

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PURCHASING OF STATUS BRANDS
AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION
AMONG STUDENTS AT A TERTIARY LEVEL

A MCDONALD

An investigation of the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among students at a Tertiary Level

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Clothing fulfils a number of functions beyond mere functional performance such as warmth or protection. It conveys how important an individual is, informs others how much status an individual has and what the individual is like.

It has been known and observed for a long time that individuals care about their social status and they tend to over consume in order to impress their neighbours, peers and co-workers. Status seeking is a basic human drive and one that brands seek to exploit, not create.

Individuals feel that once they wear certain brands associated with the expensive purchasing ability, it places them in a higher social class than the other individuals who cannot afford that particular type of clothing. The question arises if it is the purchasing of status brands or conspicuous consumption of brands that plays a role in the type of friends or the social groups of university students.

This study will therefore investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among students at the University of Pretoria.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students. The secondary objectives are to determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students, to determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students, to determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands and also to determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands. This will be determined by the means of a survey amongst the university students.

Questionnaires were distributed within specified classes within the Department of Economic and Management Science at the University of Pretoria's main campus. The questionnaires were collected, coded and interpreted by the researcher.

Statistical test incorporated to test the hypothesis within this study were both parametric and non-parametric hypotheses tests. Non-parametric test included the Mann Whitney, Cramer's V and the Two Sample Chi-Square test and parametric tests such as Scheffe Test, ANOVA, Factor Analysis and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were used. Also the statistical techniques such as the frequency, cumulative frequency, percentage, and cumulative percentage were used to analyse specified questions within the questionnaire.

The conclusions drawn from this research study is that university students at the University of Pretoria do not over-consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst peers and as self-creation projects. Culture is influential in the type of fashion clothing university students' purchase whether it is status brand or departmental store brands.

Gender also plays an important role in the purchasing of status brands. It was determined that women as compared to men do have a tendency towards over consumption of fashion clothing. The overall empirical findings found that there is a positive relationship between the conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

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CHAPTER 1

1 AN INTRODUCTION INTO THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PURCHASING OF STATUS BRANDS AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AMONG STUDENTS AT A TERTIARY LEVEL.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been known and observed that individuals care more about their social status and tend to over consume in order to impress their neighbours, peers, and co-workers. Status seeking is a basic human drive and one that brands can only seek to exploit, and not create.

Individuals feel that once they wear certain brands associated with the expensive purchasing ability, that it places them in a higher social class than the other individuals who cannot afford that particular type of clothing.

This has been prevalent among university students for years not just within the South Africa context but also on a worldwide basis. Status and conspicuous consumption of brands according to Metron (1957:246) is the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer or symbolize status for both the individual and surrounding of others.

In an increasingly disconnected world, brands signal differences. The differences refer to logos, labels, product types, and constructed lifestyles including attitudes, cultural products and ideas.

Social scientists such as Metron and Rossi have recognised group membership as a determinant of behaviour. The fact that people act in accordance with a frame of reference produced by the groups to which they belong is a long accepted and sound premise (Metron, 1957: 246).

According to Brierley (2004:31) status seekers suspend all of their critical faculties in order to elevate their social standing and will spend an enormous amount of money to raise their self-esteem.

The main focus of this study will therefore be to investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students. It is also aimed at determining if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students. The study will also investigate if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students; the differences in the level of consumption between male and female students; the sense of belonging conspicuous consumption creates amongst peers, and also the influence of culture on individual's preferences towards status brands.

The study will be limited to clothing brands due to the fact that clothing purchases play a major role when attending a tertiary institute and students have a tendency to over spend on clothing.

The literature review will provide a better insight into the conspicuous consumption of status brands among university students. Within the broader context of the literature review a number of dated sources were consulted and integrated into the discussion. Conspicuous consumption dates back to 1899 when the American Economist Thorstein Veblen first discovered it and these sources are therefore necessary to provide a complete in depth discussion of the concepts. The literature review, problem statement, the objectives, importance and benefits of study, and method of study will be discussed. Thereafter a detailed outline of the different chapters will be provided.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Status and conspicuous consumption among university students are related to the basic need of wanting to belong. There are two kinds of needs, the primary and secondary needs. Kumar (2001:2) argues that primary needs are associated with physiological

needs such as thirst, hunger and sex while secondary needs are acquired needs like sense of belonging, status and self-esteem.

Kumar (2001:2) further argues that consumers might not consciously know their secondary needs and it is in this situation that the symbolism associated with brands could appeal to consumers. Consumers, by associating themselves with these symbolic brands, are able to gratify their psychological needs.

There are also intrinsic and extrinsic needs, which Kumar (2001:3) describes as the classification of needs from the viewpoint of application to practical context. Extrinsic needs would refer to those, which motivate an individual to achieve an end result. Buying of status symbols to impress others could be associated with extrinsic needs. However if the individual buys a car for his own comfort and enjoyment, it is associated with intrinsic needs.

According to Goldsmith, Moore and Beauclain (1999:8) the topic of self-concept refers to the collection attitudes that people hold towards themselves. Self-concept includes self-esteem, or the value a person places on him or herself. It also includes self image or perceptions people have of what they are like.

Dolich (1969:80) identified two important self-concepts, that of real self and the ideal self. He further argued that the real self was generally defined as an individual's perception of how he actually is and the ideal self is the perception of how he would like to be.

Kumar (2001:3) contends that self-concept is the image an individual holds about himself and his ability to identify the actual or real self, the ideal self and the expected self. He defined the actual self as how the individual perceives himself while the ideal self was defined as how an individual would like to ideally perceive himself.

Kumar (2001:4) further contends that there is a thin line of difference in that the ideal self-concept has more of an overtone of futuristic aspiration than in that of the actual self-concept. The individual perceives the ideal image of himself / herself based on his/ her aspirational needs that would depend on the individual's status.

The expected self was defined by Kumar (2001:4) as the kind of image between the actual and ideal self-images. This might prove to be useful to marketers because changing the self-image radically towards the ideal image could prove to be difficult whereas expected self-image is one, with which consumers could identify with. He further argued that though there is an element of aspiration, consumers feel it leads to a situation, which for example can be the completion of a course and this forms the basis of a stepping-stone for individuals to realise their aspirations, whereas the ultimate ideal self is the realisation of their dreams.

Abhilasha (1999:2) defines self-concept as the totality of individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object. He further argued that it is composed of multidimensional characteristics and includes physical as well as psychological attributes and interacts with the various roles a person must take on.

Products and brands are also related to how one defines oneself. Tucker (1957:152) highlighted that consumers can be defined in terms of either the product they acquire or use. Consumers may also be defined in terms of the meanings products have to them or their attitude towards products.

Consumption of goods and services are however frequently described as a means of gaining social status. Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999:41) argue that individuals crave status symbols, but while these hierarchical social relationships are important in determining the amount of social status one has, there is another sense in which consumers are motivated by the desire for status; this is the concept of status consumption.

Status consumption is defined as the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and the surrounding significant others (Eastman et al., 1999:42).

Conspicuous consumption can be defined as buying expensive services and products in order to flaunt your wealth. Thorstein Veblen the American economist introduced the term conspicuous consumption in the late 19th century (Mason, 1981:263). Conspicuous

consumption or pathological purchasing is a symptom observed in individuals in society where over-consumption has been a social norm or expectation (Mason, 1981:263).

According to Mason (1981:246) conspicuous consumption is not a recent phenomenon. Evidence of such behaviours can be found in the earliest societies and the economic extravagances. Conspicuous consumption is a form of economic behaviour to which individuals will not admit.

Veblen (1967:61-62) believed that individuals became subjects to invidious distinctions, which form the conventional basis for esteem and self-respect, thus promoting conspicuous consumption that is socially visible consumption, which yields status for the individual.

Eastman et al. (1999:41) argue that significant levels of status consumption exist in all communities in the world where the utility of products is measured by the social advantage their purchase offers. Stated differently, consumers tend to purchase goods and services owing to the status it may confer, irregardless of cost and social class level.

Belk (1988:104-105) highlights that all consumers tend to be often attracted to and indulge in aspects of conspicuous consumption before they have secured adequate food, clothing and shelter.

Parks and Lessig (1977:123) investigated reference group influence and conclude that students are more susceptible than housewives to group influence for a variety of products.

While Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:17) defines reference groups as a group of people individuals' compare themselves with for information regarding behaviours, attitudes or values.

Reference groups according to Bearden and Etzel (1982: 183) are defined as a person or group that significantly influences an individuals' behaviour. They further contended that reference groups expose people to behaviour and lifestyles, influence self-concept

development, contributes to the formation of values and attitudes, and generate pressure for conformity to group norms.

Basil and Solomon (1995: 16) also agreed with Bearden and Etzel (1982: 183) but they argued that that marketers need to identify and appropriately represent target consumers in advertisements by accurately reflecting, the clothing and accessories because reference groups assist in influencing of individuals self concept.

Bourne (1957:218) originally proposed that reference group influence on product and brands decisions is a function of two forms of conspicuousness. The first condition affecting product decisions is the exclusivity in a way of the item no matter how visible the product is. The second condition is that in order for reference group influence to affect brand decisions items must be seen or identified by others.

Value expressiveness is a type of influence characterised by the need for psychological association with a person or group and is reflected in the acceptance of positions expressed by others (Bearden & Etzel, 1982:184).

Value expressiveness reflects the individual's desire to enhance self-image by association with a reference group. Value expressiveness is motivated by the individual's desire to enhance or support his or her self-concept through referent identification (Kelman, 1961:73).

Value expressiveness according to Brinberg and Plimpton (1986:225) operates through the process of identification, which occurs when an individual adopts a behaviour or opinion of another because the behaviour or opinion is associated with satisfying a self-defining relationship.

Consumption must be visible when it is for the purpose of gaining status or relative position. There must be some degree of commonality in rankings among individuals concerning the relative desirability or status of products and brands (Chao & Schor, 1996:3).

Chao and Schor (1996:3) further argued that social visibility is important because of a moral hazard problem associated with socially non-visible goods. Moral hazards arise because individuals have an incentive to exaggerate their consumption in order to gain social position.

A background has been given on the various theories surrounding the conspicuous consumption of status brands, to provide a background for development of the problem statement, which will now be discussed further.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students on university campuses face problems such as adaptive problems, peer relationships and demands of self-identification. As a result they focus attention on consumption as a means of easing self-identification and increasing peer relationships.

Clothing, to students are considered to be the most important tool young people have discovered to express themselves with, this is also used as a tool to gain recognition by peer groups owing to the fact that university students are more influenced by their peers.

It has been observed that students tend to over consume status brands once at a university level. The question arises as to what are the reasons behind students over consumption of status brands.

Although conspicuous consumption and status consumption have formed the basis of numerous internal studies such as Piacentini and Mailer's (2004) symbolic consumption in teenagers' clothing choice, O'Cass and McEwen's (2004) exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption, and O'Cass's fashion Clothing consumption: antecedents and consequences of fashion clothing involvement. However no research to date has been published that investigated the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among students at the University of Pretoria. The main aim of this study is therefore to investigate this concept further.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Primary Research Objective

The primary research objective is:

- To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students

1.4.2 Secondary Research Objectives

The secondary research objectives are:

- To determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students.
- To determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students.
- To determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands.
- To determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands

1.5 IMPORTANCE / BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Self-image plays a major role in the lifestyle of consumers and even on a larger scale among younger consumers such as university students. These young consumers might form a belief that in order to distinguish themselves from their peers they have to dress in a certain manner or way.

This belief can lead to the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption for the mere sake of fitting in amongst their fellow peers. The main aim of this study is to investigate this phenomenon.

No prior research exists on the conspicuous consumption of status brands amongst university students in the South African context. It is therefore necessary to investigate

this concept further in order to benefit future marketers in comprehending the buyer behaviour of their target markets. The research will also be beneficial to consumers, students as well as individuals in the academic field in South Africa.

Also this study might prove to be beneficial to marketers in comprehending the buyer behaviour of their target markets. This insight will aid them in developing effective marketing strategies. Marketers will thus be able to predict buyer behaviour of university students in this regard based on the knowledge gained from the study.

1.6 METHOD OF STUDY

The study will consist of a literature study to gain more insight into the research problem as well as an empirical study to investigate the problem. The literature study will provide insight into the research problem and the necessary background to support the empirical part of the study. During this phase a comprehensive study of related literature will be conducted.

The sample for the empirical part for this study will be drawn from the students enrolled at the University of Pretoria's main campus. Self-administered, structural questionnaires will be distributed to students on the main campus of the University of Pretoria and will be returned to the researcher once completed. The questionnaires will be coded, the data captured into a statistical software package and statically analysed. The findings will then be used to address the primary and secondary research objectives.

The research design regarding the methods, techniques and measurement instruments, which will be used, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Background and definition of the problem

Chapter one was used as the introductory chapter, which highlighted the purpose of the study and the problem statement. The chapter also provided a background discussion on the topic of conspicuous consumption of status brands.

Chapter 2: Consumer behaviour

This chapter will provide an overview of consumer behaviour with specific attention to consumer needs, consumers self-concept/ image, cultural influences on consumer behaviour and the influences of reference groups in the buying and shopping behaviour of individuals.

Chapter 3: Conspicuous consumption of status brands and status consumption

This chapter will focus on the consumer's behaviour towards dress, fashion clothing involvement as well as gender involvement in purchasing decisions. This chapter also investigates more specifically the conspicuous consumption of status brands in order to explain the conspicuousness of individuals where clothing is used to build one's self-concept and self-esteem. It also examines consumer status and conspicuous consumption as well as symbolic consumption and consumer socialisation.

Chapter 4: Linkages of objectives to hypotheses

Chapter four will examine the linkages between the objectives and the hypotheses and it provides a short summary of the literature where the hypotheses were strategically placed.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

In Chapter five the research methodology is discussed in more detail and the specific methods used to gather the empirical information are outlined.

Chapter 6: Analysis and interpretation of results

An interpretation of the finding of the empirical research will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Recommendation and conclusions

The conclusion and recommendations will be discussed in this chapter.

1.8 SUMMARY

In chapter one, a broad overview of what this study will encapsulate in terms of the conspicuous consumption of status brands was provided. The major aim of this study is to investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students. This formed the basis for the formulation of the research study. It has been noted that students tend to over indulge status brands as a means of fitting in among peers and also as a means of creating a higher self- esteem or self-image.

The problem statement was formulated as a result of the various issues identified in the literature discussion. Chapter one provided a short overview of the research in terms of what the objectives of the study are, the methods of study that will be followed and the importance and benefit of the study. Chapter two and three will provide a more detailed discussion of the available literature of the concepts identified in chapter one.

CHAPTER 2

2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study is to investigate the conspicuousness of students towards status brands. In order to fully comprehend this phenomenon, consumer behaviour in its totality should be explained further. The aim of this chapter is therefore to provide a detailed discussion on consumer behaviour concepts that are relevant to this study.

Consumer behaviour is the way in which a consumer may behave before they purchase a product or the influences that may cause a consumer to buy a specific product or service. The examination of these constructs of consumer behaviour will aid the researcher in addressing the secondary objectives.

This chapter will start with defining consumer behaviour, thereafter internal influences and more specifically self-concept and the needs aspect of motives will be discussed. This chapter will conclude with a discussion on reference group and cultural influences.

2.2 DEFINING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Consumer behaviour is defined by Walters and Bergiel (1989:9) as comprising of those decisions and related activities of persons involved specifically in buying and using economic goods and services.

Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995:954) also define it as those actions directly involved in obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions.

Cronje, du Toit, Mol, van Reenen and Motlatla (1997:164) refer to it as the behaviour patterns of decision-making units (families and individuals) directly involved in the purchase and use of products, including the decision making processes preceding and determining these behaviour patterns.

Sheth and Mittal (2004:491) define it as the mental and physical activities undertaken by customers that result in decisions and actions to buy and use products and services.

Hawkins, Best and Coney (2004: 7) contend that consumer behaviour can be defined as the study of individuals, groups or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer behaviour.

The definitions of consumer behaviour have changed over the years as highlighted above and the list of definitions by different authors can be numerous although they all have the same underlying meaning of what consumer behaviour entails. However for this study the five identified encapsulates all the relevant constructs that form parts of this research.

Like the various definitions of consumer behaviour, the models of consumer behaviour have changed over the years in order to encapsulate newer constructs or to explain old ones. The different models of consumer behaviour will now be discussed.

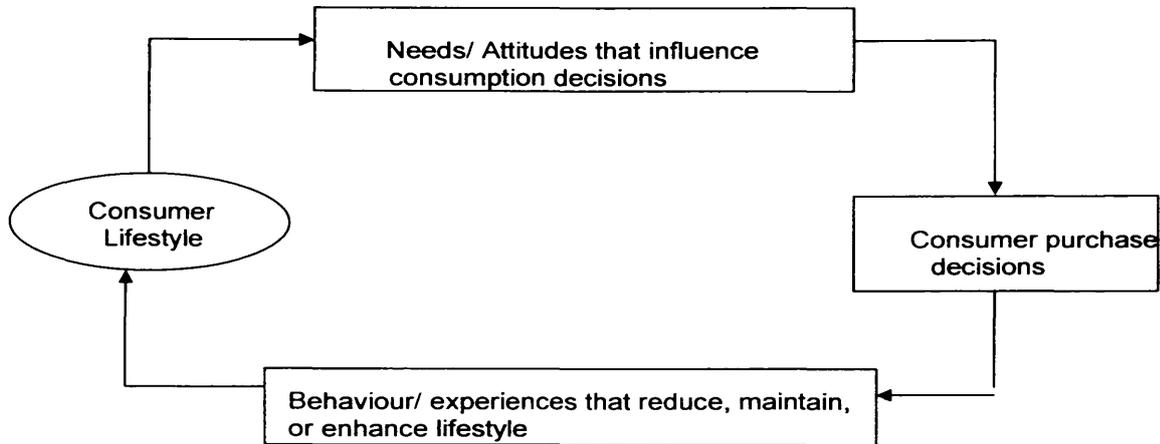
- **Models of Consumer Behaviour**

Engel et al. (1995:143) contend that a model is nothing more than a replica of the phenomena it is designed to present. A model indicates the various factors and how they are connected. Three benefits of this occurrence are as follows:

- Certain behaviour may be better understood.
- The model may indicate opportunities for future research, by showing gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- The model may set the groundwork for information systems to develop marketing strategies.

Hawkins, Best and Coney (1989:20) developed a model of consumer behaviour that is not a predictive model in the sense that it does not provide sufficient details to allow a prediction of a particular purchase or brand choice. The model only provides information on the variables that influence consumer behaviour. The model is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Consumer lifestyle and consumer decisions



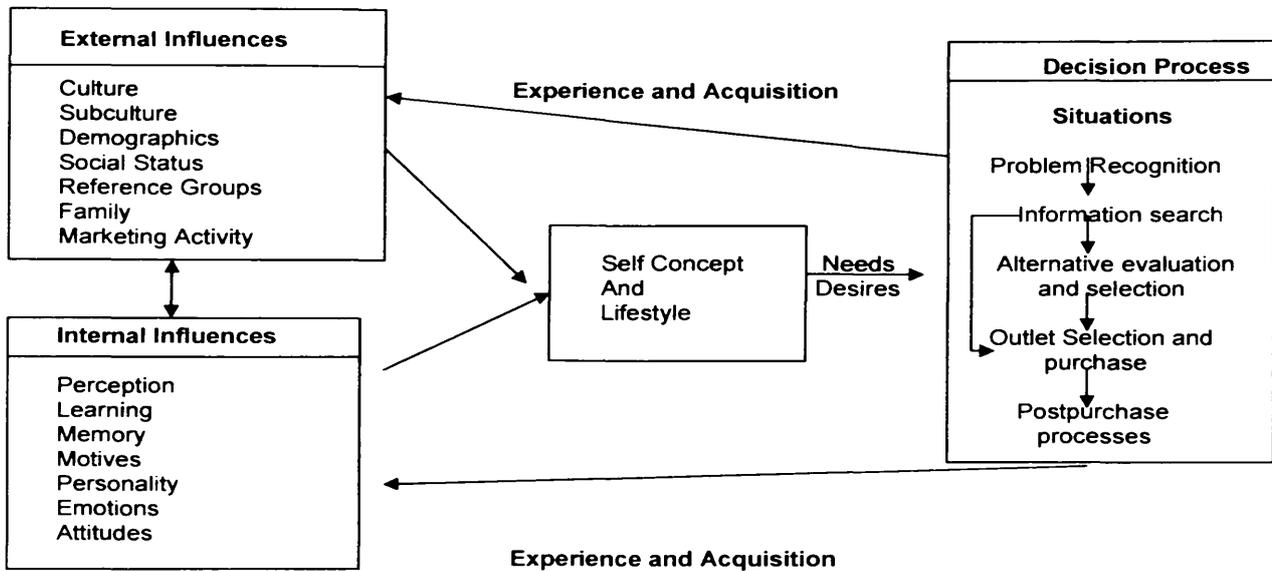
Source: Hawkins, Best and Coney (1989:20)

Figure 1 illustrates that consumer lifestyle and decision-making is continuous, in the sense that it is on going. It does not stop at just one concept. Consumer purchasing decisions influences consumer lifestyle, which in turn influences the purchase decision, thus an interrelated relationship.

Hawkins et al. (1989:21) contend that problems arise for consumers in their attempts to develop, maintain, and / or change their lifestyles. Past decisions, time-related events such as aging, and external events such as an illness or job change lead to lifestyles changes that pose additional consumption problems and result in new purchases, new attitudes, and related changes that in turn bring about further lifestyle changes. It must be stressed that most consumer problems and the resulting decisions involve very little effort on the part of the consumer.

Hawkins et al. (2004:37) adapted their initial consumer behaviour model and self-concept and lifestyles were identified as the common ground that affects both external and internal influences of consumer behaviour. The model is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2: Overall Model of Consumer Behaviour



Source: Hawkins, Best and Coney, (2004:27)

This model reflects the beliefs about the general nature of consumer behaviour. Individuals develop self concepts and subsequent lifestyles based on a variety of internal (mainly psychological and physical) and external (mainly sociological and demographic) influences. These self-concepts and lifestyles produce needs and desires, many of which require consumption decisions to satisfy. As individuals encounter relevant situations, the consumer decision process is activated. This process and the experience and acquisitions it produces in turn influences the consumers' self-concept and lifestyle by affecting their internal and external influences (Hawkins et al., 2004:27).

Internal influences refers to individuals perceptions, learning, memory, motives, personality, emotions and attitudes while external influences refers to issues that may affect an individual namely: culture, subculture, demographics, social status, reference groups, family and marketing activities.

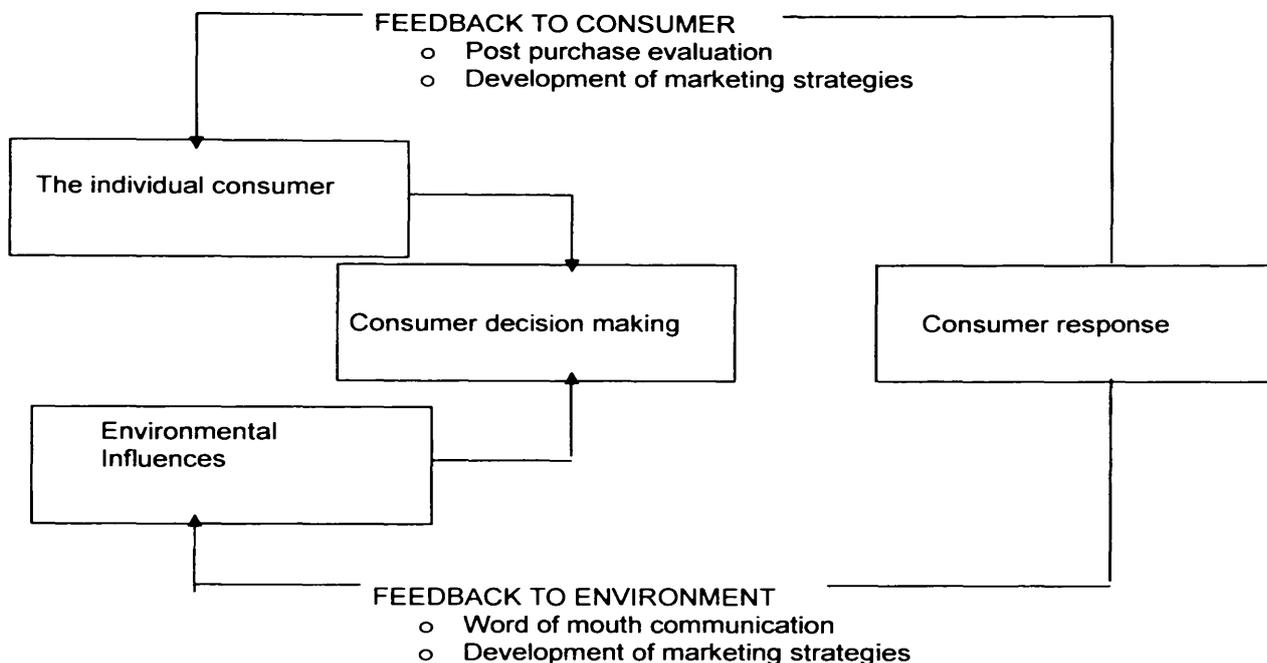
However due to the nature of this research study the focus will only be on the internal influence of motives in relation to consumer needs and the external influences of culture and reference groups.

This model, while simple, is both conceptually sound and intuitively appealing. Individuals have a view of themselves (self-concept), and they try to live in a particular manner, given their resources (lifestyles). The view of oneself and the way individuals try to live are determined by the internal factors (such as personality, values, emotions and memory) and the external factors (such as our culture, age, friends, family, and subculture). The views of oneself and the way in which individuals try to live results in desires and needs that bring about the multitude of situations encountered daily. Many of these situations will cause individuals to consider a purchase (Hawkins et. al, 2004:27).

As figure 2 indicates, a consumer's needs/ desires may trigger one or more levels of the consumer decision process. It is important to examine that for most purchases, consumers devote very little effort to this process, and emotions and feelings often have as much or more influence on the outcomes facts and product features (Hawkins et. al, 2004:28).

A simple model of consumer behaviour developed by Assael (2004:22) emphasises the interaction between the marketers and the consumer. The central component of this model illustrated in figure 3 is consumer decision making that is the process of perceiving and evaluating brand information, considering how brand alternatives meet the consumer's needs, and deciding on a brand.

Figure 3: A model of consumer behaviour



Source: Assael (2004:22)

Two broad influences determine the consumer's choice. The first is the individual consumer whose needs, perceptions of brand characteristics and attitudes toward alternatives influence brand choice. In addition, the consumer's demographics, lifestyle and personality characteristics influence brand choice. The second influence on consumer decision-making is the environment. The consumer's purchasing environment is represented by culture (the norms of society), subcultures (a part of society with distinct norms and values in certain respects, and face-to-face groups (friends, family members, and reference groups). Marketing organisations are also part of the consumer's environment, because these organisations provide the offerings that can satisfy consumer needs (Assael, 2004:22).

Assael (2004:22) further contended that once the consumer has made a decision, post purchase evaluation, represented as feedback to the individual consumer, takes place. During evaluation, the consumer will learn from the experience and may change their pattern of acquiring information, evaluating brands, and selecting a brand. Consumption

experience will directly influence whether the consumer will buy the same brand again. A feedback loop also leads back to the environment. Consumers use word of mouth to communicate their purchase and consumption experiences to friends and families.

Figure 3 also highlights that consumer feedback is the basis for marketing strategies. Marketers seek information from consumers (top loop). They track consumer responses in the form of market share and sales data. However, such information neither tells marketers why the consumer purchased nor provides information on the strength and weaknesses of the marketers' brand relative to those of the competition. Therefore, marketing research is also required at this step to determine consumer reactions to the brand and future purchase intent. This information permits management to reformulate marketing strategy to better meet consumer needs (Assael, 2004:22).

Marketers also seek information from the environment (bottom loop) in order to determine the nature of the word-of-mouth communications regarding their brands. They also try to determine how cultural and social norms might impact the purchase of their products. On a broader dimension, marketers seek consumer opinions regarding their corporate image in the context of social responsibility (Assael, 2004:22).

All three models identified above, provide a definition of what consumer behaviour entails and although they are unique, they possess the same underlying meaning. The Hawkins (1989) model has evolved in order to encapsulate the internal and external influences while Assael's (2004) model examines the same underlying concepts of the consumer, the consumer decision making process and the consumer response but placed more emphasis on the environmental influences that affects consumer decision making process as well as examining consumer behaviour from the marketers perspective.

The focus of this research will be on self-concept as well as on needs as an internal influence and reference groups and culture as an external influence.

Walters and Bergiel (1989:11) identified two broad types of consumer behaviour that directly affect how persons make purchase decisions. They are:

- Variables that are internal to the individual (Basic Determinants)
- Variables that are external to the individual (Environmental Determinants)

Basic determinants referring to the needs, motives, personality, learning attitudes and perceptions of the individual while the environmental determinants refers to family, social, business, cultural and economic influences (Walters and Bergiel, 1989:11-12).

The following section will examine the high and low involvement of consumer decision-making as well as the risks associated with it.

2.3 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT AND RISKS

Peter and Olson (2002:552) defined involvement as the degree of personal relevance a product, brand, object, or behaviour has for a consumer. Experienced as a feeling of arousal or activation and interest or importance. A high involvement product is one a consumer believes has important personal consequences or will help achieve important personal goals. A low involvement product is one that is not strongly linked to important consequences or goals.

Involvement is a motivational state that energises and directs consumers' cognitive and affective processes and behaviours as they make decisions. Consumers do not continually experience feelings of involvement, even for important products such as a car, a home, or special hobby equipment. Rather people feel involved with such products only on certain occasions when means-end knowledge about the personal relevance of products is activated (Peter and Olson, 2002:88).

Engel et al. (1995:161) define involvement as the level of perceived personal importance and / or interest evoked by a stimulus (or stimuli) within a specific situation. Involvement is best conceived as a function of person, object, and situation. The starting point is always with the person's underlying motivations in the form of needs and values. It is activated when the object (a product, service, or promotional message) is perceived as being instrumental in meeting important needs, goals, and values.

Engel et al. (1995:161) further argued that involvement is a reflection of strong motivation in the form of high-perceived relevance of a product or service in a particular context, and it also takes the form of a continuum ranging from low to high. Involvement becomes

activated and felt when intrinsic personal characteristics (needs, values, self-concept) are confronted with appropriate marketing stimuli within a given situation.

A person's degree of involvement can be conceived as a continuum, ranging from absolute lack of interest in a marketing stimulus at one end to the obsession at the other. Consumption at the low end of involvement is characterised as inertia, where decisions are made out of a habit because the consumer lacks the motivation to consider alternatives. At the high end of involvement, it is expected to find the type of passionate intensity reserved for people and objects that carry great meaning to the individual (Solomon 1996:147).

Engel et al. (1995:162) identified three factors of involvement, namely:

- **Personal Factors:** without activation of need and drive, there will be no involvement, and it is strongest when the product or service is perceived as enhancing self-image. When this occurs, involvement is likely to be enduring and to function as a stable trait, as opposed to being situational or temporary.
- **Product Factors:** products or brands also become involving if there is some perceived risk in purchase or use. Consumer behaviour involves risk in the sense that any action of a consumer will produce consequences, which individuals cannot anticipate with anything approximating certainty, and some of which are likely to be unpleasant. The greater the perceived risk the greater the likelihood of high involvement. When perceived risk becomes unacceptably high, there is motivation either to avoid purchase and use all together or to minimize risk through the search and pre-purchase alternative evaluation of stages in extended problem solving.
- **Situational Factors:** enduring involvement can be considered as a stable trait; situational (or instrumental) involvement changes over time. It is operational on a temporary basis and wanes once purchasing overcomes are resolved. This is often the case with fads such as trendy clothing items in which involvement is high initially but quickly diminishes once the item is worn and fashions begin to change.

Solomon (1996:148) argued that there are several broad types of involvement namely:

- **Product involvement:** which is related to a consumer's level of interest in making a particular purchase. Many sales promotions are designed to increase this type of involvement.

- **Message-response involvement:** refers to the consumer's interest in processing market communications. Television is considered a low involvement medium because it requires passive viewer who exerts relatively little control over content. In contrast, print media demand high involvement. The reader is actively involved in processing the information and is able to pause and reflect on what he or she has read before moving on.
- **Ego Involvement (enduring Involvement):** refers to the importance of a product to a consumer's self-concept. This concept implies a high level of social risk; the prospect of the product not performing its desired function may result in embarrassment or damage to the consumer's self-concept. This type of involvement is independent of a particular purchase decision situation; it is an ongoing concern related to the self and hedonic experiences.

Sheth, Mittal and Newman (1999:530) distinguished between two types of involvement namely:

- **Purchase-decision involvement:** which is the degree of concern and caring that customers bring to bear on the purchase decision. Purchase decision involvement is high for most of the high-ticket items, but price and involvement do not have one-to-one correspondence.
- **Enduring involvement:** this involvement continues well beyond the purchase into the product and services. In other word enduring involvement is on-going interest in the product or service.

Assael (2004:91) identified two types of involvement, namely:

- **Situational involvement:** which occurs only in a specific situation and is temporary. Situational involvement generally occurs when a purchase decision is required.
- **Enduring involvement:** is continuous and more permanent.

All three authors encapsulate enduring involvement as a type of involvement. Even though the authors changed overtime, enduring involvement remained.

Both situational and enduring involvement is likely to result in complex decision-making. Marketers take a very different approach in targeting those with enduring versus situational

involvement. The deep-seated nature of enduring involvement means that symbols and images are more likely to be used to connect the consumer with the product. In targeting the situationally involved consumer, more specific appeals to the particular context of the purchase is made.

In general, consumers find high risk uncomfortable. As a result, they are usually motivated to engage in any number of behaviours and information-processing activities to reduce resolved risk. Consumers can reduce uncertainty by being brand loyal (buying the same as last time), ensuring that the product should be at least as satisfactory as the last purchase (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2004:70).

Perceived risk, according to Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:71), can be classified as:

- Reducing risk perceptions: when perceived risk is high, marketers can either reduce uncertainty or reduce the perceived consequences of failure.
- Enhancing risk perceptions: When risk is low, however, consumers are less motivated to think about the brand and its potential consequences. Marketers sometimes need to enhance risk perceptions to make their promotional appeals more compelling.

Assael (2004:90) argues that the level of involvement with a product varies by individual. Some individuals may be highly involved with the purchase of jeans because they associate the product with personal appearance and social acceptance. Others may not be as highly involved because they view jeans as just another piece of casual clothing with few personal associations. Thus, consumer involvement with a product can vary on a continuum from high to low. The position of the consumer on this continuum depends on several factors. A consumer is more likely to be involved with a product when it:

- **Is important to the consumer:** a product is most likely to be important when the consumer's self-image is tied to the product, it has symbolic meaning tied to consumer values, it is expensive; or it has some important functional role, such as the transportation provided by a car or the quick cooking facilities provided by a microwave oven.
- **Has emotional appeal:** consumers do not seek only functional benefits in products. They often seek benefits that trigger an emotional response.

- **Is continually of interest to the consumer:** the fashion-conscious consumer, for example has an ongoing interest in clothing, and the car buff has an ongoing interest in cars.
- **Entails significant risks:** among these risks would be the financial risk of buying a house, the technological risk of buying a personal computer, the social risk of changing one's wardrobe, or the physical risk of buying an unsafe car or the wrong medication.
- **Is identified with the norms of a group:** that is, the product has sign or badge value.

These conditions are present when purchasing clothing and are likely to result in a complex decision making process. Central to consumer behaviour and the complex decision making process is the self-concept theory, which will be discussed further in the following section. Self-concept/ image plays a major role in the consumer decision process because it determines who we are as individuals.

2.4 CONSUMERS SELF –CONCEPT/ SELF IMAGE

Individuals do not only consume products as a means to satisfy needs but also to carry out self-creation projects. Self concept (or self-image) has become a popular approach to investigate possible relationships between how individuals perceive themselves and what behaviours they exhibit as consumers.

