South African millennials' propensity to adopt voluntary simplistic clothing purchasing and consumption choices

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DISSERTATION

M. CONSUMER SCIENCE (CLOTHING RETAIL MANAGEMENT)

Supervisor: Prof AC Erasmus

MAY 2018

Suid Afrikaanse millenniërs se neiging om vrywillig hulle kleding aankoop- en verbruikspatrone af te skaal

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VERHANDELING

M. VERBRUIKERSWETENSKAP (KLEDING KLEINHANDELBESTUUR)

Studieleier: Prof AC Erasmus

MEI 2018

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BY

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

M. CONSUMER SCIENCE (CLOTHING RETAIL MANAGEMENT)

In the

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Consumer and Food Science

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Prof AC Erasmus

MAY 2018

DECLARATION

I, **Prishaniee Naidoo**, declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree of **M in Consumer Science: Clothing Retail Management** at the University of Pretoria, is my own work, and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution. I do confirm that all reference material in the dissertation has been duly acknowledged.

PRISHANIEE NAIDOO

MAY 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the duration of this dissertation multiple people have motivated, encouraged and assisted me. I am truly grateful to these people and would therefore like to thank them.

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof Alet Erasmus for her continued faith in me, her support, her constant guidance and encouragement. If it was not for her help throughout this process my completion of this dissertation would not be possible. Thank you for believing in me.

I would also like to thank my parents Natasha and Nesan, for their constant encouragement and motivation throughout this process. Their faith in me and my ability to do this has been extraordinary.

To my siblings Karushka and Sashiel, for always being there when I needed a break or some laughter. Thank you for always knowing how to make me feel better and push me to achieve my best.

To my family and friends, who always enquired about my Masters and encouraged, supported and motivated me throughout. Thank you, I am truly grateful for you all.

To the University of Pretoria, thank you for accepting me and allowing me the opportunity to do my Master's degree at this institution.

ABSTRACT

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Supervisor: Prof AC Erasmus

Keywords: Voluntary Simplicity, Voluntary Simplifiers, sustainability, apparel industry, clothing consumption, The Rational Choice Theory, Millennial, South African Millennials, material simplicity.

The study investigated South African Millennials' propensity to consume in a Voluntary Simplistic manner taking into consideration selected dimensions of Voluntary simplicity as defined in literature namely; material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination and human scale. Demographic differences among Millennials were also considered. A survey was conducted in Tshwane, Gauteng, as Tshwane potentially provided access to a high population of Millennials, which made data collection easier. Data collection and coding of questionnaires were done by trained fieldworkers, after which a professional research company captured the data. Data analysis, which was done under supervision of a statistician, consisted of descriptive statistics, Chi square- and post hoc tests.

The study confirmed that South African Millennials are to an extent Voluntary Simplistic in terms of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. These Millennials indicated a fairly strong propensity toward material simplicity and ecological awareness but a moderate or weak propensity towards self-determination and human scale. Previous studies indicated that willingness to purchase in a Voluntary Simplistic manner is affected by demographic characteristics such as gender, education level, household income and population group. Therefore, the relevance of demographic characteristics formed part of the investigation of Millennials' clothing purchase decisions.

This study found that population group and gender could be good predictors of the nature of Millennials' purchasing decisions, further indicating that females and the black population group are

more likely to consume and purchase clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic manner. Further indications are that Millennials are fairly materially simplistic and frugal in terms of their clothing purchase and consumption practices. When confronted with a scenario where they were given the option of extra money to spend on a special outfit, the majority of the sample indicated that they would rather spend their money on something else than to upgrade their current outfit. This indicates a tendency towards frugal consumption and a change from materialism towards material simplicity. While the Millennial cohort is a highly lucrative market due to their undeniable purchasing power, marketers and brand managers should take cognisance of these consumers' preferences and the type of products that they are interested in. Use of social media, which they are very confident in using, could be optimised to entice them to buy local merchandise and to enhance store experiences. Topics related to the way in which Millennials buy clothing and the factors that they regard important when purchasing clothing deserves further investigation in order to gain a better understanding of these consumers who are central to our economy in the future.

OPSOMMING

Suid Afrikaanse millenniërs se neiging om vrywillig hulle kledingaankoop- en verbruikspatrone af te skaal

deur

PRISHANIEE NAIDOO

Studieleier: Prof AC Erasmus

Sleutelwoorde: Vrywillige eenvoud, vrywillige simplifiers, volhoubaarheid, kledingindustrie, kledingverbruik, Rasionele Keuseteorie, Millenniërs, Suid-Afrikaanse Millenniërs, materiële eenvoud

Hierdie studie het Suid-Afrikaanse millenniërs se geneigdheid tot vrywillige eenvoud ten opsigte van hulle kledingverbruik ondersoek in terme van sekere dimensies van die konstruk "Vrywillige Eenvoud", soos wat dit in die literatuur gedefinieer word, naamlik: materiële eenvoud, ekologiese bewustheid, selfbeskikking en menslike skaal. Demografiese verskille tussen millenniërs is ook in ag geneem. 'n Opname is uitgevoer in Tshwane, Gauteng, omdat hierdie area potensieel toegang tot 'n digte bevolking millenniërs gebied het wat data insameling vergemaklik het. Data-insameling en die kodering van vraelyste is deur opgeleide veldwerkers gedoen, waarna 'n professionele navorsingsonderneming die kodering hanteer het. Data-analise is gedoen onder toesig van 'n statistikus en het beskrywende statistiek, Chi-kwadraat toetse en post-hoc toetse ingesluit.

Bevindinge toon dat Suid-Afrikaanse millenniërs tot 'n mate vrywillig simplisties is in terme van die dimensies van die konstruk soos aangedui. Hierdie millenniërs het 'n redelike sterk neiging tot materiële eenvoud sowel as ekologiese bewustheid getoon, maar hulle neiging tot selfbeskikking en menslike skaal is matig tot traag. Demografiese eienskappe deel gevorm van die ondersoek na Suid-Afrikaanse millenniërs se kledingaankoopbesluite omdat vorige studies toon dat eienskappe soos geslag, opleidingspeil, huishoudelike inkomste en populasiegroep, verbruikers se neiging tot vrywillige eenvoud beïnvloed.

Die studie het bevind dat geslag en populasiegroep goeie voorspellers kan wees van Suid-Afrikaanse millenniërs se aankoopbesluite, en dat dames en die swart populasiegroep meer geneig is om vrywillige

eenvoud te demonstreer tydens kleding aankope en -verbruik. Verder is gevind dat millenniers redelik materieël simplisties en spaarsamig is wat hulle kledingaankope en -verbruik betref. Toe hulle gekonfronteer is met 'n scenario waar hulle meer geld kon kry vir 'n uitrusting vir 'n spesiale geleentheid, het die meerderheid van die steekproef aangedui dat hulle die geld liewer op 'n ander noodsaaklikheid sou spandeer as om die uitrusting op te gradeer. Dit dui op 'n neiging tot spaarsamigheid en 'n verandering van materialisme na vereenvoudigde verbruik. Terwyl die millenniërs 'n baie waardevolle teikengroep vir die ekonomie is as gevoelg van hulle potensiële koopkrag, behoort bemarkers en handelsnaambestuurders kennis te neem van hierdie mark se voorkeure en die tipe produkte waarin hulle belangstel. Die gebruik van sosiale media waarmee hulle vertroud is, kan geoptimaliseer word om hulle aan te moedig om plaaslike produkte te koop en om winkelervarings te verbeter. Onderwerpe wat veband hou met millenniërs se kledingaankope en hulle voorkeure verdien verdere aandag in navorsing om 'n beter begrip te ontwikkel van hierdie groep verbruikers wat sentraal is tot die ekonomie van die toekoms.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general introduction to the study including the theoretical background of the study, the research problem, as well as the aim and main objectives. The structure of the dissertation is also presented.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Voluntary Simplicity is the act of living a life that is inwardly and outwardly simple, the yardstick of "simplicity" being determined by one's own perception thereof. It consists of the de-cluttering of life in regards to material possessions and is geared towards achieving a greater good for humanity, starting with one's own existence (Eglin & Mitchell, 1977). Described by Leonard-Barton (1981), as "…*the degree to which an individual selects a lifestyle intended to maximise his/her control over daily activities and to minimize his/her consumption and dependency*", Voluntary Simplicity has drawn considerable interest in scholarly research within multiple disciplines, in recent decades. While philosophers regard Voluntary Simplicity as the demonstration of an honourable, wise lifestyle through fundamentals such as self-restraint, frugality and simplicity (Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009), those who adopt a Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle abandon high consumption and usually express disdain towards high income levels (Walther & Sandlin, 2011). Most significantly, the motivation behind Voluntary Simplicity is either to seek quality in life, or to respond to social and environmental concerns (Walther & Sandlin, 2011; Dholakia & Levy, 1987), save money, and/or curb consumption (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016). For example, the decision to curb clothing consumption would directly affect the expanse as well as frequency of clothing purchases a consumer makes, ultimately reducing money spent and resulting in mindful clothing choices and purchases. This decision could also have a direct influence on the type of brands, quality, fabric type and fabric origin, as well as environmental factors relating to clothing production, manufacturing as well as distribution processes.

People who adopt Voluntary Simplistic practices, typically prefer a low consumption lifestyle. When concerned about ecological responsibility, consumers would typically choose to be self-sufficient, inter alia arguing that "*small is beautiful*" and "*less is more*". These consumers therefore view purchasing in a more complicated manner compared to their counterparts (Taylor, 2017; Shama, 1985). In today's age, which is defined as a global economy, consumer practices are largely undermining the ecological foundations of life particularly in regards to the obstinate inequalities of wealth, as well as the widespread occurrences of cultural dissatisfaction. Moreover, people are increasingly discovering that consumerism (more so in reference to excessive consumption) cannot satisfy the innate human desire for meaning. Today, humankind is challenged to reimagine the good life, tell new tales of what prosperity should be, and get to work predicting and building a new world within boundaries of the old world (Simplicity Institute, 2017). Gambrel and Cafaro (2009) associates Voluntary Simplicity with thriving individuals, growth of societies, individual freedom, increased knowledge, living meaningfully, as well as the preservation and protection of non-humans. In essence, Voluntary Simplicity is associated with pertinent core values such as material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, human scale and personal growth (Shama, 1985; Leonard-Barton, 1981).

The principle of Voluntary Simplistic consumption is however not yet fully explored and understood, specifically with regard to specific product categories. The South African apparel market has been on the decline for several years, yet has interestingly witnessed a spike in terms of international brands investing in the country, resulting in an increase in job creation. Investment within the apparel industry amounted to more than R1.5 billion in 2015, with approximately 90,000 people being formally employed within the apparel sector. This number had been on the decline for approximately twelve years, however a turn of events took place in 2015, resulting in the advent of more than 1,000 jobs within the apparel manufacturing sector (Meer, 2016). Nevertheless, in the current economy and with South Africa's unfortunate current junk status, a significant decline has re-emerged (Statistics South Africa, 2016). This decline and turmoil within the economy will inevitably affect South African consumers' clothing consumption and purchasing patterns – an occurrence most likely to be witnessed within the Millennial age cohort, who are recorded to possess the greatest market share and spending power (Stein, 2013).

Resultantly, various aspects of the concept of Voluntary Simplicity have recently been explored in a South African context in recent studies as part of a research focus in the Department of Consumer Science at the University of Pretoria. These examinations included a study that focused on environmentally friendly purchases amongst male consumers (Taljaard, 2015); an investigation of the values and beliefs amongst

young female consumers and their clothing disposal habits (Meyer, 2013); along with an investigation of young females' environmentally friendly clothing purchases (Momberg, 2011). These studies have broadly confirmed an interest in, but also lack of information with regard to the purchasing behaviour as well as the environmental concern of a generational cohort that forms a very important part of the South African economy at present, namely the so-called Millennials. Simultaneously, much has been reported about this cohort's materialistic behaviour, (Stein, 2013), and reports of Millennials' lifestyles, and associated spend thrift are plentiful (Martins, 2014; Stein, 2013).

Clothing retail is an imperative part of the South African economy, and a sizeable creator of direct and indirect employment, as well as a substantial contributor to government funding (ncrfsa.org, 2017). However, in the past few months, clothing retailers have experienced the negative effects of the economy in terms of the deceleration of household consumption (Goko, 2017). Interestingly, South African consumers are becoming increasingly fashion conscious, however the sole availability of clothing from previous seasons, coupled with retail stores' inability to stay abreast of major international fashion trends, results in frustration being felt by fashion conscious consumers. This is especially true for Millennials who are well-connected via the Internet and who spend a considerable amount of time browsing the Internet or social media. Consequently, these consumers are well-versed in the advent of new and novel trends, which are shifting at a rapid pace (Meer, 2016; Stein, 2013). The influence of the Internet plays a significant role in what these consumers purchase and which trends will sell in stores (Meer, 2016; Stein, 2013; Martins, 2014). As a result, it is imperative that brands and retailers elect to produce what is in-demand in smaller quantities, as opposed to delivering large quantities of goods that they are doubtful over. Most importantly, retailers are required to be agile in their approach to delivering goods that will meet their customers' wishes (Taylor, 2017; Meer, 2016).

The Millennial generation has drawn the interest of researchers in recent years, as this is by far the largest generation to date in the world in population size (Stein, 2013) and it differs notably from previous generations, reflecting the typical values of people in this era (Martins, 2014). Millennials are characterised as having a unique approach to consumption, as evidenced in the resultant closure of numerous businesses, which displayed apathy towards the behaviours and lifestyle choices of this distinct generation (Taylor, 2017). It would therefore be insightful to gain empirical evidence of the buying and consumption behaviour of South African Millennials in a product category that all can associate with, in the context of an emerging market that is quite volatile at present due to prevailing socio-economic and political conditions. The conditions may not be conducive to the typical extravagant behaviour that this

generational cohort is typically associated with elsewhere in the world (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Consequently, explicit evidence is required in the determination of Millennial's adoption of Voluntary Simplistic clothing choices.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The world of fashion coupled with the textile industry have drawn considerable attention in media and literature not only for their contribution towards environmental degradation and subsequent efforts to reduce waste but also for their role in promoting sustainable production practices. On the one hand, the textile industry is accused of contributing towards the degradation of the environment, including an over utilisation of natural resources (Sweeney, 2015; Meyer, 2013; Wallander, 2012). For example, a local study among South African clothing manufacturers reported that more than half of the waste produced by the textile manufacturers end up in landfills (Meyer, 2013). The industry is thus currently confronted with multiple challenges; including a reduction of pollution, fair treatment of workers, and the adoption of environmentally-friendly manufacturing and colouring methods (Kawana, 2017:50; Sweeney, 2015). The dawn of of an emergence of "green *fashion"* is therefore rousing (De Beer, 2016; Business Partners, 2014) although the initiative has failed to garner significant momentum to date (Taljaard, 2015).

Further accusations involve consumers and their clothing consumption practices – more so the behaviour of fashion conscious consumers who are not necessarily enthused by wearing clothing beyond a particular season (Martins, 2014). Fashion, or more specifically, apparel consumption encompasses the use, maintenance and disposal of fashion items, which indisputably contributes to excessive waste if garments are discarded while they are still useful. Such practices are associated with factors that instigate waste, which forms part of the discussion around causes of climate/ environmental change (Taljaard, 2015; Meyer, 2013; Hiller-Connell, 2010). Millennials, i.e. an age group currently aged below 40 years and who form a vibrant part of the economy (Martins, 2014; Stein, 2013) are reported to be particularly fashion conscious (Eastman, Iyer & Thomas, 2013; Stein, 2013). This generation presently has higher disposable incomes than their counterparts and therefore possess the spending power that equates to more luxurious consumption practices - specifically in regard to clothing and fashion items (Stein, 2013). Millennials are described as culturally diverse, technology orientated, and possess a sense of community - including a willingness to partake in community upliftment initiatives, as well as display support of businesses that aim to enhance communities. It is therefore quite surprising that former studies have found Millennials as not being typically concerned with issues concerning the environment (Eastman *et*

al., 2013; Lodes, 2010). This is unfortunate in terms of the promotion of Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour that in essence promotes a more modest and responsible lifestyle.

Previous studies concerning consumers' need and willingness to adopt a simpler lifestyle in support of concerns for the future of our planet, were mostly done in First World contexts (Wolmarans, 2011; Mouton, 2001). Those that have focused on apparel as a product category, have mostly focused on more developed apparel markets (Martins, 2014), although not necessarily focusing on the behaviour of the Millennial generation that is particularly important due to their prominence in the market place. Little is therefore known about this generation in South Africa with its plural society and unique economic conditions. The dilemma is particularly intricate, because in beleaguered conditions, consumers do not necessarily reduce their consumption in all product categories. Often, they divert to more affordable or more economical imported clothing item or purchase locally produced goods to satisfy their needs, rather than to reduce consumption. Millennials have also been described by some researchers as less brand orientated or brand loyal than previous generations (Martins, 2014; Lodes, 2010). This type of behaviour conflicts with what Voluntary Simplistic practices entail and what "green" /sustainable consumption endorses.

Evidence of South African Millennials' stance towards Voluntary Simplistic behaviour is limited, particularly in regards to clothing and fashion. To establish an effective approach in retail and media to reach this very influential consumer group it would be insightful to have a better understanding of their clothing purchase and consumption behaviour and how this influences their allocation of money when making clothing decisions. Furthermore, one cannot assume that the clothing behaviour of Millennials as an age cohort as a collective is consistent across the spectrum and thus, possible demographic differences will be investigated to provide a more specific insight concerning the clothing behaviour of this market segment.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study makes a theoretical contribution towards a better understanding of Millennial consumers from a South African perspective - a context that has yet to be explored to date, creating the impression that the above-mentioned issues are mostly confined to Western societies (Wolmarans, 2011; Mouton, 2001). The study focuses on consumers' propensity to adopt a Voluntary Simplistic approach in terms of their clothing purchase and consumption practices, admitting that South Africa – especially urban areas -

possesses many characteristics that are not significantly different to circumstances in First World countries (De Beer, 2016; Wolmarans, 2011; Mouton, 2001), i.e. opportunities that are conducive for over consumption. This creates doubt about whether the behaviour of South African consumers differs from consumers in First World countries that have been in the spot light in recent years. Extant research describes South African consumers as fairly materialistic, particularly certain market segments such as the "Black Diamonds", and the increased availability of imported, global brand names further encourages overconsumption as opposed to modest consumption (Wolmarans, 2011). Many enterprises and international brands that are presently available in South Africa have also been witnessed promoting so-called *"green fashion"* (De Beer, 2016), which refers to consuming products which are ethically produced and have a low environmental impact (Kawana, 2017:50).

Voluntary Simplicity *per se*, entails much more, and has not yet received the attention it deserves. Research on South African Millennials' purchase and consumption practices will aid in the understanding of future generations' purchases and consumption behaviour (Duffett, 2015), especially since this generation is likely to greatly impact its offspring by virtue of consumer socialisation. Millennials are a very important market segment because this cohort represents the parents of future generations who, by example, will influence their children through consumer socialisation (Taylor, 2017; Stein, 2013). Millennials are known to use technology and digital communication methods daily, resulting in heightened self-awareness and global cognizance (Taylor, 2017; Stein, 2013). Supporting evidence showcasing the same attributes in the South African context is lacking. Their consumption patterns, as well as the way in which they select products such as clothing, will give insight into how devoted future generations could be in selecting more modest consumption patterns (Taylor, 2017; Stein, 2013). This research will provide empirical evidence that can be used by retailers to more appropriately inform and subtly educate a prominent consumer market segment in terms of specific products and brands in the market place, which will ultimately dictate the way in which their children purchase and consume products (Taylor, 2017; Martins, 2014).

1.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study investigates Millennial consumers' propensity to purchase apparel in a Voluntary Simplistic manner by applying the rational perspective to confirm how steadfast they are through confrontation with several distinctly different purchase and consumption choices. The Rational Choice Theory (RCT) asserts that humans are rational beings who make careful, calculated and informed decisions, and that

humans (consumers) understand the value of their decisions (Babin & Harris, 2013:250; Solomon, 2007). The theory distinguishes two distinct components, namely that consumers steadily and meticulously gather and integrate all information, including previous knowledge and experiences of a product and the possible outcomes. Secondly, it assumes that a consumer evaluates the possible outcomes of a purchase decision consciously (Jackson, 2005), evaluating possible outcomes with related pros and cons of each outcome (Solomon, 2007; Van Hamersveld & De Bont, 2007:25). Theoretically, a rational individual will choose the outcome that will lead to the greatest satisfaction or reward, taking social approval into account (Scott, 2000). Equally, consumers avoid outcomes that could lead to social disapproval (Jackson, 2005).

The acuity of rationality differs between individuals (Babin & Harris, 2013:251). While some decisions necessitate the individual to go through a complex process to reach a final decision, many decisions are impulsive and do not entail prior planning. When a consumer has too many choices or options to choose from, they subconsciously revert to their emotions to act as a problem-solving technique to make a suitable decision. It is these emotional associations that affect a consumer's decision-making, especially when confronted with frequent choice options (Van Hamersveld & De Bont, 2007:485). Theoretically then, if a consumer (Millennial) could be influenced to rationally consider their purchase decisions and consumption behaviours, integrating the environmental consequences on an emotional level, their purchase and consumption behaviour would evoke less critique from environmentalists.

1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate South African Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchases and consumption behaviour in a South African context, and to verify the findings in terms of this generational cohort's predilection towards clothing expenditure.

The following research objectives directed the investigation:

1. To distinguish Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption behaviour in terms of selected dimensions - a scale that was inspired by, and adapted from the work of Leonard-Barton (1981), namely:

    1.1 material simplicity

    1.2 ecological awareness

    1.3 self-determination

    1.4 human scale

2. To discriminate and describe *demographic differences* in Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption as per the aforementioned dimensions, specifically:

    2.1 gender differences

    2.2 income differences

    2.3 level of education differences

    2.4 population differences

3. To associate Millennials' propensity towards *material simplicity*, one of the dimensions of the measurement scale, in terms of their propensity to spend money on clothing when challenged with different financial scenarios, namely:

When they unexpectedly have more money to spend on a specific clothing purchase, would they:

    3.1   Purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit

    3.2   Opt an alternative, for another more expensive outfit

    3.3   Keep to the original outfit and save the money

    3.4   Keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else

    3.5   Have a unique garment designed and custom made

The first objective aims to investigate the extent to which Millennials are Voluntary Simplistic in terms of specific dimensions of the phenomenon, namely material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination and the human scale, using an adapted version of a scale that was designed by Leonard-Barton, 1981). The second objective aims to investigate possible demographic differences such as, income, education, gender and population differences among Millennials which might influence their clothing purchasing - and consumption patterns. The third objective aims to understand the choices

Millennials will make in the event they have additional money to spend on an outfit for a special occasion, as an indication of the extent to which Millennials are inclined to purchase in a Voluntary Simplistic manner when money is not an issue and/ or readily available, accordingly verifying their "material simplicity" as indicated in Objective 1.1.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

A cross sectional research design was used to report on the clothing consumption practices of Millennial consumers within a particular period (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2016:156; Salkind, 2014:329). The study was quantitative in nature and was conducted on an exploratory basis in order to capture and observe the purchasing habits of Millennial consumers with regards to the concept of Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption behaviour which has attracted the attention of multiple scholars in recent times, and which is highly relevant in terms of the current South African context, considering the textile industry as well as retail sales.

1.6.2 Research methodology

Quantitative data was collected for the study by means of an exploratory survey design. This was conducted in a single phase, using a paper-based survey that was completed by distributing questionnaires by trained fieldworkers across Tshwane, for voluntary completion. All parties involved were willing respondents.

1.6.2.1 Study area

The study was conducted within the Tshwane region in Gauteng. It involved Millennial consumers who lived in suburbs across Tshwane. This was of importance as the majority of working class people who would fall into the Millennial population group, makes up 71,9% of the total population of Tshwane. The study was conducted within this area by virtue of holding a growing population with a total population of 2.9 million people. The Tshwane region also has a relatively equal male to female ratio, making it the ideal conditions for recruiting the correct sample for the study. Although the sampling process was not entirely purposive, a decision was taken to incorporate and analyse all useful questionnaires. Time (the requirement to complete the study within a two-year period) and financial considerations (the occurrence of limited financial resources) were pertinent in considering the study area (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

1.6.2.2 Sample and sampling

Tshwane is known to have approximately 2.9 million people who are working class or of working age (Statistics South Africa, 2011). This is beneficial to this study (particularly since it focuses on South African Millennials), principally due to the time and financial constraints related to this investigation that made it arbitrary to include the whole Millennial population of South Africa. Thus, using Tshwane, which has a sizeable representation of Millennials, assured a valid perspective on the clothing consumption patterns of South African Millennials. The aim was to collect as many usable questionnaires as possible within a specific period of time. Convenient sampling combined with snowball sampling was used. The questionnaire was initially pre-tested and timed before final data collection so as to eliminate error and possible misinterpretation of questions and instructions. This study forms part of a larger study which was conducted in 2016, which produced a total of 1025 usable questionnaires. In the larger study, materialism as a personal value and its relation in terms of Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption behavior was also investigated.

1.6.2.3 The measuring instrument

A paper based questionnaire that distinguished six sections, was designed, of which only sections D, E and F are relevant to this study:

The **cover page** of the questionnaire provided all the information to the respondents regarding confidentiality and the purpose of the study, as well as the process of the study and the information required to complete the questionnaire.

Section D focused on Voluntary Simplicity and the extent to which consumers purchase and consume clothing products. The scale was inspired by, and represented an adapted version of Leonard- Barton's Voluntary Simplicity scale (1981) using a 7- point Likert-type Agreement measurement ranging from "7=strongly agree" to "1=strongly disagree".

Section E measured the consumers' likelihood to reconsider their clothing expenditure when more money was available for a specific clothing purchase for a special occasion, by including some options that were more frugal, as a verification and practical confirmation of their Voluntary Simplistic consumption choices that was assessed in Section D.

Section F captured the demographic information of the respondents in terms of gender, household income, level of education and population group.

Following the data collection, the completed questionnaires were coded by the fourty-three field workers under supervision of the supervisors of the study: the coding of the Likert-type scales entailed an assignment of scores as per response. An assistant made cross checks by contacting the mobile numbers of a selection of the respondents that were provided anonymously for the lucky draw, to ensure that the questionnaires were completed carefully as per initial instruction. The data was thereafter captured by an external company, namely Datanet. With the aid of a qualified statistician, the data was processed for analysis in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistical analyses were used to summarise the data (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:93). The first step was to calculate the frequencies, percentages and standard deviations. Further analyses involved the calculation of reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the Voluntary Simplicity scale (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:92, 173, 274) as well as t-tests and ANOVAs to indicate significant differences within and among different demographic categories. Tables and graphs were used to visually present the results.

1.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ISSUES

Validity in research refers to how well the instrument measures the items that need to be measured and comprises different types of validity (Creswell, 2014: 259). Construct validity was ensured through an extensive literate review so as to ensure that the important and relevant aspects of the topic were studied appropriately, in terms of the most recent research. The scale of Leonard- Barton (1981) was adapted in terms of specific reference to clothing purchases and to refer to clothing consumption behaviour, to address the specific objectives of the study rather than to refer to products in general. Face validity was ensured through a pre-test to ensure that all the questions and instructions were clear and easily understood by the respondents. Predictive validity was attended to determine whether a single item or multiple item approach would be required to obtain relevant results. In terms of research, a single item approach is a less common approach, as it refers to an item which can be conceptualized as concrete and therefore does not require multiple items. However, multiple items usually measure the norm of a specific construct. Provided that an item is formulated thoughtfully, a single item construct could be more

effective or just as effective as a multiple item construct (Rossiter, 2007). This study used multiple items to measure a construct, for example material simplicity, and calculated Cronbach's Alpha to confirm the internal consistency of a particular scale.

Reliability is the degree to which the measurement instrument yields consistent results when the characteristics that are measured remain unchanged (Creswell, 2014: 259). The questionnaires were paper-based and administered by trained fieldworkers. The training of the field workers inter alia ensured that the said field workers were well-informed and that they would not influence the respondents in any way. The data was then captured and checked by an established company that reduced possible error. Reliability coefficients were calculated where possible (Cronbach Alpha), where ≥ 0.6 was used as a norm for internal consistency of the dimensions of the Voluntary Simplicity scale (Wiid & Diggines, 2013).

1.9 ETHICS

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee for human participants of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS) of the University of Pretoria (see Appendix B). Ethical requirements included issues such as voluntary and anonymous participation of the respondents, honesty throughout the study, respect of the confidentiality of respondents' contributions, as well as ensuring that respondents were permitted to terminate their participation at any point during the study as they so wished (De Vos *et al.*, 2016:115).

1.10 PRESENTATION AND OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation comprises of six chapters that can briefly be introduced as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presented a general introduction to the study including the theoretical background of the study, the research problem, as well as the aim and the main objectives of the study. The structure of the dissertation is also presented.

