

**IMPORTANCE OF CLOTHING BRANDS ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS
OF GENERATION Y IN THE VAAL TRIANGLE AREA**

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2013

DECLARATION

I, **Moshibudi Nancy Mothapo** declare that *IMPORTANCE OF CLOTHING BRANDS ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF GENERATION Y IN THE VAAL TRIANGLE AREA* is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been identified and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this dissertation has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised educational institution.

.....

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To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the completed research of Nancy Mothapo for the Master of Commerce thesis entitled: *Importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle Area*.

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author of the thesis.

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The interpretation of the statistical rests with the author of the thesis.

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The secret of success in life is for a woman to be ready for her opportunity when it comes.

ABSTRACT

IMPORTANCE OF CLOTHING BRANDS ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF GENERATION Y IN THE VAAL TRIANGLE AREA

This study focuses on the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y individuals. The research concentrates specifically on university students aged between 17 to 26 years, located in the Vaal Triangle Area. This study aims to determine if this group of Generation Y members are brand conscious in their choices of clothing brands and what influences or motivates them to buy clothing brands.

The findings suggest that Generation Y students are brand conscious, in that the right choice of clothing helps them create an image and identity for themselves. Peer and family influences play a crucial role in their choice of brands as it aids in their socialisation process. In addition, advertising is an important variable in communicating brand values and establishing an image for the brand. Celebrities also have an impact on branded clothing as they promote certain attributes such as image, quality and status. However, the results of this study are limited given that the study was only conducted amongst students in the Vaal Triangle area. Furthermore, the research does not follow the individuals over time to see how their brand choices might have changed.

In order to maintain Generation Y students' loyalty, it is recommended that brand managers focus on building an emotional attachment to make their brands special and bring a lasting competitive advantage. In addition, advertising should be used not only to create awareness but also to influence brand image and preference. Generation Y individuals establish their brand preferences at an early age especially during their years of study and, therefore, targeting this consumer group may be rewarding because with careful promotions, marketers can create a group of brand loyal customers for the future.

Keywords: brands, advertising, endorsement of clothing, Generation Y, peer influence, reference groups

UITTREKSEL

BELANGRIKHEID VAN HANDELSMERKE OP DIE

AANKOOPBESLUITTE VAN GENERASIE Y IN DIE VAALDRIEHOEK

Hierdie studie fokus op die belangrikheid van handelsmerke van klere op die aankoopbesluite van Generasie Y individue. Die navorsing fokus spesifiek op universiteits studente tussen die ouderdomme van 17-26 jaar, woonagtig in die Vaaldriehoek gebied. Hierdie studie het ten doel om te bepaal of hierdie groep van Generasie Y handelsmerk bewus is in hul keuse van handelmerke van klere en wat beïnvloed of motiveer hulle om klere met handelsmerke te koop.

Die bevindinge dui daarop dat die Generasie Y handelsmerk bewus is omdat die regte keuse van klere hulle help om 'n beeld en identiteit vir hulself te skep. Eweknie-en familie-invloede speel 'n belangrike rol in hulle keuse van handelsmerke as dit help in hul sosialisering proses. Daarbenewens, advertensies is 'n belangrike veranderlike om handelsmerk waardes te kommunikeer asook die skepping van 'n beeld vir die handelsmerk. Bekendes het ook 'n impak op die keuse van handelsmerke van klere omdat hulle sekere eienskappe soos die beeld, kwaliteit en status van die handelsmerk bevorder. Die resultate van hierdie studie is egter beperk omdat dit slegs onder studente in die Vaaldriehoek gedoen is. Daarby volg die navorsing nie die individue oor tyd om te sien hoe hul handelsmerk keuses mag verander het nie.

Om die lojaliteit van Generasie Y te behou, beveel die navorser aan dat die handelsmerk bestuurders 'n emosionele band om hul handelsmerke moet bou om hul handelsmerk 'n volhoubare mededingende voordeel te gee. Daarbenewens moet advertensies nie net gebruik word om bewustheid te skep nie, maar om die handelsmerkbeeld en voorkeur te beïnvloed. Generasie Y individue vestig hul handelsmerkvoorkeure op 'n vroeë ouderdom, veral tydens hul jare van studie en daarom kan die fokus op hierdie verbruikergroep lonend wees omdat met versigtige promosies kan bemarkers van handelsmerke lojale kliënte vir die toekoms skep.

SLEUTELWOORDE: handelsmerke, advertensies, endossement van klere, Generasie Y, eweknie-invloed, verwysingsgroepe

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The clothing industry forms part of the larger fashion industry within the business environment. It plays a significant role in the manufacturing of products such as clothing, footwear and accessories (Van Eck, Grobler & Herbst, 2004: 4). In South Africa, the clothing industry has an important influence on the economy and is one of the six most important industries (Altman, 1994:49). The clothing industry, like most other sectors that forms part of the economy, consists of both formal and informal sectors. Most of the firms in the formal sector of this industry are from, or originated from the informal sector. The informal sector of the clothing industry is reflected by groups of producers/manufacturers who are not registered or recorded in the economy of a country; they do not pay taxes and are found in most towns/cities within the country. Most of these businesses started as home-based businesses (ANON, 1998:16).

The employment rate reflected by the clothing industry is not accurate because there are people who are self-employed and not registered, or employed under the informal sector (Morris, Schindehutte & Allen, 2005:15). Despite the issues that the clothing industry faces such as, for example, productivity and the mechanising of labour, the clothing industry is still regarded as one of the important industries that contribute positively to the overall economy (Vlok, 2006: 3). Firms that fall or operate under the clothing industry offer different brands from casual, formal to sportswear brands.

Branding is very important in the marketing of clothing. The main purpose of branding is to differentiate a businesses' product from those offered by competitors in the same industry. Typically, brands are used as a sign, whereby people are judged by the kinds of clothing brands that they are wearing (Husic & Cicic, 2009: 3). Consumers, especially the young generation, use clothing brands as a tool in creating a self-identity and a sense of identification for themselves. Generation Y consumers purchase their favourite clothing brands because those brands make

them feel comfortable and offer a means of investing in themselves. This is why it is important for marketers to make sure that their brands create a long-lasting relationship with their target market. Marketers in the clothing industry must have a clear understanding of motivations, perceptions and attitudes of their consumers with regard to buying clothing brands. By so doing, they are better able to meet their expectations and satisfy their needs (Knight & Kim, 2007: 272).

This study focuses on Generation Y consumers and their purchasing decisions regarding clothing brands. Generation Y is defined as group of young people born between 1985 and 2005 (Markert, 2004: 21). This group of consumers is important to marketers, as they have exceeded the market size of the previous generation that used to be the largest generation segment (Zeller, 2006: 5; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009: 99). Marketers in the clothing industry are constantly eager to reach the Generation Y members because these consumers are in their formative years of forming brand relationships (Tran, 2008:8). Generation Y members love to shop for clothes. Their brand choices and purchasing decisions are influenced by, amongst other reasons; their peer groups, family members, the advertisements of firms in the clothing industry, as well as by celebrity endorsers. As much as Generation Y members love to shop, they tend to look for approval from others before they buy. The majority of them shop with other people at least half of the time (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009: 24). The Generation Y group embraces social networking sites where members may share ideas with their friends and get opinions and advice before making purchasing decisions, especially with regard to the latest brands. According to Feltham (1998: 372), when Generation Y consumers leave home, their brand loyalties shift significantly from that of the family unit to that of their peer groups, and this provides an important opportunity for marketers to influence their brand choices.

Despite a decreasing influence of parents in the later years of Generation Y, parental influence remains important with regard to the brand choices of Generation Y consumers. This suggests that marketers need to assess how they are going to market their brands to young adults who are away from home for the first time. According to Yoh and Pitts (2005: 28), university or college students, who also form part of the Generation Y cohort, are one of the most important target market groups for many clothing firms as they form part of a segment that marketers have to listen to and reach.

1.2 EXPLANATION OF SELECTED KEY CONCEPTS

The following section briefly explains the key concepts used in this study.

1.2.1 Brand

A brand is defined as a name, symbol or term, which identifies the goods, or an idea sold by a firm. It is also described as everything that is known and felt about a product from its recognisable name, logo and packaging to the power it holds in consumers' minds and gives a product an identity or a meaning (Rath, Bay, Petrizzi & Gill, 2008: 53).

1.2.2 Clothing industry

The clothing industry is defined as an industry that produces different clothing items from woven and knitted fabrics to natural leather for different household needs and industrial purposes (Koketkin, 1979:17).

1.2.3 Generation Y

Generation Y is defined as a group of people born between 1985 and 2005 (Markert, 2004: 21). This group of consumers may be regarded as well nurtured and fortunate because they were born in an advanced economic society where everything was technologically advanced. Moreover, they are more career-oriented and have to work towards achieving entrepreneurial skills than any other lifestyle group (Martin & Turley, 2004: 464).

1.2.4 Consumer purchasing behaviour

Consumer purchasing behaviour is a process or pattern of decision-making that consumers use when purchasing goods and acquiring services that satisfy their needs and wants (Van Der Walt, Strydom, Marx & Jooste, 1996: 76). It may also be described as all the activities by which consumers acquire, consume and dispose products (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2003: 98).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Increased competition amongst manufacturers within the clothing industry necessitated that more current and reliable information be collected to make better marketing decisions. In the current clothing market of South Africa, as stated by Van Eck *et al.*, (2004: 5), there is a lack of information upon which to make good marketing decisions, especially concerning the perceptions, values and the motivations of the young generation to buy clothing brands. Generation Y individuals, as compared to other groups of consumers, have different behaviours and attitudes towards clothing brands and they are influenced by many factors before making a purchase. That is why it is important for manufacturers and marketers of different clothing brands to understand the needs and wants of their target market (Koutras, 2006:10).

Manufactures and marketers of clothing brands who know and understand the needs and wants of their consumer segment(s) are able to make better marketing decisions, create long lasting relationships, provide good service delivery, have reliable market segmentation and have a competitive advantage over their competitors in the same industry. Generation Y is a market segment that can no longer be underestimated and ignored because most of these group members are well educated and constantly being exposed to new media, as compared to previous generations. This means they are a well-informed group of what is happening in the market. Therefore, the research study focused on the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle area.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research objectives formulated for this study are as follows:

1.4.1 Primary research objective

The primary research objective of the study is to determine the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decision-making of Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle area.

1.4.2 Secondary research objective

The following are the secondary research objectives:

- Establish the influence of reference groups on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y students regarding clothing brands.
- Determine whether major differences exist between the perceptions of Generation Y male and female students regarding choice of branded clothing.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

It is important for manufacturers and marketers in the clothing industry to have a clear understanding of what influence and motivate Generation Y consumers to buy clothing brands. As such, this is the focus of the study. Manufacturers in the clothing industry spend a great deal of money advertising their brands with the hope of making consumers aware of their brands, attracting consumers that will be loyal to their brands and increasing their market share. Furthermore, it is essential for advertisers and brand managers to become more aware of the values, perceptions and motivations carried by Generation Y consumers regarding clothing brands, as this group may become loyal consumers for the future. Having knowledge of these influencing factors and an understanding of the consumers' needs may lead to better marketing decision, market segmentation initiatives and a better quality of service delivery, as well as long lasting customer relationships (Van Eck *et al.*, 2004:7).

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations of the research are noted:

- The research only focuses on the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decision of Generation Y students.
- The research will not be able to assess the full extent of the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decision of Generation Y, as only Generation Y students from/in the Vaal Triangle are included in this study.

1.7 ETHICS STATEMENT

The research project complies with the ethical standards of academic research, which, among other things, protects the identities and interests of the respondents. The confidentiality of information provided by the respondents is guaranteed.

1.8 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATIONS

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and structure of the research study

This chapter presents the introduction and background to the research study. The statement of the research problem and the importance of the research study are discussed. The chapter includes explanations of some of the key concepts.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature and important issues regarding the influence of different factors on the choices of Generation Y concerning different clothing brands, including family, advertising, celebrities and peers. The differences between the perceptions of young male and female consumers regarding branded clothing are also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Research methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology. It describes the population, sampling frame and discusses the sampling procedure.

CHAPTER 4: Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis and statistical procedures used in the study are discussed in this chapter. This chapter also analyses, interprets and evaluates the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

This chapter reviews the entire study, provides conclusions drawn from the study and makes recommendations. Limitations of the study are discussed within this chapter, together with recommendations for further research.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In today's society, brands play a significant role in the lives of the youth, especially during social interactions with their peers/friends. They express themselves using well-recognised brands that they own so as to be accepted by their peers (Eadie, Hastings, Stead & Mackintosh, 1999: 105).

The decisions of Generation Y individuals have a significant impact in today's society and affect many economic choices. Moreover, their familiarity and ability to utilise today's technology put them ahead in the acquisition of information, especially with regard to branded clothes. Generation Y will have a remarkable economic impact on society since it is larger than the previous generations. One of the biggest mistakes that any marketer can make is not to pay attention to this group of consumers. Marketers who manage to bond with this group will benefit if they can develop a competitive advantage through branding (Gronbach, 2000a: 45; Gronbach, 2000b: 36).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Marketers of branded products or services need to understand why or why not consumers buy their brands and why their competitors' brands are favoured or not favoured. Chapter 1 provided the framework of why the research study is needed. It dealt with issues such as the objectives of the research study, the importance thereof and its limitations. Chapter 2 involves a literature review aimed at establishing the theoretical framework of the study and discusses branding, branding equity, Generation Y consumers, their purchasing behaviour and their purchasing decisions. Consumers today, especially the Generation Y consumers, regard or use clothing brands as part of their identity and as a mechanism to signal to which group they belong (Belk, 1988:141). They define themselves by what they possess. Generation Y consumers' purchasing behaviour and acquisition of clothing brands differentiate them from other consumer groups, simply because during their purchasing process they buy clothing brands that will create a unique image of themselves during their social interactions with peers (Tian, Bearden & Hunter, 2001: 57).

A brand is regarded as a sign that is used to attract consumers to buy a particular clothing item. Most of the consumers in the clothing industry see or regard brands as a symbol of "class" and quality (Koutras, 2006:13). Marketers in the clothing industry need to have a clear understanding of a brand's meaning in the minds of consumers, since brands have different meanings to different consumers. By so doing, they are better able to market brands that satisfy different consumers' needs and wants, and improve their sales growth (Jevons, Gabbott & De Chernatony, 2005: 305). Generation Y consumers establish their purchasing behaviour and brand preferences at a young age because they sometimes follow the purchasing behaviour/process of their reference groups, especially their family, since this is the first group to which a person belongs. It may be beneficial to marketers in the clothing industry targeting this cohort to listen and understand their needs so that they can create brand loyal consumers (Van Eck *et al.*, 2004:10).

2.2 COMPONENTS OF A BRAND

A brand consists of different components, which will be discussed below.

2.2.1 Brand strategy

A brand strategy originates from the position the brand holds within the broader portfolio of the entity that has possession of the brand. A brand could be fighting for its survival in a high growth segment or perhaps be content with functioning and surviving within a mature or declining segment (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005: 39).

2.2.2 Brand positioning

Brand positioning focuses on the functional or physical aspects of the brand, as well as the competition it confronts on a daily basis. Some of the functional dimensions according to which a brand can be positioned include features like big/small, fast/slow, and male/female (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005: 32). In mature markets, brands are likely to be positioned close to one another, while in new and innovative markets there is likely to be a greater diversity in the features offered by the different brands (Doyle, 2002:16). In attempting to evaluate the dynamics related to consumer purchasing patterns of clothing brands, Kotler (2008:19) and Keller (1998: 27) state that well established brands enjoy a great deal of success because of their ability to consistently deliver reliability, dependability and time savings.

2.2.3 Brand personality

The personality of a brand is the perception that consumers have of the brand in question. Brand appeals shape the personality of a brand. There are three types of appeals, namely, sensual, rational and emotional appeals that help shape the personality of the brand. The sensual appeal of a brand revolves around the comfort and feelings that the consumers have about the product, while the rational appeal has to do with the performance of the product in the market.

The emotional appeal revolves around the benefit that the product is able to create in the consumer's mind (Doyle, 2002:18).

2.2.4 Characteristics of successful brands

Brands can be classified as a tangible product, a basic brand, an augmented brand and a potential brand. A tangible product refers to the end product that satisfies the needs of the consumers. A basic brand is more concerned with the packaging used for the tangible product to attract a consumer's attention. A brand may be augmented with its reliability and availability in the market as well as its after-sales services. A potential brand is established through creating consumer preferences and loyalty (Levitt, 2000: 236). When establishing a brand, marketers need to answer questions such as: What should the actual branding strategy be? How should the brand be positioned? What brand personality should be established?

2.3 CONCEPT OF BRAND EQUITY

Brand equity is used to describe the value of having a well-known brand name. A definition of brand equity is provided below and the dimensions of brand equity are further more discussed.

2.3.1 Definition of brand equity

Brand equity is defined as the competitive advantage that a firm has over its competitors for having a well-known brand in the market and having a positive response from the consumers on the brand being marketed (Kamakura & Russell, 1991: 245). Customer-based brand equity takes place when the consumer is comfortable with the brand and holds good and loyal memories of the brand as compared to those of that of the competitors in the same industry (Kamakura & Russell 1991: 248).

2.3.2 Dimensions of brand equity

The concept of brand equity consists of a number of dimensions, namely, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, perceived quality, perceived value to the firm, perceived value to consumers and other brand assets(Aaker, 1991: 253), as discussed below(also see Figure 1).

2.3.2.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness can be described as the ability of the consumer to recognise a brand in different situations (Keller, 2003:153). Brand awareness can be in the form of brand recognition or brand recall. Brand recognition takes place when the consumer who was previously exposed to the brand or has seen the brand before, recognises it the next time round. Consumers might be familiar with a number of brands, but only recall a small number of them, sometimes even only one brand. Therefore, brand recognition is considered as the minimum level of brand awareness and it is based on aided recall (Holden, 1993: 386; Laurent, Kapferer & Roussel, 1995:175; Mariotti, 1999: 66).

2.3.2.2 Brand association

Brand association refers to the meaning of the brand in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1991:174). This dimension is closely related to brand awareness, since both dimensions take place after a consumer's previous brand contact (Fournier, 1998: 350).

2.3.2.3 Perceived quality

Perceived quality is described as the decision that the consumer makes about the product's or brand's quality in the market when compared to those of the competitors in the same industry (Zeithaml, 1988: 8). In order for a brand in the market to have perceived quality, manufactures have to constantly improve the quality and marketers have to communicate the quality of that particular brand to consumers in order to meet their expectations (Grönroos, 1984: 45; Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000:197).

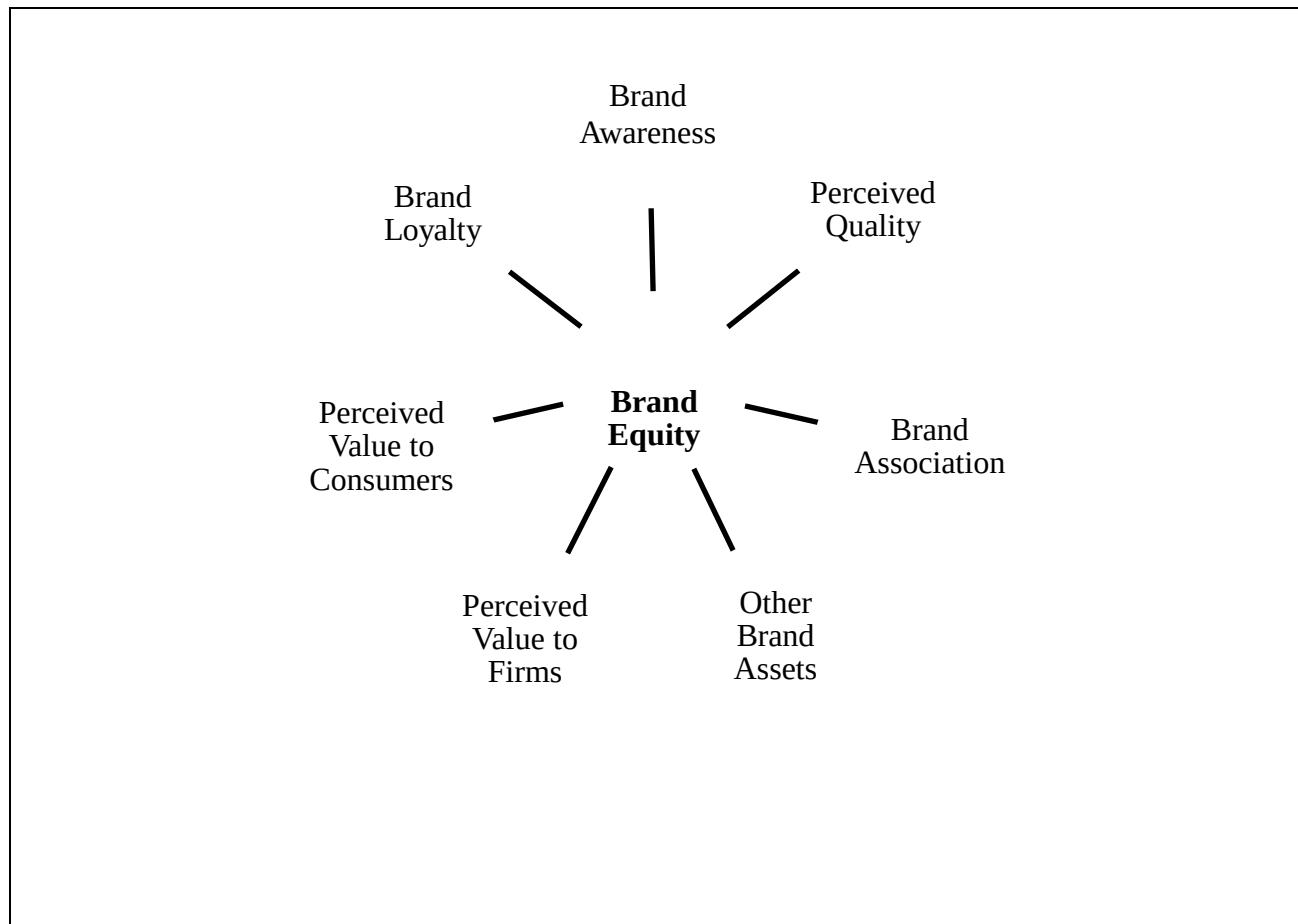


Figure 1: Concept of brand equity

Source: Aaker (1991: 253)

2.3.2.4 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty can be described as a commitment by consumers to buy the same brand constantly, irrespective of the availability of similar substitute brands from other suppliers (Oliver, 1997: 273). Consumers prefer to buy products or brands that they know or are comfortable with, rather than to buy new products in the market. This is the reason why new suppliers have difficulty entering the market because existing suppliers in that particular market already have brand loyal consumers and good consumer relationships.

2.3.3 Relationship between brand equity dimensions

There is a direct relationship between the different brand equity dimensions and this is illustrated in Figure1. Perceived quality is directly related to brand awareness simply because the quality of the brand might be the factor that makes the consumers to be aware of the brand and also attracts them to buy that brand. Brand association also relies on the brand awareness because once consumers are aware of the brand it affects their purchasing behaviour, whether in a positive or negative way. For example, consumers may choose to switch brands once they have become aware of a particular brand that satisfies their needs depending on what that brand means to them (Aaker & Biel, 1993:180). As indicated in the study of Yoo *et al.*, (2000:199), brands of high quality are easily recognised by consumers because of the added advantage that they offer and also the uniqueness they have when compared to those of the competitors in the same industry. Once consumers are aware of a brand and its quality benefits it creates a meaningful sense in their minds and they become loyal to that particular brand.

2.3.4 Benefits of brand equity

While it is time consuming and expensive to develop brand equity, it does offer several benefits to the firm. This include achieving a differential advantage due to consumer perceptions acting as a restriction on other brands that want to enter the market, promoting international expansion and protecting the product from changes in consumer preferences and tastes (Kotler, 2008: 20). Aaker(1991: 46) states that well known brands in the market can have a competitive advantage as well as good market value. Shiffman and Kanuk (2004: 180) add that brand equity aids in encouraging the acceptance of a new product with the same family brand name and in gaining premium shelf space, which in turn, adds to the perceived value and quality of the product, and also assists the firm to earn good returns.

2.4 GENERATION Y CONSUMERS

The Generation Y cohort is regarded as the largest generation in history that marketers in the clothing industry are desperate to understand and reach as they represent the potential brand loyal customers of the future (Noble & Noble, 2000: 295). The values and experiences illustrated in Figure 2 drive the loyalty of consumers to purchase clothing brands because they meet and satisfy their needs.

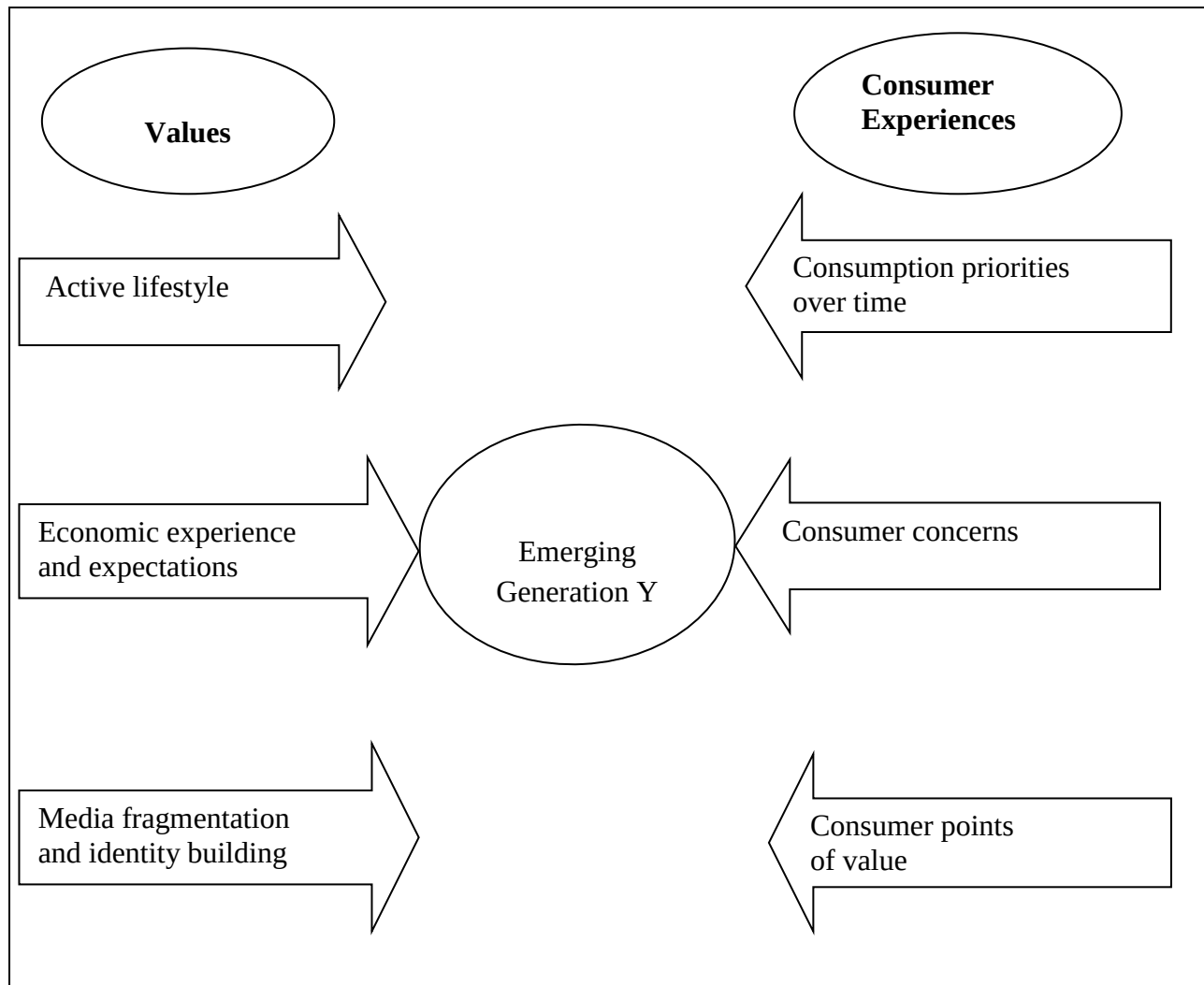


Figure 2: Generation Y formative values and common experiences

Source: ANON(2001: 7)

According to Howell (2004:12), Generation Y consumers use clothing brands to express themselves and to fit into a group, especially during interactions with their friends and peers. Johnson (2006:10) adds that Generation Y consumers tend to buy clothing brands not only for the quality but also for the status that those brands hold in the society. In certain cultures or societies, certain brands have a certain meaning and people are often judged according to the kinds of clothing brands that they purchase and wear.

Johnson (2006:12) states that Generation Y consumers are the most consumption-oriented generation ever and that they are keen to keep up with the latest fashion in the market. Since the Generation Y cohort is an important target market in the clothing industry, it is important for marketers to align their marketing strategies constantly with the changing needs of these consumers. That is, they need to ensure that their strategies meet the expectations of this cohort, as they will continue to represent a major economic and shopping force (Koutras, 2006:12).

Retailers and marketers in the clothing industry need to be creative and take advantage of advanced technology to improve their brand promotions as well as advertisements in order to attract this consumer group. When advertising and promoting their clothing brands, marketers can use media sources that are mostly used by the young generation, for example, the internet, social networks and magazines (Frings, 2005: 275). The young generation likes to commit to a supplier or brand owner who understands, accommodates and satisfies their needs continuously without compromising quality and expectations.

The Generation Y group can be classified into four key consumer types, namely, fringe, generator, confused and conformists consumers (ANON, 2001:9), as illustrated in Figure 3. Generators are Generation Y consumers with enough income to allow them to make purchases regularly and also become loyal to a particular brand, simply because that particular brand suits their lifestyle and satisfies their needs. Conformists are Generation Y consumers who struggle to make up their minds in terms of which brand they prefer or want to buy and, as a result, they end up buying the same brands as Generators. They become followers in their purchasing processes and end up buying popular brands that they are aware of or learned about from others.

Confused Generation Y consumers are influenced by other people's opinions without being able to justify why they buy or not buy a product or brand. They are likely to suffer from short-lived trends because they are influenced by the Generators and the Conformists.

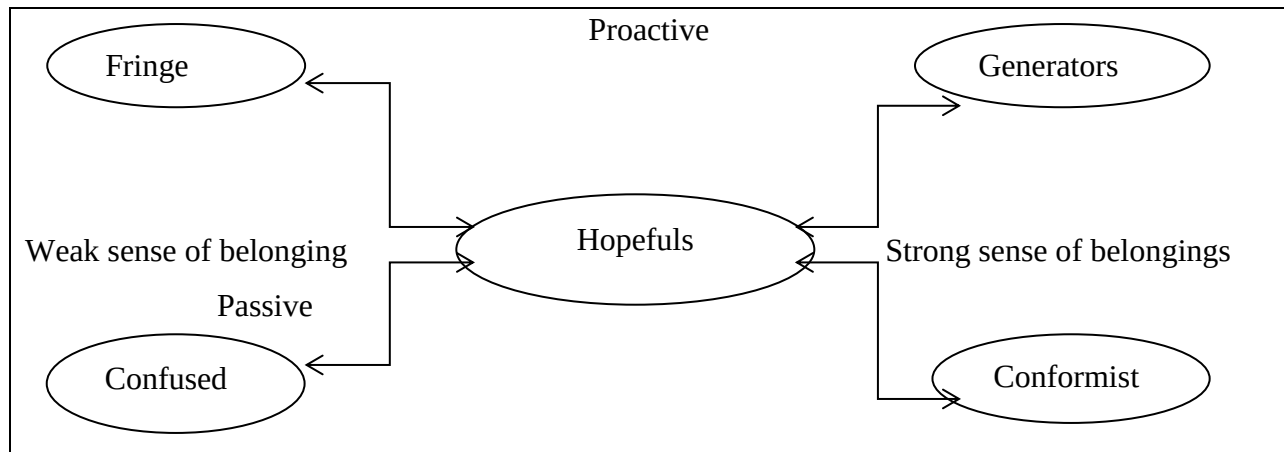


Figure 3: Generation Y - four key consumer types

Source: ANON(2001:9)

Fringe Generation Y consumers consist of two consumer types. Attitudinal Fringe who break away from the norm in order to rise up against mass trends. They support simply because they are not recognised and represented by the mainstream media as a way of establishing their own unique identities through social engagement. Economic Fringe who break away from the norm because they do not want to follow the mass trends. They also recognise that they do not have enough resources, for example, money to follow popular trends and thus create their own set of beliefs and values that they can embrace. Hopefuls are consumers who are concerned about image since they want to fit in their social engagements with their peers. They possess remarkable consumer knowledge and act as opinionated and savvy consumers (ANON, 2001: 9-10).