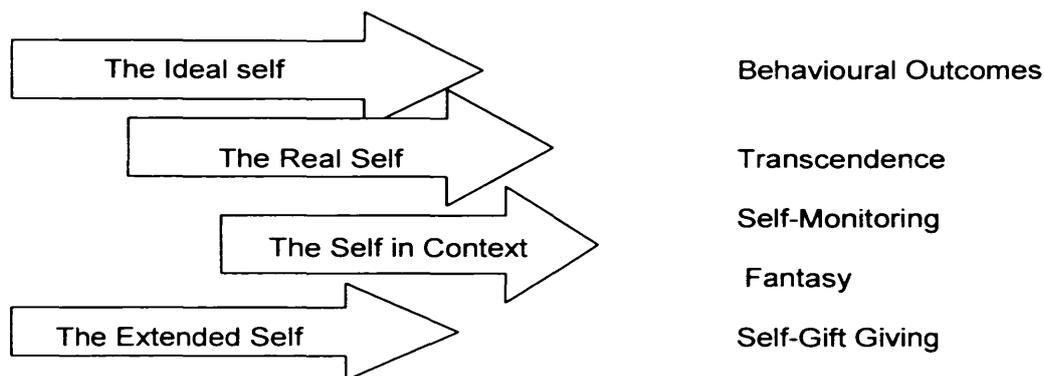
Self-concept/ image theory holds that individuals have a concept of self based on who they think they are (the actual self) and the concept of who they think they would like to be (the ideal self). The self-concept theory is related to two key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, the ego and the superego. Since the ego is a reflection of one's objective reality, it is similar to the actual self and the superego is defined by the way things should be and is therefore a reflection of the ideal self (Assael, 2004:300)

The self-concept, or self-structure, can be regarded as an organised configuration or perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the precepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment; the values and qualities

which are perceived as associated with experiences; and objectives, goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence (Engel et al., 1995:410).

The vein of consumer research acknowledges that self-concept is now viewed more broadly as having multiple dimensions (Engel et al., 1995:412). Figure 4 illustrates these dimensions and the behavioural outcomes that have been identified:

Figure 4: Expanded View of the Self-Concept



Source: Engel et al. (1995:412)

The Ideal self, as portrayed in figure 4, refers to the self one aspire to be. While the real self refers to the way one think one is. The self in context refers to the way one sees oneself in different social settings and the extended self is portrayed as the self incorporated into objects and artefacts that assume importance.

The behavioural outcomes of transcendence which is also illustrated in figure 4 refers to the issue that individuals are what they have and that there is an extended self-concept that encompasses possessions. This allows individuals to transcend the existence as biological beings and to assign unique, often sacred meanings to possessions. Three forms of self-monitoring were identified namely, concern for social appropriateness of behaviour, attention to social comparison as cues for appropriate self-expression and the ability to modify self-presentation and expression across situations (Engel et al., 1995:412).

Fantasy, the third behavioural outcome illustrated in figure 4 is another form of monitoring the comparison of real self with ideal self. One of the most common outcomes is fantasy and daydreaming. If taken to extremes, this can be dysfunctional; there is however no question that fantasy can be a powerful selling appeals. Lastly, self-gift giving bolsters self-esteem through indulgence justified by desiring behaviour (Engel et al., 1995:412).

Hawkins et al. (1989:396) defined self-concept as the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to him or herself as an object. While Hawkins et al. (2004: 422) further contend that it is the individual's perception of and feelings toward him or herself. In other words an individual's self concept is composed of the attitudes that individual holds towards him or herself. This definition is similar to one offered by (Engel et al., 1995:412) in the sense that they are both striving to establish that self-concept consist of the beliefs, values and attitudes the individual has about himself.

Hawkins et al. (1989:396) contend that the self-concept is, in fact, the personal or internal basis of the lifestyles of an individual, since the self-concept denotes the totality of one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and evaluations of one's self.

Self-concept is divided into four basic parts as shown in table 1: actual versus ideal, and private versus social self-concept. The actual / ideal distinction refers to your perception of who you are now (actual) and who you would like to be (ideal). The private self refers to how you are or would like to be to yourself (private self), while social self is how you are seen by others or how you would like to be seen by others (social self) (Hawkins et al., 1989:396).

Table 1: Dimensions of a Consumer's Self-Concept

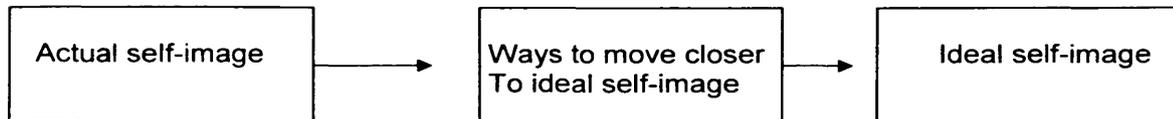
Dimensions of self-concept	Actual self-image	Ideal self-image
Private self	How I actually see myself	How I would like to see myself
Social self	How others actually see me	How I would like others to see me

Source: Hawkins et al. (1989:396)

The concepts in table 1 identified by Hawkins et al. (1989: 396) are similar to the ones identified by Engel et al. (1995:412). Hawkins et al. (1989: 396) however approached

these similar concepts from a different angle as the private and social self. Hawkins et al. (1989:396) focused on the actual and ideal self, as illustrated in figure 5, instead of the self in context and extended self.

Figure 5: An individual's goal is to move closer to the Ideal Self-Image



Source: Hawkins et al. (1989:397)

Hawkins et al. (1989:397) also argued, as illustrated in figure 5, that there is a very definite relationship between the actual self and the ideal private self-concept and between the actual ideal social self-concept. In both cases, the individual moves from the real (actual) self-concept towards the ideal self-concept. A basic motivation then, according to self-concept theorist, is to achieve the ideal self-concept, or at least to move toward an ideal self-concept.

Hawkins et al. (2004:422) argued that there are interdependent and independent self-concepts also referred to as separateness and connectedness. An independent concept of the self emphasises personal goals, characteristics, achievements and desires. Individuals with an independent self-concept tend to be individualistic, egocentric, autonomous, self-reliant, and self contained. They define themselves in terms of what they have done, what they have, and their personal characteristics. While interdependent self-concept emphasises family, cultural, professional, and social relationships. Individuals with an interdependent self-concept tend to be obedient, sociocentric, holistic, connected and relation oriented (Hawkins et al., 2004:422).

Consumers' self-preference can have a strong influence on their behaviour in the marketplace. For example, the way an individual perceives various products could be affected by the image the individual has of himself (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1984:509).

Preferences might actually develop for certain brands because the consumer perceives them as reflecting their own self-image. Certain other brands may be desired because the

consumer views them as projecting an image that they presently do not possess but aspire to have (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1984:509).

Loudon and Della Bitta (1984: 511) also highlight that consumers appear to hold images of various products, and these images can be viewed as symbols that communicate meaning about those who purchase them.

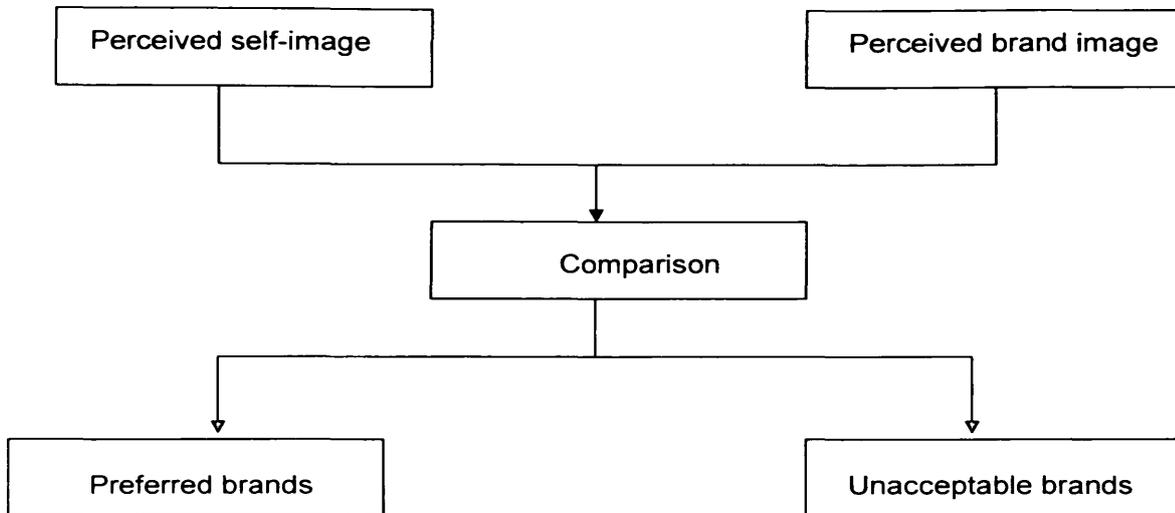
Therefore, an area of considerable practical interest is the degree to which a consumer might actually prefer certain products or brands because the individual perceives their images as consistent with the views of himself, what he would like to be, or some other aspect of self-concept.

Loudon and Della Bitta (1984:511) identified five points to assist further in the explanation of self-concept, namely:

- Consumers form their self-concepts through psychological development and social interaction. Because the individual's self-concept has value to them, they will act to define, protect and further it.
- Products and brands are perceived by consumers as having images or symbolic meaning.
- Because of their symbolic role, selective possession, display, and use of these good-symbols assist an individual in defining and enhancing his self-concept for himself and for others.
- Therefore, the behaviour of individuals will be motivated towards furthering and enhancing their self-concept through the consumption of goods as symbols.
- The preferred brands are those that the consumer perceives as having images, which are most consistent with his self-concept.

Figure 6 illustrates the process whereby the consumer's preferred brands are identified through a matching between the individual's self-image and their perception of various brand images (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1984:511).

Figure 6: A model of the brand choice process as a function of self and brand images.



Source: Loudon and Della Bitta (1984:511)

Loudon and Della Bitta, as illustrated in figure 6, highlight that both the perceived self-image and the perceived brand image are related to comparison, which in turn affects the preferred brands and unacceptable brands of an individual's choice.

Congruity theory proposes that the greater the brand/ self-image congruence, the more a brand will be preferred. It should again be noted that congruity could exist along a number of self-concept dimensions (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1984:511). Thus the lesser the congruence the less likely a brand will be preferred.

Anderson and Ross (1998: 142) argues that the congruity theory predicts that if there are two contradicting people, sets of information, or concepts on which a judgment must be made by a single observer, the observer will experience pressure to change his or her judgment on one of the sides. However, if the two sets of information are similar or congruent, then there will be no problem, and the observer will not experience pressure of any form.

Congruity theory is a scientific model because it is predictive of how third-party observers will react to an argument between two main parties. It does little to explain why people do

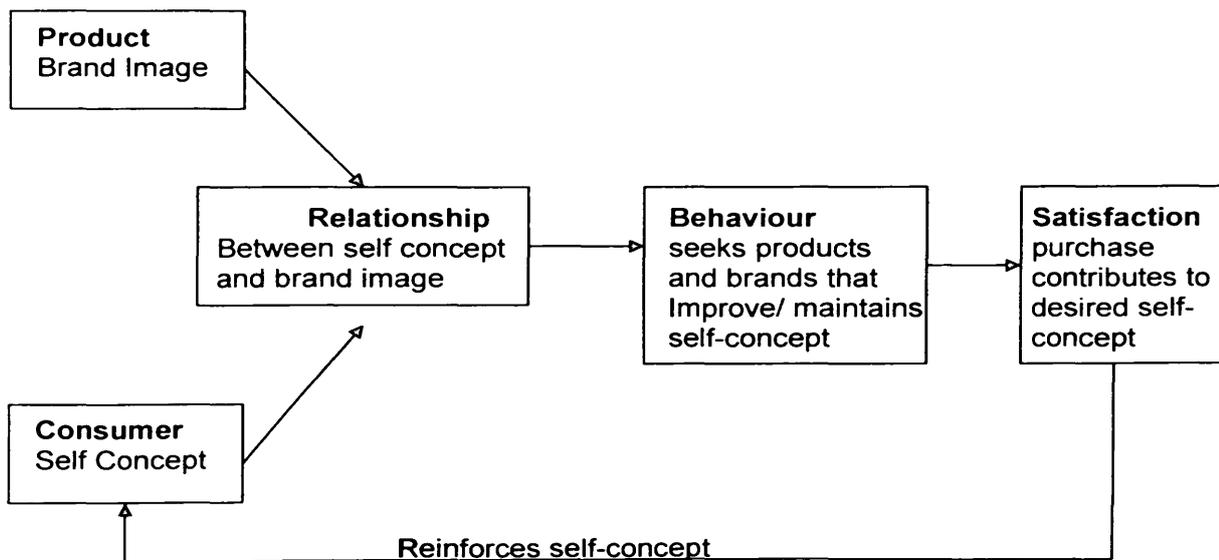
what they do in such a situation, but simply states how their actions and views might change (Anderson and Ross, 1998: 145).

The basic premise of the theory is to help determine the levels of congruence between two sides. If a third-party observer feels pressure to take a side or change a viewpoint, there must be low levels of congruence between the two sides. If the third-party observer feels no pressure, than there must be a high level of congruence between the two immediate parties (Anderson and Ross, 1988: 45).

Research motivated by congruity theory was especially prevalent during the Freudian invasion in the motivation research days of the 1950's. Attempts were made to capitalise on or change existing brand images to stress the match between self-image and brand image (Engel et al., 1995:410).

Hawkins et al. (2004:426) are of the opinion that people's attempts to obtain their ideal self-concept, or maintain their actual self-concept, often involve the purchase and consumption of products, services and media. This process is further illustrated in figure 7.

Figure 7: The Relationship between Self-Concept and Brand Image Influence



Source: Hawkins et al. (2004:427)

Figure 7, according to Hawkins et al. (2004:427) implies a rather conscious, deliberate process by which consumers determine their actual and desired self-concept and proceed to purchase products consistent with these concepts. Although this may occasionally occur, the process is mostly not deliberate. For example a person may drink diet colas because his desired self-concept includes a trim figure, but he is unlikely to think about the purchase in these terms.

Hawkins et al. (2004:427) clearly indicate that marketers should strive to develop product images that are consistent with the self-concepts of their target markets. While everyone's self-concept is unique, there is also significant overlap across individuals. Consumers maintain and enhance their self-concepts not only by what they consume, but also by what they avoid. Consumers prefer brands that are similar to their self-concept; however, the degree to which they would be attracted to such a brand varies with the symbolism and conspicuousness of those product classes. Furthermore, the interaction between self-concept and product image is situation specific.

Individuals form self-concepts and desired lifestyles as a result of the interaction between external and internal influences (Hawkins et al., 2004:275).

Based on the detailed discussion of self-concept in this section the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho1: Purchasing of status brands do not significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

Ha1: Purchasing of status brands significantly influences the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

In section 2.5 internal influences and more specifically motivation and needs will be discussed further as it can be regarded as a determining factor in conspicuous consumption.

2.5 CONSUMER NEEDS

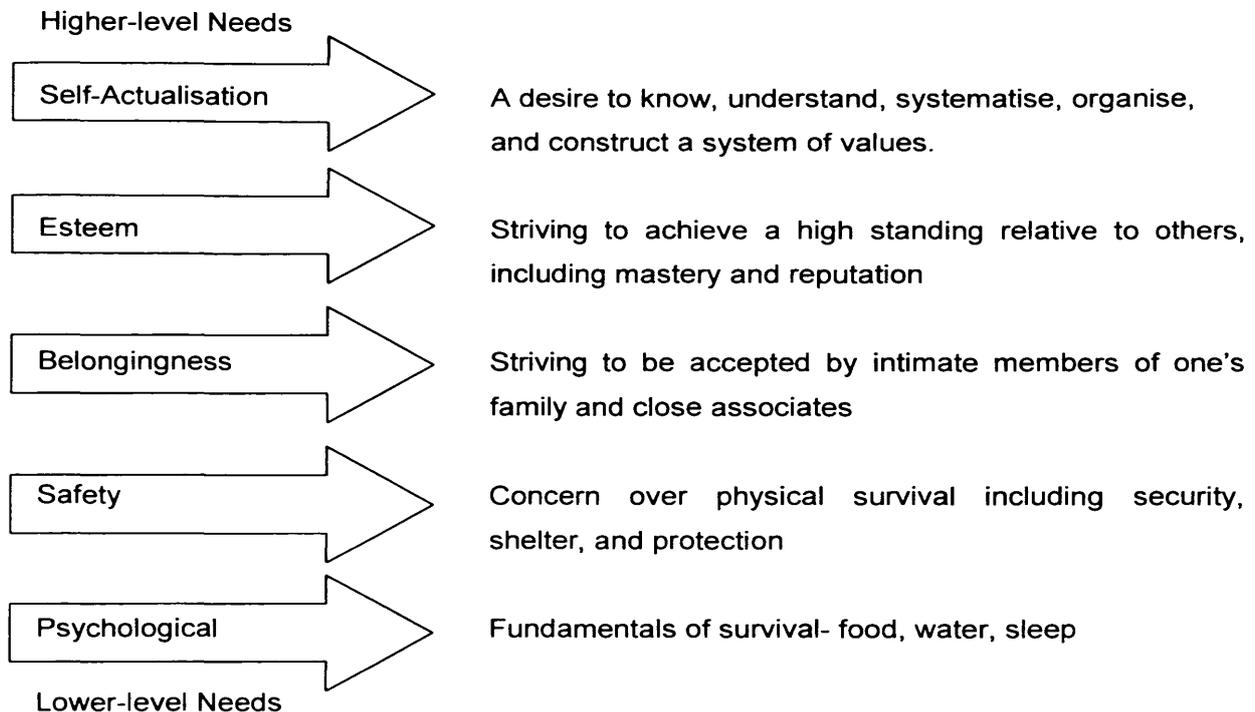
The concept of needs and wants is closely aligned to the concept of motivation. A need defined by Sheth and Mittal (2004:163) is a felt deprivation of the desired state. The desired state provides the goal-object, and its deprivation provides the drive.

Motivation according to Hawkins et al. (2004:355) is the reason for behaviour. It is the energising force that activates behaviour and provides purpose and direction to that behaviour. A motive is a construct representing an unobservable inner force that stimulates and compels a behavioural response and provides specific direction to that response. A motive is why an individual does something.

Consumers recognise a need when there is a disparity between their current state and some desired end state. This disparity creates tension and arouses a motivation to act (Assael, 2004:33).

According to Abraham Maslow, a psychologist who developed a motivational theory based on a hierarchy of needs, consumers are motivated to act by first satisfying the lowest level of needs before the next higher level of needs becomes activated. Once these needs have been satisfied, the individual then attempts to satisfy the next higher level (Assael, 2004:34). Figure 8 illustrates Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

Figure 8: Maslow's Hierarchy of needs



Adapted: Engel et al. (1995:422)

Assael (2004:24) contended that marketers could appeal to a range of needs within Maslow's five levels. For example, they can appeal to the following:

- Self-actualisation needs, by showing self-fulfilment through travel, education, or cultural pursuits.
- Ego / esteem needs, by linking a product to success in business (credit cards) or in sports activities (athletic shoes).
- Belongingness / social needs, by showing group acceptance as a result of wearing certain types of clothing or using a brand of a soap or deodorant.
- Safety needs, by emphasising messages in advertising about safety cars or promoting a safer environment, smoke detectors, insurance and burglar alarms.
- Psychological needs through sexual appeal, as in advertisements for personal grooming products. Also products like health foods, sports drinks, low-cholesterol foods and exercise equipment.

In addition to Maslow's classification, needs are also classified as utilitarian or hedonic needs. Assael (2004:35) defined utilitarian needs as seeking to achieve some practical benefits such as a durable car, an economical computer, or warm clothing. Such needs are identified with functional production attributes that define product performance. Hence, the utilitarian purchase maintains an informational focus and emphasise the purchase process itself.

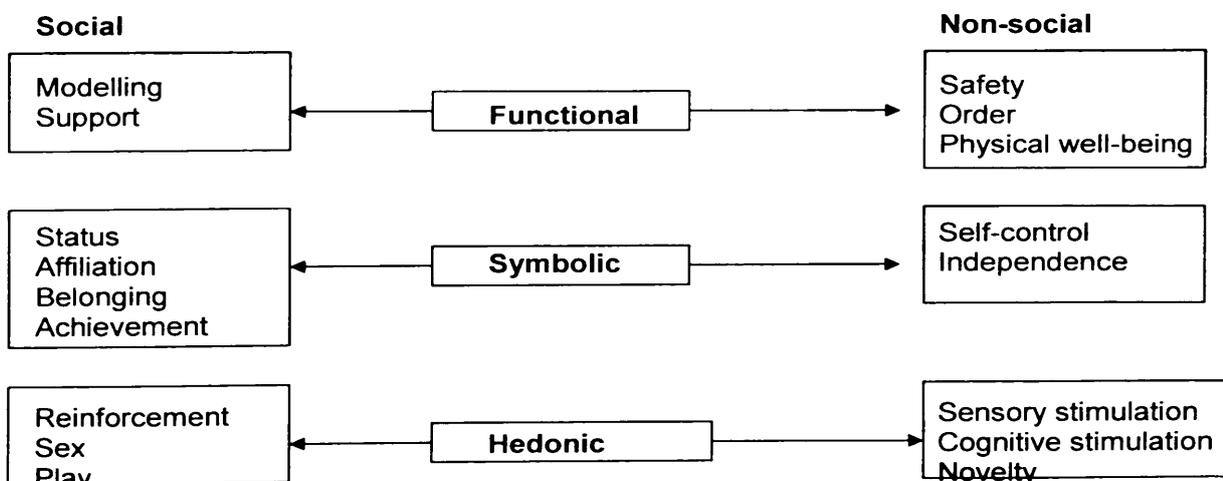
Hedonic needs seek to achieve pleasure from a product. They are more likely to be associated with emotions or fantasies derived from consuming a product. In satisfying hedonic needs, consumers frequently use emotional, rather than utilitarian criteria in evaluating alternative brands (Assael, 2004:35). For example buying a Gucci scarf for twice as much as the same scarf with a store label cannot be justified based on the functional benefits of the scarf, but it can certainly be justified based on its hedonic benefits.

Types of consumer needs will now be discussed further in the following section.

2.5.1 Types of consumer needs

Needs are usually categorised according to whether they are social or non-social and function, symbolic or hedonic in nature as illustrated in figure 9.

Figure 9: Types of consumer needs



Source: Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:63)

- Social needs are externally directed and related to other individuals. Fulfilling these needs thus requires the presence or actions of other people. For example, the need for status drives our desire to have others hold us in high regards. Individuals also have antisocial needs, which refers to the need for space or psychological distance from people. For example, plane seats that are too close together violate the need for space and motivate people to escape the confining environment.
- Non-social needs are those for which achievement is not based on other people. The need for sleep, novelty, control, uniqueness and understanding, which involve only oneself, can affect the usage of certain products and services. Individuals might purchase the same brand repeatedly to maintain consistency in their world or might buy something totally different to fulfil a need for variety.
- Functional needs may be social or non social. Functional needs motivate the search for products that solve consumption-related problems. For example, one might consider buying a product like a Volvo wagon with side airbags because it appeals to one's safety needs (a functional, non-social need).
- Symbolic needs affect how consumers perceive themselves and how others perceive them. Achievement, independence, and self-control are symbolic needs because they are connected with the sense of self. Similarly, the need for uniqueness is symbolic because it drives consumption decisions about how individuals express their identity. The need to avoid rejection and the need for achievement, status, affiliation, and belonging are symbolic because they reflect the social position or role.
- Hedonic needs include needs for sensory stimulation, cognitive stimulation, and novelty (non social hedonic needs) and needs for reinforcement, sex and play (social hedonic needs). These hedonic needs reflect out inherent desires for sensory pleasure.
- Needs for cognition and stimulation also affect motivation and behaviour. Consumers with a high need for cognition (a need for mental stimulation) tend to be highly involved in mentally taxing activities like reading and are more likely to actively process information during decision making. People with a low need for cognition may be involved in activities that require less thought, such as watching television, and less likely to actively process information during decision making. Consumers also need other kinds of stimulation. Those with a high optimum

stimulation level enjoy high levels of sensory stimulation and tend to be involved in shopping and seeking brand information.

Section 2.5.2 will now examine the different characteristics of consumer needs.

2.5.2 Characteristics of consumer needs

Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:64) identified four characteristics of needs, which are:

- **Needs are dynamic:** needs are never fully satisfied; satisfaction is only temporary. Clearly eating once will not satisfy our hunger forever. Also, as soon as one need is satisfied, new needs emerge. Thus, needs are dynamic, because daily life is a constant process of need fulfilment.
- **Needs exist in a hierarchy:** Although several needs may be activated at any one time, some assume more importance. Despite this hierarchy, many needs may be activated simultaneously and influence your acquisition, usage and disposition behaviours.
- **Needs can be internally or externally aroused:** Although many needs are internally activated, some needs can be externally cued. Smelling pizza cooking in the apartment next door may, for example, affect the perceived need for food.
- **Needs can be conflict:** A given behaviour or outcome can be seen as both desirable and undesirable if it satisfies some needs but fails to satisfy others. The result is called an approach-avoidance conflict because consumers both want to engage in the behaviour and want to avoid it. An approach-approach conflict occurs when someone must choose between two or more equally desirable options that fulfil different needs. While the avoidance-avoidance conflict occurs when the consumer must choose between two equally undesirable options such as going home alone after a late meeting (need for safety) or waiting another hour until a friend can drive her home (need for affiliation). Conflict arises because neither option is desirable (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2004:65).

This research focuses on self-concept as well as needs as internal influences. It also examines reference groups and culture as an external influence. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 will

therefore examine these two external factors as possible influences of consumer behaviour.

2.6 GROUP INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

One of the most important environmental influences on consumer behaviour is the face-to-face group. A consideration of the influence of groups is based on the reference group; that is a group that serves as a reference point for individuals in forming their attitudes and behaviour (Assael, 2004:398).

The terms groups and reference groups should be distinguished. A group consists of two or more people who interact with each other to accomplish some goal, while a reference group involves one or more people that someone uses as a **basis** for **comparison** or point of reference in forming affective and **cognitive** responses and **performing** behaviours (Peter and Olson, 2002:351).

According to Assael (2004:401) reference **groups** are more likely to influence a member's behaviour if they are:

- Cohesive, in that members have similar norms and values
- Frequently interacting, thus creating more opportunities to influence members
- Distinctive and exclusive, in that membership in the **group** is **highly valued**.

2.6.1 Characteristics of reference groups

Assael (2004:406-408) postulated that reference **groups** have certain characteristics that affect their influence on the consumers, which are listed below:

- **Norms**, who are the rules and standards and conduct the **group** establishes. These norms are not documented but they are clearly understood.
- **Values**, which are shared beliefs among group members as to what behaviours are desirable and undesirable.
- **Roles**, which are functions that the individual assumes or that the group assigns to the individual to attain group objectives.

- **Status**, refers to the position the individual occupies within the group. High status implies greater power or influence. Symbols of dress or ownership are frequently associated with both high and low status.
- **Socialisation**, which is the process by which an individual learns the group's norms and role expectations.
- **Power**, the influence the group has on an individual is closely related to the group's power. Three types of power were identified namely:
 - (i) **Expert power**: an individual or group must have experience and knowledge in order to have expert power.
 - (ii) **Referent power**: The basis for referent power is the individual's identification with members of the group. The greater the similarity between the individual's beliefs and attitudes and those of group members, the greater the groups' referent power.
 - (iii) **Reward power**: is based on the group's ability to reward the individual. Groups that have reward power may also have coercive power over the individual (Assael, 2004:408)

According to Leigh and Gabel (1992: 29) when consumers feel a strong sense of belonging to the reference group, purchasing based on symbolic meaning is more likely. The presence of any of the following group characteristics is likely to contribute to a stronger sense of belonging for the consumer; namely exclusive groups, distinctive groups, homogeneous groups, frequent-interacting groups, and formal groups. The first three characteristics are the most relevant for segmentation purposes because such characteristics are likely to result in a strong sense of belonging for the group member and thus likely to influence purchasing behaviour. While the purchasing habits of these members appear to be quite dissimilar, they are alike in that they are highly affected by symbolic interactionism.

They further argued that the latter two characteristics also influence the sense of belonging for the group member. The more frequently a group interacts, the more opportunities exist for members to observe and evaluate each other's purchasing behaviour. The family or a student's classmate exemplifies this type of group. The more formal a group is, the stronger will be the norms pressuring the individual to conform will be (Leigh and Gabel, 1992:29).

Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:398) argued that reference groups could further be described according to degree of contact, formality, similarity among members, group attractiveness, density, degree of identification, and the strength of the ties connecting members. These characteristics are explained as follows:

- **Degree of contact:** Reference groups vary in their degree of contact. There may be direct and extensive contact with some reference groups. Reference groups with which there is considerable contact tend to exert the greatest influence.
- **Formality:** Reference groups also vary in formality depending on the type of group membership, that is, formal or informal structures.
- **Homophily:** The similarity among group members: Group vary in their homophily or the similarity among the members. When groups are homophilous, reference group influence tends to be strong because similar people tend to see things in the same way, interact frequently, and develop strong social ties.
- **Group attractiveness:** When consumers perceive a group as very attractive, they have stronger intentions to conform through illicit consumption behaviour. Group attractiveness is much less important, however, when a group is capable of socially punishing a member for not conforming by practicing in illicit consumption.
- **Density:** Dense groups are those in which group members all know one another.
- **Degree of identification:** Some characteristics of the individual within a group contribute to the way groups vary. One degree of identification a consumer has with a group.
- **Tie-strength:** Which is the extent to which a close, intimate relationship connects people. A strong tie means that two people are connected by a close, intimate relationship, often characterised by frequent interpersonal contact. A weak tie means that people have a more distant, non-intimate relationship, with limited interpersonal contact.

The next section investigates the different types of reference groups that influences individuals in terms of their decision-making processes.

2.6.2 Types of reference groups

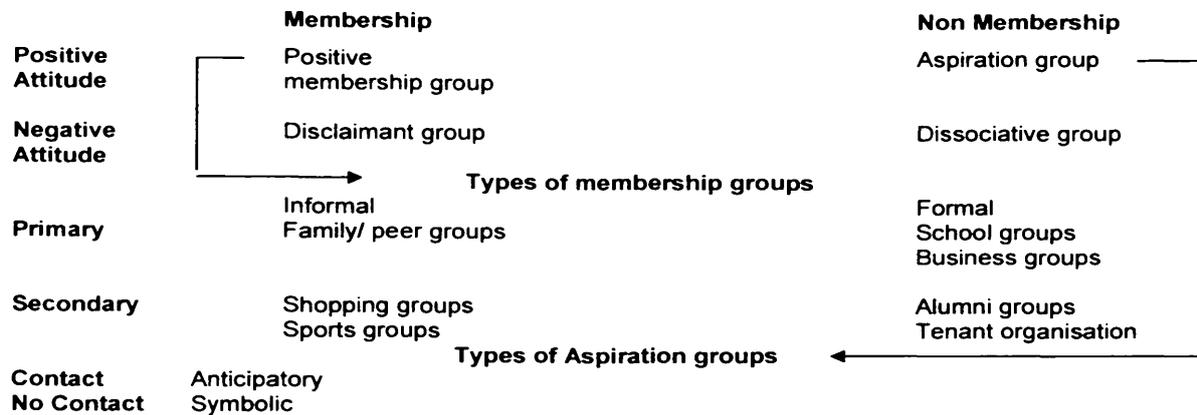
Hawkins (1989: 165) identified three types of reference groups, which are:

- **Informational Influence:** which occurs when an individual uses the behaviours and opinions of reference group members as potentially useful bits of information.
- **Normative influence:** sometimes referred to as utilitarian influence, occurs when an individual fulfils group expectations to gain a direct reward or to avoid a sanction (Hawkins, 1989: 165). Utilitarian reference group influence on consumer behaviour occurs when the reference group controls important rewards and punishments (Peter and Olson, 2002:353). Normative influence is the strongest when individuals have strong ties to the group and the product involved is socially conspicuous and it appeals more to younger consumers (Hawkins, 2004:233).
- **Identification influence:** also called value expressive influence, occurs when individuals use the perceived group norms and values as a guide for their own attitudes or values (Hawkins, 1989: 165). By identifying and affiliating with certain reference groups that express these desired meanings, consumers can draw out some of these meanings and use them in their own self construction products (Peter and Olson, 2002:353).

Hawkins (2004:225) further argued that groups could have negative or positive desirability in terms of membership. Groups with negative desirability also referred to the dissociative reference groups, which can influence behaviour. For example, teenagers tend to avoid clothing styles associated with older consumers. While non-membership groups with a positive attraction referred to as aspiration reference groups exert a strong influence. Individuals frequently purchase products used by the desired group in order to achieve actual or symbolic membership in the group.

Assael (2004:401) however, contended that reference groups provide a point of comparison by which to evaluate attitudes and behaviour. A consumer can either be a member of a reference group such as the family, or aspire to belong to a group. In the first case, the individual is part of a membership group; in the second, the individual is part of an aspiration group. This is illustrated in figure 10:

Figure 10: Types of reference groups



Source: Assael (2004:405)

Further, positive membership groups are classified as primary or secondary and informal or formal. Primary groups are more important to the consumer in developing product beliefs, tastes, and preferences and have a more direct influence on purchasing behaviour such as family and peer groups (Assael, 2004:402).

Groups can also be divided by whether they have found a formal structure with specific roles or an informal structure. The structure roles of informal groups are implicit. This classification produces four types of membership groups such as primary, secondary, informal and formal groups.

Two types of aspiration groups, anticipatory and symbolic, are classified at the bottom of figure 10. Anticipatory aspiration groups are those that an individual anticipates joining at a future time and, in most cases, with which he or she has direct contact. Symbolic aspiration groups are those that the individual admires but is not likely to belong to, despite acceptance of the group's beliefs and attitudes (Assael, 2004:406). Hoyer and MacInnis (2004:396) identified this type of group as a dissociative reference group, whose attitudes, values, and behaviours consumers disapprove of and do not wish to emulate.

Based on the discussion above the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho2: University students do not conspicuously purchase status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

Ha2: University students conspicuously purchase large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

Another external influence that plays a role in forming self-concept and that influences buyer behaviour is culture. The following section will therefore highlight this influence further.

2.7 CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Cultural values are considered to be a determinant variable in the South African market in terms of consumer decision making. Culture is defined by Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:397) as a set of learnt beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, and forms of behaviour that are shared by a society and are transmitted from one generation to the next by members of that society through language and symbols. Cultural values are the beliefs that a general state of existence is personally and socially worth striving for. Cultural values such as inner harmony or individualism are considered as terminal values, or goals to be attained and developed.

According to Hawkins et al. (2004:42) culture is the complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society.

Ethnicity and culture are also major factors influencing consumer behaviour. These groups tend to be bound together by cultural ties that can, in turn, strongly influence their consumer behaviour. In addition, through a process called acculturation, members of a subculture must learn to adapt to the host culture (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2004:313).

During acculturation, consumers acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviour through social interaction, modelling the behaviour of others, and reinforcement or receiving rewards for certain behaviours. Acculturation combines with traditional customs to form a unique consumer culture (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2004:313). The process of acculturation falls under the characteristic of learned behaviour.

The process of acculturation is particularly noticeable in the new South Africa (Post Apartheid South Africa) because many communities that have been separated from one another in the past through apartheid laws have the opportunity to learn from each other's culture, resulting in greater understanding and tolerance of different viewpoints and lifestyles (Du Plessis and Rousseau, 2003:398).

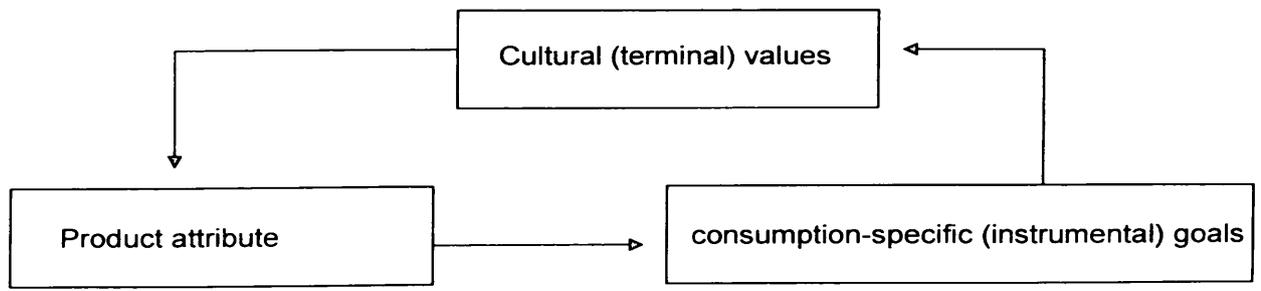
Because cultural values are, to a large extent, enduring, attempts to change them have not been successful. Therefore marketing strategies attempt to reflect, rather than change, core values (Du Plessis and Rousseau, 2003:405).

