SELECTED ANTECEDENTS TO APPROACH STATUS CONSUMPTION OF FASHION BRANDS AMONG TOWNSHIP YOUTH CONSUMERS IN THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT

By

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AUGUST 2016
DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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*Selected antecedents to approach status consumption of fashion brands among township youth consumers in the Sedibeng district*

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

Yours truly,

Linda Scott
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My late uncle and aunty, Zinkosi and Nobantu Madinga,

And my late sister, Bongiswa Madinga
ABSTRACT

SELECTED ANTECEDEANTS TO APPROACH STATUS CONSUMPTION OF FASHION BRANDS AMONG TOWNSHIP YOUTH CONSUMERS IN THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT

Key words: group identity, social identity, township, status consumptions, materialism and fashion clothing involvement

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. More often than not, individuals purchase expensive and luxury goods to display their social standing. In addition, individuals purchase status products to fulfil their material desires and reinforce their group identity. This is often a case with regards to youth consumers who often purchase expensive, luxury fashionable clothing brands to portray status and impress their peers. This behaviour seems to be trending among township consumers. The township market is a major contributor to the South African economy with an annual spending power of approximately R307-R308 billion.

This study sought to investigate the influence of fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity on fashion brand status consumption amongst the youth. The research concentrates specifically on township youth consumers aged between 18 to 24 years, located in the Sedibeng district.

This study made use of a non-probability convenience sample. A self-administered questionnaire was designed based on the scales used in previous studies. Five fieldworkers were selected and received training from the researcher on the purpose of the research as well as the critical elements of fieldwork. Once the training was completed, the questionnaires were distributed by fieldworkers. The questionnaire requested respondents to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the extent of their agreement or disagreement with items designed to measure their status consumption, fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity. In addition, the participants were requested to provide certain demographic data. For this study, a sample of 400 township youth individuals, residing within the Sedibeng district, was drawn. From this sample, only 345 questionnaires were usable leading to a response rate
of 83 percent. The captured data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics comprising of correlation and regression analysis.

The findings indicate that fashion clothing involvement significantly and positively predicted status consumption of township youth consumers. Therefore, the results show that fashion-involved consumers are more likely to engage in status consumption. There was a direct relationship between materialism and status consumption. Group identity had a significant positive influence on status consumption.

Owing to the high demand for status brands or products by township youth consumers, it is recommended that marketers should tap the market potential of this consumer segment while considering the influence of their reference groups. In addition, their advertisements should emphasise the brand or product’s ability to indicate status. Furthermore, marketers should make use of social media to effectively reach youth consumers.

Insights gained from this study will help marketers to better understand township youth consumers, their engagement in status consumption, and their involvement in fashion clothing, which, in turn, should help them tailor their marketing efforts in such a way as to appeal to this segment in an appropriate manner.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The trend of buying expensive and fashionable brands to portray social status is increasing rapidly (Lertwannawit & Mandhanchitara 2012:1409). According to O’Cass, Lee and Siahtiri (2013:440), modern consumers are concerned with what they wear and how others perceive them. As such, consumers tend to portray their social standing through the purchase of status-enhancing brands (Goldsmith, Flynn & Clark 2012:105). Status-buying appears to matter as it can be used to signal an individual’s socio-economic position within one’s group and to gain recognition for one’s sense of self and recognition from others (Kaus 2013:69). This is especially the case among the youth. A study conducted by O’Cass and McEwen (2004:32) observed that the youth have a tendency to display their status and materialistic possessions by purchasing expensive branded clothes. According to Goldsmith et al. (2012:106), “clothing is a highly symbolic product category”. For example, in their study Khare and Rakesh (2010:209) noted that clothing is one of the products that fulfil both the functional and symbolic needs of the youth. Markert (2004:14) defines youth as those individuals between the age of 10 and 29 in 2015. Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco (2012:108) note that consumers in this age category tend to make huge sacrifices in order to purchase expensive brands as a way to project status among the community members. Typically, the youth tend to perceive brands as essential in creating individual identity, a sense of achievement and individuality (O’Cass & Frost 2002:67).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010:338) refer to status as the ranking of individuals in each social class using factors such as power, wealth and prestige. Generally, individuals seek status by consuming products or brands signifying their rank in their community (Kao 2013:84). Similar to Kao’s (2013:84) contention, Mazali and Rodrigue-Netro (2013:103) suggest that consumers buy certain products to show their social status. Also true, however, is the fact that certain individuals go to great lengths to buy products or services that people perceive to be high in status to project their social prestige from others (Grotts & Johns 2012:281).

Therefore, status consumers represent those consumers who buy expensive products to make a statement. Hence, the decision of buying a product cannot be explained by the motivation
derived from using it, rather by what it symbolises to others (Corneo & Jeanne 1997:55). Studies indicate that status consumption occurs through personal antecedents such as group identity, the need to conform to surrounding standards (Khare 2014:333), materialism (Eastman, Fredenberger, Campbell & Calvert 1997:52), the need for uniqueness (Abdolvand & Reihani 2013:1012), and symbolic items like clothing (Goldsmith et al., 2012:102). In conclusion, Clark, Zboja and Goldsmith (2006:45) observe that consumers buy expensive clothing, to seek peer approval and impress others.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Theoretical framework

The current study utilises the social identity theory (SIT), to explore the proposed relationship between status consumption and its antecedents. Social identity theory proposes that individuals form their identity through belonging to a group (Stets & Burke 2000:230). Ashforth and Mael (1989:23) believe that an individual’s identity refers to an individual’s desire to interact with other people and affiliate with groups. Group identity influences the manner in which individuals react to situations (Dutton & Dukerich 1991:530). Correspondingly, group members influence an individual’s attitudes and behaviours (McKinley, Mastro & Warber 2014:1050). Within the context of youth research, Aghaei, Karbasi, Falahati, Hamayoun Aghapour, Songtarashami and Koulak (2014:5) observe that status consumption among the youth is characterised by a need to belong and conform to social settings and groups.

1.2.2 Status consumption

Patsiaouras and Fitchett (2012:154) argue that status consumption is the practice of displaying status by purchasing well-known and luxury brands. Status consumption refers to the consumption of expensive products or services with the aim of displaying wealth (Bock, Eastman & McKay 2014:112). According to Shukla (2010:111), status consumption is more about establishing social relations than satisfying a basic need. As such, Brezinova and Vijayakumar (2012:169) emphasise that products are not only consumed to satisfy direct needs in the consumption process but also used to portray social status. Specifically, status seekers do not consume products only to satisfy their physiological needs but to satisfy their
psychological needs such as achievement or recognition and appreciation (O’Cass & Frost 2002:70). These individuals tend to surround themselves with tangible evidence of their superiority (Eastman & Liu 2012:94).

1.2.3 Fashion clothing involvement

Generally, the youth is very involved in fashion clothing, as compared to their elders (Khare, Mishra & Parveen 2012:47). O’Cass (2004:870) defines involvement as a link between an individual and an object. In the context of 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 (Zeb, Rashid & Javeed 2011:226). Thus, clothing involvement is the degree by which a consumer perceives the relevance of fashion in his or her life (Vieira & Slongo 2008:47). In general, Khare et al. (2014:432) state that clothes are used to display an individual’s personality, status, position and social class but also serves as a means to enhance one’s social image.

1.2.4 Materialism

Materialism is the extent to which individuals attempt to engage in the construction and maintenance of the self through the acquisition and use of products, services, experiences, or relationships that are perceived to provide desirable symbolic values (Shrum & Wong 2013:1179). Materialism is seen as an obsession a person has for materialistic possessions (Vandana & Lenka 2014:457). Consequently, materialism leads people to spend a huge amount of money on acquiring goods (Goldsmith & Clark 2011:279).

1.2.5 Group identity

Consumers tend to analyse their purchase decisions with respect to their personal and social identities and prefer products that reinforce their group identity (Khare et al., 2012:46). Group identity usually refers to an individual’s sense of self, originating from being part of a particular social group (Chen & Xin-Li 2009:431). Ledgerwood, Liviatan and Carnevale (2007:873) emphasise that many people view being part of a group as an extension of one’s self and desire to be around other individuals who share similar characteristics. However, Dunleavy (1988:36) argues that individuals become confident in joining a group only when the group members have the same interests.
1.2.6 Need for uniqueness

People are motivated to maintain a sense of specialness as they define themselves on various important self-related dimensions that relate to others (Kao et al., 2013:84). According to Ruvio, Shoham and Brecic (2008:33), uniqueness refers to people wanting to be different from others through acquiring and utilising particular goods with the aim of making and enhancing their social image. Thus, the need for uniqueness is an acquired need – it can be learnt through responses to the external environment (Manikandan & Rajamohan 2014:136). In essence, individuals consume products that are different from others and are always looking for certain unique features that are accepted by the group (Dhar & Sherman 1996:193).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The township market is a major contributor to the South African economy (Statssa 2011:2). In 2011, revenue generated from township spending was estimated to be R307–R308 billion in annual consumer spending (Dlamini 2011:30). Manley (2012:76) states that township consumers have the largest share of purchase power in South Africa. The majority of spending comes from the youth (Selvakumar & Vikraman 2012:10967). South African youth mainly spend their income on clothing as a sign of depicting their standing in the community (Parker, Hermans & Schaefer 2004:176). In discussing status-related consumption, Bevan-Dye, Garnett and De Klerk (2012:5581) note that the youth spend on status-depicting clothing, status clothes are often associated with their need to belong to a group, suggesting that group identity has a strong influence on status consumption (O’Cass et al., 2002:69).

Several studies (Bevan-Dye et al. 2012:5578; Eastman et al. 2012:94) have examined status consumption among the younger consumers. While previous research has addressed status consumption (Grotts & Johnson 2012:281) and materialism (Goldsmith & Clark 2011:43), the research has been conducted in developed countries and in a different context. There is a lack of evidence in studies examining this issue in developing countries like South Africa and within the township context. Given that townships play a drastic role in the South African economy, it is surprising to note that little attention has been given to this important segment.
Such an investigation is important and is likely to contribute significantly to both the academic field and to marketers. The main purpose of this study is to fill this gap. This study is expected to generate valuable knowledge to understanding status consumption in developing countries, especially in townships. The findings of this study will assist marketers to understand and target this underserved segment.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of fashion clothing involvement, materialism, group identity and the need for uniqueness on status consumption of fashion brands among the township youth.

1.4.2 Theoretical objectives

In order to achieve the primary objective, the following theoretical objectives were formulated for the study:

- Review the literature on status consumption behaviour
- Review the literature on the need for uniqueness
- Review the literature on materialism
- Review the literature on clothing involvement
- Review the literature on the role of group identity on consumption of clothing
- Review the literature on the social identity theory
- Review the literature on the motives for status consumption
- Review the literature on status symbols.

1.4.3 Empirical objectives

In accordance with the primary objective, the following empirical objectives were formulated for the study:
- Determine whether group identity influences status consumption among township youth
- Determine whether fashion clothing involvement influences status consumption among township youth
- Determine whether the need for uniqueness influences status consumption among township youth
- Determine whether materialism influences status consumption among township youth.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

Based on the theoretical background and framework, four hypotheses were formulated to highlight the various dimensions and relationships under investigation in this study. Based on the conceptualised model, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1  Group identity has a significant positive influence on status consumption.

H2  Fashion clothing involvement has a positive influence on status consumption.

H3  Need for uniqueness has a positive influence on status consumption.

H4  There is a direct relationship between materialism and status consumption.

1.5.1 CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH MODEL

Based on the literature provided in this study, a conceptual model and hypotheses were developed. The following model was proposed for the study:
1.6 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

Research methodology is a set of procedures that guides the researcher in the process of verifying a particular hypothesis and excluding all other possible hypotheses and explanations (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagree 2006:185). This study adopted a quantitative approach. A quantitative approach is defined as the analysis of numerical data using techniques that include simply describing the phenomenon of interest or looking for significant differences between groups or among variables (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2009:5). A quantitative approach is used to examine the relationships between variables and quantify the size, distribution, and association of variables in a study population (Malhotra, Gasain & El-Sawy 2005:150).
This section focuses on explaining the research methodology that is employed in the empirical portion of the study. The target population, sampling size, sampling method, data collection method and measurements instruments are discussed.

1.6.2 Target population

Population is the universe of people from which the study is generalised (Aaker, Kumar & Day 2004:374). A target population is defined as the subset of people from the population who will participate in the study (Vanderstoep & Johnston 2009:25). In this study, the target population comprised of individuals from the Sedibeng district, Gauteng province, between the ages of 18 and 24 years. The population included both female and male participants.

1.6.3 Sample size

A comparison of past research studies was used to choose the sample size. Grotts et al. (2012:286), O’Cass et al. (2013:448), O’Cass and Siahtiri (2013:510), Eastman et al. (2014:113) and O’Cass et al. (2002:75) were considered in determining the sample size. These studies used sample sizes ranging from 250 to 600. Therefore for this study, a sample size of 400 individuals was drawn.

1.6.4 Sampling method

The researcher selected the most appropriate sampling technique to obtain a representative sample. There are two sampling methods available, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a sampling technique wherein every individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected. Subjects are selected based on their accessibility. On the other hand, non-probability sampling refers to sampling technique where it is not known which of the units will be picked to be sampled (Churchill & Iacobucci 2005:325).

The sampling technique used during this research is non-probability sampling in the form of convenience sampling method using mall intercepts at township malls in the Sedibeng district.
1.6.5 Data collection method

The data was collected through the distribution of self-administered structured questionnaires. Structured questionnaires are able to collect large amounts of information, from a large number of respondents and results can be easily and quickly quantified (Feinberg, Kinnear & Taylor 2012:264). Furthermore, questionnaires are cost effective when dealing with a large audience.

1.6.6 Measuring instrument

A scale developed by Eastman et al. (1999:45) was used to measure status consumption. Clothing involvement was measured by using Mittal and Lee’s measurement scale (1989:377). To measure materialism, Richins and Dawson’s (1992:307) measurement scale was used. The Cameron (2004:250) scale measured the group identity. A scale developed by Burns and Warren (1995:7) was used to measure the need for uniqueness. Modifications were made to the scales to fit the context and purpose of the study. All variables were measured using five-point Likert scales with anchors strongly agree=1 and strongly disagree=5. A Likert scale is a summated scale for the assessment of survey respondents’ attitudes (Clason & Dormody 1990:31).

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

1.7.1 Data analysis procedure and statistical approach

To accomplish the research objectives of this study, the researcher commenced with coding data in an Excel spreadsheet. From Excel, data was imported and analysed for descriptive statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 for Windows. Empirical data was tested by assessing reliability, validity, descriptive analysis, correlations and regression analysis.

