses from the different strata is shown below in Figures 4.16 to 4.27.
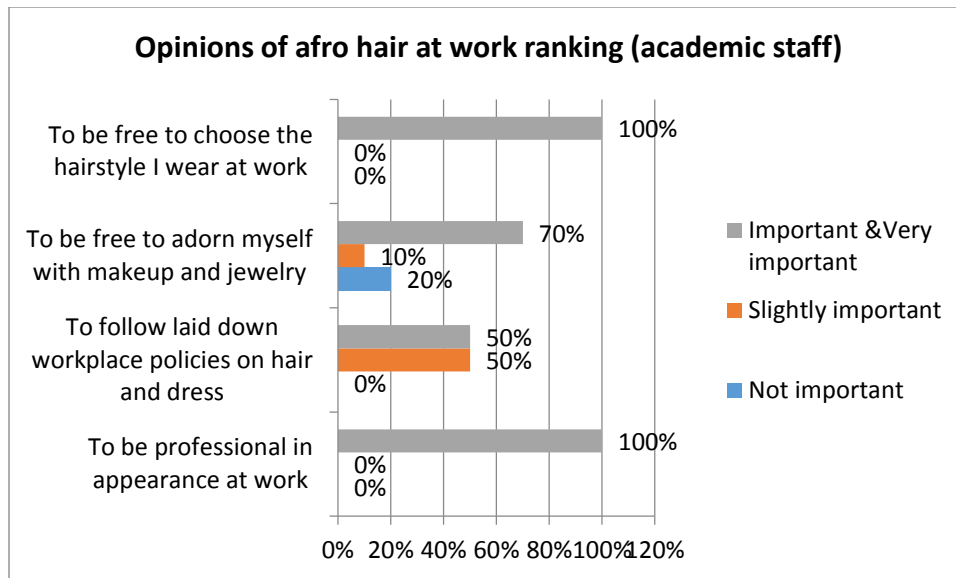
Fig 4.16: Ranking of afro hair at work according to academic staff

Combining very important and important, it was found that 100% of the academic staff felt it was of equal importance to be free to choose their hairstyles at work and also be professional in appearance at work. 70% thought that it was also important to be free to adorn themselves with makeup and jewelry with 20% feeling it was not important. 50% of respondents felt that it was important to follow laid down work policies on hair and dress while the other 50% felt it was slightly important.
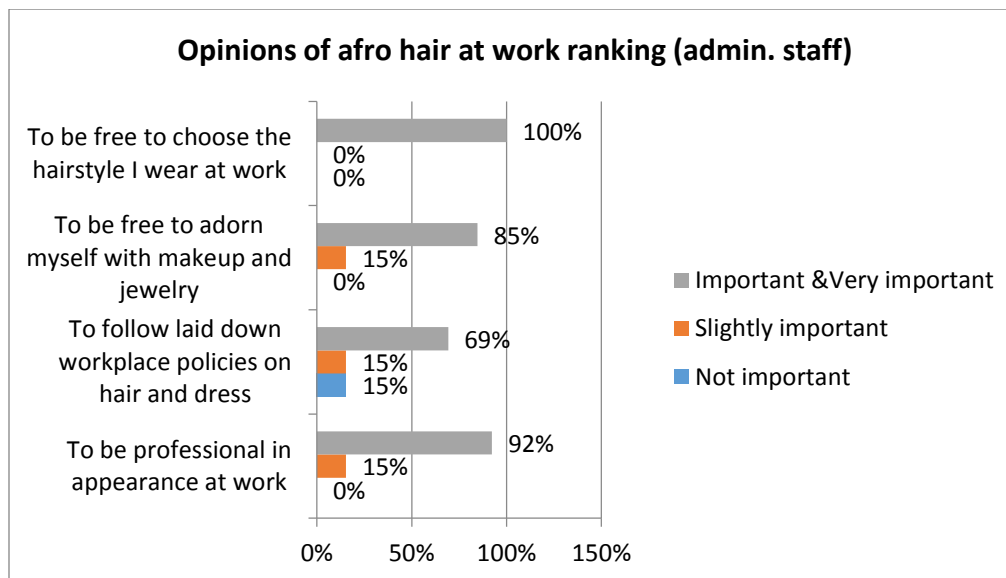
Fig 4.17: Ranking of afro hair at work according to administrative staff

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The administrative staff also showed a similar distribution to the academic staff in their responses with 100%, 92%, 85% and 69% feeling that it was important to be free to choose their hairstyles at work, be professional in appearance at work, be free to adorn themselves with makeup and jewelry and follow laid down principles at work on hair and dress respectively.

Opinions of afro hair at work ranking (masters' students)

To be free to choose the hairstyle I wear at work
- 93%
- 7%
- 0%

To be free to adorn myself with makeup and jewelry
- 64%
- 29%
- 7%

To follow laid down workplace policies on hair and dress
- 71%
- 29%
- 0%

To be professional in appearance at work
- 86%
- 14%
- 0%

Legend:
- Important &Very important
- Slightly important
- Not important

(axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)
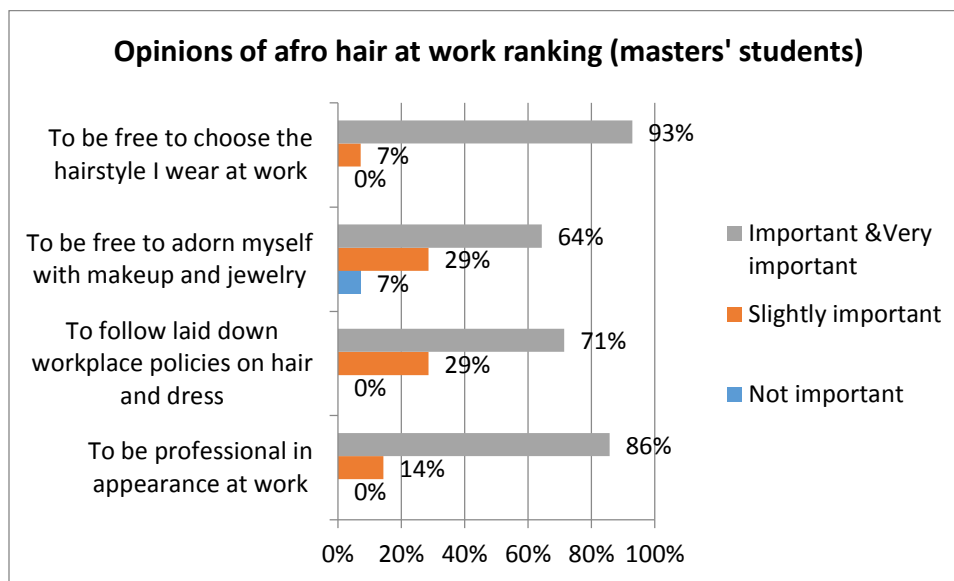
Fig 4.18: Ranking of afro hair at work according to masters' students

The masters' students' responses also indicated a similar distribution to the academic and administrative staff responses with 93%, 86%, 71% and 64% feeling that it was important to be free to choose their hairstyles at work, be professional in appearance at work, follow laid down principles at work on hair and dress and be free to adorn themselves with makeup and jewelry respectively.
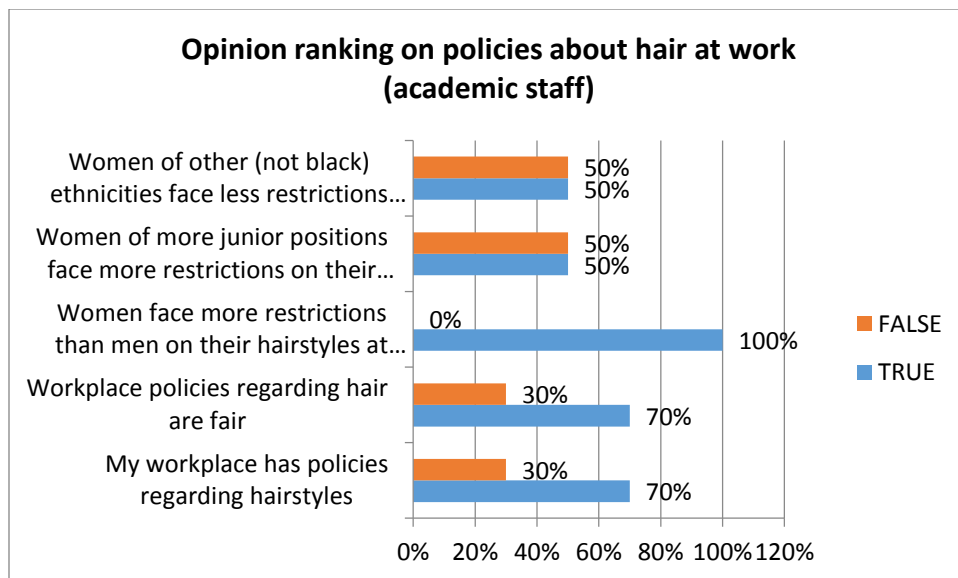
Fig 4.19: Ranking of opinions on workplace policies on hair according to academic staff

100% of academic staff felt that women face more restrictions on hair than men, while 70% felt that the workplace policies were nonetheless fair. 50% of them thought that junior women faced more restrictions than senior women, while the other 50% did not agree with that. Yet 50% also thought that women of other ethnicities (other than black) faced fewer restrictions on their hairstyles.
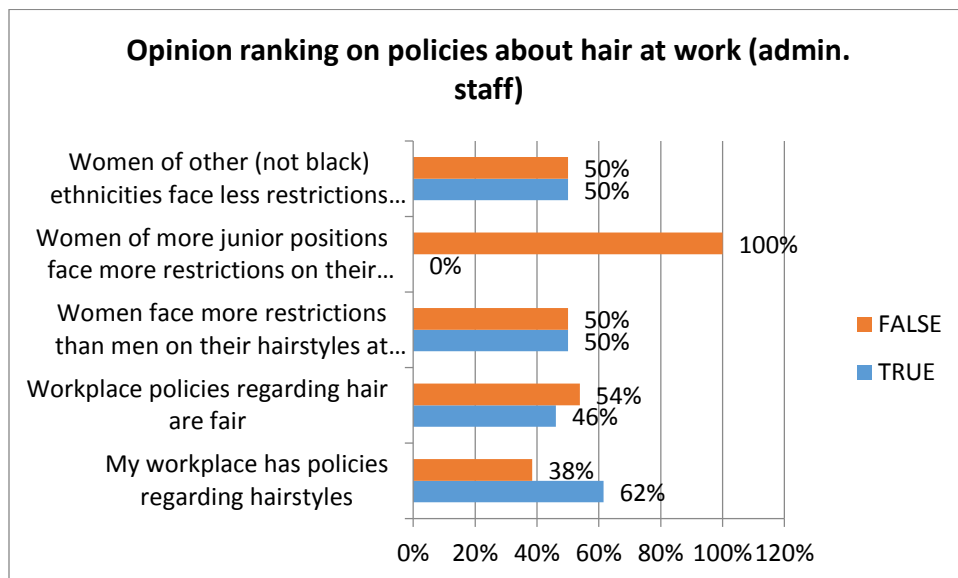
Fig 4.20: Ranking of opinions on workplace policies on hair according to administrative staff

Similar to the academic staff responses, 54% the administrative staff felt that workplace policies on hair were fair while 100% felt that women of junior positions did not face more restriction than their senior counterparts. When it came to women facing more restrictions than men and if black women faced more restrictions that women of other ethnicities, the responses were split 50/50.

