



FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE INTENTION OF FOREIGN APPAREL AMONGST MILLENNIALS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

South Africa's clothing and fashion industry is perceived to be quite profitable, with over 800 apparel retailers nationwide. Most of the retailers sell apparel imported from various countries across the globe. Meeting the basic need of clothing trends is the most important factor driving this country's fashion and clothing industry. Millennial tastes and preferences mostly drive fashion trends. This study, therefore, has a particular interest in investigating how millennials in South Africa, in particular, respond to foreign apparel and what factors influence them to choose imported apparel as opposed to local retailers by identifying the South African factors that millennial customers use to decide whether or not to buy from foreign clothing brands, assessing the impact of this decision on millennial customers' purchasing behaviour, and examining the drivers behind millennial customers' purchase behaviour. This paper used a sample of 797 anonymous respondents, and descriptive and quantitative analyses were carried out on the survey results. The results described the factors that affected the choice of foreign clothing brands by South African millennials, mainly focusing on the consumption group of South African millennials. The relevance and impact of various factors on millennials' purchase intention and purchase behaviour were shown through the data analysis of several factor variables. The purpose was to determine the influencing factors of millennials' purchase intention to buy foreign clothing brands in South Africa, and the analysis results proved consistent with the theoretical framework. This study found that disposable income, sustainable fashion, social media influence, and brand experience strongly impact purchase intention. Ethnic disparities adversely affected the purchase intention greatly. Purchase Intention also had a major positive impact on purchase behaviour. This study recommended that marketers and brand owners identify diverse client needs based on various customer attributes to satisfy South African consumers' varying and ever-changing wants for foreign apparel products.

Keywords: *foreign apparel; millennial; purchase intention; purchase behaviour*

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the purpose of the study and then introduces the context of the study, which was the current economic background of South Africa, the fashion industry status and development in South Africa. Subsequently, it made a problem statement. Then it elaborates on research objectives, questions, delimitations, definitions of terms and hypotheses.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research investigated the determinants of millennials' propensity to buy international clothing in South Africa. This study researched different customer characteristics, different customer needs, and a few factors that caused impacts to provide just the right supply and improve efficiency, reduce waste of resources, give advertisers and brand runners the necessary information they require, and meet South African consumers' dynamic and different demands on foreign apparel products.

1.3 Context of the Study

More restrictions and uncertainty than ever before are being applied to foreign clothing businesses and retailers (McKinsey & Company, 2021). They have to deal with rapidly evolving trade and tax policies, as well as adjust to shifting consumer preferences and needs, by making the supply chain more sustainable, transitioning customer demographics from baby boomers to the millennial and Z generations, and meeting consumers' growing demands for digitalization while simultaneously contending with new forms of international competition (McKinsey & Company, 2021). All of these elements call for better informed and timely business decisions. An indirect tax known as VAT is primarily targeted at domestic consumption of goods and services as well as at imported commodities into South

Africa. The tax is intended to be primarily paid by the final customer or buyer in South Africa. It is assessed at two rates: the standard rate and the zero percent rate (0%). Since that time, the standard VAT rate has increased from the previous 14 to 15%. There are very few business transactions that take place in South Africa that are exempt from VAT. On all taxable supplies along the production and distribution chain, enterprises that have registered with SARS as "vendors" are responsible for collecting the tax. VAT is not applied to purchases or supplies made by non-vendors (PwC, 2023). Tax implications and custom duties generally affect the import and export business in South Africa including the fashion and apparel business. For instance, when custom duties are higher consumers pay higher prices for purchased goods compared to when they buy locally manufactured items which do not incur such tax implications. However in some cases consumers are prepared to incur such costs for various reasons such as the need to have unique fashionable styles that are not similar to others' that buy their clothes from retail stores across the country (Mandarić, Hunjet, & Vuković, 2022).