Chapter 2: A review of literature

Literature is presented to explicate the research problem and to identify and extend important concepts

relating to the research.

Chapter 3: Theoretical perspective, conceptual framework and research objectives

This chapter presents the theoretical perspective, the conceptual framework, as well as the aim of the research and subsequent research objectives.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology, measures that were taken to improve the quality of the data, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Results and interpretations

The results are presented in accordance with the objectives for the study, incorporating relevant literature. Tables and graphs are used to visually represent certain results.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations for future research

The conclusions that assist in clarifying the contribution of this study are presented. Research limitations are indicated and suggestions for future research studies are provided.

1.11 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following section provides definitions for important terms that were used throughout the dissertation:

Anti-Consumption: The rejection of over-buying goods (Alexander, 2010).

Consumption: The use of final goods by a consumer (Shaw & Newholm, 2002).

Downshifting: The most self-centered way in terms of living simply (Shaw & Newholm, 2002).

Ecological awareness: Recognition of the interdependency of people and resources (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

Economic ethic: Cultural structures that enable people to deflate their material wants (Daoud, 2011).

Ethical simplifiers: Voluntary simplifiers that respond mostly to ethical terms (Shaw & Newholm, 2002)**.**

"Green" products: The term refers to environmentally and ecologically-friendly products (Walther & Sandlin, 2011).

Material simplicity: Non-consumption orientated patterns of use (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

Millennial: The generation of people born between approximately 1980 and 2000 (Stein, 2011).

Personal growth: A desire to explore and develop inner life (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

Self-determination: A desire to assume greater control over destiny (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

Simple liver: A person who lives a Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle (Alexander, 2015).

Upcycle: The process of taking a used garment and altering it in order to be something usable as well as beautiful and better than the original (Stewart, 2014).

Voluntary Simplicity: The singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life (Leonard-Barton, 1981)**.**

3-D printing: Is the form of additive manufacturing where a CAD program is used to design a garment and it is then built up using layers of material to create the textile required by a specific method of printing (Partsch, Vassiladis & Papageorgas, 2015).

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CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is presented to explicate the research problem and to identify and extent of important concepts relating to the research

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Voluntary Simplicity is a topic that has attracted considerable interest in recent years. Although much research on the topic has been published, more can be done to understand the behaviour of certain segments of society and consumers in different parts of the world. Voluntary Simplicity is defined by Leonard-Barton (1981) as a lifestyle which offers restraint and direction towards a simpler but more self-fulfilling lifestyle. It is an important concept to consider currently as it is evident that global warming is occurring rapidly. With the textile industry being the second highest polluting industry in the world after the oil industry, it is evident why clothing purchasing and consumption is targeted in discussions about environmental degradation as well as labour and production concerns and conservation of natural resources.

2.2 VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

2.2.1 Voluntary Simplicity defined

Voluntary Simplicity was originally defined by Richard Gregg, stating that "*Voluntary Simplicity means the singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life*" (Leonard-Barton, 1981). Subsequently, Leonard-Barton (1981) proposed that "*Voluntary Simplicity orders and guides our energy and desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions.*" In more recent times, and more briefly stated, Voluntary Simplicity is defined as "*a manner of living that is outwardly simple and*

inwardly rich" (Elgin, 2010). Ultimately, the extent of simplification – that being where, how, when and to what extent - is a matter that each individual has to achieve personally.

In more practical terms, Voluntary Simplicity is associated with a conviction to support lower levels of consumption and to dispose of trivial objects and activities to prevent a stressful life. Owning less is therefore associated with lower levels of concern and increased happiness (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016). In terms of this study, Voluntary Simplicity relates to a reduction in clothing consumption and clothing purchases in favour of focusing on quality garments that would last longer, thereby changing the way in which a consumer rationalizes his/her purchase decisions.

2.2.2 Voluntary Simplicity and the knowledge associated with this way of living

Voluntary Simplicity supposes that people possess knowledge about the situation, the world and elements around them as part of a society. Two schools of knowledge are relevant according to Gambrel and Cafaro (2009), namely *self-awareness*, i.e. to explore one's true needs and most vital objectives, as well as *ecological knowledge,* i.e. to acquire insight about environmental problems and how to prevent them. Knowledge of this nature is important to divert the focus from a consumer-orientated lifestyle to one that is internally more beneficial, thus performing what enhances internal happiness, not forgetting the greater good of the community. Voluntary simplifiers, i.e. those who are committed to Voluntary Simplistic behaviour, typically purchase products knowing how and where the products were manufactured, as well as possess awareness of the effect that the products would have on the environment (Alexander, 2015).

Social change is a crucial part of Voluntary Simplicity (Alexander, 2015), thus, supposing a new way of living that dissociates itself from high consumption and materialism (Alexander, 2015). A Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle requires a focus on self-determination, assuming more control over one's destiny; material simplicity, that prioritizes "non-consumption"; ecological awareness, i.e. understanding the interdependence of people and nature; human scale - thus wanting less rather than more - and personal growth, which highlights development of the inner self (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

2.2.3 Constructs associated with Voluntary Simplicity

This study solely focuses on four selected constructs that were distinguished in Leonard-Barton's Voluntary Simplicity scale (1981) to limit the focus of the study, as only the following four constructs were

regarded as relevant to the investigation, namely:

Material simplicity is the act of consuming less (Shama, 1985). A primary aspect of Voluntary Simplicity is the reduction of material goods and the elimination of clutter from one's life (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016). The act of decluttering one's life highlights what is more important as opposed to what is not. It also demonstrates which possessions are paramount and the attitudes one has toward them (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). According to Shama (1985), the Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle influences one's buying power and consumption patterns. A material simplistic person resists high consumption lifestyles while seeking a lower consumption lifestyle to improve their quality of life (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). Possessions are then considered because of their importance and value as opposed to their number (quantity) and status. Daoud (2011) proposes that voluntary simplifiers shape their own wants relative to their material resources, for example thinking that they ought to be consuming clothing in a normative sense.

Environmentalism entails the reduction of overall carbon emissions, released chemicals, and forest losses. This is a difficult task when competing within the economic and cultural paradigm of today that is obsessed with growth (Assadourian, 2013). The current size of the world population, being 7,4 billion in 2016, and its demands, causes considerable strain on the earth and its health (Worldometers, 2016). The environmental movement is important, as it's geared towards decreasing the strain on the earth, aiming to evolve at a rapid pace in order to prevent or reduce the current and future degradation of the environment. The environmental movement can be accelerated through ecological awareness.

Ecological awareness is defined by Leonard-Barton (1981) as the *"recognition of the interdependency of people and resources". "Interdependence of human beings and the natural environment"* was said to be one of the three main issues of sustainability at the United Nations Conference in 1972 (Shen, Richards & Lui, 2013). A consumer's environmental awareness refers to a person's understanding of the repercussions of human behaviour on the environment (Suki, 2013). The more aware the individual, the higher their level of cognition and knowledge on the topic, which results in the person partaking in pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour more regularly. The way people behave is influenced by "Green" awareness in several ways (Suki, 2013). Specifically, when consumption is reduced, there is a switch from wasteful and unsustainable consumption toward ecologically friendly products, making individuals more conscious of recycling their waste, or participating in different behaviours that support environmental sustainability (Taljaard, 2015; Suki, 2013).

To understand the construct "ecological awareness", one needs to first understand the environmental movement. Environmentalism enhances/ encourages the importance and responsibility of humans to be respectful, protective, and conservative towards nature in order to save it from human mistakes (Thompson, 2016). The exact date or time of the origins of the environmental movement is unclear. However, on the 30th of June 1948, for the first time, water quality legislation was put in place by congress in the USA, known as the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. This Act was revised in 1956, 1965, and 1972 (American Express, 2013). A further significant date was Earth Day which commenced on the 22nd of April 1970, as a protest against environmental ignorance (American Express, 2013). Twenty years later, in 1990, an excess of 140 countries celebrated the 20th anniversary of Earth Day (American Express, 2013). Today, environmental organizations focus on global issues including global warming, population growth, and the depletion of fossil fuel resources.

Consumers' awareness of how serious the degradation of the environment and the repercussions thereof, has increased (Kaufmann, Panni & Orphanidou, 2012), giving rise to sustainable consumption (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2009). Sustainable consumption was first defined by Brundlandt in 1987 as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs*" (Wright & Zeller, 2014:422). Products should thus be created using materials that are reusable and can be composted or fully recycled (Bly, Gwozdz & Reisch, 2013).

Consumers have grasped the concepts of pro-environmental activities such as purchasing environmentally friendly products and recycling (Bly *et al*., 2013; Meyer, 2013), although few understand or consider practicing reduced consumption levels (Pepper *et al*., 2009). Adoption of sustainable consumption practices only arises after awareness and thus consumers require an understanding of innovative practices before they are likely to accept and adopt them. The innovation adoption model has been proven correct on various levels, examples include Internet banking and online shopping. Initially, consumers recede from what they do not understand (Shen *et al*., 2013). Therefore, if consumers, do not fully understand or trust environmentally friendly products, they are unlikely to purchase them. This is of concern as it has resulted in multiple possible *"green purchases"* not gaining momentum (Pepper *et al*., 2009). Additionally, it has been found that even where consumers are ecologically aware and concerned, it does not guarantee that a *"green purchase"* will be made (Anvar & Venter, 2014). A contributing factor points to the inadequate promotion of such products, in that the purchase of such products is hindered where advertising was not produced (Taljaard, 2015).

Self-determination can be described as an independence and control of one's own life (Johnston &

Burton, 2003). Leonard-Barton (1981) describes Self-determination as a desire to assume greater control over ones destiny (Johnston & Burton, 2003). This is further emphasized in the definition of Voluntary Simplicity: "*Voluntary Simplicity is defined as the degree to which an individual selects a life-style intended to maximize his/her direct control over daily activities and to minimize his/her consumption and dependency*" (Johnston & Burton, 2003).

Self-determination is rooted in consumption and the practices of regaining control over one's own lifestyle and consumption patterns (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977), for example in terms of clothing purchases. The degree of dependency on one's material sufficiency is tested and discipline needs to be exercised in order to attain a more self-sufficient lifestyle and a less self-reliant one (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977).

Human scale per se, is not extensively documented in research as it is based on human interaction, choices and perspectives, which are constantly changing. Human scale is defined as living a life which is simpler and better for human integration and life. It is focused on the integrations of human beings and allowing these integrations to be organic and unencumbered by daily tasks and corporations to simplify one's life (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). Human scale is not rooted in the lack of large corporations such as fashion houses and fast fashion, businesses and entities, but rather highlights supportive, small institutions and the decentralization of corporations, thus accentuating local clothing manufacturing and production with an emphasis on small business and companies, that produce ethically and on a small scale (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). It is preferred that human beings place focus on manageable contributions to society, ensuring wholly individual shares, whilst maintaining accountability for their actions and choices, in order to guarantee an society that is rooted in human perspective and proportion (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977).

All the aforementioned attributes discussed (in Section 2.2.3) underpin the basis of effective social change, concern for the environment, and consideration of job creation and economic growth within a specific sector; namely the clothing sector within the context of South Africa. Ultimately, an individual who embodies the above characteristics is effectively categorized as a Voluntary Simplifier.

2.2.4 Voluntary Simplifiers

A Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle assumes that people consume a smaller, more sustainable portion of nature, while simultaneously enjoying freedom, happiness, a meaningful life and diversity. For voluntary simplifiers, growth implies that a person's riches is measured in terms of the quality and strength of one's relationships as well as growth of personal spirituality, intellect, aesthetics and social life (Alexander, 2011). Most literature describes Voluntary Simplicity as an individual or a community-based act (Gambrel &

Cafaro, 2009), suggesting that people's needs need to be refined on a micro-, meso- and macro level (Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009). Essentially, less materialistic lifestyles are possible through changes in economic protocol (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009) with increased emphasis on a moral value structure of society. Reduction of consumption is a start, but varied and sustainable consumption is also suggested – aspects that can only be attained through the understanding of the current global dilemma (Taylor, 2017; Daoud, 2011). In terms of clothing consumption, it would require an alternative approach to clothing purchases, a consideration of recycling and a thoughtful revisit of factors that entice the attainment of clothing.

Presently, human consumption is unsustainable and over extending the planet's ecosystems (Alexander & Ussher, 2012), requiring individuals to start consuming consciously, attending to the preservation of the Earth's natural resources and the environment. This includes considering products that were produced in an environmentally friendly manner, such as "green" fashion. Undoubtedly, decreased consumption along with astute technological innovations are critical when thinking about the ecological devastation that the world and future generations are facing (Taylor, 2017; Daoud, 2011). Evidence of alternative approaches in the textile industry that are favourable in terms of Voluntary Simplicity as a phenomenon, are for example, organic clothing, 3D-printed clothing (which is a process whereby CAD drawings are used in order to print garments directly from the computer in three dimension), as well as upcycled clothing - which is the beautifying of the original garment in order to make it better than what it was.

2.2.5 Types of Voluntary Simplifiers

Three categories of voluntary simplifiers are distinguished in literature; namely *Conservers, Crusaders* and *Conformists*. *Conservers* are people who have been brought up to prevent misuse of any kind often purchasing organic products and brands that dissociate themselves from animal cruelty. *Crusaders* have a strong sense of social responsibility that supersedes a need to save money, explaining why they would opt for more expensive products that are better for the environment or that are locally produced despite being more expensive. C*onformists* are usually driven by guilt and would rather purchase more expensive products that support their values and beliefs about the environment, ethical consumption and natural resources (Leonard-Barton, 1981). Countless people in mainstream society are over consuming, purchasing more than what they really need based on the imbedded materialistic ideal that additional possessions are better – a thought stemming from previous generations who strove to improve their quality of life (Taylor, 2017; Stein, 2013; Alexander & Ussher, 2012).

2.2.6 Overconsumption and its effects

Overconsumption in prosperous societies is one of the biggest contributing factors to the world's ailments, such as environmental degradation and global poverty. Therefore, any type of conversion to a more sustainable society is critical (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). The need for persons to alter their consumption patterns cannot be emphasized enough. It is imperative that governments of affluent societies put measures in place to ensure that pull factors are made more attractive to the general public (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). Contextually speaking, a pull factor is an element that entices a person to become a material simplifier, thus embracing motives such as saving money, controlling ones consumption, increasing activity and becoming more creative (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016). Due to people's overwhelming desire for material goods, push factors do not necessarily look enticing. A push factor is defined as a force factor, which in its nature, is less desirable (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016).

Unfortunately, most enterprises and governments of affluent societies are not willing to accept that achieving a sustainable environment requires a reduction in global consumption, as it enforcing such practices does not really benefit their respective economies. Nevertheless, governments have a duty to encourage sustainable lifestyles amongst their populations as a means of realizing a more sustainable environment (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). Marketers can also contribute towards enticing pull factors, particularly since the growing Voluntary Simplistic market promises viable opportunities for their sector.

Moreover, thoughtful marketing can encourage people to become more sustainable (Shama, 1985) by cleverly promoting products that can be associated with material simplistic values; such as products that are environmentally friendly, that are of better quality and will last longer, along with products that increase personal growth (Taljaard, 2015; Shama, 1985). To ensure success, marketers and governments need to combine their authority to entice and educate consumers to become materially simplistic, as technology alone cannot halt environmental degradation. The general consumer can make a difference by "*voting with their money*" (Stein, 2013; Alexander & Ussher, 2012): if consumers demand less of certain goods, suppliers will cease to supply the said goods to the market. Civilisation's beliefs and values must therefore change to generate a social and economic environment where pull factors are stronger than push factors (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016; Alexander & Ussher, 2012).

Material simplicity involves two core acts: minimizing spending and valuing fewer objects (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Daoud, 2011). Alexander and Ussher (2012) conducted a multi-national online survey to gain insight and practicality of the material simplistic lifestyle. The online survey revealed that 50% of people considered it important to reduce expenditure; whilst 35% said it was of moderate importance and 15 % said it played a minor role in a simplistic lifestyle. Respondents also contributed to the study by

saying frugality is more about where and what you spend your money on (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Dauod, 2011); stating that a material simplifier is more likely to spend their money on an ecological product or a product that is produced locally rather than a product produced internationally which is not environmentally friendly. With respect to clothing, 51% of the respondents in the study stated that simple living affects their clothing choices: instead of consuming more clothing, they would rather repair or make clothes or buy second hand clothing (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). These statistics prove that frugality is possible within our mainstream society.

2.2.7 Voluntary Simplicity and the greater community

Most literature speaks of Voluntary Simplicity as an individual or community-based act (Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009). People's needs ought to be distinguished on an individual level, a family level and most importantly at a social level (Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009). An aspect that could help individuals with choosing less materialistic lifestyles are changes in economic protocol (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009). For material simplicity to gain momentum, economic ethic is needed to steer away from social movements towards a more moral or routine value structure of society. Although reducing consumption is a positive step, it remains critical that individuals consume more pensively and feasibly as a means of preserving our environment (Daoud, 2011).

Studies indicate that demographic characteristics of consumers influence their levels of environmental participation. Two demographic characteristics that are often referred to in these discussions, are gender and age. With regard to **gender**, females seemingly tend to behave in a more environmentally conscious manner than men (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Meyer, 2013; Suki, 2013; Honabarger, 2011; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). Men are however likely to have greater environmental knowledge than women, while women hold an emotional bond with the environment (Taljaard, 2015; Honabarger, 2011). Women are likely to have characteristics of altruism, a behaviour where a person shows concern and behaves selflessly for the benefit of others at their own expense (Straughan & Roberts, 1999:563). Furthermore, women are also more influenced by marketing strategies (Honabarger, 2011). A study showed that educated females generally have positive attitudes with regards to sustainable behaviour and purchasing *"green"* (Taljaard, 2015; Honabarger, 2011)*.* Further studies revealed that females displayed behaviours of ecological consciousness compared to their male counterparts (Meyer, 2013; Straughan & Roberts, 1999), whilst males were found to be part of a group of non-environmentalists (Anvar & Venter, 2014). Interestingly, despite these findings, an alternative study that focused on sustainable fashion, revealed that gender does not have a great impact on buying sustainable clothing (Shen *et al.*, 2013). The time of the various studies, as well as the contexts, may have influenced the outcomes which confirms the importance of a local

investigation.

With regard to **age**, younger generations have displayed the most concern over the environment (Meyer, 2013; Kaufmann *et al*., 2012). Although studies (as previously mentioned) indicate that many consumers are environmentally aware, have a desire to save the environment, to participate in sustainable activities and to support sustainable practices, research illustrates that it does not follow through in consumers' actual buying behavior (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Meyer, 2013; Suki, 2013; Honabarger, 2011; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). Numerous factors may influence consumers' purchase decisions or prevent them from acting in a sustainable way: Firstly, the **price** of products has a stronger hold over a consumer than their desire to buy sustainable products. Furthermore, **brands** need to have developed a relationship of trust and loyalty with a consumer, and consumers must be aware of a brand's relationship with the environment before they would commit to buying so-called sustainable brands. **Labelling** of products to show their environmental practices is helpful for consumers, although consumers are inclined to place different values on the specific words that are used to represent sustainability.

In order for Voluntary Simplicity to be viable and widely implemented, a desire to obtain the greater global good ought to be kept paramount (Cherrier, 2007). Voluntary Simplicity diverts from consumerism and a spending culture to that of a culture based on humanity, community and respect for nature (Cherrier, 2007), which is the core foundation that directs the behaviour of voluntary simplifiers in an ever changing world (Cherrier, 2007). Personal control and self-sufficiency have been identified as the driving force for a new social movement that requires a revisit of personal values that guide consumption patterns rather than to be driven by media and others' expectations (McDonalds, Oats, Young & Hwang, 2006).

2.2.8 Voluntary Simplicity on a global scale

Although Voluntary Simplicity and simplistic lifestyles have been widely researched on an international scale in recent times (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016; Shen *et al.*, 2013; Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Alexander, 2011; Dauod, 2011) and locally (Taljaard, 2015; Anvar & Venter, 2014; Meyer, 2013; Momberg, 2011), countless consumers are still unaware of the notion and thus it would be difficult to implement lifestyle changes and policies both internationally and locally (Kasser, 2009). Voluntary Simplicity relates to personal values and awareness, as well as a person's desire to improve the environment and the community (Johnston & Burton, 2003). Sparse information is currently available concerning the effects that being Voluntary Simplistic has on individuals.

2.3 THE MILLENNIAL COHORT

2.3 1 Interest in the Millennial cohort

Millennials (Generation Y) are widely described as people who are born between approximately 1980 and 2000 (Stein, 2013). Globally, they are more alike than previous generations because they are all connected via the Internet and worldwide web, making them an intriguing generation (Brunswick, 2017; Stein, 2013). Millennials are the most technologically advanced generation to date, particularly since they have grown up with mobile phones and the Internet (Close, 2015). Millennials are the off spring of Baby Boomers and Generation X, who imparted onto Millennials the ideology that they can achieve anything they wish to achieve, raising them to develop a positive self-esteem and to become successful (Eastman *et al.*, 2013; Stein, 2013). Millennials are said to undervalue traditional systems such as marriage and having children because they were linchpins in their households and were taught that opportunities and achievements were boundless. This explains why more Millennials than previous generations have a tertiary education.

Millennials are focused on education, and the advent of technology (Howe & Strauss, 2000) and are not hesitant to switch jobs in the pursuit of instant gratification. They are described as being industrious overachievers with high standards who have an incessant need for work engagement (Martins, 2014), resulting in them having high expectations (Martins, 2014). In short, Millennials are passionate supporters of change, freedom of speech and are known to be trendsetters who express themselves easily, often through social media. Millennials apparently have a large influence on other cohorts and have a notable purchasing power, said to contribute 2.45 trillion dollars worldwide in 2015 (Duffett, 2015). They should therefore be considered and acknowledged in discussions pertaining to upcoming fashion trends (Duffett, 2015; Eastman *et al.*, 2013).

Millennials are no longer money orientated, but rather focus on their happiness and its attainment thereof, be it through their careers, households, or even in their purchases (Kurz, 2014), often seeking greater fulfillment in most aspects of their jobs (Stein, 2013). Millennials differ significantly from the generations before them, as they encountered diverse issues compared to their parents and grandparents: they are known to be better at communicating with people in senior positions because they are not afraid to challenge the norm and speak up when dissatisfied (Stein, 2013). They are highly focused on ensuring their opinions are heard and are unafraid of rating products and providing feedback, especially when they are unhappy, largely due to growing up with technology at their fingertips (Barton, Fromm & Egan, 2012). Millennials are creative visionaries known to exercise proactive thinking in any

given situation, making them more cognizant and intuitive (Stein, 2013). A Millennial is described as having an optimistic view on the world, their life and the future; they possess business prowess, strong financial acumen, and are constantly seeking novel methods of performing daily tasks, making them a prime generation for promoting Voluntary Simplicity (Stein, 2013).

In light of these aforementioned characteristics, Millennials are often attributed with contributing towards the downfall of numerous enterprises, for failure of not living up to the expected standards that this age cohort can relate to; for example, quality versus price; environmentally friendliness of product; company value as well as the overall good of the specific product or brand (Taylor, 2017).

2.3.2 Millennials' importance within the apparel market

Millennials are said to be more aware of their choices when making purchase decisions, inclusive of their clothing choices. Contributing factors towards these purchasing patterns include the emphasis on recycling and ethics (such as fair trade and charitability) that are instilled into Millennials from a young age (Barton, et al., 2012). It is said that Millennials are no longer interested in showing respect on the basis of age, but would rather show appreciation and reverence towards someone who is esteemed for their passion and craft. It is imperative that brands learn to focus on understanding these consumers and exercise a great level of progressivist thinking and mental alignment to keep Millennials interested and brand loyal. This can be done through a change in strategy in terms of truly understanding and communicating with Millennials in terms they understand, by showing an appreciation for the products produced, by enforcing community engagement and support, and by "getting into Millennials' heads". To do this, brand managers need to think at least five years in advance to keep Millennials interested and loyal to the brand (Kurz, 2012).

Due to the age of technological advancement in which Millennials were raised, they are more likely to be cognizant of their surroundings and are less trusting of experts. They would rather trust a friend's firsthand experience over that of an expert. For brands to create a relationship with Millennials, their influence and credibility should align with that of the Millennial ethos (Barton, *et al.*, 2012), and concurrently assimilate themselves into the fast-paced lives of this generation in order to maintain brand loyalty amongst this age group (Barton *et al.*, 2012).

Recent evidence produced by a study conducted in America by D'Adamo (2017) indicates that Millennials are cost conscious, although their focus is no longer on cost alone. The study concluded that Millennials are serious about the quality of garments as well as their functionality. Moreover, 65% of Millennials tend

to look for fashionable designs, while 47% of Millennials look for styles that are unique. Furthermore, the study found that Millennials prefer the recommendations of their peers, with 72% of this age cohort likely to buy items based on photos taken by peers. Millennials are also focused on brands that place emphasis on individuality and that seek to attract them based on authenticity. Although Millennials do partake in online shopping, they seem to prefer certain brand experiences (D'Adamo, 2017; Kawana, 2017:50).

2.3.3 South African Millennials

2.3.3.1 The angry generation

South African Millennials include the "born free" generational cohort who were born after the apartheid regime (Martins, 2014). They represent approximately 14 million, or 27% of the population of South Africa (GFK, 2017). These Millennials are better educated, reflecting a Matric or tertiary completion of 84% compared to the 58% Matric pass rate and 11% tertiary completion reflected by the previous generation. With a mere 7% of the previous generation having obtained a post-graduate degree, Millennials outperform their grandparents when it comes to formal education (GFK, 2017). A study conducted by Deloitte in January 2017 of approximately 200 South African Millennials, displayed the following statistics: 12% are in senior jobs; 29% in trainee/ apprentice jobs; 89% have a university or college qualification and 63% are employed in the private business sector (Deloitte, 2017).

The fall of the apartheid regime paved the way for a Black middle class having resulted in an increased number of Black Millennials in South Africa (Close, 2015). The increase in this particular group allows for an entirely new market segment that has not yet been extensively explored. It would therefore be important to understand the views and clothing consumption behaviours of this group that will be the parents of future generations, and who will thus set the scene for the consumption behaviour of their offspring in the future (Close, 2015).

South African Millennials grew up with racial integration and access to worldwide media, making them "culturally integrated" (Martins, 2014). South African Millennials are therefore more diverse than their counterparts elsewhere in the world due to the influences of unemployment and social injustices that have resulted in an angrier generation. Particularly concerning for them, is the unstable job market and the increase in unemployment (Close, 2015). Some characteristics of local Millennials are that they are family-orientated, seek attention, possess self-confidence, optimistic, independent, hopeful, goal driven, community-minded, driven by success, lifestyle-centered and entrepreneurial. Although they have many similarities with their worldwide counterparts, they are said to be the only Millennials who value owning their own business over learning and development due to the need for balance and security in the

unstable job market and economy of the country (Close, 2015). They are commonly referred to as the 'entitled' South Africans (Martins, 2014). South African Millennials are seen as the generation that want to evoke change; they are focused on leaving a lasting legacy, and desire to make a positive impact on the community at large (Viviers *et al.,* 2012), largely because of the effects imprinted on them as a result of the social and political injustices of the past (Close, 2015). They are therefore more likely to buy clothing on the basis of its personal value, along with the social awareness of the brand, while environmental concerns might similarly be of importance (Close, 2015).

2.3.3.2 The essence of the South African Millennial

The optimism of South African Millennials is evident from the fact that 38% believe that South Africa's economic situation will improve in the next year, while 41% of South African Millennials compared to 36% globally believe that the social and political situation in their country will improve within the next year, thus indicating the optimism of South African Millennials, as well as their expectation for brands and companies to improve in line with their values and principles (GFK, 2017).

Furthermore, 84% of South African Millennials opine that businesses have a positive impact on the wider society; and 64% of them feel enabled to contribute to charities and other worthy social causes (Deloitte, 2017). Seemingly, Millennials would be more likely to invest in companies and brands that have similar values to theirs as opposed to companies with conflicting values. Millennials are highly aware of the effect they have on the economy and their purchasing power. They require transparency and authenticity from brands, meaning that brands need to be innovative in their solution to current problems allowing for interesting and intriguing solutions in their pursuit of brand loyalty (GFK, 2017). Contextually, Millennials' influence could be invaluable to the textile and apparel industry in the event they are persuaded to support sustainable consumption practices, along with local industries (Kawana, 2017:50; Taylor, 2017).

2.4 SOUTH AFRICAN MILLENNIALS AND VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY IN A BROARDER CONTEXT

It is said that Millennials across the globe demonstrate similar behaviour and attitudes (Duffett, 2015, Eastman *et al.*, 2010) based on similar lifestyles (Martins, 2014). It has been recently reported that the young affluent social class, Millennials/ Generation Y, is the majority contributor to the purchase of environmentally friendly products (Anvar & Venter, 2014) due to a higher level of concern with regard to ecological issues brought about by their upbringing (Martins, 2014; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). According to Small, Medium Enterprises South Africa, 73% of respondents under the age of 20 stated that they are

willing to pay more for sustainable products (Kgosiemang, 2015; Taljaard, 2015). Ostensibly, consumers younger than 30 years prefer the option of *"green products"* over other products (Anvar & Venter, 2014). It is postulated that consumers' awareness of eco-friendly products will encourage more consumers to purchase the said products (Taljaard, 2015).