1.7.2 Reliability and validity

Reliability is an estimate of the accuracy and internal consistency of a measurement instrument (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagree 2006:184). Coldwell and Herbst (2004:17) explain reliability as the assurance that the items posited to measure the construct are
sufficiently reliable. In order to test reliability of the measurement instruments this study made use of Cronbach’s alpha. The acceptable requirement for Cronbach coefficient should be greater than 0.70 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham 2006:134).

Validity is defined as the extent to which a test measures what it is meant to measure (Coldwell et al., 2004:18). In this study, content and construct validity were assessed.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are principles and guidelines that clarify the conditions under which the research will be conducted (Kolb 2008:13).

- The researcher requested permission for respondents’ time to complete the questionnaire.
- Each respondent was informed about the purpose of the survey.
- Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected.
- Personal information from the individual was not ascribed to any individual.
- The right to equality, justice, human dignity/life and protection against harm was ensured.

1.9 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

This chapter provides an overview and background of the study. The design of the research was discussed briefly. A brief description of statistical analysis, reliability, validity and ethical issues pertaining to the study were highlighted. Ethical issues were also described and adhered to.

Chapter 2: status consumption and selected antecedents of status consumption

This chapter provides a theoretical foundation on status consumption. The chapter provides a review of the literature on the status consumption antecedents, particularly group identity, materialism, need for uniqueness and fashion clothing involvement.
Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research design and methodology used in this study. In this chapter, details of the target population, sampling method, sample size, and data collection methods were provided.

Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of empirical findings

Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the data, interpretation and evaluation of the research findings.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and conclusions

Conclusions based on the findings are discussed. Recommendations emanating from the study are provided. The chapter concludes by providing limitations and implications for further research.
CHAPTER 2

STATUS CONSUMPTION AND SELECTED ANTECEDENTS OF STATUS CONSUMPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided a background to the study. The problem statement and objectives of the study were outlined. The chapter also briefly introduced the design of the study. This chapter provides the review of literature on status consumption followed by the social identity theory. Given the focus of this study, it is important to first give a definition of status consumption and provide the reasons why individuals consume products for status. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of antecedents of status consumption, by focusing on materialism, fashion clothing involvement, group identity and need for uniqueness. The chapter will conclude by discussing the characteristics of youth consumers’ segment of the market.

2.2 STATUS CONSUMPTION

Status consumption is a buyer consumption pattern that normally displays only noticeable products (Eng & Bogaert 2010:63). Hence, luxury fashion goods are the focus of status consumption studies (Heaney, Goldsmith & Jusoh 2005:87).

2.2.1 DEFINING STATUS CONSUMPTION

O’Cass and McEwen (2004:28) define status consumption as the individual nature of possessing status goods both for inner reasons (self-reward, without showing the product to the public) and/or external reasons (to show wealth through public display of products). In the definition of Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999:46), status consumption is viewed as an individuals’ behaviour of seeking to buy products or services for the status they represent, regardless of the individual’s income or social class. Drawing upon various definitions on status consumption, Mason (2001:31) concluded that the visible consumption of expensive products and services offers the consumer fulfilment from others’ responses to the wealth shown rather than from the worth of the product itself. Status consumption is a concept, which has been defined in different ways. For the purpose of this study, status consumption
will be viewed as buying or possessing products to enhance one’s image and to demonstrate wealth through public display of those products irrespective of one’s socio-economic background. Different types of status symbols are discussed in the following section.

2.2.2 STATUS SYMBOLS

According to O’Cass and Frost (2002:72), status symbol is what the product means to consumers and the broad spectrum of feelings they experience in purchasing and using it, such as arousal, excitement or pleasure. In addition, O’Cass and Frost (2002:72) maintain that status symbols relate to the image a particular item elicits in consumers’ minds.

For any product to be perceived as a status symbol, certain characteristics must prevail. Del Río, Vázquez and Iglesias (2001:410) suggest that the status of a product is determined by the product’s attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes refer to what an individual perceives a product to be and what is involved with its buying or consumption (Jakpar, Na, Johari & Myint 2012:221). Benefits refer to what consumers think the product can do for them. Attitudes entail individual’s overall judgment of the product (Onyango, Nayga & Schilling 2004:202). If consumers believe that the product or brand will uplift their status, it becomes a status symbol (Mazali & Rodrigues-Neto 2013:126). Products such as mobile phones, luxury cars, pets and branded clothing have been associated with status (Mazali & Rodrigues-Neto 2013:128).

2.2.2.1 Mobile phones

Individuals buy cellphones for several reasons. Certain individuals buy cellphones to use as a communication tool; these individuals appear to care less about the cellphone appearance or symbolism. However, other people purchase the cellphone to project status (Oksman & Rautianinen 2003:106). These individuals are very selective when choosing a cellphone to use (Davis 1992:3). According to Heugel (2015:13), consumers often purchase expensive cellphones such as Apple (iPhone) and Samsung Galaxy to portray their status to their surroundings. As such, Swartz (2003:3) ascertains that a cellphone is an extension of the consumer’s identity.
2.2.2.2 Pets

Hirschman (1994:624) states that individuals buy rare and unusual animals to satisfy their need for status. According to Pajarskaite and Cekavicious (2012:21), individuals purchase pets as beautiful-to-behold possessions and they serve as “animal ornaments”. These pets are used to portray consumer’s fortune and high social class (Pajarskaite & Cekavicious 2012:21). Pets such as King Charles spaniels, Chinese shar-pei dogs, sphynx and Bengal cats normally are perceived as status objects (Hirschman 1994:624). Furthermore, animal companions, particularly cats and dogs, often are bought to satisfy social needs and they are utilised as tools to extend the self and to symbolise certain aspects of who you are as an individual (Endenburg, Hart & Bouw 1994:201).

2.2.2.3 Luxury cars

Modes of transportation, luxury cars in particular, have long been considered general status symbols. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, luxury cars have been one of the most dominant and universal status symbols (Vella 2008:14). Not every car can be utilised to symbolise an individual’s status but cars that are only available on a limited basis can be used to display status (Fan & Burton 2003:39). Hence, Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2009:630) opined that products are regarded as a status symbol when they are expensive and only the wealthy can afford them.

2.2.2.4 Wellness

Many people regard wellness as a status symbol and the privilege of the wealthy individuals (Fodor, Csiszarik-Koscir, Katalin & Medve 2013:140). Furthermore, individuals display good health as a social status symbol of dominance (Ansbacher & Ansbacher 1967:12). According to Berry (1994:68), wellness is a symbol of the new luxury taking over the upper class consumers. Thomas (2007:168) indicates that in the past, consumers used to show off new expensive luxury cars or expensive designer handbags to obtain status from their society. However, “health bragging” has become the alternative to show others how privileged you are (Kraft & Goodell 1993:21).

Zhang and Kim (2013:69) states that wellness is the new buzzword of the flourishing lifestyle trend and it is not cheap. Many people consider going to a gym as a madly extravagant expenditure since it is not a once-off purchase but a monthly habit for an increasing
percentage of the people for whom wellness has come to be a visual stamp of their superfluous lifestyle (Vlachopoulos, Theodorakis & Kyle 2008:295). Benavides and David (2010:28) indicate that consumers, who are health conscious, feel a little superior to others.

2.2.2.5 Golf club membership

Golf is a well-known leisure activity primarily used to meet people (customers) and used as an indicator of status (Bell 2000:43: Chopra 2003:176). Middle class consumers believe that having a golf club membership card is the best way to mark their identity and separate themselves from socially inferior individuals (Mrozek 1983:124). According to Petrick (2001:68), golf club membership reveals an individual’s wealth and prestige, and certain consumers may seek to boost their social standing by buying into a golf community or playing the game. Furthermore, Garl, Hirsh, Leiningher, Mulvihill, Renner and Scavo (2001:234) indicate that aspects such as status and exclusivity of golf courses encourage individuals to play golf. However, not all individuals who own a golf club membership card are golf players. They just enjoy the aesthetic qualities and the perceived exclusivity of the community (Garl et al., 2001:6).

2.2.2.6 Luxurious jewelry

According to Andrews (1990:59), the word jewelry is derived from the Latin word jocale, meaning plaything. Curtis and Tallis (2005:241) point out that jewelry is the most ancient form of body ornamentation. Apart from functional use, jewelry is a symbol of wealth and status (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004:340). In addition, Piron (2000:315) indicates that the ownership of luxury jewelry normally signifies the owner’s economic status. As a result, consumers purchase and exhibit luxurious jewelry to display their social status and their ability to afford them (Chandon, Wansink & Laurent 2000:68). Consumers tend to believe that the more expensive the jewelry, the higher perceived social status they can attain (Wattanasuwan 2005:183). Dubois and Duquesne (1993:37) argue that the main motive of purchasing and exhibiting luxury jewelry is for the symbolic value thereof.

2.2.2.7 Vacations

Vacations are considered to be “new luxury” (Hanzae & Rouhani 2011:36). New luxury represents a product or service, which cannot be owned or consumed by everybody and gives
consumers higher levels of quality, passion and pleasure. Status-conscious consumers, who are typically middle class (Heine 2012:152), are likely to find new ways to display their status and differentiate themselves from others. Expensive vacations have become one of the ways those consumers display their status (Ustuner & Holt 2010:44).

### 2.2.2.8 Clothing

Clothing is among the product categories used to communicate one’s status (O’Cass & Frost 2002:68). In a study by Karpova, Nelson-hodges and Tullar (2007:12), respondents revealed they could identify an individuals’ social status by observing their outfits. Furthermore, O’Cass and Choy (2008:348) assert that clothing is used to indicate the social position of its wearer. Thus, clothing assists individuals in expressing their identities associated with social class (Coskuner & Sandikci 2004:287). Through clothing, the middle and upper class communicate their standing in society (Solomon & Rabolt 2004:239). More importantly, the upper class establish their superiority over lower classes by consuming certain clothing items (Coskuner & Sandikci 2004:287). As such, clothing helps individuals express their social standing and social status.

### 2.2.3 MOTIVES FOR STATUS CONSUMPTION

The consumers’ willingness, decision, or need to buy a product (Chaudhuri & Majumdar 2006:53) is a reaction to several influences (Ko, Robert & Cho 2006:97). According to Vigneron and Johnson (1999:239), the inner human desires are liable for status purchase motivations. In addition, consumers purchase status products because of the influence they receive from their societies (Chadha & Husband 2006:345). Teimoupour, Hanzae and Teimpour (2012:1681) revealed that consumers purchase status products because of quality assurance, desire for social status, hedonism, social conformity, desire for uniqueness and symbolic motivation. These motives for status consumption are discussed in the following section.

### 2.2.3.1 Quality assurance motivation

Gentry, Putrevu, Shultz and Commuri (2001:261) indicate that consumers usually purchase status products for the superior quality reflected in the product or brand name. Hence, quality superiority is a substantial, perceptible value associated with status goods (Wiedmann, 2004:310).
Hennings & Siebel 2009:637). This is consistent with the notion that status products provide greater quality and performance compared to non-status products (Quelch 1987:41; O’Cass & Frost 2002:83; Vigneron & Johnson 2004:487). According to Aaker (1991:456), consumers are likely to associate status products with greater brand quality and reassurance in such a way that they perceive more value from status brands. Thus, individuals purchase well-known brands mainly for their perceived high level of quality (Zhou & Wong 2008:473). Thus, quality assurance is known as a self-directed drive in status consumption (Tsai 2005:430).

2.2.3.2 Desire for social status motivation

With this motive, individuals wish to advance their self-esteem and social status by purchasing and consuming luxury goods in the presence of others (Vigneron & Johnson 1999:239). Several studies (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer 1982:11; Solomon 1983:321) established that consumers are often more interested in status-directed symbolism compared to utilitarian functions. Grubb and Grathwohl (1967:25) propose that every individual has a self-concept and aims to boost it through use of products as symbols. Mason (1981:156) asserts that status pursuit is the most essential motive in status consumption, and it generally occurs across all social classes (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn 1999:47).

2.2.3.3 Hedonic motivation

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982:98) believe that individuals have a tendency to buy goods through the experience of fun, fantasy and playfulness with products. Liao and Ma (2009:90) contend in such instances, pleasure is the main motivator of individual’s behaviour. Therefore, individuals are likely to purchase goods to fulfil their own hedonic requirements (Dubois & Laurent 1994:274; Tsai 2005:438).

Hedonism is defined as “the perceived subjective utility and intrinsically attractive properties acquired from the purchase and consumption of a luxury brand as the arousing feeling and affective states received from personal rewards and fulfillment” (Sheth, Newman & Gross 1991:164). According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982:94), hedonic consumption is viewed as “consumers’ multisensory images, fantasies and emotional arousal in consuming products.” In this case, multisensory refers to the experiences obtained from several sensory systems: taste, touch, smell and visual. Vigneron and Johnson (2004:492) state that
individuals who depend on their inner preferences and who are not vulnerable to interpersonal influences are more likely to engage themselves with hedonic consumption.

2.2.3.4 Social conformity motivation

According to Mason (1993:49), conformity is defined as the behaviour of individuals purchasing luxury products due to interpersonal influence, so that a specific social group can accept them, particularly those individuals around them. In social psychology theory, individuals are viewed as social creatures that conform to social norms and whose behaviour is powerfully directed by their group memberships (Kotler 1965:42). Therefore, it is a natural way for consumers to conform to the majority opinion of the groups they communicate with, thereby owning products because of the membership connotations (Grubb & Stern 1971:383; Solomon 1983:324). Hence, Zhou and Wong (2008:476) state that individuals purchase luxury brands to adhere to a particular social group. In essence, reference groups influence individuals when they make purchase decisions (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel 1989:479; Burnkrant & Cousineau 1975:210).

2.2.3.5 Uniqueness motivation

Uniqueness is based on the assumption that the perceived exclusivity and rareness of the product enhances a consumer’s need or preference for it (Verhallen 1982:317; Lynn 1991:263; Pantzalis 1995:47). Snyder and Fromkin (1977:522) argue that the main aim of purchasing unique products is to reinforce consumer’s need for uniqueness and their desire for differentiation and exclusivity. Vigneron and Johnson (2004:487) state that this desire can only be fulfilled when a few individuals consume the product or brand.

2.2.3.6 Symbolic motivation

Veblen (1899:210) defines symbolic consumption as the “process when consumers consume status products as symbols to communicate meaning about themselves to their reference groups”. Symbolic products are products that are mainly sensitive to social influence and are visible (Nueno & Quelch 1998:62). Eastman, Iyer, and Thomas (2013:58) point out that symbolic products include luxury clothing, accessories, automobiles, and furniture.