In some cases consumers are lucky enough to have their favourite foreign brands readily available in the country however for others, they have to be the main importers and order the clothes online which has its perks such as convenience and time saving, however it also has its own disadvantages of high custom duties and very long delivery times or waiting periods before they have their items delivered (Kasuma et al, 2020). Moreover, there is the risk of not having seamless returns and refunds systems in the case that a customer prefers a different size, colour or item (Rose Sutton, 2022). When setting up a foreign apparel business in South Africa, these are some of the elements alongside understanding the needs of the targeted consumer that call for better informed and timely business decisions.

1.3.1 Political and economic factors affecting foreign apparel brands in South Africa

Most garments in the South African market are originally made in China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia (The International Labour Office, 2017). South Africa is a country where commodities rely heavily on imports. South Africa experiences significant demand for ready-to-wear garments in the winter and summer, but the capability for manufacturing and technology limits the local textile industry, so the market demand for apparel products cannot be met fully. Consequently, every year, a sizeable volume of textiles and clothing from other countries is imported (Xia, 2022). Commercial complexes in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth are where China makes most of its textile and apparel investments in South Africa (China Africa Trade Research Centre, 2021).

People's disposable income has decreased yearly in South Africa due to the over two years pandemic, unsatisfying GDP, increasing CPI and inflation, and increasing unemployment rate. However, South Africa's GDP increased by 4.9% in 2021 as opposed to declining by 6.4% in 2020 (Maluleke, 2021). On March 8, Statistics South Africa's statistician general asserted that the country's expansion resulted from its 2021 recovery from the pandemic outbreak. Although these figures are optimistic, real GDP has not yet reached the levels observed in the 2nd quarter of 2021, when civil unrest disrupted the economy and harsher closure restrictions in the 3rd quarter (BULBULIA, 2022). Moreover the recent floods in Durban which is the main port hub of the country, majorly affected the country's economic performance with not only importers of fashion apparel but also importers of all other major economic goods suffering from losses and backlogs at the port that was led by the damage to the infrastructure and electricity caused by the natural disaster. This resulted to the country's economy shrinking by 0.7 per cent by the second quarter of 2022 (News24, 2022).

The import tax on finished clothing by South African Customs is very high; the import tax rate on garments in South Africa is 40%, yarns 15%, fabrics 22%, and fibres 7.5% (South Africa - Import Tariffs, 2021). These high costs are ultimately incurred by the final buyer. In addition, the high cost and danger of establishing a garment factory in South Africa also contribute to the high cost of apparel there; for instance, the price of a coat in South Africa can purchase two or three coats in China, which can also greatly decrease customers' purchase intention.

1.3.2 Social and technological factors affecting foreign apparel brands in South Africa

Social factors affect people when they choose products and services, including purchasing patterns, demographics, opinions and attitudes, brand preferences and culture (Lautiainen, 2015). Despite the economic downturn and increasing unemployment rate since the pandemic, the urbanisation process in South Africa has never stalled, and it has promoted the growth of the fast fashion consumer market, encouraged the entry of international brands, and increased market competition (Market Line, 2021). In recent years, online shopping has become increasingly popular, and online clothing retailers can provide consumers with convenience, variety and lower prices. According to the estimated data released by Statista (2021), South Africa's fashion industry would bring in over \$120 million in 2022, with a compound annual growth rate of over 19% from 2023 to 2025. The number of users in the fashion sector is anticipated to reach more than 20 million by 2025. Internet sales reached 23% in 2020, and this market will expand throughout the ensuing years. According to a report published by Market Line (2021), fast fashion from China is also becoming increasingly popular locally, especially with fashionable and low-cost clothing. One of the most popular Chinese fashion brands in South Africa is Shein which is a global fast-fashion giant that supplies and sells affordable clothing to more than 150 countries and appeals mostly to young fashion-conscious consumers. Although the brand is very popular in South Africa, the company has triggered numerous complaints from local manufacturers for selling items at very low prices

and therefore undermining the country’s objective of the 2019 textile master plan whereby the retail sales of clothing, textiles, shoes and leather goods must be increased to R250 billion within the country by 2030 (Peyper, 2023).

