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### Influence of Demographic Factors on the Buying Behaviour of Sports Apparel Consumers in Johannesburg

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#### Abstract:

Establishing the factors that influence consumer buying behavior is an important marketing and managerial function. The aim of this study was to determine the influence of demographic factors such as gender, race, age and education level on the purchasing behavior of sports apparel in Johannesburg, South Africa. In addition, the study investigated the preferred options and the reasons for buying sports apparel. A quantitative research approach was adopted. The data were collected using a closed-ended online questionnaire, and 70 responses were obtained. The study found that demographic factors had no significant influence on the buying behavior of sports apparel in Johannesburg. The results also indicated that there was no significant difference between purchasing sports apparel for participating in physical activities and casual wear. Moreover, no significant difference was found between those who preferred stores inside shopping malls and those who preferred stores in shopping centers. This means that managers may either decide to locate their sports apparel stores inside shopping malls or in shopping centres, depending on commercial viability. Also, marketers can consider using similar marketing communications strategies for all demographic groups to minimize advertising costs. Owing to the limited research on sports apparel consumption in Johannesburg, the findings of this study have provided useful insights for marketers to consider. These include the effect of demographic factors, consumer preferences, and ways in which consumers prefer to buy sports apparel.

**Keywords:** consumer behaviour, purchase intention, Generation X and Y.

### 約翰內斯堡人口因素對運動服裝消費者購買行為的影響

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## 摘要:

建立影响消费者购买行为的因素是一项重要的营销和管理职能。本研究的目的是确定性别、种族、年龄和教育水平等人口因素对南非约翰内斯堡运动服装购买行为的影响。此外，该研究还调查了购买运动服装的首选选择和原因。采用了定量研究方法。数据通过封闭式在线问卷收集，共收到70份回复。研究发现，人口因素对约翰内斯堡运动服装的购买行为没有显著影响。结果还表明，购买运动服装参加体育活动和休闲服装没有显著差异。此外，偏好购物中心内商店的人和偏好购物中心内商店的人之间没有发现显著差异。这意味着管理者可以决定将他们的运动服装店开在购物中心内或购物中心外，具体取决于商业可行性。此外，营销人员可以考虑对所有人口群体使用类似的营销传播策略，以最大限度地降低广告成本。由于约翰内斯堡运动服装消费的研究有限，这项研究的结果为营销人员提供了有用的见解。其中包括人口因素、消费者偏好以及消费者喜欢购买运动服装的方式的影响。

**关键词:** 消费者行为、购买意愿、X一代和是一代。

## 1. Introduction

The study of consumer behavior is an important marketing and managerial function. Nowadays, there is an increased interest in the importance of consumer behavior in the marketing field (Auf et al., 2018). Knowledge of consumer behavior may help marketers to determine the elements that bring about customer satisfaction, which may result in customer loyalty and the proper allocation of resources (Blackwell et al., 2001). Therefore, it is important for companies to study consumer behavior if they want to meet the needs of their customers.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, race and education level on the buying behavior of sports apparel consumers in Johannesburg. Moreover, the study also sought to establish the reasons why consumers purchase sports apparel and the preferred option when they are buying it.

The researcher believes that the findings of this study will help the marketers and managers of sports apparel companies to make informed decisions regarding the adoption of appropriate and cost-effective marketing communications strategies across demographic groups.

### 1.1. Problem Statement

South Africa is a diverse nation with different races, age groups, generational cohorts, literacy levels, religious affiliations, and so on. Due to this diversity, marketers should have a focused approach when studying consumer behaviour. This is important because different consumers may have dissimilar tastes and preferences, and treating them in the same way can yield poor results.

This study was conducted in Johannesburg, the biggest single metropolitan contributor to South Africa's GDP, contributing almost 16% to the national economy and 40% to the provincial economy (Joburg, 2018). In Johannesburg, there is a great deal of competition amongst sportswear companies, such as Totalsports, Mr Price Sport, and Sportsman's Warehouse in capturing customer patronage, with each company fighting for a share in the market. Thus, if a

company does not understand what influences customers' decisions to buy products, it will not know what strategies to implement to attract more buyers.

The research on the influence of demographic factors on the buying behavior of sports apparel consumers in Johannesburg is a bit limited. This is problematic because marketers may not know how to effectively target different demographic groups within the population. It is essential for clothing marketers to have sufficient knowledge of the many factors that influence consumer decisions in order to ensure successful product delivery and customer retention in the marketplace (Mafini & Dhurup, 2014).