Tharp and Scott (1990:24) have identified various symbolic roles of products that reflect cultural values. These include products conveying social status, self-expression, and sharing experiences, as well as products with hedonic value. Thus, clothing became an important means of expressing status, fashion, and hedonic values of pleasure.

Psychographics, lifestyles segmentation, and cultural value measurement have nowadays become important tools for formal research in defining target markets. They all add to marketers' insight into consumers but, if they are all marketers use to gain insight; further insight will be limited (Du Plessis and Rousseau, 2003:406).

Assael (2004:323) has described the role of cultural values in influencing consumer behaviour as a means-ends chain, in that the means (product attributes) are the vehicle for attaining cultural values (the ends) with consumption goals as an intermediary between them as shown in figure 11. Product attributes can be considered a reflection of cultural values.

Figure 11: The means-end chain



Source: Assael (2004:323)

This conceptualisation relies on two theories. The first theory underlying the means-end chain is Rosenberg's (1956: 370) expectancy-value theory. Rosenberg posits that consumers' evaluate products based on the degree to which they are instrumental in achieving cultural values. Secondly there is Rokeach's (1968: 548) distinction between cultural (terminal) values and consumption (instrumental) goals. Consumers evaluate the projected consequences of their actions and buy products that achieve the desired consequence (Assael: 2004:323).

Means are objects (products) or activities in which people engage (running, reading). Ends are valued states of being such as happiness, security, and accomplishment. A mean-end chain is therefore a model that seeks to explain how a product or service selection facilitates the achievement of the desired end state. The means-end chain concept offers marketing managers a way to position products by associating mean (the psychological aspects of products) with advertising that seeks to tie the consumption or products to the achievement of desired ends (value states) (Gutman, 1982:60).

Gutman (1982:60) also argued that the model is based on two fundamental assumptions about consumer behaviour:

- That values, defined here as desirable end-states of existence, play a dominant role in guiding choice patterns, and
- That people cope with the tremendous diversity of products that are potential satisfiers of their values by grouping them into sets or classes to reduce the complexity of choice.

Cultural values and influences are related to the product attributes that individuals take into consideration before or when purchasing a product. Which then leads to the consumption specific goals which would refer to the actual purchase of the product or goods and services, which in turn refers back to cultural values thus making the means-end chain a continuous chain (Gutman, 1982:60).

Thus, a consumer who values a world of beauty (a terminal value) favours product attributes such as biodegradability because the consequences of buying a biodegradable product help preserve the environment (Assael, 2004:323).

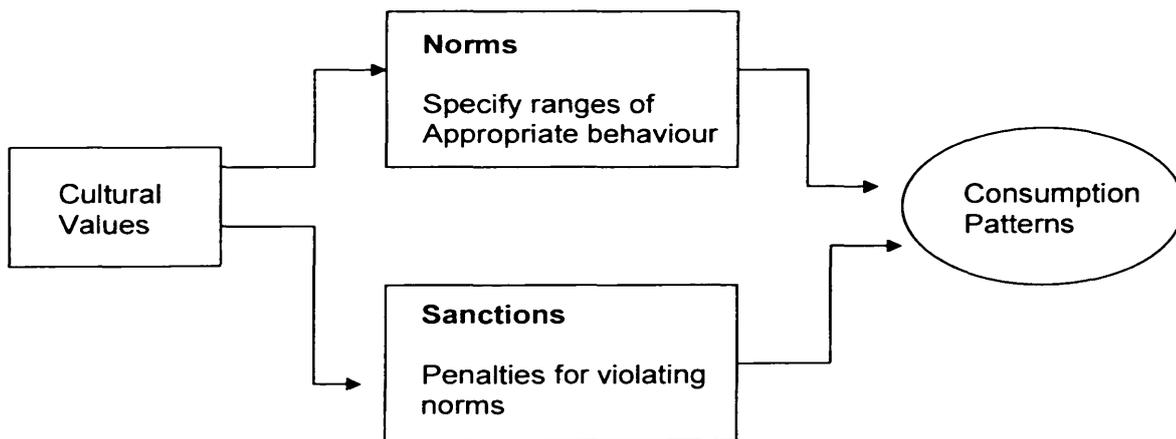
Applying Rosenberg's theory, the means-ends chain leading to the purchase of the product is:

- Product attribute: biodegradability
- Consumption consequence: helping to preserve the environment
- Cultural (terminal) value: a world of beauty (Assael, 2004:323)

Culture operates primarily by setting rather loose boundaries for individual behaviour and by influencing the functioning of such institutions as the family and mass media. Thus, culture provides the framework within which individuals and household lifestyles evolve (Hawkins et al., 2004:43).

The boundaries that culture sets for behaviour are called norms, which are simply rules that specify or prohibit certain behaviours in specific situations. Norms are derived from cultural values, or widely held beliefs that affirm what is desirable. Violation of cultural norms results in sanctions, or penalties ranging from mild social disapproval to banishment from the group (Hawkins et al. (2004:43). Figure 12 illustrates how cultural values is linked to consumption patterns.

Figure 12: Values, Norms, Sanction and Consumption Patterns



Source: Hawkins et al. (2004:43)

Figure 12 illustrates that cultural values is interrelated to the norms and sanctions of society and this in turn influences the consumption patterns of individuals. In other words cultural values directly influence individuals purchasing decisions.

Hawkins et al. (2004:42) also argued that culture is a comprehensive concept. It includes almost everything that influences an individual's thought processes and behaviours. While cultures does not determine the nature or frequency of biological drives such as hunger or sex, it does influence if, when, and how these drives will be gratified. It influences not only preferences but also how decisions are made and even how the world around us is perceived.

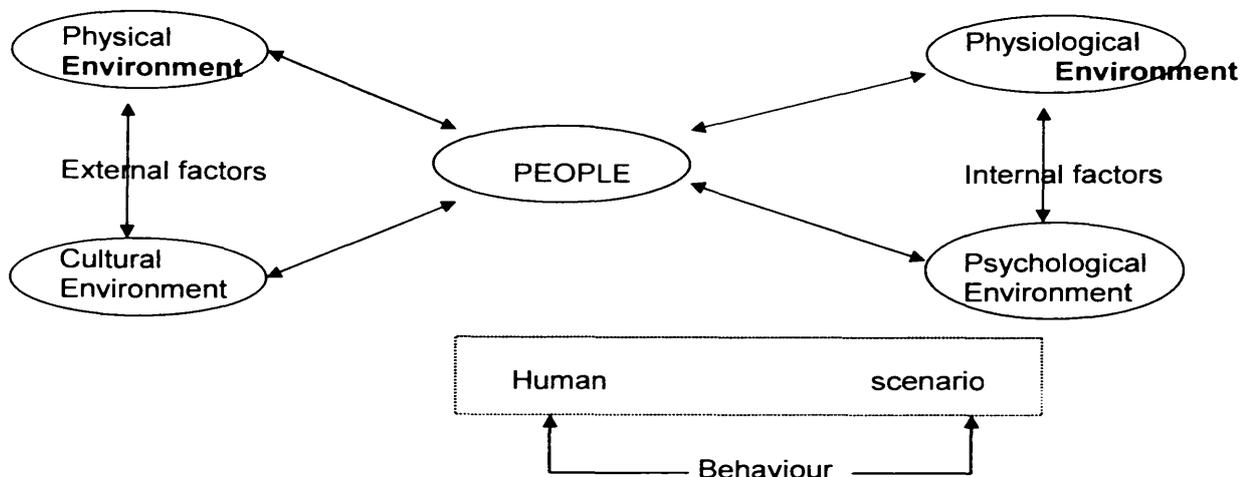
According to Hawkins et al. (2004:45) cultural values affect behaviour through norms, which specify an acceptable range of responses to specific situations. He also identified three categories of variations in cultural values namely:

- **Other-oriented values:** reflect a society's view of the appropriate relationships between individuals and groups within that society. This is one of the core factors differentiating cultures. It is so fundamental that it affects the self-concept and self-consciousness of individuals.
- **Environment-oriented values:** prescribe a society's relationship to its economic and technical as well as its physical environment.
- **Self-oriented values:** reflect the objectives and approaches to life that the individual members of society find desirable.

2.7.1 The effects of culture on consumption

Culture is on of the main factors to determine behaviour (Jen, 1990:284). Together with the physical environment it is one of the two main external factors that shape human behaviour as illustrated in figure 13:

Figure 13: Effects of culture on consumption



Source: Jen (1990:284)

The two external factors (culture and physical environment) and the two internal factors (physiological and psychological factors) interact and form the basic factors to determine human behaviour. Therefore, one cannot view people behaviour simply as a function of humans. Humans and their environments have always acted simultaneously. Behaviour is therefore a result of this (Jen, 1990:285).

Chang (2005:259) pointed out that culture could affect consumer behaviour, and then decide the marketing activities of enterprises. The marketing activities will have large impacts on the original culture. Kolter, Ang, Leong and Tan (1999:186) argued that consumer decision is profoundly affected by factors such as the consumer's culture, society, individual, and psychology. Among those factors, culture exerted the most extensive and profound influence on consumer behaviour.

Culture also includes three parts, namely culture, subculture, and social class. Culture is the most basic deciding factor of human desire and behaviour. Individuals are all included in many smaller subculture groups, which provide a clearer sense of identification and social process. Basically, subculture can be divided into four types namely nationality groups, religious groups, racial groups, and geographical regions. Many subcultures can form important market segments, and provide the decision reference on product designs

and marketing campaigns for marketing personnel to serve the demands of consumers (Chang, 2005:529).

2.7.2 Effects of subculture of university students consumption behaviour

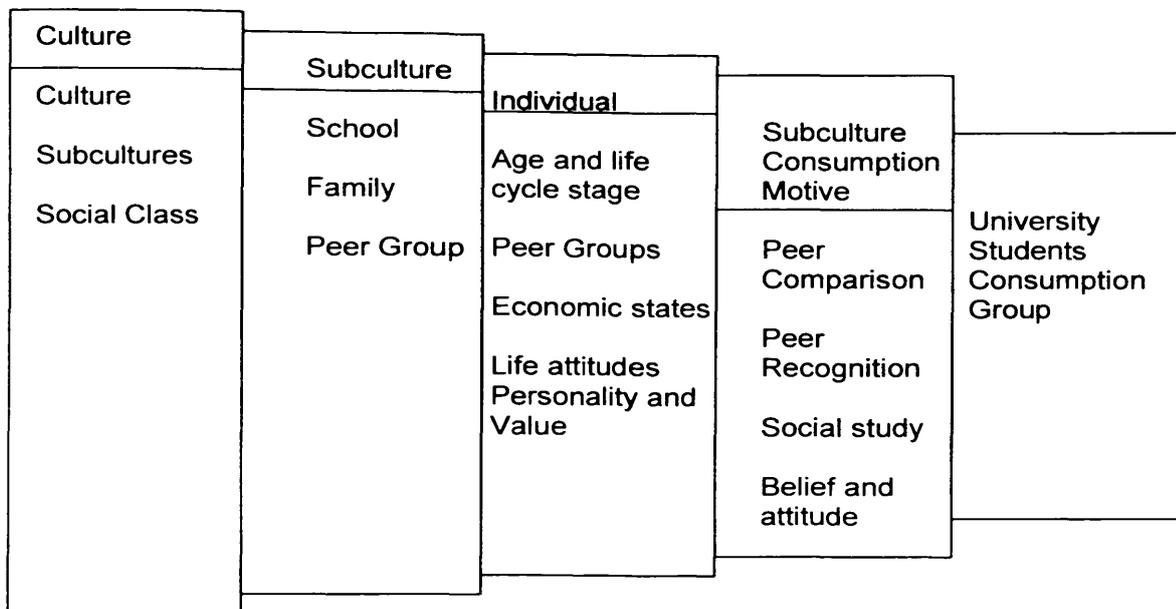
A complex social culture has not only its common parts, but also different subcultures. Members in different groups in society all have their unique behaviour forms and values, relating to the general culture of society but with their own characteristics. Students all form unique values and behaviour forms when university became a complex formal organisation. During this process of seeking collective entity, they form subcultures (Chang, 2005:260).

In other words through the normal organisation of school and the non-formal organisations students form a set of special values, attitudes, and living methods, which can be referred to as university students' subculture.

After students enter the large social system of the university and interact with the teachers and peers, they develop common values, standards and life forms of the university student group. This is the so-called student subculture. The subculture of university students is developed from the interaction between students and peer groups. It is a behaviour mode influencing and binding the exhibition of external activities and internal ideology and is shared by all students (Chang, 2005:261).

Chang (2005:261) also argued that the good or bad subcultures received by the university will not only affect their academic achievements, but also their personality achievements, and realization of the whole university education objective. This is highlighted in figure 14.

Figure 14: Model of subculture and consumption relationship of university students.



Source: Kolter et al., (1999:85)

As highlighted in figure 14, during the process of student socialization, peer groups are a more important unit. Three units, including family, school, and peer groups, form the important forces of subculture. After high school, the affecting force of peer group gradually becomes the most important key power. In recent years, most social scholars realised the socialisation function of peer groups, gradually viewed students' subculture as individual socialisation process. Peer groups of the same value orientation also develop subcultures that reflect its value and attitudes.

The peer groups of university students develop unique meaning and behaviour standards for clothing suitable for their appetites. For example the question, of which sports shoes, clothing, and pants are the most fashionable to young consumers, already has the same cognition and differing opinions in a peer group. The response of the cognition will directly affect the purchase and consumption behaviour of the subculture group (Chang, 2005:263).



Culture is discussed in this chapter because it plays an important part in the consumption patterns of individuals and is also the most pervasive influence on consumer behaviour; hence the following hypothesis were developed:

Ho3: Culture does not significantly influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

2.8 SUMMARY

In chapter 2 the discussion of consumer behaviour highlighted that consumer behaviour is the way in which a consumer may behave before they purchase a product or the influences that may cause a consumer to buy a specific product or service.

Some of the internal and external factors that influence consumer behaviour were also examined in chapter 2. Consumer needs are one of the major internal influences because it is based on the theory that it is a felt derivation of a desired stated. In other words, all consumers have needs no matter how simple or shallow it may seem, whether it is for the basic need or security. For the purpose of this research the basic need to belong will be investigated further in the empirical part of this study.

A number of external influences play a role in consumers' purchase decisions but due to the nature of this research the emphasis will be on reference groups' influence. Reference groups' plays a major role in determining how conspicuous an individual will be in terms of purchasing status brands.

Reference groups, as an external influence of consumer behaviour, play a major role in the decision making process of individuals especially amongst individuals who has the basic need to belong amongst their peers. Reference groups may refer to peers who influence consumer decision making in terms of what the new styles of fashion are and in terms of who is wearing what.

Reference groups serve a number of important functions. They provide norms of conduct, assign roles within the group to individuals, and designate status positions within the

CHAPTER 3

3 CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND STATUS CONSUMPTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Theories of demand and consumer preference formation are based on the proposition that all goods and services are wanted and purchased for utility they offer the buyer. The majority of consumers purchase goods and services for the direct, personal satisfaction, while some customers tend to over consume resulting in the conspicuous consumption of goods and services.

Conspicuous consumption defined by O’Cass and Frost (2002:68) involves expenditures made for the purposes of inflating the ego, coupled with the ostentatious display of wealth, while status consumption is the process of gaining status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods that the individual and significant others perceive to be high in status.

The concept of status consumption is one where consumers are driven by the desire for status in their lives and crave status symbols. Thereby indulging in the conspicuous consumption of status brands in terms of clothing.

Fashion clothing not only forms an important part of everyday consumption decisions, but is implicitly a central component of almost all daily events, influencing what we eat, how we, dress, how we talk and even the very nature of our thinking processes (O’Cass and Frost, 2002:68).

Consumption is thus central to the meaningful practice of everyday life. Basically consumption employed not only to create and sustain the self but also to locate us in society.

This chapter will start with a discussion on consumer behaviour towards dress/ fashion. Thereafter fashion clothing involvement and gender involvement in purchasing decisions, conspicuous consumption, consumer status and conspicuous consumption, and symbolic

consumption will be addressed. Chapter 3 will then conclude with a discussion on consumer socialisation.

3.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS DRESS/ FASHION

Fashion is a form of dress that is amongst the most visible and continually changing parts of daily lives. To a naïve observer, consumers' acceptance of changing fashions may appear to be unpredictable, capricious, and even trivial. To the sophisticated analyst, however, each fashion a consumer selects has important meanings. It may be a symbol communicating the individual's lifestyle, a prop on the stage of human social interaction, a medium for individualistic self-expression, a manifestation of a changing socio-cultural environment, in any one may be a purposefully selected object of consumer behaviour (Sproles, 1989:3).

3.2.1 Defining fashion

Fashion is a way of behaving that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proposition of members of a social group because that chosen behaviour is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation (Sproles, 1989:5). Clothing fashion however is a style of dress that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen style is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation (Sproles, 1989:5).

The importance of involvement in the domain of fashion clothing is illustrated by the defining role of fashion clothing in society. Further, fashion clothing's continual and cyclical nature implies people are often drawn into the style or fashion of the moment, and there are those who place a great deal of emphasis on their clothing (O'Cass, 2000:547).

High fashion involved consumers have historically been important to fashion researchers and marketers, because they are seen as the drivers, influential and legitimists of the fashion adoption process (Goldsmith, et al., 1999:10).

However, little work has been done on fashion involvement per se, particularly so with regard to a broader array of area for fashion clothing as it often represents an important

symbolic consumption area for consumers. Clothing can fulfil a number of functions beyond mere functional performance such as warmth or protection. It conveys how important an individual is (O’Cass, 2000:547).

Fashion is also defined by Sperber (1990:13) as the preoccupation with keeping in step with the times following the example of prestigious opinion leaders who crystallise and reinforce the vaguely expressed collective tastes of the public; admiring proposals when they are in good taste and new, and discarding them when they are in bad taste and old.

Sperber (1990, ix) asserted that styles or models of scientific thought rise to and fall from prominence just as shifting hemlines and chrome fenders are brought onto and cast off center stage, that their fate is governed by the operation of collective tastes and sentiments that are shifting, amorphous, persuasive, and usually acknowledged by the audience.

A number of theories of fashion have been developed and section 3.2.2 will highlight the three theories, which are applicable to this study.

3.2.2 Three theories of fashion

Thomas (1999:9) identified three main theories which locates the demand for fashions in the socio-psychological demands of the consumer, namely:

- **The Trickle Down Theory:** This is one of the oldest theories of fashion. It states that fashion emerge because lower classes wish to imitate the practices of the upper classes, in order to improve their apparent social status. They therefore copy the styles of clothing preferred by the upper classes. As the upper classes realise that this imitation is occurring, they change their style of clothing, in order to differentiate them from the lower classes. The lower classes then imitate this new style. Hence the continuous cycle of changing clothing patterns, each of which may be defined as fashion.
- **Collective Selection Theory:** This theory contends that fashion satisfy a number of needs in individuals. The first of these is that it provides a method through which individuals can make sense of an infinitely complex world by narrowing the choices

available to them. Fashions are regarded as restricting the options available to individuals, and so increase their feeling of security. Fashion also satisfies the need of individuals for change. They offer a means through which traditional ideas may be discarded in favour of new ideas.

- **Marionette Theory:** This theory regards fashions as an inevitable product of the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism depends upon a continual demand for new products by consumers. These consumers are manipulated by advertising into desiring those products, which are most modern, and thus become marionettes of the advertisers. As a result, products are continually discarded as they become outmoded, thus increasing the rate at which particular fashions emerge and fade from prominence.

Frings (2002:55) argued that there were three variations of the fashion adoption process namely:

- **Traditional Fashion Adoption (The Trickle Down Theory)** which was identified by Thomas (1999:9), but Frings (2002:55) argued that the trickle down theory is based on the traditional process of copying trend setting from around different areas around the world. For example if a new trend starts in Europe, then people in New York and other large cities will probably be the first to accept it.
- **Reverse Adoption (Trickle Up or Bottom Up Theories)** this refers to manufacturers paying more attention to consumer innovation. For example going back to the retro look of the 80's.
- **Mass Dissemination (Trickle Across theory)** Mass production is becoming the more prevalent mode of fashion adoption. There is no longer a channel for fashion dissemination. Many separate markets have developed across the various age ranges, lifestyles, tastes, and handbags.

These three variations in the fashion adoption process focuses more on the marketers or producers side rather than the consumers, but was used to highlight the use of the trickle down theory within its adoption process.

The collective selection theory is however the most relevant theory to this study because it examines the role fashion plays in the needs of individuals. Individuals have a number of

needs. This theory also examines the role individuals play in terms of using clothing as a means of security.

Even with the development of fashion theories it all relates back to the issues of fashion clothing involvement, that is, the meaning or attributes an individual places on particular product. Therefore fashion-clothing involvement is discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.3 FASHION CLOTHING INVOLVEMENT

Fashion clothing has been described as possessing something approximating code. Davis (1994:156) argued that in the context of this code that clothing styles and the fashions that influence them over time constitute a code, however, such a code is quite different from the codes in others areas or languages.

It has been argued that relationship marketing and how individuals ascribe specific meanings to products can be clarified by the construct of involvement. It has been argued here that this is extremely applicable to fashion clothing. Involvement (product centrality) has been identified as being at the heart of the person-object relationship (O'Cass, 2000: 550) and the relationship variable most predictive of purchase behaviour (Martin, 1998:15).

Fashion clothing involvement may be understood by means of consumer fashion clothing attachment or relationships. Involvement is viewed as being linked to the interaction between an individual and an object, that is a relationship variable. However, consumer activity and fashion clothing involvement is defined as the extent to which the consumer views the focal activity as a central part of their life, a meaningful and engaging activity in their life. High fashion clothing involvement implies greater relevance to the self (O'Cass, 2000:552).

However, because fashion clothing means different things to different people, consumers form differing attachments to it that may be quite different from their family or friends in intensity and nature.

Materialism plays a major role in that of fashion involvement. Materialism is defined as the importance people attach to owning worldly possessions and materialists place great importance on possessions. It appears to be a potentially important dimension of consumer behaviour because of its influence on forming attachments to possessions (Solomon, 1996:356).

Materialism, may, therefore represent a key variable in the development of a consumer's involvement with products, particularly fashion clothing. Browne and Kaldenberg (1997:40) explicitly link materialism and involvement. This argument is particularly relevant in the context of fashion clothing as it allows the fulfilment of values such as acquisition and happiness and helps in portraying acceptable images.

Fashion clothing as a possession may be seen for its role and the materialism consumption nexus appears to be a significant issue, as materialist have been found to rely on external cues, favouring those possessions that are worn or consumed in public places (Richins, 1994:529).

The important aspects of possessions for materialist are utility, appearance, financial worth and ability to convey status, success and prestige. Such products are thought to include fashion clothing, because it is particularly susceptible to differences in consumption stereotyping, and therefore to differences in ability to encode and decode a range of messages. This suggests that consumers with stronger materialistic tendencies use clothing for impression management (Richins, 1994:530).

Importantly consumers vary greatly in their knowledge about fashion clothing and their degree of familiarity with it. Knowledge can come from product experiences, ad exposure, interactions with sales people, friends or the media, previous decision-making or previous consumption and usage experiences held in memory.

O'Cass (2004: 884) highlighted that with regards to fashion clothing knowledge, there are two potential methods for operationalising and measuring product knowledge. One is to measure product knowledge in terms of how much a consumer actually knows about the product. The other is to measure knowledge in terms of how much a consumer thinks or perceives they know about the product. The first approach is related to the objective

knowledge structure of an individual held in long-term memory; while the second is based on and related to an individual's subjective self-report on how much they think they know about the product.

In a general sense one would assume that fashion clothing familiarity will result in consumers increased expertise and experience. In this regard, apart from examining central issues, such as memory, one can also look at the impact of constructs such as fashion clothing involvement on the development of fashion knowledge and expertise. Fashion knowledge is developed when consumers combine separate meaning concepts into larger, more abstract categories of fashion knowledge (O'Cass, 2004:884).

Fashion clothing involvement can also be viewed from a gender perspective by investigating gender involvement in purchasing decisions. Males and females want different products and they are likely to have different ways of obtaining them. Gender involvement will be discussed further in the following section.

3.4 GENDER INVOLVEMENT IN PURCHASING DECISIONS

Evidence suggests that gender differences exist in the aids used to arrive at buying decisions as well as in the decisions themselves (Wood, 1998:310). Katz and Katz (1997:4) report that American women have more purchasing power than the total economic output of any other country including Japan. This focus on women has left the shopping behaviour of men largely under researched, despite the asserted dominance of masculine ideology in consumer research.

In the last decade, however, men increasingly have devoted time to tasks traditionally performed by women and has increasingly become involved in shopping, partly to prevent their working wives becoming role overloaded and partly because of the changing societal roles and expectations of men and women (Engel et al., 1995: 752).

Many marketplace interactions are influenced by internalised sex role norms and, although limited in number and scope, some research explicitly examining the impact of gender on buying behaviour has found that differences exist (Wood, 1998:299).

A study conducted by Solomon and Schopler (1982: 510) found that men are less appearance and gender conscious. This could be because, in many societies, it behoves women to fulfil the role of attractive gender or because men exhibit a weaker sensitivity to the opinions of their friends, which makes them less concerned with their appearance. Males exhibit fewer interpersonal relationships (Sherrod, 1989:170), are less prone to engage in active information provision to other consumers (Feick and Price, 1987:90) and are less likely to be impulsive as well as compulsive buyers (Wood, 1998: 318).

Men are more likely to engage in variety seeking purchasing, exhibit weaker brand involvement, be less environmentally concerned and be less likely to buy environmentally friendly products (Ozanne, Hymphrey and Smith, 1999: 619).

Darley and Smith (1995:49) argue that in terms of personality traits, men report to be more dependent, confident, competitive, externally motivated, more willing to take risks, especially with money and less prone to perceive risk than females. They are less likely than women to complain when dissatisfied with a good or service, less likely to spread negative word of mouth and less likely to participate in family purchase decisions than females. All this leads to the notion that males and females will approach shopping differently.

Thus from the above discussion the following hypothesis was developed:

Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

From the discussion in section 3.3 it is clear that high fashion involvement is linked to materialism, which is linked to conspicuous consumption. Materialistic individuals focus more on appearance, financial worth and ability to convey status, success and prestige, which lead individuals to conspicuously consume status products and services. Also from the literature on gender involvement in relation to purchasing decisions it highlighted that there is a difference in the way males and females consume different products and services. Conspicuous consumption will therefore be discussed further in section 3.5.

3.5 CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

In the Theory of the Leisure Class (1967), Thorsten Veblen coined the phrase conspicuous consumption to refer to the practice of acquiring goods beyond what one needs for sustenance. He referred to the acquisition of goods for the purpose of show and status, a practice that was, at the time, affordable only by the wealthy, those whom he dubbed as the leisure class.

Like many sociologists, Veblen argued that mankind is motivated by and desires high status more than any other social or psychic reward. While pre-eminence within spheres of endeavour may be objectively determined by material, political or social outcomes, these cannot generate the reward of recognition unless they translate into some type of publicly perceptible display of the excellence (Mason, 1981: 153).

Veblen (1967: 63) suggests that the abstract retainer of value and money is the currency of measure of worth. Value is conferred by money, and money is used to consume conspicuously, indicating the worth of the consumer. During the early part of this century, consumerism, or the consumption of manufactured goods, became the pre-eminent type of conspicuous consumption.

Davis and Moore (nd, 253) laid the groundwork by describing the social rewards conferred on those who carry out activities that are important to society and require scarce high skill and talent: status, material goods, and diversion (leisure). They further argued that the most desirable form of social reward is status or prestige. The more scarce and needed the endeavour, the more highly society rewards and values its accomplishment. While conspicuous consumption is clearly related to having material rewards, these material rewards may really also be intervening factors, existing primarily to allow prestige and status to be conveyed.

Veblen (1967:24) proposed that individuals crave status, and that status is enhanced by material displays of wealth and in order to gain and to hold the self-esteem of men, wealth must be put in evidence for esteem to be awarded.

By social custom, the evidence consist of unduly costly goods that fall into accredited canons of conspicuous consumption, the effect of which is to hold the consumer up to a standard of expressiveness and wastefulness in his consumption of goods and his employment of time and effort (Veblen, 1967:71).

According to Veblen (1967: 63) in its symbolic aspect conspicuous consumption has as its goal an inference of and connection to prestige. This may be considered its most important result.

On the other hand, it may be argued consumption of luxury goods may be motivated by a desire on the individual's part for superiority, as an inner drive. Hence, the conspicuous consumption would be a by-product of a personal quest for perfection.

Conspicuous consumption is suggested when:

- Items, which are widely regarded as prestigious, are consumed primarily in spheres where their use can be seen, as opposed to in other areas of consumption.
- These purchases often cannot significantly be distinguished by their intrinsic quality from other possible purchases; hence the value of their acquisition lies in their use value and luxuriousness (Mason, 1981:154)

In particular, Veblen distinguished between two motives for consuming conspicuous goods: invidious comparison and pecuniary emulation. Invidious comparison refers to the situations in which a member of a higher class consumes conspicuously to distinguish himself from members of the lower class. Pecuniary emulation occurs when a member of a lower class consumes conspicuously so that they would be thought of as a member of a higher class (Mason, 1981:160).

Paying excessive prices for conspicuous goods does not necessarily signal wealth. Consumers tend to have private information about the value of their assets, and attempt to signal their wealth by consuming a conspicuous good (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996:350). But instead one might, prefer to purchase a larger quantity of conspicuous goods at a lower price, or a higher quality of conspicuous goods at a higher price.

Certain customs in Thailand illustrate the practice of advertising wealth through quality rather than price. For example In a study conducted by Shenon (1991:4) it is considered acceptable, even by the Western-educated Thai women who would otherwise describe themselves as feminist, for a man to take one or more mistresses and even be seen with them in public, as long as all women and their children are provide for financially. Mistresses are to some degree a demonstration of wealth, and as a rule, the more mistresses the wealthier the man.

Consumers who seek to signal high levels of wealth purchase luxury brands. It is important to emphasis that, in equilibrium, the luxury brands are not intrinsically superior to the budget brands; they are simply goods of identical quality, sold at a higher price (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996:351).

Since consumption of conspicuous goods reduces expenditures on other goods, declining marginal rates of substitution imply that conspicuous consumption is more costly for households with less wealth (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996:351).

It can therefore be deducted form the literature discussion in section 3.5 that conspicuous consumption may occur because individuals are trying to portray status, trying to distinguish themselves from others or just trying to build their self-esteem. However, theoretically researchers such as Thorsten Veblen, O'Cass and McEwen, Bagwell and Bernheim have highlighted that because conspicuous consumption examines the use of status brands to display wealth, the concept of status consumption was developed.

Status and conspicuous consumption are mostly identified as if they are the same phenomena. But when this occurs the theories can be fundamentally flawed in the sense that each construct's domain is not thoroughly delineated. Thus Section 3.6 will therefore examine consumer status and conspicuous consumption as separate entities.

3.6 CONSUMER STATUS AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

Increasingly brands are seen as important in creating an identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers.

Status is a form of power that consists of respect, consideration, and envy from others and represents the goals of a culture (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981:29)

Conspicuous consumption refers to expenditures not made for comfort or use, but purely honorific purposes to inflate ego and is concerned primarily with the ostentatious display of wealth (Mason, 1981:vii).

It is also evident that certain brand dimensions and associations lead to increased marketplace recognition and economic success as a result of the value consumers place on them. A company's economic superiority is frequently implied by the strength of its brand name, giving it the ability to differentiate itself, yielding status or greater conspicuousness of consumption. This implies that the status and conspicuous consumption tendencies of consumers are important in creating relationships between consumers who possess such characteristics and specific types of products and brands that yield status (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004: 25).

In relation to fashion, status brands are generally those that have high-perceived quality, luxury, prestige and / or high class attached to them (Shermach, 1997: 13). Therefore, the contention is raised that such brands are often consumed to indicate status and as such displayed conspicuously to provide a visual representation of status.

O'Cass and McEwen (2004: 26) assert that one important motivating force that influences a wide range of consumer behaviour is the desire to gain status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods.

Both status and conspicuous consumption are often identified in literature as if they are inherently the same phenomena. Kilsheimer (1993:341) explains that status consumption involves the purchase and use of products in order to increase a person's social status. Status consumption is defined then as the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolise status both for the individual and surrounding significant others.

Conspicuous consumption is pursued in order to enhance one's prestige in society, which can be achieved through public demonstration signalling wealth and communicating affluence to others (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004: 27).

It has been argued that Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption is based on the premise that those who put wealth in evidence are rewarded with preferential treatment by social contacts, and that such effects depend upon a comparison of the desirability of signalling through price, quantity or quality (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996: 349). Furthermore it has been argued that status consumption implies or leads to conspicuousness of such consumption.

Status consumption therefore is more a matter of consumers' desire to gain prestige from the acquisition of status-laden products and brands, while conspicuous consumption focuses on the visual display or overt usage of products in the presence of others.

To further differentiate between status and conspicuous consumption the following example can be used as an illustration. A consumer may wear Calvin Klein underwear because they see the brand as symbolising luxury and their own wealth in being able to afford expensive lingerie. This does not imply that they will flaunt their undergarments to people of high status as a means of advancing their social standing, which is in contrast to wearing a labelled Calvin Klein shirt or jeans. At this stage the difference seems to lie in the view that status consumption tendencies emphasise the personal nature of owning status laden possessions, which may or may not be publicly demonstrated, whereas conspicuous consumption focuses more towards putting wealth or position in evidence, whereby possessions are overtly displayed (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004: 27).

Piron (2000:309) points out that conspicuous consumption is a culturally accepted medium to communicate wealth and social class affiliation especially amongst the Asian- Chinese consumers. However, results from Piron's study indicated that Asian- Chinese consumers placed higher importance when considering the purchasing of luxury over necessity products.

Piron (2000:309) has investigated the impact of reference groups on product and brand decisions and offered that such decisions are a function of two forms of conspicuousness which are:

- Exclusive
- Seen or identified by others, visibility

Exclusivity can be high for products categorised as luxuries possessed by few, or low or even nonexistent for products categorised as commonly owned necessities. Visibility relates to where a product is usually consumed or used. Products are either publicly, when consumption can be witnessed, or privately, where it is not (Piron, 2000:2).

In addition to Veblen's early work on conspicuous consumption, work by Marcoux, Filiatrault, and Cheron (1997:25), although lacking a formal definition, states that social status demonstration is a dimension of conspicuous consumption, arguing that interpersonal influence and social status demonstration were the two main variables from the meanings of the conspicuous consumption scale.

Goldsmith, Flynn and Eastman (1996:309) assert that one important motivating force that influences a wide range of consumer behaviour is the desire to gain status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods.

A growing body of work on fashion has identified that consumers undertake and engage in different behaviour depending on their gender. For example, Goldsmith et al. (1996:313) found that female fashion innovators often consider themselves more excitable, indulgent, contemporary and vain than followers.

O'Cass (2004:50) found that, in the context of fashion clothing, females were significantly more involved than males, which implies that females use clothing and apparel more than males do, to tell others who they are and how much status they have.

Reference group influence appears to be important to the relationship between status and conspicuous consumption, as both appear to be impacted by an individual's proneness to interpersonal influence. Reference groups typically portray an image for group members

to refer to, which can be in the form of common identity or interest (O’Cass and McEwen, 2004:28).

Conspicuousness is essential if consumers want to gain recognition, approval, or acceptance from their reference groups. The conspicuousness of a product allows reference group members to see the product or brand and provide their approval or disapproval (O’Cass and McEwen, 2004:29).

Individuals often gain recognition and distinction by spending their income on products that display status and success to significant others. Their social networks still largely determine consumers’ desire for conspicuous goods. Status-conscious consumers are more socially aware and more interested in social relationships (Kilsheimer, 1993:342).

Prominent characteristics of status-conscious consumers focus on social relationship formation, and revolve around interpersonal influence and self-monitoring of status. Such a notion rests on the view that status consumption involves purchase and use of products (and brands) in order to increase a person’s status, perceived or otherwise and sees a significant influencing role of the others. The ability to monitor one’s social environment and adjust one’s behaviour to fit the appropriate product selection will assist status conscious individuals to gain the desired status (Goldsmith et al., 1996:313).

Goude (1993:422) argued that self-monitoring is the degree to which an individual observes and controls their expressive behaviour and either maintains or adapts self-presentation depending on certain social cues, triggering situationally appropriate behaviour.