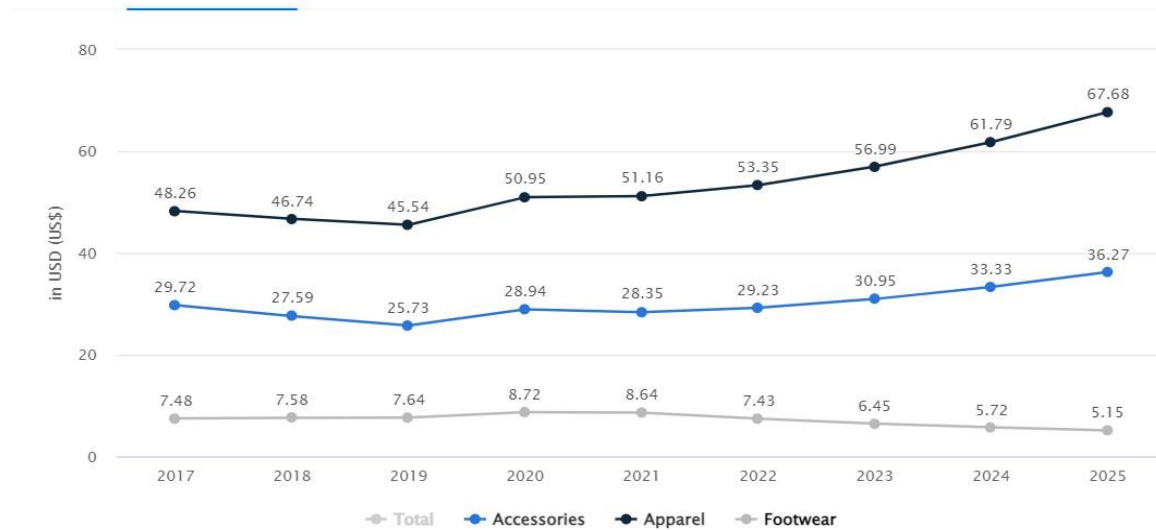


Figure 1.1: Average Revenue Per User by SegmentSource: Statista.com

Fashion retailers are speeding up their migration from offline stores to e-commerce after COVID-19; as expenses rise, consumers cut back on their spending, and businesses fall out of business (Parker & Kuo, 2021). Enhancing the experience with mobile shopping and browsing is critical as more users transition from desktop to mobile (Fashion in South Africa, 2021). Although Internet usage is on the rise in South Africa, it still accounts for only 55% of the total population, and the South African government will increase investment in satellite communications and broadband expansion in the next few years, which means that online shopping is still unlimited for growth (Monzon, 2022). The increased security of online payments has led more consumers to shop online which brings a lot of convenience and saves time which further indicates expected growth in establishment of online stores as they are becoming the norm.

By examining the variables that impact international fashion brands in South Africa, this study's practical outcome could be to increase millennials' purchasing intentions.

1.4 Problem Statement

There is a fair amount of literature that studies the evolution of fashion in South Africa, stimulates customers' purchase intention by improving their brand experience (Kekana, Chuchu, Venter de Villiers & Van den Berg, 2019), stimulate buying behaviour through social media marketing (Parker & Kuo, 2021), sustainable fashion (Moreno-Gavara & Jiménez-Zarco, 2019), ethics in the apparel industry (Anna, 2022), South African customers' consciousness of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism towards imported products (Muposhi, Dhurup & Shamhuyenzva, 2018). Besides, South African women's body characteristics have also been researched in terms of clothing patterns and sizing (Pandarum, Hunter & Harlock, 2017). However, there are still research gaps in the existing literature on the purchase attention of South African millennial consumer groups towards foreign apparel in the South African market (Mbumbwa, 2016).

