

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**A survey of the perception of sport brands amongst select customers in the
Pietermaritzburg region**

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ABSTRACT

The global sportswear industry has experienced significant growth with future growth projected to reach a value of US \$125 billion and a category growth of 6% (Lucintel, 2012). Two brands dominate this category, namely Nike and Adidas. As one of the leading sports brands in the business, Nike features as the highest valued sports brand according to the Brandz Top 100 Report (Milward Brown, 2014). Such brands have contributed to the consistent growth trends of this category. Other factors contributing to the positive growth experienced by sports brands are due to an increase in the participation of sports, the increasing number of women participating in sport and more consumers leaning towards a healthier lifestyle (Transparency market research, 2013). There has also been an increase in sports spectatorship with spending on tickets growing by 20% between 2006 and 2010 (Spectator Sports – UK, 2011). Evidence supporting these trends can be attributed to such statistics that crowds attending football league games in the United Kingdom reached the highest number in 2004 – 2005 after 45 years (Robinson, 2008) whilst three quarters of adults in Britain claimed to watch or listen to sport in 2004 (Intel, 2005). Successful branding of sports brands have also been shown to have positive implications such as influencing the likelihood that a brand will be chosen, the willingness of consumers to pay a price premium (Gladden & Milne, 1999), and a positive spread by word of mouth (Arai, Ko & Ross, 2013). These effects have also been tied to athlete endorsers who have been shown to maintain the support of their fans regardless of their performance within their areas of sport, resulting in more athletes being used to endorse products (Arai et al., 2013).

Another potential contributor to the growth of sportswear brands is the growing usage of sportswear for the purpose of following fashion trends (Sweeney, 2006), for the use of comfortable casual wear (Yee & Sidek, 2008) and to show support towards a particular sports team. A number of factors are believed to have contributed to how sportswear brands are perceived. The usage of sportswear brands more for fashion and comfort than just for sport and the growing importance of sport and athlete endorsers have both potentially contributed to how sports brands are seen and perceived by consumers.

This study aims to explore how sportswear brands are perceived within a selected sample of respondents at a health club within the Pietermaritzburg area. The objectives are to determine what the influencing factors are that drive sportswear brand preference and to determine which attributes are associated with sportswear brands, as well as how the leading brands in the industry are perceived and whether there are emotional factors influencing sportswear brand preference. Demographic factors were also evaluated to determine whether perceptions of sportswear can be attributed to specific demographics. The study takes

an exploratory and descriptive approach to uncover insights pertaining to how sports brands are perceived and aimed to describe group characteristics that may exist. A self-administered questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents. The sample of respondents was conveniently selected at a health club in the Pietermaritzburg region. Participation was strictly voluntary. The data was analysed using the statistical programme, SPSS.

The literature covers the construct of perceptions and provides insight from the sportswear brands, where possible with the intention of understanding how sportswear brands are perceived. The study is of an exploratory and descriptive nature, with the objective of investigating factors relating to the perceptions of sports brands held by consumers in the Pietermaritzburg region. Therefore a self-administered questionnaire was used as the method of data collection. The data was analysed mainly by using non-parametric and descriptive statistical methods.

The study evaluates several variables of perception in relation to sports brands. The results of the study showed that there were no significant gender differences impacting on how sports brands are perceived. Furthermore, the market leaders within this category tested very strongly on values of awareness, association and brand preference. In contrast to the available literature, weak levels of loyalty to sports brands were evident, indicating that respondents are likely to switch between brands regardless of their strong preference for a particular brand.

Positive emotional variables were visible indicating that emotion may play a role in influencing the perceptions of sports brands. However, no relationship was found with negative emotional variables. Respondents reportedly did not place significant value on advertising or their preference for either male or female athletes who were featured in sport brand advertising. This is supported by the results indicating that sport, athlete and sports team endorsement do not impact on their preference for brand or brand choice and do not influence which brand is selected.

The most popular media sources for information on sports brands were reportedly television, online and magazines. Overall, respondents reported holding their favourite sports brands in high regard, perceiving favourite sports brands to be relevant to their needs. Respondents also sought quality, innovation, comfort and style as mandatory variables that sports brands should possess and which are likely to result in their switching behaviour to brands other than their preferred brands, should the alternate brand meet their needs. Price was shown to be a driving factor in switching behaviour. This was an indication that the

choice of sports brands may be needs driven and that decisions are influenced by price, even though respondents reported strong preferences towards particular brands.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Among product categories, a possible similarity may exist among products due to “copy-cat” or “look-alike” advertising and also the existence of “Me-too” brands, which are brands that aim to replicate features of other brands. This replication of features has resulted in these brands being less profitable (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu, 1995). This may be a reason why the typical failure rate of new launches is between eighty five and ninety five percent (Dornblaser, 2010). As seen below there is a substantial investment involved in marketing efforts, hence companies and brands are under substantial pressure to perform within an increasingly competitive market.

South Africa’s total advertising spending equated to R32 billion in 2012 with an increase of 11% on 2011 (Fastmoving Retailer News, 2012). Looking at sports brands specifically, whilst no data was found regarding the advertising spend in South Africa, on a global scale, brands such as Nike are spending in the region of \$100 million dollars on major campaigns around events like the World Cup and Olympics (CNN Money Fortune, 2012). It is therefore evident, that companies have been investing a substantial amount on marketing initiatives with the objective of trying to build strong brands.

One of the benefits of strong brands is that brands are enabled to have the potential to contribute substantially to a business’s success in the following ways (Milward Brown, 2009):

- Dictating and maintaining price premiums versus competitors;
- Driving the growth of sales by attracting new customers;
- Creating barriers for new competitors entering a market by building loyalty with consumers who are reluctant to switch; and
- Having the potential to expand into new categories and markets.

A study by Milward Brown (2009) argues that brands are important to businesses and valuable to consumers because people expect brands to consistently deliver a high level of quality and reliability. Brands grow their value and as a result evolve from a position of being unknown to consumers to then being well-known; and also by converting consumers from first time users to potentially loyal and devoted consumers over time. Understanding this level of consumer commitment is considered important as it suggests that users of a brand who exhibit a strong degree of loyalty towards that brand are more

likely to allocate a greater portion of their share of spend toward that brand or category (Milward Brown, 2009).

Based on this argument, knowing how the consumer perceives the brand and delivering to meet their needs assists in building the strength and brand loyalty of the brand, as well as influencing allocation of a higher share of spending by consumers. Milward Brown (2009) further reports that a stronger degree of loyalty towards a brand will develop when a consumer believes that a brand has relevance, delivers a superior experience or offers benefits that create the perception that it is the optimal choice.

As mentioned, it is crucial to have an understanding of the level of commitment that consumers have towards a brand or product to enable users to have a stronger attitude towards particular brands and invest a higher share of spending in that brand or category. Part of this understanding of consumer commitment entails understanding how brands are perceived by consumers (Milward Brown, 2009). Understanding perception with reference to sports brands forms the basis and content of this study.

The business dictionary (business dictionary, 2014) defines perception as “A marketing concept that encompasses a customer’s impression, awareness and/or consciousness about a company or its offerings and is typically affected by advertising, reviews, public relations, social media, personal experiences and other channels”.

Brand experiences and perceptions are developed over time through the following sources (Infotrends, 2014):

- Previous experience with the brand;
- Interaction with sales, customer service and other employees;
- Recommendations from friends and colleagues;
- Advertising.

Pappu, Quester and Cooksey, (2005:143-154) define perception as a measure of consumer-based brand equity, described by four measures: brand awareness, brand association, product quality and brand loyalty. Consumer-based brand equity can be defined as a measure of the degree to which a consumer is attached to a brand and is also considered a description of the associations and beliefs the consumer has with a brand (Feldwick, 1996):

- Brand Awareness: refers to the positioning of the brand in the mind of the consumer;
- Brand Association: the links formed with a brand that is stored in the consumer’s memory;

- Product Quality: the tangible attributes of a brand or product that allows consumers' needs to be satisfied (Yee & Sidek, 2008); and
- Brand Loyalty: The degree of consumer commitment and loyalty to a particular brand expressed through a tendency to repeatedly purchase a brand without pressure from competing brands (Yee & Sidek, 2008).

This study aims to explore consumer perceptions of sports brands based on particular attributes including the four attributes discussed: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. These characteristics will be looked at from a sports brand perception by taking into account consumer awareness of sports brands; consumer-held associations of sports brands with sports teams and athletes, gender differences and the perceptions of local versus global sports brands.

A brand can be defined as the sum of perceptions that a target audience has about a product or service (Jones & Bonevac, 2009). It is further argued that a brand is made up of perceptions which are any claims or promises made by a brand which are held in the mind of the public (Jones & Bonevac, 2009). This suggests that marketing objectives that contribute to building a brand's essence results in the creation of an identity for the brand. The creation of this brand identity allows for a group of associated perceptions which is held by the consumer audience for a particular brand (Jones & Bonevac, 2009).

Literature pertaining to perceptions within the context of how sports brands are perceived appears to be somewhat limited. Therefore, understanding the idea of perception relative to further understanding of how sports brands are perceived is critical to defining the objectives of this study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) argue that establishing brand awareness and brand image have been key goals of brand management. However, more recently companies have realised the importance of developing brand relationships with consumers to enable a higher consumer relationship approach to marketing.

A study by Milward Brown (2009) states that the strongest brands are those that connect with the minds of consumers, understand change and act faster than competitors, offer value, are innovative, create a good brand promise and convey confidence. This implies that if a brand is made up of perceptions that consumers form in their minds, then the strength of the brand will be based on the degree of strength of

perceptions associated with that brand by consumers (Milward Brown, 2009). It is also reported that individuals react on the basis of their perceptions more than they do on reality, and, therefore, perceptions are generally seen as more important than reality (International Conference on Technology and Business Management, 2005:66). This suggests that the decisions companies make regarding brands rely heavily on how the brand is perceived.

Erdem, Swait, Broniarczyk, Chakravarti, Kapferer, Keane, and Zettlemeyer (1999) suggest that elements of the selection process are brand and time specific because consumers usually have different perceptions over time, and there is a possibility that these perceptions may evolve over time. Creating a strong brand perception, therefore, can be a powerful marketing strategy to reduce uncertainty when evaluating a product and to facilitate an increased intention to purchase the brand. It is argued that well-known brands which have positive associations of perceptions develop a competitive advantage by increasing consumers' interests and attention towards brands and also enables consumers to positively evaluate the product which in turn encourages repeat purchase (Sadeghi & Ghaemmaghami, 2011).

It is thus evident that building relationships with consumers is important. Having a clear understanding of how consumers perceive particular brands and products is critical to building the brand's essence, resulting in greater appeal to consumers and creating differentiation between competitors.

Currently there is limited research available that covers the scope of how sports brands are perceived. The sports industry has seen significant growth and a positive market growth trajectory are projected. To date, sports companies have paid little attention to subject matters such as whether the nature of decision making differs among males and females (Sporting Goods Manufacturers' Association, 2006). More recently evidence showed significant differences between males and females, indicating a greater significance in women on factors such as quality, recreation, confusion (relating to brand choice), brand awareness (tendency to relate price with quality and also the tendency towards preference of well-advertised brands): whereas no differences were seen relating to fashion and price awareness (Bae & Miller, 2009).

Bae and Miller (2009) discuss that because of the diverse range of sports brands in stores, on television and in print magazines, most consumers may tend to be confused by the selection of sports brands available and also that female consumers are more concerned with the brand and quality. This suggests that the marketing of sports brands should cater to a range of high quality products and reasonable price

ranges to match the expectations of female consumers as well as focus on the use of sports magazines and television advertising to appeal better to the female consumer market (Bae & Miller, 2009).

Therefore it is of interest to this study to address a list of proposed questions in order to understand the dynamics behind the perceptions of sports brands consumers in order to gauge an understanding of the drivers of purchase choice on factors such as brand awareness, loyalty, quality, price, sports and athlete sponsorship, country of manufacture, emotion and other factors to enable successful marketing of sports brands to consumers.

There are a number of questions and objectives that are relevant to this study. These are listed in the next sub-section.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the statement of the problem, this study aims to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Do gender factors affect how sports brands are perceived?
2. Do market leaders of the sports category possess top of mind awareness in the consideration of sports brands?
3. Are market leaders predominantly the brand of choice when it comes to sports brand preference?
4. Is there a relationship among the factors of relevance, differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem pertaining to sports brands?
5. Is there a perception among consumers that their preferred sports brands deliver on what is promised?
6. Are factors such as the brand's name, quality, athlete or team sponsored influential in the purchase decision of sports brands?
7. Is there a difference in the way global and local sports brands are perceived?
8. Is brand choice predetermined prior to shopping for sports brands?
9. Are media sources (television, in store displays, recommendation, price promotion) common references in obtaining information about sports brands?
10. Are consumers loyal to particular sports brands? What attributes impact brand loyalty of sports brands?
11. Do sports brands have strong associations?
12. Is there a preference regarding the gender used in the advertising of sports brands?
13. Does a sports team or athlete sponsorship influence the preference of sports brands?

14. Do sports brands elicit emotion?
15. In which channels are sports brands predominantly purchased?

1.4 Research Objectives

The investigated research objectives are listed below:

1. To determine whether gender influences the perception of sports brands.
2. To determine whether market leaders of the category possess top of mind awareness in the consideration and selection of sports brands.
3. To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived relevance and differentiation of sports brands to consumers.
4. To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived brand knowledge and esteem of sports brands to consumers.
5. To determine whether there is a perception among consumers that their preferred brands deliver on what is promised.
6. To determine whether factors such as the brand's name, quality, athlete or team sponsored are influential in the purchase decision of sports brands.
7. To determine whether there is a difference in how global and local brands are perceived.
8. To determine whether brand selection is predetermined in shopping.
9. To determine whether media sources (television, in store displays, recommendation, price promotion) are common references in obtaining information about sports brands.
10. To determine whether consumers are loyal to particular sports brands and what attributes influence brand loyalty.
11. To determine whether there are strongly perceived associations with sports brands.
12. To determine if there is a preference towards gender used in sports advertising.
13. To determine whether sports team or athlete sponsorship influences the preference of sports brands.
14. To determine whether sports brands elicit emotion.
15. To determine in which channels sports brands are predominantly purchased.

1.5 Hypotheses Development

The following hypotheses set out to investigate the research objectives defined:

H0₁: There is no perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H1₁: There is a perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H0₂: Market leaders do not possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

H1₂: Market leaders possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

H0₃: Market leaders are not predominantly the brand of choice in a purchase decision.

H1₃: Market leaders are predominantly the brand of choice in a purchase decision.

H0₄: There is no relationship between brand relevance, brand differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem.

H1₄: There is a relationship between brand relevance, brand differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem.

H0₅: Consumers do not believe their favourite sports brands deliver on what they promise.

H1₅: Consumers believe their favourite sports brands deliver on what they promise

H0₆: Brand name, quality, athlete endorsement, sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture are not important factors in directing brand preference.

H1₆: Brand name, quality, athlete endorsement, sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture are important factors in directing brand preference.

H0₇: Global sports brands are not perceived differently from local brands.

H1₇: Global sports brands are perceived differently from local brands.

H0₈: Sports brand choice is not predetermined.

H1₈: Sports brand choice is predetermined.

H0₉: Media has no influence on the purchase decision of sports brands.

H1₉: Media has an influence on the purchase decision of sports brands.

H0₁₀: Consumers are not loyal to sports brands.

H1₁₀: Consumers are loyal to sports brands.

H0₁₁: Consumers have no associations with particular sports brands.

H1₁₁: Consumers have associations with particular sports brands.

H0₁₂: Gender use in advertising has no influence on how sports brands are perceived.

H1₁₂: Gender use in advertising has an influence on how sports brands are perceived.

H0₁₃: Sports team or athlete sponsorship is not an influential factor on the perception of sports brands.

H1₁₃: Sports team or athlete sponsorship is an influential factor on the perception of sports brands.

H0₁₄: There is no emotion elicited by sports brands.

H1₁₄: There is emotion elicited by sports brands.

1.6 Significance of the Study

By addressing the designated research questions and objectives, the study aims to add to the field of knowledge by further understanding how sports brands are perceived on the basis of established theory and current sports market trends with the application on a small convenient sample targeted at a health club in Pietermaritzburg.

1.7 Limitations

Due to the research being of a quantitative nature, one limitation of the study is that a probability method of sampling was not employed and this limits the generalizations that can be made regarding a particular population. To try and obtain a reliable means of sampling, respondents approached for recruitment were conveniently, yet strategically selected to attempt in meeting the sample quota targets relating to demographics and gender and ethnicity. A further limitation was the sample size employed and the time warranted to collect the data. Authorisation from the health club was only granted for two weeks, and a maximum of 100 respondents were allowed to be involved in the research in order to limit interference with the health club's member base and day-to-day operations. The incentives (gym towels and baseball caps) rewarded to participants in the study assisted largely in this regard, encouraging respondents to participate in the study and enabling the target sample of 100 respondents to be reached.

A small sample may additionally pose challenges to identifying significant relationships in the data. With regards to current available literature, although there is a wide database of research pertaining to the construct of perceptions and its application to marketing, there appears to be a gap in the literature relating to how sports brands in particular are perceived and how past studies can be applied to understanding the perceptions of sports brands. In addition, there was a limit to the access of sales data of sports brands pertaining to the South African market. A learning that materialised during this study is that the encouragement of participation within such a study is challenging. Many respondents provided feedback that the survey was quite complex and long which resulted in more difficulty in getting respondents to willingly participate. Data reliability may also have been placed at risk should any questions have not been understood and no clarity requested; or based on the possibility that respondents may have completed the questionnaire with no reference to the questions simply to receive the incentivised reward. However, all respondents appeared to read through the questions and worked through the questionnaire constructively and clarified areas where more clarity was needed.

1.8 Chapter Outline

This dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter one provides a brief insight into the purpose of the research study by means of the problem statement and by defining the research questions in relation to the objectives. The chapter also makes mention of the sports brands that were included in the set of brands by which consumers' perceptions were tested. Chapter Two covers relevant literature pertaining to the topic. Chapter Three discusses the research methods that were employed in conducting the study. Chapter Four analyses the results of all tested hypotheses, with the aim of addressing the research questions and objectives.

Chapter Five includes a more in-depth discussion of the findings and delineation of the findings in relation to relevant literature within the sports industry and analyses the findings in relation to how sports brands are perceived. It then makes recommendations on ways in which to market sports brands on the basis of the results obtained from the study. Chapter 6 concludes the findings, offers recommendations for sports marketers and recommendations for future research.

1.9 Brands that the Study will Cover

Table 1.1 BRANDS THAT THE STUDY WILL COVER

NIKE	ADIDAS	REEBOK	TAP IT	QUIKSILVER
PUMA	ROXY	SPEEDO	MR PRICE SPORT	EVERLAST
TITLE	FUSION	NEW BALANCE	ASICS	GYM
SLAZENGER	UNDER ARMOUR	FALKE	KAPPA	HI TECH
TOTALSPORTS	PRO ACTION	WILSON	GILBERT	TAYLORMADE
OAKLEY	FIRST ASCENT	K WAY		

1.10 Summary

Chapter One has outlined the research questions and objectives of the study and has discussed the idea of perception in relation to the problem statement. The literature review chapter that follows discusses, in further detail, the issues and findings pertaining to the context of this study that has been covered to date by means of the existing literature and defines the parameters within which the study objectives are investigated and explored.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature discussed hereunder reviews consumer perceptions within the context of the sports category to understand what perceptions are, how consumers form perceptions of brands and what factors impact on perception formation. The literature critically discusses relevant themes as a means to link back to and address the research questions and objectives.

2.2 The Sportswear Category

The sportswear market comprises three segments: active sports clothing (clothing used in active sports), sports apparel (clothing used for general lifestyle) and licensed sports apparel (clothing co-branded with the logo of sports teams or sports leagues) (Chi & Kilduff, 2011). Sportswear has become common and popular among younger people due to its ability to offer a more relaxed and comfortable lifestyle (Yee & Sidek, 2008). The sportswear market is furthermore highly segmented and dominated by a few large companies or brands (Nike, Adidas, Puma and Reebok). This market is estimated to grow as a product category at 4% between 2012 and 2019 (Forbes, 2013). It was valued at \$135 billion in 2012 with a forecast value growth reaching around \$178 billion by 2019 (Forbes, 2013).

Among key players within the sportswear market are the brands Nike, Adidas, Puma and Reebok. Nike has been growing ahead of the rest of the sports brands with a growth of 14.2% and a share of 25% between 2010 and 2012. Adidas is also a leading player in the global sportswear market with a global market share of 11% at the end of 2012 (Forbes, 2013). The factors supporting this market's growth trends are increasing fitness consciousness, rising income levels in developing countries, the increasing need for sportswear among women and a growing demand for fashionable, stylish and comfortable sportswear (Forbes, 2013). Traditionally, the United States and the European Union contributed the majority of the share to the sportswear industry; however future growth is projected to come from emerging markets such as Latin America and Asia Pacific due to rising standards of living and greater awareness of international sports brands (Reportlinker, 2014).

A further trend fuelling the growth of the sportswear market is the need for sports brands of young consumers who are using sports brands as casual every - day wear (Reportlinker, 2014). Sports brands have in turn reacted to this trend by combining casual and athletic designs (Reportlinker, 2014).

On a global scale, the sportswear market saw new trends in recent years due to an increase in people becoming more health conscious, an increase in the participation of sports, and also the spread of sports to new regions (Prweb, 2014). In addition, an increasing number of women participating in sports have largely impacted on the growth of the sportswear market with women in the 35 years plus age group having a higher disposable income and, therefore, becoming an opportunistic target group. Sporting events such as the Rugby World Cup and the Soccer World Cup have further contributed to the growth of the sportswear market (Prweb, 2014).

Within the total clothing market in South Africa, strong sales volume growth has been evident due to factors such as reduced prices, the expansion of retail outlets, increasing price competition among department stores and specialist retailers, as well as price competition arising from online retailers, street markets and hypermarkets (Euromonitor, 2014). South African consumers have further reported in the Customer Satisfaction Index (a survey based on a sample of 44 200 interviews with South Africans and with a focus on 19 industries and 100 brands) that they are most satisfied with three shopping categories of which, one was athletic shoes (Bizcommunity, 2013). The Sunday Times “Top Brandz” survey results placed Nike top of the sports clothing category, followed by Adidas in second place and Puma third within South Africa. Results reported a significant increase in usage of sportswear brands, which is an indication that this market is growing in South Africa, and that sports brands are becoming more important within this market. The increase in sports brand consumption within South Africa may also be due to consumers being better able to afford branded clothing due to a greater availability of consumer credit from retailers. The leisure and fashion category is the largest category within South Africa in which sales of sport shoes contribute 40%, followed by running gear (23%), soccer boots (9%) and hiking and mountaineering gear (8%) (Sportstrader, 2010).

Three brands constitute almost half of the sales of the entire sportswear market: Adidas, Nike and Reebok. Nike is currently the largest sportswear company in the world, leading with an income of \$25 billion in revenue and a 17% share of the market, whilst Adidas follows as the second largest sportswear company with a revenue of \$20 billion and a share of 12% in 2014 (Businessweek, 2014). There is generally a reasonable level of awareness and knowledge of the leading sports brands by consumers in the sportswear category since these brands have commonly been used at least once. Awareness of such brands is also as a result of the high spending on advertising and sponsorships by particular sports brands (Del Rio, Vasquez & Iglesias, 2001).

The “Brandz Top 100” reports by Milward Brown (2009), a research-based consultancy company, reported in this survey that of the most trusted brands, consumers were spending more freely on, clothing in-store and online in 2013. Shoppers also demonstrated a search for value, be it good quality at a fair price or exceptional quality that was seen as worthy of that price. Nike featured at number 56 on the top 100 Brandz list, being the only sports brand to make the list, ranking as the second highest apparel brand on the list but the highest valued sports apparel brand in the industry.

Findings by Dawes (2009) on the sportswear market conclude that sportswear brands enjoy polygamous loyalty from their buyers, with smaller brands in possession of a slightly lower loyalty than larger brands and with consumers switching between sports brands approximately in line with its market share. Sportswear brands also showed no difference in appeal within demographic segments and even popular brands, which consumers admire, show predictable patterns in brand performance (Dawes, 2009).

Sportswear has grown from an athlete’s only market to become part of typical fashion with brands in this industry referred to as ‘iconic’ (Dawes, 2009). Sports brands have made quite an impact on consumers. Nike, for example has been referred to as an emotional brand which made sportswear brands accessible to people who do not engage in sports, in a way that inspired success, energy and determination (Bouwman, 2008). Such connections with consumers may have resulted in successes such as the Nike “Just do it” campaign, which was one of the top five advertising campaigns of the 20th century (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Roberts (2004) considers Nike to be more than just a brand and refers to the brand as a “lovemark”. Roberts (2004) defines a “lovemark” as a requirement for inspiring a high degree of loyalty and suggests that Nike’s brand loyalty levels should therefore, be expected to be extremely high. Nike’s biggest competitor Adidas is also a marketing giant who has over the years built a strong association with sports and prestigious sportspeople (see examples in Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000) to build an impressive brand franchise (Dawes, 2009). Such brands have come to dominate the sportswear industry, suggesting that the connections they have established with consumers have played a role in their gained success.

Dawes (2009) argues that consumer motivations in the sportswear category are unique. Piacentini and Mailer (2004) argue that sportswear brands are to be consumed partly for symbolic purposes (Hogg, Bruce & Hill, 1998). This may apply to consumers of sportswear brands who purchase branded sportswear as a means of supporting or being identified with their favourite sports team (Dawes, 2009).

Dawes (2009) concludes that if these beliefs turned out to be true, then high levels of commitment to sportswear brands might be expected.

According to Tong and Hawley (2009), the sportswear and athletic footwear market is one of the most heavily branded segments in the global clothing market, with more than three-quarters of the total sportswear market and 80% of footwear being branded. The strength of sportswear branding has proved to consistently be the category's most significant competitive advantage (Tong & Hawley, 2009). The sportswear category has reportedly been a category in which customers' buying decisions are frequently determined by the athletes they admire or the sports teams' attire they aspire to wear (Newbury, 2008).

Research conducted on the Chinese market shows a consistent trend that an increase in wealth leads to a heightened interest in sports and leisure activities (Bashford, 2003). This is supported by findings from the report (prweb, 2012) which argues that sports participation is on the increase, which may explain the growth of the South African sportswear market, due to a higher ability to afford sports brands. There is a noticeable link between the increases in the participation of sports when there is an increase in consumer income. It may be assumed therefore that a similar situation would exist within South Africa, as it has in China with more South Africans being more able to participate in sports and, therefore, resulting in an increase in sports brands' consumption.

Within the Chinese market, sports styles and the growing population of those who follow and participate in sports have an increasing influence on the clothing and footwear market (Tong & Hawley, 2009). The 2008 Beijing Olympics was expected to further expand China's sportswear market by 25%. In South Africa, a similar situation may be expected due to major sports events such as the soccer and rugby World Cup.

Through gathering assumptions from a study conducted on the Chinese sportswear market, it was observed that global brands were experiencing strong sales growth and were popular specifically among the young Chinese consumers due to the reputation, fashion status, comfort and premium quality that sports brands have built (Urbanowicz, Murphy & Ernst, 2008). The popular brands such as Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Puma and Fila were the favourite brands with Nike remaining in the number one spot (Brand Strategy, 2006). The competition in China's sportswear market has seen movement from being price focused to a greater focus on brand building, as a result of branding becoming increasingly important to Chinese consumers in this market. This illustrates the opportunity and upward trend of the sportswear

market in emerging markets such as China and potentially South Africa, and the importance and significance that branding has with these consumers.

Loyalty also demonstrated a strong impact within the Chinese sportswear market (Kim & Kim, 2004; Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000). Tong and Hawley (1999) also showed that strong associations with brands result in a favourable behaviour toward the brand and may enable a strong sportswear brand to obtain leadership (Kim & Kim, 2004; Yoo et al., 2000). This is an illustration of how associations can strengthen and positively impact on the perceptions of sportswear brands held by consumers.

Other factors may also influence the perceptions that consumers have towards sports brands. The data in a study by Tong and Hawley (1999) did not have enough evidence to conclude a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality, brand awareness and brand equity. Brand equity can be defined as the added value awarded by a brand to a product (Farquhar, 1989). It is indicated that possessing a high level of quality or a brand name alone does not guarantee a successful brand in the sportswear industry. Also evident were relationships between perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty. The inter-correlations with brand awareness might affect brand equity by influencing brand association and brand loyalty (Farquhar, 1989).

The sportswear industry is a well-developed industry supported by a variety of different sports brands (Sweeney, 2006). Sweeney (2006) reports that the majority of sports brands today are global giants that provide products for a range of different sporting needs all over the world and are available in a number of countries. The world's top sports brands compete against each other with technology by creating new innovative products and beating their competitors to the market with the chance to be represented by world class athletes and world-class teams and by creating a strong presence and stance in various markets (Ballantyne, Warren & Nobbs, 2006). Sweeney, (2006) further argues that there are also smaller brands with lower credibility than their competitors due to restricting themselves to a particular market or product and others that are working hard to establish a global name for themselves.

Sweeney (2006) reports that many sports brands have expanded their product range and focus towards more fashionable and street- type wear, and although these brands have maintained their focus on sports, they have moved into the fashionable, street wear markets for the purpose of expansion. This is becoming more common as these markets continue to grow due to the trend that sports brands are evaluated on particular criteria, as illustrated in the literature, and that consumers are now seeking more functions out of sports brands.

Findings from Sweeney (2006) suggest that sports brands have adapted to meet the evolving needs of the sports brand consumer. It has been discussed that sports brands are being used more for leisure and fashion than solely for sports and therefore are more commonly becoming more of an everyday wear trend, specifically to younger consumers (Sweeney, 2006). It is also important to note that loyalty in this market has been reported as a common trait among consumers and that the brand's name alone is not a significant factor that drives preference and purchase choice in this category. Also reported is that there is no particular demographic bias pertaining to sports brand preference. Furthermore, the growing importance of sport has influenced consumption models with sports brands being largely used for symbolic purposes such as support of a sports team and buying decisions being made on the basis of the athletes and sporting heroes who are admired.

Past findings as discussed in the preceding section suggest a number of factors that drive perceptions of a brand and where literature was available, discusses what drives specifically the perceptions of sportswear brands. South African consumers have noticeably increased consumption of sports brands due to having a higher disposable income, greater access to more retailers and being allowed higher retailer credit that enable more purchases of sports brands (Euromonitor, 2013). Understanding the basis of the perceptions that drive such behaviour in the sports brand industry is of relevance to this study. The following section discusses the idea of perception within the context of understanding sports brands.

2.3 Brand Perceptions

Perception can be defined as a 'consumer's response to a brand' (Esch et al., 2006). Fournier (1998) argues that the way in which consumers perceive brands will determine the longevity of business-consumer relationships. Morris (1996) argues that understanding perceptions is a priority for companies.

Keller and Lane (1993) define brand perception as a consumer's ability to identify the brand under different conditions on the basis of brand recognition and brand recall ability. Brand recognition refers to the ability to recognise the brand and brand recall refers to the ability of the consumer to retrieve the brand from memory (Keller & Lane, 1993). The associations formed by consumers include perceptions of the brand's quality and attitudes (Low & Lamb, 2000). Brand perception is also defined in accordance with the definition of brand equity (Aaker, 1991), as a measure of consumer-based brand equity based on four dimensions: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Brand equity is the value that drives consumer perception of the name of a brand that the brand has earned over time which may result in higher sales volumes and profit margins versus its competitors. Del Rio et al. (2001)

define brand perception in a similar way as reflected by the cluster of associations with the brand name in memory.

These definitions outline the importance of perceptions in relation to being aware of the brand, being able to recall that brand during purchase situations, recommending the brand to others, encouraging and enabling repurchase of a brand and ultimately building brand loyalty. As mentioned, brand perception is a consumer's ability to identify a brand under different conditions based on their ability to recognise the brand, the level of awareness held and recall ability (Wonglorsaichon & Sathainrapabayut, 2008).

Del Rio et al. (2001) establish that three competitive benefits result from a positive brand perception:

1. Benefits such as the brand's ability to command higher margins and/or volumes due to consumers being less price sensitive, more effective marketing communication and greater cooperation with the trade;
2. Benefits such as longevity and profits, brand loyalty, lower vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and lower vulnerability to marketing crises; and
3. Benefits such as growth potential, possible licensing opportunities, positive word of mouth and the brand's ability to introduce new products as brand extensions.

It is clear from the streams of research discussed that understanding consumer perceptions is important in attaining a number of brand objectives. The idea of perception can be understood as a response that a consumer has towards a brand that enables a better understanding of the brand by allowing that brand to be differentiated, recognised and recalled versus other similar brands. It has been reported as an effective competitive advantage that brands are top of mind by being the first brand recalled among a set of considered brands in a purchase decision which creates a higher probability of the brand being chosen as the brand of choice in a purchase decision. Consumers develop perceptions about brands from their collection of associations of quality and attitudes towards the brand and are a part of the experiences that the consumer has had with a particular brand. It is also argued that the possession of positive brand perception translates to the ability to demand higher prices, greater longevity and profits and growth opportunities such as entrance into new markets and line extensions (Del Rio et al., 2001).

Based on the above, perceptions are believed to contribute to the equity of a brand that drives its commercial value in the market place. It, therefore, appears important that consumers form a favourable perception of the brand gathered over time through their collective awareness and associations held with

the brand. A consumer's preference towards a brand influences his/her probability to choose a particular brand versus its competitors, his/her willingness to purchase the brand as well as his/her willingness to pay a premium price for the brand.

Measuring perception is, therefore, implied to be an important process for brand owners or companies in order to allow the positioning of brands aligned to how they are perceived by consumers. The Brand Asset Valuator is one tool that measures perceptions. This tool is a device that measures perceptions of a brand on the basis of the four dimensions and is employed to measure the perceptions of sports brands based on particular dimensions. This tool is discussed in the next section.

2.3.1 The Brand Asset Valuator

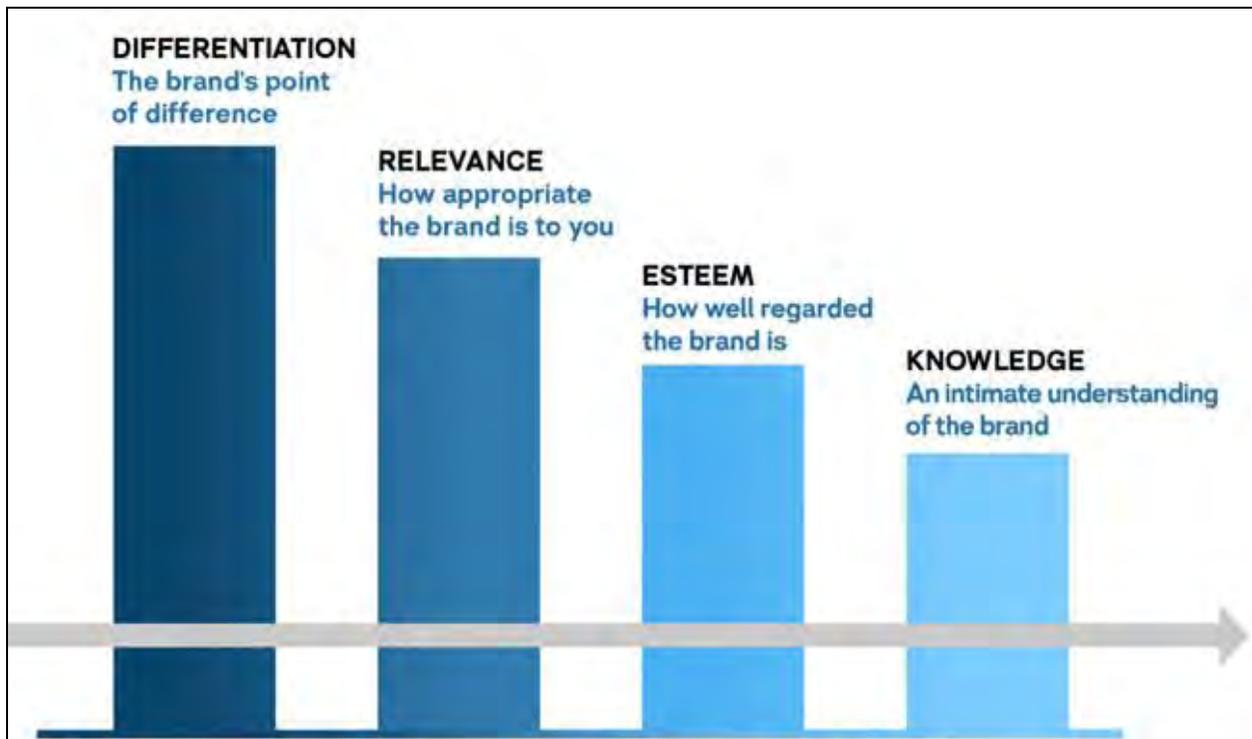
The Brand Asset Valuator is a perception measurement tool that describes a brand's perceived attributes as a combination of esteem and knowledge and uses this as an indicator of the current perceptions of a brand by consumers (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). More than 350,000 consumer interviews were conducted globally, measuring more than 55 different perceptions in relation to 20,000 brands which have shown the four pillars discussed below to be linked to delivering a brand's ability to generate revenue and profit (Young & Rubicam, Inc., 2010). The tool is a framework for understanding brands.