2.4.1 Characteristics of Generation Y

Generation Y consumers are characterised as an independent and self-sufficient group. They are more concerned with their image and with how others perceive them. They do not like to be underestimated by their peers; hence, they use clothing brands as a certain life style indicator. Generation Y consumers make use of technology to share information about new trends in the market (McCrindle, 2010: 22).

There are five different characteristics that define Generation Y individuals, as stated by Howell (2004:13). These characteristics are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of Generation Y consumers

Characteristic	Description
Loyalty	Consumers who are loyal to their preferred brand choice as well as benefits that come with it
Awareness	Consumers who are aware of trendy brands in the market and make decisions based on what they observed or what they are aware of
Balance	Consumers who balance their lifestyles to accommodate any kind of change
Risk	Consumers who are open and flexible to change
Intimacy	Consumers who are able to establish and sustain close relationships.

Source: Howell (2004:13)

According to Williams and Page (2010: 8), Generation Y consumers are brand loyal customers and follow a certain pattern in their choice of clothing brands. Members of the Generation Y group are regarded as the most educated group and most interesting group to engage with, especially when it comes to clothing brands. To engage with this cohort, marketers need to provide convincing advertising messages and keep them entertained (Williams & Page, 2010:12).

2.4.2 Reaching Generation Y

Marketers in the clothing industry need to understand the needs and brand preferences of Generation Y consumers. It is important for marketers in the clothing industry to understand consumers' perceptions and values about brands as well as where they spent most of their time and money. When they are not at colleges or universities, Generation Y consumers spend most of their time listening to the radio, watching television and surfing the Internet. This provides an opportunity for marketers to come with better marketing tools to reach this group. The Generation Y group also needs to be communicated with or be reached at where they live and this means using street marketing. Street marketing is a form of localised, personalised and non-conventional marketing which includes things such as give-away samples and special events (Gronbach, 2000a: 46).

If, for example, a new retail store targeting young consumers opens in a particular area, representatives need to be sent to areas around the colleges or universities to give samples away, showing the retailer's logo or brand. By so doing, they are creating brand awareness in this target market. Retail stores especially those that are targeting young consumers should create a teen or young generation-friendly environment. They should utilise young salespeople who understand the needs and wants of this cohort. Generation Y consumers tend to respond well to campaigns/promotions that are directed at them, firms need to show that they have an interest in them as consumers (Gronbach, 2000b: 36-37). This creates an opportunity for firms in the clothing industry to develop campaigns/promotions specifically for this target group.

Radio and television are appropriate media for attracting the young generation market through mass marketing efforts. In today's world, the Internet is the most powerful/popular marketing tool that marketers can use to reach the young generation group. Nowadays, young people spend more of their time surfing/using the Internet than watching television. The Internet is now forming part of their everyday life and its importance will continue to grow (Gronbach, 2000b: 38). The marketing industry needs to adapt and change its approach to meet these consumers in new forms of media that are comfortable to them (Lane, King & Reichert, 2011: 55). Gronbach (2000b:3 8) agrees and states that in today's world media, choices are endless and consumers have control of their input. In order for retailers and manufacturers to reach this market segment, they need to integrate and constantly keep up with this fast changing environment and make new experiences more interactive.

2.4.3. Differences between male and female perceptions on clothing brands

Research conducted by Ferle and Chan (2008 :214) on the functions of clothes showed that male consumers have a different approach from females when it comes to purchasing clothing brands. Males are more concerned with comfort, quality and warmth. In contrast, females concentrate more on brand value and appearance because for them expensive clothing brands mean an acceptable lifestyle by peers.

Other researchers like Ogletree, Williams, Raffeld, Mason and Fricke, (2003:195) support the above statement by describing this behavioural difference between genders as a social condition that started a long time ago and one that is reflected in advertisements showing appearance issues more for females rather than for males. In addition, clothing substitution is more commonly found amongst female consumers because they do not like to be seen wearing the same clothing item over and over again (Lurie, 2000: 39). In most cases, male consumers prefer to buy good quality products whereas females prefer quantity as opposed to quality.

2.4.3.1 Factors affecting male fashion consciousness

Fashion consciousness is more than simply an awareness or preferences for fashion, style or

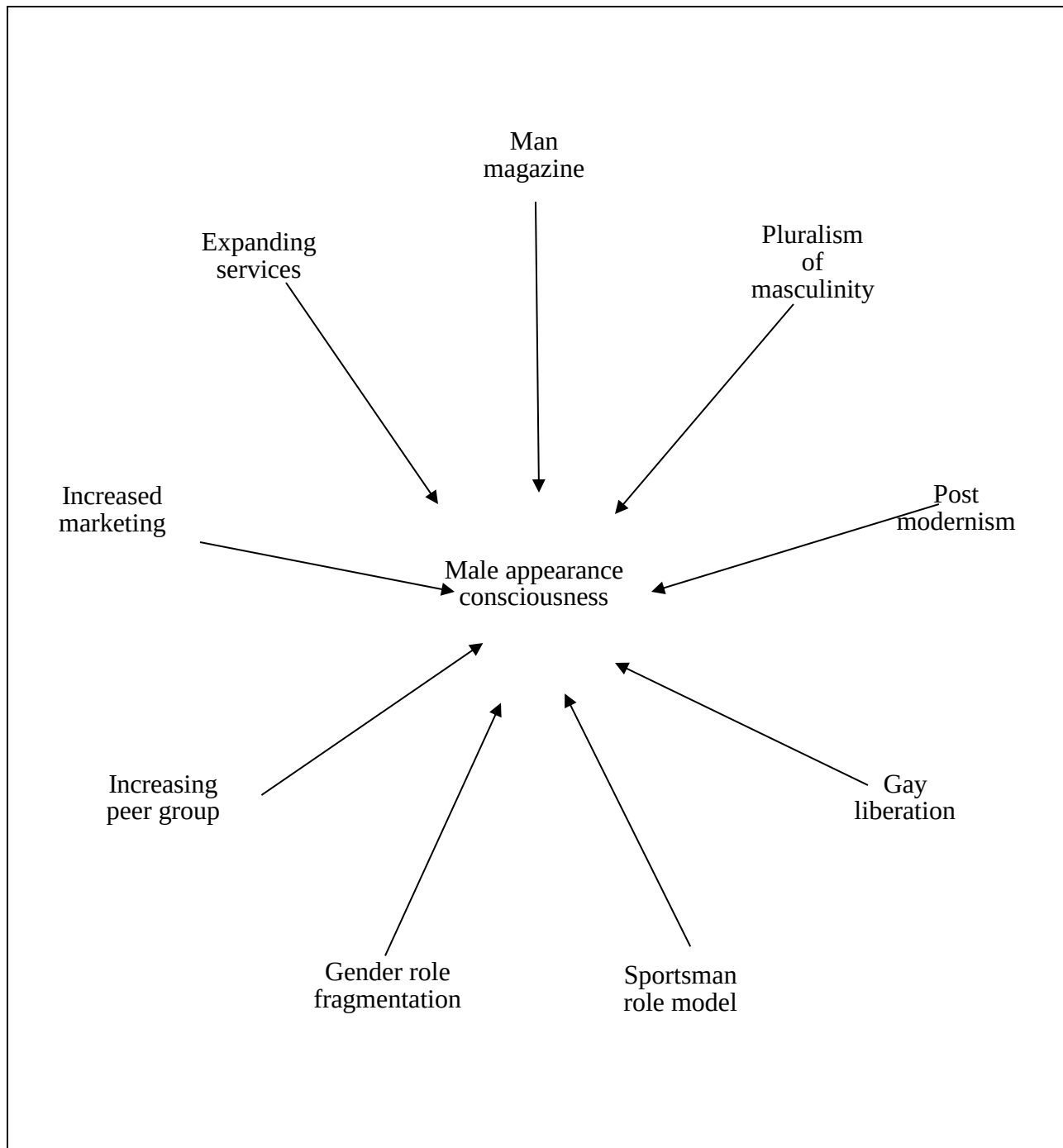


Figure 4: Major influences on male appearance consciousness

Source: Kaiser and Freeman (2004: 42)

trends in choosing clothing. Fashion consciousness can be described as the level at which a person is involved in with trendy brands (Kaiser & Freeman, 2004: 40). Fashion consciousness is branded by an interest in clothing and fashion (McCracken & Roth, 2006:15). Figure 4 presents the major influences affecting male appearance consciousness and these influences are also discussed below.

Mintel (2000:17) defines men magazines advertising as a marketing tool/media where men are used to advertise certain clothing brands and their benefits in relation to the latest fashion in the market. This form of advertising encourages men to keep up with the fashion changes in the market constantly. During the purchasing process, Generation Y consumers make decisions based on the look of the clothing item, rather than as to what it does. Homosexuality and multiculturalism affect men's attitudes towards fashion. Masculinity is essentially heterosexual and a middle class experience. Men who do not form part of this group often follow decisions that are considered feminine in nature (Kimmel, 1994:12).

Most advertisements in the clothing industry, especially those targeting Generation Y males, use role models such as sportsmen to advertise their clothing brands to attract the attention of their target market. Male Generation Y consumers sometimes buy clothing items because their favourite sportsman or role model wears it and this influences their purchasing behaviour positively (Hewitt & Baxter, 2004:115). Factors such as the use of social media and the Internet also play an important role in influencing the buying behaviour of men.

Environmental changes also affect the purchasing behaviour of consumers in different ways. Change in prices and climates may affect the brand loyalty of other consumers. The influence of these changing environments is not only for a certain generation - it can affect all consumer segments (Schewe & Noble, 2000:137). Certain changes like technological changes allow Generation Y consumers to share valuable information from their experiences with certain products as well as benefits.

2.4.3.2 Factors affecting female fashion consciousness

Table 2 outlines the factors that are affecting female fashion consciousness.

Table 2: Factors affecting female fashion consciousness

Factor	Description
Environment	Change in fashion in the market, change in climate, cultural beliefs and other factors that affect the buying behaviour in the market, for example, societal values, available options, promotion and advertisements
Individual characteristics and Preferences	Consumers' purchasing patterns, influences, quality, comfort as well as status
Continuous need arousal and awareness	Buying brands to satisfy their needs and being aware of new trends in the market
Store environment	Cleanliness, background music, store offerings, attitude and behaviour of staff. All these factors can influence the purchasing behaviour of female consumers
Suppliers and actual purchase	Factors considered by consumers before making actual purchases, for example, quality, availability, price and style-these factors are used by consumers to evaluate the preferred supplier
Favourite brands	Continuous purchase of favourite brands

Sources: Rath *et al.*, (2008: 82)

2.5 GENERATION Y's PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

Consumer purchasing behaviour is a process that consumers follow when involved in purchasing different products/brands to satisfy their needs. Consumers' purchasing behaviour influences the marketing strategies of firms and therefore firms must design strategies that follow their target consumers' purchasing patterns to satisfy their needs (Anderson, Fell, Smith, Hansen & Gomon,

2005: 24). Retailers and other businesses will only be able to satisfy consumers if they understand their needs. Marketers and brand owners in the clothing industry are focusing more attention on the purchasing behaviour of the Generation Y group of consumers because this cohort is different from previous generations, even their purchasing behaviours are unique as compared to other generations.

Generation Y members like to share information about the latest trends in the market. They influence each other to buy certain brands (Martin & Bush, 2000a: 462). Generation Y members learn purchasing behaviours from a young age and grow up with those skills. Certain Generation Y consumers continue to follow the purchasing patterns followed by their families, even if they are no longer staying at home. An important aspect of the Generation Y members is their socialisation process in their purchasing behaviour. Socialisation of consumers is defined as a learning process where individuals acquire certain skills, predilections and knowledge that enable them to be active as consumers in the market (Ward, 1974: 9). The consumer-socialisation process has changed gradually for Generation Y and marketing managers will need to modify their strategies in targeting the market of young generation (McNeal, Herndon & Yeh, 1998: 56).

2.5.1 Models of consumer behaviour

Several consumer-purchasing models have been developed that aim to describe the process of consumer purchasing behaviour. Even though they vary in their form of presentation, most of them are a build-up of stages, such as pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2001:90; Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 250). According to Blackwell *et al.*, (2001: 255), there is a five-step model that describes the consumer decision-making process. Figure 5 shows a consumer decision-making process and each of the stages is also explained.

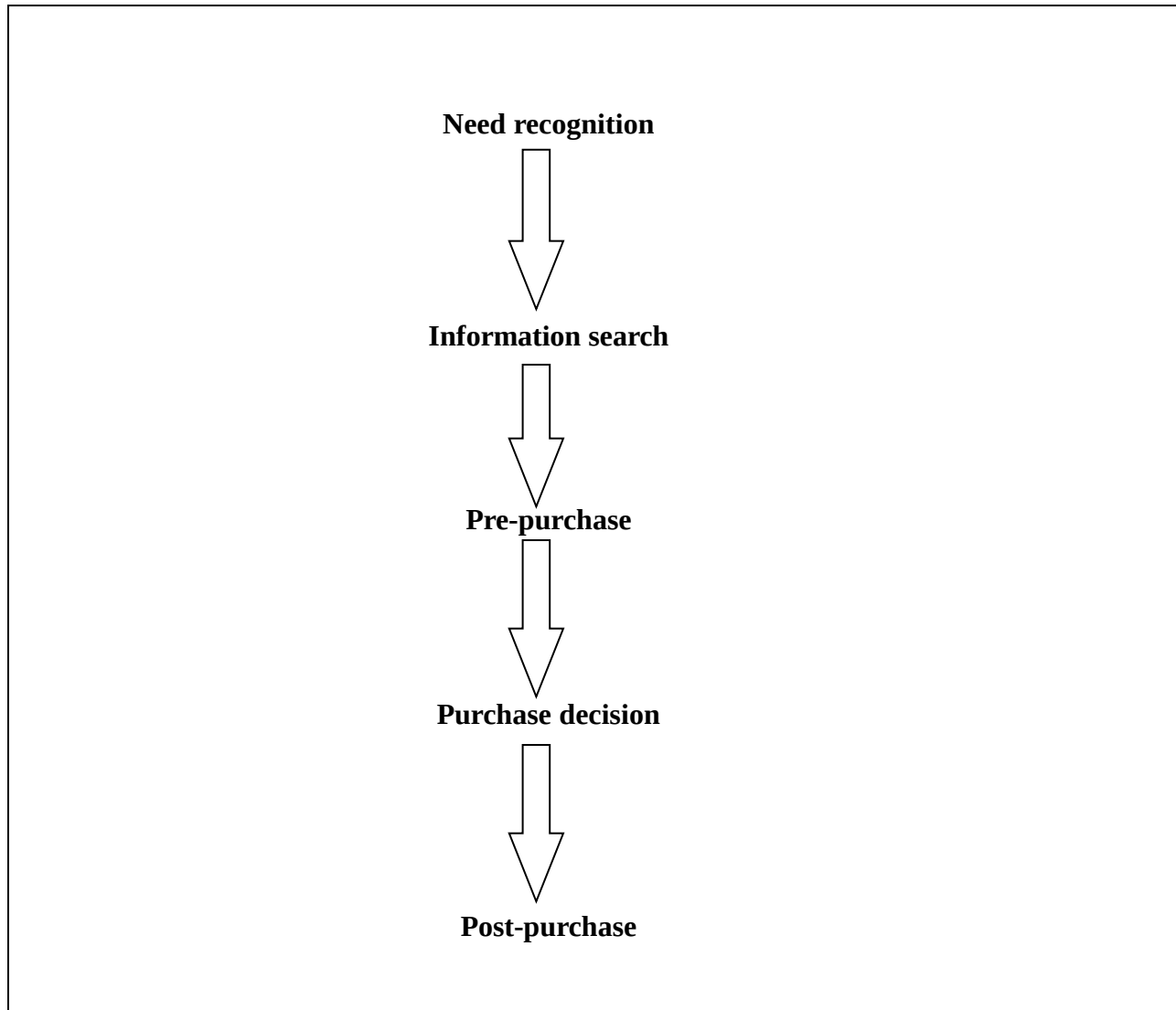


Figure 5: Consumer decision-making process

Source: Blackwell *et al.*, (2001:255)

Stage 1, which is need recognition, comes about when a consumer becomes aware that there are needs that are not satisfied (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2006:127). There are two kinds of needs in a consumer's life, namely, functional needs and psychological needs. Functional needs are more concerned with the performance of the product in the market, while psychological needs are obtained when consumers feel satisfied with shopping or owning a clothing brand that they have been longing for (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001: 257).

Stage 2 involves the search for information. Research and search of information about different products/brands differ from person to person because an individual's needs and means to satisfy those needs are different (Moorthy, Ratchford & Talukdar, 1997: 271). Search of information is divided into pre-purchase search and on-going search. Pre-purchase search starts when the consumer realises that there is a need that has to be satisfied and therefore starts looking for information about the products that can satisfy that need. On-going search is more concerned with individual preferences about certain brands and individuals look for the most recent information on that particular brand (Solomon *et al.*, 2006:129).

Stage 3 focuses on the pre-purchase evaluation, where consumers compare different products and brands prior to making their final purchasing decision. During this stage, consumers pay particular attention to the attributes that are most relevant to their needs, for example, availability of the brand, quality and price (Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong, 2005: 95). In order for firms to gain a competitive advantage over competitors in the same industry, they must offer good quality products at a reasonable price.

Stage 4 refers to the purchase decisions made by the consumer after comparing different offerings from different suppliers. There are two steps that contribute to this decision-making process, namely, the retailer and in-store selections. Retailer selection is made by judging which retailers to buy from after investigating the attributes from the previous stage. The in-store selection step is affected by the store environment, as well as the behaviour and attitude of the salespeople (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001: 247).

Stages 5, 6 and 7 form part of the post-purchase stage. In Stage 5, consumers begin consuming the products, whereas in Stage 6 consumers evaluate the consumption process. Stage 7 pertains to divestment, that is, the manner in which the consumer disposes or recycles the products.

2.5.2 Consumer decision-making styles

Marketers targeting Generation Y consumers need to understand them and build long lasting relationships. By so doing, Generation Y consumers will be open to share their decision-making

style (Spero & Stone, 2004:155). In order to understand the purchasing behaviour of this young generation, their decision-making styles should be specified. Consumer decision-making styles are defined as patterned, mental and cognitive orientations that consistently dominate a consumer's approach in making purchase choices. It has both cognitive and affective characteristics. It is central to the consumer-interest studies to identify the basic characteristics of decision-making styles and it helps to profile an individual's consumer style (Sproles & Kendall, 1986: 274). According to Bakewell and Mitchell (2003:101), there are eight different types of consumer decision-making styles and these are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Consumer decision-making styles

Decision style	Description
Price consciousness	Is a decision-making style where consumers are price conscious but aim to get the best price for the best product
Perfectionism	Consumers who follow this decision-making style do not compromise for what is best for them and what satisfy their needs fully. For example, quality of products to them comes before the price
Brand consciousness	Consumers following this decision-making style always buy or prefer to buy well known and expensive brands because in their minds high price means high quality
Uniqueness	This decision-making style is influenced by new trends in the market and keeping up with the latest fashion. Consumers who follow this style always want to be up to date with what is new in the market
Brand loyal	This decision-making style is more concerned with consumers who make continuous purchases of the same brand
Recreational shopping consciousness	Consumers who enjoy to shop and choose from different product offerings prefer to use this decision-making style
Impulsive	Is a decision-making style where consumers do not plan their purchases, they shop as they please and are not concerned about the spending
Availability of suppliers	This consumer decision-making style is related to consumers who find it difficult to choose preferred products because of too many available options or suppliers in the market

Source: Bakewell and Mitchell (2003: 98)

2.5.3 Choice criteria of Generation Y consumers

Choice criteria can be defined as the different variables that contribute positively to the purchasing decision of the consumer (Jobber, 2001: 70). These criteria influence consumers to purchase their favourite brands. In Table 4, four different types of criteria are named and the examples of each criterion are discussed in the description column. It is important for marketing managers to know the choice criteria that Generation Y consumers follow to evaluate their products, especially clothing brands. Having this knowledge will contribute positively in the manufacturing and advertising of brands to this consumer group. The choice criteria that they use include technical criteria, where they (Generation Y) look at the comfort, reliability and the look or style of the brand. The economic criterion, where they are concerned about the price of the clothing brand. The important one is the social criterion, where they are concerned about the status and their social belonging, especially in the eyes of their peers. The personal criterion involves the image or the emotional satisfaction of the consumer, where the concern is how others will assess or see them (Jobber, 2001: 70).

Table 4: Four different types of choice criteria

Types of criteria	Examples of each criteria
Technical	Reliability, durability, style/look, comfort, convenience and taste
Economic	Price, value of money, running cost and life cycle cost
Social	Status, social belonging and fashion
Personal	Self-image, risk reduction, morals and emotions

Source: Jobber (2001: 69)

2.6

INFLUENCES ON GENERATION Y's PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

There are many factors in the market that influence Generation Y consumers to buy certain clothing brands. For example, reference groups, price, environment, cultural beliefs and social influences. This group of consumers is at a stage in their lives where they are trying to show/set up their individual preferences as potential consumers in the market. That is why it is important for marketers to understand them during this phase (Eadie *et al.*, 1999:103).

Generation Y consumers prefer to buy clothing brands that suit their life styles. They are extremely concerned with their appearance and with how others see and value them, especially their friends (Tan, 1999: 367). Clothing brands that are well known in the society and have a certain value/status attached to them play an important role in the lives of young consumers and help them to show or express their individual personal taste. As a result, Generation Y consumers continue to commit to the group by stating their loyalty to, and being seen wearing culturally accepted brands (Eadie *et al.*, 1999:105).

Generation Y consumers sometimes prefer to have a second opinion when shopping. As such, they often invite friends along so as to enhance the purchasing process. This group of consumers is sometimes influenced by friends to buy certain clothing brands and this influence helps them to be accommodated during the socialisation process. Advertising also plays an important role in sending out valuable and reliable information about clothing brands (Schroeder & Salzer-Morling, 2005:160). Marketers in the clothing industry must make sure that they deliver the right message at the right time to this group, by so doing, they would be able to establish long lasting relationships and develop brand loyal consumers. Advertisements and promotions of clothing brands using celebrities also have a significant influence on the purchasing behaviour of the young generation, especially where clothing brands are concerned. Generation Y consumers like to follow or be like their role models or people they admire. They are of the opinion that brands advertised by their role models are of good quality and have status (Johnson, 2006:14). It is important for marketing managers to include or use celebrities in their advertisement.

2.6.1. Role of reference group

There are a number of groups that fall within the category of reference group, for example, family, friends, celebrities and religious groups. Reference group can be defined as a group to which a person will compare himself or herself to determine his or her own relative standing (Runyon & Stewart, 1987: 268). Family is considered an important group to many individuals because it is the first group that a person belongs to from a very young age. Most of the consumers still follow the purchasing patterns they have learned at a young age from their parents or family members. Reference groups play an important part in the formation of purchasing patterns, purchasing behaviours and have a significant influence on the purchasing decision of the young generation. Family and friends are considered to play a significant role in this regard, since Generation Y consumers interact more with them than any other groups (Feltham, 1998: 377).

According to Winer (2000: 210), group or social factors are important elements that influence the choice of brands. In the mind of a consumer, as well as in the market, successful brands are described as those brands that are well-known, reliable, good quality and always available when consumers need them. Grant and Stephen (2005: 455) emphasise that to a great extent consumer behaviour is carried out under the influence of others and through the socialisation process. It is clear that both parents and peers play an important role in learning of consumer socialisation. Parents contribute greatly to the formation of children's consumer behaviour in the earlier phases of a child's growth, and the peers' socialising influence increases with age as the parental influence decrease (Moschis & Churchill, 1978: 601; Ward, 1974: 8).

Marketers in the clothing industry need to take reference group influence into consideration when establishing their marketing strategies as well as their marketing plans, and this must be used as an opportunity to deliver a certain message to their target market. It is important for marketers to know what or who influences Generation Y consumers to buy clothing brands.

2.6.1.1. Types of reference groups

There are many different types of reference groups, and they do not need to be in physical contact in order to be effective. Table 5 shows and describes the existence of four types of reference groups.

Table 5: Four types of reference groups

Reference group	Description
Membership or non-membership groups	Membership groups are those that an individual is part of, whereas non-membership groups are those that an individual may wish to be part of
Formal or informal groups:	This depends on whether reference group tend to take on a formal or informal structure
Primary or secondary groups	A group may be primary or secondary depending on the frequency of contact. Primary groups can be either formal or informal groups. If a person is in regular contact with certain individuals such as families, friends, peers and business associates, then these can be referred to primary formal groups. Secondary formal groups that meet infrequently are well structured and not so closely knit. Examples are shopping groups and club membership groups - they constitute secondary groups because of their less frequent contact
Anticipatory or aspiration groups	There are those that a person anticipates joining at some future time. The appeal of the group is in the anticipation of eventually arriving at the top. Symbolic aspiration groups are those that an individual is not likely to belong to, such as professional sports groups

Source: Runyon and Stewart (1987: 270)

The reference groups outlined in Table 5 play an important role in marketing, depending on the amount of influence they possess. The common factor among these different types of reference groups is that each is used by the consumer as a point of reference to evaluate actions, beliefs and attitudes at different times. Primary groups are more important to the consumer in developing product beliefs, tastes and preferences and have a more direct influence on purchasing behaviour (Runyon & Stewart, 1987: 270).

2.6.1.2 Family influence

Parents have a huge influence on the purchasing patterns of the young generation and parents' attitudes often override any other form of influence. Family, especially parents, plays an important role when Generation Y consumers seek information about certain clothing brands (Moschis, 1985: 905). Young consumers learn the basic knowledge of consumer behaviours by being involved in the purchasing process of their family at a young age. According to Ward (1974:10), the influence of family on consumer socialisation seems to have benefiting effects because of regular interaction between parents and their children.

Generation Y's involvement in the purchasing process of their families benefit them at a later stage because when they become independent, they follow those patterns and have enough information about different products and that leads to better purchasing decisions (Mascarenhas & Higby, 2003: 55). Although some studies report that parental influence tends to decrease when young consumers get older, other studies indicate that parental influences are still important with regard to university students' purchasing behaviour (Mascarenhas & Higby, 2003: 56).

2.6.1.3 Peer influence

When Generation Y consumers become independent (that is, move away from home or to pursue their studies at universities), the clothing brands that they used to buy or that their parents used to buy for them, as well as the brand loyalties established, tend to change to those that their friends wear or accept as being fashionable. They shift their loyalties and preferences because they want to be accepted by their peers and fit in during their social interactions (Fernandez, 2009: 86). Feltham (1998: 376) concurs, stating that family influence decreases when individuals leave homes while friends' influence starts to play a major role in their brand choices. A positive relationship exists between the amount of time spent by Generation Y students at different institutions with their friends and the influence of peers on the purchasing decision of clothing brands. The reason being, that the more time they spend together the more information they share about different clothing brands, including the latest trends in the market (Feltham, 1998: 376).

The regularity of communication with peers tends to show a relationship with certain consumer related behaviour. For example, consumers become aware of new products, the benefits of certain products, as well as different opinions about different clothing brands (Keillor, Parker & Schaefer, 1996: 50; Moschis & Churchill, 1978: 607). Ferle and Chan (2008:208) add that peers also influence each other with regard to favourite clothing stores, advertisements and television programmes. Therefore, effective marketing communication strategies targeted at this group of customers play an important role in their purchasing decisions.

2.6.2. Role of advertising

Advertising plays a major role in everyone's life, especially in the lives of young consumers. Different divisions of the society may need advertisement for different reasons, from information sharing to consumer persuasion to decision-making (Duncan, 2005:163). The approaches engendered by an advertisement can influence the purchasing decisions of consumers either directly or indirectly. Before, advertising was the main media choice used by marketers to make consumers aware of certain clothing brands and their benefits, for example, quality of the clothing item, comfort and reliability (Duncan, 2005:165). According to Eadie *et al.*, (1999:105), even today, advertising plays a significant role in marketing because it operates more visibly than any other marketing variable. When Generation Y consumers see advertisements of clothing brands that they like, they start to associate with those brands and consider how they fit in with their lifestyles, and that can influence their purchasing decisions. Advertisements of branded clothing are important to the young generation because for them is not all about having a clothing item. Rather, it is about having clothing brands that are fashionable, well known, famous, of a good quality and with a certain status attached to them (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005: 37).

Advertisements that use celebrities to make consumers aware of new or improved clothing brands get more attention as compared to the ones that use ordinary individuals, simply because the young generation wish to look like people they admire. Therefore, when they see their role models on television or on any other platform of media they pay attention and this influences their purchasing decisions positively. As indicated in the study of Belch and Belch (2001: 221), celebrity advertisements in the mind of a young consumer communicate a certain meaning about

the brand, for example, status, class, personality and lifestyle. An advertisement that uses celebrities makes the brand socially noticeable, which translates into the youth buying that particular brand to make a statement. As such, advertisements may be regarded as an important influencing factor to young consumers when they decide what to buy. Advertising can be very persuasive in nature and provides information about a brand, including its quality, availability and price.

2.6.3 Role model influence and celebrity endorsement

A role model can be defined as someone who appears as a good example or who has a positive influence on people's lives and behaviour (Bandura, 1977:140). Based on the definition of a role model, many people may be considered role models, for example, parents, peers, teachers, entertainers and sports people. People who can influence the purchasing decision of an individual may be regarded as consumption role models. Celebrities help in speeding up the brand-image formulation process (Strong & Eftychia, 2006:121). Marketers must make sure that they choose the best endorser in promoting their brands so as to improve the awareness of the brand in the consumer's mind. The selected celebrity should be a strong brand personality and the attributes of the celebrity should match the attributes of the clothing brand being highlighted (Strong & Eftychia, 2006:123).

Research conducted by Martin and Bush (2000: 445) revealed that celebrity endorsements have positive effects on the purchasing decisions and brand attitudes of Generation Y consumers. There are two theories in the literature of consumer behaviour describing how individuals learn buying behaviour methods. The first one is the cognitive-developmental theory, which is more into the behavioural attitudes between infancy and adulthood or methods that a child can use to survive the environment at different stages. The second theory is the social learning theory, which describes how young consumers learn about values, attitudes and behaviours from social interactions, social agents as well as modelling (Moschis & Churchill, 1978: 607). Modelling in consumer behaviour is more about how young generation learn consumer-related attitudes, values, skills and behaviour through the observation or imitation of other individuals (King & Multon, 1996:116).