Opinion ranking on policies about hair at work (masters' students)

- Women of other (not black) ethnicities face less restrictions… — TRUE 100%, FALSE 0%
- Women of more junior positions face more restrictions on their… — FALSE 75%, TRUE 25%
- Women face more restrictions than men on their hairstyles at… — FALSE 13%, TRUE 88%
- Workplace policies regarding hair are fair — FALSE 75%, TRUE 25%
- My workplace has policies regarding hairstyles — FALSE 29%, TRUE 71%

Fig 4.21: Ranking of opinions on workplace policies on hair according to masters' students

100% of the masters' students' respondents felt that women of other ethnicities (other than black) faced fewer restrictions with regards to hairstyles at work. 88% felt that women faced more restrictions at work than men and 75% felt that workplace policies on hair and dress were unfair.
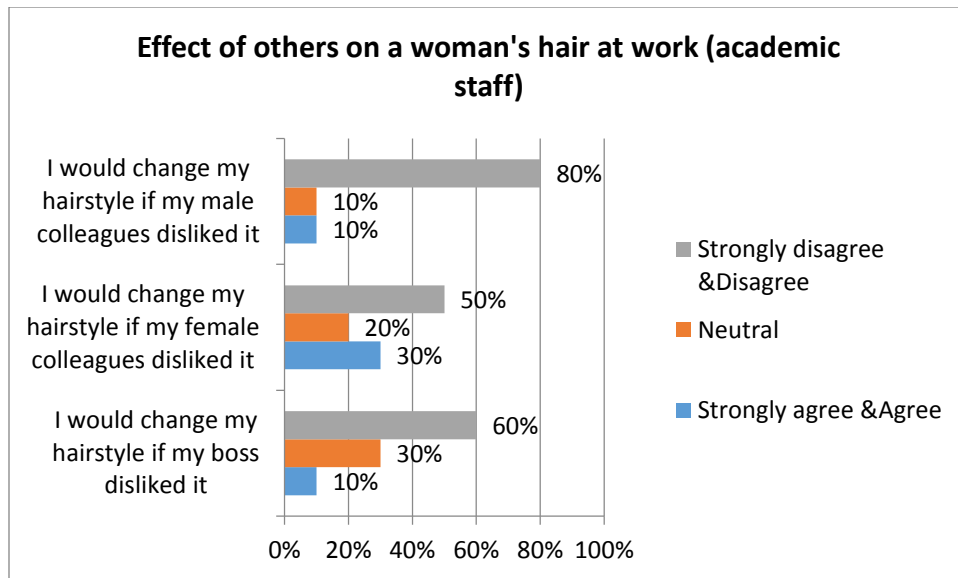
Fig 4.22: Ranked effect that others have on a woman's hair at work according to academic staff

Combining strongly disagree with disagree, 80% of the academic staff respondents felt that they would not change their hairstyle if a male coworker disliked it. While 60% felt that they would also not change their hair if their boss disliked it. 50% said they would not change their hair if a female coworker disliked and 30% said they would change it in this situation.
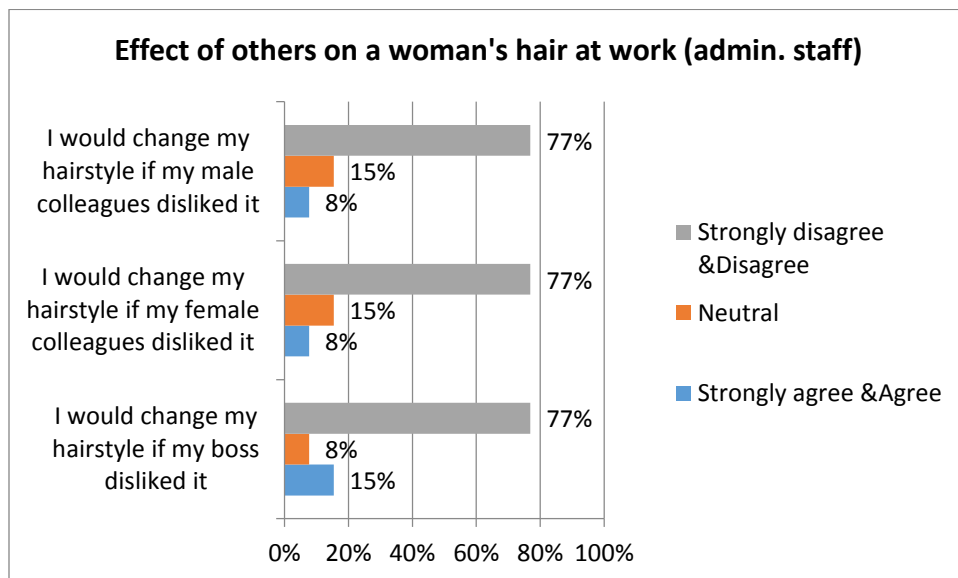
Fig 4.23: Ranked effect that others have on a woman's hair at work according to admin. Staff

77% of the administrative staff respondents said they would not change their hair if their boss, female or male coworkers disliked it. 15% stated that they would change their hair if boss disliked it, but only 8% said they would change their hair if either of their male or female colleagues disliked it.
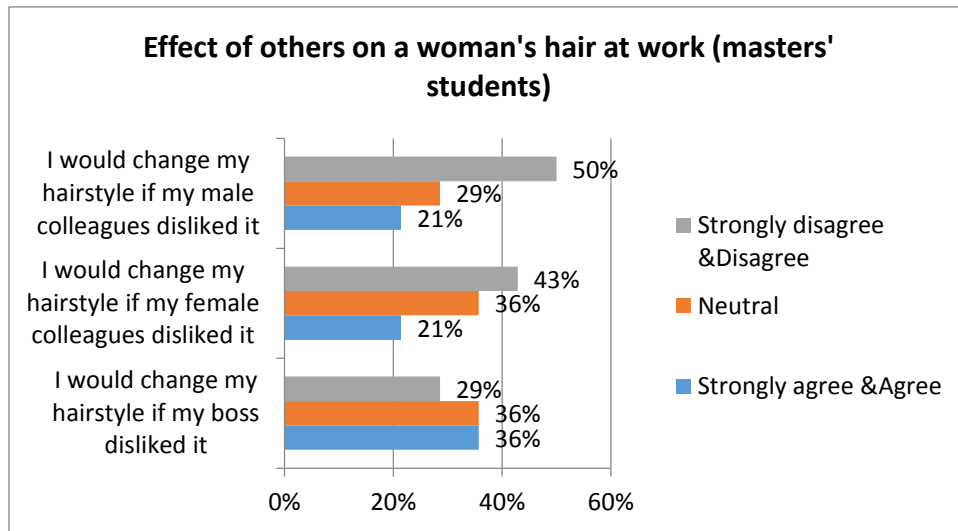
Fig 4.24: Ranked effect that others have on a woman's hair at work according to masters' students

Dissimilar to the academic and administrative staff responses, only 29% of the masters' students' felt that they would not change their hair if their boss disliked it. However, 50% and 43% said that they would not change their hair if their male and female coworkers disliked it respectively.
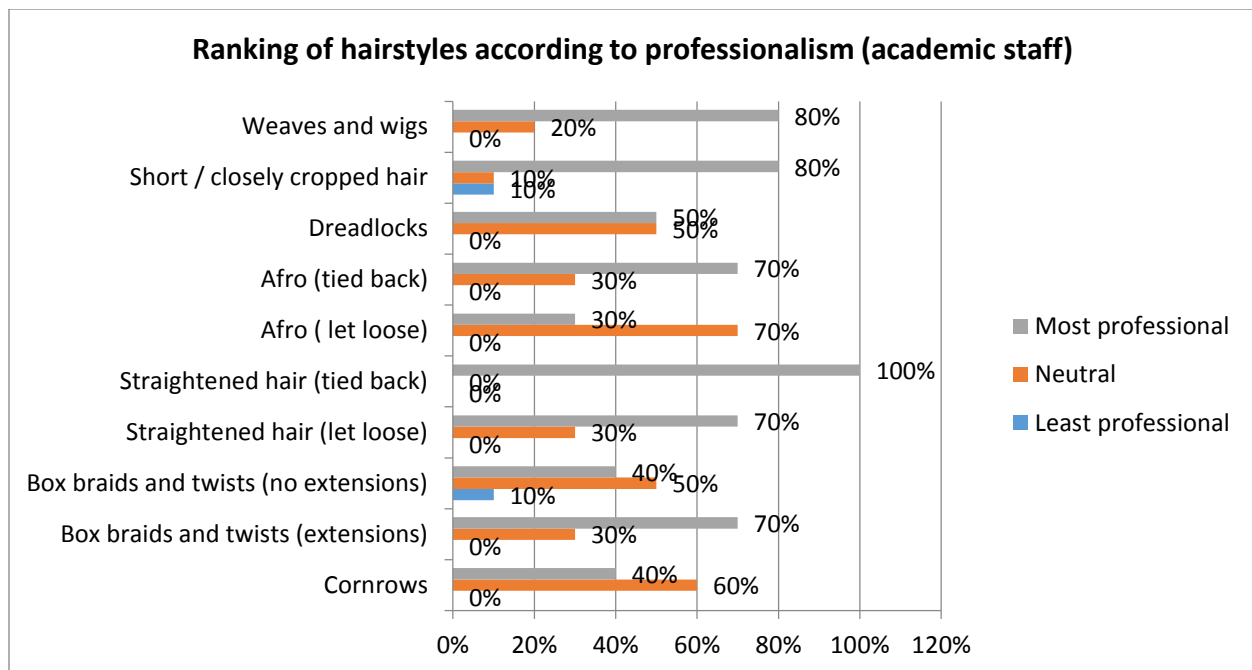
Fig 4.25: Ranking of hairstyles based on professionalism according to academic staff

Academic staff respondents ranked most of the hairstyles as professional or professionally neutral with short or closely cropped hair and box braids and twists (no extensions) being viewed as unprofessional by 10% of the sample strata.
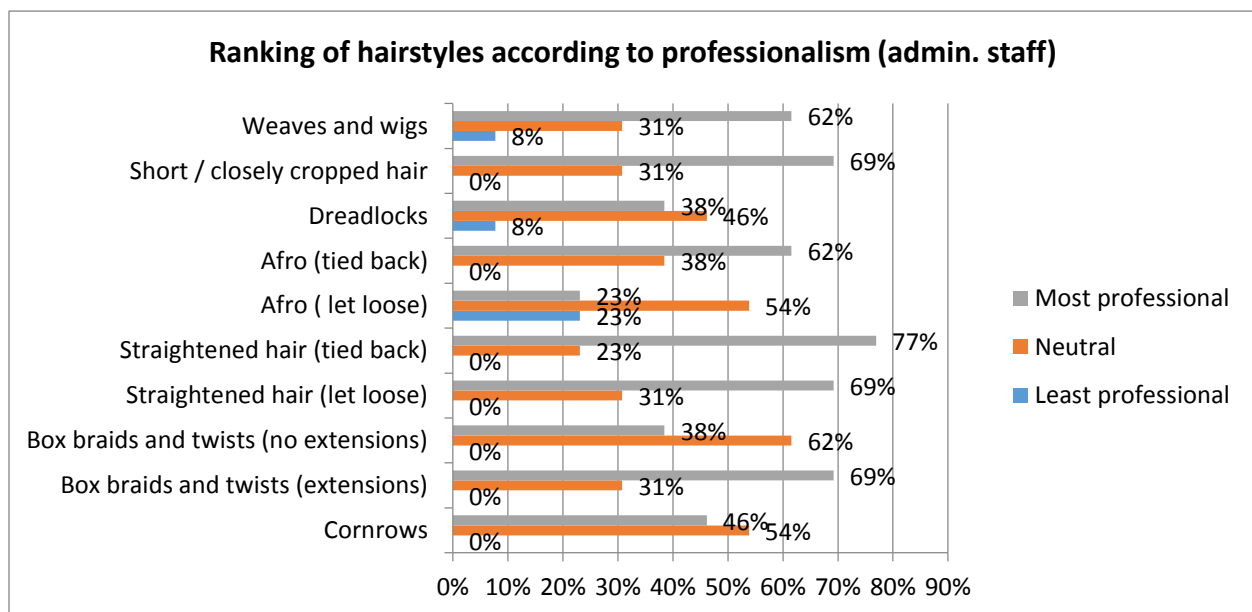
Fig 4.26: Ranking of hairstyles based on professionalism according to administrative staff

The administrative staff respondents ranked most of the hairstyles as professional similar to the academic staff respondents. The difference being that afros let loose, dreadlocks and weaves and wigs were rated as being least professional by 23% and 8% of the sample strata respectively.

Ranking of hairstyles according to professionalism (masters' students)
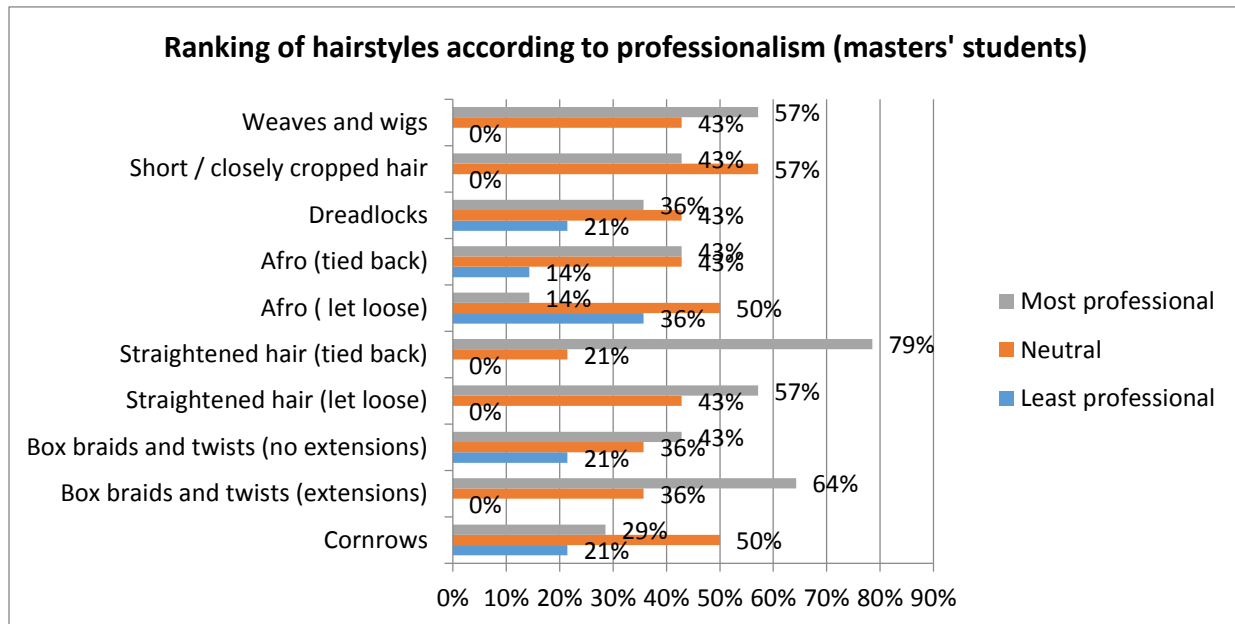
Fig 4.27: Ranking of hairstyles based on professionalism according to masters' students

79% of the masters' students' response showed that straightened hair that was tied back was the most professional while 36% felt that afros let loose were found to be the least professional along with dreadlocks, box braids and twists with no extensions and cornrows which were rated by 21% of the sample strata.

