

**THE EFFECT OF ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT BRANDING ON TEENAGE
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE ACTION SPORTSWEAR MARKET**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the effect anti-establishment branding has on teenage consumer behaviour within the action sports market, as well as the various factors which influence teenagers when purchasing clothing. The study challenges the notion that teenage consumers respond to, and are influenced by the unconventional marketing campaigns of action sports brands.

The results of this study indicate that the action sports market initially captivated the attention of the youth by offering teenagers a sense of acceptance through rebellion. Unfortunately, as the movement grew in popularity the exclusivity of the movement decreased and the clothing associated with it became viewed as too 'mainstream' by the wearers. Although the anti-establishment movement is striving for individuality and shies away from conformity, the study found that there appears to be a misconception in the notion that all 'brands' are susceptible to 'trends' which are driven by 'designers'. Therefore, there can never be a pure 'anti-establishment brand' as the concept of a brand rejects the purpose of anti-establishment rebellion.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

***‘Trends are only considered ‘trends’ because they have a following of people. If people did not copy one another’s dress styles then the concept of ‘trends’ would be eradicated’
(Respondent from study, 2010).***

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a general outline of the study, information regarding the research undertaken and clarifies the merit of the research. The chapter examines background information relevant to the topic, highlights critical questions and defines problems the study encountered.

1.2 PURPOSE STATEMENT

To investigate the effect anti-establishment branding has on teenage consumer behaviour within the action sportswear market.

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO ACTION SPORTS

Participation in action sports such as snowboarding, skateboarding, freestyle motocross and many individual based sports is on the rise and has been growing globally over the past ten years (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:16). As a result of cleverly strategized marketing tools there has been a progression in consumers developing an interest in clothing brands related to these types of activities. This development has translated into a booming industry worldwide and in 2005 in the USA alone it was estimated to be a staggering \$12-billion industry, with a growth rate of 20% per annum (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:16). Khanh (2008:13) states that action sports apparel is emerging as a viable market in a troubled industry. For this reason it is important to investigate this phenomenon driven by the clothing industry.

The sudden growth and interest into this niche market may be driven by advertisements and intuitive marketing strategies which project these brands as a part of an extreme lifestyle

To test this assumption the study examined the buying behaviour of teenagers from various schools located in the Highway Area with the Durban area and questioned the respondents regarding their views on action sports brands and their understanding of 'anti-establishment' branding. This was done in order to gather information about brand awareness and the youth's attitudes towards certain action sports brands. The results of the study serve as an indication of the potential growth within the youth market. It could also be used to assess how aware the youth are of actions sports brands such as *Volcom*, *Quiksilver*, *Fox*, *Element*, *Zoo York* and many others. The study provides qualitative results regarding how teenagers view, understand and interpret brand image. It might also identify the number of learners within the defined sample who are actively involved in purchasing products from action sports stores.

The anti-establishment image these brands portray reflects the lifestyle associated with this niche market. The perception that danger is a way of life and not a risk, is utilised within marketing strategies to capture the attention of thrill seeking teenagers and consumers who strive for individuality. The element of risk and individuality was assumed to play a major role within the consumers' decision-making process and therefore became a key theme throughout the study's investigation. For example, *Volcom* is named as one of the fastest growing brands in the \$12-billion global action sports industry (Palmeri, 2008:1). This figure indicates the importance of this growing market within the South African clothing industry and should encourage retailers to invest in this sector. How this translates into earning potential within a South African context would be beneficial to marketing managers who seek to understand the psychological reasons behind adolescent purchasing intent. The results of the study could serve as a useful tool to local brand managers who are concerned with understanding the reasons why certain brands appeal more to consumers falling into this age group and why others do not. As a product's brand image follows through from concept to consumer, the brand's advertising strategies need to correspond with the desired response from consumers. For this reason

advertisers play a pivotal role in the formation of brand image. As discovered, adolescents who are purchasing action sports clothing have rigid ideas of where the line is drawn between mainstream clothing and anti-establishment images. Therefore, by exploring the contributing factors of consumer behaviour this study will serve as a guide for advertisers as to how the formulation of successful advertising strategies can benefit the brand.

The areas focussed upon in this study were that of consumers' perceptions of action sports brands, reasons for choosing certain brands over others, as well as consumer reasoning at point of purchase. The information gathered included consumer profiling such as age, demographics, opinions towards differing brands and expectations of the image certain brands portray.

Information on the topic at hand can be found in past and current literature; therefore the initial process was to source documented theories relating to the topic. These assumptions and theories are investigated and analysed within the literature review section of the study. The available literature is used in this chapter to provide a general outline and presents a general background to the topic, thus contextualising the study within the field of branding.

1.4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The theoretical framework for this study rests on the following key issues:

- The social, cultural and psychological factors that might influence teenage consumer behaviour at point of purchase;
- Marketing strategies which have been successful in capturing the youth's attention within the action sport Industry; and
- The formation of teenage sub-cultures which contributes to consumer socialisation and consumer buying habits.

1.4.1 The importance of consumer behaviour studies

According to Tustin (2006:26) quantifying consumer spending is of particular use in analyzing the demand for certain product groups and for tracking the spending trends of different consumer groups. Although national data on consumer spending trends is readily available, there appears to be little data on spending patterns of consumers in the South African action sports market. Therefore, building on literature available in an international context, this study aims to provide empirical research on how action sports brands have established and captured a niche market in the South African branded clothing industry.

1.4.2 The social, cultural and psychological factors that influence teenage consumer behaviour

Bornmann (2004:16) describes Generation Y consumers as a CAPTIVE target audience who have a natural desire for anything fresh and are highly susceptible and impressionable. Consumers born between the years 1977 and 1994 are deemed part of Generation Y. Sebor (2006:25) describes this generation as the perfect consumers; they grew up on MTV, are a generation that has always been exposed to cellular telephones, and are a media-saturated generation who are tired of being targeted by advertisers. The dynamics involved in the buying habits of this new generation were evaluated against theories found within the literature. Models such as Solomon's Wheel of Consumer Behaviour (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004:117) explore the factors which play a role in the decision making process when adolescents are placed in a buying situation. This theory highlights the marketing tactics to which adolescents are susceptible, and how these tactics are used to elevate a brand's status within the teenage consumer market.

1.4.3 Marketing strategies used to capture the youth market

One particular marketing strategy which has emerged in the past decade is that of Lifestyle Advertising. This method has been highly successful when used to promote products related to the sporting industry, with particular reference to the

action sports Industry. As explained by Solomon (2003:2), in the past products were used strategically to manage the impressions made on others. Today brands are used as material props to validate the wearer's identity, and to promote acceptance within their social environment. The Wheel of Consumer Behaviour underscores the essence of Lifestyle advertising and affirms that people buy products because of what they might reveal about the wearer.

Puchan (2004:171) states that action sports are often described as lifestyle sports which involve a certain level of challenging one's abilities, and therefore the clothing needs to match the spirit of the sport. It is for this reason the trend of Lifestyle advertising coincides with this specific segment of the market. Puchan (2004:171) emphasises that the advertising industry has identified an increased interest in extreme sports. The advertising industry frequently uses extreme sport sequences to promote ordinary products with the aim of capturing the aura of the extraordinary and the extreme.

1.4.4 Consumer socialisation and the influence of sub-cultures

Olson and Peter (2005:296) suggest that advertising has been the most closely studied method of transferring cultural meanings from physical and social environments into products. Sub-cultures play a definitive role in the socialisation of teenagers, and influence products purchased. Olson and Peter (2005:321,360) describe sub-cultures as distinctive groups of people in a society who share common cultural perceptions of:

- Emotional reactions (beliefs, values and goals);
- Behaviours (customs, rituals, behavioural norms); and
- Environmental factors (living conditions, geographic location, important objects).

The concept of sub-cultures will be used to interpret the principal characteristics of the action sports consumer. It is important to explore the socialisation process of children through adolescence in order to understand the need for, and formation of

reference groups and sub-cultures. It is important to study the cognitive meanings attributed to sub-cultures in order to understand the expectations a typical action sports consumer might hold for products falling within the action sports market. Consumer socialization refers to how consumers develop and acquire attitudes and opinions regarding products and brands. This in turn results in emotional bonds with brands which can be valuable incentives to maintaining brand loyalty.

1.5 RATIONALE

As the teenage market is fast paced and constantly evolving, it provides an exciting area for research. It has become evident that no matter how many new styles and trends today's youth are exposed to, teenagers are able to remain current with these new trends. The 'anti-establishment' movement which is gaining popularity with the youth has not been investigated in depth and uncovering teenagers' opinions regarding this subject may prove to be an interesting study. How teenagers process and form ideas regarding their purchasing decisions is a complex process involving many factors. Identifying these factors may assist marketers understand teenagers' thought processes. Considering the fast pace of the market, this study seeks to investigate how today's teenagers view the action sports market, and to shed light on the factors that influence their buying habits.

The results of this study may benefit marketing professionals in the industry who face problems with capturing the youth market's attention as well as retailers whose target market is the youth who display an interest in action sports. Current literature regarding this topic reveals that there is minimal information available relating to the Durban Highway Area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Therefore, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge specific to anti-establishment branding.

1.6 MOTIVATION

The impetus for this study stems from the need to understand today's youth and to identify patterns in their consumer behaviour with specific reference to the action sports market. The use of clothing as a tool for self-expressive purposes has been a

topic of research for many years. These intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics became the motivating factors for this study. It was hypothesised that there may be a link between what this division of the sporting arena represents and the perception by teenagers of the anti-establishment images portrayed in their advertising campaigns. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is a link between teenage consumer perceptions of action sports brands and how this influences their buying behaviour.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to explore the influences affecting the buying patterns of young adults today, as well as to investigate the various action sports brands they choose to associate themselves with and why. This study aims to highlight the trends in which the youth market are currently interested, and explores how these trends translate into particular dress styles. This research will be of interest to marketers who seek to follow the 'cradle-to-grave' marketing strategy as explained by Schlosser (2002:43). By understanding the various factors that influence the buying habits of teenagers today, it may be possible to predict their future buying behaviour as well as understand where their preferences lie and why. Learners from Grades 10 to 12 are prime candidates to study regarding elements that influence fashion buying habits as this age group strives for social acceptance. According to Kaiser (1998:146) social factors influence our perceptions of self and for this reason self-reflection is a social construct. Clothing is not only important in a physical sense but also defines the self psychologically. This need for social recognition drives young adults to spend a substantial portion of their allowance on clothing to ensure acceptance by their peers. This research investigates the various factors that affect the buying habits of the sample.

1.8 RESEARCH AIMS

The general aim of the study is to investigate the factors influencing teenage consumer behaviour with regard to the purchasing of action sportswear in the Durban Highway area. Given that the literature suggests that an anti-establishment

culture is an important aspect of teenage fashion choice, the research seeks to establish a possible link between the buying behaviour of teenagers and anti-establishment branding.

According to Thomas (2008:1) the worldwide action sports market is no longer a niche business, it has become a mainstream trend. This study hopes to offer insights into the position occupied by action sports brands within the fashion retail market of the Durban Highway Area, as well as how teenagers view brands that fall within this category. DesMarteau (2004:1) states that this industry sector provides a compelling example of Lifestyle marketing at its best; it is therefore considered important to research teenage buying trends to determine whether or not Lifestyle marketing might affect their buying habits.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are covered in the study:

- 1.9.1 Are teenagers attracted to anti-establishment branded sportswear, and why?
- 1.9.2 What factors within various anti-establishment brands are seen by teenagers as the deciding factors in purchasing action sportswear?
- 1.9.3 What other key factors can be seen to influence teenage purchasing of action sportswear?

1.10 UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION

This study tested the assumption that teenagers are finding a sense of acceptance through rebellion through the clever use of manipulative anti-establishment branding techniques. This paradox is seen as a possible defining issue within this study. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:16) validate this assumption by stating that the core of the action sports segment possesses a degree of counter-conformity motivated by a desire to be different from the mainstream. This hypothesis was examined in the empirical investigation of this study and results analysed against those reflected in current literature.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology consisted of surveys and in-depth interviews. For the surveys, Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners from three high schools in the Durban Highway area were used. Qualitative data was collected from this sample population in the form of questionnaires. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:183) define descriptive survey research as the acquiring of information about groups of people concerning their opinions, attitudes, or previous experiences by asking them questions and tabulating their answers. According to Somekh and Lewin (2005:219) non-probability sampling applies when the sample is a group that the researcher has access to or has selected for a particular reason. Questionnaires were handed out to three purposively selected high schools. As action sports clothing is marketed particularly to middle and higher income level consumers, schools falling into the following categories were approached.

- A Government school; and
- Two Private schools.

Key issues arising from the questionnaires were addressed with respondents during in-depth interviews. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:105) this method of interviewing consists of asking respondents to comment on broadly defined issues, including issues which relate to their experiences.

1.12 LIMITATIONS

As with any form of research, the researcher encounters certain limitations that could disrupt or alter the results of the study. Identifying possible limitations before the data gathering process takes place assists in appropriate measures being taken to avoid those problems. As this study focussed on data obtained from learners ranging between the ages of 15 and 18 with the use of questionnaires, the following limitations were predicted:

- Learners might not view the questionnaires or the purpose of the research as being important to them, therefore might not complete the questionnaires, or possibly complete them but with little enthusiasm.
- Questionnaires are said to be limited regarding the depth to which the researcher is able to probe any particular respondent in order to clarify responses from the sample. It is for the above mentioned reasons that follow-up interviews were conducted.
- Acquiring permission from selected schools proved to be difficult as well as obtaining permission to conduct the survey within the designated teaching times. For this reason more than one school was approached until three schools with the stipulated subdivision agreed to participate.

It is essential to predict and resolve any problems that may arise before commencing with any research programme. For this reason, a pilot study was completed to assess the limitations of the questionnaire before distributing it to the sample. This pilot study comprised of five pupils of the target age group. The purpose was to ascertain if the correct information was being obtained, as well as to assess whether the pupils understood the questionnaire.

1.13 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

It was initially anticipated that the schools chosen to participate in the study would be selected according to the following specifications:

- One government girls' school;
- One government boys' school; and
- One private co-educational school.

The breakdown of schools which participated in the study differed from that which was initially anticipated due to the refusal from a private co-educational school to participate. The final breakdown of schools that completed questionnaires designed for the empirical research section of the study was as follows:

- One Government boys' school;
- One private girls' school; and
- One government co-educational school.

1.14 CONCLUSION

This study explores the social, psychological and cultural influences that are affecting the youth market, as well as the impact anti-establishment brand image has on their consumer behaviour. This study was designed to assess the impact of these marketing strategies, by establishing where the interests of today's teenagers lie, and to understand what influences their buying habits.

This chapter sought to provide an overview of the study at hand as well as outlined the various factors pertaining to the investigation within this study and highlighted the contributing theories which were set to be explored. The framework of this study has been set out within this chapter with the purpose of depicting the direction that this study aims to follow. Chapter 2 presents the current literature available relating to this topic and investigates various theories relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, theories relating to consumer behaviour will be analysed in order to clarify various issues regarding the reasons why consumers make the choices they do. These theories will also delve into how and why these factors have impacted on the action sports consumer and the development of this niche market in South Africa.

Theories linked to each issue below will form the theoretical framework for this study:

- Key issue A: The social, cultural and psychological factors influencing teenage consumer behaviour at point of purchase;
- Key issue B: Marketing strategies that have been successful in capturing the attention of the youth within the action sport industry; and
- Key issue C: The formation of teenage sub-cultures and how these may be attributed to consumer socialisation which translates into consumer buying habits.

Figure 2.1 on the following page shows the structure of the Literature Review Chapter.

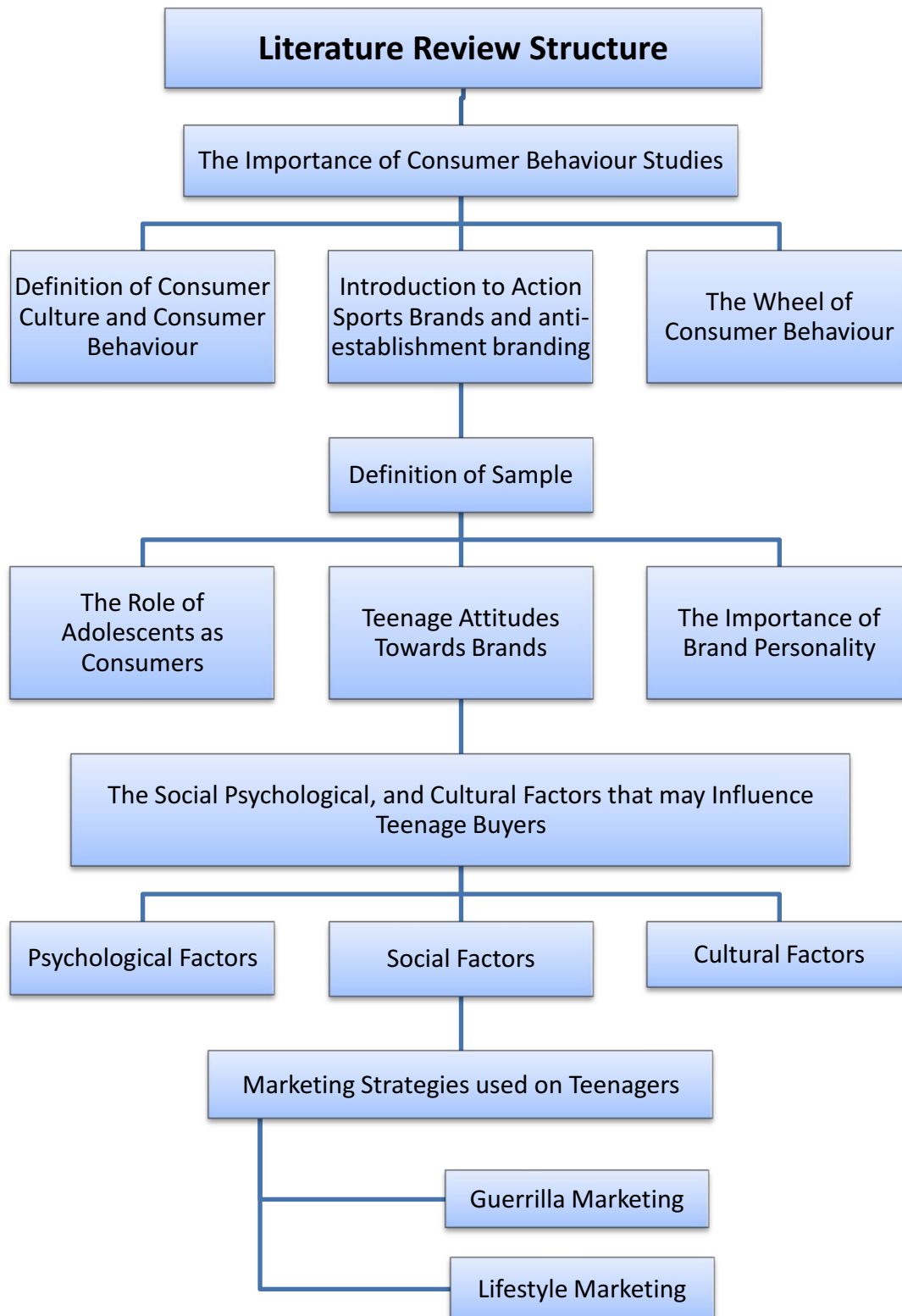


Figure 2.1 Literature Review Structure.

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR STUDIES

As in any industry, the clothing industry conceptualises, develops, produces and retails products. The objective of this process is to establish a profitable label or brand to which consumers can relate and ultimately become loyal to. Along with selling products, organisations invest time and money developing their brand's image and personality. This process is much like a parent moulding their child into a fully functioning adult. Like the growing child, a brand needs focussed attention during its growth period, as well as continued support throughout its lifespan. Ongoing success of a brand is achieved by ensuring the brand maintains a continued appeal to the target consumer and meets the consumer's expectations. Capturing and sustaining an identified consumer market is accomplished by gaining insight into the fascinating study of consumer behaviour.

Consumer behaviour studies go hand in hand with understanding how an organisation's marketing plan is interpreted and perceived by the target consumer. Solomon (2007:9) suggests that understanding consumer behaviour is the essence of good business skills, and that a good marketing strategy will ensure the consumers' needs are met. The consumers' response towards a structured marketing plan is the ultimate test of whether a marketing strategy will succeed or not. For this reason, data regarding consumers can help organisations define the market and identify threats and opportunities to a brand. Cohen (2006:33) states that by exploring the underlying forces behind consumer behaviour it is possible to maintain a competitive advantage.

2.3 THE WHEEL OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

A basic model defining the key factors of consumer behaviour was developed by Solomon (2007:37). This model breaks down the various factors that consumers are exposed to during the decision making process. The Wheel of Consumer Behaviour (see Figure 2.1) consists of five basic components as discussed below Figure 2.1:

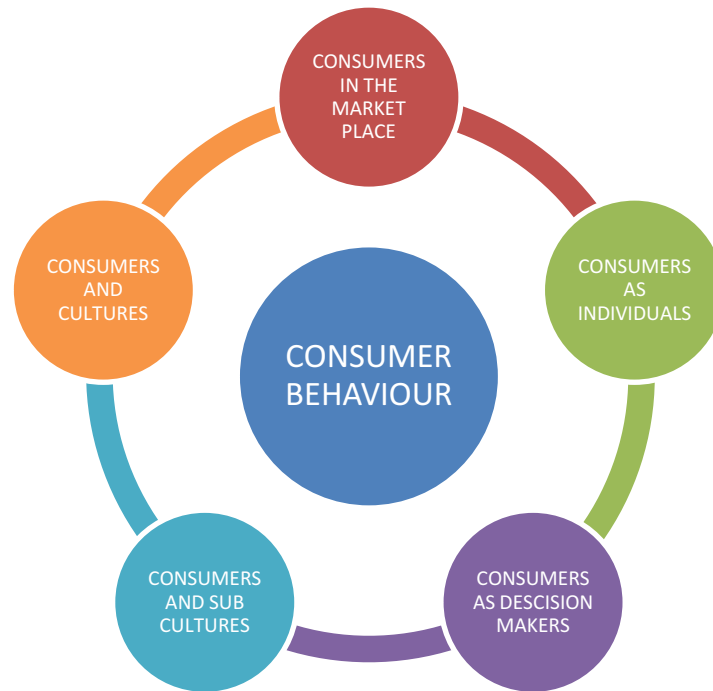


Figure 2.2 The Wheel of Consumer Behaviour.

Source: Solomon, M. *Consumer Behaviour*, 2007:37

- 2.3.1** The consumers in the market place: how consumers respond to and are affected by marketers.
- 2.3.2** The consumers as individual: considers the consumer at micro level. This component describes how individuals receive and interpret information in order to form personal opinions about products and services.
- 2.3.3** The consumer as decision maker: explores the ways in which consumers use the information in their direct environments to make purchasing decisions.
- 2.3.4** The consumers and sub-cultures: expands upon how consumers act as part of a larger social structure. This structure is made up of various identities, social classes, ethnic groups and reference groups.

2.3.5 The consumers and culture: describes the impact marketing has on mass culture. This includes the expression of culture, values and lifestyles.

Before applying this wheel to the action sports market, it is important to understand the essence of action sports brands and how they have developed into a thriving sector in the clothing retail market.

2.4 INTRODUCTION TO ACTION SPORTS BRANDS

In the past ten years there has been an increase in the participation of action sports such as snowboarding, skateboarding, freestyle motocross and other individual based sports (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:16). There are many social, psychological and lifestyle reasons for the sudden interest and participation in these sports which will be investigated in this section. Firstly, a clearer definition of what constitutes a lifestyle sport will be sought. This will assist in drawing a link between the psyche of participants of such sports and their attitudes when choosing clothing that reflects their lifestyles.

According to Delaney and Madigan (2009:54) skateboarding was classified as the first extreme sport in the 1950's. The popularity of skateboarding grew at a rapid rate and by the 1960's many competitions and events showcasing the sport had emerged. Today, skateboarding and the skateboarding sub-culture has been immortalised by many skateboarding movies, media coverage and associated retail products. Furthermore, the essence of the sport was made recognisable and reinforced as a symbol of rebellion by the association it was given with the cartoon character Bart Simpson in the early 1990's. Since then, extreme sports have evolved to incorporate many different activities, all which share a common thread, the desire for an adrenalin rush. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:3) state that the image of extreme lifestyle sports has evolved into a counter-culture, anti-establishment, non-conformist way of life, radiating passion, excitement, intensity, self expression, creativity and freedom. Delaney and Madigan (2009:55) maintain that skateboarders, snowboarders and surfers alike, seek gravity defying adrenalin rushes by executing free style manoeuvres and testing physical boundaries.

Snowboarding is currently viewed as the most recent in extreme sports, emerging only in the 1980's, and has grown into one of the most popular sports in the United States sporting industry.

Action sports and the clothing worn during action sporting activities developed as a result of several societal progressions. As global society moved towards a "safer" way of living, people became bored with their career choices and leisure activities. As mentioned earlier, the root of extreme sports emerged from the growth in popularity of the skateboarding and surfboarding generation. Skateboarding and surfing were viewed as more 'alternative' leisure choices, supported by hippies and rebellious individuals. These attitudes began to change at the turn of the century (Puchan, 2004:13). Slowly, a larger contingent of individuals began to recognise the appeal of these newer activities. A more nonchalant outlook on life was promoted by brands related to these activities, which promoted the element of a no-stress, free lifestyle. Organisations took action by implementing a more individualistic and extreme approach to branding. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:4) argue that the core action sport segment possesses a degree of counter conformity motivation as well as a desire to identify as being different from what is accepted as mainstream fashion. The authors argue that the notion of anti-establishment branding exposed the restrictions normal society imposes upon the general public, not only in careers, politics and society, but also in the fashion world. Anti-establishment movements promote individually chosen fashion which express personality and lifestyle rather than what high end designers predict, manufacture and profit from. Puchan (2004:72) supports this by stating that action sports offer new challenges and demands in a consumerist society where everything is immediately available and where risk is largely removed through insurance. Sports related to the anti-establishment movement involved individual based sports, often involving a level of danger. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2) support the argument by stating that, if anti-establishment sports commercialise the perceptions of action branded sports and products associated with them, they ultimately run the risk of a transgression violating the emotional trust and bond with the brand, thus weakening the bases of self-connection and identification.