Therefore, this study aimed to gain insights into how factors affect millennials' purchase intention, including millennials' disposable income, sustainable fashion consciousness, ethnic difference, social media influence and brand experience. Then it explained how to purchase intention influences purchase behaviour. This research focused on the customer group of millennials and foreign brands in South Africa.

1.5 Research Objectives

The broad objectives of this study were to assess customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel among millennials and to find the contributing elements that influence the fashion consciousness of apparel brands. The objectives were:

1. To determine the factors influencing the purchase intentions of millennial clients for international clothing brands in South Africa.
2. To evaluate the influence of millennials' purchase intention of foreign apparel on their purchase behaviour.
3. To examine the motives of millennial customers' purchase behaviour towards foreign apparel brands.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What factors are influencing millennial customers' purchasing intentions for international clothing brands in South Africa?
2. How does millennials' purchase intention of foreign apparel influence their purchase behaviour?
3. What are the motives of millennial customers' purchase behaviour towards foreign apparel brands?

1.7 Delimitations

The research was not only limited to the factors related to consumer behaviour but also included objective factors such as politics, economy, and social culture, as well as factors related to company marketing activities and business models. These factors also affected the consumption behaviour of millennials in South Africa. The focus of this study was the characteristics of South African millennial consumers, factors influencing their purchase intention, and marketing tactics a foreign apparel brand can use. The scope of this study included South African millennials who have purchased foreign apparel products or have interests in

fashion but have not tried to buy foreign apparel products. In addition, the study was limited to the young population living in South Africa.

1.8 Contribution of the Study

This research provided suggestions for the survival and development of foreign clothing brands in South Africa and theoretical perspectives for the South African clothing industry. Through the analysis of factors of South African millennials' purchase intentions of foreign clothing brands, it is beneficial for industry practitioners to formulate appropriate marketing strategies. It provided references for policymakers to regulate and promote the apparel market and relevant research results in the academic field.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

1.9.1 Millennials

Commonly referred to as Gen Y, it is the generation that precedes Generation Z and follows Generation X, which refers to people who were born between 1980 and 2000, aged from 26 to 40 years old (Kekana, Chuchu, Venter de Villiers & Van den Berg, 2019).

1.9.2 Disposable Income

Disposable income is the money an individual can earn from wages after paying personal income tax, in the quantity of goods and services purchased or the amount spent (CFI Team, 2021).

1.9.3 Sustainable Fashion

Sustainable fashion is a component of the growing sustainability movement and design philosophy, which aims to create a durable system considering social responsibility and its effects on people (Gardetti & Torres, 2017). In a field that moves quickly, like fashion, sustainability is a concept that designers should investigate, pioneering new ground in terms of the environmental effects of the manufacturing supply, final use, or product lifespan (Seock & Shin, 2020).

1.9.4 Ethnic Differences

The ethnic differences include ethnic body differences, cultural differences, consciousness of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism due to different nations' backgrounds. Consumers with different ethnic characteristics show different preferences when selecting apparel products or hold different attitudes towards foreign apparel brands (Pentz, 2011).

1.9.5 Social Media Influence

Social media platforms include websites, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok, Twitter, WhatsApp, and examples of social media advertising are paid search advertising, display advertising, search engine optimization (SEO) and content strategy.

1.9.6 Brand Experience

Brand experience is related to the feeling, emotions, cognition and behaviour response caused by the brand (Kekana, Chuchu, Venter de Villiers & Van den Berg, 2019). Customers' brand experience mainly comes online and offline. On the one hand, online shopping websites, social platforms and other pre-sales and after-sales services, web page aesthetics, fluency and functionality; on the