Studies in a South African context show that young South African females are the most concerned about the environment (Meyer, 2013), and are more supportive of *"green products"* (Anvar & Venter, 2014) compared to men who are not necessarily aware of these products due to lack of attention to marketing and advertising (Taljaard, 2015; Momberg, 2011). A local study by Taljaard (2015) revealed that consumers who buy *"green products"* are aged between 18 and 45 and that they display greater enthusiasm over environmental issues. A further study confirms that young adults between the age of 25 and 30 have a more positive attitude towards "green products" as compared to their younger and older counterparts (Momberg, 2011). Fortunately, it has been reported that many consumers are environmentally aware, and have a desire to save the environment, to participate in sustainable activities and to support sustainable practices (Taljaard, 2015). However unfortunately, research shows that environmental awareness does not always reflect in consumers' buying behaviour as human beings still tend to associate high consumption lifestyles with hierarchal success despite this causing discontent (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). A high consumption lifestyle is usually linked to time poverty, physical and mental strain, a sense of wastefulness and lack of community involvement while research confirms that people who are no longer connected to nature, are generally unhappy (Alexander & Ussher, 2012).

2.4.1 The "green products" market

Living in today's society, voluntary simplifiers are under constant pressure to consume (Daoud, 2011). A particular challenge for voluntary simplifiers, is the pursuit of a simple existence that does not fuel production-orientated entities (Daoud, 2011; Walther & Sandlin, 2011). The complete avoidance of a materialist lifestyle tends to be a personal inclination rather than an intentional form of existence (Daoud, 2011), raising the question as to whether Voluntary Simplicity is a cultural proposal or practical direction (Daoud, 2011; Larney & van Aardt, 2010). Theoretically, Voluntary Simplicity aims to get rid of the participation of communal life to rather coincide with a view of an honourable life - on a cultural plane, this implies the dismissal of the material world and all material possessions. A voluntary simplifier will therefore end all material wants (Daoud, 2011). On a practical plane, however, due to social pressures, voluntary simplifiers will uphold some material wants and will not completely reject the material world (Daoud, 2011). Sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects condition the type of wants that people have, making it difficult to for them to simplify (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016; Daoud, 2011) because one's

environmental surroundings, social groups and family create the wants that people have (Martins, 2014; Daoud, 2011). For example, these wants would relate to the way in which consumers purchase and whether or not "green" clothing purchases are made. Therefore, in a materialistic society being a voluntary simplifier, will be difficult.

Despite consumers having positive attitudes towards *"green purchases"*, there is no certainty that these will be their preferred product choices (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Shen *et al*., 2013; Kaufmann *et al*., 2012; Honabarger, 2011). This statement is supported by considerable research. The difference found between the attitude and behaviour of the consumer is referred to as the ***attitude behaviour gap*** (Anvar & Venter, 2014). Studies have revealed that the success purchase rate of most *"green products"* is low, despite consumers advising that their buying decisions are driven by environmental concern (Kaufmann *et al*., 2012). Consequently, *"green merchandise"* does not have a large market share. A study conducted in 2011 demonstrated that only 33% of the 87% of customers that indicated concern for the ecological state, are prepared to, or have made environmentally sustainable purchases (Honabarger, 2011). As a result, a dichotomy between consumer attitudes and actual behaviour arises. In a study that specifically focused on apparel, it was found that ecologically aware and concerned consumers generally did not consider or question how the production and processes of creating the product affected the environment before they made their purchases (Zurga, Hladnik & Tevcer, 2015).

Consumers can investigate the sustainability of products in multiple ways, such as via retailers' websites where corporate social responsibility policies are stated (Robbins, 2015). There are multiple tweaks that consumers can make to decrease their personal impact on the grave ecological state of the earth. Limited studies indicate that those with positive attitudes and beliefs towards supporting a sustainable environment actually participate in environmentally sustainable behaviour (Kaufmann *et al*., 2012). Consumers have shown a preference towards ethical and sustainable methods, but studies further illustrate that they are actually influenced to a larger extent by the price of products (Shen *et al*., 2013).

Without a doubt, price influences consumers' purchasing of environmentally friendly products (Suki, 2013). Studies also show that consumers who were acquainted with recycling, preferred clothing made from recycled fiber. However, as soon as price became a factor, environmental concern was no longer considered. In fact, consumers stated that they would purchase the cheaper product regardless (Zurga *et al*., 2015). In another study, 48% of consumers held that price was the main factor preventing them from purchasing more products that are sustainable for the planet, as they were unwilling or unable to pay extra (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2008). A frugal consumer is one who is economically sparing when purchasing goods and services. However, frugality is not always voluntary and may be reflective of income

(Pepper *et al.*, 2009). The price of *"green products"* relative to other products is therefore of utmost importance.

Ecologically sustainable products should not only limit environmental harm but should also prevent substantially higher prices. There is a lesser chance of consumers converting to *"green products"* if they are made to pay a premium, as price sensitivity cannot be denied (Suki, 2013). Although consumers may have a positive attitude towards sustainable behaviour, they may not be willing, or have the means to pay higher prices (Anvar & Venter, 2014). Alternative evidence indicates that environmentally conscious consumers will pay a higher price to purchase *"green products"* (Suki, 2013). Under such conditions, more money is spent to ensure that supply chains are sustainable. Nonetheless, the result is unfortunately that the majority of sustainable products are more expensive than standard products (Zurga *et al.*, 2015). The 2015 Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report (NGCSR) that was done among 30 000 consumers in 60 countries, detailed that brands that are committed to social and environmental change are supported by 68% of South African consumers who are apparently also willing to spend more on these brands (Kgosiemang, 2015). Whether that will culminate at the pay point is however, still questionable, considering previous evidence as discussed (Zurga *et al.*, 2015; Anvar & Venter, 2014; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2008).

2.4.2 The "green" clothing market in South Africa

A fashion brand represents the context that surrounds a garment, as well as the image created by the designers, retailers, manufacturers, and promotional activities that are implemented to drive the consumer to buy the product. Branding is used as a competitive strategy. *"Green branding"* can be used to elevate the corporate image and act as a unique selling point, although a brand cannot simply stand for sustainability and support *"green products"* (Strahle, 2015). The brand's prevailing image plays a key role in how the consumers view the brand and thus a brand's green strategy should be clearly communicated to the public to erase any doubt (Strahle, 2015).

There is a higher chance of consumers buying *"green products"* when they are familiar with the brands. In addition to this, consumers want to be associated with businesses whose brand image is connected with the environment (Suki, 2013). The 2015 Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report (NGCSR) illustrated that brands that have demonstrated dedication to sustainability have increased by an excess of four percent in sales globally, while alternative brands grew less than one percent. Accordingly, results from the NGCSR (2015) have suggested that this is a palpable opportunity for consumer-goods brands

that already enjoy an established level of trust among consumers and that such brands will enjoy an increase in their growth by introducing sustainable products to certain areas of their business (Kgosiemang, 2015). Related studies showed repeatedly that consumers with greater environmental concern are more likely to respond positively to those companies that support environmental sustainability. The fashion brands that supply information about their environmentally friendly products were preferred by consumers and the more information consumers have, the more sustainable apparel they will be inclined to buy (Strahle, 2015).

Eco-labels can be used to enlighten consumers as they present information regarding environmental criteria, the product's performance and durability (Taljaard, 2015; Ratiu, 2014). It is a voluntary tool that assists and guides individuals about environmental issues that are related to the products that they are interested in purchasing (Ratiu, 2014). Some indicators that consumers may use to determine the sustainability of apparel, are the fiber content label, the garment hang tag and the packaging. The wording used is crucial, with examples including: '100% cotton', 'made in SA', and 'made locally' (Bellomy Research, 2013). Research found a link between the term 'sustainable apparel' and products that are manufactured locally: 50% of the respondents who were "aware" of sustainable apparel, indicated that locally manufactured products were a key part of what is defined as sustainable apparel, while 32% of the respondents were unaware of the association. More so, 71% of the "aware" respondents also associated organic materials with sustainable apparel. Within the same study, products made from recycled goods were found to have the closest association with sustainable apparel (Khan, 2014).

Of vital importance is that eco-labels can only be useful and accepted if they are promoted and have a respectable reputation (Ratiu, 2104; Thogersen, Haugaard & Olesen, 2010). What is concerning, is that many consumers are still not aware of environmentally friendly products at all (Khan, 2014), and that many are unaware of eco-labels and how to utilize the information on them (Thogersen *et al.*, 2010).

2.4.3 Voluntary Simplicity within a South African apparel market

Voluntary Simplicity is concerned with community awareness, as well as the effects of consumerism on the sustainability of global resources (Vining, 2002). This requires a reconsideration of the benefits of changing one's lifestyle for the sake of internal, intangible benefits (McDonalds *et al.*, 2006). It is said that Voluntary Simplicity allows followers of a simplistic lifestyle to live a life that promises more internal - than external - gain (Johnston & Burton, 2003).

Sustainable consumption in the South African apparel market is on the increase, with indications of an

increase in responsible production and ethical consciousness. This is evident in brands such as *The Joinery*, which encourages local shopping, and the purchase of quality garments that last longer instead of a multitude of garments with a shorter lifespan (Kawana, 2017). Similarly, brands such as Hannah *Lavery*, *The Research Unit* and *Fundudzi* have also added sustainability to their brands' core values, incorporating natural fibers, recycled plastic bottles and vegetable dyes to their textiles to make them more environmentally friendly (Kawana, 2017; FashionRevolution.org, 2017). These South African fashion brands have also gone one step further in joining the Fashion Revolution to reduce over-consumption by making clothing of a higher quality that would last longer and thus reduce textile waste. They are also encouraging local purchasing and manufacturing as well as enticing consumers towards their clothing items by asking "Who made my clothes?" to raise awareness of the working conditions within manufacturers as well as the treatment of their staff (Kwanan, 2017; FashionRevolution.org, 2017).

The South African apparel industry made pertinent changes in the lead up to the Copenhagen Fashion Summit that took place in May 2018. The Global Fashion Agenda released seven priorities that CEO's should prioritise in terms of the apparel industry (O'Connor, 2018), namely:

1. Supply chain traceability, meaning that suppliers would need to publish a list of their suppliers to allow full transparency and to allow for collaboration and an increase in stakeholder commitment.

2. Efficient use of water, energy and chemicals, also indicating that suppliers would be encouraged to track their usage of water, energy and level of pollution to reduce waste.

3. Respectful and secure work environments through established policies that consider the working conditions and human rights of all staff.

4. Using a sustainable material mix where raw materials include more organic materials and being innovative to create more sustainable textiles (O'Connor, 2018).

5. Closed- loop fashion system, as 73% of the world's clothing currently ends up in landfills. Therefore, fashion items need to be made in ways which allow them to be durable, easy to dissemble and to recycle.

6. Promotion of better wage: the global fashion industry employs 60 million people throughout the value chain, and companies need to ensure that better wage systems are put in place.

7. Fourth industrial revolution, meaning that new technologies need to be reviewed and considered fully before implementation to ensure that workers across the supply chain are still employed.

Voluntary Simplicity cannot be achieved by only attending to a single dimension of the phenomenon - (O'Connor, 2018; Johnston & Burton, 2003) such as local goods, recycling or material simplicity, which explains why the measuring instrument that was designed by Leonard-Barton (1981), distinguished several dimensions to coherently explain the construct. Ultimately, Voluntary Simplicity is focused on the control of one's life and the effects of such control on one's person, the community as well as global consequences (Johnston & Burton, 2003). In order for South African Millennials to experience a simplistic lifestyle they need to embrace the phenomenon in its entirety (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977) thus fully embracing Voluntary Simplicity in as part of their livelihood.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Voluntary Simplicity is a topic that has attracted considerable interest in recent years. The construct was originally defined by Richard Gregg and later expanded by Leonard-Barton. Practically speaking, Voluntary Simplicity is associated with a conviction to support lower levels of consumption and to dispose of trivial objects and activities to prevent a stressful life. Voluntary Simplicity supposes that people possess knowledge about the situation, the world and elements around them as part of a society. Social change is a crucial part of Voluntary Simplicity, supposing a new way of living that dissociates itself from high consumption and materialism (Alexander, 2015). Nowadays, multiple constructs are associated with Voluntary Simplicity and this study attends to some of them. In essence, less materialistic lifestyles are possible through changes in economic protocol with increased emphasis on a morally valued structure of society. Presently, human consumption is unsustainable and over extending the planet's ecosystems.

Literature distinguishes different types of voluntary simplifiers - conservers, crusaders and conformists - based on underlying values that drive their consumption practices. These consumers are under constant pressure to consume further. However, they would need to reject the material world and all material possessions in order to become a voluntary simplifier. This is the reason overconsumption is a practice avoided by voluntary simplifiers and is one of the biggest contributing factors to the world's problems, such as environmental degradation and global poverty.

Voluntary Simplicity allows for people to refine their needs on multiple levels in order to change the way in which they live. Although this concept has been widely researched, many consumers are still unaware of this type of lifestyle. Hence it is important to consider one of the most prominent generational cohorts; namely the Millennials. The Millennials or Generation Y are people who are born between approximately

1980 and 2000 and are said to be globally more alike than previous generations. Millennials are said to be more aware of their choices when making purchase decisions in terms of clothing purchases. They globally demonstrate similar behaviour and attitudes based on similar lifestyles. It is due to these similar lifestyles that South African Millennials are racially and culturally integrated. South African Millennials are also said to be optimistic about the future and of the social and political state of the country.

It can be agreed upon that South African consumers possess a level of understanding of the constructs of Voluntary Simplicity - as can be seen by South African female consumers' support of *"green products"*. Resultantly, an increase in interest from South African consumers in terms of sustainable consumption within the South African apparel market comes to light. It is due to this interest that brands are placing a greater focus on environmental, social and political issues within the South African apparel industry. It is thus vital for South African Millennials to experience a simplistic lifestyle to fully comprehend the changes occurring within the local apparel market.

The following chapter presents the theoretical perspective that directed the investigation, the research objectives and the conceptual framework for the study.

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CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This chapter presents the theoretical perspective, the conceptual framework, as well as the aim of the research and subsequent research objectives

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study adopted the rational choice theory (RCT) as part of the theoretical framework that would direct the investigation and interpretation of the research results. The RCT asserts that humans are rational beings who make careful, calculated and informed decisions, and that humans understand the value of their decisions (Babin & Harris, 2013:250; Solomon, 2007:306). This study therefore assumed that Millennials, as per the characteristics attributed to them (explicated in Chapter 2), approach their clothing decisions in a premeditated manner, having full appreciation of what they want and the consequences of their decisions thereof.

3.2 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY (RCT)

The RCT assumes that when a consumer makes a purchase decision, the following apply:

- *The individual will intentionally try to solve the decision problem* (Hoque, 2006:8). It is proposed that a consumer meticulously gathers and integrates the relevant information, including previous knowledge and experiences of a particular product that are stored in memory, as well as the associated outcomes produced (Jackson, 2005). For example, to choose an outfit for a special occasion, which this study investigates eventually, a person would gather relevant information, consider all the available alternatives within his/ her expectations framework, by trying to optimise the decision outcome.

- *Completeness* is important, assuming that the individual will gather all (or as much as possible) information in order to enable a rational choice (Hoque, 2006:8; Jackson, 2005). Consequently, an individual would have the relevant product properties that need to be considered available, also understanding the consequences of each outcome to erase any doubt.

- *Possible purchase outcomes can be graded (ranked), and no purchase decision is equal to another.* A consumer (Millennial) therefore evaluates the possible outcomes of a purchase decision consciously (Jackson, 2005), to achieve an outcome that will produce the greatest satisfaction or reward (Van Hamersveld & De Bont, 2007), bearing in mind social approval (Scott, 2000) and avoiding social disapproval (Jackson, 2005). Millennials are known to value friends' and family members' first-hand experience rather than the recommendations of experts (D'Adamo, 2017; Barton *et al.*, 2012). The term "crowd sourcing" is often used to indicate that consumers (Millennials) are inclined to tap into a network of Internet users who have bought specific brands or products to expand their insight concerning the intended acquisition, rather than to consult another source, such as sales personnel in the store - more so if the said sales person is older - as they do not trust them to the same extent (Barton *et al.*, 2012). While Millennials will source a wide range of information, they also have preferred information sources. Apparently, social media is very influential in Millennials' purchase decisions. In South Africa, Black Millennials have been found to be likelier than their White counterparts to consult social media marketing and to purchase online (Duffett, 2015), although Millennials (consumers) also utilise shopping as a form of entertainment and a source of experience, often making purchasing decisions based on the greatest experience obtained during the purchasing process (D'Adamo, 2017). Social media plays a major role in Millennials' purchase decisions and Millennials often favour a product based on the fact that the brand has a Facebook page over other brands that do not (Barton *et al.*, 2012).

  Finally, according to RCT, a consumer possesses the ability to identify a purchase decision that exceeds others - for example opting for a garment that is locally manufactured, and if there are several that fit this specification, another property such as the quality or design would be used to determine the final decision. Nevertheless, the perception of rationality differs among individuals (Babin & Harris, 2013:251; Levin & Milgrom, 2004). While some decisions necessitate the individual to go through a complex process to reach a final decision, many decisions are made impulsively and do not entail prior planning. Furthermore, when a consumer has too many options to consider, they subconsciously revert to their emotions as a problem-solving technique (Van

Hamersveld & De Bont, 2007:485; Eastman *et al.,* 2013). Theoretically then, if a consumer (Millennial) could be influenced to integrate the environmental consequences of their purchase decisions on an emotional level, their purchase and consumption behaviour would evoke less critique from environmentalists.

- *Transitivity* assumes that an individual has different preferences that are determined by the rewards that are associated with all possible outcomes. Millennial (consumers) are said to use shopping as a form of entertainment as well as for the sake of the experience, and would make purchasing decisions based on the greatest experience and entertainment they receive during the purchasing process (D'Adamo, 2017). Thus, it is important to show these consumers what a brand truly encompasses through personal in-store as well as social media interaction if it is important for this cohort to adopt and accept the product (D'Adamo, 2017; Eastman *et al.,* 2013; Levin & Milgrom, 2004). In the case of Millennials, specific brands/ products can be promoted among the cohort successfully by attending to individuals' experiences, thereby ensuring that some level of pleasure is derived through the specific purchase/ consumption behaviour. A consumer who is a voluntary simplifier, might therefore choose a specific brand that depicts preferable characteristics such as good quality garments, and is not concerned if he/ she wears the same outfit repeatedly because the garment represents specific preferences that epitomize an experience in itself. In terms of material simplicity, which is a dimension of Voluntary Simplicity, it results in the product being optimized, reducing the need for unnecessary additional purchases.

- *Consumers' preferences do not change, even when an alternative is introduced (Levin & Milgrom, 2004).* This implies that a consumer who makes rational decisions, is clear about what he/ she wants and will not doubt a decision about a product (garment) if it fulfils all his/ her expectations. This involves valuing a locally manufactured brand that is manufactured under ethical conditions - even where a very attractive alternative is introduced, such as a cheaper garment, or an imported garment with an established brand name.

- *There are no official or psychological restrictions on the decision-making process* (Hoque, 2006:8,9), thus the premise that all the options that a Millennial considers during the evaluation process, are morally and socially acceptable.

3.3 RELEVANCE OF RCT IN THE INVESTIGATION

According to literature, Millennials have pertinent characteristics: they are technologically advanced, have a high self-esteem, do not value traditional systems, possess high education levels and high expectations in terms of brands and companies (Martins, 2014; Viviers, *et al.*, 2012). Due to these characteristics, RCT seemed appropriate.

Of importance for this investigation, is that Millennials would intentionally search for specific clothing items because they place certain attributes such as quality in high regard. It has been found that for Millennials, brand experiences, environmental obligations and price are not necessarily a defining factor (Stein, 2013). Millennials eventually receive intrinsic satisfaction from purchasing items that satisfy their goals and that maximize their preferences (Levin & Milgrom, 2004; Scott, 2000). Because Millennials are goal driven, it seems a logic inference to view them as rational beings. To them, each purchase decision is an individualistic decision; although the outcomes need to be socially acceptable (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). Social approval is regarded as a form of reinforcement, which would yield specific outcomes when money (economic exchange) and social interaction (social exchange) are used to satisfy specific goals (Scott, 2000). Voluntary Simplistic behavior requires conscious thought over and above emotions, RTC was considered an appropriate theoretical perspective.

3.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study is depicted in Figure 3.1. It was completed by integrating relevant literature as presented in Chapter 2, that enabled the identification of pertinent concepts that would be useful to address the aim and objectives in this investigation. Eventually, three objectives were deduced to represent the scope of the overall aim of the study, and to order the investigation logically.

The study is concerned with Voluntary Simplicity as a phenomenon that has become a matter of concern on a global scale, specifically in the clothing and textiles field due to accusations that the textile industry is negligent, inter alia contributing to unnecessary waste and pollution (American Express, 2013; Suki, 2013). Simultaneously, consumers are accused of contributing to waste due to the replacement of clothes that are useful, simply to follow fashion trends and to display certain information to others about themselves (Duffett, 2013; Eastman *et al.*, 2013). Particularly relevant for this investigation, is that Millennial consumers' product preferences and demands do not necessarily demonstrate concern for the

environment and the well-being of future generations. This study focuses on Voluntary Simplicity as a phenomenon, which refers to "...*the degree to which an individual selects a lifestyle intended to maximise his/her control over daily activities and to minimize his/her consumption and dependency*" (Leonard-Barton, 1981). The study specifically attends to consumers' clothing behaviour (purchase and consumption) that generally provides ample opportunity to over consume if a consumer is not devoted to/ concerned about/ interested in simplistic consumption behavioural practices to support the cause that is strongly promoted by environmentalists.
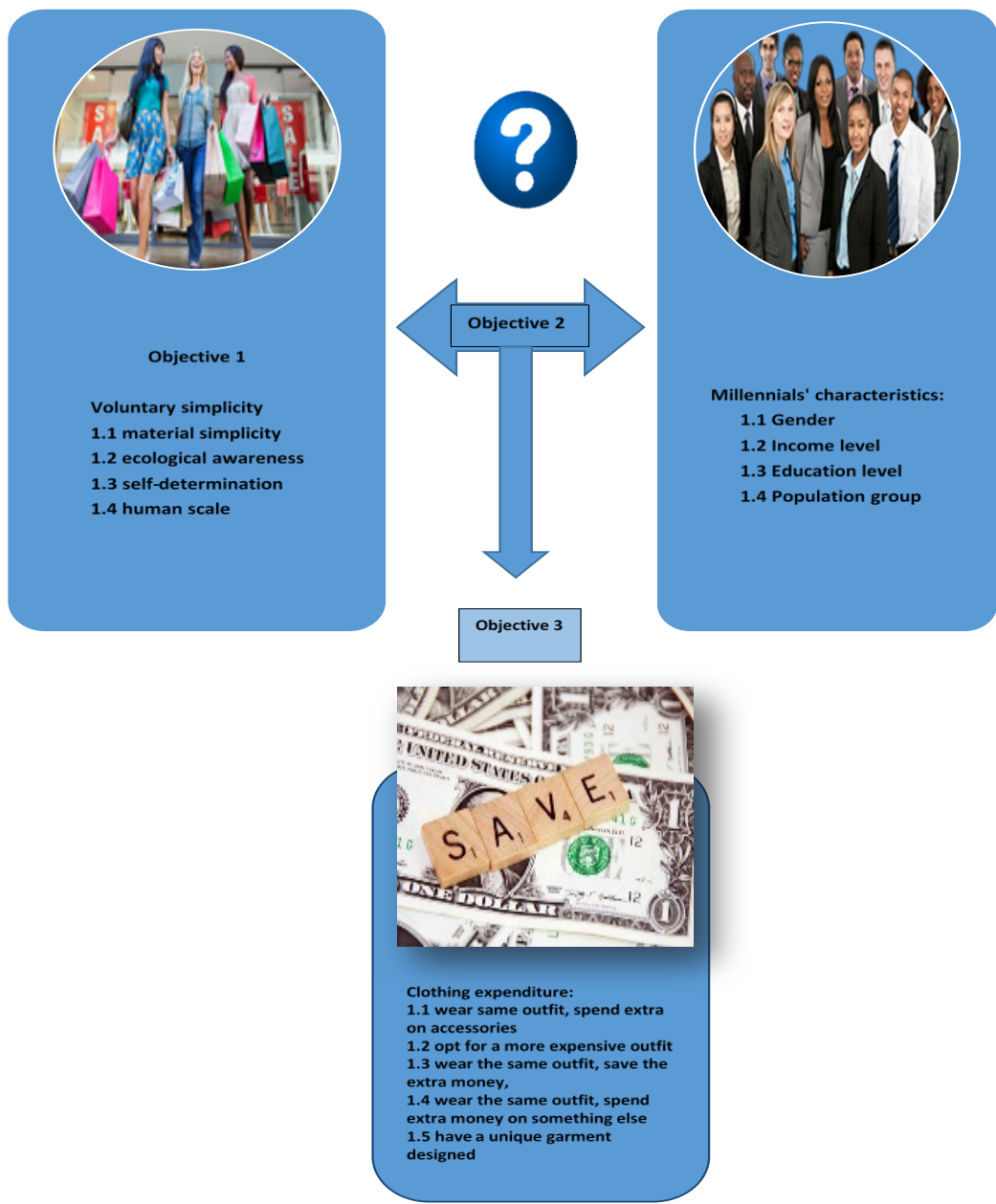
FIGURE 3.1:   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Voluntary Simplicity is described by Leonard-Barton (1981) in terms of specific dimensions, of which four dimensions served as inspiration for this investigation - though one sole dimension (material simplicity) is ascribed in more detail.

The first objective of this study investigates four dimensions of the phenomenon, namely material simplicity (Objective 1.1); ecological awareness (Objective 1.2); self-determination (Objective 1.3); and human scale (Objective 1.4) as an indication of how Millennials' clothing consumption practices concur with what is understood with Voluntary Simplistic practices. Scale items of the original scale were slightly adapted to specifically refer to Millennial consumers' clothing practices rather than products in general.

The study involves South African Millennials (recruited in a major urban area in Tshwane), and distinguished specific demographic characteristics to allow comparisons within the age cohort (Objective 2) among different demographic groups, namely gender (Objective 2.1); household income (Objective 2.2); education level (Objective 2.3); and population group (Objective 2.4). Through this objective, the study aimed to indicate whether there are distinct differences within the Millennial age cohort when they are further segmented in terms of other demographic characteristics.

In Objective 3, Millennials are distinguished *in terms of their devotion towards material simplicity* as concluded in Objective 1.1 (ranging from highly devoted to low devotion) and the respective groups are hence related to their purchase decisions (Objective 3.1 to 3.5). According to RCT, Millennials who are decidedly devoted to highly materially simplistic clothing practices, would exercise frugality (Options 3.3 & 3.3) rather than spendthrift (Options 1.1, 1.2, 1.5) because they would calculatedly refrain from not optimizing useful clothing/ garments. On the contrary, Millennials who are not devoted to being materially simplistic, would most likely not hesitate spending additional money on more elaborate outfits (D'Adamo, 2017; Kawana, 2017:50).   Eventually, this study attempts to describe the consumption categories in terms of their demographic characteristics.

3.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

3.5.1 Research aim

This study aims to distinguish Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption behaviour in a South African context, distinguishing specific demographic categories within the age cohort. It argues that a generalization regarding Millennials' clothing behaviour cannot solely

observed in terms of age. Furthermore, the study aims to verify the findings through evidence of the respective categories of Millennials' predilection to award available financial resources when confronted with different purchase scenarios.

3.5.2 Research objectives

The following research objectives directed the investigation:

1. To distinguish Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption behaviour in terms of selected dimensions - a scale that was inspired by, and adapted from the work of Leonard-Barton (1981), namely:

   1.1 material simplicity

   1.2 ecological awareness

   1.3 self-determination

   1.4 human scale

2. To discriminate and describe *demographic differences* in Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption as per the aforementioned dimensions, specifically:

   2.1 gender differences

   2.2 income differences

   2.3 level of education differences

   2.4 population differences

3. To associate Millennials' propensity towards **material simplicity,** one of the dimensions of the measurement scale, in terms of their propensity to spend money on clothing when challenged with different financial scenarios, namely:

   When they unexpectedly have more money to spend on a specific clothing purchase, would they:

   3.1   Purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit

   3.2   Opt an alternative, for another more expensive outfit

   3.3   Keep to the original outfit and save the money

   3.4   Keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else

   3.5   Have a unique garment designed and custom made

3.6 CONCLUSION

Based on literature that indicates that Millennials are specific in terms of product preferences (Kawana, 2017:50; Martins, 2014; Stein, 2013) as well as their demeanour in the market place (D'Adamo, 2017) the rational choice theory which suggests premeditated consumer decision-making, was used as the underlying theoretical framework to direct this study. Theoretically, this approach suggests that Millennial consumers obtain all the relevant information they require, or do research about certain products and brands before making a purchase decision. Of particular importance for this age cohort, is that they are generally technologically savvy and well informed. They value the opinion of friends as well as product endorsements on social media. This infers that purchase decisions would reflect the values they cherish. Since environmental issues have attracted global attention in recent years, it is likely that Millennials will possess awareness of alternative consumption methods that may be more respectful towards the Earth's resources and the well-being of future generations. To date, research in this regard is either unclear, or contradictory. This study is places distinct focus on Millennials' clothing purchase and consumption behaviour, and the extent to which it supports the principles that are associated with Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour, along with the extent of material simplicity demonstrated in their clothing decisions. Millennials are of vital importance as they are the parents of the forthcoming generation, whose habits and behaviour is likely to be emulated.