Snyder (1979:112) contended that high self-monitors are concerned with maintaining their appearance and overall image; hence they are more sensitive to interpersonal influence. High self-monitors place more importance on the overt self and modify roles according to the situational encountered, as opposed to being true to their inner self (the low self-monitor).

High self-monitors may place more emphasis on conspicuously consuming status brands to fit into social situations, as they are acutely aware of their appearance and status, and understand that products can communicate (Sullivan and Harnish, 1990:299).

It has also been argued by Belk (1988:153) that, even in the third world countries people are often attracted to and indulge in aspects of conspicuous consumption before they have adequate food, clothing and shelter.

From the literature discussion the following hypothesis was developed:

Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Conspicuous consumption is also referred to as symbolic consumption of products, goods and services. The following section therefore examines the concept of symbolic consumption.

3.7 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

Individuals use products and brands as materials with which to cultivate and preserve their identities. Consumer goods are capable of serving consumers in this way because of the symbolic meaning that is embedded into them (Belk: 1988:141).

Contained within symbolism are the messages that an individual may wish to transmit to other socially significant people. For young people, these symbols are especially pertinent, as they are often in stages of uncertainty, gathering material possessions as a way of establishing their identity and gaining much needed prestige (Belk, 1988:145).

Symbolic consumption, unlike related constructs such as materialism, involves an encoder and a decoder. The owner of a product is the encoder. The encoder is trying to communicate something about him/her self through a specific product, but the

communication is incomplete unless a decoder attaches symbolic meaning to the product as well (Belk, Bhan and Mayer, 1982: 525).

Individuals use consumer goods and practices in a number of ways. The symbolic meaning of goods is used as an outward expression of their self-concept and connection to society (Elliot, 1999:246).

Individuals can develop a repertoire of symbolic consumption objects that can be collectively used in the construction of self-identity. The use of goods as symbols for communicating with other consumers is related to the use of goods in the development of self-identity. There is evidence that people use consumption as a means of encoding messages to others through their consumption, and also for decoding messages from others' consumption practices (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004: 252).

The degree of product conspicuousness also influences the communication of self-identity messages through consumption symbols (Hwan Lee, 1990:390). Socially consumed products are utilized most often in instances of symbolic consumption, consumers being more likely to use products that are socially visible to others to communicate identity (Hwan Lee, 1990:390).

Hwan Lee (1990:402) contends that as product conspicuousness increases, an individual's own choices are more likely to be contingent upon the consumption choices of socially significant others.

It is important for individuals to determine how other people in their social groups might interpret the meanings of certain products and brands (Ligas and Cotte, 1999:612). Individuals can then use the symbolic content of chosen consumption objects to reflect their affiliation or connection to a particular social group (Elliot and Wattanasuwan, 1998: 140).

Consumers do not make consumption choices based solely on products' utilities but also utilise their symbolic meanings, social symbolism and self-identity are provided largely by advertising and are transferred to brands, allowing the consumer to exercise free will to form images of who he or she wants to be (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:142).

Young people, particularly in the West, tend to have a strong desire to communicate their maturity and adulthood to their peers through their consumption. Gathering material possessions is a way of establishing their identity and gaining much-needed prestige, especially at the time of identity crisis for many adolescents (Belk, 1988:155).

Clothes are a socially consumed product category, with strong social norms affecting individual behaviour (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004: 253).

Peer pressure is most likely to be experienced for public luxuries such as branded fashion items (Childers and Rao, 1992:202). Probably the strongest influence on children is their peer groups, friends and siblings (Pilgrim and Lawrence, 2001:15), starting as early as six years old and becoming particularly significant as they enter adolescence when they learn about their peers' product favourites and take them into account when evaluating products on their own (Gunter and Furnham, 1998:253). This influence is at its height in the relation to symbolic goods such as clothes and fashion items (Brittan, 1963:389).

Understanding the teenage market includes examining symbolic consumption, since this phenomenon peaks in adolescence and influences teens' choice behaviour as well as potential influencing prejudice and stereotyping (Belk, et al., 1982: 15). Because of the influence symbolic consumption has on teens' choice and the possibility of negative consequences, it is important to understand how this phenomenon develops in young people (Schoenbachler, Ayers, Gordon, 1995:2).

As children and adolescents move through stages in cognitive organisations, they are better able to make inferences about others based on their actions (Schoenbachler et al., 1995:2). It appears that factors besides age influence the development of symbolic consumption in young people, which refers back to consumer socialisation that will be discussed in the next section.

3.8 CONSUMER SOCIALISATION

Consumer socialisation is defined as the processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place

(Ward, 1974:5). This provides a more complete framework as to understand the development of symbolic consumption.

Consumer socialisation theory stems from social learning theory, but encompasses cognitive development as well. Social learning theory assumes that young people learn skills through continuous reciprocal interaction of personal environment factors. The key to understanding development is to identify the personal and environmental factors relevant to the behaviour interest, as well as the processes driving the interaction (Schoenbachler et al., 1995:5).

Moschis and Churchill (1978:600) developed a model of consumer socialisation, which encompasses both social learning and cognitive development theory. The model suggests that age or life cycle and social structural variables such as sex, social class and race are antecedents to the socialisation process.

John (1999:185) argued that the theory of cognitive development has four main stages for cognitive development, namely: sensorimotor (birth to two years), preoperational (two to seven years), concrete operational (seven to eleven) and formal operational (eleven through adulthood). Vast differences exist in the cognitive abilities and resources available to children at these stages, including the preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages of most interest to consumer researchers. The preoperational stage features children who are developing symbolic thought but are still very focused on perceptual properties of stimuli.

The social learning theory suggests that individuals learn general behaviours and attitudes from past experiences. These experiences often take place in a number of different contexts as individuals come into contact with a variety of diverse influences and encounters (King and Multon, 1996:120).

Socialisation agents are the people and institutions that have great influence on young individuals and are actively involved in the socialisation process. Youth is a crucial period for consumer socialisation, a process that begins at an early age and lasts throughout life. Young people have however less experience than adults and are therefore more vulnerable consumers (Lachance and Choquette, 2004:443).

The family is considered the most important variable in terms of teaching adolescents rational or economic motives for consumption, while peers contributed to the learning of materialistic values and social motivations.

Neeley (2005:63) suggest that the family plays three additional roles in consumer socialisation and information processing:

- An indirect impact on developing consumer skills by directing influencing cognitive ability.
- A direct impact by motivating the child to use available cognitive abilities in consumer situations.
- A direct impact by teaching consumer skills, which are unrelated to cognitive ability.

Parents engage in consumer behaviour instruction through both direct and indirect means. Direct consumers learning is the intentional instructions by the parent for the purpose of teaching the child some aspect of consumer behaviour, while indirect learning is the unintentional instruction of some aspect of consumer behaviour that is initiated by the child through direct observation or participation (Neeley, 2005:64).

Lachance and Choquette (2004:444) suggest that parents are the main socialising agents for young consumers and that parents continue to play a major role in their children's consumer decision making process even once they become young adults. Peers are most often associated with learning about expressive and social aspects of consumption, such as development of brand preferences and brand sensitivity.

The area where family influence has been examined most extensively is consumer socialisation through interpersonal communication. Because family communication structures teach children how to cope with experiences and situations that arise outside the family context, these structures (such as norms and expectations, reinforcements and behavioural modelling) also prepare children to experience the market place (Moschis, 1985:901). Parental communication styles are known to influence consumer socialisation through control exposure to consumer situations (Carlson and Grossbart, 1988:80).

Consumer socialisation theory provided a valuable framework for understanding adolescent's consumer learning. Ward (1974:3) suggests that consumer socialisation can

help one understand how young people acquire attitudes about social significance of goods, and how people learn to perceive that the acquisition of some kind of products or brands of goods can be instrumental to successful social role enactment.

While Bandura (1986:253) argues that social learning processes can explain individuals' tendency to react emotionally to things and to cast people into stereotypes without having had any prior experience with them.

The identification of key social structural variables and socialisation agents influencing the learning of symbolic consumption allows better understanding of adolescent's tendency to stereotype others based on product ownership (Schoenbachler, et al.: 1995:4).

Consumer socialisation is therefore, relevant to this research because it influences the purchasing decisions of individuals in terms of the brand preference and brand sensitivity. It also highlights that the family is the major socialising unit. Individuals either adapt their decision making process by the teachings of their parents or by observation, thus if parents tend to conspicuously consume products and services it will only be natural for their children to also conspicuously consume products and services.

3.8.1 Stages of consumer socialisation

John (1999: 186) identified three stages of consumer socialization namely:

- **The Perceptual Stage:** derives its name from the overwhelming emphasis that children in this stage place on perceptual as opposed to abstract or symbolic thought. It is characterised by a general orientation toward the immediate and readily observable perceptual feature in the market place. Children's consumer knowledge is characterised by perceptual features and distinctions, often based on a single dimension or attribute, and represented in terms of concrete details from their own observations.
- **The Analytical stage:** is named from the vast improvements displayed at this stage in children's abilities to approach matters in a more detailed and analytical manner. This period contains some of the most important developments in terms of consumer knowledge and skills. Concepts such as product categories or price are

thought of in terms of functional or underlying dimensions, products and brands are analysed and discriminated on the basis of more than one dimension or attribute, and generalisations are drawn from one's experience. Reasoning proceeds at a more abstract level, setting the stage for knowledge structures that include information about abstract concepts such as advertiser's motives as well as the notion of contingencies.

- **The Reflective Stage:** derives its name from the emphasis that children in this stage place on understanding the complex social contexts and meanings related to consumption. Knowledge about marketplace concepts such as branding and pricing becomes even more nuanced and more complex as children develop sophisticated information processing and social skills. More distinct is the shift in orientation to a more reflective way of thinking and reasoning, as children move into adolescence and become more focused on the social meanings and underpinnings of the consumer marketplace. A heightened awareness of other people's perspectives, along with a need to shape their own identity and conform to group expectations, results in more attention to the social aspects of being a consumer, making choices, and consuming brands. Consumer decisions are made in a more adaptive manner, depending on the situation and task. In similar fashion, attempts to influence parents and friends reflect more social awareness as adolescents become more strategic, favouring strategies that they think will be better received than a simple direct approach.

These consumer socialisation stages capture the different socialisation stages children go through in terms of their thinking abilities, what they know and how they express themselves as potential consumers.

3.8.2 Children's product and brand knowledge

Haynes, Burts, Dukes and Cloud (1993:155) argued that to children, products and brands are probably the most salient aspects of the marketplace. Products and brands are advertised on television, displayed in stores, and found all around one's home. Even before they are able to read, children as young as two or three years of age can recognise

familiar packaging in the store and familiar characters on products such as toys and clothing.

Children's development in brand awareness fosters a greater understanding of brands and product categories. Children begin to discern similarities and differences among brands, learning the structural aspects of how brands are positioned within a product category. Children also learn about product categories themselves, developing a greater understanding of how product types are grouped together and distinguish from one another, this type of knowledge is known as structural knowledge. Young consumers also begin to understand the symbolic meaning and status accorded to certain types of products and brand names; this is referred to as symbolic knowledge (John, 1999:192).

John (1999:192) argues that there are two types of knowledge namely:

- **Structural Knowledge:** between early middle childhood, children learn a great deal about the underlying structure of product category. Although children learn to group or categorise items at a very early age, they shift from highly visible perceptual cues to more important cues as a basis for categorising and judging similarity among objects, as they grow older. By third and fourth grade, children are learning to group objects according to attributes that suggest taxonomic relationships (e.g. belts and socks share the same attribute of being items of clothing), attributes that indicate the relationship of categories to one another (e.g. fruit juices differ from soft drinks on the attribute of naturalness), and attributes inherent to the core concept of structure, or even functional attributes because they convey the true meaning of a category or the function a category might serve. Prior to the use of attributes such as these, young children typically rely on perceptual attributes that are visually dominant, such as shape, size, or colour.
- **Symbolic Knowledge:** Middle or late childhood is also a time of greater understanding of the symbolic meanings and status accorded to certain types of products and brand names. During this time, children develop a preference for particular brands, even when the physical compositions of the products are quite similar in nature. By the time they reach early adolescence, children are expressing strong preferences for some brand names over others, based on a relatively sophisticated understanding of their brand concepts and images.

During the adolescent years, further development takes place in the use and references for information sources. Older adolescents seek out more sources of information as a prelude to purchasing. More importantly, adolescents develop preferences for specific information sources, favouring peers and friends over parents and mass media as they mature (Tootelian and Gaedeke, 1992:40).

However, adolescents also become more flexible in using different sources, favouring peers and friends for some types of products and parents for others. For example Moschis and Moore (1979: 109) asked middle and high school students to identify the sources they would rely on most before buying eight different products. Friends were relied on most for products where peer acceptance is an important consideration, whereas parents were a favoured source for products with a higher perceived risk in terms of price and performance. In addition, parents were more influential at the information-gathering stage than at the product evaluation stage.

Consumer socialisation involves more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to the consumer role. It also includes learning the adoption motives and values pertaining to consumption activities. This will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.8.3 Consumption Motives and values

Though a variety of motives and values might be transmitted, the focus of consumer research has been undesirable outcomes of socialisation process, including orientation towards conspicuous consumption, materialism, and non-rational impulse-oriented consumption (John, 1999: 196).

3.8.3.1 Materialism

Research suggests that children clearly value the possessions of material goods from a very young age, sometimes favouring them above all else. A case in point provided by Golberg and Gorn (1978:25) in a study within 4-5 years old boys. Children were divided into three groups. The first two groups saw an advertisement for a new toy, with the first group seeing the advertisement twice in one showing and the second group seeing it only

once a day for two days. A third group did not see any advertising for the new toy and served as a control group. After viewing the advertisement, children were given a choice between two hypothetical playmates, one described as very nice that did not own the new toy and one described as not so nice but owing the new toy. About a third of the control group selected the boy without the new toy, but 43-65% of the group seeing the advertisement for the new toy selected this playmate. Children were also asked to choose between two hypothetical play situations namely playing alone with the new toy or playing in a sandbox with friends (without the toy). Again about a third of the control group selected the new toy, but in both experimental groups, a majority of children selected the play situation with the new toy.

Once the stage is set for adoption of materialistic values, the extent to which adolescents exhibit these orientations depends on several factors in their environment, such as family communication, peer communication, and television exposure. One of the most interesting findings linked to materialism is the family communication structure. Children in families with a socio-oriented communication structure, which stresses deference and harmony among families' members while avoiding controversy, exhibit higher levels of materialism. This is even the case with consensual families who balance socio-oriented communication with concept-oriented communication, which encourages children to develop their own views and think through controversies. Families high in concept-orientation, such as pluralistics, produce children with much lower levels of materialism (Moore and Moschis, 1981: 47).

3.8.3.2 Social and economic consumption motives

John (1999:179) also argued that another facet of consumer socialisation is the learning and subsequent adoption of motives for evaluating and selecting goods and services. Two contrasting motives for consumption have been examined that of social and economic motivations. Social motivation for consumption emphasise conspicuous consumption and social expression (e.g. peer approval), whereas economic motivations for consumption focus on functional and economic features of products (e.g. prices and guarantees). On a normative level, social motivations are often viewed as undesirable with economic motivations typically viewed as more desirable socialisation outcomes.

Research finding for social consumption motives was found to be identical to those for materialism. Stronger social motivation for consumption is positively associated with socio-oriented family communication, higher levels of peer communication about consumption, greater television exposure and social utility reasons for watching television advertisements. Social consumption motives are also reported to be higher in males than female adolescents (John, 1999:179).

John (1999:180) further argued that the economic motives for consumption are influenced by many of the same factors, albeit in the opposite direction. Stronger economic motivations are negatively associated with socio-oriented family communication, greater exposure to television, and social utility reasons for watching television advertisements. In contrast, economic motivations encouraged by more frequent family communication about consumption matters as well as increasing age and maturity.

3.9 SUMMARY

Fashion and conspicuous consumption form the basis of this study. These two concepts were analysed in this chapter. Fashion was defined as a way in which an individual keeps up with the trends of society and as way to display status. While conspicuous consumption was defined as the ostentatious display of wealth. Three theories of fashion clothing were identified namely the trickle down theory, collective selection and marionette theory. The concept of materialism was also looked at because materialism can determine the type of brands materialistic individuals purchase, whether it's for social status, or just conspicuous consumption.

It can therefore be suggested that fashion clothing can assist individuals in terms of displaying wealth. By dressing a certain way, by wearing certain brands individuals' display the amount of wealth they have. Gender involvement in purchasing decision was also discussed in this chapter to highlight that there is a difference in the way males and females make purchasing decisions.

The concepts of symbolic consumption and status consumption were also investigated in this chapter and both concepts relates back to the use of fashion clothing as a means of

displaying wealth of status in society. Symbolic consumption placed more emphasis on the consumer socialisation process in terms of the products; brands and services individuals were exposed to from when they were young.

Consumer socialisation also considered the family as the important socialising agent for young consumer, because young consumers usually tend to follow the consumption patterns of their parents. This is conducted through direct impact by parents or indirect impact. Direct impact referring to the parents' ability to teach aspects of consumer behaviour to their children or the indirect impact whereby the children learns from their observation and participation.

Also the section of consumer socialisation focused on children's' products and brand knowledge, consumption motives and values and the social and economic consumption patterns as a result of socialisation. Materialism was also examined within this section in order o determine if socialisation has some effect on individuals being materialist.

Chapter four will provide a summary of linkages of the research objectives to the research hypotheses as well as a short summary of the reasons why the hypotheses were formulated as part of related literature discussions. A short summary of these literature discussions is also included in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4

4 LINKAGES OF OBJECTIVES TO HYPOTHESES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the objectives formulated within this study as well as the linkage of these objectives to the hypotheses that were formulated. It also examines the literatures that lead to the formulation of the hypotheses.

It is important to form linkages between the objective and the hypothesis of the study because it ensures the reliability and validity of the study. In other words it ensures that the research is statistically valid and reliable.

4.2 LINKAGES

The linkages of objectives to hypotheses are as follows:

Table 2: Linkages of Objectives to Hypotheses

Objectives	Hypothesis
<p>Primary Objective is: To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students,</p>	<p>Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students. Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.</p>
<p>Secondary Objectives are: To determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students.</p>	<p>Ho1: Purchasing of status brands do not significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students. Ha1: Purchasing of status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.</p>

<p>To determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students, has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students.</p>	<p>Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers. Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.</p>
<p>To determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands.</p>	<p>Ho3: Culture does not significantly influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands. Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.</p>
<p>To determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands</p>	<p>Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males. Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.</p>

4.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND RELEVANT LITERATURE EXCERPTS

4.3.1 Hypothesis one

Ho1: Status brands do not significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

Ha1: Status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

Hypothesis Ho1 and Ha1 were formulated on the literature of self-concept/ image in section 2.3 of this study. These hypotheses were formulated because self-concept/ image

plays a key role in determining who individuals are and how individuals would like to be perceived by others.

Even though section 2.3 does not place any emphasis as such on students, this hypothesis is based on student's perceptions of himself or herself in creation of a better self-concept/ image by conspicuously utilising status brands as a medium of creating this better self-concept/ image.

Individuals do not only consume products as a means to satisfy needs but also to carry out self-creation projects. Self concept refers to a person's perception of one's self. It can be denotation of the totality of one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions and evaluations of one's self.

Self-concept/ image consist of dimensions of how individuals actually see themselves, how they would like to see themselves, how others see them and how they would like others to see them. There is the basic motivation to achieve the ideal self-concept or at least to move towards an ideal self, which is how one would like to see one's self and would like others to see them.

4.3.2 Hypothesis two

Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

Hypothesis Ho2 and Ha2 were formulated based on section 2.4 of this study. Section 2.4 examines the concept of consumer needs, which is considered an internal influence of consumer behaviour. Consumer needs is defined as a felt deprivation of the desired state. Needs may be social, non-social, functional, symbolic or hedonic.

Social needs are externally directed and related to other individuals while non-social needs are those for which achievement is not based on other people. Functional needs motivate

the search for products that solve consumption-related problems. Symbolic needs refer to how consumers perceive themselves and how others perceive them, while hedonic needs reflect the inherent desires for sensory pleasures.

These hypotheses were developed based on the social needs identified. Also these hypotheses are based on the basic human need to belong as highlighted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's ideology of belonging refers to the strive to be accepted by intimate members of one's family and close associates, close associates in this regard referring to peer groups.

Also there is the external influence of reference groups. Reference groups play a crucial role when it comes to influencing consumers purchase decisions. Reference group influence consumers by means of norms, values, roles, status, socialisation and power. Reference groups are further described according to the degree of contact, formality, similarity among members, group attractiveness, density, degree of identification and the strength of ties connecting members.

4.3.3 Hypothesis three

Ho3: Culture does not significantly influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

Cultural influences as an external influence of consumer behaviour formed the basis in the formulation of hypothesis three. Culture plays a crucial role in terms of influencing consumer behaviour because culture is a set of beliefs, values, attitude, habits and forms of behaviour that are shared by a society and are transmitted from one generation to the next by members of that society through language and symbols.

Ethnicity and culture are also major factors influencing consumer's behaviour. These groups tend to be bound together by cultural ties that can, in turn, strongly influence their consumer behaviour. Because cultural values are to a large extent, enduring, attempts to

change them have not been successful. Rather marketing strategies attempts to reflect rather that to change core values.

Culture can be a determining factor in the process where consumers have to decide which products or services to purchase. Culture affects the consumer purchasing decision because consumers with strong cultural ties who tend to over consume will result in that individual also over consuming product and services.

There are various symbolic roles of products that reflect core values including products conveying social status, self-expression, and sharing experiences. Thus clothing became the important means of expressing status, fashion and hedonic values of pleasure. Hypothesis three was therefore formulated to determine the role that culture plays in influencing student's conspicuousness to consume status brand.

4.3.4 Hypothesis Four

Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Hypothesis four was developed as part of the literature discussion on fashion involvement in section 3.3. This discussion highlighted that depending on how high or low an individuals' fashion involvement, is a determining factor in how conspicuously that individual will consume products and services.

Fashion involvement is viewed as the relationship between the individual and an object or product, as in this case the object or product refers to status brand. Section 3.8.3.1 examined the role materialism plays in terms of it being the key variable in the development of a consumer's involvement with fashion clothing. Materialism also examined key concepts of using material possession to convey status, prestige and success in the same way as conspicuous consumption of products and services. Conspicuous consumption, on the other hand, is the use of products and services to display one's wealth or status in society.

It can be deduced that materialism leads individuals to conspicuously consume status brands. Hence the formulation of the hypothesis to determine if there is a relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands amongst university students.

4.3.5 Hypothesis Five

Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

Hypothesis five was derived from the literature on gender involvement on purchasing decisions. The literature focused on the differing patterns of males and females purchasing decisions.

Marketplace interactions are influenced by internalised sex roles, norms and, although limited in number and scope research examining the impact of gender buying behaviour has found that differences exist.

Males exhibit fewer interpersonal relationships, are less prone to engage in active information provision to other consumers and are less likely to be impulsive as well as impulsive buyers.

It has also been noted that males are less appearance conscious as compared to females thereby highlighting that females are more prone to conspicuously purchase status products than males, hence the formulation of hypothesis five.

4.4 SUMMARY

Chapter four examined the linkages of objectives to hypotheses, a short summary of why it was strategically placed in that particular part of the literature and also a short summary of that section of the literature.

In chapter 5 the research methodology of this research, will be discussed. The research design of the study, types of measurement levels, data collection methods, and descriptive statistics that will be utilised to interpret and analyse the findings of this study will be highlighted further.

CHAPTER 5

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Methodology according to the Oxford Dictionary (2002:559) refers to the science or body of methods used in a particular activity. Another definition of methodology identified by Crask, Fox and Stout (1995:215) refers to the term methodology in the research process as an indication of how the survey will be conducted.

In this study, the term methodology refers to the different methods that will be applied to ensure the objectives highlighted in section 1.4 are addressed. This chapter will thus provide an explanation of all the processes that will be applied. The chapter will start with an explanation of the research design. Thereafter sampling and data collection are highlighted further. The chapter concludes with a discussion on data analysis. The findings of this empirical study will then be discussed in chapter 6.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design according to Cooper & Schindler (2003:146) is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. The plan is the overall scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data. A structure is the framework, organisation or configuration of the relations among variables of the study. A research design expresses both the structure of the research problem and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on relations of the problem.

The research design that will be followed in this study is displayed in table 3:

Table 3: Descriptors of Research Design

Category	Options
✓ The degree to which the research questions has been crystallized	✓ Formal study
✓ The method of data collection	✓ Interrogation / communication
✓ The power of the researcher to produce effects in the variables under study	✓ Ex post Facto
✓ The purpose of the study	✓ Descriptive
✓ The time dimension	✓ Cross-sectional
✓ The topical scope – breadth and depth – of the study	✓ Statistical study
✓ The research environment	✓ Field setting
✓ The participants' perception of the research activity	✓ Modified Routine

Adapted: Cooper & Schindler (2003:147)

The degree to which the research question has been crystallised in this research study will be viewed as that of a formal study. A formal study indicated by Cooper & Schindler (2003:146) begins where the exploration leaves off. It begins with a hypothesis or research question and involves precise procedures and data source specifications. The goal of formal research is to test the hypothesis or to answer the research questions posed. The various hypotheses that were formulated are therefore indicative of a formal study.

The method of data collection is conducted via interrogation / communication where the researcher questions the subjects and collects their responses by personal or impersonal means (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:147). Interrogation / communication is applicable because the data, for this study, will be collected via a self-administered questionnaire, which will be distributed to university students.

There are various methods of interrogation namely personal interviews, telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires. In personal interviews people who are

selected to be part of the sample are interviewed in person by a trained interviewer, while telephone interviews are the conducting of the interview via a telephone. Self-administered questionnaires may also either be mailed, faxed, or couriered to be self-administered with a return mechanism included (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:324).

The ex post facto design will be utilised within this study because investigators have no control over the variable that is, being able to manipulate them. Researchers only report on what has happened or what is happening (Cooper & Schindler, 2003: 149). If manipulations of variables occur, it will affect the accuracy of the empirical findings of this study.

The purpose of the study is a descriptive study because it is aimed at finding out the 5 W's which are who, what, where, when, and why status brands are purchased and conspicuous consumption occurs.

Cooper and Schindler (2003:161) define descriptive studies as being more formalized studies that are typically structured with clearly stated hypotheses or investigative questions. Formal studies serve a variety of research objectives, namely:

- Description of phenomena or characteristics associated with a subject population (the who, what, when, where, and how of a topic).
- Estimates of the proportions of a population that have these characteristics.
- Discovery of associations among different variables.

A descriptive study may be simple or complex and may take place in a number of settings. The simplest descriptive study concerns a univariate question or hypothesis in which it states something about the size, form, distribution, or existence of a variable (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:161).

The time dimension of this study is cross sectional because it is happening over one particular point in time. The questionnaire will be distributed and collected within one particular time frame and not over a repeated or extended period.

The topical scope is statistical studies because they are designed for breadth rather than depth. They attempt to capture a population's characteristics by making inferences from a

sample's characteristics. Hypotheses are tested quantitatively. Generalisations about findings are presented based on the representativeness of the sample and validity of the design (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:150). Statistical was chosen for this study in order to test the null hypotheses identified, quantitatively and also to make generalisations about various findings.

This research is being conducted in a field environment where the data will be gathered by means of a questionnaire distributed amongst University students. The study utilises a modified routine where the respondents are aware of part taking in a research process.

5.3 SAMPLING

The basic idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a population, conclusions may be drawn about the entire population. (Cooper & Schindler 2003: 179). A sample is a part of a population, which is the totality of entities in which there is an interest (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2000:10).

Webb (1992:45) identified six distinctive steps in sampling, namely:

- Step 1:** Defining the population
- Step 2:** Identifying the sample frame
- Step 3:** Select the sample unit
- Step 4:** Selecting the sample method
- Step 5:** Determining the sample size
- Step 6:** Defining the sample plan

Using these step, university students at the University of Pretoria's main campus will be selected to complete the questionnaire. The five steps will now be discussed further.

5.3.1 Defining the population

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003: 179) the population is the total collection of elements about which you wish to make some inferences. The target population for this study refers to the all students registered at the University of Pretoria for 2005.

Another definition identified by Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1993:215) describes a population as a set of people, products, firms and markets, which is of concern to the reader. Once a population has been defined, it should be referred to as the target population. The elements, which will make up the population, will then be called the sampling units. A population must be defined in terms of elements, units and time.

Martins et al. (1996:251) also define a population in terms of elements, sample units, time and size. In context of this research scope these are specified as follows:

Element:	Registered students on the main campus of the University of Pretoria
Sample Units:	Registered students on the main campus of the University of Pretoria
Time:	2005
Size:	Students registered within the Faculty of Economics and Management

The students registered within the faculty of Economic and Management were chosen on the assumption that the number of students registered within this faculty is greater as compared to the other faculties. A formal breakdown of the number of students registered, in terms of males, females and cultural groups, for the year 2005 will be discussed in section 5.3.2.

5.3.2 Identify the sampling frame

Once the population has been defined, the next step is to define a frame for the population. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003: 188) the sampling frame is closely related to the population. Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (2003: 791) also describe the sampling frame as the list of sampling units for a particular study. It is the list of elements from which the sample is actually drawn.

Webb (1992:51) identified five characteristics of a sampling frame, namely that: each element should be included only once; no element should be excluded; the frame should cover the entire population; the information, which is used to design the frame, should be up-to-date; and the frame should be easy to use.

According to the Client Service Centre at the University of Pretoria there are 27,393 registered students at the main campus. Thus the sampling frame in this study refers to the 27,393 registered students.

Table four highlights the number of males and females registered for 2005 at the main campus of University of Pretoria within the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences

Table 4: Number of males and females registered students for 2005

Males	14562	Females	12831
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Table five illustrates the cultural composition of students registered for 2005.

Table 5: Cultural composition of registered students

Cultural Groups	Number of students
Whites	17,869
Coloureds	1471
Africans	7500
Indians	1471
Asians	
TOTAL	27393

5.3.3 Select the sample unit

The sample unit refers to the frame, which holds the elements of the targeted population (Webb, 1992:52). The sample frame and the sample units are therefore the same in this study.

5.3.4 Selecting the sampling method

Martins et al. (1996:253) divide sampling methods into two broad categories: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is one in which the sample units are selected at random and all have an equal chance a being selected (McNabb, 2002:117). It is a controlled procedure that assures that each population element is given a known nonzero chance of selection (Cooper & Schindler, 2003: 183). Probabilistic sampling methods can be used to develop confidence interval that provides bounds on the sampling error (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams, 2003: 792).

Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:15) identified five probability sampling methods namely, simple random, systematic, stratified, cluster and multistage sampling. Simple random sampling occurs when sample members are chosen randomly for inclusion in the sample, with each population element having an equal probability of being selected. Also each possible sample element has a known equal chance of being the one actually chosen. Systematic sampling exists when sample members are chosen at regular intervals after a random start.

Stratified sampling occurs when sample members are chosen from different segments of an overall population. Each stratum may be sampled in proportion to its size in the overall population. Cluster sampling exists when sample members are chosen in groups (clusters) rather than individually. The cluster themselves are chosen randomly from a population split into groups. Multistage sampling occurs when final sample members are chosen by means of one of the other probability methods described above but a number of stages precede the final selection (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:15).

Non-probability sampling, according to McNabb (2002:117) is one in which chance selection techniques are not used. Each member does not have a nonzero chance of being included (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:183).

Webb (1992:53) also contends that with non-probability sample technique the chance of a unit to be selected is not known and generalisation about the results of the study cannot be made. Martins et al. (1996:253) contend that in non-probability sampling there is no way of estimating the probability that any element will be included in the sample, there is therefore no method of finding out whether the sample is representative of the population.

The key difference between probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling methods is that with the former, a statistical evaluation of sampling error can be undertaken, thus enabling the researcher to assess how likely the sample is to be non-representative and by how much. Such an assessment is not possible with samples drawn by non-probabilistic methods (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:13).

It should also be noted that non-sampling errors (e.g. measurement errors and non-response errors) also affect research results and there is therefore no guarantee that a

probability sample will produce overall more accurate results than a non-probability sample (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:13).

There are 27,393 registered students at the University of Pretoria as was mentioned in section 5.3.2. The entire population and the chance of each unit to be selected are, therefore, unknown.

Cooper and Schindler (2003:200) identified three methods of non-probability sampling that can be used, namely convenience, judgement and quota sampling. Convenience sampling is the least reliable design but normally the cheapest and easiest to conduct. The researcher or field worker has the freedom to choose depending on availability.

Judgement samplings according to Martins et al. (1996:253) refers to an attempt to draw a representative sample from the population using judgemental criteria and within quota sampling relevant characteristics describe the dimensions of the population. If a sample has the same distribution on these characteristics, then it is likely to be a representative of the population regarding other variable of which there is no control over (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:201).

Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:13) also identified two non-probabilistic sampling methods in addition to the three discussed above. They are purposive and multiplicity (snowball) sampling. Purposive sampling occurs when the sample members are chosen with a specific purpose/ objective in mind and the sample is thus intentionally selected to be non-representative. Multiplicity sampling is used when the sample members are initially chosen either judgementally or through a probability sampling methods and are subsequently asked to identify others with the desired characteristics, thus, the final sample is constructed from referrals provided by the initial respondents.

Due to the large amount of students registered at the University of Pretoria's main campus the convenience non-probability sampling method will be used because respondents will be selected on the basis of the availability while distributing questionnaires within the lecture halls. The size of the convenience sample will be discussed further in next section.

5.3.5 Determining the sample size

According to Martins et al. (1996:256) there is no statistical formula to calculate the sample size of a non-probability sample. In these instance determinants of the sample size would be time and funds available.

Owing to the fact that there are 14,562 males and 12,831 females, as discussed in section 5.3.2, the sample size will be limited to the number of students that are available within the lecturer halls at the time of the questionnaire distribution. Four (4) classes were chosen based on the fact that they contain a large number of students registered for the course within the Economic and Management Science Department.

The four classes refer to two third year subjects (FRK 320 and BEM 320), one second year both the English and Afrikaans (BEM 220) and one first year group (KOB 120) once again targeting both the English and Afrikaans students. Appointments were made with the lecturers and questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and returned once completed.

The approximate sizes of the classes are as follows:

- Financial Accounting (FRK320) with approximately 100 registered students.
- Marketing Management (BEM320) with approximately 600 registered students (Both English and Afrikaans).
- Business Management (220) with approximately 300 registered students.
- Communication Management (KOB 120) with approximately 250 registered students.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the students who were present at the time.

The students who completed the questionnaire are as follows:

- FRK(320) – 92 students (English)
- BEM (320) – 262 students (Both English and Afrikaans)
- OBS (220)- 229 students (Afrikaans)
- KOB (150) – 95 students (Both English and Afrikaans)

The sample size therefore refers to the 678 students who were present at the time of the questionnaire distribution and the questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher upon completion.

5.3.6 Defining the sample plan

The goal of the sampling plan is to obtain the maximum amount of information from the respondents, while reducing the potential for errors to a minimum. The main section on data collection addresses methods to gather information from the respondents and will be discussed in section 5.4

5.4 DATA COLLECTION

The gathering of data may range from a simple observation at one location to a grandiose survey of multinational corporations at sites in different parts of the world. The method selected will largely determine how data are collected. Questionnaires, standardised tests, observational forms, laboratory notes, and instrument calibrations logs are among the devices used to record raw data (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:87).

Cooper and Schindler (2003:87) define data as the facts presented to the researcher from the study environment. Secondary data have at least one level of interpretation inserted between the event and its recording, while primary data are sought for their proximity to the truth and control over error.

Gilbert and Churchill (1996:54) reveal that there are two data collection methods, namely the collection of secondary data and the collection of primary data. Secondary data refers to data, which has already been collected for other research purposes.

Data capturing is elusive and is complicated by the speed at which events occur and the time-bound nature of observation. Gilbert and Churchill (1995:54) state that, if data specific of a particular research topic is unavailable or unsuitable for the problem, primary data collection methods should be used. Table 6 illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of the different communication approaches.