4.3.4 Afro hair at work and its effect on feminine identity/ femininity

The third research question was focused on establishing whether the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace had any effect on the feminine identity of the black women working and studying at Strathmore University. The third section of the questionnaire therefore was aimed at finding out if these perceptions about afro hair affected the femininity of respondents using a total of 18 questions. It was divided into three parts with the first part having 10 questions, the second part had 5 questions and the third part

had 3 questions which were open-ended. The distribution of responses from the different strata is shown below in Figures 4.28 to 4.33.

Ranking of hairstyles according to femininity (academic staff)
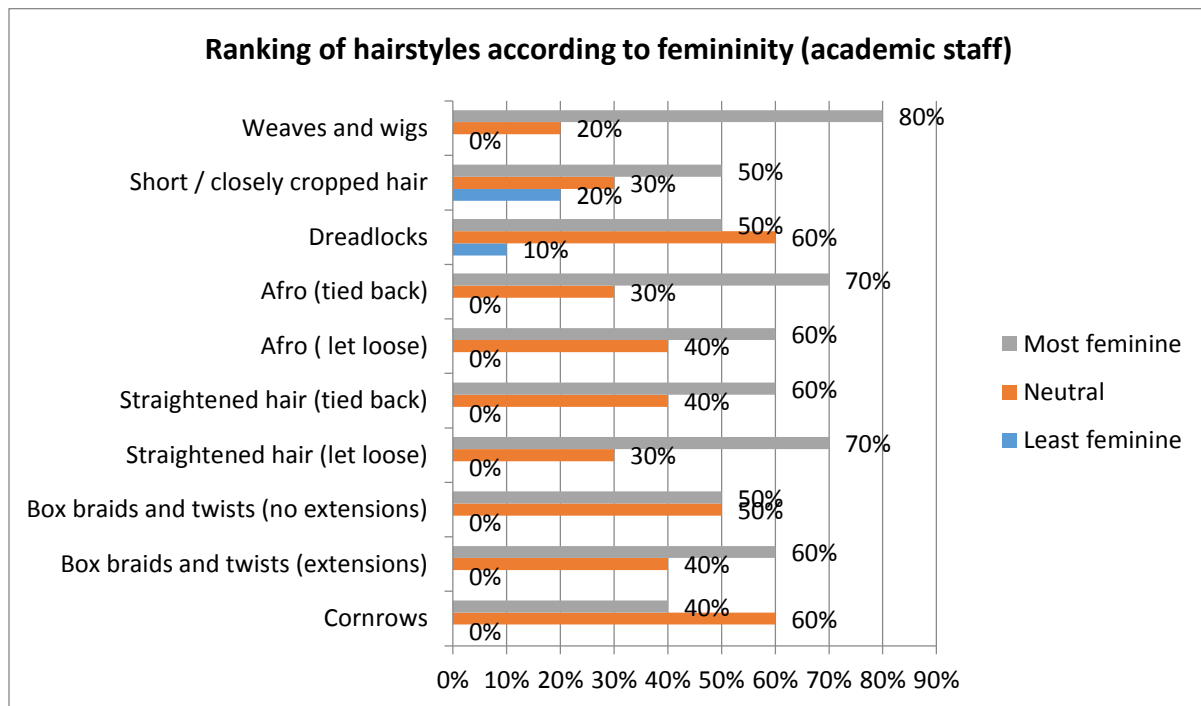
Fig 4.28: Ranking of hairstyles based on femininity according to academic staff

The academic staff respondents felt that weaves and wigs were the most feminine being ranked so by 80% of the sample strata. Straightened hair let loose and afros tied back were found to be most feminine by 70% while afros let loose, afros tied back, braids and twists with and without extensions were found to be feminine by 60% and 50% of the respondents respectively. Short or closely cropped hair and dreadlocks were found to be least feminine by 20% and 10% of the sample respectively.

Ranking of hairstyles according to femininity (admin. staff)

Hairstyle	Most feminine	Neutral	Least feminine
Weaves and wigs	77%	23%	0%
Short / closely cropped hair	38%	46%	8%
Dreadlocks	31%	46%	15%
Afro (tied back)	69%	31%	0%
Afro (let loose)	69%	31%	0%
Straightened hair (tied back)	62%	31%	8%
Straightened hair (let loose)	77%	23%	0%
Box braids and twists (no extensions)	54%	46%	0%
Box braids and twists (extensions)	69%	31%	0%
Cornrows	54%	31%	8%

Fig 4.29: Ranking of hairstyles based on femininity according to administrative staff

Similar to the academic staff responses, the administrative staff were found to rank weaves and wigs and straightened hair let loose 77% most feminine. Meanwhile, dreadlocks were rated by 15% as least feminine and short or closely cropped hair and cornrows being ranked least feminine as well by 8% of the respondents.

Ranking of hairstyles according to femininity (masters' students)
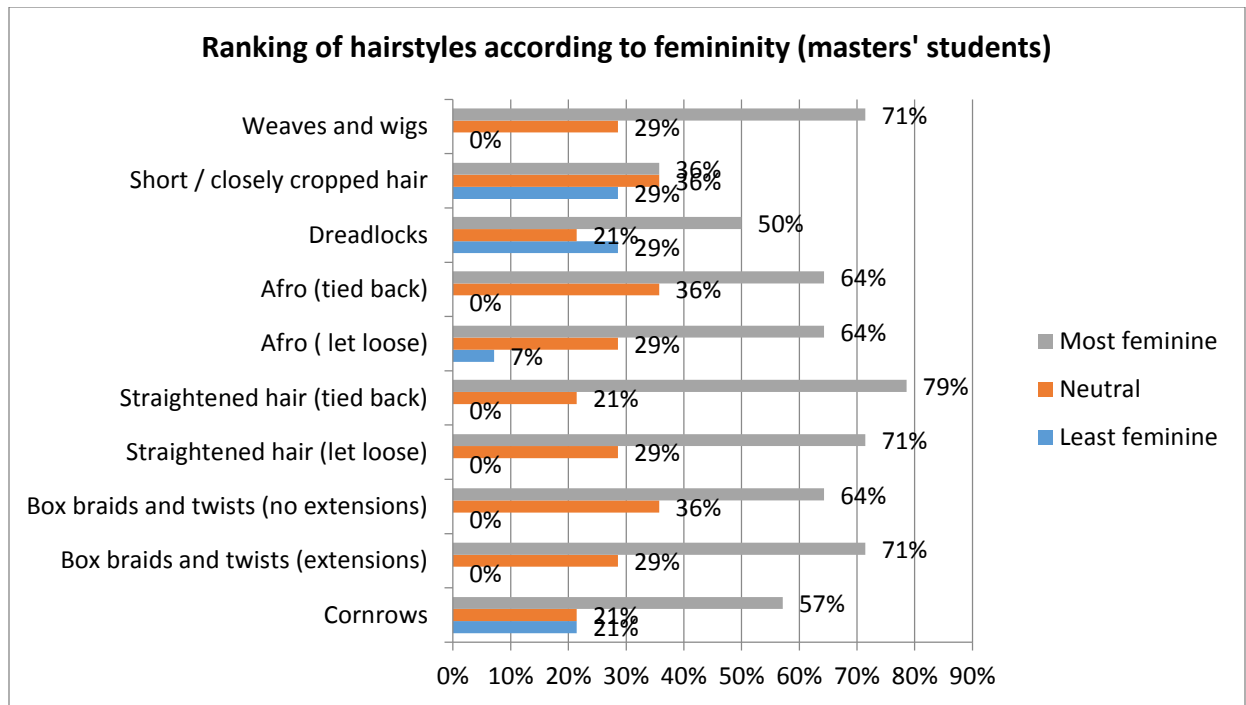
Fig 4.30: Ranking of hairstyles based on femininity according to masters' students

The trend for masters' students' responses follows closely the distribution of the academic and administrative staff responses with little deviation. 79% of respondents ranked straightened hair that is let loose as the most feminine, followed closely by weaves and wigs, straightened hair that is tied back and box braids and twists with extensions at 71% and afros both tied back and let loose at 64%. Closely cropped hair and dreadlocks were rated as the least feminine with 29% responses.
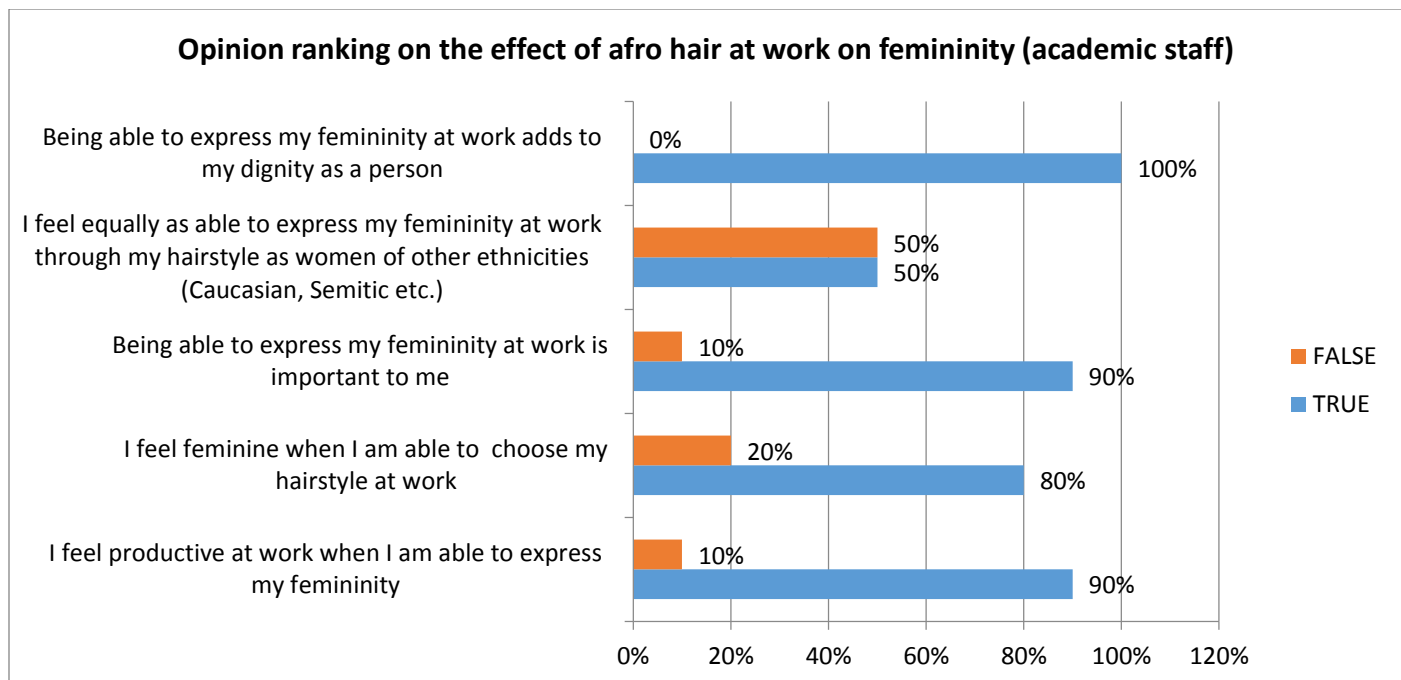
Fig 4.31: Ranked opinions on the effect of afro hair at work on femininity according to academic staff

Among the academic staff respondents, 100% felt that being free to express their femininity at work added to their dignity as a person. 90% felt that expressing their femininity at work was important and it made them more productive at work. 80% of them felt more feminine when they were able to choose their hairstyle at work while 50% felt they were equally able to express their femininity at work as women of other ethnicities and the other 50% did not.

Opinion ranking on the effect of afro hair at work on femininity (admin. staff)

Being able to express my femininity at work adds to my dignity as a person — FALSE 8%, TRUE 92%

I feel equally as able to express my femininity at work through my hairstyle as women of other ethnicities (Caucasian, Semitic etc.) — FALSE 8%, TRUE 92%

Being able to express my femininity at work is important to me — FALSE 15%, TRUE 85%

I feel feminine when I am able to choose my hairstyle at work — FALSE 0%, TRUE 100%

I feel productive at work when I am able to express my femininity — FALSE 23%, TRUE 77%

Fig 4.32: Ranked opinions on the effect of afro hair at work on femininity according to administrative staff

Among the administrative staff responses, 100% felt more feminine when they were able to choose their hairstyle at work. 92% felt that being able to express their femininity at work added to their dignity as a person and that they could express their femininity at work through their hairstyles as equally as women of other ethnicities. 85% felt that expressing their femininity at work was important and 77% felt productive at work when they were able to express their femininity.