When studying the characteristics of action sports clothing, it becomes evident that these types of brands aim to create the same fantasy appeal that the actual sports do. This has certain psychological and ego related effects on the wearer and how they are perceived by others within their environment. During adolescence the signals sent out by the wearer are more acutely observed by peers than at any other stage during lifespan development. As stated by Kim and Rhee (2008:546) adolescents typically demonstrate a high level of conformity with their peers, a tendency that is usually ascribed to the developmental and psychological traits of adolescence. Teenagers acknowledge the power that brands have on identity formation and use branded clothing to enhance their social standing or to mould a certain image that may or may not be a true reflection of their lifestyles. The extreme sport label is described by Puchan (2004:171) as a label that is placed on sports that are not mainstream or traditional and often include risk, danger, or unconventional rules and techniques. Increased interest into action sports has resulted in a natural progression for consumers to be attracted to clothing associated with action sports. This development has given rise to a booming industry worldwide. In 2005 in the USA alone it was estimated to be a staggering US\$12-billion industry, expanding at 20% per annum. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2) concur by stating that capturing the attention of this niche market is a challenge, as it has grown larger, and more affluent, conversely more cynical than ever before.

It is important to understand how this lifestyle sport has developed into a major industry and how this genre of clothing has grown as a result. It is also important to take into account the factors that have assisted the massive growth this industry is experiencing. Puchan (2004:177) states that the emergence of action sports/extreme sport is not isolated from other societal developments, but can be seen as symbolic of a postmodern society where people are searching for new ways to explore their limits and escape from boredom and mediocrity. Recent observations by many sociologists show that since the turn of the century, people have searched for new ways to define their lives, extending personal limits and boundaries in the hope to break free from societal norms that have in the past limited them. This need has been fuelled by the desire to escape from the increasingly regulated and sanitised way of living. Puchan (2004:77) states that the 'risk is fun'

culture has given rise to the adventure sports industry and that this can be linked to the emergence of cultural changes within the sporting ethos.

Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2) assert that all voluntary consumption carries symbolic meaning and therefore consumers will consume products that hold a particular symbolic meaning. This is reiterated by Puchan (2004:172) who states that participants in the action sports lifestyle have a thirst for adventure and, therefore the clothing worn during these sporting activities should reflect the spirit of the sport. He also adds that action sports present new challenges and demands to a consumerist society dominated by instant gratification. It is this alternative view that action sports clothing aims to promote. These brands have adopted an 'anti-mainstream' image that rebels against anything 'designer' or traditionally 'commercial'. This approach, in itself has created the hype needed to catapult this sector into the high popularity stakes with teenagers who can relate to the notion of not wanting to 'fit in' or be told what to do and what to wear.

The process of deciding what to wear and what to buy is predetermined through various factors. This process of decision making is known as consumer behaviour, and is ultimately influenced by consumer culture. The two elements of consumerism, these being consumer culture and consumer behaviour, are explored below.

2.5 DEFINITION OF CONSUMER CULTURE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Solomon and Rabolt (2004:23) define consumer behaviour as the process involved when consumers or consumer groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their particular needs and desires. This process of consumerism and consumer behaviour is now recognised as an ongoing rather than static a process. The exchange between consumer and retailer is the moment at which the consumer receives an object of value. This notion is valued by marketers as it implies that there is an emotional connection between object and consumer. This then gives rise to the marketers exploiting the emotions of the consumer, and as described earlier, these emotions are generally more easily

accessed within the youth market. This is then elevated due to the social power products can have within youth reference groups like the action sports market.

The *social power* of clothing relates to the perceived ability of clothing to elevate the status of the wearer among peer groups. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2) elaborate on this concept by stating that clothing brands hold important symbolic meaning that exceeds the functionality of the brand, resulting in consumers using clothing brands for self-expressive purposes. Parker and Hermans (2008:110) agree by confirming that clothing offers teenagers a means of self-expression or a way of coping with social situations. This means that adolescents often find acceptance and self validation through association with certain peer groups and the clothing approved, worn and recognised by these peer groups. Linking these theories to those of consumer behaviour studies, support of the views held by Solomon become apparent. Solomon (2003:41) states that consumers use product cues to guide their behaviour particularly when they find themselves in unfamiliar roles or situations. This has specific relevance for adolescents who frequently find themselves in unfamiliar situations and situations where they are required to define their identities; this definition of self is achieved by the use of clothing as a vehicle of expression. Clothing is associated with certain lifestyle choices that can predict social acceptance or rejection. This notion may explain the importance of clothing within adolescent social settings as well as how clothing relates to and is influenced by culture. Solomon (2003:42) further expands upon this by asserting that consumers are influenced by many factors when placed in a buying situation, consumer culture includes the setting, the ideas and reasons for certain reactions within buying situations.

Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:148) state that product cues in advertising are important to consumers in making inferences, reducing uncertainty and forming product preferences. They further hypothesise that sports event sponsorship and sport celebrity endorsement cues are designed to strongly and positively affect consumer and brand perceptions. This study aims to clarify why specific consumer groups react to buying situations in certain ways, and to develop an understanding into how adolescents react towards anti-establishment brands and the images portrayed by these types of brands. As this study is specifically aimed at

investigating teenage consumer behaviour and their perceptions towards action sports brands, a definition of the sample population is provided below.

2.6 DEFINITION OF SAMPLE POPULATION AND GENERATION Y

The interest into the teenage and childhood market is not new. Many marketing strategies are focussing on the mass teenage market. This is because it is said to be a captive market which is easily influenced. According to McNeal (1992:4) the concept of children as consumers is a post war phenomenon which continued to grow after the introduction of television. In 1956 the label 'teenage' first entered the general American vocabulary, according to Solomon (2007:514), 'Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers' became the first pop group to identify themselves with this new sub-culture termed 'teenagers'. This gives rise to the notion that the concept of 'teenagers' is a relatively recent construct.

Generation Y consumers are described by Bornmann (2004:16) as an ideal target audience. This generation has a natural desire for new trends and are highly susceptible and impressionable. Consumers born between the years 1977 and 1994 are deemed part of Generation Y. Sebor (2006:25) supports Bornman by describing Generation Y as the perfect consumers; they grew up on *MTV*, and are a media-saturated generation who are continually targeted by advertisers.

Statistics regarding the spending patterns of American teenagers reflect the profound influence this retail sector has on consumerism. Solomon (2003:62) states that in the USA the number of Generation Y children stand at 70 million or 21% of the population. Gordon (2008:8) confirms that in 2008 the total monthly spending of South African teenagers stood between R6.5 billion and R10 billion. These figures demonstrate the magnitude of consumer activity this niche market is spending on a monthly basis. Tapping into this market could ultimately secure future success for brands as teenagers develop into adult consumers.

Teenagers in Grades 10, 11, and 12 form the focus of this research, as these are the years where teenagers are seeking social acceptance and often succeed by

expressing themselves through the clothing they wear. Kenway and Bullen (2001:5) propose that young adults are seeking to define themselves in society. Marketers and retailers see this group as an exciting growth opportunity and are determined to calculate what teenagers expect.

Capturing the attention of the youth market may be difficult as teenagers of today seek contemporary products, improved versions, and continual updates. According to Solomon (2003:63) a market research firm specialising in the Generation Y segment of the retail industry has labelled adolescent consumers as SKIPPIES – *'School Kids with Income and Purchasing Power'*. These consumers purchase a variety of products consumed on a monthly basis and have also been noted to spend their money on 'feel good' products (Solomon, 2003:63). The types of products purchased by teenagers of today include fast food, games, clothes, cosmetics, cellular telephones and other products falling into the category of 'feel good products'. Considering the magnitude of the impact teenage consumers have on the retail sector it is important to identify the role these consumers play.

2.7 THE ROLE OF ADOLESCENT CONSUMERS

Adolescents are often seen as the driving force behind new trends reaching the communities. They play a role in exposing older and younger consumers to new trends. Sebor (2006:26) states that adolescents of today evince impulsive spending patterns and are compulsive shoppers with few financial responsibilities. Adolescents are therefore more inclined to impulse purchasing in order to own the latest trends. Bornmann (2004:19) disagrees, stating that for teenagers of today growing up has been accelerated in so many other ways that by the time they reach the age of fourteen they are not gullible, vulnerable, or passive victims as in the past. This means that not only are they willing to spend but they are acutely aware of which products are regarded as 'trendy'.

Trends spread easily among teenagers as they are highly susceptible to purchasing and wearing similar items as sported by their peers. According to Parker and Hermans (2008:1) clothing offers teenagers a means of self-expression and a way of coping with social situations. They argue that self-expression is especially important

and found that clothing style, appearance and fit were the three most important clothing selection criteria used by sixteen to nineteen year-old females. They also found that this age group was preoccupied with social acceptance, social affiliation and “coolness” attached to making the “right” clothing choices. This concept is further discussed by Solomon (2007:515) who suggests that consumers of this age group have a number of needs, including experimentation, belonging, independence, and approval from others. As a result of this, product usage is a significant medium through which to express these needs. Solomon makes a vital observation by asserting the importance of independence and experimentation. Teenagers strive for an extended independence from their parents and a more personal acceptance by their peers. This is often achieved through trial and error experimentation.

As teenagers break away from parental control they begin to rely more heavily on peer approval and support. This is expressed by McClung and Holdorf (2007:4) who assert that as teenagers become older, parents lose influence and media and friends gain more. This reality becomes pertinent to retailers and advertisers, as they will need to acknowledge keen peer judgment and ensure their marketing strategies are not only appealing to individuals but also appealing to teenagers on a social level. Teenagers are collectively approving of certain brands yet those brands still manage to maintain the competitive edge of individualism that is so vital within the action sports sector. This is not an easy task as balancing individualism versus mass appeal proves to be challenging with adolescents.

Macklin (2000:14) states that as children reach adolescence a greater knowledge of advertising is formed and children are then able to understand the tactics used by marketers to sway their purchasing habits. Not only this, but children grow more sceptical toward advertising and begin to voice negative attitudes towards advertising strategies. This means that reaching teenagers on a personal level in the midst of scepticism proves more and more difficult as teenagers mature.

2.8 ATTITUDES OF TEENAGERS TOWARDS BRANDS

Solomon (2003:13) maintains that the theory of common ownership links us together in the way religion, family, and community did in past times. Hence, brands are perceived by teenagers as vehicles that link them to one another, to certain lifestyles or social classifications. This could translate into a theory that peer perceptions regarding brands are reflected upon the wearer and could ultimately mean that brands possess a power to create an illusion devoid of true personal reflection.

According to Solomon (2007:528) adolescents from Generation Y are much less brand loyal than previous generations and are more accepting of generic labels. Although generic brands may attempt to engage the teenage consumer environment, they may not be able to build enduring relationships with consumers that large brands can. Bornmann (2004:17) in contrast to Solomon states that branding is powerful with teenagers, if you can build a successful brand, you can raise your selling price. Although price is vital in increasing profit margins, loyalty is still an important factor which can only be accomplished by forming an emotional bond with purchasers.

North and Enslin (2008:1) emphasise that there is general agreement amongst theorists that a brand is more than the name given to a product; it embodies a whole set of physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs. Brands aim to build recognisable personalities which teenagers begin to feel an emotional connection to through continued support of the brand during their development into adulthood. Brands target the youth at this vital stage as this is where they are the most responsive. This belief is strengthened by Mayo and Nairn (2009:204) who state that the onset of puberty is associated with an enhanced responsiveness to rewarding stimuli which is why peer acceptance is particularly potent for young teenagers. This is not only relevant to the brands teenagers buy but it is also applicable to aspects of pop culture like images, sounds, products, activities and sports. Hood (2007:4) discusses the decisions of teenagers to either accept pop culture images and adapt them to their lives, or to disregard them in favour of individualism. This is said to determine their placement in social groups. This behaviour is said to manifest in the attempt to buy into brand images. If teenagers

are recognised by their peers for wearing one piece of clothing rather than another, the teenagers would be more likely to continue wearing that article of clothing in the hope of gaining social acceptance. This becomes pertinent to marketing strategies of various brands.

Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:3) propose that clothing brands chosen by the youth act as 'social glue' and denote membership, conformity and 'fitting in' with other members of their youth culture group, as is in the case in action sports brands. As a result it is possible to predict that brands play a vital role in the purchasing of certain brands, which are linked to many psychological factors that play a role in brand choice by teenagers. This evidence supports the assumptions of this study validating its merit and relevance within the brand marketing field. McClung and Holdorf (2007:5) conducted an interactive poll which found that 67% of females aged thirteen and nineteen are already loyal to particular brands and certain items of clothing. 78% of the girls aged thirteen and seventeen had already chosen clothing designer brands which they felt they would be more loyal to or drawn towards in future years. The relevance of this result can be tested in the empirical investigation of this study, and specifically evaluated against the action sports market consumer's perceptions of brands. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:4) state that the image of a brand's typical user as perceived by the target group also influences the overall brand image, brand personality, brand attitude and product preference. These four factors will be empirically investigated to evaluate their relevance when a consumer is placed in the situation of product purchasing. This will be triangulated against the literature reviewed regarding teenagers' attitudes towards brands. It will also be possible to compare the theories discovered within the literature against the views of teenagers who relate to the action sports market and ascertain how the views of these teenagers differ from the mass market consumer.

Ross and Harradine (2004:11) investigated the relationship between children and branding. The study was conducted on a sample of 107 primary school children over a period of six months with the following research objectives:

- Determine the degree of brand recognition/awareness by age;
- Assess the effects of branded products on the attitudes of various age groups; and
- Establish the extent to which different age groups are able to express their attitudes towards brands and brand preferences.

Although the children in the Ross and Harradine (2004:11) study are younger than that of this specific study's sample, it remains important as it illustrates how children do not view brands in the same manner as adults. The study reflects that children are becoming aware of brands at the age of five, and brand recognition commences at a very early age. The study also shows that older children have a greater awareness of branding and brand names as they mature. The results reflect that older children are aware of the role of branding as a factor in enhancing self-esteem and acceptance among peer groups. This is a significant fact as it could be the motivation for teenagers choosing specific brands over others.

Perceptions of brands were also discussed by Ross and Harradine (2004:11) who state that it is important to understand and distinguish consumer's perceptions of a brand and how this influences purchasing choice. Perceptions represent the way consumers analyse, interpret and make sense of information. The consumer's perception of a celebrity could influence their perception and attitude toward the product. This could be a positive or negative perception of the celebrity which could translate into a positive or negative perception and attitude toward the product. This study aims to investigate this notion of 'perception' and determine to what extent the images portrayed by action sports labels influence teenage consumers' perception of brands, and how this influences their consumer purchasing patterns.

A youth brand survey was published by the *Sunday Times* (2008) called "Generation next, walking in the middle ground is a tricky experience". The study was carried out

on a sample of 6800 urban South African pupils between the ages of eight and twenty-two in the first quarter of 2008. In the study Shevel (2008:10) investigated and identified brands and products seen to be 'cool', a term used by the youth to signify what they regard as trendy. This survey is an important indicator as to which brands and products have the potential to outlast others in the South African market.

According to Shevel (2008:10) the youth have become experts at dissecting brands and determining where they fit in the youth market and what the various brands represent. Surprisingly, *Edgars* (South African retail outlet) was ranked the most popular fashion and accessory store in the country, yet is said to be negotiating a tough position within the market place as it holds a 'middle of the road' type of store position. The reason for its high positioning could be due to the broad variety of brands and types of clothing it stocks, as it offers high end labels as well as cheaper alternatives. The survey results show that *Edgars* appeals to the youth market as it carries 'trend-ripe' merchandise as well as a range of national and international brands. The key to *Edgars'* wide appeal appears to be that it captures the middle and upper income markets and stock ranges that possess a broad market appeal.

Levin's (2008:11) interpretation of the youth survey was that today the youth are less influenced by advertising and see advertisements as entertainment. Brands such as *Adidas*, *Coke* and *Nike* are expected to deliver a certain amount of 'cool' in their advertising campaigns, and the youth become disappointed if they don't.

The results of the various surveys carried out by the *Sunday Times* indicate three vital aspects young people expect from advertising - insight, interactivity, and honesty. While older South Africans are used to old-fashioned advertising and are satisfied with a more passive approach, Generation Y seeks to be interactive in the brand's life cycle, actively participating as well as being rewarded for doing so.

Loubser (2008:9) illustrates the new transparency trend that has emerged around the world. This trend is driven by the new, super empowered generation of young consumers who expect nothing less but the truth from marketers and brands. It is vital for brands to comply with these demands, as the youth of today have widespread access to blogs, social networks and other channels. This view is

supported by Bornmann (2004:16) who states that Generation Y consumers demand an ethical, transparent world.

In contrast to what has been discussed, Ritchie (1995:129) states that according to a survey completed in 1993, young adults were less likely to look for brand names when shopping. By comparing these results to that of the 2008 survey completed by the *Sunday Times*, it can be seen that in the past fifteen years young consumers' views on brands have changed dramatically. Ritchie (1995:129) proposes that lower brand loyalty may be due to the emergence of higher brand diversity. This may have been the case in 1995 but young adults today have been raised in environments surrounded by enormous brand diversity and have grown up accustomed to the choice and competitive nature of various brands.

Williams (2000:7) points out that successful brands cause consumers to feel an emotional connection to them as a result of the wearer regarding that particular brand best equipped to suit their emotional needs at the time they encounter it. Similar to people, brands are said to present themselves with personalities which consumers relate to, which strengthens the emotional connections between the brand and the consumer.

2.9 IMPORTANCE OF BRAND PERSONALITY

A study conducted by Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:3) explores brand-personality constructs in the Australian action sports youth branded clothing market. As mentioned earlier, the study indicates that clothing brands are believed to possess symbolic meaning that extends beyond the functionality of the brand; consumers utilise clothing brands as a means of personal expression. They assert that a clothing brand's image may be a primary means of symbolically constructing and communicating their personal and social identity. This is a theory that has received much attention in previous research papers. It is predicted that self-image equivalence can explain and predict different facets of consumer behaviour, including advert effectiveness, product utilisation, purchase intent, brand attitude, brand relationship and brand loyalty.

North and Enslin (2008:1) assert that for many consumers, the brand 'is the product'. The brand name itself and the status linked to that brand can often be more crucial than the design or functionality of the piece of clothing. This is relevant not only to the wearer but also to their peers. Managers and marketing specialists therefore consider branding a key strategic tool for creating awareness, reputation and enhance the organisation's image. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:3) confirm that authenticity, image, symbolism and credibility as opposed to purely utilitarian attributes are a common necessity when marketing action sports brands. Thomas (2008:1) reinforces the importance of true authenticity around action sports and names it as being absolutely essential. Consumers who fall into this buying category are acutely aware of the conventional methods used by commercial brands when implementing a marketing scheme. He further explains that a rigid image is expected from action sports marketers as consumers have strong views on the marketing messages and images created by these clothing brands. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:4) coincide with Thomas' view that action sports clothing brands must convey images of integrity and authenticity, thereby separating their identities from the mainstream consumer.

Thomas (2008:3) asserts that the action sport consumer desires the atmosphere surrounding the brand and that of the store to reflect the ethos of the action sports brands that they sell. Authenticity is vital when making a cultural connection. The action sport consumer wants to feel that the retailer they are purchasing items from understands them, relates to them and is genuine in their support for the sport of 'lifestyle' and is not merely benefiting from the trends. For this reason brand managers need to pay special attention to the 'personality' they construct for their brands.

Aaker (1996:347) states that a strong, favourable, brand personality provides emotional fulfilment and may lead to image enhancement and an increased willingness by the consumer to continue supporting a brand, or to pay premium prices for that particular brand. This confirms the earlier hypothesis regarding branding and brand personalities.

Solomon (2007:205) describes brand personality as the set of people traits which are attributed to a product as if it were a person. He suggests that consumers' feelings about brand personality are an important part of brand equity. Brand equity refers to the extent to which a consumer holds strong, favourable and unique associations with a brand in memory. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:5) state that brand personality can be defined as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand, and like people, brands take on personality traits. For this reason, the formation of a *brand personality* needs to be carefully considered. This is because, like individual personalities, a brand's personality is difficult to change. Ideas formed about a brand's personality are not easy to modify in the mind of a consumer. If a person decides they cannot relate to another person's personality they will instinctively avoid contact and association with that individual. This holds true for consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards brands too. If consumers cannot relate to or connect with a brand's 'personality', they will not purchase products under that label. Consumers may even go to the extreme of completely rejecting messages sent out by that brand.

It thus can be assumed that brand personality construct is linked to and influenced by the psychological, cultural and social factors that play a role when a consumer is faced with purchasing decisions. Therefore it is important to investigate these factors in order to understand how the consumer processes the information sent out in the brand marketing messages.

2.10. THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ADOLESCENT CONSUMERS

As mentioned earlier Solomon's (2007:37) Wheel of Consumer Behaviour comprises of five basic components. These five basic components will now be used as a guide to investigate the factors that influence consumers, with specific reference to the teenage consumer and the action sports market consumer.

Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:109) adopt a South African approach to consumer behaviour. They explore the concept that there are two main factors influencing the

consumer's decision-making process, namely individual and environmental. Their approach suggests that consumers' choices are influenced by the environment they are surrounded by, which includes culture, peers, parents, advertisements and other factors. The individual factors that influence consumers' choices may be age, gender, perceptions of brands, peer opinions and personal expression. From the above theories it may be confidently stated that these two aspects influencing consumer behaviour are imperatives for further exploration.

Olson and Peter (2005:22-25) state that consumer 'affect' and consumer 'cognition' refer to two types of mental responses which consumers exhibit toward stimuli and events in their environment. 'Affect' refers to their feelings regarding stimuli and events such as whether they like a product or not. 'Cognition' refers to their beliefs about a particular product. The consumer 'environment' refers to everything external that influences the consumer's thoughts and responses. This includes social stimuli, such as other cultures, sub-cultures, social classes, references groups and families. It also includes physical stimuli, such as stores, products, advertisements and signs which can change consumers' thoughts, feelings and actions. They further suggest that the consumer environment is an important factor with regard to marketing strategies because it is the medium within which stimuli are placed to influence consumers. This in turn suggests that the stimuli sent to consumers within a buying situation plays a large role in their purchasing decisions. As a result it is possible to link what has been established earlier in the brand personality construct investigation to the stimuli within a buying environment. It would seem that not only does brand personality affect the consumers' views on the brand, but also the environment in which the product is placed.

According to Hood (2007:3) individuals make distinctions among one another by their 'surface tendencies' which are the observable variations in styles of behaviour affect and cognition. Teenagers will wear clothing from particular stores or particular brands as a means of displaying their personality. Teenagers also express themselves through the places they choose to socialise with friends and the television programs they watch i.e. their environment. Dooley (2006) discusses teenage cognitive processing, and asserts that teenagers rely on an area of the brain called the superior cortex temporal sulcus to make their decisions. This is in contrast

to adults who use the prefrontal cortex. For this reason teenagers are less likely to understand the consequences of their actions. This theory expressed by Dooley is in contrast to those expressed by Gasperini (2008) who proposes that when it comes to spending patterns, the youth culture today also exhibits a greater measure of consumer control. This trend has always challenged traditional advertising and marketing in general, especially in the fashion industry. This may be caused by friends exerting a significant amount of influence on young peoples' growing sense of identity and individuality, therefore adolescents are more cautious in what they choose and why. This concept is reiterated by Solomon and Rabolt (2004:24) who hold that in teenage consumer behaviour there is often an *influencer* - an individual who provides recommendations for or against certain products without actually buying or using them.

With regard to the purchasing habits of South African consumers, Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:109) state that consumers do not act in isolation. A buying situation can be defined as a pattern of choices within a given context and that each purchase is made through the integration of the consumers' internal needs and external environmental factors. Therefore, consumers are free to interpret these factors and make informed decisions with regard to what they buy. Although adults can effectively distinguish between purchases made, adolescents are subjected to persuasion from marketing strategies as they are more easily influenced. This concept is expressed by Bullen and Kenway (2001:46) who describe adolescent consumers as being emotionally vulnerable to current advertising strategies.

The above mentioned theories illustrate that certain strategies are used on young consumers which play on their emotional wants and needs, these being:

- Control (gaining a step up on adults, feeling intellectually superior);
- Inspirational values (yearning for adulthood);
- Social acceptance (friendship and social acceptance);
- Possession (ownership, collecting material object); and
- Good versus evil (Star Wars and Superman).

According to Solomon and Rabolt (2004:178) cultural bonds are formed between people who are born within the same time periods. As people grow older, their needs and preferences change in unison to those who are of the same age. By using these strategies, companies can influence the youth market's attention and formulate concepts of items they will possibly buy or reject. When investigating the meaning of culture Solomon gives a simple and clear definition: "Culture is the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms, and traditions among the members of an organisation or society" (Solomon, 2007:542). The influence of culture will be investigated further on in this chapter. The process of change and the influence it has on consumers is now considered below.

Cholachatpinyo, Padgett and Crocker (2002:11) state that the orientation toward continuous change and progress is generally found in modern society. Fashion is one of the most visible types of media that is subject to change. It reflects change in aesthetic, economic, political, cultural and social life. This concept is supported by Solomon (2007:85) who links learning and change, stating that learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour caused by experience. The casual, unintentional acquisition of knowledge is called 'incidental learning'. In the context of this study, incidental learning reaches its peak during the adolescent years. Teenagers take the new information acquired about products and either align themselves to a brand or not. As a result, these choices made will either encourage acceptance from peers or rejection depending on the sub-culture group the teenager belongs to and connects with.

