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Portfolio of Evidence

A quantitative, cross-sectional study describing brand loyalty amongst Millennials in the fashion industry in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for The IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signature:

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Date:

28/10/2020

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Abstract

The purpose of this cross-sectional positivist quantitative research study was to gain an in-depth understanding describing millennial brand loyalty in the South African fashion industry. This research study is supported by Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid which guided the framework of the survey questions. The loyalty ladder together with behavioural and attitudinal loyalty was identified as this helped to gain a varying perspective of millennials and how brands will be placed accordingly by these millennials. These theories highlight that millennials can either be satisfied or dissatisfied with the brands products. Survey data was collected from 30 millennials in which only 27 responded as this was further analysed through descriptive statistics where graphs and tables were constructed to further gain an understanding of millennial brand loyalty. Furthermore, the findings reflected a low millennial response rate to brand loyalty in Durban, South Africa.

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A quantitative, cross-sectional study describing
brand loyalty amongst Millennials in the fashion
industry in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal

1. Introduction

This research was conducted to describe millennial brand loyalty in South Africa, Durban. This report identifies the background of the study and why it is relevant. In order for a guided understanding of the topic, Aaker's loyalty pyramid and related theories was discussed briefly and how it was suitable for this research. To further understand the context of millennial brand loyalty in South Africa, a review of previous literature was conducted. Furthermore, the methodology section highlights the population and sampling of this study. Findings and interpretation of the findings are presented. Finally, this research identifies potential limitations and delimitations.

1.1. *Contextualisation and Background*

Today, brands not only represent the name or the symbol of a specific product, they also achieve a cult-like status among a brand's most faithful consumers (Akpi, 2012). Over the last number of decade's, brand loyalty has faced a certain level of decline in South Africa as research has showed that roughly 80 percent of millennials will look for cheaper alternatives than more expensive priced brands (Olenski, 2013). The South African fashion industry has been slowly declining due to declined purchases of fashion and footwear by millennials (Mhlangu, 2019). Given the competitive nature of the retail industry in South Africa, brand loyalty, customer retention and brand awareness are vital to the long-term sustainability of retail brands (Duffy, 1998).

The problem of millennials in Durban showing low loyalty to the fashion industry make it harder for brands to satisfy millennials which in turn could lead to a decrease in retention (Wojcik, 2018). According to The Krug Store (2018) the fashion industry has a major impact on the world today while the challenge facing the fashion industry in South Africa has been retention of customers (Gallagher, 2020). The actual problem in the fashion industry is that little is known about millennial brand loyalty in the fashion industry as this research aims to bridge the gap between brand loyalty and millennials.

Millennials have become a difficult target to reach as they are considered resistant to the traditional marketing efforts which make it difficult to retain them as loyal customers (Bush, Martin & Bush, 2004) and in turn make it difficult for disloyal millennials to repeat a purchase (Sebor, 2006). Therefore, it is important for brands to understand millennials as this could be a key for brands to gain a competitive advantage (Saxton, 2007). Through customer satisfaction, millennials build loyalty towards a particular brand which influence their buying behaviour both directly and indirectly (Hatch, Schultz & Williamson, 2001). In order for the fashion industry to benefit from millennials, they need to capture and maintain millennials loyalty which could lead to significant rewards such as a positive profit from their spending habits (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999).

It is essential for the fashion industry to look for ways to increase millennial loyalty toward their brands by introducing loyalty programmes which can make millennials feel 'special' and by increasing their brand loyalty strategies such as; advertising on social media to draw millennials to a specific brand (Minami & Dawson, 2008).

This research study followed a positivist and quantitative methodology that objectively investigated whether millennials are brand loyal customers in the fashion industry. This research also utilised a descriptive design, aiming to describe millennial brand loyalty as this will give a good insight into further studies of millennials to identify if they are driven by price, the overall experience or other criteria of trending fashion in South Africa. The data gathered from the questionnaire was then interpreted using quantitative techniques.

1.2. ***Rationale and Relevance***

1.2.1. *Rationale*

The findings of a study by Lazarevic's (2012) discusses the importance of creating consumer brand relationships in order to generate brand loyalty which has significant relevance to this research study, as it was found that integrated marketing

communication strategies should be utilised in order to increase the connection between millennials and the brand (Lazarevic, 2012). Therefore, it is relevant to explore marketing and communication strategies for instilling brand loyalty among South African millennials as they make up a major part of today's shoppers. The rationale behind researching brand loyalty amongst millennials is due to millennials making up a major part of today's consumer market.

This study may enable brands and other retailers to understand the impact millennials have on brand loyalty and how gaining their loyalty could be effective in developing strategies for gaining such loyalty for the sustainability of the business. This study also contributed to the body of knowledge by drawing conclusions from the findings as to what affect Millennials have on the fashion industry. Future researchers who are studying brand loyalty can adjust the questionnaire to suit their research objectives and their sample. This study further aimed to create suggestions and recommendations based on the results collected.

1.2.2. Relevance

Brand Loyalty is essential in today's fast-paced world as there is high competition in the marketplace as people tend to switch brands continuously because there are more choices than before (Miller, 2017). Competing in today's world can be difficult therefore businesses need to create brand loyalty in order to take the company to new heights (Miller, 2017). Therefore, this study is significant to the field of marketing management as it will benefit retailers, retail stores and future researchers to establish brand loyalty in their business. This research may shed light on how millennials show low loyalty toward the fashion industry. Due to the fact that this study is based on the retail brand and the fashion industry, retailers or brands could use the findings and results of the study to understand millennials and potentially improve their insights to gain brand loyalty among millennials.

1.3. ***Problem Statement***

A challenge facing the fashion industry now is retention of customers (Gallagher, 2020). In particular, millennials show low loyalty toward the fashion industry making it harder for brands to satisfy millennials. This can lead to a decrease in retention as they are less satisfied with current loyalty initiatives (Wojcik, 2018).

An issue that businesses and their brands encounter is that millennials show less levels of brand loyalty and will switch brands more often than not (Warren, 2017). Brands must build trust and promote customer loyalty through positive customer experiences with key marketing components like product placement and price (Warren, 2017). This study contributed to solving the problem by gaining a deeper understanding and identifying millennial loyalty in the fashion industry.

There are limited studies on millennial loyalty in Durban, therefore this study contributes to solving the problem by describing millennial brand loyalty in Durban so that effective strategies for improvement can be developed.

1.4. ***Purpose Statement***

The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of brand loyalty in the fashion industry of millennial brand loyalty within the fashion industry in Durban. This study followed a quantitative method and the research tool that was used was questionnaires. The purpose of this research was also to describe millennial loyalty in the Durban area. Aaker's loyalty pyramid was discussed to support this deductive study as well as the key concepts that are relevant to this study was discussed. The data analysis was pure descriptive statistics and there was no hypothesis testing.

1.5. **Research Questions**

1.5.1. Primary Research Question:

- 1.5.1.1. What is the description of millennial brand loyalty within the South African fashion industry.

1.5.2. Secondary Research Questions:

- 1.5.2.1. How do millennials behave with regard to brand switching?
- 1.5.2.2. How do millennials perceive fashion brands in Durban?
- 1.5.2.3. Does brand image affect millennial shopping?

1.6. **Objectives**

1.6.1. Primary Research Objectives:

- 1.6.1.1. To describe brand loyalty among millennials in Durban, South Africa.

1.6.2. Secondary Research Objectives:

- 1.6.2.1. To describe how often millennials will switch brands.
- 1.6.2.2. To describe how millennials perceive fashion brands in Durban.
- 1.6.2.3. To describe how brand image can affect millennial shopping.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework served as a lens which examined a topic through the research questions (Maxwell, 2004). The theory that supports this study is Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid. Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid suggests that, there are different tiers of brand loyalty when it comes to consumer behaviour (Aaker, 1991). The survey questions for this research study was supported by the theory in that the different tiers of brand loyalty have been used to frame the research questionnaire. Framing the survey questions using the tiers of Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid ensured that an in-depth understanding was obtained in respect of millennial brand loyalty

2.1. *Theoretical Framework – Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid*

The Brand Loyalty Pyramid developed by David A. Aaker in 1991 comprises of five steps or tiers, with prospects or customers entering at the base (switcher) and progressing upwards (committed to the brand) as they become more loyal to the brand (Wachtel, 2019). This model was used deductively in this research as each tier of the pyramid was examined by posing relevant questions to the participants (millennial shoppers) to understand their loyalty.

Aaker (1991) defines brand loyalty as the continued purchasing or the use of a brands products or services, which results in the consumer feeling a sense of positivity toward the brand. Aaker (1991) further goes on to explain brand loyalty as the likelihood of a customer to switch to a competitors' brand, particularly when that brand makes changes in price and product features. The act of consumers purchasing the same brand repetitively, due to them having a strong preference for the brand is described as brand loyalty (Hoyer, Macinnis & Pieters, 2012).

In order to classify the degrees of customers brand loyalty, Aaker's Loyalty Pyramid (figure 1.1) can be used (Aaker, 1991). This model was used to classify retail

customers as it places customers into different classifications. Survey questions were structured using the different levels of the pyramid.