The Brand Asset Valuator argues that the "value of a brand lies in the mind of the consumer" and proposes that the four measures of the model indicate that brands develop in a particular progression of consumer perceptions which establishes the health of the brand (Young & Rubicam, Inc., 2010):

- Differentiation – The brand's ability to stand apart and be distinguished from its competitors. A low or declining level of differentiation is a sign that a brand is fading;
- Relevance – The level of appropriateness of the brand to consumers. Relevance allows the attraction and retention of consumers. Once differentiation is achieved, relevance is an important factor concerning whether consumers stay with brands;
- Esteem - The degree to which consumers like a brand and hold it in high regard. Esteem is driven by two perceptions: quality and popularity. Quality has a strong relationship with esteem. If a brand is also seen as popular, the relationship is even stronger; and
- Knowledge – Brand knowledge is the outcome if the brand is seen by consumers as relevant and different to its competitors and is held in high esteem by consumers. Having knowledge of the brand means that consumers understand what the brand stands for.

The combination of differentiation and relevance contributes to the strength of the brand. Brands that manage to obtain relevance and differentiation tend to be leaders in their category and also commonly define the category (Young & Rubicam Inc., 2010). The combination of esteem and knowledge displays the brand's familiarity and the degree to which a brand has been successful in building a level of knowledge and respect among consumers. Figure 2.1 defines the Brand Asset Valuator model.

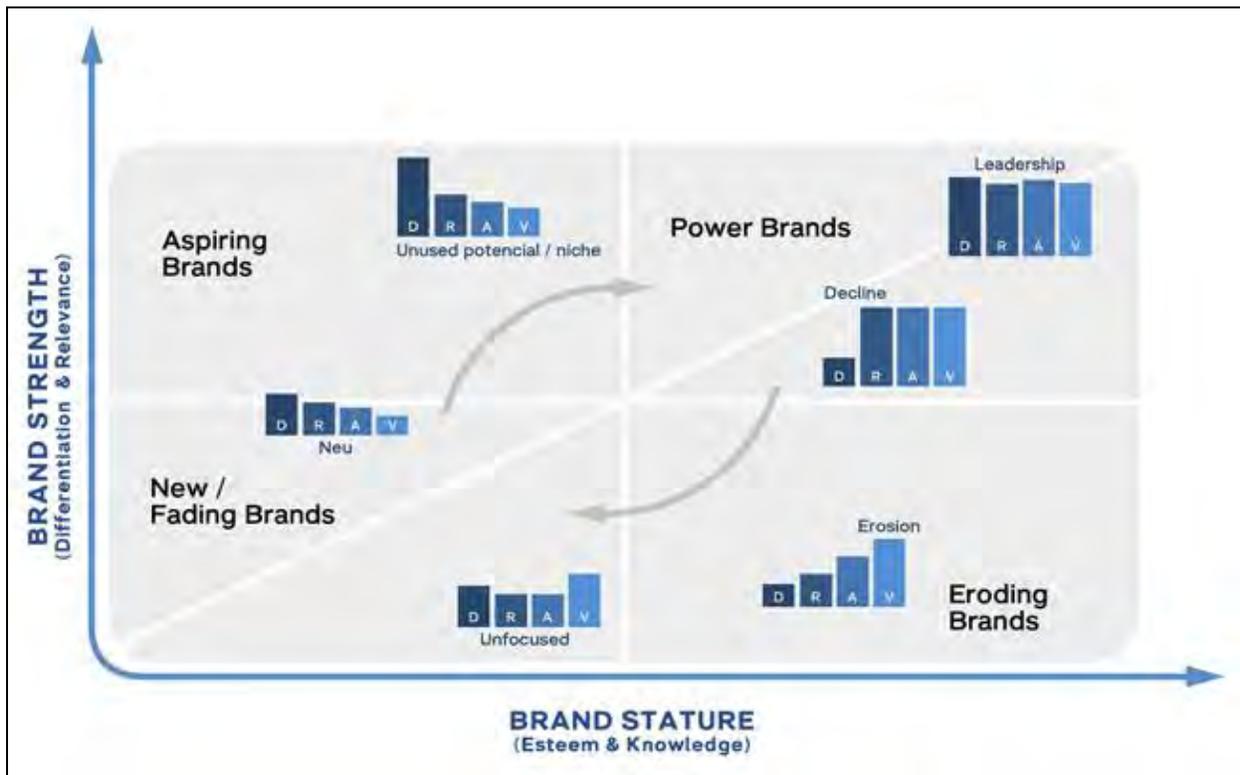
Figure 2.1 THE YOUNG AND RUBICAM BRAND ASSET VALUATOR



Y&R Brand Asset Valuator (Young & Rubicam, 2010)

Figure 2.2 below illustrates how consumers' perceptions position a particular brand in one of the four quadrants. The model is based on four dimensions where each quadrant represents the potential for the brand. Enough power positions the brand into the upper left quadrant. Brands in this quadrant are successful niche players. Positioning in this quadrant is a possible indication of unrealised potential. Brands positioned in the upper right quadrant are seen as brand leaders and those in the bottom right quadrant are brands in the trouble spot. Positioning within this quadrant is an indicator of eroding potential. Brands in this quadrant are at risk of losing their esteem and could eventually fade from consumer's consciousness.

Figure 2.2 THE BRAND ASSET VALUATOR POWER GRID (YOUNG AND RUBICAM)



Y&R Power Grid (Young & Rubicam, 2010)

The measurement of consumer perceptions on the four measures of differentiation, relevance, knowledge and esteem allow brands to be positioned on the grid as in Figure 2.2. Gaining sight of one’s potential, be it leader status, potential to grow or an erosion of potential, means the brand is losing or has lost relevance or esteem of its consumers. The Power Grid therefore maps out the growth prospects of a brand allowing brands the ability to establish themselves as a strong brand or determine whether the brand is eroding (Young & Rubicam, 2010)

The Brand Asset Valuator (BAV) is therefore a tool that suggests that perceptions of brands are gradually formed and is achieved through four key measures. Relevance and differentiation together contribute to the power of the brand whilst esteem and knowledge as a combination is an indication of the status of the brand. The BAV tool results in a brand, therefore, being able to be positioned on a grid in relation to its potential as a brand as perceived by consumers and is an indication of the how the brand will perform in comparison to other brands within the industry or competitive set or more importantly a purchase decision.

Measuring the relationship among the four pillars is effective in diagnosing the health of a brand. Two patterns indicating a healthy brand are when differentiation is greater than relevance, meaning that the brand has room to grow. When relevance is greater than differentiation, the uniqueness of the brand has diminished and price has become the primary reason to purchase. The second healthy pattern is when esteem is greater than knowledge when the consumer would like to know more about a brand (Young & Rubicam, 2010).

In further understanding how perceptions are developed, the Martinez model (Martinez, 2012) is referred to in the next section.

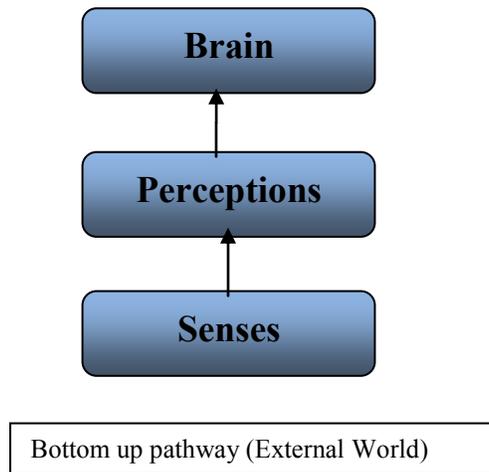
2.3.2 The Bottom-up Pathway Model of Perception

Martinez (2012) proposes a model with the aim of defining a pathway to perceptions, stating that there are two information super highways that people all have between the “real” external world (objective) and the internal psychological world (subjective) and that the two routes work in a complementary fashion. Bottom up comes from the external world: for example, a consumer standing in a sports retail store, considering the selection of athletic shoes. All products compete for the consumer’s attention due to several factors influencing the consumer’s attention span, which can include anything from packaging, size, style, product innovation, advertising or point-of-sale promotional material.

All these factors in-store reach consumers through senses such as sight and smell or in some instances taste. For example, the consumer interacts with the packaging using the sense of touch and may be enticed to try on several pairs of athletic shoes. There may be point-of-purchase media available at the category which uses the sense of sight through which information may be learned about the brand. Such media may involve the feature of a sponsored athlete or sports team, or simply be communicating a product promotion.

These factors allow perceptions of the different athletic shoes to be created in consumers’ minds that may potentially drive consumer decisions to purchase a particular type of athletic shoe. This implies that the bottom-up method to perception appears to be a factor that is able to be manipulated and influenced by variables such as packaging, product innovation or in-store media. Also implied is that attributes involving senses such as sight and smell have an impact on the perception of a brand created in a consumer’s brain which can potentially lead to driving behaviour and product purchase.

Figure 2.3 THE BOTTOM-UP PATHWAY MODEL OF PERCEPTION



The Bottom-up Pathway Model of Perception (Martinez, 2012: 1-200).

In this study, the impact that external influences or the bottom-up plan may have on sports brands is of interest. This is due to not being able to measure the internal psychological world, which refers to how perceptions are first created in the brain and how this then impacts product or brand choice.

The external environment reaches consumers' minds through the senses (through feelings and perceptions). When someone is told about a particular phenomenon, this information changes the perceptions of reality influencing later feelings and perceptions. An example of this can be the fact that any information received about sports brands will impact on how that particular brand is perceived at a later stage (Martinez, 2012). Martinez (2012) argues that consumers are bombarded with marketing on a daily basis and that there is a saturation of stimuli that consumers are exposed to. The function of the brain highlights attention to particular stimuli to which a consumer is exposed. Attention helps consumers' perceptions in selecting the information coming in from external sources. Hence with all information competing for the consumer's attention, only part of the information will be absorbed to enable creation of a perception that will be later used to influence brand choice (Martinez, 2012).

With regards to perceptions, it is argued that although many perceptions may be created by the consumer in relation to a particular brand, only a few may actually drive behaviour such as consumer choice and purchase. This concept is termed single attribute perception and is discussed in the following section. In

relation to the study, many perceptions are under analysis. However, according to particular attribute positioning, one or more factors may be more influential in driving consumption of sportswear brands as an example. Single attribute positioning also links in to the fact that numerous information sources, especially those of a marketing nature, compete for people's attention and selected information sources that will be processed is dependent on how it breaks through the clutter.

2.3.3 Single Attribute Positioning

Single attribute positioning is a concept which has proposed that perceptions are equally important and that certain perceptions trigger purchase (Romaniuk, 2002). Romaniuk (2002) further argues that if consumers hold a particular perception about a brand they may result in buying it. From this theory, it is concluded that the benefit is generated from getting more people to link the brand with a particular attribute. As an example, it can be assumed that a consumer who perceives a particular brand as good value for money, is likely to purchase that brand (Romaniuk, 2002).

This suggests that only some of the total perceptions held by a particular consumer will be likely to drive consumer choice and purchase. The perceptions that therefore drive purchase will need to compete with all perceptions that a consumer possesses at any given time in order to influence selection and/or purchase of a particular brand.

Recent research has shown that brands can be brought to the consumer's mind by a number of attributes such as situation attributes (e.g. at the beach); benefit attributes (e.g. low in fat); country of origin attributes (e.g. is Italian); or quality attributes (e.g. is the best) (Romaniuk, 2002). It is further argued that all of these have the potential to trigger and stimulate the purchase of the brand.

2.4 Brand Salience/ Share of Mind

In alignment with a select number of perceptions that are most likely to drive the selection or purchase of a brand, Romaniuk and Sharp (2003) discuss that the retrieval of brand information is dependent on an idea which activates links within the consumer's mind. For instance, the sports brand Nike could be linked to several factors such as sport, comfort, style and quality. These links all have an equal chance of being retrieved at any time but only a specific amount of information will be retrieved at one time. The more attributes to which the brand is associated, the higher the likelihood that the brand will be retrieved and aligned to the interests of the customer. This is referred to as a salience/share of mind measure, which is the link to attributes that could potentially become brand retrieval cues (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003)

Brand salience / share of mind was based on a calculation where the number of times a brand was mentioned across all of the attributes presented to the respondent could range between zero, i.e. the brand not being mentioned, to a different extreme where the brand was mentioned across 19 attributes, being mentioned in response to each attribute. Romaniuk and Sharp (2003) conclude that there is a link between brand salience and brand loyalty, stating that the higher the salience or share of mind, the more loyal the customer. This suggests that brands need to increase their salience or presence within the consumers mind, being linked or associated to many attributes in order to increase their chances of being recalled in any alternative scenario. This idea was tested within this study by means of analysing which brands were predominantly associated with a set of attributes relevant to sportswear brands.

Chandon and Wasink (2002) found that enhancing the salience of a product through pictures and shelf position in-store resulted in increased consumption for high-convenience products, which they conclude is the reason for the product being noticed more often and therefore, selected. This links into in-store factors, with regards to the position of the product on the shelf. Increasing the visibility of the product on the shelf may allow for a consumer to notice the product, and allow interest to be generated in the product that allows for consideration of consumption. Macdonald and Sharp (2000) note that brand salience positively impacts the brand being selected from a set of considered options, when more than one brand is available to the consumer. Brand retrieval, however, is not guaranteed, due to an inability of a consumer to retrieve everything from memory and also due to competing brands that simultaneously compete to be recalled via the same cues.

According to Dickson and Sawyer (1990), even when all or most brands are present at the point of purchase, consumers retrieve information from memory and only recall some brands.

Three characteristics contribute to the generation of perceptions: brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty. The next section delves into these conceptualisations in more detail and how they impact on perceptions created by consumers.

2.5 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the power of the brand as positioned in the mind of the consumer (Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2005). It is the ability of the brand to be recalled from memory and possibly form a considered set of brands in a scenario. Laurent, Kapferer and Roussel (1995) compared three commonly used brand awareness measures:

1. Top of mind (first brand recalled);
2. Spontaneous awareness (unprompted recall of the brand name); and
3. Aided awareness (recognition of the brand when prompted).

Responses showed that prompted measures which involve recognition of the brand are higher and more stable over time than unprompted responses which occur when a consumer is able to recall a brand without any cues. Romaniuk, Sharp, Paech and Driesener (2004) found this relationship to be in line with the brand's market share. A brand with a large share of market will usually gain more responses than a brand with a smaller share of market (Romaniuk, 2006).

Romaniuk (2008) argues that not all buying situations when a brand or product choice is being made allow information from the environment to be recalled from memory. This is evident in a supermarket, where on average 12 seconds is spent by a consumer when choosing a brand from a category and, therefore, there may not be sufficient time to assess the store environment or retrieve information from memory. Romaniuk (2008) suggests that even in an environment where everything is in front of the consumer, the retrieval of information from memory plays a significant role in making a decision concerning a brand. All categories are believed to have a mix of memory cues that enables brand awareness to be measured (Romaniuk, 2006).

Brand name awareness refers to the probability that a brand name will be brought into the consumer's mind and the ease with which it is recalled (Keller, 2003). Brand awareness therefore, consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition is related to a consumer's ability to recall prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue, by having either seen, heard or experienced the brand previously. Brand recall relates to a consumer's ability to retrieve the brand when given a cue such as the product category and, therefore, requests that consumers correctly retrieve the brand from memory (Keller, 2003).

According to Keller (2003), brand awareness is an important consumer decision-making requirement because it is important that consumers think of the brand when they think of the product category. Thinking of the product category can affect decisions about other brands that are considered in a purchase scenario. It has been shown to result in consumers adopting a decision rule to buy only familiar, well established brands (Keller, 2003). This means that it is important that the brand has a strong awareness and is top of mind in order to be considered.

Sadheji and Ghaemmaghami (2011) argue, however, that brand awareness is not enough to ensure a brand's success. A successful brand must offer superior value to consumers and differentiate themselves from those of its competitors which are achieved by building a brand image. Brand image is defined by Keller (1993:3) as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory". This suggests that the associations that consumers hold will impact on consumers' perceptions despite the level of awareness of the brand.

Applying this understanding to the objectives of the study, a particular brand will not only need to be top of mind in terms of brand awareness, but it will also be required that favourable associations are established with that brand.

Brand associations are covered in the next section in relation to their importance in forming perceptions that drive preference and choice within the category.

2.6 Brand Association

Keller (1993:3) defines brand associations as the 'links a consumer has to a brand in memory that contain the meaning of that brand. Brand image therefore refers to strong and favourable brand associations in memory, resulting in a positive perception of quality, and an overall positive affect'.

2.6.1 Brand Associations and Associative Network Models

Henderson, Iacobucci, and Calder (1998) believe that mental models, called associative networks, are effective in studying consumers' networks of associations. Anderson and Bower (1973), discuss the concept of networks stating that consumers store brand information in the form of networks.

It has been found that the brand associations consumers carry with brands are important and it is critical to determine what these associations are and how they are formed. This may help provide a clearer understanding of the perceptions that consumers have of brands (Henderson et al., 1998). For example, the nodes in an associative network include a firm name (Nike), a product brand name (Air), a generic product category (athletic footwear), and features of the product (sport, cushioning, comfort) as per the Peter and Olsen Network Model illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

The associative network in Figure 2.4, presented by Peter and Olsen (1993) contains three athletic brands of footwear (Brooks, Nike and New Balance), all of which are clearly associated with running. Regarding

other associations such as cushioning and “feels soft to run in”, consumers categorise Nike as being connected to Brooks and New Balance. However, Brooks is not perceived to be connected to New Balance which may lead one to suspect that these two brands are less likely to be perceived as similar by consumers or as direct competitors when purchasing decisions are made. Also evident is that only Nike is associated with the property of cushioning which appears to be a desirable attribute within this category, and is an attribute that is only indirectly linked to the other brands (Anderson & Bower, 1973).

Figure 2.4 THE PETER AND OLSON NETWORK

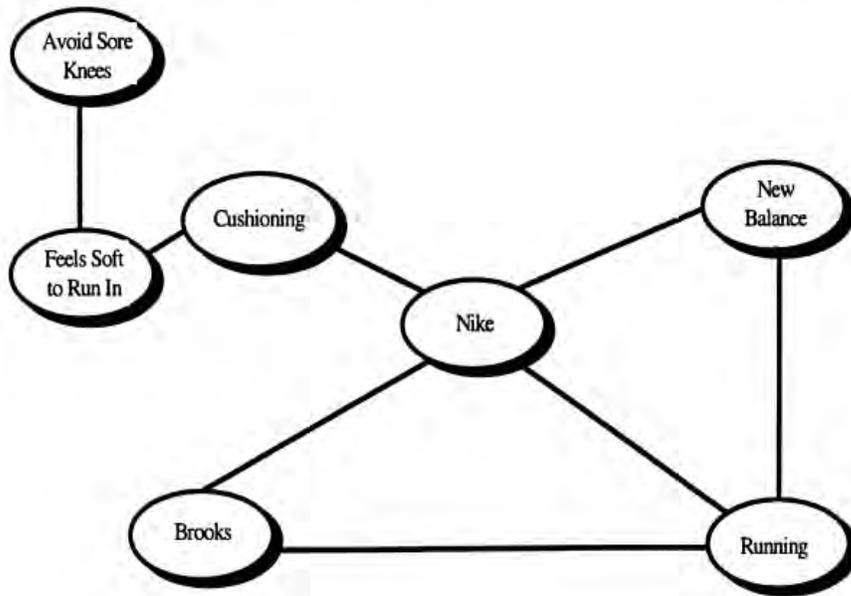


Fig. 2. Peter and Olson (1993) network.

The Peter and Olson network (Henderson et al., 1998: 306 - 327).

Researchers have found brand associations to have a positive impact on consumer choice, preferences and intention to purchase, the willingness to pay a price premium, accept brand extensions as well as recommend the brand to others (Park & Srinivasen, 1994; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995). Positive brand associations may also increase the probability that a brand will be purchased repeatedly.

Brand loyalty is the consumer’s intention to re-purchase a brand without pressure from competitors. In a market which has seen an 85% failure rate of new products, it can be assumed that brand loyalty is important for developing strong and sustained perceptions of brands which will ultimately result in consumers exhibiting re-purchase behaviour. Brand loyalty enhances the strength of the brand and may

likely lead to higher market shares and protection from the threat of new entrants in addition to existing competitors.

2.7 Brand Loyalty

Aaker (1991) defined brand loyalty as the ability to attract and maintain customers and a measurement of a consumer's behaviour and/or attitude towards the brand and his/her likelihood to re-purchase the brand. A link has been previously noted where brand associations have been proven to lead to brand loyalty. Many companies especially in the sportswear industry try to enhance brand loyalty among their customers (Yee & Sidek, 2008). According to Amine (1998) the loyalty construct is distinguished via two main approaches:

1. Behavioural - the repeat purchasing of a brand over time by a consumer; and
2. Attitudinal - a consumer repeatedly purchasing a brand is necessary but does not serve as a condition for true brand loyalty.

This means that in order for a brand to achieve true brand loyalty it must be perceived positively on many levels to ensure that it is repeatedly purchased (Amine, 1998). Brand loyalty occurs when consumers perceive the brand to offer the right image, product features or level of quality at a relevant price (Fong Yee & Sidek, 2008). It has also been seen that if perceived value is greater than the cost, consumers will purchase that product (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Loyal customers have been found to be willing to pay a premium price for particular brands towards which a degree of loyalty is illustrated because there is usually a perceived risk associated with choice of an alternate brand or product (Yoon & Kim, 2000).

There appears to be a high loyalty to sportswear brands. Discount Store News (1995) reported that consumers are likely to walk out of a store without making a purchase if their favourite sports brand was not available. Pre-determined brand choice of sports brands was also evident with more than 8 out of 10 consumers in the United States shopping for sporting goods with a specific sports brand in mind (Nike, Adidas and Reebok being at the top of their list of favourite sports brands) (Kurt Salmon Association, 1995).

The survey by the Kurt Salmon Association also reported that 62% of consumers would go to another store if their brand was not available with only 14% reporting that they would switch to an alternate brand. This is an indication that there is a high level of loyalty among users of sportswear brands who are not likely to switch from their preferred brands.

Lau, Chang, Moon and Liu (2006) argue that there are seven factors that influence the loyalty of consumers towards certain sportswear brands. These seven factors are brand name, product quality, functional attributes, price, style, store environment and promotion.

2.7.1 Brand Name

According to Keller (2003), well-known brand names can display benefits of the brand's products and also result in higher recall of these benefits than brands that are not well-known. Cadogan and Foster (2000) claim that well-known brand names and their images attract consumers to purchase the brand and may result in repeat purchasing behaviour and reduce the probability of brand switching. Similarly, according to Yee and Sidek (2008), the brand's name is important as it attracts consumers to purchase the product. The brand's name has also proven to influence repeat purchasing behaviour (Discount Store News, 1994). As mentioned, the brand's name in sportswear can be seen as significantly important due to the level of loyalty and the resistance to switch brands if their brand of choice is not available. The prominence of recall of such brands is also an indication that the brand name is an important factor that influences loyalty in this category.

Both the brand name and loyalty have been stated as significant factors in the consumption of sports brands. This theory may be attributed to the fact that a few brands dominate the sportswear market and have continued to maintain and grow share, as well as grow the category. Brands such as Nike and Adidas have, as a result, become leaders within the sportswear market. These brands have also adapted to changing trends and consumer demands regarding innovation and the functional uses that have been demanded and almost expected from sports brands.

They have also identified and catered for the growing need for sports brands by the non-sports consumer for everyday use. The numerous attributes which brands appear to have linked to their brand name therefore creates a priority on brand name in the consumption, consideration and preference of sports brands.

2.7.2 Product Quality

It is suggested that consumers may repeatedly purchase particular brands or switch between repertoires of several brands due to the level of quality of products (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Erdem and Swait (2004) argue credibility to be the most important attribute of a brand. They define credibility as the "believability of the

brand, depending on consumers' perceptions of whether the brand has the ability and willingness to consistently deliver what has been promised". Erdem and Swait (2004) further define brand credibility as having two aspects: trustworthiness and expertise. Trustworthiness means that the brand is willing to deliver what it has promised and expertise means whether a brand is capable of meeting what is promised. According to Bae and King (2011), consumers may evaluate brands which are credible as high quality brands. In addition, according to Pappu et al. (2005) perceived quality gives consumers a reason to buy a brand because brands can be differentiated from competitors on the basis of quality. Results from Bae and King (2011) show that brand credibility impacts significantly on purchase intention through an increase in perceived quality; perceived value for money; information costs saved; and decreased perceived risk. Perceived quality is related to brand choice and purchasing intention and is defined as the consumer's perception of the overall quality of a product or service. Perceived quality can also create value for the consumer and provide a reason to purchase (Shahin, Kazemi & Mahyari, 2013).

Quality is an attribute that is of interest to the study as consumers are known to seek quality in the sports category due to quality being the supporting factor where price and value are associated. Also regarding the different uses of sports brands, be it for sport or comfort in everyday use, quality should be a desired product attribute. There is also believed to be an expectation of longevity of products depending on the usage, especially in the case of sport which in turn warrants the price value perception, resulting in sportswear consumers willing to spend more for a brand that is perceived as high quality and long lasting.

2.7.3 Functional Attributes

In relation to the sportswear category, functional attributes include "quick dry, breathable, waterproof, odour resistant, light weight and durable", which are perceived as the life of the garments (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Consumers are known to wear their sportswear for heavy work and some for leisure and sports as they require clothing that allows a lot of movement (Yee & Sidek, 2008).

An example of functional attributes could be a soccer boot from Nike within what they call the "Mercurial boot range" which features a lightweight boot that was designed especially for soccer players in the winger and striker position and has been developed to give these players speed and agility due to the lightweight design. These boots are available to consumers as well as sports stars. Consumers who participate in soccer and therefore identify the need or value of such an attribute and who also aspire to perform or be like their sports heroes may be very likely to consider this product for the aforementioned attributes. Consumers also seeking a tailored need pertaining to sport will be likely to value the possession of such functional attributes in their sports brands. Sports brands are continuously evolving to

stay ahead of trends and the functional and technical demands of the market. Incorporating functional benefits such as the one mentioned is one means by which sportswear companies may achieve this.

2.7.4 Price

According to Cadogan and Foster (2000), price is the most important consideration for the average consumer. However, consumers with a high loyalty towards specific brands are willing to pay a premium price for their preferred brand, so their purchase intention is not easily influenced by price (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Long-term relationships that involve service quality also result in customers being more tolerant to prices as loyal customers are less likely to make price comparisons with other products and are less likely to “shop around” (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Bucklin, Gupta and Siddarth (1998) argue that price significantly influences consumer choice and the probability of purchase. Price is described as the quantity of payment for something and is considered an exchange ratio for goods. The Mercurial range of soccer boots discussed above retails at a premium price compared to many similar products. However, the claims and propositions made by the brand and the faith that this may possibly instil in consumers, as well as the fact that Nike reports top soccer stars use this brand, may very well warrant the value gained by the product resulting in loyalty to the brand and consistent purchase with no threat of brand switching because of price.

It has been reported that consumers perceive a negative relationship between the equity of a brand and the need to price incentivise (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). It is argued that consumers perceive high spending on advertising as an indication that marketing managers have confidence in the product.

Price promotions and advertising have therefore been illustrated as impacting either positively or negatively on the perception of brands (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). Advertising has shown to influence attitudes and cause people to behave in a certain way and allows brands to influence consumer’s awareness, recall, and preferences, enabling brands to command higher prices (Wansink & Ray, 1996).

2.7.5 Style

Style refers to the visual appearance or fashion appeal, which has shown to affect consumer perceptions towards brands (Frings, 2005). According to Yee and Sidek, (2008), consumers’ perception of fashion is influenced by their view of what is currently fashionable’. Brands that offer stylish sportswear attract loyal customers who are fashion conscious. It is reported that these types of customers gain an experience

of satisfaction from wearing the latest fashion and style (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Research conducted by Duff (1999) showed that sportswear shoppers were becoming more fashion conscious and were in turn demanding products with more style. Furthermore, the fact that sportswear brands are now not only worn for sport purposes but also for fashion, establishes the importance of the possession of style or fashion attributes in sportswear brands. The popularity of sports brands among the younger generation to who fashion is important, may also drive the fashion appeal that sports brands are expected to deliver.

2.7.6 Store Environment

Omar (1999) claimed that the store environment was the most important factor in retail success and positive characteristics of the store which includes store locations, store layout and in-store stimuli, affect brand loyalty to some degree. Omar (1999) further claimed that the location of the store and the number of outlets are critical in influencing the shopping and purchasing behaviour of consumers.

The in-store stimuli such as the characteristics of salespeople, store layout, noises, smells, temperature, shelf space and displays, signs, colours and merchandise affect consumers to a certain degree and may affect the decisions consumers make (Abraham-Murali & Littrel, 1995; Evans, Moutinho & Raaij, 1996).

Furthermore, the opening of specialised brand stores such as the Nike store is a display of this strategy to create a unique shopping experience employing displays, signs and technology as a means to create in-store stimuli that engage and interact with shoppers. These flagship stores as they are termed are increasingly becoming a popular method of building relationships with consumers (Kozinets, Sherry, Deberry-Spence, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit, & Storm, 2002). Flagship stores usually house just one brand and operate with the intention of building or reinforcing the image of the brand (Kozinets et al., 2002).

2.7.7 Promotion

Promotion is an element of communication between brands and consumers and is a collective use of advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity. Promotion plays a role in impacting on consumers' images, beliefs and attitudes towards products and brands, and influences their buying behaviours (Evans et al., 1996), showing that promotion, especially through advertising can help establish perceptions in the consumers' mind as well as differentiate products against other brands. It is argued that promotions are an important element of a marketing strategy that is used to communicate with consumers with regard to product offerings which encourage the consideration and purchase of a product or service (Rowley, 1998).

In 2011, Adidas launched a promotional campaign called “all in” with the intention of connecting with and “creating intimacy” between consumers and the brand (Adidas group blog, 2012). The brand executed the campaign as a means to reach their target consumer. This is an example of a promotional campaign used to creatively connect with consumers, create awareness and generate interest in the brand. Promotional efforts can also simply involve price discounting or promotional value-added offerings.

Consumers have shown high levels of awareness, loyalty and perception of quality and have had high awareness of brands that have a high advertising spend (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). Based on this statement it can then be assumed that the same result will be generated from the high investment made on sports brand advertising. Sports brands such as Nike and Adidas have made use of some of the biggest names in the sporting world as ambassadors. The international soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo signed a \$32.5 million contract with Nike (\$6 million a year) which was an increased counter offer to have the star represent the brand over Nike’s largest competitor Adidas (Examiner, 2010). However, a positive perception relating to spend invested by a brand has not been seen (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco (2005) conclude that a high spend on advertising showed a favourable link with brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations, in that a higher spend creates the perception that the brand has a higher awareness, is of a better quality, and is linked to more positive associations. Apart from these attributes that contribute to the development of consumers’ perceptions towards brands, emotion is an additional factor that may potentially impact on how perceptions are formed towards brands.

2.8 Brand Emotion

The concept of emotion is defined as:

‘A mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes’, (American Heritage Dictionary, 2014).

According to Percy, Hansen and Randrup (2004), when people experience something, all elements of that experience will be stored in memory, one of which is an emotional element associated with that experience. In a similar fashion experience with a brand that is stored in memory will also include people’s emotional experiences with that brand.

Percy, Hansen and Randrup (2004) argue that if the emotions associated with a brand are able to be measured, this will enable managers to understand them better and as a result position brands better and

work towards optimising positive emotional associations in memory. Understanding the emotional associations with a brand in memory, advertising (or other marketing communication) that generates emotional responses consistent with the brand, should help reinforce positive brand perceptions as well as purchase intentions, as a result of that brand's communication (Percy et al., 2004).

Percy et al. (2004) also argue that since there are emotional memories associated with brands, a reliable measurement tool for emotions will act as a powerful means to better understand brands and position them to capitalise upon positive emotional associations in the brand's marketing communication.

Emotional reactions are believed to not only be established first, but also facilitate memory and influence reactions (Hertel & Parks, 2002). This suggests that understanding emotions is important in enabling awareness and recall of a particular brand to be triggered from memory. In relation to sports brands many emotions may be projected towards sports brands. Considering the high levels of loyalty towards sports brands, one may be expected to assume that there is a certain love or happiness felt towards particular brands. Furthermore, athletes and sports team associations are of interest and hence performance of an athlete endorser or sports team may result in certain emotions towards a sports brand such as anger and sadness. Surprise may be experienced with an innovation by the brand and disgust or aversion may be the resulting factor of a lack of quality issues experienced with the brand.

This study employs Damasio's (1994) model to determine any present links relating to how people feel towards sports brands and the attributes of sports brands. The six basic emotions were tested against respondents' emotional reactions towards their favourite sports brand. Apart from the basic emotions proposed by Damasio (1994), other attributes that were seen as relevant to sports brands were used, such as confidence, empowerment and energising. The objective of using emotional attributes was to determine if emotion is an influencing factor when sports brands are considered.

The basic emotions as defined by Damasio, (1994) are as follows:

1. Happiness: a positive emotion, directly related to everything that makes people feel good on all levels;
2. Sadness: the opposite emotion to happiness and, therefore has negative valence;
3. Fear: a very important emotion that acts to protect the individual and the species. Although this has a negative valence, it fulfils the survival function. It sounds a warning and alerts the person to mortal danger;
4. Surprise: the emotional reaction to an unanticipated or new situation which may have a positive or negative valence; and

5. Anger: a negative emotional reaction, both physical and psychological, when confronted with unpleasant or repugnant objects or situations.

Martinez (2012) argues that information reaches people through the five senses. From there it travels to the areas of perception where messages are integrated. The most relevant information captures the person's attention and connects with the available memory and with emotions leading to the formation of their perceptions. The goal of any brand and sports brand in this case, is to enter through the five senses, to capture the consumers' attention, to connect with their needs, values and desires, to create the emotional link and leave a long term imprint in their memory, to positively influence their purchase decisions and maintain top of mind awareness, and encourage repeat purchase and brand loyalty (Martinez, 2012).

It is suspected that sports brands elicit high levels of emotion from the admiration and support of sports teams and athletes that are associated with particular sports brands. Athlete and sports team endorsement are becoming hugely popular with the intention of linking big names in sport to sports brands. Sport sponsorship has also become a common and popular event and has come to play a role in sports brand consumption where sports brands are purchased for personal use, as part of a collection of items of a particular sports team, and also as purchasing for others, termed emblem passing. The following section discusses sport sponsorship with reference to its impact on sport brand consumption.

2.9 Sport Sponsorship and Endorsement

As mentioned earlier, sportswear is an area of clothing in which customers' purchasing choices are often influenced by the sports figures they admire or the team's merchandise they aspire to wear (Newbury, 2008). This suggests that sports teams, sporting celebrities and athletes may have an impact on the preference, perceptions and choice of sports brands.

2.9.1. The Impact of Sports and Sport Celebrities on the Perception of Sports Brands

Over the years, advertisers have paid a significant amount of money to athletes to endorse their products. Endorsement opportunities can range from wearing certain brands, for example Tiger Woods and Nike apparel, to being a spokesperson for the brand by providing brand testimonials (Bush, Martin & Bush, 2004). Bush et al., (2004) report that, despite the widespread use of athletes as product or brand endorsers; there is a lack of available research that establishes the influence that these athletes may have on a target market and the brand itself. The desired impact of celebrity endorsers on advertisers' strategic expectations is questionable with only one out of five meeting the required objectives (Miciak &

Shanklin, 1994). Researchers have, however, indicated that endorsers may in certain instances not have connected with the intended target market (Sukdhial, Kahle, & Aiken, 2002). Bush et al., (2004) conclude that the reason for this may be due to a lack of identification and familiarity of the endorser with the target market.

Generation Y has proved to be a valuable segment for sports brands. Generation Y refers to the generation of people born between the period of the 1980s and early 1990s. This generation has had constant access to technology in their youth (The Business Dictionary, 2013). Generation Y has therefore been seen as an easier group to target as they have not been exposed to the economic conditions of prior periods such as the 1970's and have shown to buy something simply because it is "cool to do so" (Brandchannel, 2003) and may therefore be more responsive to media, and specifically to celebrity and hence potentially athlete endorsers in this case.

Celebrity endorsers have been of great interest to many organisations, which have chosen sporting personalities as endorsers and spokespeople of their brands (Brooks & Harris, 1998). Athletes are admired and respected greatly in today's society and are seen somewhat as heroes that many people idolise. Pikas, Schied and Pikas (2012) use three main terms to describe celebrity endorsers: attractiveness, expertise in sport and trustworthiness of the individual. It is generally perceived to be more beneficial if an endorser possesses all three traits (Pikas et al., 2012).

Boyd and Shank (2004) reports that some researchers measure aspects such as the degree of similarity of the endorser with the consumer, the familiarity of endorser to the consumer and whether or not the endorser is admired. In terms of attractiveness, athletes, due to their peak physical condition are thought to generally be attractive. There is also generally a high degree of familiarity with endorsers, especially among consumers that follow their sports. It is this association coming from such celebrity endorsers that many brands hope will reflect favourably upon the brand. It is believed that the possession of a high level of expertise in athlete endorsers is more important than physical attractiveness because it allows for a mental connection to be formed between the brand and the endorser (Premeaux, 2009). This quality is usually associated with athletes who are performing at the optimum level (Stone, Joseph, & Jones, 2003). The trait of trustworthiness is the consumer's perception of the degree of honesty in which the brand information is delivered by the endorser (Boyd & Shank, 2004).