2.6.4 Price influence

Price can be defined as the amount that an individual is willing to pay for a product or service. For most of the consumer groups, especially those who are regarded as an average consumer, price is an important factor to consider before making the final decision to buy (Banndura, 1977:143). In some instances, the average consumer is not loyal to any brand because his or her purchasing decisions depend on the market price of the product. In contrast, brand loyal consumers are prepared to pay any price for their favourite brands. Their purchasing decision is not affected by price (Cadogan & Foster, 2000:188).

For some consumers, quality and the benefits of the brand come before the cost, if the benefits of the product/brand and its quality are more than the cost, consumer will not hesitate to buy that particular brand (De Ruyter, Wetzels & Van Birgelen, 1999:137). Service loyalty, reliability, availability, improved quality and continuous innovation of clothing brands assist to increase the loyalty of consumer and make them more tolerant with regard to the price attached to that brand, as well as discouraging them from switching to other brands or making comparisons with alternative brands (Bush, Martin & Bush, 2004:113).

2.6.5 Style influences

Style can be the most influential factor to young consumers when buying clothing brands because there is a need for them to be accepted by their peers and for them to be accepted or be noticed by their peers they need to wear the latest fashion in the market. Consumer judgment depends on the consumer's level of fashion consciousness, so judgment will be conditioned by their opinion of what is currently fashionable and in style (Abraham & Littrell, 1995: 69). Clothing brands that are stylish and satisfy the consumer's expectations get more attention and are continuously bought. Generation Y consumers prefer to buy or feel confident when they own clothing brands that are considered fashionable, improve their image with the latest style and offer comfort. Research conducted by Duff (1999: 32) shows that young generation consumers are fashion conscious and demand products or brands with more style.

2.6.6 Store environment

The store environment encompasses the factors that attract the attention of the consumers to a particular retail outlet and influence their purchasing decisions. This includes store atmosphere, store location, store layout and store cleanliness. Of these factors, store location plays an important role in changing consumer shopping and purchasing patterns. For example, if consumers find the store to be easily accessible during their shopping trip and are satisfied with the store's offering and services, they may become store loyal afterwards (Evans, Moutinho & Raaij, 1996: 367). Store atmosphere is also regarded as one of the important factors that may influence consumers' decision-making because if consumers feel comfortable and relaxed during the purchasing process, they find it easier to make good purchasing decisions. Store lay out, cleanliness, good attitude of salespeople and the temperature all influence consumers to buy and may also influence them to become loyal consumers of that store because they are satisfied with the store offerings and the store environment (Abraham & Littrell, 1995: 69). That is why it is an important element in the retail marketing store environment.

2.6.7 Service quality

Service quality refers to the level of services offered and delivered to consumers during the purchasing process. Service quality should be in line with the consumers' expectations and meet their requirements (Grönroos, 1990:105). Service quality is a selling point that may influence the purchasing-decision of consumers. Generation Y consumers prefer to buy from certain retailer stores because of the good service they offer and because the retailer has a clear understanding of their needs. Knowledge of consumer needs improves the quality of service and helps to build long lasting relationships with consumers (To & Leung, 2001: 318). Good behaviour and attitudes of salespeople towards consumers appear to relate to overall perceptions of the store's service quality and results in the consumer being satisfied with the store. It is important for retailers to improve their service offering/service quality continuously so that they may have loyal customers and build long lasting relationships with their consumers.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The youth market is important to both the clothing industry and the economy as a whole. The Generation Y group is the most targeted segment in the clothing industry because of their purchasing power. Their purchasing patterns are different from those of previous generations because they love shopping, they are not afraid to try different/new things and they are constantly up to date with the latest fashion brands in the market (Omar, 1999:180). They are technologically advanced and this makes it easier for them to share information about what is happening in the clothing industry, as well as being aware of the latest brands in the market. Social networks also play a significant role in sharing information (Schroeder & Salzer-Morling, 2005:160). These factors influence them to choose and buy their favourite clothing brands without hesitation. Generation Y consumers prefer to buy clothing brands that are of good quality, fit them nicely and that are in line with the latest style. Some of these preferences they learned or observed them from their families and friends, while others have been influenced through the consumer's own unique cultural make-up. Manufactures and marketers in the clothing industry need to understand and satisfy the needs of this consumer segment because they represent their brand loyal consumers in the near future (Prasana, 2009: 93).

Brands play an important role in shaping people's perceptions and attitudes about certain clothing items. Owing to the perceptions that consumers have about certain clothing brands, they attach certain values and meaning to them and this plays a significant role in their purchasing process. Generation Y consumers like to be seen with famous or well-known brands and uses those clothing brands to make a statement about themselves especially during social gatherings with friends or any other member of society (Koutras, 2006:10). When Generation Y consumers become comfortable with certain clothing brands and expect more benefits from that particular brand, long-term and trusting relationships may be established between consumers and manufactures in the clothing industry. Marketers who want to win this group of loyal customers should refine their marketing strategies as well as promotions to meet the expectations of this cohort as well as satisfying their needs.

There are important factors that marketers, manufactures and retailers should take into consideration in satisfying their consumer's needs.

Manufactures of clothing brands in the clothing industry need to do research constantly about consumer needs so that they can be innovative and creative when manufacturing new products. It is also important for manufactures to improve quality, durability and other benefits every time when manufacturing new products. The most important thing is to make these factors known to their consumers, by so doing that they will be creating trusting relationships with their target market because consumers who have faith in their favourite brands are not afraid to try new products of the same brand or from the same manufacturer.

Marketers in the clothing industry need to be creative in the methods they use to deliver messages to their target market. Marketers targeting Generation Y consumers should make use of different kinds of media, such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio advertisements, the Internet and social network sites to reach this consumer segment easily. It will be beneficial for them to use new media platforms like the Internet and social network sites to reach this consumer group. It is also important for marketers to improve their marketing strategies constantly to include some of the factors that influence the purchasing behaviour of young generations as this is their important market segment and they need to keep up with their changing needs.

Retail stores targeting Generation Y consumers need to make sure that that their stores have the following influencing factors, easy accessible stores, store layout, friendly salespeople, reasonable prices and high service quality offerings to their consumers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research comprises one of the most important facets of marketing. It plays an important role in collecting useful information, exploring new opportunities and improving marketing strategies that will help in solve marketing problems (Malhotra, 1996: 9). Marketing research is regarded as a useful tool in marketing because it specifies the methods that should be used to collect information, manage the process of collecting information, analysing the collected data and interpreting the findings to enable better marketing decisions (Mullarkey, 2001: 72). The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology used to carry out the empirical section of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Decisions concerning the research design is an important step in the marketing research process as it provides the structure and procedures that need to be followed in conducting a useful research and get reliable answers for the research questions (Mullarkey, 2001: 74). In marketing, there are two types of research methods, namely, qualitative and quantitative research methods. These methods differ in approach, depending on the kind of data being collected. Quantitative research method focuses on analysing numerical data whereas qualitative research deals with meanings, examining the attitudes, feelings and motivations of people (Babbie, 2004:24; Dey, 1993: 45). In the field of research, qualitative research method is sometimes regarded as a relatively minor methodology than the quantitative method and there are some assumptions that experimental data, official statistics, random sampling and quantified data can lead to more valid or generalisable facts (Proctor, 2000: 221). Both the quantitative research and qualitative research methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages of

quantitative research methods are that it can analyse data based on representative samples from a large population.

An advantage of qualitative research methods is that it is more likely to look into people's in-depth feelings, for example, attitude (Kirk & Miller, 1986: 62). In this way, qualitative analysis is stronger than quantitative analysis simply because it can persuade readers with large-scale and numeric data. Unlike quantitative research, which uses ad hoc procedures to define and measure variables, qualitative research tends to focus on describing the process of how we define and measure variables in everyday life (Silverman, 2000:10).

The aim of this study is to find out the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle area. Values and perceptions that they have towards clothing brand are also investigated. Quantitative research methods are used for this study based on the advantage described above. The research design will address issues with regard to the secondary research, the primary research process, questionnaire design and the data analysis.

3.2.1 Secondary research

For the purpose of this study, both local and international literature reviews were undertaken.

The following sources were consulted:

- The Internet
- Book publications
- Academic journals
- Previous research reports and dissertations
- Online academic databases (EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, J-Stor, Emerald and SAePublications)

3.2.2 Primary research

The primary objective of the study is to determine the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y individuals in the Vaal Triangle area.

3.2.2.1 Target population, sampling frame and sampling method

The target population of this study was defined as Generation Y individuals registered at South African public higher educational institutions (HEIs). The sampling frame constituted full-time students registered at HEIs in the Vaal Triangle region – one a traditional university and the other a university of technology. Sampling techniques can be described as either probability sampling or non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, units are selected by chance. Every potential element has an equal chance of being selected. Non-probability sampling relies on the personal judgement of the researcher, rather than on chance, to select sample elements (Malhotra, 1996: 336). Non-probability samples may yield good estimates of the population characteristics but are not statistically projectable onto the population. However, often it is not feasible to use probability sampling. For the purpose of this study, a non-probability convenience sample was drawn from the sampling frame. A sample of 100 students was used. The sample size was consistent with previous studies conducted by Tong (2006: 67) at the University of Missouri-Columbia and Van Eck *et al.*, (2004:6).

3.2.3 Questionnaire design

All questions were collected in a book format with a cover page explaining the purpose and objective of this research. The particulars of the author were given, including address and contact numbers. A self-administered questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents to complete. The questions were drawn from various studies in the literature. The questionnaire comprised of two sections, namely, Section A of the questionnaire which included biographical questions, Section B of the questionnaire which used five point Likert scales (5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree) and posed questions on value, perception and importance statements influencing the purchasing decisions of the respondents. The Likert scale is a scale that consists of statements that express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the object of interest, thus producing interval data. The value, perception and importance questions were drawn from the sources listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Questionnaire items and sources

Items	Sources
Values	Tong, 2006:162
Perceptions	Van Eck <i>et al.</i> , 2004: 8
Importance	Tong, 2006:168

For the study, ten clothing brands were chosen based on their performance in the market, namely, Levi, Polo, Uzzi, Guess, Lacoste, Billabong, Quicksilver, Roxy, Louis Vuitton and Lee Cooper. These clothing brands were chosen to ensure that the majority of participants could at least find one among them that they are familiar with. The familiarity with regard to the product by respondents will increase response reliability (Yoo *et al.*, 2000:101). All the selected brands are comparatively popular with consumers, so it was assumed that most respondents would be familiar with them.

3.2.4 Validity

Validity is defined as the extent to which the conclusions drawn from a research study are true (Koutras, 2006:10). Validity determines if the findings accurately represent the reality. When using an instrument to measure perceptions, attitudes and the like, it is necessary to determine whether the instrument is measuring that what it is supposed to measure. The validity may be determined by a number of different ways. This research study made use of content validity and a validity check.

3.2.4.1 Content validity

Content validity is a subjective but systematic evaluation of the instrument's ability to measure what is expected (Koutras, 2006:10). The scale is evaluated to determine if the items cover all that should be measured. In order to do this evaluation, the procedures used to develop the instrument should be investigated. After making these evaluations, experts should be asked to determine which items, in their opinion, should or should not be included in the scale.

After making all necessary changes, the questionnaire should then be re-tested to determine the validity of the changes (McDaniel & Gates, 1999: 310). The content validity of the questionnaire was checked by the student's supervisor in order to ascertain that the content of the questionnaire was up to standard. Furthermore, these construct questions were drawn from earlier validated studies.

3.2.4.2 Validity check

After the content validity was evaluated, the revised questionnaire was then administered on 20 respondents that formed part of the target population, but not of the final sample. Results were satisfactory and the questionnaire was finalised.

3.2.5 Data processing and analysis

Data preparation includes the editing, coding, transcription and verification of data in order to remove errors that may have occurred during the data collection process (Malhotra, 1996: 25). The next step is data analysis in terms of which the information contained in the questionnaires has to be converted into relevant knowledge, thereby giving meaning to the data collected.

For the purpose of this study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0 for Windows was used for the data processing and analysis. SPSS is a statistical program created for data encoding and design. The data from the questionnaires were entered directly into SPSS after each questionnaire have been checked for completeness. Descriptive statistics were mainly used for the data analysis. Independent-sample t-test and one way ANOVA were also utilised. Each of these methods will be discussed below.

Descriptive statistics can be defined as a set of brief descriptive coefficients that summarise a given data set, which can either be a representation of the entire population or a sample (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush, 2008:117). Examples of descriptive statistics used in this study are means and standard deviations. The mean refers to the arithmetic average of the values included in a specific set of data.

The standard deviation is a numerical value used to indicate how widely values in a data set vary from the mean (Hair *et al.*, 2008:117). The Independent-samples t-test is a statistical technique that is used to analyse the mean comparison of two independent groups (Brendt & Petzer, 2011: 254). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a technique used to compare means of two or more samples (using the F distribution). This technique can be used only for numerical data (Berndt & Petzer, 2011: 254).

3.3 CONCLUSION

To examine the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y consumers, the study focused on branded clothing specifically for Generation Y male and female wear. In conclusion, in this chapter the research design that was used to conduct the study was outlined. The researcher also described and justified the instruments developed to collect the data from respondents, the methodology, the data analysis and what guidelines were applied to enhance the trustworthy features of the study. The following chapter, Chapter 4, provides a discussion and interpretation of the research findings, relating the research findings with that of the literature findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Different firms in the clothing industry are now using clothing brands to compete in the market. Firms that meet the requirements of the consumers need to get accurate information about consumers' needs and understand consumers' purchasing behaviour (Yang, 2011:40). Perceptions of fashion in the mind of consumers change all the time, especially for the young generation. Generation Y consumers like to keep up with the latest fashion in the market, that is why they are constantly doing "research" about the latest brands in the market. It is important for marketers to understand the purchasing patterns of this consumer segment so that they can be more competitive. Marketers or brand owners must constantly innovate and design different patterns/styles of clothing brands in order to satisfy consumers' needs (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009: 97).

The primary research objective of the study was to determine the importance of clothing brands on the purchasing decision-making of Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle area. The literature on the clothing brands purchase decisions and influencers of Generation Y consumers was discussed in Chapter 2. To have a better understanding of the importance of brands in the clothing/fashion purchase process, the focus of the research was on the key factors like values, perceptions and importance of brands that contribute to the brand choice of Generation Y consumers. In this chapter, the results and the interpretation of the collected data are discussed. For the study, 100 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to students. Of these 100 questionnaires, 70 questionnaires were completed and used for the final analysis, the response rate therefore was 70 percent. Results are reported on a question-by-question basis and are presented mainly by way of figures in the next sections.

4.2 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to collect the respondents' demographic details. Figures 6 to 10 summarise the sample demographic characteristics of respondents of the study.

4.2.1 Age

Age is one of the factors that affect consumer behaviour. Individuals are often divided into age cohorts that allow marketers to predict a specific age group's future attitudes, values and behaviour. Different generations are most likely to exhibit different consumer behaviour patterns from other generations (Cant & Machando, 2006:100). For the purpose of this study all participants were 17 to 26 years and older. Of all the respondents, about 38.6 % (n = 27) were under 21 years of age, 44.3 % (n = 31) from 20 to 23 years old, 8.6 % (n = 6) from 23 to 26 years old, and 8.6 % (n = 6) over 26 years old – see Figure 6.

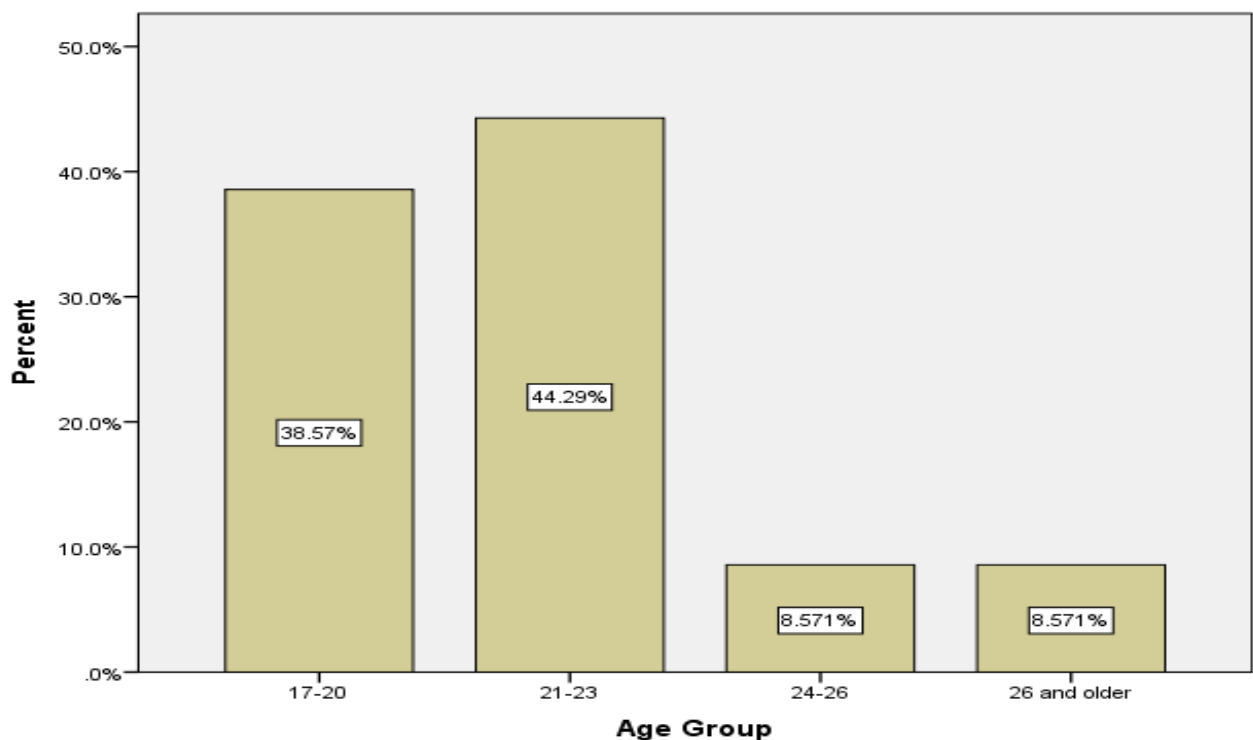


Figure 6: Age group

4.2.2 Gender

Gender has an impact on consumers' values and preferences. Gender will thus most likely affect purchasing patterns. This study had an almost equal number of male and female respondents. The 33 males and 37 females represented a proportion of 47.1% and 52.9 %, respectively. It is interesting to note that findings were somewhat in line with the national statistics according to Statistics South Africa, 48% male and 52% females (ANON, 2011:24). Therefore, it can be said that the questionnaires were distributed proportionally among the respondents - see Figure 7.

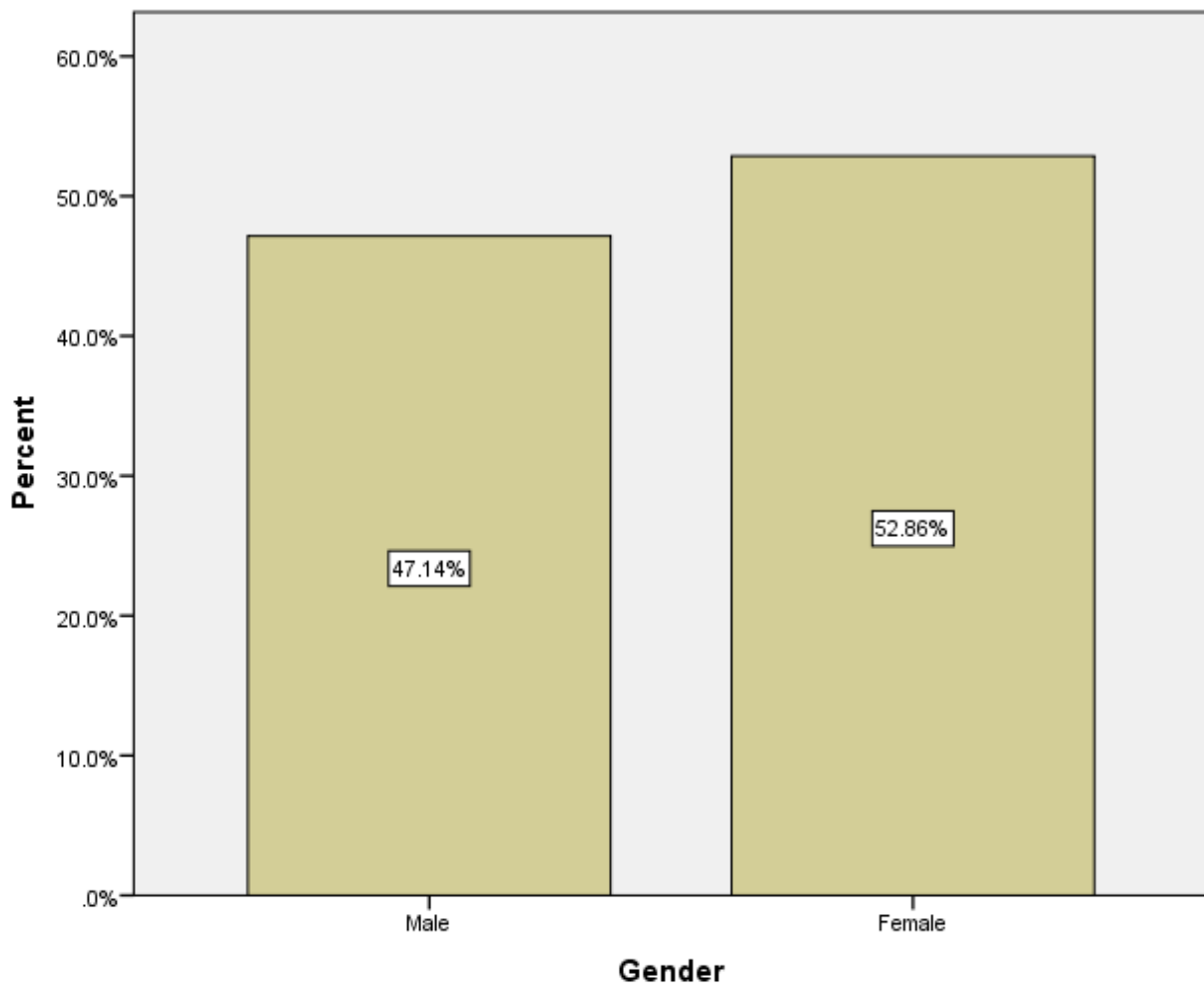


Figure 7: Gender

4.2.3 Ethnic group

Race is a characteristic that marketers can use to establish sub-cultures and can be defined as “the genetic heritage group into which a person is born” (Cant & Machado, 2006:88). Black, White, Indian and Coloured are some of the most common racial groupings in South Africa. Different racial groups have different consumer needs and purchasing behaviours and it is up to the marketers to respond to these differences by targeting each group with unique marketing communications strategies. From this study 72 % (n=51) of the respondents were Black students, 17 % (n= 12) were Whites, 8.6% (n=6) were Coloureds and only 1.4% (n=1) was an Indian student – see Figure 8. This shows that the majority of the respondents were Black students.

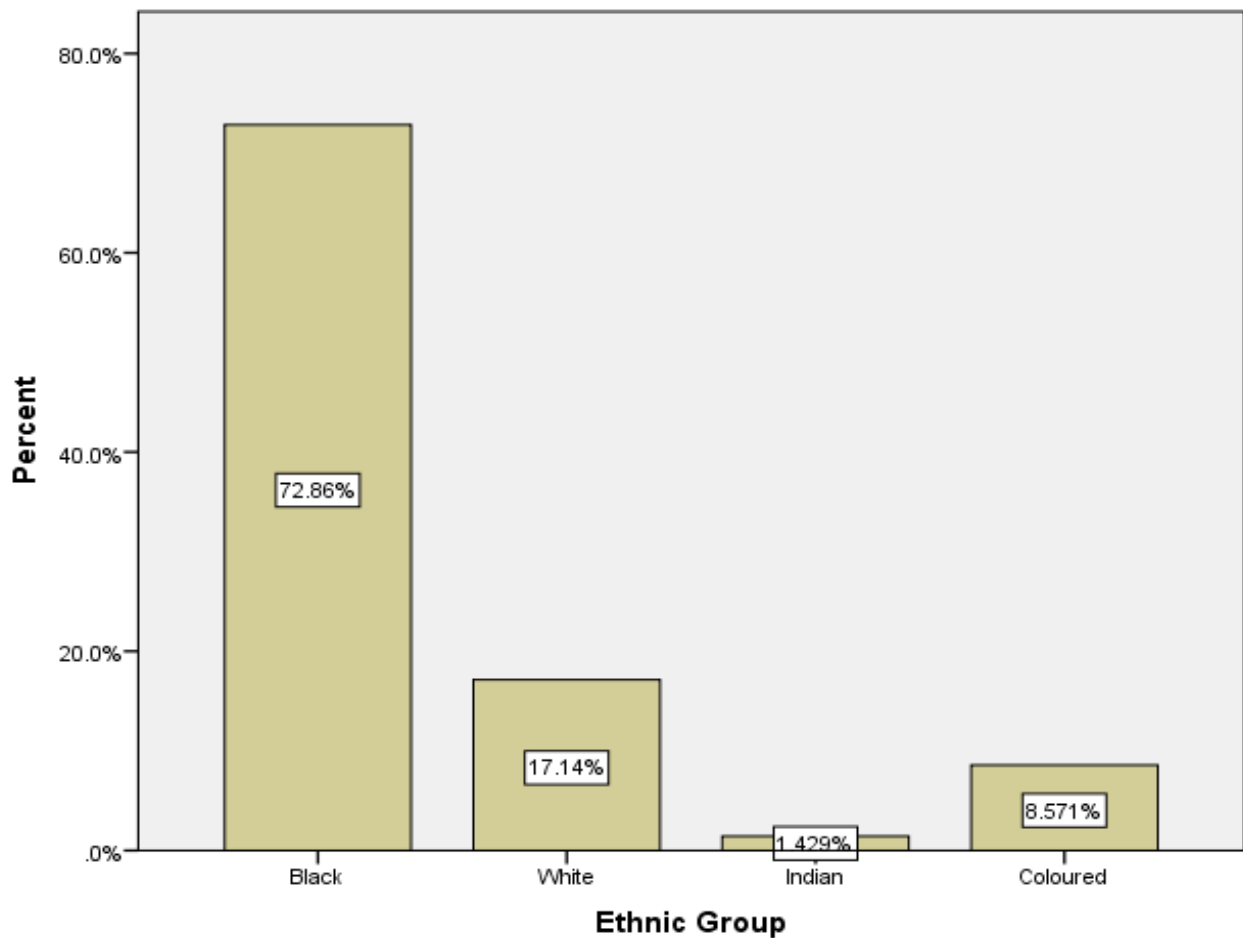


Figure 8: Ethnic group

4.2.4 Academic year

The majority of the respondents of this study were the first-year students which were 31.4 % (n=22), 22.9% (n=16) were second year students, 14.3% (n=10) were third years students, 10 % (n=7) were fourth year students and 21.4 % (n=15) were postgraduate students – see Figure 9.

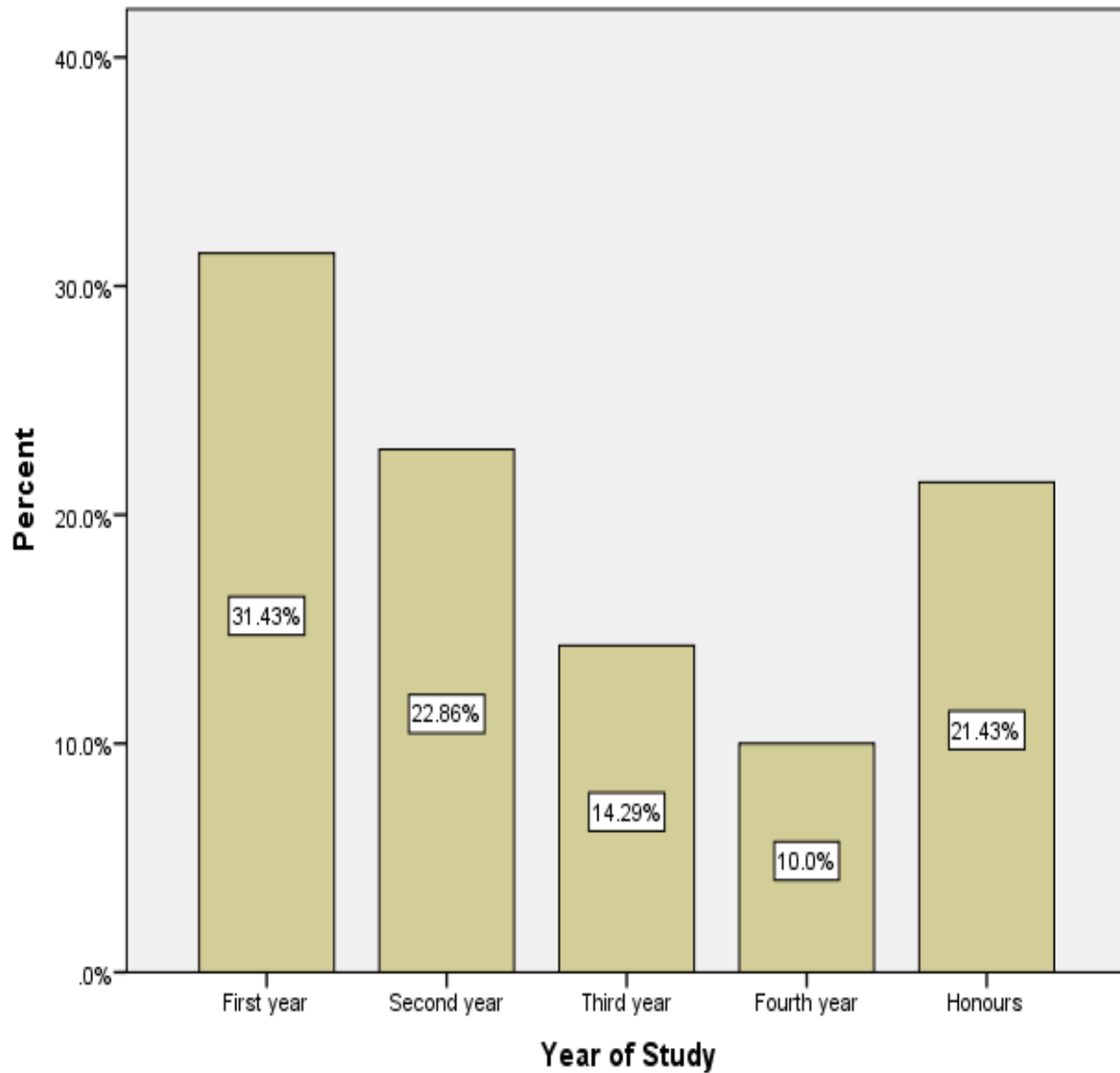


Figure 9: Academic year

4.2.5 Place of residence

About 41.43% (n=29) of the respondents are still staying at home while studying, 28.57% (n=20) stay at the university residences, 20% (n=14) are renting flats and only 10% (n=7) use other means of accommodation which can be either renting at the backrooms, commune or any other form of accommodation - see Figure 10.