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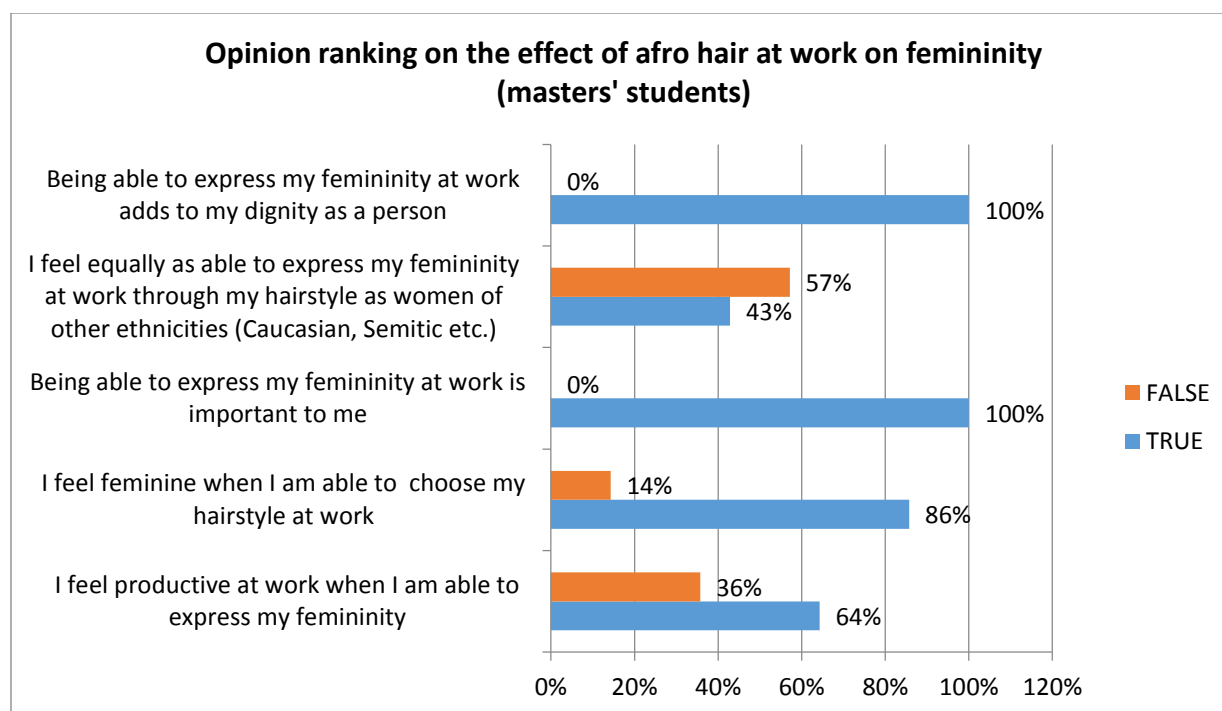
Fig 4.33: Ranked opinions on the effect of afro hair at work on femininity according to masters' students

100% of the masters' students' respondents felt that being able to express their femininity at work added to their dignity as a person and that it was important to be able to express their femininity at work. 86% felt more feminine when they were able to choose their hairstyle at work, while 64% felt productive at work when they were able to express their femininity. On the other hand 57% felt that they were not equally as able to express their femininity at work through their hairstyle as women of other ethnicities.

4.4. Revealed understanding of feminine identity/ femininity

The staff responded to an open ended question on their understanding of what feminine identity/ femininity was. The responses were coded and are represented in Fig 4.34 and Fig 4.35. They show the way that academic and administrative staff understands the concept of feminine identity.

What is your understanding of the term "feminine identity/ femininity" (Academic staff)

Legend:
- EMBRACING WOMANHOOD
- SOCIALIZING AS A WOMAN
- KNOWING OWN WORTH AS A WOMAN
- BEING A NATURAL WOMAN
- POSSESSING QUALITIES OF A WOMAN
- DID NOT RESPOND

Pie chart values: 20%, 20%, 10%, 20%, 10%, 20%
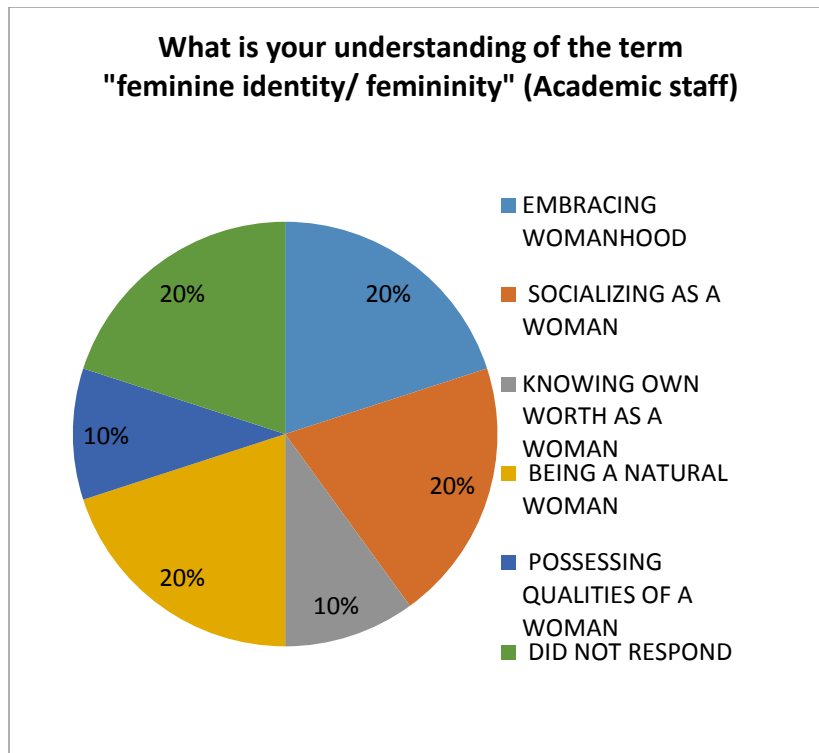
Fig 4.34: Revealed understanding of feminine identity/femininity according to academic staff

The academic staff's understanding of feminine identity includes equal parts, embracing womanhood, socializing as a woman and being a natural woman while 10% felt that knowing one's own worth and possessing the qualities of a woman were feminine identity.

What is your understanding of the term "feminine identity/ femininity" (Admin. staff)

- EMBRACING WOMANHOOD
- SOCIALIZING AS A WOMAN
- KNOWING OWN WORTH AS A WOMAN
- BEING A NATURAL WOMAN
- POSSESSING QUALITIES OF A WOMAN
- DID NOT RESPOND

15%
15%
15%
8%
31%
15%
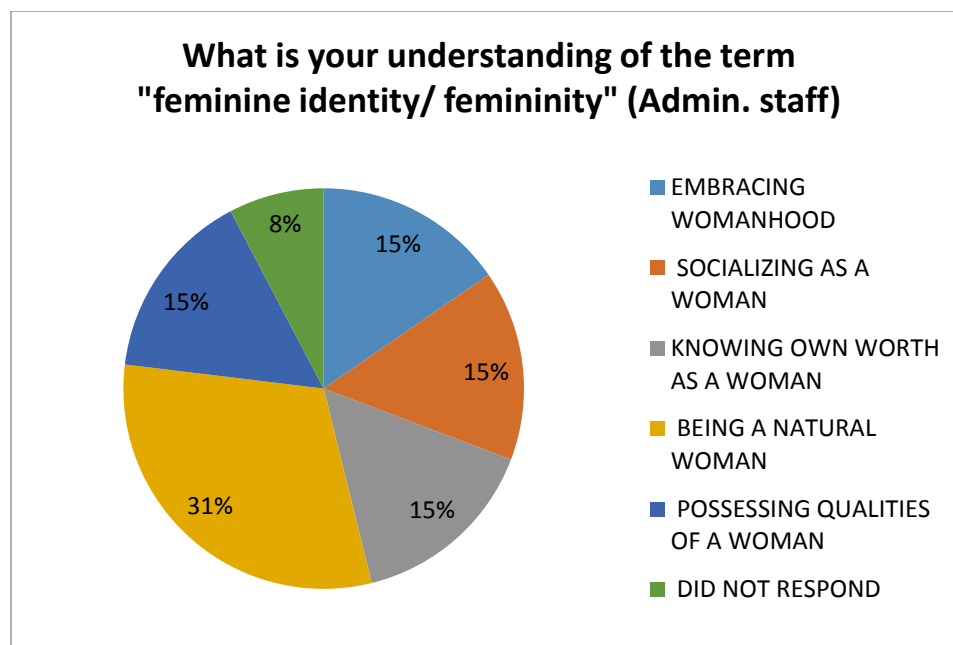
Fig 4.35: Revealed understanding of feminine identity/femininity according to administrative staff

The administrative staff members mainly understood that feminine identity is to be found in being natural as a woman with 31% of respondents stating so while 15% felt that socializing as a woman, knowing one's own worth and embracing womanhood were what feminine identity stood for.

4.5. Revealed effect of afro hair at work on feminine identity/ femininity

The survey question on the ability to freely express your femininity at work revealed that most of the respondents felt free to express their femininity at work as shown in Fig 4.36 and 4.37 below.

Do you feel free to express your femininity/feminine identity at work (Academic staff)

- YES
- NO DUE TO WORK POLICIES
- NO DUE TO MALE DOMINANCE
- NO DUE TO DOUBLE STANDARDS AMONG ETHNICITIES
- DIDN'T RESPOND

50%
20%
0%
0%
30%
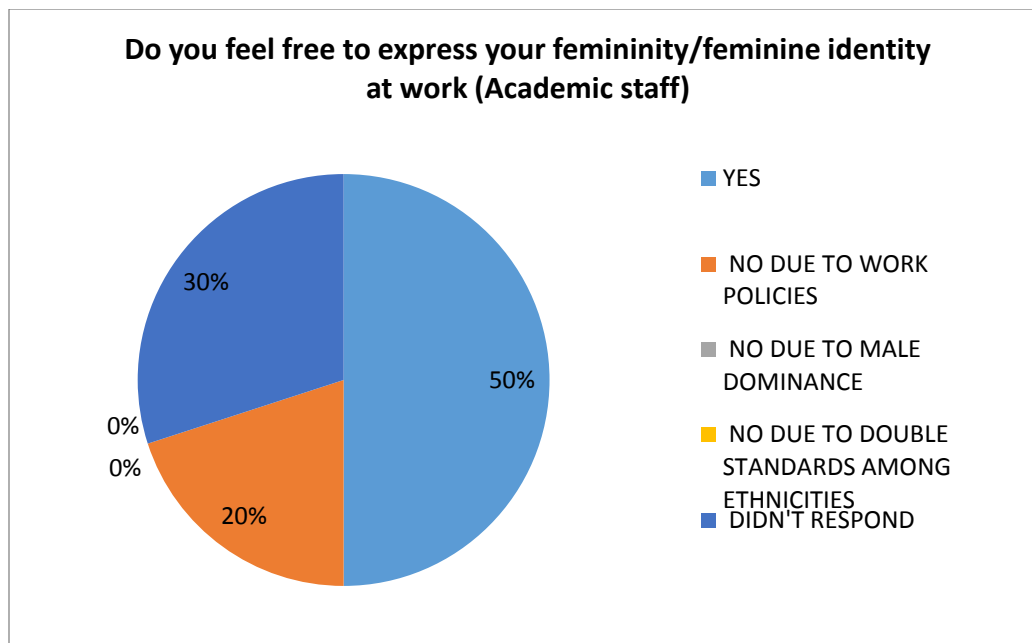
Fig 4.36: Revealed feeling of freedom to express femininity/ feminine identity at work according to academic staff

50% of the academic staff respondents said they felt free to express their femininity at work. 20% said that they did not feel free due to work place policies on hair and dress.

Do you feel free to express your femininity/feminine identity at work (Admin. staff)

- YES
- NO DUE TO WORK POLICIES
- NO DUE TO MALE DOMINANCE
- NO DUE TO DOUBLE STANDARDS AMONG ETHNICITIES
- DIDN'T RESPOND

69%
8%
8%
0%
15%
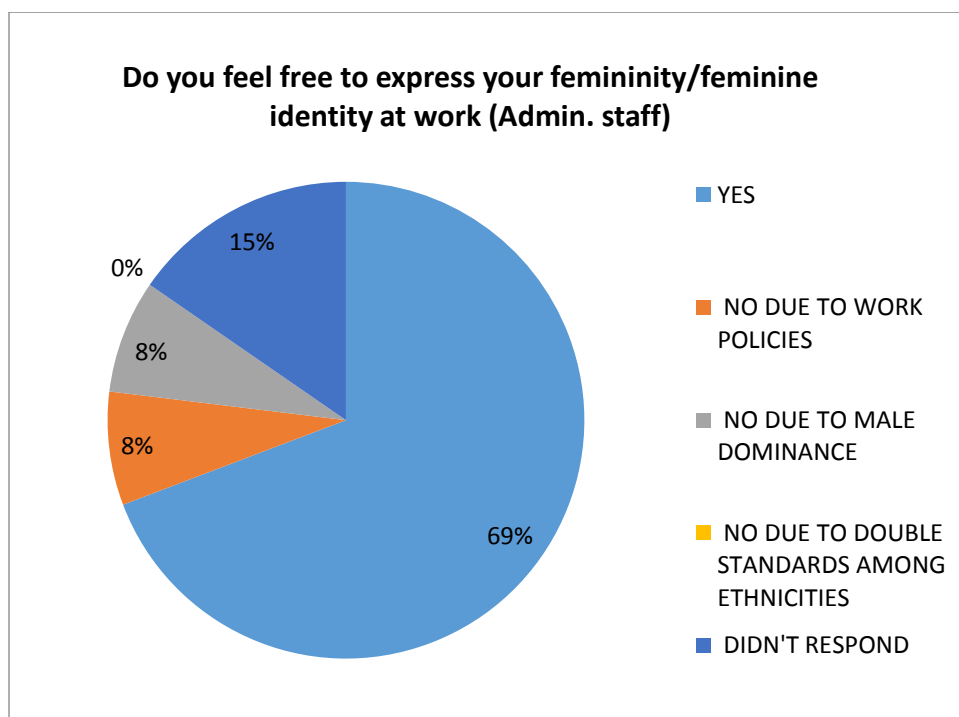
Fig 4.37: Revealed feeling of freedom to express femininity/ feminine identity at work according to administrative staff

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Among the administrative staff respondents, 69% said they felt free to express themselves through their hair at work. Meanwhile, 8% felt that they could not express themselves due to either work place policies or male dominance at work.