The established Voluntary Simplicity scale of Leonard-Barton (1981) served as inspiration and was adapted for use, by selecting four of the five relevant dimensions of the scale, and by rephrasing the instructions to explicitly reflect on clothing purchases, rather than products in general.

The conceptual framework is a graphical representation that outlines the study as well as the important constructs of the study and how they relate to each other. The study distinguished the Millennial cohort in terms of other demographic characteristics as one cannot assume that this consumer segment is homogeneous in character.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and methodology measures that were taken to improve the quality of the data as well as the ethical considerations

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Research conducted in the social sciences is generally aimed at studying people's beliefs, relations, and behaviours (Neuman, 2000:6), to obtain information, explain situations or engage in human interactions (De Vos & Strydom, 2011:42). The following paragraphs are aimed at introducing and explaining the research design and methodology of this study.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the approach that is best suitable to achieve the research aims and objectives (Creswell, 2014:12). The study was quantitative in nature, utilizing numerical data to reflect an accurate research objective (Creswell, 2014: 219; Zikmund & Babin 2010:94; Goddard & Melville, 2005:9). Secondly, the study was survey - based and cross sectional, i.e. it was conducted at one specific point in time within a specific geographical location (Creswell, 2014: 225,226; Fouché, Delport & De Vos, 2011:156; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:674). An exploratory survey research approach was followed to gain insight into an area that has not yet been extensively studied to date (Salkind, 2012:213) - as well as to allow the researcher to gain insight into a specific topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:674), that being Millennials' clothing consumption behaviour and the extent to which they exercise choices that reflect Voluntary Simplicity. No attempt was made to change the behaviour or conditions of the respondents; instead, an investigation on the factual events and circumstances was maintained (Hopkins, 2000).

4.3 METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Population, sample and sampling

4.3.1.1 Target population

In the context of this study, the target population included Millennials' who resided in Tshwane, South Africa at the time of the investigation. The sample was chosen randomly in an unbiased manner, aiming to portray the overall population which has been selected (Kumar, 2014:288). The selected sample needed to be diverse in terms of demographic characteristics to closely mirror the population of Tshwane (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

4.3.1.2 Sample and sampling

A pre-requisite for participation in this study, was that respondents had to be at least 21 years of age. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data, implying that the odds of selecting a particular individual are not known and the sampling frame does not have an equal chance of being selected, due to the population size and identity of the population members being unknown (Strydom, 2011b:231; Zikmund & Babin 2010:311). Reasons for this method of sampling were based on financial constraints, which limited the collection of a representative sample of the population.

A number of measures were taken to increase the diversity of the sample and to prevent bias by over representing groups that had easier access to the fieldworkers. For example, the sample had to be recruited in such a way that approximately half were White respondents, and approximately half were female. Furthermore, fieldworkers were assigned to specific suburbs across Tshwane to include a broad socio-economic spectrum.

4.3.1.3 Data collection

The paper-based questionnaire (explained in 4.3.2) was handed out over a three-week period during May 2016. This method was chosen as it allowed easy access to the respondents within a limited time period, within budgetary constraints (Salkind, 2012:103, 104; Zikmund & Babin 2010:312). The drop-down-collect-later procedure involved trained fourth year under graduate students who each had to distribute a certain number of questionnaires in pre-selected suburbs across the metropolitan area, to ensure inclusion of a broader socio-economic array of respondents.

Convenience sampling was used, since it is easy and convenient for the researchers and fieldworkers to manage in instances where purposive sampling is unmanageable. This technique is also one of the most inexpensive forms of sampling (Kumar, 2014:244). However, the researchers attempted to increase the

sample size to limit the restrictions associated with convenience sampling. Fieldworkers (forty-three) handed out the questionnaires to readily available respondents in various suburbs across Tshwane, which included Central Pretoria, Pretoria West, Pretoria East, the Moot area, Pretoria North as well as Centurion. Convenience sampling unfortunately does not allow for a generalisation of the findings as the sample may not portray the entire population (Kumar, 2014:244; Explorable.com, 2009). The second technique used to expand the data collection process, was Snowball sampling, whereby additional questionnaires were distributed via networking (Kumar, 2014:244). Chosen respondents were asked by fieldworkers to kindly identify other respondents, such as colleagues or neighbours to fill out the questionnaire.

A statistician was consulted to guide the eventual size of the sample (Goddard & Melville 2005:9), i.e. to recruit a diverse quota sample in terms of age, monthly household income, and level of education within the target area. A sample size of approximately 1000 was envisaged, which would allow a large enough sub sect of Millennials to be investigated.

The final questionnaire included a consent form, which informed the respondents of the purpose of the research study and guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. If the respondents found it necessary to ask any questions or required assistance in completing the questionnaire, the fieldworkers assisted without influencing them in any way to ensure reliability of the research study. The paper-based questionnaire was distributed according to a sampling plan to willing respondents across Tshwane in May 2016. This method of data collection was cost effective as the fieldworkers dealt with the data collection as part of a compulsory research module. They also collected the completed questionnaires per appointment, and where a respondent failed to complete the task, they were only reminded once. Thereafter, no further pressure was exerted to complete the questionnaires and they were not contacted again. Respondents completed a tear off slip with their cell numbers in the event they wished to participate in a subsequent lucky draw. This information was later used to do spot checks to ensure that all the questionnaires were completed, assuring the completeness of valid questionnaires.

4.3.2 The measuring instrument

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was designed for the research and predominantly included existing scales. The various sections in the questionnaire acknowledged scales that were developed in previous studies.

In terms of the section that attended to the dependent variable, namely Voluntary Simplicity, the independent variables were selected based on the dimensions of an established Voluntary Simplicity scale

(Leonard-Barton, 1981). However, the original scale items were adapted to specifically reflect on respondents' clothing consumption behaviour. The four dimensions (independent variables): material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination and human scale, involved a total of 22 items.

The most frequently used instrument for the collection of primary data in a survey, is a questionnaire (Bowling, 2005:284). The survey consisted of six sections that included a total of 120 questions. Only three sections are relevant to this research report, namely D, E and F.

- Section A focused on the **importance of possessions** (**Materialism**), which is not relevant in this discussion.

- Section B dealt with the **prestige of clothing brands**, which is not relevant in this discussion.

- Section C focused on **important things in your life** (**Values**), which is not relevant in this discussion.

- Section D represented the **Voluntary Simplicity Investigation**, which comprised of 22 items and was based on a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranged from Always to Never.

- Section E represented the **Willingness to Spend Inquiry** that entailed six questions with different expenditure scenarios that offered choices on a 5-point Likert-type Agreement scale that ranged from 'strongly disagree'= 1 to 'strongly agree'= 5.

- Section F represented the **Demographic Inquiry**, using nominal categorical selections for age, gender, household income level, education level and population group while age was an open ended question.

In Section D which is relevant to this study a 7-point Likert-type behavioural scale, ranging from 'Never' = 1, to 'Always'= 7. Likert-type scales was used as it has been used very successfully in similar studies before, and are easy to complete (Hartley, 2014:84). Questions were not misleading as they were worded in such a way that there was no suggestion that one answer was more desirable than another. Questions related to the objectives of the study which focused on clothing consumption behaviour, to assure valuable and usable results.

Before the questionnaire was launched, it was pre-tested to address any possible problems with wording and instructions timeously (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:255). The pre-test was also used to determine the time of completion of the questionnaire. The pre-test provided valuable insight concerning challenges that may be encountered during data collection and provided opportunity to improve the wording and

instructions in the questionnaire. Forty-six respondents took part in the pre-test. It was decided that respondents were more likely to give valuable responses if the instructions were brief, clear and included examples that could aid in an understanding of the instructions, especially for those not experienced in participating in surveys. Respondents were asked to bring to the researchers' attention any queries, issues or problems that they encountered whilst completing the questionnaire. These were put across by writing comments on the questionnaire and correcting any mistakes made in the questions that could be attended to by the researchers. Errors found included: repetition of questions; incorrect numbering in some areas; and word placement errors. Once these issues and errors had been fixed, the data collection could commence.

Table 4.1 (Operationalisation) presents a list of the constructs, related concepts, information pertaining to the relevant scales, as well as how they were measured in the study.

4.3.3 Data analysis

The data was coded by the fieldworkers under supervision. Spot checks were made by a technical assistant to ensure that all the questionnaires were completed honestly: the assistant telephoned a selection of cell numbers and asked a few random questions about the questionnaire. If any doubt was raised, a fieldworker's entire stack of questionnaires was discarded from the pile. Data was captured by Datanet, a contracted research company, and then transferred to statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics, such as means, percentages and frequencies, were used to present information in graphical, tabulated or figure format (Fouché & Bartley, 2011). Inferential statistical procedures were used to draw conclusions in terms of the objectives of the study as indicated in Section 4.3.

4.4 OPERATIONALISATION OF CONSTRUCTS

The operation of constructs is presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION

Objectives	Dimensions	Items	Measurement scales
Objective 1: To distinguish and describe the Millennial cohort's propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption behaviour for the generational cohort.	1.1 Material simplicity	V4.1 V4.7 V4.9 V4.14 V4.20	Scale inspired by, and adapted from (Leonard-Barton, 1981) and worded to reflect clothing purchases. Cronbach Alpha Means SD Chi square tests
	1.2 Ecological awareness	V4.3 V4.4 V4.10 V4.11 V4.16 V4.17 V4.22	
	1.3 Self-determination	V4.2 V4.8 V4.15 V4.21	
	1.4 Human scale	V4.5 V4.6 V4.12 V4.13 V4.18 V4.19	
Objective 2: To discriminate and describe demographic differences in Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing purchase and consumption per dimension.	2.1 Gender	V8.1	Anova Cross tabs Chi Square, Pearson correlations
	2.2 Level of Education	V8.3	
	2.3 Household Income	V8.4	
	2.4 Population Group	V8.5	
Objective 3: To associate Millennials' willingness to spend money on clothing when challenged with different financial scenarios in terms of their propensity towards "material simplicity".	3.1 Wear the same outfit, spend extra money on accessories	V5.5 V6.5 V7.5	Cross tabs Chi Square, Pearson correlations
	3.2 Opt for another more expensive outfit	V5.4 V6.4 V7.4	
	3.3 Keep to your original outfit and save the money	V5.3 V6.3 V7.3	
	3.4 Keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else	V5.1 V6.1 V7.1	
	3.5 Have a unique garment designed	V5.2 V6.2 V7.2	

4.5 QUALITY OF THE DATA

4.5.1 Validity Issues

Validity can be described as the accuracy of a measure or the degree to which a score will correctly represent a concept (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:250). If the data collected is valid and reliable, then the research study can be said to display precise and accurate data (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:29). When considering the validity of a study, three types of validity are relevant: theoretical validity, measurement validity and predictive validity (Rossiter, 2007; Leedy & Ormond, 2005:28-29).

Theoretical validity can be ensured through a literature review and an appropriate theoretical perspective which would contain clear definition of the concepts that are used to investigate Voluntary Simplicity and the lifestyles of South African Millennials.

Measurement validity is divided further into the following four sub-categories: content validity, construct validity, criterion validity and face validity. **Content validity** and **face validity** are established before data collection can start, whereas construct and criterion validity can only be evaluated after the data is collected (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011). Generally, measurement validity will be assured through the use of simple language and easy reading to eliminate any complexity for the respondent (Kumar, 2014:21). **Content validity** shows the extent to which a test represents the universe of items from which it is drawn and becomes clear when a scale's content logically reflects what was intended to be measured (Salkind, 2012:124; Delport & Roestenburg, 2011; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:250). It also contains the logical flow from one concept to the next and is used when scale logically represents the concept being measured within the study. The questionnaire will be pilot tested and checked by the study leader to ensure there are no glitches and ambiguous statements (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011).

Face validity is the degree to which the measuring instrument actually measures what it is supposed to measure. The questionnaire was divided into four sections in order to categorize it and make it appear well organized (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011).

Construct validity is defined as the extent to which the findings are related to an underlying set of variables. This was established by correlating the test scores with the scores measured for the underlying theory of the research (Salkind, 2012:125; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:251). In terms of this research study, a questionnaire was constructed with questions that determine how Voluntary Simplistic the respondents were. Construct validity was then achieved by using scales and measurement instruments that have been proven successful, as they have been used in previous research studies as along with the conceptualisation

and operationalisation of the constructs that are being measured (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011).

Predictive validity would also need to be taken into account as it determines whether a single item or multiple item approach will be taken. Within this study, a multiple item approach was taken in order to measure the norm associated with Voluntary Simplicity among South African Millennials (Rossiter, 2007).

4.5.2 Reliability Issues

Reliability can be described as the extent of consistency in the findings of an instrument, therefore containing no standard errors (Kumar, 2014:23). Reliability is also a measure of an instrument's consistency and occurs when the instrument measures the same concept multiple times, providing results with a similar outcome (Salkind, 2012:115; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:249). In order to ensure reliability, a questionnaire using Likert scales was used as its use has been proven successful in multiple studies before (Hartley, 2014). The reliability of the study was ensured through pre-testing to ensure that the correct constructs were measured and that the respondents could provide useful responses based on the format of the instructions. Also, the questionnaire included additional information and examples enclosed in brackets, to assist the respondents in clearly understanding what is being asked of them (Botha, Du Toit, Erasmus, Maree & Mugobo, 2013:43). A statistician was consulted to affirm that the questions were easy to understand and answer, and that the questions matched the objectives for the research as well as anticipated statistical analyses. This was accomplished alongside the study supervisor.

4.6 ETHICS

Ethics can be defined as the range of moral principles that are accepted by a group or an individual. These principles indicate the most appropriate rules and behavioural expectations concerning the conduct towards experimental subject as well as researchers, research assistants, students and respondents (Strydom, 2011a:114). The respondents' identities were kept confidential in order to get the most truthful and frank responses. Potential respondents were not pressured to participate in the study in any way. Finally, a consent form was attached to the questionnaire for the purposes of stating the aim of the study to the respondents, and to clarify the reason for the research that formed part of academic instruction at the University of Pretoria (Salkind, 2012:112). Confirmation of ethics from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Studies at the University of Pretoria (EC160606-045) was acquired before commencing with data collection. It was critical to ensure that the respondents who participated in the study were treated in the appropriate manner with regard to certain ethical considerations, i.e.

showing respect, as well as retaining confidentiality. The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondent's were maintained and information obtained was not revealed in the research process nor during the data collection process (Strydom, 2011a:119). Respondents were recruited on a voluntary basis and were allowed to withdraw themselves from the study if they wished to do so at any point during the study (Salkind, 2012:86; Strydom, 2011a:116). Respondents had to sign a consent form to ensure that they understood the purpose of the study as well as the conditions of participation (Salkind, 2012:86; Strydom, 2011a:118). Finally, the findings of the research study will be executed and released in an objective manner in the form of written report (academic document) (Strydom, 2011a:118), complying with all necessary requirements as stipulated by the University of Pretoria and the Department of Consumer and Food Science.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter described and explained the research design and methodology of this study. The research design details the research approach, which was quantitative in nature, using numerical data to address the research objectives, namely to explore and describe RSA Millennials' clothing consumption behaviour and to what extent they exercise choices that reflect their self-reported levels of Voluntary Simplicity. The study targeted the Millennials population who live in Tshwane, Gauteng, in South Africa. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used in terms of a structured, self-administered questionnaire which predominantly included existing scales of a nominal nature. Before distribution of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested to address any possible problems with wording and instructions. The data for the study was then collected and was coded by the fieldworkers under supervision.

Data analyses were done in accordance with the objectives of the study and anticipated outcomes and these are summarized in an operationalisation table. The measures that were employed to enhance the quality of data attended to the validity and the reliability of the data, the research process as well as the findings. Validity is described as the accuracy of a measure or the degree to which a score will correctly represent a concept (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:250). After reflecting on the validity of the study, three forms of validity were recognised: theoretical validity, measurement validity and predictive validity. The second measure used to check the quality of the data, was reliability, which can be described as the extent of consistency in the findings of an instrument; thereby containing no standard errors (Kumar, 2014:23). Finally, prior to commencing with data collection, the ethical considerations were made with due regard to the confirmation of ethics as per the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Studies

at the University of Pretoria. This chapter relates critical elements that form the basis of the results that are discussed in the proceeding chapter.

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CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in accordance with the objectives for the study, incorporating relevant literature. Tables and graphs are used to visually represent certain results

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The demographic characteristics are initially presented to describe the sample, where after the results are presented and discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study. Foremost, the results reflect Millennials' devotion to Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices in accordance with the four dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. The dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity were inspired by a scale of Leonard-Barton (1981), which was adapted to specifically acknowledge clothing consumption behaviour. Subsequently, demographic differences in the clothing consumption behaviour within the Millennial age cohort is presented and discussed, where after Millennials' propensity to award money towards a specific clothing purchase is used to verify the findings obtained in Objectives 1 and 2.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

This study formed part of a larger research project that involved a diverse sample of respondents, of which only the relevant subset of the sample, i.e. the Millennial age cohort (n=545) was used for further analysis. One thousand and twenty-five (N=1025) usable questionnaires were completed by people living in the Tshwane area. The sample characteristics are summarised in Table 5.1, also distinguishing the characteristics of the Millennial age cohort (n=545), which are relevant for this study.

TABLE 5.1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (N=545)

Variables	Sample		Millennials	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (n=1025) **Missing n=6**	1025			
Male	448	43.71	236	43.78
Female	576	56.20	303	56.22
Age (n=1024) **Missing: n=1**				
18-29 years	304	29.66	304	55.78
30-39 years	241	23.51	241	44.22
40 years and older	479	46.73	-	-
Monthly Household income **(n=1017)** **Missing: n=8**				
<R10 000	295	28.79	205	38.04
≥R10 000 < R15 000	130	12.69	77	14.30
≥R15 000 < R25 000	188	18.34	95	17.64
≥R25 000	404	39.42	158	29.32
Level of Education (n=1022) **Missing: n=3**				
≤ Grade 12	352	34.34	184	34.14
Grade 12 plus Degree/Diploma	420	40.98	231	42.86
Post Graduate	250	24.39	123	22.82
Population Group (n=1025) **Missing n=5**				
White	527	51.41	246	45.64
Black	359	35.02	227	42.12
Other	139	13.56	67	12.43

5.2.1 Gender distribution

Over half of the Millennials were female (n=545/ 56.22%), as is often the case with non-random, convenient samples where men seem more reluctant to participate. Males (n=236/ 43.78%) were nevertheless well represented.

5.2.2 Age distribution

The age of Millennials (n=545) varied from 19 to 39 years, with a slightly larger percentage (55.78%) being younger than 30 years of age.

5.2.3 Household income distribution

The income distribution of the Millennials is understandable considering their age, thus including a slightly higher percentage with lower incomes, earning <R10 000 monthly (38.04%). There was a nearly equal percentage of respondents in the middle-income and high-income categories (31.94% and 29.32% respectively). Figure 5.1 visually represents the income distribution of the Millennials in the sample.
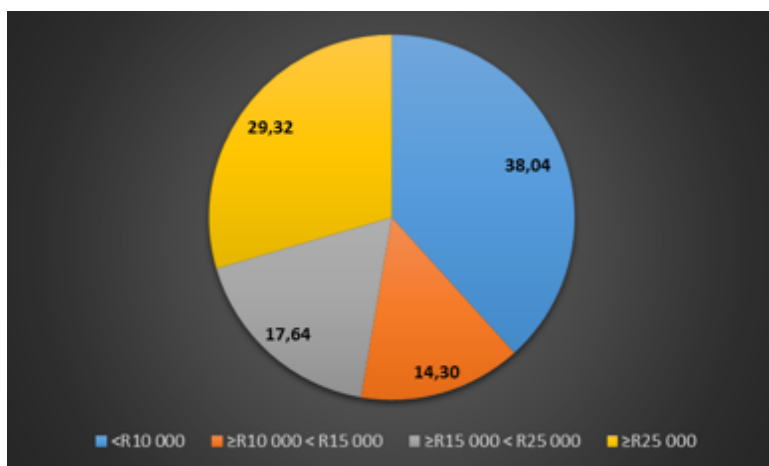
FIGURE 5.1: REPRESENTATION OF MILLENNIALS' MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

5.2.4 Level of education representation

The three level of educational categories (as presented in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2) that were identified for further analyses, were well represented: almost a third of the respondents possessed some form of secondary school qualification up to grade 12, while the smallest percentage of the sample had a post graduate qualification. Every level of education segment was large enough (n>100) to enable further statistical inferences about this demographic category.
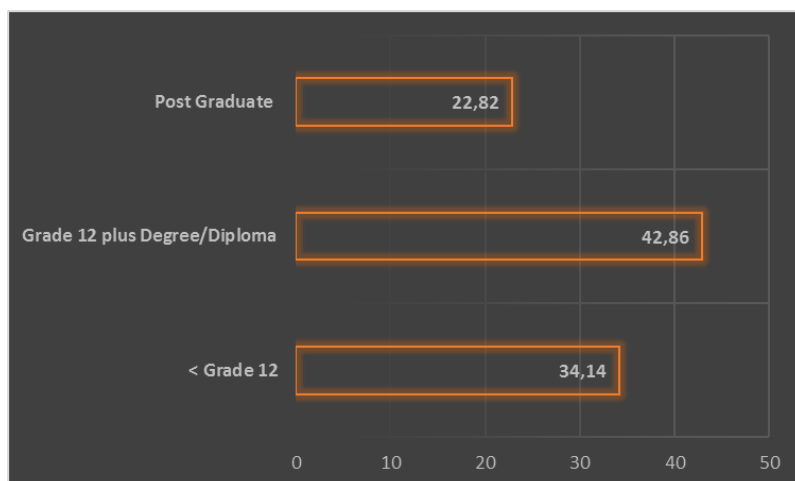
FIGURE 5.2: REPRESENTATION OF MILLENNIALS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

5.2.5 Population categories

Particularly beneficial in this convenient sample in terms of statistical analysis, is the almost equal representation of White (n=246/ 45.64%) and Black (n=227/ 42.12%) respondents (see Figure 5.3). The

"Other" population groups unfortunately only comprised 12.43% (n=67) of the subsect of Millennials in total.
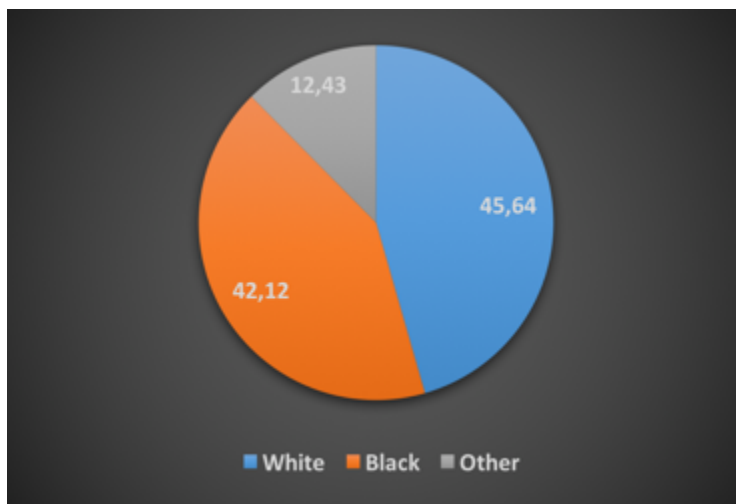
FIGURE 5.3: POPULATION GROUP DISTRIBUTION

5.3 RESULTS

The results are presented in accordance with the objectives of the study. The report commences with an investigation of Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour as per the four dimensions that were distinguished by, and adapted from Leonard-Barton's Voluntary Simplicity measurement scale (1981) to refer to clothing specifically (Objective 1), progressing to report demographic differences within the Millennial cohort (Objective 2), and lastly, a report of Millennials' propensity to award their financial resources when confronted with a specific purchase scenario.

5.3.1 Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices (Objective 1)

Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices was investigated in terms of four dimensions of the construct. The results are based on means that were calculated for the underlying dimensions, as well as standard deviations (SD) and Cronbach's Alpha to confirm the internal consistency of the four dimensions of the measurement scale, as presented in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: RESPONDENTS' PROPENSITY TOWARDS VOLUNTARY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES (N=545)

Dimensions	Item	Item wording	Mean (SD)	Cronbach Alpha
Factor 1: Material simplicity	~~V4.1~~	~~I buy good quality clothes so that I can wear them longer~~	5.44 (0.97)	0.625
	V4.7	I look after my clothes so that they last longer		
	V4.9	When going to a special occasion, I would rather wear something I already have than buy a new outfit		
	V4.14	I wear my clothes for more than one season		
	V4.20	I make a conscious effort to only buy clothes that I really need		
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	V4.3	I recycle and repurpose old clothing (e.g. using old T-shirts as cleaning rags)	4.28 (1.20)	0.722
	V4.4	Whenever possible, I buy clothes with eco-friendly features (e.g. organic cotton)		
	V4.10	I dispose of clothing in an eco-friendly way e.g. donating it to charities		
	V4.11	I buy clothing brands that are known to be environmentally responsible		
	V4.16	In our household, we pass clothes on to siblings, friends or other family members to be reused		
	V4.17	I try to reduce the environmental impact of my purchases by shopping close to home		
	V4.22	Given the opportunity, I will sell unwanted clothing so that it is reused by others		
Factor 3: Self-determination	V4.2	I have an appreciation for handcrafted garments	4.22 (1.26)	0.600
	V4.8	I prefer wearing clothes that are handcrafted to clothes that are mass produced		
	V4.15	When possible, I repair damaged clothing rather than to throw it away		
	V4.21	I have clothing altered if it no longer fits me		
Factor 4: Human scale	V4.5	I refuse to buy clothing from companies that are guilty of unethical practices	4.16 (1.47)	0.870
	V4.6	I prefer clothes that are made in South Africa to imported brands		
	V4.12	I support clothing manufacturers who create fair working conditions		
	V4.13	I shop at stores that promote South African clothing		
	V4.18	I am inspired by clothing brands that have a reputation for being ethical and socially responsible		
	V4.19	I support clothing labels that are produced by local South African communities		

The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for all four factors (>0.6) were acceptable (Garson, 2016) after removal of one item in Factor 1 (I buy quality clothes so that I can wear them longer), which improved the reliability coefficient for the factor to a more acceptable level. The items relating to the other factors were retained for further analysis. Theoretically, the maximum mean for every dimension of the scale, was M=7. Therefore, it was decided that, in order to interpret respondents' Voluntary Simplistic clothing behaviour, the following would apply:

• **Weak material simplicity**	•	M≤3.5
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	•	M>3.5<M4.5
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	•	M>4.5<M5.5
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	•	M>5.5<6.5
• **Strong material simplicity**	•	M>6.5

For three dimensions of the scale, namely *ecological awareness* (M=4.28), *self-determination* (M=4.33), and *human scale* (M=4.16) a relatively weak propensity to consume clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic way was recorded. The mean for the fourth dimension, namely *material simplicity* (M=5.44) was the highest and indicated a moderately strong propensity to follow practices that indicate frugal, economical, thoughtful clothing behavioural practices. The results are visually presented in Figure 5.4 and are discussed in the subsequent sections.
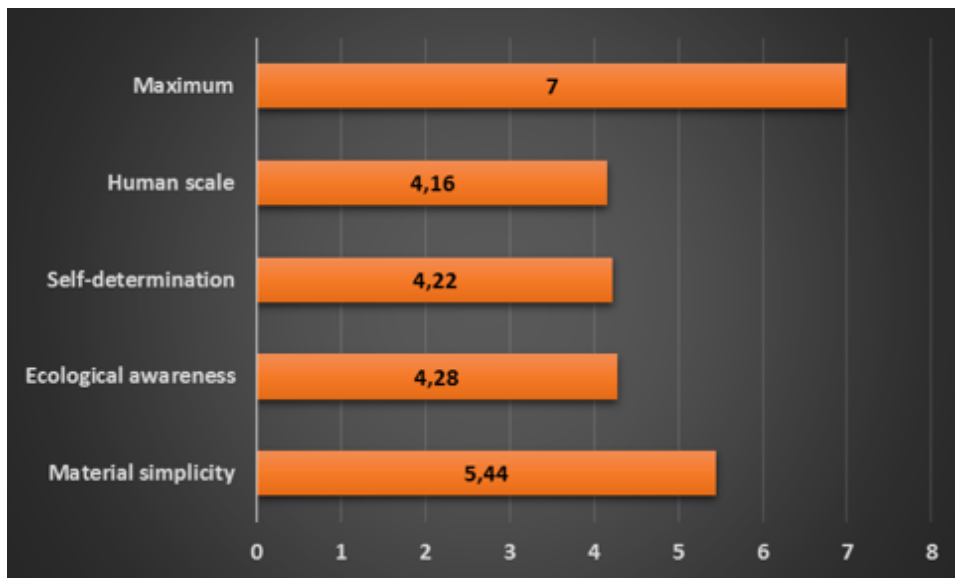
FIGURE 5.4: MEANS FOR THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF VOLUNTARY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR

5.3.1.1 Material simplicity

With respect to *material simplicity,* which encompasses the act of consuming less (Shama, 1985), and being defined as the reduction of clutter and material goods in order to place emphasis on what is important in terms of one's own values and principles (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016), the mean score (M=5.44) indicates Millennials' inclination to purchase good quality clothes that can be worn longer; attempts to look after clothes so that they last longer; rather wearing an outfit that one already has than to buy a new outfit; to wear clothes for more than one season; to make conscious effort to only buy clothes that are really needed. The mean for material simplicity (M=5.44), was the highest of the four

dimensions, confirming a moderately strong tendency of Millennials to be materialistically simplistic in the clothing product category.