Table 6: Comparison of Communication Approaches

	Personal Interviews	Telephone Interview	Self-Administered Questionnaires (people intercepted)
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good cooperation from respondents. ▪ Interviewer can answer questions about survey, probe questions, use follow-up questions, and gather information by observation. ▪ Special visual aids and scoring devices can be used. ▪ Illiterate and functional respondents can be reached. ▪ Interviewer can pre-screen respondents to ensure he/she fits the population profile. ▪ CAPI- Computer-assisted personal interviewing: responses can be entered into a portable microcomputer to reduce error and cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower cost than personal interview. ▪ Expanded geographic coverage without dramatic increase in cost. ▪ Uses fewer, more highly skilled interviewers. ▪ Reduces interviewer bias. ▪ Fastest completion time. ▪ Better access to hard-to-reach respondents through repeated callbacks. Can use computer generated random-digit dialling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid data collection. ▪ Respondents who cannot be reached by phone (voice) can be accessible. ▪ Sample frame lists viable locations rather than prospective respondents. ▪ Visual may be used.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High cost. ▪ Need for highly trained interviewer. ▪ Longer period needed in field collecting data. ▪ May be wide geographic dispersion. ▪ Follow-up is labour intensive. ▪ Not all respondents are available or accessible. ▪ Some respondents are unwilling to talk to strangers in their homes. ▪ Some neighbourhoods may be difficult to visit. ▪ Questions may be altered or respondents coached by interviewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response rate is lower than personal interview. ▪ Higher cost if interviewing geographically dispersed. ▪ Interview length must be limited. ▪ Many phone numbers are unlisted or not working, making directory listings unreliable. ▪ Some target groups are not available by phone. ▪ Responses may be less complete. ▪ Illustrations cannot be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for low distraction environment for survey completion. ▪ Low response rate in some modes. ▪ Cannot be long or complex. ▪

Adapted: Cooper and Schindler (2003:324)

Research usually involves some numerical data or contains data that could usefully be quantified to help answer research questions. This study will thus be based on quantitative data that according to Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (2003:798) are numeric values that indicate how much or how many. Quantitative data are obtained using either the interval or ratio scale of measurement.

The data will be collected by means of self-administered questionnaires. A self-administered questionnaire is a form of quantitative research for primary data. A questionnaire will be prepared and will be completed by the selected sample frame.

Traditional paper questionnaire will be used, which will be handed out to students to complete without the assistance of the researcher. However, the researcher will be available to assist in answering any related questions.

Most of the questions will be fixed-response alternative questions that require the respondent to select from a predetermined set of responses. The use of fixed-response questions reduces the variability in the results that may be caused by the differences in interviewers. It also simplifies the coding, analysis, and interpretation of data (Martins et al., 1996: 197).

The major advantage of this particular survey method is that it costs less than most of other survey methods. The survey will also take place at a centralised location namely the University of Pretoria lecture halls. This eliminates travel costs, the need for several interviewers, and providing training to them. Self-administered questionnaires also include minimal staffing. There will only be four students distributing the questionnaires. Questionnaires are anonymous and allow the respondents to think carefully about the questions before they answer. The researchers will be available for probing and explanations.

The major limitation of this survey method of data collection concerns the type and amount of information that can be secured. Researchers normally do not expect to obtain large amounts of information and cannot probe deeply into topics. Participants will generally refuse to co-operate with long and / complex questionnaires unless they perceive a personal benefit (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:341). The questionnaire will be pre-tested

on a number of students that formed part of the total population and all the questions that are unclear will be reworded or omitted.

An insight is however needed into the different measurement scales available to the researcher before the process of questionnaire design can be further explained. Measurement and measurement scales will therefore be discussed in the following section

5.4.1 Measurement and measurement scales

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:221), measurement consists of assigning numbers to empirical events in compliance with a set of rules. The key to ensuring that everyone who reads a research report understands the measurement, lies in the consistent use of the measurement scale appropriate for the task at hand (McNabb, 2002:100).

The definition by Dillon et al. (1990:332) provides more clarity, by stating that measurement refers to the steps, which must be followed, in order to allocate numbers to the characteristics being measured. In turn, the measurement will then provide a correspondence between the concept and the real world.

Webb (1992:139) contends that the definition of measurement, therefore, focuses on three important components, namely that measurement is a process, measurements translate characteristics into numbers and measurement is governed by formal rules.

Cooper and Schindler (2003) identified four characteristics for measurements of scales namely:

- **Classification:** Numbers are used to group or sort responses. No order exists.
- **Order:** Numbers are ordered. One number is greater than, less than or equal to another number
- **Distance:** Differences between numbers are ordered. The difference between any pair of numbers is greater than, less than or equal to the difference between any pair of numbers.
- **Origin:** The number series has a unique origin indicated by the number zero.

Copper and Schindler (2003:223) summarise the classification of measurement scales as follows in table 7:

Table 7: Measurement Scales

Type of Data	Characteristics of Data	Basic Empirical Operations
Nominal	Classification but no order, distance or origin.	Determination of equality.
Ordinal	Classification and order but no distance or unique origin.	Determination of greater or lesser value.
Interval	Classification, order and distance but no unique origin.	Determination of equality of intervals or differences.
Ratio	Classification, order, distance and unique origin.	Determination of equality of ratios.

Adapted: Cooper and Schindler (2003:223)

According to Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (2003:6) the scale of measurement determines the amount of information contained in the data and indicates the data summarisation and statistical analyses that are most appropriate. The four scales of measurement can be classified as follows:

- **Nominal Scales:** A scale is nominal when the data are labels or names used to identify an attribute or an element. The scale can also be nominal even though numerical values are used.
- **Ordinal Scales:** The scale is ordinal if the data have the properties of nominal data and order and rank of the data is meaningful. The data for an ordinal scale may either be nonnumeric or numeric.
- **Interval Scales:** A scale is interval if the data have the properties of ordinal data and the interval between observations is expressed in terms of a fixed unit of measure. Interval data are always numeric.
- **Ratio Scales:** The scale is a ratio scale if the data have all the properties of interval data and the ratio of the two values is meaningful. A requirement of this scale is that it must contain a zero value that indicates that nothing exist for the variable at the zero point.

Table 8 examines the levels of measurement, permissible descriptive statistics and the hypotheses test identified for each measurement scale.

Table 8: Levels of measurement, permissible descriptive statistics and hypotheses test

Level of measurement	Level of central location (centrality)	Measures of variability (spread)	Measures of shape	Descriptive tables	Hypotheses test
Nominal	Mode	Index of diversity, range		Frequency counts, cross tabulation	Non-parametric test
Ordinal	Median	Range, Interquartile range		Frequency counts, cumulative frequency counts, cross tabulation	Non-parametric test
Interval	Mean	Variance, standard deviation, coefficient of variation	Skewness coefficient, Kurtosis coefficient	Frequency counts, cumulative frequency counts, cross tabulation	Parametric test
Ratio	Mean	Variance, standard deviation, coefficient of variation	Skewness coefficient, Kurtosis coefficient	Frequency counts, cumulative frequency counts, cross tabulation	Parametric test

Cooper and Schindler (2003:250) define scaling as a "procedure for the assignment of numbers (or symbols) to a property of objects in order to impart some of the characteristics of the number to the properties in question.

Cooper and Schindler (2003:251) classify measurement scales into three types:

- **Rating scale:** which is used when respondents score an object or indicant without making direct comparison to another object or attitude.
- **Ranking scales:** where the study participant has to make comparisons among two or more indicants or objects.
- **Categorisation:** which ask respondents to put themselves or property indicants in groups or categories.

Rating scales, closed and open-ended questions will be used in the questionnaire for this research. The rating scales, which will be used in the questionnaire, are the following:

- **Simple Category Scale:** Two choices are offered and the respondent has to choose one of the two.
- **Multiple Choice Single-Response Scale:** This scale encompasses multiple options for the respondents but only one answer is sought or required.
- **Likert Scale:** This aids in the comparison of one person's score with a distribution of scores from a well-defined sample group (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:253). The questionnaire utilises both 3-point and 5-point likert scales.

5.4.2 The questionnaire design

When utilising quantitative methods to collect data, a decision must be made between the degree of structure and disguise, which will be used in the questionnaire. Structure refers to the degree of the standardisation used in the questionnaire. The questions asked and the responses are predetermined. Disguise refers to the degree of openness about the purpose of the study. The questionnaire in this study will mainly make use of predetermined answers (Gilbert and Churchill, 1991:315).

Self-administered questionnaires were chosen as the data collection method because they are relatively inexpensive. They are typically more impersonal and provide more anonymity than other communication modes. However a major limitation to self-administered surveys concern the type and amount of information that can be secured. Researchers normally do not expect to obtain large amounts of information and cannot probe deeply into topics (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:341).

Another major weakness of the self-administered study is the non-response error. Webb (1992:65) describes the non-response error as failure to obtain information from the respondents in the sample.

Crask et al. (1995:163) argue that a response error may occur, when the respondent does not correctly understand the question asked, or when the respondent mistakenly marks the wrong option in the closed ended questions.

An instrument error is caused by the questionnaire. A question, to which the respondent does not have the answer to, may be asked (Crask et al., 1995:164). In order to reduce this type of error, when pre-testing is done and certain questions are identified as being incomprehensible and unanswerable, they will be disregarded.

There is also the processing error, which refers to the numerical values assigned to the questions typed into the computer. Errors may occur with the typing of these numbers (Crask et al., 1995:164). In order to reduce this type of error it is crucial for the researcher to ensure that the printout of values match the values that were captured into the computer. The following section will examine the considerations of questionnaire design.

5.4.3 Considerations of the questionnaire design

This section examines the considerations that should be taken into account when designing a questionnaire.

- **The question content**

A question should only be used if the answer will contribute to the objectives of the study. Therefore the function of the question content is to make sure that the demands of the research objective for the particular data are met (Webb, 1992:93). Dillion et al., (1990:379) suggest that the question should only be formulated after the research question has been thought through. The language of the question should be at the respondents level. Question phrasing is therefore important.

- **The question phrasing**

The question phrasing refers to the transmission of the question content into a useable form. There are various criteria, which can be used to evaluate the question and to prevent ambiguous mistakes. The first criterion entails testing whether the question has another meaning. The second criterion entails finding a simpler word or phrase available. Thirdly, two questions should not be asked in one sentence (Webb, 1922:97). The correct

phrasing of the question can be designed, while utilising different types of response format.

- **Types of response format**

Webb (1992:102) identified two types of response formats namely open and close-ended questions. Open-ended questions refer to questions where the respondent can choose words freely to answer the question and close-ended questions refer to questions where the respondent is provided with options, from which a selection must be made.

The researcher will mainly utilise close-ended questions because it saves respondent time when completing the questionnaire and could therefore increase the response rate. However a limitation of close-ended questions is their inability to capture information, when the respondent's answer is not an absolute yes or no (Webb, 1992:103). In addition to these types of response format, the question sequence also needs attention.

- **The question sequence**

Crask et al., (1995:197) argued that there are two considerations to be taken into account when the question sequence is designed, namely responding to the questionnaire should be as simple as possible and the questions should therefore follow a logical flow to reduce interview error and respondent frustration. Secondly, the consideration suggests that questions, which are asked first, should not bias the response to later questions.

The questions should initially be general questions, followed by more specific questions. All questions, particular to one topic, should be asked before the following topic is addressed. The first set of questions should be designed to capture the interest of the respondent and the difficult questions should be asked later (Webb, 1992:106).

- **The questionnaire layout**

The questionnaire should be designed with enough space between the wordings. The instructions should be clearly given. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the researcher

will give clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and will provide adequate space between questions, to ease the use of the questionnaire (Webb, 1992:107).

- **Pre-testing of questionnaire**

Pre-testing the questionnaire is a method to discover mistakes before it is too late to correct them. Webb (1992:108) suggests that the debriefing method should be used to pre-test the questionnaire. The method entails that respondents, a small sub-sample of the intended sample group, should complete the questionnaire and provide their opinions on the questions being asked.

Pre-testing is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. It should, therefore, draw subjects from the target population and simulate the procedures and protocols that have been designated for data collection (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:86).

Pre-testing relies on colleagues, respondent surrogates, or actual respondents to refine a measuring instrument. It may be repeated several times to refine questions, instruments, or procedures (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:87).

The questionnaire in this research will be pre-tested on a small sub-sample of respondents from the targeted population and all weaknesses, misinterpretations or questions that are unclear in the questionnaire will be corrected or deleted.

Section 5.4.4 will now examine the linkages between the research objectives, research hypotheses and the questions in the questionnaire.

5.4.4 The Linkage between the questions in the questionnaire, research objectives and research hypotheses

Table 9 highlights the linkages between the research objectives, hypotheses and the questions in questionnaire.

Table 9: Linkage of Research Objectives, Hypotheses and questions in Questionnaire

Research objectives	Research Hypotheses	Question Numbering
Primary Objective is: To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students,	Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students. Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.	2,3,4,5,6,7, 8,9,10,11, 12
Secondary Objectives are: To determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students.	Ho1: Purchasing of status brands do not influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students. Ha1: Purchasing of status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.	10, 11
To determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students, has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students.	Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers. Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.	10,11,12
To determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands.	Ho3: Culture does not influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands. Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.	4,7,8,9,10, 11, 12
To determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands	Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males. Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.	3,7,8, 9, 10,11,12

Table 9 identified the questions within the questionnaire that address the research objectives highlighted in section 1.4 of this study and linked it to the research hypotheses identified in the relevant literature.

Section 5.4.2 has examined the linkages between the research hypothesis, research hypotheses and the questions in the questionnaire. In section 5.4.5 a question-by-question analysis of the questions in the questionnaire will be conducted.

5.4.5 Question Analysis

This section examines the questions formulated within the questionnaire and the sources from which they were formulated. The questions in the questionnaire were formulated in order to test the research objectives and hypotheses previously discussed. Each question will now be discussed. The questionnaire was divided into two sections namely:

- **Section A:** Demographics
- **Section B:** Status and Conspicuous Consumption

(i) Questions in section A

- **Question 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6**

Question one was developed in order for the researcher to be able to code the questionnaire. Questions two, three and four were own designed questions and are all measured on a nominal level of measurement. They were not adapted from a previous study owing to the fact that they are investigating general demographic responses. Questions three and four were included in the questionnaire because they measure the constructs of gender and ethnicity, which are two of the main constructs, being investigated by the questionnaire. The constructs of gender and ethnicity also forms part of the secondary research objectives as identified in section 1.4.2 and the research hypotheses. Questions five and six are classification questions in order to distinguish between years of study and for which programme the respondents are registered.

(ii) Questions in section B

- **Question 7**

This question was formulated in order to determine the purchasing preference of the type of clothing students purchase whether its status brands, departmental brands or both. It also addresses the primary objective of investigating the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students.

- **Question 8**

Question eight is a follow up of question seven and also addresses the primary objective. It consists of a three- point likert scale measured on an interval level of measurement. Question eight examines how often respondents purchase the particular brands identified. These brands were identified based on the definition of status brands referring to the market recognition, economic success and the value consumers place on a particular brand. Due to the nature of this research more emphasis was, however, placed on the value consumers place on the brand.

- **Question 9**

Statements within question nine were derived from previous studies conducted by Kilsheimer (1993), O'Cass and McEwen (2004) and from Placentini and Mailer (2004) discussed in section 3.5 and 3.6 of the literature review. It consists of a five-point likert scale that is measured on interval level of measurement.

The statements that were adapted from Kilsheimer's 1993 status consumption scale were considered to be reliable and valid. The statements adapted from Kilsheimer's status consumption scale are:

- I am interested in brand named fashion clothing.
- I would buy clothing just because it has status.
- I would pay more for status brand fashion clothing.
- Status brands are more valuable to me if it looks expensive.
- Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person.
- The status brand of fashion clothing is irrelevant to me.

The statements adapted from O'Cass and McEwen 2004 study, were evaluated on content and face validity and the results of that study indicated that reliabilities were well above the accepted levels. The statements are as follows:

- I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success.
- I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige.
- I am interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth.
- Status brands enhance my image amongst my peers.

- I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing.

The statements adapted from Piacentini and Mailer (2004) measure the constructs of symbolic consumption, self-concept/ image as well as address the usage of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers. The statements were adapted from the study carried out on young teenagers and older teenagers but were adapted to address university students within this study. The statements are as follows:

- I get a feeling of self-fulfillment from wearing fashion clothing
- I would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image I want to convey.
- I am influenced by what is hot and what is not.
- I prefer to buy clothing my friends and neighbours approve of.
- I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear.
- Comfort is more important than the brand name.
- Quality is more important than the price.
- Status brands make me feel more confident when socializing.

- **Question 10**

Question ten was formulated to determine the percentage of the respondent's allowance that is spent on the purchasing of status brands fashion clothing. From the responses of this question the researcher will be able to determine how much, in terms of percentage, the respondent spends on fashion clothing.

- **Question 11**

The statements on conspicuous consumption within this question were adapted from O'Cass and McEwen (2004) discussed in section 3.5 in the literature review. This question is based on a three-point likert scale measured on an interval level of measurement. These scales were evaluated on content and face validity and the results of that study indicated that reliabilities were well above the accepted levels. This question is measured on an interval level of measurement.

▪ **Question 12**

Question twelve is developed on a three-point likert scale measured on an interval level of measurement. It is aimed at determining the importance respondents place on purchasing status brands fashion clothing.

Table 10 illustrates the survey question matrix that indicated exactly which sources assisted in the development of the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 10: Survey Question Matrix

Question(s)	Source of question(s)
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,12	Own design
9	Adapted from Kilsheimer (1993), O'Cass and McEwen (2004) and Piacentini and Mailer (2004),
11	Adapted from O'Cass and McEwen (2004)

Table 11, illustrates the linkage between the different sections, different questions, question formats and the different scale types used in the questionnaire.

Table 11: Linkage between the different sections, questions, question format and different scale types

Section	Question	Question Format	Scale Type
A	1	-	-
	2	Close-ended	Dichotomous
	3	Close-ended	Dichotomous
	4	Close-ended	Dichotomous
	5	Close-ended	-
B	6	Open-ended	Dichotomous
	7	Close-ended	Dichotomous
	8	Close-ended	3-point Likert
	9	Close-ended	5-point Likert
	10	Close-ended	Dichotomous
	11	Close-ended	3-point Likert
	12	Closed –ended	3-point Likert

It is evident from table 11 that dichotomous and Likert scales were mainly used in the development of the questionnaire.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers generate information by analysing data after it is collected. Data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:87).

5.5.1 Editing

The customary first step in analysis is to edit the raw data. It too, should be done soon after the data has been gathered (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:455).

Editing entails a thorough and critical examination of a completed questionnaire in terms of compliance with the criteria for collecting meaningful data and in order to deal with questionnaires not duly completed (Martins et. al., 1996:295).

Crask et al., (1995:228) refers to editing as the reviewing of data collected, to ensure that all questions have the appropriate answers. Typical mistakes, which can be identified with editing, are more than one answer selected if only one answer is required or the skipping of questions.

Cooper and Schindler (2003:87) further argued that data are edited to ensure consistency across respondents to locate omissions. In the case of survey methods, editing reduces errors in the recording, improves legibility, and clarifies unclear and inappropriate responses. Edited data are then put into a form that makes analysis possible. Because it is impractical to place raw data into the report, alphanumeric codes are used to reduce responses to a more manageable system of storage and future processing. The codes follow various decision rules that the research devised to assist with sorting, tabulation, and analysing.

Once all questionnaires are received, they will be checked for completeness, accuracy and consistency with the intent of the question. All incomplete questions will be left as such and will not be tampered with by the researcher because that would be unethical. After the raw data has been edited, the data will be coded.

5.5.2 Coding

Coding refers to the process whereby codes are assigned to the answers of the respondents (Martins et al., 1996:299). The classifying of data into limited categories sacrifices some data detail but is necessary for efficient analysis. Coding helps the researcher to reduce several thousand replies to a few categories containing the critical information needed for the analysis (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:456).

Every answer will be coded in order to simplify the results of the data. Numerical values will be assigned to close-ended questions during the questionnaire design. The answers to the close-ended questions will be classified according to their sequence of appearance, for example the first answer to the question will be coded one, the second answer two and so forth.

5.5.3 Validation

An important control function of the researcher is to validate the results of the questionnaire.

University of Pretoria (2004: 17) highlights four ways in which missing responses can be prevented. They are as follows:

- Limiting the number of potentially threatening or embarrassing questions in a survey.
- Limiting the length of a questionnaire to prevent respondent fatigue.
- Carefully pre-testing a questionnaire to ensure that all questions are correctly understood.
- Using personal interviews instead of self-completion questionnaires whenever possible.

The first three steps will be applicable to this study, as a self-administered questionnaire will be used instead of personal interviews.

In terms of editing, coding and cleaning of the data in preparation, all missing responses within the data collected will be assigned a specific code by which the data coders will be able to identify with. Because this study will be using questionnaire distributed to university students, it would be difficult to do 'call backs' *per say* because of the anonymousness of the questionnaire it will be difficult to decipher who wrote what.

The entire list of questionnaires with missing data will be assigned a specific code, for example the code of 000 or 999, to indicate that the information is missing in order to validate their responses. The ones that were incomplete will also be deleted in order to generate some degree of validity and reliability within the study.

According to the University of Pretoria (2004: 43) the basic objectives of descriptive data analysis are to:

- Help detect errors in the coding process.
- Present the data in an easily understandable format through the use of graphs.
- Provide summary measures describing the 'typical' or 'average' responses to a question, the variation in responses for a given variable, and the shape of variable distribution.
- Investigate the distribution of values for each of the variables of interest.
- Provide an easy opportunity for checking whether the distributional assumptions of subsequent hypothesis tests are likely to be satisfied.

5.5.4 Descriptive data analysis techniques

The responses from the coded questionnaire will be captured, using a software package programme at the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria. Various descriptive techniques will be used in the analysis. The final analysis and reporting of the results will be done in chapter 6.

The measurement of scales utilised within the questionnaire development are interval and nominal. Interval data utilizes the mean measure of central location, the variance, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation in terms of its measure of variability. The measure of shapes utilised will be that of skewness coefficient and Kurtosis coefficient. The descriptive tables will be that of frequency counts and cumulative frequency counts as well as the bar/ line chart of means for the descriptive graphs. Nominal data utilises the mode as the measure of central location, the range as the measure of variability and the descriptive tables of frequency counts and cross tabulation.

- **The Mean**

The mean is a measure of the central location that is computed by summing the data values and dividing by the number of observations (Anderson et al., 2003:128).

- **The Mode**

According to Anderson et al., (2003:128) the mode is a measure of location, defined as the value that occurs with greatest frequency.

The mode, median and mean, which will be calculated, may have the same values, but the frequency of distributions may differ. Measures of dispersion will, therefore, be calculated to determine the variation, which might occur in the data (Crask et al., 1995:234).

- **The variance**

The variance is a measure of variability based on the squared deviations of the data values about the mean (Anderson et al., 2003:128).

- **The Standard Deviation**

Anderson et al., (2003:128) argue that the standard deviation is a measure of variability computed by taking the positive square root of the variance.

The smaller the standard deviation, the more the observations will cluster around the mean and thus little variability among the responses will exist and vice versa (Dillon et al., 1990:465).

- **The Coefficient of Variation**

The coefficient of variance is a measure of relative variability computed by dividing the standard deviation by the mean and multiplying by 100 (Anderson et al., 2003:128).

- **The Range**

The range is a measure of variability, defined to be the largest value minus the smallest value (Anderson et al., 2003:128).

Section 5.5.4 provided an explanation of the descriptive statistical techniques that will be utilised within this research study. The following section examines the statistical methods that will be employed in order to test the hypotheses identified in the section.

5.5.5 Statistical Methods of Hypotheses Test

According to the University of Pretoria (2004: 78) one can distinguish between two categories of hypothesis tests – parametric and nonparametric tests- based on the assumptions they make about the nature of the population from which sample data are drawn. One typical assumptions of parametric test is that sample data have been drawn from populations with a normal (i.e. bell- shaped) distribution. The nonparametric tests do not make such assumptions and are, therefore, also known as “distribution free” test.

Table 12 illustrates the hypothesis test that will be utilised in order to test the research hypotheses formulated in the literature section of this study.

Table 12: Linkages between Research Hypotheses, Hypothesis Test and the Questions in the Questionnaire

Research Hypotheses	Hypothesis Test	Questions in Questionnaire
<p>Ho1: Status brands do not influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.</p> <p>Ha1: Status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.</p>	<p>This hypothesis is measured on an interval scale. Therefore the parametric hypothesis tests for question 10 and 11 are ANOVA, Factor Analysis, and Scheffe Test. The Non-parametric test is the Mann Whitney U Test.</p>	10,11
<p>Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.</p> <p>Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.</p>	<p>The hypothesis tests are the Parametric ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Scheffe Test and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The Non-parametric test is the Mann Whitney U test.</p>	10,11,12
<p>Ho3: Culture does not influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.</p> <p>Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.</p>	<p>This hypothesis is measured on the interval and nominal scale. For the nominal measurements the tests conducted were the Cramer's V, the Two Sample Chi-Square Test and the Mann Whitney U Test and for the interval measurement the hypothesis test measuring this hypothesis is the Parametric ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Scheffe Test, and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.</p>	4,7,8,9,10,11,12
<p>Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.</p> <p>Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and</p>	<p>For the nominal questions measuring this hypothesis the Nonparametric test Cramer's V, the Two Sample Chi-Square Test and the Mann Whitney U Test. And for the interval</p>	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12

the purchasing of status brands among university students.	measurements the Parametric Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Scheffe Test.	
Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males. Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.	This hypothesis test for testing this hypothesis is the Nonparametric Two-Sample Chi-Square Test , the Cramer's V and the Mann Whitney U Test, The parametric ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Scheffe Test, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation	3,7,8,9,10,11,12

(i) Parametric test

Parametric test are more powerful because their data are derived from ratio and interval measurements. Parametric test are the test of choice if the following assumptions are met:

- The observations must be independent
- The observation should be drawn from normally distributed populations
- The populations should have equal variance.

Also the measurements scales should be interval so that arithmetic operations can be used with them (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:532).

▪ **Pearson Product Moment Correlation**

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:570) the Pearson (product moment) correlation coefficient varies over a range of +1 through 0 to -1. The designation r symbolises the coefficient's estimate of linear association based on sampling data. The coefficient ρ represents the population correlation. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:203) argue that emphasis is placed on linear because if the two variables are linked to one another by means of a non-linear relationship the Pearson correlation coefficient cannot detect it.

Pearson product moment correlation is used when the hypothesis is a statement about the relationship (association) between two variables. It tests hypotheses one, two, three and four of this research study. It is measured on an interval or ratio level of measurement.

- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

ANOVA avoids Type 1 error inflation cross comparisons of a number of treatment groups by determining whether the entire set of sample means suggest that the samples were drawn from the same general population. That is, ANOVA is used to determine the probability that differences in means across several groups are due solely to sampling error (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1995:262).

Hair et al. (1995:262) further contend that as the name analysis of variance implies, the following two independent estimates of the variance for the dependent variable are compared, one that is sensitive to treatment and one that is not:

- **Within-group estimate of variance:** This is an estimate of the random respondent variability on the dependent variable within a treatment group and is based on deviations of individual scores from their respective group means, but the difference between the means. This is comparable to the standard error between two means tests. The value of the mean square within the group is sometimes referred to as the error variance.
- **Between-group estimate of variance:** The second estimate of variance is the variability of the treatment group means on the dependent variable. It is based on deviations of the group means from the overall grand mean of all scores. Under the null hypothesis of no treatment effects, this variance, like mean square within groups, is a simple estimate of the sampling variance of scores. However, this variance estimate, unlike the mean square between groups, reflect any treatments effects that exist, that is, differences in treatment means increase the expected value of the mean square between groups.

- **The Scheffe Test**

The Scheffe test is used to make unplanned comparison among the means in an experiment. The Scheffe test is much less powerful than methods used to make planned comparisons. The Scheffe test is a multiple comparison test that pinpoints exactly between which groups the difference exist (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:190).

- **Factor Analysis**

According to Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:216) factor analysis refers to a range of techniques the aim of which are to describe a larger number of (metric) variables by means of a smaller set of composite variables (so called factors) and to aid the substantive interpretation of data. There are two main types of factor analysis with different objectives, namely:

- **Common factor analysis:** which focuses on the common variance, that is, the variance shared among the original variables and seeks to identify underlying dimensions known as common factors. Common factor analysis is particularly useful in the context of measure development, as it enables an assessment of the dimensionality of multi-item scales.
- **Principal component analysis:** This focuses on the total variance, that is, the entire variation in the data set and seeks to reduce the original set of variables into a smaller set of composite variables called principal components, which are uncorrelated to one another.

Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:216) further argue that the difference between principal components analysis and common factor analysis is that, in the former case, the sole aim is to reduce the original set of variables into a smaller set of composite variables (components); it is simply a data reduction technique and makes no assumptions regarding the underlying structure of the data. In contrast, common factor analysis focuses explicitly on the interrelationships among the original variables and seeks to describe them in terms of common underlying dimensions; thus, the focus is on explaining the patterns of relationships among the original variables by means of a factor structure.

(ii) Nonparametric Test

Nonparametric test are used to test hypotheses with nominal and ordinal data. Nonparametric test have fewer and less stringent assumptions. They do not normally specify normally distributed populations or homogeneity of variance. Some tests require independent cases; others are expressly designed for situations with related cases. Nonparametric test are only ones useable with nominal data, they are the only technically correct test to use with ordinal data. Nonparametric test may also be used for interval and ratio data, although they waste some of the information available (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:532)

▪ Cramer's V

Cooper and Schindler (2003:593) argue that Cramer's V is a modification of phi for larger tables and has a range up to 1.0 for tables of any shape. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000:200) posit that Cramer's V values always falls between 0 and 1 and thus, can be interpretive as reflecting relationships of different magnitudes. Cramer's V is also used as a statistical technique for investigating the relationship between two nominal variables (measures of association). This hypothesis test is used to test hypotheses one, three and four.

▪ The Two-Sample Chi-Square Test

The null hypothesis tested by the two-sample chi-square is that no difference exists between the two groups with respect to the relative frequency with which group members' fall into the various categories of the variable on interest. The reason for focusing on relative rather than absolute frequencies is that the two groups may have unequal sample sizes and, therefore, the calculation of expected frequencies needs to take this into account (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:175).

If the observed frequencies depart significantly from the expected frequencies (that it cannot be dismissed due to sampling error), it can be concluded that the two groups differ along the variable of interest, If, on the other hand, discrepancies are found between

observed and expected frequencies to be small and non-significant, there is no evidence of the difference between the groups (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:175).

This hypothesis test is conducted when measuring statements comparing two or more groups on the same variable on a nominal scale of measurement. It is used to test hypothesis five.

- **Mann Whitney U**

The Mann-Whitney U test (also known as the Wilcoxon Rank Sum W test) is very useful when you have two groups to compare on a variable, which is measured at an ordinal level. The null hypothesis tested by the Mann-Whitney U test is that there is no difference between the two groups in terms of location, focusing on the median as a measure of central tendency. The Mann-Whitney test is a useful alternative to a parametric location test (such as two-sample t-test) when the assumptions about normality are violated and the sample sizes are small (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:180).

Section 5.5.5 provided a detailed analysis of the statistical methods of hypothesis test that will be employed to test the hypotheses identified in table 12. Section 5.5.6 will now discuss the reliability and validity of conducting research.

5.5.6 Reliability and Validity

According to Martin et al., (1996:26), researchers often neglect to point out possible shortcomings and pitfalls in research results. Reliability and validity are a pre-requisite for research data to be useful. It is therefore important to be able to proof reliability and validity.

(i) Reliability

A measure is reliable to the degree that it supplies consistent results. Reliability is a necessary contributor to validity but is not a sufficient condition for validity (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:236). Thus in order to test reliability in relation to the measurement of scales used in this study, the split half technique of internal consistency will be utilized.

The split half technique according to Cooper & Schindler (2003:239) can be used when the measuring tools has many similar questions or statements to which the subject can respond as in the case of the questionnaire survey method that was chosen for this study. The questionnaire and the results are separated by item into even and odd numbers or into randomly selected halves. When the two halves are correlated, if the results of the correlation are high, the instrument is said to have high reliability in an internal consistency sense.

Bagozzi (1994:18) distinguishes between two primary types of reliability namely internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Internal consistency is obtained when two or more measures of the same theoretical concept are obtained at the same point in time and the agreement between the measures is ascertained. While test-retest reliability addresses the consistency of repeated measures of the same theoretical concept over time and can be estimated by the correlation between the measures across time.

A scale is internally consistent if the Cronbach alpha coefficient is larger than 0.7. Cronbach alpha has great utility for multi-item scales at the interval level of measurement. Stability is generally assessed through test-retest measurement of the same group of respondents under more or less the same circumstances (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:238). Cronbach's alpha will thus be used to test the internal consistency of the measurement scales of this study due to the fact that most of the questions are multiple item scales utilising interval level of measurement.

(ii) Validity

Validity defined by Cooper and Schindler (2003:231) is the extent to which differences found without a measuring tool reflect true differences among respondents being tested. Validity within this study will be tested via construct validity which according to Churchill (2001:371) can be defined as an assessment of how well the instrument captures the constructs, concept or trait (i.e. characteristic) it is supposed to be measuring.

In order to show that a scale has construct validity Churchill (2001:371) argued that it has to show it has:

- **Face validity:** which is established by determining on the face value whether the items in a scale are logically and conceptually accurate.
- **Content validity:** has to do with the question whether the scale items adequately cover the domain of the construct as specified in its conceptual definition. If the measurement instrument adequately covers all the important aspects or dimensions of the construct being measured, it has content validity.
- **Criterion-related validity:** focuses on the usefulness of measuring instrument as a predictor of some other characteristic or behaviour of the respondent. There are two types of criterion-related validity namely concurrent and predictive validity. Concurrent validity is tested by simultaneously collecting data from a sample of respondents on the scale of interest and the criterion to be predicted. Predictive validity is similar to concurrent validity except that the data for the scale of interest is collected before the data of the criterion is collected.
- **Convergent validity:** In order to establish convergent validity, the researcher needs to show that the measures that which should be related are in reality related.
- **Discriminant validity:** Researchers need to show that the measures that should not be related are in reality not related. If there is discriminant validity the relationship between the measures from the different constructs should be very low.

The final questionnaire will be pre-tested by distributing a sample of questionnaires to students around the campus that they have to complete. These respondents closely reflected the same characteristics of the sample study. The sample questionnaire will be adapted after the pilot phase and questions and words that were unclear or misunderstood would be edited, deleted or replaced.

Some of the questions in the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies, which were tested and found to be reliable and valid, thus, ensuring reliability and validity of this questionnaire.

After the literature study was conducted and the research methodology was designed within this chapter and the potential questionnaire was drawn up. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents whose characteristics were similar to those identified in the intended sample of this research study. The purpose of the pre-test phase was to measure the validity of the questionnaire as described above. It was determined that the

content validity approach would be utilised, as the aim of pre-testing was to determine whether the respondents interpreted the questions correctly and whether the respondents interpreted the questions correctly and whether information on the factors affecting students conspicuousness to over consume status brands would be captured adequately. Feedback from the pre-testing was obtained and corrections were made to ensure that a validated questionnaire was used in the field study.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter described the research methodology that will be used for this research. It highlighted the type of study, how the research will be conducted, the sample population as well as the sample size, the types of measurement scales used within the questionnaire, and how the questionnaire will be pre-tested.

The purpose of the methodology description in this chapter was to construct a blueprint, which will direct the empirical part of the research to be conducted. This chapter provided insight into the research problem and how the research will be conducted.

It was determined that data collection will be collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire, which will be distributed to the respondents identified as registered students at the main campus of the University of Pretoria. Various measurements of scales will be utilized in the questionnaire in order to determine the objectives identified in chapter one.

In chapter six the research findings of the study are discussed.



CHAPTER 6

6 RESEARCH RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the results, which were obtained from the distributed questionnaires and will be presented and interpreted within this chapter. The results will be interpreted on a question-by question basis and all codes allocated to the various answers will also be explained.

Emphasis will also be placed on the statistical techniques used, as identified in chapter five, within this study in order to interpret the results from the questionnaire. Tables will also serve as a graphical representation of the questions results within this section of the chapter.

6.2 RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON A QUESTION-BY-QUESTION BASIS

The interpretation of the results of the questionnaire will be conducted on a question-by-question basis using tables of the relevant percentages, cumulative frequencies and cumulative percentages. In some instances comparisons will be conducted between two or more questions in order to draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives and hypotheses.

From the 678 questionnaires distributed all 678 were returned to the researcher thus reducing the no response error.

6.2.1 Section A

Questions one to six in section A were included to obtain general background information of the respondents with regards to the demographic profiles. Question one was included in order for the researcher to count the number of respondents, whose questionnaires were completed, thus allowing them to be used within the research. Thus this section will start with a question-by-question analysis from question 2.