The survey question on the extent to which you feel free to express your femininity at work through your hairstyle as a black woman at work revealed that the staff respondents felt fully free to do so, while the masters' students' respondents were split between not feeling fully free and feeling fully free as shown in Figs 4.38, 4.39 and 4.40 below.
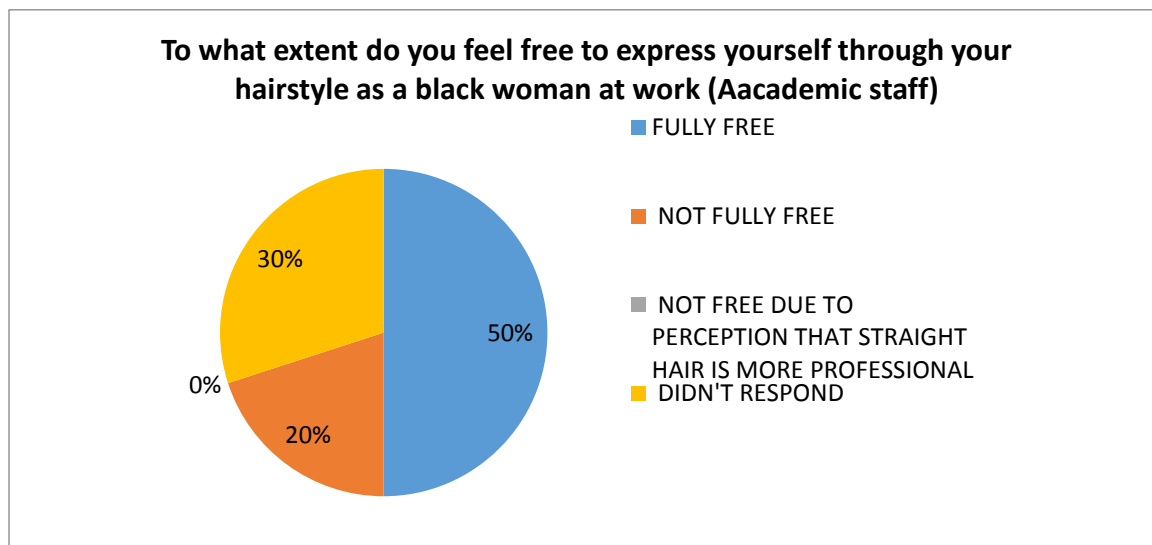
Fig 4.38: Revealed extent of freedom for black women to express themselves through their hairstyles at work according to Academic staff

50% of academic staff felt fully free to express themselves as black women at work through their hairstyles, while 20% felt not fully free but did not elaborate any reasons.
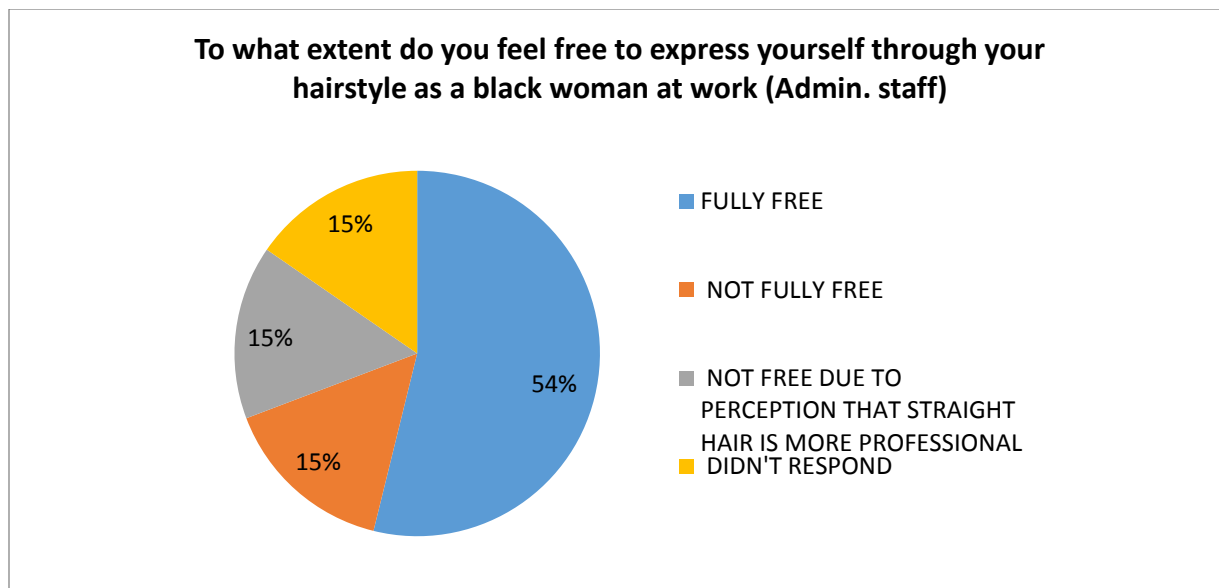
Fig 4.39: Revealed extent of freedom for black women to express themselves through their hairstyles at work according to administrative staff

According to administrative staff, 54% felt fully free to express themselves as black women at work through their hairstyles, while 15% felt not free to express themselves due to the perception that straight hair is better than curly or kinky hair.
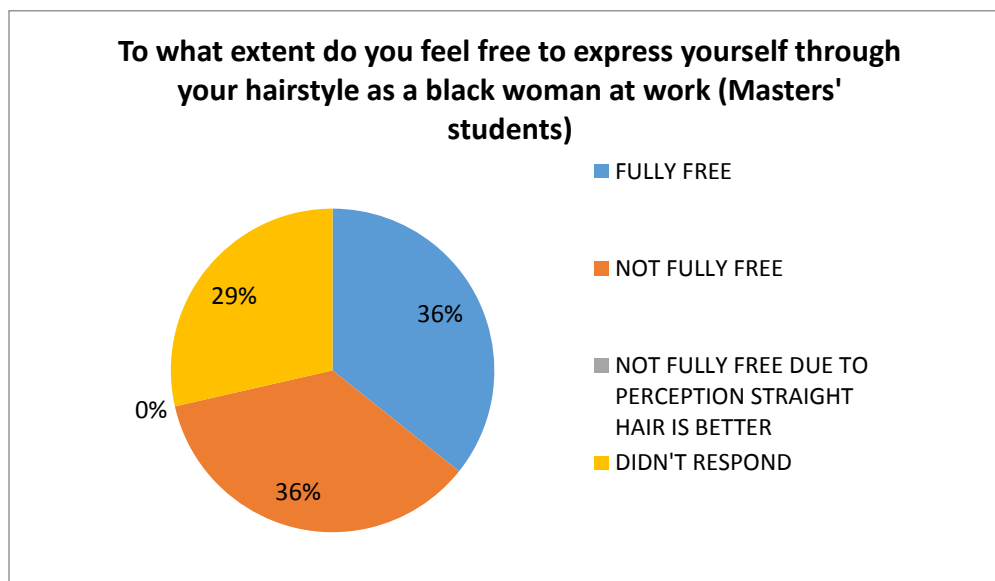
Fig 4.40: Revealed extent of freedom for black women to express themselves through their hairstyles at work according to masters' students

According to masters' students, 36% felt fully free to express themselves as black women at work through their hairstyles, while 36% felt not fully free to express themselves but did not elaborate the reasons.

The survey question on the effect that being able (or not) to express your femininity at work through your hairstyle has on women revealed that most women felt that being able to express your femininity inspired their confidence as women at work and also raised their dignity and allowed them to focus more on their careers in that confidence. A small number also felt that not being allowed to express their femininity fully lowered their self-esteem and took away their sense of focus on their careers and unity among their coworkers as shown in Figs 4.41, 4.42 and 4.43 below.
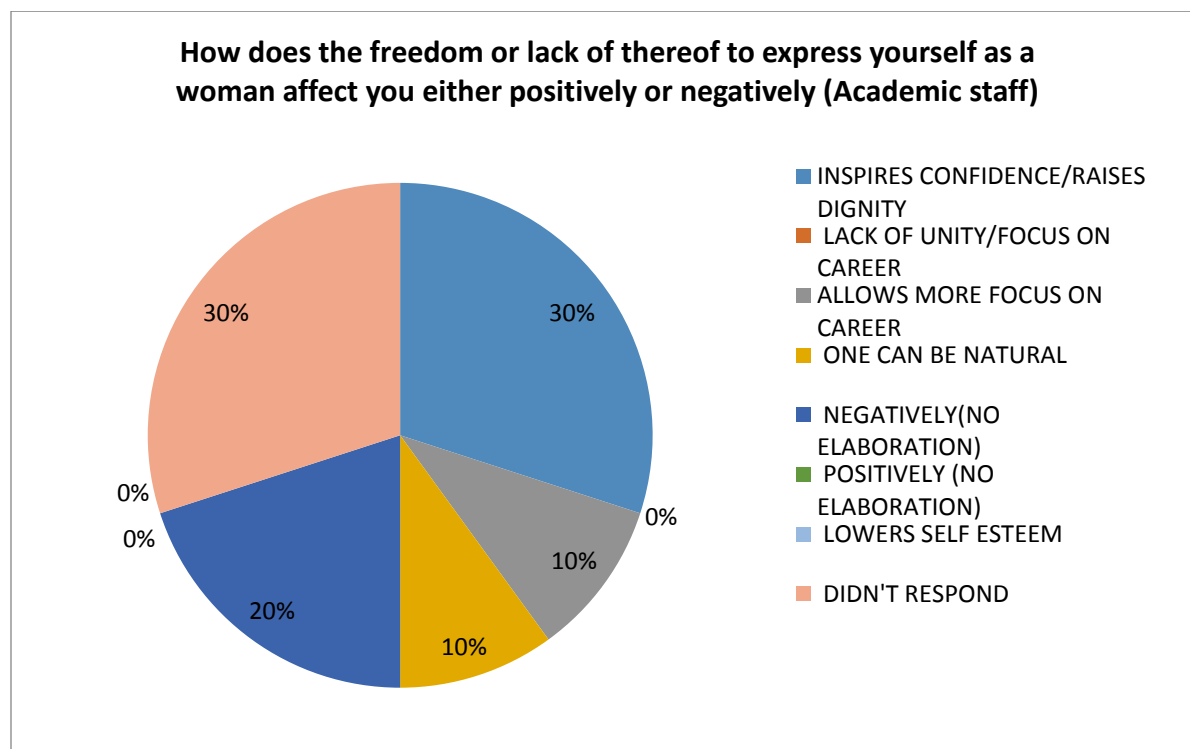
Fig 4.41: Revealed effect of freedom to express oneself as a woman according to Academic staff

30% of academic staff respondents felt that the freedom to express themselves as women inspires confidence or raises dignity. 20% felt that the lack of freedom to express themselves as women affected them negatively, while 10% felt that they were affected positively by allowing them to focus on their careers and that they could be natural.