According to literature, Millennials express disinterest in wearing an existing outfit to a special occasion enjoy wearing fashionable clothes (Duffett, 2015), which may have influenced the mean for this specific dimension negatively. Millennials do however appreciate quality clothing (D'Adamo, 2017; Kawana, 2017:50; Martins, 2014) pay special attention to their clothes, which may have influenced the mean score positively. In this study, the reality of clothing choices is further investigated and explained in Section 5.3.3.

5.3.1.2 Ecological awareness

The mean for ecological awareness (M=4.28) indicates a relatively weak propensity to purchase and consume clothing with due consideration for environmental consequences. This can include acts of disposing clothing items by donating it to charities while they are still useful or beneficial, or handing clothes down to siblings or family members. Respondents therefore do not seem strongly inclined to purchase clothing with eco-friendly features, or to attend to brands that are known to be environmentally responsible. An opportunity for consumer education thereby arises, where market strategies for the promotion of sustainable consumption, intentionally targeting Millennials in media can be availed. Research indicates that, even if consumers are ecologically aware and concerned, it does not guarantee that they will make "green purchases" (Anvar & Venter, 2014). A contributing factor, is inadequate promotion of such products (Taljaard, 2015).

5.3.1.3 Self-determination

Respondents' level of self-determination also seems relatively weak ($\leq$M4.5). This indicates limited attempts towards clothing behavioural practices that are associated with modest consumption, such as appreciation for self-crafted garments, repairing and altering garments rather than simply replacing them with new ones. Alexander and Ussher (2012) as well as Elgin and Mitchell (1977) describe self-determination as a level of independence and control within one's daily life. According to the findings of this study, there is substantial opportunity for improvement in terms of the encouragement of Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption practices. For example, when analysing individual statements, it became clear that it is not necessarily preferable for Millennials to wear handcrafted clothes (M=3.74); or to alter clothes that no longer fit well (M=3.92). However, there seems to be a stronger indication that damaged clothing is repaired rather than thrown away (M=5.11), where an individual displays a fondness towards

a certain item. In modern society, it might not necessarily be general practice to produce one's own clothing therefore, a relatively strong inclination to repair damaged clothing or upcycle is encouraging when it comes to the ideal of more sustainable consumption practices. Research indicates that few understand or consider practicing reduced consumption levels (Pepper *et al.*, 2009) and that adoption of sustainable consumption practices will   only arise after awareness and an understanding of the phenomenon before they are likely to accept and adopt them.

5.3.1.4 Human scale

Human scale is the dimension of Voluntary Simplicity that indicates one's ability to consume in a manner that supports local business, small enterprises and products that will generally uplift one's local community (Dauod, 2011; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). The results (M=4.16) indicate that respondents' concern is relatively feeble, which means that Millennials' demand for local products, ethical behaviour in South African clothing companies, as well as concern about the well-being of workers in the clothing industry is disappointing (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Shen *et al.*, 2013; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2012; Honabarger, 2011). The results indicate that Millennials' clothing decisions will not be deterred by properties or characteristics that do not support environmental concerns as a phenomenon, such as the refusal to buy clothing from companies that are guilty of unethical practices; preference for clothes that are manufactured in South Africa rather than imported brands; support of clothing manufacturers that create fair working conditions; shopping at stores that promote South African clothing and local brands and insisting on clothing brands that have a reputation for being ethical and socially responsible. This is evident in literature, as studies have revealed that the purchasing of "green" products in South Africa is dismal. Although consumers might be aware of environmental issues and have these concerns, they do not necessarily search for the above-mentioned characteristics within businesses and in products when making purchases (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2012).

5.3.2 Demographic differences in Millennials' clothing consumption practices (Objective 2)

5.3.2.1 Gender differences

Arguing that Millennials' clothing consumption practices are not necessarily consistent across the age cohort, demographic differences among the various demographic categories were investigated to identify demographic groups that are possibly more devoted to the cause. A gender comparison by means of a t-test was done across the four dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity and the results are summarised in Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

Section D: dimensions		n	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	F	Sig.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Material simplicity	Male	236	5.50	1.04	0.068	5.37	5.64	1.4	7		
	Female	303	5.39	0.90	0.052	5.29	5.49	1.6	7		
	Total	539	5.44	0.97	0.042	5.36	5.52	1.4	7	1.89	**0.17**
Ecological awareness	Male	236	4.10	1.25	0.081	3.94	4.26	1	7		
	Female	303	4.41	1.14	0.065	4.28	4.54	1.29	7		
	Total	539	4.28	1.20	0.052	4.17	4.38	1	7	8.67	**0.003**
Self - determinatio	Male	236	4.08	1.27	0.083	3.92	4.24	1	7		
	Female	303	4.33	1.25	0.072	4.19	4.47	1	7		
	Total	539	4.22	1.26	0.054	4.11	4.33	1	7	5.28	**0.022**
Human scale	Male	236	3.99	1.48	0.097	3.79	4.18	1	7		
	Female	303	4.29	1.45	0.083	4.13	4.45	1	7		
	Total	539	4.16	1.47	0.063	4.03	4.28	1	7	5.74	**0.017**

In terms of the interpretation of the means, the following applied:

• **Weak material simplicity**	•	M≤3.5
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	•	M>3.5≤M4.5
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	•	M>4.5≤M5.5
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	•	M>5.5≤6.5
• **Strong material simplicity**	•	M>6.5

Statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) between males and females came to the forefront for three dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, namely: **ecological awareness, self-determination** and **human scale.** In all three instances, the means were significantly higher ($p<0.05$) for females than for males. The differences between males and females for **material simplicity**, was however not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). Findings concur with previous studies that concluded that females seemingly tend to behave in a more environmentally conscious manner than men (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Meyer, 2013; Suki, 2013; Honabarger, 2011; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). This is despite men having greater environmental knowledge than women, arguing that women hold an emotional bond with the environment (Taljaard, 2015; Honabarger, 2011). Women are likely to have characteristics of altruism, a behaviour where a person shows concern and behaves selflessly for the benefit of others at their own expense (Straughan & Roberts, 1999:563). Furthermore, women are also more influenced by marketing strategies than men (Honabarger, 2011). Further studies revealed that females displayed more pertinent behaviours of ecological consciousness compared to their male counterparts (Meyer, 2013; Straughan & Roberts, 1999).

- **Material simplicity**

The means for material simplicity indicated a relatively strong propensity to demonstrate materialistic simplistic behavioural clothing practices. Interestingly, this is the only of the four dimensions where the mean was significantly higher for males than for females, indicating a slightly stronger inclination among males to buy good quality clothes and to look after their clothes so that they can be worn longer; to optimise clothes in their wardrobe for a special occasion rather than to buy a new outfit; to wear clothes for more than one season; and to make a conscious effort to only buy clothes that are really needed. Inevitably this suggests that Millennial men are less fashion conscious because they are willing to wear clothes for several seasons.

Results further indicate that both men and women are equally inclined to resist excessive clothing consumption. Literature indicates that consumers who reduce their clothing purchases and consumption patterns to utilize their money for other forms of enjoyment are indeed the ones who are aware of a Voluntary Simplistic way of life (Alexander & Ussher, 2016). These consumers would be more conscious as to the clothing they purchase in accordance with the values they wish to uphold through their purchasing behaviour. These consumers value the importance of possessions rather than the price, quantity of possessions and even the status that the purchase will bring (Dauod, 2011).

The results equate with what the rational choice theory (RCT) proclaims, indicating that Millennials rationally consider their clothing choices and make considered purchase decisions (Babbin & Harris, 2013:250; Solomon, 2007:306). RCT further proposes that "possible outcomes can be graded, and no purchase decision is equal to another", which was confirmed for both males and females based on indications that quality is important in their clothing choices, as they aim to purchase items that will last longer, and exclude products and brands that are regarded inferior and expendable.

- **Ecological awareness**

Statistically, females appear significantly ($p<0.05$) more ecologically aware (M=4.41) compared to their male counterparts (M=4.10), suggesting that females in the Millennial age cohort are likelier to practice pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour than males, which corroborated with previous studies (Taljaard, 2015; Meyer, 2013). Prior studies that were conducted locally indicated that females are generally more environmentally aware than males in terms of their clothing purchasing and disposal habits (Taljaard, 2015; Meyer, 2013), alluding that clothing that is advertised as being environmentally-

friendly or "green" is most likely to be purchased by female consumers who would be less swayed to purchase alternatives (O'Connor, 2018; Taljaard, 2015; Meyer, 2013; Suki, 2013).

Means for males as well as females were such that a relatively weak ecological awareness in terms of their clothing purchases is deduced in this study. Considering RCT, one can assume that neither male nor female Millennials prioritise ecological issues strongly when purchasing clothing. These consumers could probably be enticed to take the matter more seriously by emphasising the social approval that would come with purchasing a clothing item that will have a positive impact on the environment (Levin & Milgrom, 2004).

- **Self determination**

The results for this dimension (self-determination) of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behaviour, largely concur with the findings for the previous dimension, ecological awareness: namely that the self-determination of both males and females is relatively weak (M<4.5), though females are significantly more self-determined than males (p>0.05). Therefore, Millennial females are more likely to be aware of the effect that their clothing purchasing may have on their lives and the greater globe (Kawana, 2017; Johnston & Burton, 2003). Therefore, Female consumers (Millennials) would likely practice more self-discipline and would be more interested in a self-sufficient lifestyle than male consumers, due to their self-determination, which supports former studies (Duffett, 2015; Meyer, 2014).

Unfortunately, males' and females' self-determination lacks drive to prioritise this dimension of Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour when it comes to their clothing decisions. RCT proposes that consumers possess the knowledge to support their product (clothing) decisions. It is therefore possible that Millennials' self-determination can be enhanced through expanded knowledge of the phenomenon. Additionally, social approval could serve as a reward (Scott, 2000) that coincides with the anticipated outcomes of rational product decisions.

- **Human scale**

The means for this dimension were the lowest for males as well as females considering the other dimensions of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural choices. Males were found to have the weakest propensity towards principles related to the human scale dimension (M<4), and their propensity was significantly weaker (p<0.05) compared to females. Therefore, females are statistically significantly more likely to engage in acts such as refusing to buy clothing from companies that are guilty of unethical

practices; to insist on local rather than imported brands; to support clothing manufacturers who create fair working conditions; to promote local retailers; to be inspired by clothing brands that have a reputation for being ethical and socially responsible; and to support clothing labels that are produced by local South African communities. The findings coincide with literature on gender differences in general, namely that females are be more likely to purchase locally and to avoid big fashion houses and fast fashion due to their level of understanding of the human scale (Duffett, 2015; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). Important however, in terms of the extent to which a consumer will purchase from large corporations or small local business, is knowledge and an understanding of the consequences (Dauod, 2011; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977).

The RCT suggests that consumers would make choices based on individual satisfaction, as well as decisions which would yield the highest social approval (Levin & Milgrom, 2004; Scott, 2000). Although females in the Millennial cohort are more likely to purchase clothing from smaller corporations as well as locally produced garments, as indicated in this study, the results indicate that this is not a strong motivational force in terms of their clothing behavioural choices, and that it is even less likely for men in this age group. Much therefore still needs to be done to inform young adults about the consequences of their clothing choices to enable informed choices. Presently, evidence indicates a weak predisposition to acknowledge human scale as part of their decision framework. However, if they could be convinced that local clothing and local brands are of a high quality and that it will last long (material simplicity), they might be persuaded.

5.3.2.2 Household income comparison across the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity

For household income, significant differences ($p<0.05$) became evident in two dimensions ($p<0.05$), namely *ecological awareness* ($p=0.024$) and *human scale* ($p=0.002$) (see Table 5.4). In order to identify the differences among the income groups, post hoc Bonferroni tests were done (Table 5.5).

Means were interpreted as follows:

• **Weak material simplicity**	• $M \leq 3.5$
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	• $M>3.5 <M4.5$
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	• $M>4.5 \leq M5.5$
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	• $M>5.5 \leq 6.5$
• **Strong material simplicity**	• $M>6.5$

TABLE 5.4 HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Max	F	Sig,
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Factor 1: Material simplicity	Less than R10 000	205	5.52	0.942	0.066	5.39	5.65	1.60	7		
	R10 000 - R14 999	77	5.46	1.071	0.122	5.22	5.71	1.40	7		
	R15 000 - R24 999	95	5.41	0.919	0.094	5.22	5.59	3.00	7		
	R25 000 and more	158	5.35	0.971	0.077	5.19	5.50	2.20	7		
	Total	535	5.44	0.966	0.042	5.36	5.52	1.40	7	0.99	0.40
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	Less than R10 000	205	4.48	1.196	0.084	4.31	4.64	1.29	7		
	R10 000 - R14 999	77	4.17	1.247	0.142	3.89	4.46	1.00	7		
	R15 000 - R24 999	95	4.21	1.208	0.124	3.96	4.45	1.29	7		
	R25 000 and more	158	4.12	1.144	0.091	3.94	4.30	1.00	7		
	Total	535	4.28	1.198	0.052	4.18	4.38	1.00	7	3.17	**0.02**
Factor 3: Self determination	Less than R10 000	205	4.35	1.307	0.091	4.17	4.53	1.00	7		
	R10 000 - R14 999	77	4.22	1.283	0.146	3.93	4.51	1.00	6.5		
	R15 000 - R24 999	95	4.19	1.274	0.131	3.94	4.45	1.00	7		
	R25 000 and more	158	4.09	1.200	0.095	3.90	4.27	1.00	7		
	Total	535	4.22	1.268	0.055	4.12	4.33	1.00	7	1.30	0.28
Factor 4: Human scale	Less than R10 000	205	4.43	1.422	0.099	4.24	4.63	1.00	7		
	R10 000 - R14 999	77	4.18	1.529	0.174	3.83	4.53	1.00	7		
	R15 000 - R24 999	95	4.10	1.488	0.153	3.80	4.40	1.00	7		
	R25 000 and more	158	3.84	1.441	0.115	3.61	4.06	1.00	7		
	Total	535	4.16	1.472	0.064	4.04	4.29	1.00	7	5.07	**0.00**

TABLE 5.5: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIFFERENCES: POST HOC BONFERRONI TEST

Dependent Variable	(I) Income categories - AE	(J) Income categories - AE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	Less than R10 000	R10 000 - R14 999	.303	.15912	.346	-.1187	.72
		R15 000 - R24 999	.269	.14775	.418	-.1227	.66
		R25 000 and more	.360*	.12603	.027	.0258	.69
	R10 000 - R14 999	Less than R10 000	-.303	.15912	.346	-.7241	.12
		R15 000 - R24 999	-.034	.18255	1.000	-.5175	.45
		R25 000 and more	.057	.16545	1.000	-.3813	.50
	R15 000 - R24 999	Less than R10 000	-.269	.14775	.418	-.6599	.12
		R10 000 - R14 999	.03412	.18255	1.000	-.4493	.52
		R25 000 and more	.09098	.15456	1.000	-.3183	.50
	R25 000 and more	Less than R10 000	-.35958*	.12603	.027	-.6933	-.03
		R10 000 - R14 999	-.05686	.16545	1.000	-.4950	.38
		R15 000 - R24 999	-.09098	.15456	1.000	-.5003	.32
Factor 4: Human scale	Less than R10 000	R10 000 - R14 999	.25287	.19452	1.000	-.2622	.77
		R15 000 - R24 999	.33252	.18062	.397	-.1458	.81
		R25 000 and more	.59708*	.15406	.001	.1891	1.01
	R10 000 - R14 999	Less than R10 000	-.25287	.19452	1.000	-.7680	.26
		R15 000 - R24 999	.07965	.22316	1.000	-.5113	.67
		R25 000 and more	.34421	.20226	.536	-.1914	.88
	R15 000 - R24 999	Less than R10 000	-.33252	.18062	.397	-.8108	.15
		R10 000 - R14 999	-.07965	.22316	1.000	-.6706	.51
		R25 000 and more	.26456	.18894	.972	-.2358	.76
	R25 000 and more	Less than R10 000	-.59708*	.15406	.001	-1.0051	-.19
		R10 000 - R14 999	-.34421	.20226	.536	-.8798	.19
		R15 000 - R24 999	-.26456	.18894	.972	-.7649	.24

Firstly, respondents' inclination to be Voluntary Simplistic, was relatively strong for the lowest income groups and moderately strong among the middle- and higher income groups for the dimension material simplicity. On face value, the means were always the highest for the lowest income category in all three of the other dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. Significant differences among the income categories were evident in two of the four dimensions, namely *material simplicity* and *human scale*. Details are discussed in terms of Table 5.5 that presents the outcomes of the post hoc tests

- **Material Simplicity**

In terms of the dimension *material simplicity*, the means for the four income groups as reported in Table 5.4, indicated a fairly- or moderately strong inclination to be materialistic simplistic (M>5.35). However, the means for the income groups did not differ statistically significantly (p>0.05). Therefore, household income amongst Millennial consumers does not seem to predict Millennials' inclination to be materialistic simplistic with regard to their clothing behavioural practices, and based on the findings, this is the dimension of the phenomenon that Millennials seem dedicated to the strongest compared to the other dimensions.

Literature indicates that consumers who resist high consumption patterns in terms of clothing purchases, as is the case with consumers who are materialistic simplistic are in essence living a Voluntary Simplistic way of life (Alexander & Ussher, 2016) and they would be more conscious in terms of the value of items instead of the price (Dauod, 2011).

In relation to the RCT, results indicate that Millennials across all income groups are more likely to make fewer, and more calculated purchases that will add value to their life. Their clothing purchases would therefore be aimed at maximizing satisfaction and adding to their overall wants and goals (Scott, 2000). In this study, this principle seems valid across all income groups.

- **Ecological Awareness**

The lowest income category's *ecological awareness*, was moderately strong (M=4.48), and the strongest when compared to the other income groups, although not significantly stronger than the middle income groups. The lowest income group was however statistically significantly more ecologically aware in terms of their clothing behavioural practices than the highest income group (p<0.05). Results therefore suggest that monetary resources may be influential in consumers' demonstration of ecological awareness when purchasing and consuming clothing, as the highest income group is significantly less ecologically aware

compared to the lowest income group. On a practical level, the lower income groups are more likely to wear clothing that has been handed down or recycled (Gambrel & Cafaro, 2009) due to financial limitations. At the same time, this kind of behaviour supports environmental awareness.

In terms of the RCT, and based on the findings of this study, lower income consumers who have to optimise their financial resources would be more inclined to intentionally recycle and hand clothing down to stretch their budgets. They would for example rather resort to mend and repair clothing, also wearing clothing for more than one season as part of an intentional savings plan (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). Due to the current tight state of the South African economy, this behavioural practice is positive in terms of the prevention of excessive consumption and waste. Although indicative of ecologically awareness (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). It is however not certain whether the environment is the real cause or motivation behind low income Millennials' frugal behaviour because high income groups are significantly less concerned about the cause. One way to enhance frugal consumption among more affluent Millennials, is to promote the cause through sharing knowledge, as well as communication of the social implications of frugal behavioural practices in the long run (Scott, 2000).

- **Self-determination**

The results for the dimension of self-determination, indicate a relatively weak propensity across all income groups to demonstrate behavioural clothing practices such as an appreciation for handcrafted garments, preference for clothes that are handcrafted rather than mass produced clothes, and optimisation of clothes rather than to discard them prematurely. Means do not differ significantly across the income groups, indicating that income is not a predictor of self-determination. Therefore, income does not indicate the level of restraint that Millennials would exercise in terms of their clothing acquisitions (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Dauod, 2011).

In terms of RCT, it is evident that Millennials' self-determination in terms of responsible clothing purchases is not influenced by their income level, therefore across all income levels Millennials are not strongly self-determined to adopt clothing choices that are environmentally friendly. A possible solution, would be to promote clothing that is produced by small businesses, as opposed to popular brand names of which many are imported, as unique and socially acceptable to persuade Millennials to prioritise an alternative way to evaluate brands and products (Scot, 2000). RCT proposes that consumers (Millennials) are well informed. What should thus change, is their attitudes towards custom made clothing and local brands that are of good quality.

- **Human Scale**

Although relatively weak, the highest mean score (M=4.43) was noted for the lowest income category (Table 5.4) indicating that low income Millennials have the strongest propensity to dissociate themselves from clothing companies that are guilty of unethical practices and unfair working conditions; prefer to buy local brands and South African retailers, as well as to support clothing labels that are produced by local South African communities. Their devotion to issues related to the human scale dimension of Voluntary Simplicity, was significantly stronger (p<0.05) compared to the highest income category. On face value, the mean decreased as the income increased across the four income categories (see Table 5.4). This suggests that the availability of financial resources serve as a distraction from issues relating to Voluntary Simplistic behavioural practices. Scott (2000) explains that (and this supports the assumptions of RCT), a consumer would choose a product that has the potential to produce the greatest post purchase satisfaction for themselves. Millennials who have the financial resources to afford "green" products are generally not the ones purchasing them. This is due to the fact that frugality can be considered to not always be a choice but a non-voluntary decision which is reflective of income (Zurga *et al.*, 2015; Suki, 2013; Pepper *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, an effort should be made to convince Millennials with higher incomes to attach their satisfaction to alternative cues, such as locally manufactured, proudly South African, etc. by accentuating the success of South African designers and the local textile industry (Kawana, 2017:50). See Figure 5.5 as an example.
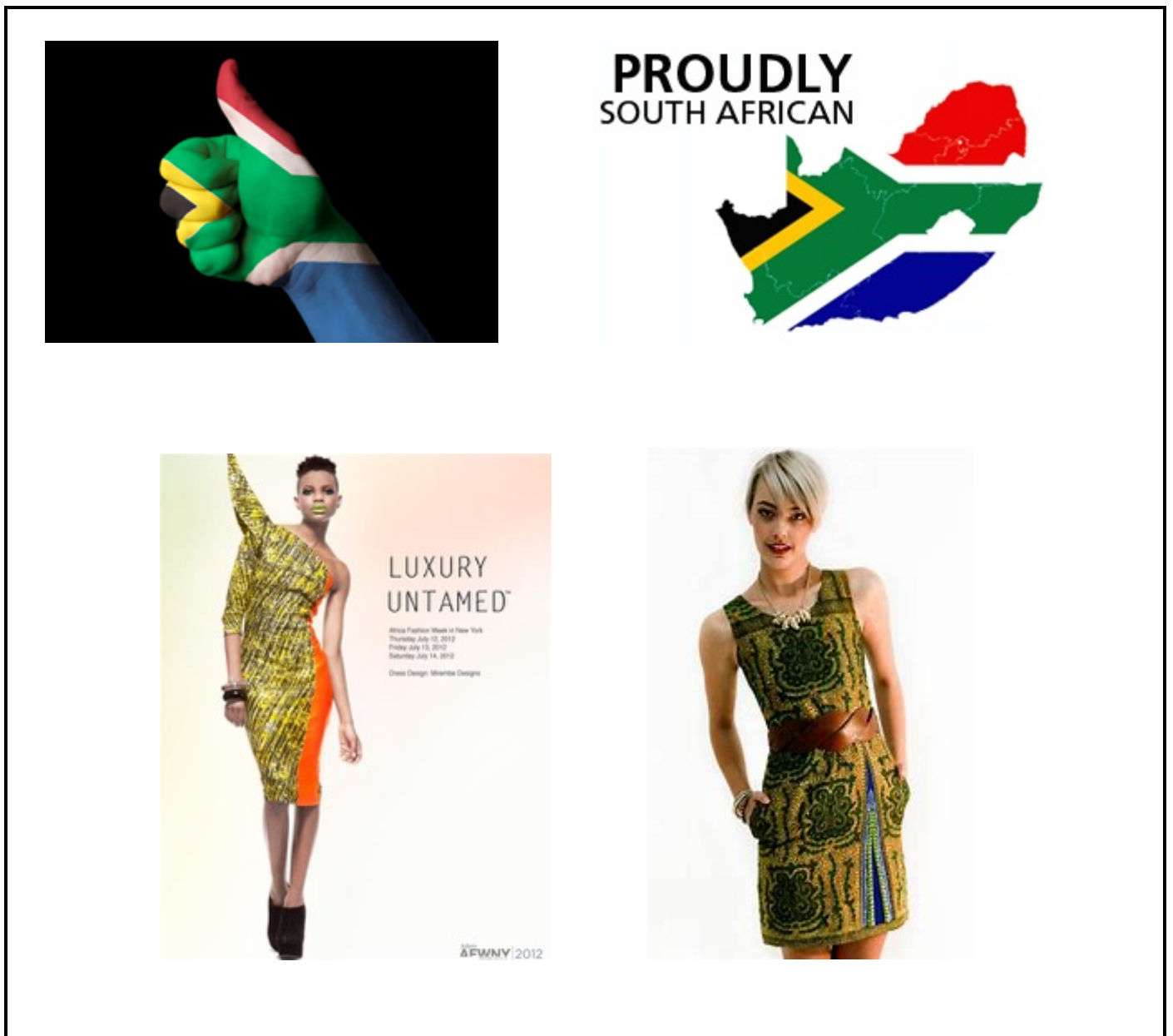
FIGURE 5.5: EVIDENCE OF PRO SOUTH AFRICAN PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET

5.3.2.3 Level of education comparison across the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity

Results for the investigation of differences within the four dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, among the level of education categories are presented in Table 5.6. Firstly, ANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the level of education groups for any of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity ($p > 0.05$). The highest mean scores were reported for the dimension *material simplicity;* indicating that level of education is not a predictor of how parsimonious Millennials would be in terms of their clothing behavioural practices, and that irrespective of level of education, Millennials' frugality in terms of their clothing is fairly strong ($M > 5.4$).

Across all the level of education groups, for two of the dimensions, namely *ecological awareness* and *self-determination* a relatively weak propensity to consume clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic manner, was concluded. Again, the mean for the fourth dimension, namely *human scale* was the lowest, indicating a weak propensity to consider related matters in terms of clothing behavioural choices. Noteworthy, is the fairly large standard deviations that were calculated, indicating a fairly big fluctuation in consumer's responses that indicate uncertainty or hesitance about appropriate behaviour. While some researchers concluded that level of education needs to be considered when determining consumers' devotion to Voluntary Simplicity as a lifestyle, this study could not confirm the same and there seems concurrence concerning certain dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity as a phenomenon among Millennials, irrespective of their level of education.

TABLE 5.6: LEVEL OF EDUCATION DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

		n	Mean	SD	Std, Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max	F	Sig,
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Factor 1: Material simplicity	Grade 1 - 12	184	5.51	0.91	0.067	5.38	5.65	1.60	7		
	Grade 12 & Degree / diploma	231	5.39	1.02	0.067	5.25	5.52	1.40	7		
	Post graduate	123	5.45	0.94	0.085	5.28	5.61	2.20	7		
	Total	538	5.44	0.96	0.042	5.36	5.53	1.40	7	0.91	0.40
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	Grade 1 - 12	184	4.36	1.21	0.090	4.19	4.54	1.00	7		
	Grade 12 & Degree / diploma	231	4.28	1.21	0.079	4.12	4.43	1.00	7		
	Post graduate	123	4.15	1.14	0.103	3.94	4.35	1.71	7		
	Total	538	4.28	1.20	0.052	4.18	4.38	1.00	7	1.21	0.30
Factor 3: Self-determination	Grade 1 - 12	184	4.22	1.30	0.096	4.03	4.41	1.00	7		
	Grade 12 & Degree / diploma	231	4.25	1.28	0.084	4.09	4.42	1.00	7		
	Post graduate	123	4.14	1.17	0.106	3.94	4.35	1.00	7		
	Total	538	4.22	1.26	0.054	4.11	4.32	1.00	7	0.30	0.74
Factor 4: Human scale	Grade 1- 12	184	4.25	1.50	0.110	4.04	4.47	1.00	7		
	Grade 12& Degree/ diploma	231	4.20	1.44	0.095	4.02	4.39	1.00	7		
	Post graduate	123	3.39	1.48	0.133	3.67	4.19	1.00	7		
	Total	538	4.16	1.47	0.063	4.03	4.28	1.00	7	2.00	0.14

5.3.2.4 Population group comparison across the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity

Differences among the three population categories that were distinguished in this study, were evident for three dimensions of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices, namely *ecological awareness* (p=0.000), *self-determination* (p=0.000) and *human scale* (p=0.000). In order to confirm how the categories differed, post hoc Bonferroni tests were done and the outcomes are presented in Tables 5.7 and 5.8 respectively.