Of additional interest to the objectives of the study is whether sports sponsored athletes and/or sports team endorsers influence brand perception and is a basis for sports brand choice or preference. A further

enquiry of interest is whether such perceptions are gender biased. Males have been found to perceive non-physical features of athlete endorsers as more important, such as the athlete being likable and familiar, whilst females were more likely to place greater importance on the athlete endorser's physical ability suggesting that females are more concerned with physical appearance than males are (Pikas et al., 2012).

Bush et al. (2004) reported findings purely within the adolescent market, that celebrity sport endorsers and athletes have a positive influence on word of mouth endorsement and brand loyalty, especially among the youth market, suggesting that celebrity sports athletes are important to adolescents when they make brand choices and talk about these brands positively.

Generation Y have demonstrated consideration of athletes as role models and it has been found that females are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth endorsement about a product or brand that is endorsed by a favoured celebrity athlete than males are, and also agree more than males that athlete endorsers influence them to purchase certain brands (Bush et al., 2004). Whether this translates to the broader market is a question that this study aims to explore. Forbes (2013) reported that the 10 highest paid male and female athletes earned a total of \$600 million in endorsements to date, with some athletes actually earning more money from endorsements than they do in their entire careers as athletes (Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko; 2009).

Athlete endorsers are usually selected due to the celebrity status that these athletes have obtained from their success within a particular sport. The effectiveness of endorsers can be determined on the basis of their credibility, attractiveness and their contribution to the characteristics of the product. In the case of sports brands, the characteristics of athlete endorsers appear quite relevant to those of the athletes (Simmers et al., 2009). Athletes used to endorse sports brands have earned a great deal of respect and admiration from fans and embody the essence of sport. Hence when endorsing a brand, these attributes associated with endorsers may potentially transfer onto the brands they represent. It has been found that the celebrity to product fit remains critical in order for an endorsement to succeed.

It is suggested that the expertise of an endorser is more significant than their physical attractiveness when matching products with celebrity endorsers, however, physical attractiveness can be seen as expertise, and depending on the product that is being endorsed (Simmers et al., 2009). For example a person endorsing make-up can be seen as an expert, on the perception that she is knowledgeable regarding beauty. However the match between a make-up endorser and a sports brand may not be significant. It is suggested by the

In a celebrity endorser deal, the brand hopes to associate itself with the endorser as a means to developing a stronger, positive consumer attitude toward the product or brand (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). Moorman (2006) reports that athlete endorsers need to consider more carefully their choice of endorsements as they are liable to use the brand themselves. This may potentially lend itself to the increased likelihood that athlete endorsers have predominantly represented sports brands more than other products.

Bush et al. (2004) further argue that sports teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid have shown to drive retail sales of products associated with their names and images and it is common to tie their brands to popular teams (Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009). Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) suggest that when linking their brands to popular sports teams, firms hope to transfer the team's positive attributes onto the brand. These teams are generally selected on a basis of a perceived connection with the consumer and the team. According to Kwon and Armstrong (2002), when consumers identify with a sports team there is a significant and positive influence on impulsive sport related purchases.

Carlson, Donavon and Zimmerman (2005) found that an individual's personality traits influence his/her identification with a sports entity. Aaker (1997) however, states that the attraction to a team may also be influenced by the brand personality. Strong identification with a sports team has also been linked to increases in consumer spending (Lichtenstein, Drumweight, & Braig, 2004). Consumers can identify with sports teams on the basis of two characteristics. Davies, Chun, da Silva, and Roper (2004) define the first characteristic, 'prestige' as exclusively respect and status. Many sports teams are associated with prestige which may influence consumers to spend more on purchases of the brand. The second characteristic, 'distinctiveness' relates to how sports teams are different from their competitor's sports teams. Consumers create an identity by belonging to a particular sports team group that is unique compared to another group (Ashforth & Mael, 1992).

Carlson & Donovan (2008) states that consumers often buy items for others (called symbol passing) as well as buying items for themselves (called symbol collecting). Having a team image that fans or consumers want to identify with, may result in a higher allocation of spending on the team and its related products. Sports brands will fall within this set of products which is commonly related to prestigious sports teams.

The sports industry is rapidly growing, with consumers spending an increasing amount of money on retail purchases that enhance the sports consumption experience. Carlson et al. (2005) reports findings that the

more a consumer identifies with a team, the more time and money he/she will spend to support the team and display affiliation with a particular team.

Athletes provide several benefits to advertising, such as increasing the brand's name recognition; creating positive associations with the product, such as a greater physical appeal or likeability; and enabling brand personalities to be developed (Kamins, 1990). Piacentini and Mailer (2004) argue that athletic endorsements of status products have influenced consumers to purchase these products for the purpose of identity expression. Today, athletes' names are not only being attached to athletic products but also to other categories including the cell phone industry, cameras and soft drinks. Athletic endorsements have helped sales of athletic products with a sales uplift to \$37.2 billion in 2002 (Janoff, 2004). In 2003, consumers spent around \$7.3 billion on athletic footwear which was boosted by Michael Jordan's signature sneaker Air Jordans. U.S. companies also paid more than \$1 billion to athletes for endorsements, contracts, agreements and licensing rights (Lane, 1996).

Manufacturers of sports team merchandise are aiming to gain market share by being affiliated with well-known brands of sports teams. Regarding sports team merchandise, Nike, Reebok and Adidas are among the leading manufacturers for professional teams.

Celebrity endorsement advertising has been used for over 150 years, with celebrity athletes often coming out as the highest paid and most popular endorsers (St James, 2010). There have, over the years, been fewer female athlete endorsers than male athletes (Fink & Parker, 2008). However, the use of female athletes as endorsers has increased over the past 3 decades (Kahle & Riley, 2004). In 2000, tennis star, Venus Williams, signed a \$40 million contract with Reebok, which was one of the highest single endorsement contracts ever received (Bonham, 2000). This in turn triggered a series of more female athletes signing endorsement deals. According to Goldman (1995), female endorsers have shown to be more credible than male endorsers. It has been found by previous studies that female athletes receive less coverage than males in newspapers, sports shows, and sport magazines (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Advertisements employing female athletes also tend to focus more on their femininity than their athleticism (Smith, 2006).

One of the leading problems for advertisers according to Downey (2002), is the amount of advertisement clutter that consumers are exposed to, which can add up to over 1500 advertisements daily from a variety of media sources such as television, billboards, radio etc. Celebrity endorsers have been included in advertisements to try and slice through this clutter (Erdogan, Baker, & Tag, 2001). They have been

shown to influence an increase in brand loyalty and advertisements featuring celebrities have been rated by audiences as being more interesting, strong and effective (Bush et al., 2004). Celebrity endorsers are accompanied by high costs and their value may be lessened if they endorse multiple products or should negative press impact on their image and the associated brand (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

Athletes have been used frequently to endorse non-sports related brands; however, their effectiveness has not been documented. More positive brand perceptions of athlete endorsers of non-sports related brands have been often seen with brands where the endorser is seen somewhat as an expert, in the case of energy bars, for example (Koernig & Boyd, 2009). The match up effect proposed by Koernig and Boyd (2009) suggests that an athlete should be most effective when endorsing a sport-related brand and proposes further that the match between the image of the celebrity and the image of the brand should contribute to more positive perceptions of the endorser as well as the advertisement and as a result increase purchase behaviour. Koernig and Boyd's (2009) match up effect between brands and celebrity endorsers suggested that it was limited to increasing liking and trust. Another concern raised by advertising agencies is the potential risk that celebrities will overshadow the brands themselves with celebrity endorsers being liked more than the brands they are endorsing. Results have also suggested that the current industry practice of linking athletes, who have no match to the product category, may not be the most efficient use of company resources. La Ferle and Choi (2005) suggested that a non-celebrity might be a better use of company resources. The finding that the effectiveness of an endorser increases by matching a product with that endorser was also proposed by Brooks and Harris (1998).

Then the characteristics of both the brand and athlete will be enforced in consumers' minds. It is therefore imperative to select the right athlete to enforce this association with consumers as the traits of the athlete and brand influence the perception of each other. Perceived value involves a consumer's overall perception of a product which means that if a consumer does not believe that the product holds any value, he/she will not be likely to purchase that product (Lee, Trail, Kwon & Anderson, 2005). According to Brooks & Harris (1998), endorsers need to have star appeal, meaning they need to appeal to a specific target market. Adams and Tuggle (2004) found that female athletes lacked representation on television sports coverage. In 1995 there was a ratio of 25 males to 1 female athlete featured in athlete coverage. In 2002 the ratio was 48:1. A reason for this according to Nelson (1991) is that men dominate sports media and female athletes usually play by male rules.

A study by Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf and Hardin (2002) showed men to be depicted three times more often than females, with male athletes shot in active poses of their sports 58% of the time, whilst female

athletes were only portrayed 15% of the time in active poses, concluding that female athletes remain under represented in all advertisements. Hardin et al. (2002) also concluded that there is a femininity focus as opposed to an athletic focus on female athletes. It was also found that within women's magazines female athletes were more likely to be featured in their sport than they were in male audience-intended magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Cassidy (2001) reports that sport companies such as Nike have come to the realisation that professional athletes and sports teams are no longer seen as having "god like status" and have reacted by de-emphasising the famous athlete endorser and choosing to focus more on ordinary people who practise sports in a number of ways.

According to Kamins (1990) athletes can provide important benefits to advertisements such as increasing brand name recognition, creating positive associations by transferring different qualities to the product, such as physical appeal or likeability and developing brand personalities. Athletes also can provide strong testimonials for products that have contributed to their sporting performance and success (Dyson & Turco, 1997). Athletic endorsements of products may lead to the purchasing of these products by consumers as a means to express an identity (Piancentini & Mailer, 2004). Athletic endorsement has helped brand sales increase drastically. Sales of sports jerseys and footwear in 2002 increased to \$37.2 billion driven by Michael Jordan's signature sneaker (Janoff, 2004).

Team identification has been identified as a justifiable factor pertaining to the perceptions held by sports fans of their favourite sports teams that in turn influence their purchasing behaviour of sports brands related to particular sports teams.

2.9.2. Team Identification

Team identification is defined as "the degree to which the fan's relationship with the team contributes to his/her social identity" (Mahony, 1995:12). Purchasing behaviour of sports team licensed merchandise creates and strengthens the feeling of "belongingness" of an individual to a particular sports team that the individual wishes to be associated with. Sports team merchandise is also used to separate his/herself from other groups of people (fans of rival sports teams). Kwon, HongBum and Mondello (2008) concluded from their finding that a respondent's attitude toward co-branded licensed clothing (sports brands) which co-partners with a sports team or athlete for branding purposes differed from its manufacturers. Respondents' team identification has been seen to influence their attitude toward co-branded team licensed apparel, whilst also impacting on their attitudes toward their manufacturers. This implies that,

disregarding how the respondents feel towards the co-sponsored sports brands; their attitudes were more influenced by their attitudes towards the manufacturer than towards the sports team.

It can therefore be concluded that sports consumers' perceptions towards licensed clothing is partially determined by their attitudes toward the manufacturer. Nike manufactured sports team licensed apparel and showed high team identification which was measured by the attitude held towards these manufacturers. Respondents showed a neutral perception rather than a positive one toward an unknown brand. Kwon et al. (2008) concludes that when deciding on the manufacturer for licensed apparel, marketers should completely understand how the manufacturer is perceived by their target market.

Keller (2003) reports that sponsorship has been shown to be considered as an effective means of enhancing brand awareness and brand image. Sponsorship has become a popular mechanism to drive brand image, brand personality and other dimensions of brand equity. Bennett (1999) shows that sponsorship is a powerful method to communicate with spectators at sporting events and with spectators watching sport at home. It has shown to be effective for strengthening brand awareness and recall and also for creating among supporters a wide spread use of sponsoring firms' products. It has been found that, through sports sponsorship, a company can link itself or its product to strong feelings a consumer has toward the sponsored team (Madrigal, 2000). Amis, Berrett and Slack (1999) argue that sponsorship has the ability to provide a firm with a sustainable competitive advantage if they are able to successfully tap into a consumer's psychological connection with a sports team or athlete.

Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnova (2001) suggest that a company and its products are perceived by consumers to be separate and hence, a consumer's perception of a company may be favourable but he/she may perceive its products as inferior compared to its competitors. This may be the case where a sponsorship of the partnership is favoured, for instance Adidas and a particular sports team, where Adidas as a brand may have negative or less favourable perceptions compared to a competitor. Sponsorship appears to be an effective tool in enhancing perceptions of a sponsor as it is capable of enhancing consumers' positive perceptions of a company's image. The authors further recommend that sponsorship only be considered with successful teams as the under-performance of a team can negatively impact perceptions of an associated sponsor due to brand image transfer or other elements associated with sponsorship.

2.10 Global Versus Local Perceptions of Sports Brands

Bris, Smit and Sorell (2010) define a global firm that leverages its own brand to sell a large quantity of products in many markets. Global brands have shown growth in popularity. One explanation for the widespread popularity is that global brands create consumer perceptions of brand superiority (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008), making people more likely to purchase (Alden, Batra & Steenkamp, 2003). Johansson and Ronkainen (2005) establish that the reason a global brand enjoys higher self-esteem than local brands is due to the fact that being marketed around the world gives an “aura of excellence”. Holt, Quelch and Taylor (2004) suggest that global brands are still seen as the “awe inspiring company” in its superiorly perceived consumer value in emerging and developed markets, as they inspire trust and demonstrate progress for people in these countries.

Global brands are consistently positioned in different markets, generally under the same name with a similar personality and look and feel, which is enabled by centrally coordinated marketing strategies and programs. Bris, Smit and Sorrell (2010) found that global brands sell more products than non-global brands. Global brands are further believed to generate greater consumer preference; to suggest higher quality (Alden, Batra & Steenkamp, 2003); and to enjoy greater esteem (Johannsen & Ronkajnen, 2000), resulting in global myths. They therefore generally have an advantage over local brands according to Holt et al. (2004).

In emerging and developing markets, customers associate global brands with an aspiration toward the lifestyles of more advanced economies (Alden, Batra & Steenkamp, 1999). Global brands assumedly also have lower risks for consumers as they enable rapid product and service identification and reduce the consumer search costs, therefore increasing repeat purchasing behaviour. Global brands are further generally perceived as higher quality and as a result associated with lower price sensitivity, (Ailawadi, Lehman & Neslin, 2003) and have stronger positive quality associations.

Studies have suggested that country of origin (the country in which a brand is manufactured) effects determine consumers' perceptions of quality of and favourability towards a brand (Shahin et al., 2013). Country of origin is also thought to play a role in influencing consumers' product and/or brand evaluation (Shahin et al., 2013). Country of origin effects are thought to bring out associations, influence consumers' perceptions and cause brand popularity, leading to brand loyalty in the case of a country with a popular image (Shahin et al., 2013). Yasin, Noor and Mohammed (2007) found a country's image to have a significant effect on brand awareness, where countries which are favoured positively, are often perceived

as producers of quality brands, with supporting findings that consumers perceive countries with a good image as technologically advanced and brands from these countries as therefore reliable and assuring high quality. Findings from Shahin et al. (2013) show that country of origin has a significant impact on perceived quality and brand awareness which indicates that countries with a good image are often familiar to consumers and are perceived as producers of quality brands. This means that such brands are able to differentiate themselves from other brands in the category.

Milberg and Sinn (2008) support arguments regarding perceived quality by stating that perceived quality is important in determining consumer preferences towards global and local brands. Alden et al. (2003) define a global brand as one that is believed to have been marketed and recognised in many countries, whereas a local brand is produced domestically for a specific national market and usually only obtainable in a particular region (Batra, Ramaswamy, Alden, Steenkamp, & Ramachander, 2000). Cayla and Eckhardt (2007) argue that a local brand may be preferred when consumers can identify with others in their community, because the local brand is often positioned to understand local needs and culture. Batra et al., (2000) further add that global brands appeal to local consumers due to higher perceived quality, status and prestige that is often associated with it. Holt et al. (2004) found that 44% of brand preference was attributed to quality which shows that perceived quality has a direct association with the consumer preference for global brands.

2.11 Demographic Associations with Sport

Associations of a typical brand user may be based on demographic factors (for example, gender age, race and income); and/or psychographic factors (for example, according to attitudes towards career, possessions and the environment).

The youth market is said to be particularly important to Nike and Adidas (Duncan, 2005). Duncan (2005) assumes that if these brands are positioned for youths, it can be expected that the brands will be more popular within households with children. The brand shares were analysed and split according to the presence or absence of children in the household. It was found that Adidas has a 33% overall market share, however, the share figure showed hardly any variation across households with no children, households with one child, or households with more than one child. Demographics has been found to explain little of the variation in brand choice (Fennel, Allenby, Yang & Edwards, 2003) suggesting that brand performance tends to be fairly even across demographics, with large brands being generally

common among large demographics and smaller brands being generally common among smaller demographics (Dawes, 2009).

Social class was also looked at. For instance, Nike showed to be performing better among the wealthier classes. Sportswear has become a common and popular category among people as it identifies them with a more relaxed lifestyle, greater versatility and comfort (Yee & Sidek, 2008).

Apart from demographic influences on sports brand consumption, there is an element of suspicion that there are gender based influences as well, which pertain to sports brand preference, choice and consumption.

2.11.1. Sports Shopping Behaviour in Relation to Gender

Weidman, Walsh, Hennig-Thurua, and Mitchell (2001) states that sports consumer shopping characteristics are an important area in sports marketing research because each sports consumer has different shopping patterns. Research (Sproles & Kendall, 1986) shows that most consumers have a different kind of shopping behaviour relating to factors such as quality, price, brand, recreation, confusion and habit when shopping.

Generally, female consumers make a greater effort to analyse product information, whereas male consumers do not undertake comprehensive processing of information (Barbara, Laroche, Sadd, Cleveland & Browne, 2000). Male consumers tend to go directly to a sales clerk to obtain product information rather than attempting to process available sources of information and they believe that the brand name serves as a replacement for detailed product information (Barbara et al., 2000).

The different characteristics between men and women result in different preferences in relation to shopping. Men are believed to be more aggressive, dominant and achievement oriented whereas women are believed to be more emotional, nurturing and deferential (Suzuki, 1991). Previous research suggests that the differences between genders and between nationalities were affected by culture, sex roles, economic situations and environments and that therefore, cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration before developing marketing strategies.

Women also tend to be more influenced by service quality more strongly than men, whilst men are more interested with economic value (Kumar & Lim, 2008). Gender has been found to have an impact on

perceptions of company credibility, but not on brand attitudes or on switching intentions (Seock & Bailey, 2008). Burton, Netemeyer, and Lichtenstein (1995) reported that the perception of product appearance is gender specific. Gender specific differences were also noticed in perceptions of high priced brands. Males are more likely than females to shop online (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003). Seock and Bailey (2008) found differences in male and female shopping orientations, online information searches and purchase behaviour. Regarding shopping, men are found to have a stronger relationship between enjoyment and re-patronage than women (Lim, Kim & Park, 2007). Based on such findings it is relevant to test if differences and similarities exist in the perceptions of sports brands by both men and women.

Marketers face a challenge when establishing brand associations. Although consumers value brands they spend little mental effort actually thinking about them and even when they do think about brands, they often do so in a manner beneath their level of conscious awareness. This results in brands being recalled without even thinking of them which explains habitual behaviour that occurs when consumers buy particular brands repeatedly out of habit, without considering other brands in the category (Milward Brown, 2009). Most occasions when people do focus on brands and recall related associations and memories, are during the following circumstances:

- When marketing communication gets their attention (including traditional forms of advertising, sales promotion or sponsorship, as well as communication channels such as mobile phones or online social networks). Although having a short term effect on purchase decisions, they have the potential to create, amend or refresh associations;
- When they hear or see things about brands that are not directed or controlled by the brand, such as word-of-mouth;
- When experiencing the brand in some way; and
- When considering a product purchase.

Campbell (1997) suggests that males have a different idea of effective shopping behaviour, stating that males view shopping as a needs-driven and purchase-motivated activity whereas females perceive it as enjoyable and link it to satisfying wants and desires. Barbara et al. (2000) establish that males and females also exhibit different information processing behaviours related to different products. Females seek more information and invest time to analyse products and information, whereas males do not display intensive analysis of products and information. Women and men have also been seen to spend different amounts of time shopping and searching for information due to the different attitudes towards shopping held by both males and females (McDonald, 1993).

Ariely and Berns (2010) describe the objective of marketing as helping match people with products which serves a dual purpose of guiding the design and presentation of products so that they are compatible with consumer preferences and so that they facilitate the choice process for the consumer. Ariely and Burns (2010) go on to describe the marketing process in which marketers use a range of tools to attempt to maximise sales after a product is launched, by guiding the menu of offerings, choices, pricing, advertising and promotions. These tools include marketing research techniques such as focus groups and individual surveys to actual market tests among other approaches.

To gender a brand refers to the association of a brand's image with a gender-role stereotype in the minds of consumers, or in other words, linking the brand with a masculine or feminine image and identity (Costa, 1994). There are two ways in which a brand can accomplish this. One is to modify the brand so it is appealing to the stereotypical male or female, and secondly the brand is given a gender image which means it is strongly associated with the masculine or feminine gender through advertising or promotion (Annie, Cristina & Minna, 2006). Cohan (2001) reports, that to associate the brand with a particular gender may influence people to switch their attitude regarding the brand even if they feel quite strongly about it. Alreck (1994) argues that, depending on the target group, a brand may have to adapt its offerings so that it is more appealing to the target group.

2.12 Summary

As discussed, perceptions can be defined as the consumer's response to a brand (Esch et al., 2006) and have been seen as a top business priority for companies (Morris, 1996). This is potentially due to perceptions enabling consumers to identify the brand and to recall the brand during a decision when considering purchase within a set of brands. A consumer's perceptions determine his/her preference for a particular brand compared to competitors as well as their willingness to pay a price premium (Yoo et al., 2000) versus their willingness to switch to a competitor brand.

Many attributes relating to the concept of perception have been discussed in the literature review as a means of delineating the concept of perception and the application thereof to date, with the objective of addressing the research objectives and the defined research hypotheses that were under investigation. Such attributes included perceptions of endorsers and sports teams and sports sponsorship, country of origin effects, demographic and gender impact, association, awareness and loyalty. It has been illustrated in past research as discussed in the literature, that at any given time many perceptions relating to a brand

may be formed by a consumer or individual; however it is likely that only a few will actually drive purchase behaviour (Romaniuk, 2002).

The perceptions that influence the choice or preference of brands and that will trigger information in a choice situation of a particular brand are dependent on the number of attributes that are linked to a brand in memory. When considering sports brands the category attributes that are relevant and significant to consumers will drive the build-up of perceptions that in turn will drive which sports brands they prefer or choose. The study, therefore, aimed to investigate the various contributing factors that impact on what perceptions are held of sports brands and the relative impact of such perceptions on consumer choice and preference of sports brands.

The study objectives aim to gain insight into a number of the topics covered in the literature as a means to identify similar or new trends relating to sports brands within the select sample of respondents. Concepts are delineated and hypothesised in the chapter to follow. Methodology pertaining to how the study was conducted is also discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was employed to answer the research objectives set and to test the relative hypotheses with regard to understanding consumers' perceptions of sports brands by using a selected sample of possible sports brands consumers within the Pietermaritzburg region. The chapter will outline the measurement scales, sampling method, validity and reliability measures as well as outline the ethical issues and limitations.

As discussed, the objectives of this study as illustrated below aim to address the problem statement and hypotheses, with the intention of gaining insight into the understanding of how sports brands are perceived.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are outlined below:

1. To determine whether gender influences the perception of sports brands.
2. To determine whether market leaders of the category possess top of mind awareness in the consideration and selection of sports brands.
3. To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived relevance and differentiation of sports brands to consumers.
4. To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived brand knowledge and esteem of sports brands to consumers.
5. To determine whether there is a perception among consumers that their preferred brands deliver on what is promised.
6. To determine whether factors such as the brand's name, quality, athlete or team sponsored are influential in the purchase decision of sports brands.
7. To determine whether there is a difference in how global and local brands are perceived.
8. To determine whether brand selection is predetermined in shopping.
9. To determine whether media sources (television, in store displays, recommendation, price promotion) are common references in obtaining information about sports brands.

10. To determine whether consumers are loyal to particular sports brands and what attributes influence brand loyalty.
11. To determine whether there are strongly perceived associations with sports brands.
12. To determine if there is a preference towards gender used in sports advertising.
13. To determine whether sports team or athlete sponsorship influences the preference of sports brands.
14. To determine whether sports brands elicit emotion.
15. To determine in which channels sports brands are predominantly purchased.

3.3 Hypothesis Development

The following were hypotheses set out to investigate the research objectives defined.

H0₁: There is no perceived difference in the importance of the brand name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H1₁: There is a perceived difference in the importance of the brand name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H0₂: Market leaders do not possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

H1₂: Market leaders possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

H0₃: Market leaders are not predominantly the brand of choice in a purchase decision.

H1₃: Market leaders are predominantly the brand of choice in a purchase decision.

H0₄: There is no relationship between brand relevance, brand differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem.

H1₄: There is a relationship between brand relevance, brand differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem.

H0₅: Consumers do not believe their favourite sports brands deliver on what they promise.

H1₅: Consumers believe their favourite sports brands deliver on what they promise.

H0₆: Brand name, quality, athlete endorsement, sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture are not important factors in directing brand preference.

H1₆: Brand name, quality, athlete endorsement, sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture are important factors in directing brand preference.

H0₇: Global sports brands are not perceived differently from local brands.

H1₇: Global sports brands are perceived differently from local brands.

H0₈: Sports brand choice is not predetermined.

H1₈: Sports brand choice is predetermined.

H0₉: Media has no influence on the purchase decision of sports brands.

H1₉: Media has an influence on the purchase decision of sports brands.

H0₁₀: Consumers are not loyal to sports brands.

H1₁₀: Consumers are loyal to sports brands.

H0₁₁: Consumers have no associations with particular sports brands.

H1₁₁: Consumers have associations with particular sports brands.

H0₁₂: Gender use in advertising has no influence on how sports brands are perceived.

H1₁₂: Gender use in advertising has an influence on how sports brands are perceived.

H0₁₃: Sports team or athlete sponsorship is not an influential factor on the perception of sports brands.

H1₁₃: Sports team or athlete sponsorship is an influential factor on the perception of sports brands.

H0₁₄: There is no emotion elicited by sports brands.

H1₁₄: There is emotion elicited by sports brands.

3.4 Research Design

The study is of an exploratory and descriptive nature, with the objectives' investigating factors relating to the perceptions of sports brands held by consumers in the Pietermaritzburg region. Exploratory research is used to discover ideas and insights and is used to gain a better understanding of a situation (business Dictionary, 2014). Exploratory research is not, however, expected to come up with final answers or decisions. Hypotheses are developed within an exploratory study to provide insights about what is going

on in a situation. Exploratory research is usually employed when researchers lack a clear idea of the problems they anticipate meeting during a study, and therefore this method acts as a way to develop concepts more clearly, establish priorities and improve the final research design (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Popular methods of exploratory research include literature searches, in-depth interviews and focus groups, of which the literature search was used within this study.

Descriptive research is very common in business and usually tries to describe certain group characteristics. Descriptive techniques are further used to determine the proportion of people who behave in a specific way, to make specific predictions and to determine relationships between variables such as awareness levels of men versus women or those respondents investigated in the study that engage in sport versus those that do not. The study uses descriptive research techniques to classify different genders, age and demographic characteristics pertaining to how people within the sample perceive sports brands. One of the techniques employed in descriptive research is a survey method where small populations are targeted. This method was selected as it is an economical method that allows a quicker turnaround of data collection than other methods. According to Babbie (1990), this method allows for identification of attributes of a larger population from a smaller sample.

The survey method in the form of a self-administered questionnaire was selected as the primary method for the study. Participants who were approached to participate in the study tended to be more willing to participate in the research on the condition that they were able to complete the questionnaire by themselves and in their own time. Self-completion of the study may also more than likely eliminate response bias, as respondents are likely to answer more honestly and not be subject to interviewer bias where the interviewer influences the response by revealing his/her own opinions (Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 2011).

The nature of the survey was cross-sectional, meaning that data was collected at one given point in time. A survey design provides a numerical or quantitative description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population through surveys and experiments. By studying a sample of a population deductions can be drawn in relation to the research questions and hypotheses (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The purpose of the survey method is to generalise from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made relating to the study. The objective regarding this study is, therefore, to gain insight into how people perceive sports brands as a means to deduce how sports brands are generally perceived.

The research method that was adopted was quantitative. Quantitative data methods involve pre-determined questions relating to performance data, attitude data, observational data and statistical analyses. Furthermore, a quantitative approach is one which uses surveys and collects information that yields statistical data. Qualitative research is an enquiry approach in which the enquirer explores one key concept by asking participants broad, general questions in the form of words or images and involves coding data for description and themes (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

The time line for administering the survey was two weeks as stipulated by management when approving the administration of questionnaires to members at a health club. The questionnaire consisted of 9 sections and 25 items with inclusions of Likert scales and ranking.

3.5 Research Environment

The surveys were personally administered in a field setting where respondents were recruited from a local health club. All respondents voluntarily opted to participate. The health club was selected as the targeted environment in which to gather the sample as such a population was expected to use and have a fair amount of knowledge about sports brands or at least have a general awareness of sports brands. The challenge was getting people to take 20-30 minutes off their schedule to partake in the study. A concern was also the quality of data as many subjects had provided feedback that the questionnaire was longer and more involved than anticipated. An incentive in the form of a gym towel or cap was given to participants as a reward for their time. This encouraged participation and also the increased willingness to answer the questionnaire accurately. The data collection took place over a period of one week. Respondents were also more willing to participate on weekends than they were during the week due to more time constraints existing within the week and also possibly due to a different mind-set, being approached early morning and not late in the evening after work.

3.6 Sampling and Sampling Method

The general idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a population, assumptions can be drawn about the entire population (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). A technique of convenience, non-probability sampling, was selected. A non-probability or convenience sample is deemed less desirable as respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability. Non-probability sampling involves the selection of respondents based on the judgment of the researcher and not random or probabilistic techniques which are seen as superior to non-probability methods by some researchers. The non-probability sampling method is used (as it was in this case) with most quantitative studies due to there

being a lack of access to a list of the population being studied. Convenience sampling is also an easier and cheaper method of data collection (Laerd Dissertation, n.d.). Non-probability techniques are also particularly useful in exploratory research where the aim is to find out if a problem exists. Convenience sampling was the selected method in this study.

3.6.1 Sampling Frame

Convenience sampling allows the freedom of including whomever the researcher chooses (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling is a method in which the respondents selected to partake in the study are the easiest to access. The area of coverage within which the sampling was targeted was at a local health club within the Pietermaritzburg region. Respondents were approached at the health club. Assumptions when selecting the environment were that people who go to gym are more likely to also engage in other sporting activities, are likely to be users of sports brands and are likely to have a generally competent knowledge of sports brands. The sample was also conveniently selected to allow representation of the demographic variables relating to age and cultural ethnicity. Different genders were also categorised and differentiated within the sample. Respondents were conveniently selected with the aim of getting an accurate as possible mix between male and female, demographic and age group. The sample was recruited at a health club in Pietermaritzburg and included a mix of females and males, aiming to get as equal as possible representation across all racial or cultural groups. Of particular interest were the users of sports brands.

3.6.2 Target Population

Respondents were conveniently selected with the aim of getting an accurate as possible mix between male and female, demographic and age group. The sample was recruited at a health club in Pietermaritzburg and included a mix of females and males, aiming to get as equal as possible representation across all racial or cultural groups. Of particular interest were the users of sport's brands.

3.6.3 Sample Size

The sample included 100 respondents. The split in the sample needed to be representative of the target population and aimed to include an approximate 50/50 split between males and females and a representation of all race groups, as well as different age groups. The sample size was concluded at 90 after all incomplete surveys were excluded. Furthermore, a few respondents requested to complete the survey in their own time and return them, but some were not returned.

3.6.4 Data Collection

Questionnaires were personally administered to all respondents. The advantage of this technique is that the survey is restricted to a local area, and any clarification can be made immediately, allowing responses to be collected within a short period. This method also allows respondents to think about the questions, which, therefore, increases the validity of responses, allows for rapid data collection, and is often the lowest cost option (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

3.7 Validity

Cooper and Schindler (2006) define validity as the extent to which a test measures what is actually wanted to be measured. Aaker (1991) reports that there is always a concern with the validity of the scaling task, as any ambiguity in the scale or inability of the respondent to use the scale will affect validity and reliability of results. There are three types of tests to ensure validity within a study, two of which that were used within this study and which are discussed below.

3.8 Content Validity

Content validity of a measuring instrument is the extent to which it provides adequate coverage of the investigative questions and shows that the instrument adequately represents a sample of the subject matter investigated (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). To ensure a good level of content validity, the definition of the topic, items to be scaled and the scales to be used were carefully determined. Each item was cross referenced to each of the research objectives to ensure that all subject matter was covered.

3.9 Construct Validity

In determining if an instrument holds construct validity, both the theory and the measuring instrument must be considered. The items needed to correspond to grounded theory (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The Brand Asset Evaluation tool was used for constructing validity in this study as the item within the instrument was designed around this theory to test the four primary measures defined by this model.

3.10 Reliability

Sekaran (2003:203) defines reliability as the stability or consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess 'the goodness of test measure'. The goodness of test measure is the measurement of variables to confirm that what is being measured is what is intended to be measured

(Sekaran, 2003). Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was used to test reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient of reliability or consistency (Idre: Institute for digital research & education UCLA, 2014) that is a measure of internal consistency that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. The closer Cronbach's Alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability (Sekaran, 2003). An alpha value of 0.8 was obtained, therefore, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable.

3.11 Instrument Development

In designing the questionnaire, a list of investigative questions was developed that link to the research questions and objectives. In structuring these questions in terms of ordering and wording the instrument aimed to encourage participants to provide accurate responses, to encourage participants to answer all questions and to leave the participant with a positive attitude about participation in the survey (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

The questionnaire contained three categories of measurement questions:

- **Administrative questions**
Administrative questions identified the participant by means of their occupation which was not necessary for data collection but merely as a reference to participants' profiling.

- **Classification questions**
Classification questions identified the respondent by means of age, gender, ethnicity and income group. This data was requested to profile respondents to determine any visible correlations relating to demographic factors.

- **Structured target questions**
Target questions address the questions under investigation within a study. All questions were structured in that respondents were offered a set list of choices from which to choose. However, in some questions an "other" option was provided if their choice were not available as part of the set choice responses. The content of the questionnaire was matched against the research objectives and reviewed as to whether it was of proper scope and coverage and whether the participants would willingly and adequately answer the questions asked. The questions complied with a simple and believed to be commonly understood vocabulary so that respondents were sure to understand completely all questions asked.

3.11.1 Structure of Questions

The instrument contained the following type of questions:

- Dichotomous Questions suggest opposing responses. For example, respondents were asked whether their brand choice is predetermined prior to shopping for sports brands. The choice of responses was a Yes or No answer to this question.
- Rating Questions require that the participant position a factor on a scale, be it verbal or numeric. Numeric scales were employed within this study to measure how specific attributes relating to sports brands are measured.
- Ranking Questions are used to determine the ordering choices provided in order of importance. This scale was employed to determine how sports brands are ranked in order of preference; to determine what attributes are important in the consideration of sports brands; and to determine the importance of media influencing factors that are referenced for information on sports brands.

3.11.2 Sequence of Questions

Administrative and classification questions were positioned to start off the questionnaire. Questions regarding awareness of sports brands followed. The questionnaire was split into 9 sections each targeting specific research objectives or questions, with a mixture of scales used as previously discussed.

3.11.3 Questionnaire Items

Section 1 included question that enable profiling of respondents by means of demographic factors such as age, gender and income group as well the shopping behaviours of sports brands relating to how often sports brands are purchased and what categories of items within sports brands are purchased. Section 1 also establishes the awareness levels of sports brands with a specific reference to market leaders and also includes a ranking scale to determine how sports brands are ranked in order of preference.

Section 2 addressed how brands are perceived on levels of differentiation, relevance, esteem and knowledge as based on the Brand Asset Evaluator Tool and the Young and Rubicam model.

Section 3 used a ranking scale to determine important attributes relating to choice of a sports brand as well as whether brand choice is pre-determined. Also included in this section is a ranking scale of what attributes influence the purchase of a sports brand. The last question within section 3 addresses brand loyalty to determine the degree of loyalty people have towards sports brands and what factors impact on this loyalty.

Section 4 uses an associative model which aimed to determine what attributes the respondents linked to particular sports brands. Section 5 looked at emotional correlating factors to sports brands as well as important attributes when using a sports brand.

Section 6 and 8 looked at sports brands advertising and the relative influence on preference. They also looked at gender implications on perceptions.

Section 7 reviewed whether there was a degree of preference towards globally and/or locally manufactured brands.

Section 9 investigated the weighting in importance of different media sources that are used for gaining information relating to sports brands. The objective of this section was to determine where sports brands were predominantly purchased.

A Likert scale was employed in section 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8. The Likert scale is the most frequently used scale that consists of statements which are used to express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward a particular matter of interest (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The Likert scale was therefore deemed as an appropriate method to investigate attitudes towards various subjects of interest in this study.

3.12 Data Analysis

The data was analysed mainly by using non-parametric and descriptive statistical methods. Nonparametric tests do not possess the same rigorous requirements and, therefore, do not make the same assumptions about the population as parametric tests do (Pallant, 2005). Non-parametric tests are less sensitive and have been believed to be less powerful than parametric tests; however, this method of analysis was employed due to the nature of questions having an inclusion of nominal and ordinal scales (Pallant, 2005). Non-parametric tests offered by the SPSS analysis program that have been employed in this study include the Chi-Square, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, test and the Mann-Whitney test.