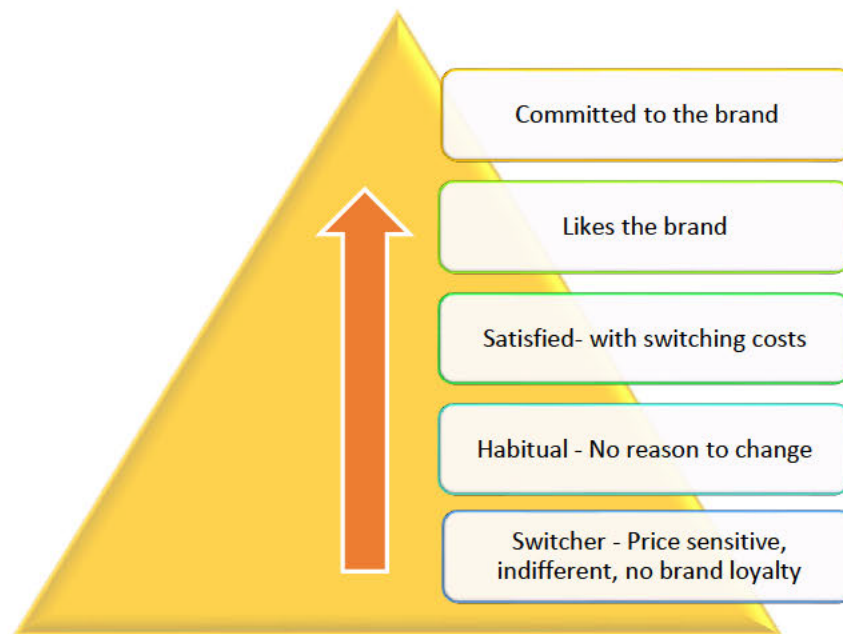


Figure 1.1 Brand Loyalty Pyramid (Aaker, 1991)

The degree of loyalty a millennial has for a brand increases as they move up the pyramid. The levels of loyalty are explained as follows (Aaker, 1991):

2.1.1. Switchers

These are millennials who behave indifferent as to which brands they purchase and base their purchase and usage decisions on whether the price is within their budget. These millennials display no loyalty towards brands.

2.1.2. Habitual

These are millennials who purchase a brand out of habit. These millennials are satisfied with the brand offering and therefore feel that there is no reason to change brands. However, these millennials can be induced to switching to a competitors' brand, if there is more perceived benefit of switching created.

2.1.3. Satisfied

These are the millennials who are content with what the brand is offering them. However, they can be lured by competing brands to switch, if the incentives of switching brands outweigh the switching costs associated with the change (time, money and acquired loyalty advantages).

2.1.4. Likes

These are the millennials who enjoy and have an emotional attachment to the brand. This emotional attachment is often the reason why there is a long-term relationship established with the brand. The emotional attachment can stem from factors such as the millennial having positive user experiences as well as perceiving the brand as high quality.

2.1.5. Commitment to the brand

On this level, millennials are extremely loyal to the brand and would recommend that others use the brand. These are millennials who are not swayed by competitors' offerings and will continue to support the brand going forward. According to Davis (2020) people from different demographics respond to brand loyalty in many different ways which depend on their age, gender and income. The researcher identifies that there wouldn't be as many committed millennials because of the age group difference.

This theory is suitable as it addresses the research problem of millennial loyalty in the fashion industry.

2.2. *Literature Review*

This section addresses each of the themes and problem statement as the literature was categorised according to various themes to address different components of the research problem. There are four predominant themes that arose namely; brand loyalty, buying behaviour, South African fashion brands and brand loyalty strategies.

2.2.1. Theme 1: Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as consumers behaviour through which the consumers tend to be committed to a specific brand or product and make repeat purchases over time (Shaw, 2018). Brand loyalty can lead to the long-term success of a brand, as a loyal customer who frequently purchases the brand, forms significant brand equity, as opposed to those who purchase the brand once (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). According to Kotler and Keller (2009), brands apportion large budgets to attaining customers but pay less attention to retaining customers, when brand loyalty can result in profitable brand equity. The cost of retaining customers is lower than the costs associated with attracting new customers (Reichheld, 1996). A brand which has a strong loyal customer base establishes a barrier to entry to competitor brands. In order for new competitor brands to encourage loyal customers to switch to their brand, they would have to budget for high costs associated with marketing (Aaker, 1991). In strategic marketing, brand loyalty is an essential asset, as it enables the brand not to lose following when factors such as price or product features change (Wernerfelt, 1991).

In an age of increasing brand parity and a society overwhelmed by choice and technology, brand loyalty is now on a worrying decline (Maggs, 2019). The levels of

loyalty are declining in all spheres of life and brand owners tend to question whether it is realistic to continue expecting millennials to remain loyal to their brand when they are not loyal to anything else namely; religion, politics, work or relationships (Maggs, 2019). Therefore, with millennials being overwhelmed by choice and technology, technology has a huge impact on millennials as South Africans spend a significant portion of their time online as well as the quest for loyalty to brands is becoming more complex (Maggs, 2019).

According to David (2017) there are three types of customer brand loyalty which can related to millennials that being; heart loyal customers, head loyal customers and hand loyal customers.

2.2.1.1. Heart loyal customers:

This group follows their heart and are driven by an altruistic motive which tend to help the environment or support brands for a special cause as the brand shapes their identity. This can be related to millennials as they are unlikely to switch products since they are drawn by an inner belief (David, 2017).

2.2.1.2. Head loyal customers:

This group is driven by rationality and common sense as they would make purchases which make sense to them instead of wasting money on brands to fill a sense of inner purpose as the brand to them should be the best and cost effective (David, 2019). This group can be related to millennials in that they will buy, for example Nike footwear or other items in the Nike brand category.

2.2.1.3. Hand loyal customers:

This group is driven out of habitual purchasing, buying the same brand continuously without checking for price or what's discounted for, this group will not switch brands (David, 2019). This can be related to millennials in that they are loyal to the brand they purchase overtime.

The importance of brand loyalty for organisational success is evidenced through this theme where the three types of customer loyalty can be taken into consideration in order for brands to gain millennial loyalty.

2.2.2. Theme 2: South African fashion brands

In the luxury fashion market particularly, firms have relied upon customers purchasing their products as a way of demonstrating their social status (Peng, Hackley, Tiwsakul and Chou, 2011). This social status is demonstrated through the exclusivity of certain brands. A luxury brand is often defined through its superior quality & craftsmanship, distinctiveness and its high transaction value (Fionda & Moore, 2009). Okonkwo (2007) states that for a brand to be deemed as luxury, its products must be innovative in design and be of an exceptional standard of quality which eclipses a customer's expectations. However, a brand is often deemed as luxury due to more than a perceived high quality of its product range. Jackson (2004: 158) argues that aspects such as exclusivity, premium prices, status and image come together to make luxury products "more desirable for reasons other than function".

Luxury brands in South Africa are symbolic (Gumede, 2013). There are some cultural traditions that play a vital role in assisting luxury brands to flourish in South Africa (Crosswaite, 2014). Showing off one's social status could be considered as a cultural tradition that has been prevalent in African cultures for millennia (Gumede 2013). Although sustainable luxury has emerged in South Africa, it is considered a bold status (Crosswaite, 2014: 98). The awareness of 'bling culture' was invented by Gumede (2013) who defines it as the way in which individuals measure their value depending on the degree of their 'bling lifestyle' (Robinson, 2014). This is the new standard of accomplishment for some South Africans which could possibly symbolise that one has 'made it'.

Diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and the subjectivity of luxury continue to make research within this area a challenging yet ever-changing scope of research,

highlighting the unlimited possibilities of exploration (Gumede, 2013). The buying behaviour of South Africans in the fashion industry needs to be further understood. The researcher views the findings of this theme where South African millennials are a part of the 'bling culture' as they have immersed themselves into showing off their social status through their fashionable items which results in disloyalty towards brands as the constant need to 'keep up with trends'.

2.2.3. Theme 3: Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, consumer and dispose of products and services (Radu, 2019). The author further states that consumer behaviour is important as retailers will be able to understand how millennials decide on a product and what influences their buying behaviour. The process could include consulting search engines or engaging with social media posts (Demand Jump, 2020). A consumer will purchase a brand or product based on a specific criteria (Bhasin, 2018). Marketing and advertising play a fundamental role into triggering whether a person might or might not decide to purchase a product or utilise a service (Basin, 2018). Consumers tend to purchase products and services that are aligned with their interests.

The consumer buying behaviour trends with millennials in South Africa have reshaped the country's values as millennials are now driving values of adventure, freedom, curiosity and authenticity (Thompson, 2020). There are certain trends that also affect how millennials shop or influences their buying behaviour this includes (Thompson, 2020):

2.2.3.1. *Cocooning:*

This is where South Africans are entertaining themselves at home rather than going out to a mall or nightclubs mainly because of their fears of financial security as a millennial would feel they could become a victim to cyber-crime if they have to shop

online. Brands that show they care about consumers safety online will win the customers heart and can lead to loyalty to the brand.

2.2.3.2. *Experiences trump possessions:*

Fifty percent of South African millennials agree that experiences are more important than possessions. Millennials prefer to gravitate towards low-cost experiences rather than wanting to spend money on expensive possessions. They would rather visit the beach or having a girls or boys night at home than to spend.

2.2.3.3. *Savvy shoppers:*

South African millennials are becoming less loyal to brands as they seek out the best prices. Some South Africans are less loyal to one retailer as they have to shop around more to find the best value, while others feels that a good thing about brands is that they offer good value for money.

2.2.4. Theme 4: Brand Loyalty Strategies

This theme was used in order to help retailers gain millennial loyalty by introducing loyalty programmes and social media advertising.

2.2.4.1. *Loyalty programmes*

A loyalty programme is a marketing tool used by retailers, with the aim of attaining and retaining customer, by offering them incentives. These incentives are rewards, which are achieved through frequently purchasing from the retailer (Kopalle, Sun and Neslin, 2009). These reward programmes are utilised to cultivate customer loyalty over time, as customers seldom benefit from these rewards after just one purchase (Sharp and Sharp, 1997).