TABLE 5.7: POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

		n	Mean	SD	Std, Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	F	Sig,
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Factor 1: Material simplicity	White	246	5.38	0.85	0.054	5.27	5.48	2.20	7		
	Black	227	5.50	1.07	0.071	5.36	5.64	1.40	7		
	Other	67	5.46	0.97	0.119	5.22	5.69	2.80	7		
	Total	540	5.45	0.96	0.041	5.36	5.52	1.40	7	.973	.378
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	White	246	3.95	1.12	0.071	3.81	4.09	1.00	6.71		
	Black	227	4.59	1.17	0.077	4.44	4.74	1.29	7		
	Other	67	4.43	1.26	0.154	4.12	4.74	1.71	7		
	Total	540	4.28	1.20	0.051	4.18	4.38	1.00	7	18.86	.000
Factor 3: Self determination	White	246	3.95	1.14	0.073	3.80	4.09	1.00	7		
	Black	227	4.54	1.31	0.087	4.37	4.71	1.00	7		
	Other	67	4.14	1.32	0.161	3.82	4.46	1.50	7		
	Total	540	4.22	1.26	0.054	4.11	4.33	1.00	7	13.85	.000
Factor 4: Human scale	White	246	3.62	1.34	0.085	3.46	3.79	1.00	6.5		
	Black	227	4.69	1.39	0.092	4.51	4.88	1.33	7		
	Other	67	4.30	1.51	0.184	3.93	4.66	1.67	7		
	Total	540	4.16	1.47	0.063	4.03	4.28	1.00	7	35.81	.000

TABLE 5.8: POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES: POST HOC BONFERRONI TESTS

Dependent Variable	(I) Population groups recoded	(J) Population groups recoded	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Conf Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Factor 2: Ecological awareness	White	Black	-.64294[*]	.10661	.000	-.8990	-.3869
		Other	-.48365[*]	.15963	.008	-.8670	-.1003
	Black	White	.64294[*]	.10661	.000	.3869	.8990
		Other	.15929	.16105	.969	-.2275	.5461
	Other	White	.48365[*]	.15963	.008	.1003	.8670
		Black	-.15929	.16105	.969	-.5461	.2275
Factor 3: Self determination	White	Black	-.59453[*]	.11365	.000	-.8675	-.3216
		Other	-.19169	.17017	.781	-.6004	.2170
	Black	White	.59453[*]	.11365	.000	.3216	.8675
		Other	.40283	.17169	.058	-.0095	.8151
	Other	White	.19169	.17017	.781	-.2170	.6004
		Black	-.40283	.17169	.058	-.8151	.0095
Factor 4: Human scale	White	Black	-1.06985[*]	.12710	.000	-1.3751	-.7646
		Other	-.67204[*]	.19031	.001	-1.1291	-.2150
	Black	White	1.06985[*]	.12710	.000	.7646	1.3751
		Other	.39781	.19201	.116	-.0633	.8589
	Other	White	.67204[*]	.19031	.001	.2150	1.1291
		Black	-.39781	.19201	.116	-.8589	.0633

Interpretation of the means was guided by the following:

• **Weak material simplicity**	• M$\leq$3.5
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	• M>3.5 $\leq$M4.5
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	• M>4.5 $\leq$M5.5
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	• M>5.5$\leq$6.5
• **Strong material simplicity**	• M>6.5

Although not significantly different with respect to the dimension *material simplicity* ($p>0.05$), the means for the Black population category were the highest for all four dimensions (indicating a stronger propensity towards simplistic consumption practices), and the means for the Whites were the lowest of the three population categories. Also, the means were statistically significantly higher ($p<0.05$) for Blacks compared to Whites for three of the dimensions (excluding material simplicity); while the means of the Other population groups were also significantly higher compared to the Whites for two dimensions, namely *ecological awareness* and *human scale* ($p<0.05$)

- **Material simplicity**

In terms of *material simplicity,* all population groups were found to be relatively strongly committed to clothing behavioural practices that are frugal.

- **Ecological awareness**

Black Millennials' ecological awareness in terms of their clothing behavioural choices seem moderately strong and significantly stronger compared to Millennials in the White population group. The same can be said about the so-called "Other" population groups compared to the Whites, whose ecological awareness is relatively weak.   Reasons for this discrepancy should be investigated further. This study hence indicates that White and other population groups are significantly less ecologically aware compared to the Black population group. Some researchers are of the opinion that the rise in the Black Millennial generation in South Africa, and changing living conditions, may contribute to a stronger interest in environmental preservation (Martins, 2014). However, although these consumers are more likely to be environmentally aware, this not necessarily translate in actual purchasing of "green" fashion (Meyer, 2013). This is due to a multitude of factors ranging from price all the way to advertising of these products.

According to Rational Choice Theory, a consumer will try to exercise choices that will produce the most satisfactory outcome. If consumers are more environmentally aware, their purchase decisions will reflect

that (Solomon, 2007:306). Predictions can however, not be made in terms of a single dimension of Voluntary Simplicity, or a single demographic characteristic.

- **Self-determination**

Self-determination is described as the yearning for a greater sense of purpose and control over one's life (Johnston & Burton, 2003). In this study, Black Millennials' self-determination in terms of simplistic clothing behavioural practices, was found to be moderately strong, and significantly stronger (p<0.05) compared to their counterparts in the White population category who revealed a relatively weak level of self-determination. As was found in terms of Black consumers in general (Cherrier, 2007), Black Millennials are more likely to purchase locally manufactured clothing products and with the greater good of the community in mind compared to the other population groups.

- **Human scale**

Evidence of Black Millennials' moderately strong propensity to be concerned about companies that are guilty of unethical practices, preference for South African brands and companies, ethical and socially responsible conduct of clothing retailers and manufactures is comforting. The finding that White Millennials are significantly less concerned (p<0.05), and who are merely weakly devoted to the cause (see Table 5.7) may have some connection with White Millennials' predominant individualistic upbringing which is more typical of Western societies (Duffett, 2015) compared to Blacks who tend to be more collectivistic (Close, 2015). Therefore, Black Millennials are seen as more likely to buy clothing which adds value to their lives and allows for the concerns they have such as the brands ethical and environmental considerations to be met before making a purchase (Viviers *et al.*, 2012).

5.3.2.5 Summary

Millennials' clothing consumption practices are not necessarily consistent across the age cohort, therefore demographic differences among different demographic categories were investigated to identify demographic groups that are possibly more devoted to the cause. A gender comparison was done and revealed that males and females were statistically different in terms of the dimensions of ecological awareness, self-determination and human scale and for all, the means were significantly higher for females than for males. However, in terms of material simplicity, there was no statistical significant gender differences. Millennials indicated a relatively strong propensity to demonstrate materialistic simplistic behavioural clothing practices. Both men and women seem equally inclined to resist excessive clothing

consumption. Females are once again statistically significantly more ecologically aware compared to their male counterparts, indicating that Millennial females are likelier to practice environmentally friendly behaviour. Self-determination yielded results that were fairly similar to that of ecological awareness, namely that females are significantly more self-determined than males. The means for human scale were the lowest for males as well as females, compared to the other dimensions of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural choices. Findings nevertheless indicate that females in the Millennial age cohort are more likely to be voluntary simplifiers. (See Table 5.3).

In terms of income level, respondents' inclination to be Voluntary Simplistic, was relatively strong for the lowest income groups and moderately strong among the middle- and higher income groups for material simplicity. The lowest income category's ecological awareness, was moderately strong. Results therefore suggest that monetary resources may be influential in consumers' demonstration of ecological awareness when purchasing and consuming clothing, as the highest income group is significantly less ecologically aware compared to the lowest income group. The results for the dimension of self-determination, indicate a relatively weak propensity across all income groups with regards to clothing practices. This indicates that income is not a conjecturer of self-determination. A relatively weak mean score was noted for the lowest income category, indicating that low income Millennials have the strongest propensity to the human scale dimension of Voluntary Simplicity, probably because they can identify with related issues.

ANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the level of education groups for any of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. The highest mean scores were reported for the dimension *material simplicity;* indicating that level of education is not a predictor in terms of Millennials frugality with regards to their clothing consumption. The dimensions of *ecological awareness* and *self-determination* had means that suggest a relatively weak propensity to consume clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic manner across all the level of education groups. With the same occurring for the fourth dimension *human scale* which was the was the lowest, indicating a weak propensity. While some researchers concluded that level of education needs to be considered when determining consumers' devotion to Voluntary Simplicity, that was not evident in this study.

Differences among population categories were distinguished and differences were evident for three dimensions of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices, namely: *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale.* Although not significantly different with respect to the dimension

material simplicity. In terms of *material simplicity,* all population groups were found to be relatively strongly committed to clothing behavioural practices that are frugal.

 The means for the Black population category were the highest in terms of all four dimensions of the construct. Means for the Whites were the lowest of the three population categories, thus finding that Black Millennials' choices seem moderately strong and significantly stronger compared to White Millennials. Black Millennials' moderately strong propensity to be concerned about companies that are guilty of unethical practices, preference for South African brands and companies, ethical and socially responsible conduct of clothing retailers and manufactures is more prominent than that of White Millennials. Black Millennials would highly likely prioritise local brands and certain labels, which they trust, contrary to White Millennials.

5.3.3 Millennials' propensity to demonstrate clothing behavioural practices that reflect material simplicity (Objective 3)

5.3.3.1 Evidence of Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices

Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices, which is one of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, that specifically attends to consumers' inclination to use clothing for a longer period of time and to optimise rather than replace it, is presented in 5.3.3 and summarised in 5.3.3.2. and 5.3.3.4. As previously explained, *material simplicity* encompasses the act of consuming less (Shama, 1985), and entails effort to reduce clutter in order to place emphasis on what is important in terms of one's own values and principles (McGouran & Protheroo, 2016). The mean for material simplicity across the sample (M=5.44), was the highest of the four dimensions, confirming a moderately strong tendency to be materialistically simplistic in the clothing product category. However, according to literature, Millennials are not really keen to wear an existing outfit to a special occasion and they like to wear fashionable clothes (Duffett, 2015; Martins, 2014) and that may have influenced the mean for this specific dimension negatively. Millennials do however like quality clothing (Taylor, 2017) and take care of their clothing, which would to therefore have influenced the mean score in a positive way.

The reality of Millennials' clothing choices was hence further investigated as confirmation of their self-admitted level of material simplicity, by providing them with a purchase scenario and five options (see questionnaire in Addendum 1), namely:

Subsequently, cross tabulations were done to distinguish respondents' propensity to spend money when confronted with a scenario (i.e. that they have more money to spend on an outfit for a special occasion than initially anticipated). For this cross tabulation, respondents were divided into subsets based on their materialistic predisposition, anticipating that those with a stronger sense of material simplicity would rather save the extra money (Option c), and those with a weaker sense of material simplicity would spend the money in diverse ways (Options a, b, d or e). Respondents' **materialistic predisposition** was firstly categorised based on the means reported in 5.2.1 as indicated in Table 5.9 and Figure 5.6.

TABLE 5.9: MILLENNIALS' PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS MATERIAL SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR

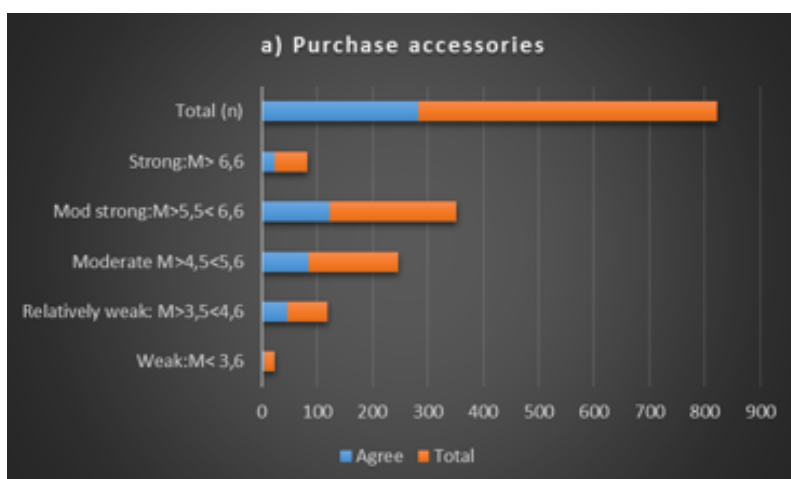| Level of material simplicity	Score	n
• **Weak material simplicity**	• M≤3.5	18
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	• M>3.5 ≤M4.5	72
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	• M>4.5 ≤M5.5	161
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	• M>5.5≤6.5	229
• **Strong material simplicity**	• M>6.5	60
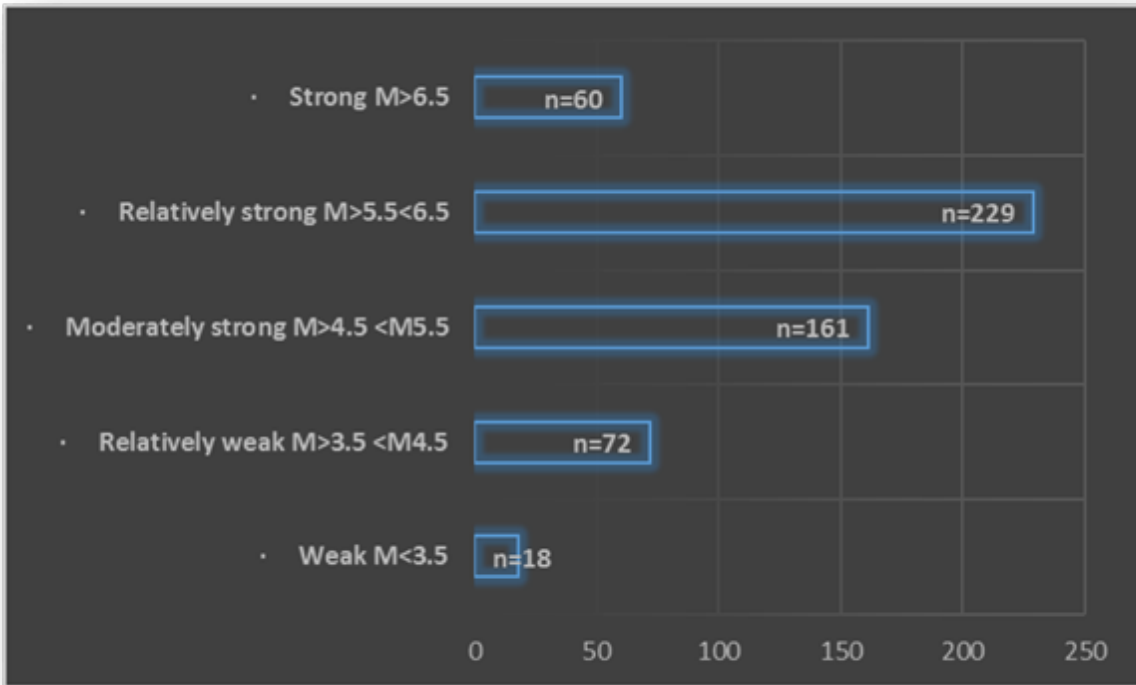
FIGURE 5.6: MILLENNIALS' PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS MATERIAL SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR

The different sub sets' decisions on how they would allocate their money are presented in Table 5.10.

TABLE 5.10: RESPONDENTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS RELATED TO THEIR MATERIAL SIMPLICITY

| Purchase option	Material simplicity						%	p-value
	Weak: M< 3.6	Relatively weak: M>3.5<4.6	Moderate M>4.5<5.6	Mod strong: M>5.5< 6.6	Strong: M>6.6	n	%	
a) Purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit								
Disagree	10	18	49	74	30	181	33.5	
Undecided	3	8	27	32	7	77	14.3	
Agree	5	46	85	**123**	23	282	52.2	0.026
Total	18	72	161	229	60	540	100	
b) Opt for another more expensive outfit								
Disagree	8	26	70	**122**	43	269	49.9	
Undecided	1	15	35	41	6	98	18.2	
Agree	9	31	55	66	11	172	31.9	
Total	18	72	160	229	60	539	100	0.002
c) Keep to the original outfit and save the money								
Disagree	7	17	24	35	6	89	16.5	
Undecided	5	13	39	31	8	96	17.8	0.003
Agree	6	42	97	**162**	46	353	65.6	
Total	18	72	160	228	60	538	100	
d) Keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else								
Disagree	8	15	35	56	16	130	24.1	
Undecided	3	13	39	44	12	111	20.6	0.534
Agree	7	44	87	**129**	32	299	55.4	
Total	18	72	161	229	60	540	100	
e) Have a unique garment designed and custom made								
Disagree	11	33	86	**138**	36	304	56.3	
Undecided	0	14	26	22	10	72	13.3	0.126
Agree	7	25	49	69	14	164	30.4	
Total	18	72	161	229	60	540	100	

Results for the different choice scenarios are visually presented in Figures 5.7 to 5.11.
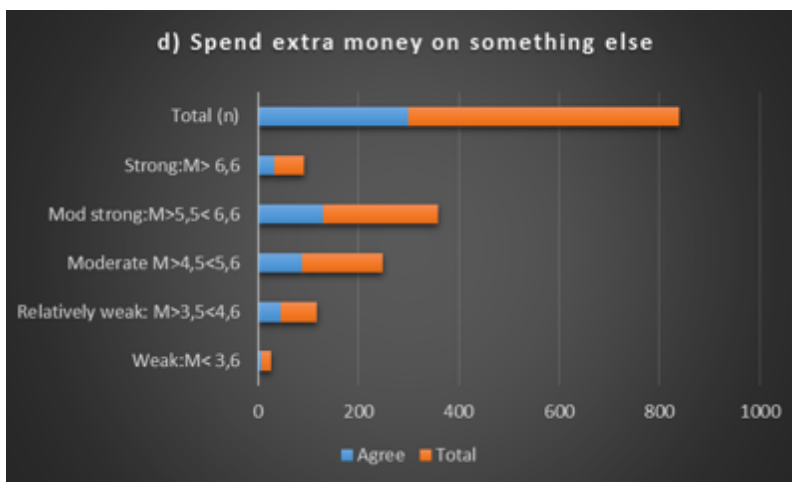
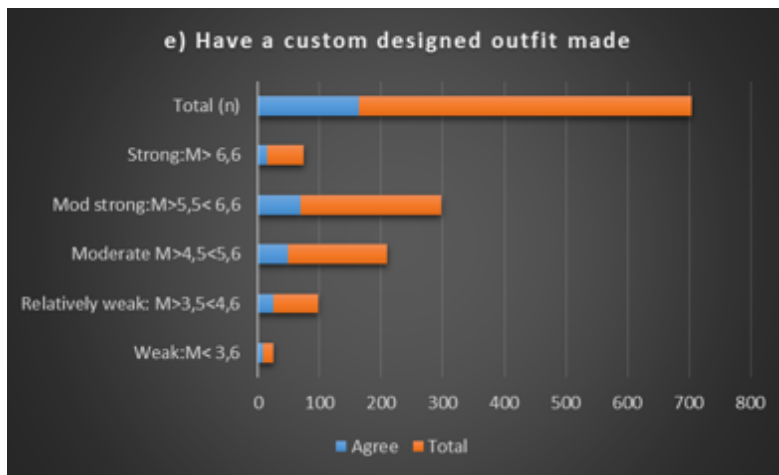

FIGURE 5.7: EXPENDITURE OPTION A
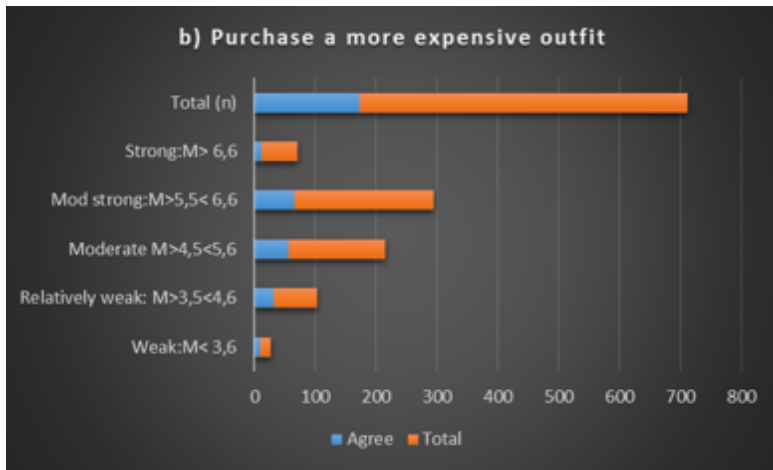
FIGURE 5.8: EXPENDITURE OPTION B
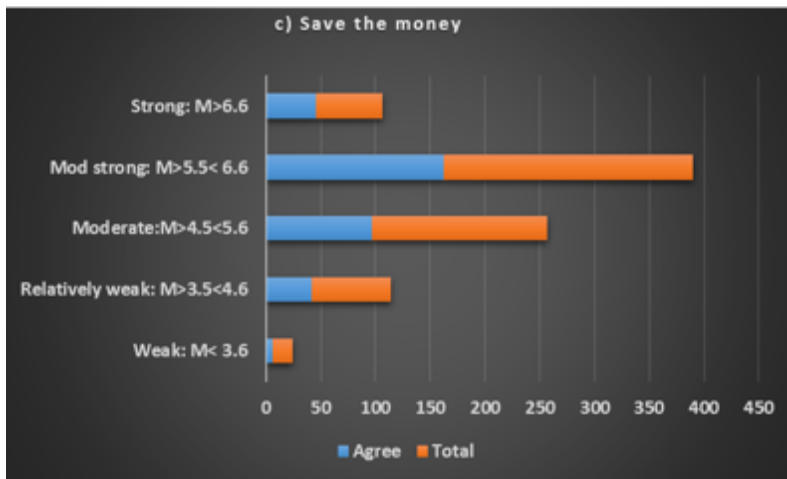
FIGURE 5.9: EXPENDITURE OPTION C

FIGURE 5.10: EXPENDITURE OPTION D

FIGURE 5.11: OPTION E

In terms of the fundamental principles of material simplicity, Millennials who indicated that they were **moderately strong, or strongly inclined** (M>5.5) to optimise their wardrobe, thus aiming not to spend unnecessarily (n=288) were expected to exercise option c, namely to "Keep to the original outfit and save the money". Results (Figure 5.6; Table 5.10) show that:

- Almost half of the sample (n=288/ 53.5%) had a relatively strong-, or strong propensity towards material simplistic clothing consumption practices.

- Of this committed group, 72.2% (n=208) indicated that they would save the extra money rather than spending it, which confirms their self-committed devotion to be materialistically simplistic.

- The 14.2% (n=41) who indicated that they would not save the money, or who were undecided (n=39/ 13.5%), were probably not candid when indicating their devotion towards material simplistic consumption behaviour.

Respondents who were **moderately committed** towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>4.5<5.6), formed near a third of the sample (n=161/ 29.8%), and their choices of how to spend the extra money, differed in terms of the five listed options (a, b, c, d or e). Given different scenarios, it became evident that:

- The most preferred options among near half of this group, was option c (n=97/ 60.6%), namely to keep to the outfit and rather save the extra money; or to keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else (Option d: n=87/ 54.4%); or to keep the outfit and to spend the extra on accessories (n=85/ 53.1%). Important to note, is that they could indicate more than one possible answer. Therefore, approximately half of this category would spend the money and not save it although those who indicated that they would spend the money on something else, not necessarily

indicated that it would be clothing. This is not necessarily an indication of spendthrift, as the money could have been spent on a worthy cause such as school fees, groceries etc.

- Near a third of the sample (n=55/ 34.3%) indicated that they would opt for another more expensive outfit (Option b), or have a unique garment designed and custom made (n=49/ 30.6%), thus option e. Therefore, a third of the sample who indicated moderate commitment demonstrated a stronger intention towards spendthrift. Their preferred choices confirmed their self-committed lack of devotion towards material simplistic behavioural practices, even though the way in which they chose to spend their money differed.

Respondents who were **relatively weakly committed** towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>3.5<4.6), formed a small percentage of the sample (13.3%/ n=72), and their choices of how to spend the extra money, differed:

- Almost equally chosen, were the option to purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit (Option a: n= 46/ 63.8%) or to keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else (Option d: n=44/ 61.1%).
- More than half of this group however also considered saving the money and wearing the same outfit (Option c: n= 42/ 58.3%), which indicated an intention to be frugal.
- A sizable part of this group opted to purchase another, more expensive outfit (Option b: n=31/ 43.0%) while 34.7% (n=25) wished to have an outfit custom made (Option e): both options indicating extravagance, which confirms their self-committed weakly commitment toward frugal clothing behavioural practices.

In terms of the construct of material simplicity, Millennials were **moderately strong, or strongly inclined** (M>5.5) to optimise their wardrobe and not to spend unnecessarily were expected to exercise option c. The results showed that almost half of them had a relatively strong-, or strong propensity towards material simplistic clothing consumption practices. The respondents who were **moderately committed** towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>4.5<5.6), formed near a third of the sample and their choices of how to spend the extra money, differed in terms of the five listed options. The most preferred options among near half of this group, was option c. The respondents who were **relatively weakly committed** towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>3.5<4.6), formed a small percentage of the sample and their choices of how to spend the extra money, differed between Options a, c and d, which indicated an intention to be frugal. However, part of this group opted for Option b and Option e, both options indicating overspending, which confirms their self-committed weak commitment

toward frugal clothing behavioural practices and ultimately their inclination towards material simplicity was low.

5.3.3.2 A categorisation of Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices in terms of their demographic characteristics

Subsequently, the sample was categorised in Table 5.9 in terms of their choice of spending their money, i.e. as having:

- a *weak predisposition towards material simplicity*   (M≤3.5): n=18;
- a *relatively weak predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>3.5 ≤M4.5): n=72
- a *moderately strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>4.5 ≤M5.5): n=161
- a *relatively strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>5.5≤6.5): n=229
- a *strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>6.5): n=60

These were hence cross tabulated and further investigated by means of Pearson Chi square tests to enable a more specific description of the respective groups in terms of their demographic characteristics. The results of the cross tabulations are presented in Table 5.11, while Table 5.12 presents the results of the Pearson Chi-Square Tests.