The data was first entered into the SPSS program and a coding system was used to sort the data in order to prepare the data to be analysed. Exploratory data analysis was undertaken and the output of results was displayed by means of frequency tables, bar charts and pie charts. Hypothesis testing was also employed using non-parametric methods such as the t-test and chi square test for nominal data. Binomial tests are appropriate if the measurement scale is viewed as only two classes, for example male and female and is particularly useful when the sample size is small (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The Chi-square test was

used to test differences between samples and was selected as it is a valuable method for analysing nominal data. The questionnaire was pre-tested by five subjects to ensure questions are of a logical and adequate level of comprehension. Correlation analysis was used to test relationships between variables by means of the Spearman's correlation test. Correlation coefficients reveal the magnitude and direction of relationships (Cooper & Schindler, 2001) and therefore were the selected method employed to analyse relationships between variables.

The Table below shows the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables used in the study. The sample was split on a ratio of Female to Male, forty four percent to fifty six percent respectively. The largest proportion of respondents, equating to almost one third (28%) were in the 20-25 year age group with 16% in the 41-50 age group with a small proportion residing in the under 20 age group and all other respondents falling within the 36-40, 41-50 and 51+ age group. Respondents were required to categorise themselves within one of four cultural groups or 'other' if their ethnicity groups were not listed as part of the options available. Sixty percent of the population fell into the White and Asian groups, whilst 18% fell into the Black ethnicity group and a small proportion of six percent fell within the Coloured group.

Table 3.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE

Variable	Category	N %
Gender	Female	44%
	Male	56%
Age	Under 20	9%
	20-25	28%
	26-30	12%
	31-35	14%
	36-40	7%
	41-50	16%
	51+	14%
Ethnicity	Black	18%
	White	42%
	Asian	34%
	Coloured	6%
Income group (ZAR monthly)	0-999	10%
	1000-2999	6%
	3000-4999	7%
	5000-9999	12%
	10000-14999	14%
	15000+	42%

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was requested and granted for the study. In order to comply with ethical standards, respondents' participation in the study was completely voluntary. All participants signed a letter of consent, acknowledging voluntary participation and comprehension of the degree of involvement they have by partaking in the research.

3.14 Delimitations

Due to the nature of the data collection method, the credibility of the data was of concern, due to respondents potentially not understanding specific questions and not obtaining clarification in such cases. Also a limitation was the time allowed to collect the data. Data was collected at a health club. In order to refrain from interruption of operational processes and customer management, the health club only permitted one week in which to collect the data. The study was also limited to only one health club in the

Pietermaritzburg region, hence the sample does not substantially represent the population and therefore findings cannot accurately be extended to the population.

3.15 Summary

A combination of exploratory and descriptive research methods have been employed in this study. The literature search covers the exploratory method by means of investigating and providing insight relating to how sports brands are perceived. Various attributes pertaining to the concept of perception and the combination of elements that shape and form perceptions of brands were investigated. These concepts were investigated within the context of sports brands; however, a limited amount of literature was available. The findings reported by past studies tied up with some of the research objectives. In this case the objectives of this study were comparatively assessed in relation to past findings. Other findings were assessed on the results of the selected sample of respondents and used as an inference to the general perceptions of sports brands held by consumers or individuals.

The descriptive part of the study relates to the statistical data used to analyse the relative hypotheses and make assumptions accordingly. The study is of a cross-sectional and quantitative nature employing a self-administered questionnaire as the instrument by which data was collected. A total of 100 respondents were targeted, of which 90 complete and accurate questionnaires were returned. The sample was conveniently selected within a health club within the Pietermaritzburg area. Two methods of validity were used to determine that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure. Measurement tools were also used to ensure that the constructs were appropriately designed. Data was analysed using the SPSS data analysis package version 21. Non-parametric statistical methods such as Correlation analysis, and the Independent and One Sample Tests were used.

The reward incentive assisted tremendously in gaining willing participation of respondents into the study. Most people were being stressed for time and had pre-allocated a set amount of time for their exercise routines, and therefore had minimal additional time to participate in the questionnaire. The incentive also aided in more accurate responses and in fewer incomplete questionnaires being returned from respondents. The incentive was also relevant to their exercise needs and hence there was a high level of enthusiasm from respondents for participating in the study.

The targeted sample characteristics was fairly easy to meet as the health club consisted of a diverse member base of all cultural ethnicities; however, there was a greater bias towards White and Asian

ethnicities and was less representative of Black and Coloured representation. The gender target was, however, easily met at a ratio of fifty six percent to forty four percent, slightly skewed towards males. The sample was split fairly in terms of age groups with a slightly higher representation by 20-25 year olds. This did, however, assist in making inferences with regard to the younger generation.

The raw data was analysed using the SPSS data analysis program version 21. Some questions such as the associative instrument employed were analysed within the Excel 2007 data analysis program due to the complexity being easier to evaluate within this program. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.05 was used.

Once the data was captured each of the hypotheses was analysed individually in correspondence with the responses gathered from the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4: Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

The concept of perception was defined as a measure of how strongly a brand is positioned in the mind of the consumer, the associations created with a brand by the consumer in memory, the degree of loyalty possessed towards a brand (the willingness of a consumer to repurchase the brand) and finally the degree of quality that a brand is believed to possess (Pappu et al., 2005).

It has been argued that understanding perceptions are a priority for brands (Morris, 1996). Fournier (1998) supports this argument by stating that the way in which consumers perceive brands enables the development of long term business-consumer relationships. Hence understanding how sports brands are perceived by consumers will potentially enable companies to position brands more effectively to appeal to the intended targeted audience as well as to cater to the needs of consumers.

4.2 Presentation of findings

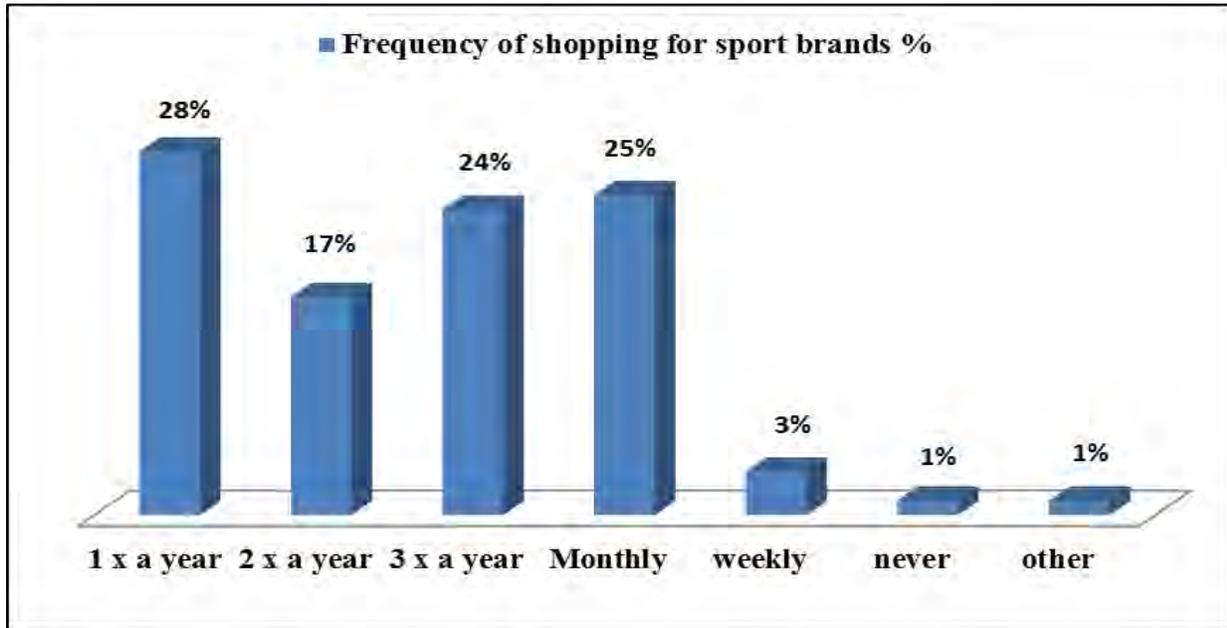
The research objectives that were defined in this study were to determine the influencing factors pertaining to the perceptions of sports brands. The study aimed to determine what attributes lead to and influence the formation of perceptions. Specific objectives of the study included whether demographic factors impact brand preference and perception. Also of interest was the understanding of the awareness levels of brand leaders versus competitors, as well as the influence of other factors, such as sports team or athlete endorsement, differentiation, relevance, brand name, quality and country of manufacture, and their relative influence on perception.

The study examined how sports brands are perceived within a select sample of (n=90). This chapter outlines the results obtained from the questionnaires returned by the participating respondents with the objective of investigating the outlined research questions and hypotheses.

Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 set the scene for the objectives and hypotheses that follow with regards to how often sports apparel are purchased, and the most popular or common items purchased. Also illustrated is the relationship between income and frequency of shopping trips made for sports apparel specifically.

Figure 4.1 makes reference to the results obtained from question 1.10 in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they are likely to shop for sports brands within a one year period.

Figure 4.1 FREQUENCY OF SPORTS BRAND PURCHASES



The results reported in Figure 4.1 indicate that, within the target sample, twenty eight percent of respondents reported shopping for sports brands on average once yearly, whilst twenty three percent of respondents reported shopping 3 times per a year. Twenty four percent of respondents reportedly shopped more frequently on a monthly basis. According to responses illustrated in Figure 4.1, sports brands are predominantly shopped for once a year, with a slightly smaller proportion of respondents shopping more frequently; either shopping three times a year or monthly. Shopping for sports brands on a weekly basis appears uncommon in the target sample. Only one percent of respondents reported never shopping for sports brands.

Based on the above results, it is evident that the purchase of sports brands is not commonly a frequent occasion.

The level of income as a determining factor for the frequency of purchase was also of interest. Table 4.1 below illustrates the use of Spearman's correlation to indicate whether a relationship exists between the level of income and respondents' frequency of purchase relating to sports brands.

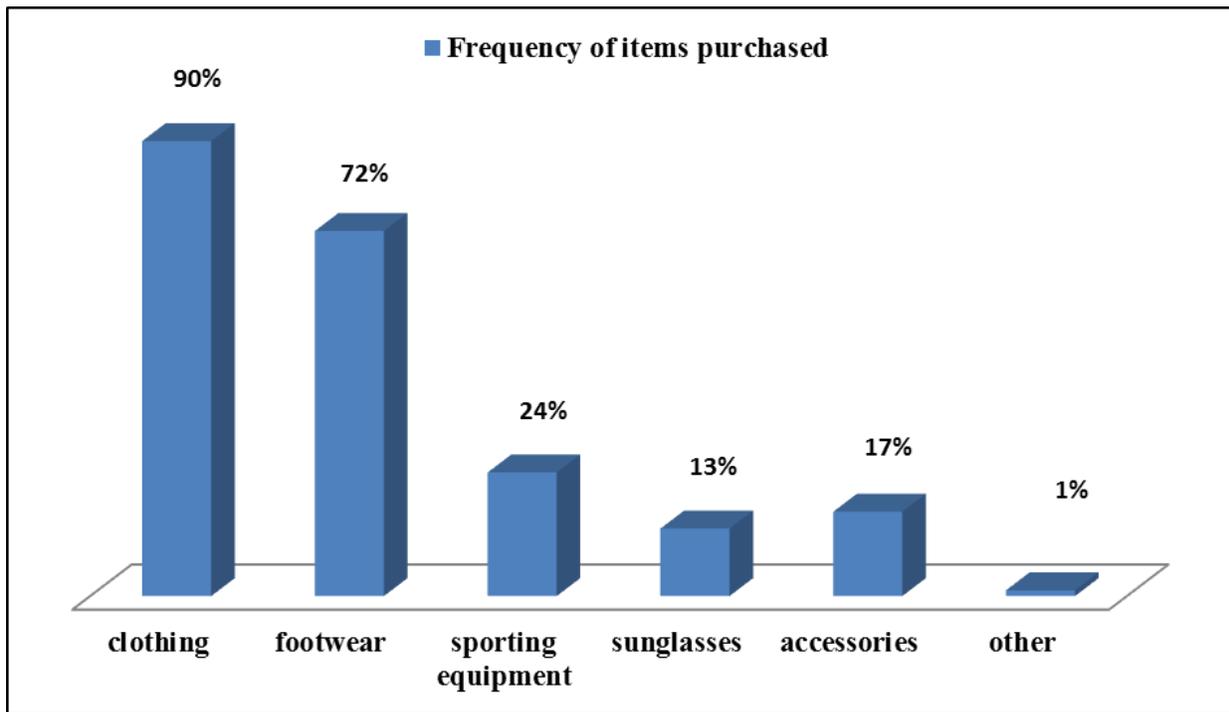
Table 4.1 SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT: INCOME AND FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE

		Income	Frequency of purchase
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.056
	Income		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.617
	N	82	81
	Correlation Coefficient	0.056	1.000
	Frequency of purchase		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.617	.
	N	81	88

Table 4.1 reports that there is a weakly positive relationship between income and how frequently sports brands are shopped for, with the Spearman's correlation coefficient equating to 0.056. The significance level is >0.05 and therefore it can be concluded that although the level of income earned by a respondent has an impact on how frequently sports brands are purchased, there is not sufficient evidence to conclude a significant relationship between the two variables.

Figure 4.2 displays the results relating to question 1.11 which investigates the most common types of sportswear that are purchased as reported by respondents.

Figure 4.2 MOST FREQUENTLY PURCHASED SPORT ITEMS



According to Figure 4.2 the most common items of purchase included clothing (90%) and footwear (72%). AMPS (2012a) reports that 34.9 million people in South Africa purchased clothing within a 3 month period. Of this total, 9%, equating to 3 million people had purchased sports or exercise clothing whilst 4 million purchased athletic shoes. This is an indication that a significant number of purchases for clothing are specifically for sports clothing within the South African market (AMPS 2012a).

Understanding the frequency of purchase and scope of purchase regarding what type of items are purchased, helps understand the sports brand environment in relation to what types of purchases are made as a preliminary introduction to the hypotheses analysed within the next section.

Within the following section a critical analysis of each hypothesis is carried out with the goal of addressing the research objectives.

The findings and discussion thereof will be based on the study objectives.

Objectives:

Objective 1:

To determine whether gender influences the perception of sports brands.

Findings pertaining to Objective 1:

Objective one aims to determine whether there are gender influences that impact on how sports brands are perceived. The study sought insight into gender's relative impact on the perceptions of sports brands relating to the factors of the brand's name, price, quality, loyalty and athlete endorsement.

In order to address objective one, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

3.1. When shopping, which of the following factors are important to you when selecting a sports brand? Rank in order of their importance, 1 being the most important and 5 the least important. Each factor should have a different ranking.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete or team the brand sponsors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Price | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3.3. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

- I always purchase the same sports brand and will not consider another brand
- I will purchase any sports brand that meets my need
- I will purchase whichever sports brand that is on price promotion

The sports brand I choose needs to sponsor athletes or sports team

This analysis is presented in Table 4.2 hereunder:

Table 4.2 IMPORTANCE OF BRAND NAME AMONG MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS

Crosstab

		Brand Name Rank					Total
		1 on importance	2 on importance	3 on importance	4 on importance	5 on importance	
Gender	Count	8	8	10	9	4	39
	% within Gender	20.5%	20.5%	25.6%	23.1%	10.3%	100.0%
	Female % within Brand Name Rank	33.3%	33.3%	52.6%	69.2%	44.4%	43.8%
	% of Total	9.0%	9.0%	11.2%	10.1%	4.5%	43.8%
	Count	16	16	9	4	5	50
	% within Gender	32.0%	32.0%	18.0%	8.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Male	% within Brand Name Rank	66.7%	66.7%	47.4%	30.8%	55.6%	56.2%
	% of Total	18.0%	18.0%	10.1%	4.5%	5.6%	56.2%
	Count	24	24	19	13	9	89
	% within Gender	27.0%	27.0%	21.3%	14.6%	10.1%	100.0%
Total	% within Brand Name Rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	27.0%	27.0%	21.3%	14.6%	10.1%	100.0%

Table 4.2 reports the weighted importance of the brand's name as perceived by respondents. Respondents were asked to rank the importance to them of the brand's name in relation to sports brands on a ranking scale from one to five. One indicated a high degree of importance, whilst five was indicative of a low degree of importance. A high number of respondents (fifty four percent) reported the brand's name as important, with an assigned ranking of one or two. The proportion of females to males which reported to value the name of the brand was forty one percent to sixty four percent sixty four percent respectively.

The proportion of females to males which reported the brand's name to have a low importance with a ranking of four or five was thirty three percent to eighteen percent respectively.

The significance of the brand's name can also be tested through the following hypothesis:

H₀: There is no perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H₁: There is a perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

Table 4.3 HYPOTHESIS TEST – GENDER INFLUENCE ON BRAND NAME

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Brand Name Rank is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.058	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05

The null hypothesis is rejected with a significance level of $p = 0.058$.

Table 4.4, presented hereunder addresses objective one by illustrating the perceived importance that price plays in relation to sports brands according to gender.

Table 4.4 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF PRICE AMONG DIFFERENT GENDERS

Crosstab

		Price Rank					Total	
		1 on importance	2 on importance	3 on importance	4 on importance	5 on importance		
Gender	Female	Count	14	10	10	4	1	40
		% within Gender	35.0%	25.0%	25.0%	10.0%	2.5%	100.0%
		% within Price Rank	45.2%	45.5%	40.0%	50.0%	33.3%	44.4%
		% of Total	15.6%	11.1%	11.1%	4.4%	1.1%	44.4%
	Male	Count	17	12	15	4	2	50
		% within Gender	34.0%	24.0%	30.0%	8.0%	4.0%	100.0%
		% within Price Rank	54.8%	54.5%	60.0%	50.0%	66.7%	55.6%
		% of Total	18.9%	13.3%	16.7%	4.4%	2.2%	55.6%
	Total	Count	31	22	25	8	3	90
		% within Gender	34.4%	24.4%	27.8%	8.9%	3.3%	100.0%
	% within Price Rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	34.4%	24.4%	27.8%	8.9%	3.3%	100.0%	

According to Table 4.4, there is no significant difference between how importantly price is perceived among female and male respondents. Price was ranked as a significant factor among the total sample, of which fifty nine percent assigned a one or two ranking to price. The proportion of females that placed a high value on price, with a weighted ranking of one or two was sixty percent versus fifty eight percent in males.

Table 4.5, hereunder, addresses objective 2 by illustrating the perceived importance that quality plays in relation to sports brands among different genders.

Table 4.5 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY AMONG DIFFERENT GENDERS

Crosstab

		Quality Rank				Total
		1 on importance	2 on importance	3 on importance	5 on importance	
Gender	Count	34	6	0	0	40
	% within Gender	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Female % within Quality Rank	44.7%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%
	% of Total	37.8%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%
	Count	42	4	1	2	50
	% within Gender	84.0%	8.0%	2.0%	4.0%	100.0%
	Male % within Quality Rank	55.3%	40.0%	100.0%	100.0%	55.6%
	% of Total	46.7%	4.4%	1.1%	2.2%	55.6%
	Count	76	10	1	2	90
	% within Gender	84.4%	11.1%	1.1%	2.2%	100.0%
Total	% within Quality Rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Count	76	10	1	2	90
	% of Total	84.4%	11.1%	1.1%	2.2%	100.0%

According to Table 4.5, quality proved to be a significantly important factor with ninety six percent of all respondents ranking the importance of quality as a one or two rank.

The significance of quality can also be tested through the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

H₁₁: There is a perceived difference in the importance of the brand's name, quality, loyalty or athlete endorsement of sports brands among females and males.

Table 4.6 HYPOTHESIS TEST OF QUALITY PERCEPTION ACROSS GENDER

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Quality Rank is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.816	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

According to the hypothesis test, the result is non-significant; hence the null hypothesis is retained. There is no significant difference in how the quality of sports brands is perceived by females as opposed to male respondents.

Table 4.7 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF BRAND LOYALTY AMONG DIFFERENT GENDERS

		Will not consider another brand					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Gender	Count	5	6	18	8	3	40
	% within Gender	12.5%	15.0%	45.0%	20.0%	7.5%	100.0%
	Female % within Will not consider another brand	38.5%	42.9%	52.9%	47.1%	33.3%	44.4%
	% of Total	5.6%	6.7%	20.0%	8.9%	3.3%	44.4%
	Count	8	8	16	9	6	50
	% within Gender	16.0%	16.0%	32.0%	18.0%	12.0%	100.0%
	Male % within Will not consider another brand	61.5%	57.1%	47.1%	52.9%	66.7%	55.6%
% of Total	8.9%	8.9%	17.8%	10.0%	6.7%	55.6%	
Total	Count	13	14	34	17	9	90
	% within Gender	14.4%	15.6%	37.8%	18.9%	10.0%	100.0%
	% within Will not consider another brand	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	14.4%	15.6%	37.8%	18.9%	10.0%	100.0%

Table 4.8, presented above illustrates the perceived importance that brand loyalty plays in relation to sports brands among different genders.

According to Table 4.8, a total of thirty percent reported to be brand loyal to sports brands, in responding “Strongly agree” and “Agree” to the statement “I always purchase the same brand and will not consider another brand”. The gender responses mirror the overall responses with only twenty seven percent of females and thirty percent of males responding to be brand loyal to sports brands. A majority of respondents reported neutral responses or disagreement with the resistance to brand switching.

Table 4.8, hereunder, illustrates the perceived importance that athlete endorsement plays in sports brands among different genders.

Table 4.8 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF ATHLETE ENDORSEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT GENDERS

		Athlete Endorsement Rank					Total
		1 on importance	2 on importance	3 on importance	4 on importance	5 on importance	
Gender	Count	5	4	5	7	15	40
	% within Gender	12.5%	10.0%	12.5%	17.5%	37.5%	100.0%
	Female % within Athlete Rank	38.5%	50.0%	20.8%	46.7%	62.5%	44.4%
	% of Total	5.6%	4.4%	5.6%	7.8%	16.7%	44.4%
	Count	8	4	19	8	9	50
	% within Gender	16.0%	8.0%	38.0%	16.0%	18.0%	100.0%
	Male % within Athlete Rank	61.5%	50.0%	79.2%	53.3%	37.5%	55.6%
	% of Total	8.9%	4.4%	21.1%	8.9%	10.0%	55.6%
Total	Count	13	8	24	15	24	90
	% within Gender	14.4%	8.9%	26.7%	16.7%	26.7%	100.0%
	% within Athlete Rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	14.4%	8.9%	26.7%	16.7%	26.7%	100.0%

Table 4.8 illustrates that athlete endorsement is not considered important with only twenty three percent of the total sample ranking athlete endorsement as an important factor, with a ranking of one or two. Of the total sample, twenty three percent of females and twenty four percent of males considered athlete endorsement an important attribute for sports brands.

Objective 2

- To determine whether market leaders of the category possess top of mind awareness in the consideration and selection of sports brands.

In order to address objective two, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

1.8. When you think of sports brands, which is the first brand that comes to mind?

1.9. Which other brands come to mind?

1.12. Indicate which of the following brands you have purchased recently. Select all that apply:

NIKE	ADIDAS	REEBOK	TAP OUT	QUIKSILVER
PUMA	ROXY	SPEEDO	MR PRICE SPORT	EVERLAST
TITLE	FUSION	NEW BALANCE	ASICS	GYM
SLAZENGER	UNDER ARMOUR	FALKE	KAPPA	HI TECH
TOTALSPORTS	PRO ACTION	WILSON	GILBERT	TAYLORMADE
OAKLEY	FIRST ASCENT	K WAY		

This analysis is presented in Figure 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below.

Figure 4.3 BRANDS WITH TOP OF MIND AWARENESS

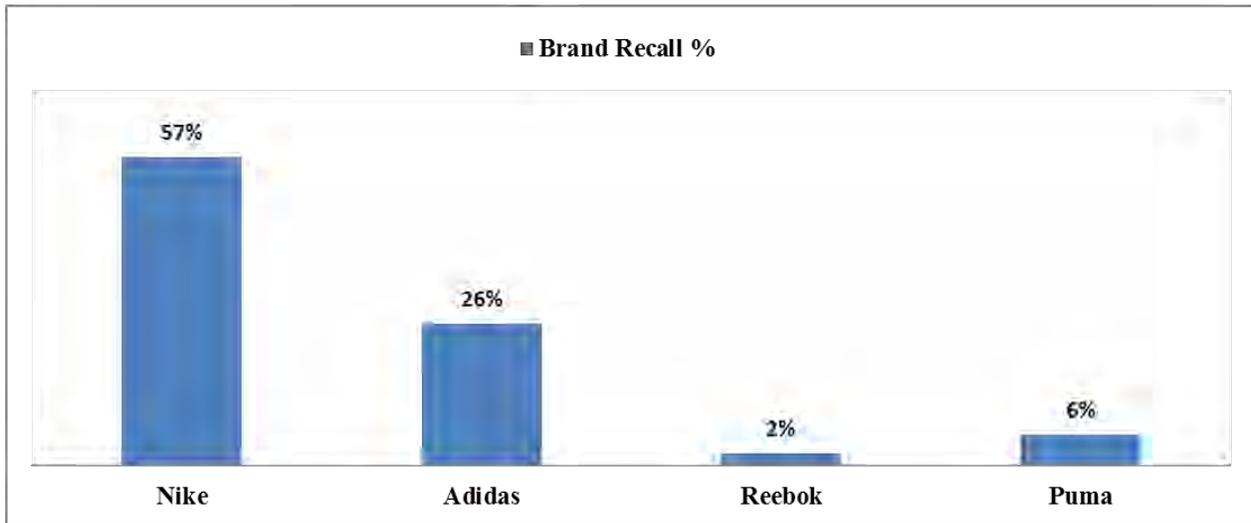
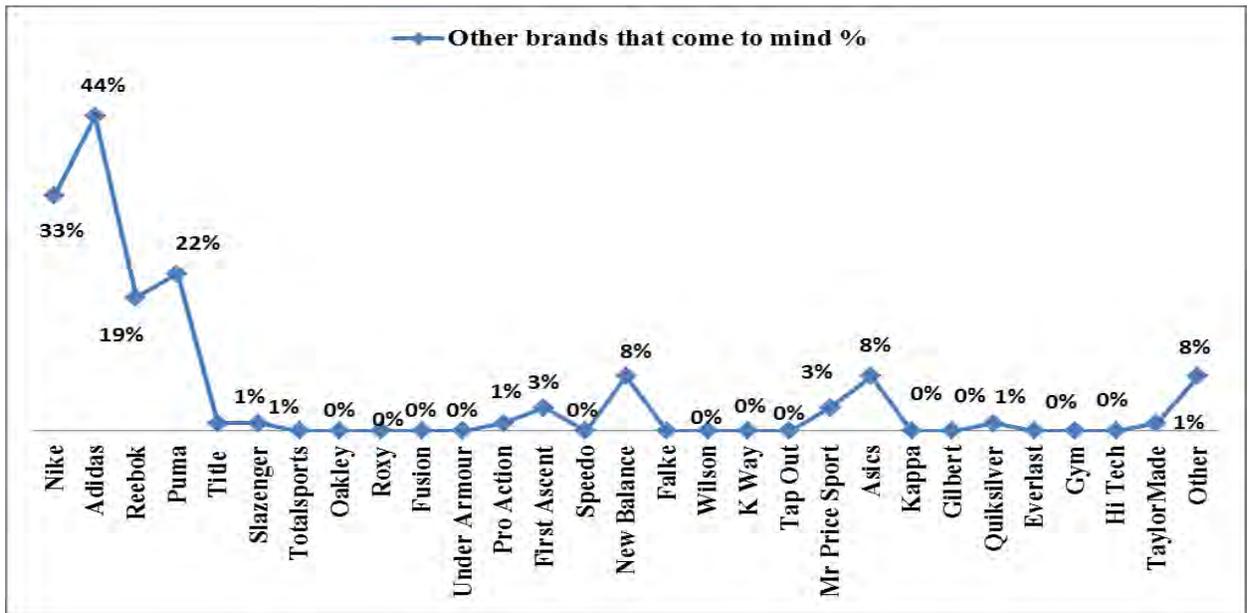


Figure 4.4 OTHER BRANDS THAT COME TO MIND



According to the figures above (4.3; and 4.4), the two market leaders of the sportswear category are the first brands recalled when the category is mentioned or thought of. The market leaders Nike, Adidas and Puma were reportedly the top three sports brands in the world (Shah, Nazir & Zaman; 2013) and within the results of this study Nike and Adidas proved to be the most recalled and identified brands, being

recalled by fifty six percent and twenty six percent of respondents respectively. Respondents also reported Nike and Adidas as the second brand recalled when thinking of the sportswear category interchangeably with their first choice. The overall majority of respondents reported Nike and Adidas as the brands that were top of mind or consequently thought of following the brand that was top of mind.

Objective two can further be tested through the following hypothesis:

H₀₂: Market leaders do not possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

H₁₂: Market leaders do possess top of mind awareness when sports brands are considered.

Table 4.9 HYPOTHESIS TEST – BRAND RECALL OF MARKET LEADERS

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories defined by market leader recalled = Yes and No occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Table 4.9 indicates that the null hypothesis should be rejected on the basis that there is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies that market leaders are recalled as opposed to non-market leaders. As seen in Figure 4.3, only four brands were reported as the first brands recalled by ninety percent of respondents when they think of the sports category. Of this ninety percent of respondents, fifty six percent reported Nike as the first brand they think of, whilst Adidas was mentioned by twenty six percent of respondents.

Figure 4.5 indicates how frequently each of the brands were reportedly purchased by respondents.

Figure 4.5 PURCHASE FREQUENCY OF SPORTS BRANDS

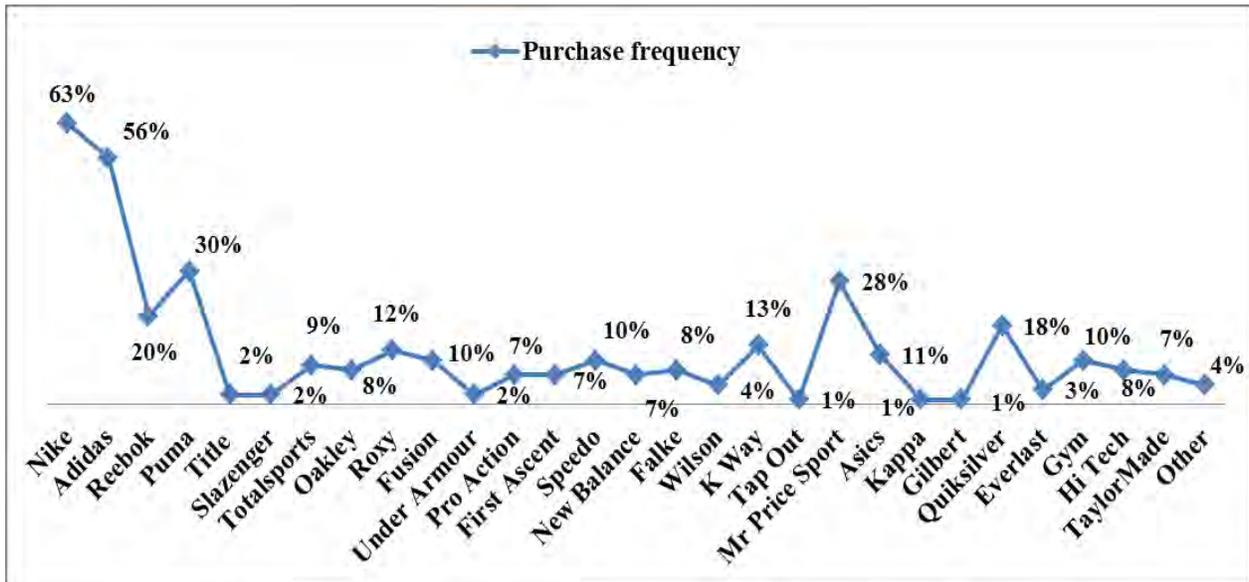


Figure 4.5 indicates that Nike and Adidas were reported most frequently as the brands purchased, with Nike being purchased by sixty three percent of respondents and Adidas fifty six percent. Reebok and Puma were purchased by twenty percent and thirty percent of respondents respectively. Mr Price Sport was also recalled by a significant proportion of respondents (twenty eight percent). All other sports brands were reported to be purchased less frequently by respondents.

Table 4.10 presents a hypothesis to assess there is a difference in how frequently market leaders to non-market leaders are purchased.

H₀₂: There is no difference between the frequencies that market leading sports brands and non-market leading sports brands are purchased.

H₁₂: There is a difference between the frequencies that market leading sports brands and non-market leading sports brands are purchased.

Table 4.10 HYPOTHESIS TEST – MARKET LEADERS PREDOMINANTLY THE BRAND OF CHOICE

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories defined by Market leader purchased = Yes and No occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5	One-Sample Binomial Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Table 4.10 illustrates that the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the statement that market leaders are also predominantly the brand of choice in purchase decisions.

Objective 3:

- To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived relevance and differentiation of sports brands to consumers.

In order to address objective 3, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

Consider your favourite sports brand when answering the following questions. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

2.1. This brand gets my attention because it is different from other brands

2.2. This brand is relevant to me and my needs

Table 4.11 uses Spearman’s Correlation to test if there is a relationship between brand relevance and brand differentiation.

Table 4.11 SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION – BRAND RELEVANCE * BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

		Differentiation	Relevance
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.323**
	Differentiation Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.002
	N	90	89
	Correlation Coefficient	0.323**	1.000
	Relevance Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	.
	N	89	89

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 4.11, a positive linear relationship was found between the two variables at a significance level of 0.02.

The results presented in Table 4.11 indicate a strong positive relationship between differentiation and relevance, meaning that consumers perceive their favourite sports brands as relevant to their needs and different from competitors or unique. This is an indication that favoured sports brands are perceived as strong brands.

Objective 4:

- To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived brand knowledge and esteem of sports brands to consumers

In order to address objective 4, the following questions were analysed in the questionnaire:

Consider your favourite sports brand when answering the following questions. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

2.3. I think highly of this brand.

2.4. I understand what this brand is about and what it stands for.

This analysis can also be tested through the following hypothesis:

H0₄: There is no relationship between brand knowledge and brand esteem

H1₄: There is a relationship between brand knowledge and brand esteem

This analysis is presented in Table 4.12, hereunder:

Table 4.12 SPEARMAN’S CORRELATION – BRAND KNOWLEDGE * BRAND ESTEEM RELATIONSHIP

		Knowledge	Esteem
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.570**
	Knowledge Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	90	88
	Correlation Coefficient	0.570**	1.000
	Esteem Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	88	88

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.12 presents the findings in response to whether a relationship exists between brand knowledge and brand esteem as perceived by respondents towards sports brands. A positive relationship can be concluded at a significance level of 0.00.

As per the strong positive correlation presented in Table 4.12, there is a clear relationship between esteem and knowledge among respondents when their favourite sports brands are considered.

Objective 5:

- To determine whether there is a perception among consumers that their preferred brands deliver on what is promised.

In order to address objective 5, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

Consider your favourite sports brand when answering the following questions. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement:

2.4. This brand delivers on what it promises

This analysis is presented in the table hereunder:

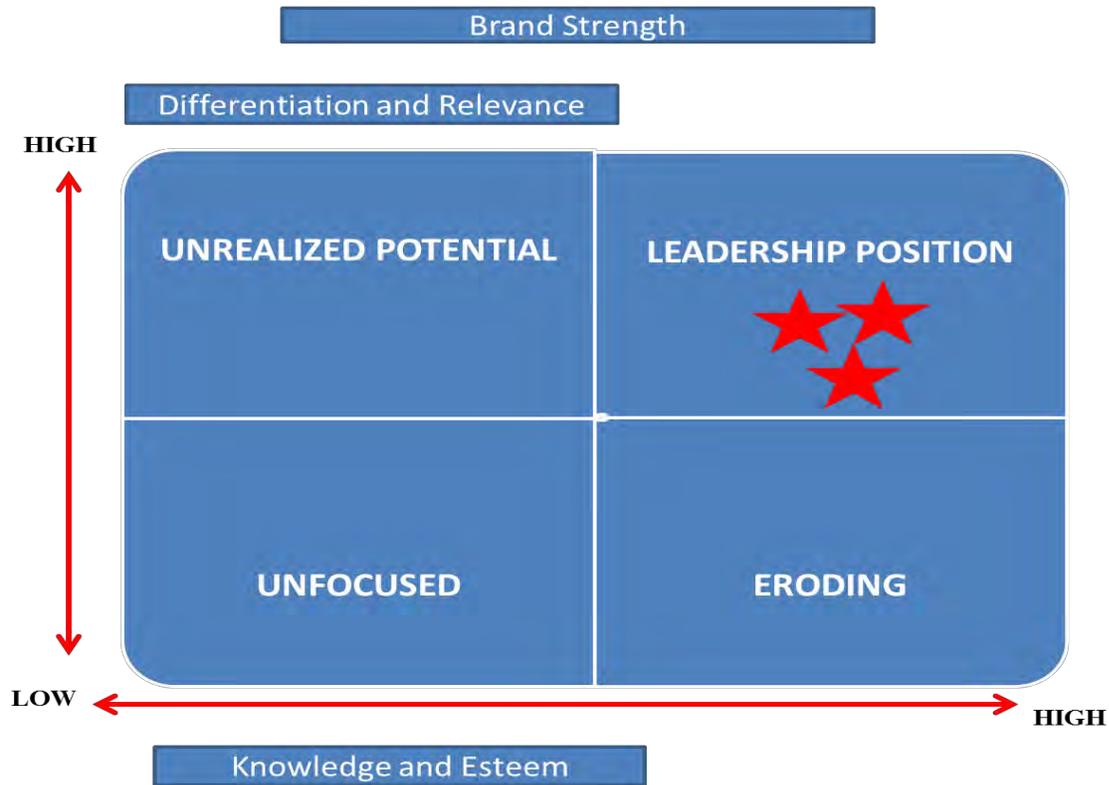
Table 4.13 BRAND DELIVERS ON PROMISE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	48	52.7	53.9	53.9
Agree	26	28.6	29.2	83.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12	13.2	13.5	96.6
Disagree	1	1.1	1.1	97.8
Strongly Disagree	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

Table 4.13, indicates that a high proportion of respondents (eighty three percent) believe their favourite sports brands do deliver on what they promise. This is indicated on the table by the cumulative percentage of the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses.