other hand, offline clothing stores, including store design and decoration, waiter's attitude and professionalism, and so on.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter established that the study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the purchase intention of foreign apparel among millennials in South Africa. This study expanded the background of political, economic, social and technological aspects, allowing readers to see factors affecting foreign apparel brands in South Africa. There were three research objectives: to determine the factors influencing millennial customers' purchase intention, to evaluate the influence of millennial purchase intention, and to examine the motives of millennial customers' purchase behaviour towards foreign apparel brands. To further research this subject, definitions of millennial, disposable income, sustainable fashion, ethnic difference, social media influence, and brand experience were offered for better understanding. The study's conceptual Model was established according to research objectives and guided formulation of hypotheses.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter first introduced millennials' buyer behaviour through Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), then elaborated on factors influencing millennial customers' purchase intention: disposable income, sustainable fashion, ethnic difference, social media influence and brand experience. Following was the influence of purchase intention by above mentioned factors through Self-determination theory (SDT). Then it introduced the motives of millennial customers' purchase behaviour with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The chapter concluded with Study Conceptual Model and a chapter summary.

2.2 Millennials' Buyer Behaviour

Millennials are young people with stable jobs and sufficient disposable income; the growing middle class's thirst for low-cost clothing maintains "Made in China" clothing in strong demand. In the context of the economic downturn, millennials tend to choose more affordable imported clothing (Naidoo, 2018). Millennials, who were born around the same time as computers, and grew up with the Internet, can be adept at using high-tech tools, self-assured, unrestricted, upbeat, and unafraid of change, making them different from other generations in terms of purchase intention (Vogels, 2023). These characteristics and consumption concepts also influence personality traits. In the meantime, this consumer group has a strong social and environmental awareness, so it often takes sustainability as the basis of purchase intention. Fashion and how their peers see them are incredibly important to millennials. They provide a crucial societal purpose by using their purchases of items to demonstrate their individuality and personal preference through clothing as identifying symbols (Dabija & Băbut, 2019). Even people without high income are prepared to spend a lot of money on things that can improve their appearance, despite millennials being highly concerned about clothing prices.

Each generational classification serves as a concise summary of people's opinions, motivations, and historical occurrences from the previous 20 years. They are practical buzzwords for marketers and tend to gradually penetrate common usage (Williams & Page, 2022). The objective is to communicate marketing information according to people's stages of life, regardless of the language or categorization employed. The age range does not imply any fixed definition of the group features. For instance, the objectives of millennials will alter in six or ten years, needing a timely adjustment to marketing techniques. However, we must remember that younger generations frequently adopt new technology and services first, followed by older generations gradually (Williams & Page, 2022).

According to the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), people voluntarily engage in behaviours and activities that they are not interested in, because external motivators influence them to do so (James et al., 2019). Extrinsic motivations come in a variety of forms and can help an individual become more socially integrated. This theory proposes external regulation, introjected regulation, identifiable regulation, and integrated regulation as the four categories of extrinsic incentives (Zamarripa et al., 2018). Therefore, millennials' buyer behaviour can be influenced by a lot of internal and extrinsic motivations, which are discussed following in this study.

2.3 Hypotheses Development and Factors Influencing Millennials' Purchase Intention

2.3.1 Effect of Disposable Income on Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Disposable income refers to the amount left over after fixed expenses are deducted, or after covering basic expenses, is typically seen as a key variable determining purchase intention (Jin-Long, Ying-Yu, & Yi-Shiang, 2013). Consumer demand is significantly influenced by disposable income, which controls consumers' everyday spending (Wilmers, 2017). There will be a

significant reduction in discretionary income in the event of financial challenges such as an economic downturn and unemployment (CFI Team, 2021). However, due to the war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, fuel prices increased in all countries, including South Africa (Magome, 2022). Fuel prices are closely related to people's necessities like living, eating, and travelling, while the increasing number of petrol and diesel makes people's life more expensive in South Africa when people's salaries stay the same. As the cost of living is now high, it is difficult for people to manage their budgets, therefore fuel price rises have a significant impact on consumers' wallets (Pillay, 2022). In this case, the negative economic factors would negatively impact millennials' purchase intention towards foreign apparel products. The effect of income growth on current consumer expenditure was shown to be positive. The changes in the exchange rate and the price of gasoline have little impact on household consumption spending. Therefore, to improve household expenditures and long-term outcomes, authorities must assure exchange rate stability and household income growth (Habanabakize, 2021).