TABLE 5.11: CROSS TABULATIONS OF MILLENNIALS' PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS MATERIAL SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR IN TERMS OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Mat simpl	Gender		Level of education			Income level				Population group		
	Male	Female	≤ Gr 12	Gr 12 & Deg/ dip	Post grad	< R10K	≥R10K < R15K	≥R15K < R25K	≥R25K	White	Black	Other
M< 3.6	3,81	2,97	1,63	4,76	3,25	2,93	5,19	1,05	4,43	2,85	3,96	2,99
M>3.5<4.6	13,56	13,20	13,04	12,99	13,82	11,22	12,99	16,84	13,92	12,60	14,10	13,43
M>4.5<5.6	26,27	32,67	28,26	31,60	28,46	27,32	28,57	29,47	33,54	36,18	22,47	31,34
M>5.5<6.6	40,68	43,56	46,74	39,83	41,46	47,32	37,66	41,05	39,24	41,87	44,05	38,81
M> 6.5	15,68	7,59	10,33	10,82	13,01	11,22	15,58	11,58	8,86	6,50	15,42	13,43
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total n	236	303	184	231	123	205	77	95	158	246	227	67

TABLE 5.12: RESULTS OF PEARSON CHI SQUARE TESTS

| Gender	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.172[a]	4	.038
Likelihood Ratio	10.125	4	.038
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.786	1	.181
N of Valid Cases	539		
Level of Education	**Value**	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	5.236[a]	8	.732
Likelihood Ratio	5.422	8	.712
Linear-by-Linear Association	.261	1	.610
N of Valid Cases	538		
Income level	**Value**	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	9.847[a]	12	.629
Likelihood Ratio	10.099	12	.607
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.044	1	.081
N of Valid Cases	535		
Population group	**Value**	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	17.356a	8	.027
Likelihood Ratio	17.924	8	.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.834	1	.176
N of Valid Cases	540		

Gender differences

Results indicate a more or less equal distribution of males and females across the categories for weaker and a moderate inclination towards materialistic simplistic clothing consumption behaviour (M<4.5). Significant gender differences were identified within the strongly devoted category (M>6.5; p=0.038), revealing that being strongly devoted to material simplistic clothing behaviour is significantly more typical of men in the Millennial age cohort.
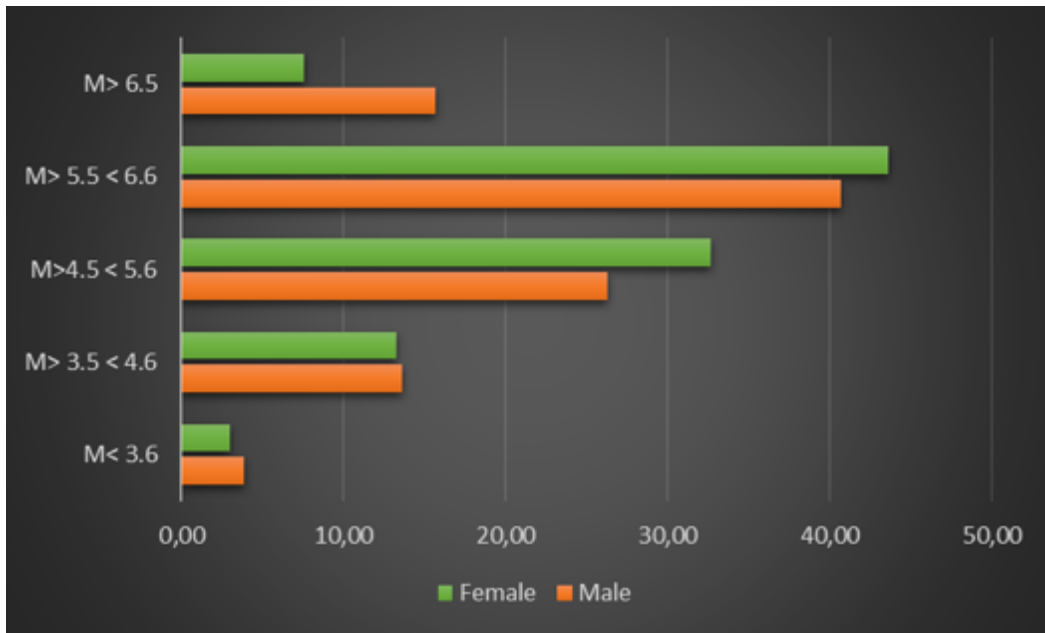
FIGURE 5.12: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' PROPENSITY TO DEMONSTRATE MATERIALISTICALLY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

**Level of education differences**

Differences in the devotion to material simplistic clothing behaviour among the different level of education categories were not significant when considering their devotion to material simplistic clothing behaviour (p=0.732). A closer investigation of the results presented in Table 5.11 indicates almost equal percentages of Millennials with lower education levels ($\leq$Grade 12) and with higher education levels (Grade 12 & Degree or Diploma, as well as those with post graduate qualifications) who are either weakly (M3.5<4.6) or strongly devoted (M>6.5) to frugal clothing consumption behaviour. Therefore, no association between level of education and propensity towards material simplicity could be confirmed in this study. Figure 5.13 presents the results visually.
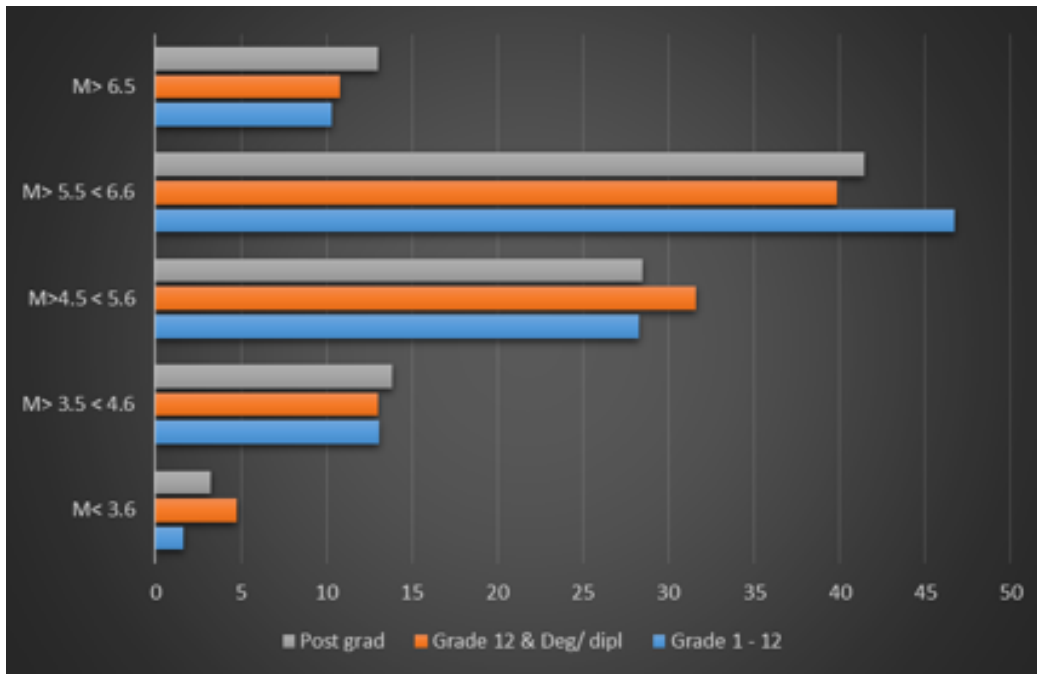
FIGURE 5.13: LEVEL OF EDUCATION DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' PROPENSITY TO DEMONSTRATED MATERIALISTICALLY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

Income level differences

As is the case with level of education, differences among income groups within the levels of devotion towards material simplicity were also not statistically significant (p=0.629). Therefore, income level is not associated with specific levels of material simplicity. On face value, around one in four Millennials across all income groups are moderately inclined to be frugal, while just more than half of the Millennials are moderately strong or strongly devoted to avoid spendthrift in terms of clothing purchases and consumption.
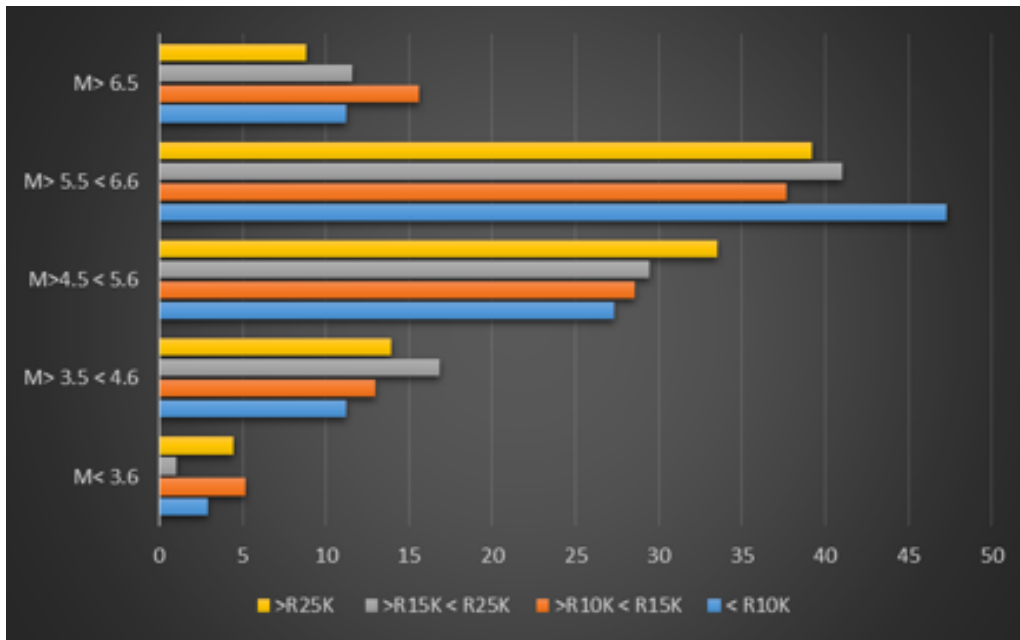
FIGURE 5.14: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' PROPENSITY TO DEMONSTRATE MATERIALISTICALLY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES
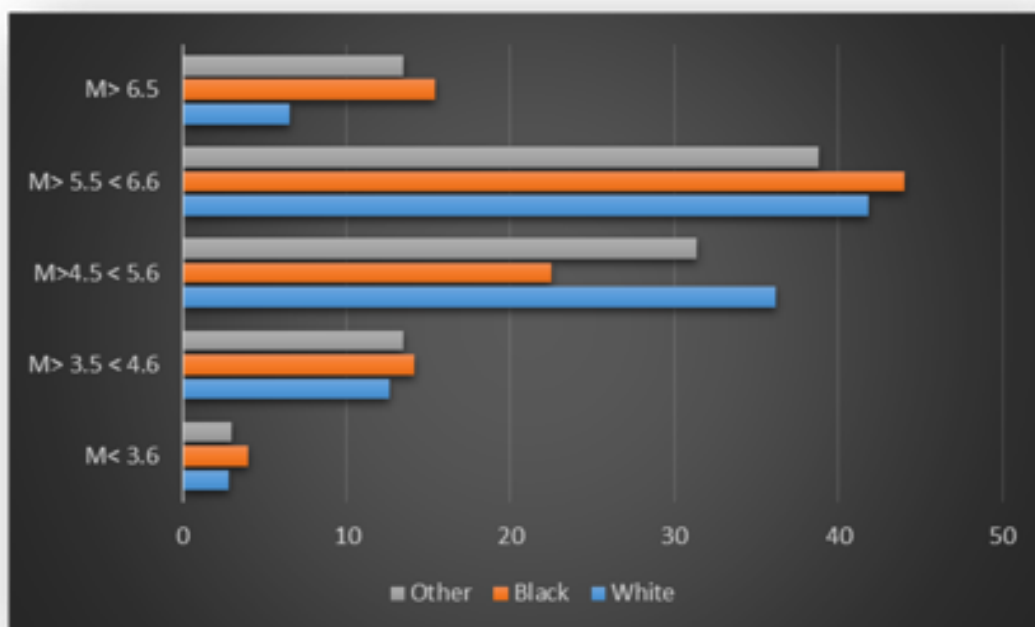
Population group differences

Because the so-called "Other" population group (n=67) does not represent a specific population group of which the characteristics can be specified, the discussion focuses on Black (n=227) versus White population groups' (n=246) propensity to demonstrated materialistically simplistic clothing behavioural practices. Results indicate significant differences, firstly showing that 48.78% of White- as opposed to 36.5% Black Millennials' propensity to demonstrate frugal clothing behavioural practices, is weak or moderately strong (M<4.6). To the contrary, 48.37% White versus 59.42% Black Millennials have a relatively strong M>5.5<6.5) or strong propensity (M$\geq$6.5) to demonstrate frugal clothing behavioural practices. A Pearson Chi-square test revealed significant population differences (p=0.027) indicating a significantly stronger association between Black Millennials and a strong devotion towards materialistically simplistic clothing consumption practices. As shown in Figure 5.15, the reverse is true for a moderate propensity to be frugal, which is significantly more so associated with White Millennials. Therefore, moderation is more typical of Whites, while a stronger devotion seems more typical of Black Millennials. A visual representation follows in Figure 5.15.

FIGURE 5.15: POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' PROPENSITY TO DEMONSTRATED MATERIALISTICALLY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

5.3.3.4 Summary

The categories in the sample were distinguished as follows: *weak predisposition towards material simplicity* (M≤3.5), *relatively weak predisposition towards material simplicity* (M≥3.5<4.5), *moderately strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M≥4.5<M5.5), *relatively strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M≥5.5<6.5) and *strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>6.5).

Gender differences indicate a more or less equal distribution of males and females across the categories for weaker and a moderate inclination towards materialistic simplistic clothing consumption behaviour. Level of education differences in materialistically simplistic clothing consumption behaviour were not statistically significant. The results indicate almost equal percentages of Millennials with lower education levels and Millennials with higher education levels who are either weakly or strongly devoted to frugal clothing consumption behaviour. The Income level differences were fairly similar to level of education as differences among income groups were also not statistically significant. This indicates that income level cannot be used to predict Millennials frugal clothing consumption behaviour. Population group differences indicate significant differences in the population groups' propensity to demonstrate materially simplistic clothing behavioural practices as White Millennials' frugal clothing behavioural practices is weak or moderately strong, which is significantly weaker compared to that of Black Millennials. Therefore, indicating that Black Millennials seem more sensitive in terms of wasteful practices.

Pearson Chi square tests shed more light on the profile of consumers who are more strongly devoted to material simplicity, indicating that: being strongly devoted to material simplicity is significantly more typical of males, and Black Millennials. A moderate devotion to material simplicity is significantly more typical of White Millennials. Similar conclusions could not be reached for level of education or income level.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The demographic characteristics of the sample were presented first to describe the sample, where after the results are presented and discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The results firstly reflect Millennials' devotion to Voluntary Simplicity clothing behavioural practices in accordance with four dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. This study formed part of a larger research project and only the Millennial cohort (n=545) was used for further analysis. The Millennial respondents consisted of almost half male and female between the ages of 19 to 39 years. The sample also included almost equal representation of White and Black respondents.

The report commences with an investigation of Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour per the four dimensions that were distinguished by, and adapted from Leonard-Barton's Voluntary Simplicity measurement scale (1981).

Objective 1: Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices. This investigation was done in terms of four dimensions of the construct. For three dimensions of the scale, namely *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale* a relatively weak propensity to consume clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic way was concluded overall. However, respondents' regard for *material simplicity* was the highest and indicated a moderately strong propensity to consume in a frugal manner.

Objective 2: Demographic differences in Millennials' clothing consumption practices. This investigation concluded significant gender differences ($p<0.05$) in terms of *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale* with females being significantly more concerned. In terms of *material simplicity*, a relatively strong propensity to demonstrate materialistic simplistic behavioural clothing practices was evident. In terms of household income, and significant differences were found with regard to two dimensions, namely *ecological awareness* and *human scale*. In the level of education discrimination,

material simplicity was found to be the strongest/ most pertinent, while ecological awareness and self-determination were relatively weak overall. Population group differences were found for *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale*.

Objective 3: Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices (which is one of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity). Respondents who were moderately committed towards materialistic simplistic clothing behavioural practices (M>4.5<5.6), formed near a third of the sample with the majority preferring to save the extra money and not to upgrade their outfits when they had extra money to spend. The respondents who were relatively weakly committed towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>3.5<4.6), formed a small percentage of the sample.

A categorisation of Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices showed that a more or less equal percentage of males and females admitted a weaker to moderate inclination towards materialistic simplistic clothing consumption behaviour. Level of education differences were evident, in that an almost equal percentage of Millennials with higher education levels indicated that they are weakly devoted to frugal clothing consumption behaviour while the same percentage were strongly committed. Findings reveal that income level cannot be used to predict Millennials' frugal clothing consumption behaviour: the correlation between income level and level of commitment towards material simplicity was not significant. Population group differences in the results indicate significant differences between White- and Black Millennials, revealing a significant correlation between frugal behaviour (a strong commitment towards material simplicity) and the Black population group. Therefore, Black Millennials seem more sensitive in terms of wasteful practices. Figure 5.16 summarises visually the propensity of Millennials to be Voluntary Simplistic in terms of their demographic characteristics.
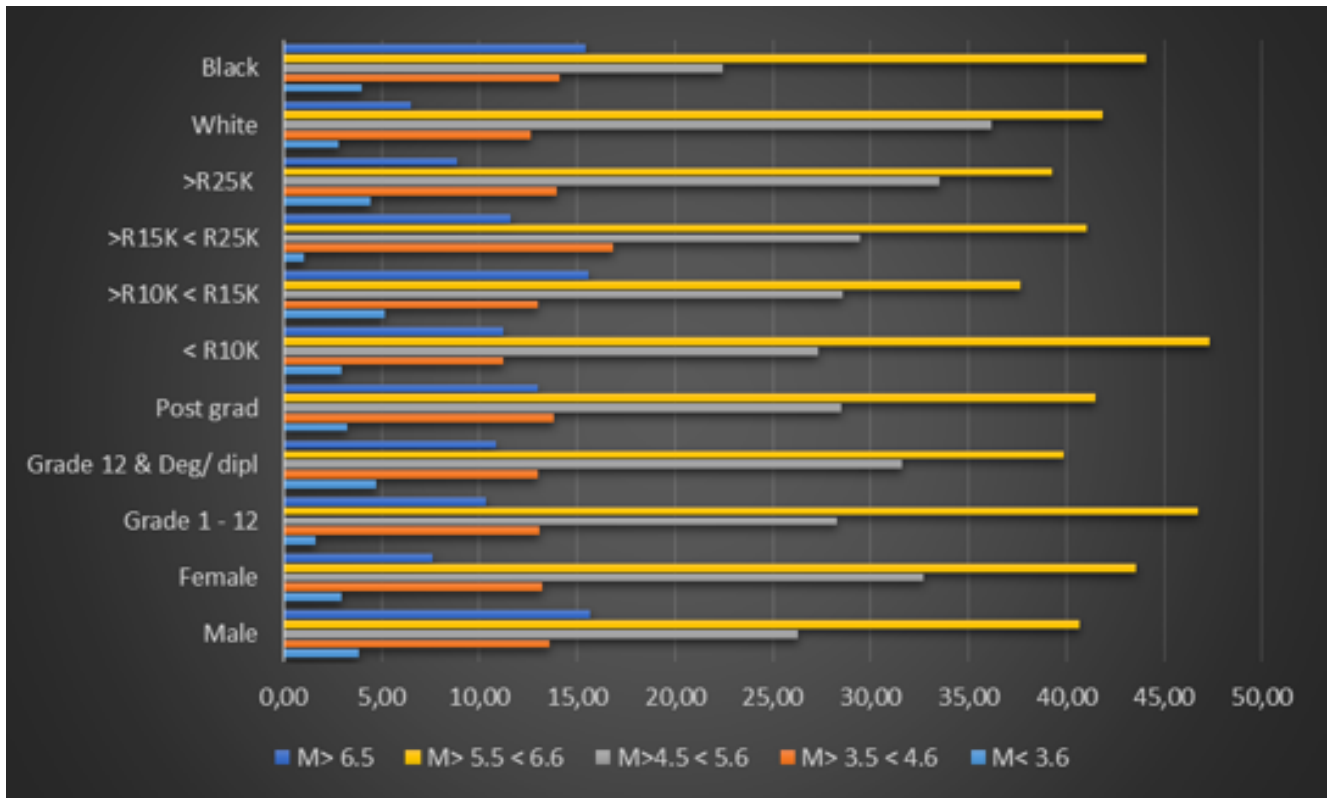
FIGURE 5.16: DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN MILLENNIALS' PROPENSITY TO DEMONSTRATED MATERIALISTICALLY SIMPLISTIC CLOTHING BEHAVIOURAL PRACTICES

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The conclusions that assist in clarifying the contribution of this study are presented in addition to the research limitations, while suggestions for future research are made

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to identify the Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption patterns of South African Millennial consumers that would eventually expand the literature, clarifying Millennials' devotion to sustainable consumption practices with regard to their clothing purchases. It was reasoned that Millennials are the parents of the future generations, and that their purchase behaviour would be paramount in what is instilled in children. The research explicitly concentrated on specific dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity as defined in literature, although the focus was on material simplicity in terms of Millennials' financial decisions. Not only does this study provide insight into the pertinence of Voluntary Simplicity in South African Millennials' minds when purchasing a commodity that is used by all, but also regarded highly important by many. The rational choice theory was used as theoretical perspective, arguing that the decision to consume in a Voluntary Simplistic way, would involve intentional cognitive deliberation despite the emotional issues that are associated with environmental degradation. The outcome of the study reverts attention to our understanding of current consumers and how their purchasing will affect current and future purchasing. A summary of the conclusions reached in this investigation is presented, coupled with the affirmation that the requisite procedure was followed. The research concludes with recommendations as to how South African retailers can entice and promote Voluntary Simplistic clothing practices among Millennials as a lucrative market segment. Lastly, all limitations as well as recommendations for further studies are addressed and noted.

6.2 CONCLUSION OF OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 Objective 1: Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices

The first objective was to investigate South African Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices and this was inspired by selected dimensions of a scale of Leonard-Barton (1981), that was adapted for this investigation to specifically reflect on consumers' clothing purchases. The four dimensions that were attended to, are: *material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination,* and *human scale*. The results are based on the means that were calculated across 7-point Likert type scales. Standard deviations were attended to, to ensure that the data was stable. Cronbach's Alpha were calculated throughout to confirm the internal consistency of the data before proceeding with further analyses. Considering a maximum mean (M=7), the following was used for interpretation of the results:

• **Weak material simplicity**	• M$\leq$3.5
• **Relatively weak material simplicity**	• M>3.5$\leq$M4.5
• **Moderately strong material simplicity**	• M>4.5$\leq$M5.5
• **Relatively strong material simplicity**	• M>5.5$\leq$6.5
• **Strong material simplicity**	• M>6.5

The results indicated that *material simplicity* (M=5.44) was the strongest of the four dimensions, indicating a moderate propensity towards frugality in Millennials' clothing behavioural choices. *Material simplicity* encompasses the act of consuming less and being more prudent in terms of consumption (Shama, 1985). This suggests that Millennials have the inclination to rather purchase quality clothes as opposed to shop for quantity; that they would rather purchase clothing that can be worn longer, will last longer and is not seasonally-dependent. Coinciding with former literature (D'Adamo, 2017; Kawana, 2017:50; Martins, 2014) they seem inclined to make considerable effort to make purchases only when absolutely necessary.

In terms of the results presented for the construct of *ecological awareness*, Millennials displayed a relatively weak propensity to consume clothing in a Voluntary Simplistic way (M=4.28). This means that although they are relatively materially simplistic as indicated, it is not necessarily due to ecological awareness, which is disheartening. Millennials are therefore not strongly committed to acts such as disposing of clothing items by donating it to charities, or handing clothes down to siblings or other family members to extend useful items' life span. Neither are they strongly inclined to purchase "green" clothing,

or brands that are known to be environmentally responsible. This signals opportunity, and the need for consumer education, and marketing strategies that would enable this important market segment to understand the consequences of their clothing behaviour in terms of the future of the environment.

Millennials' level of *self-determination* (M=4.33) was also found to be disappointingly weak. This indicated that limited efforts are made by Millennials in terms of frugal and modest consumption. It also shows a lack of understanding and appreciation of self-crafted garments, repairing and altering. Self-determination has been described as a level of independence and control within one's daily life (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). The findings of this study therefore, suggest that there is sufficient room for improvement in terms of encouraging Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption practices with regards to repairing pre-worn clothes, donations of, recycling as well as upcycling of clothing.

The final construct *human scale* further yielded a weak propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic consumption behaviour (M=4.16). Human scale is the dimension of Voluntary Simplicity which aims to encourage consumers to purchase locally, and incite upliftment through their purchases (Dauod, 2011; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). It is noted that Millennial's demand for local products, ethical behaviour in South African clothing companies, and concern about the well-being of workers in the clothing industry is not very strong (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Shen *et al.*, 2013; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2012; Honabarger, 2011). Studies have revealed that the purchasing of "green" products in South Africa is low, despite consumers being aware of environmental issues and Millennials are not necessarily on the lookout for ethical considerations, fair labour treatment as well as overall production and manufacturing of garments within businesses and in products when making purchases (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2012).

6.2.2 Objective 2: Demographic differences in Millennials' clothing consumption practices

Millennials' clothing consumption practices do not indicate consistency throughout the spectrum, resultantly, demographic differences among different demographic categories were investigated to identify the (demographic) groups that are possibly more devoted to Voluntary Simplicity.

A **gender** comparison revealed statistically significant differences (p<0.05) between males and females with regard to three dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, namely: *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale.* For all three dimensions, female Millennials were significantly more devoted to the cause.

- The gender difference between males and females with regard to *material simplicity was not statistically significant* ($p > 0.05$). With regard to the latter, both males and females seem to exercise a relatively strong tendency towards frugal clothing consumption patterns, thus to resist excessive clothing consumption. It is evident that Millennials rationally consider their clothing choices and make informed purchase decisions in the context of material simplicity (Babbin & Harris, 2013:250; Solomon, 2007:306).

- Females are significantly more *ecologically aware* (M=4.41) compared to males (M=4.10). Therefore, Millennial females would be significantly more impelled to purchase clothing items that are "green" as was also found in previous studies (O'Connor, 2018; Taljaard, 2015; Meyer, 2013; Suki, 2013). Nevertheless, neither males nor female are strongly ecologically aware with regard to their clothing behavioural practices. This could be due to lack of knowledge and understanding of this dilemma.

- With regard to *self-determination,* results concur with the findings for ecological awareness in that the self-determination of both males and females is relatively weak (M<4.5), despite females' being significantly more self-determined. Female Millennials would thus more likely to practice self-discipline and display great enthusiasm in a self-sufficient lifestyle than male consumers, which supports previous findings (Duffett, 2015; Meyer, 2014). In conclusion, Millennials ought to be educated to fully appreciate its fundamentals of the phenomenon.

- Millennials devotion to *human scale*, as an element of Voluntary Simplicity was the weakest of the dimensions although females' devotion was significantly stronger.

According to RCT, rational consumers would make choices based on individual satisfaction, as well as decisions which would produce the highest social approval (Levin & Milgrom, 2004; Scott, 2000). While that might be the case for Millennials, therefore to gain personal satisfaction through their clothing decisions and to gain the approval of their peers, their clothing behavioural decisions are not based on a prioritisation of Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption practices. Intentional effort to educate Millennials to reconsider their clothing behaviour decisions, is therefore necessary for the sake of a change in the behaviour of future generations.

In terms of **household income** comparisons, significant differences were evident for two dimensions, namely *ecological awareness* and *human scale*. Overall, respondents' inclination to be Voluntary Simplistic, was more likely among the lower income groups.

- With regard to *material simplicity,* all four income groups were strongly devoted to frugality (M>5.35), suggesting that income level does not predict Millennials effort to consume clothing sparingly. Millennials across all income groups are predisposed to making fewer, and more calculated purchases that will add value to their lives (Scott, 2000). However, this is not necessarily due to a commitment towards the environment, as is evident in the following results.

- With regard to *ecological awareness,* the lowest income categories were significantly more ecologically aware (p<0.05) (M=4.48) even though not impressively high. The results therefore imply that monetary resources may be influential in consumers' demonstration of ecological awareness when purchasing and consuming clothing as the higher income group was significantly less ecologically aware than the lower income groups. A way to enhance frugal consumption among more affluent Millennials and to prioritise the cause during their clothing choices, is perhaps to promote the cause through knowledge-sharing and communication of the social implications of frugal practices in the long run (Scott, 2000).

- *Self-determination* was relatively weak across all income groups, revealing little appreciation for handcrafted garments, reduction in the purchase of mass produced clothes, and upcyling or recycling of clothing. Income is hence not an influencing factor of self-determination. A possible solution to this would be to promote clothing that is produced by small, local businesses to persuade Millennials to select an alternative to their usual purchases (Scot, 2000).

- With regard to *human scale*, the strongest devotion was reported for the lowest income category (M=4,43) indicating that low income Millennials are significantly more committed to dissociate themselves from clothing companies that have unethical practices and unfair working conditions. The relevance of this dimension decreased as the income increased across the four income categories, suggesting that the availability of financial resources may serve as a distraction from issues that are related to Voluntary Simplistic behavioural practices and that Millennials who have the financial resources to afford "green clothing" are not necessarily the ones purchasing them. This is a consequence of frugality being a choice as opposed to a voluntary decision, which is reflective of income (Zurga *et al.*, 2015; Suki, 2013; Pepper *et al.*, 2009). Ultimately, efforts should be made to convince affluent Millennials on the benefits of procuring locally manufactured, proudly South African clothing (Kawana, 2017:50).

Level of education differences among Millennial consumers were not statistically significant differences for any of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity (p>0.05). Education level does therefore not appear to be a predictor of how thrifty Millennials would be (or not) in terms of their clothing behavioural practices.

Population differences were distinguished for three dimensions of Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices, namely *ecological awareness*, *self-determination* and *human scale* (p=0.000). Only Black and White Millennials were considered as the representation of the other population groups was not good enough to merit further analysis.

- With regard to *material simplicity,* differences between White and Black Millennials were not significant (p>0.05). Compare to the other dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, consumers are more devoted to being *materialistically simplistic.*

- Black Millennials seem significantly more *ecologically aware* in terms of their clothing behavioural choices than Whites. The reasons for this discrepancy should be investigated further and predictions cannot be made in terms of a single dimension of Voluntary Simplicity, or a single demographic characteristic.

- In this study, Black Millennials' displayed stronger *self-determination* (p<0.05) compared to their counterparts in the White population category. Seemingly, Black Millennials are more likely to purchase locally manufactured clothing products particularly with the greater good of the community in mind, compared to their counterparts. This could partly be to the individualistic upbringing of White Millennials which is more typical of Western societies (Duffett, 2015) compared to Black Millennials who are more collectivistic (Close, 2015).