A theory proposed by Cholachatpinyo, Padgett and Crocker (2002:17) becomes relevant to this study as it highlights important cognitive and environmental factors that play a role in the consumer behaviour of not only teenagers but of all consumers. They state that there is an interaction between the micro level (individual) and the macro level (socio-dynamic) forces. They describe the micro objective realm as the level at which an individual interacts with fashion objects in the marketplace. It is the level where fashion objects are selected by individuals to create their appearances, in order to conform to the social concepts of the time. Fashions change because of continuous micro subjective level demands for change by fashion innovators. This means that the pace at which these trends evolve is

dependent on social trends and the pressure to conform. Chalachatpinyo, Padgett and Crocker (2002:17) conclude by stating that these micro subjective forces should be predictive of all aspects of fashion commodification. Brands will always have brand power but they must also continually evolve to reflect the micro subjective level forces. Otherwise their power will be eroded in proportion to their failure to encapsulate the micro subjective level forces. The process of learning and change during adolescence is supported by certain mental developments and changes which is also known as cognitive development.

2.10.1 Cognitive learning theory

Solomon (2007:95) describes the Cognitive Learning Theory as a process that stresses the importance of internal mental development. He describes people as problem solvers who actively use information from the external world to master their personal environment. Other views on this theory also stress the role of creativity and insight during the learning process. This theory supports the views held by Olson and Peter (2005: 22-25) who define the importance of affect, cognition and the types of mental responses which consumer's exhibit toward stimuli and events in their environment.

The logic or 'form' of thinking is referred to as 'formal thought' or 'formal operational thought' by Hoffnung (1994:520). Through his analysis of mental cognition it is possible to see that this developmental stage emphasises the 'possible' versus the 'real', using reason and combining existing ideas and opinions. Adolescents seek to activate their 'perceived' value in exchange for their real identities. They adapt their real identities to simulate that of their ideal self in the hope to a desirable surface identity. It is thus possible to state that teenagers who are associated with the action sports lifestyle find a sense of acceptance and belonging when purchasing and wearing action sports brands. When teenagers are seen wearing certain action sports brands their 'perceived' identities portray a certain identity, way of life, or lifestyle. This process can often become a vital factor in teenager socialisation. In the teenage process of formal thought, if they do not or cannot wear certain brands they fear total failure or complete rejection from social groups. As marketers are

aware of the importance of peer social acceptance and how dependant it is on the clothing worn by teenagers, they realise that price becomes secondary when the most vital factor is the selection of the clothing 'brand'.

Hoffnung (1994:523) suggests that teenagers may fail to see the limits of logic. It is suggested that as adolescents gain life experience they accumulate ways to solve problems systematically. This causes teenagers to become idealistic and prevents them from appreciating the practical limits of logic. Therefore it can be said that adolescents lack the ability to process information logically regarding brands and the messages they emit if worn. Also, it can be said that adolescents will not be fully able to objectively distinguish between certain brands worn by peers and how these brands would translate within their social groups and ultimately affect social standing. It can be hypothesised that teenagers lack the ability to fully comprehend how wearing certain brands can affect the formation of the self image.

2.10.2 The self

It is generally assumed that people judge their worth in terms of their physical appearance. People consume products in order to form a new sense of self or to build upon a desired image they would like the world to perceive of them. McClung and Holdorf (2007:2) offer the view that clothes both mirror the inner self and can act as a camouflage to guard against criticism. This statement holds true for adolescents.

The formation of 'the self' is a process that largely takes place during adolescence. Solomon (2007: 515) states that many interesting changes take place within adolescents as they assume the roles of adulthood. These changes create uncertainty about the self; the need to belong and to find one's unique identity becomes extremely important. Therefore adolescents who mould their image according to the rigid rules dictated by the action sporting lifestyle are of particular interest. As certain lifestyle trends gain or lose popularity, the clothing associated with those lifestyles follows suit. Action sports lifestyles have grown in the past decade and the clothing has consequently evolved into high fashion commodities.

According to Hood (2007:1) images from popular culture often provide the external basis from which teenagers will benchmark their thoughts, opinions and associations. Adolescents forge their identities largely in accordance with these pop culture images. They perceive such images as the social norm and as a means to attain the social acceptance that is vital to their personal maturation. One cannot ignore the paradox that exists within the action sports area of fashion. Many teenagers are seeking approval of their peers and mimic popular trends exhibited by their peers, while teenagers who relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle often ridicule teenagers who 'follow the crowd'. These anti-establishment teenagers enjoy a sense of rebellion and create their self-image according to their own rules and tastes. McClung and Holdorf (2007:3) state that adolescence is a time of growth, maturity, socialisation and re-assessing one's self identity. To these teenagers, expressing their self-image as an individualistic character is of the utmost importance, whilst conforming to the masses is not. By regarding their self-image as a key factor, they often take a lot more risks with regard to their clothing choices. These are adolescents who not only live a lifestyle of risk-taking, but also express this in their choice of clothing. For this reason they are either fiercely rejected by their peers who cannot relate to their lifestyle outlook, or are celebrated for their eccentricity.

The action sport lifestyle is promoted through the fantasy appeal of being an 'individual', a 'risk taker' and independent. This approach is successful as it appeals to adolescents who are forming a self-image that relates to this lifestyle. These are adolescents who are attempting to bridge the gap between the ideal self and the actual self. Solomon (2007:157) explains that the ideal self is a person's conception of how they would like to be, while the actual self refers to their realistic appraisal of the qualities they do not have. Therefore, consumers purchase products which they believe to be instrumental in achieving the status they wish to portray. For this reason, in recent years, action sports clothing has embraced the anti-establishment culture, by placing alternative graphics, prints, slogans and messages on their clothing. This is to attract teenagers who are going through the cognitive and psychological changes of moving away from their parents' control and dictating their own independent choices and ideas. The breakaway movement from the parental

ideal of who they want their teenagers to become and the identity the teenagers wish to form for themselves, is explained by Hoffnung (1994:546) who defines identity as a relatively stable sense of our own individual uniqueness and a commitment to an integrated set of goals, values and beliefs. Solomon (2007:156) explains that marketing communications can influence a consumer's level of self-esteem. The ideal self and actual self are two principles that are played upon by marketers to mould the consumer's perceptions about products and their own qualities. Although the above definitions cover many aspects of the development of the self-image, the concept of identity is difficult to define. This is because the issue of identity involves many different dimensions, experiences and develops over an extended period of time. This process of the development of self-image is concurrent with adolescence according to the Social Learning Theory, as discussed below.

2.10.3 Social learning theory

Hood (2007:1) discusses the relevance that Social Learning Theory (SLT) has for the teenage consumer. SLT theorises that individuals either accept or reject images and thoughts by observing how other groups engage in particular experiences and activities. SLT is also summed up in the cliché, "Don't learn from your own mistakes – learn through the mistakes of others." The SLT is based on the concept that individuals search for cues from their peers, and learn from the reaction others have to certain situations, ideas, products and cultures. This may be due to humans being social creatures, and we often learn from and mimic others in order to attain the same reaction from our peers. Hood (2007:3) mentioned that individuals make distinctions among one another by their "surface tendencies". These surface tendencies are the observable variations in styles of behaviour affect and cognition; adolescents learn from and replicate what has been deemed to be effective from others.

Bush and Bush (2005:259) defines consumer socialisation as the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place. Not only are consumers defined as acquiring product knowledge through others, they are also developing attitudes and opinions of certain

brands by association and interaction with other consumers or peers in the case of teenagers. This view is crucial, because as the relevant information is sent out by brands it may not necessarily be interpreted by the consumers as anticipated. This is due to social conditioning, where attitudes and opinions are influenced, altered and distorted by peers and other consumers. Information is only as effective as the perceptions of other consumers of that particular product. As this study centres on the perceptions of adolescents towards action sports brands, clarity on this aspect is paramount. As suggested earlier by Hoffnung (1994:535), during adolescence teenagers become overly impressed with the skill of reasoning and logic. This development of formal thought then leads to a new confusion between the teenager's thoughts and the thoughts of others. This confusion of thoughts is then said to induce a form of egocentrism. This egocentrism is more often than not misinterpreted or misunderstood by adults, resulting in the conflict of opinion leading to the accelerated need to develop a self identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Hoffnung (1994:548) suggests that the process of developing an identity begins in the adolescent phase when teenagers realise they are psychologically different from their parents. This phase is followed by a phase of experimentation and actively challenging parental advice. McClung and Holdorf (2007:5) argue that listening to friends shows independence, while maintaining a feeling of conformity and solidarity amongst peer groups. As a result increases the commitment by the adolescence to peers and friends, strengthening bonds, trust and dependence on members of peer groups. This reaction contrary to what their parents expect of them is the reason for anti-establishment brands having the impact they have had in recent years.

2.11 MARKETING STRATEGIES USED ON TEENAGERS

'In a climate of the youth-marketing feeding frenzy, all culture is created with the frenzy in mind' (Klein, 2000:66).

Olson and Peter (2005:12) define a marketing strategy as the design, implementation and control of a plan in order to influence exchanges to achieve

organisational objectives. Marketing strategies are designed to increase the chances that consumers will have favourable response to particular products, services, or brands and will therefore repeatedly purchase them. North and Enslin (2008:5) state that the primary goal of all marketing communication efforts is to inform, persuade and remind the target market of the product (brand) and service benefits, with the objective of influencing attitudes and consumption behaviour.

The interpretation of the alternative in marketing communications is, however, indicative of traditional *inside-out* thinking, an approach often taken by action sports brands marketers. North and Enslin (2008:6) state that the alternative contact is not bound by media type and is, therefore, in keeping with the zero-based planning approach, media neutral. The strategic challenge and qualifying factor is the unconventional and unexpected experience of the point of contact, whether in a traditional or non-traditional media environment. The authors highlight that within the context of the new media environment, the concept of ambient media is introduced. Ambient media aims to penetrate the environments with which consumers routinely interact to create unconventional and unexpected points of brand contact. They explain that ambient media is introduced to have an impact on consumers in the spaces they inhabit. The '*Future of Media*' highlights the growth of alternative contact opportunities and specifically new ambient media owners in South Africa. The company '*Graffiti*' has, for example, evolved outdoor media by introducing branded student cars, taxi tops and golf carts. This form of marketing is also known as guerrilla marketing, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

As teenagers are in the fragile stage of defining their self-image, this presents an opportunity for marketers to exploit their vulnerability. Quart (2003:10) identifies some of the issues facing the current youth market with specific reference to the 'branding' of teenagers. She expresses the notion that brands have infiltrated the adolescent's inner life and therefore it is possible to see the commercial remaking of teenagers. Teenagers of today are not only seen as potential profit, but are being enticed by the lure of commodities. Bornmann (2004:18) takes this stance one step further, by stating that current advertising trends and marketing strategies are turning children into commodities. Bornmann (2004:19) counteracts the negativity of this idea by putting forward the notion that there is a positive by-product to this; the

ultimate outcome being, that by the time adolescents reach their mid-teen years, they are far more astute with regards to marketing than they are given credit for.

Mayo and Nairn (2009:200) argue that the youth being the target of advertising is an important part of how children grow up and learn to socialise. They suggest that children should be informed and educated in media literacy which will, therefore equip them to make better consumer decisions.

Cohen (2006:103) offers a different approach to youth marketing. He suggests that defining the target customer by age is an outdated approach and that consumers are not interested in having age dictate their purchase decisions. His approach holds that consumers are not age conscious but rather lifestyle driven, purchasing products which best reflect their ideal or real lifestyle choice. This theory indicates that consumers are actively living or aspiring to a certain lifestyle, rather than following an age specific trend. This notion may support the trend of selling adulthood to the youth and promoting the 'glamour' of adulthood. Solomon (2003:3) asserts that it is important to 'sell the sizzle instead of the steak'. Through the investigation of action sports brands it is possible to state that this is an approach that works well within this sector. Action sports consumers are seeking the thrill and rebellion of the movement, and crave the eccentric atmosphere that wearing the clothing emanates. Companies should practice aspirational marketing by focusing on consumers' ideals; this is specifically relevant to the teenage market which moves through trends at a rapid rate and has a natural desire for the acquisition of new trends.

According to Thomas (2008:1) a primary factor as to why sporting chains have not capitalised on the action sports business is because they tend to be over-promotional, which is unacceptable for both the premier action sports brands as well as an action sports customer. The marketing strategies used by action sports brands need to appeal to the consumer in a very specific way, as action sports consumers have very demanding expectations for the anti-establishment lifestyle they relate to. For this reason action sports brands have adopted, developed and implemented a few strategies that have proven to be successful when reaching out to the action sports consumer.

2.11.1 Guerrilla marketing

Guerrilla marketing is a fairly new marketing strategy that is proving to be highly successful with the youth. Guerrilla marketing is described by Solomon (2003:398) as a promotional strategy that uses unconventional locations and intensive word-of-mouth campaigns to promote products. These campaigns often recruit legions of real consumers who agree to engage in some kind of street theatre or other activity in order to convince others to use the product or service.

Palmeri (2006:14) discusses the guerrilla tactics used by the action sports brand *Volcom*. He states that as a result of imaginative marketing, *Volcom*'s sales had doubled since 2004. He adds that *Volcom* held the Number eleven position on Business Week's 2006 Hot Growth list of small companies. This success is attributed to their inventive marketing strategies. Palmeri (2006:15) explains that the company produced fifteen feature length DVD's on surfing, skating and snowboarding. In addition, they expanded their reach by launching their own record label. This was done to relate to the consumer on a closer level and to gain popularity. Another guerrilla tactic used by *Volcom* was obtaining the naming rights to skateparks and placing the artwork of fans and 'consumers' on the *Volcom* web page and sponsoring athletes. They also have encouraged athletes to put their own artwork and graphics on *Volcom* apparel and *Volcom* products.

According to Palmeri (2006:14) extreme guerrilla tactics by *Volcom* included sending a recreational vehicle (RV) to park on the side of a road just outside a major sporting event, pretending to have broken down and instead of sponsoring the event, *Volcom* team members handed out T-shirts to passersby. He then states that this is the all-important elusive energy Richard Woolcot (founder of *Volcom*) aims to achieve within his brand.

Solomon (2003:165) states that consumerism is now blending in with entertainment to emerge as a new form of activity some have termed 'retailtainment'. 'Retailtainment' includes themed environments designed to stimulate our senses while motivating us to empty our wallets. This is seen in Durban's Gateway Theatre of Shopping mall. In this shopping mall there is a section dedicated to the action

sports consumer, and those who subscribe to this lifestyle. In this shopping mall all brands associated with the action sports lifestyle are placed in an area that exudes the essence of the action sports lifestyle. This section of the shopping centre includes a climbing wall, skatepark, wavehouse surfing and other activities. This themed location is ideal for guerrilla marketing tactics such as sponsored events hosted by the retail chains within that sector of the mall. Solomon (2003:165) explains that these types of shopping centres are commercial venues based upon a shared cultural meaning where design elements are carefully coordinated to produce an integrated consumer experience.

Solomon (2003:167) states that guerrilla marketing aims to surprise the consumers by putting messages in places they do not expect, as mentioned above with *Volcom's* RV staged breakdown. He adds that it is no longer only about advertising; it is about creating a 'buzz' or 'hype' around a brand. Guerrilla marketing falls into three categories:

- Attention getting outdoor activities;
- Teasers and buzz builders; and
- Street teams and stunts.

Bush and Bush (2005:257) states that one of the fastest growing market segments noted for its word-of-mouth (WOM) behaviour is the teenager market. Bornmann (2004:16) states that MTV'S (Music Television) success as a desirable satellite channel around the world proves that courting new generations makes for profitable business. As discussed earlier, teenagers are mostly influenced by that which their peers support. According to Solomon (2003:165) there has been a noticeable rise in global youth culture, fuelled by the Internet and communications networks like MTV, which transcend national borders. These channels of communication not only link teenagers nationally but create an instant link to international trends worn by teenagers of similar age groups. Solomon (2003:165) states that the development of instant trends is assisted by new resource mediums resulting in a global youth culture.

From the discussion above it can be deduced that guerrilla tactics in the action sports sector are successful due to the lifestyles the consumers are striving towards. Off-beat marketing campaigns work because the consumer does not want to be targeted in an ordinary manner. These consumers celebrate their individualism and are driven by their anti-establishment views, therefore the marketing campaigns used to reach these consumers need to match that sense of rebellion. Guerrilla marketing is often linked to and fuelled by lifestyle marketing.

2.11.2 Lifestyle marketing

One particular marketing strategy which has emerged in the past decade is that of Lifestyle advertising. This method has been highly successful when used to promote products related to the sporting industry, with particular reference to the action sports Industry. The emergence of Lifestyle advertising and its use within the action sports clothing industry will be reviewed in order to clarify why this particular type of advertising is so appealing to the action sports consumer.

It is emphasised by Puchan (2004:171) that the advertising industry has clearly identified the increased interest in extreme sports and now frequently uses extreme sport sequences to promote ordinary products with the aim of capturing and transmitting to the wearer the aura of the extraordinary and extreme.

Solomon (2007:210) states that the goal of Lifestyle marketing is to allow consumers to pursue self-expression through their chosen social identities. Therefore a key aspect of Lifestyle marketing is to focus on product usage in desirable social settings. This is supported by Solomon (2003: 65) who states that advertisements aimed at teenagers are often action orientated, and depict a group of trendy teenagers using the product. This is the essence of Lifestyle advertising; making the product desirable by presenting the product in such a manner that the consumers can relate to, reinforcing their aspiration to emulate the product users in the advertisement. Solomon and Rabolt (2004:184) state that teenagers actively search for cues from their peers and from advertisers when considering their self-image and behaviour. This leads to advertising that favours teenagers and is typically action

orientated, resulting in advertisements that depict teenagers or groups of 'popular' teenagers using the product.

Views held by Chalachatpinyo, Padgett, and Crocker (2002:14) suggest that society consists of a number of sub-culture groups, the patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and practices of these entities are known collectively as 'lifestyles'. This then opens up the possibility for the markets to differentiate between groups of people. Sub-cultures and sub-societies are searching for ways in which to relate to one another. The simplest was by associating oneself with people of the same lifestyle trend by the clothes one purchases and wears. Further, a lifestyle marketing perspective according to Solomon (2007:209) recognises that people divide themselves into groups on the basis of activities they like to take part in and how they choose to spend their leisure time. This also includes how they choose to spend their disposable income. Lifestyle advertising is a key marketing strategy used when marketing action sports brands. Du Preez, Visser and Zietsman (2007:4) state that lifestyles can be described as "a mode of living that is identified by how people spend their time (activities), what they consider important in their environment (interests), and how they perceive themselves and the world around them (opinions)". According to Puchan (2004:176) adventure has now become a distinguishing brand and marketing strategy, which is co-opted and commodified to suggest or validate producers' product's active membership. The difference lies in the notion of 'action sport' or 'lifestyle sport' where the consumers are a select group who feel they are integrated with highly specific niche markets. Solomon (2003:47) states the use of co-branding is beneficial in Lifestyle advertising, i.e. sponsorships at sporting events. This method of linking marketing strategies to lifestyles will be investigated later in this chapter. Sponsorships of events and celebrity endorsements play a large role in the persuasion of consumers to purchase products, and for this reason it is important to identify how action sports brands are capitalising on this aspect.

Having discussed the two marketing approaches, it is possible to conclude that using cunning marketing strategies that appeal to the emotional subconscious level, it is possible to influence teenagers' attitudes towards products. Mayo and Nairn (2009:203) offer this key insight, explaining that children may be able to display

scepticism toward advertising but find it difficult to recognise the true intentions of marketing strategies.

2.11.3 Extreme sport appeal

Over the past decade a few key societal changes have taken place, and as a result extreme sports and extreme sport clothing have increased in popularity. This change mainly supports the idea that career choice does not necessarily have to jeopardise one's lifestyle preferences. Young adults are now noticing that it is possible to support one's preferred lifestyle by making strategic career choices, thus capitalising on the enormity of the action sports industry and cashing in on the rewards. Puchan (2004:172) states that according to German sociologist Opaschowski, the alternative lifestyle and the option of 'leisure careers' is highly appealing to the new working class generation for various reasons: it offers participants freedom and self determination; enjoyment of one's role and task; enjoyment of life; search for success; defining experiences; as well as pride through recognition of achievement by others. These are the qualities that action sports brands are striving to project to the consumer.

A defining analysis by Yiannakis (2001:47) highlights the fact that sport has recently been analysed as a place where dominant values and norms are challenged and where alternative norms and values are created. This underpins action sports clothing and action sports. This notion is also observed by the youth and is perceived as a highly appealing way of life. According to Puchan (2004:171) young people in particular tend to shy away from traditional careers in favour of a lifestyle that combines their favourite pastime and careers. Furthermore, Roberts (1999:12) highlights that we now live in an era when most people's leisure time exceeds their hours of paid work. He also describes how recent economic and social changes have destabilised people's occupational careers, their neighbourhoods and family lives. Such trends underline the importance of recognising, and using leisure time to contribute to personal and social well-being. From the above discussion it can be deduced that the youth of today recognise that leisure activities can successfully be combined with career choices. It would seem that the youth are now looking to

become involved with products that relate to them on a level where they feel loyal to certain brands because they feel that becoming involved with these brands at an early stage will be beneficial to them in the future.

Action sports and action sports products have become popular because of their lifestyle appeal. The extent to which this has taken place is highlighted by Thomas (2008:1) who asserts that if one were to ask a group of 14 to 20 year-olds today to name their top ten participatory sports, snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding will rank among the highest. These activities do not only have specific brand names that are associated with them, but these brands have become so exclusive that it is very difficult for a new brand to launch itself into this niche market. Solomon (2007:128) defines cult products as products that command fierce consumer loyalty, devotion and maybe even a kind of worship.

Cult products and brands that are deemed to have a highly specific following have a difficult task in balancing their image portrayed by their marketing strategies, and keeping their consumers satisfied with the manner in which they promote their brand. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:4) state that action sports brands run the risk of violating the emotional trust and the bond the brand has built up with the target consumer by weakening the base of self connection and identification by becoming too commercial or 'mainstream'. This poses a complex growth dynamic, as it is difficult for action sports brands to grow rapidly yet avoid seeming as though they are abandoning their anti-establishment core values. While this has proved to be true, Khanh (2008:2) explains that action sports labels must step outside their comfort zone as trends are changing as rapidly as their consumers. He maintains that action sports brands are definitely evolving along with the consumer. As consumers become more fashion-conscious, so too should the action sport clothing labels. Khanh (2008:2) suggests that the action sports consumer will welcome the integration of the anti-establishment image with a more current and trend conscious approach.

When dealing with action sports consumers, it is important to keep in mind that these are consumers who are loyal to these types of brands because of the image associated with them. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2) stress that the youth

culture in general is preoccupied with the self, rebellion and nonconformity. This is usually characterised as a crisis of identity involving the seeking of a social identity through the association with symbolic tools. These ideals are often shared by action sports brands, and for this reason there is a common objective linking teenagers to action sports brands. As teenagers are striving to relate to the action sports lifestyle by wearing clothing brands that are associated with the lifestyle, marketers can use this tendency to their advantage. Brands that hope to build loyalty from consumers are now seen as capitalising on the success of action sports, hoping that their brands reflect the same magical qualities as that of the actual sports.

2.11.4 Linking products to lifestyles

According to Solomon (2007:209) the term 'lifestyle' refers to a pattern of consumption reflecting a person's choice of how he or she spends their time and money. As mentioned above, the action sports lifestyles employ the marketing approach of Lifestyle marketing to capture their consumers' attention. Products associated with the action sports lifestyle adopt the same fantasy appeal that the sports do. By using the recognition that has been created around anti-establishment brands, teenagers experience a sense of acceptance through rebellion. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:16) validate their view that the core of the action sports segment possesses a degree of counter conformity motivation and a desire to identify as being different from mainstream.

Hsu and Chang (2006:151) state that the basic premise of lifestyle research is that the more marketers know and understand their customers, the more effectively marketers communicate with and serve customers. This concept is also explained by Solomon (2003:46) who states an important aspect of Lifestyle marketing is to identify the set of products and services that seem to be linked to a specific social role. For example, in the action sport market not only is the hardware important to brand formation i.e. skateboards, surfboards, bodyboards etc, but also the apparel that is utilised whilst taking part in these sports. The study focuses on the apparel that teenagers relate to through either association with the action sports lifestyle, or through the influence of their peers, media, and brand marketing campaigns. In a

study conducted by Yiannakis (2001:49) various skateboarders were questioned regarding the theory of Hegemony. They defined skateboarding as a way of living and rejected any notions that the activity should be used as a way of making a living. As a consequence their relationship with commercially produced products was carefully negotiated. This reality is faced by action sports brand managers on a daily basis. The more popular a brand becomes, the more sceptical of that brand true supporters of the action sports lifestyle become. As established earlier, teenagers are highly impressionable and this negative attitude towards brands becoming too commercialised spreads quickly among this ultra-specific niche market. Therefore the balance between product, lifestyle, and marketing campaign needs to be treated with great circumspection.

It is important to ensure that product information sent out by advertising campaigns remains consistent with the consumer's perceptions and expectations in order to achieve extended brand loyalty. According to Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:148) complete product information is rarely available to consumers, therefore consumers rely on assumption where relevant product information is absent in order to form an integrated, overall evaluation. They conclude that product cues in advertising are important to consumers in making inferences, reducing uncertainty and forming product preferences. They further hypothesise that sport event sponsorship and sport celebrity endorsement cues are designed to strongly and positively affect consumer and brand perceptions. Within the action sports clothing market, celebrity endorsements and product sponsorships play a large role within brand promotion. For this reason it is critical to investigate how celebrity endorsements and sponsorships are received by the consumer and how they can influence the overall impression the consumer forms about brand personality and the assessment of that brand.