The objectives of using a loyalty programme are as follows (O'Malley (1998):

2.2.4.1.1. *Loyal customers are rewarded*

A loyalty programme will encourage repeat purchasing through the enticement of future rewards. Many people enjoy getting something for nothing, so they are dedicated to participating in such programmes.

2.2.4.1.2. *Combat a competitor or competing programme*

When an organisation experiences a decline in their customer base due to a competitor having an attractive loyalty programme or offering, the organisation could implement a loyalty programme or reward to loyal customers, new customers or lost customers.

2.2.4.2. *Social Media Advertising*

Before the era of social media the most important marketing form was word of mouth, today it is social media (Brandignity, 2020). Social media advertising is the use of social media platforms in order to connect with your audience which can help build your brand, increase sales or create brand loyalty (Lua, 2020). In the interconnected world today, brand loyalty mostly depends on the ability to leverage the power of social media in order to build multiple connections with customers (Meyer, 2017).

Meyer (2017) further states that brands need to cultivate millennials through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other platforms is a critical way to create loyal millennials and millennial followers who will continue to purchase the product or service as act as a brand ambassador.

Davis (2019) asserts that there a three ways to increase consistent brand loyalty:

2.2.4.2.1. *Develop a smart social media strategy:*

Each platform has its own unique and different intricacies therefore its essential to create a strategy that includes a cohesive plan in order to keep up with competition. When focusing on brand loyalty, the brand needs to answer the questions of what value they create for millennials and their answer has to be powerful enough in order to inspire millennials to be loyal.

2.2.4.2.2. *Finding your voice:*

Millennials like interaction therefore if the brand has to interact with their followers and share common values and interests, this will keep millennials coming back for more content.

2.2.4.2.3. *Be consistent:*

As a brand it is vital to create and consistently display favourable personality traits to build familiarity among millennials. These traits can be expressed through content sharing and conversation with millennials on the platforms.

2.2.5. Theme 5: Related theories

In order to gain a varying perspective, there is a need to look into other theories in this section which include; the loyalty ladder and behavioural and attitudinal loyalty that have added to this research study.

2.2.5.1. The Loyalty Ladder

According to Mutyala's (n.d.) loyalty ladder there are five levels of the loyalty ladder which can be related to millennials, which are:

- Prospect

- Customer
- Client
- Support and
- Advocate

The researcher identifies that millennials most likely fall under a future purchaser (Prospect) or a repeat purchaser (Client) but will not commit to be a brand champion (advocate).

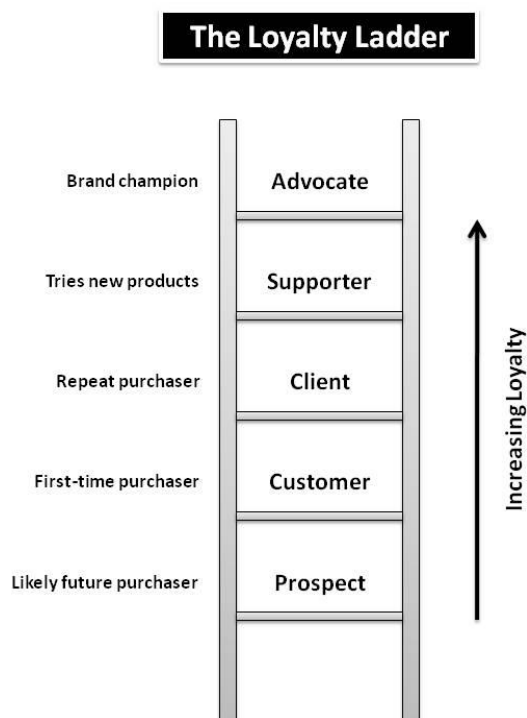


Figure 1.2 The Loyalty Ladder (Mutyala, n.d.)

2.2.5.2. Behavioural and Attitudinal Loyalty

There are two forms of customer loyalty: Behavioural Loyalty and Attitudinal Loyalty (Baloglu, 2002). To accurately measure brand loyalty, behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty needs to be taken into account.

2.2.5.2.1. Behavioural Loyalty

According to Tucker (1964) the concept of behaviour is fundamental to brand loyalty. Behavioural loyalty is customers who continue to make repeat purchases (Baloglu, 2002). As individuals' behaviour is observable and measurable, some scholars consider behavioural loyalty as a measure of brand loyalty (Hart, Smith, Sparks & Tzokas, 1999). Rothschild and Gaidis (1981) suggest that the types of incentives that many customer loyalty schemes offer may induce loyalty to the programme rather than to the core product or service. Oliver (1991) further went on to explore the attitudes behind loyalty.

2.2.5.2.2. Attitudinal Loyalty

Attitudinal loyalty is measured by customers' commitment to repurchase or increase their spend on a specific brand, regardless of competitors offerings (Oliver, 1991). This is the emotional attachment a customer has with a brand as a result of understandable, consistent, friendly and personalised service.

These dimensions of loyalty are important when it comes to understanding how millennials loyalty affects a brand. It has helped the researcher discover whether millennials shop at fashionable stores out of loyalty towards the brand or because of convenience or habit (behavioural loyalty) or whether people are loyal to the fashionable brand and will repurchase regardless of competitors offerings due to having an emotional bond with the brand (attitudinal loyalty).

2.2.6. Conclusion

Previous research on millennial brand loyalty has utilised both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This research focused on a quantitative, positivist paradigm as the researcher believed this method would provide sufficient insight into millennial brand loyalty. Aaker's Brand Loyalty pyramid enabled the researcher to understand the behaviours of millennials through the core concepts of the theory. From the

literature review conducted, millennial buying behaviour is sporadic, which means that the buying behaviour does not follow a consistent trend (Thompson, 2020).

Brand loyalty and the question of millennials being loyal is still a gap to fill where the researcher found that loyalty levels are declining in South Africa (Mhlangu, 2019). Brand loyalty strategies were researched and identified in this study as this will help retailers gain millennial brand loyalty.

The researcher found that the South African fashion industry focuses more on one's social status rather than trends in which very limited research has been done in this area as this study provided a questionnaire to millennials in an attempt to close the gap (Peng *et al.*, 2011).

2.3. Conceptualisation

The researcher has identified the following key concepts that are relevant to this research study:

2.3.1. Millennials

Millennials can be defined as the individuals who are born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Wallop, 2014) and (Kurian, 2017). These individuals are set to become and is the most educated generation as they are a more diverse group compared to boomers born between 1944 and 1970 (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). Millennials also grew up in a time of change which has shaped them into a unique generation (Kurian, 2017). Millennials are curious, savvy shopper, who tend to have a short attention span and therefore have to be kept entertained (Meltzer, 2017).

2.3.2. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to as “the extent of the faithfulness of consumers to a particular brand, expressed through their repeat purchases, irrespective of the marketing pressure generated by the competing brands” (Uthayakumar, 2013). Brand loyalty is at the heart of the value of any brand (Aaker, 2000). This is the reason why brands such as Nike or Adidas find their success in long-term performance measures such as brand loyalty and brand equity (Gasca, 2014). Wernerfelt (1991) states that brand loyalty should be considered as an important and fundamental asset in strategic marketing which will allow benefits namely, increased price flexibility, market share, performance and repeat purchases.

2.3.3. Customer loyalty

In an increasing competitive market one of the most important factors to win market share is by being able to build customer loyalty (Jarvis & Mayo, 1986). Building this type of loyalty will develop a sustainable competitive advantage (Kotler & Singh, 1981). Customer loyalty can further be defined as how committed a customer is to repurchasing a particular brand. Loyal customers are often less price sensitive and regardless of convenience they will purchase the brand; they also encourage other people to use the brand (Aaker, 1991).

2.3.4. Buying behaviour

Customer buying behaviour is a path a customer might take before purchasing a product or a service or spending more money on a brand (Johnston, 2016). There are different factors that influence how, when, where and why consumers purchase, which include; social status, income, perceptions a consumer links with the brand based on whether their values and beliefs align with a brand, as well as their attitudes toward a brand (Bhasin, 2018).

2.3.5. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction can be defined as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment, which resulted from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome against one's expectations (Rajeev, 2019). Customer satisfaction is used to measure customer loyalty, as a customer who is satisfied with a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchases (Reichheld, 1993). There is a correlation between customer satisfaction and product or services provided by the company or retailer that has a positive effect on customer loyalty (Hu, Huang & Chen, 2010). Hu *et al.*, (2010) further explains that true loyalty is derived from an emotional commitment and attachment to the product or service provider.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. *Paradigm*

This research was conducted through a positivist framework. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) a positivist paradigm allows one to discover causal relationships in order to predict and control events. The main aim of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of millennials showing low loyalty toward the fashion industry through data observation, this supports the use of a positivist paradigm along with quantitative data being collected. This paradigm was suitable and the researcher believes that it adopts an objective conception of social reality (Bryman and Bell, 2014: 28). The selection of the paradigm was relevant as it aimed to forecast and comprehend behaviour by engaging in objective measurements and to conduct statistical analysis of data received from the quantitative analysis (Botha, 2015).

According to White (2016) a paradigm is the collection of beliefs and concepts, it is also a set of theories, ideas and assumptions that contribute to a worldview or create a framework from which one operates every day. This study follows a positivist paradigm as it corresponded closely with this study's research question and aimed to measure and observe data collected from Durban millennials. Moreover, in relation to the quantitative method that was chosen, this study has adopted a deductive approach. The theory of Aaker's loyalty pyramid was used in order to gather data from Durban millennials. Bradford (2017) describes deductive reasoning as a form of valid reasoning as it determines the possibilities to reach a specific conclusion.