- With regard to *human scale*, Black Millennials concern with unethical practices, preference for South African/local brands and companies, and ethical and socially responsible conduct of clothing retailers and manufactures adds optimism to the overall improvement of future clothing behavioural practices.

6.2.3 Objective 3: Millennials' propensity to demonstrate clothing behavioral practices that reflect material simplicity

Confirmation of Millennials self-committed material simplicity through evidence of their willingness to spend money on an outfit for a special occasion:

Millennials' propensity towards materially simplistic clothing behavioural practices, which is one of the dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, attends to consumers' inclination to use clothing in a frugal manner. The mean for material simplicity across the sample (M=5.44) was the highest of the four dimensions. This confirmed a tendency to be materially simplistic among Millennials in the clothing product category. Furthermore, literature indicates that Millennials are seldom keen on wearing an existing outfit to a

special occasion (Duffett, 2015; Martins, 2014), which might have influenced the mean for this specific dimension negatively. However, research has also shown that Millennials do enjoy quality clothing and do take care of their clothing (Taylor, 2017).

The reality of Millennials' clothing choices was further investigated by providing them with five options that related to their propensity to be materially simplistic (or not). The following is the scenario that was given to the Millennials and the Options with which they were presented.

Scenario

If you have 50% more than the amount that you were willing to spend on an outfit for a special occasion, how would you revise your plans? Please mark one option only:

    a) Purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit
    b) Opt for another more expensive outfit
    c) Keep to the original outfit and save the money
    d) Keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else
    e) Have a unique garment designed and custom made.

Cross tabulations were done to distinguish respondents' propensity to spend money when confronted with the above scenario. This cross tabulation subsequently divided respondents into subsects based on their materialistic predisposition (from high to low), anticipating that Millennials with a stronger sense of material simplicity would rather choose Option c and those with a weaker sense of material simplicity would choose Options a, b, or e.

Respondents' materialistic predisposition was firstly categorised based on the means. It was found that Millennials that were **moderately strong, or strongly inclined** (M>5.5) to optimise their wardrobe and spend conservatively (n=288) were expected to exercise option c, namely to "Keep to the original outfit and save the money". Almost half of the sample (53.5%) formed part of this relatively strong-, or strongly devoted group.

The respondents who indicated a **moderate commitment** towards materialistic simplistically clothing behaviour (M>4.5<5.6), formed near a third of the sample (29.8%). The majority of this group indicated that they would choose Option c which is to keep to the outfit and rather save the extra money. It therefore indicated that they are not as spendthrift as one would expect. It should also be noted that the surplus money could have been spent on an earnest cause such as school fees, groceries etc. Almost a third of this group (34.3%) indicated that they would opt for another more expensive outfit (Option b), or

have a unique garment designed and custom made (30.6%). Their preferred choices hence confirmed their self-committed lack of dedication towards material simplistic behavioural practices, even though the way in which they chose to spend their money varied.

The respondents who indicated a **relatively weak commitment** towards materially simplistic clothing behaviour (M>3.5<4.6), formed a small percentage of the sample (13.3%), and their choices of how to spend the extra money, differed. Almost equally chosen, were options a (63.8%) and d (61.1%), thus to purchase accessories with the extra money to enhance the original outfit, or to keep to the original outfit and spend the money on something else. More than half of this group however also considered saving the money and wearing the same outfit (Option c: 58.3%), that indicates an intention to be parsimonious. The last part of this group chose to purchase another, more expensive outfit Option b (43.0%) whilst 34.7% wished to have an outfit custom made (Option e). Both these options indicating overindulgence, which would thus confirm their self-committed weak commitment toward prudent clothing behavioural practices.

In summary: Millennials' material simplicity was the strongest of the four dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity. This exercise indicated support for their self-commitment towards material simplicity. Those who were more strongly committed, opted to wear the same outfit and to save the money or spend it on something else (which could have been a worthy cause); while those with a weaker commitment, wished to spend the money to enhance the outfit, either through accessories, or by purchasing another outfit.

A clarification of the profile of Millennials who are more strongly devoted to material simplicity:

A categorisation of Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices in terms of their demographic characteristics was also done to get some understanding of the profile of the Millennials who are more devoted to Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices. The categories in the sample were summarised as follows:

- a *weak predisposition towards material simplicity* (M<3.5: n=18);
- a *relatively weak predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>3.5 <M4.5: n=72);
- a *moderately strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>4.5 <M5.5: n=161);
- a *relatively strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>5.5<6.5: n=229);
- a *strong predisposition towards material simplicity* (M>6.5: n=60).

These categories were cross tabulated, using Pearson Chi-square tests to enable a more specific description of the respective groups in terms of their demographic characteristics.

Results revealed a significant *gender difference* in terms of being strongly devoted to material simplistic clothing behavioural practices, in that males are significantly more devoted (p=0.038) than females. Also, the Black population group is significantly more so associated (p<0.05) with strong material simplistic behavioural practices. Neither education level nor income level could be associated with a strong predilection towards materialistic simplistic clothing behavioural practices

6.3 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

This study shed light on South African Millennial consumers' clothing behavioural decisions and provided some understanding of their purchase and consumptions decisions amidst concerns about over consumption which is more typical of this age cohort, given their financial well-being, interest in fashion and social interaction that many authors have explicated in the past. The buying and consumption behaviour of Millennials within a South African context is however still under explored. The theoretical contribution of this study is in terms of South African Millennials' propensity to exercise Voluntary Simplistic decisions in a product category that is important to them in terms of social visibility and experience of self-worth.

The study found that South African Millennials are not yet devoted to Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural choices and that much could be done to enhance their understanding of the dilemma as well as the role that they could play to reduce wasteful consumption. Throughout the study, room for improvement in term of Millennials' commitment to adopt less selfish clothing consumption practices, were revealed. Although certain demographic differences were identified, for example that a strong devotion to material simplicity is more characteristic of males and the Black population group, mean scores were nevertheless not very high. It was also found that even though devotion to material simplicity seems to be the strongest, it is not clear that environmental concern of voluntary simplicity is the reason for frugal behaviour. It could also be economical or selfish as Millennials' commitment to other dimensions of the phenomenon, such as self-determination and human scale, was relatively weak.

Applying RCT, indicates that clothing decisions may be made in terms of specific criteria such as to enhance personal satisfaction or to gain social approval but evidence that sustainable consumption is a priority, is unfortunately lacking.

6.4 REFLECTION ON METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The study was quantitative in nature and survey based. It was conducted in Tshwane as part of an academic exercise. This specific report only refers to the behaviour of a sub set of the larger research project that with a broader overall aim and which involved a broad spectrum of respondents, and not only Millennials.

6.4.1 Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument was only available in English, and contained six sections and 120 items. Of these sections, only three sections were utilised within this study, namely:

- Section D, which focused on Voluntary Simplicity, comprising of 22 questions focusing on the different dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, i.e. material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination and human scale. These dimensions were inspired by a scale developed by Leonard-Barton (1981) but the items were adapted to specifically reflect on clothing behavioural choices. For ease of completion, 7-point Likert-type scales were used.
- Section E focused on consumers' propensity to spend their money when confronted with a specific purchase scenario.
- Section F, the demographic section, captured information pertaining to gender, household income, level of education and population group.

6.4.2 Sample and sampling

A pre-test was done including 46 respondents to confirm that the questions were clear and easy to complete. The completion time was also determined during the pre-test. There after it was distributed by trained fieldworkers according to a sampling plan throughout Tshwane. For the purpose of the larger study, consumers aged 21 and older were recruited, although only the Millennial age cohort, aged younger than 40 years were relevant in terms of this research report. This eventually made up a total sample of 545 respondents, including all population-, income- and level of education groups.

In retrospect, the researcher can confidently state that no problems were encountered with regard to the format of the measuring instrument, its length, or the instructions. Although only available in English, nobody complained about it. Data collection was done according to a sampling plan, aiming to mirror the population of Tshwane. However, because a convenient data collection process was used, it was not possible to recruit enough respondents in certain categories due to limited time available, limited resources, and limited access to certain geographic areas. Eventually, therefore, the study could only comfortably make population inferences with regard to the Black and White population groups as the other population groups were under represented.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although special care was taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the study and to ascertain that the research was conducted in a manner which was ethical, certain limitations need to be admitted.

The research completed for this study was completed for the purpose of a post graduate degree that is required to be completed over a two-year period of time. Certain decisions, the execution thereof and planning of the research were done with this time frame in mind. It should be noted that financial resources were limited, which certainly influenced the sample size and population that could be reached. Limited finances also contributed to the sample size and sampling method used. Although the study was conducted in 2016 and a larger sample of 1025 respondents with usable questionnaires were available eventually, only 545 Millennial respondents participated in the study.

Convenience and snowball sampling were used to gain as many respondents as possible. This type of sampling was done due to the limited time frame. It is therefore difficult to make completely accurate generalised assumptions about the sample as only a small portion of the population was surveyed. The sampling was also limited geographically as it was only done within Tshwane due to time and financial restraints. This population makes up a large part of the South African population and has a substantial buying power within the apparel market and thus, the data might not be a true reflection of the whole South African Millennial cohort.

This study only reflects the outcome of selected parts of the larger investigation which jeopardises an overall perception of Millennials propensity to spend their money.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recommendations identified by the researcher for further study are given below.

The sampling method used for this study limits the application of the findings due to the fact that it entailed convenient sampling and that it was limited to Tshwane, Gauteng. It is recommended that a representative sample of the population of South Africa is recruited in future research. The study could also be repeated as a comparative study, involving Millennials from different countries.

Research in terms of South African Millennials' clothing purchasing behaviour is somewhat lacking, despite them being a lucrative market segment. Therefore, it would be beneficial to also focus on the general buying habits of Millennials including more specific questions concerning choice of local brands, knowledge of local clothing and textile brands, quality preferences and – concerns as well as issues concerning ethical conduct in clothing and textile industries which they seem to be less concerned about (as was found in this study).

A qualitative approach could be beneficial to enable in-depth interviews to gain more comprehensive insight into Millennials' reasons for specific responses, for example apparent lack of devotion to certain elements of Voluntary Simplistic behavioural practices as was found in this study. This would include *self-determination* and *human scale*.

This research report only included the responses of Millennials. It would be valuable to analise the rest of the sample that was recruited, to also enable an age comparison of the matters that were addressed in this report. It would be valuable to relate the rest of the demographic variables with material simplicity.

6.7 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This study describes South African Millennial consumers' propensity to make Voluntary Simplistic clothing decisions, specifically attending to four dimensions of the construct that have been identified in literature, namely; *material simplicity, ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale*. Demographic characteristics that may influence Millennials' propensity to adopt Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption behaviour were also considered, namely gender, household income, level of education and population group. The research indicated that certain demographic characteristics are more pertinent in

terms of Millennials' propensity to adopt Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices, namely gender, and population group. Indications are that females are mostly more inclined to be Voluntary Simplistic, although a strong propensity to be materially simplistic, is significantly more so associated with Millennial men. Apparently, level of education and household income do not significantly influence Millennials' devotion towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices. Nevertheless, indications are Millennials with lower incomes are more frugal in terms of their clothing behaviour. Implications are that education about sustainable consumption is needed across the socio-economic spectrum. Even though certain significant differences were distinguished among demographic groups, overall, Millennials' devotion to the cause was not impressive. Particularly concerning, are low levels of devotion to the dimensions that relate to ethical consumption, support of local manufacturers, -brands- and -industries. This may be due to lack of knowledge. This study used RCT as a theoretical framework. Findings suggest that Millennials decisions are made to support their own expectations about products in terms of quality and social acceptance and that concern about the environment, reduction in waste and the well-being of all are not necessarily predominant. In terms of the future, it is therefore necessary to educate Millennials in order to sway their minds.

Results indicate that South African Millennials are fairly materially simplistic and will purchase in a frugal manner. However, in terms of the other dimensions of the construct, namely *ecological awareness* and *self-determination* Millennials seem disinterested, or are simply not knowledgeable about the consequences of their decisions. This shortcoming could be addressed through use of social media and more focussed advertising in media that Millennials are exposed to. Millennials have a significant purchasing power as mentioned in the literature review and it is thus important to encourage them to make purchases that reflect concern about the future of our planet and the well-being of others. It is unfortunate that Millennials are not inclined to purchase local clothing products from small, local enterprises as this would boost the South African economy and might even be cheaper than imported products. That is why it is important to address the issue of local clothing production and prices and find the solution to making local production cheaper so that the final product is more affordable and will entice Millennial consumers to but locally instead of imported clothing.

6.8 CONCLUSION

Objective 1 of the study aimed to identify Millennials' propensity towards Voluntary Simplistic clothing behavioural practices in terms of selected dimensions of a scale by Leonard-Barton (1981) although the

content was adapted to reflect on clothing behavioural practices. It became clear that Millennials devotion towards *material simplicity* was the strongest, and indeed moderately strong in terms of the norm in this study. It is concerning that Millennials' *ecological awareness* is relatively weak as this refutes the finding for material simplicity: indicating that parsimoniousness is not necessarily related to their knowledge about the environment. Furthermore, weaker levels of *self-determination* and *human scale* indicate the need to educate, encourage and inspire Millennials to alter their behaviour in an informed manner.

With regards to *Objective 2, demographic* differences in Millennials' clothing behavioural practices, statistically significant gender differences were detected with regard to the three dimensions of Voluntary Simplicity, namely *ecological awareness, self-determination* and *human scale*. Without exception, females were more strongly devoted to the respective issues while males and females were equally materially simplistic. Therefore, in general, females' sentiment towards Voluntary Simplistic behaviour seems more conducive in terms of further encouragement to support the cause and to change existing behavioural patterns that are not supportive of a Voluntary Simplistic lifestyle. Interestingly, level of education and income level among Millennial consumers are not predictors of their Voluntary Simplistic clothing consumption behaviour. Indications are, however, that Millennials with less money, tend to be more frugal. Findings however indicate clearly that being Voluntary Simplistic is not more typical of a higher education level where it might be assumed that people are better informed, or of a certain income level, assuming that less money significantly encourages frugality. Population differences were evident, indicating significantly stronger concern about ethical issues (human scale) among Black population groups.

Objective 3: This investigation provided a triangulation of the findings obtained in the previous investigation (Objective 1 and 2). A categorisation of Millennials' propensity towards material simplistic clothing behavioural practices in terms of their demographic characteristics indicated a fairly equal distribution of males and females across the categories for weaker and a moderate predisposition towards materialistic simplistic clothing consumption behaviour. Millennials' education levels and income level cannot be used to predict frugal clothing consumption behaviour. However, population group differences came to the fore, indicating significant stronger propensity to demonstrate materially simplistic clothing behavioural practices among Black compared to White Millennials.

This study took special care to ensure the validity and reliability of the study and made effort to ascertain that the research was conducted in a manner which was ethical despite certain limitations. No unexpected problems were encountered and the researcher therefore concludes that the research was successful in gaining answers to the objectives that were stated for the investigation; that the findings are both interesting and valuable in disclosing problems that can be addressed to alter Millennials' clothing behavioural decisions in ways that will be more favourable in terms of the well-being of societies in the future.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Consumer Science
+27 012 420 2488/ 2575
3 May 2016

Dear respondent

RESEARCH PROJECT: An investigation of consumer-related characteristics influencing specific types of purchase decisions

Thank you for considering participation in this research project that the final year students in the Department of Consumer Science have to execute as part of an investigation that has been on-going for the past four years. Our research has attracted the interest of prominent industries in South Africa, as part of a specific research focus in our department. Students have to submit their contributions in the form of a scientifically documented research script as part of the prerequisites for obtaining their B Consumer Science degrees.

The purpose of the 2016 research endeavour is to gain a better understanding of consumer-related characteristic influencing specific types of purchase decisions. To take part in this study, you must reside in Tshwane. It will take approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Please answer the questions carefully and give your honest opinion throughout. There are no right or wrong answers;

All information will be dealt with anonymously and it will not be possible to eventually trace your information back to you in any way as the questionnaires are completed anonymously and are returned in sealed envelopes. If, for any reason, you wish to withdraw anyway, please feel free to inform the student. Respondents may provide their cell phone details voluntarily on the tear off strip below and enter it into a separate envelope for participation in a lucky draw to win a gift voucher to the value of R500 at the closure of data collection. Three names will be drawn, and the winner will be notified telephonically.

Please read the questions carefully and give your honest opinion throughout. **Thank you for your participation!**

RESEARCH COORDINATORS: DR S DONOGHUE AND PROF ALET C ERASMUS
CONTACT: 012 420 2488/ 012 420 2575

IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LUCKY DRAW, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CELL NUMBER ONLY AND PLACE THE STRIP IN THE ENVELOPE WHEN RETURNING YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE

CELL NUMBER:_____

Section A: IMPORTANCE OF POSSESSIONS								Respondent number:		
1. The following statements investigate your personal regard of the importance of the products that you buy and own in terms of how they contribute to your state of happiness and how you feel. **This is a very personal issue that one does not necessarily openly discuss with other people. Therefore, please respond to every statement honestly.** Please indicate your response to every statement with an *X* in the relevant column.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided/neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	**Office use**	
I like to own things that impress people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.1	
Material possessions are important because they contribute a lot to my happiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.2	
Obtaining valuable things is important for my happiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.3	
Material growth (increase in money and possessions) has an irresistible attraction for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.4	
To buy and possess expensive/ luxurious things is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.5	
Material accumulation (increase in material possessions) helps raise the level of civilization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.6	
I like to own things that make people think that I am unique/ different	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.7	
I like to own expensive things because people see that as a sign of success	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.8	
To me, it is important to own expensive things such as an expensive home, car, clothes and other things because it makes me happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.9	
Growth (increase) in material consumption (consumption of goods) helps to raise the level of civilization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.10	
The only way to let people know about my high status is to show it through the way that I live and/or goods that I own and consume	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.11	
I usually buy things that make me look distinctive/ unique/ different	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.12	
I feel uncomfortable when someone else in public is wearing the same clothes that I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.13	
I am prepared to pay more to get a more distinctive/ unique item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.14	
I feel good when I buy expensive things because people think of me as successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.15	
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V1.16	
Section B: PRESTIGE OF CLOTHING BRANDS									
2. The following statements investigate your thoughts/ actions about the prestige of the clothing brands that you buy compared to the brands that other people buy or own. **Please respond to every statement honestly** and indicate your response with an *X* in the adjacent column. In terms of clothing brands ………………	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided/neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	**Office use**	
I chat about clothing brands with my friends/colleagues on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.1	
Advertisements give me an idea of which clothing brands people with lifestyles similar to mine are using	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.2	
A clothing brand is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.3	
It is important that others like the clothing brands I buy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.4	
Advertisements give me an idea of which clothing brands to buy to impress others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.5	
I ask my friends/colleagues for advice about which clothing brands to buy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.6	
I like to know which clothing brands will impress others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.7	
Advertisements are helpful to know which clothing brands will, or will not reflect the kind of person I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.8	
I often identify with other people by purchasing the same clothing brands as them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.9	
If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same clothing brands that they buy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.10	
The status of a clothing brand is irrelevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.11	
If other people can see which clothing brands I use, I tend to purchase the brands they would expect me to buy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.12	
I generally purchase clothing brands that I think others will approve of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.13	
I would pay more for a clothing brand if it had status	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.14	
I often consult others to help me choose the best option available from a range of brands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.15	
Social media (e.g. Facebook/ Twitter/Instagram) indicates to me what clothing brands to buy to impress others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.16	
I am interested in new clothing brands with status	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.17	
Social media (e.g. Facebook/ Twitter/Instagram) indicates to me which clothing brands will or will not reflect the kind of person I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.18	

2. *Continued…* Please indicate your response to every statement with an **X** in the relevant column.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided/neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles unless I am sure my friends/colleagues approve of them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.19	
Social media (e.g. Facebook/ Twitter/Instagram) helps me keep up with fashion trends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.20	
I frequently consult family members about a clothing brand before I buy it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.21	
To ensure I buy the right clothing brand, I often observe what others are buying or using	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.22	
I would buy a clothing brand just because it has status	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.23	
My friends/colleagues encourage me to buy clothing brands that would impress others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.24	
If I have little experience with a clothing brand, I would ask my family about the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.25	
Social media (e.g. Facebook/ Twitter/Instagram) tells me what clothing brands people with lifestyles similar to mine are using	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.26	
I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same clothing brands that others purchase	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.27	
I get information about clothing brands that have status from my friends/colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.28	
Advertisements are useful to me to keep up with current fashion trends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V2.29	

Section C: IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE

3. These statements investigate your personal views and opinions about things that you may regard important in your life. **Please respond to every statement honestly** and indicate your answer with an **X** in the relevant column.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided/neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
It is important to me to always be polite to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.1	
Thinking up new ideas (being creative) is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.2	
Being very successful is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.3	
It is important to do things the way I learned from my family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.4	
It is important that every person in the world should be treated equally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.5	
I am always looking for new things to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.6	
The safety of my country is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.7	
It is very important to me to care for the people I know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.8	
I want people to do what I say	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.9	
Enjoying life is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.10	
I like to make my own decisions about what to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.11	
I believe that people should be satisfied with what they have	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.12	
I want to have a lot of money and expensive things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.13	
Living an exciting life is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.14	
Honesty is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.15	
It is important to me that everything is clean and in order	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.16	
It is important to me to do things that give me pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.17	
I believe that people should care for nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.18	
I think people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.19	
I am ambitious and prepared to work hard to get ahead	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.20	
I would do anything to make sure my family is always safe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.21	
It is important to me to listen to people who are different from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.22	
I do not like to boast or draw attention to the things I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.23	
I think it is important to have interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.24	
I want to avoid doing anything people would say is bad or wrong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.25	
World peace is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.26	
I want people to admire what I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.27	
It is important to me that my friends can always trust me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.28	
Being religious is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V3.29	

Section D: VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY										

4. These statements investigate your personal views about the purchase and consumption of clothing products. **Please respond to every statement honestly** and indicate your response with an **X** in the relevant column.	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always	Office use	
I buy good quality clothes so that I can wear them longer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.1	
I have an appreciation for handcrafted garments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.2	
I recycle and repurpose old clothing (e.g. using old T-shirts as cleaning rags)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.3	
Whenever possible, I buy clothes with eco-friendly features (e.g. organic cotton)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.4	
I refuse to buy clothing from companies that are guilty of unethical practices (e.g. child labour)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.5	
I prefer clothes that are made in South Africa to imported brands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.6	
I look after my clothes so that they last longer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.7	
I prefer wearing clothes that are handcrafted to clothes that are mass produced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.8	
When going to a special occasion, I would wear something I already have rather than buying a new outfit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.9	
I dispose of useful clothing in an eco-friendly way e.g. by donating it to charities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.10	
I buy clothing brands that are known to be environmentally responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.11	
I support clothing manufacturers who create fair working conditions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.12	
I shop at stores that promote South African clothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.13	
I wear my clothes for more than one season	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.14	
When possible, I repair damaged clothing rather than to throw it away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.15	
In our household, we pass clothes on to siblings/ friends/ other family members to be reused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.16	
I try to reduce the environmental impact of my purchases by shopping close to home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.17	
I am inspired by clothing brands that have a reputation for being ethical and socially responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.18	
I support clothing labels that are produced by local South African communities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.19	
I make a conscious effort to only buy clothes that I really need	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.20	
I have clothing altered if it no longer fits me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.21	
Given the opportunity, I will sell unwanted clothing so that it can be reused by others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V4.22	

Section E: YOUR ALLOCATION OF MONEY TO SPECIFIC PURCHASES

The following section investigates your allocation of money to **three different types of household purchases**

Please respond to every question honestly

Office use

5. SCENARIO 1 If you have to prepare a special dinner for SIX distinguished guests, **how much money would you be willing to spend on the food, excluding the drinks and décor**? *Stipulate the approximate amount in the adjacent column*	V5.0	R_____

If you have 50% more than the amount that you indicated in V5.0 to spend on the dinner, how would you revise your plans? Please respond to every statement and mark every relevant answer with an **X**	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
a) **Extend the menu** and add **additional dishes**	1	2	3	4	5	V5.1	
b) **Adapt the menu** to include **alternative dishes that require more expensive ingredients** that the former menu did not allow for	1	2	3	4	5	V5.2	
c) **Keep to the original menu and save the money**	1	2	3	4	5	V5.3	
d) **Keep to the original menu and spend the money** on something else	1	2	3	4	5	V5.4	
e) Invite the guests to a **restaurant**	1	2	3	4	5	V5.5	
Now reconsider all five of the options listed above and **circle the ONE option** (a or b or c or d or e) that you are most likely to exercise						V5.6	

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
6. SCENARIO 2 Imagine that you have to attend a special function where you have to look your very best. **How much money would you be willing to spend on an outfit for yourself?** *Stipulate the approximate amount in the adjacent column*	V6.0		R				
If you have 50% more than the amount that you indicated in V6.0 to spend on the outfit, **how would you revise your plans?** Please respond to every statement and mark every relevant answer with an *X*	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
a) Purchase accessories with the extra money **to enhance the original outfit**	1	2	3	4	5	V6.1	
b) **Opt for another more expensive outfit**	1	2	3	4	5	V6.2	
c) **Keep to the original outfit and save the money**	1	2	3	4	5	V6.3	
d) Keep to the original outfit and **spend the money on something else**	1	2	3	4	5	V6.4	
e) Have a unique garment designed and custom made	1	2	3	4	5	V6.5	
Now reconsider all five of the options listed above and **circle the ONE option** (a or b or c or d or e) that you are most likely to exercise						V6.6	
7. SCENARIO 3 Imagine that your washing machine is giving trouble and that you have to replace it soon. **How much money would you be willing to spend on a new washing machine?** *Stipulate the approximate amount in the adjacent column*	V7.0		R				
If you have 50% more than the amount that you indicated in V7.0 to spend on the washing machine, how would you revise your plans: Please respond to every statement and mark every relevant answer with an X	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Office use	
a) Purchase the **same appliance brand but another model** that has more features	1	2	3	4	5	V7.1	
b) Opt for **another more expensive brand**	1	2	3	4	5	V7.2	
c) Keep to the original decision and **save the extra money**	1	2	3	4	5	V7.3	
d) Keep to the original decision and **spend the extra money on something else**	1	2	3	4	5	V7.4	
e) Have the **old machine repaired**	1	2	3	4	5	V7.5	
Now reconsider all five the options listed above and **circle the ONE option** (a or b or c or d or e) that you are most likely to exercise						V7.6	

Section F: TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF	Office use
This section is as important. **Please answer every question** by marking every relevant answer with an *X*	

What is your gender?			Male	1	Female	2	V8.1

What is your age?						Years	V8.2

What is your completed highest level of education?	Lower than grade 10	1	Grade 10 or 11	2	Grade 12	3	Grade 12 + Degree/ diploma	4	Post graduate	5	V8.3

What is your approximate total monthly HOUSEHOLD INCOME (Bruto – before deductions)?	Less than R5000	1	R5000 to R9999	2	R10000 to R14999	3	R15000 to R24999	4	R25000 or more	5	V8.4

What population group do you belong to according to the SA Population Equity Act?										
White	1	Black	2	Indian	3	Coloured	4	Asian-	5	Other: Please specify	6	V8.5

What is the name of the suburb where you live in Tshwane? *Please specify.*		V8.6

Thank you for your participation!

Remember to enter your cell phone number on the separate tear slip if you wish to enter into the lucky draw for the gift voucher.

APPENDIX B: ETHICS DECLARATION

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
Ethics Committee

E-mail: ethics.nas@up.ac.za

Date: 02/07/2016

ETHICS SUBMISSION: LETTER OF APPROVAL

Dr S Donoghue
Department of Consumer Science
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
University of Pretoria

Reference number: EC160606-045
Project title: An exploration of the differences in consumers' purchase and consumption of selected products based on specific consumer-related variables in an emerging context

Dear Dr Donoghue,

We are pleased to inform you that your submission conforms to the requirements of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Ethics committee on the condition that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative.

Please note that you are required to submit annual progress reports (no later than two months after the anniversary of this approval) until the project is completed. Completion will be when the data has been analysed and documented in a postgraduate student's thesis or dissertation, or in a paper or a report for publication. The progress report document is accessible of the NAS faculty's website: Research/Ethics Committee.

If you wish to submit an amendment to the application, you can also obtain the amendment form on the NAS faculty's website: Research/Ethics Committee.

The digital archiving of data is a requirement of the University of Pretoria. The data should be accessible in the event of an enquiry or further analysis of the data.

Yours sincerely,

p/p M Potgieter

Chairperson: NAS Ethics Committee

APPENDIX C: TURNITIN REPORT

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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

TURNITIN DECLARATION

Full names of student	Prishaniee Naidoo
Student number	13082982
Degree	M Consumer Science (Clothing Retail)
Department	Consumer Science

Declaration by student:

I declare that I have used Turnitin according to University's policy in this regard.

SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE: _____

I declare that I have seen and am satisfied with the Turnitin reports.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: _____

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: _____

Date: _____