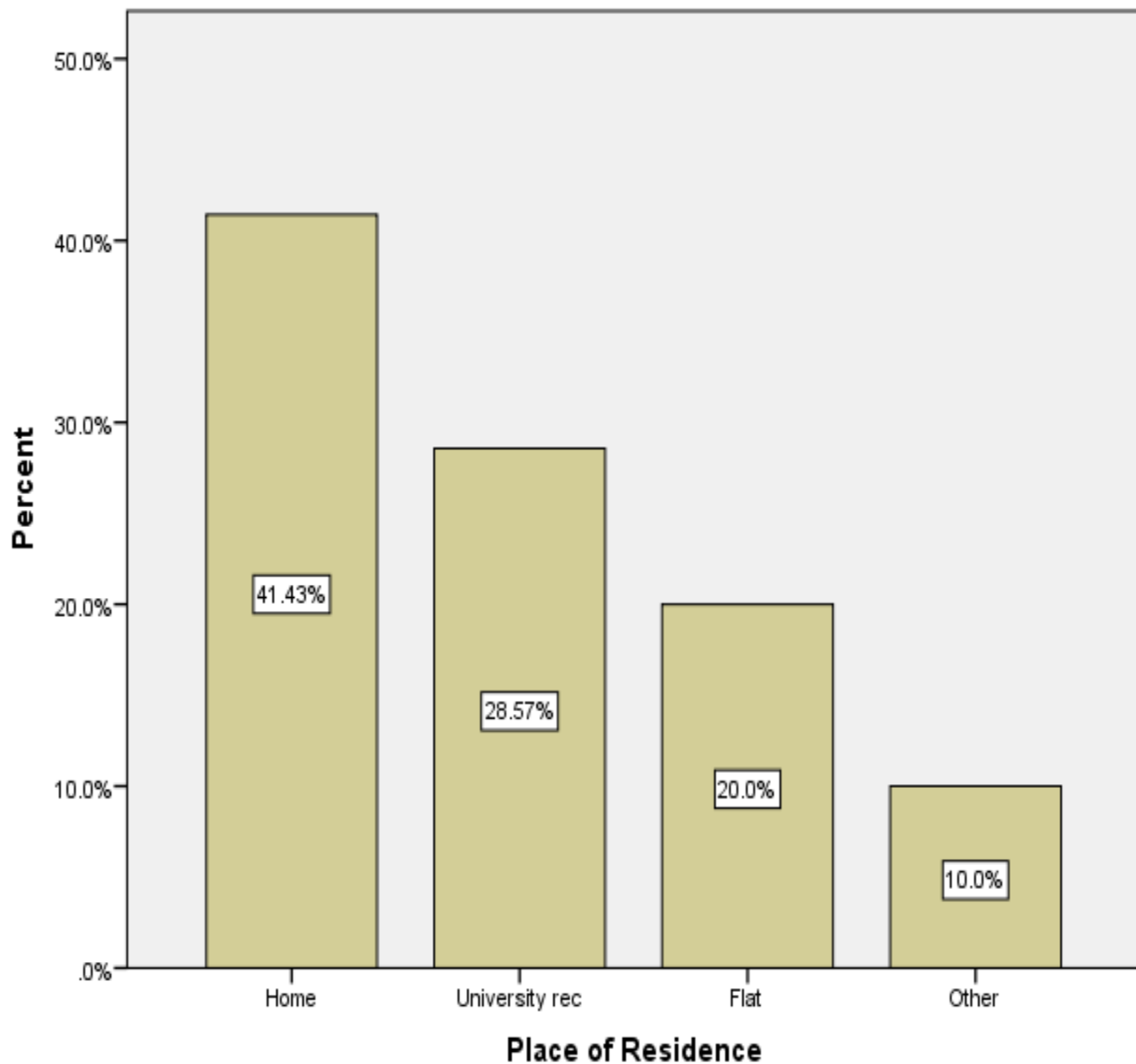


Figure 10: Place of residence

4.3 SECTION B: IMPORTANCE OF CLOTHING BRANDS ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF GENERATION Y STUDENTS

Section B had the following four subsections:

- Brands most liked. The subsection reads “From the following ten brands, please choose one clothing brand that you like the most, please mark one answer” (see Appendix A).
- Ten value statements. The subsection reads “The following are some values people seek with regard to purchasing clothing brands. To indicate how important each value is to you, please encircle one answer”.
- Ten perception statements. The subsection reads “The following are perceptions of young adults regarding clothing brands, please encircle one answer”.
- Ten “importance” statements. The subsection reads “The following are important to young adults when purchasing clothing brands, please encircle one answer”.

Clothing brands are used by young consumers as a symbol indicating certain lifestyle. Brands are important for both consumers and business. For consumers, brands can serve a number of purposes as discussed in the literature review (see Chapter 2), for example, it can serve as an indicator of certain status and quality. For firms, brands can serve as a tool that can be used to compete in the market and earn a competitive market share (Aaker, 1991:177). Consumers become comfortable with brands that meet and satisfy their needs, especially if they provide value through form and function. Marketers can form long lasting relationships and brand loyal customers with their target market by always responding positively to their needs and always making sure that consumers’ favourite brands are always available (Keller, 2003:159).

Marketers need to know and understand how Generation Y consumers form attachments to brands. There are factors that influence the purchasing decisions of Generation Y consumers to buy clothing brand, for example, peers, price and knowledge of the product. Firms that need to improve their competitive advantage must understand brands and consumer brand relationships (Berry, 2000: 396).

4.3.1 Subsection B: Brands most liked.

The subsection reads “From the following ten brands, please choose one clothing brand that you like the most, please mark one answer”

From Figure 11 below it can be deduced that the majority of respondents from this study favours the Guess brand with a response of 35.71% (n=25), followed by other brands not mentioned in the questionnaire with a response rate of 18.57% (n=13).

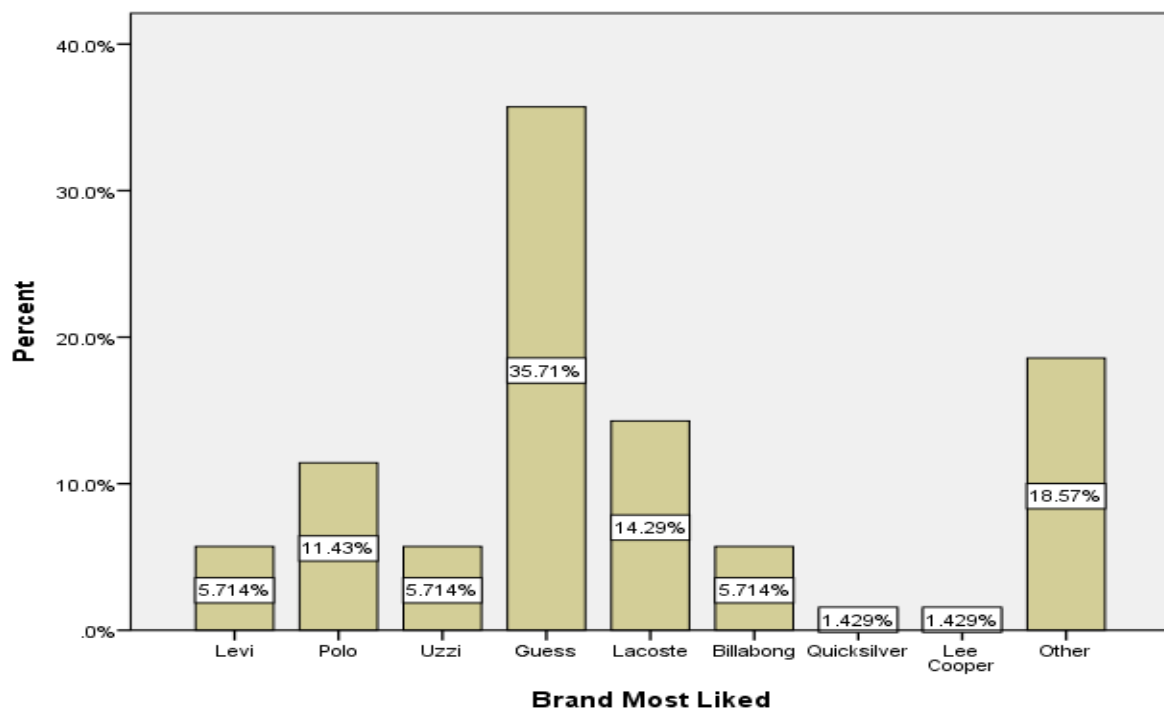


Figure 11: Brand most liked

This was followed by Lacoste 14.29% (n=10), Polo 11.43% (n=8), Billabong, Levi and Uzzi yielding equal percentages of 5.7 (n=4). Quicksilver and Roxy both were at 1.4% (n=1). Therefore, it may be concluded, as per the collected data, that Guess is the most favourite brand. This finding is in line with study results published in the Sunday Times “Generation Next 2011 Brand Survey Awards” that Guess was the most favoured brand among young generation.

4.3.2 Subsection B: Ten value statements.

The subsection reads “The following are some values people seek with regard to purchasing clothing brands. To indicate how important each value is to you, please encircle one answer”.

This section covers the ten value statements and Figures 12 to 21 provide the necessary

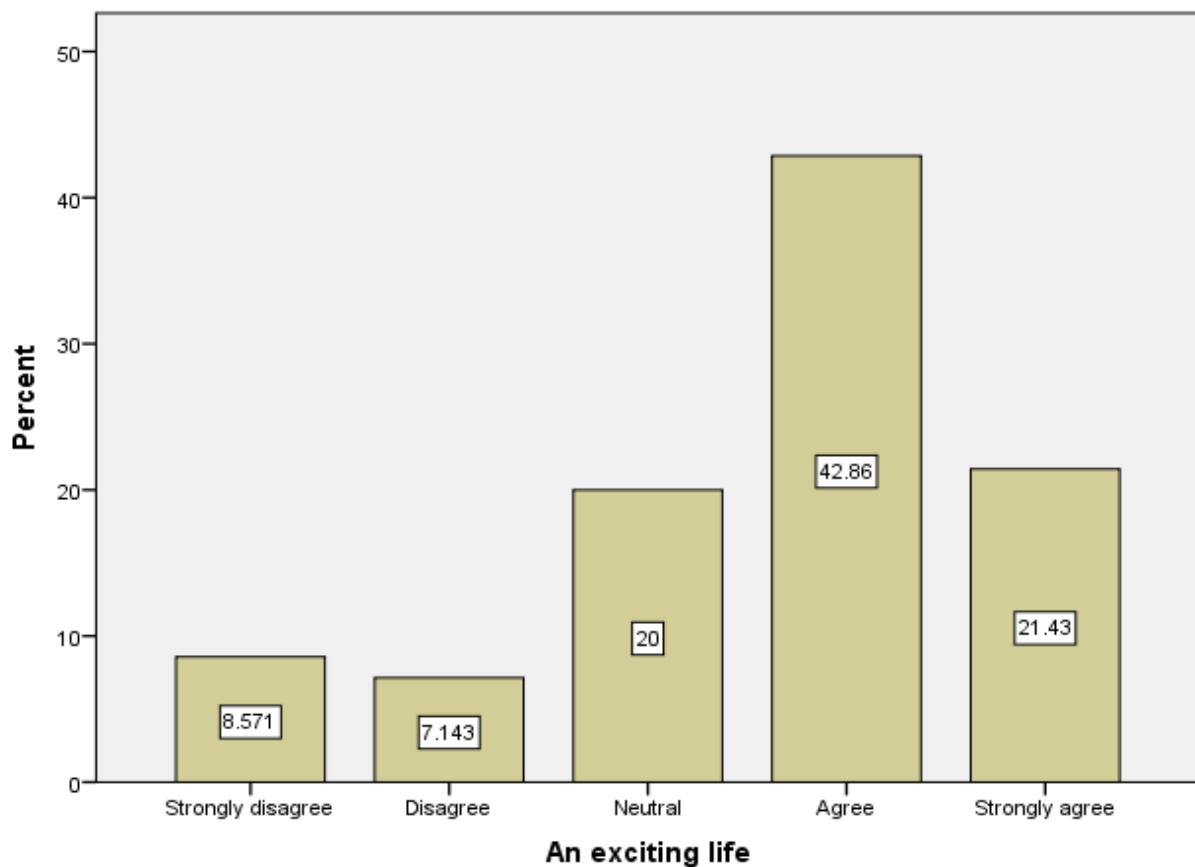


Figure 12: An exciting life

illustrations. People, especially Generation Y consumers associate wearing or buying clothing brands with living an exciting life, this is supported by the results shown in Figure 12 above shows that 42.86% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 21.43% strongly agreed with the statement, 20% were neutral and less than 10% disagreed. This is in line with the findings of

O’Cass (2001:185) where it was indicated that clothing brands have a certain symbolic meaning that goes far beyond the basic functionality of the brand, whereby consumers use clothing brands for self-expressive purposes, which can be associated with an exciting life. It can therefore be concluded, based on these results of the study, that Generation Y consumers buy clothing brands because for them owning brands is exiting and is associated with living a good life.

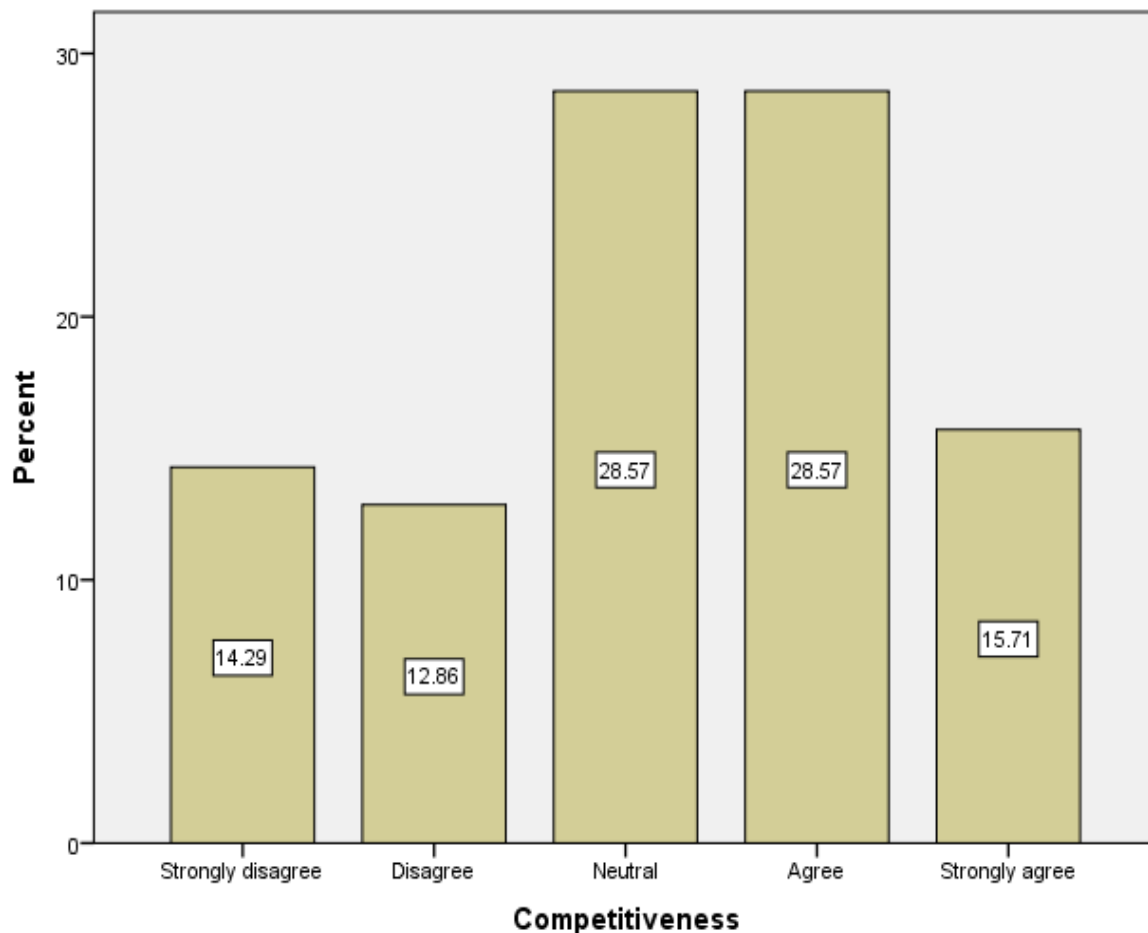


Figure 13: Competitiveness

Keller (2008:194) indicates that brands have certain dimensions that differentiate them from other products designed to satisfy the same need. Figure 13 above reflects that 28.57% agreed and 15.71 strongly agreed that competitiveness is an important value in purchasing clothing brands.

Generation Y consumers buy clothing brands that differentiate them from other people and which are well known and acceptable. They also buy brand names that offer unique features, for example, good quality and status. This statement is supported by the results of this study - see Figure 14. The majority of the respondents (40%) strongly agreed that they buy clothing brands to be unique, 34.29% agreed that uniqueness is the value that they seek when purchasing clothing brands, 10% of the respondents were neutral about this statement while another 10% disagreed with the statement. Only 5.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

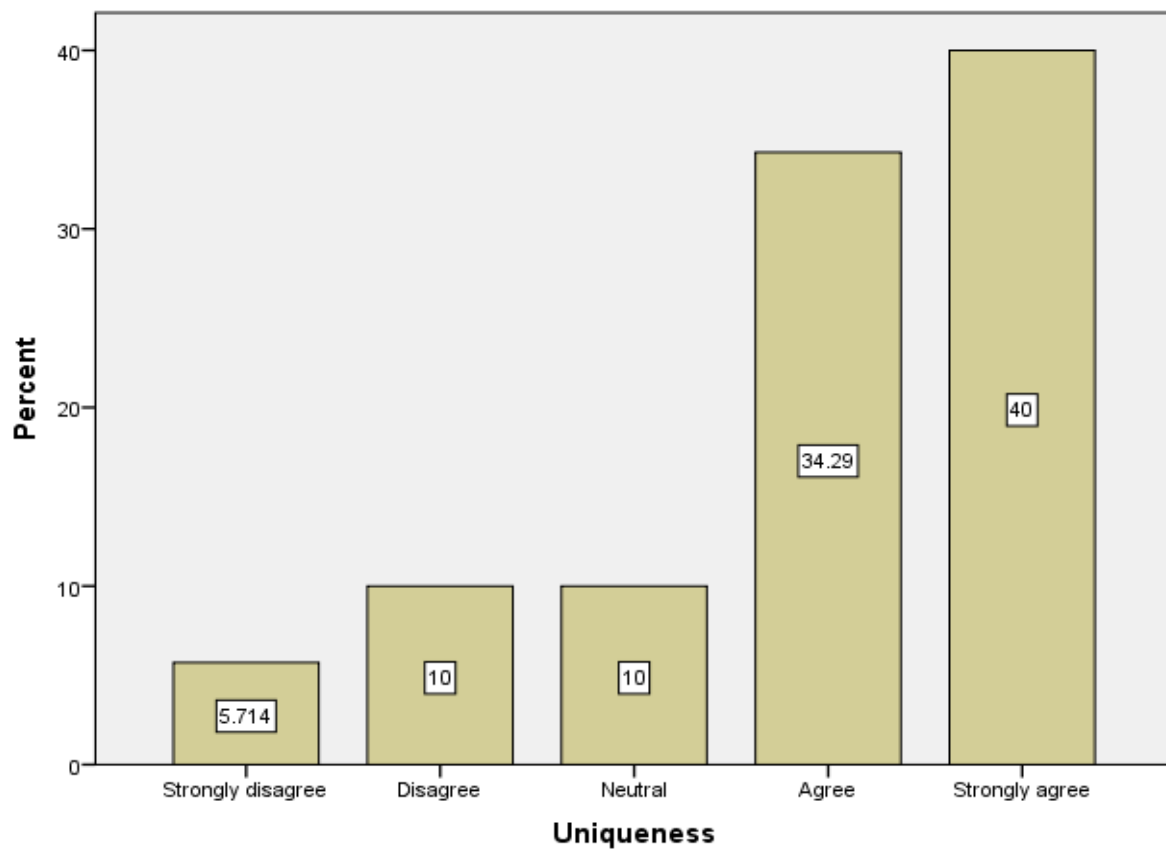


Figure 14: Uniqueness

From the above results, it may be said that clothing brands help Generation Y consumers to create an image and to express themselves in a unique way. Generation Y consumers generally prefer clothing brands that have a certain value attached to them.

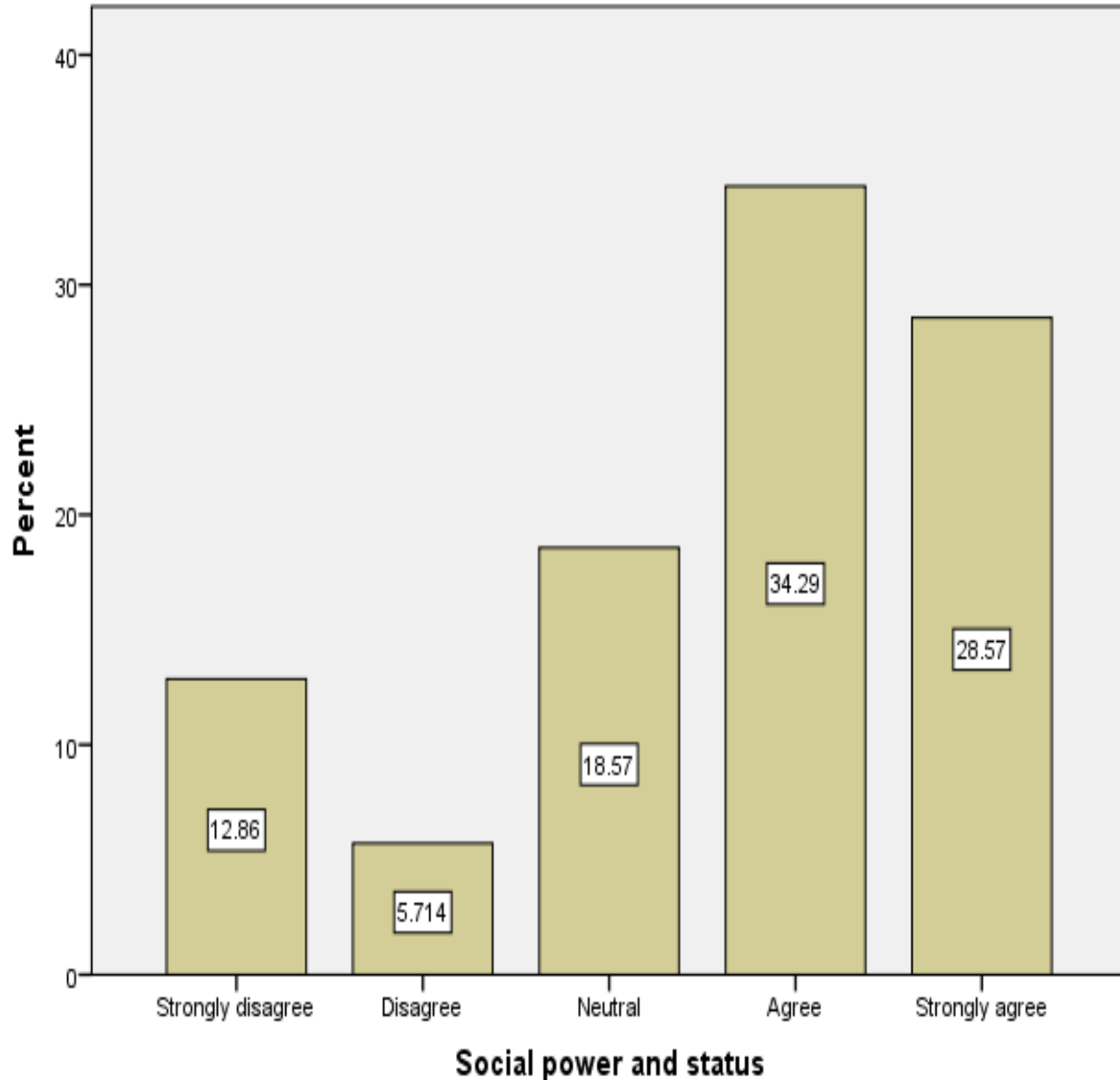


Figure 15: Social power and status

In this study, see Figure 15, 34.29% of the respondents agreed that they buy clothing brands for social power and status, 28.57% strongly agreed with the statement, 18.57% were neutral, 12.86% strongly disagreed and 5.71% disagreed. This also shows and supports the statement mentioned earlier in the literature review that status plays an important role when Generation Y consumers make purchases and since they are concerned about peer approval status, brands help them to fit in with their social circles (refer to Chapter 2).

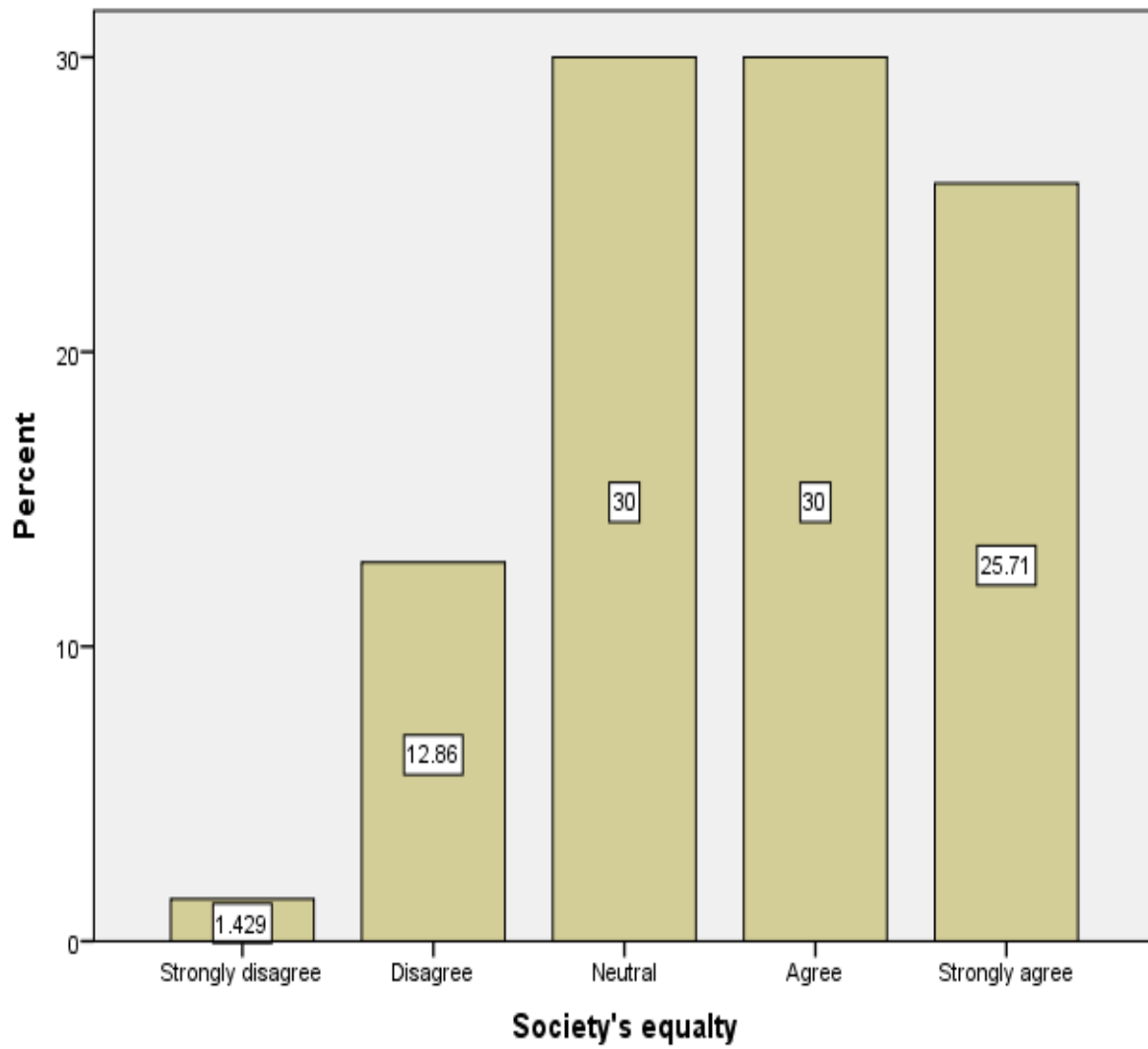


Figure 16: Society's equality

For the youth of today, a sense of belonging is of utmost importance and brands are seen as a way of reflecting their affiliation or connection to a particular social group. Figure 16 illustrates the findings with regard to the issue of societal equality. The results of this study show that 30% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they buy clothing brands to fit into the society and have an equal standing in society. Another 30% of the respondents were neutral about the statement, 25.71 % strongly agreed that buying clothing brands makes them fit into the society while 12.86% disagreed and 1.43% strongly disagreed with the statement.

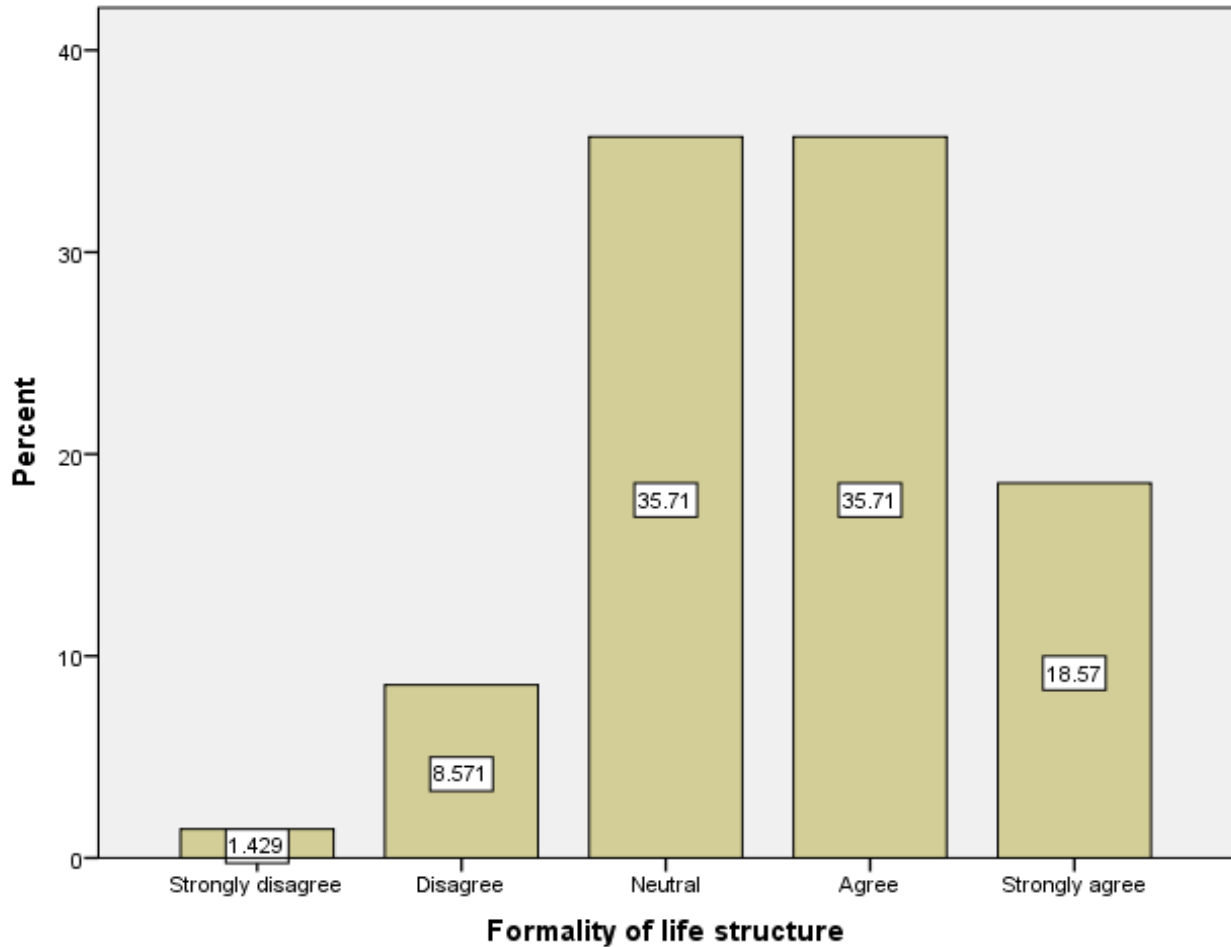


Figure 17: Formality of life structure

Generation Y consumers feel that there is a need for them to be accepted by their friends and society as a whole simply because they want to fit in during social interactions. They regard having clothing brands as part of their life structure and living a normal life (O'cass, 2000: 562). Figure 17 above provides the findings on the value statement “formality of life structure”. Approximately 36% of the respondents agreed that they buy clothing brands as being a value of the formality of life structure, whereas another 35.71% of the respondents were neutral with regard to this. It may be concluded, based on the results and the literature of this study that not all Generation Y consumers are influenced to buy clothing brands based on the value of having clothing brands but as the formality of life structure.