(A3) The main finding derived from question 4 and illustrated in table 15 is that there were more whites (69.67%) as compared to the cumulative percentage 29.50% of the other groups that filled out the questionnaire.

(d) Question 5

Which year group do you belong to?

Question five was included to determine the year groups to which the respondents belonged.

Table 16: Respondent's Year Group

Year Group	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	12	1.77	12	1.77
1 st Year	141	20.80	153	22.57
2 nd Year	163	24.04	316	46.61
3 rd Year	362	53.39	678	100.00

Table 16 provides the insight that, of the 678 respondents, 20.80% were first year students, 24.04% were second year students and 53.39% were third year students. There was also a no response rate of 1.77%, meaning that 1.77% of the 678 students did not answer this particular question.

(A4) The main finding from table 16 is that the majority of respondents were third year students (53.39%) followed by second year (24.04%) and then first year students (20.80%).

(e) Question 6

Which programme are registered for?

Question 6 examined the different programmes of study that students who responded to this questionnaire were registered for, for the year 2005. Table 17 illustrates the different programmes as well as the frequency, percentage, cumulative frequency and the cumulative percentage for this particular question.

Table 17: Respondent's programme of study

Programme of study	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	33	4.87	33	4.87
BCom Internal Auditing	72	10.62	105	15.29
BCom Own Choice	11	1.62	116	17.11
BCom Informatics	20	2.95	136	20.06
BCom Law	20	2.95	156	23.01
BCom Investment Management	7	1.03	163	24.04
BCom Business Management	44	6.49	207	30.53
BCom Financial Management	8	1.18	215	31.71
BCom Econometrics	1	0.15	216	31.86
Special Undergraduate	1	0.15	217	32.01
BCom Information Science	1	0.15	218	32.15
BCom Economics	12	1.77	230	33.92
BSoSci Psychology	2	0.29	232	34.22
BSc. Microbiology	2	0.29	234	34.51
BA: Own Choice	1	0.15	235	34.66
BCom Aviation Management	4	0.59	239	35.25
BCom Marketing Management	265	39.09	504	74.34
BCom Human Resource Management	17	2.80	523	77.14
BCom Recreation and Sports Management	4	0.59	527	77.73
BCom Communication Management	58	8.55	585	86.28
BCom Tourism Management	51	7.52	636	93.81
BA: MBK	2	0.29	638	94.10

BCom Entrepreneurship	9	1.33	647	95.43
BSc. Information Technology	1	0.15	648	95.58
BCom Agribusiness Management	2	0.29	650	95.87
BCom Agricultural Economics	1	0.15	651	96.02
BCom Accounting Science	3	0.44	654	96.46
BS Information Science	1	0.15	655	96.61
BSc Consumer Science	20	2.95	675	99.56
BS Publishing	2	0.29	677	99.85
B Engineering	1	0.15	678	100.00

From table 17 it is evident that the highest percentages of respondents were the 39.09% registered for Marketing Management within the Faculty of Economics and Management Science for the year of 2005.

(A5) The main finding of table 17 is that the majority of respondents (39.09%) are registered for BCom Marketing Management, followed by BCom Internal Auditing (10.62%) and BCom Communication Management (8.55%).

6.2.2 Section B

Section B focused more on status and conspicuous consumption as well as examining the issues of self-concept and influences by peer groups. Within this section, comparisons will be made between gender and ethnicity in order to reject or accept the research hypothesis and also to determine if the research objectives were met. Test such as the ANOVA, Scheffe Test, Chi Square Test, Factor Analysis, Mann Whitney Test and Pearson's Product Moment Correlations were conducted and the results will be interpreted within this section in order to gain a better insight into the research objectives identified in section 1.4 of this study.

(a) Question 7

Please indicate by crossing the answer that best describes the type of clothing you purchase.

Question 7 examined the choice of clothing purchases students make, whether it is only status brands, only departmental store brands or both.

Table 18: The type clothing university students' purchase

Types of Clothing	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	3	0.44	3	0.44
Status Brands	21	3.10	24	3.54
Department Brands	57	8.41	81	11.95
Both	597	88.05	678	100.00

Table 18 illustrates that from the total of 678 respondents that 597 or 88.05% purchase both status brands and department store brands of clothing.

(B1) The main finding of table 18 is that the majority of students (88.05%) tend to purchase both status and department store brands.

Question seven was compared against question 3 which examined gender. This comparison was conducted in order to determine if gender has a direct effect on the type of clothing students' purchase.

Table 19 illustrates the results of the comparison of question three and question seven. The first row of digits highlights the frequency; the second row of digits highlights the percentage, the third row of digits highlights the row percentage and the final row highlights the column percentage.

Table 19: Comparison of Gender and the type of clothing University students' purchase

Frequency Percent (%) Row percent (%) Column Percent (%)	Males	Females	Total
Status Brands	17	4	21
Percent (%)	2.52	0.59	3.11
Row Percent (%)	80.95	19.05	
Column Percent (%)	6.49	0.97	
Department Brands	15	42	57
Percent (%)	2.22	6.22	8.44
Row Percent (%)	26.32	73.68	
Column Percent (%)	5.73	10.17	
Both	230	367	597
Percent (%)	34.07	54.37	88.44
Row Percent (%)	38.53	61.47	
Column Percent (%)	87.79	88.86	
Total	262	413	675
Percent (%)	38.81	61.19	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

Table 19 depicts that 2.52% of the students that only purchase status were males as compared to the 0.59% of females who also only purchase status brands. Also 2.22% of males (from the total of 57) purchase only department store brands as compared to the 6.22% of the females. However more females (54.37%) than males (34.07%) of the total of 597 purchase both status and department store brands.

Table 19 also illustrates that of the total of 262 males that answered the question 6.94% purchase only status brands, 5.73% purchase only departmental store brands and 87.79% purchase both status brands and department store brands. Of the total sample of females (413) 0.97% prefers to purchase only status brands, 10.17% prefer to purchase only departmental store brands and 88.86% purchase both.

The majority of males (87.79%) out of the male sample of 262 prefer to purchase both status and departmental store brands while the majority of females (88.86%) out of the female sample of 413 also prefer to purchase both.

(B2) The main finding is that the majority of males and female students prefer to purchase both department store brands and status brands. However there is a

higher percentage of males (6.49%) from the total male sample that only purchase status brands than females (0.97%). Whereas more females (10.17% of 413) than males (5.73% of 262) prefer to purchase only departmental store brands.

Table 20 illustrates the results of the Chi-square and Cramer's V test that was conducted in order to address hypothesis 5.

Table 20: Results of Chi-Square and Cramer's V Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	2	19.4711	<0.0001
Cramer's V Test		0.1698	

The chi-square test was conducted to determine if a difference exist between two groups (males and females) with respect to the relative frequency results of question 7. The results of the Chi-square test illustrates that there is a significant difference in purchasing status and department store brands between males and females ($p < 0.0001$) with females being more prone to buying only departmental store brands than males and males being more prone to purchase only status brands than females.

The Cramer's V test was also conducted. The Cramer's V is used to interpret the strength of the relationship between the two variables namely the type of clothing students purchase and gender. Cramer's V rule states if the p value falls between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates no association and 1 indicates a perfect association. Therefore the result in table 20 illustrates that the Cramer's value has some association but a weak one owing to the fact that the value is 0.1698.

(B3) The main finding of table 20 illustrates that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.0001$) with females being more prone to buying only departmental store brands than males and males being more prone to purchase only status brands than females.

Ethnic groups were also compared based on their responses to question 7. This comparison was conducted in order to determine if culture plays a role in the type of clothing purchases of students. Asians, Indians and Coloureds were combined and Whites and others were also combined owing to the fact that these groups' expected cell frequency was less than 0.05. This is illustrated in table 21:

Table 21: Comparison of question 7 and question 4

Frequency Percent (%) Row Percent (%) Column Percent (%)	Asians, Indians and Coloureds	Africans	Whites and Others	Total
Status Brands Only	2	7	12	21
Percent (%)	0.30	1.04	1.78	3.12
Row Percent (%)	9.52	33.33	57.14	
Column Percent (%)	4.35	4.61	2.52	
Department Store Brands Only	1	20	36	57
Percent (%)	0.15	2.97	5.34	8.46
Row Percent (%)	1.75	35.09	63.16	
Column Percent (%)	2.17	13.16	7.56	
Both	43	125	428	596
Percent (%)	6.38	18.55	63.50	88.43
Row Percent (%)	7.21	20.97	71.81	
Column Percent (%)	93.48	82.24	89.92	
Total	46	152	476	674
Percent (%)	6.82	22.55	70.62	100.00

Frequency missing = 4

It is evident from table 21 that 2.52% of the total sample of Whites and other race groups (476) tend to purchase only status brands as compared to the 4.61% of Africans (152) and 4.35% of Asians, Indians and Coloureds (46). Of the Whites and others 7.56% purchase department store brands only as compared to the 13.16% of Africans and 2.17% of Asians, Indians and Coloureds. Lastly 93.48% of Asians, Indians and Coloureds purchase both status and department store brands as compared to 89.92% of Whites and other and 82.25% of Africans.

(B4) The main finding derived from table 21 is that the majority of Whites and Other students (89.92%), Africans (82.24%) and Asians, Indians and Coloureds (93.48%) prefer to purchase both status brands and department store brands.

Table 22 depicts the results of the Chi-square test and Cramer's V test used to test comparisons.

Table 22: Statistical test results of question 4 and 7

Statistical Test	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	4	9.3265	0.0534
Cramer's V		0.0832	

Based on the results of the Chi-Square test as depicted in table 22 it is evident that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when purchasing either department store brands, status brands or both. The results of the Chi-Square test indicate that $p=0.0534$ which is higher than the required level of significance 0.05.

However there was a statistical warning for these test conducted, and the warning read that 33% of the cells have expected counts less than 5. Therefore the chi-square may not be a valid test.

The Cramer's V was also conducted and the value is 0.0832 illustrating a very weak association.

(B5) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups regarding their choice of status brands and department store brands where the majority of all ethnic groups prefer to purchase a combination of department store brands and status brands.

(b) Question 8

How often do you buy the following brands of clothing?

Reverse coding was used within question eight where often was recoded to three, sometimes remained two and never was recoded to one. Gender and ethnicity was also used to compare the results of the question.

Table 23 illustrates the percentage of the respondents' choice in terms of purchasing particular brands of clothing, starting with the highest percentage to the least.

Table 23: Analysis of question eight

Brand Names	Count (weighted frequency)	Percent (%)
Woolworths	1451	7.31
Mr. Price	1376	6.93
Nike	1356	6.83
Levis	1256	6.33
Billabong	1239	6.24
Fochini	1204	6.07
Hang Ten	1162	5.85
Sissy Boy	1061	5.34
Quik Silver	1059	5.33
Roxy	982	4.95
Guess	978	4.93
Puma	976	4.92
Soviet	955	4.81
Diesel	926	4.66
Lacoste	854	4.30
DKNY	822	4.14
Von Dutch	753	3.79
Gucci	736	3.71
Louis Vuitton	689	3.47

Count in table 23 refers to the weighted frequency. It is the sum of all the scores on that specific statement. A higher count score therefore indicates that the often (3) option was chosen more frequently.

Table 23 illustrates that the Woolworths brand was chosen by most of the respondents (7.31%), followed by Mr. Price (6.93%) and Nike (6.83%) as the brands that are most often purchased. Whereby Von Dutch (3.79%), Gucci (3.71%) and Louis Vuitton (3.47%) were the least purchased brands chosen by the respondents.

(B6) The main finding from table 23 is that students are more prone to purchase the Woolworths (7.31%), department store brand, as compared to the other brands.

Table 24 compares males and female responses on the brands purchased most often.

Table 24: Brands purchased compared by gender

Brands	Count	Percentage for Males	Brands	Count	Percentage for Females
Levis	570	7.68	Woolworths	955	7.68
Nike	563	7.59	Fochini	909	7.31
Billabong	519	7.00	Mr. Price	893	7.18
Woolworths	496	6.69	Sissy Boy	797	6.41
Quik Silver	495	6.67	Nike	793	6.38
Mr. Price	483	6.51	Hang Ten	758	6.10
Puma	424	5.71	Billabong	720	5.79
Diesel	406	5.47	Roxy	717	5.77
Hang Ten	404	5.44	Levis	686	5.52
Guess	378	5.09	Guess	600	4.83
Soviet	355	4.78	Soviet	600	4.83
Lacoste	342	4.61	Quik Silver	564	4.54
DKNY	303	4.08	Puma	552	4.44
Von Dutch	299	4.03	Diesel	520	4.18
Fochini	295	3.97	DKNY	519	4.17
Gucci	286	3.85	Lacoste	512	4.12
Louis Vuitton	266	3.58	Von Dutch	454	3.65
Roxy	265	3.57	Gucci	450	3.62
Sissy Boy	264	3.56	Louis Vuitton	423	3.40

Count in table 24 refers to the weighted frequency. It is the sum of all the scores on that specific statement. A higher count score therefore indicates that the often (3) option was chosen more frequently.

It is evident from table 24 most of the male respondents prefer to purchase Levis (7.68%) followed by Nike (7.56%) and Billabong (7.00%). Male respondents least prefer to purchase Sissy Boy (3.56%), followed by Roxy (3.57%) and Louis Vuitton(3.58%). The female respondents mostly prefer to purchase Woolworths (7.68%), Foshini (7.31%) and Mr. Price (7.18%). Females least prefer Louis Vuitton (3.40%), Gucci (3.62%) and Von Dutch (3.65%).

(B7) The main finding from table 24 is that female respondents most often buy department store brands such as Woolworths (7.68%), Fochini (7.31%) and Mr. Price (7.18%) where as the male respondents buy status brands such as Levis (7.68%), Nike (7.59%) and Billabong (7.00%) most often.

Table 25 depicts the results of the various ethnic groups' purchasing choice of the various brands.

Table 25: Students purchasing choice compared with their ethnicity

Asians, Indians and Coloureds		Africans		Whites and others	
Brands	Percent (%)	Brands	Percent (%)	Brands	Percent (%)
Nike	8.38	Levis	7.45	Woolworths	7.51
Levis	8.30	Mr. Price	7.27	Mr. Price	6.95
Woolworths	6.73	Nike	7.06	Billabong	6.70
Hang Ten	6.23	Woolworths	6.84	Nike	6.60
Billabong	6.08	Hang Ten	6.23	Fochini	6.13
Lacoste	5.87	Fochini	6.23	Levis	5.79
Mr. Price	5.58	Sissy Boy	5.66	Quik Silver	5.75
Guess	5.08	Puma	5.64	Hang Ten	5.68
Fochini	5.01	Soviet	4.96	Sissy Boy	5.31
Diesel	4.94	Billabong	4.84	Roxy	5.09
Puma	4.87	Roxy	4.78	Guess	5.05
Soviet	4.72	Diesel	4.48	Soviet	4.77
Sissy Boy	4.65	Lacoste	4.48	Diesel	4.70
Quik Silver	4.29	Guess	4.46	Puma	4.70
Roxy	4.08	Quik Silver	4.34	DKNY	4.14
Von Dutch	3.86	DKNY	4.23	Lacoste	4.09
DKNY	3.86	Gucci	3.80	Von Dutch	3.80
Gucci	3.79	Von Dutch	3.76	Gucci	3.67
Louis Vuitton	3.58	Louis Vuitton	3.42	Louis Vuitton	3.47

From table 25 it is clear that Asians, Indians and Coloureds most often prefer to purchase Nike (8.38%), Levis (8.30%) and Woolworths (6.73%). They least prefer to buy Louis Vuitton (3.58%), Gucci (3.79%) and DKNY (3.86%). Most Africans prefer Levis (7.45%) followed by Mr Price (7.27%) and Nike (7.06%). The Africans least often purchase Louis Vuitton (3.42%), Von Dutch (3.76%) and Gucci (3.80%). Whites and others most often prefer to purchase Woolworths (7.51%), Mr Price (6.95%) and Billabong (6.70%). They least often purchase Louis Vuiton (3.47%), Gucci (3.67%) and Von Dutch (3.80%).

According to table 25 two of the three brands most often purchased by Asians, Indians and Coloureds are status brands namely Nike (8.38%) and Levis (8.30%). The Africans also most often purchased status brands if you compare the top three choices of the various ethnic groups, namely Levis (7.45%) and Nike (7.06%). However the Whites and other ethnic groups prefer to buy department store brands such as Woolworths (7.51%) and Mr. Price (6.95%) most often when comparing the top three choices.

(B8) The main finding is that a marginal percentage of Whites and others buy department store brands more often than the other ethnic groups, which include Africans, Asians, Indians and Coloureds.

(c) Question 9

Please indicate the percentage of your monthly allowance/ pocket money that you spend on fashion.

Question nine examines the amount of allowance or pocket money students spend on fashion clothing (status brands). The results are illustrated in table 26.

Table 26: Percentage of allowance/ pocket money students spend on fashion clothing

Percentage of Allowance (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	7	1.03	7	1.03
76-100	2	0.29	9	1.33
51-75	44	6.49	53	7.82
26-50	174	25.66	227	33.48
11-25	342	50.44	569	83.92
0-10	109	16.08	678	100.00

Table 26 depicts that 50.44% of students spend 11-25% of their allowance on fashion clothing, while 25.66% spend 26-50%, 16.08% spend between 0-10%, and 6.49 % spend between 51-75%. There was also a non-response rate of 1.03%. The groups identified in question 9 will be used together with the results of question 11 to conduct a Scheffe test later in this section.

(B9) The main finding from table 26 is that the majority of students (50.44%) spend 11-25% of their allowances on the purchasing of fashion clothing.

Question 9 was compared against question four (ethnicity) in order to determine if there is a significant relationship between ethnicity and the amount of money students spend on fashion clothing.

Table 27: Comparison of questions ethnic group's expenditure of allowance / pocket money

Frequency Percent (%) Row Percent (%) Column (%)	Asians, Indians and Coloureds	African	White and others	Total
51-100%	4	22	20	46
Percent (%)	0.60	3.28	2.99	6.87
Row Percent (%)	8.70	47.83	43.48	
Column (%)	9.09	14.47	4.22	
26-50%	12	44	118	174
Percent (%)	1.79	6.57	17.61	25.97
Row Percent (%)	6.9	25.29	67.82	
Column (%)	27.27	28.95	24.89	
11-25%	20	72	249	341
Percent (%)	2.99	10.75	37.16	50.90
Row Percent (%)	5.87	21.11	73.02	
Column (%)	45.45	47.37	52.53	
0-10%	8	14	87	109
Percent (%)	1.19	2.09	12.99	16.27
Row Percent (%)	7.34	12.84	79.82	
Column (%)	18.18	9.21	18.35	
Total	44	152	474	670
Percent (%)	6.57	22.69	70.75	100.00

Frequency missing = 8

The options of 51-75% and 76%-100% were combined due to the low response of the option 76-100%.

The results, as depicted in table 27 illustrates that of all the Asians, Indians and coloureds that participated in this survey 45.45% spend 11-25% of their allowance/ pocket money on fashion clothing. The African ethnic group also spend mostly (47.37%) between 11-25% and so do the White and other ethnic groups (52.53%). The least amount of Asians, Indians and Coloureds (9.09%) as well as Whites and others (4.22%) spend between 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing. Of the total (152) African ethnic group that responded to this question only 9.21% spend between 0-10% of their allowance on fashion clothing. Of the total of 46 that choose that option more Africans (47.83%) than Whites and others (43.48%) as well as Asians, Indians and Coloureds (8.70%) indicated that they spend between 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

(B10) The main finding derived from table 27 is that of the Whites and others that responded to this question more than half (52.53%) spends 11-25% of their

allowance/ pocket money on fashion clothing. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds (45.45%) as well as the Africans (47.37%) also mostly spend between 11-25%. However a higher percentage of Africans (14.47%) as compared to Whites and others (4.22%) spend 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

Table 28 illustrates the statistical test conducted in order to test these comparisons.

Table 28: Statistical test conducted to test comparisons

Statistical Test	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	6	25.6230	<0.0003
Cramer's V		0.1383	

It can be depicted from table 28 that the comparison conducted between the amount of money respondents spend on fashion clothing and ethnicity is highly significant owing to the fact that the probability is <0.0003. This significant is illustrating by the significant difference between the percentage of Africans (14.47%) who spend 51-100% of their allowance/ pocket money on purchasing status brands as compared to Asians Indians and Coloureds (9.09%) and the Whites and other ethnic group (4.22%).

Cramer's V was also conducted and the results of that test illustrates that there is some level of associations between the two questions, reinforcing the fact that there is a significant difference.

(B11) The main finding is that there is a significance difference between the percentage of Africans (14.47%) who spend 51-100% of their allowance/ pocket money on purchasing status brands as compared to Asians Indians and Coloureds (9.09%) and the Whites and other ethnic group (4.22%).

Table 29 illustrates the comparison made between the amount of allowance students spend on purchasing fashion clothing and gender.

Table 29: Comparisons of amount of allowances spent on purchasing fashion clothing compared to gender

Frequency Percent (%) Row Percent (%) Column Percent (%)	Males	Females	Total
51-100%	9	37	46
Percent (%)	1.34	5.51	6.86
Row Percent (%)	19.57	80.43	
Column (%)	3.47	8.98	
26-50%	46	128	174
Percent (%)	6.86	19.08	28.93
Row Percent (%)	26.44	73.56	
Column (%)	17.76	31.07	
11-25%	138	204	324
Percent (%)	20.57	30.40	50.97
Row Percent (%)	40.35	59.65	
Column (%)	53.28	49.51	
0-10%	66	43	109
Percent (%)	9.84	6.41	16.24
Row Percent (%)	60.55	38.45	
Column (%)	25.48	10.44	
Total	259	412	671
Percent (%)	38.60	61.40	100.00

It is evident from table 29 that 53.28% of the males who participated in this survey spend 11-25% of their allowances on purchasing fashion clothing and so does females (49.51%). The least amount of males (3.47%) as well as females (8.89%) spent between 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing. Of the total of 46 of respondents who indicated that they spend between 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing 80.43% were females and 19.57% were males.

(B12) The main finding is that females (49.51% of 412) and Males (53.28% of 259) mostly spend between 11-25% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

Table 30 reflects the results of the significant tests conducted.

Table 30: Statistical test conducted to test the comparisons made

Statistical Test	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square Test	3	40.4959	<0.0001
Cramer's V		0.2457	

Evident from table 30 is that the comparison made between the amount of allowances students spend on purchasing fashion clothing and gender is highly significant between males (25.48%) who spend 0-10% of their allowance/ pocket money on purchasing status brands as compared to females (10.44%). Also judging from the Cramer's V test is that there is the value 0.2 associations between the two variables of gender and the amount of allowance/ pocket money students spend on purchasing fashion clothing.

Of the 109 respondents who indicated that they spend between 0-10% of their allowance/ pocket money on fashion clothing, more males (25.45%) than females (10.44%) choose this option.

(B13) The main finding is that more females (8.98%) of the total female sample (412) than males (3.47%) are willing to spend almost all of their pocket money (50-100%) on fashion clothing. However more males (25.48%) from the total male sample (259) than females (10.44%) spend the minimum on fashion clothing (between 0-10% of their allowance/ pocket money). This indicates that there is a significant difference between males and females when they are compared on the highest percentage (50-100%) spent and the lowest percentage (0-10%) spent.

(d) Question 10

Do you over consume status brands?

Question 10 was formulated to determine the reasons behind students over consumption of status brands. The results are illustrated in table 31. Two constructs are measured in this question namely the influence of peers and self-image. Gender and ethnic groups were compared against these constructs. ANOVA was used as the statistical method to make comparison of these two constructs.

Tables 31 to 38 will now examine each of the statements that form part of question 10. Each statement will be interpreted separately.

Table 31: Statement 1: To be noticed by others

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	13	1.92	13	1.92
Often	29	4.28	42	6.19
Sometimes	226	33.33	268	39.53
Never	410	60.47	678	100.00

It can be depicted from table 31 that 60.47% of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others. Of the 678 respondents 33.33% sometimes over consume and 4.28% often over consume status brands in order to be noticed by others.

(B14) The main finding of table 31 is that the majority (60.47%) of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others.

Table 32: Statement 2: To gain respect from my peers

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	15	2.21	15	2.21
Often	16	2.36	31	4.57
Sometimes	107	15.78	138	20.35
Never	540	79.65	678	100.00

Table 32 illustrates that 79.65% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to gain respect from their peers. However 15.78% sometimes and 2.36% often over consume status brands in order to gain respect from their peers.

(B15) The main finding derived from table 32 is that 79.65% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to gain respect from their peers.

Table 33: Statement 3: To fit in amongst my peers

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	14	2.06	14	2.06
Often	19	2.80	33	4.87
Sometimes	188	27.73	221	32.60
Never	457	67.40	678	100.00

Table 33 depicts that 67.40% of respondents never over consume status brands to fit in amongst their peers, whereas 27.73% sometimes do and 2.80% often do over consume status brands to fit in amongst their peers.

(B16) The main finding depicted from table 33 that 67.40% of respondents never over consume status brands to fit in amongst their peers.

Table 34: Statement 4: In order to be popular

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	20	2.95	20	2.95
Often	9	1.33	29	4.28
Sometimes	70	10.32	99	14.60
Never	579	85.40	678	100.00

Evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular while 10.32% sometimes do and 1.33% often over consume in order to be popular.

(B17) The main finding evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular.

Table 35: Statement 5: Because I can afford it

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	8	1.18	8	1.18
Often	158	23.30	166	24.48
Sometimes	351	51.77	517	76.25
Never	161	23.75	678	100.00

It is clear from table 35 that 51.77% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands because they can afford it, 23.30% often and 23.75% never over consume because they can afford it.

(B18) The main finding from table 35 is that 51.77% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands because they can afford it.

Table 36: Statement 6: To enhance your self-image

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	13	1.92	13	1.92
Often	137	20.21	150	22.12
Sometimes	326	48.08	476	70.21
Never	202	29.97	678	100.00

It is evident from table 36 that 48.08% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands in order enhance their self image, 29.97% never and 20.21% often do.

(B19) The main finding from table 36 is that 48.08% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands in order enhance their self image.

Table 37: Statement 7: Because it shows who you are

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	13	1.92	13	1.92
Often	136	20.06	149	21.98
Sometimes	214	31.56	363	53.54
Never	315	46.46	678	100.00

Table 37 illustrates that 46.46% of the respondents never over consume status brands because it shows who they are, 31.56% sometimes over consume and 20.06% often over consume.

(B20) The main finding depicted from table 37 is that 46.46% of the respondents never over consume status brands because it shows who they are.

Table 38: Statement 8: Because of who I see using it

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	15	2.21	15	2.21
Often	23	3.39	38	5.60
Sometimes	188	27.73	226	33.33
Never	452	66.67	678	100.00

Evident from table 38 is that 66.67% of the respondents never over consume status brands because of who they see using it, 27.73% sometimes over consume and 3.39% often over consume because of who they see using it.

(B21) The main finding from tables 38 that 66.67% of the respondents never over consume status brands because of who they see using it.

The eight statements measured above were combined and then divided into two constructs namely influence of peers that encapsulated statements 1-4 and self-image that entailed statements 5-8. Table 39 examines the statistical outcomes from the comparison between the first construct namely influence of peers and gender.

Table 39: Statistical outcomes for comparison of influence of peers and gender

Influences of Peers	Males	Females
Mean	1.3397	1.2444
Standard Deviation	0.4063	0.3382
S.E.M	0.0253	0.0167
Sample Size	258	409
Minimum	1.0000	1.0000
Maximum	3.0000	2.5000

It can be depicted from table 39 that the difference between the two means of the genders that responded to the 4 statements encapsulated in the construct influences of peers is very small. The mean for males is 1.3397 and the mean for females is 1.244. Because the differences between the two means are small it therefore means that no significance can be drawn and the effect size is calculated.

By using an effect size according to Steyn (2000:1) as a measure of significance it is possible to make judgement concerning the importance of the difference between the means. The effect size once calculated = 0.26 which can be constituted as a medium effect which points towards a practical significance between the construct influence of peers and gender.

Because the null hypothesis is suppose to measure that both groups have equal means its evident that there is a practical difference in the differences between the two means, thereby not being equal.

Table 40 illustrates the test statistics used to test the influences of peers and gender.

Table 40: Test statistics used in comparison of influence of peers and gender

Test Statistics		P-Value	DF
Levene F for Variability	9.85	0.0017	1, 665
Pooled T	3.28	0.0011	665
Separated T	3.14	0.0018	473.7
Mann Whitney Test	60027.5	0.0013	

It is evident from table 41 that the test of Levene F for variability is significant ($P < 0.0017$) with one degree of freedom, therefore it is separated ($p < 0.0018$). The comparison between the construct, influences of peers, and gender is significant owing to the fact that the P-value for the separated T-test is 0.0018, which is less than 0.05.

(B22) The main finding of table 41 is that the comparison between the construct influences of peers and gender resulted in a significant difference between the two, due to the fact that the p-value for the separated T-test is 0.0018, which is less than 0.05.

Table 41 examines the statistical techniques used to measure the different ethnic groups in relations to the construct measuring the influence of peers.

Table 41: Statistical test used to compare ethnic groups on the influence of peers

Ethnic Groups	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Asians, Indians and Coloureds	46	1.28	0.39
Africans	149	1.29	0.39
Whites and others	471	1.28	0.36

As illustrated in table 41 it is clear that Africans have a slightly higher mean (1.29) than the Whites and Others (1.28) and the Asians, Indians and Coloureds (1.28) when compared on the construct, influence of peers.

Table 42 examines the ANOVA comparison of the statements (1-4) that measured the construct influences of peers and the different ethnic groups.

Table 42: ANOVA Comparison of the different ethnic groups on the influence of peers on the over consumption of status brands

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Value	Probability > F
Model	2	0.03080824	0.01540412	0.11	0.8933
Error	663	90.51366332	0.13652136		
Corrected Total	665	90.54447155			
	R-Square	Coefficient Variance	Root Mean Squared Error	Peers Mean	
	0.000340	28.3457	0.369488	1.281406	

Depicted from table 42 is at a 0.05 significance level, the f value is 0.11 thereby resulting in the probability being greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.8933$) thus showing no significance between the differing ethnic groups who over consume status brands because of the influence of their peers.

(B23) The main finding depicted by table 42 is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when choosing influence of peers as the reason for over-consumption of status brands.

The Scheffe's test was also conducted to compare ethnic groups on the influence of peers. This test controls the Type I experiment wise error rate, but it generally has a higher Type II error rate. The Scheffe's Test is illustrated in table 43. Group 1 refers to Asians, Indians and Coloureds, group 2 refers to Africans and group 3 refers to Whites and other ethnic groups. These groups were combined because the expected cell frequency was less than 0.05.

Table 43: Scheffe's Test illustrating the comparison of the different ethnic groups.

Ethnic group comparison	Differences between the means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits
2-1	0.00920	-0.14369 0.16210
2-3	0.01638	-0.06882 0.10158
1-2	-0.00920	-0.16210 0.14369
1-3	0.00717	-0.13285 0.14720
3-2	-0.01638	-0.10158 0.06882
3-1	-0.00717	-0.14720 0.13285

Comparisons significant at the 0.05 levels are indicated by ***. However there are no comparisons that are significant amongst the different groups. Table 43 illustrates that group 2 does not differ from group 1 in terms of being influenced by peers to over consume status brands, group 2 does not differ from group 3 and group 1 also does not differ from group 3.

(B24) The main finding of table 43 is that there is no difference between the different ethnic groups when compared on the influence of peers on over-consumption of status brands.

Tables 44 to 47 will now examine the construct self-concept/ image, which includes statements 5-8, in relation to the over consumption of status brands.

Table 44 examines the statistical outcomes for the comparison of the construct self-concept/ image and gender

Table 44: Statistical outcomes for comparison of self concept/ image and gender

Self-concept/ image	Males	Females
Mean	1.8057	1.7193
Standard Deviation	0.4627	0.4967
S.E.M	0.0287	0.0244
Sample Size	260	414

The mean effect size for the table above is 0.18, which can be constituted as a small effect, and this illustrates practically no significance.

(B25) The main finding of table 44 is that there is not a significant difference between the means of the two gender groups when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

Table 45 illustrates the test statistics used to compare the construct of self-concept/ image to gender.

Table 45: Test statistics used in comparison

Test Statistics		P-Value	DF
Levene F for Variability	0.86	0.3549	1.672
Pooled T	2.26	0.0240	672
Separated T	2.29	0.0222	579.3
Mann Whitney Test	59992.0	0.0111	

Observed from table 45 is that the p value for the Levene F for variability is 0.3549 which highlights that there is no significant difference therefore it is not separated. The p-value for the Separated T-test is 0.0222, which shows that there is no significance between the comparisons of the respondents when comparing the two gender groups on the influence of self-concept/ image. Table 46 illustrates the results of the ANOVA test used to compare various ethnic groups to determine if there is a significant difference between the groups in terms of over consumption of status brands.

Table 46: ANOVA Test for the comparison of self-concept/ image and ethnicity

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Value	Probability > F
Model	2	3.7519987	1.8759994	8.12	0.0003
Error	670	154.7846737	0.2310219		
Corrected Total	672	158.5366724			
	R-Square	Coefficient Variance	Root Mean Squared Error	Peers Mean	
	0.023666	27.42288	0.480647	1.752724	

It is observed from table 46 that the f-value is 8.12 thereby resulting in the probability being 0.0003, which is less than the significance level of 0.05 therefore illustrating that the comparison between the construct self-concept/ image and ethnicity is significant.

(B26) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between males and females when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on over-consumption of status brands. There is however a significant difference between the various ethnic groups with regards to the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

The Scheffe's test was also conducted for ethnicity in order to determine if there was any significant difference amongst the different ethnic groups. This is illustrated in table 47:

Table 47: Scheffe's test illustrating comparison of self-concept/ image and the different ethnic groups

Ethnic group comparison	Differences between the means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits	
Africans –Asians, Indians and Coloureds	0.11116	-0.08757	0.30989
Africans – Whites and other	0.18061	0.07023	0.29099 ***
Asians, Indians and Coloureds - Africans	-0.11116	-0.30989	0.08757
Asians, Indians and Coloureds – Whites and other	0.06945	-0.11259	0.25150
Whites and other - Africans	-0.18061	-0.29099	-0.07023***
White and others - Asians, Indians and Coloureds	-0.06945	-0.25150	0.11259

The comparisons significant at the 0.05 levels are indicated by ***. From table 38 it can be observed that there is a significant difference between Africans and Whites and other in terms of over consuming status brands in order to improve one's self-concept/ image. There, however was no significant difference between Asians, Indians Coloureds and Africans, also no difference exist between Asians, Indians, Coloureds and Whites and others.

(B27) The main finding derived from table 47 is that the Africans and Whites and others differ significantly when compared on self-concept/image as the reason for over-consumption of status brands. There is however not a significant difference between Africans and Asians, Indians and Coloureds as well as White and the same group.

(e) Question 11

Please indicate your agreement/ disagreement with the following statements where 1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree.

Tables 48- 66 will report on the descriptive statistics derived from the statements in question 11.

Table 48: Statement 1: I am interested in brand named fashion clothing

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	5	0.74	5	0.74
Strongly Agree	131	19.32	136	20.06
Agree	275	40.56	411	60.62
Uncertain	122	17.99	533	78.61
Disagree	100	14.75	633	93.36
Strongly Disagree	45	6.64	678	100.00

It is evident from table 48 that 40.56% of the overall 678 respondents who responded to this question agreed that they are interested in brand named fashion clothing. Whereas 19.32% strongly agreed, 17.99% were uncertain, 14.75% disagreed with the statement and 6.64% strongly disagreed.

(B28) The main finding from this table is that most of the respondents (40.56%) agreed that they are interested in brand names fashion clothing.

Table 49: Statement 2: I would buy clothing just because it has status

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	3	0.44	3	0.44
Strongly Agree	24	3.54	27	3.98
Agree	87	12.83	114	16.81
Uncertain	122	17.99	236	34.81
Disagree	203	29.94	439	64.75
Strongly Disagree	239	35.25	678	100.00

Table 49 illustrates that 35.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement, 29.94% disagreed, and 17.99% are uncertain, 12.83% agreed and 3.54% strongly agreed.

(B29) The main finding depicted in table 49 is that most of the respondents either strongly disagreed (35.25%) or disagreed (29.94%) that they buy clothing just because it has status.