The aim of positivism is to uncover the laws that govern human behaviour and that society shapes the individual (Thompson, 2015). A positivist paradigm can be defined as exploring social reality which can be based on the ideas that one can best gain an understanding of human behaviour through observation and reason (Nel, 2016). The behaviour of millennials was analysed to determine whether they show low loyalty to brands or not.

There are different positions linked to positivism:

The *ontological assumption* can be defined as “the study of being”, it is concerned with what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence and the structure of reality as such (Crotty, 2003: 10). This study has a positivist ontological assumption and followed a quantitative approach. The reality of this research can be known by observing the data gathered from millennials in South Africa.

The *epistemological assumption* is providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Crotty, 2003). The epistemological assumption of this study is that the truth can be known by conducting online surveys to 30 millennials and gathering the data based on the findings. This study follows a quantitative approach that utilises survey questionnaires to obtain data which was utilised to uncover the laws of human behaviour such as millennials behaviour toward fashion brands, which is most commonly associated with deductive research and supports this deductive approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

The *axiological assumption* is where honesty is valued with no personal bias and objectivity which will lead to accurate results (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The researcher values brand loyalty and believes that millennials can be more brand loyal to fashion in South Africa, this research is an objective study which is free from bias.

The *methodological assumption* is the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods (Crotty, 2003: 3). It also aims to describe, evaluate and justify the use of particular methods (Wellington, 2000). This study focused on the human behaviour of millennials and aimed to gain a deeper understanding of millennial loyalty in the fashion industry.

The *metatheory* can be defined as what lies beyond or outside any substantive theory, empirical research or human practice (Fleetwood and Ackroyd, 2004). This study follows individualism as it aimed to understand individual brand loyalty of millennials.

3.2. ***Research Design and Conceptual Approach***

3.2.1. *Quantitative Study*

This study is a phenomenological research study and it is quantitative in nature which is based on objective information that is measurable and observable (Bhat, 2019). This approach aims to describe millennial loyalty in the fashion industry in Durban.

3.2.2. *Timeframe*

A cross-sectional study is used when data is collected from the respondents at one point in time (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This research was a cross-sectional study as the data collected from millennial shoppers in the fashion industry was once off.

3.2.3. *Deductive Reasoning*

Deductive reasoning is a form of valid reasoning, it determines the possibilities to reach a specific conclusion (Bradford, 2017). This study has used deductive reasoning as it tests an existing theory to describe brand loyalty among millennials.

3.2.4. *Research design*

Research Design is defined as methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of research in a logical manner (Bhat, 2019). This study is a quantitative study and used a non-interactive method as online surveys were sent out.

3.3. ***Population***

A Population is a discrete group of people that are identified by one common characteristic for the purpose of data collection (Rose, 2019). The population group for this study comprised of all Durban millennial shoppers in South Africa. This section entails the target, accessible and parameters of the population.

3.3.1. *Target Population*

Target Population is the total group of individuals from which the sample is drawn (McLeod, 2019a). The target population for this research study was millennial shoppers in the South African fashion industry which included both male and female consumers. It was easy to apply this study to millennials in Durban and to other provinces as well as into wider South Africa as millennials in one province have the same characteristics as other millennials in other provinces in South Africa. The target population is not easily applicable beyond South Africa because South African consumer may differ from cultures beyond South Africa.

3.3.2. *Accessible Population*

Accessible population is the population in which the researchers can measure and apply their conclusions (Mack, 2019). The accessible population for this research was millennial shoppers in South Africa's fashion industry in Durban that had met the parameters of the current study which the researcher had access to.

3.3.3. Population Parameters

Population parameters refer to the mutual characteristics that the sample share (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The population parameters for this research study comprised of the following parameters:

- Millennials (male and female) born in 1980-2000
- Shoppers of clothing or shoe brands
- Based in Durban

3.4. **Sampling**

According to Bhat (2019) a sample is defined as a smaller set of data that is chosen or selected from a larger population. The sample for this study included millennials born between 1980 and 2000, who purchase items from the fashion industry, that reside in South Africa.

3.4.1. Unit of Analysis

According to The Pell Institute (2019) a unit of analysis is the “who” or the “what” that the researcher is analysing for the study. The unit of analysis for this study was the individual, that being a millennial who shops in the fashion industry. The researcher analysed participants responses.

3.4.2. Sample size of accessible population

A large number of consumer participants was necessary for this study as the relevant questionnaire was used as a research tool to find answers to the research questions. According to Riley (2019) a sample size is defined as part of the population chosen for a survey or experiment. The sample size decided for this study was 30 millennials

in order to gather data and draw specific conclusions. According to Delice (2002) a sample size ranging between 30 and 500 individuals is generally sufficient for many researchers.

3.4.3. Response rate

A questionnaire was sent out to 30 millennials within Durban, however only 27 out of the 30 participants have responded. The response rate for this study was 90 percent. Therefore, according to Willott (2019) a response rate of 90 percent is adequate as this is driven by high levels of motivation to complete a study.

3.4.4. Sampling Technique

The type of sampling that is suited for this research study is non-probability sampling. Non Probability sampling is when elements do not have an equal chance of being included in the sample (Du Plooy- Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This technique was used as it is difficult for the researcher to gain access to the entire population.

3.4.5. Sampling Method

There are two types of non-probability sampling methods that were regarded as most appropriate; purposive sampling and convenient sampling.

Purposive sampling is described as a method that is based on features of a population in which the objective of the study focuses on the particular characteristics of the individual (Du-Plooy-Cilliers *et.*, 2014). The objective of purposive sampling is to produce a sample that can be assumed to be representative of the population (Lavrakas, 2008). Another type of non-probability sampling is convenient sampling. This method includes elements of the population due to it being easy accessible to the

researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This method is advantageous as it is less time consuming, as well as it is affordable to sample the population.

The researcher has chosen purposive sampling as this method was used in order to gain a deeper understanding of millennial brand loyalty in South Africa in the fashion industry. The participants were selected according to the population parameters.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

According to Research Methodology (2019) a data collection method is the process of collecting information from all the relevant sources in order to solve the research problem.

3.5.1. Research Design

The data collection method for this study followed a quantitative research design. The available quantitative research designs are; non-experimental and experimental designs. The appropriate research design for this study was non-experimental, descriptive research which was used to collect data. This was the relevant design as the aim of the research was to describe the condition or phenomenon in a given sample and not to prove or experiment on a sample that involves the use of a Likert scale, mean, and standard deviation (Lucero, 2018).

3.5.2. Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire was created using the online survey platform Google Forms as it allowed for responses of participants to be captured in real time and eliminated bias as responses were completed individually without the influence of the researcher. The data was transferred onto Microsoft-Excel to further assess the data that was collected. A pilot test was conducted to determine the reliability and ensure understanding of the questionnaire. According to Fuel Cycle (2019) a pilot study tests

the validity of your study and gives you an insight into the true scope of the research. The pilot study enabled the researcher to identify whether the research instrument contained no errors and ensured that all questions were well understood.

A Likert scale was used as it was easily sent out to the participants. This scale was appropriate as the researcher was able to pose questions around the key concepts of customer loyalty, brand loyalty, customer satisfaction and consumer buying behaviour. The Likert scale provided for an opportunity to quantify responses to statements which participants had to choose the most appropriate answer which therefore enabled quantitative analysis. Participants had to rate a statement about millennial loyalty on the Likert scale key whether they feel that they strongly agree or disagree to the statements.

3.6. *Data Analysis Methods*

Once the data was collected, deductive data-analysis was followed and descriptive statistics was used to describe millennial loyalty while following a non-experimental design. Data analysis can be defined as the process of formatting, evaluating and interpreting the data collected during a research study in order to establish conclusions and observes certain outcomes (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivanka, Jansen, Niewenhuis, Pietersen & Plano Clark, 2016). Descriptive analysis entails methods that are used to present and organise data such as bar graphs and pie charts (Maree & Pietersen, 2016).

Google Forms provided an analysis that included tools to examine the data gained from the survey. This allowed the researched to enter the collected data into Microsoft Excel to be investigated. The data collected from Google Forms was arranged according to descriptive statistics such as mean, the mode where the question responses were calculated to determine the loyalty trends of millennials and the confidence levels were determined. Furthermore, the response for each question was analysed using the descriptive statistical analysis method.

Descriptive analysis was an appropriate method to quantitatively present a large number of responses that were gathered from the questionnaire. These statistics were interpreted to make sense of the answers from the respondents. Furthermore, the data was analysed in order to establish patterns and make predictions (Du-Plooy Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). They were interpreted by linking the findings back to the questions, Aaker's loyalty pyramid, the problem statement as well as the findings of previous literature.

Description of data is where it has been composed and summarise in terms of graphs, tables and calculations (Donges, 2018). The mean of a data set is defined as the average of data that is stretched (Narlhede, 2018). The confidence levels were calculated which helped determine the mean of the feedback from millennials loyalty to brands. The mode of data is determined by the common number in the data set (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). The data was arranged with the most frequent amount of numbers was singled out while graphs and pie charts highlighted the trends that were identified. Furthermore, from the data generated findings were then interpreted, identifying whether millennials are brand loyal.

The steps that were involved in this analysis included; capturing all the data on a Microsoft-Excel spreadsheet, generating descriptive statistics from the data collected, describing the statistics by linking it back to Aaker's loyalty pyramid. The data analysis method was important as it provided an overview of findings and showed answers in a visual manner which then allowed the researchers to identify patterns.