Figure 4.6, presented hereunder illustrates the positioning of favoured sports brands as reported by respondents on the perceptions of relevance, differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem.

Figure 4.6 BAV MODEL OF SPORTS BRANDS



Results presented in Figure 4.6 indicate that respondents perceive their favourite brands to deliver on what is promised. Coupling this with the relationships between relevance and differentiation as well as esteem and knowledge, it is evident that the majority of respondents positioned their favourite brands on a level of high relevance and differentiation, and high on the attributes of knowledge and esteem. Brands plotted in the upper right quadrant as illustrated in Figure 4.6 are seen as brand leaders and are in possession of a high level of relevance, differentiation, esteem and knowledge.

Objective 6:

- To determine whether factors such as the brand’s name, quality, athlete endorsed, price and the country in which a brand is manufactured is influential in the purchase decision of sports brands

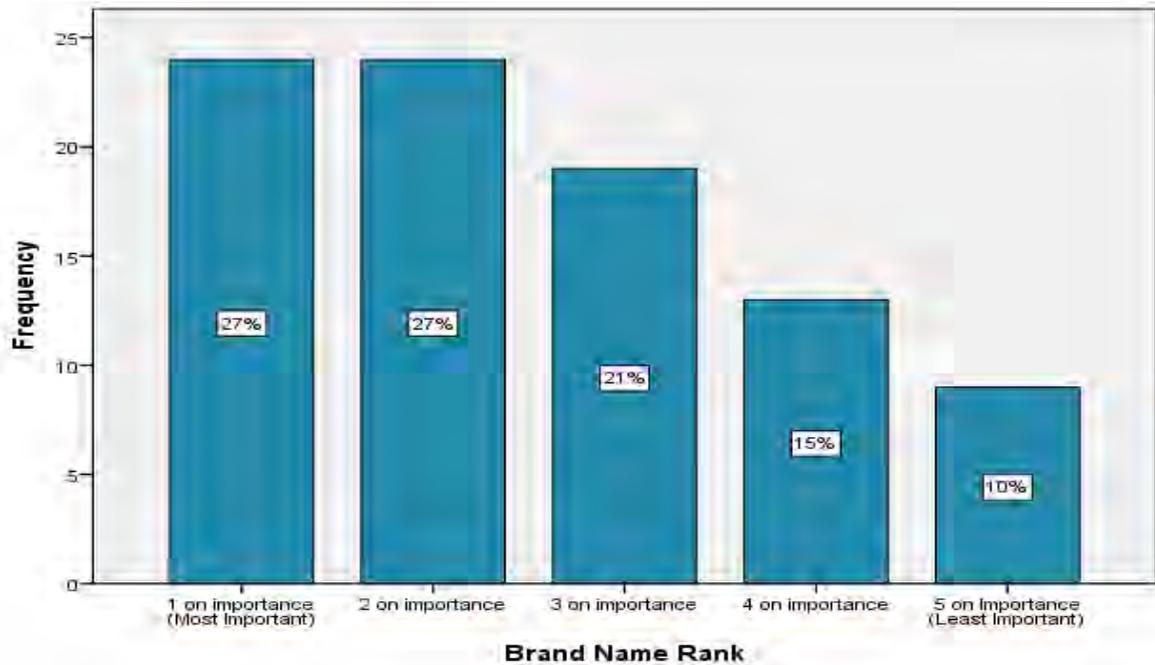
In order to address objective 6, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

3.1. When shopping, which of the following factors are important to you when selecting a sports brand? Rank in order of their importance, 1 being the most important and 5 the least important. Each factor should have a different ranking.

- Brand Name
- Quality
- Athlete or team the brand sponsors
- Price
- The country in which the product is manufactured

The analysis is presented in Figure 4.7

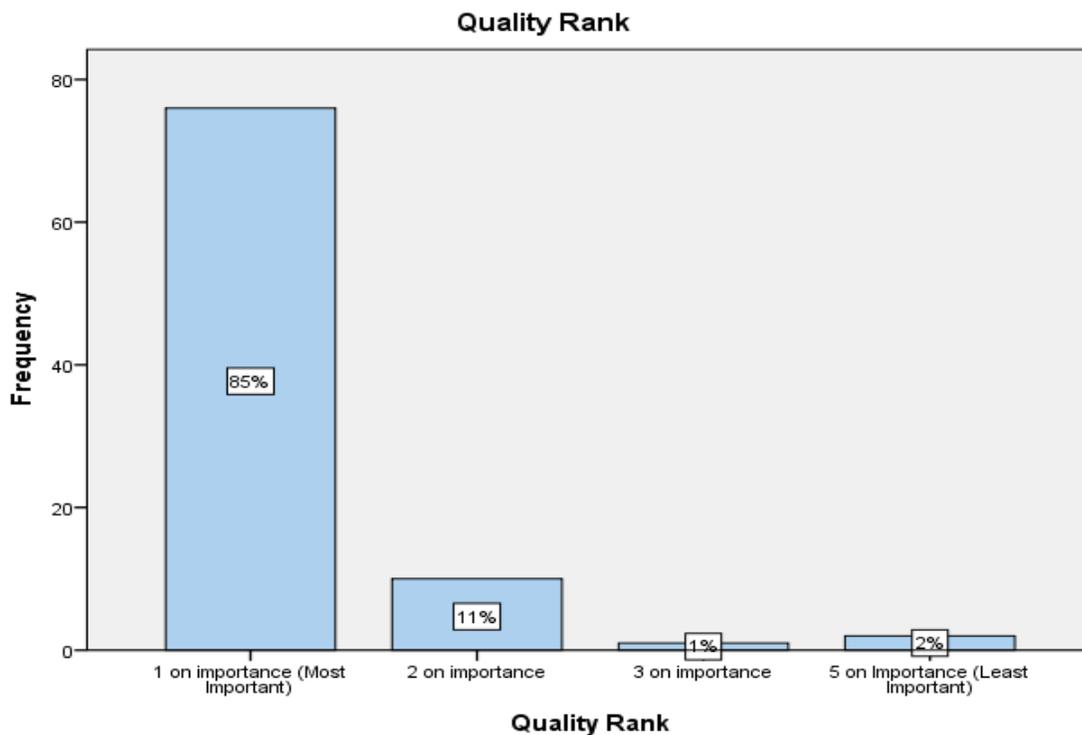
Figure 4.7 FREQUENCY PLOT – IMPORTANCE OF BRAND NAME



According to Figure 4.7, twenty seven percent of respondents assigned a 1 ranking, meaning they believe the brand name to be an extremely important variable that drives choice. Twenty seven percent of respondents also assigned a two ranking to the brand name, which is an indicator that the brand name is perceived to be important. Only a small proportion of respondents who assigned a four or five rating (twenty two percent) reported brand name to be a less important attribute that drives product choice of sports brands.

Figure 4.8 evaluates whether the variable of quality is important when considering or selecting sports brands.

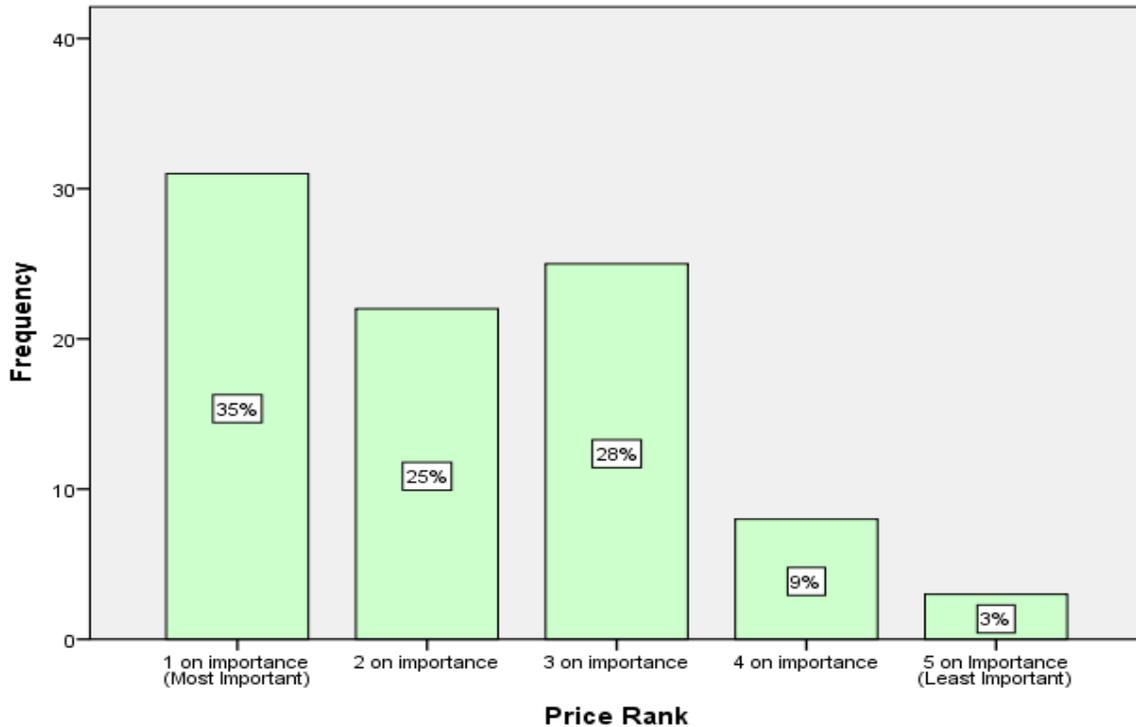
Figure 4.8 FREQUENCY PLOT – IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY



According to Figure 4.8, eighty five percent of respondents placed significant value on sports brands having a high level of quality as a pre-requisite in order to be selected, and assigned a ranking of one, meaning “Most Important”. A further eleven percent ranked quality on two, meaning quality is believed to be a very important factor that drives choice, in this scenario within ninety six percent (respondents that collectively ranked the importance of quality on a one or two on the scale). This is a strong indication that quality is considered a significant factor that customers may not compromise on.

Figure 4.9 analyses the significance of price in the selection decisions of sports brands.

Figure 4.9 FREQUENCY PLOT – IMPORTANCE OF PRICE



More than half the sample of respondents (fifty three percent) stated that price is an influential decision in the selection of sports brands with a rank of one or two. Twenty five percent of respondents responded neutrally ranking price on a three. Only a small proportion of respondents (eleven percent) reported price to be a non-significant factor in the selection of sports brands.

Figure 4.10, hereunder, presents the analysis for the importance of sports brands on the basis of athlete endorsement.

Figure 4.10 FREQUENCY PLOT – IMPORTANCE OF ATHLETE ENDORSEMENT AND SPORTS TEAM SPONSORSHIP

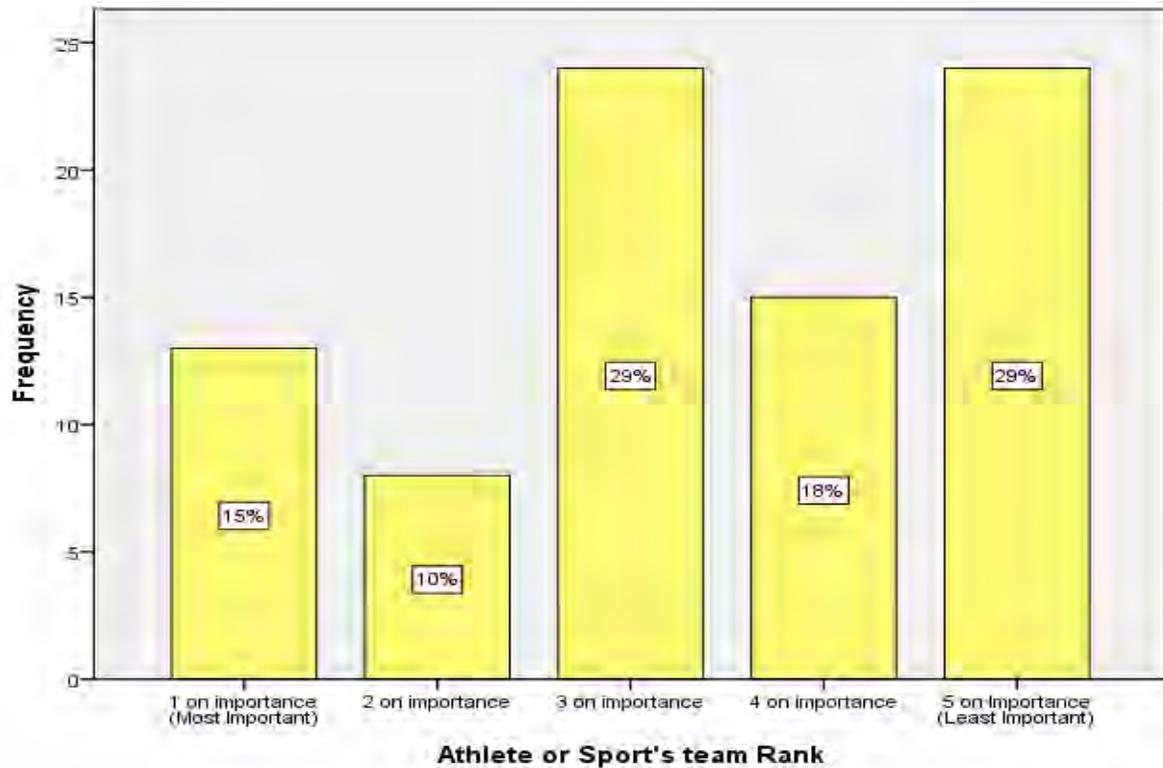
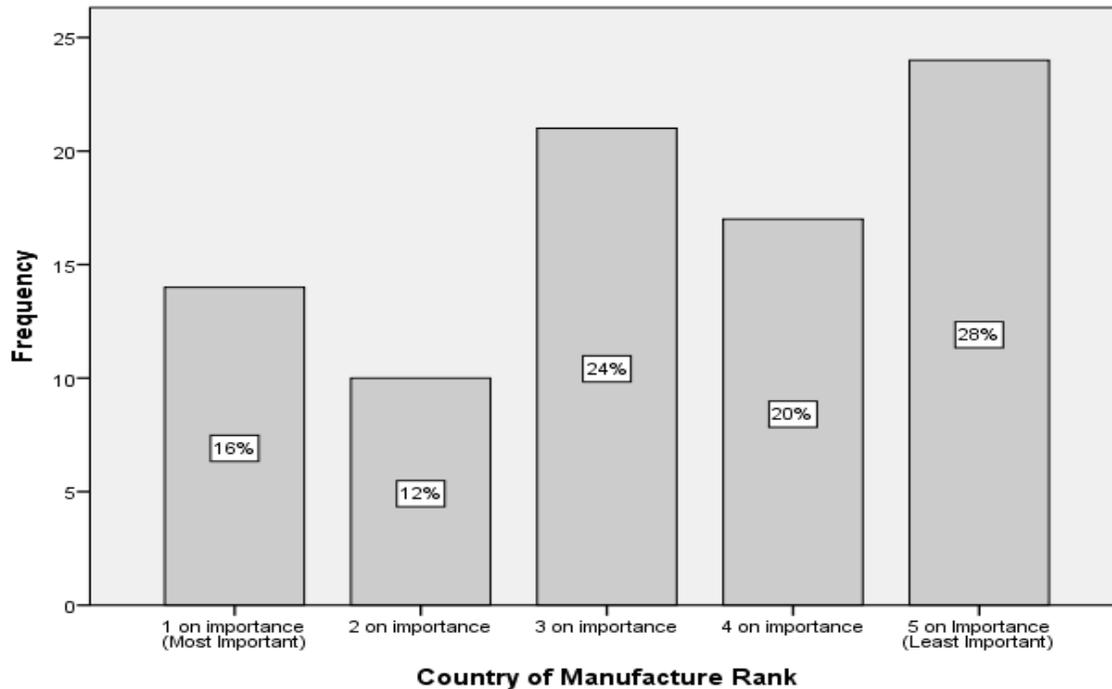


Figure 4.10 illustrates the finding that athlete endorsement and sports team sponsorship is not a significant factor driving preference and hence selection of sports brands. Twenty five percent of respondents regard this variable as important on a scale of 1 or 2, whilst a large proportion (twenty nine percent) has either a neutral perception of athlete endorsement or considers this variable as non-important (forty seven percent).

Figure 4.11 presents the analysis relating to the perceived importance of the country in which a brand or product is manufactured.

Figure 4.11 FREQUENCY PLOT – IMPORTANCE OF COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE



As displayed in Table 4.14, the country in which a brand is manufactured is reported as a variable that is not significantly important to the majority of respondents with over forty eight percent of respondents assigning a lower ranking to the importance of the country in which a brand is manufactured and the resulting effect of this variable on brand choice (four or five ranking).

The perceived importance of the factors of the brand's name, quality of the brand or its products, price, athlete endorsement or sports team sponsorship can also be tested through the following hypothesis:

H₀₆: There is no perceived importance relating to the brand's name, quality, athlete endorsement or sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture.

H₁₆: There is a perceived importance relating to the brand's name, quality, athlete endorsement or sports team sponsorship, price and country of manufacture.

This analysis is presented below:

Table 4.14 HYPOTHESIS TEST – BRAND NAME, QUALITY, PRICE, ATHLETE ENDORSEMENT AND COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Binomial Test

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Brand Name Rank	Group 1	<= 2	48	0.54	0.50	0.525
	Group 2	> 2	41	0.46		
	Total		89	1.00		
Quality Rank	Group 1	<= 2	87	0.97	0.50	0.000
	Group 2	> 2	3	0.03		
	Total		90	1.00		
Price Rank	Group 1	<= 2	54	0.60	0.50	0.073
	Group 2	> 2	36	0.40		
	Total		90	1.00		
Athlete or Sports team Rank	Group 1	<= 2	27	0.30	0.50	0.000
	Group 2	> 2	63	0.70		
	Total		90	1.00		
Country of Manufacture Rank	Group 1	<= 2	27	0.30	0.50	0.000
	Group 2	> 2	62	0.70		
	Total		89	1.00		

The above output shows that the importance of each variable was broken into 2 groups, ≤ 2 and > 2 . Any variable ≤ 2 was concluded as important and naturally anything over 2 was considered as non-important. The p value is significant for all factors excluding the brand's name and price. Therefore it is concluded that the null hypothesis can be rejected for the variables of quality, athlete endorsement or sports sponsorship and country of manufacture. This means that these variables are considered as significant factors that may influence the selection of sports brands. Quality was considered an important factor in driving sports brand choice, whereas athlete or sports team sponsorship and country of manufacture was not considered significant in driving choice. In the case of the brand's name, although results trend more towards this variable being considered important by forty eight percent of respondents, forty one percent of respondents do not consider this variable as significant and there is therefore insufficient evidence to conclude the alternate hypothesis due to only a slight variance between the two groups. The null hypothesis is retained ($p=0.525$).

Objective 7

- The objective of hypothesis 7 is to determine whether differences are evident in the way global brands are perceived compared to local brands.

In order to address objective 7, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

7.1. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

7.1. Global brands are more superior to local brands

7.2. Global brands have a higher level of quality than local brands

7.3. I will pay more for a global sports brand

7.4. The country in which a brand is manufactured is an important consideration factor in choosing sports brands

The hypothesis testing this objective is as follows and is presented in Table 4.15, below:

H₀₇: There is no difference in how global brands are perceived from local brands.

H₁₇: There is a difference in how global brands are perceived from local brands.

Table 4.15 PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL VERSUS GLOBAL BRANDS

Binomial Test

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Brand chosen needs to be manufactured locally	Group 1	<= 2	13	0.14	0.50 0.000
	Group 2	> 2	77	0.86	
	Total		90	1.00	
Brand Chosen needs to be manufactured globally	Group 1	<= 2	28	0.31	0.50 0.000
	Group 2	> 2	62	0.69	
	Total		90	1.00	
Global Brands are more superior to local brands	Group 1	<= 2	64	0.71	0.50 0.000
	Group 2	> 2	26	0.29	
	Total		90	1.00	
Global Brands have a higher quality than local brands	Group 1	<= 2	60	0.67	0.50 0.002
	Group 2	> 2	30	0.33	
	Total		90	1.00	
Willingness to pay more for a global sports brand	Group 1	<= 2	56	0.62	0.50 0.026
	Group 2	> 2	34	0.38	
	Total		90	1.00	

The results presented in Table 4.15 show all factors pertaining to how local brands are perceived from global brands to be significant.

This objective was assessed on five variables to gain insight into whether there is a specific preference regarding whether the brand is locally or globally produced, and also to determine the respondents' stance on the subject concerning their perception of local versus global brands by means of superiority, quality and their willingness to pay a price premium. Responses of <=2 were an indication that the variable was important, whereas >2 indicated that no particular importance was linked to that variable. All variables proved to be significant; hence the null hypothesis was rejected on all factors. Respondents reported that they do not have a specific preference for their sports brand of choice to be manufactured locally or globally. A large proportion, seventy seven percent and sixty two percent respectively, stated that there is no need for sports brands to have any locally produced, nor globally produced status. Both were significant (p=0.00).

However, a large proportion of respondents (sixty four percent) did report perceiving global brands as more superior to local brands, have a higher quality than local brands (sixty percent) and they were also more willing to pay a higher price for a global brand.

Objective 8

- To determine whether brand selection is predetermined prior to shopping.

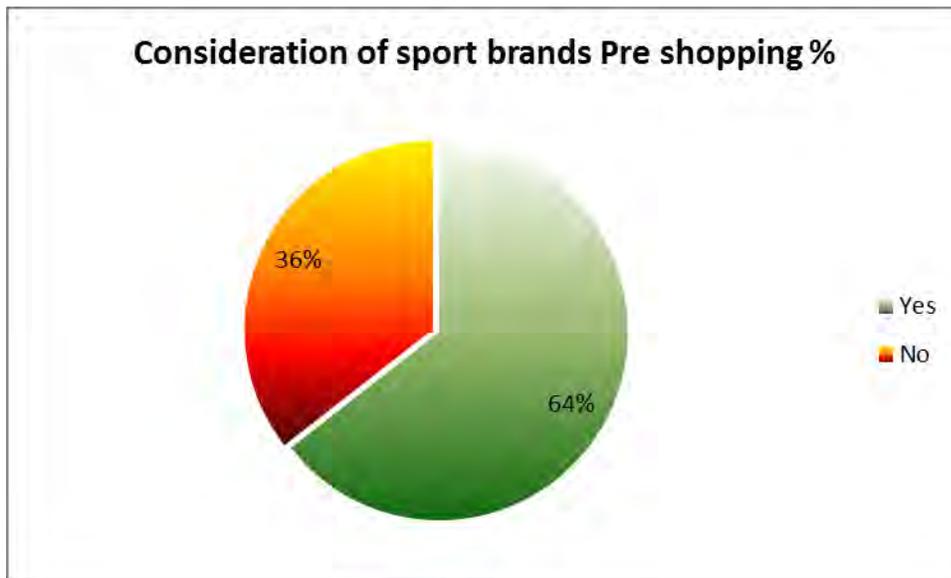
In order to address objective 8 the following questions in the questionnaire were addressed:

3.2. When considering buying a sporting brand, do you know which brand you are going to purchase before you enter a store?

- Yes
- No

The analysis is presented in Figure 4.12, hereunder:

Figure 4.12 CONSIDERATION OF BRAND PRE-PURCHASE



The analysis can also be presented through the following hypothesis:

H0₈: There is no difference between brand choices that are pre-determined to those that are not.

H1₈: There is a difference between brand choices that are pre-determined to those that are not.

Table 4.16 HYPOTHESIS TEST – CONSIDERATION OF BRAND PRE-PURCHASE

Binomial Test

			Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Consider Brand choice prior to purchase	Group 1	Yes		58	0.64	0.50	0.008
	Group 2	No		32	0.36		
	Total			90	1.00		

According to Figure 4.12 and Table 4.16, sixty four percent of all respondents’ purchase decisions of sports brands are decided prior to entering the store or prior to a shopping trip. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected on the basis that there is evidence to conclude that there is a distinct difference between brand purchase decisions that are predetermined versus those that are made at the point of purchase.

Objective 9

- To determine whether media sources (television, in store displays, recommendation, and price promotion) influence the purchase of sports brands.

This objective was analysed through the responses from the following questions in the questionnaire:

3.3. What is most likely to cause you to purchase a specific sports brand?

The analysis can be presented through the following hypothesis:

H0₉: There is no influence of advertisements, in store advertisements, price promotion and recommendation on the purchase decision of sports brands.

H1₉: There is an influence of advertisements, in store advertisements, price promotion and recommendation on the purchase decision of sports brands.

Table 4.17 HYPOTHESIS TEST – THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS, IN STORE ADVERTISEMENTS, RECOMMENDATION, PRICE AND PROMOTION ON THE SELECTION OF SPORTS BRANDS

Binomial Test

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Importance of advertisements	Group 1	<= 3	44	0.49	0.50	0.916
	Group 2	> 3	46	0.51		
	Total		90	1.00		
Importance of In store advertisement	Group 1	<= 3	48	0.53	0.50	0.598
	Group 2	> 3	42	0.47		
	Total		90	1.00		
Importance of price promotion in store	Group 1	<= 3	72	0.80	0.50	0.000
	Group 2	> 3	18	0.20		
	Total		90	1.00		
Importance of Recommendation	Group 1	<= 3	59	0.66	0.50	0.003
	Group 2	> 3	30	0.34		
	Total		89	1.00		

Findings presented in Table 4.17, revealed that there was no significant influence of advertisements and in-store advertisements. Any rankings from 1 to 3 were considered influential on purchase choice, whilst ranks greater than 3 were considered as non-influential drivers of sports brand choice. Price promotion in-store was ranked as a significant variable ($p=0.000$) with seventy two percent of respondents reporting that price promotion in store is likely to influence their purchase decision of sports brands. Recommendation was also seen as a significant factor ($p=0.03$) by fifty nine percent of respondents.

The alternate hypothesis is rejected for advertisements and in-store advertisements, as these variables do not influence the purchase decision. The alternate hypothesis for price promotion and recommendation is accepted, concluding that these variables are strong influencers on the purchase decision of sports brands.

Objective 10

- To determine whether consumers are loyal to particular sports brands and what attributes influence brand loyalty

This analysis is presented in Figure 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15, hereunder:

Figure 4.13 RESISTANCE TO CONSIDER ANOTHER BRAND

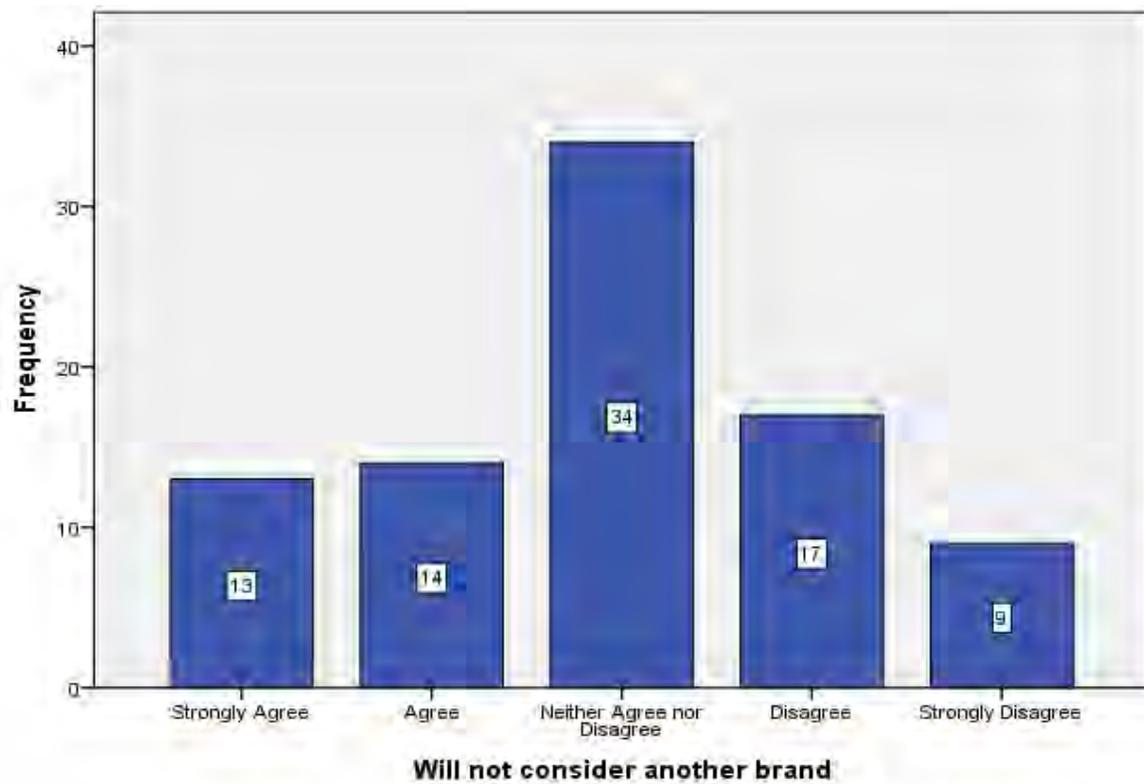


Figure 4.14 TENDENCY TO PURCHASE ANY BRAND THAT MEETS THE NEED

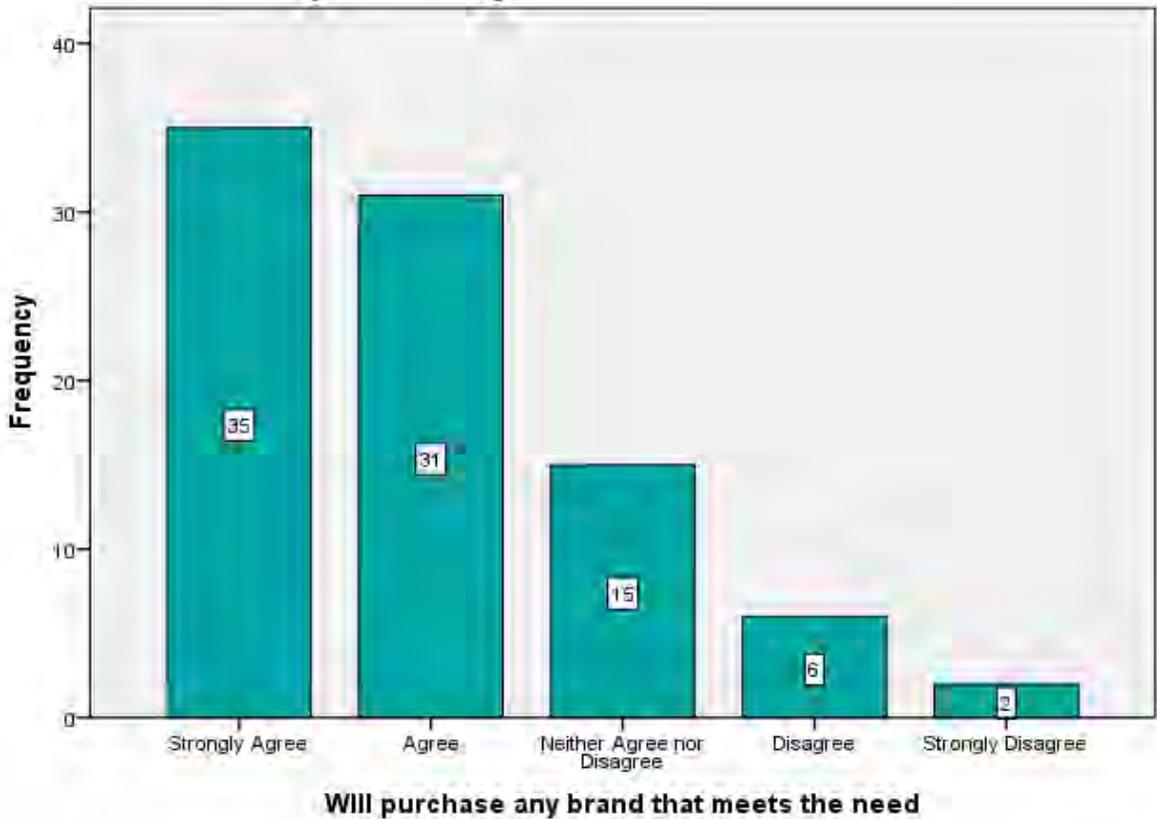


Figure 4.15 TENDENCY TO PURCHASE ANY BRAND THAT IS ON PRICE PROMOTION

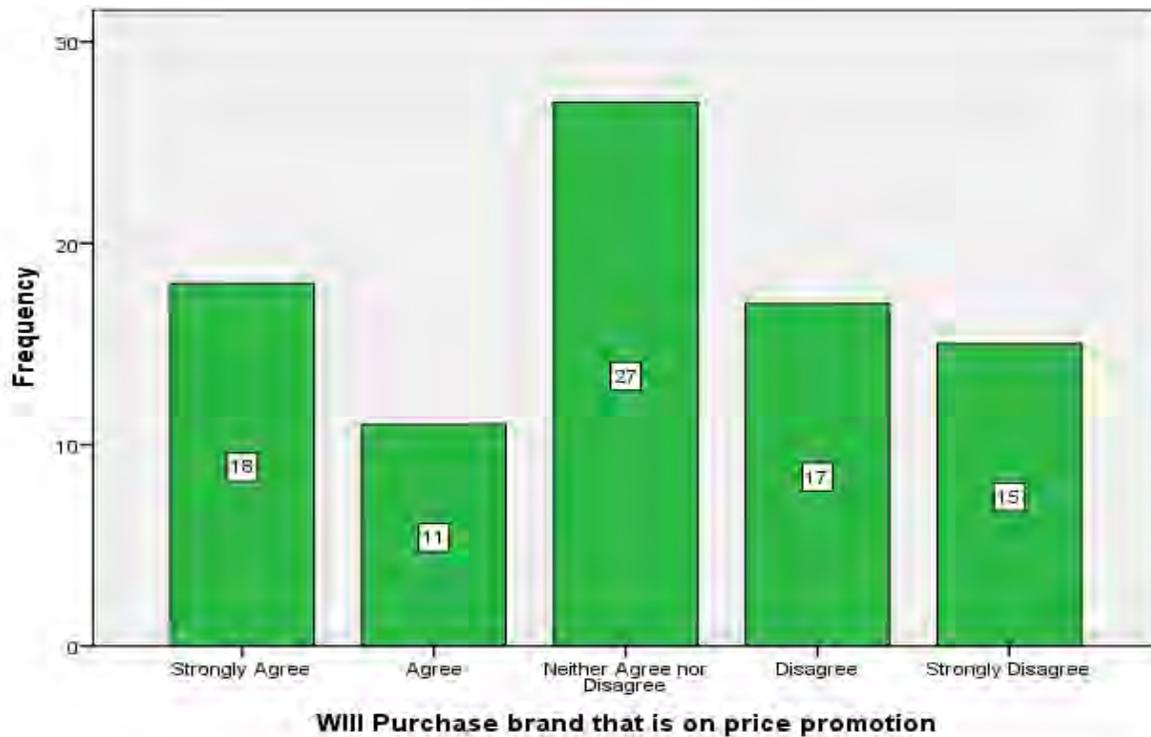


Figure 4.13 illustrates that a large proportion (sixty percent) of respondents reported that they disagree with the statement that that they will not consider another brand. Only twenty seven percent of respondents claim to be brand loyal to their chosen sports brands stating that they would not consider a brand other than their sports brand of choice. Figure 4.14 reports that a large proportion of respondents (sixty six percent) will purchase any sports brand that meets their needs. Figure 4.15 indicates that respondents are not price sensitive as forty nine percent will not simply choose the brand that is on price promotion. Figures 4.13 – 4.15 therefore suggest that respondents do not exhibit a high degree of loyalty towards sports brands and in addition, price alone is not a factor that influences choice. Rather, it is the capability of chosen sports brands to meet their needs that influences brand and product choice in this category.

Objective 11

- To determine whether there are strongly perceived associations with sports brands

In order to address objective 11, the following question in the questionnaire were analysed:

4.1. Consider the following sports brands. Please indicate all factors that you think apply to each brand. Rate only the brands that you are familiar with. Mark all that apply with an X.