Clothes are necessities in people's lives, but fast fashion is not. Fast fashion is quickly transferred from runway to retail outlets. Fast fashion makes it possible for regular people to affordably buy the hottest new style or the hottest new trend (Hayes, 2022). Cheap and trendy clothing is available in fast fashion, but collections change quite quickly. Once per week, fast-fashion retailers like H&M, Zara, Topshop, and others update their lines. Factories compromise quality in an effort to lower costs. As a result, clothing degrades more quickly, causing consumers to purchase new items much more frequently. When it comes to excessive consumption, Over time, buying clothes has become more of a passion than a need (Komazova, 2022). Nowadays millennials tend to resell the clothes they wear only for once and no longer wear in the future. Young people who are active on social media platforms cannot take another picture in the same one piece of clothes after they already posted it for once (Kale, 2021).

It can be seen from above that the millennials' willingness to buy fashion products is still strong with limited disposable income, and their purchasing

behaviour has never stopped. The consumer's disposable income affects their purchase frequency and quantity of apparel products in the purchase behaviour, but at the same time, the apparel products change in order to adapt to the change of consumers' disposable income. The change of social consumption behaviour from slow fashion to fast fashion is an example.

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Disposable income positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

2.3.2 Effect of Sustainable Fashion on Purchase Intention and Behaviour

The second-highest emitter of pollution in the world is now the fashion sector (McFall-Johnsen, 2019). An industry that uses a lot of chemicals is the textile manufacturing sector. Due to preparation, dyeing, finishing, cutting, synthetic fibres, and other processing steps, textile materials use many water resources and produce much waste and wastewater. According to a South African apparel company survey, the textile industry generates approximately half of the landfill waste (Gam, Cao, Farr & Heine, 2009). Textile production has high pollution levels, which endangers the continent's environmental sustainability. The environmental sustainability movement, called slow fashion, serves as a manual for eco-friendly consumerism and sustainable shopping practices (Jung & Jin, 2016). It typically manifests as, for instance, purchasing fewer but more expensive products, purchasing recycled clothing, repurposing and recycling old clothing, and creating clothing out of garbage, among other things (Seock & Shin, 2020).

Generation Y customers are rapidly supporting the concept of green fashion and sustainable consumerism, and clothing products made of natural and safe materials and chemicals can benefit consumers' health. Young customers are "creating their style" through customization and do-it-yourself craft, a developing trend in sustainable design. Many users post images of their reimagined apparel

on Pinterest (Wang, 2021). Identifying and resolving environmental problems brought on by a lot of pollution is a tough task for business runners and customers worldwide (Winter & Lasch, 2016). Corporate social responsibility and image impact consumers' impressions of them and their willingness to purchase their products. Today's fashion brands differentiate themselves mostly via sustainability (Seock & Shin, 2020). Nowadays, many manufacturers and merchants pursue sustainable development, create corporate sustainable development strategies, and generate profits by conserving the earth's finite resources, cutting pollution, and safeguarding the environment (Winter & Lasch, 2016).

The expansion of regional industries, spearheaded by regional business people with strong ties, sustainability, and employee development, is key to the future of fashion in Africa (Moreno-Gavara & Jiménez Zarco, 2019). Consumers are becoming more aware of where their apparel is produced and how the manufacturing process is conducted. According to Marshal Cohen, a retail analyst at the NPD Group, shops will pay a 10 to 15% premium for ethically produced clothing (SEGRAN, 2017). Many fashion start-ups have opted to manufacture their goods domestically in recent years to provide consumers with more transparency (Monroe, 2021).