4. Presentation and Interpretations of Findings

4.1. Findings and Interpretation of the Data Collected

In this section, the data collected from the questionnaire was analysed and interpreted by the researcher. This section is presented from a quantitative data analysis perspective related to the questionnaire. In this section the analysis was presented and interpreted by the researcher. A discussion linking the findings to the broader problem, literature review and theoretical foundation was also presented. The data collected was captured on Microsoft Excel from which graphs, pie charts, the mean, mode and confidence levels were produced. Furthermore, the presentation of the findings below are grouped according to the various levels of Aaker's Loyalty pyramid, namely; switchers, habitual, satisfaction, likes and commitment to the brand.

4.1.1. Biographical Presentation

Demographic variables such as gender and age were explored for this research study. These variables are visually presented below in figure 1 and 2.

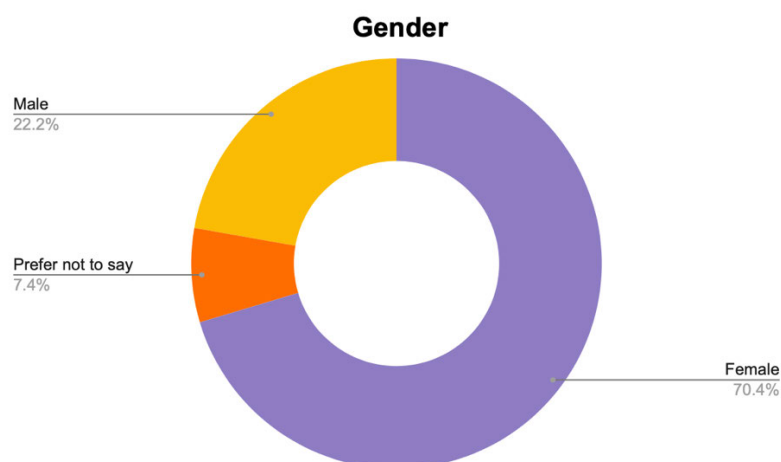


Figure 1: The gender of respondents that have participated in the study

Figure 1 illustrates the gender of the participants in which 70.4% of participants were female while 22.2% were male and 7.4% had not disclosed their gender. The majority of millennials that had participated in this survey were female.

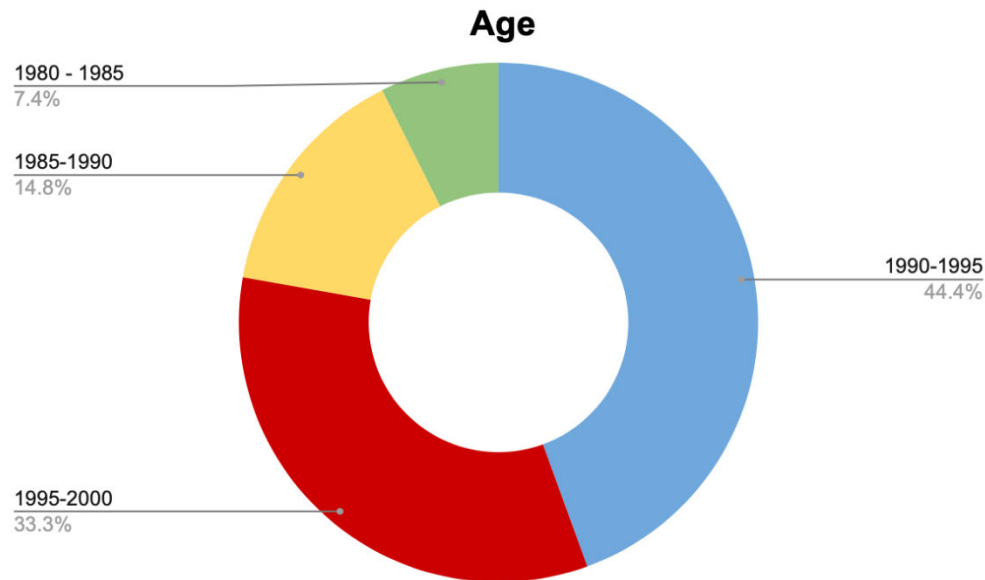


Figure 2: The age of millennials that participated in the study

The results of the age of respondents that participated in this study ranged from millennials born from 1980-2000 as shown in figure 2. The age of respondents indicated that majority of millennials in Durban that participated in this study were born between 1990-1995 by 44.4% and 1995-2000 by 33.3%.

4.1.2. Responses to Questions

The following section is where the questions and findings have been grouped according to Aaker's Loyalty Pyramid (Aaker, 1991):

4.1.2.1. Switchers (Price sensitive, no brand loyalty):



Figure 3: Preference of shoes, irrespective of price

Figure 3 demonstrates that 13 out of 27 participants (48.1%), provided a neutral response to whether they purchase their shoes according to price irrespective of the brand while 6 participants strongly disagree that they don't purchase shoes according to price irrespective of the brand and 7 (25.9%) participants agree that they purchase their shoes according to price. According to Aaker (1991) people who are indifferent to which brands they purchase base their purchase decisions within their budget. This directly corresponds with the findings of 48.1% of participants responding as neutral which directly links to Aaker's loyalty pyramid where they are indifferent to which brands they purchase.



Figure 4: Preference of clothing, irrespective of price

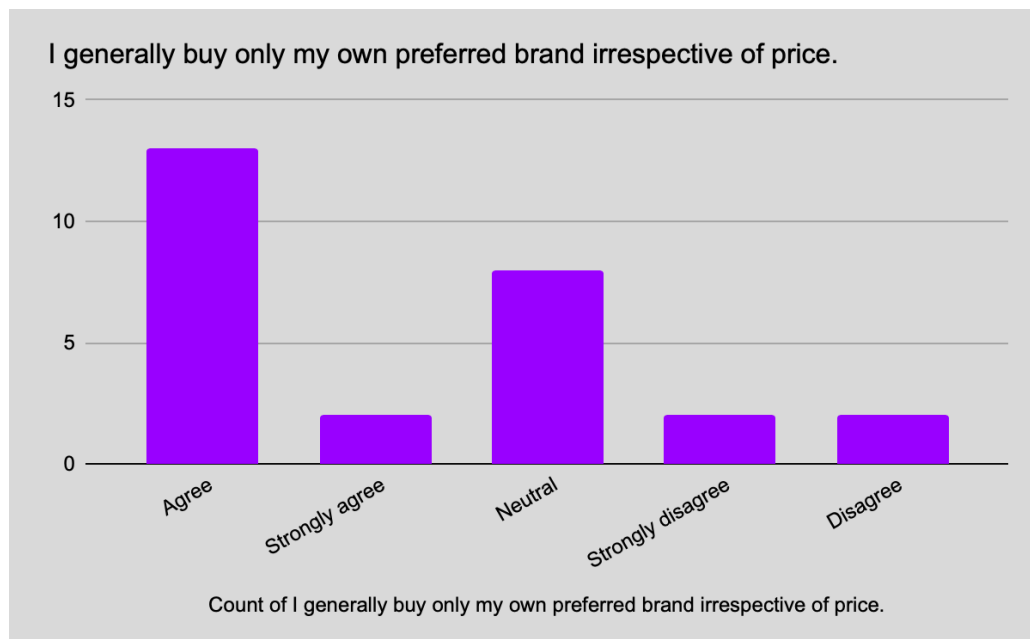


Figure 5: Preference of brands irrespective of price

Figure 4 further demonstrates that 14 out of 27 participants purchase their clothing according to price irrespective of the brand. 7 participants have no opinion (neutral) and 7 agree that they purchase according to prices when buying clothes that is 25.9%

of the 27 participants and 6 strongly disagree (22.2%) of the participants. Figure 5 demonstrates that 13 (48.1%) of participants agree, 8 participants (29.6%) responded neutrally and 2 participants disagree that they purchase their own brand irrespective of price. The researcher identifies that in figure 4 and 5 most participants either 'agree' or do not have an opinion (neutral). This suggests that these participants base their purchase and decision on whether the price is within their budget, this shows that these millennials show no loyalty to brands (Aaker, 1991).

4.1.2.2. *Habitual (No reason to change)*



Figure 6: Brand has not failed to satisfy

In figure 6, it is evident from the graph above that 12 out of 27 participants don't have an opinion (neutral) while 7 out of 14 participants 'agree'. This suggests that their preferred clothing brand has never let them down and 3 out of 27 participants disagree. The researcher identifies that the research findings of millennials purchase their brands out habit as most participants have don't have an opinion (neutral) and 'agree'.

This therefore corresponds to David (2019) which states that these groups will purchase their clothing and shoes out of habitual purchasing.