This analysis is presented in Figure 4.16 hereunder:

Figure 4.16 SPORTS BRAND ASSOCIATION MATRIX

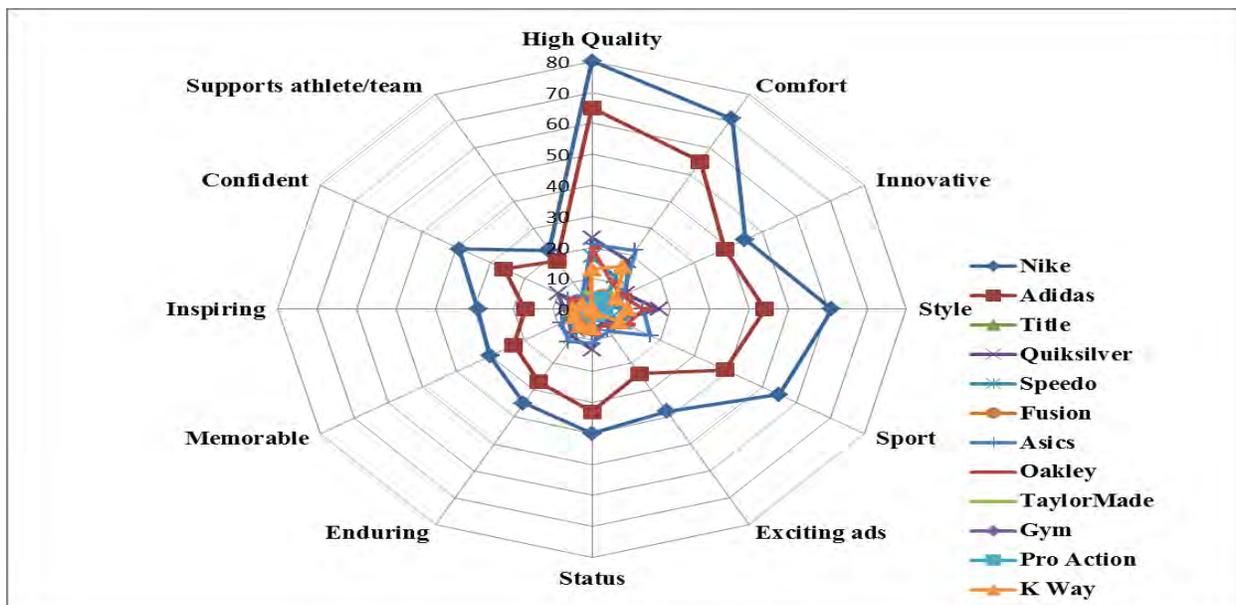


Figure 4.16 illustrates the affinity or association relating to a variety of attributes that respondents have towards a number of sports brands. Respondents were requested to mark the attributes that believed to be associated to the various brands. As per Figure 4.16., the more attributes linked to the particular brands by a greater number of respondents will indicate the strength of the various attributes to each of the brands.

The objective was to determine the strongest associations between the brands and the variables mentioned above. Figure 4.16 illustrates the magnitude of the various associations between the variables and the

relative brands. Many brands were not recalled across many variables whilst others were not recalled at all. Nike however was the only brand to be recalled across all variables by a large proportion of respondents. Adidas followed, however across fewer associations and by a smaller number of respondents than Nike was. According to the responses, quality ranked as the highest perceived association. This supports the literature and discussions that quality is a desired attribute in this category. Comfort, innovation and style were also highly reported as associations with brands.

Objective 12

To determine if there is a preference towards gender and athletes used in sports brands advertising and observe the differences, if any, among males and females. In order to address objective 12, the following questions were analysed in the questionnaire:

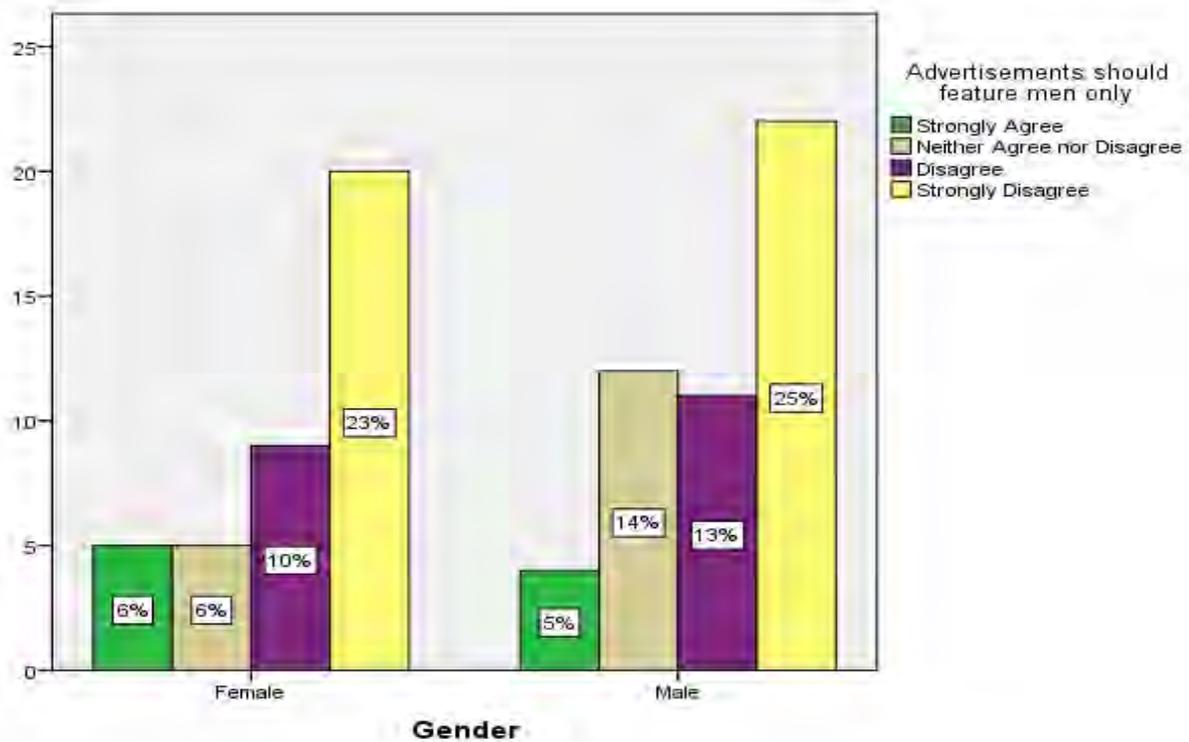
Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

- 8.1. Sport brand advertisements should feature men only
- 8.2. Sport brand advertisements should feature women only
- 8.3. Sport brand advertising should focus on sports teams
- 8.4. Sport brand advertisements should focus on athletes
- 8.5. Sport brand advertisements should focus on everyday people

The analysis is presented in Figure 4.17 and 4.18, hereunder.

Figure 4.17 illustrates the degree of agreement and disagreement that sports brand advertising should have a greater male focus.

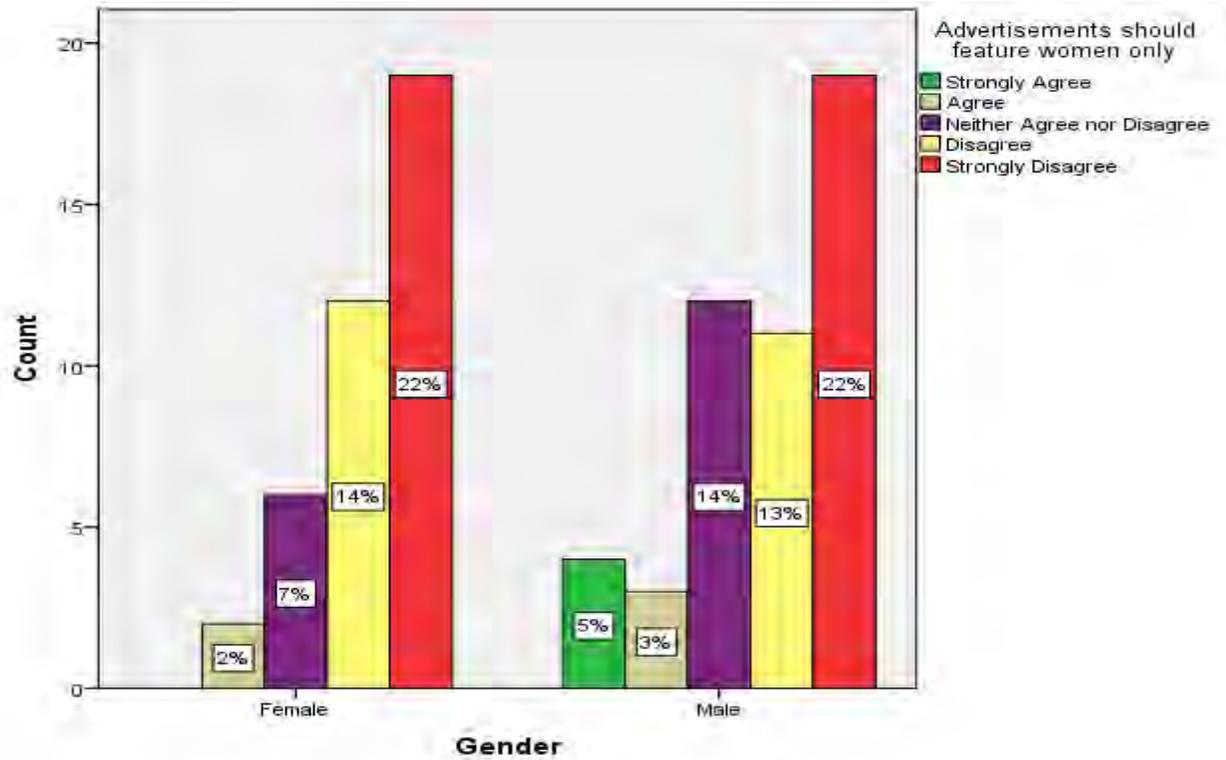
Figure 4.17 SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD HAVE A MALE FOCUS



Responses recorded in Figure 4.17 show that there is an approximately equal split between males and females who disagree with the statement that sports advertisements should have a male focus, with the majority of female and male respondents in disagreement with the statement (thirty three percent in females to thirty eight percent in males)

Figure 4.18 looks at the perception among female and male respondents that sports brand advertising should have a greater female focus.

Figure 4.18 SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD HAVE A FEMALE FOCUS



Concerning the focus of females in sports advertising, again there was a similar split between males and females, with the majority of respondents (thirty six percent females to thirty five percent males) reporting to be in disagreement that sports advertising should have a female focus.

Figure 4.19 presents the responses concerning the feature of athletes in sports advertising.

Figure 4.19 SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD FEATURE ATHLETES

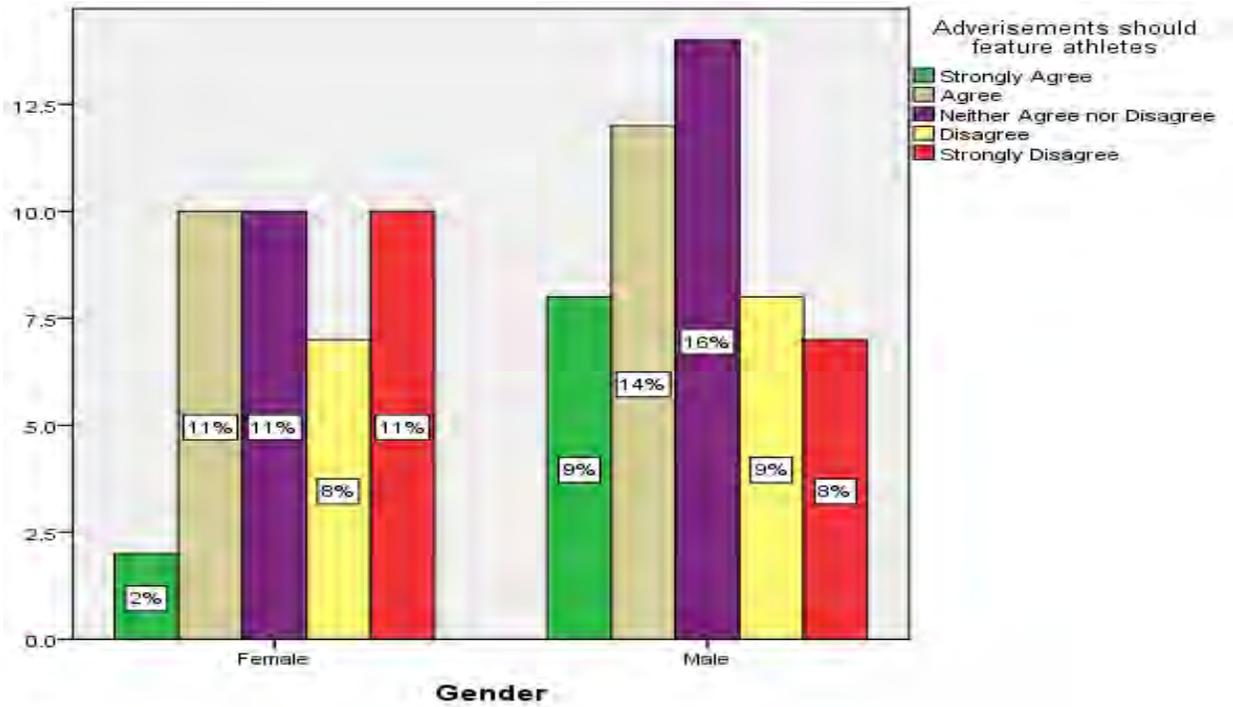


Figure 4.19 shows that a larger proportion of males to females (thirteen percent in females to twenty three percent in males) believe that athletes should be featured more prominently in sports brand advertising.

Figure 4.20 presents the results concerning the need to see sports teams featured in sports brand advertising among females and male respondents.

Figure 4.20 SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD FEATURE SPORTS TEAMS

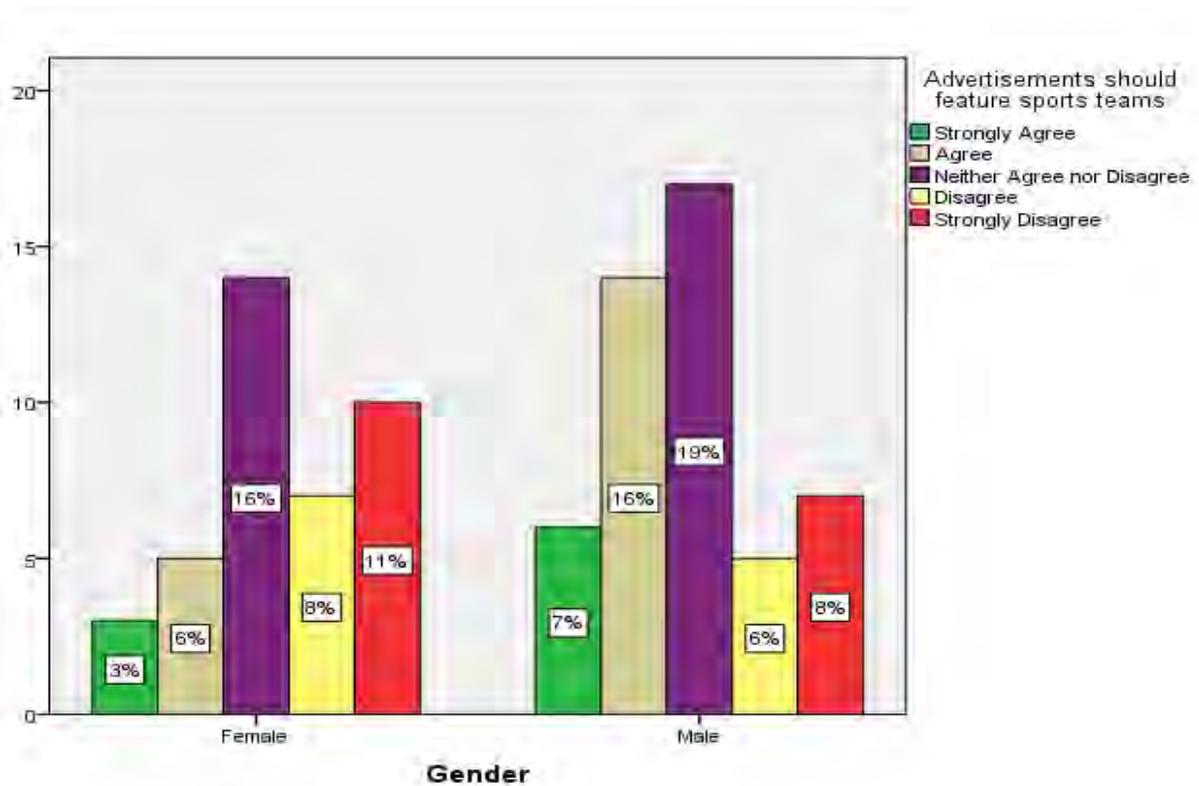


Figure 4.20 shows a similar trend with the majority of respondents, both female and male, that disagree that there should be a greater focus on sports teams featured in sports brand advertising.

Figure 4.21 presents the results in response to the statement about whether sports brand advertisements should have a greater focus on everyday people.

Figure 4.21 SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD FEATURE EVERYDAY PEOPLE

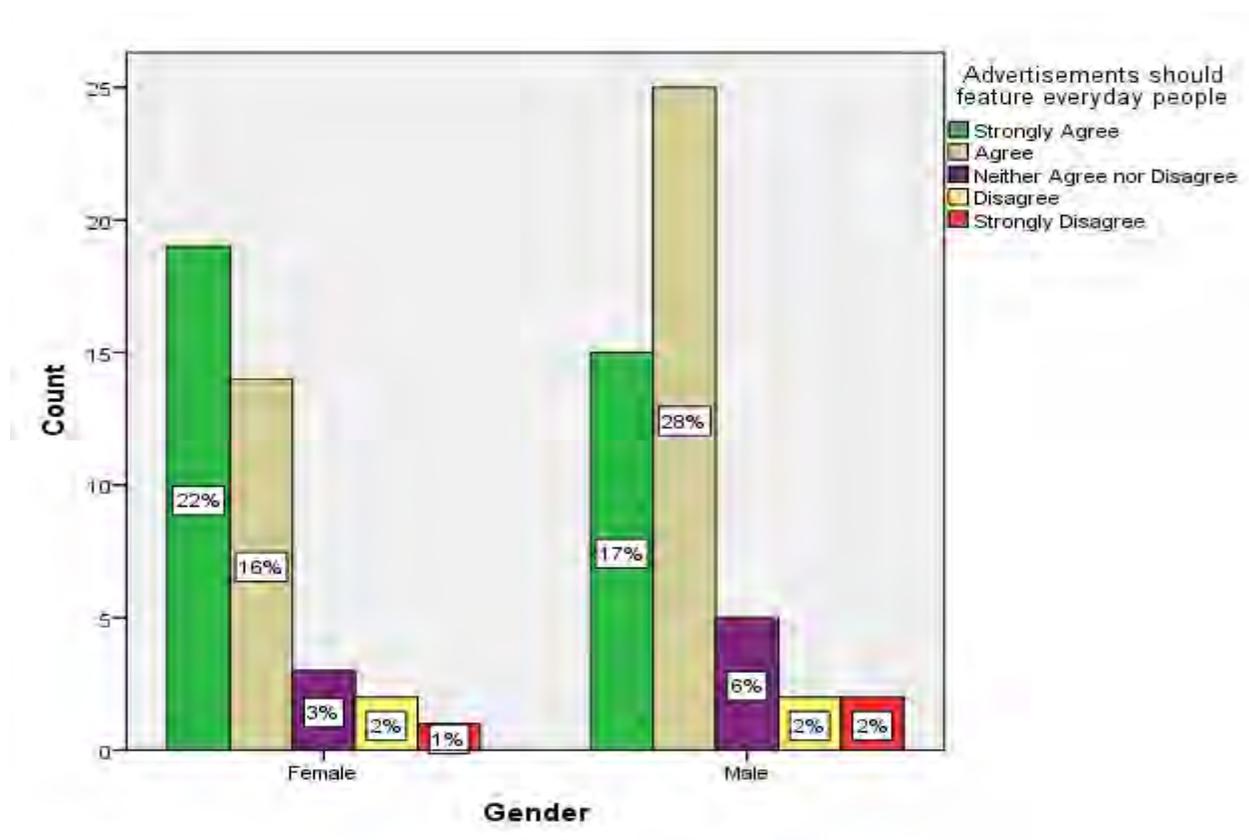


Figure 4.21 illustrates that the majority of female and male respondents are in agreement that sports brand advertising should feature more everyday people in their advertisements.

Objective 12 can also be tested through the following hypothesis.

H₀₁₂: Gender use in advertising does not influence perceptions of sports brands.

H₁₂: Gender use in advertising influences perceptions of sports brand.

Table 4.18 HYPOTHESIS TEST – SPORTS BRAND ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Test Statistics^a

	Advertisements should feature men	Advertisements should feature women	Advertisements should feature sports teams	Advertisements should feature athletes	Advertisements should feature everyday people
Mann-Whitney U	947.000	827.000	756.000	821.500	834.500
Wilcoxon W	2222.000	2102.000	2031.000	2096.500	1654.500
Z	-.459	-1.481	-2.044	-1.484	-1.446
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.646	0.139	.041	0.138	0.148

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

As presented in Table 4.18, there are no significant differences among female and male respondents pertaining to the need for advertisements to have a greater feature on men ($p=0.646$); neither is there a significant difference relating to the need for advertisements to have a greater feature on women ($p=0.139$). In both these instances there is a greater disagreement in response to the two statements, indicating that there is no preference or concern for a particular gender to be featured in sports brands advertising. Regarding the need for sports brand advertising to feature sports teams, there was a greater trend towards disagreement with this statement, but differences were significant ($p=0.041$) in that there was a greater affinity for seeing sports brands advertise with a greater use of sports teams among males than among females. No significant difference was reported among female and male respondents concerning the feature of athletes in sports brands ($p=0.138$). In addition, there was a great need for both females and males to see more everyday people employed in sports brand advertising. However, the difference was not significant ($p=0.148$).

Objective 13

- To determine whether sports, sports team and/or athlete sponsorship influences the preference of sports brands

In order to address objective 13, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed.

6.1. The sport that a brand sponsors is an important factor that will influence which sports brands I prefer / choose

6.2. The athlete / sports team sponsored by a sports brand influences which sports brand I prefer /choose

6.3. The sports team or athlete endorsing a sports brand is more important than the brand itself

The analysis is presented in tables 4.19, 4.20, and 4.21, hereunder.

Table 4.19 INFLUENCE OF SPORTS SPONSORSHIP ON BRAND CHOICE

The sport sponsored will influence the sports brand I prefer/choose

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	19	20.9	21.1	23.3
Valid Agree	23	25.3	25.6	48.9
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	26	28.6	28.9	77.8
Valid Disagree	7	7.7	7.8	85.6
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	14.3	14.4	100.0
Valid Total	90	98.9	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.1		
Total	91	100.0		

As presented in Table 4.19, forty nine percent of respondents reported that the sport sponsored by a sports brand would influence their brand choice (this is the cumulative total of respondents who answered “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”). The remaining 51% of the sample were either neutral in their response or claimed that the sport sponsored by a sports brand does not influence their product choice.

Table 4.20 INFLUENCE OF SPORTS TEAM OR ATHLETE SPONSORSHIP ON BRAND CHOICE

The athlete/sports team sponsored by a sports brand influences which brand I prefer/choose

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	15	16.5	16.7	18.9
Valid Agree	21	23.1	23.3	42.2
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	31	34.1	34.4	76.7
Valid Disagree	8	8.8	8.9	85.6
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	14.3	14.4	100.0
Valid Total	90	98.9	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.1		
Total	91	100.0		

Table 4.20 reports that there was a split between respondents, with forty two percent in agreement that their brand choice is influenced by the sponsored athletes or sports team, and fifty seven percent reporting that their choice is not influenced by sponsorship of sports teams or athlete endorsers.

Table 4.21 WEIGHTING OF THE PRIORITY OF SPORTS TEAM SPONSORED VERSUS THE BRAND ITSELF

The athlete or sports team sponsored is more important than the brand itself

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	6	6.6	6.7	8.9
Valid Agree	12	13.2	13.3	22.2
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	29	31.9	32.2	54.4
Valid Disagree	20	22.0	22.2	76.7
Valid Strongly Disagree	21	23.1	23.3	100.0
Valid Total	90	98.9	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.1		
Total	91	100.0		

As reported in Table 4.20 and 4.21, there are a large proportion of respondents who claimed that the sports teams and athlete endorsers do exert a level of influence on their choice or preference of sports brands. Table 4.21, indicates that the majority of respondents that answered “Neither Agree”, “Agree” or “Strongly Disagree” (seventy percent in total) report that they do not see the athlete or sports team sponsored by a sports brand as more important than the brand itself.

Objective 14

- To determine whether sports brands elicit emotion

In order to address objective 14, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

5.1. Consider your favourite sport brand/ brands and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement on the following scales regarding how you feel towards this brand

- 5.1. a. I love this brand
- 5.1. b. My favourite sports brand/brands makes me happy
- 5.1. c. My favourite sports brand inspires me
- 5.1. d. My favourite sports brand makes me sad
- 5.1. e. My favourite sports brand causes me to feel scared
- 5.1. f. My favourite sorts brand surprises me
- 5.1. g. My favourite sports brand makes me angry
- 5.1. h. My favourite sports brand gives me confidence
- 5.1. i. My favourite sports brand empowers me
- 5.1. j. My favourite sports brand energizes me
- 5.1. k. My favourite sports brand helps me perform at my best
- 5.1. l. No other brand can compete with my favourite brand

The analysis is presented in Tables 4.22. – 4.31.

Table 4.22 BRAND LOVE

I love this Brand

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	52	57.1	57.8	58.9
Valid Agree	28	30.8	31.1	90.0
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	9	9.9	10.0	100.0
Valid Total	90	98.9	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.1		
Total	91	100.0		

As presented in Table 4.22, ninety percent of respondents reported a feeling of love towards a brand, by indicating agreement with the statement “I love this brand”. Only ten percent of the sample reported disagreement, claiming that such an emotion is not experienced in response to their favourite sports brand.

Table 4.23 THIS BRAND MAKES ME HAPPY

This Brand Makes me happy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	34	37.4	38.2	38.2
Valid Agree	39	42.9	43.8	82.0
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	14.3	14.6	96.6
Valid Disagree	1	1.1	1.1	97.8
Valid Strongly Disagree	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
Valid Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

As seen in Table 4.23., a similar response was received by the statement “This brand makes me happy”, with 82% of respondents indicating that they their favourite sports brand does deliver a feeling of happiness.

Table 4.24 THIS BRAND INSPIRES ME

This Brand inspires me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	29	31.9	32.6	33.7
Agree	29	31.9	32.6	66.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	20.9	21.3	87.6
Disagree	5	5.5	5.6	93.3
Strongly Disagree	6	6.6	6.7	100.0
Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

Table 4.24 reports that sixty six percent of respondents claimed to experience a feeling of inspiration resulting from their favourite sports brand.

Table 4.25 THIS BRAND MAKES ME SAD

This Brand makes me sad

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	1.1	1.1	3.4
Valid Agree	3	3.3	3.4	6.8
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	14.3	14.8	21.6
Valid Disagree	15	16.5	17.0	38.6
Valid Strongly Disagree	54	59.3	61.4	100.0
Valid Total	88	96.7	100.0	
Missing System	3	3.3		
Total	91	100.0		

Table 4.25 illustrates the feeling of sadness experienced in relation to sports brands. The majority of respondents responded neutrally or in disagreement with the statement “This brand makes me sad”: ninety percent, of which 59% were in strong disagreement).

Table 4.26 THIS BRAND SCARES ME

This brand scares me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	1.1	1.1	3.4
Valid Agree	3	3.3	3.4	6.7
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	14.3	14.6	21.3
Valid Disagree	13	14.3	14.6	36.0
Valid Strongly Disagree	57	62.6	64.0	100.0
Valid Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

Similarly, as seen in Table 4.26, respondents were also in disagreement with the statement “This brand scares me’ with 91% of respondents in disagreement (the total of respondents who answered, “Neither Agree nor Disagree”; “Disagree”; or “Strongly Disagree”).

Table 4.27 THIS BRAND MAKES ME ANGRY

This brand makes me angry

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	1.1	1.1	2.2
Valid Agree	2	2.2	2.2	4.5
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	14.3	14.6	19.1
Valid Disagree	8	8.8	9.0	28.1
Valid Strongly Disagree	64	70.3	71.9	100.0
Valid Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

Table 4.27, reports a similar trend with the majority of respondents in disagreement with the statement “This brand makes me angry”.

Table 4.28 THIS BRAND MAKES ME CONFIDENT

This brand makes me confident

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	32	35.2	36.0	36.0
Agree	33	36.3	37.1	73.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16	17.6	18.0	91.0
Disagree	5	5.5	5.6	96.6
Strongly Disagree	3	3.3	3.4	100.0
Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

As seen in Table 4.28, a large proportion of respondents (seventy three percent) were in agreement that their favourite sports brand enabled more confidence.

Table 4.29 THIS BRAND EMPOWERS ME

This brand empowers me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	22	24.2	24.7	25.8
Agree	33	36.3	37.1	62.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	22.0	22.5	85.4
Disagree	6	6.6	6.7	92.1
Strongly Disagree	7	7.7	7.9	100.0
Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

As per the results in Table 4.29, sixty three percent of respondents were in agreement that their favourite sports brands empower them.

Table 4.30 below investigates whether respondents perceive sports brands to be energizing.

Table 4.30 THIS BRAND ENERGIZES ME

This brand energizes me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	22	24.2	24.7	24.7
Agree	33	36.3	37.1	61.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23	25.3	25.8	87.6
Disagree	5	5.5	5.6	93.3
Strongly Disagree	6	6.6	6.7	100.0
Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

Sixty two percent of respondents agreed that they felt energised by their sports brands, as seen in Table 4.30.

Table 4.31 THIS BRAND HELPS ME PERFORM AT MY BEST

This brand helps me perform at my best

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	25	27.5	28.1	29.2
Valid Agree	29	31.9	32.6	61.8
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	24	26.4	27.0	88.8
Valid Disagree	2	2.2	2.2	91.0
Valid Strongly Disagree	8	8.8	9.0	100.0
Valid Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

As reported in Table 4.31, sixty two percent of respondents reported the belief that their sports brands help them perform at their best.

Table 4.32 NO OTHER BRAND COMPETES WITH FAVOURITE PERCEIVED BRAND

No other brand competes with favourite perceived brand

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	22	24.2	24.7	24.7
Valid Agree	17	18.7	19.1	43.8
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	30	33.0	33.7	77.5
Valid Disagree	12	13.2	13.5	91.0
Valid Strongly Disagree	8	8.8	9.0	100.0
Valid Total	89	97.8	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.2		
Total	91	100.0		

As presented in Table 4.32, forty four percent of respondents claimed that no other brand is able to compete with their favourite sports brand, whilst fifty five percent were in disagreement.

Objective 14 can also be tested through the following hypothesis

H0₁₄: There are no differences between the emotions elicited by sports brands.

H1₁₄: There are differences between the emotions elicited by sports brands.

Table 4.33 CHI-SQUARE TEST – EMOTIONS ELICITED BY SPORTS BRANDS

Test Statistics

	I love this brand	This brand makes me happy	This brand inspires me	This brand makes me sad	This brand scares me	This brand surprises me	This brand makes me angry	This brand makes me confident	This brand empowers me	This brand energises me	This brand helps me perform at my best	No other brand competes with this brand
Chi-Square	68.667 ^a	71.169 ^b	52.910 ^c	138.636 ^d	153.764 ^c	37.270 ^c	203.247 ^c	46.000 ^b	49.809 ^c	32.517 ^b	53.315 ^c	16.674 ^b
Df	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.5.

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 17.8.

c. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 14.8.

d. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 14.7.

Regarding the emotional measure used in the study, ninety percent of respondents reported loving their favourite sports brands whilst eighty two percent claim that their brands of choice create a feeling of happiness. Over sixty percent of respondents report to be inspired by their favourite sports brands and a large proportion (sixty three percent - Table 4.29) claim that they are empowered, that their brands energise them (sixty two percent- Table 4.30) and help them perform at their best (sixty two percent - Table 4.31).

As per Table 4.33 the null hypothesis is therefore rejected on the basis of all emotions tested, meaning there is significant evidence to conclude that consumers reportedly love their brands, believe that their sports brands make them happy, are inspired, empowered and energised by their sports brands. Respondents also reported perceiving that their sports brands help them perform at their best. The null hypothesis was also rejected on all other variables, however were in disagreement with such variables.

Objective 15

To determine the sources of reference for information on sports brands

In order to address objective 15, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed.

9.1. Where do you obtain information about sporting brands before purchasing? Rate in order of importance.

Radio

Television

Newspaper

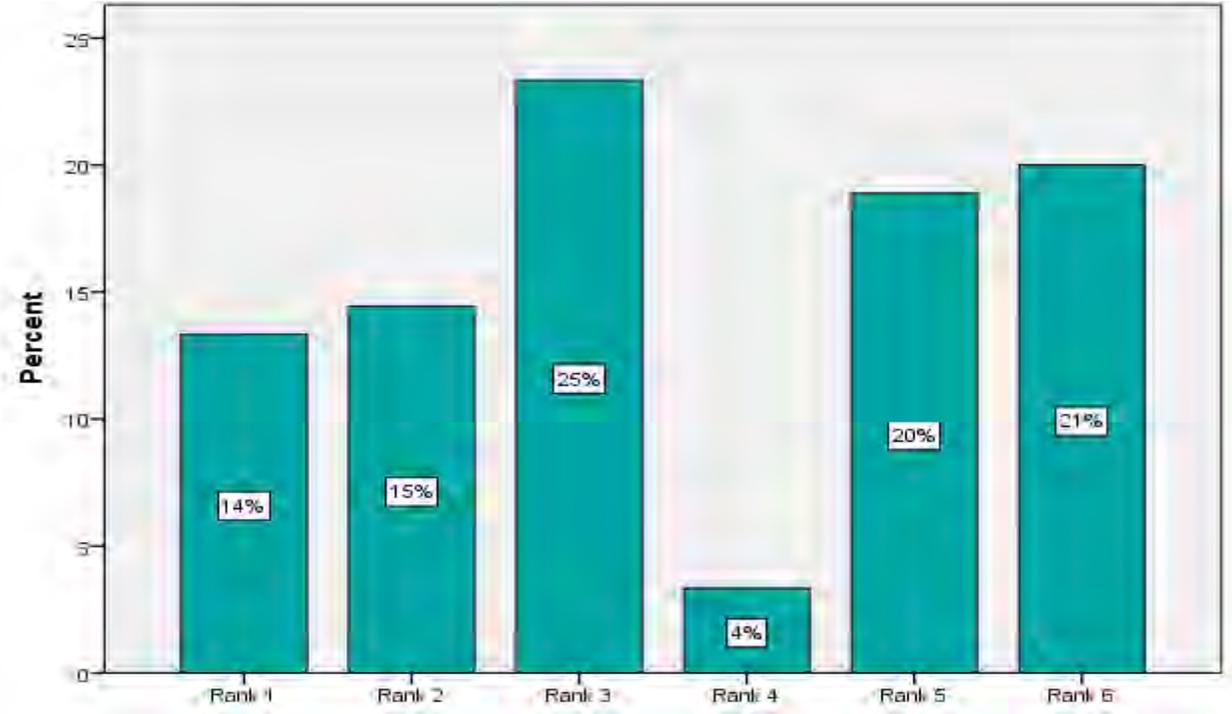
Magazine

Online

Friends

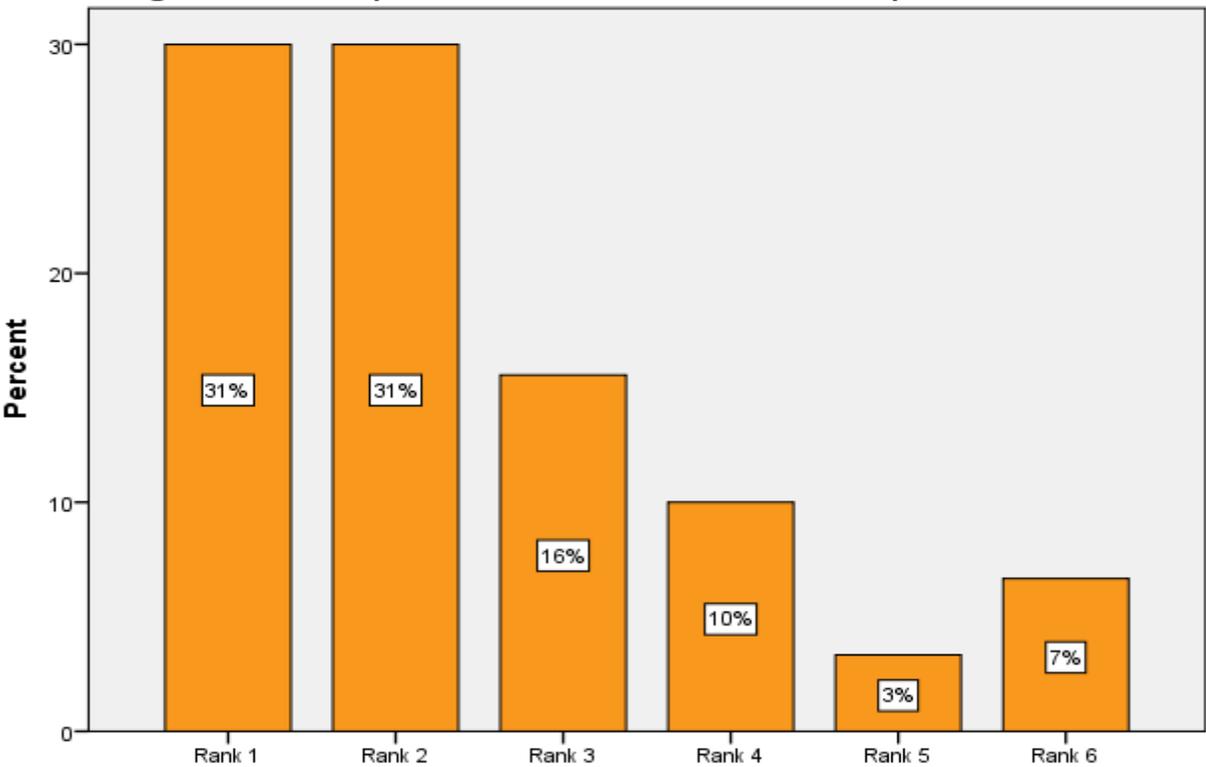
Figures 4.22 – 4.27 report the frequency split of respondents as reported per the different media sources.