Dubois and Duquesne (1993:36) indicate that symbolic motivation of status consumption is divided into two groups known as snobbism and bandwagon. Snobbism refers to individuals
that purchase less of the product or brand if others are purchasing it as well (Dubois & Duquesne 1993:36). Individuals within this classification prefer purchasing unique products to signify their exclusive identities. According to Leibenstein (1950:204), snobs demand for a product or brand will drop if they notice mass consumers’ demand for the same product increases. In addition, snobs tend to prefer limited supplies of luxury goods and they reject the product when they notice that it has been consumed by the masses (Vigneron & Johnson 1999:243).

Bandwagons are individuals who purchase what other consumers are purchasing (Dubois & Duquesne 1993:39). Bandwagon refers to consumers that desire to conform to their ideal reference group and to segregate from an undesired reference group (Vigneron & Johnson 1999:240). Bandwagons’ demand for a product escalates when they notice others are also using the same product.

2.2.4 SOCIAL CLASS

2.2.5 SOCIAL CLASS CATEGORIES

A major influence on individuals’ buying habits and behaviour is the social class to which the individual belongs (Blythe 2013:203). Consumers’ associate brands of various products and services with social classes and this has an effect on the products they purchase (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1993:153). Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:297) define social class as “the division of members of a society into a hierarchy of distinct status classes, so that members of each class have relatively the same status and members of all other classes have either more or less statuses”.

Hamilton (2009:257) maintains that individuals of the same social class usually have similar attitudes, stay in similar neighbourhoods, drive a similar class of cars, dress alike, purchase similar brands and even buy at the same types of stores.

Gilbert and Kahl (1982:166) point out there are nine variables that determine social class. These variables include economic variables (income, wealth and occupation), interaction variables (personal prestige, association and socialisation) and political variables (power, class consciousness, mobility). The most obvious indicator of social class is the individual’s disposable income and wealth. Block and Roering (1979:144) observe that rich individuals
can afford to purchase expensive, luxury, high quality products while low-income consumers can only afford necessities. Another variable known to indicate one’s social class is occupation (Sharma 2004:203). Thus, an individual’s occupation is usually a reflection of their education level and has an impact on their status, consumption and lifestyle, as well as type of house, car and clothes they purchase and their neighborhood choice (Caruana & Magri 1996:40). In addition, the level of education is viewed as a key determinant of individuals’ success (Breen 2005:15).

According to Gherasim (2013:7), personal prestige is defined as the respect an individual gets from others due to having more possessions compared to them, while association refers to the way individuals live their lives in the same way within the same social class category (Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Fathi 2013:95). Socialisation is mainly about how individuals interact and learn the skills and attitudes of others (Lawlor & Prothero 2007:1209).

With regards to political variables, power is viewed as the ability of an individual to exert influence over others (Durmaz & Tasdemir 2014:188). Class consciousness is the sense of belonging to a specific social class group (Post 2010:7). According to Engel et al. (1999:109), class consciousness is reinforced by the other individuals’ consumers associated with. Lastly, social mobility is the process of moving from one social class to another (Behrman 2000:73). Yaish and Andersen (2012:529) argue that social mobility can either be downwards (moving from upper class to lower class) or upwards (moving from lower class to upper class).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:298) assert that little is known on how many different class divisions are essential to sufficiently describe the class structure of the market. According to Sivadas, Mathew and Curry (1997:469), social class categories can range from two, three, four, five and even six class schemes. The choice of how many class schemes to utilise solely depends on the amount of particulars the researcher believes is required to explain sufficiently the attitudes or behaviour under the study (Islam, Wills & Hamilton 2009:269). Peter and Olson (2008:328) suggest that a four social class scheme is appropriate for generalisation. These social class schemes comprise of lower class, working class, middle class and upper class.
2.2.6 SOCIAL CLASS CATEGORIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Within the South African context, Seekings (2003:4) points out that the researcher needs to reflect on the appropriate theoretical bases of class, acknowledging the difference between the South African and the developed countries society. According to Motale (2015:32), class in South Africa is mainly characterised by financial gains. Hence, Strydom (2011:64) argue that an individual’s financial worth is a primary determinant of their social standing.

Joubert (2010:28) indicates that one of the most essential ways South African social classes are described is by using the Living Standard Measure (LSM), which is the most generally applied technique of segmenting the South African consumer market. The LSM divides the South African market into 10 groups, 10 representing the highest social class and one representing the lowest social class (Ungerer & Joubert 2011:104). In South Africa, lower class consumers are known as LSM 1-3; working class as LSM 4-5; Middle class as LSM 6-7 and Upper class as LSM 8-10 (Ungerer & Joubert 2011:104). The social class categories are explained below.

2.2.6.1 Lower class (LSM 1-3)

According to Peter and Olson (2005:338), lower class consumers comprise 16 percent of the population. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2013:136) point out that lower class consumers are often unemployed and rely mostly on government support and are usually assisted by non-profit organisations. Unskilled labourers with minimal education and very low income or are out of work make up the majority of these consumers (Shiffman & Kanuk 2007:371).

2.2.6.2 Working class (LSM 4-5)

Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2013:134) state that working class comprises of skilled and semi-skilled sales, factory and service workers. According to Joubert (2010:27), this social class group is the largest segment in South Africa. They consist of 38 percent of the population (Peter & Olson 2005:338). These consumers stay in modest homes or flats that are usually located in marginal urban neighborhoods, old suburbs or rural areas (Hawkins, Best & Coney 2004:136). Working class individuals cannot afford to move to better places when their neighborhoods become unsafe and undesirable to stay in (Varnum, Na, Murata & Kitayama 2012:521). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2013:134) point out that this segment
dislike upper-class consumers and favour purchasing products located at their social-class level.

2.2.6.3 Middle class (LSM 6-7)

In South Africa, middle class consumers are also known as Black Diamonds and are the most attractive market (Joubert 2010:27). Middle class individuals comprise of the white-collar personnel (office employees, schoolteachers, and low-level managers), high-paid blue-collar (plumbers and factory managers) and independent businessmen/business women, corporate managers and successful professionals (Mahalingam 2007:306). Middle class consists of 32 percent of the population (Peter & Olson 2005:338). Members of this social class are university graduates, many with advanced degrees (Blythe 2013:204). These individuals stay in fine homes, drive newer model vehicles, purchase quality furniture, drink expensive alcohol and visit nice resorts (Hawkins et al., 2004:134). According to Grossmann and Varnum (2011:85), middle class individuals are concerned about responsibility and they care what other people think.

2.2.6.4 Upper class (LSM 8-10)

Upper class forms part of the smallest segment of the entire population. According to Peter and Olson (2005:338), this social class category only consists of 14 percent of the population. In most cases, consumers in the upper class have small well-established families, memberships to country clubs and sponsor big charity events (Solomon 2004:447). These consumers buy and consume expensive multiple homes, luxury automobiles, branded clothes and so forth, mainly to demonstrate their great wealth and status (Shiffman & Kanuk 2007:371) and their exclusivity to others (Truong, Simmons, McColl & Kitchen 2008:192). Peter and Olson (2005:338) add that prestige education for children continues to be the highest consumption priority of this segment.

In spite of social class influence, researchers indicate that certain antecedents also play a major role in influencing consumption patterns of individuals. The following section discusses the dimensions of status consumption.

2.3 ANTECEDENTS OF STATUS CONSUMPTION

In this section, selected antecedents of status consumption are discussed.
2.3.1 Materialism

An excessive portion of people’s time and effort is dedicated to attaining and thinking about material possessions (Douglas & Isherwood 1979:273). Such individuals are of the opinion that their well-being could be enhanced by a relationship with objects (Burroughs & Rindfleisch 2002:354) and their achievement in life would be judged by the material possessions they have acquired (Belk 1984:267; Richins 1994:360). Thus, possessions have come to serve as an important symbol for an individual’s happiness. Hence, Dittmar (1992:205) states that a person’s identity is influenced by the symbolic meanings of his or her own material possessions, and the way in which she or he relates to those possessions. Such possessions occupy a vital place in an individual’s life and are assumed to offer the greatest sources of pleasure (Ogle, Karen, Yan & Littrell 2014:154). Thus, Clow, Cole and DeNardin (2014:32) claim that materialism is an individual’s orientation concerning possessions and use of money for happiness.

Belk (1984:291) describes materialism as the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. Richins and Dawson (1992:308) define materialism as a set of “beliefs about the importance of possessions in one’s life”. O’Cass (2001:48) points out that essential aspects of possessions for materialistic consumers are utility, appearance, financial worth and ability to convey status, success and prestige. However, Richins and Dawson (1992:307) suggest that possessions are a necessary, pleasing form of conduct to reach desirable states, including happiness. This is particularly the case among highly materialistic consumers. Roberts, Tsang and Manolis (2015:489) maintain that highly materialistic customers value the accumulation of possessions as they are important to their lives, judge other individuals success by the quality of the products they have, and consider possessions as important in attaining happiness and well-being (Roberts, Tsang & Manolis 2015:489). Ferle and Chan (2013:205) further argued that individuals who are highly materialistic will also be high in status consumption. Similarly, Nga, Yong and Sellappan (2011:244) propose that highly materialistic consumers may value obtaining products more than actually using them in view of the fact that they acquire such products to communicate success and status.

In other instances, materialism has been used to express a person’s effort to describe his or her social identity grounded on ownership of certain goods. As such, Goldsmith, Flynn and Clark (2012:104) have found a link between materialism and a person’s identity. This
perspective is supported by the social constructionist assumption that possessions are basically ‘self-extensions’. According to Segev, Shoham and Gavish (2015:87), material goods are considered symbols of various aspects of social identity including social class and status.

Materialism is linked further to culture. Thus, material belongings and the attainment of possessions usually are regarded as an imperative element of any culture in the modern society (Clow et al., 2014:33). Several modern societies are described by a powerfully held belief that “to have is to be” (Dittmar 1992:118). Hence, there is a belief that developed countries are more materialistic than developing countries (Cleveland & Chang 2008:967). That being the case, materialism is not only a phenomenon observed in developed countries. The unhealthy obsession with objects is also prevalent in developing countries. Recently, the majority of individuals in the developing countries are beginning to imitate the Western style of materialistic culture (Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen 2008:54). Those individuals, who live in materialistically oriented places, generally see possessions as playing a dominant role in identity construction and maintenance (Inglehart 1990:465).

Perhaps the most used item to demonstrate one’s possessions is fashion clothing. According to Auty and Elliott (1998:120), the reason individuals use fashion clothing to show materialism is that fashion clothing is susceptible to differences in usage stereotyping, and consequently to differences in capacity to encode and decode a variety of messages.

2.3.2 Fashion clothing involvement

A typical product category utilised to display status is fashion clothing (Eastman et al., 1999:47). Solomon and Rabolt (2004:239) concur with the notion and point out that fashion is the main example of a product category used to display status and personal meaning.

Past research indicates that fashion clothing fulfils a number of functions beyond mere functional performance (Hourigan & Bougoure 2012:128). Clothing says how important a person is, tells others how much status an individual has and what the individual is like (Piamphangsant & Mandhachitara 2008:443). Hence, a strong link between consumers’ involvement and fashion clothing exists. With regards to clothing, involvement refers to a person’s perception of importance and awareness throughout several situations related to fashion (Tigert, Ring & King 1976:49).
Zaichkowsky (1985:349) defines involvement as an individual’s perceived significance of a product or service based on needs, desire and values. O’Cass et al. (2000:550) refer to involvement as the degree to which the buyers observe the main object as a fundamental part of their life, a significant and engaging entity in their life that is important to them. This led Kim (2008:295) to conclude that involvement shows the tendency of a person to pay more attention to specific products or to participate actively in specific product acquisition activities.

Involvement is also a variable used to predict the buying behaviour of the consumer (Khare 2015:433). Therefore, there are observed differences between consumers who are highly involved and those who are less involved (Hourigan & Bougoure 2012:128). Martin (1998:18) asserts that highly involved consumers are most likely to purchase fashion clothes than less involved consumers. Furthermore, consumers’ that are highly involved with clothing products often purchase products before others and encourage others to buy them as well (McFatter 2005:57). Likewise, they do not mind paying a premium price for products and spend a larger quantity of their time shopping (Vieira 2009:184). These consumers are regarded as the drivers of the fashion adoption process. Thus, highly involved consumers constitute an imperative group to fashion marketers. Individuals who have high fashion involvement obtain fashion information for themselves and others, making these individuals good opinion leaders (Hourigan & Bougoure 2012:130). Therefore, consumers who are high in involvement prefer doing extensive research before making decisions with regards to fashion clothing as they feel that fashion is personally relevant (Jordaan & Simpson 2006:35). Whereas, low involved consumers usually do not conduct any research before making purchase decisions (Josiassen 2010:25). Moreover, less fashion-involved consumers tend to buy fashion clothes when on sale (Miquel, Caplliure & Aldas-Manzano 2002:8).

Fashion clothing involvement is a fast growing research stream as it is connected with how essential and meaningful clothes have become to the lives of individuals around the world (Hourigan & Bougoure 2012:128). O’Cass et al. (2004:870) define fashion-clothing involvement as the degree to which a purchaser views the related fashion clothing activities as a fundamental part of their lives. Fashion clothing involvement generally results in repeat purchase, use of a product and increased attainment of product information (Jordaan & Simpson 2006:37).
2.3.3 Group identity

Studies (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Ethier 1995:284; Laverie, Kleine & Schultz 2002:663) have examined the influence of group identity on consumer attitudes and opinions. Group identity is commonly referred to as an individual’s sense of self, derived from perceived belonging in social groups (Reza & Valeecha 2013:198). When individuals belong to a group, they are likely to grow a sense of identity (Chen & Xin-Li 2009:431). A person who identifies himself or herself as an affiliate of a particular social group will regularly conform to core characteristics of that specific social group, inviting that person to take the group’s interest to heart including their buying behaviour (Reed, Forehand, Puntoni & Warlop 2012:310). Consequently, group identity has a great impact on individual’s behaviour (Akerlof & Kranton 2005:27). Overall, once individuals see themselves as part of a group, they derive self-esteem from that group affiliation and embrace behaviours that are consistent with the stereotypes related to their group identity.

Consumers’ brand choices for products such as food (Roper & La Niece 2009:87) and clothes (Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolea 2001:497) have all been found to be influenced by consumers’ group identity. Relating a brand with a consumer’s group identity has also been established to impact the extent of self-brand connection the consumer forms with the brand (Escalas & Bettman 2005:382). As such, group identity can govern what types of brands individuals purchase (Forehand & Deshpande 2001:338; Grier & Deshpande 2001:219).