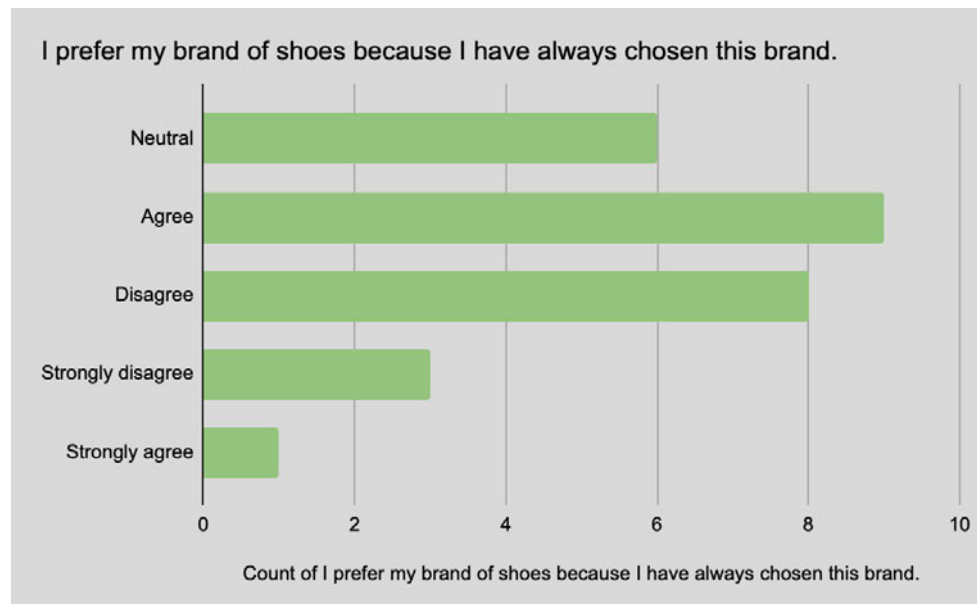


Figure 7: Preference of one brand (Shoes)

In figure 7, it can be seen from the bar chart that 9 out of 27 participants which is 33.3% of the respondents had responded that they agree with the statement, while 8 out of 27 – 29.6% participants disagree with the statement. Participants agree with this statement as they prefer their brand of shoes due to the loyalty they have for the brand. Participants also disagreed with the statement as they feel that they can purchase any brand that they want. David (2019) states that brand loyal customers buy the same brand continuously without checking the price of the brand. The researcher assumes that those that have disagreed, are the participants that are disloyal to the brands they purchase while those that agreed are brand loyal purchasers. These millennials that have agreed to the statement are satisfied with the brand offering therefore they feel there is no reason to change brands.

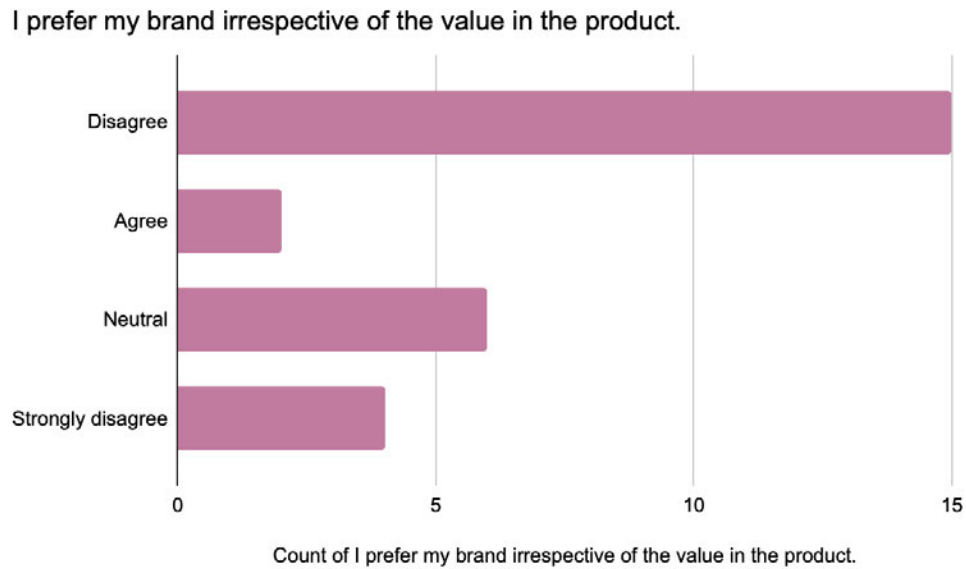


Figure 8: Value of the product

It is evidenced in figure 8, 15 out of 27 participants disagree with this statement while 2 agree with this statement. According to Tallyfy (2020) the value of the product is important because of the results of the efforts to create value are measured through the customers perception of the value. This can be linked to figure 8 above as majority of the participants identify that the value for the product is important for their purchasing decision. The researcher assumes that these participants, don't just purchase any brand but if they are comfortable with the value that their brand offers they will be loyal. These millennials have been induced to switching to a competitors brand as there is more perceived benefits such as the value the product offers.

4.1.2.3. *Satisfaction (With switching costs)*

I don't mind purchasing a new brand as long as I am assured of the quality.

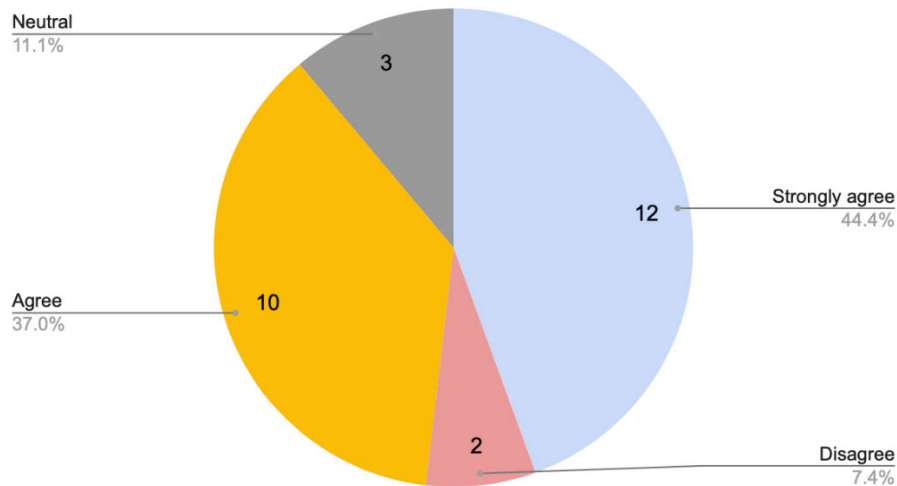


Figure 9: Quality assurance

It is evidenced in figure 9 that majority of the participants have 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' with the statement as most identified that quality is important as they don't mind purchasing a new product. The researcher suggests that these millennials are disloyal to their brands as they have been lured by competitors to switch their brands as the quality of one brand could outweigh the quality of another brand therefore they don't mind changing brands as long as there is assurance of the quality of the product. This is an important role where marketing and advertising of a brand trigger whether the person might or might not purchase the product (Bhasin, 2019).

I don't mind purchasing a new brand as long as I am sure that it is safe in terms of the guarantees, warranties, deliveries, etc.

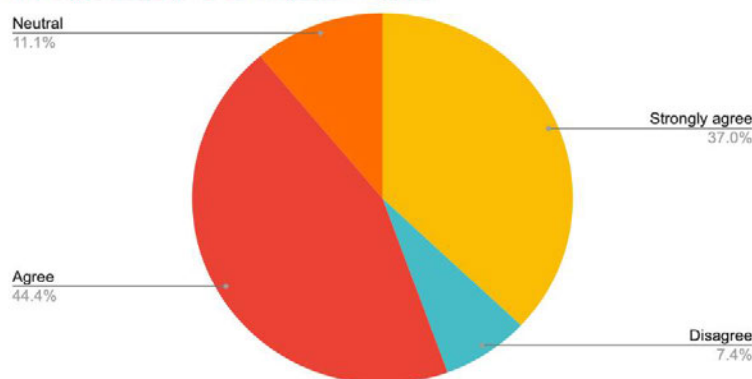


Figure 10: Safety of the product (guarantees and warranties)

In figure 10 it is evident that 44.4% of participants agree with this statement and 37.05% strongly agree with this statement. According to Murthy and Blischke (2006) warranties and guarantees are important as they provide assurance to consumers against defective products that fail to perform satisfactorily. Safety is also important as it should be the number one rule for all companies when selling their products (Agrawal, 2016). This can be linked to the pie chart above as safety, warranties and guarantees provide assurance to the purchaser. The researcher identifies that these millennials are likely to be disloyal to their brands as they don't mind changing their preferred brand.

4.1.2.4. Likes (Emotional attachment)

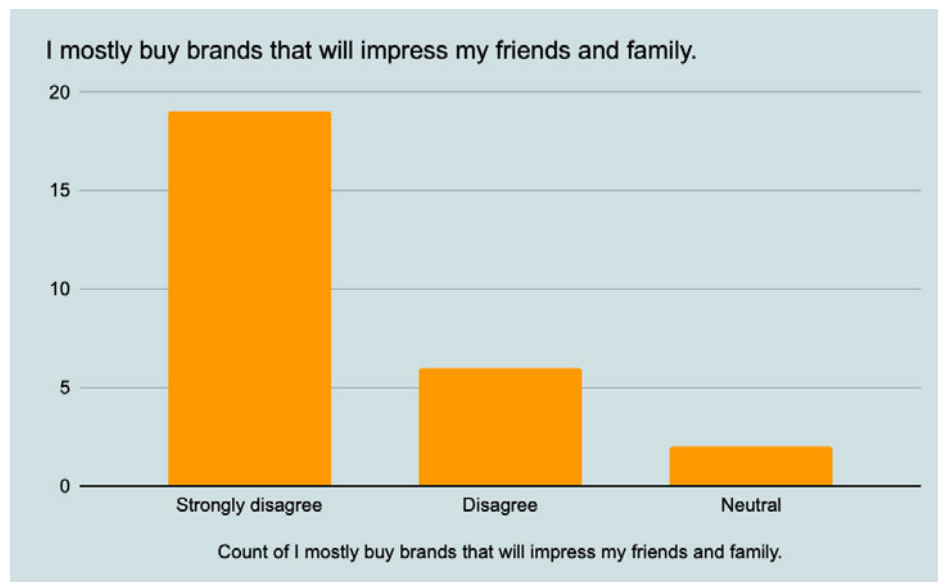


Figure 11: Products that will impress family and friends

In figure 11, 15 out of 27 participants strongly disagree and 7 disagree with this statement. Aaker (1991) states that millennials who purchase a brand and enjoy the

brand develop an emotional attachment to the brand. The researcher identifies from the results above that brands are purchased according to one's desired likes and not to impress friends or family but rather through the emotional attachment a brand gives the millennial. Majority of the respondents feel that they don't purchase according to the statement but generally for their own likes and admiration of the brand that is appealing to them.