How does the freedom or lack of thereof to express yourself as a woman affect you either positively or negatively (Admin. staff)

- INSPIRES CONFIDENCE/RAISES DIGNITY
- LACK OF UNITY/FOCUS ON CAREER
- ALLOWS MORE FOCUS ON CAREER
- ONE CAN BE NATURAL
- NEGATIVELY(NO ELABORATION)
- POSITIVELY (NO ELABORATION)
- LOWERS SELF ESTEEM
- DIDN'T RESPOND
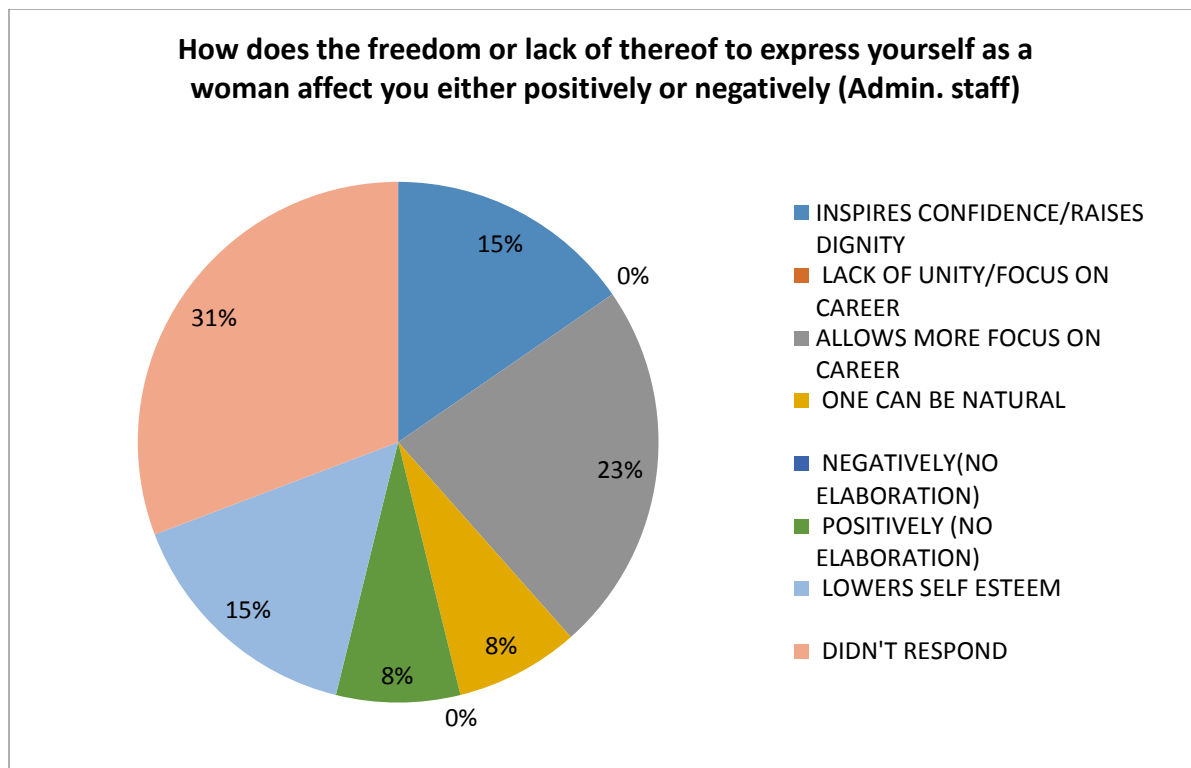
Fig 4.42: Revealed effect of freedom to express oneself as a woman according to administrative staff

23% of administrative staff felt affected positively by being allowed to focus more on their careers, 15% felt that it inspired confidence or raised their dignity, while 8% felt that it allowed them to be natural. 15% of them however felt that in the absence of this freedom their self-esteem was lowered.

How does the freedom or lack of thereof to express yourself as a woman affect you either positively or negatively (Masters' students)

- INSPIRES CONFIDENCE
- LACK OF UNITY/ FOCUS ON CAREER
- ALLOWS FOCUS ON CAREER
- CAN BE NATURAL
- NEGATIVELY (DIDN'T ELABORATE)
- POSITIVELY (DIDN'T ELABORATE)
- LOWERS SELF ESTEEM
- DIDN'T RESPOND

14.29%, 14.29%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 35.71%
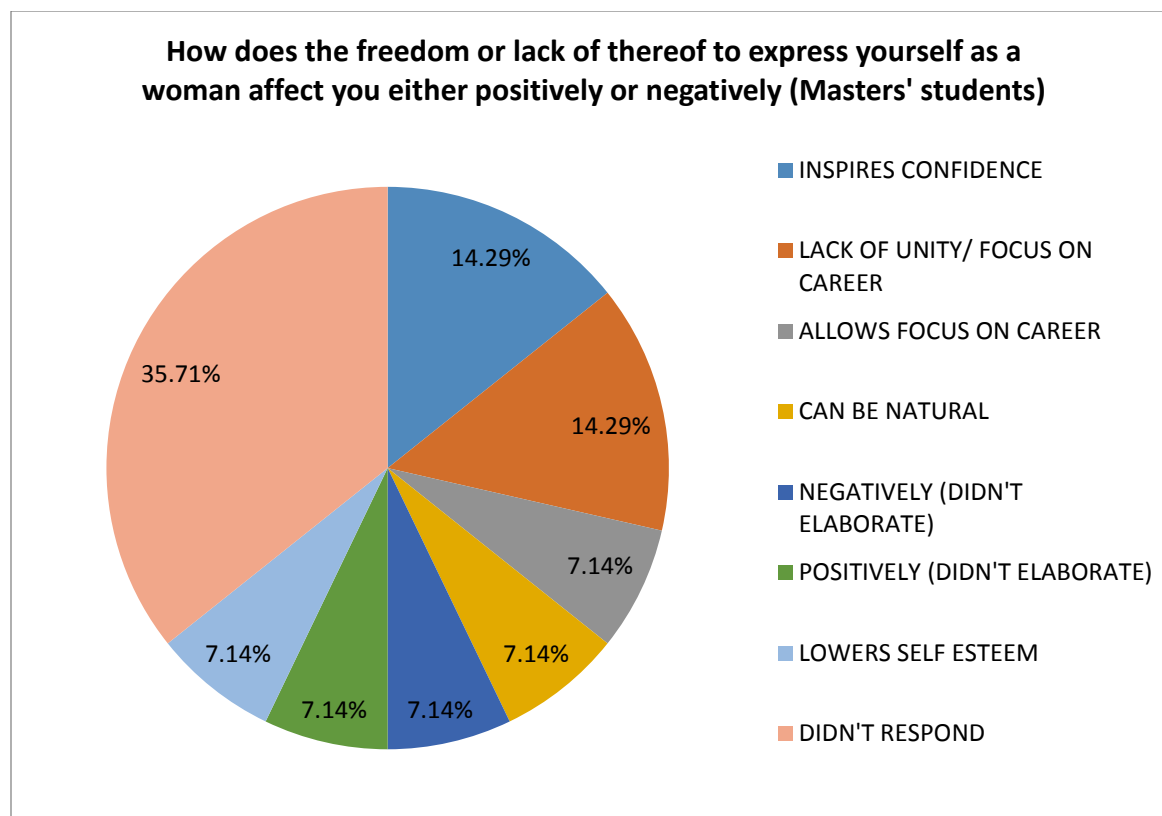
Fig 4.43: Revealed effect of freedom to express oneself as a woman according to masters' students

Of the masters' students, 14.29% felt that they were affected positively by inspiring confidence or raising their dignity, 7.14% felt that it allowed them to focus on their careers and be natural. Likewise 14.29% felt that the absence of this freedom led to lack of unity among colleagues and 7.14% felt that it lowered their self-esteem.

4.6 Focus Group Discussion Findings

Three focus group discussions were carried out to go in depth into the understanding of feminine identity and the perceptions about afro hair at work as well as their effect on feminine identity. The focus groups were carried out on 8 administrative female staff members, 8 academic female staff members and 8 female evening masters' students in Strathmore University.

4.6.1 General afro hair care

The respondents mostly wore their hair natural with a few who had relaxed hair and so the maintenance was varied from weekly salon visits for those with relaxed hair and monthly braiding and homecare inclusive of washing and moisturizing and deep conditioning for those with natural hair.

The ones with natural hair said they chose that particular hairstyle due to its convenience and cheapness. Not all were agreed that natural hair was easy or cheap to maintain due to the temptation to over-indulge in buying all the products that have flooded the natural hair care market in recent years.

"I prefer to have my hair natural as it costs little to take care of since I do everything myself at home without the need for salons" (Administrative 2).

"I don't like the stress of worrying about hair all the time, so it's a small price to pay to have someone else handle it for me at the salon. There I can relax and come out looking good" (Academic 4).

Many of the respondents said that hairstyles such as straight loose hair and loose afro puffs were the most feminine as opposed to styles where the hair was tied back or braided in any way or locked.

"I find the type of hairstyle where my hair is free and loose to hang is the most feminine as it makes me feel like a lady" (Masters 6).

4.6.2 Understanding feminine identity/ femininity

The responses from the focus groups on feminine identity correspond with the responses from the questionnaire.

The respondents' understandings about feminine identity were varied as well. Some were of the opinion that femininity was a socially constructed concept that had no bearing on how women really felt about themselves. Others saw it as a certain dignity that

distinguishes men from women and others felt that the peculiar qualities and desires that women shared as part of humanity made them feminine and therefore more uplifted.

"I think to be feminine is everything that a woman is from her very core to her hair tips, and accepting that makes a woman more who she was meant to be, unlike those who reject it" (Academic 3).

The respondents mostly thought that what made them feminine were more their spiritual and non-physical attributes and qualities rather than their natural physical endowments. They mentioned qualities such as patience, kindness, mothering, intelligence and tact, diplomacy, sense of humor, taking conscious care of reproduction as opposed to being born a certain way. The general sentiment especially among the masters' students was that to be conniving and scheming was to be less feminine and to do things that lowered your character was also not what made you feminine.

"To try to be good, in as far as your power and talents as a woman, is what makes you feminine" (Administrative 5). "Being a woman who tears other women and even men down just to gain for their own benefit is not what being feminine is about" (Masters 4).

It was found that being feminine to a woman was an important part of living the life of a woman. The respondents agreed that to reject your womanhood and likewise your femininity was to be selfish to others in your life and community and to lose something of great value, both for yourself as a person and for the society around you.

Although they all agreed that being feminine was of importance to how they identified as women, the degree varied especially among the academic staff respondents. Some felt that to be feminine was at the very root of being a woman and it could not be separated from who they were as people. Others felt that despite femininity being crucial to their identity as women, they preferred to see themselves from the perspective of what they have accomplished with their lives and not just as what they were born as.

"If I am a woman who feels she is feminine but I am not utilizing my skills and brain for the good of myself, my family and others then my femininity is not very important in

that sense, I am better off being identified by my accomplishments like a doctorate and family or mountain climber" (Academic 1).

4.6.3. Perceptions about afro hair at work

The responses from the focus groups on the perceptions about afro hair at work correspond with the responses from the questionnaire.

The respondents felt that their afro hair was beautiful and versatile depending on the texture could be easier or harder to manage sometimes. However, most felt that it is only recently that they came to view their hair and more specifically their natural hair in this way. Most of the respondents stated that growing up they always straightened their hair through blow-drying or relaxers and some of them still do so to this day because they believe it is easier to manage straight hair rather than kinky or curly hair. "After my hair started breaking because of heat damage from too much blow-drying I decided to cut it off and start fresh, that's when I discovered that I actually liked my natural hair since I had never had a chance to just have it untreated before" (Administrative 7).

The variety of hairstyles that the respondents preferred to wear were many and they all agreed that hair style choice was personal and could not let others affect it. Although most agreed that it was also important to stay professional even with hairstyles and so adopting styles that stayed true to the workplace culture was also important in order to advance in a woman's career and to be taken seriously by coworkers and superiors. "The choice of my hairstyle should reflect that I am mature enough to be doing my job an doing it well, that being said it is still my choice and nobody else but mine" (Masters 2).

Some respondents felt that although they wanted to wear certain hairstyles, their professional industry prevented them due to the strict policies on hair and dress. "I would like to wear an afro to work but I can't afford to because my boss and coworkers would look at me funny and I value my position, so I conform and either braid it or do weaves" (Masters 3).

The focus group findings in this case were in correspondence with the findings from the survey as in both instances the perceptions differed based on different workplace experiences, with the masters' students' responses revealing the greater variance from the staff responses. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.6.4. Afro hair at work and its effect on feminine identity/ femininity

The respondents felt that it was important to be able to feel feminine everywhere and that at work was of even greater importance due to the fact that most spend a lot of time working. Some felt that restrictive workplaces like for example the army was harmful for a woman's sense of worth and identity if they are forced to be like men or conform to practices that don't allow them to be fully women such as cutting off their hair. "Something like cutting off my hair should be entirely my choice and not because I am forced to because of work like a soldier. That is wrong and should be stopped. I would rather do it for say, a movie role, because I believe in it and not because I have to do it to fit in." (Academic 2)

On the other hand most agreed that depending on where you worked and how you worked, the hairstyle you may sometimes be forced to adopt may form your identity as a person. An example given was of women who work in the food processing industry and have to keep their hair covered up in order to maintain hygiene standards for the food. Such a person may tend to take extra care of their hair when they are not at work in order to compensate for when they cannot let it shine, or they may tend to neglect it and other parts of their appearance, deeming them as not so important in life. Both those alternatives contribute to who a person becomes or identifies as. "My hair makes me feel good as a person and shows part of who I am to people who do not know me and for me taking care of it shows that I am put together and just raises my mood and esteem." (Admin 8)

4.7 Summary of findings

The respondents revealed that they understood feminine identity to mean a more spiritual and non-corporeal quality possessed by all women to varying degrees. It was also clear that there remain some aspects of negative perception toward afro hair in some workplaces, but to a larger extent it does not seem to be an issue that harms any individuals directly. They showed a desire to embrace more their natural hair while still maintaining professionalism and neatness at work. They also seemed to identify how their feminine identity was affected by their hairstyle choices at work both positively and negatively depending on how a person chose to look at their situation.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings of the questionnaire according to the themes laid out in chapter 2 (theoretical framework) for the three stratified samples, the academic staff, administrative staff and masters' student samples. The graphical representation of the data collected and tabulated is presented and explained as well as the findings of the focus group discussions. The findings are then summarized.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the research finding in the light of Burke's theory of feminine identity. The chapter also responds to the three research questions that the study set out to answer, that is, understanding feminine identity, examining afro hair at work and exploring the effect of afro hair at work on feminine identity as understood by Strathmore University black female fulltime staff and evening students in the context of their workplaces.