Consumers even choose their way of gathering information about fashionable brands based on their group identity (Christopher, John & Sudhahar 2014:5). Thus, consumers frequently seek out information from other consumers prior to purchase in order to minimise the risk of making bad decisions. A consumer who looks for the opinions of others in a group makes the others a reference point of purchase decision-making process to which she or he could turn to. Hence, Ramanathan and McGill (2007:511) opine that groups may also have an impact on how the consumer feels towards particular products or brands. As proposed by Kaufmann, Loureiro, Basile and Vrontis (2012:408), this type of group is referred to as reference group. According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001:415), certain reference groups may exist exclusively around the usage of a particular brand or product. Hogg (2003:417) maintains that reference groups source the consumers with numerous social identities, which combine with the consumer’s self-concept to complete his or her entire identity. However, these groups are not...
equally exclusive and, therefore, these consumers may be influenced by various reference groups at the same time (Luna, Ringberg & Peracchio 2008:283). The types of reference groups are described below:

### 2.3.3.1 Types of reference groups

Escalas and Bettman (2003:341) refer to reference groups as those groups a consumer will compare their behaviour to. Bristol and Mangleburg (2005:83) point out that reference groups are divided into two types, known as normative and comparative reference groups.

### 2.3.3.2 Normative reference groups

Normative reference groups are defined as groups of people that have an influence on individual’s values, norms, and behaviour (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008:116). A normative reference group comprises of family, peers and work groups (Childers & Rao 1992:206). According to Subramanian and Subramanian (1995:16), individuals learn and develop their norms and values through direct interaction with their normative reference group. Normative reference groups are divided into various categories, which is discussed below.

#### 2.3.3.2.1 Family influence

Social sources such as the family often influence consumer buying behaviour (Sharma 2011:90). Bearden and Etzel (1982:199) maintain that the family influence on the individuals’ consumption behaviour tends to be very strong, as family tends to help shape individual’s values, attitudes and buying behaviour, through the process known as socialisation (Lamb 2004:160). The socialisation process is defined as the manner parents pass cultural values and norms to children (Tucker 2011:150).

#### 2.3.3.2.2 Peer influence

Bristol and Mangleburg (2005:84) define peer influence as “the extent to which peers exert influence on the attitudes, thoughts and actions of an individual”. The degree of peer influence varies across products (Bearden & Etzel 1982). As a result, several studies (Bachmann, John & Rao 1993; Bearden & Etzel 1982; Childers & Rao 1992) found that peer influence is strong, especially in the consumption of luxury products that often are consumed...
publicly. Makgosa and Mohube (2007:65) indicate that young consumers seek their peers’ opinions before purchasing luxury products.

2.3.3.2.3 Work group influence
Work groups are a more formal primary reference group that have a great influence on what an individual purchases because the members of this group interact frequently (Reza & Valeecha 2013:198). According to Shiffman and Kanuk (2007:317), work groups are classified into two types, formal work groups and informal friendship-work groups. The formal work group comprises of people who work together as part of a team, therefore, they have an ongoing opportunity to influence each other’s purchasing and consumption-related attitudes and actions. However, people who formed a friendship due to working for the same organisation are considered to be informal friendship-work group. These individuals might not even work for the same department but often meet during company functions or tea breaks. As individuals spend a significant amount of their time at their workplaces interacting with colleagues, they tend to influence each other’s consumption behaviour (Bearden & Etzel 1982:183). This is true, especially when it comes to products such as clothing (McDermott & Pettijohn 2011:65), mobile phones (Singh & Goyal 2009:180) and cars (Reza & Valeecha 2013:197).

2.3.3.3 Comparative reference group
Escalas and Bettman (2003:341) maintain that comparative reference groups are formal groups where individuals do not interact often with their group members; however, they indirectly influence these individuals (Martin & Bush 2000:447). Cocanougher and Bruce (1971:379) assert that the influence of comparative reference groups is possible only when individuals’ attitudes are favourable towards these groups. Celebrities are a good example of comparative reference group (Ahmed, Farooq & Iqbal 2014:2). This type of comparative reference group is discussed briefly below:

2.3.3.3.1 Celebrities
Celebrities are individuals who are well known to the public (Ahmed et al., 2014:4). These individuals have special skills and live extraordinary lifestyles (Sliburyte 2009:937). Many people desire to be like them to the extent that they even imitate their consumption behaviour
As a result, celebrities are viewed as a powerful force in creating interest or actions with regard to buying or consumption of goods and services (Lafferty & Goldsmith 2004:27). As such, companies pay celebrities a lot of money to endorse their products, in anticipation that the celebrity fans will respond positively to the celebrity’s association with their product (Shiffman & Kanuk 2007:321).

2.3.4 Need for uniqueness

Snyder and Fromkin (1980:187) define consumer need for uniqueness as “the trait of pursuing differences relative to others through the acquisition, utilisation, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s self-image and social image” (Tian, Bearden & Hunter 2001:52). The consumer’s need for uniqueness is a phenomenon with which people compare themselves with their peers, giving themselves a frame of reference for forthcoming consumption behaviours (Jordaan & Simpson 2006:36). Therefore, it is a social comparison process, which rests on the person’s self-perceived uniqueness (Jordaan & Simpson 2006:36).

Individuals display their need for uniqueness through creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity (Chan, To & Chu 2015:4). With regards to creative choice counter-conformity, individuals purchase products that express their uniqueness and are acceptable to their surroundings. Therefore, brand names that can offer some distinctive attribute such as unique features, exclusivity and prestige can appeal to consumers who exhibit this type of consumer behaviour. Chan et al. (2015:4) state that these types of consumers conform to social norms. They express their self-identity and exclusivity by purchasing new brands and exclusive goods as they desire to be accepted by society (Knight & Kim 2007:272). Those individuals who align themselves with unpopular choice counter conformity are expected to experience risk of social disapproval by selecting unique brands that stray from social norms because they cannot seek active ways to distinguish themselves in a socially approved way (Tian et al., 2001:53). Furthermore, they purposely purchase unusual products or brands and neglect criticism from their peers (Simonson & Nowlis 2000:53). These individuals willingly risk social disapproval to develop their uniqueness. Fascinatingly, their risky behaviour may eventually increase their self-image. The final type of consumer is referred to as avoidance of similarity. Consumers with a propensity to avoid similarities, try to avoid brands and products that are considered common
and consequently terminate the purchase and use of popular brands to avoid similarities with peers, and in such a way, differentiate themselves (Knight & Kim 2007:273). Moreover, consumers with this type of behaviour have a tendency to choose products or brands that are unlikely to become too popular, but that will differentiate them from others. For instance, they may purchase discontinued styles, shop in vintage stores, or combine apparel in unusual ways (Kernis 1984:355).

Snyder and Fromkin (1980) claim that individuals with need for uniqueness are striving to sustain a sense of specialness as they describe themselves on numerous significant self-related dimensions in relation to other people. Roehrich (2004:674) opines that the consumer need for uniqueness inspires the person to differentiate him/herself through the ownership of rare products or brands. Ross et al. (2014:29) indicate that people with need for uniqueness perceive high similarity with their peers and always try to differentiate themselves from others.

There is evidence linking the need for uniqueness to clothing consumption. In most instances, individuals seek uniqueness through seeking of fleshly products or brands (Knight & Kim 2007:273). This is particularly the case when these brands are fashion clothes. Individuals tend to buy such branded fashion clothes just because they are perceived to be scarce and are distributed in limited retailers (Bian & Forsythe 2012:1448). As such, the purchase of such brands can give individuals a unique feeling among their peers (Chan et al., 2015:3).

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING STATUS CONSUMPTION

In order to understand status consumption, social identity theory will be used. Social identity theory is based on the assumption that people want to belong in a group. Based on this theory, individuals’ behaviour is influenced, among other things, by the people they associate with. The next section discusses the Social Identity Theory.

2.4.1 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY (SIT)

Social identity has been utilised by psychologists to understand the link between individuals and the functions of groups (Brewer 2001:115). Sociologists and psychologists view SIT as a
very crucial aspect in determining human behaviour (McKinley, Mastro & Warber 2014:1049). According to Solomon (2006:380), a human is a social creature that needs to belong to a particular group in which they try to conform and use other persons as mirrors on how to behave.

Hogg and Abrams (1988:187) define social identity as an individual’s knowledge about his or her membership to a social group. Social group refers to a number of individuals who share similar social identification and view themselves as being part of the same social category (Stets & Burke 2000:225). These individuals often, through a social comparison process, judge themselves as either “Us or Them” (Hogg 2001:186). There are two main categories that have been formulated to classify individuals into social groups. Individuals with similar characteristics to self are classified as the in-group while individuals who are different from the self are classified as the out-group (Campbell 1997:21). This categorisation of groups results in evaluation, where the in-group is often judged positively and the out-group is judged negatively (Stets & Burke 2000:225).

The social identity theory further evaluates the influence of groups such as friends, peers, family and the community on an individual. The effect of such evaluations results in a unified response by group members in terms of their expected behaviours and expectations (Brewer 2001:118) and how they fit in a group (Pratt 2003:167). Consequently, group behaviours may compel individuals to act in a particular way, giving rise to group pressure especially when it comes to usage of symbolic products such as apparels and fashion brands (Brittain 1963:389). This is particularly so with regards to young consumers. According to Bearden and Rose (1990:469), young consumers value group identity in such a way that before they make a purchase they consider the views of others.

2.5 THE YOUTH AND STATUS CONSUMPTION

According to Markert (2004:14), youth are those individuals born between 1986 and 2005. This implies that youth in 2015 are individuals aged between 10 and 29 years old. These consumers are estimated to be approximately 38 percent of the total South African population in 2015 (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This is a rapid growing generation cohort (Hussain & Wong 2015:1).
Youth consumers have grown up in an environment dominated by computers (Rawlins, Simeon, Ramdath & Chadee 2008:592), and have mastered their use for numerous aspects of their lives, especially communications (Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009:731). These digital natives are often described as technologically savvy and the most visually sophisticated of any generation (Lenhart & Madden 2007:124). These consumers tend to interact with each other through social media platforms (Palfrey & Gasser 2008:213). In addition, they spend a significant amount of their time on social media (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert 2009:229). They are also more likely to value others’ opinions in social media and to feel important when they provide feedback about the brands or products they use (Espinoza & Juvonen 2011:706).

Phau and Marchegiani (2010:20) assert that the youth cohort has a greater propensity to spend (Bakewell, Mitchell & Rothwell 2006:170) and are likely to engage in status consumption through purchasing fashion clothes since spending money on expensive fashion brands serves as an indication of social standing (Kim & Jang 2014:41). Ruane and Wallace (2013:317) point out that youth consumers are in love with fashion clothing and enjoy doing shopping. As a result, these consumers spend two-third of their income, whether from parents or salary, on clothing (Bakewell et al. 2006:169). These consumers are more likely to spend their money as quickly as they get it to purchase consumer goods (McKay 2008:42).

More importantly, as indicated previously, the youth usually purchase products not for quality but status (Johnson 2006:10). This makes this cohort more open to new ideas of status products and services, such as expensive fashion clothing, as a means of self-expression or to display their desired lifestyle (O’Cass & Siahtiri, 2013:509). Also, young consumers view fashion clothing as trendy (Danziger, 2005:123). As a result, they are prepared to pay premium price to obtain such products (Eastman & Eastman 2011:9). This is also the case for township youth consumers in the Sedibeng District. The next section provides an overview of the Sedibeng district municipality.

2.6 OVERVIEW OF THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

The Sedibeng District Municipality is one of the municipalities located in the southern part of the Gauteng province of South Africa. Sedibeng’s population is approximately 942 000 (Integrated Development Plan 2015) with a third of the economic active population
unemployed (South African LED Network 2012). The majority (56 percent) of the population in Sedibeng is under the age of 30 (Bews 2008). Sedibeng district municipality encompasses three municipalities, the Emfuleni Municipality, the Midvaal Municipality and the Lesedi Municipality (South African Local Government Association 2012). The municipality covers the area formerly known as the Vaal Triangle which covers the following towns: Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton, Vereeniging and Heidelberg as well as the historic townships of Evaton, Sebokeng, Bophelong, Tshepiso, Sharpeville, Impumelelo, Boipatong, Jameson park, Kwazenzele, Mamello and Ratanda, which have a rich political history and heritage (Sedibeng Integrated Development Plan 2010). According to the Sedibeng Integrated Development Plan (2012), Sedibeng is a major recipient of new migrants every year, particularly, young people. In addition, the majority of people coming to this area are students who come to study at the North-West University, Sedibeng College and Vaal University of Technology. Figure 2.1 presents a map of the Sedibeng District Municipality:

![Sedibeng District Municipality map](South_African_LED_Network_2012)

Source: South African LED Network, 2012

**Figure 2.1: Sedibeng District Municipality map.**
2.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the review of literature in order to set the theoretical grounding of the study in accordance with the theoretical objectives set in Chapter 1. Section 2.2 briefly discussed status consumption, including its definition (Section 2.2.1). Status symbols were discussed in Section 2.2.2, including mobiles phones (Section 2.2.2.1), pets (Section 2.2.2.2), luxury cars (Section 2.2.2.3), wellness (Section 2.2.2.4), golf club membership (Section 2.2.2.5), luxury jewelry (Section 2.2.2.6), vacations (Section 2.2.2.7) and clothing (Section 2.2.2.8). In Section 2.2.3, consumer reasons for consuming products for status were discussed. The motives for status consumption comprises of quality assurance motivation (Section 2.2.3.1), desire for social status motivation (Section 2.2.3.2), social conformity motivation (Section 2.2.3.4), uniqueness motivation (Section 2.2.3.5) and symbolic motivation (Section 2.2.3.6). Social class (Section 2.2.4) and social class categories (Section 2.2.5) were highlighted, including lower class (Section 2.2.6.1), working class (Section 2.2.6.2), middle class (Section 2.2.6.3) and upper class (Section 2.2.6.4). Highlighted in Section 2.3 are the antecedents of status consumption, including materialism (Section 2.3.1), fashion clothing involvement (Section 2.3.2), group identity (Section 2.3.3) and need for uniqueness (Section 2.3.4). The theoretical framework for understanding status consumption was discussed in Section 2.4 and the selected theory was social identity theory (SIT), which was also discussed in Section 2.4.1. The youth consumers and status consumption was discussed in Section 2.5. The chapter concludes with providing an overview of the Sedibeng district municipality in Section 2.6.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, will outline the research methodology used for the empirical part of the study with reference to the research design, sampling procedure, data collection method, measuring instrument, administration of the questionnaire, pre-testing of the questionnaire, pilot testing of the questionnaire, data preparation, and statistical analysis.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is one of the most significant facets of marketing. It plays an imperative role in gathering useful information, discovering new opportunities and cultivating marketing strategies that will assist in solving marketing difficulties (Malhotra 1996:9). Marketing research is viewed as a valuable instrument in marketing mainly because it stipulates the procedures that should be used to gather data, manage the process of gathering information, analysing the gathered information and interpreting the results to enable better marketing decisions (Mullarkey 2001:72). The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research procedure used to carry out the empirical objectives of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Decisions regarding the research design are a significant phase in the marketing research course as it delivers the structure and techniques that need to be used in conducting valuable research and acquire reliable responses for the research questions (Mullarkey 2001:74).