Sportswear companies face potentially negative consequences if they do not understand consumer behavior and identity. Hence, the study complemented existing research on consumer purchasing decision making, with a focus on the Johannesburg context.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- Investigate the influence of demographic factors like gender, age, race, and education level
- Determine the reasons why consumers purchase sports apparel
- Establish the preferred option for buying sports apparel
- Establish whether or not there are any differences in the buying behavior of Generation X and Y sports apparel consumers.

### 1.3. Hypotheses

Based on the literature study, the following hypotheses were developed:

*H1:* Demographic factors like gender, age, race, and educational background have a positive influence on the purchase intention of sports apparel consumers.

*H2:* Generations X and Y do not differ in terms of their purchase intention for sports apparel.

*H3:* Sports apparel consumers have specific preferences in terms of their purchase intention for sports apparel.

*H4:* Sports apparel consumers have specific reasons for buying sports apparel.

## 2. Literature Review

In this section, findings from previous studies on the buying behavior of sports apparel consumers will be addressed. As highlighted in Kotler and Armstrong (2017), although buying behavior is never simple, marketing management needs to know the factors that drive people to buy products, one of which is the consumer generation.

### 2.1. The Meaning of Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer behavior is defined as the activities undertaken by people in the acquisition, consumption, and disposal of products/services (Blackwell et al., 2001). It can also be described as a field of study that focuses on consumer activities. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2017), consumer behavior is the buying behavior of final customers, who are individuals and households that buy goods and services for personal consumption.

### 2.2. Consumer Purchase Intention and Behavior

The purchase intention must be considered when studying consumer behaviour. This is because intention is an immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 2008). Purchase intention refers to a consumer's plan or willingness to buy a certain product or service in the future (Chiu et al., 2009). Purchase intention and purchase behavior are positively correlated (Rausch, & Kopplin, 2021).

### 2.3. Factors That Influence Consumer Behavior

Many factors influence consumers when making buying decisions. As stated in Kotler and Armstrong (2017), consumer purchases are influenced a lot by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. Marketers are unable to control these factors, but they should consider them. Studies by Richa (2012); Omar, Osman, and Ahmad (2016); Kumar, and Kumar (2019) indicate that demographic factors have a significant impact on consumer behaviour.

### 2.4. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is one of the important building blocks of strategic marketing and is crucial for marketing success (Leisch et al., 2018). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2017), markets can be segmented in numerous ways, and demographic segmentation (factors like age, gender, income, education, race, etc.) is one of them.

### 2.5. Generational Cohort Marketing

This study particularly looked at Generation X and Y consumers in Johannesburg. According to Lissitsa and Kol (2016), Generation X are people born between 1961 and 1979 and Generation Y are those born between 1980 and 1999. There are sometimes notable differences in the consumer behavior of different generational cohorts. Cohort members generally share similar values and experiences that influence their

preferences and shopping behavior (Parment, 2013). Therefore, generational cohort segmentation has become a useful marketing tool.

Generational cohorts are made up of people who are born within a certain time period and at a specific place, and who share similar life experiences, typically when they were in age range of 17-23 years (Kamenidou et al., 2020).

Consumer motivation and purchase engagement are often determined by age, meaning that a deeper understanding of buying behavior can be gained by considering the generational characteristics of consumers (Parment, 2013).

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Approach

The study adopted the positivistic research paradigm. Consequently, the quantitative research approach was used.

### 3.2. Target Population

Sports apparel consumers in Johannesburg were the target of this study. The participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 59 years.

### 3.3. Sampling Size

A total of 70 responses were obtained in this study. The participants were sports apparel consumers who fall within the specified age range and have a buying ability. The respondents were selected irrespective of their age, gender, education level, income level, or employment status. This was done to ensure that the country's diversity is well reflected.

### 3.4. Sampling Method

Simple random sampling, which is a form of probability sampling, was used. In simple random sampling, every unit in the population has the same probability of selection (Wegner, 2016).

The participants included family, friends, colleagues, and other members of the public.

### 3.5. Data Collection

An online survey was sent to the participants to collect the primary data that were used in this study. The survey link was electronically sent to the respondents so that they could complete it in their own time.

### 3.6. The Research Instrument

A closed-ended questionnaire was used. The demographic information of the participants was collected and analyzed statistically. Consumer preferences and reasons were also obtained.

### 3.7. Ethical Considerations

No one below the age of 18 was allowed to participate. Only consenting adults could participate. Their rights to confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy

were respected. They were also allowed to withdraw their participation at any time.

### 3.8. Data Analysis

A computer software called STATISTICA was used to analyse the data.

A summary of the steps taken in conducting this study is provided in Figure 1.