5.2 Feminine identity/ femininity

Burke describes feminine identity as not just something that a woman is born with but something that can increase or decrease as she goes through life (Burke, 2013). Accordingly, feminine identity can be sought after and thus can also be affected negatively or positively depending on the environment and circumstances in which she finds herself in. In addition to this a woman needs to value and respect both her body and mind in order to develop a healthy sense of feminine identity (Burke, 2007b).

While exploring the understanding of feminine identity among the respondents, it was found that most understood the concept to mean that not just the physical attributes made one feminine but more so her non-physical qualities. Responses from the three different strata sampled with regards to this concept were found to be similar and thus they were merged to form a single opinion. Among the various responses to the survey question on understanding feminine identity, 31% of them described it as embracing natural womanhood or being a fully natural woman. This seemed to be in keeping with Burke's theory on femininity being a manifestation of a more spiritual and characteristic sense rather than a physical or material manifestation (Burke, 2013b).

The results of the questionnaire found that femininity was most related to being mature in all areas, physically, mentally and emotionally. Redeeming qualities such as

independence, self-care (hygiene, grooming, hair care etc.), nurturing, gentleness, gracefulness and sensitivity were also associated with the understanding of feminine identity. This finding also highlights a convergence with Burke's theory on feminine identity being an outward bearing that is suggestive of the interior qualities of self-possession and a robust character (Burke, 2013b).

The focus groups also revealed that this concept of feminine identity was greatly increased or valued in a woman when she strived to engender good qualities while avoiding bad habits or behavior. This goes hand in hand with the idea that women as human beings with equal dignity to men and each other should aim to grow in virtues and assimilate them in life, each sex according to its own peculiar way of doing so(Burke, 2007b).

5.3 Perceptions about afro hair at work

Afro hair has been a bone of contention in the past especially in the western countries. Historically afro hair or hair that was not naturally straight and silky was found to be inferior especially in America (Brisbon, 2009b). In workplaces across the United States, many afro haired women faced subtle and even overt discrimination in the way of being harassed by their superiors with demands for straighter locks or ridiculed and sidelined by their peers and coworkers and made to not feel good enough to be natural (Byrd & Tharps, 2001b). With colonization, that perception that straighter was better slowly trickled down into Africa where hair had always had a very symbolic and cultural importance among its various communities (Sieber & Herreman, 2000b).

It emerged from the study that those perceptions might have afflicted the older generations but according to Strathmore University staff in today's work places the situation is a little different. The respondents that felt more restricted by the policies on hair and dress than their non- black counterparts were all from the masters' students sample strata who work in other organizations outside of Strathmore University. This could help explain why the views of the group differed from those of the staff members

sample strata. The fact that some of those work in the government and in law firms shows that some pressure is still exerted on women to conform to standards of beauty and hair care that are not natural to them such as the straightening of hair.

On the other hand the academic and administrative staff respondents who worked in Strathmore University revealed that they did not suffer discrimination of any kind in as far as freedom to express themselves through their hair. All hairstyles and types were embraced and celebrated as good so long as they were neat and hygienic. The academic staff respondents were found to feel that women however faced more restrictions than men, while the administrative staff respondents showed that junior staff faced more restrictions than senior staff when it came to hair and dress in the university.

From the focus groups' findings, it was clear that maturity level of a person dictated the kind of hairstyles that they chose to wear at the workplace. The respondents showed a cultivated understanding of their own hair and seemed very conscious of the image they portray to their workplace communities through their hairstyle choices. Most seemed to have found a compromise within themselves of how they want to be viewed at work based on some prevailing notions on afro hair that still seem to glorify straight and silky hair over the natural, curly and coarse hair that they possess and how they identify as black women.

Since most of the respondents for both the survey and the focus group were between the ages of 21 years and 30 years of age, they are clearly still in their early progression of their careers and as a result have to balance delicately their need to be taken seriously at work as professional women and their need for fun and adventure.

Despite the negative perceptions about afro hair that linger and are yet to be completely eradicated, most were happy with how far the acceptance of natural afro hair has come since they were children growing up with straightened hair. Some of the masters' students' respondents still had doubts about the state of things changing in their

workplaces but were happy to be given the opportunity to discuss the issue of afro hair in the workplace and expressed hope that more discussion would take place in the future.

5.4 The effect of afro hair at work on feminine identity

Women tend to use hair as a point of physical difference from men. To that end it is usually a factor in the way that women identify themselves. As a result due to the way that women wear their hair, they may feel that their feminine identity is also tied to their hair.

The study found that women felt it very important to be able to express their femininity at work since it is closely tied to their dignity as a person. This could also be because to be feminine was found to be that quality that seeks to increase itself by increasing in virtues as a woman and assimilating good habits in the peculiar way that women do. Work being something that both dignifies and gives human beings a purpose, then it follows that expressing femininity at work is to be encouraged since it can only lead to the increase of virtue and the exercise of more good habits that are essential for human beings to be happy. Burke states that femininity increases with its interaction with others (Burke, 2007b) and as a result, the more a woman is able to express her femininity through an increase in virtue towards others she increases her sense of feminine identity and both she and her environment benefit from this interaction.

Being allowed the freedom to choose their hairstyle was found to raise the confidence of women and similarly their productivity at work due to those feelings of a higher self-confidence. The findings of the focus group augment this idea further by showing that the hairstyle choice allows the person to be able to exercise more freedom with leads to more capability for responsibility which increases output at work. When women feel more feminine they are able to give more of themselves because their femininity is increased by interaction.

The opposite was found to be true however. The study revealed that when women did not feel free to choose a hairstyle they experienced a lack of unity with their coworkers

and a lowering of self-esteem. Despite the fact that this was a smaller proportion of the sample who felt this way, it is still important to note that these feelings often lead to demotivation and under-performance at work.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the findings were analyzed according Burke's theory of feminine identity according to the three research objectives and the research questions were answered. To summarize, based on the information gathered from this research in light of Burke's theory of feminine identity, the understanding of feminine identity seems to conform to the ideas of non-physical or non- material manifestations of femininity. It is also clear that the perceptions about afro hair in the work place have changed in the past two decades and are now mostly positive and accepting of a more natural hair type among black than it was previously. In addition hair affects feminine identity at work positively if a woman is allowed to be free to express her femininity at work and vice versa.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings are summarized according to the three research questions they are answering. Conclusions are drawn from the summarized findings and recommendations made based on those conclusions. Areas for further research are also considered as an ending to the study.

6.2 Summary of findings following the research questions

This study was developed as a result of the long history of afro haired women being put under pressure by society especially in the professional sphere to conform to standards of hair grooming and styles that were not natural to them. The concern was that due to this pressure, afro haired women may have formed negative perceptions about their hair which is key to their identity.

To investigate whether those perceptions were true of Kenya working women and if there was any effect on a woman's feminine identity, the elements of feminine identity discussed in a variety of Burke's writings were used to analyze the understanding of feminine identity among women working and the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace and its effect on feminine identity.

The study set out to address the following research questions

1. What is the understanding of 'feminine identity' among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?
2. What are the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?
3. What is the effect of perceptions about afro hair in the workplace on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women working and studying at Strathmore University?

The study revealed that the understanding of feminine identity was in keeping with the theory of feminine identity as outlined by Burke, that it is mostly manifested in a more non-physical and non-material way than through physical and material manifestations of being a woman. The gaining of virtues and the shunning of vice was also part of the understanding which is also in line with the theory on feminine identity.

It was also found out that the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace are not as negative as they were previously in the past two decades. Afro hair in its natural state has been embraced by many organizations, Strathmore University being ~~among~~ one of those where staff feel free to be able to express their femininity in any hairstyle of their choice without unfair hindrance from workplace policies. Some organizations such as those run by the government and the law firms were found to still be holding onto the negative perception about natural afro hair and preferring their staff to adopt a straighter and held back appearance when it comes to hairstyle.

The effect of afro hair being embraced in the workplace on feminine identity was found to be positive, and negative if afro hair in the workplace was rejected. It was clear from the study that the freedom to choose a hairstyle at work went hand in hand with a higher sense of purpose and self-confidence which led to the raising of the dignity of the person. The other factor that was discovered was that when this freedom to express femininity was felt, a higher productivity was also gained by the woman herself and as a consequence her work environment benefited too.

This study has therefore shown that with a proper understanding of feminine identity and granted the freedom to manifest one's femininity at work, a woman can only be affected positively and in turn benefit not just herself but her community as well.

6.3 Conclusions based on summary of findings

Feminine identity has been found by this study to embody a more non-material manifestation by the respondents of this study backed by the fact that Burke also suggests the same, then it can be concluded that feminine identity can be understood to be a

quality found in women that is mainly manifested through non-physical ways rather than physical ways.

The perceptions on afro hair have been found to show variance when it comes to the women who work in Strathmore University as compared to the women who work elsewhere. This can be attributed to the different values that the university subscribe to compared to other more corporate organizations and from that we can conclude that the perceptions among black Kenyan women about afro hair are mostly positive given a more relaxed and accepting culture where as the perceptions are still somewhat negative towards natural afro hair in cultures that are very formal and lean more towards the corporate nature.

The effect that these perceptions have on a women's sense of feminine identity are positive when the perceptions allow for the woman to express her hairstyles without unfair judgment, however the reverse is true, which leads to the conclusion that positive perceptions are critical to the development of a higher sense of feminine identity in a woman and leads her to value herself more and raise her dignity which leads to her valuing her work and those around her even more.

6.4 Recommendations

Strathmore University Human Resource Services may use the information on the understanding of feminine identity to enhance their delivery of services by understanding what motivates the female staff members. They can do this through enriched staff seminars where topics such as feminine identity and its development can be discussed in an open and safe atmosphere for the personal and professional development of all.

The conclusion about the perceptions about afro hair in professional organizations could be used by Strathmore University Human Resource Services and other organizations' HR departments to create awareness about the importance of changing perceptions about afro hair and allowing women to be more expressive and create a more accepting and

wholesome organizational culture that breaks down stifling views on black women's afro hair.

The effect that perceptions about afro hair at work have on women's feminine identity can be harnessed by research organizations in addition to corporate organizations to help women be more productive by effecting changes that promote the feminine freedoms of women and thus raise their dignities in the process while increasing creative and operational output in offices.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research may be necessary to determine if the understanding of feminine identity as well as the perceptions about afro hair at work would change or evolve. The present study may be used as a baseline study to conduct a longitudinal study on the evolution of these concepts over time.

The study can also be expanded to include other universities and corporate organizations around Kenya to evaluate the perceptions about afro hair in workplaces all over Kenya in terms of their effect on feminine identity. This will help inform on the trend in perceptions in the entire country.

Another potential area of research would be to carry out the study at the high school level and try to study the perceptions about afro hair on a younger generation and also try and gain an understanding of the notion of feminine identity among adolescent women who are still forming their ideas about themselves.

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Appendix I

Brenda Wanjiku Ndekei,

17th February 2017

Dean of Research Strathmore University,
P.O. Box 59897-00200 GPO,
Nairobi, Kenya.

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO COLLECT DATA AT STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY

I would like to request authorization to collect data from the female fulltime staff in Strathmore University as part of a survey that I am carrying out for my Masters in Applied Philosophy and Ethics (MAPE) degree.

My dissertation is titled "Investigating the role of hair perceptions among professional African women on their feminine identity in the workplace: a case study of female staff members and female masters' students in Strathmore University." As part of my research methodology I would like to carry out focus group discussions and administer questionnaires with Strathmore University female fulltime staff members and female masters' students. Through this, I can get a deeper insight into their understanding of feminine identity and how that is affected by their perceptions of their hair.

I look forward to a positive response.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Wanjiku Ndekei

Appendix II

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

You are invited to participate in a research study on afro hair in the workplace and feminine identity using a Case Study of Strathmore University female full time staff members and female evening masters' students. Please read the information below carefully and address any questions you may have to the person administering the questionnaire before agreeing to participate in the study.

The research is being conducted by Brenda Ndekei as part of her dissertation for the Masters in Applied Philosophy and Ethics (MAPE) in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Strathmore University. The faculty supervisor for this project is Dr. Catherine Dean.

This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or answer any question in the study at any time. All your responses will be kept confidential. I will not be collecting any personal identifying information. All records pertaining to this study will be securely stored.

Thank you for your co-operation.