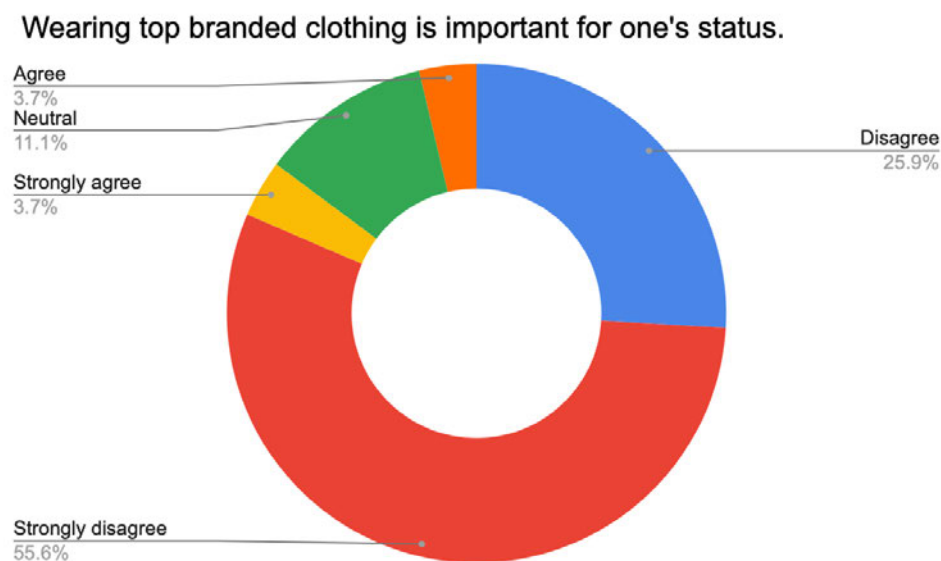


Figure 12: Likes – social status regarded as important

Social status or social class can have a profound effect on consumer spending habits as this depends on the level of disposable income (Lumen Learning, 2020). 55.6% and 25.9% of the participants have disagreed to the statement as they feel that buying products to fit one social status is not important as they rather purchase products that align with their likes to the brand. The researcher also suggests that in order to buy brands that fit society's standards your clothing and shoe preference would speak a lot about the type of money you have and whether or not you have 'made it' in life. This is deemed prevalent among African cultures as they are considered as the bling culture (Gumede, 2013).

4.1.2.5. Commitment to the brand

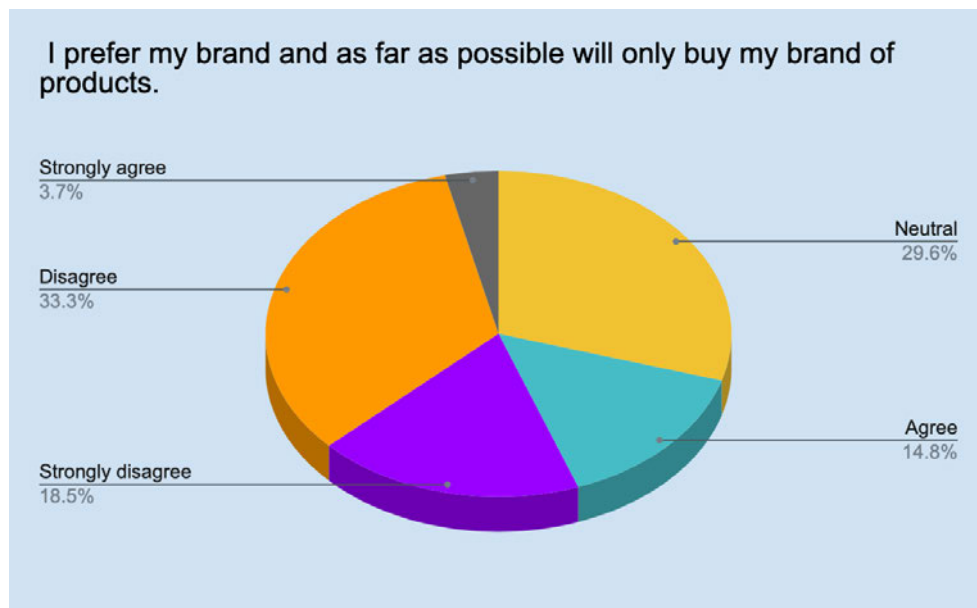


Figure 13: Commitment to one brand

In figure 13 above it is clear to see that 9 participants disagree with this statement while 7 participants have ticked 'neutral' on the Likert scale. This highlights that majority of the participants for this question are disloyal to their brands as they are open to other brands. Davis (2019) states that people from different demographics respond differently to brand loyalty.

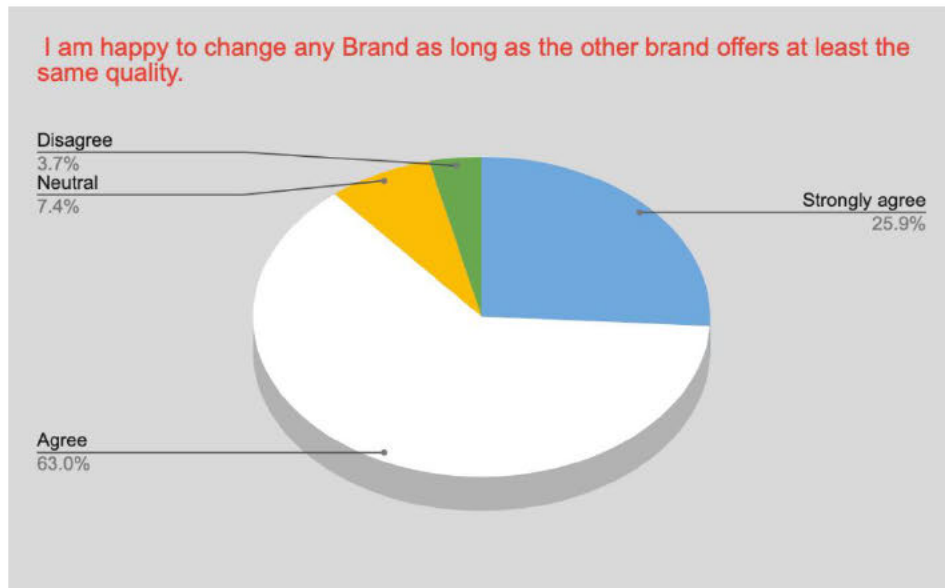


Figure 14: Changing the brand as long as the quality is the same as preferred brand

In figure 14, 63% of respondents are happy to change their brands while 3.7% disagree with this statement. This shows no commitment to the brands that they purchase as long as the brands have the same quality as other brands purchased. David (2017) states that head loyal customers purchase brands that make sense to them instead of wasting money which show disloyalty.

4.1.3. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Question 6 – The value of the product (Habitual)

Mean	1,461538
Mode	2
Confidence Level	0,38285383

From Table 1, it can be stated with a 38% confidence level that, on average 1,4 participants disagreed with the statement irrespective of the value of the product of their preferred brand, however it was mostly rated a 2. This indicates that millennials will show disloyalty to their brands if the value of the product is not upheld (Tallyfy, 2020).

Table 2: Question 7 – Quality assurance (Satisfaction)

Mean	3
Mode	1,264911
Confidence Level	0,510908

In Table 3, it is stated that with a confidence level of 51%, it shows that on average participants strongly agreed to the statement of purchasing a new brand as long as there is an assurance of good quality. This indicates that millennials look for satisfaction in the product and are more likely to switch more often than not (Aaker, 1991).

4.2. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the quantitative element of the research study, the researcher made use of a large sample and has used the relevant questionnaire as a research tool to find answers to the research questions.

According to Heale and Twycross (2015) *validity* in quantitative research refers to the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study whereas *reliability* refers to the consistency of the measured study. The researcher acted diligently and comprehensively when concepts and constructs were defined which can be referred to as content validity (Du-Plooy Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The questionnaires consisted of questions that were important for gathering information on the concepts and constructs of the study which ensured content validity.

The researcher made sure to uphold external and internal validity while conducting the research study. According to Du-Plooy Cilliers *et al.*, (2014) internal validity refers to the research method answering the research question while external validity refers to the research findings that are generalised from the sample to the larger population. A way to test the reliability of the research method is by making use of a Chronbach Alpha test. This involves a convenient test used to estimate the reliability or internal consistency of a composite score or to test whether the survey produces valid or reliable results (Statistics Solutions, 2020). However due the fact that the questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms this research study will not be using a Chronbach alpha test.

To ensure that the researcher's study was reliable and valid, the research methodology was devoid of researcher bias and adheres to the necessary human privacy rights and data collection requirements.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Overall Conclusion from Findings

5.1.1. Research Question and Research Objectives Addressed

The findings gathered from the data above enabled the researcher to draw conclusions and shed light on the research question and objectives.

Research Question – What is the description of millennial brand loyalty within the South African fashion industry?

The findings strongly indicated that millennials are disloyal to brands as the statistics above have proved that South African millennials would switch brands and change their brands more often. Furthermore, the researcher also found that millennials would become disloyal to a brand if the quality assurance and security of the brand has dissatisfied them which will cause them to be easily lured by other brand offerings.