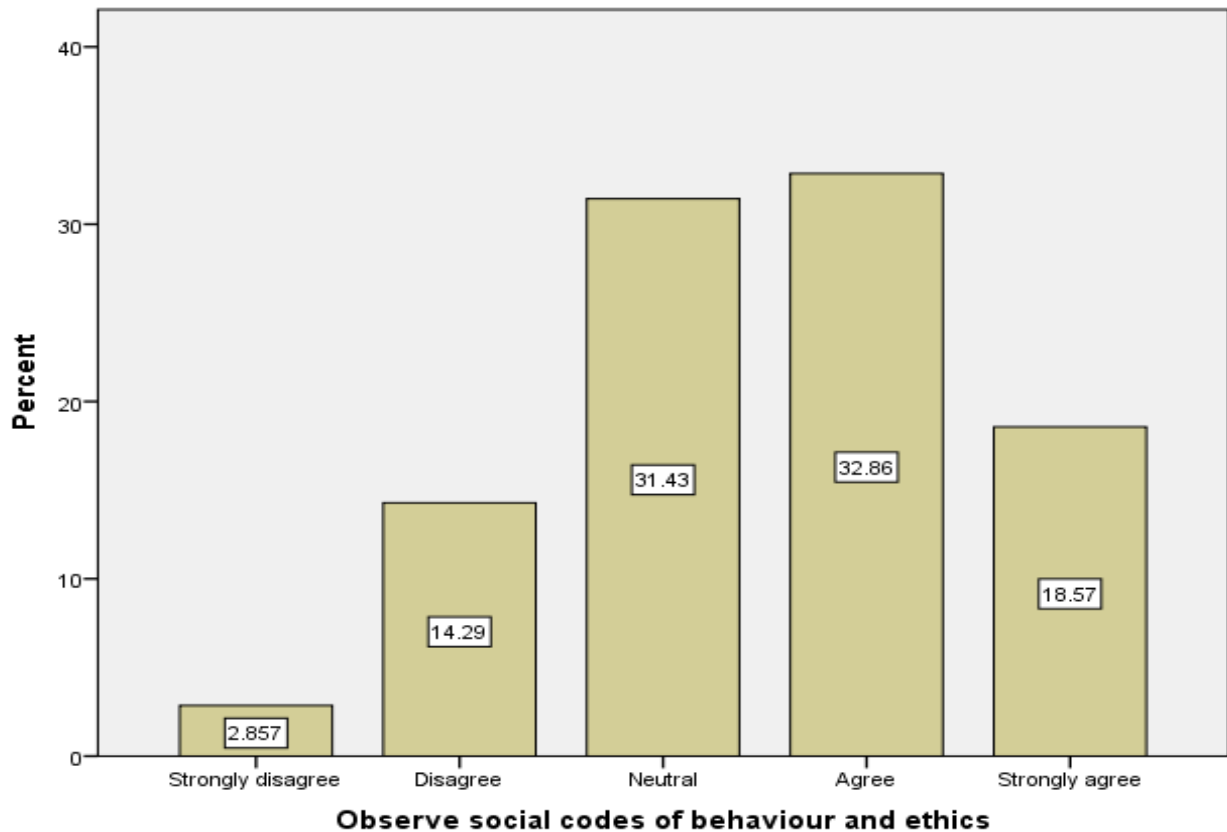


Figure 18: Observe social codes of behaviour and ethics

Generation Y consumers are more concerned with fitting in during their social interactions with their peers. They observe social codes and behaviours so that during the interactions they are accepted and welcomed by their peers. The results of this study shows that 32.86% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 31.43% were neutral 18.57% strongly agreed with the statement, 14.29% disagreed and only 2.86 % strongly disagreed - see Figure 18. Therefore, it can be concluded that Generation Y consumers do not like to be underestimated or feel unwelcome during their social gatherings with their friends. That is why the majority of the respondents agreed that social code of behaviour is the value that they seek when purchasing clothing brands and making sure they fit in during their social gatherings.

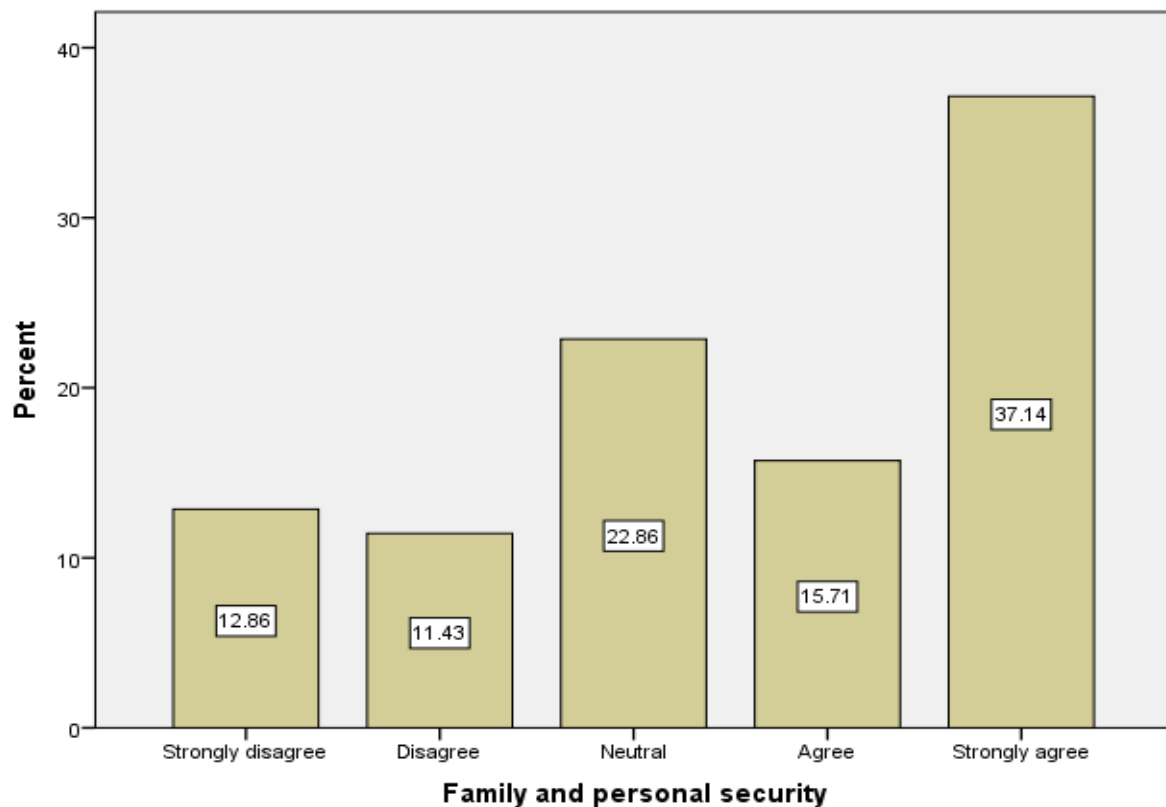


Figure 19: Family and personal security

Family members have a huge influence on the purchasing behaviours of Generation Y consumers. According to North and Kotze (2001: 95), family, especially parents, play a huge role in shaping the purchasing behaviour of their children from a young age. Generation Y consumers learn most of their behaviour from their families as it is the first group that they come into contact with. Approximately 37.14% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that that they buy clothing brands because of the family influence or because those are the brands that there were exposed to them during their young age and they still trust them - see Figure 19. It may be concluded that family influences are an important value variable in the choice of purchasing clothing brands.

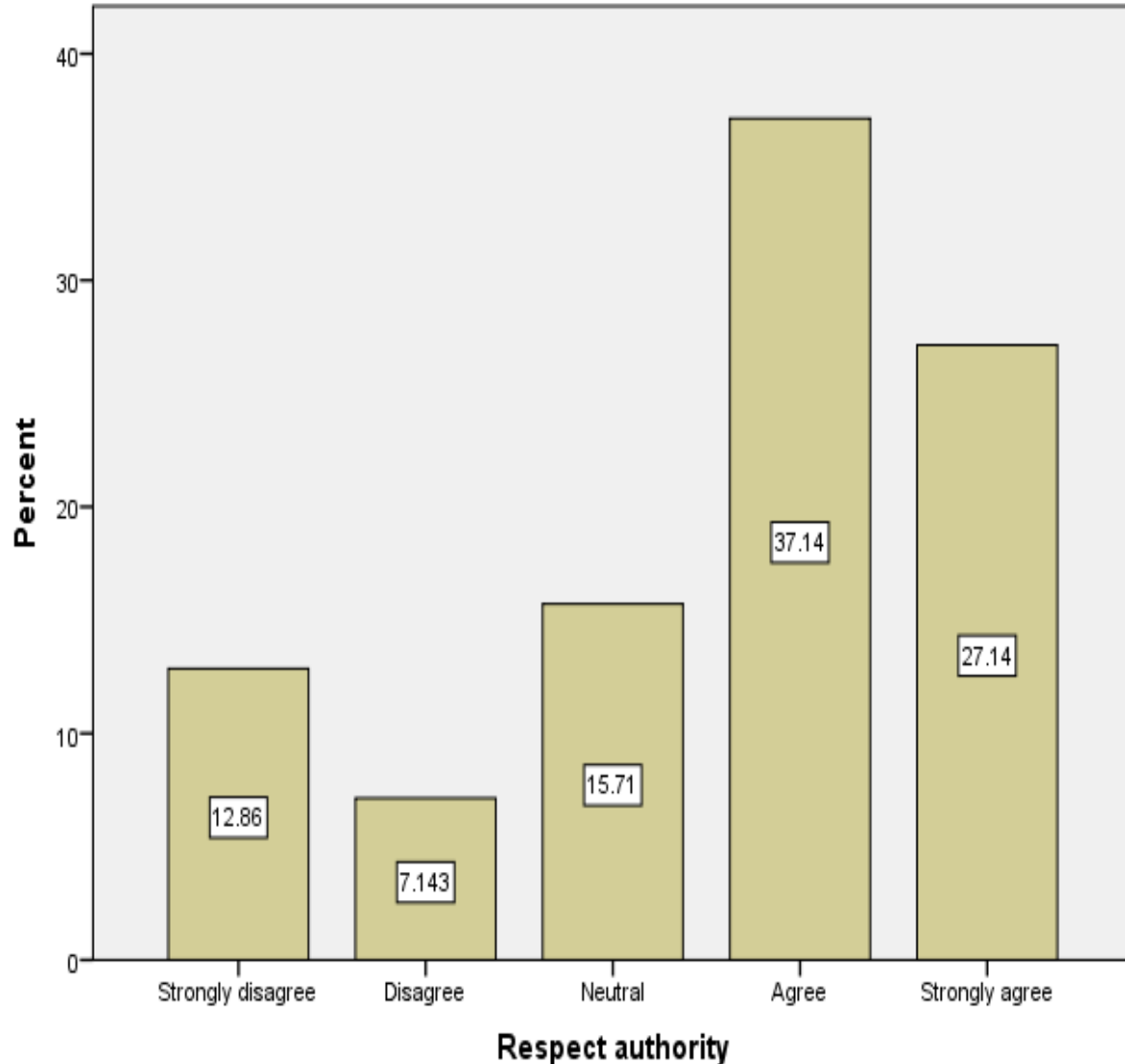


Figure 20: Respect authority

Approximately 37.14% of the respondents agreed that to them respect authority is an important value when buying clothing, 27.14% strongly agreed with the statement, 15.71% respondents had a neutral viewpoint and less than 15% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The results of this study support the statement that youth buy clothing brands in search of acceptance and respect from their peers, therefore, it may be concluded that Generation Y consumers seek the value of respect when purchasing clothing brands.

Generation Y consumers are more concerned about how other people, especially their peers, perceive them. This shows that they care and they are concerned of other people more than themselves.

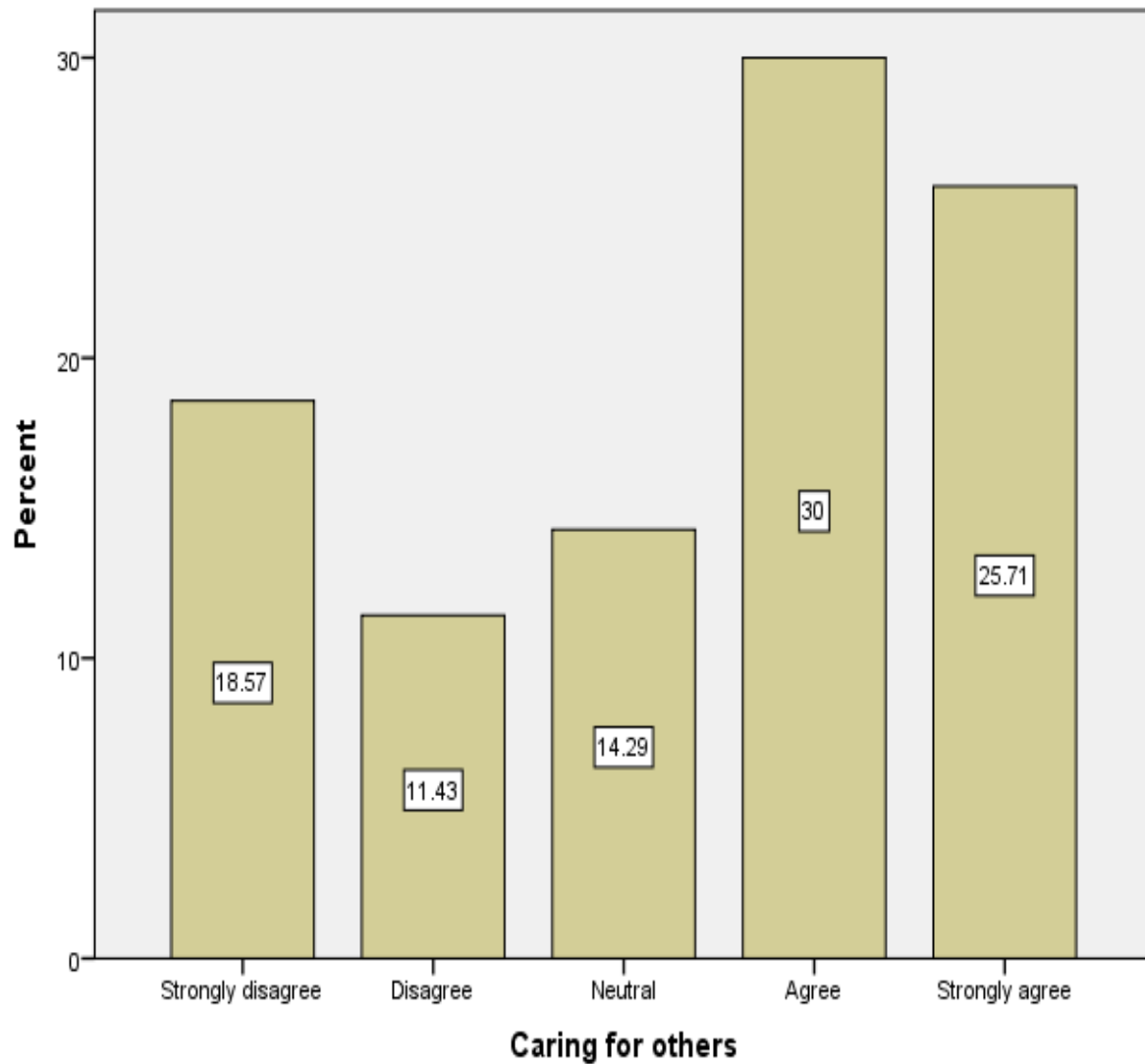


Figure 21: Caring for other

They value approval from their peers more than anything else (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005: 37). Approximately 30% of the respondents agreed and 25.71% strongly agreed that caring for others is an important value statement - see Figure 21.

Table 7 below provides a summary of the value responses. The total “agree” values are the greatest in all cases. Values are therefore important in making purchasing decisions.

Table 7: Summary of all value statement responses

Value Item	Total Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Total Agree (%)
An exciting life	17	20	63
Competitiveness	27	29	44
Uniqueness	16	10	74
Social power and status	18	19	63
Societies equality	14	30	56
Formality of life structure	10	36	54
Observe social codes of behaviour	17	32	41
Family and personal security	24	23	53
Respect authority	20	16	54
Caring for others	20	14	56

4.3.3 Subsection B: Ten perception statements.

The subsection reads “The following are perceptions of young adults regarding clothing brands, please encircle one answer”.

Figures 22 to 31 deal with responses of the perceptions of young adults regarding clothing brands. There are many factors that contribute to the perceptions that consumers have about certain clothing brands. For example, most of Generation Y members have the perception that high priced clothing brands are of good quality. Perceptions that consumers have about the brands play an important role during the purchasing process and influence them to buy certain clothing brands.

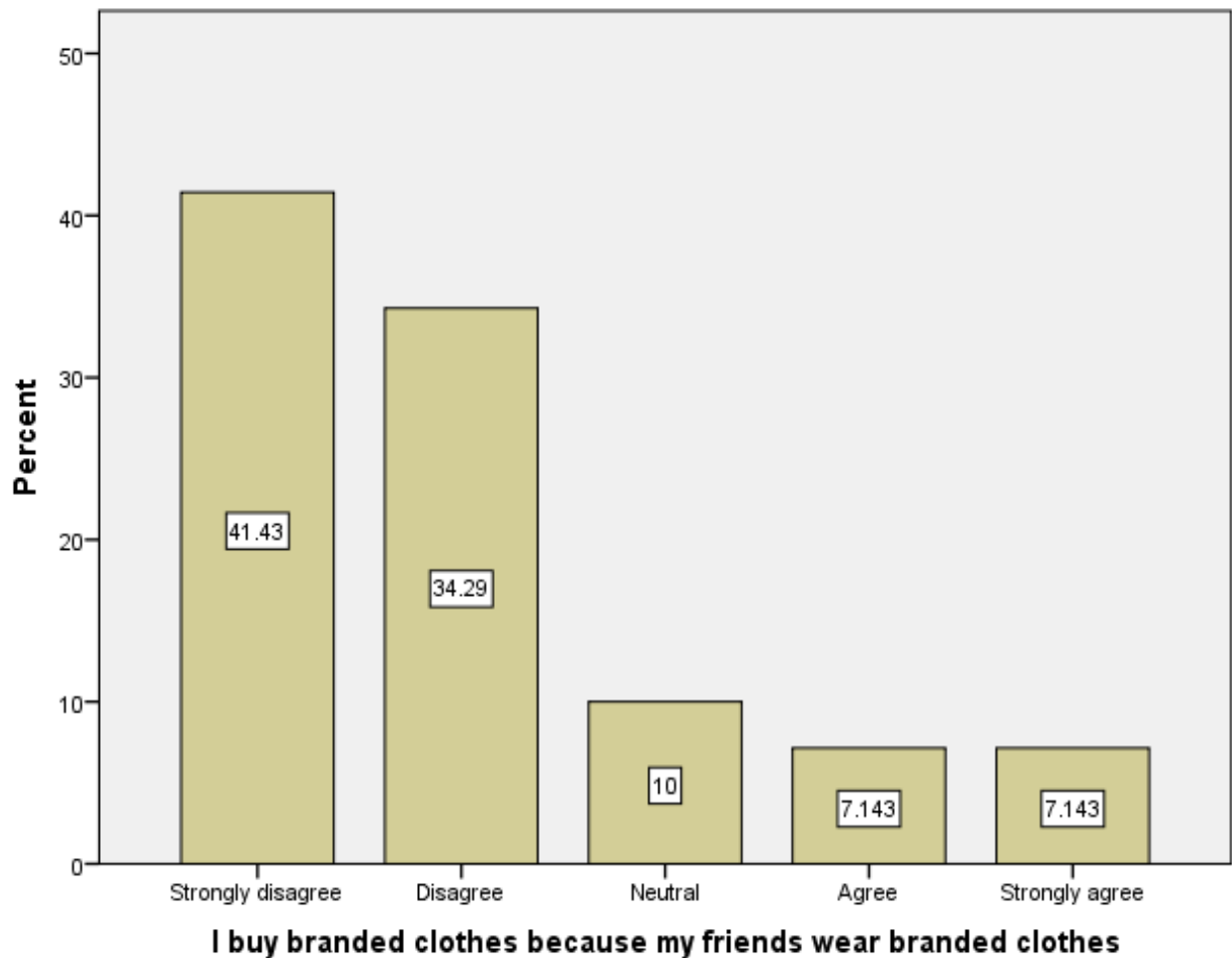


Figure 22: I buy brands because my friends wear branded clothes

Research results from Fernandez (2009:91) show that peer pressure is one of the reasons why Generation Y consumers buy branded clothing. Generation Y consumers also indicated that some of the reasons were that they want to be and fit in a group and they want to buy whatever their friends buy in terms of the clothing brands. The findings of this research were the opposite. Approximately 41.43% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that “I buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes”, 34.29% disagreed, 10% were neutral and less than 10% agreed with the statement - see Figure 22.

Having or owning clothing brands are important for young consumers as they associate it with living a good life. Approximately 33% disagreed and 33% strongly disagreed with the statement that “having branded clothing is important to them” - see Figure 23.

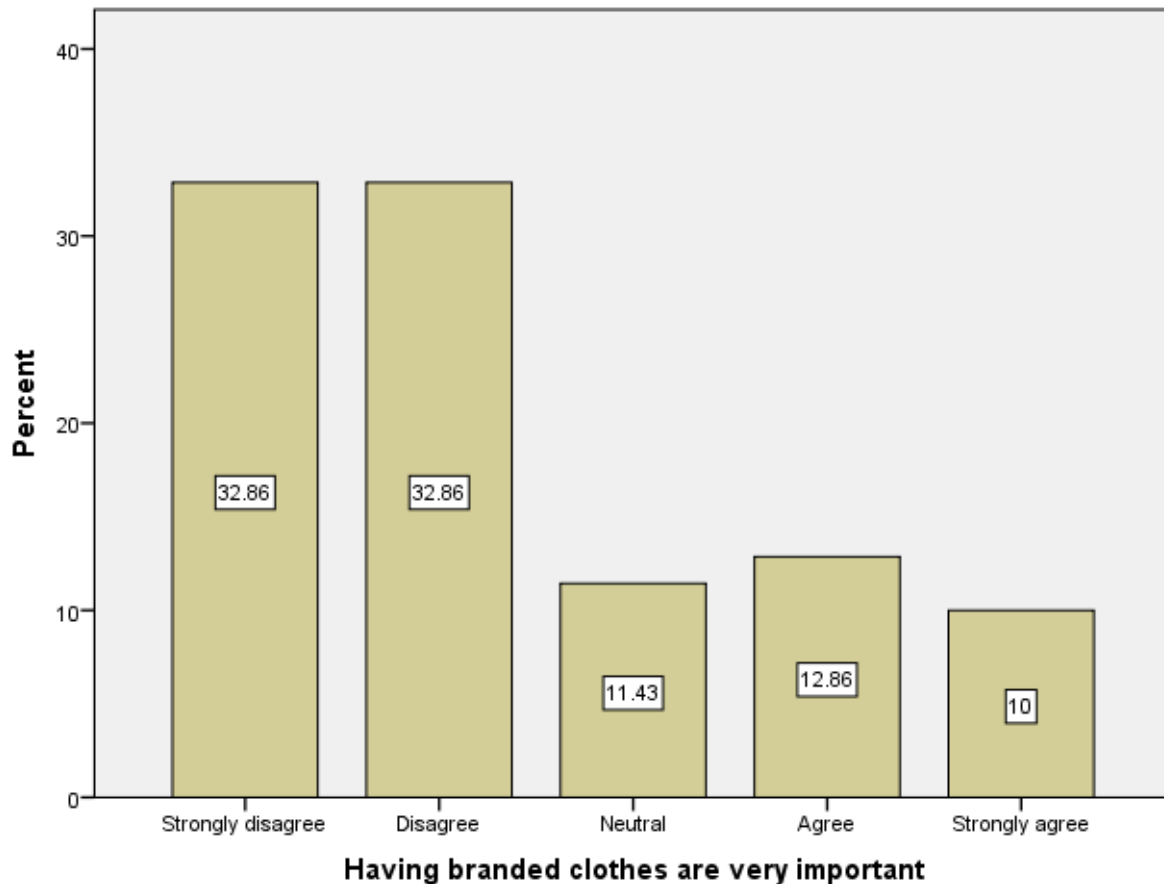


Figure 23: Having branded clothing is very important

Only 12.86% of the respondents agreed and 11.43% were neutral about the statement. It can be assumed that Generation Y consumers do not regard having branded clothes as important but regard appearance as the important factor during social interactions simply because appearance communicates personal or social values and create an acceptable image. A study of Johnson, Schofield and Yurchisin (2002:10) has found that young generation consumers are more concerned about their appearance and not whether they are wearing branded or non-branded products.

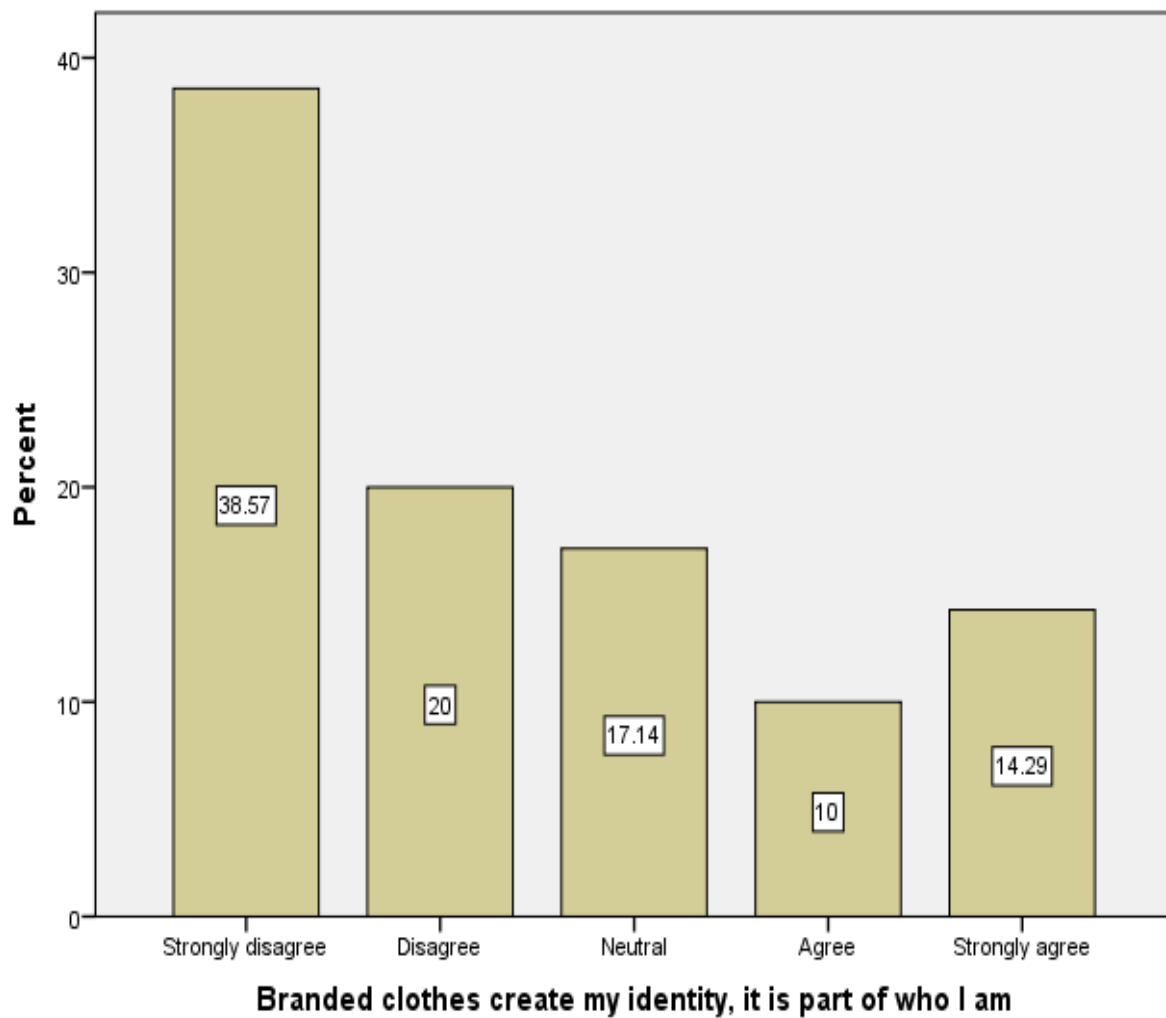


Figure 24: Branded clothes create my identity

Generation Y consumers are more concerned about their image and how their peers see them. Branded clothes help them create an image that is acceptable during the social interactions as mentioned earlier in the literature - see Chapter 2. The findings of this research were the opposite as compared to those of Fernandez (2009:80). Approximately 38.57% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that “branded clothes create my identity, it is part of which I am”, 20% disagreed, 17.14% were neutral, 14.29% strongly agreed and only 10% agreed - see Figure 24. This shows that Generation Y consumers buy clothing brands for different reasons and clothing brands mean different things to them.