2.11.5 Sponsorships

Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:149) state that corporate sponsorship of sports and other events are amongst the fastest growing forms of marketing communications used to reach target audiences. The growth rate in sponsorship expenditures is

greater than for traditional media advertising and sales promotion. This is reiterated by Ferreira, Hall and Bennet (2008:734) who assert that over the past twenty years, corporate sponsorship has been one of the fastest growing forms of promotional activity worldwide. They propose that one of the reasons for this growth is that sponsorships provide the means to cut through the clutter of traditional media by offering access to well-defined target markets. Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:149) add that corporations seek to associate themselves with corporations that will draw an attractive consumer base for their products. This means that product-consumer compatibility is important to corporations as it facilitates the activation of the sponsorship; allows the user imagery of the property to potentially 'transfer' to the sponsor products, and provides an opportunity to increase product usage among those consumers who are of interest to sponsors.

According to Puchan (2004:171) both viewing and participation in action sports is on the rise, but the implications of this for world sports, media sport and the opportunities for sponsorship is under-researched at present. Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:149) define sponsorship as an investment in an event which supports the company's corporate objectives, resulting in the enhancement of the corporate image or an increase in brand awareness. Sponsorship offers a platform to communicate emotionally with consumers who are passionate about sport by developing brand associations, creating brand exposure, demonstrating new products and services and building the corporate image. This notion is significant when dealing specifically with the teenage action sports market. They also suggest that two of the most common reasons for companies entering into sponsorship arrangements are:

1. To increase brand awareness; and
2. To establish, strengthen or change brand image.

Ferreira, Hall, and Bennet (2008:735) assert that in terms of brand differentiation, it is paramount that brand managers involved in sponsorships evaluate their marketing efforts to establish whether or not they are reaching the intended audience. When considering South African sponsorship, Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:149) state that in South Africa the total sponsorship spending increased from R1 986 million in

2000 to R4 066 million in 2005. Sport sponsorship has grown at an average rate of 23% per annum since 1986 and attracts approximately 70% of all sponsorships expenditure in South Africa.

According to Ferreira, Hall, and Bennet (2008:736) there are many proposed benefits and objectives of corporate sponsorship. One being that sponsorship offers the ability to create an emotional attachment with the target audience which can be difficult to accomplish via traditional media channels. Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:148) assert that sponsorship affects the consumer differently than other form of advertising. Sponsorship is said to engage the consumer by promoting an activity which the consumer already has an intensely emotional relationship with. Ferreira Hall, and Bennet (2008:736) add that in essence, sponsorship allows the corporation to approach the target audience through a medium in which they already have a vested interest. In return, companies who invest in sponsorships may experience high levels of preference among those who attend a sponsored event. While sponsorship has many varying objectives including creating awareness, forging goodwill, and enhancing corporate image and brand equity, it is often used as a communication tool to differentiate and position a brand apart from its competitors. Sponsorship ultimately strives toward the common goal of increased sales and profit margins.

The reason for sponsorship being successful is explained by Olson and Peter (2005:218). They state that when a new product for which people have neutral feelings is repeatedly advertised during exciting sporting events, it is possible for the product to eventually generate that same excitement on its own, solely through the repeated pairings with the events. This idea resonates with what has been established by lifestyle marketing and the process of linking products to lifestyles. Displaying products in the environment they are most interested in and using 'setting' and product placement to the marketer's full advantage. Placing familiar products or brands in an environment where the consumer has positive emotional connection, the market instantly has a means of reaching the consumer on a positive emotional level. By doing this, brands have the chance of differentiating themselves from their competitors who might not be as visible. Van Heerden and Kuiper (2008:151) state that brand differentiation can be defined as the degree to which consumers feel the

product is different from a competing product. If customers perceive a brand to have unique benefits that satisfy their needs and wants, the product will be given a value added rating and will be favoured over competitors' products. They also argue that sponsorship enhances the perceived customer value of the product or service. Celebrities enhance product recall, which explains why celebrity endorsements enhance consumer perceptions of product value.

With regards to the action sports sector, Ferreira, Hall, and Bennet (2008:736) sheds light on how sponsorships can be very successful. They state that *X Games* are the leading action sports event, having been in existence for over a decade. According to them, *X Games* have been a staple for *ESPN* (Satellite TV) in regard to broadcasting hours, and they have helped fuel the growth of action sports participation among the youth segment. The 'Dew Action Sports Tour' is *NBC's* response to the continued growth of action sports and market share enjoyed by *ESPN*. As the fastest growing soft drink in terms of sales in the 1990s, the *Mountain Dew* brand has used action sports to position its core product as a youthful, high energy, high action brand. The product takes on the same personality traits or 'brand personality' as the action sports. Using action sports as a tool to accomplish its positioning strategy, *Mountain Dew* is targeting the youth market, specifically males, between 10 and 24 years of age, which consists of more than 58 million consumers worldwide. As action sports are seen to possess their own specific 'cult' products and sub-culture following, it is important to understand how sub-cultures develop and impact on adolescents.

2.12 SUB-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Advertising has been the most closely studied method of transferring cultural meanings from physical and social environments into products. Advertising can be seen as a funnel through which cultural meaning is poured into consumer goods, and, for this reason, advertisers must decide what cultural meanings they want their products to assume and then communicate those to their consumers (Olson and Peter, 2005:296).

Solomon and Rabolt (2004:27) discuss the effect popular culture has on consumers. They propose that popular culture, consisting of clothing, music, movies, sport, books, celebrities, and various forms of entertainment, provide inspiration for marketers. A consumer's culture determines the overall priorities they attach to different activities or products. Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:16) state that a sub-culture indicates which symbolic group one belongs to and demarcates that group from mainstream. Sub-cultures help distinctive sub-groups of consumers to create and preserve unique identities through various forms of consumption practices, resulting in an identifiable social structure with a shared set of beliefs, values, relationships and modes of symbolic expression. Action sports consumers feel strongly about their niche market remaining an elite sector separate from mainstream industries. Olson and Peter (2005:350) define reference groups as cultural groups where members share certain common cultural meanings. According to Solomon's (2007:37) Wheel of Consumer Behaviour, consumers and sub-cultures describe how consumers act as part of a larger social structure. This structure is made up of various identities, social classes, ethnic groups and reference groups. These two aspects of consumer socialisation (reference groups and sub-cultures) will be investigated next as so to understand how they influence consumer buying patterns, specifically with regard to the teenage market.

According to Gasperini (2008) when it comes to global youth culture and fashion, one of the most significant differences between today and that of five years ago is that trends emerge from the streets and from individuals rather than dictated from fashion houses and designers (the traditional top-down philosophy). Young people also tend to form their ideas about fashion from utilitarian sources out of necessity. They are more susceptible to marketing via social networks, and utilise communication patterns across a range of unique methods. The influence of current youth culture, style trends, and consumer control is growing and becoming more noticeable as young people make decisions based on increased access to communication tools. International brands and retailers that are profitable and successful at tapping into various new media are *Vans*, *Levi Strauss*, *Adidas*, and *Volcom* among others, as they tend to capture specific target demographics and have moved into leadership positions in the fashion industry.

Yiannakis (2001:47) explores Gramsci's theory of hegemony and asserts that hegemony is not merely a simplistic notion that dominant group ideas are transferred to the minds of sub-ordinate groups through super-structural means. Rather, this theory implies the active consent of the sub-ordinate group in creating and maintaining its sub-ordinate status. In this way sub ordinate groups actively choose from the dominant groups' agendas, maintaining the illusion of freedom while reinforcing the dominant group's interests. This means that active consent occurs not simply by consciously acknowledging certain ideas, but by arranging one's behaviours by those ideas. To further explain this theory, Chalachatpinyo, Padgett, and Crocker (2002:14) hypothesise that positive interest and positive involvement are the two elements involved in the process of change. People are able to accept and then pursue a change eagerly, because they have both a positive interest and positive involvement. This kind of interaction is labelled 'conformity'. Kim and Rhee (2008: 548) add a supporting theory, that once group norms (including fashion norms) are formulated they are sustained through expectations of conformity by individuals who wish to acquire group approval. Conformity to group norms plays a critical role in peer acceptance among adolescents, therefore as adolescents experience dramatic personal change (physical, social, sexual and intellectual), the importance of family diminishes and that of peers increases. Kim and Rhee (2008:549) point out that there has been extensive study of the relationship between peer acceptance and clothing acceptance. In general, such research has demonstrated a positive relationship between peer acceptance and clothing acceptance, although the findings have not been entirely consistent and an exact causality in the relationship has remained unclear.

When considering the action sports consumer, the following features become apparent: Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:16) define the action sports sub-culture consumer as a group of consumers who relate to counter-culture music and lifestyle elements which support the anti-establishment, non conformist attitude and comprise of individuals who wish to be different, who break away from traditional mainstream activities and sports, who pursue excitement, self expression, creativity and freedom. This sub-culture of consumers use action sports and the associated branded clothing to express their identity in their peer groups and symbolise how they are different from other members of the general youth market. This definition links and validates

the paradox which was highlighted earlier, that within their rebellion this fascinating group of consumers find acceptance.

2.12.1 Reference groups

The desire for individuals to 'fit in' is often the motivating factor behind product purchasing. Solomon (2007:38) defines a 'reference group' as an actual or imaginary individual or group perceived as having significant influence on an individual's evaluations, aspirations or behaviour. Social power is the ability of an individual to influence the actions or behaviours of others. Reference groups are important to individuals as they create and enhance the voluntary or involuntary actions of those linked to one another and in turn create the illusion of social power.

Sub-cultures play a significant role in the socialisation of teenagers, and in turn influence their purchasing patterns. Olson and Peter (2005:321,360) describe sub-cultures as distinctive groups of people in a society who share common cultural meanings for:

- Emotional reactions (beliefs, values and goals);
- Behaviour (customs, rituals, behavioural norms); and
- Environmental factors (living conditions, geographic location, important objects).

The concept of sub-cultures will be used to interpret the defining characteristics of the action sports consumer. It is important to explore the socialisation process of children through adolescence in order to understand the need for, and formation of reference groups and sub-cultures. It is also important to study the cognitive meanings attributed to sub-cultures in order to understand the expectations a typical action sports consumer has of products within the action sports market. As established earlier, consumer socialisation refers to how consumers develop and acquire attitudes and opinions regarding products and brands.

Referring to Yiannakis (2001:48) and his analysis of the hegemony theory, he explains that the issues of ideology and everyday life are not distinct entities but are

interactive: how dominant ideology affects subordinate sub-cultures and how those sub-cultures, in turn, respond to the effects of the dominant ideology. In Hood's (2007:5) theory, two types of self-evaluation exist in reference groups:

- The normative effect, which evaluates the reference group as a whole and those who compare themselves to the group;
- The comparison effect, which looks at particular members of the group and the behaviour of others in the group in comparison to those particular members.

Therefore, a teenager not associated with a reference group may base his or her self-evaluation on a normative effect since they have yet to become established within a particular group.

According to Solomon (2007:381) the degree to which reference groups will influence purchasing decisions depends on whether the product will be consumed privately or publicly. With reference to action sports clothing, these products will most definitely be consumed publically; therefore reference groups play an important role in brands chosen and products purchased. Solomon (2007:385) describes a brand community as a group of consumers who share a set of social relationships based upon the usage or interest in a product. Within the action sports clothing market this is a key component of purchasing habits. It is often found that the emotional bonding which exists between people who wear similar brands will provide a sense of emotional belonging due to their shared interest in a lifestyle.

2.12.2 Consumer socialisation

Consumer socialisation is defined by Olson and Peter (2005:360) as the process through which children acquire knowledge about products and consumption related skills. Bush and Bush (2005:259) describes socialisation agents as anyone whom the consumer comes into contact with, and who may influence the consumer's consumption decisions. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is defined as the need to identify or enhance ones image with significant others through the acquisition or use of products and brands, as well as the willingness to conform to

the expectations of others regarding purchasing decisions or the tendency to learn about products by observing others and seeking information from them. Traditionally the mass media has been directly linked to the socialisation of consumers. This is supported by Solomon (2007:435) who defines consumer socialisation as the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace and states that children have two primary socialisation sources, these being the media and family.

According to Mayo and Nairn (2009:185) consumer socialisation consists of a three stage process through which children mature, evolve and start to operate like adults. These states are:

- 1 The 'perceptual' stage (age 3-7);
- 2 The 'analytical' stage (age 7-11); and
- 3 The 'reflective' stage (age 11-16).

After the age of 11 the processing capabilities of children become much more strategic and they begin to understand that other people have different perspectives and play different roles in a social group or system. While this has merit, McNeal offers a differing insight. To gain a better understanding of how children develop into consumers, McNeal (1992:8) illustrates the various stages children undergo in the consumer socialisation process. According to him, the process begins when parents introduce children to the role of consumer but thereafter marketers play an important role in the continued socialisation of children as parents lose interest. This process takes place as follows:

- Accompanying parents and observing;
- Accompanying parents and requesting;
- Accompanying parents and selecting with permission;
- Accompanying parents and making independent purchases; and
- Going to the store unaccompanied and making independent purchases

The last stage in the consumer socialisation process will be focussed on in this review. The first stage usually begins between the age of 5 and 7 and continues until the child reaches adulthood. To marketers this is the most vital step in the process as it is at this point that children can be persuaded to buy a particular brand or product without needing permission to do so. Mayo and Nairn (2009:203) suggest that it is often assumed that once children have the cognitive capacity to be sceptical they are somehow equipped to deal with advertising. Whether or not they trust the message is irrelevant.

According to Olson and Peter (2005:296) advertising has been the most closely studied method of transferring cultural meanings from physical and social environments into products. In the action sports industry the core theme surrounding products is that they are required to possess the characteristics discussed by Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:4). Advertising acts as a funnel through which cultural meaning is poured into consumer goods and for this reason advertisers must essentially decide what cultural meanings they want their products to have and then communicate those to their consumers.

When looking specifically at the influence sub-cultural groups have on adolescent consumers, it is important to understand the underlying reasons why individuals feel the need to conform to the norms of certain sub-cultural groups. Olson and Peter's (2005:321,360) theory describes sub-cultures as distinctive groups of people in a society where principle characteristics influence their behaviour. It is important to explore the socialisation process of children through adolescence in order to understand the need and formation of reference groups or sub-cultures. Through socialisation processes families transmit the cultural meanings of society, sub-cultures and social class to their children and thereby influence their children's cognition and behaviour. These cognitive meanings are important to study in order to understand what expectations a typical action sports consumer has for products or brands falling within the action sports market. As mentioned, consumer socialisation refers to how consumers develop and acquire attitudes and opinions regarding products and brands. This in turn results in emotional bonds with brands which can be valuable to utilise in attaining brand loyalty from consumer reference groups.

2.13 FINAL INSIGHTS FROM LITERATURE

From the literature reviewed, it is possible to conclude that the interest in the teenage market has developed over the years due to this market fast becoming an influential industry. A key factor emerging from the literature indicates that teenage consumers became targeted by marketers because they no longer require parental permission to purchase clothing products. This freedom of purchase enables the exploitation of the emotional instability of adolescents. By preying on their need to define themselves in society through their clothing, as well as by manipulating the forging of identities within peer groups, this objective is achieved.

This study confirmed that consumer behaviour is an ongoing process and, if studied attentively, it is possible to assess the various contributing factors that affect consumer choice. This facilitates the prediction of future purchasing trends and as a result increases the possibility of maintaining a competitive edge. This study applied the basic model developed by Solomon (2007:37) known as 'The Wheel of Consumer Behaviour'. This model highlights the many processes and facets a purchaser is exposed to as a consumer. It also highlighted the social, psychological and cultural elements that play a role in the decision making process experienced by all consumers with specific reference to the action sports consumer.

When defining the key characteristics of the action sports consumers it was established that these individuals desire the atmosphere surrounding 'the brand' and that of 'the store' to mimic the ethos of the brands that they are selling. This means that authenticity is vital to action sports consumers and, as stated by Thomas (2008:3), action sports brands need to ensure they make a cultural connection with their consumers. This proves to be a difficult task as the action sport consumer has specific views and requirements regarding the advertising and marketing tools implemented when promoting action sports brands. This section of consumers wants to feel that the retailer they are purchasing items from understands them, relates to them, and is genuine in their support for the sport of 'lifestyle' and is not just cashing in on the trends. For this reason brand managers need to pay special attention to the 'personality' they construct for their brands.

From the investigation it was discovered that the formation of a brand personality needs to be carefully plotted because like individuals' personalities, a brand's personality is difficult to re-construct within the minds of the consumer. It was established by Kim and Rhee (2008:546) that during the teenage years, signals sent out by the wearer are more acutely observed and that there is a palpable power which brands have on identity formation. Teenagers therefore use branded clothing to better their social standing or to mould a certain image that may or may not be a true reflection of their lifestyles. This was deemed to be the social power of clothing. This social power was found to induce the ability for an individual to influence the actions or behaviours of others. Bush and Bush (2005:259) defined consumer socialisation as the process of young people acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the market place. It was also established that adolescents acquire product knowledge through others, and develop attitudes and opinions of certain brands by association and interaction with peers. This point is critical, because relevant information being sent out by brands is not necessarily interpreted by the consumers as anticipated. Therefore opinions are influenced, altered and distorted by peers and other consumers. Information is only as effective as the perceptions of other consumers of that particular product.

Reference groups were found to be important to individuals as they create and enhance the voluntary or involuntary actions of those linked to one another and in turn create the illusion of social power. This becomes relevant as it confirms that consumers are not only forming personal opinions about brands but are also using other's views as reference points too. As teenagers break away from their parental influence they begin to rely more heavily on peer approval and support. Therefore what their peers say about products and trends becomes vital. Peer judgment plays a role in the fact that marketing strategies are not only required to appeal to individuals but also need to appeal to teenagers on a collective level too, weaving a web between members of sub-groups and linking consumers to a brand. This connection between sub-group members is vital in preserving unique identities and social structures with shared beliefs, values, relationships, and modes of symbolic expression.

This need for peer acceptance by teenagers' during adolescence highlights the paradox which exists within the action sports clothing industry. It was stated that many teenagers seek the approval of their peers and mimic popular trends exhibited by their peers, while teenagers who relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle often shun teenagers that conform to popular trends. To these teenagers, expressing their self image as *individualistic* is vital and they are consequently more progressive with their fashion choices. Not only are they living a lifestyle of risk taking and shifting the boundaries, but are also doing so in their clothing choices. The action sport lifestyle is being sold as 'individualistic', 'risky', independent and cutting edge. This is done through the clever use of Lifestyle marketing, which is successful because anti-establishment movements are not bound by high end designer predictions but are inspired by individually chosen fashion which expresses personality and lifestyle. This appeals to the youth market because the youth culture focusses on self rebellion and nonconformity, characterised by a crisis of identity involving the seeking of social identity through the association with symbolic tools as explained by Buresti and Rosenberger (2006:2). These ideals are shared by action sports brands, therefore this common objective links teenagers to action sports brands. The image created around anti-establishment brands allows teenagers to find a sense of acceptance through rebellion. This paradox is thought to become a defining issue within the empirical investigation of this study.

As a result of new trends in marketing to the youth it is anticipated that marketing strategies should be *lifestyle orientated* as opposed to age specific. The idea is not to sell consumers superficial images, but to investigate the qualities that drive consumer's behaviour. In the case of action sports consumers, brand managers need to adopt an 'anti-mainstream' image that rebels against anything 'designer' or anything viewed as 'commercial'. This approach relates to teenagers who find acceptance through rebellion. Creating an image consistent with the expectations of the consumer requires detailed examination of the expectations of the target consumer (as envisaged in this study). From the literature it is possible to predict that brands are expected to deliver insight, interactivity, and transparency within their marketing campaigns. Generation Y wants to be included in the life cycle of brands and participate in the brand's success. This results in the brands becoming not only a product but an object of value.

Higher brand diversity has decreased brand loyalty and Generation Y consumers have grown accustomed to choice and the competitive nature of brands. Therefore investigating these factors assists in presenting a product to the consumer that encourages the support of the brand. Olson and Peter (2005:22-25) highlight that the visual presentation of a brand has an effect on the response towards that brand from the consumer. The consumer environment is an important medium which also influences consumer perception. Therefore not only does brand personality affect the consumer's views on the brand but the 'personality' of the environment in which the product is placed becomes vital in the construct of those particular brands.

Recent economic and social developments have encouraged the youth to recognise that leisure activities can successfully be combined with career choices. Consumers enjoy being involved with products that relate to them on an emotional level and therefore feel loyal to those particular brands. It is important for the consumer to feel involved in the lifespan of brands. For this reason sponsorships have proved to be a successful way for action sports brands to excite the consumer while indirectly achieving their marketing goals. Sponsorship was found to be successful because when a product is repeatedly advertised during exciting sporting events, it is possible for the product to generate support solely through repeated parings with exciting events.

While many inventive techniques are used to market this very specific section of the sports market, one reason why sporting chains have not capitalised on the action sports business is because they tend to be over promotional, which discourages the action sports brands and the action sports customer. According to Solomon (2007:128) products associated with action sports lifestyles are seen by the consumer as 'cult products'. Marketers therefore have the difficult task of balancing the image portrayed by their marketing strategies and keeping their consumers satisfied. They run the risk of violating the bond the brand has built up by becoming too commercial. This poses a complex growth dynamic as it is difficult for action sports brands to grow rapidly yet seem as though they are abandoning their core values.

2.14 CONCLUSION

From the literature review it is possible to state that the action sports market is a fashion movement fuelled by lifestyle choices. When it comes to global youth culture and fashion, one of the most significant differences currently is that trends emerge from the streets, rather than dictated from fashion houses and designers (the traditional top-down philosophy). Therefore the empirical investigation of this study aims to investigate the expectations of the youth to understand the factors that influence their buying behaviours. This is done to ultimately obtain a better understanding of what the 'street' consumer expects from action sports products and what factors they base their judgements on. Solomon (2007:198) suggests that the consumer can never be fully understood or be aware of their purchasing decisions and highlights the importance of various unconscious motives which inspire purchases. The implication of this is that consumers can never be expected to fully describe their true motives for purchasing certain products, even if sensitive ways were derived to ask them directly. While this may be true, the literature suggests that it is possible to draw conclusions surrounding action sports consumers' decisions based on the personal and emotional satisfaction they achieve by being associated with this niche market.

Puchan (2004:175) offers a final thought which will emerge from the empirical investigation of this study. He states that although the 'anti-mainstream' image of action sports is still apparent, its interdependent relationship with the media and corporate agents has reversed the oppositional ideology that marked its earlier motivation. As the surf lifestyle evolved and became too 'mainstream' in the past decade, the skate trends and brands began to emerge. The 'skate' phenomenon and it leaning towards 'anti- establishment' brands is now in a growth phase in South Africa as consumers are looking for the next phase, going beyond the surf lifestyle which has since become viewed as 'mainstream'.

Chapter 3 aims to define the research design process and explains the objectives of the empirical study. The chapter will describe the methods used to obtain the data necessary for the empirical investigation of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters defined the objectives of this study and examined the relevant literature available. This chapter describes the methodology used to obtain the necessary data for the empirical investigation of the study. This chapter aims to illustrate the methods used in:

- The research design process;
- The procedure for selecting the sample;
- The administration of the survey instrument; and
- The data collection and analysis techniques utilised.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research requires extensive planning and preparation. Therefore it is important to be clear on which technique of qualitative research would be best suited to data collection. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:134), a descriptive qualitative approach is appropriate when the purpose is to discover the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people. As this study focuses on investigating the perceptions of the sample toward various action sports brands and the effect anti-establishment branding has on their purchasing patterns, a qualitative approach is suitable in this instance.

Sarantakos (2005: 41) explains that in qualitative research, human beings and their perceptions of reality become the central focus of the study. He states that reality is experienced internally and resides within the minds of the people who construct it, hence each person constructs their own reality which is therefore subjective. For this reason, qualitative research becomes specific to the target population and results obtained will differ as the respondents' perceptions vary from that of their peers. It is suggested by Sapsford (2007:14) that survey research is highly structured, and therefore it is unlikely to discover anything which was not in some

sense anticipated. This notion supports the impetus of a hypothesis when undertaking a research orientated study. This study called for the examination of the sample population's perception of reality through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:247) state that the meaning of human creations, words, actions, and experiences can only be ascertained in relation to the contexts in which they occur. Therefore it is important to bear in mind that the sample population consists of teenagers who may or may not be fully aware of the reasoning behind their purchasing behaviour. Sarantakos (2005:42) affirms that the purpose of qualitative research is to assist in the interpretation and understanding of:

- The reasons for certain social actions ;
- The way in which the sample population construct their lives and the meaning they attach to them; and finally
- The social context of social actions.

Effective planning of the empirical investigation of a study ensures unbiased and valid results. The research content and purpose of the study dictates the direction which the empirical investigation will follow, and is further discussed below.

3.3 RESEARCH CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The content of the research revolved around teenage consumers' perceptions toward anti-establishment clothing brands, their reasons for choosing specific brands and consumer reasoning at the point of purchase. The information gathered included consumer profiling, opinions regarding different brands as well as expectations consumers have of brands.

It was anticipated that there could be a link between the sample population's perceptions of action sports brands and their buying behaviour. The study challenged the assumption that teenage consumers respond to, and are influenced by the anti-establishment visuals portrayed by action sports brands within their

marketing campaigns. The following questions were formulated into a questionnaire which encouraged teenagers to consider their purchasing decisions:

1. Are teenagers attracted to anti-establishment branded sportswear, and why?
2. What factors within various anti-establishment brands are seen by teenagers as the deciding factors in purchasing action sportswear?
3. What other key factors can be seen to influence teenage purchasing of action sportswear?