Table 50: Statement 3: I would pay more for status brand fashion clothing

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	3	0.44	3	0.44
Strongly Agree	83	12.24	86	12.68
Agree	226	33.33	312	46.02
Uncertain	137	20.21	449	66.22
Disagree	97	14.31	546	80.53
Strongly Disagree	132	19.47	678	100.00

Table 50 shows that 33.33% of the respondents agreed that they would pay more for status brand fashion clothing and 12.24% strongly agreed, 20.21% are uncertain, 19.47% strongly disagreed and 14.31% disagreed.

(B30) The main finding evident from table 50 is that 45.57% of the respondents were in agreement that they would pay more for status brand fashion clothing as compared to the 33.78% who were in disagreement.

Table 51: Statement 4: Status brands are more valuable to me if it looks expensive

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	44	6.49	48	7.08
Agree	141	20.80	189	27.88
Uncertain	141	20.80	330	48.68
Disagree	158	23.30	488	71.98
Strongly Disagree	190	28.02	678	100.00

It is clear from table 51 that 28.02% of the respondents strongly disagreed that status brands are more valuable to them if it looks expensive, 23.30% disagreed, 20.80% were uncertain and also agreed and 6.49% strongly agreed.

(B31) The main finding is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (28.02%) or disagreed (23.30%) that status brands are more valuable to them if it looks expensive than those that strongly agreed (6.49%) and agreed (20.80%).

Table 52: Statement 5: I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	3	0.44	3	0.44
Strongly Agree	104	15.34	107	15.78
Agree	214	31.56	321	47.35
Uncertain	134	19.76	455	67.11
Disagree	119	17.55	574	84.66
Strongly Disagree	104	15.34	678	100.00

Evident from table 52 is that 31.56% of the respondents agreed that they were interested in fashion clothing if it signals symbols of success and 15.34% strongly agreed. Whereas 19.76% were uncertain, 17.55% disagreed and 15.34% strongly disagreed with being interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success.

(B32) The main finding depicted from table 52 is that 46.88% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success as compared to the 32.89% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 53: Statement 6: I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	7	1.03	7	1.03
Strongly Agree	81	11.95	88	12.98
Agree	209	30.83	287	43.81
Uncertain	148	21.83	445	65.63
Disagree	127	18.73	572	84.37
Strongly Disagree	106	15.63	678	100.00

Table 53 illustrates that 30.83% of the respondents agreed that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige, 21.83% were uncertain, 18.73% disagreed, 15.63% strongly disagreed and 11.95% strongly agreed.

(B33) The main finding is that respondents mostly agreed (30.83%) that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige.

Table 54: Statement 7: I am interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	42	6.19	46	6.78
Agree	132	19.47	178	26.25
Uncertain	149	21.98	327	48.23
Disagree	181	26.70	508	74.93
Strongly Disagree	170	25.07	678	100.00

It is clear from table 54 that 26.70% of respondents disagreed with being interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth, 25.07% strongly disagreed, 21.98% were uncertain, 19.47% agreed and 6.19% strongly agreed.

(B34) The main finding of table 54 is that more than half of the respondents (51.77%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth.

Table 55: Statement 8: Status brands enhance my image amongst my peers

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	35	5.16	39	5.75
Agree	109	16.08	148	21.83
Uncertain	142	20.94	290	42.77
Disagree	169	24.93	459	67.70
Strongly Disagree	219	32.30	678	100.00

Tables 55 depicts that the highest percentage of respondents (32.30%) strongly disagreed that status brands enhances their image amongst their peers, 24.93% disagreed, 20.94% were uncertain 16.08% agreed and 5.16% strongly agreed.

(B35) The main finding evident from table 55 is that the majority of the respondents were in disagreement (57.23%) that status brands enhance their image amongst their peers.

Table 56: Statement 9: The status brand of fashion clothing is irrelevant to me

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	5	0.74	5	0.74
Strongly Agree	145	21.39	150	22.12
Agree	139	20.50	289	42.63
Uncertain	152	22.42	441	65.04
Disagree	159	23.45	600	88.50
Strongly Disagree	78	11.50	678	100.00

Depicted from table 56 is that 23.45% of the respondents disagreed that status brands of fashion clothing were irrelevant to them, 22.42% were uncertain, 21.39% strongly agreed, 20.50% agreed and 11.50% strongly disagreed.

(B36) The main finding derived from table 56 is that slightly more respondents were in agreement (41.87%) that the status brand of fashion clothing was irrelevant to them than those who were in disagreement (34.95%).

Table 57: Statement 10: Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	6	0.88	6	0.88
Strongly Agree	53	7.82	59	8.70
Agree	132	19.47	191	28.17
Uncertain	138	20.35	329	48.53
Disagree	171	25.22	500	73.75
Strongly Disagree	178	26.25	678	100.00

Illustrated in table 57 is that 26.25% strongly disagreed that fashion clothing is central to their identity as a person, 25.22% disagreed, 20.35% were uncertain, 19.47% agreed and 7.82% strongly disagreed.

(B37) The main finding from table 57 is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (26.25%) or disagreed (25.22%) that fashion clothing is central to their identity as a person than those who agreed (19.47%) or strongly agreed (7.82%).

Table 58: Statement 11: I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	3	0.44	3	0.44
Strongly Agree	74	10.91	77	11.36
Agree	201	29.65	278	41.00
Uncertain	132	19.47	410	60.47
Disagree	146	21.53	556	82.01
Strongly Disagree	122	17.99	678	100.00

It is clear from table 58 that 29.65% of the respondents agreed that they feel a sense of personal satisfaction when wearing status brands fashion clothing, 21.53% disagreed, 19.47% were uncertain, 17.99% strongly disagreed and 10.91% strongly agreed.

(B38) The main finding of table 58 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were either in agreement (40.56%) or disagreement (39.52%) that they feel a personal sense of satisfaction when they wear status brand fashion clothing.

Table 59: Statement 12: I get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	5	0.74	5	0.74
Strongly Agree	75	11.06	80	11.80
Agree	182	26.84	262	38.64
Uncertain	137	20.21	399	58.85
Disagree	148	21.83	547	80.68
Strongly Disagree	131	19.32	678	100.00

Table 59 depicts that 26.84% of the respondents agreed that they get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing status brands, 21.83% disagreed, 20.21% were uncertain, 19.32% strongly disagreed and 11.06% agreed.

(B39) The main finding derived from table 59 is that slightly more of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed (41.15%) that they get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing than those who agreed or strongly agreed (37.90%).

Table 60: Statement 13: I would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image I want to convey

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	6	0.88	6	0.88
Strongly Agree	141	20.80	471	21.68
Agree	241	35.55	388	57.23
Uncertain	111	16.37	499	73.60
Disagree	103	15.19	602	88.79
Strongly Disagree	76	11.21	678	100.00

Table 60 illustrates that 35.55% of the respondents agreed that they would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image they want to convey, 20.80% strongly agreed, 16.37% were uncertain, 15.19% disagreed and 11.21% strongly disagreed.

(B40) The main finding evident from table 60 is that the majority of the respondents were in agreement (56.35%) that they would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image they want to convey.

Table 61: Statement 14: I am influenced by what is hot and what is not

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	5	0.74	5	0.74
Strongly Agree	67	9.88	72	10.62
Agree	164	24.19	236	34.81
Uncertain	142	20.94	378	55.75
Disagree	164	24.19	542	79.94
Strongly Disagree	136	20.06	678	100.00

Evident from table 61 is that 24.19% of the respondents both agreed and disagreed that they are influenced by what is hot and what is not while 20.94% were uncertain, 20.06% strongly disagreed and 9.88% strongly agreed.

(B41) The main finding as depicted in table 61 is that more respondents were in disagreement (44.25%) with the statement that they are influenced by what is hot and what is not than those who were in agreement (34.07%).

Table 62: Statement 15: I prefer to buy clothing my friends and neighbours approve of

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	28	4.13	32	4.72
Agree	110	16.22	142	20.94
Uncertain	133	19.62	275	40.56
Disagree	169	24.93	444	65.49
Strongly Disagree	234	34.51	678	100.00

It is clear from table 62 is that 34.51% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they prefer to buy clothing their friends and neighbours approve of, 24.93% disagreed, 19.62% were uncertain, 16.22% agreed and 4.13% strongly disagreed.

(B42) The main finding from table 62 is that the majority of the respondents either strongly disagreed (34.51%) or disagreed (24.93%) with the statement that they prefer to buy clothing their friends and neighbours approve of.

Table 63: Statement 16: I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	14	2.06	18	2.65
Agree	17	2.51	35	5.16
Uncertain	30	4.42	65	9.59
Disagree	93	13.72	158	23.30
Strongly Disagree	520	76.70	678	100.00

Table 63 illustrates that 76.70% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they choose their friends on the basis of what they wear, 13.72% disagreed, 4.42% were uncertain, 2.51% agreed and 2.06% strongly agreed.

(B43) The main finding depicted from table 63 is that an overwhelming majority of the respondents strongly disagreed (76.70%) with the statement that they choose their friends on the basis of what they wear.

Table 64: Statement 17: Comfort is more important than the brand name

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	5	0.74	5	0.74
Strongly Agree	395	52.95	364	53.69
Agree	179	26.40	543	80.09
Uncertain	84	12.39	627	92.48
Disagree	32	4.72	659	97.20
Strongly Disagree	19	2.80	678	100.00

Table 64 depicts that 52.95% of the respondents strongly agreed that comfort is more important than the brand name of fashion clothing, 26.40% agreed, 12.39% were uncertain, 4.72% disagreed and 2.80% strongly disagreed.

(B44) The main finding from table 64 is that more than half of the respondents (52.95%) were in strong agreement that comfort is more important than the brand name of fashion clothing.

Table 65: Statement 18: Quality is more important than price

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	6	0.88	6	0.88
Strongly Agree	336	49.56	342	50.44
Agree	220	32.45	562	82.89
Uncertain	77	11.36	639	94.25
Disagree	26	3.83	665	98.08
Strongly Disagree	13	1.92	678	100.00

Evident from table 65 is that 49.56% of the respondents strongly agreed that quality is more important than price, 32.45% agreed, 11.36% were uncertain, 3.83% disagreed and 1.92% strongly disagreed.

(B45) The main finding from table 65 is that a vast majority of the respondents were in agreement (82.01%) that quality is more important than price.

Table 66: Statement 19: Status brands make me feel more confident when socialising

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No response	4	0.59	4	0.59
Strongly Agree	91	13.42	95	14.01
Agree	166	24.48	261	38.50
Uncertain	169	24.93	430	63.42
Disagree	135	19.91	565	83.33
Strongly Disagree	11	16.67	678	100.00

Table 66 illustrates that 24.93% of the respondents were uncertain about whether status brands made them feel more comfortable when socialising, 24.48% agreed, 19.9% disagreed, 16.67% strongly disagreed and 13.42% strongly agreed.

(B46) The main finding evident from table 66 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were in agreement (37.72%) or disagreement (36.58%) with the fact that status brands make them feel more confident when socialising. A large percentage of the respondents were also uncertain (24.93%).

Factor analysis was also conducted on question 11 in order to determine how many constructs were measured within that question. Originally it was assumed that it contained 3 different constructs but upon conducting this factor analysis it was found that this question only contained one construct, which is status consumption. Also the statement, quality is more important than price, on the questionnaire was deleted because the Cronbach Alpha was below 0.7. All other statements were re-coded with 5 being strongly agreed and 1 being strongly disagreed.

Table 67 illustrates the factor analysis conducted to measure the 1 construct of status consumption identified in question 11.

Table 67: Factor analysis conducted to measure question 11

Eigenvalue: 6.7680	Cronbach alpha: 0.8955		
Statements in question 11	Factor Loading	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach Alpha after deletion
I am interested in brand named clothing	0.570	0.39920	0.8900
I would buy clothing just because it has status	0.627	0.42184	0.8876
I would pay more for status brand fashion clothing	0.554	0.40583	0.8899
Status brands are more valuable to me if it looks expensive	0.606	0.40033	0.8887
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success	0.636	0.61547	0.8883
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige	0.663	0.66872	0.8874
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth	0.699	0.54545	0.8858
Status brands enhances my image amongst my peers	0.659	0.45472	0.8869
Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person	0.554	0.34994	0.8911
I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing	0.770	0.62094	0.8845
I get a sense of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing	0.741	0.60682	0.8850
I would pay extra or a product that is consistent with the image I wan to convey	0.564	0.33078	0.8904
I am influenced by what is hot and what is not	0.500	0.29990	0.8913

I prefer to buy clothing my friends and neighbours approve of	0.355	0.25182	0.8957
I choose friends on the basis of what they wear	0.260	0.22578	0.8985
Status brands make me feel more confident when socialising	0.716	0.49502	0.8858
The status brand of fashion clothing is irrelevant to me	0.413	0.25016	0.8945
Comfort is more important than price	0.321	0.15703	0.8968

Table 67 illustrates all the statements within this question have a Cronbach Alpha of 0.8, therefore indicating that it is a reliable measuring instrument. Statement 18 was omitted because it contained a Cronbach alpha value lower than 0.70.

Factor loading is the means of interpreting the role each variable plays in the defining factor. It is therefore evident from table 67 that statement 11 (I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing) has the highest factor loading of 0.770. Statement 11 therefore indicates that it has the highest degree of correspondence to the factor of status consumption measured. Statement 16 (I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear) had the lowest factor loading (0.260) indicating that it has the lowest degree of correspondence to the factor measured.

(B47) The main finding of table 39 is that the highest factor loading (0.770) is statement 11 (I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing), which indicates that it has the highest degree of correspondence to the factor of status consumption measured and the lowest degree of correspondence to the factor (0.260) is statement 16 (I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear).

Table 68 illustrates the results of the Scheffe test that was conducted to compare the respondents who indicated they spend a certain percentage of their allowance/ pocket

money on fashion clothing against the factor of status consumption identified in question 11.

Table 68: Scheffe's test for Question 11

Question 9 Comparison	Difference Between Means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Intervals	
(50-100%) - (26-50%)	0.33990	0.01136	0.66844***
(50-100%) - (11-25%)	0.55431	0.24304	0.86557***
(50-100%) - (0-10%)	0.82071	0.47229	1.16914***
(26-50%) - (50-100%)	-0.33990	-0.66844	-0.01136***
(26-50%) - (11-25%)	0.21441	0.02978	0.39903***
(26-50%) - (0-10%)	0.48081	0.23874	0.72288***
(11-25%) - (50-100%)	-0.55431	-0.86557	-0.24304***
(11-25%) - (26-50%)	-0.21441	-0.39903	-0.02978***
(11-25%) - (0-10%)	0.26641	0.04836	0.48445***
(0-10%) - (50-100%)	-0.82071	-1.16914	0.47229***
(0-10%) - (26-50%)	-0.48081	-0.72288	-0.23874***

Observed from table 68 is that all the comparisons are significant and this is denoted by ***. All these comparisons are significant at a 0.05 level. All the options once combined highlights that there is a significant difference between all the statements measured in question 11, with the omission of statement 18, and question 9 when compared against the amount of allowance / pocket money respondents spend on purchasing fashion clothing.

(B48) The main finding of table 68, which is the Scheffe test, is that there is a significant differences between all the different groups of the amount of allowance/ pocket money respondents spend on fashion clothing and the factor of status consumption identified in question 11.

Table 69 is an ANOVA table comparing gender groups (question 3), ethnic groups (question 4) and groups based on the percentage of money they spend on fashion clothing (question 9) on the factor of status consumption identified in question 11.

Table 69: ANOVA table comparing question 11 to questions 3, 4 and 9

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Probability >F
Model	6	51.8240354	8.6373392	17.28	<0.0001
Error	663	331.4630523	0.4999443		
Corrected Total	669	383.2870877			
	R-square	Co-efficient of Variance	Root Mean Square Error	Question 11 Mean	
	0.135209	26.25622	0.707067	2.692952	
Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Probability >F
Gender	1	22.81466475	22.81466475	45.63	<0.0001
Ethnic groups	2	1.39692958	0.69846479	1.40	0.2480
% on monthly allowance money spent on fashion clothing	3	40.49390265	13.49796755	27.00	<0.0001

It can be depicted from table 69 that the results of the comparison between question 11 and question 3 based on gender, and question 9 based on the percentage of allowances spent on fashion clothing are highly significant because the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance. However there is no significance between question 4 based on ethnic groups and question 11 due to the fact that the probability is greater than 0.05.

(B49) The main finding depicted from table 69 is that there is a significant difference between males and females when compared on status consumption. There is also a significant difference between the groups identified by the percentage they spend on fashion clothing when compared on status consumption. There is however not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when compared on the factor status consumption.

Pearson's product moment correlation was conducted in order to compare question 11 with question 10. To reiterate, question 10 was divided into two constructs, that of influence of peers and self-concept/ image. Under these two constructs the statements were divided into 1-4 being influence of peers and 5-8 being self- concept/ image. This is illustrated in table 70.

Table 70: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between question 11 and 10

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Probability > r under HO: rho=0 No. of Observations	Self-concept/ image	Peers	Question 11
Self-concept/ image Probability > r under HO: rho=0 No. of Observations	1.00000 674	0.45387 <0.0001 664	0.54991 <0.0001 674
Influence of peers Probability > r under HO: rho=0 No. of Observations	0.45387 <0.0001 664	1.00000 667	0.48888 <0.0001 667
Question 11 Probability > r under HO: rho=0 No. of Observations	0.54991 <0.0001 674	0.48888 <0.0001 667	1.00000 678

Depicted from table 70 is that there is a positive correlation (<0.0001) between construct 1 (influence of peers) and question 11 based on status consumption because the results are lower than the 0.05 significance level. There is also a positive correlation (<0.0001) between construct 2 (self-concept/ image) and question 11 based on status consumption.

(B50) The main finding of table 70 is that there is a positive correlation between the influence of peers and self-concept/ image and status consumption.

(f) Question 12

Please indicate how important the following reasons are when you purchase status brands fashion clothing where VI= very important, I= Important and NI = not important.

Table 71-77 illustrates the descriptive statistical results for each of the statements that formed part of question 12.

Table 71: Statement1: To look expensive

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	10	1.47	10	1.47
Very Important	39	5.75	49	7.23
Important	208	30.68	257	37.91
Not Important	421	62.09	678	100.00

Evident from table 71 is that 62.09% of the respondents felt that purchasing status brands to look expensive was not important, while 30.68% thought it was important and 5.75% thought that it was very important.

(B51) The main finding is that the majority of the respondents (62.09%) felt that purchasing status brands to look expensive was not important.

Table 72: Statement 2: To look good

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	8	1.18	8	1.18
Very Important	430	63.42	438	64.60
Important	219	32.30	657	96.90
Not Important	21	3.10	678	100.00

Table 72 depicts that 63.42% of the respondents thought it was very important to purchase status brands to look good, 32.30% thought it was important and 3.10% thought it was not important.

(B52) The main finding depicted from table 72 is that the majority of respondents (63.42%) thought it was very important to purchase status brands to look good.

Table 73: Statement 3: To create a specific image

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	9	1.33	9	1.33
Very Important	185	27.29	194	28.61
Important	328	48.38	522	76.99
Not Important	156	23.01	678	100.00

It can be depicted from table 73 that 48.38% of the respondents thought that it was important to purchase status brands to create a specific image, while 27.29% thought it was very important and 23.01% thought it was not important.

(B53) The main finding from table 73 is that 48.38% of the respondents thought that it was important to purchase status brands to create a specific image.

Table 74: Statement 4: To fit in amongst peers

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	10	1.47	10	1.47
Very Important	28	4.13	38	5.60
Important	178	26.25	216	31.86
Not Important	462	64.14	678	100.00

Table 74 illustrates that 64.41% of the respondents thought it was not important to purchase status brand in order to fit in amongst peers, 26.25% thought it was important and 4.13% thought it was very important.

(B54) The main finding from table 74 is that more than half of the respondents (64.41%) thought it was not important to purchase status brand in order to fit in amongst peers.

Table 75: Statement 5: To get a good quality of clothing

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	10	1.47	10	1.47
Very Important	461	67.99	471	69.47
Important	189	27.88	660	97.35
Not Important	18	2.65	678	100.00

It is clear from table 75 that 67.99% of the respondents felt that it is very important to get a good quality of clothing, 27.88% felt that it was important and 2.65% felt it was not important.

(B55) The main finding evident from table 75 is that that 67.99% of the respondents felt that it is very important to get a good quality of clothing.

Table 76: Statement 6: To boost my image

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	9	1.33	9	1.33
Very Important	121	17.85	130	19.17
Important	307	45.28	437	64.45
Not Important	241	35.55	678	100.00

Table 76 depicts that 45.28% of respondents felt that purchasing status brands of fashion clothing was important to boost their image, 35.55% felt it was not important and 17.85% thought it was very important.

(B56) The main finding from table 76 is that more respondents (63.13%) felt that the purchasing of status brands to boost their image was either important (45.28%) or very important (17.85%) than those who regard it as being unimportant (35.55%).

Table 77: Statement 7: To boost my self-esteem

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	8	1.18	8	1.18
Very Important	158	23.30	166	24.48
Important	290	42.77	456	67.26
Not Important	222	32.74	678	100.00

It is evident from table 77 that 42.77% of the respondents felt that purchasing status brands to boost their self-esteem was important, 32.74% felt it was not important and 23.30% felt that it was very important.

(B57) The main finding from table 77 is that more respondents (66.07%) felt that purchasing of status brands were either important (42.77%) or very important (23.30%) than those who regarded it as being unimportant (32.74%) to boost their self-esteem.

For question 12 the respondents had to indicate the importance they attach to certain reasons when purchasing status brands. In order to perform the necessary statistical procedure the question was recoded where very important = 3 and not important = 1. The results are depicted in table 78. The count refers to the weighted frequency. It is the sum of all the scores on that specific statement and the more threes the higher the number of the count.

Table 78: Analysis of question 12

Statements in question 12	Count	Percent (%)
To get a good quality of clothing	1781	19.20
To look good	1754	18.91
To create a specific image	1384	14.92
To boost my self esteem	1276	13.76
To boost my image	1218	13.13
To look expensive	955	10.29
To fit in amongst peers	905	9.75

Based on the results depicted in table 78 it is clear that the quality of clothing was regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) when purchasing status brands, followed by to look good (18.91%), to create a specific image (14.92%), to boost self-esteem (13.76%), to boost image (13.13%), to look expensive (10.29%) and the least was to fit in amongst peers (9.75%).

(B58) Main findings as derived from table 78 are that good quality of clothing is regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) and to fit in amongst peers as the least important reason (9.75%) when purchasing status brands.

Comparisons were also conducted between question 12 and question 3 based on gender. The results are illustrated in table 79.

Table 79: Comparison between questions 12 and gender (question 3)

Statements in question 12	Count	Percent (%) of Males	Statements in question 12	Count	Percent (%) of Females
To get a good quality of clothing	685	18.88	To get a good quality of clothing	1096	19.42
To look good	679	18.72	To look good	1075	19.04
To create a specific image	550	15.16	To create a specific image	834	14.77
To boost my self esteem	495	13.64	To boost my self esteem	781	13.84
To boost my image	481	13.26	To boost my image	737	13.05
To fit in amongst peers	371	10.23	To look expensive	588	10.42
To look expensive	367	10.12	To fit in amongst peers	534	9.46

Evident from table 79 is that both males (18.18%) and females (19.42%) respondents regard to get a good quality of clothing as the most important reason for purchasing status brands. To fit in amongst peers is the least important reason for females (9.46%) whereas males (10.12%) regard the expensive look as the least important reason.

(B59) The main finding is that males (18.88%) and females (19.42%) respondents agree that the most important reason for purchasing fashion clothing is the quality of clothing. Males and females however differ in their rating of the least important reason, where males indicated that the expensive look (10.12%) is the least important reason and females regard fitting in amongst peers (9.46%) as the least important reason.

Question 12 was also compared against question 4, which is the different ethnic groups, and this is illustrated in table 80.

Table 80: Comparison of question 12 to ethnicity (question 4)

A, I & C			Africans			Whites and other		
Statements	Count	%	Statements	Count	%	Statements	Count	%
To get a good quality of clothing	119	19.07	To look good	420	19.31	To get a good quality of clothing	1261	19.52
To look good	113	18.12	To get a good quality of clothing	398	18.29	To look good	1218	18.85
To boost my self-esteem	94	15.06	To create a specific image	344	15.81	To create a specific image	950	14.70
To create a specific image	88	14.10	To boost my self-esteem	301	13.84	To boost my self-esteem	879	13.60
To boost my image	86	13.78	To boost my image	291	13.38	To boost my image	840	13.00
To look expensive	68	10.89	To fit in amongst peers	216	9.93	To look expensive	681	10.54
To fit in amongst peers	56	8.97	To look expensive	205	9.43	To fit in amongst peers	632	9.78

Table 80 illustrates that 19.07% of the Asians, Indians, Coloureds and 19.52% of Whites and other regarded getting a good quality of clothing when purchasing status brands as the most important reasons whereas Africans regarded looking good (19.31%) as the most important. Asians, Indians, Coloureds (8.97%) and Whites and other ethnic groups (9.87%) considered fitting in amongst peers to be the least important. Africans however regarded looking expensive (9.43%) to be the least important.

(B60) The main findings from table 80 are that Asians, Indians and Coloureds (19.07%) and Whites and other ethnic groups (19.52%) agreed that to get good quality clothing was the most important reason for purchasing status brands whereas the Africans regard to look good (19.31%) as the most important reason. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds and the Whites and others also agreed that to fit in amongst their peers was the least important reason whereas the Africans indicated that to look expensive was the least important reason.

In this section the results were reported on a question-by-question format. Statistical tests were conducted where necessary and results were commented on. Certain main findings were formulated throughout the section. The final section of this chapter will provide a summary of these main findings.

6.3 MAIN FINDINGS

A number of main findings were derived from this research and will be consolidated in this section to form the main findings of this study. The findings listed in this section will be used in the final chapter (chapter 7) to address the objectives and hypotheses formulated for this study.

(A1) The main finding from table 13 is that most of the respondents were between the ages of 17-21 years of age.

(A2) The main finding from question 3 depicted in table 14 is that more female respondents completed the questionnaire as compared to the males.

(A3) The main finding derived from question 4 and illustrated in table 15 is that there were more Whites (69.67%) as compared to the cumulative percentage 29.50% of the other groups that filled out the questionnaire.

(A4) The main finding from table 16 is that the majority of respondents were third year students (53.39%) followed by second year (24.04%) and then first year students (20.80%).

(A5) The main finding of table 17 is that the majority of respondents (39.09%) are registered for BCom Marketing Management, followed by BCom Internal Auditing (10.62%) and BCom Communication Management (8.55%).

(B1) The main finding of table 18 is that the majority of students (88.05%) tend to purchase both status and department store brands.

(B2) The main finding is that the majority of males and female students prefer to purchase both department store brands and status brands. However there is a higher percentage of males (6.49%) from the total male sample that only purchase status brands than females (0.97%). Whereas more females (10.17% of 413) than males (5.73% of 262) prefer to purchase only departmental store brands.

(B3) The main finding of table 20 illustrates that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.0001$) with females being more prone to buying only departmental store brands than males and males being more prone to purchase only status brands than females.

(B4) The main finding derived from table 21 is that the majority of Whites and Other students (89.92%), Africans (82.24%) and Asians, Indians and Coloureds (93.48%) prefer to purchase both status brands and department store brands.

(B5) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups regarding their choice of status brands and department store brands where the majority of all ethnic groups prefer to purchase a combination of department store brands and status brands.

(B6) The main finding from table 23 is that students are more prone to purchase the Woolworths (7.31%), department store brand, as compared to the other brands.

(B7) The main finding from table 24 is that female respondents most often buy department store brands such as Woolworths (7.68%), Fochini (7.31%) and Mr. Price (7.18%) where as the male respondents buy status brands such as Levis (7.68%), Nike (7.59%) and Billabong (7.00%) most often.

(B8) The main finding is that a marginal percentage of Whites and others buy department store brands more often than the other ethnic groups, which include Africans, Asians, Indians and Coloureds.

(B9) The main finding from table 26 is that the majority of students (50.44%) spend 11-25% of their allowances on the purchasing of fashion clothing.

(B10) The main finding derived from table 27 is that of the Whites and others that responded to this question more than half (52.53%) spends 11-25% of their allowance/ pocket money on fashion clothing. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds (45.45%) as well as the Africans (47.37%) also mostly spend between 11-25%. However a higher percentage of Africans (14.47%) as compared to Whites and others (4.22%) spend 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

(B11) The main finding is that there is a significance difference between the percentage of Africans (14.47%) who spend 51-100% of their allowance/ pocket money on purchasing status brands as compared to Asians Indians and Coloureds (9.09%) and the Whites and other ethnic group (4.22%).

(B12) The main finding is that females (49.51% of 412) and Males (53.28% of 259) mostly spend between 11-25% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

(B13) The main finding is that more females (8.98%) of the total female sample (412) than males (3.47%) are willing to spend almost all of their pocket money (50-100%) on fashion clothing. However more males (25.48%) from the total male sample (259) than females (10.44%) spend the minimum on fashion clothing (between 0-10% of their allowance/

pocket money). This indicates that there is a significant difference between males and females when they are compared on the highest percentage (50-100%) spent and the lowest percentage (0-10%) spent.

(B14) The main finding of table 31 is that the majority (60.47%) of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others.

(B15) The main finding derived from table 32 is that 79.65% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to gain respect from their peers.

(B16) The main finding depicted from table 33 that 67.40% of respondents never over consume status brands to fit in amongst their peers.

(B17) The main finding evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular.

(B18) The main finding from table 35 is that 51.77% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands because they can afford it.

(B19) The main finding from table 36 is that 48.08% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands in order enhance their self image.

(B20) The main finding depicted from table 37 is that 46.46% of the respondents never over consume status brands because it shows who they are.

(B21) The main finding from tables 38 that 66.67% of the respondents never over consume status brands because of who they see using it.

(B22) The main finding of table 41 is that the comparison between the construct influences of peers and gender resulted in a significant difference between the two, due to the fact that the p-value for the separated T-test is 0.0018, which is less than 0.05.

(B23) The main finding depicted by table 42 is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when choosing influence of peers as the reason for over-consumption of status brands.

(B24) The main finding of table 43 is that there is no difference between the different ethnic groups when compared on the influence of peers on over-consumption of status brands.

(B25) The main finding of table 44 is that there is not a significant difference between the means of the two gender groups when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

(B26) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between males and females when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on over-consumption of status brands. There is however a significant difference between the various ethnic groups with regards to the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

(B27) The main finding derived from table 47 is that the Africans and Whites and others differ significantly when compared on self-concept/image as the reason for over-consumption of status brands. There is however not a significant difference between Africans and Asians, Indians and Coloureds as well as White and the same group.

(B28) The main finding from this table is that most of the respondents (40.56%) agreed that they are interested in brand names fashion clothing.

(B29) The main finding depicted in table 49 is that most of the respondents either strongly disagreed (35.25%) or disagreed (29.94%) that they buy clothing just because it has status.

(B30) The main finding evident from table 50 is that 45.57% of the respondents were in agreement that they would pay more for status brand fashion clothing as compared to the 33.78% who were in disagreement.

(B31) The main finding is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (28.02%) or disagreed (23.30) that status brands are more valuable to them if it looks expensive than those that strongly agreed (6.49%) and agreed (20.80%).

(B32) The main finding depicted from table 52 is that 46.88% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success as compared to the 32.89% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

(B33) The main finding is that respondents mostly agreed (30.83%) that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige.

(B34) The main finding of table 54 is that more than half of the respondents (51.77%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth.

(B35) The main finding evident from table 55 is that the majority of the respondents were in disagreement (57.23%) that status brands enhance their image amongst their peers.

(B36) The main finding derived from table 56 is that slightly more respondents were in agreement (41.87%) that the status brand of fashion clothing was irrelevant to them than those who were in disagreement (34.95%).

(B37) The main finding from table 57 is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (26.25%) or disagreed (25.22%) that fashion clothing is central to their identity as a person than those who agreed (19.47%) or strongly agreed (7.82%).

(B38) The main finding of table 58 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were either in agreement (40.56%) or disagreement (39.52%) that they feel a personal sense of satisfaction when they wear status brand fashion clothing.

(B39) The main finding derived from table 59 is that slightly more of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed (41.15%) that they get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing than those who agreed or strongly agreed (37.90%).

(B40) The main finding evident from table 60 is that the majority of the respondents were in agreement (56.35%) that they would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image they want to convey.

(B41) The main finding as depicted in table 61 is that more respondents were in disagreement (44.25%) with the statement that they are influenced by what is hot and what is not than those who were in agreement (34.07%).

(B42) The main finding from table 62 is that the majority of the respondents either strongly disagreed (34.51%) or disagreed (34.93%) with the statement that they prefer to buy clothing their friends and neighbours approve of.

(B43) The main finding depicted from table 63 is that an overwhelming majority of the respondents strongly disagreed (76.70%) with the statement that they choose their friends on the basis of what they wear.

(B44) The main finding from table 64 is that more than half of the respondents (52.95%) were in strong agreement that comfort is more important than the brand name of fashion clothing.

(B45) The main finding from table 65 is that a vast majority of the respondents were in agreement (82.01%) that quality is more important than price.

(B46) The main finding evident from table 66 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were in agreement (37.72%) or disagreement (36.58%) with the fact that status brands make them feel more confident when socialising. A large percentage of the respondents were also uncertain (24.93%).

(B47) The main finding of table 39 is that the highest factor loading (0.770) is statement 11 (I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing), which indicates that it has the highest degree of correspondence to the factor of status consumption measured and the lowest degree of correspondence to the factor (0.260) is statement 16 (I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear).

(B48) The main finding of table 68, which is the Scheffe test, is that there is a significant differences between all the different groups of the amount of allowance/ pocket money respondents spend on fashion clothing and the factor of status consumption identified in question 11.

(B49) The main finding depicted from table 69 is that there is a significant difference between males and females when compared on status consumption. There is also a significant difference between the groups identified by the percentage they spend on fashion clothing when compared on status consumption. There is however not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when compared on the factor status consumption.

(B50) The main finding of table 70 is that there is a positive correlation between the influence of peers and self-concept/ image and status consumption.

(B51) The main finding is that the majority of the respondents (62.09%) felt that purchasing status brands to look expensive was not important.

(B52) The main finding depicted from table 72 is that the majority of respondents (63.42%) thought it was very important to purchase status brands to look good.

(B53) The main finding from table 73 is that 48.38% of the respondents thought that it was important to purchase status brands to create a specific image.

(B54) The main finding from table 74 is that more than half of the respondents (64.41%) thought it was not important to purchase status brand in order to fit in amongst peers.

(B55) The main finding evident from table 75 is that that 67.99% of the respondents felt that it is very important to get a good quality of clothing.

(B56) The main finding from table 76 is that more respondents (63.13%) felt that the purchasing of status brands to boost their image was either important (45.28%) or very important (17.85%) than those who regard it as being unimportant (35.55%).

(B57) The main finding from table 77 is that more respondents (66.07%) felt that purchasing of status brands were either important (42.77%) or very important (23.30%) than those who regarded it as being unimportant (32.74%) to boost their self-esteem.

(B58) Main findings as derived from table 78 are that good quality of clothing is regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) and to fit in amongst peers as the least important reason (9.75%) when purchasing status brands.

(B59) The main finding is that males (18.88%) and females (19.42%) respondents agree that the most important reason for purchasing fashion clothing is the quality of clothing. Males and females however differ in their rating of the least important reason, where males indicated that the expensive look (10.12%) is the least important reason and females regard fitting in amongst peers (9.46%) as the least important reason.

(B60) The main findings from table 80 are that Asians, Indians and Coloureds (19.07%) and Whites and other ethnic groups (19.52%) agreed that to get good quality clothing was the most important reason for purchasing status brands whereas the Africans regard to look good (19.31%) as the most important reason. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds and the Whites and others also agreed that to fit in amongst their peers was the least important reason whereas the Africans indicated that to look expensive was the least important reason.

6.4 SUMMARY

Chapter six analysed the statistical results, test and procedures used in order to decipher the main findings of the relevant questions in the questionnaire. Findings were recorded and the main finding from all the relevant questions were further summarised in section 6.3. These main finding will form the basis of chapter seven where it will be compared against the research objectives and hypotheses.