According to Churchill, Brown and Suter (2010:78), a research design is the plan that is followed in gathering and analysing data. Malhotra (2010:102) defines the research design as the structure that guides the implementation of a research project. Kent (2007:5) indicates that there are three main available research designs, known as exploratory research, descriptive research and causal research. An exploratory design research is similar to detective work, in that the researcher hunts for understandings and clues into a research problem through a number of sources (Stevens et al., 2006:27). However, decisive research designs, like descriptive research and causal research, are often structured and formal (Malhotra 2010:104). Kent (2007:5) maintains that descriptive research concentrates on measuring and forecasting on the rate with which things occur. According to Malhotra (2010:106), descriptive research naturally contains measuring market characteristics, for instance, consumer attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. Lastly, casual research determines the cause and effect connections among variables (McDaniel & Gates 2001:196).
3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

After choosing a specific research design for the study, the data collection needs to be determined. According to Zikmund (2000:462), it is preferable to use a sample rather than a census in marketing research as it is a more reasonable approach for data collection. Struwig and Stead (2001:109) pointed out that gathering data from the sample is more practical than gathering data from the entire population. Sampling is recommended when it is impossible for the researcher to obtain information from the entire population. Zikmund and Babin (2007:406) recommend specific steps to be followed in developing the sampling procedure for empirical study. Figure 3.1 presents the steps in the sampling process.

![Diagram of sampling process steps]

**Figure 3.1. The sampling process steps**

**Source:** Zikmund and Babin (2007:406)
3.3.1 Target population

According to Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:283), a population is the whole group of individuals about whom the investigator needs to get information. McDaniel and Gates (2006:319) define a target population as a set of all the individuals or subjects the scholar is fascinated in knowing about and from which the sample is selected. Aaker, Kumar and Day (2007:374) indicate it is imperative to identify the target population properly and accurately as improper identification may produce unclear results. As such, it is crucial for the researcher to be accurate in specifying precise population elements of interest (Fraenkel, & Wallen 2008:91). For the purpose of this study, the population comprised of males and females, ranging between 18 - 24 years and who reside in townships in the Sedibeng district.

3.3.2 Sample size

A sample size is described as a number of individuals chosen to participate in the study (Malhotra & Birks 2003:357). A sample of 400 was selected based on previous research studies. Table 3.1 outlines the determination of the sample size based on past studies.

Table 3.1 Determining the sample size based on past research studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scope of the study</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O’Cass, A. &amp; Frost, H.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Status brands: examining the effects of non-product-related brand associations on status and conspicuous consumption</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsmith, R.E., Flynn, L.R. &amp; Clark, R.A.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Materialistic, brand engaged and status consuming consumers and clothing behaviours</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grotts, A.S. &amp; Johnson, T.W</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Millennial consumers’ status consumption of handbags</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: O’Cass and Frost (2002:75); Goldsmith, R.E., Flynn, L.R. & Clark, R.A (2012:102); O’Cass et al. (2013:448); Grotts et al. (2013:286).

3.3.3 Sampling method
Sampling is defined as a rigorous procedure of choosing units of analysis from a bigger population (Malhotra 2010:402). There are numerous reasons for choosing a sample, instead of studying the entire population (Zikmund & Babin 2010:302). Those reasons include speed of collecting the information, cheap research cost and accuracy of results.

Sampling methods are classified into two basic categories, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Loubser, Martins & Van Wyk 1996:253). According to Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2000:344), in non-probability sampling the chance of selection of each element is unknown. Whereas, on probability sampling the probability of an element being selected is known (Churchill et al., 2010:333). When a researcher wants to get a representative sample, probability sampling methods are advised. A probability sampling method offers numerous advantages; it allows an explicit statement as to how much variation is introduced, because a sample is used instead of a census of the population, and it makes possible the most explicit identification of possible biases (Aaker, Kumar, Day & Laene 2011:342).

Due to the nature of this study, the researcher selected non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling was used in the current study. According to Bradley (2007:179), convenience sampling refers to choosing the sample elements due to their availability when the study takes place. The greatest advantage of this sampling technique is that it allows the researcher to contact many respondents in a very short period of time (Hair et al., 2000:355). The following figure illustrates the two types of sampling techniques.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources: Probability and non-probability sampling methods (Shukla 2008:59)

Figure 3.2 Sampling methods
3.4 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument design is a vital stage in the survey. Doyle (2011:322) describes a questionnaire as a number of questions utilised to gather data for research purposes. According to Malhotra (2004:205), a questionnaire is a formalised set of questions used by the researcher to obtain information from the respondents. Zikmund (2003:250) maintains that relevance and accuracy are the two criteria a questionnaire must meet if it is to fulfil a researcher’s purpose. Burns and Bush (2006:300) suggest six functions of a questionnaire, which are discussed below:

- A questionnaire translates the research objectives into specific questions that are asked of the respondents.
- A questionnaire standardises those questions and the response categories so every participant responds to identical stimuli.
- By its wording, question flow and appearance, a questionnaire fosters cooperation and keeps respondents motivated throughout the interview.
- Questionnaires serve as a permanent record of the research.
- Depending on the type of questionnaire used, a questionnaire can speed up the process of data analysis.
- Questionnaires contain the information on which reliability assessments may be made, and they are used in follow-up validation of respondent’s participation in the survey.

For the purpose of this research, a structured questionnaire was selected. A structured questionnaire contains several questions that are offered to every respondent in precisely the same order and phrasing in order to compare responses (Churchill & Iacobucci 2005:215). Structured questionnaires are often utilised in marketing practice because of their consistency and ease of recording.

The survey method used in this study opens with a cover letter. A cover letter is described as a letter that accompanies a measuring instrument with the purpose of introducing the research and motivating the respondents to answer the questionnaire (Zikmund & Babin 2010:222).
Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau, and Bush (2010:192) emphasise that it is imperative for a researcher to identify the organisation conducting the research as this helps to generate trust from the respondents. The Vaal University of Technology letterhead was utilised and the contact details for researcher and supervisor of the study were provided. According to Burin (2010:211), it is important for any research cover letter to contain the importance of the study and a brief explanation of the nature of the research. On the cover letter, the researcher assured the respondents that the information they provide would be held confidential. Furthermore, the cover letter stated the estimated amount of time a respondent might take to complete the questionnaire.

3.4.1 Questionnaire layout

The questionnaire used in this study comprised five sections.

Section A: Biographical information consisted of seven questions.

Section B: Fashion clothing involvement. The scale developed by Mittal and Lee (1989:377) was used to measure fashion clothing. A five-point Likert scale with one denoting strongly disagree and five denoting strongly agree was utilised. The fashion involvement scale consisted of six items such as: “Fashion clothing means a lot to me”; “Fashion clothing plays a significant part of my life”; “I consider fashion clothing to be a central part of my life”; “I am very interested in fashion clothing”; “I think a lot about my choices when it comes to fashion clothing”; and “I am very much involved in/with fashion clothing”.

Section C: Status consumption. The scale developed by Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999:45) was used to measure status consumption. A five-point Likert scale with one denoting strongly disagree and five denoting strongly agree was utilised. The scale consisted of five items such as: “I buy fashion brands to enhance my image”; I buy fashion brands to indicate a social status symbol”; “I buy fashion brands as a symbol of success and prestige”; “I buy fashion brands to indicate wealth”; and “I buy fashion brands to indicate achievement”.

Section D: Materialism. The scale developed by Richins and Dawson (1992:307) was used to measure materialism. A five-point Likert scale with one denoting strongly disagree and five denoting strongly agree was utilised. The scale consisted of seven items such as: “I usually
buy only things I need”; “I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned”; “The things I own are not all that important to me”; “I enjoy spending money on things that are not practical”; “Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure”; “I like a lot of expensive things in my life” and “I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know”.

Section E: Group identity. The scale developed by Cameron (2004:250) was used to measure group influence. A five-point Likert scale with one denoting strongly disagree and five denoting strongly agree was utilised. The scale consisted of five item such as: “I often buy fashion brands that friends have told me about”; “I place a lot of confidence in friends’ opinions regarding buying fashion brands”; “I often decide to buy fashion brands that I see my friends wearing”; “After buying fashion brands similar to those my friends bought, I want to let them know” and “I am often concerned with the impression friends may form of me because of the fashion brands I buy”.

Section F: Need for uniqueness. A scale developed by Burns and Warren (1997:7) was used to measure the need for uniqueness. A five-point Likert scale with one denoting strongly disagree and five denoting strongly agree was utilised. The scale consisted of five item such as: “I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands”; “Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assist me in establishing a distinctive image”. “The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality”. “I often think of things I buy and do interns of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image” and “I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness”.

3.4.2 Administration of the questionnaire

The survey was conducted from 15 June to 15 July 2015. The following shopping centers were used to collect data; Sebokeng Plaza, Thabong Mall and Evaton Plaza. Five fieldworkers were chosen and received training from the researcher on the purpose of the research as well as the critical elements of fieldwork. The selection was based on their knowledge of the subject matter, their understanding of research projects and language proficiency. The researcher supervised the fieldwork administration to ensure an efficient, accurate and effective sample was obtained.
3.5 PRE-TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Zikmund and Babin (2007:232), pre-testing is a trial run with a group of respondents to iron out fundamental problems in the instructions or design of a questionnaire. Malhotra (2010:322) indicated that pre-testing helps the researcher to identify and eliminate potential problems. In addition, conducting a pre-test study gives an advance warning to the researcher about possible difficulties and problems regarding the proposed methods and whether the research instrument is appropriate. Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2003:464) note that during a pre-test stage, the respondents are requested to pay significant attention to factors such as words, questions, phrases and instructions flow patterns and point out anything they think is confusing or complicated to understand. Furthermore, pre-testing assists to eliminate ambiguity and variation in respondents’ understanding and interpretation of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested by the statistician, the supervisor and two academics.

3.6 PILOT TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Bradley (2010:210), a pilot study is a good way to test if the questionnaire will function as it should. A pilot test can be seen as a survey employing a limited number of respondents who fit the selection criteria (McDaniel & Gates 2004:22). According to Zikmund (2003:57), a pilot study is a descriptive term indicating a small-scale study in which the results are only preliminary and intended to assist in the design of a subsequent study. A pilot study is used by the researcher to improve the validity of the research (Quinlan 2011:481).

3.7 DATA PREPARATION

Shiu, Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2009:494) maintained that data preparation is “converting raw data from questionnaires into an alternative format for analytical use”. Editing and coding are the data preparation methods that were used in this study to ensure that the questionnaire is complete and ready for answering. These methods are discussed in the following section.

3.7.1 Data editing

McDaniel and Gates (2013:437) pointed out that editing is the process of checking completeness, consistency, and legibility of data and of making the data ready for coding and transfer to storage. The main aim of editing is to increase accuracy and precision (Malhotra
The editing procedure contains field editing and central office editing. The field edit is a preliminary edit, designed to detect the most glaring omissions and inaccuracies in the data. Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:406) state that field editing also assists to control the field force and clear up its misunderstandings about the procedures and specific questions. The next editing procedure is central office editing, which involves a careful physical inspection of each questionnaire for mistakes and possible omissions to responses to questions (Churchill & Brown 2006:427).

3.7.2 Data coding

Coding involves forming meaningful sets for responses gathered by means of questionnaires or other data gathering forms, so that the responses may be classified into usable categorisations (Perreault & McCarthy 1996:114). Researchers organise coded data into fields, records and files (Zikmund 2000:560). It is advisable to follow certain conventions when coding the data. Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:409) suggest the following conventions when coding data:

- Use only one character per column. Most computer programs cannot read multiple characters per column. When the computer allows multiple responses, use separate columns for each answer.

- Use standard codes for “no information”.

- Give each respondent an identification number. This number need not, and typically does not, identify the respondent by name.

The final step in the coding process is to prepare a codebook. The codebook contains general instructions indicating how each item of the data was coded, so that people conducting the data analysis can see what the coders did.

The questionnaire was separated into five sections. Section A was selected to gather demographical data from respondents, Section B measured consumer’s fashion involvement, Section C measured status consumption, Section D measured materialism, Section E measured group influence and Section F measured need for uniqueness. Data coded in this study is shown in Table 3.2.
### Table 3.2: Coding information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF DATA</th>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>QUESTION NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic data A7</td>
<td>A1 to A7</td>
<td>Section A, Question A1 to A7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion involvement</td>
<td>B1 to B6</td>
<td>Section B, Items B1 to B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status consumption C5</td>
<td>C1 to C5</td>
<td>Section C, Items C1 to C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>D1 to D7</td>
<td>Section D, Items D1 to D7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group influence E5</td>
<td>E1 to E5</td>
<td>Section E, Items E1 to E5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for uniqueness</td>
<td>F1 to F5</td>
<td>Section F, Items F1 to F5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.8 RELIABILITY

Reliability is defined as the degree to which a measuring instrument can achieve consistent measurement outcomes across repeated trials (Hair et al., 2010:156). Generally, reliability is a measure of consistency in measurement that alternatively is referred to as internal consistency (Malhotra 2007:284). According to Zikmund (1999:221), reliability is the extent to which a questionnaire is free from random error and as such, yields reliable results. Systematic sources of errors do not have an adverse impact on reliability because they affect the measurement in a constant way and do not lead to inconsistency.

Malhotra and Peterson (2006:274) indicate that there are different techniques of assessing reliability, namely:

- Test-retest reliability: an approach in which respondents are administered in identical sets of scale items at two different times under as nearly identical conditions as possible.
• Alternative form: an approach for assessing reliability, which requires two equivalent forms of the scale to be constructed and then measures the same respondent at two different times using the alternate forms.

• Internal consistency: is used to assess the reliability of the summated scale or subscale where scores for several items are summed to form a total score for a construct. It consists of two types of measurement, which are split-half reliability and Cronbach’s alpha.

Cronbach alpha was used as the technique to establish reliability in the study.