The design of the research instrument and interpretation of the results will impact the outcome of the study, for this reason careful planning needs to be executed when formulating the questionnaires.

3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design, according to Sarantakos (2005:105) explains how the researcher intends to conduct the study, namely how the questions asked in each research step will be addressed. The research design is also said to clarify the steps in the research process, enabling the researcher to foresee and prevent eventual errors, bias or distortions. The steps involved in the research design process are described below.

- WHAT is the research topic?
- HOW will the topic be addressed?
- WHO are the subjects?
- WHERE will the subjects be found and HOW will the data be gathered?
- HOW will the data be processed?
- HOW will the findings be communicated?

These steps were used to define the research process that was followed within this study. These steps are described in Figure 3.1 on the following page.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHAT is the research topic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate the effect of anti-establishment branding on teenage consumer behaviour within the action sportswear market. • The areas focused on in this study were that of consumers' perceptions, their reasons for choosing specific brands, and consumer reasoning at the point of purchase. The information gathered included consumer profiling of opinions about different brands as well as their expectations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOW will the topic be addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data was collected from the sample population in the form of questionnaires. • Questionnaires were formulated and handed out to 3 purposively selected High Schools. • Follow up interviews were conducted in order to gain further clarity on issues which arose from the questionnaires.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO are the subjects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 10, 11 and 12 students from the Durban Highway area. Namely, a Government boys school, a private girls school and a Government co-educational school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHERE will the subjects be found and HOW will the data be gathered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires were distributed to schools which had agreed to participate in the study. Specifics regarding how particular classes were chosen were left up to the discretion of the school. This ensured that the survey did not disrupt teaching time, and did not infringe upon any school regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOW will the data be processed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questionnaires were interpreted by the researcher with the assistance of a data analysis programme such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOW will the findings be communicated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings were then formulated into the final research report.

Figure 3.1 The research design process.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:183) characterise *survey research* as the process of acquiring information on one or more groups of people pertaining to their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or experiences. This is done by asking the sample population questions and tabulating the results. The purpose of this is to ultimately learn about a large population of people by surveying a small sample of that particular population. This approach involved the researcher asking a series of questions to willing participants, summarising their responses in percentages and frequency counts and finally drawing conclusions about the particular population as a result of the sample population's responses.

The methodology consisted of survey questionnaires (See Addendum C). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:183) define descriptive survey research through the acquiring of information of groups of people concerning their opinions, attitudes or previous experiences by asking them questions and tabulating their answers.

The method in selecting the sample population and why this particular sample was used will be discussed below.

3.5 DESCRIPTION OF TARGET POPULATION

This study focuses on the teenage market with specific reference to pupils at private as well as government high schools. The sample population chosen were in Grades 10, 11 and 12, it was felt that these are the years where teenagers are seeking social acceptance and often do this by expressing themselves through the clothing they wear. Private and government schools were chosen as these categories of schools are thought to constitute children from middle to upper income levels, as the action sports brand consumer generally fall into this bracket. This age group has recently become the focus of many marketing strategies and therefore it would be interesting to examine how effective these marketing strategies have been on the teenage market.

3.6 THE SAMPLING PROCESS

Mouton (1996:135) describes defining a population as a two-step process:

- Defining the target population; and
- The sample frame must be constructed.

The sample frame for this study included learners in Grades 10, 11 and 12 from moderate to higher income level schools as they are a target market of action sports brands.

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:85) good sampling implies:

- A well defined population; and
- An adequately chosen sample population.

Somekh and Lewin (2005: 219) state that non-probability sampling applies when the sample is a group that the researcher has access to or has selected for a particular reason. As the action sports clothing is marketed particularly to middle and higher income level consumers, questionnaires were formulated and handed out to three purposively selected high schools. Schools falling into the following categories were approached.

- A government co-educational school
- A private boys' school
- A private girls' school

When choosing a sample population, purposive sampling was used as this sampling method is based upon the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:51) highlights that purposive sampling is used in cases where the sample is selected for theoretical reasons. A cross-sectional sample within the population was chosen since this method includes people from several different age groups whose results can then be compared. The sample aimed to represent a population of high school students from private and co-educational schools which are situated in affluent and wealthier areas of the Durban Highway area. Sarantakos (2005:164) states that within purposive sampling the researcher purposively selects a sample population who, in their opinion, are relevant to the study. This type of sampling can be viewed as judgemental sampling. The classes chosen in each Grade to complete the questionnaire was left to the discretion of heads of departments of the schools.

3.7 PROCEDURE FOR DRAWING OF THE SAMPLE

For this study, the optimal sample size was determined by factors such as cost and time. It is not only important to take the researchers' time frames into account but also the learning time of scholars that would have been disrupted by the time set out for the distribution of the survey instrument. According to Maree (2007:178) larger samples are needed to represent the diversity of a population therefore three schools were included in the sample including a cross-section of three Grades.

The questionnaires were distributed to three grades per school. This resulted in 270 surveys being distributed. The cross sectional sample chosen ensured the results showed a relatively equal representation of male and female adolescents per Grade. Each class consisted of approximately thirty pupils.

3.8 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Sapsford (2007:10) states that surveys not only describe populations, but are also used as tools to test a conclusion or to find out how one group differs from another. Therefore the prime purpose of survey data is to make planned comparisons. Questionnaires were seen to be the most suitable form of data collection for this study (See Addendum C). The reasons for choosing questionnaires above other forms of data collection were as follows:

According to Sarantakos (2005:263) questionnaires as a data collection method have various strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are listed below:

- They produce rapid results;
- They offer assurance and anonymity;
- They offer less opportunity for bias or external influence from the researcher;
- They are a stable, consistent and uniform measure free of variation;
- They offer an objective view of the issue;
- They allow a wide coverage of respondents; and
- They are not affected by respondents who are not available at the time of the survey.

Although these are the proposed strengths regarding the use of questionnaires, they are also prone to various weaknesses, these being:

- Questionnaires do not allow further probing or prompting regarding the researched topic;
- Clarification of the answers given is not always possible;
- The identity of the respondent is not always known and it is difficult to follow up on respondents if necessary;
- Questionnaires do not offer the opportunity to gather further information at the point of completion; and
- Due to lack of supervision, an incomplete response is often possible.

Taking these strengths and weaknesses into account and weighing them up against the nature of this study, it was decided that questionnaires would ultimately prove the most suitable research tool. To overcome the weaknesses of questionnaires, it was also decided that follow-up interviews would be conducted with willing participants drawn from the returned questionnaires.

When selecting a method for data collection, Leedy (1980:99) suggests considering several practical guidelines when employing a questionnaire as a research tool:

- The language used must be clear in conveying precisely what the researcher wishes to discover. To ensure this, short concise questions were used in the design of the questionnaire;
- The questions should be designed to fulfil a specific research objective. For this reason, the research objective was kept in mind when each question was designed ensuring that the results obtained were relevant to the purpose of the study; and
- Questionnaires succeed if they are correctly planned. Once the pilot study had been completed it was evident which questions needed reassessing or modification.

3.9 THE QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The importance of a well-developed questionnaire is defined by Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:484). They name four important steps to achieving successful results, these being:

- To clarify the reason for the study;
- To determine the information required from the respondents;
- To list the research questions that are required to be answered within the study; and
- To identify any additional information required to address the research questions.

The main purposes of a questionnaire are defined by Wild and Diggines (2010:173). They suggest that a questionnaire must:

- Collect the relevant data for the identified problem;
- Ensure that the data collected is comparable;
- Minimise bias;
- Attract and motivate respondents to participate;
- Encourage respondents to be honest and accurate when answering; and
- Facilitate the task of the interviewer and the data-processing activities.

These factors were taken into account during the formulation of the questionnaire to ensure the research instrument complies with and incorporates all of the above recommendations. Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:458) emphasise that it is important to pay close attention to the length of the questionnaire. This is because the aim of the researcher is to collect as much information as possible without taking too much of the respondents time. Therefore, the questionnaire should prompt the respondents to provide in-depth clarity on the research topic, but should not be overly lengthy which will ultimately taint the results.

Questions in a questionnaire, according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:115) should be simple and short. Long, in-depth questions should rather be broken down

into a few shorter questions. This is particularly relevant to the respondents within this study as they are high school students. Their attention could be easily disrupted, therefore the questions need to be basic, quick to interpret and answer. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:117) add that there are two types of questions which could be used, these being factual questions and opinion questions. Within this study, both were employed as the information required is related to the respondents' opinions on anti-establishment branding as well their purchasing behaviour.

The key issues which needed to be addressed within the questionnaires were as follows:

- Are teenagers attracted to anti-establishment branded sportswear, and why?
- The investigation of the factors which influence teenage consumer behaviour with regard to action sportswear ;
- Establishing whether there is a link between perceptions of action sports brands and buying behaviour;
- Testing the assumption that teenage consumers respond to, and are influenced by the anti-establishment images portrayed by action sports brands;
- Investigating consumers' perceptions of action sports brands;
- Consumer's reasons for choosing specific brands;
- Opinions regarding different brands;
- Consumer expectation of brands;
- To what extent is the purchasing of action sportswear influenced by anti-establishment branding?
- What factors within various anti-establishment brands are seen by teenagers as the deciding factors in purchasing action sportswear?
- What other key factors can be seen to influence teenage purchasing of action sportswear?

The above issues were then formulated into short, concise questions and formatted into a questionnaire. These questions aimed to gain the information required to

validate the purpose of the study. Once the questions were placed in a questionnaire format a covering letter was developed as is important to motivate potential respondents (see Addendum A). The covering letter explained the reasons for completing the questions as well as the goal of the study. It was also important to thank the respondents for their participation and to welcome any additional comments.

3.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The reliability and validity of a research instrument and the process of gathering data needs to be carefully considered. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:126), the reliability of measurement is the degree to which the instrument used produces equivalent results for repeated trials. The greater the consistency in the results, the greater the reliability of the measuring procedures. Yet very few instruments ever produce entirely consistent results, specifically in the social sciences field of research. Reliability, according to Sarantakos (2005:88) refers to the instrument's capacity to produce consistent results. Therefore a research instrument can be classified as being reliable, if it produces consistent results whenever repeated. Also, it is required to display results in an objective light. Sapsford (2007:100) makes a clear comparison when clarifying the term 'reliability'. He uses a yard-stick as a metaphor. He states that if a yard-stick is used to measure the distance between the same two points at different times, the measurement should be the same. This is then said to be a reliable instrument and the result valid.

Reliability, according to Sarantakos (2005:88):

- Measures objectivity, stability, consistency and precision;
- Measures the quality of indicators and instruments; and
- Refers to the ability of the instrument to display the same findings each time it is activated.

It is also essential to remember that an instrument with high reliability is redundant if it has poor validity. While reliability deals with issues such as consistency and

accuracy of the instrument, validity deals with what the instrument measures. The validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:28).

Sarantakos (2005:83) states that validity defines the quality of the process of measurement. A valid research instrument should be relevant, accurate and precise. It is also necessary to consider whether the questions placed within the questionnaire are vital to the study. If not, irrelevant questionnaires should be discarded.

According to Sarantakos (2005:91) validity:

- Is a measure of the quality of measurement;
- Tests the quality of indicators and research instruments;
- Measures relevance, precision and accuracy; and
- Tests the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:90) explain that there are certain types of validity which need to be applied to the data collection process. These are:

Internal Validity	The extent to which casual conclusions can be drawn
External Validity	The extent to which it is possible to generalise from the data and context of research study to the broader populations and settings
Measurement Validity	The extent to which the constructs in the research question are successfully operationalised
Interpretative Validity	The extent to which appropriate conclusions are drawn from the data
Statistical Validity	The extent to which the study has used an appropriate design and statistical method of analysis.

When establishing if the questionnaire displayed the necessary properties of reliability and validity it was important to weigh the research instrument against the above requirements. The questionnaires distributed for this study were designed to measure the opinions of the respondents with regard to their buying habits. The results of this study are compared to those established in the literature review, which either confirmed or rejected assumptions made earlier in the research process. The validity of the research instrument can be established through the pre-testing of the instrument. 'Reliability' and the 'interpretative validity' of the survey will only be assessed once the results have been drawn and triangulated with the aims of the study and the literature review. As mentioned above, pre-testing the instrument is vital in establishing whether or not the research instrument is in fact gathering the necessary data. The process of pre-testing and its importance is discussed below.

3.11 PRE-TESTING OF THE INSTRUMENT

Pre-testing or a pilot study is conducted prior to the distribution of the research instrument. The main purpose of a pilot study, according to Fink (2006: 6) is to assist in the production of a survey that will provide the desired information. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:95) assert that pilot studies are preliminary studies which are implemented before the final research design, and are conducted on small samples. The purpose is to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the research instruments. Sarantakos (2005:256) maintains that pre-testing takes place to assess the following:

- The time and costs involved in the completion of the questionnaire;
- The effectiveness of the questionnaire;
- The suitability of the research methods;
- Adequacy of the sample frame;
- The diversity of the sample frame;
- The response rate of the subjects to the overall research design;
- Potential problems, weaknesses, inadequacies, ambiguities of the research instrument; and

- Whether or not the results obtained from the questions are relevant to the study and provide the desired results.

During the pilot study, it is also possible to test the administration process to assess the effectiveness of the questionnaire. The first set of pilot studies were distributed to five randomly selected high school students. All five of the pilot study respondents were in Grade 11 at Hillcrest High School, which is one of the schools that agreed to take part in the study. The pilot study respondents comprised of three females and two males. The selection of pupils was left up to the discretion of the teacher who distributed the questionnaires. Once the pilot study questionnaires had been returned and analysed it was decided that certain questions as well as the format of the questionnaire had to be revised.

From the pilot study results it became evident that due to the respondents being high school students, it would be beneficial to include graphics, logos and images that they could relate to. The teacher who distributed the pilot study proposed including logos or advertisements relating to the brands being investigated. It was suggested that the inclusion of logos and graphics would attract the attention of the students and therefore provoke more elaborate responses from them. This suggestion was taken into account and deemed relevant. Therefore the questionnaire layout was reconsidered and altered.

3.12 AMENDED QUESTIONNAIRES

It was decided that the questionnaire should incorporate questions which were more closely related to the critical questions of the study. As the sample population were high school students it was decided that quotes and explanations be included in order to clarify the topic at hand. It was important for the respondents to have an understanding of anti-establishment branding and the use of persuasive branding within products. More open-ended questions were included in the questionnaires which would offer the respondents a chance to explain their opinions and give more detailed responses. Once the pilot study had been analysed and revised, a second set of pilot questionnaires were distributed. Once returned, it was established that the questionnaires were ready for distribution to the three schools.

3.13 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviews with the Heads of the various schools were arranged to discuss the purpose of the questionnaires and to obtain permission to distribute the surveys within the schools. It was important to present the empirical study as being beneficial to the pupils as well as to the researcher. Once permission was obtained it was suggested that the questionnaires be distributed during a registration period to the pupils by the respective registration teachers. Due to the questionnaires being dispersed in a registration period, the registration teachers had to ensure that the pupils returned their completed questionnaires. A total of three schools were approached with three Grades per school participating in the surveys. A total of 270 questionnaires were predicted to be completed. Absenteeism of pupils on the day the questionnaires were administered had to be taken into account as well as pupils who did not return or complete the questionnaires during the allocated time period.

The questionnaires were distributed to the three chosen schools and completed by the pupils at a time suitable to the various teachers who agreed to assist with the study. Once the questionnaires were completed they were returned to the researcher for analysis.

3.14 RESPONSE RATE

A total of 270 questionnaires were divided amongst the three schools.

90 Questionnaires were distributed to each of the following schools: Hillcrest High School (co-education government school), St Mary's School for Girls (private school) and Westville Boys High School (government school).

The response rate percentage from each school is displayed in table 3.1 below:

Name of School	Questionnaires obtained	Questionnaires returned	Unusable questionnaires	Response rate
Hillcrest High School	90 questionnaires	71	19	78%
St Mary's School for Girls	90 questionnaires	68	22	76%
Westville Boys' High School	90 questionnaires	71	19	78%
Total return	210 questionnaires			

Table 3.1 Response Rate.

Gender Count			
Name of School	Male	Female	Total
Westville Boys' High School	71	0	71
Hillcrest High School	22	50	72
St Marys' School for Girls	0	67	67
Total	93	117	210

Table 3.2 Response Rate Cross-tabulation According to School.

Name of School	Age					Total
	15	16	17	18	19	
Westville Boys' High School	4	22	30	13	2	71
Hillcrest High School	4	22	34	11	1	72
St Mary's	8	21	26	12	0	67
Total	15	65	90	36	3	210

Table 3.3 Response rate cross-tabulation according to age.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:185) state that the return rate of questionnaires is typically very low. This results in the return rate not depicting the chosen sample accurately. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:108) the response rate for questionnaires is usually between 20% and 40%. This could be due to the respondent misplacing the questionnaire once it is completed, or the respondent may not wish to participate. However, in this case, questionnaires were administered and collected in a controlled environment which contributed toward achieving a high return rate of 77.7% valid questionnaires.

3.15 DATA ANALYSIS

Empirical research requires the linking of data to concepts and the connecting of a concept to its empirical indicators (Punch, 2006:45). This link is important as it forms the bonds that tie the research questions to the data obtained. For the data to be relevant or useful to the study, logical connections need to be formed on all levels of the research process from inception to completion. Once data is obtained it is the researcher's responsibility to analyse and interpret the data and to draw conclusions regarding the study at hand.

Sarantakos (2005:345) suggests that during the process of analysis the researcher:

- 3.15.1** Focuses on the gathered data and reads the data in the setting and context of the research. The researcher must employ basic, descriptive content analysis;
- 3.15.2** Works through materials, to identify patterns, themes, sequences, differences and other important developments in the sample's responses;
- 3.15.3** Assess whether or not more data is necessary to complete the study, and if so, gather new conclusive data;
- 3.15.4** Establish commonalities and eliminate negative cases, leading to consistency and small scale generalisations; and
- 3.15.5** Link generalisations to one another, testing and re-testing, contrasting, and comparing constantly, leading to typologies and eventually theories.

The use of a computer programme to analyse the data assisted the researcher to draw conclusions from the obtained data as the information was displayed by the program in diagrams, tables and figures. From past studies it had been the experience of the researcher that visual charts, tables and diagrams are more easily understood and processed by the reader. For this reason SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was utilised.

The returned questionnaires were sent to a data capturing company for analysis and tabulation. The data outputs were captured in SPSS and sent back to the researcher for correlation against findings from the literature reviewed.

3.16 LIMITATIONS

As with any form of research, the researcher encountered certain limitations that could disrupt or alter the results of the study. Identifying possible limitations before the process of data gathering took place assisted in appropriate measures being taken to avoid problems once data gathering began. As this study was focussed on obtaining data from school learners ranging between the ages of 15 and 18 with the use of questionnaires, the following limitations were predicted:

Learners might not view the questionnaires or purpose of the research as being important to them, and therefore may not complete the questionnaires, or possibly complete them but with little enthusiasm. Hofstee (2010: 132) states that, when using questionnaires as a research tool, it is important to remember that people differ in their ability and willingness to provide answers and therefore it may be difficult to interpret or analyse their responses. He also states that questionnaires have the disadvantage of not allowing the researcher to interact with or observe the respondents. Questionnaires are also said to be limited in terms of the depth to which the researcher is able to probe any particular respondent in order to clarify responses from the sample. It may also have proved to be difficult to obtain permission from the desired schools to conduct the survey within their designated teaching times. For this reason more than one school within the government and private school subdivisions was approached until three schools conforming to the stipulated subdivision agreed to participate.

3.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the methodology that was used within this study as well as the data collection process and data analysis. As this study is constructed around the use of questionnaires, the strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires were also investigated. This study is considered to be an investigation into a social setting and the opinions of the respondents, therefore the view held by Sarantakos (2005:51) that critical science explains social reality, criticises it and empowers people to question it becomes a key assertion. The above chapter explains how the researcher set about gaining information from respondents regarding their opinions and perceptions of the topic at hand. Chapter 4 will deal with the data gathering process and the results obtained from the data.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter defined the objectives of the empirical study as well as described the research design process. This chapter presents the results of the empirical investigation. It displays the obtained information in the form of display charts and tables.

4.2 RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

This study was based on certain assumptions which could be supported or disproved according to data gathered via questionnaires. The order in which the key issues are addressed within this chapter will be as follows:

- 4.2.1** The social, cultural and psychological factors that influence teenage consumerism;
- 4.2.2** Marketing strategies which are successful in capturing the youth's attention;
- 4.2.3** Whether teenagers are attracted to anti-establishment branded sportswear;
- 4.2.4** Deciding factors for teenagers when purchasing action sportswear;
- 4.2.5** Other key factors which influence teenage purchasing of action sportswear.

Before analysing the above issues, an overview of key findings is discussed below:

4.3 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

When investigating the attitudes of teenagers towards the anti-establishment movement it is important to assess how teenagers perceive brands in general. For this reason the questionnaire commenced by asking the respondents to describe their clothing style and the kinds of clothes they prefer. It became evident that the youth market has a very diverse sense of style and varied clothing preferences. Although there was a distinctive difference between the boys' and girls' responses in

how they described their dressing style, individuality and the comfort of their clothes were evident in both gender responses. Throughout the results comfort played a defining role in the choices teenagers made regarding their clothing. This element overshadowed any other option given to them for both girls and boys. This indicates that although trends, fashion and styling is important to teenagers, the deciding factor remains the issue of comfort as well as whether or not the wearer feels comfortable in the clothes they were wearing.

Types of clothing which attracted them were then investigated by providing them with a check box question which asked them to identify which kinds of clothing they liked. The results are reflected in Figure 4.1:

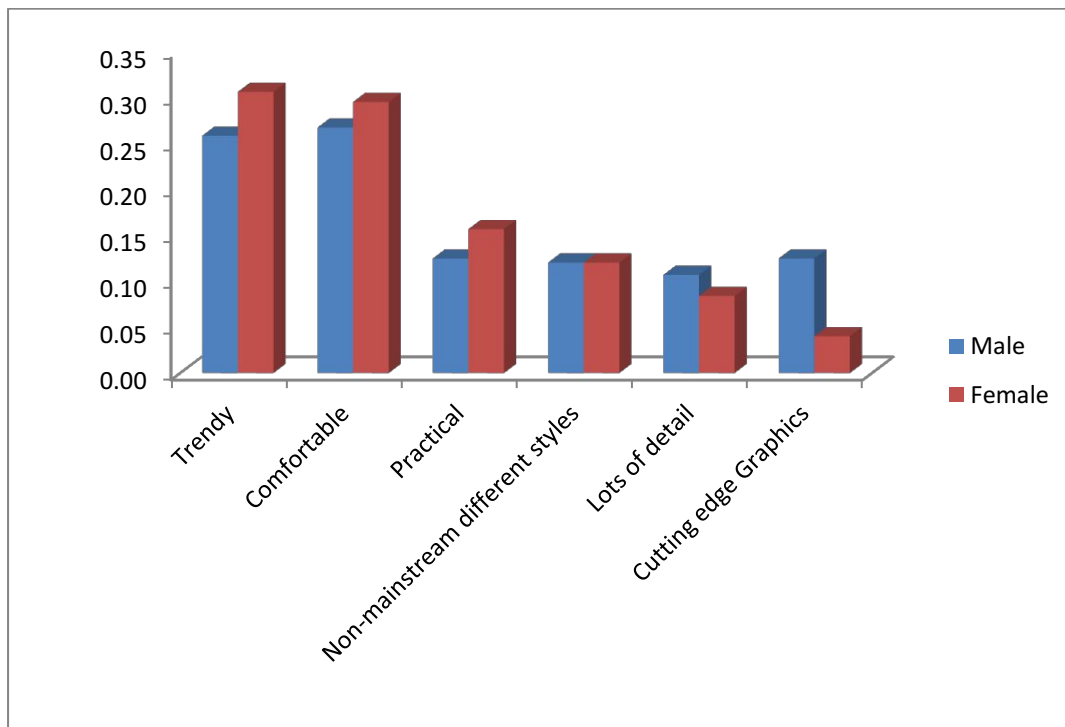


Figure 4.1 Types of clothing preferred by respondents (n = 210).

The results displayed in Figure 4.1, show that both male and female respondents regarded comfort and trend appeal as being the most influential buying factor when placed in a purchasing position. Practicality of the clothing ranked as the third most important factor to females. Although this factor took third position with males, it tied with non-mainstream different styles. This result supports the theory which suggests

that males are more actively inspired by individuality and the anti-establishment movement.