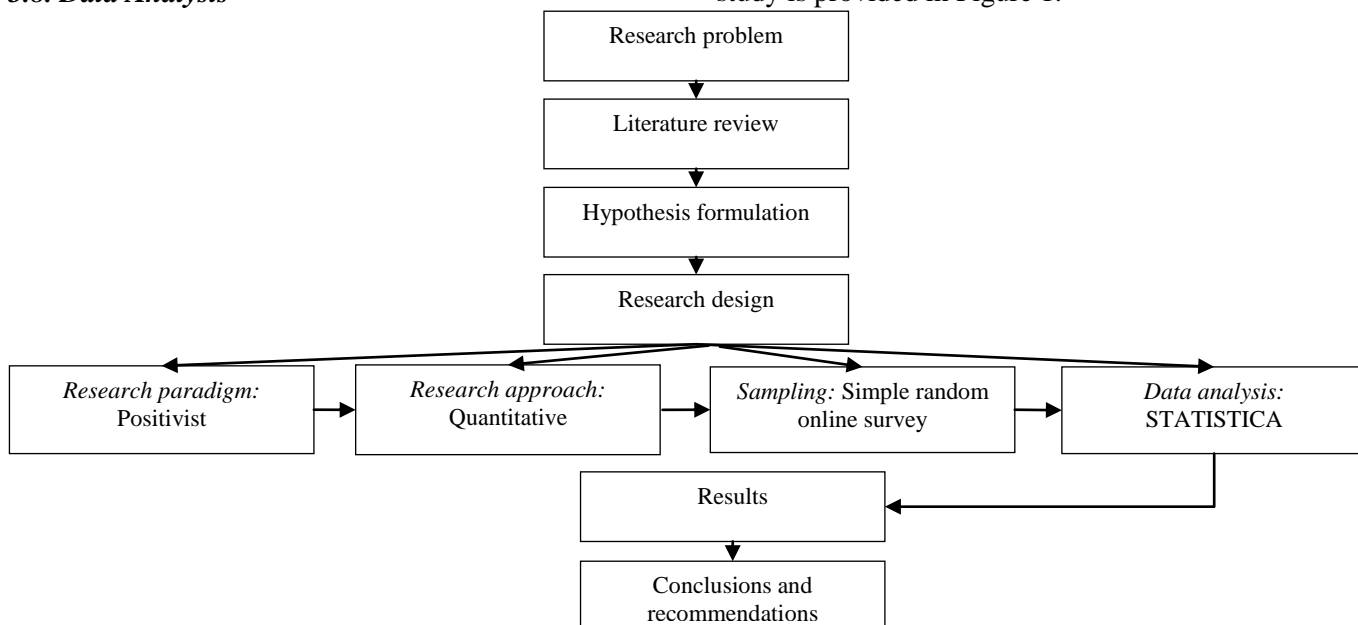


Figure 1. Steps followed in conducting the study

## 4. Results

This section presents the findings of the study.

### 4.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents and

### Consumer Preferences/Reasons

Table 1 below summarizes the demographic distribution of the 70 surveyed respondents and their preferences and reasons for buying sportswear.

Table 1. Demographic profile and consumer preferences/reasons

Variable	Distribution	% Response	The number of respondents
Gender	Female	60%	42
	Male	40%	28
	Total	100%	70
Age	18–29	29%	20
	30–39	59%	41
	40–49	9%	6
	50–59	4%	3
	Total	100%	70
Race	Asian	0%	0
	Black	80%	56
	Colored	6%	4
	Indian	6%	4
	White	9%	6
Highest education level	Total	100%	70
	Below matric	1%	1
	Matric	11%	8
	Diploma	29%	20
	Bachelors degree	39%	27
	Postgraduate	13%	9
	Masters	7%	5
Doctorate	0%	0	
Employment status	Total	100%	70
	Employed	87%	61
	Unemployed	4%	3
	Self-employed	6%	4
	Prefer not to say	3%	2
Monthly income level	Total	100%	70
	R0–R2 999	4%	3
	R3 000–R7 999	1%	1
	R8 000–R14 999	16%	11
	R15 000–R29 999	29%	20
	R30 000–R49 000	20%	14
R50 000+	10%	7	
Prefer not to say	20%	14	

	Total	100%	70
	Stores inside shopping mall	54%	38
	Stores inside shopping centers	29%	20
Preferred option when buying sports apparel	Stand-alone stores	11%	8
	Online stores	6%	4
	Total	100%	70
	For participating in sports activities	9%	6
Reasons for buying sports apparel	For doing physical activities (like gym)	51%	36
	For casual wear	40%	28
	Total	100%	70