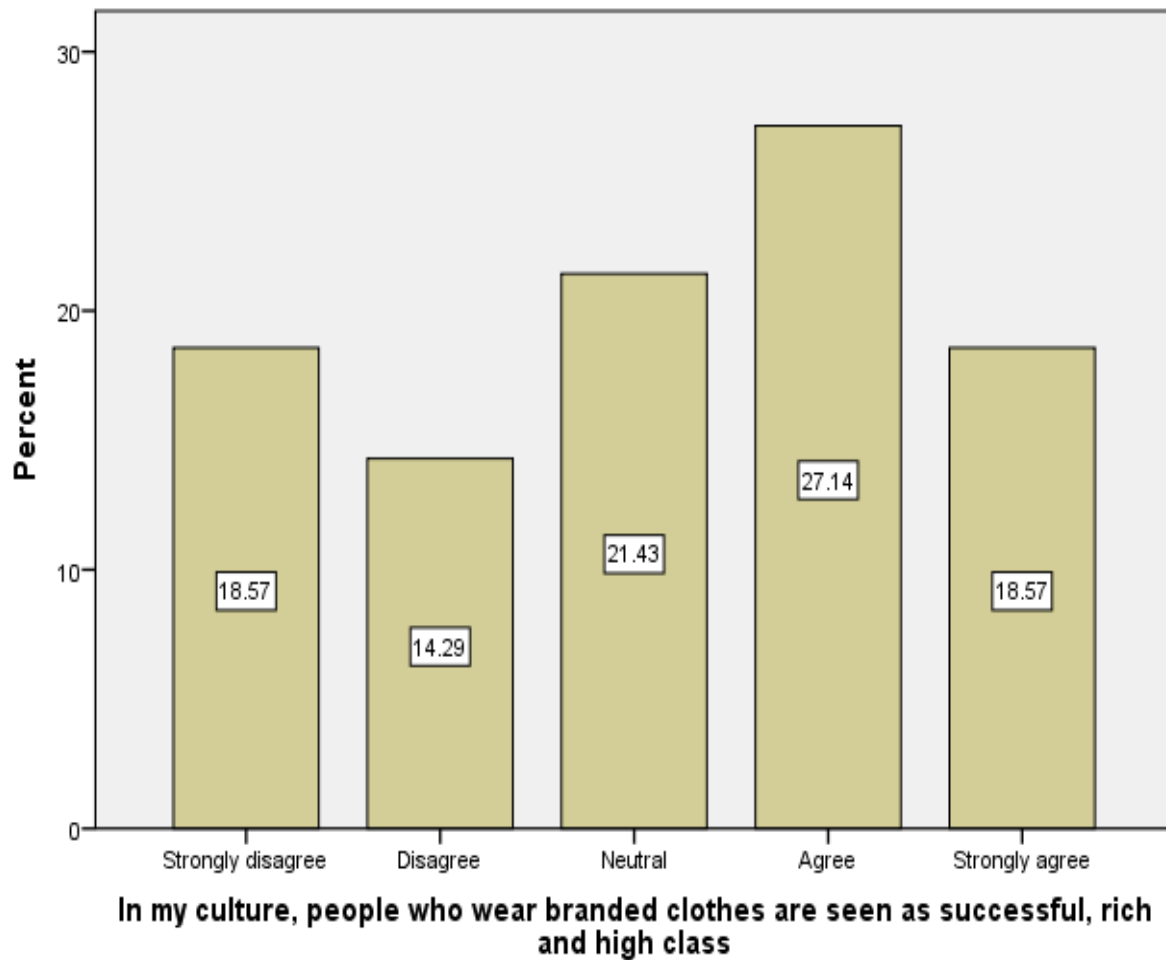


Figure 25: In my culture, people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful

Figure 25 provides the responses to the perception statement “In my culture people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class”. The results of this study show that 27.14% of the respondents agreed that in some cultures people wearing clothing brands are seen as successful, rich and high class and 21.43% were neutral. From these results it can be concluded that culture does have a significant influence. Generation Y consumers will continue to follow cultural beliefs, values, and customs as long as they provide satisfaction.

With regard to price, approximately 34.29% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that price is not important when they purchase clothing brands, 21.43% disagreed,

17.14% were neutral 14.29% agreed and 12.86% strongly agreed - see Figure 26. From the findings of this study, Generation Y consumers are price conscious when it comes to purchasing their favourite clothing brands. Retailers need to make prices affordable to stay within the young generation's spending budgets and should not charge more for specific brands.

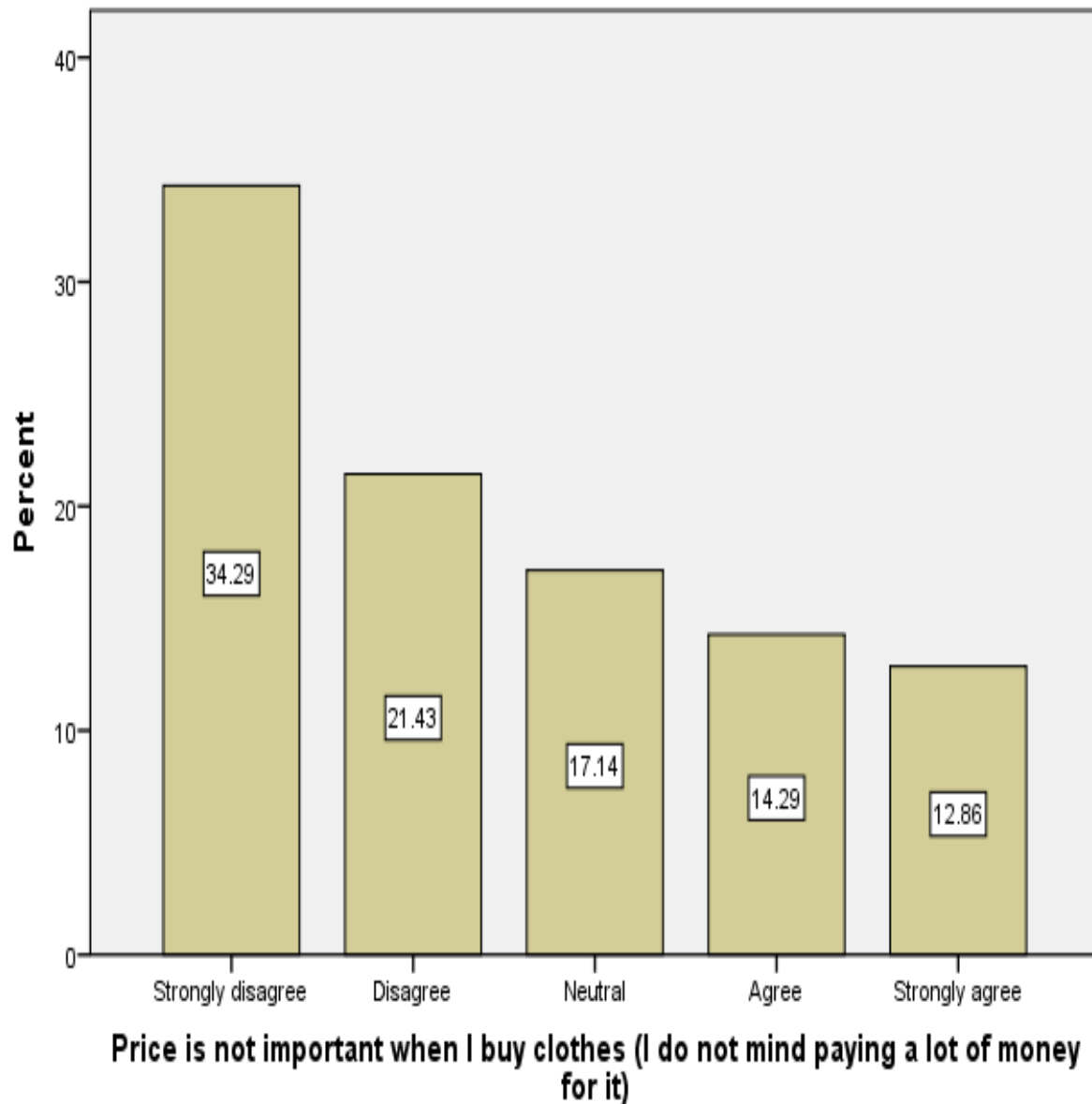


Figure 26: Price is not important when I buy clothes

Moreover, because young generation consumers are not always brand loyal and will go to another brand that fit their needs and is within their budget. Retailers need to find new ways to attract teens to purchase their products (Barrett, 2000:78). Approximately 51% in total disagreed or strongly disagreed that they buy branded product as a habit - see Figure 27.

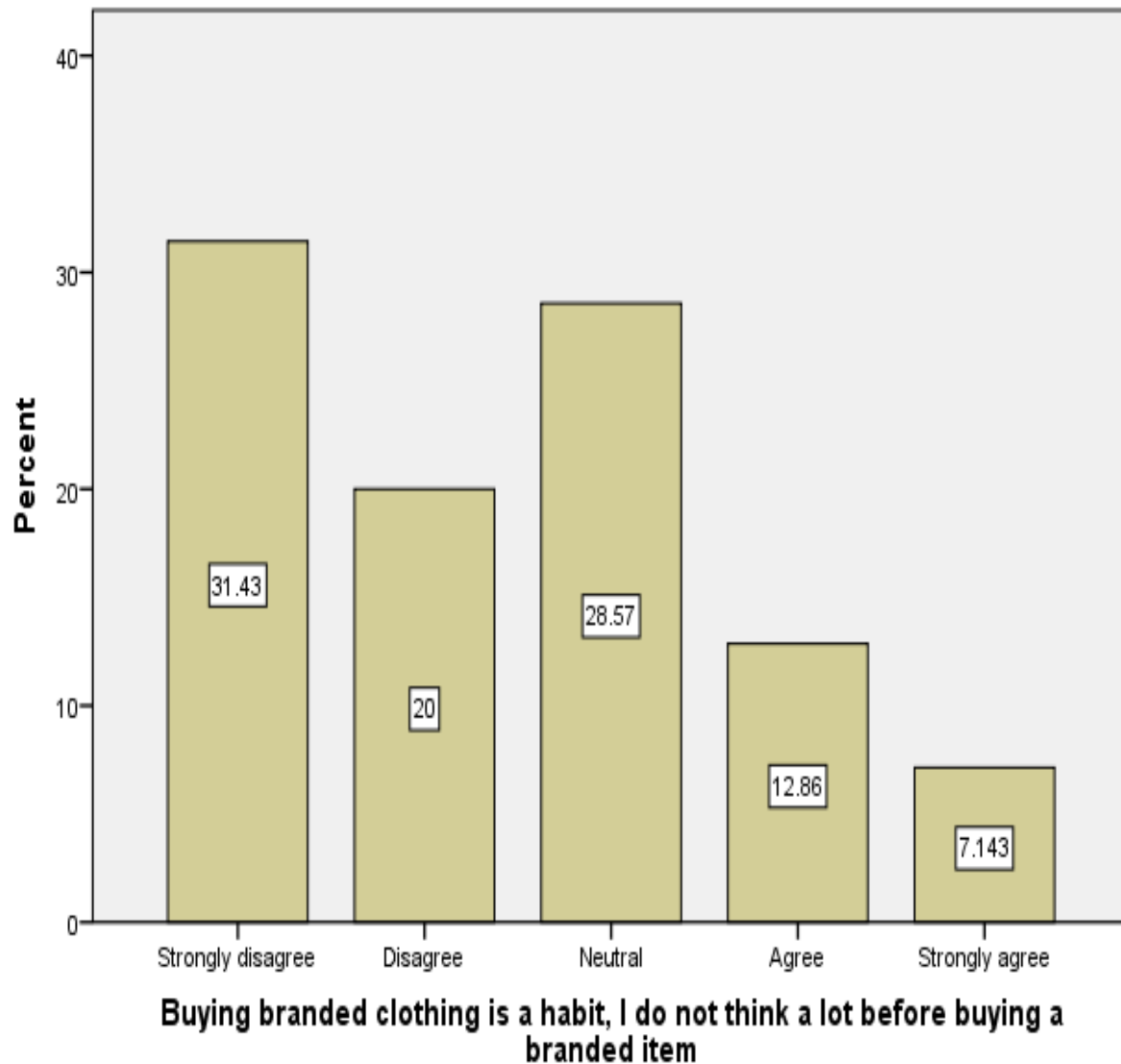


Figure 27: Buying branded clothing is a habit, I do not think a lot before buying a branded item

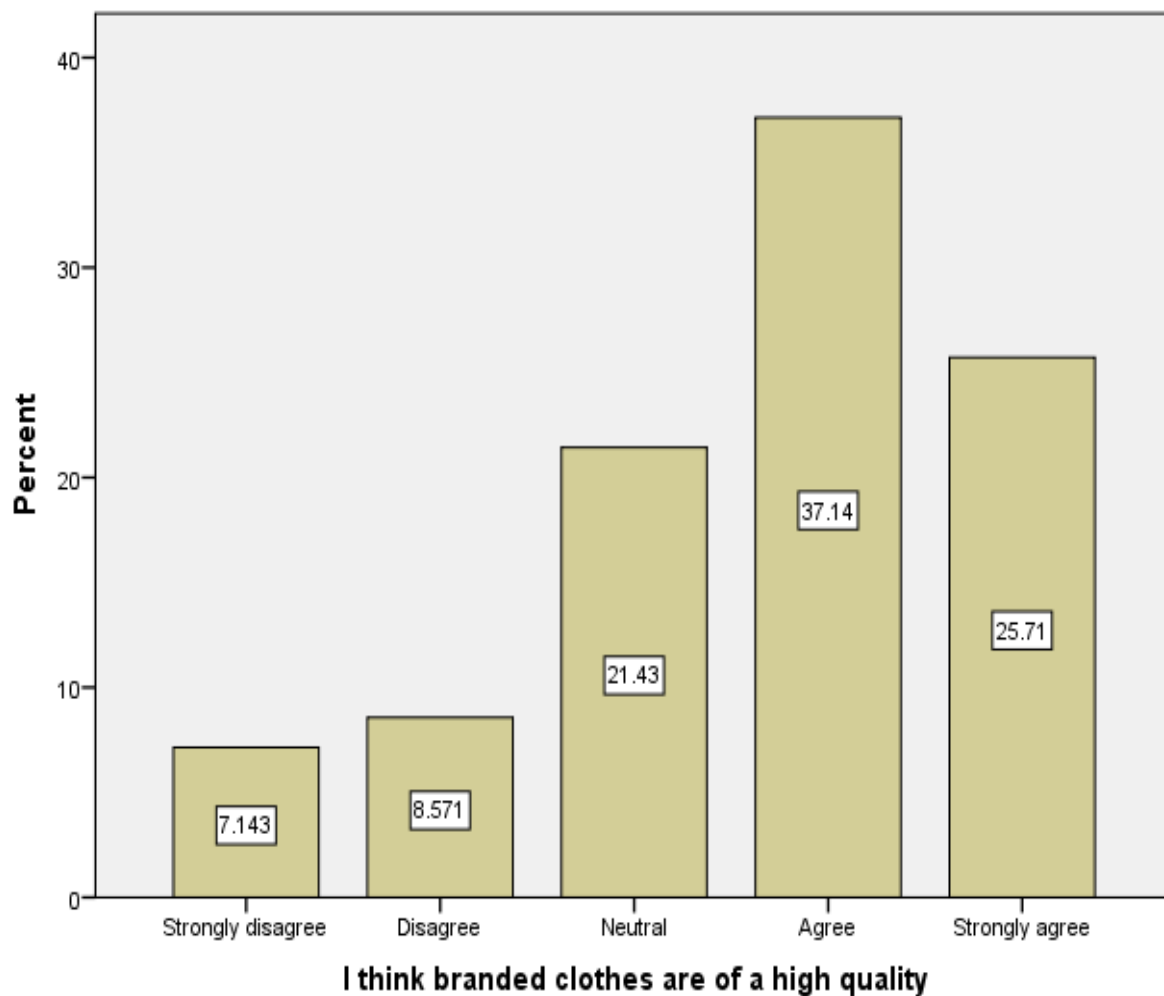


Figure 28: I think branded clothes are of high quality

Clothing brands targeted at Generation Y consumers must communicate or show the benefits of that particular brand being advertised. If consumers are satisfied with the offerings and the benefits, they will share the information with their friends that may increase sales. Approximately 37.14% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they perceive branded clothes as being of high quality, 25.71% strongly agreed, 21.43% were neutral and less than 10% disagreed with the statement - see Figure 28. Jobber (2001: 67) mentions that brands serve as a symbol of quality and authenticity in consumers' minds. It is important for marketers to emphasise quality in their promotions or campaigns of brands. According to Porter (2004: 325), a brand promises the consumer value and quality.

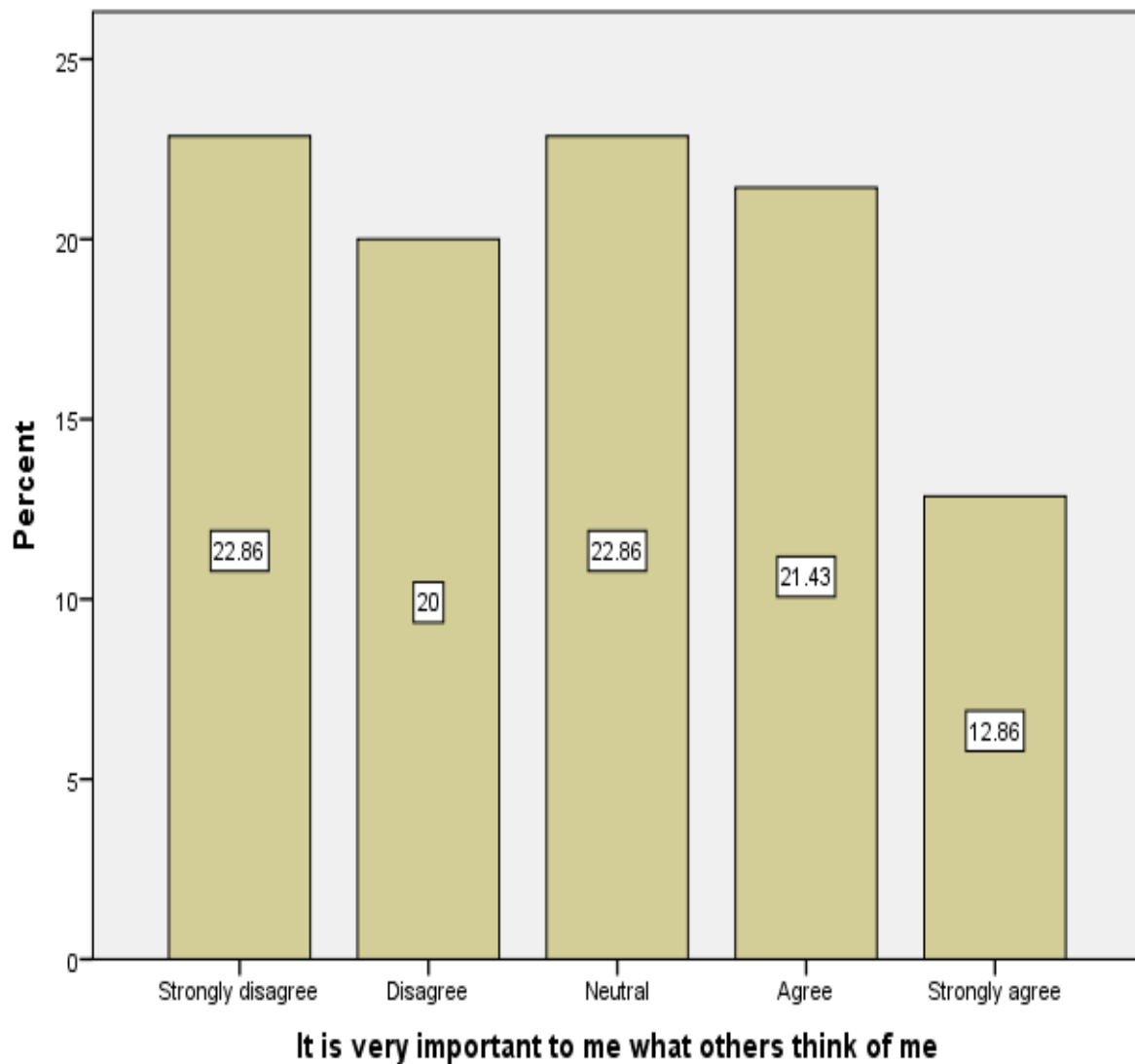


Figure 29: It is very important to me what others think of me

Generation Y consumers are concerned about their image and how others perceive them. They rely more on what others think about them and use clothing brands as a defence mechanism. The findings of this study showed a relative indifference as 22.86% of the respondents were neutral to the statement, 22.86% strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 21.43% agreed and 12.86% strongly agreed- see Figure 29. Based on this finding, it may be said that not all Generation Y consumers are concerned about what others think of them.

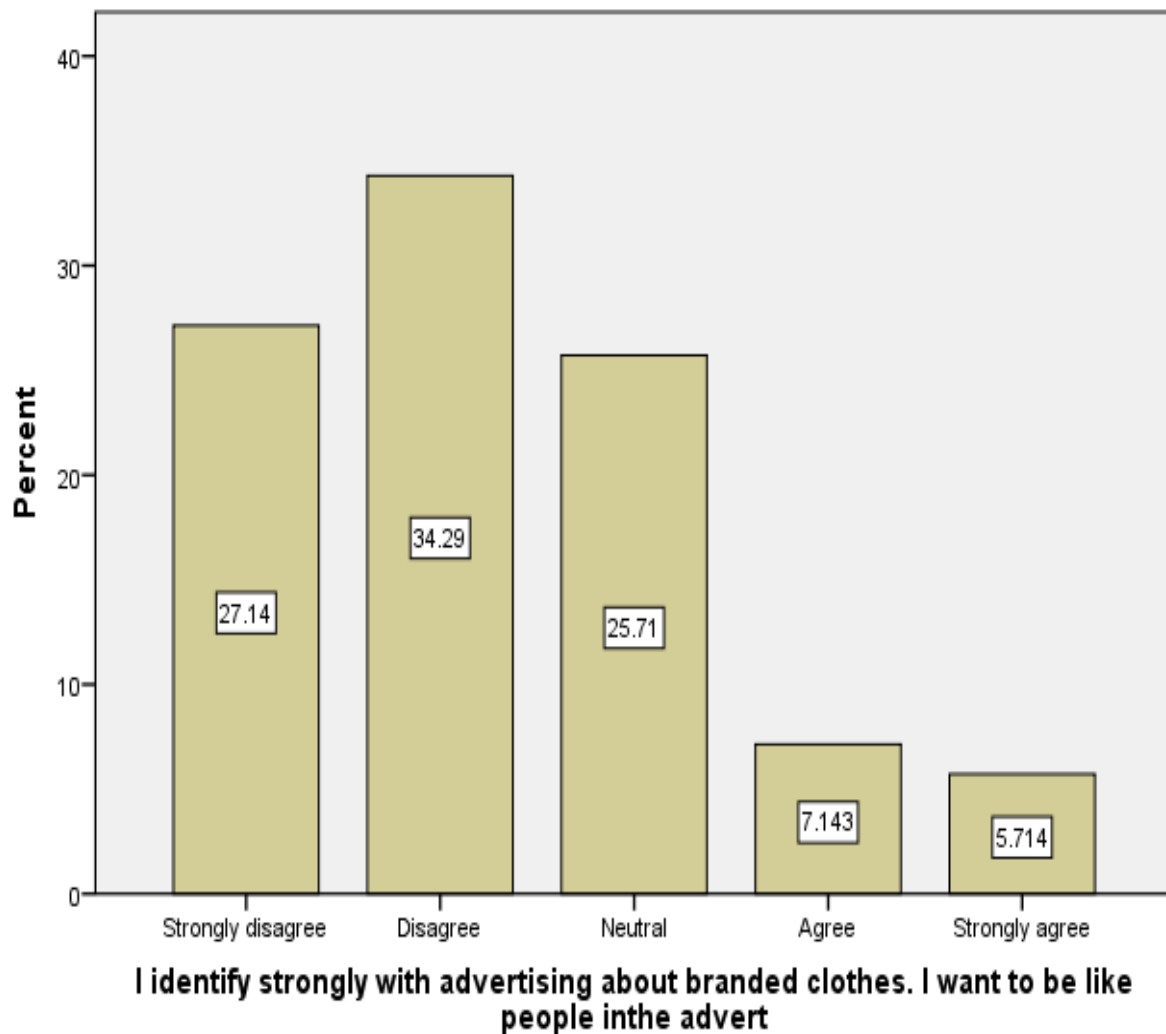


Figure 30: I identify strongly with advertising about branded clothes

Marketers in the clothing industry use advertisements to communicate with their target market. Most of the consumers become aware of certain clothing brands by seeing advertisements on television or any other kind of media (Duncan, 2005:169). Advertising also influences the purchasing behaviours of Generation Y consumer, especially if they are using role models like celebrities. The findings are quite interesting - see Figure 30. Most of the respondents disagreed with the statement “that they wanted to be like the people in the advert”.

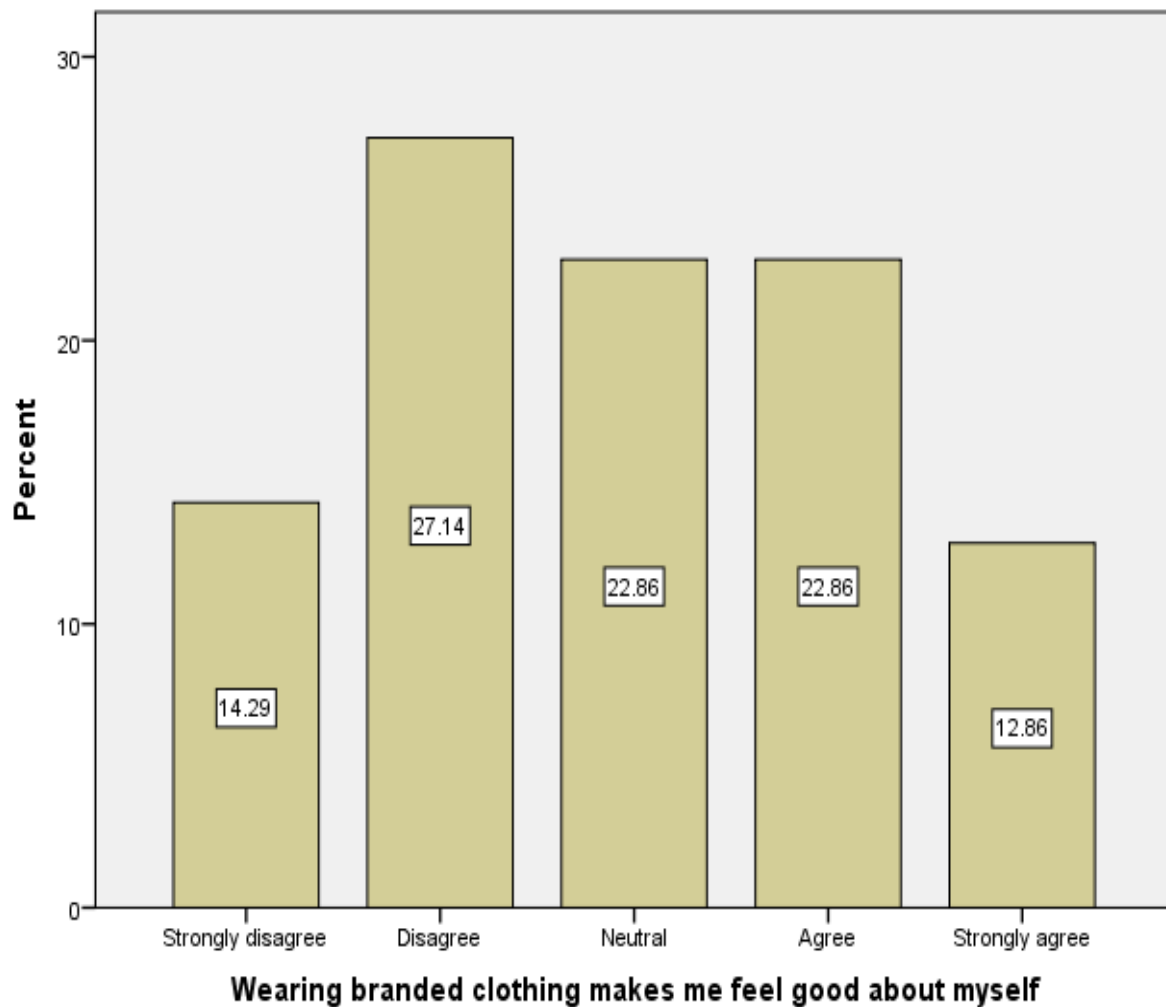


Figure 31: Wearing branded clothes makes me feel good about myself

Generation Y consumers are concerned about their appearance and the image that they project in front of their friends, so wearing clothing brands makes them feel good and confident. According to the results shown in the research of Dotson and Hyatt (2005: 41), Generation Y consumers feel good when wearing clothing brands because they are respected and admired by their peers. Again, the results of this study are not very conclusive if one looks at the distribution of responses in Figure 31. The responses are “evenly” spread for those in agreement and not in agreement.

Table 8 below provides a summary of all the perception statement responses.

Table 8: Summary of all the perception statement responses

	Total Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Total Agree (%)
I buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes	76	10	14
Having branded clothes is very important to me	65	12	13
Branded clothes create my identity: it is part of who I am.	58	17	25
In my culture, people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class	32	22	46
Price is not important when I buy branded clothes (I don't mind paying a lot of money for it)	56	17	27
Buying branded clothing is a habit: I do not need to think a lot before buying a branded item	52	29	19
I think branded clothes are of very high quality	16	22	63
It is very important to me what others think of me	43	23	34
I identify strongly with advertising about branded clothes: I want to be like the people in the advert	63	26	13
Wearing branded clothing makes me feel good about myself	41	23	36

4.3.4 Subsection B: Ten importance statements

The subsection reads “The following are important to young adults when purchasing clothing brands, please encircle one answer”.

This section deals with the responses regarding issues of importance when respondents had to buy a product - see Figures 32 to 41.

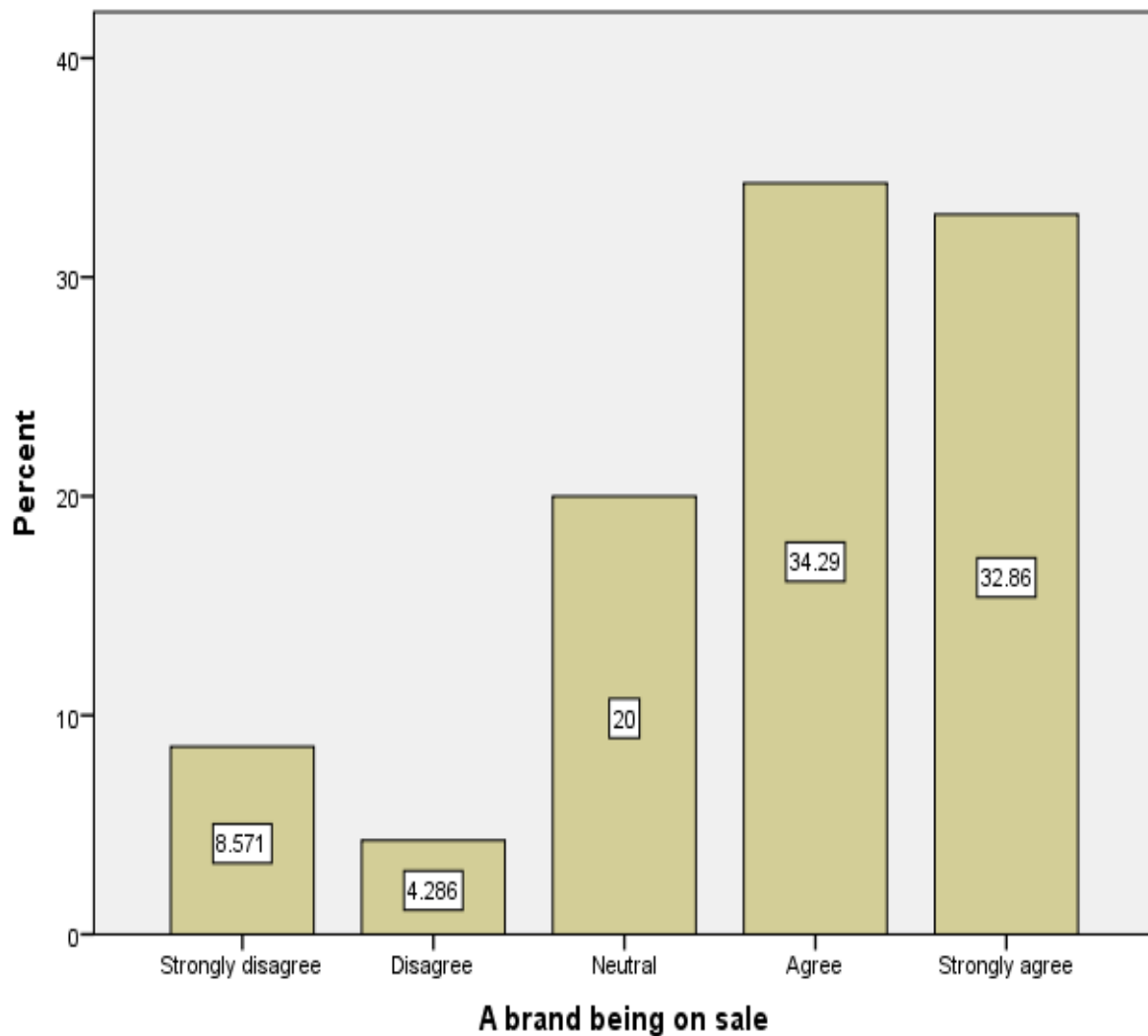


Figure 32: A brand being on sale influences my buying behaviour

Generation Y consumers are influenced by many things to buy clothing brands and a special sale or discount on their favourite brands might be one of the influencers. From the results for this study it shows that 34.29% respondents agreed with the statement to buy clothing brands on a special sale or discount and 32.86% strongly agreed. Affordability, therefore, plays a crucial role in the purchasing decisions of young people.