The respondents were asked to rate a list of factors which influences them when shopping. The rating scale for this question placed the value of 1 as most important and 10 being the least important. Therefore the results obtained for Figure 4.2 are shown in an ascending order. The results are reflected in Figure 4.2:

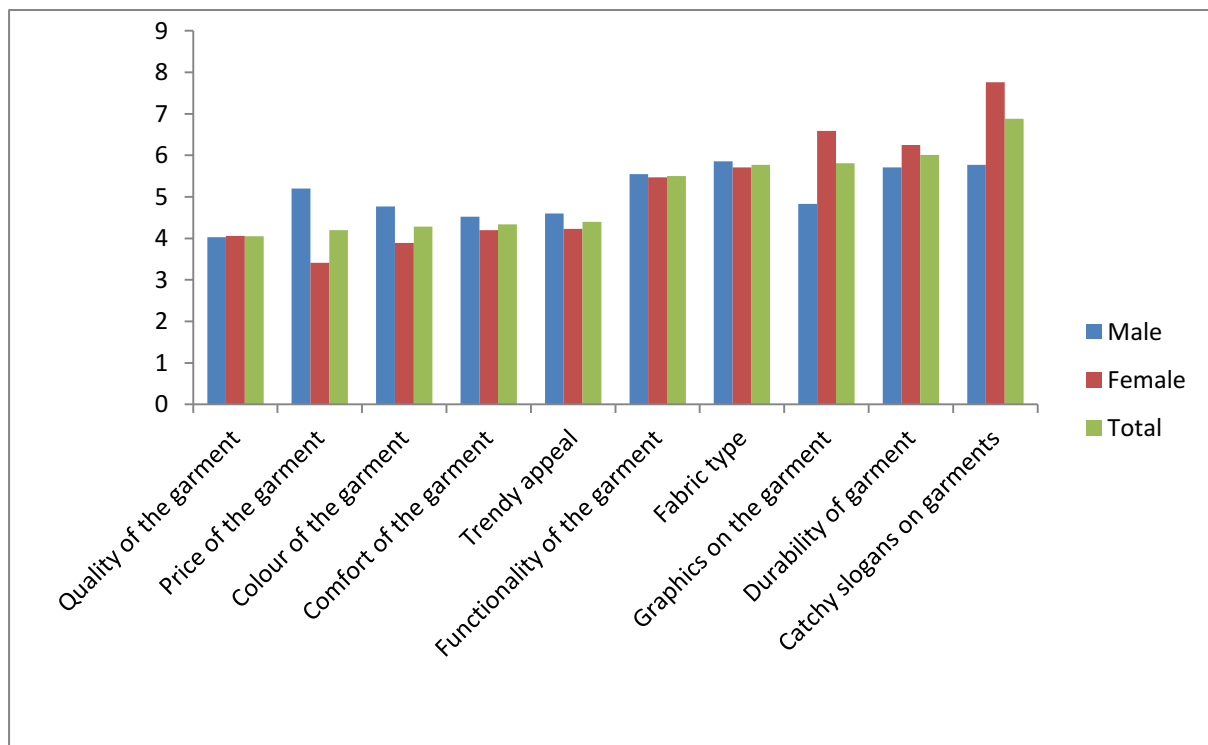


Figure 4.2 Factors which influence buying behaviour: mean rating by gender (n = 210).

The results reflect that quality and comfort remain imperative for male respondents, with trend appeal take third position. Contrary to what was predicted, the functionality of clothing was ranked as bearing a relatively low significance for male respondents. These results support previous theories which state that brands rely heavily on the appeal of quality products and therefore can determine their price brackets around this.

With regards to the female respondents, price appeared to be a deciding factor when making purchasing decisions, closely followed by quality. This response was obtained from both male and female respondents and can work in any brand's favour. Consumers are more quality conscious today as opposed to in the past where mass-produced, low cost import products were considered acceptable. It would appear that consumers have a negative perception of low quality, low price products and are willing to pay more for products with a visibly higher price tag. This contradicts Solomon's (2007:528) idea that adolescents from generation Y are less brand loyal than previous generations and are more accepting of generic labels. It was important to assess whether the South African youth market is influenced by generic brands and their appeal. It was hypothesised that, although generic brands do enter into the teenage consumer environment, they may not be able to form long-lasting relationships with consumers. It was established that if company can produce a reputable brand, it can rely on the strength of that brand to justify price.

Results from the empirical investigation support the idea that the youth market seek quality products with a suitable price tag. The youth are not necessarily purchasing multiple pieces of branded clothing but rather opt for one or two signature pieces. This may be due to the price of branded clothing being outside their budgets, combined with the lure of other, more expensive technological gadgets such as *iPods*, Cellular phones, *Xbox* games and *PlayStations*. The need to purchase clothing is second to the temptation of spending money on other status items and is hence in competition with such items. In recent years teenagers have been exposed to the full scope of consumerism and are now faced with many choices of where to spend their money. The pace at which trends spread has rapidly increased. 'Lifetime investment' pieces of clothing are no longer logical. For this reason expensive branded clothing do not attract the consumer in the same way it did with previous generations.

To further investigate the influence of brands on the teenage market, responses to the following statement were requested:

'Brands are seen by teenagers as vehicles that link them to one another, to certain lifestyles or social classifications' (Solomon, 2003:13).

The following responses were deemed relevant to the study:

“It is important to wear the brands which are accepted by your peers. Wearing certain brands can display to the world what interests you”. This response indicates that certain adolescents perceive brand choice as being an influencing factor when it comes to social acceptance. This is supported by a respondent who felt that “most teenagers desire to be accepted, and wearing certain brands helps them to achieve this”. With regard to social grouping it was said that “certain brands and different styles are favoured by similar types of people, we socialise with people who have the same taste as we do”. This strengthens what was reported by another respondent who stated that “teenagers seek to be accepted therefore they conform by wearing clothes that are accepted by their peers and society”.

“Teenagers are affected by what they see on television and by the clothes others around them are wearing. It is often thought that wealth is displayed by the types of clothes and the brands that one chooses to wear. “This helps us to fit in”. This statement shows that money and status are important elements to teenagers of this age group, and teenagers are aware that “higher status equals class which aids with popularity” as reported by a Grade 10 boy. Another respondent felt that “by wearing certain brands, teenagers can influence one another’s clothing choice, it becomes a system of brand reinforcement. Individuals wearing trendy clothes are seen as trend setters and they become the ones who promote certain brands”.

A female respondent stated that “clothes should represent who you are and should not associate you with someone else”. Although this statement has validity, her view is not supported by the majority of her peers. Branding and advertising has altered consumers’ perception into believing that brands create status and social classification. A few respondents felt that popular brand names and the status associated with wearing them is diminishing due to the high prices and the availability of mass market products which are more competitively priced.

As previously discovered, clothing and brands link sub-groups together but can also associate teenagers with certain lifestyles. One respondent stated that “certain brands are aimed at certain lifestyles and people who relate to those lifestyles or

classes will associate themselves with people of similar interests including similar dress styles". This indicates that it is not only those teenagers who use anti-establishment clothing as a tool to initiate acceptance who are drawn to branded clothing but it is also those teenagers who have been influenced by the ideals promoted by these brands.

"Sub-cultures predict the type of brands we wear." This statement suggests that sub-cultures do play a part in friendship bonding and social ranking. According to a Grade 12 respondent, "brands create social rank and stipulate your position on the social ladder". This notion shows that teenagers have firm ideas about who they associate with. The association of the self with material possessions initiated the anti-establishment rebellious lifestyle. A handful of individuals felt that clothing and the effect clothing has on social standing is superficial. The anti-establishment movement grew from those who rejected this materialistic outlook and followed their own styles. A respondent demonstrated this by stating that "materialism is very common these days and influences everyone".

When comparing the above findings with the assumptions drawn in Chapter 1 it becomes apparent that there is a contradiction between the sample's responses and that of the findings from the literature reviewed. To draw conclusions for this study it is important to consider the key issues of this study and to assess how the empirical findings support or reject the previously defined assumptions.

4.4 SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING TEENAGE CONSUMERS

Many teenagers seek the approval from their peers and mimic popular trends, while teenagers who relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle often shun teenagers who conform to popular trends. To establish the importance of individually chosen trends and to investigate how important 'individualism' has become to teenagers, the respondents were asked how important it is for them to "dress differently from everyone else". Many of the respondents felt that it was important as it "gets you noticed." Many felt that creating your own individual style which displays your

character was one of the main purposes of clothing and assists teenagers to create a unique look. It was evident that an individual dress style was considerably more important to the females than to the males.

A female respondent stated that she wanted to have her own individual style but she did not want to be too different as to be considered an outcast. This demonstrates that following trends could ultimately jeopardise a teenager's individuality. One respondent stated that trends are only considered 'trends' because they have a following of people. If people did not copy one another's dress styles then the concept of 'trends' would be eradicated. Another respondent stated that "it is good to follow trends as long as you adjust what is popular to your own personal style and not follow trends too rigidly".

It became apparent that the respondents had fairly strong views on individuality with regards to their clothing choices, but when asked specifically whether or not they thought they were conveying a message by what they were wearing, they responded as follows:

A number of Grade 10 respondents stated that:

- "Clothes represent your boundaries and your moral standards";
- "My personality is displayed to the world by what I choose to wear";
- "Clothes show the world how you want to be seen"; and
- "Clothes can show people how much money you have and your social standing".

A few Grade 11 respondents stated that:

- "I don't care what people think when they look at my clothes, they will only get to know the real me through spending time with me"; and
- "People use clothes to give the world an idea on what they like, their personality and what sort of people they like to hang around with".

Certain Grade 12 respondents felt that:

- “The way you dress represents your personality as with the saying ‘you are what you eat’, your dress code is a reflection of who you are and what message you want to bring across to people”;
- “First impressions are important to teenagers, if you dress to impress then you have used your clothes to indicate to people that you are bold and confident”;
- “Through the clothes I wear, people can tell whether I am fashionable or not, but my dress style also shows people that I am slightly aware of my body so I try and dress in a way that conveys a good message. Doing this helps people get the right impression of me”.

The sample was then asked whether or not they thought they were being judged the by the clothes which they choose to wear. The results were as follows:

Do you think people judge you by the clothes you wear?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	96.7%	98.3%	97.6%
No	3.3%	1.7%	2.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.1 Clothing as a communicative tool (n = 210).

Table 4.1 shows that teenagers are aware that clothing is a communicative tool which can be used as a representation of who they are. This dynamic was further investigated in order to assess whether or not the youth market acknowledges the social power of clothing and how they feel about it. If clothing is seen as a communicative tool, then what one wears is a reflection of one's personality.

Therefore clothing is perceived to have the ability and control over social standing, social mobility and social power. The sample was requested to provide their opinion regarding the following quote:

*'Social power is the ability that clothing has to raise the status of the wearer
among their peer groups'
(Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:2).*

The general response was that of agreement with the quote. The sample is aware that clothing defines the wearer and that wearing the right brand equals acceptance. Many felt that this superficial aspect of humanity supports and encourages materialism from a young age.

The sample felt that wearing the right brand can assist in attaining social acceptance. They reported that wearing the right brand does have the ability to raise social status and can assist in achieving a desired social position. A respondent stated that "if you have a good sense of style and a trendy taste in fashion people will instantly think more of you and take you seriously". Admiration from peers instigated by fashion choices was said to be one of the most commonly used tools by teenagers as it facilitates gaining recognition.

A few respondents felt that using clothing to gain social status is an unjustified means and that individuals should be judged on their personalities rather than their appearance. Teenagers who felt this also recognised that society has and will continue to rely on superficial elements on which to base their first impressions. A Grade 11 respondent agreed with the above quote and responded by stating that "when people compliment you on your clothes, you might see yourself as being more important and accepted, and as a result you are the one giving clothing its social power". Another respondent disagreed and felt that "provided people are dressed appropriately, they should earn their positions in society based on their own merit and not on that of their clothing".

"Once your position has been established in a peer group, clothing becomes less of a factor". This respondent felt that "status within a peer group will only last as long

as you are functioning as part of that peer group; it is not something that you can take with you. If you change social groups you will have to rebuild and re-start the opinion forming process”.

A Grade 11 respondent was unhappy with the notion that people are judged by the clothes they wear, and said that often the nicest and most genuine people are overlooked because of the clothes they wear. A Grade 12 respondent felt that “people can sometimes damage their own self-image if they follow trends too closely. Clothes have the ability to lower your status if it seems as though you are trying too hard to fit in”. This fuels the idea that “the person you would like to be seen as can be forged by the clothes you choose to wear”. Finally a male respondent reported that “the supplied quote is only true to a certain extent because the relationship of clothing and its perceived social power can be switched around. Sometimes the clothes that people wear can be made popular by the perceived social power of those wearing them”.

Not only are cultural factors influencing teenagers but they affect sub-cultural factors too. Sub-cultures and their influence on socialisation play a major role within the social lives of teenagers. This fuels sub-divisions within peer groups with regard to their leisure choices, activities they become involved in, role models they look up to and the clothes they choose to wear.

To assess how teenagers view brands associated with sub-cultures, the following quote was given to the respondents:

*‘The image created around anti-establishment brands allow teenagers to find a sense of acceptance through rebellion’
(Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:16).*

The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. The responses reflected the following results:

Do you agree with the statement?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
I agree with the statement	84%	92%	88%
I do not agree with the statement	16%	8%	12%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.2 Gaining acceptance through rebellion (n = 210).

Table 4.2 indicates that teenagers agree with what was established earlier in the literature. The literature suggested that the anti-establishment movement was instigated by a small group of teenagers who felt that rebellion and the rejection of commonly accepted 'trends' would bind them to an individualistic group in society. Rebellion is commonly associated with the age group of this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is a time in a teenager's life where they shrug off parental control. To establish what percentage of teenagers saw rebellion as an accepted phase in teenager socialisation and development, the sample was asked whether or not they would wear clothes which their parents did not approve of. The results are reflected in Table 4.3 below:

Would you wear clothing that your parents do not approve of?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	79.7%	85.9%	82.5%
No	20.3%	14.1%	17.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.3 The influence of parental approval (n = 210).

Table 4.3 confirms that the youth market is open to wearing clothes that their parents would not approve of. This shows that parental control and approval had already diminished by the time the sample reached high school.

Whether or not the youth market is aware that there is a difference between mainstream clothing and anti-establishment clothing was also questioned. The sample was provided with the following definition describing the tenets of the anti-establishment movement:

*‘Anti-establishment culture is about individually chosen fashion that expresses personality and lifestyle rather than what big designers predict and profit from’
(Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:98).*

One respondent felt that:

“Although the anti-establishment movement is striving for individuality and breaks away from conformity, there is duality in the fact that all brands (no matter their disposition) have ‘trends’ which are driven by ‘designers’ and the ‘brand’ ultimately profits from the popularity of the brand. Therefore there can never be a truly ‘anti-

establishment brand' as the whole concept of a 'brand' goes against the purpose of anti-establishment rebellion".

This statement is far beyond the cognitive abilities of the general sample and forms a valid conclusion for this study. If more teenagers had the insight to draw these conclusions the entire body of anti-establishment brands would have difficulty in continuing their quest for success. It is this astute minority of teenagers who are more acutely aware of the intentions of marketers and who drive new ideas into the market, ensuring that markers are constantly challenged.

The sample was asked to provide their opinion regarding the difference between anti-establishment clothing and mainstream clothing.

Anti-establishment clothing was said to have the following characteristics:

- Clothing that is original and that does not follow current trends;
- Anti-establishment clothing represents you and not what the mainstream trends predict;
- Clothing which offers unique and different styles and trends;
- Anti-establishment clothing encourages one to follow one's own trends rather than trends predicted by high end designers;
- Anti-establishment clothing encourages rebellion and each piece of clothing worn should represent the wearer and not be a reflection of what is fashionable;
- Anti-establishment clothing is designed to make a statement and impacts on the impression the wearer sends out to the public;
- Anti-establishment clothing is aimed to contradict mainstream clothing and is edgier and darker than the accepted trends. It has a more pessimistic connotation to it and expresses a harder look than mainstream clothing;
- The image projected by anti-establishment clothing usually contradicts that of mainstream clothing and is aimed at rebelling against what is universally accepted as being fashionable;

- Anti-establishment clothing is used to prove non-conformity to mainstream fashions and encourages the development of individualism;
- Anti-establishment clothing targets rebellious teenagers who are seeking to stand out and make a statement;
- Anti-establishment clothing is about being an individual (but some teenagers feel it has become too commercialised which defeats the point of the movement); and
- Anti-establishment clothing redefines the norm, and sets new trends while promoting individuality instead of conforming to popular trends like mainstream clothing.

Mainstream clothing is defined as having the following characteristics:

- Clothing which is usually more conservative and follows current trends;
- Mainstream clothing is mass-produced and accepted by a larger portion of the population;
- Mainstream clothing is made to appeal to a larger target market;
- Mainstream clothing conforms to the boundaries that society sets;
- Mainstream clothing follows pre-established fashion trends while anti-establishment clothing follows the rules and trends of the wearer rather than that of the designers;
- Mainstream clothing does not usually make a statement;
- Mainstream clothing follows high fashion trends instead of what you would like to wear.

From the above responses it becomes apparent that the youth are generally aware that there is a difference between mainstream clothing and clothing related to the anti-establishment lifestyle. A common thread evident from the sample was that the initial aim of the anti-establishment movement was to provoke a response from mainstream consumers and to develop a trend which contradicted what was socially accepted by the mass market. Individuality was key, but as a larger contingent of consumers became aware of the movement it gradually lost its appeal. This could be as a result of the media promoting the movement, for example the attachment of

anti-establishment brands to extreme sporting events. Large scale advertising campaigns became involved in promoting the movement which initially showed a positive response from the consumer.

The respondents were asked whether or not celebrities influenced what they wore. This was to establish whether or not they followed trends set by celebrities and sports icons. The results are reflected in Table 4.4 below.

Do celebrities influence what you wear?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	45.2%	85.1%	66.9%
No	54.8%	14.9%	33.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

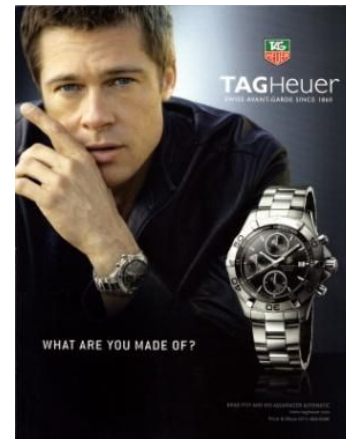


Table 4.4 Celebrity influence (n = 210).

Plate 4.1 Celebrity Influence
Source: Men's Health Magazine
(Vol 114, 2007:161)

Table 4.4 shows a split between the opinions of male and female respondents. Female consumers openly acknowledge the effect celebrities have on their dressing style, whereas the male respondents felt less influenced.

The above questions designed to test the respondents' opinions regarding rebellion and non conformity. The aim was to investigate whether a link exists between action sports clothing and the anti-establishment movement. To further this, the quote below was supplied to the respondents, describing the lifestyles of action sports stars and what the key characteristics of their dress style are

'Extreme sports stars are living a lifestyle of risk taking and pushing boundaries, but are also pushing the limits with the edgy clothing they choose to wear'
(McClung and Holdorf, 2007: 95).

Many of the respondents felt that clothes in general do reflect the lifestyle one follows. The results support the notion that action sports stars are taking risks within their lifestyle choices as well as with the clothes they choose to wear. One respondent felt that action “sports stars aim to be seen as edgy and non-conformist; therefore their clothing styles match their lifestyles. They dress a certain way to portray an image to the public of being edgy, noticeable, and extremists. They are rebellious in every aspect of their lives not only in their clothing. For this reason their clothes need to match their personalities and their lifestyles. This would mean that they require clothes that are durable, risky and different”. The clothes they choose to wear are influenced by the extremity of the sports they are involved in.

A Grade 11 respondent felt that “extreme sports stars are not satisfied with normal life and therefore rebel against all forms of societal norms which are accepted”. This response solidifies the link between extreme sports and the anti-establishment lifestyle and the clothing associated with the two. This response indicates that the youth market is in fact aware of the image which they choose to portray by conforming to anti-establishment trends. Many of the respondents acknowledged the fact that action sports stars and those associated to the lifestyle rebel against the confines of society and those restrictions set by popular fashion trends. Therefore they purposefully deny conformity and normality. Many of the respondents also reported that people associated to this lifestyle wear a certain type of clothing which is indicative of the reckless lifestyle that they lead. One respondent felt that although the clothes the sports stars are wearing are ‘edgy’ most of these clothes were not chosen by the sportsman themselves. Their clothing choices are left up to the sponsors’ discretion making them ‘billboards’ instead of trend setters. It can therefore be said that the youth of today are indeed aware of the link between lifestyles and clothing. This leads to the investigation of lifestyle marketing and the effect it has on this sector of consumers.

4.4.1 Successful marketing strategies within the action sport industry

As discussed in Chapter 2, the modern youth is highly aware of the marketing strategies used to persuade them into a certain buying direction. This study is aimed at investigating these strategies and their effectiveness on the youth market. When questioned about marketing strategies and the effectiveness of advertising the respondents voiced strong opinions on the subject. The youth market is fully aware of the intentions of brands and marketers to attract their attention and their money. The sample was asked whether or not they agreed with the quote below:

*‘Advertisements play a role in creating a brand image’
(Van Heerden and Kuiper, 2008:148).*

The majority of the respondents agreed with the above quote and agreed that brand image is highly dependent on the advertisements used in creating a certain type of personality for the brand. It is not only the advertisements that create a strong brand image but also the personality of the brand which often influences the lifestyles of the wearers of the brand. Advertisements attract certain groups of consumers who relate to the ‘personality’ of the advert and this image becomes essential in the life cycle of the brand.

One respondent stated that the brand’s image was responsible for “explaining to the public how the brand should be incorporated into the consumer’s lifestyle. A Grade 10 respondent felt that teenagers do not necessarily purchase certain brands because they are popular; they purchase certain brands because they are buying into a brand image and the image they will be associated with if they wear that brand. Advertisements were said to set the tone for a brand and create an interest around the product.

The sample agreed that teenagers are highly influenced by innovative advertisements. If the youth market is impressed with an advertising strategy they will form a perception of that brand which will be associated with the edginess of the advertisement. This becomes a type of brand reinforcement with teenagers, and as stated by a Grade 11 female who felt that “this is how a fashion revolution begins”.

One respondent felt that “advertisements create the atmosphere which a brand is associated with. A well designed advertisement can change the way people perceive the brand and its brand image. Advertisements make brands seem attractive even if the clothing does not necessarily fulfil the promises made in the advertisements. Teenagers are always looking for a quick fix to their social problems and clothing is seen as the answer”.

One particular Grade 12 respondent argued that advertisements were too staged and that brand image is formed by those who choose to wear that brand on a daily basis. He added that advertisements have a limited effect on the image of the brand. How the brand is advertised will predict what demographic of consumer will buy that brand. This respondent felt that the power of word-of-mouth far exceeds that of conventional branding and teenagers respond to one another’s recommendations far more acutely than advertisements.

The action sports market relies heavily on anti-establishment branding techniques to attract a specific consumer group. This study assessed the effectiveness of this approach. The sample was required to explain what they understood by the term ‘anti-establishment branding’. The responses show that the majority of respondents did not realise what anti-establishment branding is and only a handful of the respondents could explain what it was. Those respondents who understood this term explained it as being:

“A form of advertising which aims to break the moulds predicted by society and encourages followers to rebel in order to promote individuality”

Anti-establishment branding was also said to:

“Allow individuals an outlet to express their personalities and emotions through clothing”.

A few respondents implied that this form of branding usually incorporates an element of sarcasm and puns, while playing on societal norms. They felt that it is a form of branding that goes against what is universally accepted and the companies are

somewhat eccentric. Many felt that this form of clothing usually encourages the wearer to make a statement by using clothing to reflect their personality rather than current trends.

One respondent stated that:

“This form of branding eventually contradicts itself. In the attempt to rebel against society and ‘be different’ the movement slowly grows a following which ultimately becomes a trend which in turn evolves into mass commercialism”.

This type of progressive thinking is what anti-establishment marketers try to avoid, as it encourages consumers to question the motives of the brand. Profit and growth is naturally the visualised aim of any brand but anti-establishment brands need to tread carefully with regard to their marketing campaigns so as not to jeopardise the integrity of the movement. Therefore the marketers involved in creating campaigns for this sector of the industry would benefit from investigating at what point the youth would feel that this fine balance has been compromised.

4.4.2 Lifestyle and Guerrilla marketing

Lifestyle and guerrilla marketing tactics were found to be successful in capturing the youth market with regard to anti-establishment clothing. These findings were based on studies which took place in the United States of America and Australia. These countries are excelling in the action sports market due to the instigation of anti-establishment branding and the promotion of a rebellious lifestyle. This study investigates whether or not this approach to brand promotion had been fully utilised in South Africa with specific reference to the Durban youth market. Therefore the respondents were asked whether or not they related to the anti-establishment lifestyle. The sample were supplied with the following quote:

‘The action sport lifestyle is being sold as individualistic, risky, independent and cutting edge’

(Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:4).

The results are reflected in Figure 4.3 below.

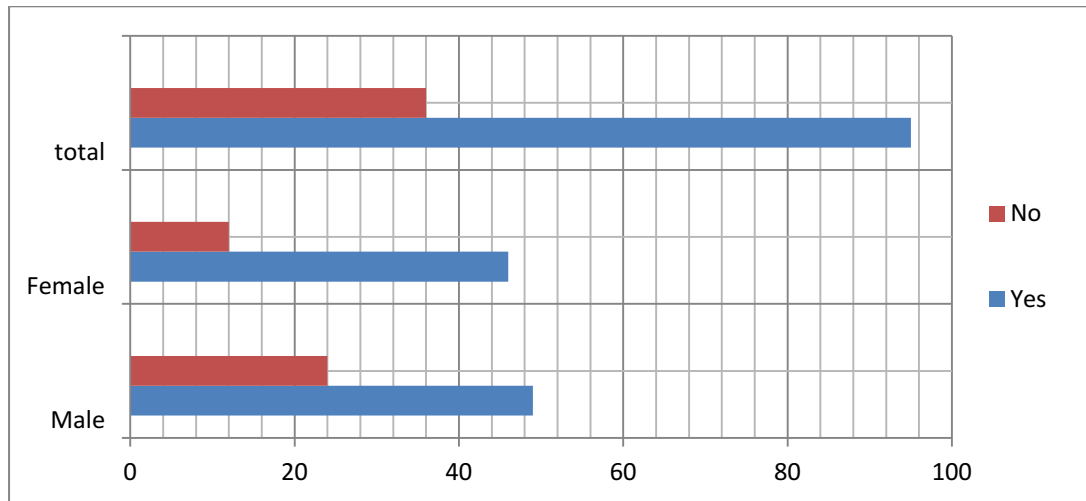


Figure 4.3 Do adolescents relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle of action sports? (n = 210).