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please choose your job type

Academic	☐	Administrative	☐

2. Please indicate your department/ school/ faculty

Academic:

FIT	☐	SFAE	☐	SOA	☐
SMC	☐	IMS	☐	SHSS	☐
SLS	☐	CTH	☐	SGS	☐

Administrative/support:

Exam services	☐	Library	☐	Reception	☐
Human resource	☐	Mentoring	☐	Admissions	☐

Finance	☐	Labs	☐	Housekeeping	☐
ITD	☐	Helpdesk	☐	Catering	☐
Fashion	☐	Security	☐	Course Admin	☐

3. How long have you worked in this organization (all roles held)

<1 year	☐	11-20 years	☐
2-5 years	☐	>20 years	☐
6-10 years	☐		

4. Please tick your appropriate age category

21-30 years	☐
31-40 years	☐
40+ years	☐

SECTION ONE: FEMININE IDENTITY/FEMININITY

This section consists of statements which focus on the understanding of feminine identity. Please tick the statement that best represents your opinion

(1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 –Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5- Strongly agree)

Feminine identity/ Femininity- related statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Feminine identity/Femininity is virginity					
2. Feminine identity/Femininity is independence					
3. Feminine identity/Femininity is physical and sexual maturity					
4. Feminine identity/Femininity is mental maturity					
5. Feminine identity/Femininity is emotional maturity					

I associate feminine identity/femininity as having the following descriptors:

Feminine identity/ Femininity descriptors		1	2	3	4	5
6.	Gentleness					
7.	Nurturing					
8.	Sensitivity					
9.	Passiveness					
10.	Gracefulness					
11.	Emotional					
12.	Quietness					
13.	Sexual submissiveness					
14.	Softness					
15.	Accepting					

Being a feminine woman means possessing the following characteristics/behavior:

Feminine behavior/characteristics		1	2	3	4	5
16.	Personal hygiene and grooming					
17.	Sense of style or fashion					
18.	Hair care					
19.	Modesty of dress					
20.	Attraction to the opposite sex					

21. What is your understanding of the term feminine identity/ femininity

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION TWO: AFRO HAIR AT WORK

This section consists of statements which focus on discovering the perceptions regarding afro hair in the work place. Please select the statement that best represents your opinion

(1 – Not important; 2 – Slightly important; 3 – Important; 4 – Very important)

How important is it for me…	1	2	3	4
1. To be professional in appearance at work				
2. To follow laid down workplace policies on hair and dress				
3. To be free to adorn myself with makeup and jewelry				
4. To be free to choose the hairstyle I wear at work				

Please indicate if the following statements are either TRUE or FALSE

Perceptions about afro hair at the workplace	TRUE	FALSE
5. My workplace has policies regarding hairstyles		
6. Workplace policies regarding hair are fair		
If your answer to (6) was false please evaluate the following statements according to your experience:		
7. Women face more restrictions than men on their hairstyles at the workplace		
8. Women of more junior positions face more restrictions on their hair than more senior women at the workplace		
9. Women of other (not black) ethnicities face less restrictions than black women on their hairstyles at the workplace		

Please rate to what extent others affect your hairstyles in the workplace

(1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 –Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5- Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
10. I would change my hairstyle if my boss disliked it					
11. I would change my hairstyle if my female colleagues disliked it					
12. I would change my hairstyle if my male colleagues disliked it					

Please evaluate the following hairstyles commonly worn by black women according to the degree of professionalism they present to you:

(1 – Least professional; 2 –Neutral; 3- Most professional)

Hairstyles		1	2	3
13.	Cornrows			
14.	Box braids and twists (extensions)			
15.	Box braids and twists (no extensions)			
16.	Straightened hair (let loose)			
17.	Straightened hair (tied back)			
18.	Afro (let loose)			
19.	Afro (tied back)			
20.	Dreadlocks			
21.	Short / closely cropped hair			
22.	Weaves and wigs			

SECTION THREE: AFRO HAIR AT WORK AND ITS EFFECT ON FEMININITY

This section consists of statements which focus on discovering whether the perceptions regarding afro hair in the work place have any effect on a woman's

feminine identity/ femininity. Please select the statement that best represents your opinion

Please evaluate the following hairstyles commonly worn by black women according to the degree of feminine identity/femininity they present to you:

(1 – Least feminine; 2 –Neutral; 3- Most feminine)

Hairstyles		1	2	3
1.	Cornrows			
2.	Box braids and twists (extensions)			
3.	Box braids and twists (no extensions)			
4.	Straightened hair (let loose)			
5.	Straightened hair (tied back)			
6.	Afro (let loose)			
7.	Afro (tied back)			
8.	Dreadlocks			
9.	Short / closely cropped hair			
10.	Weaves and wigs			

Please indicate if the following statements are either TRUE or FALSE according to your opinion:

		TRUE	FALSE
11.	I feel productive at work when I am able to express my femininity		
12.	I feel feminine when I am able to choose my hairstyle at work		
13.	Being able to express my femininity at work is important to me		

14.	I feel equally as able to express my femininity at work through my hairstyle as women of other ethnicities (Caucasian, Semitic etc.)		
15.	Being able to express my femininity at work adds to my dignity as a person		

16. Briefly explain if you feel free to express your feminine identity/ femininity at work

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Briefly explain the extent to which you feel free to express yourself through your hairstyle as a black woman at work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Briefly explain how this affects you either positively or negatively? how

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix III

MASTERS' STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

You are invited to participate in a research study on afro hair in the workplace and feminine identity using a Case Study of Strathmore University female full time staff members and female evening masters' students. Please read the information below carefully and address any questions you may have to the person administering the questionnaire before agreeing to participate in the study.

The research is being conducted by Brenda Ndekei as part of her dissertation for the Masters in Applied Philosophy and Ethics (MAPE) in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Strathmore University. The faculty supervisor for this project is Dr. Catherine Dean.

This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or answer any question in the study at any time. All your responses will be kept confidential. I will not be collecting any personal identifying information. All records pertaining to this study will be securely stored.

Thank you for your co-operation.

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please choose your Masters' course

MAPE (Master of Arts in Philosophy and Ethics)	
MEM (Master's in Educational Management)	
MScB (Master of Science in Biomathematics)	
Master of Science in Statistical Sciences	
Master of Science in Mathematical Finance	
MComm (Master of Commerce)	
Master of Science in Information Technology	
Master of Information Systems Security	

2. Please indicate which industry you work in

3. How long have you worked in the organization (all roles held)

<1 year	☐	11-20 years	☐
2-5 years	☐	>20 years	☐
6-10 years	☐		

4. Please tick your appropriate age category

21-30 years	☐
31-40 years	☐
40+ years	☐

SECTION ONE: FEMININE IDENTITY/FEMININITY

This section consists of statements which focus on the understanding of feminine identity. Please tick the statement that best represents your opinion

(1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 –Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5- Strongly agree)

Feminine identity/ Femininity- related statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Feminine identity/Femininity is virginity					
2. Feminine identity/Femininity is independence					
3. Feminine identity/Femininity is physical and sexual maturity					
4. Feminine identity/Femininity is mental maturity					
5. Feminine identity/Femininity is emotional maturity					

I associate feminine identity/femininity as having the following descriptors:

Feminine identity/ Femininity descriptors	1	2	3	4	5
6. Gentleness					

		1	2	3	4	5
7.	Nurturing					
8.	Sensitivity					
9.	Passiveness					
10.	Gracefulness					
11.	Emotional					
12.	Quietness					
13.	Sexual submissiveness					
14.	Softness					
15.	Accepting					

Being a feminine woman means possessing the following characteristics/behavior:

Feminine behavior/characteristics		1	2	3	4	5
16.	Personal hygiene and grooming					
17.	Sense of style or fashion					
18.	Hair care					
19.	Modesty of dress					
20.	Attraction to the opposite sex					

21. What is your understanding of the term feminine identity/ femininity

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION TWO: AFRO HAIR AT WORK

This section consists of statements which focus on discovering the perceptions regarding afro hair in the work place. Please select the statement that best represents your opinion

(1 – Not important; 2 – Slightly important; 3 – Important; 4 – Very important)

How important is it for me...	1	2	3	4
1. To be professional in appearance at work				
2. To follow laid down workplace policies on hair and dress				
3. To be free to adorn myself with makeup and jewelry				
4. To be free to choose the hairstyle I wear at work				

Please indicate if the following statements are either TRUE or FALSE

Perceptions about afro hair at the workplace	TRUE	FALSE
5. My workplace has policies regarding hairstyles		
6. Workplace policies regarding hair are fair		
If your answer to (6) was false please evaluate the following statements according to your experience:		
7. Women face more restrictions than men on their hairstyles at the workplace		
8. Women of more junior positions face more restrictions on their hair than more senior women at the workplace		
9. Women of other (not black) ethnicities face less restrictions than black women on their hairstyles at the workplace		

Please rate to what extent others affect your hairstyles in the workplace

(1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 –Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5- Strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
10.	I would change my hairstyle if my boss disliked it					
11.	I would change my hairstyle if my female colleagues disliked it					
12.	I would change my hairstyle if my male colleagues disliked it					

Please evaluate the following hairstyles commonly worn by black women according to the degree of professionalism they present to you:

(1 – Least professional; 2 –Neutral; 3- Most professional)

Hairstyles		1	2	3
13.	Cornrows			
14.	Box braids and twists (extensions)			
15.	Box braids and twists (no extensions)			
16.	Straightened hair (let loose)			
17.	Straightened hair (tied back)			
18.	Afro (let loose)			
19.	Afro (tied back)			
20.	Dreadlocks			
21.	Short / closely cropped hair			
22.	Weaves and wigs			

SECTION THREE: AFRO HAIR AT WORK AND ITS EFFECT ON FEMININITY

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This section consists of statements which focus on discovering whether the perceptions regarding afro hair in the work place have any effect on a woman's feminine identity/ femininity. Please select the statement that best represents your opinion

Please evaluate the following hairstyles commonly worn by black women according to the degree of feminine identity/femininity they present to you:

(1 – Least feminine; 2 –Neutral; 3- Most feminine)

Hairstyles		1	2	3
1.	Cornrows			
2.	Box braids and twists (extensions)			
3.	Box braids and twists (no extensions)			
4.	Straightened hair (let loose)			
5.	Straightened hair (tied back)			
6.	Afro (let loose)			
7.	Afro (tied back)			
8.	Dreadlocks			
9.	Short / closely cropped hair			
10.	Weaves and wigs			

Please indicate if the following statements are either TRUE or FALSE according to your opinion:

		TRUE	FALSE
11.	I feel productive at work when I am able to express my femininity		
12.	I feel feminine when I am able to choose my hairstyle at work		

13.	Being able to express my femininity at work is important to me		
14.	I feel equally as able to express my femininity at work through my hairstyle as women of other ethnicities (Caucasian, Semitic etc.)		
15.	Being able to express my femininity at work adds to my dignity as a person		

16. Briefly explain if you feel free to express your feminine identity/ femininity at work

_____
_____
_____
_____

17. Briefly explain the extent to which you feel free to express yourself through your hairstyle as a black woman at work?

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. Briefly explain how this affects you either positively or negatively?

_____
_____
_____

Appendix IV

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY FEMALE STAFF MEMBERS ADMINISTRATIVE AND ACADEMIC AND MASTERS' STUDENTS**</u>

Overall Objectives:
1. To determine the understanding of 'feminine identity' among black Kenyan women working at Strathmore University.
2. To examine the perceptions about afro hair in the workplace among black Kenyan women working at Strathmore University.
3. To establish the effect that perceptions about afro hair in the workplace has on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women working at Strathmore University</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Introduction of Key Components**

- Thank you
- Your name
- Purpose
- Confidentiality
- Duration
- How discussion will be conducted
- Opportunity for questions</td><td>I want to thank you all for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Brenda Ndekei. I would like to converse with you about afro hair in the workplace and feminine identity. This discussion forms part of the research for my dissertation in the Masters in Applied Philosophy and Ethics programme (MAPE) offered by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Strathmore University. The faculty supervisor for this project is Dr. Catherine Dean.

This focus group discussion will take about 30 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or answer any question in the study at any time. All your responses will be kept confidential. This means that what we discuss will only be used for the purposes of this research. I will ensure that any information included in the report will not identify you as the respondent. All records pertaining to this study will be securely stored.

I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any comments. As we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that your comments are recorded. I will transcribe the recording to ensure accurate analysis of the contents.</td></tr>
</table>

	Your contribution is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions as we proceed please feel free to ask for clarification.
Introduction and background of the respondents	1. Please give me a brief rundown of how you care for your hair on a regular basis and why you choose that particular method 2. Kindly describe a hairstyle that is feminine in your opinion
Objective 1: The understanding of 'feminine identity' among black Kenyan women in the workplace. **Femininity**	1. What do you understand by the term 'feminine'? 2. What do you think makes you feminine? Why? 3. To what extent do you think being feminine is important in how you identify yourself as a woman? Why?
Objective 2: Black women's perceptions on afro hair in the workplace **Perceptions of black women regarding their afro hair**	1. What is your opinion about your African hair? 2. How would you say you formed this opinion? 3. How does your view of African hair affect your choice of hairstyle at work? 4. How do others affect this view?
Objective 2: Black women's perceptions on afro hair in the workplace **Hairstyles worn in the workplace**	1. What is your normal work hairstyle? 2. Is this different from hairstyles worn during your non-work time? Why? 3. How does your workplace influence your hairstyle? 4. What is your opinion about wearing an afro hairstyle at work?
Objective 3: The effect of perceptions about afro hair in the workplace on the feminine identity of black Kenyan women.	1. How important is it to you to feel feminine at work? 2. How does your hairstyle affect the way you feel about yourself as a woman? (Does it make you feel more of less feminine?)

Feminine identity and my afro hair	3. How does your hairstyle affect the way you feel about yourself as a woman while at work? 4. How do your male co-workers affect your hairstyles at the workplace?
Closing remarks	Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. Again I would like to emphasize that all your responses will be kept confidential and the records securely stored.