3.8.1 Cronbach alpha

Cronbach alpha is known as a method that computes the average of all split-half measures that result from differences in the division of the scale questions. In establishing the degree to which these individual variables correlate collectively with the questionnaire, the reliability of the questionnaire was established by employing the Cronbach alpha measurement method. According to Malhotra (2007:285), the coefficient value of the Cronbach alpha is between zero (representing ‘no reliability’) and one (representing ‘complete reliability’). Malhotra (2007:285) also stated that a value of 0.7 upwards is considered reliable.

3.9 VALIDITY ISSUES

McDaniel and Gates (2006:224) indicate that validity reports the matter of whether what the investigator is trying to measure was actually measured. Validity is defined as “the degree to which variances in observed questionnaire scores reveal true variances in what is being measured, rather than systematic or random error” (Malhotra & Peterson 2006:274). Content and construct validity will be undertaken in this study.

3.9.1 Content validity

Parasuraman (1991:442) states that a questionnaire has content validity if there is universal consensus among scholars that the questionnaire contains items that cover all facets of the variables measured. It is not mathematically evaluated but subjectively evaluated by researchers. Cooper and Schindler (2001:211) claim that if the questionnaire comprises a representative sample of the target population being studied, then content validity is believed
to be good. In this study, the questionnaire was piloted to achieve content validity. After conducting pilot testing the researcher made necessary changes to the measuring instrument.

### 3.9.2 Construct validity

Construct validity refers to the ability or the extent to which the questionnaire measures what it is supposed to measure (Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:257). According to Malhotra and Birks (2006:286), construct validity presents the question of what exactly builds or characterises the scale. Zikmund and Babin (2010:251) argue that construct validity be presented when the measuring instrument reliably measures and honestly represents a unique concept. Construct validity considers how well ideas and theories are transformed into real measures or statements (Shao 2002:247). As stated by Hair et al., (2010:708), the measuring instrument’s construct validity can be confirmed by considering its convergent, discriminant and nomological validity.

Convergent validity assesses the ability of the items of the same construct to correlate when measured by two measurements (Shao 2002:248). In other words, the items that are indicators of a specific variable should converge (Hair et al., 2010:709). Discriminant validity is determined when a variable does not correlate with other constructs from which it is supposed to differ (Maholtra, 2006:286). It involves demonstrating a lack of correlation among differing constructs. Lastly, nomological validity evaluates whether the correlations among the constructs in a measurement instrument are accurate and relevant (Hair et al., 2006:136).

In developing the measuring instrument, the researcher made use of prior studies that have all verified reliabilities. This study made use of inter-item correlations to assess construct validity. Clark and Watson (1995:316) points out that an average inter-item correlation that falls within the 0.15 and 0.50 suggests that the measuring instrument has construct validity. Construct validity was undertaken in a pilot-test of the questionnaire. The pilot-test is reported in section 4.1 of the study.

### 3.10 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The following section presents a description of the statistical analyses conducted on the data collected from the survey.
3.10.1 Descriptive analysis

According to Lombaard, Van Der Merwe, Kele, and Mouton (2012:3), descriptive analysis refers to the process of condensing large volumes of information into a summarised version. Descriptive analysis is advised when the researcher wants to “characterise certain groups” (Bryman & Bell 2011:84). Therefore, descriptive statistics are utilised to summarise and explain the data gathered from the sample using measures of central tendency (Churchill et al., 2010:429).

3.10.2 Measures of central tendency

Measures of central tendency are employed to describe the centre of the distribution. According to Kobus (2007:186), there are three measures of central location, known as mean, median and mode. In this study, only the mean will be used. The mean is discussed below.

3.10.2.1 Mean

Mean is defined as an average value for a set of raw data that is computed from interval or ration (metric) data (Bradley 2007:64). McDaniel and Gates (2005:436) indicated that the mean is calculated by counting the values for all observations for a certain variable and dividing the resulting sum by the total number of observations. The mean is the most regularly used measure of central tendency.

3.10.2 Standard deviation

According to Shui, Hair, Bush and Ortniau (2009:531), standard deviation shows the square root of the variance, with the variance being an indication of how the different values are centrally located around the mean.

3.10.3 Frequency distribution

Frequency of distribution refers to the amount of times each probable response to a question was recorded by the respondents (Hair et al., 2010:160). Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins and Van Wyk (2005:523) state that frequency distribution shows how popular the different values were among the units of analysis.
3.11 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Inferential statistics focus on drawing conclusions and assist in making predictions about the properties of a population grounded on the information acquired from a sample (Cooper & Schindler 2006:633). It simplifies the making of broader statements about the associations between the data (Mouton 1996:166). Malhotra (2004:343) maintains that amongst other things, inferential statistics is also able to provide more comprehensive information compared to descriptive statistics, yield insight into connections between variables, disclose the causes and effects relationship, make predictions and it creates a substantial support for a given theory. Gujarati (1988:276) states that correlation and regression analysis are the most commonly used types of inferential statistics in research. Correlation and regression analysis are discussed in the following sections.

3.11.1 Correlation analysis

Correlation is described as the easiest way to recognise a relationship between two metric variables (Malhotra & Birks 2007:573). Aaker et al. (2004:509) pointed out that correlation analysis contains measuring the strength of the relationship between the variables. Relationship is a consistent and systematic link between two or more variables.

The correlation coefficient ($r$) ranges from -1 to +1. According Zikmund and Babin (2007:234), a positive correlation reveals a tendency for a high value in one variable to be related to a high value in the second variable; whereas, negative correlation reveals a relationship between a high value in one variable and low value in the second variable. A value of zero means there is no correlation between the variables.

3.11.2 Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a mathematical method used to relate constructs. Regression focuses on the correlations observed between variables (Pallant 2007:145). It enables the researcher to scrutinise the interrelationships between these variables or dimensions. According to Aaker et al. (2004:515), the main aim of regression analysis is to build a model equation connecting the dependent variable to one or multiple independent variables. Therefore, the constructed model can be employed to control, describe, and predict the variables of interest based on the
independent variables. Malhotra and Peterson (2006:503) state that regression analysis is used for the following reasons:

- To determine whether the independent variables explain a significant variation in the dependent variable, *inter alia* whether a relationship exist
- To determine how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable, *inter alia* strength of the relationship
- To determine the structure or form of the relationship
- To predict the values of the dependent variable on the independent variable
- To control other independent variables when evaluating the contributions of a specific variable or sets of variables.

### 3.13 CONCLUSION

The chapter introduced concepts in preparation for the empirical phase of the study. The research design, the sampling procedure, the measuring instrument, validity and reliability issues and statistical techniques used in this study were discussed. Furthermore, the chapter provided a brief clarification of the pre-testing and data preparation of the study. The following chapter covers the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the research findings and an analysis of the findings of the empirical research that was undertaken.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the empirical findings attained from the data gathered during the main survey of the study. Furthermore, this chapter covers a summary of the results of the pilot test in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 discusses the data gathering process. Preliminary data analysis is discussed in Section 4.3, which comprised of the coding and tabulation of the gathered data. Section 4.5 discusses the analysis of the main study, including descriptive statistical analysis of the data and the reliability and validity of the main survey. Section 4.6 contains the various inferential statistics used in this study.

SPSS version 22.0 was utilised to analyse the data for this study. Data analysis was undertaken in two phases. The first phase involved analysing the data for pilot testing and the second phase involved analysing the results of the main survey. The following section will discuss the results of the pilot survey.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY

According to Teijlingen and Hundley (2001:1), a pilot study is undertaken to assess whether the questions are correctly worded in the questionnaire prior to the main survey. The main aim of pilot testing is to address essential complications in administration procedures (Zikmund 1999:258) and test the reliability of the questionnaire (Malhotra 2010:153). The Cronbach alpha was utilised to evaluate reliability of individual scales. Malhotra (2010:319) maintains that the Cronbach alpha has to range between 0.6 and one to be considered reliable, and the nearer the Cronbach alpha is to one, the more reliable the scale is.

A pilot test was performed with 50 respondents. The pilot testing was conducted a month before the actual survey, in order to check for misinterpretations by the respondents, lack of continuity, additional alternatives for pre-coded and closed-ended questions, and general respondent reaction to the questionnaire. This was also conducted in order to review and modify the instrument.
The pilot survey obtained 39 responses. Respondents for pilot testing were selected based on their availability. Respondents from the pilot study were not part of the main survey.

The piloted questionnaire comprised five sections. The first section included demographic information of the respondents. The second section consisted of fashion clothing involvement questions. The third section comprised status consumption questions. The fourth section comprised of materialism questions. The fifth section comprised group identity questions and the sixth section comprised need for uniqueness questions. In Section A, dichotomous and multiple choice questions were utilised. In Section B, C, D and E, a five-point Likert scale was utilised. A summary of the pilot test results is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Summary of pilot results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
<th>Average inter-item correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1-B6 (Fashion involvement)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1-C5 (Status consumption)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>0.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1-D7 (Materialism)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td>0.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1-E5 (Group identity)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.1 Reliability analysis at the pilot stage**

The Cronbach alpha was undertaken to determine the reliability of the measuring instrument. The fashion clothing involvement (six items) subscale’s Cronbach alpha is 0.826, which is above the recommended level of 0.60 and suggests that the questionnaire subscale is reliable. The status consumption (five items) subscale’s Cronbach alpha is 0.905, which exceeds the recommended level of 0.60 and suggests that the questionnaire subscale is reliable. The materialism (seven items) subscale’s Cronbach alpha is 0.751, which is beyond the recommended level of 0.60 and suggests that the subscale is reliable. The need for uniqueness (five items) subscale’s Cronbach alpha is 0.594, which is lower than the recommended level of 0.60 and this suggests that this subscale may be multidimensional and that the items of the
scale may be testing more or less the same thing (Cortina 1993:100). As a result, this variable was removed from the questionnaire for the main study.

The Cronbach alpha for group identity subscale (five items) produced a value of 0.573. This value is lower than the acceptable level of 0.60. An average inter-item correlation was performed to ascertain which items are testing more or less the same thing. Pallant (2010:97) states that an average inter-item correlation that falls within the recommended value shows that the questionnaire displays internal consistency reliability. Clark and Watson (1995:316) indicate that the average inter-item correlation should range between 0.15 and 0.50. The average inter-item correlation of group identity subscale is 0.457, which falls within the recommended average inter-item correlation range. For that reason, not a single item included in the group identity was removed or changed, as this subscale was found to be reliable.

4.3 DATA GATHERING PROCESS

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data from youth consumers residing in townships in the Sedibeng district. The researcher selected fieldworkers to help administer the questionnaires from each township in the Sedibeng district. The questionnaires were then delivered to those individuals and afterwards dispersed to youth in each township. The participation of the respondents was voluntary and they were assured that all the information they provide would be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

4.4 PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS

Churchill and Iacobucci (2002:572) indicate that conducting a preliminary data analysis is crucial in research and it normally comprises of coding and tabulation of the raw data. The succeeding section will discuss the coding and tabulation of the data.
4.4.1 Data coding

Churchill (1995:51) defines coding as the technical process utilised to divide data into categories. Coding involves assigning a code, commonly a number, to each probable response to each question (Malhotra 2010:454). The questionnaire used in this study contained four sections, namely Section A - demographical data; Section B - fashion clothing involvement; Section C - status consumption; Section D – materialism; and Section E - group identity. All the participants within the sample received the same questionnaire. Table 5.2 represents the coding employed for the questionnaire.

Table 4.2: Coding information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A: Demographic data</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value assigned to response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male (1); Female (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18 (1); 19 (2); 20 (3); 21 (4); 22 (5); 23 (6); 24 (7); Older than 24 (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td>Primary school (1); High school (2); FET qualification (3); Undergraduate degree (4); Postgraduate degree (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Employed (1); Self-employed (2); A student (3); Out of work and looking for a job (4); Out of work but not looking for a job (5); Housewife (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Average monthly income or pocket money</td>
<td>Less than R500 (1); R500-R1000 (2); R1001-R1500 (3); R1501-R2000 (4); R2001-R2500 (5); R2001-R2500 (6); R2501-R3000 (7); R3001-R3500 (8); R3501-R4000 (9); R4001-R4500 (10); R4501-R5000 (11); R5001-R5500 (12); R5501+ (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Residence location</td>
<td>Sebokeng (1); Evaton (2); Sharpeville (3); Boipatong (4); Bophelong (5); Tshepiso (6); Ratanda (7); Impumelelo (8); Jameson Park (9); Kwazenzele (10); Mamello (11); other (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section B: Fashion clothing involvement</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Value assigned to response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Fashion clothing involvement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Neither disagree nor agree (3); Agree (4); Strongly agree (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section C: Status consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Value assigned to response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Status consumption</td>
<td>Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Neither disagree nor agree (3); Agree (4); Strongly agree (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>C5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section D: Materialism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Value assigned to response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>D1R</td>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Neither disagree nor agree (3); Agree (4); Strongly agree (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>D2R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>D4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>D5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6</td>
<td>D6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7</td>
<td>D7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section E: Group influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Value assigned to response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Neither disagree nor agree (3); Agree (4); Strongly agree (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>E4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>E5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R refers to reverse scored questions

### 4.4.2 Tabulation of variables

After the data had been coded, it was tabulated. The main aim of tabulation is to display a summary of the data in a manner that it is easy to read. Zikmund and Babin (2010:335) point out that tabulation involves arranging data in an orderly manner, typically in the form of a table, which displays the number of answers in each response category. Table 4.3 presents frequency tables assembled for the scaled responses collected from the main survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3: Frequency table of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale B: Fashion clothing involvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale C: Status consumption</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale D: Materialism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale E: Group identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN SURVEY RESULTS

4.5.1 Response rate

In the main survey, 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Of the respondents approached, 37 refused to participate in the survey resulting in 363 respondents who completed the questionnaires. However, 18 questionnaires were incomplete and were removed from the survey resulting in 345 usable questionnaires, thus leading to a response rate of 86 percent.

4.5.2 Sample description

This section provides a brief description of the respondents’ personal information such as gender, age, level of education, occupation, monthly income or pocket money and location of residence. The descriptions of the results are presented in graphical form.

4.5.2.1 Gender composition of the sample

![Gender Composition Chart]
Figure 4.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 shows that of the 345 respondents who participated in the main survey, 160 (46.4%) were male and 185 (53.6%) female.