The final chapter, chapter seven will conclude this research by providing conclusions and interpreting all the findings in relation to the research objectives and research hypotheses. This chapter will therefore illustrate which hypotheses should be rejected or not and

whether or not both primary and secondary objectives have been met. This chapter will also encapsulate recommendations that would include suggestions for future research. The recommendations will be based on the main findings recorded in section 6.3. In addition to recommendations of this study and limitations will also be given by which to conclude this research study.

CHAPTER 7

7 CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The research results and main findings were presented in chapter 6. Chapter 7 will conclude this research by providing conclusions and implications of the findings. The chapter will conclude by offering directions for future research.

In this chapter the hypothesis and objectives formulated in section 1.4, chapters 2 and 3 will be addressed. The main findings identified in chapter 6 will be used to accept or reject the hypotheses. Thereafter the research limitations will be listed and future research possibilities will be highlighted.

7.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES AND MAIN FINDINGS

In this section the various hypotheses identified in chapters 2 and 3 will be listed where after the main findings applicable to the hypothesis will be discussed. The relevant literature needed to address the hypotheses will also be summarised in order to formulate the necessary recommendations.

7.2.1 Hypothesis 1

Ho1: Status brands do not significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

Ha1: Status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.

The main findings addressing the research hypothesis and objective highlighted are as follows:

(B14) The main finding of table 31 is that the majority (60.47%) of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others.

(B17) The main finding evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular.

(B19) The main finding from table 36 is that 48.08% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands in order enhance their self image.

(B20) The main finding depicted from table 37 is that 46.46% of the respondents never over consume status brands because it shows who they are.

(B21) The main finding from tables 38 that 66.67% of the respondents never over consume status brands because of who they see using it.

(B37) The main finding from table 57 is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (26.25%) or disagreed (25.22%) that fashion clothing is central to their identity as a person than those who agreed (19.47%) or strongly agreed (7.82%).

(B38) The main finding of table 58 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were either in agreement (40.56%) or disagreement (39.52%) that they feel a personal sense of satisfaction when they wear status brand fashion clothing.

(B39) The main finding derived from table 59 is that slightly more of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed (41.15%) that they get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing than those who agreed or strongly agreed (37.90%).

(B40) The main finding evident from table 60 is that the majority of the respondents were in agreement (56.35%) that they would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image they want to convey.

(B50) The main finding of table 70 is that there is a positive correlation between the influence of peers and self-concept/ image and status consumption.

(B51) The main finding is that the majority of the respondents (62.09%) felt that purchasing status brands to look expensive was not important.

(B52) The main finding depicted from table 72 is that the majority of respondents (63.42%) thought it was very important to purchase status brands to look good.

(B53) The main finding from table 73 is that 48.38% of the respondents thought that it was important to purchase status brands to create a specific image.

(B56) The main finding from table 76 is that more respondents (63.13%) felt that the purchasing of status brands to boost their image was either important (45.28%) or very important (17.85%) than those who regard it as being unimportant (35.55%).

(B57) The main finding from table 77 is that more respondents (66.07%) felt that purchasing of status brands were either important (42.77%) or very important (23.30%) than those who regarded it as being unimportant (32.74%) to boost their self-esteem.

(B58) Main findings as derived from table 78 are that good quality of clothing is regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) and to fit in amongst peers as the least important reason (9.75%) when purchasing status brands.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho1 and Ho1) which was developed within section 2.4 of the study addresses the issue of consumer self-concept/ image. Self-concept/ image can be defined as the perceptions or views an individual has about ones self.

Hawkins et al. (1989:396) contend that self-concept/ image is, in fact, the personal basis of the lifestyle of an individual, since self-concept denotes the totality of one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions and evaluations of oneself.

Consumers' self-preference can have a strong influence on their behaviour in the marketplace. For example, the way an individual perceives products could be affected by the image the individual has of himself. Preferences might actually develop for certain brands because the consumer perceives them as reflecting their own self-image. Certain

other brands may be desired because the consumers views them as projecting an image that they do not possess but aspire to have (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1984:509).

The main findings regarding the creation of a better self-concept/ image depicted from the literature are as follows:

- Younger people are more likely to exhibit materialism and status tendencies.
- Clothing is required to make the wearer feel more confident, and better equipped to fulfil certain roles. Wearing certain clothes can have the psychological effect of reducing insecurities.
- Individuals define themselves by what they have done, what they have and their personal characteristics.
- Individuals develop preferences for certain brands because they perceive themselves as reflecting their own image.
- Consumers appear to hold images of various products and these images can be viewed as symbols that communicate meaning about those who purchase them.

Main findings B19, B38, B40, B50, B52-B53, and B56-B58 indicate that hypothesis Ho1 be rejected and the alternative hypothesis of status brands influencing the creation of a better self-concept / image among university students, be accepted.

The main findings derived from the empirical phase of this research illustrates that respondents admitted that they enjoyed wearing status branded clothing and that they benefit from the consumption socially as highlighted by main findings B19, B38, B40, B50, B52-B53, B56-B58. Status symbols are not only used to communicate with others but also for the purpose of conveying with one's self, to reinforce self-concept/ image.

The literature review indicated that fashion clothing is very important to younger individuals in terms of boosting their image, reducing insecurities, and creating the specific image they wanted to create in order to reflect the specific mage they wanted to reflect. The empirical research also revealed that students between the ages of 17-21 years of age over consume status brands to enhance their image that assist in reducing insecurities respondents might have of themselves. Status brands were also over consumed to signal success, prestige, to gain a personal sense of self-fulfilment and satisfaction from wearing

them, to look good and to boost one's self-esteem. Students also highlighted that the purchasing of status brands to boost their image was very important to them.

The secondary research objective of determining if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept/ image amongst university students was measured by research hypothesis 2. This research objective was addressed based on the integration of the main findings of the literature and the empirical findings.

Based on the integration of the literature review findings and the empirical findings of this study, the main conclusion, implication and recommendation can be derived.

The **main conclusion** is that although students believe that wearing or purchasing status brands are not central to their identity (B37), is not worn to be noticed by others (B14), be popular (B17) or to show who they are (B20) it has been highlighted in this study that students do over consume status brands in order to create a better self image for themselves and are more likely to exhibit materialism and status consumption tendencies towards status brands.

The **implication** is that South African marketers should be aware that students are more likely to exhibit more materialistic behaviours towards creating a better self-concept / image for themselves.

Recommendation: South African marketers with target markets between the ages of 17-21 that study at a University should keep in mind that brand advertising should be aimed at image creation rather than just informing the target market about the brand.

7.2.2 Hypothesis 2

Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.

The main findings addressing research hypothesis 2 and the secondary objective presented above are as follows:

(B14) The main finding of table 31 is that the majority (60.47%) of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others.

(B15) The main finding derived from table 32 is that 79.65% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to gain respect from their peers.

(B16) The main finding depicted from table 33 that 67.40% of respondents never over consume status brands to fit in amongst their peers.

(B17) The main finding evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular.

(B35) The main finding evident from table 55 is that the majority of the respondents were in disagreement (57.23%) that status brands enhance their image amongst their peers.

(B42) the main finding from table 62 is that the majority of the respondents either strongly disagreed (34.51%) or disagreed (34.93%) with the statement that they prefer to buy clothing their friends and neighbours approve of.

(B43) The main finding depicted from table 63 is that an overwhelming majority of the respondents strongly disagreed (76.70%) with the statement that they choose their friends on the basis of what they wear.

(B46) The main finding evident from table 66 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were in agreement (37.72%) or disagreement (36.58%) with the fact that status brands make them feel more confident when socialising. A large percentage of the respondents were also uncertain (24.93%).

(B47) The main finding of table 39 is that the highest factor loading (0.770) is statement 11 (I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing), which indicates that it has the highest degree of correspondence to the factor of status

consumption measured and the lowest degree of correspondence to the factor (0.260) is statement 16 (I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear).

(B50) The main finding of table 70 is that there is a positive correlation between the influence of peers and self-concept/ image and status consumption.

(B54) The main finding from table 74 is that more than half of the respondents (64.41%) thought it was not important to purchase status brand in order to fit in amongst peers.

(B58) Main findings as derived from table 78 are that good quality of clothing is regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) and to fit in amongst peers as the least important reason (9.75%) when purchasing status brands.

The hypothesis (Ho2 and Ha2) was developed to test the second secondary research objective and it was developed from the relevant literature in chapter 2, section 2.6 of this study. This section addresses the issue of reference groups, which is one of the external influences of consumer behaviour.

It was argued by Assael (2004:401) that reference groups influence members' behaviour if they were cohesive (members had similar norms and values), if they were frequently interacting, thus creating more opportunities to influence members and also if they were distinctive and exclusive in that membership of the groups were highly valued.

The main findings evident from the literature are as follows:

- Fitting in with peer groups is important to many adolescents and clothing is used to symbolise the link between the individual and the group they wish to be accepted by.
- Buying branded clothes was important to individuals to demonstrate that they were not poor, and brands were a useful way of keeping up with others in the school.

It is evident from the main findings (B14-B17, B35, B42-B43, B54, and B58) of this research hypothesis that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative is rejected.

The null hypothesis states that university students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers

Although the main finding of the literature determined that those individuals do over consume status brands to fit in amongst peers, the empirical phase of this research proved different. The empirical phase of this research highlighted that students do not over consume to be noticed by others and be popular (B14 & B17), never to fit in amongst peers (B16), they disagreed that status brands enhances one's image amongst peers and they also found it not to be important to purchase status brands in order to fit in amongst peers.

Determining if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students was secondary research objective two. This objective was measured by hypothesis 2 and it can be concluded from the relevant main findings of literature and the empirical phase of this research that this objective was addressed.

Based on the integration of the literature review findings and the empirical findings of this study, the main conclusions, implications and recommendations can be derived:

The **main conclusion** is that there is a contradiction between the main findings of the literature review which states that individuals using clothing as a meaning of fitting in amongst groups and the empirical findings of this research that indicated that students do not over consume status brands in order to fit in amongst peers.

The **implication** would be that the students who formed part of this study are not influenced to over consume status brands as a meaning of fitting into social groups or amongst their peers.

Recommendation: Marketing communications of clothing brands aimed at University students should not rely on the influence of peers as an influencing mechanism. Marketing communications should rather focus on emphasising individuality instead of conformity to social norms.

7.2.3 Hypothesis 3

Ho3: Culture does not significantly influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.

The main findings relevant to research hypothesis 3 and secondary research objective 3 are as follows:

(A3) The main finding derived from question 4 and illustrated in table 15 is that there were more Whites (69.67%) as compared to the cumulative percentage 29.50% of the other groups that filled out the questionnaire.

(B4) The main finding derived from table 21 is that the majority of Whites and Other students (89.92%), Africans (82.24%) and Asians, Indians and Coloureds (93.48%) prefer to purchase both status brands and department store brands.

(B5) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups regarding their choice of status brands and department store brands where the majority of all ethnic groups prefer to purchase a combination of department store brands and status brands.

(B8) The main finding is that a marginal percentage of Whites and others buy department store brands more often than the other ethnic groups, which include Africans, Asians, Indians and Coloureds.

(B10) The main finding derived from table 27 is that of the Whites and others that responded to this question more than half (52.53%) spend 11-25% of their allowance/ pocket money on fashion clothing. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds (45.45%) as well as the Africans (47.37%) also mostly spend between 11-25%. However a higher percentage of Africans (14.47%) as compared to Whites and others (4.22%) spend 51-100% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

(B11) The main finding is that there is a significance difference between the percentage of Africans (14.47%) who spend 51-100% of their allowance/ pocket money on purchasing status brands as compared to Asians Indians and Coloureds (9.09%) and the Whites and other ethnic group (4.22%).

(B23) The main finding depicted by table 42 is that there is not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when choosing influence of peers as the reason for over-consumption of status brands.

(B24) The main finding of table 43 is that there is no difference between the different ethnic groups when compared on the influence of peers on over-consumption of status brands.

(B27) The main finding derived from table 47 is that the Africans and Whites and others differ significantly when compared on self-concept/image as the reason for over-consumption of status brands. There is however not a significant difference between Africans and Asians, Indians and Coloureds as well as White and the same group.

(B60) The main findings from table 80 are that Asians, Indians and Coloureds (19.07%) and Whites and other ethnic groups (19.52%) agreed that to get good quality clothing was the most important reason for purchasing status brands whereas the Africans regard to look good (19.31%) as the most important reason. The Asians, Indians and Coloureds and the Whites and others also agreed that to fit in amongst their peers was the least important reason whereas the Africans indicated that to look expensive was the least important reason.

Culture is defined by Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:397) as a set of learnt beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, and forms of behaviour that are shared by a society and are transmitted from one generation to the next by members of that society through language and symbols.

Students tend to form unique values and behaviour when university became a complex formal organisation. During the process of seeking collective entity they form subcultures (Chang, 2005:260).

The main findings of the literature review are as follows:

- Culture strongly influences one's consumer behaviour in terms of all individuals purchasing ability.
- Consumer decisions are affected by factors such as consumer culture.
- Culture can be viewed as an attribute that individuals take into consideration before or when purchasing a product.

The findings from the literature are consistent with the main findings of the empirical phase of this study, that culture does have an effect of the purchasing of status brands amongst individuals.

It can be derived from main findings B4, B5, B8, B23, and B24 that culture does not play a significant role in terms of students purchasing choices, therefore it can be concluded that the null hypothesis be accepted and the alternative rejected.

Hypothesis three (Ho3 and Ha3) was also developed based on the secondary research objective of determining if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands was investigated by this research hypothesis and was addressed. It was derived from the literature discussion in section 2.7.

The **main conclusion** therefore is that culture does not have an influence on students' decision-making processes in terms of consuming status brands.

The **implication** is that even though culture does not affects consumer behaviour when purchasing status clothing brand, it should still be considered as an important external influencing variable in the decision making process of students.

Recommendation: The marketers concerned should therefore realise that different culture groups have different viewpoints and preferences regarding fashion. Marketers should therefore know the cultural composition of their target markets and adjust their marketing communications messages and other marketing strategies accordingly.

7.2.4 Hypothesis 4

Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

Hypothesis 4 was specifically formulated to address the primary research objective. The other secondary research objectives and hypotheses were also formulated in order to address the primary research objective. The main findings addressing hypothesis 4 is as follows:

(B1) The main finding of table 18 is that the majority of students (88.05%) tend to purchase both status and department store brands.

(B6) The main finding from table 23 is that students are more prone to purchase the Woolworths (7.31%), the department store brand, as compared to the brands.

(B9) The main finding from table 26 is that the majority of students (50.44%) spend 11-25% of their allowances on the purchasing of fashion clothing.

(B14) The main finding of table 31 is that the majority (60.47%) of respondents never over consume status brands to be noticed by others.

(B17) The main finding evident from table 34 is that 85.40% of respondents never over consume status brands in order to be popular.

(B18) The main finding from table 35 is that 51.77% of the respondents sometimes over consume status brands because they can afford it.

(B28) The main finding from this table is that most of the respondents (40.56%) agreed that they are interested in brand names fashion clothing.

(B29) The main finding depicted in table 49 is that most of the respondents either strongly disagreed (35.25%) or disagreed (29.94%) that they buy clothing just because it has status.

(B30) The main finding evident from table 50 is that 45.57% of the respondents were in agreement that they would pay more for status brand fashion clothing as compared to the 33.78% who was in disagreement.

(B31) The main finding is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (28.02%) or disagreed (23.30) that status brands are more valuable to them if it looks expensive than those that strongly agreed (6.49%) and agreed (20.80%).

(B32) The main finding depicted from table 52 is that 46.88% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success as compared to the 32.89% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

(B33) The main finding is that respondents mostly agreed (30.38%) that they are interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige.

(B34) The main finding of table 54 is that more than half of the respondents (51.77%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth.

(B36) The main finding derived from table 56 is that slightly more of the respondents were in agreement (41.87%) that the status brand of fashion clothing was irrelevant to them than those who were in disagreement (34.95%).

(B37) The main finding from table 57 is that more respondents either strongly disagreed (26.25%) or disagreed (25.22%) that fashion clothing is central to their identity as a person than those who agreed (19.47%) or strongly agreed (7.82%).

(B38) The main finding of table 58 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were either in agreement (40.56%) or disagreement (39.52%) that they feel a personal sense of satisfaction when they wear status brand fashion clothing.

(B39) The main finding derived from table 59 is that slightly more of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed (41.15%) that they get a feeling of self-fulfilment from wearing fashion clothing than those who agreed or strongly agreed (37.90%).

(B40) The main finding evident from table 60 is that the majority of the respondents were in agreement (56.35%) that they would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image they want to convey.

(B41) The main finding as depicted in table 61 is that more respondents were in disagreement (44.25%) with the statement that they are influenced by what is hot and what is not than those who were in agreement (34.07%).

(B44) The main finding from table 64 is that more than half of the respondents (52.95%) were on strong agreement that comfort is more important than the brand name of fashion clothing.

(B45) The main finding from table 65 is that a vast majority of the respondents were in agreement (82.01%) that quality is more important than price.

(B46) The main finding evident from table 66 is that an almost equal percentage of respondents were in agreement (37.72%) or disagreement (36.58%) with the fact that status brands make them feel more confident when socialising. A large percentage of the respondents were also uncertain (24.93%).

(B51) The main finding is that the majority of the respondents (62.09%) felt that purchasing status brands to look expensive was not important.

(B52) The main finding depicted from table 72 is that the majority of respondents (63.42%) thought it was very important to purchase status brands to look good.

(B53) The main finding from table 73 is that 48.38% of the respondents thought that it was important to purchase status brands to create a specific image.

(B54) The main finding from table 74 is that more than half of the respondents (64.41%) thought it was not important to purchase status brand in order to fit in amongst peers.

(B55) The main finding evident from table 75 is that that 67.99% of the respondents felt that it is very important to get a good quality of clothing.

(B56) the main finding from table 76 is that more respondents (63.13%) felt that the purchasing of status brands was either important (45.28%) or very important (17.85%) than those who regard it as being unimportant (35.55%) to boost their image.

(B57) The main finding from table 77 is that more respondents (66.07%) felt that purchasing of status brands were either important (42.77%) or very important (23.30%) than those who regarded it as being unimportant (32.74%) to boost their self-esteem.

(B58) Main findings as derived from table 78 are that good quality of clothing is regarded as the most important reason (19.20%) and to fit in amongst peers as the least important reason (9.75%) when purchasing status brands.

The main findings of conspicuousness and status consumption derived from the literature review are as follows:

- Conspicuous consumption refers to expenditures used for honorific purposes to inflate ego and is concerned with the ostentatious display of wealth.
- In relation to fashion, status brands are generally those that have high perceived quality, luxury, prestige and / or high class attached to them, therefore the contention is raised that such brands are often consumed to indicate status and as such displayed conspicuously to provide a visual representation of status.
- Individuals' consumer behaviours are influenced by the desire to gain status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods.

The main findings of the relevant literature coincide with the empirical findings of this research hypothesis in relation to conspicuous consumption and status brands. Main finding B18 also illustrates that more than half (51.77%) of the respondents over consume status brands because they can afford it. Main findings B30, B32-B33, B40, B52, B53, and B55-B58 also illustrates students conspicuousness to over consuming status brands

whether it be because they can afford it, to signal success or prestige, to create and portray specific images, to look good, to boost their self-esteem and image or to just get a good quality of clothing.

It is apparent from the main findings B9, B18, B28, B30, B32-B33, B40, B45-B46, B52-B53, B55-B58 that the null hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.

It is therefore evident from that both of the main findings from the literature and empirical research correspond that there is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchasing of status brands among university students.

To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students is the primary objective of this study and it has been addressed by the integration of the main findings from the literature and the empirical findings of this study.

The **main conclusion** therefore is that it should be noted by South African marketers that university students displays conspicuous consumption tendencies towards purchasing status brands.

The **implication** would be that because students are not aware of their conspicuousness to over-consume status brands, they over spend in order to satisfy their want or a need to look good.

Recommendation: It is evident from the literature review and the empirical study that university students over-consume status brands for reasons already discussed; therefore marketers should fully research this phenomenon of conspicuous consumption amongst university students and implement it when designing marketing strategies.

7.2.5 Hypothesis 5

Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption of status brands, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption of status brands, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.

(A2) The main finding from question 3 depicted in table 14 is that more female respondents completed the questionnaire as compared to the males.

(B2) The main finding is that the majority of males and female students prefer to purchase both department store brands and status brands. However there is a higher percentage of males (6.49%) that only purchase status brands than females (0.097%) of the total males (262) and females (413) samples. Whereas more females (10.17% of 413) than males (5.73% of 262) prefer to purchase only departmental store brands.

(B3) The main finding of table 20 illustrates that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.0001$) with females being more prone to buying only departmental store brands than males and males being more prone to purchase only status brands than females.

(B7) The main finding from table 24 is that female respondents most often buy department store brands such as Woolworths (7.68%), Fochini (7.31%) and Mr. Price (7.18%) where as the male respondents buy status brands such as Levis (7.68%), Nike (7.59%) and Billabong (7.00%) most often.

(B12) The main finding is that females (49.51% of 412) and Males (53.28% of 259) mostly spend between 11-25% of their allowance on fashion clothing.

(B13) The main finding is that more females (8.98%) of the total female sample (412) than males (3.47%) are willing to spend almost all of their pocket money (50-100%) on fashion clothing. However more males (25.48%) from the total male sample (259) than females (10.44%) spend the minimum on fashion clothing (between 0-10% of their allowance/

pocket money). This indicates that there is a significant difference between males and females when they are compared on the highest percentage (50-100%) spent and the lowest percentage (0-10%) spent.

(B22) The main finding of table 41 is that the comparison between the construct influences of peers and gender resulted in a significant difference between the two, due to the fact that the p-value for the separated T-test is 0.0018, which is less than 0.05.

(B25) The main finding of table 44 is that there is not a significant difference between the means of the two gender groups when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

(B26) The main finding is that there is not a significant difference between males and females when compared on the influence of self-concept/ image on over-consumption of status brands. There is however a significant difference between the various ethnic groups with regards to the influence of self-concept/ image on the over-consumption of status brands.

(B49) The main finding depicted from table 69 is that there is a significant difference between males and females when compared on status consumption. There is also a significant difference between the groups identified by the percentage they spend on fashion clothing when compared on status consumption. There is however not a significant difference between the various ethnic groups when compared on the factor status consumption.

(B59) The main finding is that males (18.88%) and females (19.42%) respondents agree that the most important reason for purchasing fashion clothing is the quality of clothing. Males and females however differ in their rating of the least important reason, where males indicated that the expensive look (10.12%) is the least important reason and females regard fitting in amongst peers (9.46%) as the least important reason.

Illustrated in main findings B2, B3, B7, B12, B13, B49 and B59 is that gender does have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption of status brands but females are not more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males. Therefore the first part of

the alternative hypothesis (Ha5) is accepted as highlighted by the main findings, but the latter part which states that females are more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males is not agreed with. Males are more prone to conspicuously consume status brands as illustrated by main finding B3 and B7.

The main findings from the literature review found that:

- Men are less appearance and gender conscious.
- Males exhibit fewer interpersonal relationships are less prone to engage in active information provision to other consumers and are less likely to be impulsive as well as compulsive buyers.
- Men are more likely to engage in variety seeking purchasing, exhibit weaker brand involvement, be less environmentally concerned and be less likely to buy environmentally friendly products.

These main findings gathered from the literature section of this research study compared against the empirical finding of this study highlight a difference in the sense that men were seen as being more materialist in the literature coincides with this study's empirical findings. Men were more prone to conspicuously consuming status brands as compared to women who were more prone to over consume departmental store fashion clothing (B7).

The secondary objective from which this hypothesis was formulated is to determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands, which was addressed by both the literature and the empirical findings of this study.

The **main conclusion** derived is that males and females differ significantly when it came to conspicuously consuming status brands.

The **implication** is that South African marketers need to place more emphasis on male students consumption patterns as compared to the emphasis placed on female students consumption patterns.

Recommendation: South African Marketers should be aware of the fact that male students are also fashion conscious like female students. Therefore marketers should adjust their marketing strategies to incorporate strategies also aimed at male students.

Section 7.3 will examine the linkages of the main findings to the research objectives and hypotheses.

7.3 LINKING OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives were formulated and discussed in section 1.4 of this research study. They however will be presented again within this section in order to determine if the research objectives were met or not. The primary objective is as follows:

- To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students.

The secondary objectives are:

- To determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students.
- To determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students.
- To determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands.
- To determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands.

It can be established that the secondary objective to determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social grouping of university students is tested by hypothesis Ho1 and Ha1. The objective to determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students is tested by hypothesis Ho2 and Ha2. The objective to determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands is tested by hypothesis Ho3 and Ha3 and the last secondary objective to determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands is tested by hypothesis Ho5 and Ha5 therefore the main findings will be exactly the same as listed in section 7.2.

Table 46 will illustrate the secondary research objectives, research hypotheses and main findings of the study.

Table 81: Secondary research objectives, hypotheses and main findings of the study.

Primary Research Objective	Research hypothesis	Main Findings
To investigate the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students	Ho4: There is not a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students. Ha4: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and the purchasing of status brands among university students.	B1, B6, B9, B14, B17-B18, B28-B34, B36-B41, B44-B46, B51-B58
Secondary Research Objectives	Research Hypotheses	Main Findings
To determine if the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption among university students has a significant influence on the type of friends and social groupings of university students.	Ho2: University students do not conspicuously consume status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers. Ha2: University students conspicuously consume large amounts of status brands as a means of fitting in amongst their peers.	B14-B17, B35, B42-B43, B46-B47, B50, B58
To determine if the use of status brands has an influence on the creation of a better self-concept /image amongst university students.	Ho1: Status brands do not influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students. Ha1: Status brands significantly influence the creation of a better self-concept/ image among university students.	B14, B17, B20-B21, B37-B40, B50-B53, B56-B58
To determine if culture affects the conspicuousness of students towards status brands.	Ho3: Culture does not influence students' conspicuousness to consume status brands. Ha3: Culture significantly influences students' conspicuousness to consume status brands.	A3, B4-B5, B8, B10-B11, B23-B24, B27, B60

<p>To determine if males and females differ significantly when conspicuously consuming status brands</p>	<p>Ho5: Gender does not have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females not being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males. Ha5: Gender will have a significant effect on the conspicuous consumption, with females being more prone to conspicuous consumption tendencies than males.</p>	<p>A2, B2-B3, B7, B12-B13, B22, B25-B26, B49, B59</p>
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7.4 LIMITATIONS

Specific limitations regarding the literature review and the empirical phase of this study should be noted.

7.4.1 Limitation based on literature review

A number of limitations regarding the literature review can be listed, namely:

- The fact that this study was based on conspicuous consumption a number of outdated sources had to be consulted in order to get an in-depth understanding of how conspicuous consumption originated.
- A number of relevant sources were consulted. It is however possible that some research on this topic may have not been published and was therefore excluded.

7.4.2 Limitations based on the empirical phase of the study

There were a number of limitations of this study and they are as follows:

- Questionnaire distribution: the total number of students who were suppose to be present within the relevant lectures that the researcher identified were not present.
- Some of the students were reluctant to fill out the questionnaires thereby handing in blank questionnaires.
- A number of students did not answer all the questions in the questionnaire while some answered strongly disagree or never for a majority of the questions asked which compromised the study.
- The study was limited to students at the university of Pretoria's main campus only and results should be interpreted as such.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The recommendations for future research are as follows:

- Research can be conducted on the conspicuous consumption of males only. Comparisons can then be drawn based on different age, income and lifestyle groups.
- A more in-depth study could also be conducted to determine reasons behind the different over-consumption patterns of the different ethnic groups.
- A more in-depth study should also be conducted on the differences between males and females with regards to fashion clothing as well as fashion accessories.
- Although it is difficult to find a product that is consumed more conspicuously than clothing by students a similar study can be conducted on students conspicuousness to over-consume other brand name products such as cellular phones.
- A similar study can be conducted but the study can encapsulate students from other universities such as University of Johannesburg and Cape Town. Students can then be compared to determine if the geographical area plays a role in determining the over-consumption of status brands.
- While it is evident that students are interested in consuming and displaying status products and brands, additional research is recommended to compare students against other (non-student) segments in the populations.

7.6 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide evidence to suggest that there is a link between clothing, self-concept/ image, culture, peer influence and gender. This study also has provided insights into the underlying characteristics of consumers who seek status and conspicuously consume brands. It has been revealed in the literature that young status-conscious consumers are more likely to be affected by peer influence, culture, gender and self-monitoring tendencies.

It was however difficult to determine whether university students define themselves and then choose fashion clothing based on that definition or whether their clothing choices and consumption provide them with a definition of who they are. Nevertheless, fashion

clothing consumption has a more significant effect upon the self or is influenced more by the self than most product decisions.

This study therefore also suggest that conspicuous consumption tendencies of individuals are associated with the extent to which they are influenced by reference groups, gender, culture and self-monitoring tendencies.

As discussed in the literature review, many products, particularly fashion clothing and apparel, are oriented towards individuals displaying their image to others. The results indicate that reference group's influence; self-monitoring, gender and culture did influence conspicuous consumption tendencies.

Significant gender differences were found in the study for respondents' tendencies to conspicuously consume. Young males (17-21years) were more prone to the conspicuousness of purchasing status brands according to main finding B7, while females were more prone to purchase departmental store brands. The existent of this difference between males and females is consistent with Eastman et al. (1999:50), who indicated that males might be more materialist and have a stronger orientation towards external validation through visually portraying prestige and accomplishment.

Although limitations exist with student samples, students have been argued to be more fashion conscious and image orientated. They are prone to keeping up with the latest fads in status brands.

Thus to conclude, the research process that was highlighted in chapter five of this study was followed and the relevant primary objective as well as all the secondary objectives were addressed. The limitations of the study were then highlighted and directions were provided for future research.

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APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire that will form part of my requirement for the MPhil in Marketing programme within the Department of Communication and Marketing Management, this questionnaire is aimed at investigating the purchasing of status brands and conspicuous consumption amongst university students. It would be greatly appreciated if you would take the time to fill out this questionnaire.

1. Respondent Number		FOR OFFICIAL USE													
	V1	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	1-3												
Section A: Demographics															
Please cross the answer that is applicable to you.															
2. What is your age? _____ Years	V2	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	4-5												
3. What is your gender?	V3	<input type="text"/>	6												
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Male</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> </table>	Male	1	Female	2											
Male	1														
Female	2														
4. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?	V4	<input type="text"/>	7												
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Asian</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indian</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coloured</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White or Caucasian</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (specify _____)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> </tr> </table>	Asian	1	African	2	Indian	3	Coloured	4	White or Caucasian	5	Other (specify _____)	6			
Asian	1														
African	2														
Indian	3														
Coloured	4														
White or Caucasian	5														
Other (specify _____)	6														
5. Which year group do you belong to?	V5	<input type="text"/>	8												
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">1st Year</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Year</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3rd Year</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> </table>	1 st Year	1	2 nd Year	2	3 rd Year	3									
1 st Year	1														
2 nd Year	2														
3 rd Year	3														
6. Which programme are you registered for? _____	V6	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	9-10												
Section B: Status and Conspicuous Consumption															
7. Please indicate by crossing the one answer that best describes the type of clothing you purchase.															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">I purchase only status brands fashion clothing</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I purchase only department store fashion clothing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I purchase both status brands and department store fashion clothing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> </table>	I purchase only status brands fashion clothing	1	I purchase only department store fashion clothing	2	I purchase both status brands and department store fashion clothing	3	V7	<input type="text"/>	11						
I purchase only status brands fashion clothing	1														
I purchase only department store fashion clothing	2														
I purchase both status brands and department store fashion clothing	3														

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8. How often do you buy the following brands of clothing?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Billabong	1	2	3
Guess	1	2	3
Diesel	1	2	3
Soviet	1	2	3
Hang Ten	1	2	3
Levis	1	2	3
Von Dutch	1	2	3
Louis Vuitton	1	2	3
DKNY	1	2	3
Gucci	1	2	3
Lacoste	1	2	3
Puma	1	2	3
Sissy Boy	1	2	3
Quik Silver	1	2	3
Roxy	1	2	3
Nike	1	2	3
Fochini	1	2	3
Mr. Price	1	2	3
Woolworths	1	2	3

V8	<input type="checkbox"/>				12
V9	<input type="checkbox"/>				13
V10	<input type="checkbox"/>				14
V11	<input type="checkbox"/>				15
V12	<input type="checkbox"/>				16
V13	<input type="checkbox"/>				17
V14	<input type="checkbox"/>				18
V15	<input type="checkbox"/>				19
V16	<input type="checkbox"/>				20
V17	<input type="checkbox"/>				21
V18	<input type="checkbox"/>				22
V19	<input type="checkbox"/>				23
V20	<input type="checkbox"/>				24
V21	<input type="checkbox"/>				25
V22	<input type="checkbox"/>				26
V23	<input type="checkbox"/>				27
V24	<input type="checkbox"/>				28
V25	<input type="checkbox"/>				29
V26	<input type="checkbox"/>				30

9. Please indicate the percentage of your monthly allowance/ pocket money that you spend on fashion clothing.

100%	1
75%	2
50%	3
25%	4
Other (Specify _____)	5

V27	<input type="checkbox"/>				31
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10. Do you over consume status brands

	Often	Sometimes	Never
To be noticed by others	1	2	3
To gain respect from my peers	1	2	3
To fit in amongst my peers	1	2	3
In order to be popular	1	2	3
Because I can afford it	1	2	3
To enhance your self image	1	2	3
Because it shows who you are	1	2	3
Because of who you see using it	1	2	3

V28	<input type="checkbox"/>				32
V29	<input type="checkbox"/>				33
V30	<input type="checkbox"/>				34
V31	<input type="checkbox"/>				35
V32	<input type="checkbox"/>				36
V33	<input type="checkbox"/>				37
V34	<input type="checkbox"/>				38
V35	<input type="checkbox"/>				39

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11. Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements where 1= Strongly agree, 3= Uncertain and 5= Strongly disagree.

	SA	A	U	D	SD		
I am interested in brand named fashion clothing	1	2	3	4	5	V36	<input type="text"/> 40
I would buy clothing just because it has status	1	2	3	4	5	V37	<input type="text"/> 41
I would pay more for status brand fashion clothing	1	2	3	4	5	V38	<input type="text"/> 42
Status brands are more valuable to me if it looks expensive	1	2	3	4	5	V39	<input type="text"/> 43
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of success	1	2	3	4	5	V40	<input type="text"/> 44
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals symbols of prestige	1	2	3	4	5	V41	<input type="text"/> 45
I am interested in fashion clothing that signals wealth	1	2	3	4	5	V42	<input type="text"/> 46
Status brands enhances my image amongst my peers	1	2	3	4	5	V43	<input type="text"/> 47
The status brand of fashion clothing is irrelevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	V44	<input type="text"/> 48
Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person	1	2	3	4	5	V45	<input type="text"/> 49
I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I wear status brands fashion clothing	1	2	3	4	5	V46	<input type="text"/> 50
I get a feeling of self-fulfillment from wearing fashion clothing	1	2	3	4	5	V47	<input type="text"/> 51
I would pay extra for a product that is consistent with the image I want to convey.	1	2	3	4	5	V48	<input type="text"/> 52
I am influenced by what is hot and what is not.	1	2	3	4	5	V49	<input type="text"/> 53
I prefer to buy clothing my friends and neighbours approve of.	1	2	3	4	5	V50	<input type="text"/> 54
I choose my friends on the basis of what they wear.	1	2	3	4	5	V51	<input type="text"/> 55
Comfort is more important than the brand name	1	2	3	4	5	V52	<input type="text"/> 56
Quality is more important than the price	1	2	3	4	5	V53	<input type="text"/> 57
Status brands make me feel more confident when socializing	1	2	3	4	5	V54	<input type="text"/> 58

12. Please indicate how important the following reasons are when you purchase status brands fashion clothing where VI= very important, I= Important and NI= Not Important.

	VI	I	NI
To look expensive	1	2	3
To look good	1	2	3
To create a specific image	1	2	3
To fit in amongst peers	1	2	3
To get a good quality of Clothing	1	2	3
To boost my image	1	2	3
To boost my self-esteem	1	2	3

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V55	<input type="checkbox"/>	59
V56	<input type="checkbox"/>	60
V57	<input type="checkbox"/>	61
V58	<input type="checkbox"/>	62
V59	<input type="checkbox"/>	63
V60	<input type="checkbox"/>	64
V61	<input type="checkbox"/>	65

Thank you for your participation!