Table 1 above shows that 60% (n = 42) of the respondents were female, while 40% (n = 28) were male. The dominant age group ranged from 30 to 39 years accounting for 59% (n = 41) of the total sample. Blacks were the dominant ethnic group (80%; n = 56), followed by Whites (9%; n = 6), with Asians, Coloureds, and Indians each making up 6% (n = 4) of the total sample. Most of the respondents (39%; n = 27) held a bachelor's degree, 29% (n = 20) had a diploma, and 13% (n = 9) had a postgraduate qualification. Most of them were employed (87%; n = 61), followed by the self-employed (6%; n = 4), then those who were unemployed (4%; n = 3). Most (29%; n = 20) of those surveyed earned between R15 000 and R29 999. This was followed by those who earned between R30 000 and R49 000 (20%; n = 14) and those who earned between R8 000 and R14 999 (16%; n = 11). Next were those who earned more than R50 000 a month (10%; n = 7), while the lowest number of respondents earned between R3 000 and R7 999 a month (1%, n = 1). Some respondents (20%; n = 14) preferred not to say how much they earned.

More than half of them (54%; n = 38) indicated that they were in favor of stores inside a shopping mall. The next most popular choice was stores inside shopping centers (29%; n = 20), and stand-alone stores were preferred by only 11% of the respondents (n = 8). Interestingly, only a few people (6%; n = 4) selected online stores, although the world is in the digital age. The convenience of using a mall, where many stores are

close to one another and where a consumer can try on clothes in the store, was most likely the reason why most respondents preferred shopping malls. This may have been the case with stores inside shopping centres, as opposed to online stores, where the respondents would have needed to return an item if it did not fit well or meet expectations.

Most of the respondents (51%; n = 36) indicated that they bought sports apparel to participate in physical activities (like exercising). Others (40%; n = 28) bought sports apparel to use as casual wear, while only a few (9%; n = 6) of the respondents bought sports apparel for participating in sporting activities. The increased interest in healthy lifestyles could explain why so many respondents indicated that they bought sports apparel for physical activities. In addition, the significant number of respondents buying sports apparel for casual wear was consistent with literature that suggests that the line between fashion and sportswear is becoming blurred.

#### 4.2. T-Tests between Demographic Variables and Purchase Intention

Table 2 below illustrates the two-sample t-test between gender and the purchase intention. The results ( $p > 0.05$ ) showed that there was no difference between males (mean = 3.7090) and females (mean = 3.745) with regard to their purchase intentions for sports apparel.

Table 2. Grouping by gender

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Gender (Survey results)								
	Group 1: 1					Group 2: 2			
	Mean (1)	Mean (2)	t-value	Df	p	Valid N (1)	Valid N (2)	Std. Dev. (1)	Std. Dev. (2)
Purchase intention	3,709	3,745	-0,218	68	0,828	28	42	0,567	0,732

Table 3 presents the two-sample t-test results for age. These results ( $p > 0.05$ ) indicated that there was no difference between the two age categories made up of those aged between 18 and 29 years (mean = 3.686) and

those who were between 30 and 39 years (mean = 3.756) in terms of their purchase intentions for sports apparel.

Table 3. Grouping by age

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Age (Survey results)								
	Group 1: 2					Group 2: 1			
	Mean (2)	Mean (1)	t-value	Df	p	Valid N (2)	Valid N (1)	Std. Dev. (2)	Std. Dev. (1)
Purchase intention	3,756	3,686	0,377	59	0,708	41	20	0,625	0,798

Since the present study was investigating the buying behavior consumers of Generation X and Y, a

comparison was conducted between the two cohorts to see if there were any significant differences in their

purchase intentions for sports apparel. The results ( $p > 0.750$ ) of the two-sample t-test illustrated in Table 4 below indicated that those aged between 30 and 39 years old (Gen Y) (mean = 3.756) and those aged

between 40 and 49 years old (Gen X) (mean = 3.667) did not differ. However, it is worth mentioning that larger sample could produce different results.

Table 4. Grouping by age (Generations X and Y)

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Age (Survey results)								
	Group 1: Gen Y			Group 2: Gen X					
	Mean (Gen Y)	Mean (Gen X)	t-value	df	p	Valid N (Y)	Valid N (X)	Std. Dev. (2)	Std. Dev. (3)
Purchase intention	3,756	3,667	0,321	45	0,750	41	6	0,625	0,738

Table 5 illustrates the results of the two-sample t-test for education level and the purchase intention. According to these results ( $p > 0.05$ ), there was no

difference between those who had a diploma (mean = 3.593) and those who had a bachelor's degree (mean = 3.751).