4.5.2.2 Age of the respondents

![Chart showing age distribution of respondents]

Figure 4.2 Respondents’ age

Figure 4.2 represents the age composition of the respondents. The results show that 13.3 percent (n=46) of respondents were 18 years old, 31.3 percent (n=108) were 19 years old, 20 percent (n=69) were 20 years old, 14.2 percent (n=49) were 21 years old, 14.8 percent (n=51) were 22 years old, 3.5 percent (n=12) were 23 years old, 2.6 percent (n=9) were 24 years old, and only 0.3 percent (n=1) were older than 24 years.
4.5.2.3 Respondents' level of education

Figure 4.3 reports on respondents’ level of education. Approximately 0.9 percent (n=3) of the respondents were in possession of a primary school qualification, 15.1 percent (n=52) were in possession of a high school qualification, 39.7 percent (n=137) were in possession of an FET qualification, 41.4 percent (n=143) were in possession of an undergraduate degree, and 2.9 percent (n=10) were in possession of a post-graduate degree.
4.5.2.4 Respondents occupation

Figure 4.4 Respondents’ occupation

Figure 4.4 represents respondents’ occupation. The results indicate that majority (n=278) 80.6 percent of the respondents were students. Employed people were (n=41) 11.9 percent. Individuals who were out of work but looking for a job comprised 6.1 percent (n=21). Approximately 1.2 percent (n=4) respondents were self-employed. Lastly, individuals who were housewives comprised 0.3 percent (n=1) of the respondents.
4.5.2.5 Respondents’ monthly income or pocket money

Table 4.4 Respondents’ monthly income or pocket money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY INCOME OR POCKET MONEY</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than R500</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R500-1000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1001-R1500</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1501-R2000</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2001-R2500</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2501-R3000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3001-R3500</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3501-R4000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4001-R4500</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4501-R5000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5001-R5500</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5501+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>345</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 represents respondents’ monthly income or pocket money. Findings reveal that approximately 6.1 percent (n=21) of respondents get monthly pocket money or income of less than R500. Of the 345 respondents, 11.6 percent (n=40) get monthly pocket money or income of R500 to R1000. The results indicates that 16.5 percent (n=57) get monthly pocket money or income of R1001 to R1500 and 28.4 percent (n=98) obtain monthly pocket money or income of 1501 to R2000 and 23.5 percent (n=81) get monthly income or pocket money of R2001 to R2500. While, 6.4 percent (n=22) of the respondents get monthly pocket money or income of R2501 to R3000, 2.0 percent (n=7) get monthly pocket money or income of R3000 to R3500 and 0.9 percent (n=3) get monthly pocket money or income of R3501 to R4000. The findings also shows that 2.0 percent (n=7) of the respondents get monthly pocket money or income of R4001 to R4500 and 1.7 percent (n=6) get monthly pocket money or income of R4501 to R5000. Lastly, the findings reveals that 0.6 percent (n=2) get monthly pocket
money or income of R5001 to R5500, and 0.3 percent (n=1) get monthly pocket money or income of more than R5501.

4.5.2.6 Respondents’ residence

Figure 4.5 Respondents’ residence

Figure 4.5 illustrates the residence of the respondents. Findings indicated that majority of the respondents 35.9 percent (n=124) reside in Sharpeville, followed by 26.4 percent (n=91) Sebokeng residents. Of the 345 respondents, 14.5 percent (n=50) of the respondents reside Evaton, 11.6 percent (n=40) reside in Tshepiso, 8.4 percent (n=29) of the respondents reside in Bophelong, 1.4 percent (n=5) of the respondents reside in Boipatong and Ratanda, and a small number of the respondents 0.3 percent (n=1) were from Mamello.

4.5.3 Descriptive statistics: mean and standard deviation of the sample

The scaled answers were measured on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Therefore, higher means are linked with a greater degree of agreement. Descriptive analysis extracted from the study is presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion involvement</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status consumption</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>345</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 indicates the measures of central tendency and dispersion for the dimensions of status consumption. The mean score for fashion involvement was higher, with the value of 4.17. This suggests that the respondents of this study agreed that clothing involvement is one of the important dimensions in status consumption. For group identity, the mean score of 3.89 suggests that the respondents of this study slightly agree that group identity affects status consumption. The lowest mean recorded of 3.80 was on materialism. This indicates that the respondents of this study neither agree nor disagree that materialism has an effect on status consumption.

The highest standard deviation in all the scales computed was on group identity scale (1.03), followed by status consumption scale with 0.85, then fashion involvement scale with 0.79, while materialism (0.51) had the lowest standard deviation. These values indicate that the sample is moderately homogeneous and the mean gives satisfactory indication of the responses.

In the next section, the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument used in this study is discussed.

### 4.5.4 Reliability of the main survey

In order to test the reliability of a measuring instrument, the Cronbach alpha was computed for each construct. Cronbach alpha is the most frequently used tool to measure reliability of the multiple-item scales. Pallant (2007:98) states that a Cronbach alpha greater than 0.70 is adequate. Moreover, Pallant maintains that a Cronbach alpha higher than 0.80 is more favoured as it indicates good reliability. Malhotra (2010:319) recommends a Cronbach alpha of 0.60 or more as a good sign of sufficient internal consistency reliability.
The Cronbach alpha computed for the various constructs was between 0.659 and 0.890. Therefore, the Cronbach alpha shows satisfactory reliability for all the constructs in the questionnaire with 0.865 obtained for fashion involvement. Status consumption delivered a Cronbach alpha of 0.822. Materialism and group identity returned Cronbach alphas of 0.659 and 0.890 respectively.

With the aim of determining the validity of a measuring instrument, the average inter-item correlation was calculated (Churchill 1995:405). Clark and Watson (1995:16) indicate that the average inter-item correlation has to range between 0.15 and 0.50 for sufficient validity. Inter-item correlation for group influence was 0.621, which is above the recommended values. The inter-item correlations computed for fashion involvement, status consumption and materialism were 0.524, 0.498 and 0.227 respectively. Pallant (2007:100) points out that an inter-item correlation value greater than the suggested value of 0.50 is a sign of a robust relationship between the items of the construct. Overall, all the constructs fell into the suggested values of 0.15 and 0.50 illustrating validity of the measuring instrument.

Table 4.6 gives a summary of the validity and reliability measures of the measuring instrument that was used in this study.

**Table 4.6: Reliability and validity of main survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
<th>Average inter-item correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>Fashion clothing involvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>Status consumption</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>C1, C2, C3, C4, C5</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>0.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>E1, E2, E3, E4, E5</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.5 Validity of the study

Validity can be defined as the degree to which a test or questionnaire measures what it is supposed to measure (Bae 2004:37). Content and construct validity were utilised to measure the validity of the questionnaire of this study. These methods of validity are discussed in the following section.

4.5.5.1 Content validity

Content validity arises when a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the subject being studied. Content validity was established by pre-testing the measuring instrument during which changes were made to the questionnaire regarding deletion of items, addition of items, rewording and rephrasing of questions. In order to test validity of this study, 50 participants were selected to take part in the pilot study. The average inter-item correlation was observed in order to detect low or negative correlations among variables.

4.5.5.2 Construct validity

Construct validity of the scale was measured by calculating of the average inter-item correlation for the scale and sub-dimensions of the scale. According to Clark and Watson (1995:16) the recommended level of average inter-item correlation is between the values of 0.15 and 0.50. Whilst average inter-item correlation values of two variable (fashion clothing involvement and group identity) exceeded the recommended level of 0.50, Pallant (2010:100) point out that this simply indicates a strong relationship between the items.

4.6 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

This section presents the results of inferential statistical techniques used in this study. The Pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis were performed in order to ascertain a relationship between fashion clothing involvement and status consumption; ascertain a relationship between group identity and status consumption; ascertain a relationship between materialism and status consumption; ascertain a relationship between materialism and group identity; ascertain a relationship between materialism and fashion clothing involvement; and ascertain a relationship between fashion clothing involvement and group identity. Furthermore, this section seeks to ascertain which antecedents are likely to influence the township youth consumers’ status consumption.
4.6.1 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis was undertaken to address the relationships within the variables of the study. Overall, results show a significant positive relationship among the variables. Table 4.7 presents correlation matrix for the variables of the study.

Table 4.7 Correlation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Fashion involvement</th>
<th>Status consumption</th>
<th>Materialism</th>
<th>Group identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion clothing involvement</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.735**</td>
<td>0.514**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status consumption</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>0.735**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.581**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>0.514**</td>
<td>0.581**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>0.712**</td>
<td>0.783**</td>
<td>0.648**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Table 4.7 indicates the relationship between fashion clothing involvement and status consumption among the township youth consumers. The results indicate a strong significant positive relationship between fashion clothing involvement and status consumption ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.01$).

Although the relationship between fashion clothing involvement and materialism ($r=0.514$, $p<0.01$) is slightly above the 0.50 cut-off point, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between these constructs. The table shows the positive significant relationship between fashion clothing involvement and group identity ($r=0.712$, $p<0.01$). The relationship between status consumption and materialism is slightly above the 0.50 cut-off point and is positive and significant ($r=0.581$, $p<0.01$). There is an observed positive significant relationship between status consumption and group identity ($r=0.783$, $p<0.01$). From Table 4.7, there is evidence of a positive significant relationship between materialism and group identity ($r=0.648$, $p<0.01$).

### 4.6.2 Regression analysis

Table 4.8 reports on how fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity predicted status consumption. The dependent variable was status consumption and independent variables or predictor variables were fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity. On the analysis of the relationship between status consumption and the selected predictors of status consumption, the adjusted $R^2=0.613$. This indicates that the model explained approximately 61.3 percent of variance in status consumption. Table 4.8 presents the results of regression analysis.

**Table 4.8 Predictors of status consumption (betas and significance levels)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variables</th>
<th>Standardised Coefficients</th>
<th>T values</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion clothing involvement</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>7.302</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>2.694</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>9.140</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant at $p<0.05$ level
Fashion clothing involvement ($\beta=0.328$, $p<0.05$) significantly and positively predicted status consumption of township youth consumers. Therefore, the results indicate that fashion-involved consumers are more likely to engage in status consumption. There was a direct relationship between materialism ($\beta=0.124$, $p<0.05$) and status consumption. Group identity ($\beta=0.459$, $p<0.05$) had a significant positive influence on status consumption.

Therefore, the hypotheses that there is a direct relationship among the predictors of status consumption, namely fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity, was supported.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to report on and interpret the empirical findings of the study. First, a pilot study was conducted in order to test the reliability of the measuring instrument before the commencement of the main study. The findings of the pilot study were presented and explained in Section 4.2. The modification and changes were made in the measuring instrument items before undertaking the main study. After the pilot study results were presented, the data gathering process was discussed (Section 4.3), followed by the preliminary data analysis process (Section 4.4). This section also discussed the coding and tabulation of the data.

In Section 4.5, the findings of the main survey were presented, interpreted and discussed in the form of tables and graphs. Descriptive statistics (Section 4.5.4), including the mean and standard deviation were considered to summarise the sample and data distribution. Validity and reliability tests of the main survey were conducted on the data and were explained further in Section 4.5.4. Inferential statistics was discussed briefly in Section 4.6 and the section contained correlation and regression analysis. One of the main aims of this study was to test the nature of the relationship between fashion involvement, group influence, materialism and status consumption. Regression analysis (Section 4.6.2) was calculated to further confirm the theoretical relationship that exists between these constructs.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, discusses and contextualises the research findings based on previous research on status consumption. Furthermore, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Normally, status consumption involves the purchase of expensive branded products to fulfil material desires. Individuals prefer products that convey status and reinforce their group identity and will often buy clothing to display status and personal meaning. Status-driven individuals will often purchase expensive products to impress others and these individuals are not necessarily wealthy (Chapter 2). While status consumption is a global phenomenon that has been studied by several researchers, the aim of this study was to investigate the status consumption of fashion brand practices among township youth. The study focused on three important antecedents of status consumption: a) fashion clothing involvement; b) materialism; and c) group identity (Section 2.3). As such, the primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of clothing involvement, materialism and group identity on status consumption of fashion brands among the youth. In addition to the primary objective of this study, several theoretical objectives were formulated.

5.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

5.2.2 Theoretical objectives

The theoretical objectives for this study were achieved through review of the relevant literature. The following objectives were set at the beginning of the study (refer to Section 1.4.2):

- Review the literature on status consumption behaviour
- Review the literature on materialism
- Review the literature on fashion clothing involvement
- Review the literature on the role of group identity into consumption of clothing
- Review the literature on the social identity theory
- Review the literature on the motives for status consumption
- Review the literature on status symbols
The theoretical objective one was achieved in Section 2.2 of this study. Theoretical objective two was achieved in Section 2.3.1 of this study. Theoretical objective three was achieved in Section 2.3.2 of this study. Theoretical objective four was achieved in Section 2.3.3 of this study. Theoretical objective five was achieved in Section 2.4.1 of this study. Theoretical objective six was achieved in Section 2.2.3 of this study. Lastly, theoretical objective seven was achieved in Section 2.2.2 of this study (refer to page 13). To achieve these objectives, the researcher made use of various journal articles, books and other literature sources.

5.2.3 Empirical objectives

The following empirical objectives were set at the beginning of the study (refer to Section 1.4.3):

- Investigate the influence of status consumption on group identity among South African township youth
- Investigate the influence of fashion clothing involvement on status consumption among South African township youth
- Investigate the influence of materialism on status consumption among South African township youth

5.3 MAIN FINDING OF THE STUDY

This section discusses the main findings of this study in accordance to the empirical objectives formulated in Chapter 1.

5.3.1 Investigate the influence of group identity on status consumption of South African township youth

The first empirical objectives set out in Chapter 1 was to determine whether group identity has an influence on status consumption of South African township youth. Regression analysis was computed to address this objective. According to the findings reported in Table 4.8, group identity has a statistically significant positive influence on status consumption of South African township youth consumers. This suggests that South African township youth consumers who are more concerned about belonging in a group are likely to engage in status consumption behaviour (Section 2.4.3). This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Akerlof et al. (2005:27) and Khare (2015:437), who found that group identity has a great
impact on individual’s behaviour and purchase behaviour. Ramanathan and McGill (2007:511) opine that groups may also have an impact on how the consumer feels towards particular products or brands. As a result, Forehand and Deshpande (2001:338) indicated that group identity governs the types of brands consumers buy.

5.3.2 Investigate the influence of fashion clothing involvement on status consumption of South African township youth

The second empirical objective set out in Chapter 1 was to determine whether fashion clothing involvement has an influence on status consumption of South African township youth. Regression analysis was undertaken in order to address this empirical objective. As evidenced from Table 4.8, fashion clothing involvement has a significant positive influence on status consumption of South African township youth. Results from Table 4.8 suggest that fashion clothing involvement is the strongest predictor of status consumption among South African township youth (Section 2.4.2). This finding is in accordance with the studies done by Gitimu et al. (2013:176) and Jordaan and Simpson (2006:37), as they found fashion clothing involvement to have an influence on status consumption. Thus, clothing says how important a person is and demonstrates to others how much status an individual has (Piamphangsant & Mandhachitara 2008:443).