Figure 4.3 illustrates that independent, risky and cutting edge lifestyles do in fact appeal to both male and female respondents. This suggests that the anti-establishment lifestyle and trends associated with it is not lost on the youth market and although the essence of the movement has been diminished, the concept of the lifestyle is still open to growth within the South African context.

4.4.3 Brand preference

Various sporting activities were given to the sample in a check box form. The sample was then asked to identify which of the sporting options they viewed as being typically 'anti-establishment'.

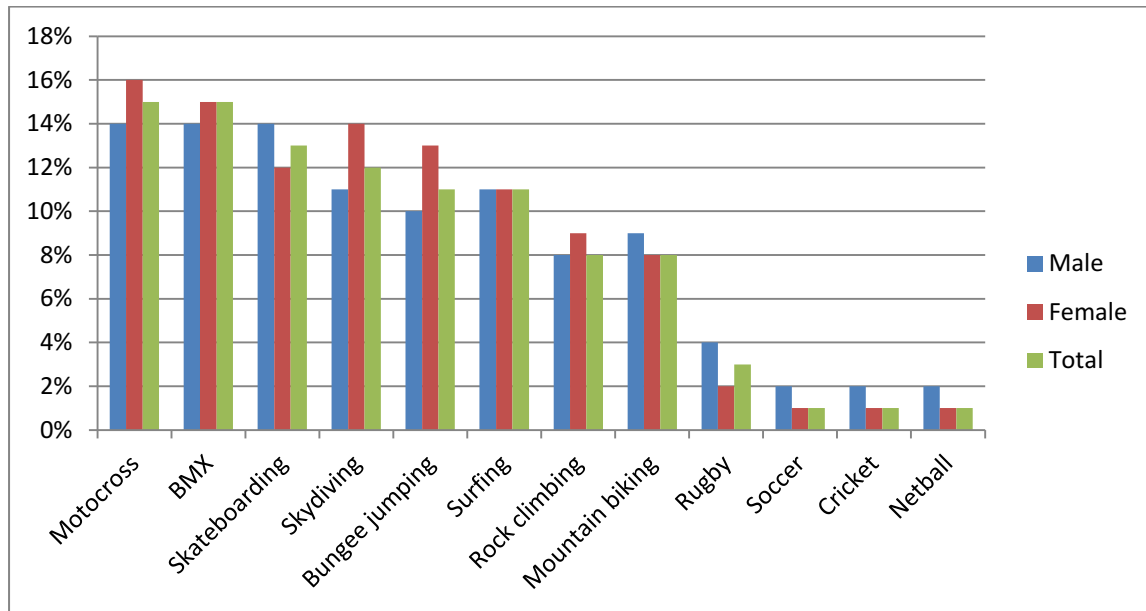


Figure 4.4 Sports associated with the action sports lifestyle (n = 210).

According to Figure 4.4, the sample recognised which sports are considered typically anti-establishment. To test how the sample perceived anti-establishment marketing campaigns which promote individualism and rebellion, the sample were supplied with a *Volcom* advertisement (See Plate 4.2).



Plate 4.2. *Volcom* advertisement.
Source: Maas, C. 2000.

Volcom is a brand closely related to the anti-establishment movement and actively uses Lifestyle advertising. The respondents were asked whether they considered *Volcom* an anti-establishment brand. The results are reflected in Table 4.5 below:

Do you think <i>Volcom</i> is an 'anti-establishment' Brand?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	92%	96%	94%
No	8%	4%	6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.5 *Volcom* as an anti-establishment brand (n = 210).

Table 4.5 confirms the sample recognised that an anti-establishment image is portrayed to consumers by this advertisement. When asked to elaborate on the advertisement the following responses were obtained:

- “The advertisement shows the consumers that *Volcom* is different from mainstream clothing, and that wearing the brand will help the wearer to stand out. It shows that girls can do anything that boys can do. The advertisement depicts a sense of rebellion and encourages the wearer to become an individual”
- “The brand is aimed at extremists. It is aimed at a consumer who is not ‘perfect’. It appeals to edgy, unique consumers who are not afraid to take risks”.
- “The advertisement is saying that women do not necessarily have to abide by the conventional ideas of what is ‘pretty’. Just because you are a girl does not mean you have to wear makeup. Girls can do extreme sports too, like the snow boarder in the advertisement. This advertisement appeals to people who do not mind being seen as different”.
- “Lipstick is usually seen as a typically ‘girl thing’ yet snowboarding is seen as a typically ‘boy thing to do’. The advertisement is saying that it is not

imperative to comply with the regular societal norms and by wearing *Volcom* the wearer is showing the world that they are not afraid to be an individual”.

- “This advertisement encourages the consumer to establish themselves as an individual and to be rebellious. It shows that it is possible to rebel yet still be accepted by wearing *Volcom* clothing”.
- “*Volcom* is a brand that goes against the grain. It is a daring brand which promotes uniqueness. *Volcom* is trying to be recognised as an anti-establishment brand in their advertisement yet their clothes are not. Their clothes have become mainstream and therefore this advertisement is false advertising”.

The results illustrate that the youth market have strong and varied opinions on the use of Lifestyle marketing. This does not necessarily mean that they respond to this type of advertising positively or negatively but it does support the notion that this kind of marketing attracts the attention of the consumer.

Results from prior questions provide evidence that there is a theme running through the sample’s opinions on the anti-establishment lifestyle. The evidence shows that by attempting to portray an ‘offbeat’ image, brands associated with this genre of clothing have shown a sharp increase in popularity and within quick succession a concomitant decline. By attempting to portray a certain type of image they have not supported their brand personality claims. It appears as though the youth market feel that the ‘anti-establishment’ lifestyle did not continue to push the limits of fashion and societal norms after launching their campaigns. Instead of retaining their individuality, the sample feels that these brands have merged with ‘mass market’ trends, ultimately forming part of mainstream trends.

An example of how action sports brands have exposed the consumer to Lifestyle advertising on an international scale without visibly imposing on the consumer is seen in the use of brand positioning. The youth market is particularly preoccupied

with technological advancements in *Xbox*, *PlayStation* and PC games. Therefore by incorporating 'real life' brands into these games, the products are viewed as true-to-life and cutting edge.



Plate 4.3 Using games as an advertising medium.

Source: EA Games. 2010.

Plate 4.3 was taken from a popular skateboarding game. The image shows 'DC' clothing being placed in the context of the game (on the skateboarders' shirt). Gamers who play these games can choose which of the world's best skateboarders they would like to be during the game. Once they have chosen which extreme sports star they would like to be, they then pick their 'sponsors'. The sponsors available in the game are based on brands that sponsor certain skateboarders in real life. These sponsors are then represented in the clothing worn and the hardware used, as well as in other areas of the game.

Respondents were asked if they thought placing products in games (such as the one illustrated in Plate 4.3) influences their choice of brand. The majority agreed that subliminal advertising does have an effect on their brand choice. They felt that by using real life skateboarding heroes as characters in the game, it is only fitting that the clothing corresponds to the sponsorships held by these celebrities. The general feeling was that this form of advertising helps consumers become familiar with brands which they might not have been exposed to otherwise. This form of brand repetition reinforces the brand with a certain group of consumers without actively having to advertise to the target market in a traditional sense.

The sample was then asked to elaborate on their attitudes towards brands being allowed to advertise in *Xbox*, *PlayStation* and PC games.



Plate 4.4. *Xbox* and *PlayStation* Logos

Source: GamingAngels and PlayStation.

One respondent felt that:

“Product placement can be beneficial but it is questionable whether or not consumers notice the clothes worn in the games, yet remains an inventive way of advertising none-the-less. It influences fans of the game as well as fans of the sport. People who are playing these games want to be like the sports stars they look up to so they might be inspired to buy the brands that sponsor the sports stars”.

While another respondent reported that:

“Globally people play video games; therefore product placement assists in the brand being noticed by consumers who the brand did not expect to reach. Product placement exposes consumers of a particular sub-culture to the types of clothes that are worn in that sub-culture”

Another respondent stated:

“Product placement is an innovative marketing platform. It adds to the realism of the game. It is an excellent way to advertise as consumers do not realise that they are being exposed to certain brands in the games. It is subtle advertising which does not impose on the target market”.

Another respondent felt that:

“By using this technique, the brand is maximising hours of advertising time, rather than one quick advertisement in a magazine or on television. Even if the gamers playing these games are not aware of the products, an emotional connection to the brand will be initiated as the consumer develops an emotional connection to the game. This subliminal advertising is clever on the brands behalf”.

The respondents were asked if they thought placing branded items in games made those brands more ‘cutting edge’. The sample responded as follows:

- “It offers the brands more exposure, although product placement can detract from the purpose of game”.
- “Adding real life brands into these games gives the impression that the brands in the game are as cutting-edge as the games. If a reputable game approves of the product then the product is perceived to be of a high quality too”.
- “Advertising in this way makes the brand more desirable because the players want to become like the sports stars in the game”
- “Placing brands in games encourages the gamer to feel connected to the brands and to the game. It links the brands to certain sports, therefore the people who follow those sports will buy those brands”.
- “When professionals in the games wear certain brands, the gamer may regard those particular brands as more elite due to the professionals associating with those brands”
- “Using brands in these games makes the brand seem surreal and super human – the players in the game are executing moves which are probably not possible in real-life, giving the brand a super-human edge”.
- “Wearing these brands could make the gamer feel like they have been sponsored by that particular brand”.
- “While the player controls the character in the game, they take notice of the brands the character in game is wearing, and as a result may be inspired to buy these brands – making their fantasy a reality”.

It is evident that brands such as *Volcom* are welcomed by the respondents in their endeavour to encourage teenagers to break free of societal norms. It appears that the Durban youth market is aware of the negative connotations associated with an anti-establishment lifestyle. This may have resulted in the local youth market witnessing the lifespan of these particular brands through international campaigns. As a result the youth market formed opinions of this genre of clothing before these brands were exposed to consumers locally. It is therefore possible to link the importance of sub-cultural groups and the influence these associations have on consumer buying habits.

4.4.4 Are teenagers attracted to anti-establishment branded sportswear, and if so, why?

The results of this empirical investigation shows that the anti-establishment movement and action sport clothing elicited varied views from the youth market. Skateboarding and surfing were in the past seen as 'alternative' leisure choices, yet these attitudes began to change at the turn of the century (Puchan, 2004:13). Gradually, a larger contingent of individuals began to see the appeal of these newer activities. In due course these leisure activities became more accepted and lost their traditional rebellious characteristics. Brands associated with this lifestyle are promoting anti-establishment branding to attract consumers who relate to the original ethos of the movement.

This segment of consumers requires the retailer to be genuine in their support for the 'lifestyle' and not merely capitalising on the trend. Therefore brand managers need to pay special attention to the 'personality' they construct for their brands. To investigate which brands are given recognition by the youth market, the sample was asked which of the options supplied in Figure 4.5 were their preferred action sports clothing brands.

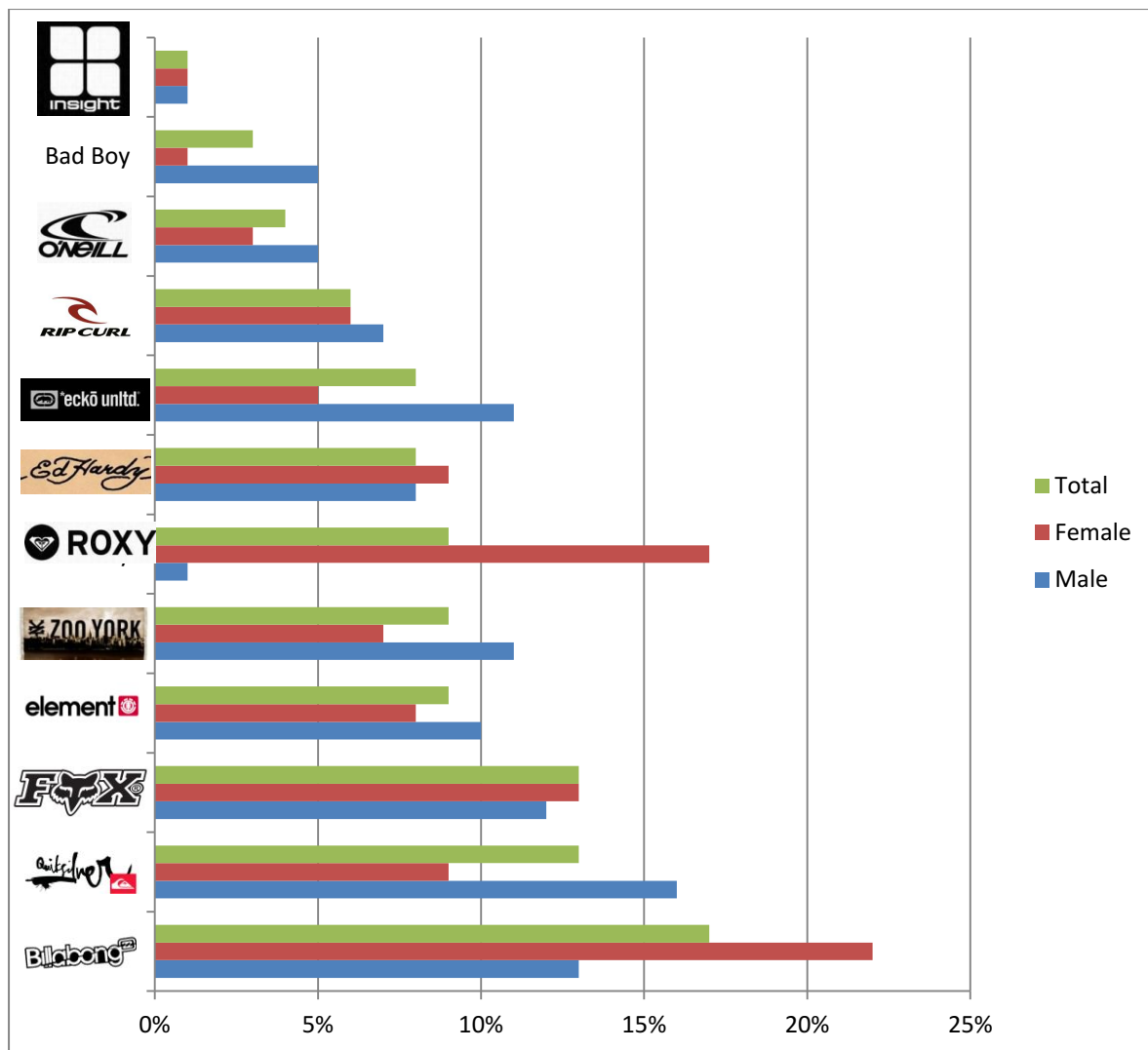


Figure 4.5 Preferred action sports brands (n = 210).

The results in Figure 4.5 display a strong bias toward *Billabong* for both males and females. *Roxy* was particularly popular with female respondents. *Quiksilver*, *Fox*, *element*, *Zoo York* and *Ecko* follow closely behind *Billabong* with the males. The results indicate that brands such as *Billabong*, *Quiksilver* and *Roxy* have staying power when it comes to the youth market, as these brands are considered to be established brands within the action sports industry. *Element*, *Zoo York*, *Fox* and *Ed Hardy* are brands which have only enjoyed success in recent years. This affirms earlier notions that anti-establishment brands emerged as a result of the initial appeal action sports had on consumers and their lifestyle choices (i.e. surfing and skateboarding).

The formation of a brand personality needs to be carefully developed, as a brand's personality is difficult to alter once established in the minds of the consumer. This phenomenon has been experienced by both *Billabong* and *Quiksilver*. These two brands established their image with a strong allegiance to the 'surfing' lifestyle. This 'surfing' culture has now been replaced by the 'skate' culture and subsequently *Billabong* and *Quiksilver* are required to modify their image to align themselves with the emergence of 'skating' consumers. 'Newer' brands such as *Ed Hardy*, *Fox* and *element* have managed to establish themselves as 'Skate' brands from the start and therefore are rapidly growing in popularity.

To establish what features of action sports clothing attracts consumers, the sample was asked to identify key characteristics which they felt attracted them when choosing between action sports brands.

Aspects of extreme sports liked by consumers:	Male	Female	Total
They create a unique impression that other brands do not have	28%	26%	27%
Their clothes have a good fit	16%	20%	18%
You can feel the clothes are made of a high quality	24%	23%	23%
They portray cutting edge, bold, risky trends	14%	15%	15%
The off-beat image attracts me	15%	12%	13%
I saw my friend wearing action sports clothes and I like the image they portray	4%	3%	4%

Table 4.6 Aspects of extreme sport clothing liked by gender (n = 210).

Table 4.6 above reinforces the definitive role which quality plays within consumer purchasing decisions. Clothing related to the anti-establishment movement has become synonymous with the production of quality products; price is therefore justified in the mind of the consumer. However, this does not necessarily mean that the youth market is willing to pay for the quality products produced by action sports brands. The respondents were asked which brands they regard as typically 'anti-establishment'. The results are displayed in Table 4.7 on the following page.















	Westville Boys' High School	Hillcrest High School	St Marys	Total
	14%	11%	16%	13%
	9%	12%	23%	13%
	11%	10%	11%	11%
	9%	8%	9%	9%
	10%	8%	8%	8%
	8%	8%	2%	7%
	7%	7%	4%	6%
	6%	6%	5%	6%
	6%	5%	5%	6%
	5%	7%	4%	5%
	4%	5%	4%	5%
	4%	5%	3%	4%
	5%	4%	2%	4%
	4%	4%	2%	4%

Table 4.7 Brands seen as typically 'anti-establishment' (n = 210).

Table 4.7 shows that *Ecko*, *Insight*, *Zoo York* and *O' Neil* are typically recognised as anti-establishment brands. As previously discovered, those brands are associated with the skateboarding lifestyle. The results reinforce the notion that the 'surfing' lifestyle is fast becoming replaced by 'skate' lifestyle choices. This may be caused by brands such as *Billabong* and *Quiksilver* being perceived as less anti-establishment than the 'skate brands'.

Within the anti-establishment movement there are certain factors which lure the youth market into purchasing products which attract their attention. These factors are vital when it comes to understanding the needs of the consumer. By gaining an understanding of the factors, brands may be able to tailor their marketing strategies toward the youth market and tweak their styling elements to suit the needs of this specific consumer segment.

4.4.5 Deciding factors when purchasing action sportswear

The literature review suggests that action sports brands aim to portray the same fantasy appeal that the actual sports do. The lure of a rebellious lifestyle and being perceived as a part of that way of life is something which the youth strive for, although they do not seem to be as actively involved in this lifestyle. The anti-establishment lifestyle has not been fully exploited in the South African context, and there is still room for growth. To demonstrate this theory the sample was asked whether they would purchase action sports clothing. Their responses reflected the following results.

Price naturally emerged as a key factor. As mentioned previously, action sports clothing is aimed at a specific market, and is generally constructed with a higher quality standard than mass market products; therefore they carry a higher price tag. Although it was noted by many of the respondents that action sports brands are of a visibly higher quality, price remained the ultimate deciding factor.

The next most popular response involved comfort. Action sports brands evidently rely heavily on their reputation regarding comfort. The respondents felt that clothing

that falls into the action sports market, are made with 'comfort' in mind. They reported that comfort and fit are defining factors which draw them to action sports brands over any other type of brand. This may be as a result of the fit being perfected with a youthful body type and lifestyle in mind.

Many of the female respondents reported that the styles and trends displayed by action sports brands is unflattering for girls. However, a number of females stated that they enjoyed the fact that these styles of clothing enabled the wearer to make a statement and enjoyed the unique appeal of these brands.

One particular respondent stated:

"Although action sports brands make a statement, the colours used are sometimes a bit too bright and the styles make the wearer stand out too much. No-one really wants to stand out that much especially as a girl. I think if they are worn incorrectly these types of clothes can make girls look trashy".

This response indicates that the fine balance between anti-establishment trends, individuality and uniqueness may have been overstepped by action sports brands. The brands may be compensating for the feeling that the anti-establishment lifestyle is being jeopardised and becoming 'too mainstream'. Many of the respondents felt that action sports brands had a short lifespan of being perceived as authentic anti-establishment, but as their popularity grew they lost their appeal. This may be as a result of their innovative marketing strategies not being followed through with maximum effect within the local market. A few respondents reported that they disliked the designs because they were too complicated and had become very 'mainstream'.

Other respondents reported that they enjoyed the off-beat image portrayed by action sports brands. They felt that the colours, the high quality and the contemporary images gave these brands an advantage over others. Practicality was also mentioned, as these brands cater to fit into the lifestyles of the youth market. It was also reported that action sports brands use trendy, creative and new ideas which test

the boundaries of conventionality. However, the observation was made that consumers pay for the reputation of these brand and not much else. The results clearly reflect mixed responses towards action sports brands and the anti-establishment lifestyle. A few of the respondents noticed that the ideal of being anti-establishment is at risk of being exploited by profit-hungry brands and this should be taken into account.

Lastly, one female respondent felt that she would not wear action sports clothing or any clothing associated with the anti-establishment lifestyle because this group of consumers are often associated with a negative connotation and are striving to shock society. She felt that this sub-culture did not reflect the sort of image she wanted to portray to the public and therefore steered clear of the clothing.

From the mixed responses above, it can be concluded that there are varied opinions relating to the anti-establishment movement. As mentioned in the literature, styles change at a rapid pace and it is the youth who are the driving forces which propel new trends into the market place. For this reason marketers should take note of their opinions and concerns relating to new trends and existing brands.

4.4.6 Other factors which influence the purchasing of action sportswear

The sample was supplied with a grid with various check options (See Figure 4.6). The sample was then requested to tick which of the factors influence them when they have to choose between various brands.

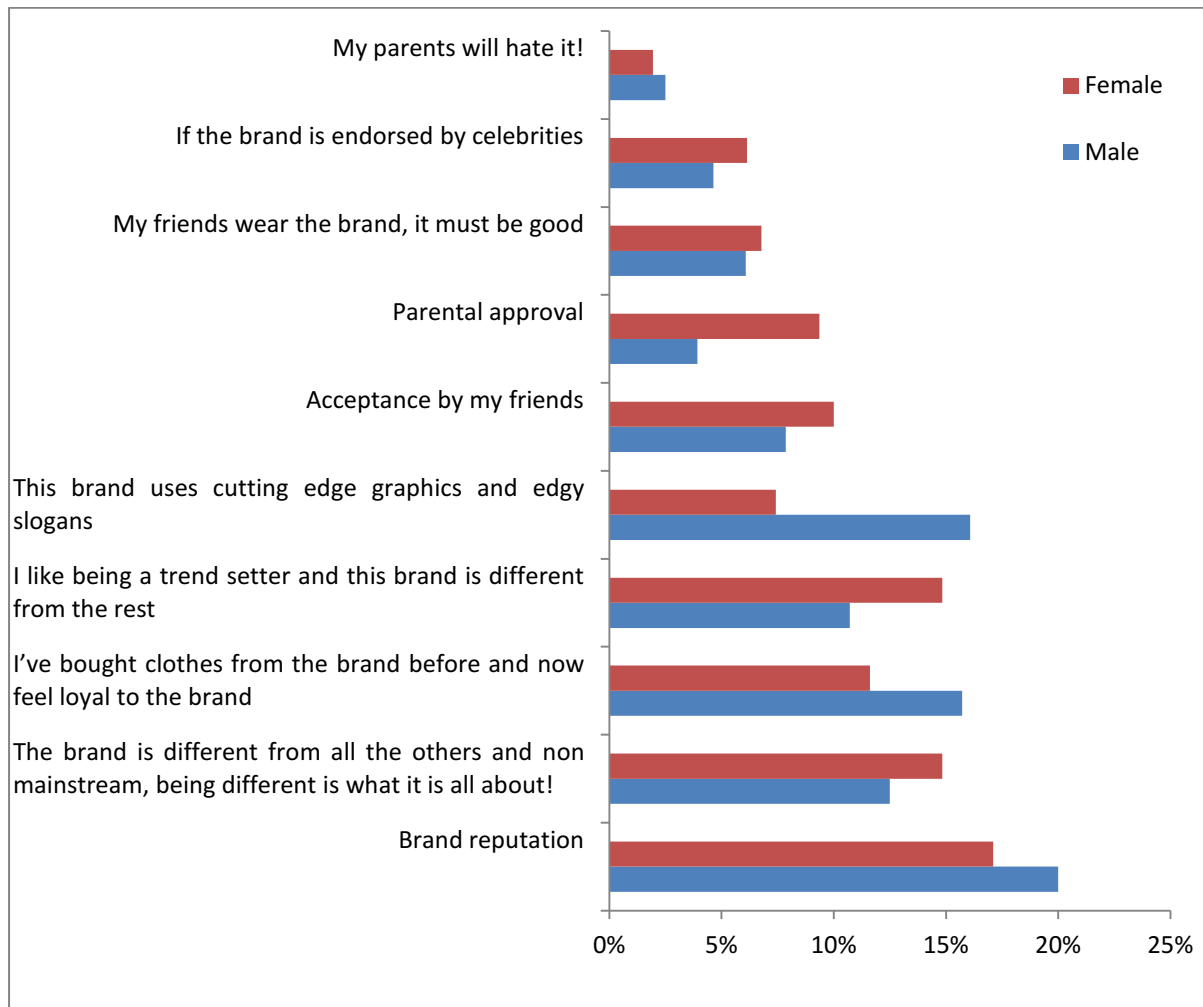


Figure 4.6 Factors which influence brand choice (n = 210).

Figure 4.6 reflects that 'brand reputation' remains highly influential in the purchasing decisions of the sample, while 'brand loyalty' and 'uniqueness' is secondary position. This suggests that the youth market are open to the concept of individuality, but do not want to be seen as extremists. The 'reliability' of a brand strengthens its appeal with the youth market, which supports the earlier assumption that by building brand loyalty it is possible to build price.