Promotions can create brand awareness among consumers and this will be important for marketers targeting Generation Y consumers. The findings show that 40% agreed and 12.86%

strongly agreed about the importance of promotion directed at brands to influence their buying behaviour - see Figure 33.

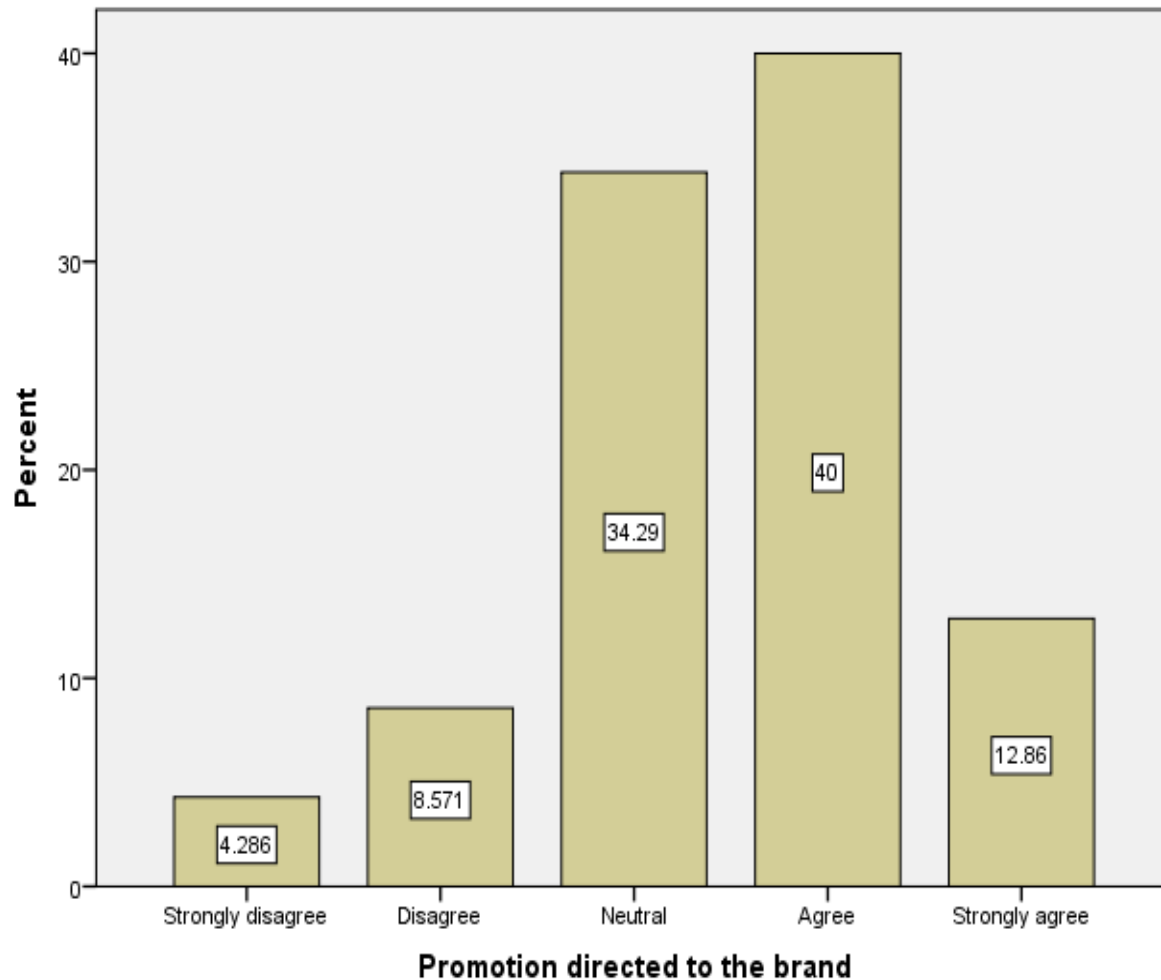


Figure 33: Promotion directed to the brand influences my buying behaviour

Generation Y consumers love fashion, trendy products and status brands. They associate high priced brands with good quality and they believe that a low priced brand is regarded to be of inferior quality. The results of this study show that 34.29% of the respondents agreed that they consider price before they buy brands, 28.57% strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 24.29% were neutral, only 12.86% disagreed - see Figure 34. Therefore, it may be concluded that price plays a major role in the purchasing behaviours of young generation when doing shopping especially where clothing brands are concerned.

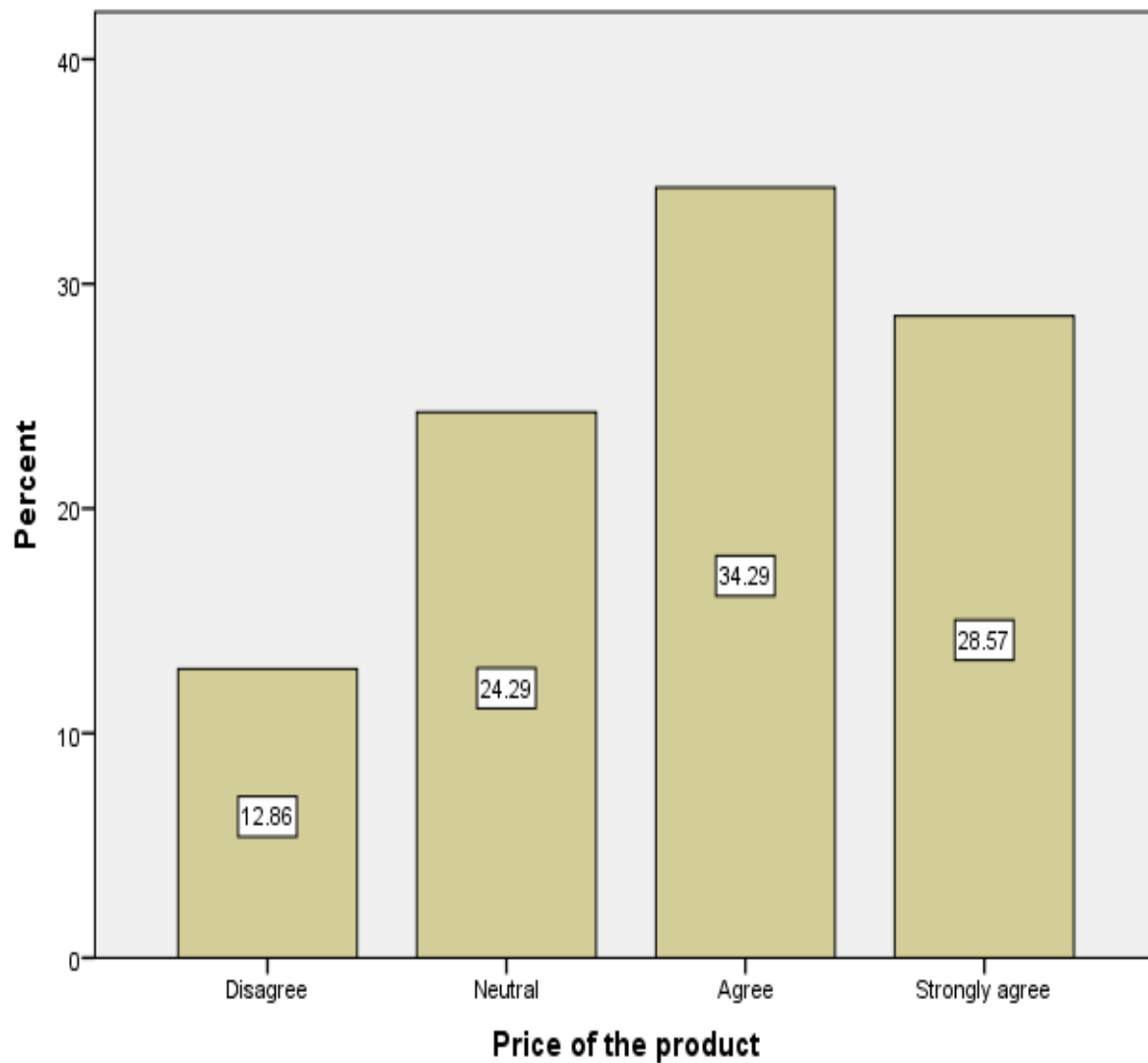


Figure 34: Price of the product influences my buying behaviour

As mentioned in the literature review, advertising plays a major role in marketing industry. Most marketers prefer to use it because it reaches consumers directly. Figure 35 shows that 34.29% of the respondents were not sure whether advertising was important or not in influencing their buying behaviour, but many more respondents indicated that it was important as compared to as not important, 50% compared to 16% respectively.

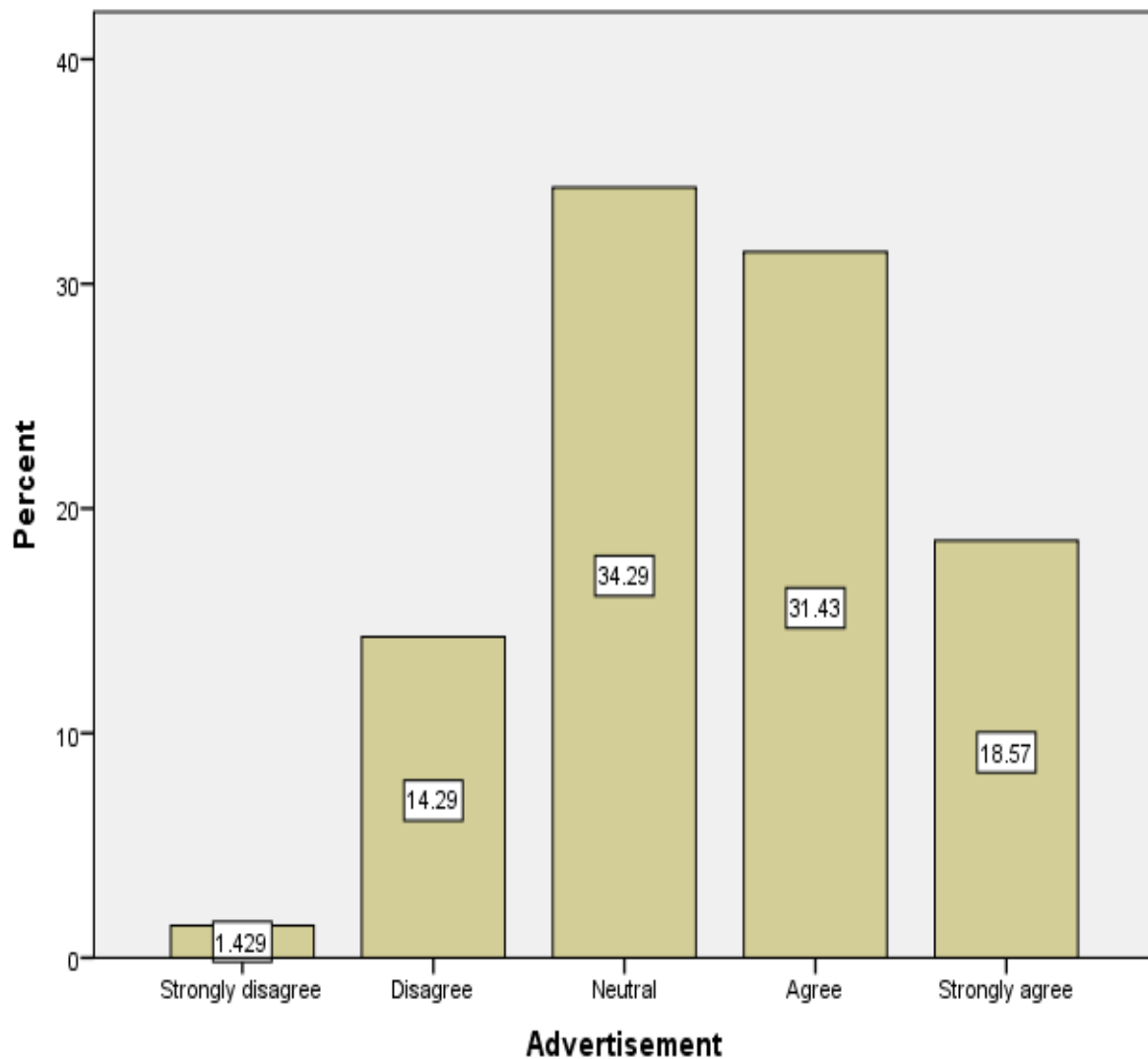


Figure 35: Advertisement influences my buying behaviour

With regard to the use of celebrities in advertisements begs the question if this influences buying behaviour? Celebrities are consumers who achieve a certain degree of fame across or among a section of a society. Their acknowledgement and success may allow them to inspire and influence the purchasing behaviours of others (Schroeder & Sazer-Morling, 2005: 268). The results of this study show that 28.57% of the respondents agreed while 22.86% strongly agreed with the statement that “celebrity wearing brands to promote certain clothing brands have an influence in their purchasing process” - see Figure 36.

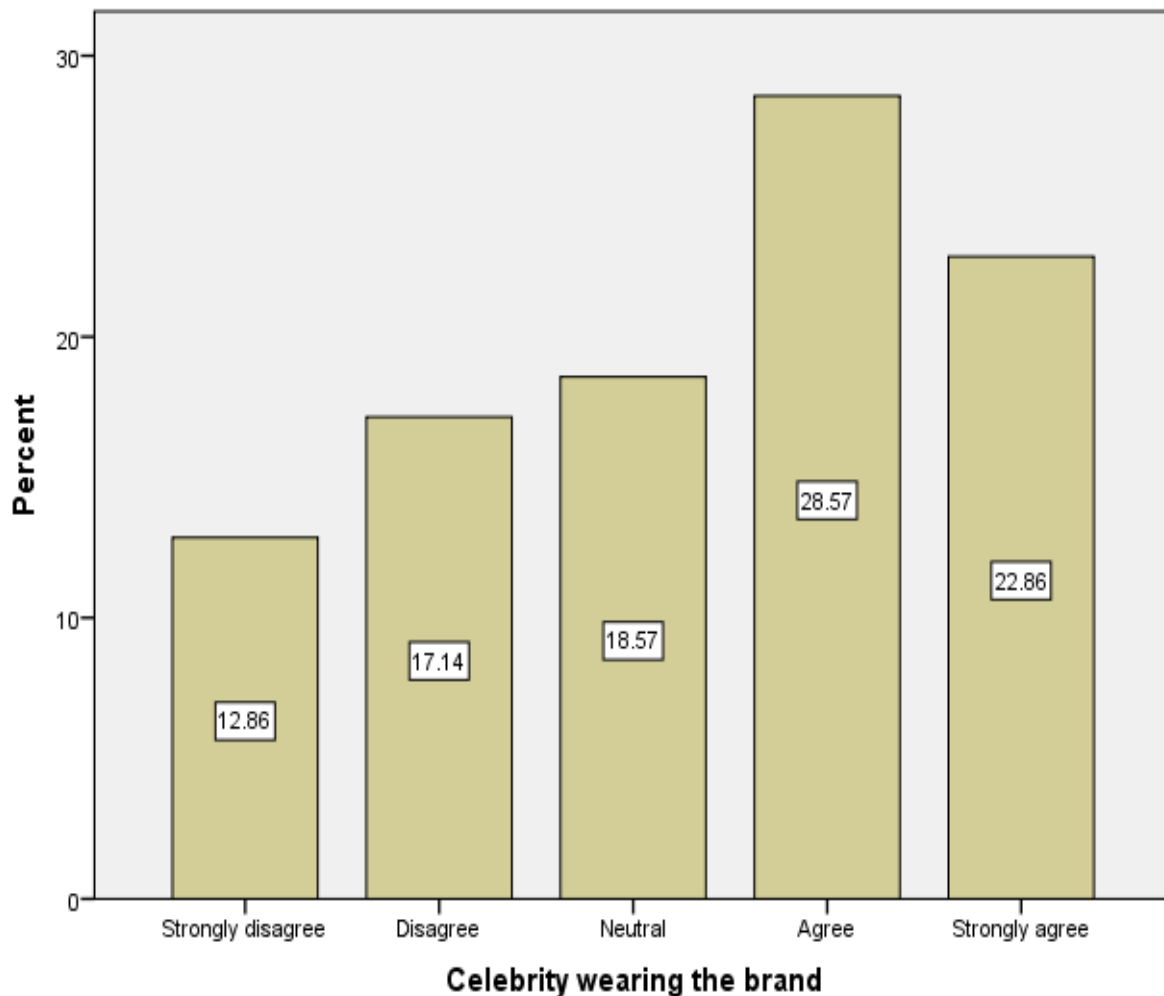


Figure 36: Celebrities wearing the brand influence my buying behaviour

Famous or well-known brands that are advertised spread the brand benefit and are easy to be remembered by consumers as compared to non-famous brands (Keller, 2003:155). Consumers prefer to buy brands that they know and are comfortable with. These respected brand and their images attract consumers to purchase the brand over and over again and preventing them to switch to other brands (Cadogan & Foster, 2000:191). Most of the respondents agreed that well-known brand names are indeed important in their purchasing behaviour. In total 64% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, while 16% either disagreed or strongly disagreed - see Figure 37. This just illustrates that branding is important.

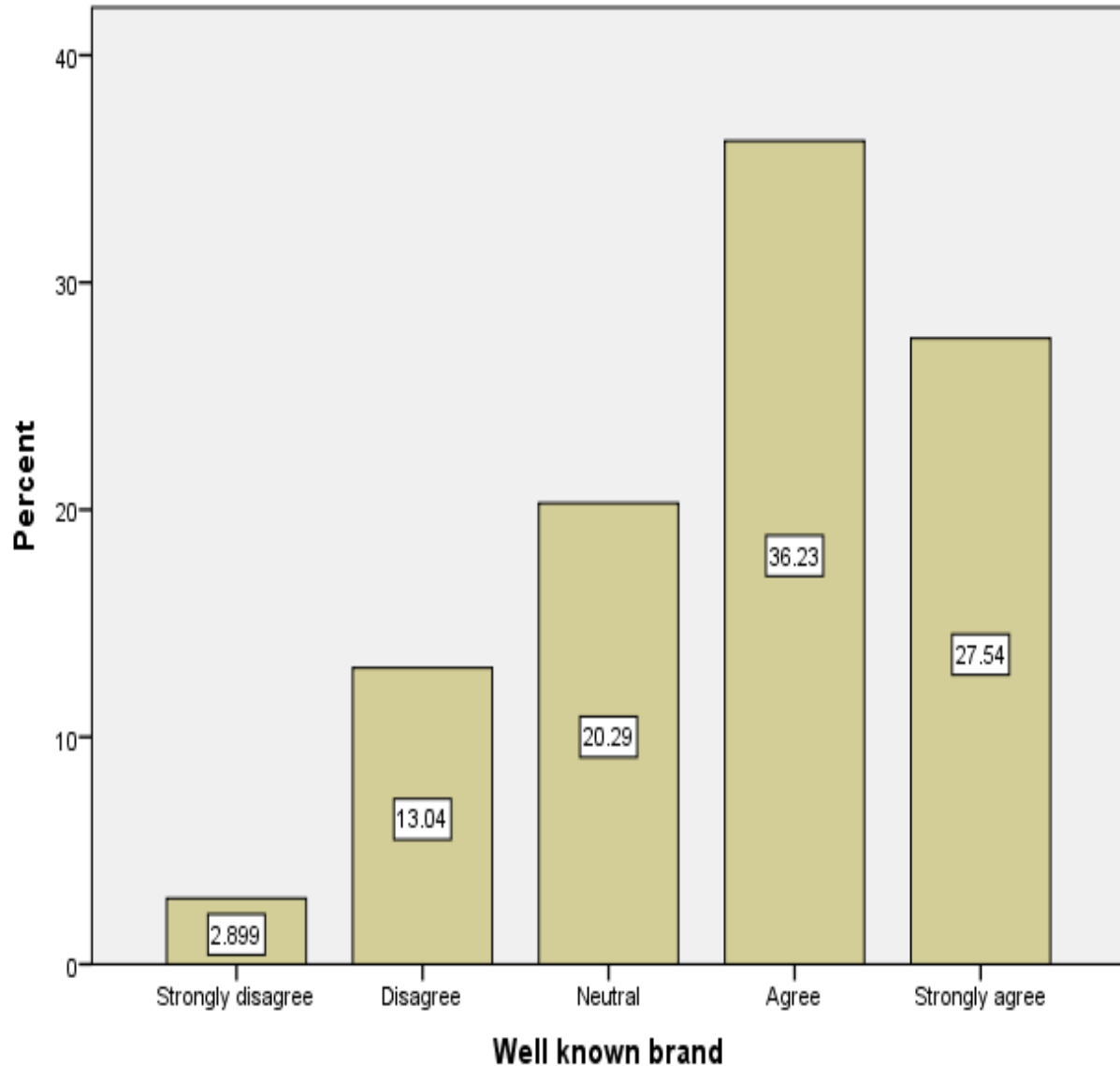


Figure 37: Well-known brands influence my buying behaviour

Family as part of the reference group plays a huge role in the purchasing behaviour of young generation (Feltham, 1998: 379). Buying behaviours of Generation Y consumers are substantially affected by the nature of their families. Surprisingly, 41.43% of the respondents were in fact neutral with regard to this statement, while in total approximately 34% agreed or strongly agreed and 24% either disagreed or strongly disagreed - see Figure 38.

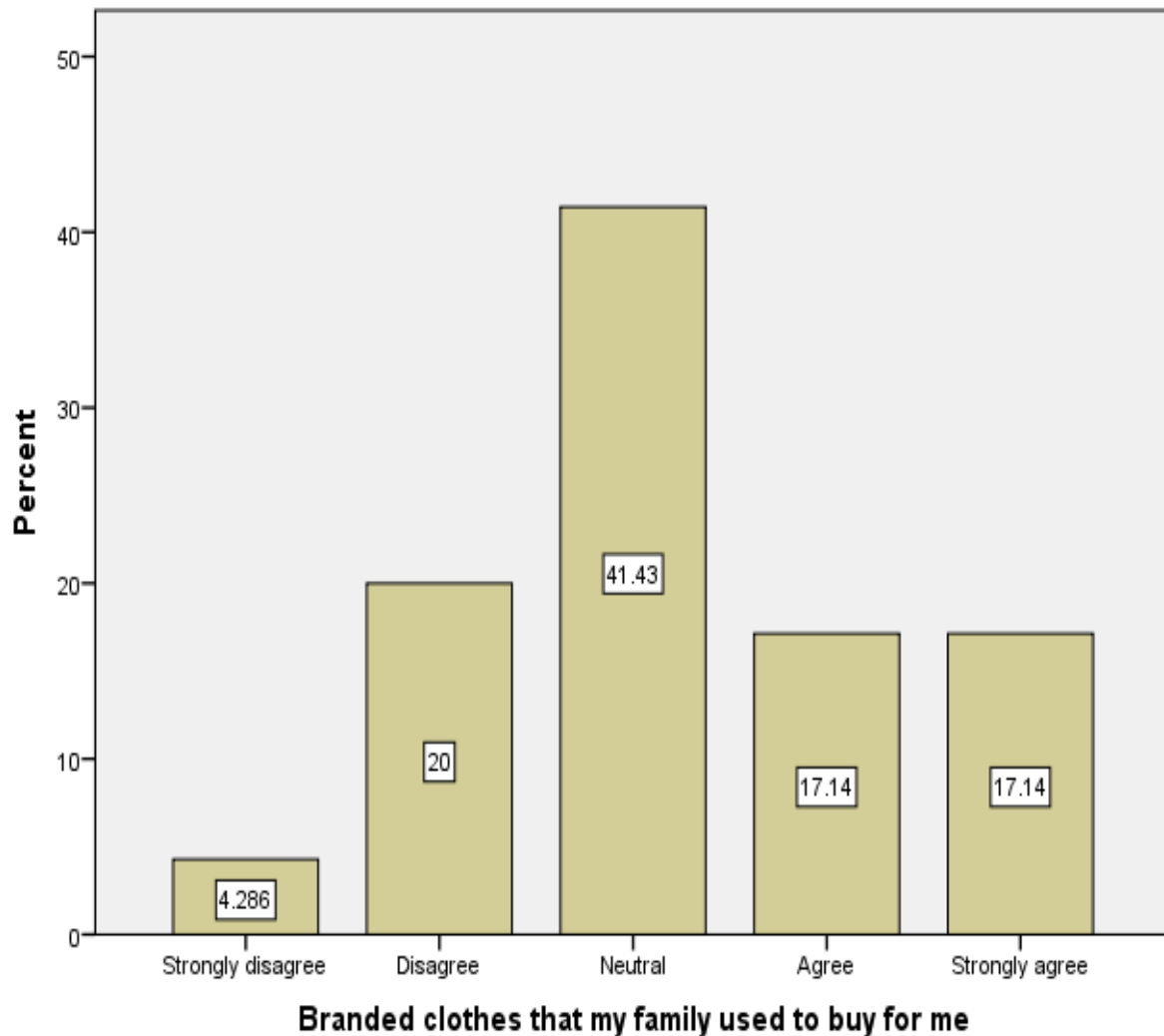


Figure 38: Branded clothes my family used to buy for me influence my buying behaviour

Peer influence can be defined as the ability of friend to influence the behaviour, attitude and thinking of an individual (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005: 82). Peer influence plays a crucial role in the choice of brands of the younger consumer. Findings of the research conducted by Fernandez (2009:88) show that Generation Y consumers are influenced by their peers to buy certain clothing brands. Findings of this study provide a different picture. Approximately 26% neither agreed nor disagreed that friends are important in buying their clothing, 36% agreed or strongly agreed in total and 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed in total - see Figure 39.

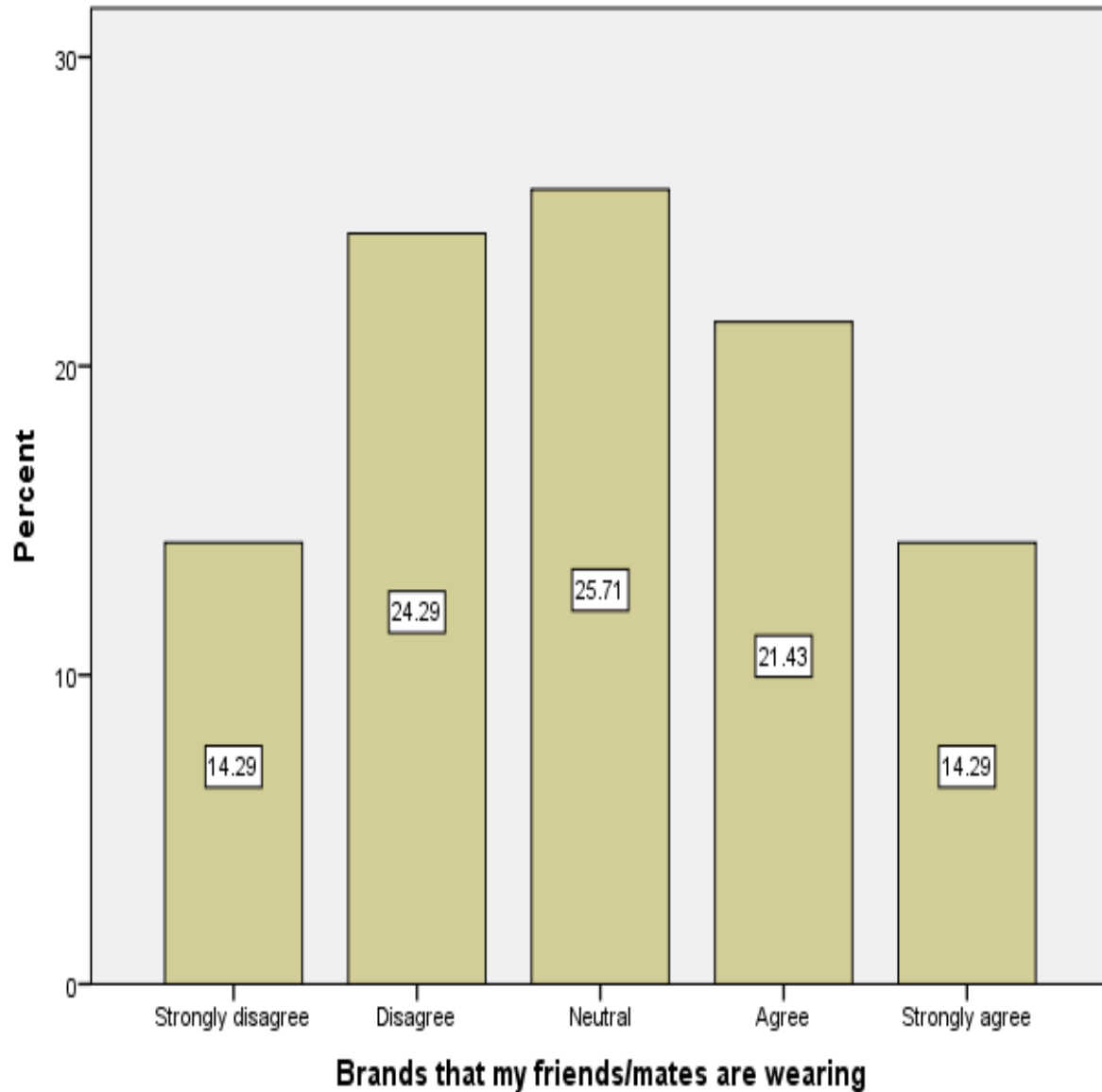


Figure 39: Brands that my friends are wearing influence my buying behaviour

Branded clothes are associated or seen as being of better quality in the mind of consumers. Figure 40 shows that there is overwhelming agreement (in total 80% either agreed or strongly agreed) that quality is important in the choice of a brand. Findings of the research conducted by Fernandez (2009: 87) also support the results of this study by showing that branded clothing is associated with good quality. Therefore, it may be concluded that consumers view brands as a symbol of good quality.