Research Objectives

Objective 1: To describe how often millennials will switch brands:

Through the graphical representation and interpretation, millennial brand switch was adequately described. The main findings were that millennials will switch brands often depending of the quality, price and security of the brand. This indicates that brands should focus more on improving the price, quality and security of the brand in order to improve the loyalty from millennials which would help millennials to not be lured into purchasing other brands products. As highlighted in this study 13 out of 27 participants would rather purchase clothing from a different brand irrespective of price and 14 out of 27 participants would purchase their shoes from a different brand irrespective of price.

Objective 2: To describe how brand image can affect millennial shopping.

This is evidenced from the graphs presented in the study that brand image has an impact on the shopping of millennials as the value that the product holds links to the image of the products, therefore it was seen that 15 out of 27 respondents felt that the value of the products is important they would not stick to their brand if the value of the products has not satisfied them. To help address this objective, retailers should have more loyalty programmes in place while being consistent with their social media advertising.

5.1.2. Research Problem Addressed

“The problem of millennial brand loyalty in Durban is unknown” has been addressed as 70% of millennials prefer their brand of clothing because it has never let them down. This adds to the research problem in terms of the need for Durban retailers to ensure that their brand of clothing is always reliable. The South African retail industry has been declining due to declined purchases from millennials this is evident from the data presented in the study as this has led to the assumption that 77.7% of millennials that are born between 1990-2000 are more disloyal to their brand compared to 22.2% of millennials born between 1980-1990 which was illustrated in graphs above. These findings were unknown prior to the research.

5.2. **Heuristic Value**

This research study provides a meaningful insight of millennial brand loyalty for retail stores to respond to by developing loyalty programmes and social media advertising strategies.

The study reiterates Aaker’s findings (1991) that millennials will switch brands often as they look for satisfaction, price sensitivity and the product value, which states that

millennials can be classified according to each level of the pyramid. Furthermore, this study also supports Wojcik (2018) assertion that millennials make it harder for brands to satisfy them which leads to a decreases in retention.

This study promotes the need for further research of millennial brand loyalty in South Africa. This study can also be done using a longitudinal time frame as it will be able to assess whether millennials have improved their loyalty to brands as this will provide reliable results. Qualitative studies with a larger sample size will provide an in-depth, interpretive approach which will enable participants to view their perspectives around the loyalty that millennials show to brands.

5.3. *Ethical Implications*

Ethics refer to having integrity on a personal level, however, they do play a part in the success of the research process. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, (2014) ethics is a moral code of conduct which outlines behaviours and attitudes which are considered acceptable and unacceptable in a research study. The researcher sent out the questionnaire to respondents through the use of an online survey software programme (Google Forms). The questionnaire dealt with no sensitive information and participants were made aware of why the data was needed. Ethical consideration were observed from the participants' and the researcher's perspective.

5.3.1. Participants' Perspective

The researcher ensured that information provided by participants was kept confidential and their identities remained anonymous. The participation of respondents were voluntary as they have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time. Privacy and anonymity in terms of disclosing the participants information throughout the study was maintained. This aimed to prevent privacy concerns that will surround the nature of an online survey as well as it encouraged respondents to answer truthfully.

5.3.2. Researcher's Perspective

The researcher has familiarised herself with the ethics guidelines and observed these guidelines throughout her research. The researcher made sure to inform the respondents that the study is for academic purposes. The researcher made sure to treat all respondents, the data analysis and data reporting approaches in an ethical manner throughout the research study and confidentiality was upheld. The researcher does not falsify, misinterpret, distort or fabricate any information or results. Given that the research study is quantitative, the aspect of bias was reduced. The researcher has been able to conduct the research at a high standard.

5.4. **Limitations of the study**

A limitation to the study may be that quantitative research is predominantly seen to be influenced by the researchers own bias (Enslin, 2014). Limitations have an impact on the overall result of the research findings. These limitations include, the sample size of the research study being too small which therefore can be limited in scope. Given the diversity of South Africa and the questionnaire being compiled in English, this could be a limitation to the study as there could be barriers of language fluency as respondents may experience confusion when answering the questionnaire or a low response rate could occur. Social desirability bias could pose as a limitation to the study as individuals conducting the survey could be pressured into providing responses that are considered socially acceptable (Davies, Lee & Ahonkhai, 2012).

5.5. *Closing Statement*

Based on the research conducted, findings were gathered which enabled new insights to be presented along with the predicted findings that were verified. This research enabled the researcher to discover millennial brand loyalty as the main findings of this research suggests that the research will further enable retailers or retail stores to identify how they could gain millennial loyalty by identifying certain strategies such as; social media advertising and loyalty programmes. Brand loyalty strategies were researched and identified in this study as this will help retailers gain millennial brand loyalty. Furthermore, this research will aim to help build millennial buying behaviour to create consistent loyalty trends. Brand loyalty and the question of millennials being loyal is still a gap to fill (Mhlangu, 2019).

From the main findings it was found that the millennials show low loyalty to brands as well as the South African fashion industry focuses more on one's social status rather than trends in which very limited research has been done in this area as this study will provide questionnaires to millennials in an attempt to close the gap (Peng *et al.*, 2011). This research focused on a quantitative, positivist paradigm as the researcher believed this method would provide sufficient insight into whether millennials are loyal. The purpose of this research study was to provide context and background to the research question being studied. Limited research still exists in this field as suggestions for future research have been proposed.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Explanatory Information Sheet



Explanatory Information Sheet

To whom it may concern,

My name is Nicole Houston and I am a student at Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Siva Moodley about Millennial loyalty in the Fashion Industry and how brands can gain their loyalty. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of millennial loyalty and help gain brand loyalty in Durban.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I believe you would add positively to my research. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to send you a questionnaire to fill out relating to millennial loyalty.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your experiences as a millennial when shopping. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College will have access to your personal information.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management at the IIE Varsity College Westville. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Nicole Houston

██████████

████████████████████

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Siva Moodley

██████████

████████████████████

Annexure B: Consent Form



Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Nicole Houston about millennial brand loyalty in Durban, whether they are brand loyal like other generations or not. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • I agree to be interviewed for this research. • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
Signature	Date

Annexure C: Ethical Clearance Letter



18 August 2020

Student name: Nicole Houston

Student number: 16007933

Campus: Varsity College,
Westville

Re: Approval of Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.

2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor:

Mr Siva Moodley



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC):

Mr Siva Moodley



Annexure D: Questionnaire



Research Thesis

A study describing brand loyalty amongst Millennials in the fashion industry in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal.

Gender

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other...

Age *

☐ 1980 - 1985

☐ 1985-1990

☐ 1990-1995

☐ 1995-2000

I purchase my shoes according to price, irrespective of the brand.

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

I purchase my clothing according to price, irrespective of the brand.

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

I generally buy only my own preferred brand irrespective of price.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I prefer my brand of clothing as it has never let me down

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I don't mind purchasing a new brand as long as I am assured of the quality.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I don't mind purchasing a new brand as long as I am sure that it is safe in terms of the guarantees, warranties, deliveries, etc.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I mostly buy brands that will impress my friends and family.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Wearing top branded clothing is important for one's status.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

...

I prefer my brand of shoes because I have always chosen this brand.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I prefer my brand irrespective of the value in the product.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I prefer my brand and as far as possible will only buy my brand of products.

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

I am happy to change any Brand as long as the other brand offers at least the same quality.

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

Annexure E: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

Research Purpose/Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The purpose of this was to describe millennial brand loyalty in the fashion industry in Durban, South Africa	What is the description of millennial brand loyalty within the South African Fashion Industry?	Millennials make up a major part of today's consumer market. The rationale is important as it may enable retailers to understand the impact millennials have on brand loyalty.	Aaker (1991)	Theme 1: Brand Loyalty	Paradigm Positivism Epistemology Obtain data from the findings to uncover the law of millennial behaviour in the fashion industry Ontology The study utilised survey questionnaires to obtain data to uncover laws that govern reality and predict outcomes such as the behaviour of millennials. Axiology The research values brand loyalty among millennials.	Quantitative	An Ethical Clearance letter was obtained, and a survey was sent out to 30 millennials which was based around Aaker's loyalty pyramid that followed a Likert scale.	The researcher needed to be as ethical as possible with no bias. The researcher did not distort or misuse any information. Anonymity and confidentiality were upheld.	Millennials show low loyalty to brands. Millennials switch brands often. Millennials prefer quality and value from a brand.	Longitudinal study, mixed method approach. Retailers can increase the sample size of their target markets aimed at millennials. Brands should showcase their fashion at outdoor events as this will draw and encourage millennials to support their favorite brands which can lead to millennial loyalty.
			Aaker & Joachimstaler (2000)	Theme 2: South African Fashion Brands		Population				
			Baloglu (2002) Du Plooy Cilliers, et al (2014)	Theme 3: Consumer Buying Behaviour Theme 4: Brand Loyalty Strategies Theme 5: Related Theories		Population Parameters Millennials born in 1981-2000, shoppers of clothing or shoe brands, based in Durban.				
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/Hypotheses/Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
The challenge of millennial brand loyalty is unknown.	To describe how often millennials switch brands.	Customer Loyalty	Aaker's Brand Loyalty Pyramid			non-probability sampling	Unit of Analysis Millennials who shop in the fashion industry Data Analysis Method(s) Microsoft Excel, Google Doc forms, mean, median & confidence levels was utilised.	Sample size being too small. Language barrier fluency and social desirability bias.	Assisted retailers, in helping gain millennial brand loyalty where they could enable more brand loyal strategies. (Theme 4)	
	To describe how millennials perceive fashion brands.	Consumer Buying Behaviour	The Loyalty Ladder			Sampling method				
		Millennials	Attitudinal & Behavioural Loyalty			Purposive sampling				
		Customer Satisfaction				Size				
		Brand Loyalty				30 millennials				