'Peer acceptance' was placed as a defining factor for female respondents yet less so with the male respondents. 'Cutting edge graphics' used on garments was a significant feature with regard to purchasing decisions for males, which strengthens the motivation behind male garments displaying young, fresh and off-beat images. The equilibrium between fashionable, unique and cutting edge needs to be balanced with universal appeal, whilst at the same time support the niche market's views of individuality. This balance is difficult for action sports brands to achieve and maintain. The youth regard individuality as an important factor, yet do not want to be seen as outcasts if taken to the extreme. Quality products at an affordable price, relative to mass market products are what they are seeking.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data collected from the empirical investigation of this study. The data was tabulated by the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SSPS). From the literature reviewed, assumptions were made regarding the outcome of the empirical investigation. These assumptions were then tested against the responses obtained from the sample population of this study and conclusions drawn. The final chapter presents the conclusions of the study and offers practical recommendations including directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings and outlines recommendations for further research. The results obtained from the empirical study were compared against key findings within the literature reviewed. Assumptions which were made at the outset were then evaluated against the data gathered from the sample. Final conclusions were then drawn. This chapter presents final insights established by this study, and suggests research recommendations for similar studies. A few unexpected results emerged regarding the buying habits of the teenagers who took part in the empirical study and will be discussed in this chapter.

5.2 THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT BRANDING

As established during the course of this study, when teenagers are faced with various products there are many factors which they consciously, physically, and sub consciously consider. During the investigation process these factors were brought to their attention through various questions, quotes, and check box tables. This was done to gain a greater understanding of how they process brand related information and form opinions regarding certain brands which then entices them to purchase the brand or not.

Anti-establishment branding was found to influence teenage purchasing decisions and their perceptions towards action sports brands. This ultimately has a ripple effect which alters their perceptions about themselves and their self-image. The youth market is often neglected by certain sectors within the clothing industry, yet should in fact be viewed as current consumers as well as future consumers. The study established that brand loyalty within this generation may be on shaky grounds; however this does not mean that there are no tactics which can be used in order to

regain their commitment to branded clothing. The findings suggest that the youth market seek quality products rather than mass produced items at lower prices.

The youth use branded clothing to gain social standing and acceptance. Clothing is used by teenagers as a 'quick fix' tool, which offers instant gratification for their need of acceptance by peers and recognition from others. A vast number of brands, products and new inventions are purchased by teenagers today, these include fast food, games, clothes, cosmetics, technology, cellular telephones and other products which fall in the 'feel good products' category. There seems to be a constant perplexity as to where teenagers should be spending their money to gain the right type of attention and social elevation. In the past, clothing and brands were the most obvious resource implemented by teenagers to obtain this recognition. However, technological advancements and high price tags associated with the aforementioned products, caused clothing to descend on the scale of importance, or at least finds itself in strong competition with these products and gadgets. For this reason, brand managers need to pay special attention to the way in which these 'feel good' clothing products attract and retain teenage consumers' attention.

Initially the anti-establishment movement appealed to the youth by relating to them on an emotional level. This fuelled the adolescent need to be accepted but also played on the duality of "rejection can be cool". For this reason the anti-establishment movement grew in popularity and so did the success of the brands that aligned themselves with this lifestyle. According to the sample, the anti-establishment movement should attract the youth of today but as with any 'trend', if it does not evolve with the consumer the initial allure of that movement begins to fade. Unfortunately, evidence indicates that unlike the American and Australian branding specialists who have managed to capture and maintain the attention of their consumers, those same brands within the South African market have not been able to evolve with their consumer and grow into the successful power brands that are now evident in global industries. International brands such as *Volcom*, *Fox*, *DC* and many others which are associated with 'feel good' products are displayed in PC and Xbox games which, to the overseas consumers, are seen as cutting edge. Yet to the South African consumer these brands are viewed as being outdated. This may have resulted from international brands not spending enough of their resources

investigating the difference between the needs of the American youth market and that of the South African youth. It appears that the South African youth market feel detached from the hard selling tactics implemented by these particular brands on an international level.

From the results obtained, it became apparent that the youth were initially attracted to anti-establishment brands and developed an emotional bond with these brands. The sample supported and promoted certain anti-establishment brands within their peer groups by use of 'word of mouth' marketing. This indirect marketing proved successful and assisted these brands to elevate their status amongst the South African youth. Also, consumer choices are being influenced by the environment they are surrounded by, which includes culture, peers, parents, advertisements, and other factors.

When linking the empirical evidence gathered as well as the literature, it was found that friends exert great influence on the adolescent's growing sense of identity and individuality, for this reason teenagers are more cautious as to what they choose to wear and why. The use of branding and advertising cause consumers to believe that branded clothing enhances their status and social classification.

5.3 THE EFFECT MARKETING STRATEGIES HAVE ON THE YOUTH MARKET WITHIN THE ACTION SPORTS INDUSTRY

Marketing strategies used by brands to lure consumers into buying their products form the basis of the consumer/brand relationship. Perceptions toward the brands are not easily altered and therefore the formation of brand image is vital.

As discovered, consumers are purchasing certain brands because they believe they are buying into a brand image and the lifestyle associated with it. The action sports consumer is seeking products that offer an alternative to the mass produced trends which are blindly accepted and followed by society. Therefore to reach their desired target consumers, action sports brands need to invest in developing new ways to reach their consumers. The introduction of 'brand placement' (e.g. within computer

games) captured the attention of established consumers as well as reached new consumers on a passive level who might not have initially been drawn to the movement through traditional advertising platforms. The study found that the action sport consumer craves the eccentric atmosphere generated through the wearing of certain clothes. Unfortunately this level of uniqueness has not been fully developed within the South African market. This is not to say that the potential consumer market is less attainable, but the correct marketing and promotion techniques have not been explored to their full potential. The South African youth market is indeed interested and attracted to the anti-establishment lifestyle but are not witnessing the same enthusiasm from local brand managers in comparison to those on an international level.

The findings indicate that local advertisements are seen to be too staged. Brand image is formed by the consumers who choose to wear certain brands, and not necessarily by their projected themes in advertisements. For this reason it is important for marketers recognise that the power of word-of-mouth marketing far exceeds that of conventional branding. According to the sample, teenagers respond to one another's recommendations more acutely than to advertising. Finding out what will attract key members of social groups and sub-cultures should be the focus of new age branding.

Becoming involved in events that the target consumer has an invested interest in, and using guerrilla marketing techniques have proved to be successful on an international scale and should be fully exploited within the local market. Using local sportsman or celebrities to endorse brands could possibly prove to be more effective than only using international sports icons. This will bring the image of the brand closer to home and will give the target market an opportunity to relate to the celebrities who endorse products on a local scale rather than only on an international scale.

It appears as though the youth market feel that the anti-establishment lifestyle did not continue to push the limits of fashion and societal norms after launching their campaigns. The sample felt that these brands catapulted to 'mass market' trends and fashions, instead of retaining their individuality, ultimately becoming a part of

mainstream trends. This observation became an interesting dynamic within this study. Witnessing the life cycle of a trend often takes years, yet the fast-paced nature of the action sports trend and the rapid changes that took place within the culture in the time of this study was fascinating. This study commenced when the action sports trend was favoured by teenagers, yet witnessed the trend is declining in popularity as the study progressed.

The sample appreciate that action sports brands try to break free of societal norms and conventional advertising barriers, yet the evidence does not confirm whether this view is fully supported by the youth. It would seem as though the attitudes of the local youth market in comparison to that of the international youth market reveals that the local youth market is more aware of the implications associated to an anti-establishment lifestyle and the negative connotations of being associated to this sub-culture. This could be a result of historical and cultural influences which the local markets have been exposed to. It could also be a result of the local youth market witnessing the lifespan of these particular brands through international campaigns. This may have resulted in the youth market forming opinions of this genre of clothing before these brands were given the opportunity to change the perceptions of the consumers locally. It therefore is possible to link the formation of sub-cultural groups and the influence of being associated to these groups to consumer buying habits.

5.4 CONSUMER SOCIALISATION AND ITS AFFECT ON CONSUMER CHOICE

Learning how to relate to one another's perceptions, cultures, ideals and characteristics forms the basis of teenage social dynamics and assists in their social group choices. These social groups often predict, or are predicted by the types of clothes they choose to wear. Social mobility is said to be influenced by many factors, clothing being one of these factors. From the study, it can be asserted that teenagers are aware of the power of clothing and the various ways in which clothing can influence perceptions. This does not necessarily mean that they agree or disagree, but teenagers understand that peer perceptions and social pressures are factors that affect their social positioning.

The data indicates that peer perceptions of brands become reflected by the wearer which ultimately indicates that brands possess a power to create an illusion, although this illusion may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of the wearer.

When investigating the action sports market, it was discovered that the sample felt that admiration from peers can result from certain fashion choices, and clothing is one of the most commonly used tools for gaining recognition. The empirical evidence showed that the sample was aware of how clothing defines one and that wearing the right brand equals acceptance. On the other hand, many of the respondents suggested that this superficial evaluation supports and encourages materialism.

Conformity plays a critical role in peer acceptance among adolescents. As adolescents experience personal change the importance of peer approval increases. Teenagers who relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle experience a contradiction, as they seek a rebellious lifestyle choice, yet are still concerned with peer acceptance. This contradiction defines the balance between rejection and moderate rebellion. The data confirms that using clothing to gain social status is viewed as an unjustified means. Individuals should be judged on their personalities rather than their appearance. However, the teenagers who proposed this recognised that society has and will continue to rely on superficial elements on which to base their first impressions.

Societal influence on clothing proved to be highly influential. This is caused by diminishing parental influence as teenagers break away from parental control and begin to form their own identities. For this reason teenagers seek confirmation from their peers as to which clothing styles to follow and trends they should adopt. Therefore marketing strategies should appeal to individuals as well as to the collective sub-group. Marketing strategies also need to link members within social groups to the brand.

The study confirms that teenagers do not necessarily rely on their own preferences when it comes to clothing choices. Teenagers look to dominant sub-cultures to find inspiration for their own images. Extreme rebellion from what is socially accepted,

and trends which could possibly depict teenagers in a negative light are not as easily accepted as mass trends. The fine balance between individuality and rebellion needs to be investigated by action sports brands in order to distinguish what level of rebellion becomes accepted as individualism and when it becomes perceived as negative.

One respondent encapsulated the relationship of clothing and its perceived power. According to the learner, the relationship of clothing and its social power can be switched around. The clothes people wear can be made popular by the social power of those wearing them, clothes do not have to rely on the reputation of the brand in order to gain recognition.

As the action sports market falls into a distinctive sub-culture which is closely associated with the anti-establishment lifestyle, final conclusions are drawn from the study as to how sub-cultures influence the youth market.

5.5 SUB-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Sub-cultures are formed by individuals through the association of ideals, trends, and common points of interest. Teenagers are specifically prone to forming sub-cultures as sub-cultures create a perceived sense of security. Sub-cultures present teenagers with a means to be accepted into a social setting where they feel comfortable with themselves and with those around them. This supports the notion of 'like seeks like'.

A consumer's culture predicts how the consumer responds to a product. Marketers need to evaluate all of the influencing factors before embarking on a marketing strategy in order to assess the longevity of the formulated marketing proposal. The rate at which a consumer's culture changes is slower than that of trend appeal and popular culture, for this reason consumer culture was established as being a more stable factor to use as a base for marketing strategies. Popular culture and current trends remain dominant factors, yet should be regarded as subsequent to consumer culture.

This study discovered that trends are spread through word-of-mouth marketing, emerging from key members in social groups as opposed to being dictated by fashion houses. Today sub-cultures emerge from lifestyle choices made by individuals along with social activities, pop culture, celebrity influences and products related to a particular sub-culture. Therefore teenagers now take inspiration from a number of sources, blending their own preferences with current trends, blurring the lines between traditional rigid sub-cultural boundaries. This freedom may have resulted from South Africa's historical events where the merging of different races, cultures and preferences has been a key point in the development of the country. It was also discovered that sub-cultural groups in their traditional form are more closely followed by males than by females. Sub-cultures were established to be more influential to males when choosing friends, leisure activities and trends they follow, whereas females were more likely to choose clothing as a result of media influences than by peer influences.

When delving into consumer culture it becomes apparent that this is a single component within the intricate matrix of the consumer decision process. It becomes difficult to pin-point one factor as being more influential than another yet it is possible to identify factors which have proven to be more stable than others.

The development of the sub-culture now known as the anti-establishment lifestyle can be attributed to the demise of the 'surf lifestyle'. The surf lifestyle prevalent from the early 2000's through to 2007 evolved and became too 'mainstream'. The followers of the surf lifestyle began to feel that the products related to the movement had digressed from the core characteristics which initially attracted them. The emerging anti-establishment trend appealed to teenagers and adults alike yet intrigued teenagers because of the rebellious angle it projected. The counter-conformity motivation along with the need to identify with peers attracted teenagers and solidified a strong allegiance toward the movement.

This study provides evidence that the fine balance between 'anti-establishment', individual and unique branding has recently been overstepped by action sports brands. These brands have been compensating for the perception that the anti-

establishment lifestyle is being jeopardised and becoming 'too mainstream'. Many respondents felt that action sports brands have had a short lived lifespan of being truly anti-establishment and as their popularity grew they lost their appeal.

Brand reputation is subject to the youth market's purchasing decisions. As a result, the youth feel that the anti-establishment movement is striving for individuality and breaks away from conformity, yet a duality exists within this niche market. All brands (regardless of their nature) become prey to setting or following 'trends' which are driven by influential 'designers' and the 'brand' ultimately profits from the popularity of the projected trends. Therefore, there can never be a truly 'anti-establishment brand'. This is because the concept of a 'brand' goes against the purpose of anti-establishment rebellion and if the consumer becomes aware of the brands ultimate intention of profit the concept becomes void and the movement is rejected.

The study found that a delicate equilibrium exists between what is regarded fashionable, unique, and cutting edge. These elements need to be balanced with universal appeal and cannot be allowed to violate the idea of individuality. The sample saw anti-establishment clothing as a movement which encourages rebellion and each garment worn should reflect the personality of the wearer and not be a mere replica of mass trends.

The study provides evidence that an independent, risky and cutting edge lifestyle does not appeal equally to male and female respondents. Males are more likely to relate to the movement than females. The anti-establishment lifestyle and the trends associated with the movement are not lost on the youth market. The essence of the movement may have changed but the concept still holds growth potential within the South African youth market.

5.6 FINAL INSIGHTS

At the outset of the study, certain assumptions were made and theories interrogated, some of which were proven to be valid and others rejected. An overview of the conclusions will be presented and discussed below:

This study offers the reader insight into how the anti-establishment movement peaked in popularity and with quick succession became perceived as a trend which disregarded the movement's initial motivation. As the movement grew in popularity, so did the scale of the marketing campaigns and sponsorship deals with celebrities. The anti-establishment movement became one of the most followed trends by teenagers in the 14 to 17 year old age group. The movement offered teenagers the opportunity to rebel against what is socially accepted, and gain social acceptance by their counter-conformity behaviour and clothing choices. Using clothing as a tool of expression is not a new concept within teenage social dynamics, yet rebelling against what is regarded as socially acceptable in order to gain acceptance made for an interesting study.

This study discovered that Kaiser's (1998:146) view which stated that clothes are not only important in a physical sense but are also used to define oneself in a psychological sense is in fact valid and is experienced by the youth on a daily basis. The use of anti-conformist brands (which are edgier and darker than commercial trends and reject mainstream clothing) are seen by teenagers as a way of gaining attention from society which is otherwise difficult to do. Clothing worn within the anti-establishment movement is closely related to action sports, therefore it was possible for marketers to commercialise their brands by the use of celebrities, sports stars and the sponsorships of sporting events. This concept proved successful with the international market, yet the local market could not relate as closely to the international marketing schemes.

The use of the media to promote anti-establishment trends at action sports events has worked in favour of international brands, yet ultimately aided their demise within the local market. The sample felt that although the clothes worn by action sports stars are 'edgy', the sportsmen did not choose those clothes themselves. The sponsors dictate which brands are worn by certain action sports stars, ultimately making them 'billboards' instead of trend setters.

5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The results of this study suggest there is room for further research into adolescent buying behaviour as a result of the rapid pace at which consumerism is developing. Teenagers become sceptical of advertisements from a younger age and therefore advertising strategies need to be under constant modification. A study investigating the views teenagers have on advertisements would be interesting to undertake in order to understand what causes their attitudes towards advertising to change.

This study indicates that in order to capture the attention of the youth it is important to be recognised by the dominant member of the social group. This is how current trends are spreading as opposed to in the past where they trickled down from the top. It would be interesting to undertake a study which investigates how the dominant member of a social group establishes themselves as a pinnacle member of the group and how their sense of authority is translated into their dressing style. Therefore, initiating a study which aims at finding out what attracts key members of social groups as this is where the power of new age branding lies.

Results emerging from this study indicate that teenagers who relate to the anti-establishment lifestyle seek a rebellious lifestyle, yet are still concerned with peer acceptance. This contradiction would be advantageous to investigate as the results would assist in defining the balance between rejection and moderate rebellion.

5.8 DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS

As with any research it is not always possible to predict the variety of problems which may be encountered. At the outset of the study the action sports market was a highly influential and well established niche market, but as the study progressed the popularity of the movement waned. This was first seen as a problem or flaw within the study but as research continued it proved to be a valuable asset to the results obtained. The study offers a comprehensive look at the lifespan of the movement and offers marketers an opportunity to become aware of their weaknesses. These weaknesses, if acknowledged, could ultimately be used by the

action sports market as indicators of previous failures and offer insight into how restructured marketing campaigns may ensure renewed popularity.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This study illustrates that teenagers are celebrating personal expression by creatively expressing their individuality through clothing. The results of this study illustrate that personal expression cannot be given - it is experienced by those who are brave enough to express themselves. The youth market possesses a great awareness of self-image and by exercising their right to personal expression they actively choose to fit in with the defined lines of various sub-cultures. Although teenagers seek acceptance through trends that link them with their peers, the rigid lines that traditionally defined various sub-cultures are under modification and are being blurred. Endeavouring to assert individuality, teenagers actively search for cues that assist them to stay current with the changes that are required to portray an appropriate external image. While this study revealed a strong focus on individual choice, it also becomes evident that advertising strategies do sub-consciously influence teenagers in trend purchasing. Teenagers expect trends in the market place to reflect their consumer culture as well as meet their lifestyle demands. In conclusion, teenagers have a voice, they have a sense of style, they have needs, they have expectations, they have demands and herein lies their strength. This group of consumers constitute a powerful segment of the market place and it is evident from this study that new marketing strategies need to be investigated in order to capture and retain their attention and support.

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ADDENDUM A**Letter of information distributed to principals**

Durban University of Technology
MTech Student
Student number: 20820506
Name: Leonie Slattery

Letter of Information: Research into the factors that influence the buying behaviours of teenagers.

Dear Principal

I am a Masters student at The Durban University of Technology. I am inviting your school to participate in a research based study I am conducting for the fulfillment of my degree program. The focus of my study is to investigate the effect anti-establishment branding has on teenage consumer behaviour within the action sportswear market.

Your students' participation in the study will include completing a survey questionnaire relating to their purchasing habits. Please see attached questionnaire. I am requesting permission for one class of learners in Grades 10, 11 and 12 to participate in the study and to complete the questionnaire in a time that is suitable to their teachers. Co- ordination of the surveys will be left up to your discretion.

Please note that any information gathered from the questionnaires will be exclusively for research purposes and all information obtained will be treated with strict confidentiality. There is no risk to the students involved and the identity of the pupils will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me on 084 299 8252 or send an email to leonieslattery@hotmail.com

Sincerely
Leonie Slattery

ADDENDUM B**Letter of consent distributed to respondents**

Durban University of Technology
MTech Student
Student number: 20820506
Name: Leonie Slattery

Consent Form: Research into the factors that influence the buying behaviours of teenagers.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. I am conducting research into the buying behaviours of teenagers, and how anti-establishment branding influences brand choice. The reason for this study is to establish whether or not anti-establishment branding and the clothes associated to the anti-establishment movement are supported by teenagers and teenager perceptions toward the movement.

You will be required to respond to a questionnaire consisting of 35 questions relevant to this study.

Confidentiality and anonymity in terms of your participation is guaranteed and in line with the ethics and Research statement of the Durban University of Technology. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage.

Should you wish, a copy of this consent form is available from the researcher, Leonie Slattery. Should you have any queries, please call 084 299 8252

Yours sincerely
Leonie Slattery

ADDENDUM C Questionnaire

1. Name of School.....
2. Age.....

3.

Male	
Female	

4. Tick the clothes you like:

Trendy	
Practical	
Lots of detail	
Cutting edge Graphics	
Comfortable	
Non-mainstream different styles	

5. How would you describe your personal clothing style?.....
6. Rate the following factors from 1 to 10 that influence you when you go shopping. 1 being most important to 10 being least important.

Price of the garment		Graphics on garment	
Quality		Catchy slogans	
Colour		Durability	
Comfort		Fabric type	
Functionality		Trendy appeal	

Brands are seen by teenagers as vehicles that link them to one another, to certain lifestyles or social classifications (Solomon, 2003:13).

7. Do you agree or disagree with the above statement, and why?.....
8. Do you think dressing differently to everyone one is important?.....
9. Do you think people judge us by the clothes we wear?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

10. Would you wear something that your parents don't approve of?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

11. Do you choose garments for how they look or to make a statement?.....
12. How do you think you are conveying a message by what you choose to wear?.....
13. Do you think you are judged by this image?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

'Social power is the ability that clothing has to raise the status of the wearer among their peer groups'. (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:2).

14. What is your opinion of the above statement?.....
.....

15. Tick which of the following sports you think are extreme sports:

Surfing		Rock climbing	
Skateboarding		Mountain biking	
Motocross		Bungee jumping	
Kite surfing		BMX	
Snow Boarding		Skydiving	
Rock climbing		All of the above	

16. Tick which of the options are your favourite Extreme Sports clothing brands:

Billabong		Quiksilver		Rip Curl	
Fox		Roxy		Insight	
Zoo York		Ecko		O'Neill	
Element		Bad Boy		Ed Hardy	

17. Which age group/ groups do you think Extreme sports brands like *Volcom*, *fox*, *Ed hardy* are aimed at?

0-15 years		15-20's	
20's- 30's		40-50's	
30-40's		Over 50's	

'The action sport lifestyle is being sold as individualistic', risky, independent and cutting edge' (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:4).

18. According to the above statement, do you think you relate to the Anti-establishment lifestyle of action sports?

Yes	
No	

*'Extreme sports stars are living a lifestyle of **risk taking** and **pushing boundaries**, but are also pushing the limits with the **edgy clothing** they choose to wear' (McClung and Holdorf, 2007: 95).*

19. Explain what you think the above quote means.....
.....

20. Tick the aspects of Extreme Sport Clothing you like:

They give off a unique vibe that other brands don't have	
Their clothes have a good fit	
You can feel the clothes are of a high quality	
They portray cutting edge, bold, risky trends	
The off-beat images attract me	
I saw my friend wearing action sports clothes and I like the image they portray	

21. Explain why you would or wouldn't buy action sports clothing:.....
.....

22. Do celebrities influence what you wear?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

‘Anti-establishment’ culture is about individually chosen fashion that expresses personality and lifestyle rather than what big designers predict and profit from (Buresti and Rosenberger, 2006:98).

The above statement describes what ‘anti-establishment’ clothing is:

23. Which of the following brands would you consider to be ‘Anti-establishment’?

Billabong		Quiksilver	
Fox		Roxy	
Zoo York		Ecko	
Element		Volcom	
Rip Curl		O’neill	
Insight		Ed Hardy	
Iron Fist		DC	

‘The image created around anti-establishment brands allows teenagers to find a sense of acceptance through rebellion’

- 24.

I agree with the above statement	
I don’t agree with the above statement	

25. What do you think is the difference between mainstream clothing and anti-establishment clothing?.....

.....

.....

26. Do you understand what anti-establishment branding is?.....

.....

‘Sports related to the anti-establishment movement involve individual based sports and sports that involve a level of danger’

27. Tick which sports you associate with the anti-establishment movement:

Surfing		Cricket	
Skateboarding		Mountain biking	
Motocross		Bungee jumping	
Rugby		BMX	
Soccer		Skydiving	
Rock climbing		Netball	



Volcom Advertisement
Source: Maas, C. 2000

Take a look at the Volcom advert on the left.
Do you think Volcom is an 'anti-establishment' Brand?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

28. What do you think the advert on the left is saying?.....
.....
.....

'Advertisements play a role in creating a brand image'

29. Do you agree or disagree with the above quote and why?.....
.....

30. Look at the picture on the right. It is taken from a popular Xbox and Play station Game. Do you think that placing products (like his T Shirt Brand) in games influences your brand choice?.....
.....



Using games as an advertising medium
Source: EA Games.

31. Explain your opinion on brands being allowed to advertise in Xbox and Playstation games?.....
.....

32. How you think placing brands in Xbox and Playstation games make them more cutting edge?.....
.....

33. Do you think advertisements that use **shock value** work well with young people your age?.....
.....

34. Now that you have answered the questions do you think you accurately described your dress style earlier on?.....

35. When you go shopping and have to choose between brands, what factors influence you? Tick below:

Brand reputation		If the brand is endorsed by celebrities	
Parental approval		My friends wear the brand, it must be good	
My parents will hate it!		I've bought clothes from the brand before and now feel loyal to the brand	
Acceptance by my friends		I like being a trend setter and this brand is different from the rest	
This brand uses cutting edge graphics and edgy slogans		The brand is different from all the others and non mainstream, being different is what it is all about!	