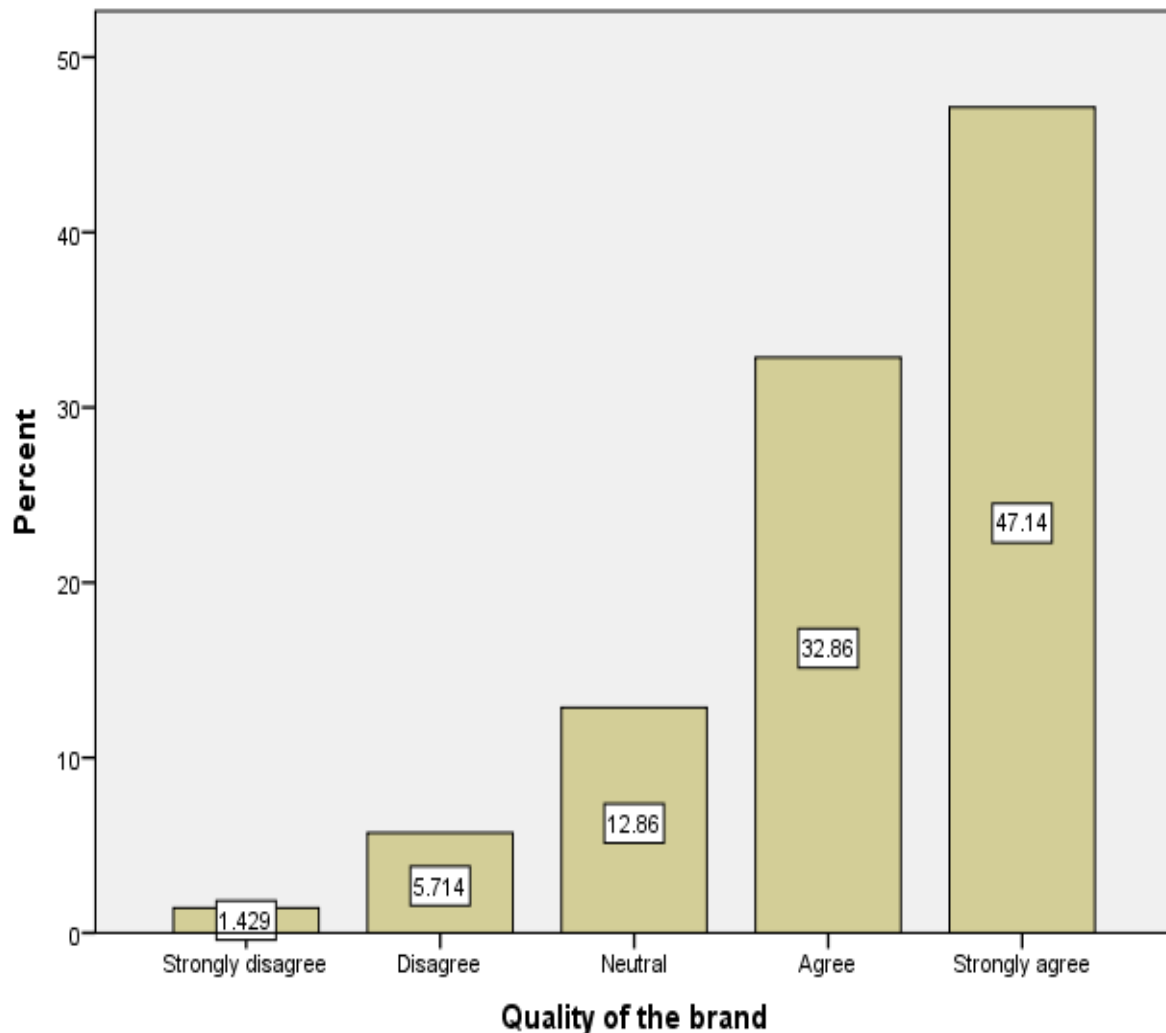


Figure 40: Quality of the brand influences my buying behaviour

Brands should be available to consumers wherever and whenever it is needed. Brand availability creates brand loyal consumers because most consumers nowadays, especially Generation Y consumers, prefer to be loyal to clothing brands that are always available to satisfy their changing needs (Belleau, 2007: 52). Approximately 32.86% of the respondents agreed that availability of their favourite brands is important to them and influence their purchasing decisions 31.43% strongly agreed, less than 8% disagreed in total and approximately 13 neither agreed nor disagreed - see Figure 41. Table 9 provides a summary of the findings in this section.

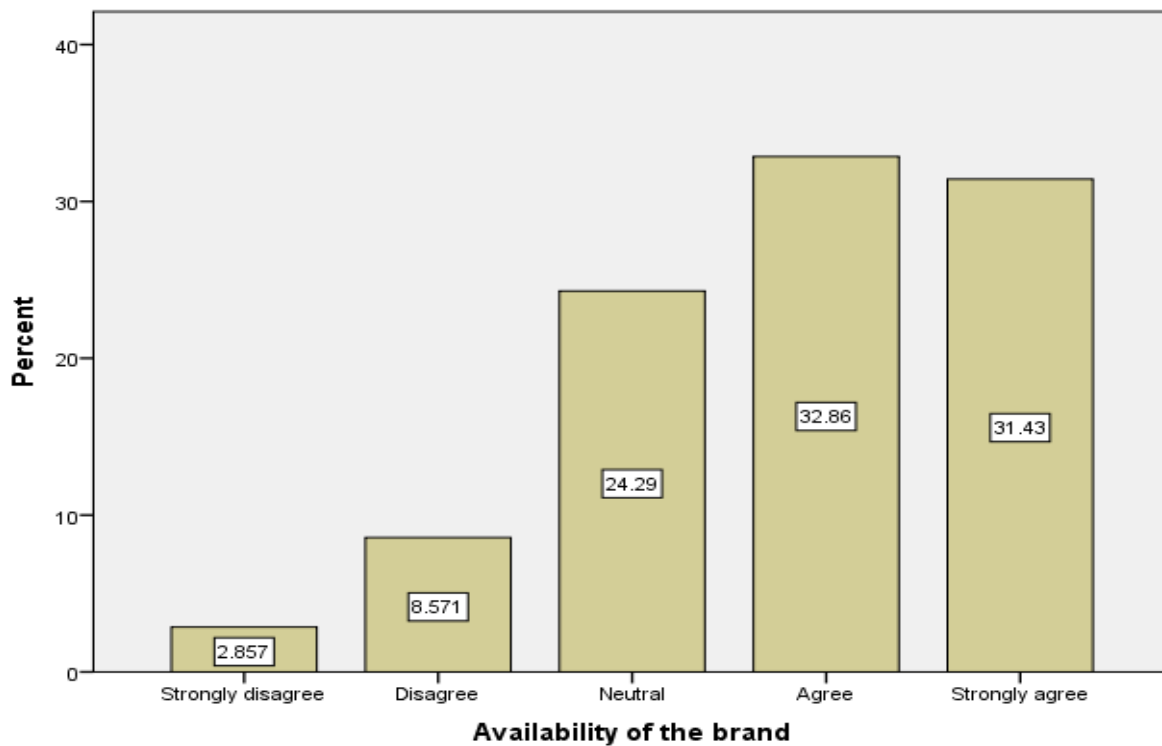


Figure 41: Availability of the brand influences my buying behaviour

Table 9: Summary of all the “importance” statement responses

	Total Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Total Agree (%)
A brand being on sale	13	20	67
Promotion directed to the brand	13	34	43
Price of the product	37	0	63
Advertisement	16	34	50
Celebrity wearing the brand	30	19	51
Well-known brand	16	20	64
Branded clothing that my family uses or buy for me	24	42	34
Brands that my friends/mates are wearing	38	26	36
Quality of the brand	7	13	80
Availability of the brand	12	24	64

4.4 SECTION C: OTHER FINDINGS

4.4.1 Descriptive statistics for “value response statements” by gender

Values are self-organising principles that guide our thoughts and actions and shape individual preferences and choices (Kaiser, 1997: 289). Table 10 shows the mean scores of the questionnaires dealing with the values that consumers seek when purchasing clothing brands. Most respondents agreed that uniqueness is the value that influences their purchasing decisions to buy clothing brands. This is supported by the highest mean scores of 3.94 (male) and 3.97 (female).

Table 10: Descriptive statistics for “value response statements” by gender
Group statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std deviation	Std error mean
An exciting life	Male	33	3.82	1.158	.202
	Female	37	3.43	1.144	.188
Competitiveness	Male	33	3.06	1.345	.234
	Female	37	3.30	1.199	.197
Uniqueness	Male	33	3.94	1.273	.222
	Female	37	3.97	1.140	.187
Social power and status	Male	33	3.33	1.362	.237
	Female	37	3.84	1.236	.203
Society’s equality	Male	33	3.30	1.015	.177
	Female	37	3.92	.986	.162
Formality of life structure	Male	33	3.58	1.032	.180
	Female	37	3.65	.857	.141
Observe social codes of behaviour	Male	33	3.36	1.055	.184
	Female	37	3.62	1.037	.170
Family and personal security	Male	33	3.57	1.439	.250
	Female	37	3.42	1.425	.234
Respect authority	Male	33	3.73	1.324	.230
	Female	37	3.09	1.305	.215
Caring for others	Male	33	3.54	1.508	.262
	Female	37	3.42	1.386	.228

4.4.2 Descriptive statistics for “perception statement responses” by gender

When deciding which products to purchase, consumers would have their preferences, which are developed in accordance with their perceptions towards the brand. The questions below in Table 11 were formulated to get the perceptions that Generation Y individuals have regarding the clothing brands. The responses with regard to the perception statement, as reflected in the table below, replicate a high degree of agreement from both males and females. The statement “I think branded clothes are of a high quality” has the highest mean score of 4.0303 for males and 3.3243 for females.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics for “perception statement responses” by gender

Group statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std deviation	Std error mean
Buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes	Male	33	2.0303	1.21153	.21090
	Female	37	2.0541	1.22352	.20115
Having branded clothes is very important to me	Male	33	2.5152	1.41689	.24665
	Female	37	2.1892	1.24360	.20445
Branded create my identity, it is part of who I am	Male	33	2.7273	1.42023	.24723
	Female	37	2.1351	1.43686	.23622
In my culture, people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class	Male	33	3.1515	1.48158	.25791
	Female	37	3.1081	1.30775	.21499
Price is not important when I buy clothes (I do not mind paying a lot of money for it)	Male	33	2.8182	1.37964	.24016
	Female	37	2.2162	1.41687	.23293
Buying branded clothing is a habit, I do not think a lot before buying a branded item	Male	33	2.8182	1.15798	.20158
	Female	37	2.1081	1.26455	.20789
I think branded clothes are of a high quality	Male	33	4.0303	1.04537	.18198
	Female	37	3.3243	1.1798	.19396
It is very important to me what others think of me	Male	33	2.8788	1.19262	.20761
	Female	37	2.7568	1.49825	.24631
I identify strongly with advertising about branded clothes. I want to be like people in the advert	Male	33	2.4242	1.09059	.18985
	Female	37	2.1892	1.15079	.18919
Wearing branded clothing makes me feel good about myself	Male	33	3.3333	1.19024	.20719
	Female	37	2.5676	1.23694	.20335

4.4.3 Descriptive statistics for “importance response statements” by gender

It is difficult for marketers in the clothing industry to know and understand why Generation Y consumers buy different brands. The importance response statements in these instances were formulated to attempt to get an understanding of what influence/motivate Generation Y individuals to buy clothing brands. The responses, as reflected in Table 12, indicate that the highest degree of agreement for both males (mean=4.3333) and females (mean=4.0541) was on the statement “Quality of the brand”. The lowest agreement was on the statement “Brands that my friends/mates are wearing” with a mean of 2.9091 for males and 3.0270 for females.

**Table 12: Descriptive statistics for “importance response statements”
Group statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std deviation	Std error mean
A brand being on sale	Male	33	3.6667	1.24164	.21614
	Female	37	3.8919	1.17340	.19291
Promotion directed to the brand	Male	33	3.5455	1.03353	.17991
	Female	37	3.4324	0.92917	.15276
Price of the product	Male	33	3.7273	0.91079	.15855
	Female	37	3.8378	1.09325	.17973
Advertisement	Male	33	3.6364	1.05529	.18370
	Female	37	3.4054	0.95625	.1721
Celebrity wearing the brand	Male	33	3.3636	1.34206	.23362
	Female	37	3.2703	1.36725	.22477
Well-known brand	Male	33	3.6061	1.17099	.20384
	Female	37	3.8333	1.02817	.17136
Branded clothes that my family used to buy for me	Male	33	3.2121	1.08275	.18848
	Female	37	3.2432	1.11568	.18342
Brands that my friends/mates are wearing	Male	33	2.9091	1.30776	.22765
	Female	37	3.0270	1.25801	.20682
Quality of the brand	Male	33	4.3333	0.81650	.14213
	Female	37	4.0541	1.07873	.17734
Availability of the brand	Male	33	3.6970	1.07485	.18711
	Female	37	3.9189	1.06402	.17492

This supports the literature review in Chapter 2 that branded clothing are perceived by consumers as being of good quality and quality is important to them when making the purchase. The observations of the male and female respondents for this study were different on the same statement ‘Celebrity wearing the brand’ with the highest standard deviation score of 1.34206 for the males and 1.36725 for the females. It may be concluded based on the Table 12 that quality, influence of peers and advertising/promotion play an important role on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y consumers.

4.5 INDEPENDENT-SAMPLE T-TEST AND ANOVA

This study made use of the independent- samples t-test to determine whether significant differences between males and female regarding values, perceptions and importance statements existed. Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2008: 237) explain that a t-test is used to compare the means of two groups with each other in order to determine if any statistical significant differences exist. For this study, independent-samples t-tests were conducted on all items of the value, perception and important statements to determine whether there were any significant differences between males and females. There was just one significant difference among the perception statements that of “It is very important what others think of me”. All the other responses were insignificant (see Appendix 2). For variables to be significant, the value under "Sig." has to be less than .05 and vice versa.

ANOVA is a general technique that can be used to test the hypothesis that the means among more than two groups are equal, under the assumption that the sampled populations are normally distributed (Silverman, 2000: 87). For this study, one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there were any significant differences among the ethnic groups regarding all the statements (see Appendix 3). Again, there was only one statement with a significant difference, which reads “It is very important what others think of me”. All the other responses were insignificant.

4.6 CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it may be concluded that Generation Y market is an important market in both the clothing industry and in the economy as a whole. Their purchasing behaviour and purchasing patterns are different from those of previous generations. What makes them a unique consumer segment is the fact that they are technologically advanced and like to search/gather information about new things in the market. Generation Y purchasing behaviours are influenced by a number of factors like family, friends, advertisement, style and other factors. It is important for manufactures, marketers and retailers to take these factors into consideration when preparing marketing plans and marketing strategies.

The following major conclusions can be drawn from the results:

- In all the cases of the value statements the respondents were more in agreement with these statements – see Table 7. This shows that during the purchasing process of Generation Y individuals much attention is paid to the value that comes with the brand or the value that the brand creates in the mind of the consumer. The value statement “uniqueness” had the highest agree/strongly agree response of 74% and “observe social codes of behaviour the lowest of 41%. Marketing managers can relate to these values when advertising or promoting their brands to this cohort, by so doing that they will be creating a good customer relationship that will last for a long time.
- Perceptions regarding the purchasing of branded clothing by Generation Y individuals provided interesting results, for example, 76% of the respondents indicated that they do not buy branded clothes because their friends wear branded clothes – see Table 8. With regard to the perception “In my culture people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class”, 32% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas 46% either agreed or strongly agreed. The perception regarding wearing “branded clothing because it makes them feel good”, no real conclusion could be drawn as 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 36% either agreed or strongly agreed. Sixty five percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the

statement that buying branded clothing is very important to them. It would be interesting to do more research on this aspect as it is contrary to the general believe why young people buy branded products.

- The importance statements of the questionnaires are summarised in Table 9. Quality, as an importance statement, had the highest agree/strongly agree response of 80% and the importance statement of “branded clothing that my family use or buy for me”, the lowest agree/strongly agree response of 34%. This shows that there are important factors that influence the purchasing behaviour of the Generation Y individuals during the purchasing process and those factors can include price of the brand, brand being on sale, brand being well known by the customers and quality. Marketing managers or brand owners must make sure that their products/brands continue to satisfy the needs of their loyal customers by meeting their expectations.

These results can only be used as a guideline for marketers and brand owners to meet the expectations of their consumers in the market by knowing what is important to them, which values are they looking for, what are the perceptions that they have regarding their favourite brands and also what motivate or influence them (consumer) to buy. Marketers must always know that quality plays an important role and influences consumers to buy and this has been proven in the results of this study.

CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the study were analysed and discussed in Chapter 4. In this last chapter of the study, Chapter 5, general conclusions are drawn based on the findings in Chapter 4. The conclusions provide opportunities to make recommendations to academics, marketers, and retailers for future research in the field of marketing, especially research concerning Generation Y consumers in South Africa, and it may also help marketers in the clothing industry to be more competitive.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Research limitations are defined as factors that are beyond the control of the researcher and may affect the findings/results of the study (Baron, 2008: 67). Although this research was carefully prepared, planned and aimed at reaching the research objective, the researcher is aware of the limitations and shortcomings that may arise.

Firstly, the sample of the studied population was only on Generation Y students in the Vaal Triangle area because it was easier for the researcher to collect data. Therefore, the exclusion of Generation Y consumers from other areas will make it difficult to generalise the findings (Martin & Turley, 2004: 470).

Furthermore, the use of students has limitations since the degree to which education affects their purchasing behaviour is uncertain. Moreover, the survey technique used in this study does not follow the consumers over time to determine how their brand choices change over time. The respondents in this study may also have different reactions towards brands if compared with others in the same age group, but with no higher formal education or who live in different parts of the country.

The above-mentioned limitations of the present study provide fertile ground for future studies.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Recommendations for the clothing industry

The findings of this study support the literature review discussed in Chapter 2 that the Generation Y consumer segment is different from other previous generations, especially in terms of brand preference, style and purchasing behaviours. It is recommended that marketers in the clothing industry communicate the benefits like quality and status when advertising their clothing brands. Generation Y consumers pay more attention to advertisement and promotions directed at them. It is important for firms to know and understand their target market needs, so that they can direct their promotions to them appropriately.

Generation Y males and females have different perceptions, motivations and values about clothing brands. Their purchasing decisions are not influenced by the same factors or things. It is recommended that firms and marketers targeting this group take these differences into account and develop appropriate marketing strategies that will address the needs of males and females separately.

The influence of reference groups and peers plays a significant role in the purchasing decisions of Generation Y consumers. It can be beneficial for marketers to take these reference group members into consideration when developing marketing strategies and communicating benefits of brands to this consumer segment. It is recommended that marketers should invest in continuous research and keep in contact with this consumer segment to check if their values, perceptions, motivations and importance of purchasing clothing brands have changed.

5.3.2 Recommendations for future research

- More research needs to be done in South Africa on clothing brand values, perceptions and importance/influences across all different races and cultures.

- To conduct a similar study where the sample of both genders represents all African languages proportionately. To develop an instrument that can help to measure and assess psychological aspects, such as perceptions, accurately.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion this study was based on the objectives of the research, the literature review, research methodology used, findings and recommendations made. It can be beneficial or it can be suggested that manufactures, marketers and retailers in the clothing industry take into account all the important factors discussed in this study as a reference to develop appropriate marketing strategies.

Technology can also be one of the important factors to be considered and used when targeting this consumer group. Generation Y consumers are technologically advanced and expect their suppliers and marketers to keep up with their expectations. Another benefit of technology is that it will enable them (marketers, manufactures and retailers) to reach this consumers segment more easily, be more competitive in the market. Advertisements and promotions must specifically target this consumer group. Generation y consumers feel comfortable to buy from retailers that show an understanding of their needs. Advertisements, promotions and campaigns targeting this group of customers should emphasise quality as it is the most important factor that Generation Y is looking for in a product. This was highlighted by the results in Chapter 4. Marketers in the clothing industry must also make sure that their advertisements attract the attention of the consumers and entertain them (Eadie *et al.*, 1999:105).

The findings of study may be summarised and concluded as follows:

Marketing managers and brand owners must put more emphasis on the value, perception and importance/motivations that consumers seek when purchasing clothing brands. Most of the results for these statements were positive where respondents agreed with the statements and that these values, perceptions and importance criteria have a crucial influence during the purchasing process.

Most of the results were not significant (see Appendix 2) but this does not mean that they do not contribute during the purchasing process, but it means it has not been proven to influence the Generation Y individuals to buy clothing brands. Hence the recommendation above to conduct more studies on these topics, namely, values, perceptions and importance, as this will help the marketing managers, brand owners and the retailers/clothing industry to know this group of consumers better. Findings of this study may help marketers who focus on designing marketing campaigns or selling products to Generation Y consumers.

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Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Importance of Clothing Brands on the Purchasing Decisions of Generation Y

Students in the Vaal Triangle Area

Contact Details

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PLEASE NOTE

This questionnaire must only be completed by North-West University and Vaal University of Technology students. All information will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purpose.

INSTRUCTION FOR COMPLETION:

Please answer the questions as objectively and honestly as possible.

Place a cross (x) in the space provided at each question which reflects your answer the most accurately.

Where asked for comments or to express your own opinion, keep answers short and to the point.

Please answer all questions, as this will provide more information to the researcher so that an accurate analysis and interpretation of data can be made.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

Section A: Biographical Data

Please place a cross (x) in the block that applies to you.

1 Age

17-20	
21-23	
27 and older	

2 Gender

Male	
Female	

3 Race

Black	
White	
Indian	
Coloured	
Other	

4 Academic year

First year	
Second year	
Third year	
Fourth year	
Honours	

5

Where do you stay?

Home	
University residence	
Flat	
Other	

Section B: Importance of Clothing Brands on the Purchasing Decisions of Generation Y Students.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

Please indicate your preference by marking with a cross (x) in the appropriate block provided.

1	Strongly Disagree	SD
2	Disagree	D
3	Neutral	N
4	Agree	A
5	Strongly Agree	SA

From the following ten brands, please choose one clothing brand you like most, please mark one answer.

	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
Other	

1. The following are some values people seek in regard to purchasing clothing brands. To indicate how important each value is to you, please mark one answer.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
A1: An exciting life					
A2 : competitiveness					
A3:uniqueness					
A4: Social power & status					
A5: Societies equality					
A6: Formality of life structure					
A7: Observe social codes of behaviour and ethics					
A8: Family and personal security					
A9:Respect authority					
A10 :Caring for others					

2. The following are perceptions of young adults regarding clothing brands. To indicate how important each value is to you, please mark one answer.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
B1: I buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes					
B2: Having branded clothes is very important to me					
B3: Branded clothes create my identity: it is part of who I am					
B4: In my culture people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class					
B5: Price is not important when I buy branded clothes (I don't mind paying a lot of money for it)					
B6: Buying branded clothing is a habit: I do not need to think a lot before buying a branded item					
B7: I think branded clothes are of very high quality					
B8: It is very important to me what others think of me					
B9: I identify strongly with advertising about branded clothes: I want to be like the people in the advert					
B10: Wearing branded clothing makes me feel good about myself					

3. The following are important to young adults when purchasing clothing brands. To indicate how important each value is to you, please mark one answer

	SD	D	N	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
C1: Brand being on sale					
C2: Promotion directed to the brand					
C3: Price of the product					
C4: Advertisement					
C5:Celebrity wearing the brands					
C6: Well-known brands.					
C7: branded clothes that my family used to buy me.					
C8: Brand that my friends/mates are wearing					
C9: Quality of the brand					
C10:Availability of the brand					

APPENDIX 2 – Independent-Samples T-Test statistics

Independent-Samples T-Test for differences of gender regarding “value response statements”

t-test for equality of means			
	t	df	sig.(2tailed)
An exciting life Equal variance assumed	1.400	68	.168
Equal variance not assumed	1.399	68.893	.166
Competitiveness Equal variance assumed	-.779	68	.439
Equal variance not assumed	-.773	64.589	.442
Uniqueness Equal variance assumed	0.71	68	.944
Equal variance not assumed	0.71	64.703	.944
Social power and status Equal variance assumed	-1.625	68	.109
Equal variance not assumed	-1.616	65.082	.111
Society’s equality Equal variance assumed	-2.779	68	.007
Equal variance not assumed	-2.794	65.591	.007
Formality of life structure Equal variance assumed	-.323	68	.748
Equal variance not assumed	-.319	64.469	.751
Observe social codes Equal variance assumed	-1.031	68	.306
Equal variance not assumed	-1.029	66.805	.307
Family and social security Equal variance assumed	-.241	68	.810
Equal variance not assumed	-.241	66.939	.810
Respect authority Equal variance assumed	-.971	68	.335
Equal variance not assumed	-.970	66.864	.335
Caring for others Equal variance assumed	-1.300	68	.98
Equal variance not assumed	-1.294	65.403	.200

Independent-Samples T-Test for differences of gender regarding“perception response statements”

		Levene’s test for equality of variance		t-test for equality means		
		f	sig	t	df	sig
Buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes	Equal variances assumed	.309	.508	-.081	68	.935
	Equal variances not assumed			-.081	67.24	.935
Having branded clothes is very important to me	Equal variances assumed	2.309	.133	1.025	68	.309
	Equal variances not assumed			1.017	64.157	.313
Branded create my identity, it is part of who I am	Equal variances assumed	.012	.913	1.731	68	.088
	Equal variances not assumed			1.732	67.265	.088
In my culture, people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class	Equal variances assumed	.917	.342	130	68	.897
	Equal variances not assumed			.129	64.318	.898
Price is not important when I buy clothes (I do not mind paying a lot of money for it)	Equal variances assumed	.033	.855	1.796	68	.077
	Equal variances not assumed			1.799	67.459	.076
Buying branded clothing is a habit, I do not think a lot before buying a branded item	Equal variances assumed	.951	.333	2.440	68	.017
	Equal variances not assumed			2.452	67.947	.017
I think branded clothes are of a high quality	Equal variances assumed	.935	.337	2.636	68	.010
	Equal variances not assumed			2.654	67.998	.010
It is very important to me what others think of me	Equal variances assumed	6.481	.013	.374	68	.710
	Equal variances not assumed			.379	67.177	.706

Independent-Samples T-Test for differences of gender regarding“importance response statements”

		Levene's test for equality of variance		t-test for equality means		
		f	sig	t	df	sig
A brand being on sale	Equal variances assumed	.000	.993	-.780	68	.438
	Equal variances not assumed			-.777	66.038	.440
Promotion directed to the brand	Equal variances assumed	.191	.663	.482	68	.631
	Equal variances not assumed			.479	64.822	.634
Price of the product	Equal variances assumed	1.491	.226	-.457	68	.649
	Equal variances not assumed			-.461	67.705	.646
Advertisement	Equal variances assumed	.893	.348	.961	68	.340
	Equal variances not assumed			.955	65.030	.343
Celebrity wearing the brand	Equal variances assumed	.001	.976	.288	68	.774
	Equal variances not assumed			.288	67.359	.774
Well-known brand	Equal variances assumed	.758	.387	-.858	67	.394
	Equal variances not assumed			-.853	63.991	.397
Branded clothes that my family used to buy for me	Equal variances assumed	.002	.966	-.118	68	.906
	Equal variances not assumed			-.118	67.498	.906
Brands that my friends/mates are wearing	Equal variances assumed	.943	.335	-.384	68	.702
	Equal variances not assumed			-.383	66.409	.703

APPENDIX 3 – One-way ANOVA statistics

One-way ANOVA for different ethnic groups on the value statements

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
An exciting life	Between Groups	4.474	2	2.237	1.701	.190
	Within Groups	88.112	67	1.315		
	Total	92.586	69			
Competitiveness	Between Groups	3.327	2	1.664	1.039	.359
	Within Groups	107.258	67	1.601		
	Total	110.586	69			
Uniqueness	Between Groups	.197	2	.099	.067	.935
	Within Groups	98.445	67	1.469		
	Total	98.643	69			
Social power and status	Between Groups	2.516	2	1.258	.725	.488
	Within Groups	116.284	67	1.736		
	Total	118.800	69			
Society's equality	Between Groups	1.124	2	.562	.505	.606
	Within Groups	74.647	67	1.114		
	Total	75.771	69			
Formality of life structure	Between Groups	.459	2	.229	.256	.775
	Within Groups	60.127	67	.897		
	Total	60.586	69			
Observe social codes of behaviour and ethics	Between Groups	1.026	2	.513	.461	.632
	Within Groups	74.474	67	1.112		
	Total	75.500	69			
Family and personal security	Between Groups	.733	2	.367	.177	.838
	Within Groups	138.709	67	2.070		
	Total	139.443	69			
Respect authority	Between Groups	1.717	2	.858	.490	.615
	Within Groups	117.269	67	1.750		
	Total	118.986	69			
Caring for others	Between Groups	1.661	2	.831	.387	.681
	Within Groups	143.782	67	2.146		
	Total	145.443	69			

One-way ANOVA for different ethnic groups on the perception statements

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Buy branded clothes because my friends wear branded clothes	Between Groups	1.953	2	.976	.661	.520
	Within Groups	98.919	67	1.476		
	Total	100.871	69			
Having branded clothes is very important to me	Between Groups	1.521	2	.761	.424	.656
	Within Groups	120.250	67	1.795		
	Total	121.771	69			
Branded create my identity, it is part of who I am	Between Groups	1.722	2	.861	.403	.670
	Within Groups	143.264	67	2.138		
	Total	144.986	69			
In my culture, people who wear branded clothes are seen as successful, rich and high class	Between Groups	8.339	2	4.169	2.262	.112
	Within Groups	123.504	67	1.843		
	Total	131.843	69			
Price is not important when I buy clothes (I do not mind paying a lot of money for it)	Between Groups	5.937	2	2.968	1.489	.233
	Within Groups	133.563	67	1.993		
	Total	139.500	69			
Buying branded clothing is a habit, I do not think a lot before buying a branded item	Between Groups	3.252	2	1.262	1.028	.363
	Within Groups	106.020	67	1.582		
	Total	109.271	69			
I think branded clothes are of a high quality	Between Groups	3.292	2	1.646	1.219	.302
	Within Groups	90.480	67	1.350		
	Total	90.771	69			
It is very important to me what others think of me	Between Groups	12.969	2	6.484	3.824	.027
	Within Groups	113.617	67	1.696		
	Total	126.586	69			
I identify strongly with advertising about branded clothes. I want to be like people in the advert	Between Groups	4.181	2	2.091	1.697	.191
	Within Groups	82.519	67	1.232		
	Total	86.700	69			
Wearing branded clothing makes me feel good about myself	Between Groups	6.707	2	3.354	2.162	.123
	Within Groups	103.936	67	1.551		
	Total	110.643	69			

One-way ANOVA for different ethnic groups on the importance statements

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A brand being on sale	Between Groups	2.730	2	1.365	.942	.395
	Within Groups	97.056	67	1.449		
	Total	99.786	69			
Promotion directed to the brand	Between Groups	.595	2	.297	.307	.737
	Within Groups	64.891	67	.969		
	Total	65.486	69			
Price of the product	Between Groups	2.968	2	1.484	1.488	.233
	Within Groups	66.818	67	.997		
	Total	69.786	69			
Advertisement	Between Groups	.923	2	.461	.451	.639
	Within Groups	68.563	67	1.023		
	Total	69.486	69			
Celebrity wearing the brand	Between Groups	2.701	2	1.351	.739	.481
	Within Groups	122.384	67	1.827		
	Total	125.086	69			
Well-known brand	Between Groups	.771	2	.386	.314	.731
	Within Groups	80.997	66	1.227		
	Total	81.768	68			
Branded clothes that my family used to buy for me	Between Groups	1.409	2	.705	.583	.561
	Within Groups	80.933	67	1.208		
	Total	82.343	69			
Brands that my friends/mates are wearing	Between Groups	.169	2	.085	.051	.951
	Within Groups	111.774	67	1.668		
	Total	111.943	69			
Quality of the brand	Between Groups	1.905	2	.953	1.018	.367
	Within Groups	62.681	67	.936		
	Total	64.586	69			
Availability of the brand	Between Groups	2.201	2	1.101	.965	.386
	Within Groups	76.384	67	1.140		
	Total	78.586	69			