Figure 4.22 RADIO IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



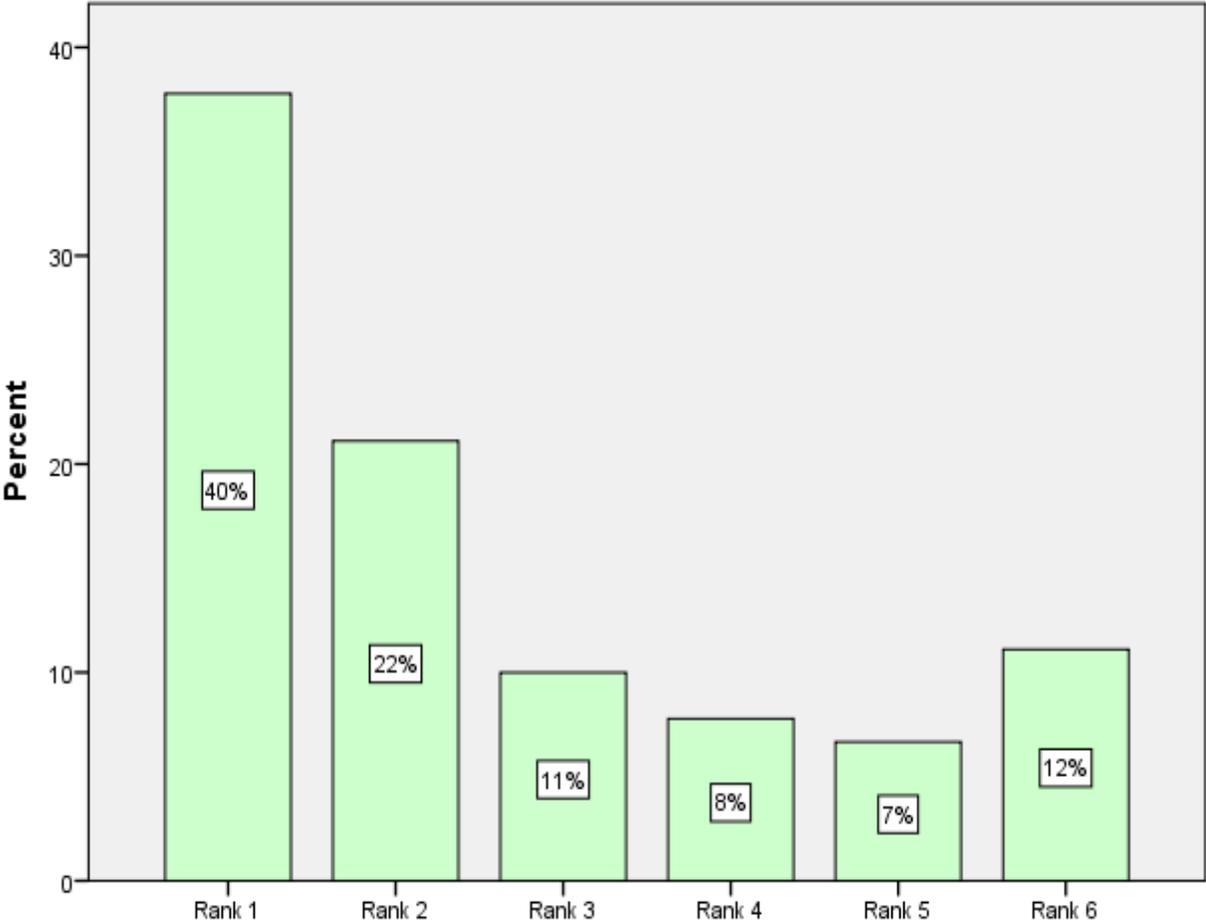
Radio was not reported as a commonly referred to source of information for sports brands with only twenty nine percent of respondents assigning a one or two rank on importance.

Figure 4.23 MAGAZINE IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



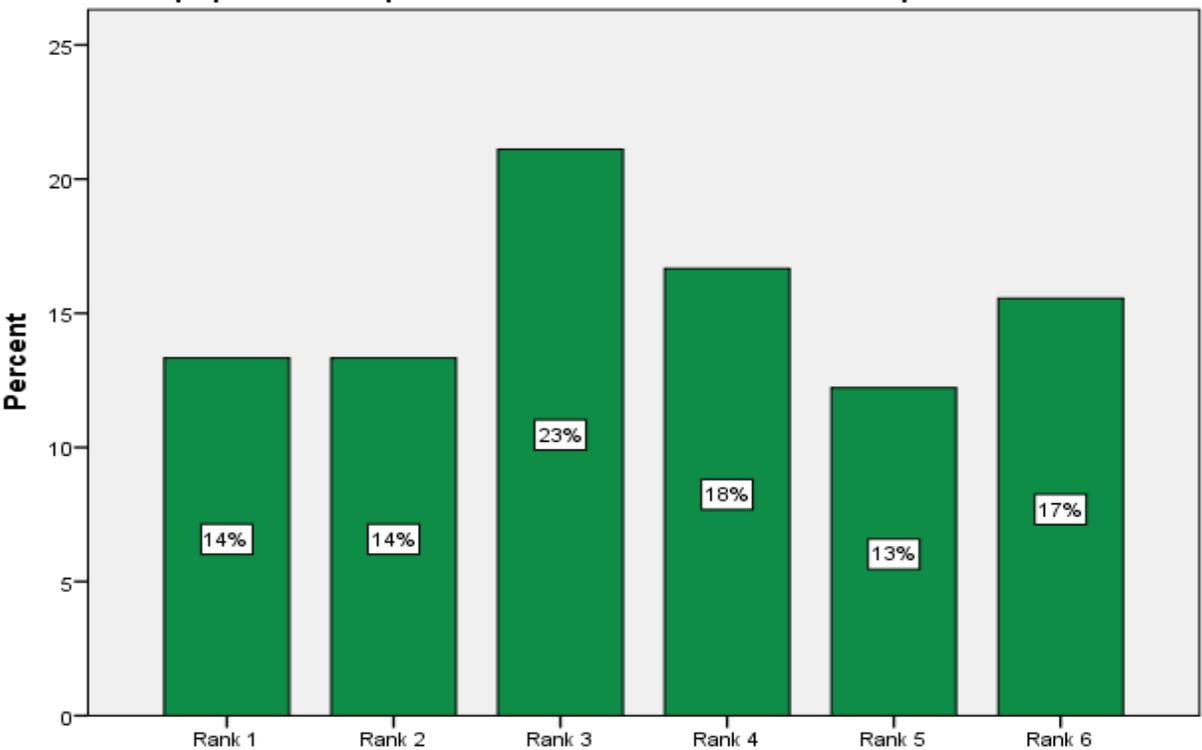
A significant proportion (sixty two percent) of respondents reported magazines as an important source to obtain information on sports brands.

Figure 4.24 TELEVISION IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



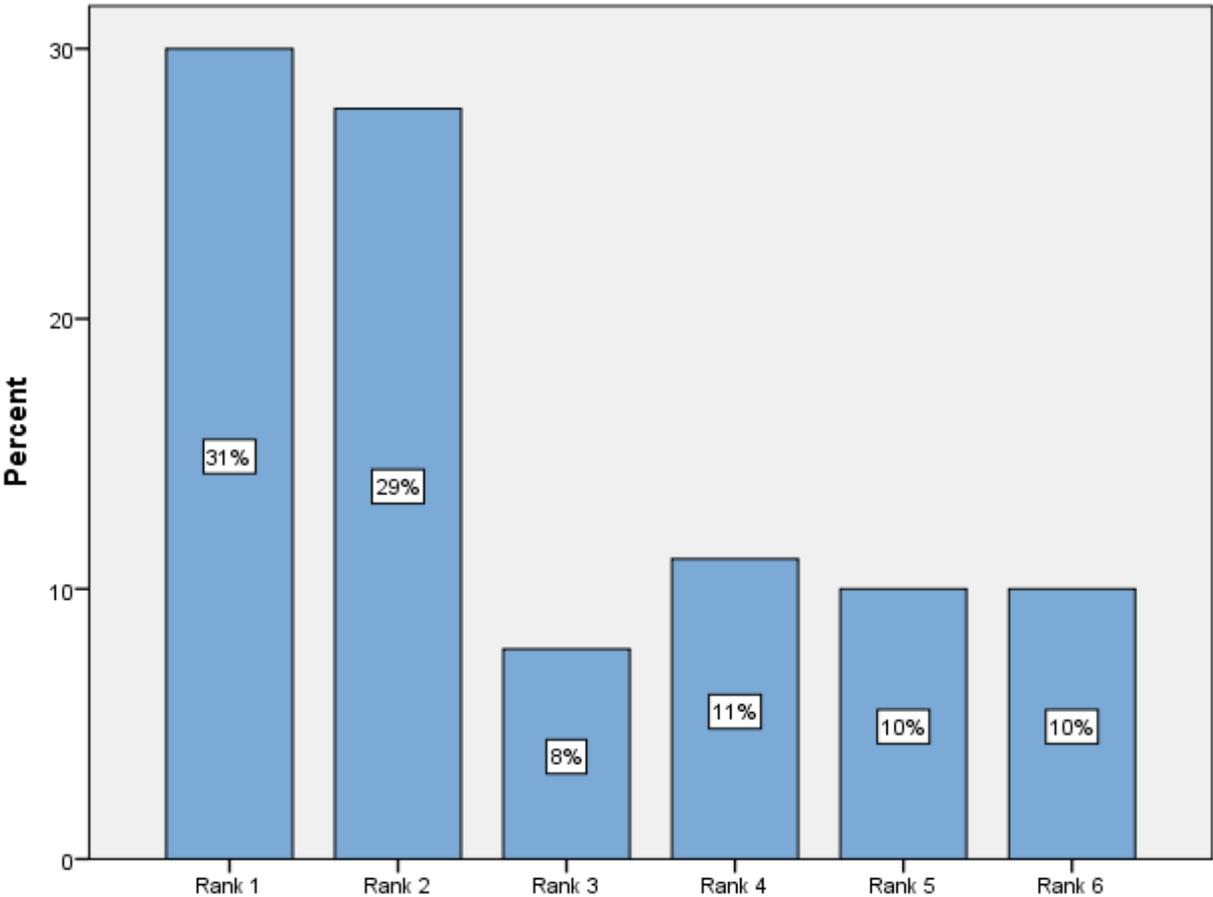
A similar importance as seen regarding magazines was observed in relation to television.

Figure 4.25 NEWSPAPER IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



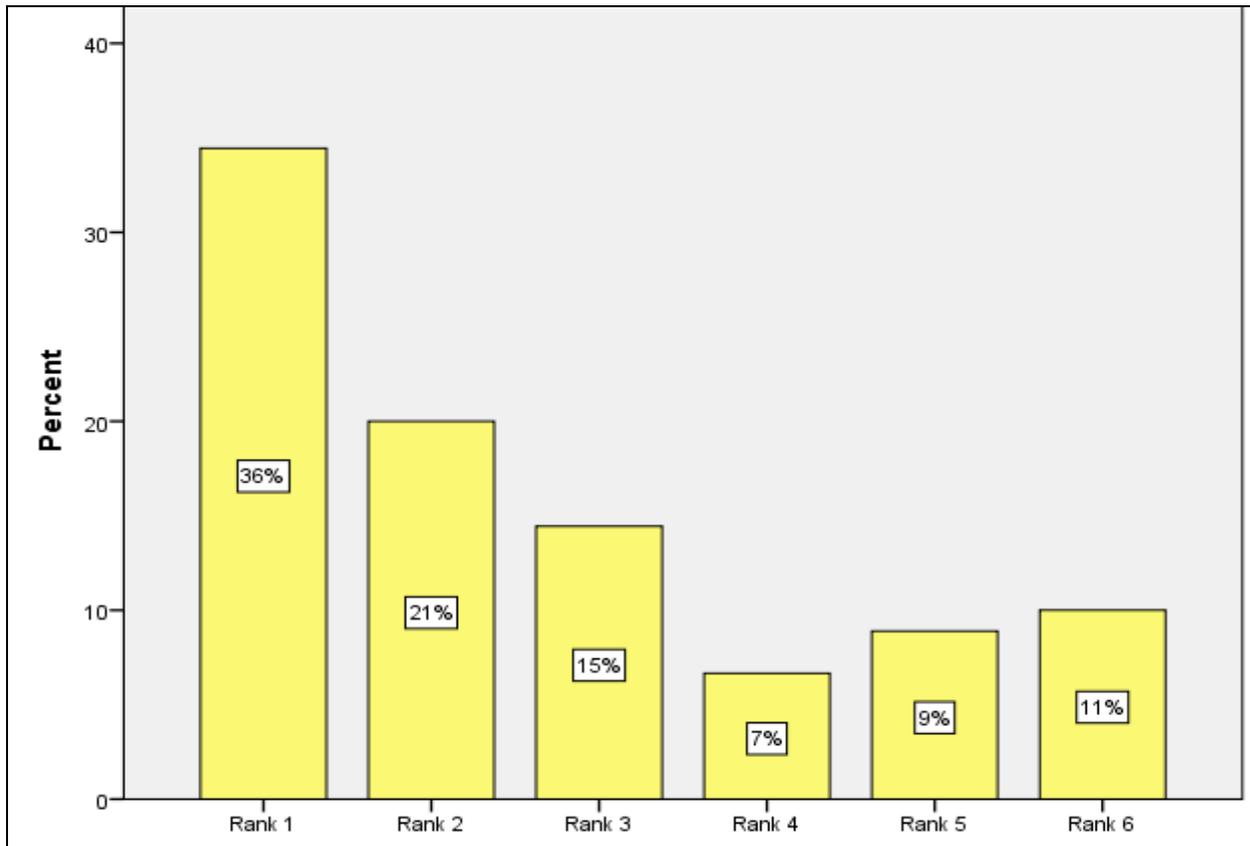
Newspapers were not seen as an important source of information for sports brands, with only twenty eight percent of respondents claiming to refer to newspapers for information pertaining to sports brands.

Figure 4.26 ONLINE IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



Online was reported as an important reference for information on sports brands by sixty percent of respondents as seen in Figure 4.26.

Figure 4.27 RECOMMENDATION (FRIENDS) IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS



Recommendation was also seen as important source of information by fifty seven percent of respondents as reported in Figure 4.27.

Objective 16

To determine in which channels sports brands are predominantly purchased

In order to address objective 17, the following questions in the questionnaire were analysed:

9.10. Where do you purchase your sports brands? Select all that apply

- A designated sport store (E.g. Nike store, Adidas store)
- A department store (E.g. Edgars)
- Sport specialization store (E.g. Sportsman's warehouse, Totalsports)
- Factory warehouse (E.g. a discounted value mart)

Figure 4.28 SPORTS BRANDS PURCHASE DESIGNATION



As seen in Figure 4.28, sports brands are reportedly purchased across all outlets where available. Designated and specialised stores are where sports brands are predominantly purchased with department stores following close behind. A small proportion of respondents reported shopping at factory stores. There was no literature found on whether the purchase designation impacts on the perception of sports brands.

4.3 Summary

This chapter presents and concludes the findings. The findings are discussed in further detail in relation to the study objectives in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the target objectives in order to understand how sports brands are perceived, considered and purchased. The first few questions included in the questionnaire aimed to determine whether income plays a role in influencing sports brand choice and frequency of purchase of sports brands. The results showed no significant relationship between the level of income earned and how frequently sports brands are shopped for. This suggests that, should consumers' income increase or decrease, changes in their purchase behaviours towards sports brands is unlikely. This is in contrast with available literature which suggests that the sportswear market in South Africa has seen volume growth as a result of reduced pricing (Euromonitor, 2013), implying that South African consumers are price conscious and there is an increase in the purchases of sports brands under conditions of reduced pricing. Furthermore, it can be argued that the opposite is also true, meaning that should consumers' income increase, more disposable income would be available as a result to be spent on purchases such as sportswear. This argument can be supported by the finding that the thirty five year plus female population is increasingly becoming a target for sportswear due to increasing participation in sport largely resulting from an increase in disposable income (Prweb, 2014). The majority of respondents reported to shop monthly or make one or two shopping trips in a year period. Respondents also reported shopping predominantly for sports clothing or footwear.

5.2 Discussion of Objectives

Discussion pertaining to objective 1 -To determine whether gender and demographic factors influence the perception of sports brands:

A minor difference in the importance of the brand's name was noted among male and female respondents. However, results leaned towards a greater tendency of brand name importance to men than to women which is in support of the literature, as male consumers make less of an effort when collecting brand information and hence the brand's name serves as a substitute for other brand information (Barbara et al., 2000). No significant evidence was therefore concluded regarding the influence of gender on the perceived importance of the brand's name with the brand name being perceived almost equally as important to females as it was to males. This is contradictory to the available literature reviewed where the brand's name is seen as a significantly important variable to males due to their lack of willingness to

seek product information and their perception that the brand's name is a substitute for product information (Barbara et al., 2000).

The price of sports brands was reported as a factor that will impact on respondents' brand choices among fifty nine percent of respondents; however, there was no significant difference in how price was perceived in females as opposed to male respondents.

With regards to brand quality, there was no significant difference between how female respondents ranked quality versus male respondents with a proportion of one hundred percent (females) and ninety percent males. No significant difference was reported regarding the degree of brand loyalty among female respondents as opposed to male respondents. There were no differences among males and females in relation to the perception of quality. Kumar and Lim (2008) found that women are more influenced by quality than men are. This reports a difference between the genders with a greater perceived importance elicited by women. The results in this study are contradictory to the finding by Kumar and Lim (2008) with an equal priority on quality reported by both males and females.

In regards to brand loyalty, Bailey (2005) found gender to have no impact on brand attitudes or switching intentions. This was in support of the results obtained in the study where there was insufficient evidence to conclude influences of gender on brand loyalty.

In response to athlete endorsement no gender differences were noted.

Gender differences pertaining to sport brand consumers were anticipated in this study from the outset. However, gender and demographic differences proved to be minimal within the sample. It has been reported that there are differences in the ways in which males and females shop, with women shopping to satisfy particular desires, whereas males shop strictly on a needs basis (Campbell, 1997). Females have also been found to spend more time shopping and assessing information than males do (McDonald, 1993). Males were found to value the brand's name more than females due to the tendency to use the brand's name as a replacement for information (Barbara et al., 2000).

No significant differences were found in this study pertaining to how sports brands are perceived by males and females which is a contradiction of the literature (Barbara et al., 2000). Females were also found in past research to place a greater value on quality (Bae & Miller, 2009). Findings in this study however show a similar importance in the concept of quality in females and in males. Demographics has

been found to explain little of the variation in brand choice (Fennel, Allenby, Yang & Edwards, 2003) suggesting that brand performance tends to be fairly even across demographics. This is aligned with findings from the study.

Discussion pertaining to objective 2 - To determine whether market leaders of the category possess top of mind awareness in the consideration and choice of sports brands:

The results illustrated that market leaders of the sports brand category is supported by the literature stating that brand awareness measures have also been found to have a relationship with market share where brands with a large share of market will always gain more responses than a smaller share brand (Romaniuk, 2006). It is also indicated that the market leaders, Nike and Adidas are predominantly the brands selected and purchased in a sports brand purchase decision.

Nike and Adidas hold the majority share within this category and were reported as the first brand recalled by a total of eighty six percent of respondents. This is a clear indication that market leaders predominantly possess top of mind awareness over brands that are not market leaders, who in this scenario were not mentioned as the first brands recalled. Therefore this finding is in support of the alternate hypothesis: that there is a difference between the frequencies with which market leaders are recalled versus brands that are not market leaders.

The hypothesis also supports the literature that brands with a higher share of market will gain more responses, evident from the findings that Nike and Adidas, brands with high market share, are recalled first in the majority of consideration and purchase scenarios, when the category is mentioned.

Consumers have shown specific preference for sports brands, reporting a strong affinity to brands such as Nike and Adidas (Milward Brown, 2013) with sixty seven percent preferring one particular brand, stating that they shop with specific brands in mind. This is in accordance with the findings reported in this study.

It was clear from the reported data that the market leaders are extremely strong in this market with the strength of two particular brands, Nike and Adidas, dominating in terms of market share in the market on a global level. It was of interest therefore to determine whether market leaders have top of mind awareness and secondly whether market leaders are predominantly the brand of choice in sports brand purchase decisions. It was also illustrated that respondents had distinct top of mind awareness levels of

the market leaders with the majority of respondents recalling either Nike or Adidas as the first brand that comes to mind when the category is considered.

As found in the literature, it is important for a brand to be recalled when the product category is considered (Campbell, 1997) and awareness of a brand is usually in line with its market share (Dawes, 2009). This supports findings in this study with those brands with the dominating share of market in the industry leading also on the basis of awareness, specifically top of mind awareness. Respondents furthermore reported not only awareness of but also to predominantly purchase the market leaders on many shopping occasions.

The market leaders Nike and Adidas dominate the market in terms of market share and category growth. This appears in line with their ability to be the first brand recalled and therefore considered in a purchase decision. According to Romaniuk (2006) a higher share brand will always be recalled more frequently than a brand that has a lower share (Romaniuk, 2006). This is evident from the top of mind awareness levels possessed by the market leaders. Keller (2003) argues that the measure of brand awareness is an important variable, because it is important that the consumer thinks of the brand when they think of the product category. This consideration of the product category has often resulted in consumer's decisions about other brands in a consideration set, with consumers choosing to purchase only the well-known brands (Keller, 2003). This is supported by findings in the study, as a majority of respondents indicated a clear preference for brands with market leader status. Awareness levels of these brands were also significantly high. This finding is also in support of Romaniuk (2006) who argues that a brand with a higher market share will always be recalled more frequently than a brand with a lower share.

Discussion pertaining to objective 3 - To determine whether there is a relationship between the perceived relevance and differentiation of sports brands to consumers:

Objective 3 aims to determine whether a relationship exists between relevance and differentiation relating to how sports brands are perceived. According to the Young and Rubicam Brand Asset Valuator (2010), relevance is defined as the level of appropriateness of a brand which enables the attraction and retention of consumers. Differentiation is defined as the factor that sets the brand apart from competitors. These two factors contribute to the strength of the brand. Findings showed a strong positive relationship between the concepts of relevance and differentiation which is in agreement with the Young and Rubicam model that respondents perceive their favourite sports brands as strong brands which are relevant to their needs and unique from competitors.

Brand knowledge has been established when consumers are aware of the brand and, as a result, understand what the brand or product stands for, whilst esteem defines the extent to which brands are held in high regard by consumers. The combination of esteem and knowledge contributes to the strength of the brand (Young & Rubicam, 2010). This indicates that respondents perceive their favoured sports brands strongly on the attributes of brand knowledge and esteem, meaning that respondents have a good understanding of what the brand stands for and have a high regard for their sports brands.

Discussion pertaining to objective 4 - To determine whether there is a relationship among the factors of relevance, differentiation, brand knowledge and esteem pertaining to sports brands:

Objective 4 aims to determine whether a relationship exists between the variables of knowledge and esteem. Knowledge is the degree to which consumers are aware of the brand and understand what the brand stands for, whilst esteem is the level to which a brand is regarded. The combination of these two variables indicates the brand's stature. A strong and positive relation was found between the concepts of brand knowledge and brand esteem indicating that consumers perceive understanding what their favourite sports brands stand for as well as holding these brands in high regard, meaning they have a level of admiration for such brands.

Discussion pertaining to objective 5: - To determine whether there is a perception among consumers that their preferred brands deliver on what is promised:

Findings in relation to objective 5 showed that respondents believe that their favourite sports brands deliver on their brand promises.

Respondents ranked sports brands highly on the attributes of Relevance, Differentiation, Knowledge and Esteem. Being ranked highly on the four attributes is an indication that the brand is well understood, considered different and unique versus its competitors, and valued as relevant and held in high regard. This qualifies a brand to be placed in the leadership quadrant of the Brand Asset Valuator Model (Young & Rubicam, 2010). Findings in this study are in agreement with this model, where sports brands are held in high regard on the basis of the four attributes mentioned above.

Discussion pertaining to objective 6 - To determine whether factors such as the brand's name, quality, athlete or team sponsored are influential in the purchase decision of sports brands:

Objective 6 intended to determine whether the brand's name, the level of quality, athlete endorsement and sports sponsorship, price and country of manufacture had an impact on sports brand preference.

Keller (2003) states that well-known brand names may lead to a higher recall of advertised benefits than non-famous brands. The brand's name has also been argued to be important as it attracts consumers to purchase the product as well as influences purchasing behaviour (Yee & Sidek, 2008). There is insufficient evidence in the findings to conclude support for the literature pertaining to the value placed on the brand's name.

Perceived quality acts as a differentiating factor from other brands and provides consumers with a reason to purchase a brand because quality acts as a differentiating factor from other products (Pappu et al., 2005). These findings illustrating the perceived importance of quality is aligned to the findings within this study that quality is an importantly perceived variable which impacts on brand preference.

Price has also been argued to influence consumer choice and purchase (Bucklin et al., 1998). As mentioned, over fifty percent of respondents within this study reported price as an important variable driving brand choice, which is supported by the findings within this study (Bucklin et al., 1998).

Newbury (2008) defines sportswear as an area of clothing in which the purchasing choices of consumers are often determined by the sports figures they admire. It has however, been argued that, despite the wide use of athletes as brand endorsers, there is a lack of published research that investigates the influence that endorsers may have on the target market (Bush et al., 2004). From the literature that does exist, Miciak and Shanklin (1994) argue that the desired impact of celebrity endorsers only meets the intended business objectives on one out of five occasions. It has also been argued that endorsers may not connect with the intended target market (Sukdhial et al., 2002). Despite this reported success rate, athletes have been shown to provide several important benefits to advertising such as increasing brand name recognition and creating positive associations by transferring different qualities to the products like physical appeal or likeability (Kamins, 1990). Athletic endorsements have also been known to influence the purchase of products for the purpose of identity expression (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). Respondents reported athlete

endorsement as a low priority regarding its influence on brand choice. In regards to the literature that has been published on the subject, the results obtained in this study contradicts the perceived importance that consumers are reported to have with particular athletes, with respondents placing a low priority on the importance of athlete endorsements.

In regards to sports team support and the perception of brands sponsoring particular sports teams the respondents report this not to be a significant factor influencing their brand choice. This is also in contrast to available literature which indicates that sports team admiration does influence consumer spending. Sports teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid have shown to drive retail sales of products associated with their names and images and it is common to tie their brands to popular teams (Carlson et al., 2009). Bergami and Bergozzi (2000) suggest that in tying their brands to popular teams', firms hope to transfer the team's positive attributes onto the brand. According to Kwon and Armstrong (2002), identification has a significant and positive influence on impulsive sport related purchases. When an individual identifies strongly with an entity there is an overlap between their self-view and the view of the entity or sports team in this case (Bergammi & Bagozzi, 2000). Strong identification has been linked to increases in consumer spending (Lichtenstein et al., 2004).

In addition, Carlson et al. (2009) state that consumers often buy items for others considered symbol passing as well as buying items for themselves, termed symbol collecting. It is argued that embracing favorable attitudes and behaviors toward specific sports teams may create an opportunity for fans to demonstrate similarity to sports teams and in turn the desirable perceptions associated with the team (Carlson & Donovan, 2008).

The results obtained in this study were in contrast to the literature with no significant value placed on athlete endorsers and sports team sponsorship.

Country of origin (COO) has been suggested as an important determinant of consumers' perceptions of quality and favourability of a brand (Shahin et al., 2013). It is thought to play an essential role in influencing consumers' evaluation of a brand or product. COO effects are thought to bring out associations, influence consumers' perceptions and cause brand popularity leading to brand loyalty (Shahin et al., 2013). COO has also been seen as having a significant impact on perceived quality and brand awareness which indicates that countries with a good brand image are often familiar to consumers and are perceived as producers of quality brands allowing such brands to be differentiated from others in

the category. Results obtained do not show that the country in which a brand is manufactured is an important variable driving choice.

As presented in the data, brand name and quality were reported as importantly perceived variables by respondents that drive the preference and choice of sports brands. Price was also seen as an important variable that is perceived to play a role in preference for sports brands. However, athlete endorsement and COO effects were not reported as influential variables driving brand choice.

The brand's name is perceived as important because it attracts consumers to purchase the product and also influences purchasing behaviour (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Product quality is argued to result in enhancing repeat purchase or switching of brands (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Perceived quality also differentiates the brand from other brands and in turn provides consumers with a reason to purchase that brand (Pappu et al., 2005). Price has been found to be the most important consideration of the average consumer (Cadogan & Foster, 2000). However, a greater willingness to pay a higher price has been observed among consumers that are loyal to a brand and hence findings show that purchase intention is not easily influenced by price (Bucklin et al., 1998). Respondents reported that they are driven by price and that price is likely to switch their purchase choice. This appears as a by-product of the fact that this category appears to be needs driven. Consumers purchase sports brands on a needs basis. Hence the reason that quality may be an essential factor for sports brands to have is due to a need for endurance, durability and comfort. The country of manufacture was reportedly not an influencing factor driving choice of sports brands.

Discussion pertaining to objective 7 - To determine whether there is a difference in how global and local brands are perceived:

Linking the findings to the perceived importance of quality, it can be assumed that the willingness to pay a higher price is not linked to the fact that it is manufactured globally as this factor was reported as non-significant, but rather due to the perceived superiority and higher quality of the brand. Global brands have shown growth in popularity, one reason being that global brands create consumer perceptions of brand superiority (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008) and better prestige, therefore resulting in more people likely to purchase that brand (Steenkamp et al., 2003). Johansson and Ronkainen (2005) establish that global brands enjoy higher self-esteem than local brands due to the fact that being marketed around the world gives an "aura of excellence". Holt et al. (2004) argue that global brands are not strong for all consumer segments in a developed country, which is a reflection of the results in this study where not all

respondents reported favourable perceptions towards global and local sports brands. Holt et al. (2004) suggest that global brands are still seen as the “awe inspiring company” in their perceived superior consumer value in emerging and developed markets as they inspire trust and indicate progress for people in these countries. The available literature is in support of the findings of this study regarding perception of global versus local brands.

Country of origin (COO) effects suggest that the country in which a brand is manufactured impacts on how the brand is perceived. Country of origin has been suggested as an important determinant of consumers’ perceptions in relation to quality and favourability and is believed to play a significant role in influencing consumers’ evaluation (Shahin et al., 2013). Country of origin effects have also been argued to result in brand loyalty (Shahin et al., 2003).

Discussion pertaining to objective 8 - To determine whether brand choice is predetermined prior to shopping:

According to a survey (Kurt Salmon Association, 1995), 8 out of 10 consumers shop for sports brands with a specific brand in mind and the majority of consumers reported that they were likely to leave a store without purchasing if their brand of choice was not available. This study’s findings are partly in agreement with the results in the survey conducted by the Kurt Salmon Association (1995), where respondents reported that they decide on their sports brand prior to entering a store. However they report that they would switch to an alternate brand once in the store if there were another brand that serves the same need but is on price promotion, or if they are persuaded by in-store media.

It was evident from the findings; therefore that brand choice is predetermined prior to shopping for sports brands. However, respondents revealed that they are highly likely to switch at the point of purchase due to other influencing factors such as price. This is an indication that strong cues at the point of purchase such as advertising and price value offset that speak to the consumer’s needs and demands for factors such as quality is relative to their need states, has the potential to switch their brand choice regardless of the fact that brand choice was pre-decided.

Women have also been found to shop for the sake of enjoyment with the intention of meeting a want or need. Therefore women may be more likely to make a decision based on gathered information prior to a shopping mission. Within this study, sixty three percent of respondents who reported making a brand choice decision prior to shopping were females, however an almost equal amount of males responded the

same way indicating that they are likely to decide on a brand prior to shopping for sportswear. As noted, brand name is an important attribute especially among men as it is used as a replacement for brand information. Brand name also proved important to female respondents in this study. Hence, it can be concluded that brand choice of sports brands are predetermined. Respondents however also reported having a low level of loyalty to their desired sports brands and would be likely to switch in the event of a price promotion for example. From the data it can be concluded that the majority of respondents claim that their brand choice is pre-determined.

Discussion pertaining to objective 9 - To determine whether media sources (television, in-store displays, recommendation, price and promotion) are common references in obtaining information about sports brands:

Although there was no comparative literature against which to make a comparison, no significant influence of advertisements and in-store advertisements was evident on the selection of sports brands. However, price promotion and recommendation was reported as a factor that is likely to influence brand choice.

Discussion pertaining to objective 10 - To determine whether consumers are loyal to particular sports brands and what attributes influence brand loyalty:

Results are in contrast to the literature discussed below, which reports a significantly high level of loyalty to sports brands, with respondents reporting the likelihood of considering brands other than their brand of choice. It is argued that a brand must be perceived positively on many levels to ensure repeat purchase and true brand loyalty (Amine, 1998) and not solely on the fact that they engage in continual re-purchase of a brand. Brand loyalty occurs because consumers perceive that the brand offers the right product features and image or level of quality at the right price (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Loyal customers are willing to pay a premium even if the price has increased, because the perceived risk is very high and they prefer to pay a higher price to avoid the risk of change (Yoon & Kim, 2000).

Relating loyalty specifically to sportswear brands, Discount Store News (1994) reported that consumers would walk out of a store without making a purchase if their favourite sports brand was not available. More than 8 out of 10 sporting goods consumers in the United States shopped for a specific sport brand with Nike, Adidas and Reebok at the top of their list of favourite sports brands (Kurt Salmon Association,

1995). The survey by Kurt Salmon Association also reported that 62% of consumers would go to another store if their brand was not available, with only 14% reporting that would switch to an alternate brand. This is an indication that there is a high level of loyalty among users of sportswear brands who are not likely to switch from their preferred brands. This finding is especially contradictory to findings reported in this study where significantly low levels of loyalty are illustrated by respondents. Respondents however did report that brand choice is pre-determined.

Brand loyalty occurs because consumers perceive that the brand offers the right product features, image or level of quality (Yee & Sidek, 2008). Loyal customers have also shown willingness to pay a price premium (Yoo et al., 2000). This study's findings are in contrast with that research. Sportswear brands are argued to enjoy polygamous loyalty from their consumers and switching between brands occurs in line with market share (Dawes, 2009). A brand such as Nike, is referred to as a lovemark (Bowman, 2008). A brand with such a perception is assumed to have high levels of loyalty. However, the findings from this study indicated that although consumers illustrated a strong preference for sports brands, consumers indicated a strong likelihood to switch brands on the basis of factors such as price promotion or in store advertising or on the basis of another brand's ability to cater to the same need. This is therefore in contradiction with the literature and indicates that sports brands consumers are not loyal to sports brands and that their purchase decision is based on a variety of factors.

Discussion pertaining to objective 11 - To determine whether there are strongly perceived associations with sports brands:

The findings in objective 11 linked many attributes with specific sports brands. Specifically there were many associations linked to the brand leaders. Comfort, innovation and style were associated strongly with sports brands. The findings pertaining to this objective was supported by current literature which illustrated that brands are being used more for the purpose of comfortable every day wear. Sportswear has trended to become a common and popular category among people as it identifies them with a more relaxed lifestyle, greater versatility and comfort (Yee & Sidek, 2008).

The associations illustrated were done so together with consideration of the associative network model (Peter & Olsen, 1993) discussed in the literature. Nike was associated with all variables tested and quite strongly among most respondents. Furthermore Adidas and Nike, the market leaders, had a few common associations with each other, such as quality, style and sport. Quality, style and sport are assumed to be category defining characteristics. There were weak levels of association with other brands which were

mentioned across only a few or in many instances across none, of the attributes. A few brands, namely Asics, New Balance, Quiksilver, Puma and Reebok did share a few attribute associations with the market leaders Nike and Adidas, such as quality and style.

In relation to the variable, style, which is a growing trend regarding sports brands, there was only a forty nine percent link between Adidas and the style factor. Style reportedly was associated highly with Nike (sixty eight percent). The same numbers across these two brands were noticed in relation to association with sport. This was surprising considering that within a sportswear category it would be assumed that there would be an automatic strong association with sport, especially in the case of Nike and Adidas who invest largely in sport, sports team and athlete sponsorship and endorsement.

As mentioned, there were low levels of associations with the rest of attributes across all brands including the market leaders showing no significant links regarding the brands having exciting advertisements, possession of status, endurance, memorability, being inspirational, instilling confidence and furthermore support of a sports team or athlete, despite brands such as Nike and Adidas investing largely on this front.

Nike showed association across all these attributes but were reported by between 25 to 35% of respondents. However, even Nike showed a twenty four percent association on the variable of support of an athlete. Respondents appear to have no significant interest in sport brand advertising as discussed in the results in the aforementioned objectives which may be due to respondents having not been exposed to such advertising or due to this advertising simply not appealing to them.

Associations were found to have a positive influence on consumer choice (Park & Srinivasen, 1994). There were a number of associations assumed to be relevant to the sportswear category and to brands within the category. Brand associations include the various attributes linked by consumers to a particular brand and are usually a collective set of associations built up through experiences with that particular brand. The findings of this study illustrated that the variables of quality as aforementioned: comfort, innovation and style were important variables associated with sports brands. Furthermore the associations were stronger with the market leaders and a small set of other brands being recalled across the associated variables. However, some brands were not mentioned across the variables. Nike was strongly associated across almost all of the variables, followed by Adidas which was only linked strongly to a few variables. Associations should be treated as a significant influencer of brand choice and experiences need to embed positive associations with sports brands so that associations can be built and linked to entrenched

perceptions of brands. The associative attributes of a category should be identified and these should be used to position brands in the mind of a consumer.