Table 5. Grouping by education level

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Education Level (Survey results)								
	Group 1: 3			Group 2: 4					
	Mean (3)	Mean (4)	t-value	Df	p	Valid N (3)	Valid N (4)	Std. Dev. (3)	Std. Dev. (4)
Purchase intention	3,593	3,751	-0,792	45	0,432	20	27	0,545	0,761

Table 6 below indicates the results of the two-sample t-tests for the preferred option when buying sports apparel and their purchase intentions. The results ( $p > 0.05$ ) showed that there was no difference between

those who preferred stores inside shopping malls (mean = 3.714) and those who preferred stores in shopping centers (mean = 3.821).

Table 6. Grouping by preferred option when buying sports apparel

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Preferred option for buying sports clothing (Survey results)								
	Group 1: 1			Group 2: 2					
	Mean (1)	Mean (2)	t-value	Df	p	Valid N (1)	Valid N (2)	Std. Dev. (1)	Std. Dev. (2)
Purchase intention	3,714	3,821	-0,576	56	0,567	38	20	0,728	0,552

Table 7 shows the two-sample t-test results for the reasons for buying sports apparel and purchase intention. The results indicated that there was no difference between those who bought sports clothing

for participating in physical activities (mean = 3.742) and those who bought them for casual wear (mean = 3.786).

Table 7. Grouping by reasons for buying sports apparel

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: Reasons for buying sports clothing (Survey results)								
	Group 1: 2			Group 2: 3					
	Mean (2)	Mean (3)	t-value	Df	p	Valid N (2)	Valid N (3)	Std. Dev. (2)	Std. Dev. (3)
Purchase intention	3,742	3,786	-0,265	62	0,792	36	28	0,617	0,698

Table 8 below provides a summary of the hypotheses tested in the t-tests above. H1, H3 and H4 were all unaccepted and only H2 was accepted. The

findings of this study cannot be generalized to a broader population, and further investigation with a larger sample size is recommended.

Table 8. Summary of the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Decision
H1 Demographic factors such as gender, age, race and educational background have a positive influence on the purchase intention of sports apparel consumers.	Not accepted
H2 Generations X and Y do not differ in terms of their purchase intention for sports apparel.	Accepted
H3 Sports apparel consumers have specific preferences in terms of their purchase intention for sports apparel.	Not accepted
H4 Sports apparel consumers have specific reasons for buying sports apparel.	Not accepted

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Main Findings

The study determined the influence of demographic factors on the buying behavior of Generation X and Y

sports apparel consumers in Johannesburg. In addition, the reasons for buying sports apparel and the preferred option for purchasing sports apparel were determined. The study also sought to establish whether or not there are any significant differences in the buying behavior of

Generation X and Y sports apparel consumers.

Based on the empirical findings of the study, it can be concluded that factors such as gender, age, and educational level do not have a significant influence on consumer behaviour. This is different from the finding of other authors. A bigger sample size could help clarify this misalignment. No significant differences between the buying behavior of Generation X and Generation Y were identified. Furthermore, no major differences were found between the respondents who preferred to buy sports apparel in shopping malls and those who preferred shopping centres. Moreover, no significant differences were identified between those who bought it for physical activities and those who purchased it for casual wear. This may be useful information for marketers in terms of cost savings and resource allocation in their marketing strategies.

### 5.2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are in congruence with some previous studies. For instance, Wang et al. (2020) found that age and gender do not have a significant influence on the purchase intention. However, they found that education level has a significant influence on the consumer purchase intention. Other studies such as Richa (2012); Omar et al. (2016); Kumar and Kumar (2019) found that demographic factors have a positive influence on purchase behavior.

### 5.3. Implications of the Study

The implications of the above findings are that the management of sports apparel companies can consider devising similar marketing communications strategies for both males and females. They could also use the same strategies for Generation X and Y consumers, regardless of their educational qualifications. In terms of store locations, they could consider the most economical option between shopping malls and shopping centers because consumers do not appear to prefer one over the other. Managers could also consider adopting marketing techniques that appeal to both active consumers and those who buy sports apparel for casual wear, which means that their promotional campaigns could cater for both to minimize costs.

### 5.4. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Any scientific study has limitations that are outside the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The present study was conducted within a short time frame; hence, the sample size was relatively small; findings cannot be generalized to a wider population. A bigger sample size can be used in future to help draw more meaningful conclusions. Only Generations X and Y were investigated.

### 5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can inquire about other generational cohorts. The influence of other factors such as religion, cultural factors, social factors, country or city of origin, etc. was not part of this study. There is room to conduct

more studies on these factors in the future. Future studies can also use qualitative research methods to gain a deeper understanding of this topic.

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