5.3.3 Investigate the influence of materialism on status consumption among South African township youth

The third empirical objective set out in Chapter 1 aimed at determining whether materialism has an influence on status consumption among South African township youth. As with the first and second empirical objectives, regression analysis was conducted in order to address this objective. The results in Table 4.8 reported that materialism has a statistically positive influence on status consumption of South African township youth. This suggests that township youth consumers, who are materialistic, are likely to engage in status consumption (Section 2.4.1). This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Ferle and Chan (2013:205). These authors found that consumers, who are highly materialistic, are also high in status consumption.
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Tap the market potential of township youth consumers

Companies have to be aware of the growing potential presented by township youth consumer segments, particularly with respect to its purchasing power and size. The majority of individuals in this consumer segment are studying in tertiary institutions and the others have already obtained their qualifications (Section 4.5.2.3, Figure 4.3), which makes them a valuable market segment. It has been reported that graduates often have a greater earning potential and higher social standing, making them potentially powerful opinion leaders among their peers. As such, it is recommended that companies should start developing marketing strategies targeted explicitly at township consumers to exploit the market potential of this fast growing consumer segment. It is also recommended that academics in the marketing field, and practitioners, engage in extensive research to profile this segment in an endeavor to understand the demographics, attitudinal and behavioural patterns in order to tailor various marketing activities effectively and accurately.

5.4.2 Marketers should target status-oriented consumers

The literature provides numerous recommendations for what marketers can do to reach the status-oriented consumers. Carty (2010:32) emphasises the need for innovations with luxury brands, as status consumers are more tempted to purchase the newest thing. The best way to reach the status-oriented market is for the marketer to create and communicate differentiation in order to make the case as to why their brand is truly special, different and offers a lasting value proposition. Egol, Clyde, Rangan and Sanderson (2010:186) also stress the need for better understanding of different consumer segments and differentiation of marketing efforts. Gardyn (2002:33) proposes that status consumers can be segmented into three groups: (1) those individuals who see luxury as functional and are looking for quality and enduring value; (2) those who see luxury as a reward and demonstrative of their success to others in a ‘smart’ manner that does not leave them open to criticism; and (3) those who see luxury as an indulgence, will pay a premium for goods that express their individuality and make others take notice, and are focused on the unique emotional qualities of the luxury product. Therefore, status marketers need to have a deep understanding of their status consumers and what they are looking for with their products.
5.4.3 Consider the influence of reference groups
The influence of reference groups and peers plays an important role in the purchasing decisions of the youth consumer segment. It can be advantageous for marketers to consider these reference group members when developing marketing strategies and when communicating the benefits of brands to this consumer segment. It is recommended that marketers should invest in continuous research and keep in contact with this consumer segment to check if their values, perceptions, motivations and importance of purchasing clothing brands have changed.

As status consumers operate within the confines of normative group influence (Section 2.3.3), it is recommended that marketers must target status consumers with visible predictors of prestige and make use advertisements where products are being consumed in a group setting or in situations that imply group approval. Consumers consume products for social acceptance, group affiliation and memberships (Section 2.4.1). Hence, marketers should capitalise on the need for group approval and should encourage the involvement of others when doing shopping or buying a product.

5.4.4 Marketers should segment consumers with different materialistic values and customise their advertisements for each segment

As indicated in the literature reviewed, materialism has also been perceived to affect a wide range of marketplace behaviours and it has been reported that individuals who are more materialistic find possessions to be a sign of success and derive happiness from them, placing possessions as central in their life. These characteristics provide a motivation to claim that when consumers have materialistic tendencies they, in effect, should be more involved in products that allow fulfilment of these tendencies. Particularly so for a product like fashion clothing because it has the ability to be used as a prop, to show others the status and success one has achieved because of its symbolic code, which are all important to materialists.

While marketers may be motivated to encourage materialistic tendencies among consumers, it can be argued that it is not in society’s interest to encourage such values (Muncy & Eastman 1998:139). However, Richins and Dawson (1992:310) point out that materialistic values can be influenced by marketing activities such as advertising.
5.4.5 Marketers should direct their communication efforts to high fashion involved consumers

High fashion clothing involved consumers are likely to be more materialistic and status oriented than other consumers. Therefore, marketers targeting these consumers should emphasise status in their marketing communication efforts. High involved fashion consumers tend to read more fashion magazines, shop more, and are more likely to attend events such as fashion shows. Individuals who have high fashion involvement obtain fashion information for themselves and others, making these individuals good opinion leaders. These consumers are likely to be more innovative regarding fashion clothing and are more inclined to have a need to be on the cutting edge of what is fashionable. For that reason, marketers should design communication messages that stress the innovativeness and trendiness of new fashion styles.

5.4.6 Marketers should emphasises product’s ability to indicate high social status

Township youth consumers seem to be driven to purchase luxury public consumed products to display their status. These consumers do not mind paying a premium price for products that will make them feel superior to their peers (Section 2.5). Status oriented consumers perceive low priced products to be of poor quality. For that reason, status conscious consumers are reluctant to purchase affordable or low priced products. Their main purchasing goal is to display status. Therefore, they purchase products that indicate high social status. In most cases, this consumer segment display status through consumption of expensive fashion clothing. For that reason, it is advisable for marketers to put more emphasis on product’s perceived role in enhancing consumers’ social status.

5.4.7 Target youth consumers through new media platforms

Traditional advertising platforms are slowly fading away while numerous new advertising platforms come into existence. These new advertising platforms are digital in nature. Youth consumers are well known as being technologically informed and are heavy users of digital technology. These consumers spend significant time on online communication and they are very active on social media. Given the importance of social media such as Facebook to the youth consumers, it is suggested that targeting this consumer segment over social media platforms such as Facebook may be feasible for marketers.
5.5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

This study measured status consumption, fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group influence behaviours of the township youth consumers. This study, like most studies, has some limitations, which present numerous future research opportunities.

The first limitation in this study is that the study utilised a non-probability sampling method. Therefore, even though a number of demographic questions were used in an effort to determine how representative the sample was of the defined target population, care should be taken in generalising the findings to the population under study. Moreover, a single cross-sectional research design was undertaken in this research study (Section 3.2). For that reason, the research study’s results need the depth of a longitudinal study. Future research making use of a longitudinal study will deliver valuable information regarding any changes in the elements that determine township youth consumer’s status consumption.

The second limitation regarding this study is the focus on the Sedibeng district, more so in only a single South African province, namely Gauteng, and the respondents being from only eleven townships. Future research is recommended across various townships in all nine provinces of South Africa. This will eventually offer more insight and accurate research findings into the understanding of township youth consumers’ behaviour towards status consumption.

Furthermore, the study only made use of a quantitative research approach. Future research may consider using a mixed-method approach that includes both a qualitative and quantitative research design, where a qualitative design method could be utilised in obtaining rich ideas and explanations.

Even though the sample size of 400 respondents for this research study was considered to be sufficient for further accurate findings and understandings into the status consumption behaviour, fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group influence, the sample size can be enlarged for future research studies.

The following section will consist of the contribution of the study.
5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into status consumption, fashion clothing involvement, materialism and group identity behaviour amongst township youth consumers. The findings from this study reveal that there is a significant relationship between fashion clothing involvement and status consumption; a significant relationship between group identity and status consumption; lastly, there is also a significant relationship between materialism and status consumption. Findings from this study contribute to the growing body of research on consumer behaviour and status consumption behaviour of township youth consumers in developing countries such as South Africa. Insights obtained from this study will assist marketers to better understand this fast growing segment’s consumer behaviour, which, in turn, will assist them tailor their marketing efforts in such a way as to appeal to this segment.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current study expands on previous research on status consumption, materialism, and group identity to look at the youth consumers within the township context. As youth consumers represent the future, it is important to understand their engagement in status consumption in order to develop appropriate marketing strategies.

Fashion clothing represents a vital tool for signaling one’s social status to the majority of consumers, particularly the youth. The key insights from the study are that youth consumers are highly involved in fashion clothing and that they consider the opinions of their reference group when making a purchasing decision. Marketers who are targeting this consumer cohort need to familiarise themselves with this market. The study reveals that the youth consumers purchase expensive brands to gain and display status and they believe in owning material possessions.

In conclusion, this study was based on the objectives of the research, the literature review, research methodology used, findings and recommendations made. The findings suggest that marketers in the clothing industry take into account all the important factors discussed in this study as a reference to develop appropriate marketing strategies.


DITTMAR, H. 1992. *The social psychology of material possessions: to have is to be*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
DLAMINI, P. 2011. Township markets: Available at: 


JAKPAR, S., NA, A.G.S., JOHARI, A. & MYINT, K.T. 2012. Examining the product quality attributes that influences the customer satisfaction most when the price was discounted: a case study in Kuching Sarawak. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3(23):221-236.


SEDIBENG INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010. 

SEDIBENG INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012. 


SLIBURYTE, L. 2009. How celebrities can be used in advertising to the best advantage?, World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, 58:934-939.


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Please complete all questions in the enclosed questionnaire. I assure you that the information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. The responses will be used for academic purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Mr Nkosivile Welcome Madinga
MTech student at Vaal University of Technology
Cell number: 083 4759 734
Email: welcome.madinga@gmail.com
QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

This section seeks some background information about you. It is important to obtain this information, as this will have a bearing on the results of the survey. Please indicate your answer by crossing (x) in the appropriate block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.1</th>
<th>Please indicate your gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.2</th>
<th>Please indicate your age</th>
<th>18 years</th>
<th>19 years old</th>
<th>20 years</th>
<th>21 years</th>
<th>22 years</th>
<th>23 years</th>
<th>24 years</th>
<th>Older than 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.3</th>
<th>Please indicate your level of education</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>FET qualification</th>
<th>Undergraduate degree</th>
<th>Post-graduate degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.4</th>
<th>Please indicate your occupation</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>A student</th>
<th>Out of work and looking for a job</th>
<th>Out of work but not looking for a job</th>
<th>Housewife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.5</th>
<th>Please indicate your average monthly income or pocket money</th>
<th>Less than R500</th>
<th>R500-1000</th>
<th>R1001-R1500</th>
<th>R1501-R2000</th>
<th>R2001-R2500</th>
<th>R2501-R3000</th>
<th>R3001-R3500</th>
<th>R3501-R4000</th>
<th>R4501-R5000</th>
<th>R5001-R5500</th>
<th>R5501+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
A.6 Please indicate at which location you are residing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sebokeng</th>
<th>Evaton</th>
<th>Sharpeville</th>
<th>Boipatong</th>
<th>Bophelong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Locations</td>
<td>Tshepiso</td>
<td>Ratanda</td>
<td>Impumelelo</td>
<td>Jameson Park</td>
<td>Kwazenzele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamello</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you indicated other, please specify_________________________________________________________

SECTION B: Fashion Involvement

(Fashion involvement is the extent to which a consumer views the related fashion clothing activities as a central part of their lives).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Fashion clothing means a lot to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Fashion clothing is a significant part of my life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>I consider fashion clothing to be a central part of my life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>I am very interested in fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>I think a lot about my choices when it comes to fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>I am very much involved in/with fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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SECTION C: Status Consumption

(Status consumption refers to the consumption of expensive products or services with the aim of displaying wealth).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>To enhance my image</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>To indicate a social status symbol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>As a symbol of success and prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>To indicate wealth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>To indicate achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION D: Materialism

(Materialism is the importance a person places on possessions and their acquisition as a necessary desirable form of conduct to reach desirable states, including happiness).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>I usually buy only the things I need</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>The things I own are not all that important to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>I enjoy spending money on things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that are not practical

D5 Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure  1  2  3  4  5

D6 I like a lot of expensive things in my life  1  2  3  4  5

D7 I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know  1  2  3  4  5

SECTION E: Group Identity

(Group identity refers to a cluster of individuals that significantly influences a person's behaviour).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1 I often buy fashion brands that friends have told me about</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2 I place a lot of confidence in friends’ opinions regarding buying fashion brands</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3 I often decide to buy fashion brands that I see my friends wearing</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4 After buying fashion brands similar to those my friends bought, I want to let them know</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4 I am often concerned with the impression friends may form of me because of the fashion brands I buy</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION F: Need for Uniqueness

(Need for uniqueness refers to individual’s desire to be different from others through acquiring and utilizing particular goods with the aim of making and enhancing their social image)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assist me in establishing a distinctive image.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>I often think of things I buy and do interns of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your cooperation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.1</th>
<th>Please indicate your gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.2</th>
<th>Please indicate your age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>19 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.3</th>
<th>Please indicate you level of your education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.4</th>
<th>Please indicate your occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.5</th>
<th>Please indicate your average monthly income or pocket money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than R500</td>
<td>R500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3001-R3500</td>
<td>R3501-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.6 Please indicate at which location you are residing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sebokeng</th>
<th>Evaton</th>
<th>Sharpeville</th>
<th>Boipatong</th>
<th>Bophelong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Ratanda</td>
<td>Impumelelo</td>
<td>Jameson Park</td>
<td>Kwazenzele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamello</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you indicated other, please specify_________________________________________________________

SECTION B: Fashion Involvement

(Fashion involvement is the extent to which a consumer views the related fashion clothing activities as a central part of their lives).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Fashion clothing means a lot to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Fashion clothing is a significant part of my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>I consider fashion clothing to be a central part of my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>I am very interested in fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>I think a lot about my choices when it comes to fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>I am very much involved in/with fashion clothing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION C: Status Consumption

(Status consumption refers to the consumption of expensive products or services with the aim of displaying wealth).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I buy fashion brands:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 To enhance my image</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 To indicate a social status symbol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 As a symbol of success and prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 To indicate wealth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5 To indicate achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SECTION D: Materialism

(Materialism is the importance a person places on possessions and their acquisition as a necessary desirable form of conduct to reach desirable states, including happiness).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1 I usually buy only the things I need</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3 The things I own are not all that important to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4 I enjoy spending money on things that are not practical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D5</th>
<th>Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>I like a lot of expensive things in my life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D7</td>
<td>I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION E: Group Identity**

(Group identity refers to a cluster of individuals that significantly influences a person's behaviour).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking (✓) the corresponding number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>I often buy fashion brands that friends have told me about</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>I place a lot of confidence in friends’ opinions regarding buying fashion brands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>I often decide to buy fashion brands that I see my friends wearing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>After buying fashion brands similar to those my friends bought, I want to let them know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>I am often concerned with the impression friends may form of me because of the fashion brands I buy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your cooperation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!