Discussion pertaining to objective 12 - To determine if there is a preference for gender used in sports apparel advertising:

According to the findings, there was no tendency towards preference for specific gender use in advertisements from males and females, showing that there is no gender bias perception towards the advertising of sports brands. This shows that respondents had no significant concern or preference for gender used in sports brand advertising. They expressed no desire to see either featured athletes or sports teams in sports brand advertising. In fact respondents expressed a desire to see more everyday people used in sports brand advertising.

A study by Hardin et al. (2002) showed men to be depicted three times more often than females, with male athletes shot in active poses of their sports fifty eight percent of the time whilst female athletes were only portrayed fifteen percent of the time in active poses, concluding that female athletes remain under-represented in all advertisements. Hardin et al. (2002) also concluded that there was a femininity focus as opposed to an athletic focus on female athletes. It was also found that in women magazines, female athletes were more likely to be featured in their sport than in male audience-intended magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Adams and Tuggle (2004) found that female athletes lacked representation on television sports coverage and that female athletes were perceived as inconsequential. In 1995 there was a ratio of twenty five males to one female athlete that were featured in athlete coverage. In 2002 the ratio was 48:1. A reason for this according to Nelson (1991) is that men dominate sports media and female athletes usually play by male rules. According to Goldman (1995), female endorsers have been shown to be more credible than male endorsers. The literature does not support the findings from objective twelve of this study.

Discussion pertaining to objective 13 - To determine whether sports team or athlete sponsorship influences the preference of sports brands:

The findings suggests that the endorsement by an athlete or sports team is an additional influencing factor that impacts on decision making and choice will not be made solely on this attribute.

As the data reported, sports sponsorship and sports team and athlete endorsement does not have a significant influence on brand choice, with less than half of the respondents claiming to make a purchase decision depending on the sport or sports team sponsored by a sports brand. This is in contrast to the available literature. Carlson et al. (2009) argue that sports teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid have been seen to be driving retail sales of products associated with their names and images. It has, therefore, been common for such sports teams to tie their brands to popular teams with the hope that positive attributes associated with these sports teams will be transferred to the brands they endorse (Carlson et al., 2009).

It has been suggested (Aaker, 1997) that the attraction to sports teams may be due to the overlap of how consumers view themselves and how they view the sports team (Bergammi et al., 2000), meaning identification with a sports team. Such strong identification has been linked to an increase in consumer spending (Lichtenstein et al., 2004). Consumers, in addition, choose sports teams, with desirable characteristics as a means to increase their own self-esteem (Carlson, 2005a). Athletic endorsements have similarly been known to influence the purchase of products for the purpose of identity expression. Fink and Kensicki (2002) illustrate the incidence of consumer purchase of products endorsed by athletes, stating that an individual motivated by an interest in role models may purchase a jersey endorsed by his/her favourite athlete because he/she aim to imitate that particular sporting personality that may be viewed as their role model. Consumers have also been known to frequently purchase products linked to sports teams either for themselves, termed symbol collection or for others termed symbol passing (Carlson et al., 2009).

Discussion pertaining to objective 14 - To determine whether sports brands elicit emotion:

The results were not particularly skewed towards any gender with the same proportion of males and females reporting a feeling of love towards their sports brands. A lower proportion of females reported experiencing a feeling of happiness from their favoured sports brands whilst inspiration proved identical across genders, and more males reported being energised by their sports brands. There was a similar magnitude of perception with respondents claiming that their sports brands help them perform at their best. There was a slight skew towards the twenty to twenty five-year age group. Respondents did not understand the relevance of the negative emotions included in the measure and therefore responded as not experiencing emotional influences towards sports brands. It is clear that emotion drives many perceptions of brands within this category. Although women have been known to be driven by emotional influences

regarding shopping, emotional influences on perception of sports brands are evident across males and females almost on an equal scale.

This objective relating to emotion is supported by the argument by Percy et al. (2004): if one is able to measure the emotions associated with a brand, this will enable brands to be better understood and more positive emotional associations to be formed with the brand in memory, Advertising and other marketing communication should help reinforce positive brand perceptions, as well as purchase intentions, formed as a result of the communication (Percy et al., 2004). Therefore, emotional variables based on Damasio (2006) were tested to determine if there was an emotional component that drives preference and perceptions of sports brands. Nike has been called a lovemark. Roberts (2004) defines a lovemark as a requirement for inspiring loyalty beyond reason and suggests that Nike's brand loyalty levels should be extremely high as a result. Based on the levels of loyalty discussed in the literature, it can be assumed that emotional influences exist within this category.

Discussion pertaining to objective 15 - To determine in which channels sports brands is predominantly purchased:

Television, magazines, online and recommendation from friends were reported as the most commonly referred to sources for information pertaining to sports brands. Radio and newspapers were not a common media source of reference among the majority of respondents. There was a high ranking on television as a referred source of information for sports brands, with magazines, online and recommendation following as popular sources of information for sports brands.

There was no significant finding regarding the type of stores where sports brands are purchased. Sports brands are generally purchased across all formats of stores.

5.3 Summary

Insights into how sports brands are perceived were investigated among a sample of 90 respondents. The majority of respondents reported shopping once to twice a year for sportswear brands with clothing and footwear being the most commonly purchased items. The majority of brand purchase decisions were predetermined before shopping for those brands.

In regards to gender and age trends in sports brand behaviour, brand name proved an important variable to both male and female respondents with a slight skew towards men, but was consistent across all age

categories. Males are believed to be more influenced by recommendation and usually seek information from sales people more than seeking information online or through print sources and other types of media. Females are believed to spend more time and effort gathering information from various sources prior to making a purchase decision.

Respondents reported seeking information about sports brands predominantly from online sources, television, magazines and recommendation from friends.

Quality was also an important variable across male and female respondents. A reason for this is that sports brands are relied upon for attributes such as performance, comfort and endurance when used for sport; and for comfort and endurance when used for leisure. Therefore quality is a top priority for sports brands consumers.

There was no significant report regarding the importance of athletes, sport or sports team sponsorship in influencing sport brand choice or preference in both male and female respondents. Respondents claimed that athlete and sports team sponsorship were not important variables driving their perceptions of sports brands. However, a number of respondents reported that the sponsorship of a sport is likely to drive their purchase decision - which is a contradiction.

Price was shown to be an important factor regardless of gender and age, with respondents claiming willingness to switch from their brand of choice to an alternate brand that is on price promotion.

Market leaders were distinctly top of mind being the first brands recalled when considering sports brands and they also remained the top brands of choice. Nike, Adidas, Reebok and Puma are seen as market leaders due to their dominant share of the sport brand category. However, Nike dominated on many levels regarding preference, awareness and most commonly purchased brand out of the basket of sports brands tested.

Regarding the Brand Asset Valuator tool discussed in the literature review, there was a significant and positive relationship on relevance, differentiation, knowledge and regard for the brand. This means there is a strong correlation between respondents' favoured brand and their understanding of the brand and its offering. The findings also show that respondents hold a high regard for their favourite sports brands. Respondents also reportedly view their favourite sports brands as relevant and different from other brands.

Sports brand choice was pre-determined prior to shopping. There was evidently also a perception that globally produced sports brands are superior to locally produced sports brands. However there was an importance in general put on the country in which the sports brand was manufactured.

Television, in-store advertisement, price promotion and recommendation all proved to be influential factors affecting the purchase decisions of sports brands.

There is relatively low loyalty to sports brands within the select sample, with respondents willing to switch to alternate brands in reaction to advertising and pricing influences.

Nike was associated strongly with all attributes measured and Adidas a few attributes, therefore linking this sports brand to Nike on a few levels such as quality, innovation, comfort, style and sport. Other brands were mentioned less frequently and were associated with the market leaders only through association of a select few associative variables such as quality, style and comfort.

Pertaining to advertising, there was no interest in or preference for advertising with gender feature bias. Similar to the respondents' perceptions and lack of need for sport brand sponsorship and association to sport, sports teams and athletes, the feature of specific genders in advertising proved a less valuable variable in driving behaviour regarding sports brands.

In relation to perception, sport's brands were perceived to be loved by a large proportion of respondents across all age groups but especially among twenty to twenty five year olds. Emotions of happiness, inspiration and confidence also showed significant correlations to favoured sports brands.

The next chapter, Chapter 6 offers business recommendations in relation to sports brand marketing based on the nature of the findings in the study.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and recommendations for future research in relation to the findings, discussion thereof, and in relation to the research objectives:

6.2 Conclusions

- Shoppers of sports brands were found to shop for sports brands once a year, three times per year and a small proportion of shoppers reported to make more frequent shopping trips, shopping once monthly for sports brands purchases.
- The majority of sports purchases were for clothing and footwear. Other sports goods such as accessories and equipment were reportedly purchased less frequently.
- No relationship was evident between the frequency with which shoppers shop and the level of income earned, indicating that an increase in income will not necessarily result in more frequent shopping missions for sports brands.
- No evidence of any significant gender implications driving the preference or purchase choice of sports brands was evident from the study. Both females and males portrayed similar behavior patterns towards attributes such as the brand's name, quality, athlete or team sponsorship or price. The brand's name was considered equally important by both males and females whilst both males and females expressed a significantly strong importance for quality. Both male and female respondents reported having no significant loyalty towards sports brands. Athlete endorsement and sport sponsorship was also shown to have equal importance among male and female respondents.
- Market leaders of this category, meaning brands that dominate on the basis of market share such as Nike and Adidas, proved to have top of mind awareness, being the first brands recalled at the mention of sports brands. Market leading brands were also reported to be brands that were part of a large number of respondents' recent purchases.
- As per the Brand Asset Valuator tool (Young & Rubicam, 2003), the four variables relevance, differentiation, brand knowledge and brand esteem were reported as attributes possessed by

respondents' favorite brands. This is an indication that respondents perceive that they have a significant degree of knowledge about their favorite sports brands; and that they consider the brand(s) as relevant to their needs and to be unique and different from competitors' brands. They are ultimately held in high regard by respondents. Possession of all four factors position brands in a leadership position. Considering the high recall of market leading brands, as well as the frequency with which these brands are purchased, it is evident that respondents are making reference to market leading brands. There was also a strong perception among respondents that their favorite sports brands deliver on what is promised.

- The brand's name was reportedly perceived to be an important variable that drives purchase choice of sports brands. Quality, as well as price, was also reported as a variable driving brand choice within this category. Contrary to the literature, athlete endorsement and sports sponsorship were not presented as factors driving choice. Furthermore, the country in which the brand was manufactured had no relative impact on purchase choice.
- There was no significant difference in how local brands and global brands were perceived.
- Brand decision was clearly reported as a decision that is made prior to shopping, meaning that brand choice is decided before an individual goes shopping for sports brands.
- Price promotion and recommendation were considered significant factors that drive the influence of purchase choice. However, advertising and in-store advertising were reported as non-significant in driving brand choice.
- Respondents expressed a low degree of loyalty towards sports brands. The category appears to be needs driven, based on the finding that respondents will likely chose any brand that meets their needs despite the high regard they may have for a favored sports brand. Respondents further reported that price promotion is not a factor that influences their product choice.
- Regarding the associations or links held with a brand, market leaders proved to have a great affinity to many of the variables, whilst other brands were shown to be linked to fewer associations.
- There was no noted preference for specific gender portrayals in sports brand advertising. Respondents did not consider gender important in advertising. Neither was there a strong

preference for the portrayal of sports team and athlete endorsers in advertising. Respondents however reported a preference for seeing more everyday people portrayed in advertising.

- A strong affinity with emotions was reported, indicating that sports brands do elicit emotion.

6.3 Recommendations

Considering the finding that income does not affect the frequency with which sports brands are purchased, and the fact that sports brands may be needs driven. Sports brands have an opportunity to effectively craft strong consumer propositions via a more tailored needs-based approach to influence the frequency of purchase resulting in consumers shopping for sports brands more often and purchasing further items and not just clothing and footwear. This will potentially allow growth of the brands as well as the category. In addition, creating a proposition not only around usage for sports but also for leisure, will create more usage occasions for sports brands and therefore enable a greater need for sports brands.

Although gender was found to have no impact on how sports brands are perceived in terms of the brand's name, the perception of quality, price, athlete or team sponsorship and price, gender and other demographic factors need to be considered when designing business strategies for sports brands. Taking into account the different ways in which males and females shop as well as the differing motives will provide insight into differential methods to enable sports brands to appeal to both genders and satisfy consumers' potentially different needs.

The market leaders within the study have proved to be successful on multiple levels. Market leaders proved to have top of mind awareness, and were reportedly the brands purchased by many of the respondents on recent shopping occasions. Market leaders were also found to have strong associations with relative variables within the category. Sports brands need to gain dominance and leadership in order to grow awareness levels and ensure they are recalled in a purchase decision. Smaller brands need to compete on differentiating factors and grow their brand equities so that they can compete with market leaders on the basis of factors that have proved to be important such as supreme quality and price.

Sports brands need to ensure that they win on various levels. Companies and organizations therefore need to ensure that brands stand apart from competitors, that the product offering meets the needs of the intended target market, and that the brand is clearly and well understood and held in high regard by consumers. This will grant sports brands leadership status and potentially aid in brands being more likely to be considered and selected in a purchase decision.

As previously stated, building and maintaining a position of leadership is associated with many benefits that may influence purchase. Therefore, the brand's name is a crucial element; therefore organizations should pay great attention to in developing the brand's name.

Considering the finding that brand choice of sports brands is predetermined, organizations need to understand the consumer's rationale in order to understand what motivates this choice prior to purchasing a brand. Gaining such insight will allow organizations to predict consumers' needs so as to be better able to influence and deliver against that particular need and thereby ensuring that particular brands are within the considered set of brands to be purchased.

Price promotion was indicated as a factor that influences product choice. However, quality was indicated as a crucial attribute that is expected of sports brands. Hence, creating a tradeoff between price and the value gained from the product's quality, may serve as being more effective than price promotion alone.

Recommendation appears to be a significant variable. Sports brands' organizations should engage with their consumers and aim to build an emotional connection with consumers. Building such connections with consumers will encourage word of mouth recommendation. Furthermore, such recommendation should be even stronger within sports groups where recommendation in terms of product success to support athletes or people engaging in sports is important. These consumers are more likely to recommend to fellow athletes and sports people, should success or satisfaction have been obtained with a specific purchase.

Loyalty was surprisingly a variable that was not evident with sports brands. As mentioned, building emotional connections with consumers and generating a strong consumer proposition with consumers will aid in bringing more consumers into a brand and thereafter consistently driving innovation to meet their evolving needs may ensure brand loyalty within the sports category. A starting point in achieving this will be to understand the needs of this market, if this market is in fact needs driven.

Sports organizations need to recognize the most relevant associations linked to sports brands and leverage such insights to build associations between brands and consumers. Strong associations identified within this study were quality, comfort, innovation and style.

Marketing communication needs to build equity around a brand's assets ensuring that the brand maintains top of mind in the consideration set and that the product offering is synonymous with a high and

consistent level of quality. A recommendation for marketers based on the demographic insights from this study, is to cater to the need to cater to the functional needs of the market. The organizations would need to offer quality at affordable prices and/or create a value for money proposition where price perception is offset by value perception gained because both male and female consumers have reported a willingness to pay a higher price for the value redeemed in a product.

Although the sample did not identify significant gender differences relating to the perceptions held by respondents of sports brands, marketers need to be cognizant of any potential differences in order to effectively cater to the potentially differing needs of both genders as reported by the literature discussed. Tailoring of communication by gender should be considered when marketing sports brands. The selected media platforms should also be tailored to be more attractive to females where necessary, due to their need for more information. A greater in-store marketing focus may assist in more effectively speaking to the targeted male market.

Marketers need to ensure that the experiences customers have with their sports brands contribute towards generating positive awareness and perceptions of the brand within memory in order to enable recall at a later stage when consumers are considering purchase. Through creating memorable experiences with consumers, brands will obtain a level of prompt awareness being recalled at the mention of the product category.

It is an essential competitive advantage to be differentiated from competitors especially within a choice scenario where there are a few brands within the consideration set. This may also in turn de-sensitise consumers from price, allowing for brand switching to be less likely to occur. Marketers have to consider ways in which to consistently differentiate their brands from competitors so that differentiating factors are evident to consumers so that the retention of consumers will result.

With regard to all four important attributes based on the Brand Asset Valuator, in order for a brand to be perceived strongly by a consumer as well as to be understood and admired, the variables of relevance, differentiation, knowledge and esteem should be prioritised. This will ensure that the brand will be consistently perceived as relevant by consumers, will be understood and admired, and will possess differentiating factors versus competitors.

Another trait regarding respondents' favourite sports brands that was reportedly important, was the perception that a brand delivers on its promise (Gerzema et al., 2008). When developing a brand promise,

a firm should ensure that it is able to and also be committed to delivering their brand promise. This may potentially aid in building a relationship of trust with consumers. As indicated by respondents, they are highly likely to switch brands based on another brand having the capability to better meet their needs, despite having a preference for a specific brand. Therefore, developing a perception among consumers that a brand delivers against its promises will allow consumers to consider and potentially build a greater degree of trust with such brands regardless of whether that brand is their brand of preference.

Looking at the nature of sports brands and their uses, sportswear is mainly used for athletic wear purposes and for leisure. This is an indication of why quality is perceived as an important variable of sports brand choice stemming from the need for longevity and comfort. Quality should be a non-compromised attribute that is communicated to both male and female shoppers and consumers.

Country of origin has been suggested as an important determinant of consumer's perceptions and has been believed to play an essential role in influencing consumers' evaluation of a brand or product. A recommendation to firms and marketers in this regard is that the country in which a sports brand is manufactured should (based on the above mentioned finding) not be named but rather there should be a focus on the quality aspect when communicating these brands to consumers.

Considering that online and television are commonly referenced sources, presence on these platforms should be pursued. Recommendation was reportedly a highly valued source. Integrating online presence via tactical means to spread awareness and equity via word-of-mouth may serve as an effective platform to facilitate recommendation.

Although consumers reported brand name to be an important variable driving the brands they chose and that brand choice was evidently pre-decided, there was a low level of loyalty that was reported from the study. A reason for this could be that consumers are seeking brands and products that cater to specific needs, be they sport or leisure. Despite the fact that the brand name is an important attribute driving choice and preference of sports brands in the market, there appears from the sample to be a low level of loyalty to brands and a large proportion of consumers therefore report the likelihood that they will switch if other influencing factors exist.

Needs is what drives consumption in this category and therefore consumers have reportedly claimed that they will switch to any brand that caters to that need. Therefore, understanding consumers' perceptions in

relation to their needs and catering to such needs to enable sports brands to stay ahead of competitors, is crucial. This also implies that brands, especially strong brands, should not assume that the strength of the name and brand assets is a sufficient differentiating factor versus competitors and therefore a motivating factor regarding purchase. Instead, there should be a focus on quality especially in regards the quality-value proposition and more importantly a focus on ensuring consumers are clear on the needs proposition that the brand and product range caters to.

The high cost of investment in sports sponsorship and endorsement seems ineffective in this case due to the perception of the target sample subjects stating that endorsement and sponsorship are unlikely to drive their brand decisions or preference for sports brands. This is contradictory to the available literature. Based on this finding, the intention of sport brand manufacturers to engage in sponsorship of popular sports teams or athletes may need to be reconsidered. Investment may provide a better return elsewhere should this insight be representative of the general population.

It was also found that the sport sponsored does impact on purchase choice. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the credibility of athlete and sports endorsers have the ability to transfer many of the attributes that they are admired for, onto an affiliated brand. Despite the growth of sport as an entertainment industry and the resultant star status that athletes and sports teams have achieved, it is surprising that a large proportion of the respondents interviewed in the study claim to place little importance on athlete or sport endorsements. In addition, they report having little care for the gender of athletes used in endorsements and report a higher preference for seeing normal everyday people in advertisements, as opposed to athletes and popular sports teams. The reason for this may be due to the promotion of sports in South Africa. Football for instance is a significant sport in the United Kingdom, with seats at all games selling out. Fans wearing their team merchandise as a means to display their support are embedded in a culture that helps them belong to a specific group and also identify with their favourite sports team. Rugby and football appear to have a similar fan base in South Africa, where fans support a specific provincial team or express their support of the national team. From the data, it can be assumed, however, that there is no link between the supported team and the manufacturer. Respondents do, however, report that the sport sponsored will influence which brand they choose which is in contradiction of the fact that they perceive athlete and sports team endorsement as a less significant attribute driving their brand choice.

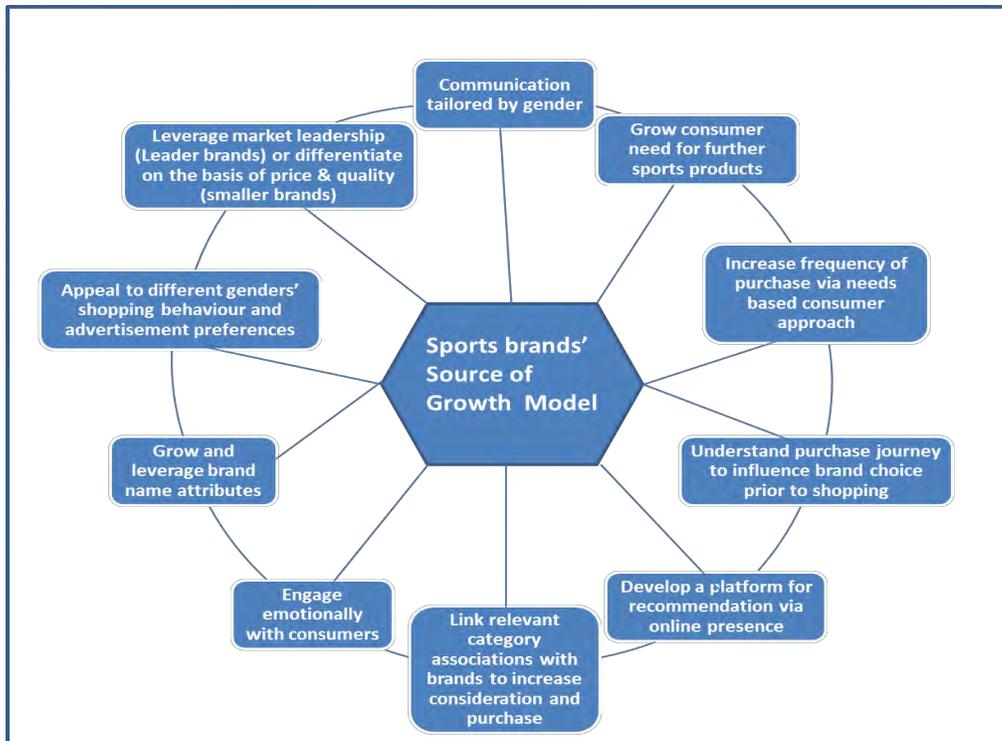
It was clearly evident that there was no influence of sport or sports team or athlete endorsement on the preference or choice of sports brands. Also, the suggestion that respondents would like to see more

everyday people is an indication that the high investment required for athlete or sports team endorsement needs to be reviewed if it appears that consumers do not respond to such advertising as is perceived by current brands employing this angle of advertising. Funds could, therefore, be invested more optimally to warrant higher return on investment.

Television, magazines, online and recommendation were seen as the most commonly referred to mediums for information on sports brands. Advertisers need to consider carefully the channels in which they advertise in order to maximise investments and returns as previously mentioned. The digital space should be investigated as a potential growth opportunity due to more people being present there. Advertising was also not reported as significant a media source as expected; hence it may become a less utilised medium.

The highest frequency of purchase of sports brands was reported in sport specialisation stores. There is, therefore, an opportunity to communicate in such stores with dynamic and effective point of sale to win consumers in the purchase choice.

Figure 6.1 RECOMMENDATION FOR SPORTS BRANDS' SOURCE OF GROWTH



6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

- Due to the literature confirming that sport and athlete endorsement is still a common marketing initiative of sports brands, together with the numerous athletes known to be affiliated with sports brands, further insight is needed into endorsement and the effect thereof, before investment is made. The results in this study were contradictory in that respondents did not place importance on athlete endorsement or sport or sports team sponsorship as a variable driving their brand choice. Literature pertaining to the success of such endorsement is minimal. Hence sports brands need to delve into the subject in order to gauge whether this is an optimal means of advertising spend.
- With regards to loyalty, the literature claimed that there is a high level of loyalty linked to sports brands and that consumers are likely to leave a store without a purchase if their sports brand was not available. The findings in this study were in contradiction of this, indicating that the purchase of sports brands is decided in line with the attributes of the brand that allows the consumer's needs to be met. More insight is needed as to the degree of loyalty in the sports brand category and as to what drives needs. Sports brands need to gain insight into possible drivers of loyalty in order to build long term relationships with consumers and ensure that consumers do not switch between brands.
- As there was no preference of gender use in advertising, further insight should be obtained with regard to the impact of gender on sports brand choice and preference. The literature available also makes mention that male endorsers are predominantly used in sports brand advertising and that female endorsers have proven to be more effective. Hence more research is required in this area.
- Due to a lack of literature in this area, further investigation into which media channels are most frequently accessed is needed, in order for sports organisations to optimally devise strategies to drive communication through such channels.
- Market leadership was found in this study as well as in the literature to be a strong driver of sports brand preference. However, it was also found within this study that such preference did not impact actual product choice and purchase. It is therefore recommended that more research be conducted to determine whether market leadership is linked to product choice and if found to be true, to devise means of obtaining share leadership in the category in order to deliver on consumer demands concerning sports brands.

- Brand choice was distinctly found to be predetermined. However it was indicated that brand choice may be influenced by consumers' needs so that switching may occur at the point of purchase. Further investigation is required to determine whether brand choice is predetermined and to devise means of a brand being within the considered set of sports brands prior to purchase.
- Associations were found to be strongly linked with particular sports brands and may enable recall of specific brands when required. Further research is recommended to determine what associations are most strongly linked to sports brands and optimise these in marketing communication and product delivery.

6.5 Conclusion

The Study tested several constructs of perception in order to investigate how consumers perceive sports brands and gain insight into the drivers of sports brand preference and choice. Findings drew inferences illustrating, that strong factors likely to drive sports brand choice included the brand's name as well as the brand's leadership positioning within the category. Perceived quality was also reported as a significant driver of brand choice. Contradictory to past research, no evidence was found to conclude loyalty to sports brands, however price and ability of a sports brand to meet the required need was reported as a more significant factor likely to influence choice of sports brand. Several recommendations are made in relation to the objectives, findings and past research; however, due to the relatively limited sample selected for this study, it is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate this construct further among larger and more diverse samples to gain richer insight and scope into how sports brands are perceived.

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APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance Letter



10 September 2013

Ms Pragashni Pillai 202522461
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0987/013M
Project title: "A survey of the perception of sport brands amongst select customers in the Pietermaritzburg region"

Dear Ms Pillai

Full Approval – Expedited

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has now been granted full approval.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Mr Sanjay Soni
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor B McArthur
cc School Administrator: Ms D Cunyngame

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville



INSPIRING GREATNESS

**APPENDIX B:
Questionnaire Cover Letter**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance
M Com Research Project
Researcher: Pragashni Pillai (071 491 6863)
Supervisor: Sanjay Soni (033- 2605735)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

Dear Respondent,

I, Pragashni Pillai am a Masters of Commerce (Marketing) student at the School of Management, IT and Governance – Pietermaritzburg campus, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*A survey of the perception of sport brands amongst select customers in the Pietermaritzburg region*”

The aim of this study is to gather insight into how people in KwaZulu-Natal perceive sport’s brands by investigating the following:

- What influences your preference of sports brands
- Whether you think about local and global sports brands
- Whether sport teams or athletes impact on which sport’s brands you purchase and prefer
- How you feel towards different sports brands

You have been randomly selected to participate in this study. Through your participation, I hope to understand further the above questions. The results of this survey are intended to contribute to understanding perceptions that people have of sport’s brands. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, IT and Governance – PMB campus, UKZN

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The data you provide will be secured for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

It should take you about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Pragashni Pillai

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

**APPENDIX C:
Informed Consent Form**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance
M Com Research Project
Researcher: Pragashni Pillai (071 491 6863)
Supervisor: Sanjay Soni (033- 2605735)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

CONSENT

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

**APPENDIX D:
Questionnaire**

Questionnaire

“A survey of the perception of sport brands amongst select customers in the Pietermaritzburg region”

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOURSELF

1.1. Name _____ (Optional)

1.2. Occupation: _____

1.3. Gender Female
Male

1.4. Age Under 20
 20 - 25
 26 - 30
 31 - 35
 36 - 40
 41 - 50
 51 +

1.5. Ethnicity Black
 White
 Asian
 Coloured
 Other (Please specify) _____

1.6. Do you engage in sport? Yes
 No

If yes, please indicate which sports you are involved in

1.7. What is your monthly average Income?

- R0 – 999
- R1000 – R2999
- R3000 – R4999
- R5000 – R9999
- R10000 – R14999
- R15000+

1.8. When you think of sport brands, which is the first brand that comes to mind?

1.9. Which other brands come to mind?

1.10. How often do you go shopping for athletic apparel?

- Once a year
- Two times a year
- Three times a year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Never

Other (Please specify) _____

1.11. If yes, what type of items do you purchase? You may select more than one item.

- Clothing
- Footwear
- Sporting equipment
- Sunglasses
- Accessories
- Other (Please specify) _____

1.12. Indicate which of the following brands you have purchased recently. Select all that apply:

NIKE	ADIDAS	REEBOK	TAP IT	QUIKSILVER
PUMA	ROXY	SPEEDO	MR PRICE SPORT	EVERLAST
TITLE	FUSION	NEW BALANCE	ASICS	GYM
SLAZENGER	UNDER ARMOUR	FALKE	KAPPA	HI TECH
TOTALPORTS	PRO ACTION	WILSON	GILBERT	TAYLORMADE
OAKLEY	FIRST ASCENT	K WAY		

Other (Please specify) _____

1.13. Which of the following brands are familiar to you? Select all that apply:

NIKE	ADIDAS	REEBOK	TAP OUT	QUIKSILVER
PUMA	ROXY	SPEEDO	MR PRICE SPORT	EVERLAST
TITLE	FUSION	NEW BALANCE	ASICS	GYM
SLAZENGER	UNDER ARMOUR	FALKE	KAPPA	HI TECH
TOTALPORTS	PRO ACTION	WILSON	GILBERT	TAYLORMADE
OAKLEY	FIRST ASCENT	K WAY		

1.14. Which of the following brands are you a user of? Select all that apply:

NIKE	ADIDAS	REEBOK	TAP OUT	QUIKSILVER
PUMA	ROXY	SPEEDO	MR PRICE SPORT	EVERLAST
TITLE	FUSION	NEW BALANCE	ASICS	GYM
SLAZENGER	UNDER ARMOUR	FALKE	KAPPA	HI TECH
TOTALPORTS	PRO ACTION	WILSON	GILBERT	TAYLORMADE
OAKLEY	FIRST ASCENT	K WAY		

1.15. Rank the following brands in order of your preference, 1 being your favourite brand. Rate only your top 10 favourite brands.

If your brand of choice does not appear list your sport brands in order of importance under "Other"

BRAND	RANKING	BRAND	RANKING	BRAND	RANKING	OTHER
NIKE		REEBOK		EVERLAST		
PUMA		SPEEDO		GYM		
TITLE		NEW BALANCE		HI TECH		
SLAZENGER		FALKE		TAP OUT		
TOTALPORTS		WILSON		MR PRICE SPORT		
OAKLEY		K WAY		ASICS		
ADIDAS		UNDER ARMOUR		KAPPA		
ROXY		PRO ACTION		GILBERT		
FUSION		FIRST ASCENT				
TAYLORMADE		QUIKSILVER				

Other (Please specify) _____

SECTION 2

Consider your favourite sports brand when answering the following questions. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
2.1. This brand gets my attention because it is different from other brands	1	2	3	4	5
2.2. This brand is relevant to me and my needs	1	2	3	4	5
2.3. I think highly of this brand	1	2	3	4	5
2.4. This brand delivers on what it promises	1	2	3	4	5
2.5. I understand what this brand is about and what it stands for	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 3

3.1. When shopping, which of the following factors are important to you when selecting a sports brand? Rank in order of their importance, 1 being the most important and 5 the least important. Each factor should have a different ranking.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete or team the brand sponsors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Price | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The country in which the product is manufactured | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3.2. When considering buying a sporting brand, do you know which brand you are going to purchase before you enter a store?

- Yes
- No

3.3. What is most likely to cause you to purchase a specific sports brand? Rate on a scale from 1-7, 1, being the most important and 7 being the least important. Each factor should have a different ranking.

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports team sponsored | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete endorser | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sport sponsored by the brand | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In store advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Price Promotion in store | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended by a friend | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other factors: Please specify: | _____ | | | | | | |

3.3. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
<input type="checkbox"/> I always purchase the same sports brand and will not consider another brand	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> I will purchase any sports brand that meets my need	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> I will purchase whichever sports brand that is on price promotion	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to be fashionable	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to be innovative	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to be manufactured locally	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to be manufactured internationally	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to sponsor athletes or sport team	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to feature female athletes in their advertising	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to feature males in their advertising	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> The sports brand I choose needs to feature both males and females in their advertising	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4

4.1. Consider the following sport brands. Please indicate all factors that you think apply to each brand. Rate only the brands that you are familiar with. Mark all that apply with an X.

BRAND	HIGH QUALITY	COMFORT	INNOVATIVE	SYTLE	SPORT	HAS EXCITING ADVERTISEMENTS	HIGH STATUS	ENDURING	MEMORABLE	INSPIRING	CONFIDENT	SUPPORTS MY FAVOURITE ATHLETE/ SPORTS TEAM
NIKE												
REEBOK												
ADIDAS												
PUMA												
TITLE												
TAP IT												
QUIKSILVER												
ROXY												
SPEEDO												
MR PRICE SPORT												
FUSION												
NEW BALANCE												
ASICS												
SLAZENGER												
OAKLEY												
WILSON												
TAYLORMADE												
KAPPA												
GYM												
HI TECH												
PRO ACTION												
FIRST ASCENT												
K WAY												

SECTION 5

5.1. Consider your favourite sport brand/ brands and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement on the following scales regarding how you feel towards this brand

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
5.1. a. I love this brand	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. b. My favourite sports brand/brands makes me happy	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. c. My favourite sports brand inspires me	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. d. My favourite sports brand makes me sad	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. e. My favourite sports brand causes me to feel scared	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. f. My favourite sports brand surprises me	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. g. My favourite sports brand makes me angry	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. h. My favourite sports brand gives me confidence	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. i. My favourite sports brand empowers me	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. j. My favourite sports brand energizes me	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. k. My favourite sports brand helps me perform at my best	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. m. No other brand can compete with my favourite brand	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. n. My favourite sports brand is the leader in innovation	1	2	3	4	5
5.1. o. My favourite sports brand sponsors the best athlete/team	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 5

5.2. Indicate what is most important to you when using a sports brand. Please indicate in order of preference, 1 being the most important, and 7 being the least important. Each factor should have a different ranking.

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The brand’s performance in sport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion appeal / Style | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support of a sports team / athlete | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country in which it is manufactured | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How appealing the advertisement is | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | | | | | | | |

SECTION 6

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to your preferred sports brand/ brands

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

- | | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 6.1. The sport that a brand sponsors is an important factor that will influence which sport brands I prefer / choose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.2. The athlete / sports team sponsored by a sports brand influences which Sports brand I prefer /choose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.3. The sport’s team or athlete endorsing a sports brand is more important than the brand itself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

	SA	A	N	D	SD
6.4. I prefer advertisements of sport's apparel brands that have a greater male focus	1	2	3	4	5
6.5. I prefer advertisements of sport brands that have a greater female focus	1	2	3	4	5
6.6. The performance of the sports team or athlete endorsing a brand impacts how I see the brand in a positive way	1	2	3	4	5
6.7. The performance of the sports team or athlete endorsing a brand impacts how I see the brand in a negative way	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 7

7.1. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
7.1. Global brands are more superior than local brands	1	2	3	4	5
7.2. Global brands have a higher level of quality than local brand	1	2	3	4	5
7.3. I will pay more for a global sports brand	1	2	3	4	5
7.4. The country in which a brand is manufactured is an important consideration factor in choosing sport's apparel brands	1	2	3	4	5

Section 8

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
8.1. Sport brand advertisements should feature men only	1	2	3	4	5
8.2. Sport brand advertisements should feature women only	1	2	3	4	5
8.4. Sport brand advertising should focus on sports teams	1	2	3	4	5
8.5. Sport brand advertisements should focus on athletes	1	2	3	4	5
8.6. Sport brand advertisements should focus on everyday people	1	2	3	4	5

Section 9

9.1. Where do you obtain information about sporting brands before purchasing? Rate in order of importance. Each factor should have a different ranking.

Radio	1	2	3	4	5	6
Television	1	2	3	4	5	6
Newspaper	1	2	3	4	5	6
Magazine	1	2	3	4	5	6
Online	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6

9.10. Where do you purchase your sport brands? Select all that apply

- A designated sport store (E.g. Nike store, Adidas store)
- A department store (E.g. Edgars)
- Sport specialization store (E.g. Sportsman's warehouse, Totalsports)
- Factory warehouse (E.g. a discounted value mart)

Thank you for your participation.