Millennials' preference for clothing companies is frequently impacted negatively by aggressive Western media coverage of ethical difficulties in factories in the country of origin's east (Landrum, 2017). Some people are avoiding clothing made in China. However, quick, inexpensive, widespread production is no longer associated with China. Because the scope of quality, skill, respect for labour laws, and environmental preservation is so broad, brands must select factories that manufacture high-quality goods while being ethical and environmentally conscious (Colleges & Managers, 2018). Nowadays, both fast fashion brands and high-end brands are manufactured in China. Consumers should strive to use clothing more thoughtfully by observing the tools and materials employed and who manufactured them at a time when fashion has serious negative effects on the environment (Anna, 2022).

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Sustainable fashion would positively influence millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

2.3.3 Effect of Ethnic Differences on Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Consumers with different ethnic characteristics hold different attitudes towards foreign apparel brands. Because buying imported goods might hurt the local economy, generate unemployment, and be perceived as contempt for their nation, highly ethnocentric consumers consider doing so morally wrong (Bandhumasuta, 2017). Consumers who value cosmopolitanism progressively select from a greater variety of foreign brands and goods as living standards rise, preferences become more sophisticated, and international trade is strengthened (Fota, 2022). In addition to offering a wider variety of items and more affordable prices, these primarily imported clothing products generally offer (Muposhi, Dhurup & Shamhuyenhanzva, 2018).

Consumer ethnocentrism is the propensity to favour domestic over imported goods (Ma, Abdeljelil, & Hu, 2019). Consumers with ethnocentrism personality trait appears to be more inclined to emphasize the advantages of domestic goods while downplaying those of imports. There is evidence from several studies that consumers' interest in a product is less sophisticated the more ethnocentric they are (Trisatya & Absah, 2022). It was discovered that elderly consumers exhibited greater ethnocentrism than younger consumers. The level of customer ethnocentrism, according to demographic data, varies with income level, age, gender, education, travel abroad, social and regional economic factors, the value of the product, and general hostility toward the foreign country (Sehgal, 2021).

Consumers with different ethnic characteristics show different preferences when selecting apparel products. Consider women's clothing items as an example.

Most of these items were originally manufactured in Asian nations like China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Indonesia, and Asian women and women from South Africa have extremely distinct body types (Blomberg, 2020). Pandarum, Hunter and Harlock (2017) revealed the differences in body sizes among blacks, whites, and people of other colours, while international clothing brands do not make clothing that fits South African women's current body measurements. According to the author, there are no separate apparel size systems in South Africa or Africa, and the size chart that is now in use is faulty using anthropometric information that South African ladies are currently studying. He believes the size standards and measurements of garment products need to be improved to solve the sizing and fitting issues faced by South African customers, provided the most recent statistics on the physique and body type for the South African clothing manufacturing and retailing industries (Pandarum, Hunter & Harlock, 2017).

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Ethnic differences would negatively influence millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

2.3.4 Effect of Social Media Influence on Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Social media marketing refers to advertising on social networks (SMM). To realize the interaction between consumers and brands, stimulate purchase intention, and ultimately promote purchase behaviour, brands draw users to socialmedia websites by improving search rankings, cutting overall marketing costs, increasing website traffic, and increasing the number of subscribers. Electronic word of mouth refers to customers spreading product links on social media (e-WOM) (Parker & Kuo, 2021). Negative online word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is more powerful than good e-WOM and is thought to be the most direct and successfulchannel in brand marketing operations. Fashion brands need to work to stop or avoid negative social media comments, encourage and promote good e-WOM, and increase buy intent. Social media is a more common online

communication method for Generation Y. Social media is a significant venue for brand engagement. Fashion businesses encourage customers to share products on their preferred social networks through interpersonal marketing initiatives and sponsored advertising (Parker & Kuo, 2021).

An omnichannel approach will be important to ensure seamless and unified interactions with customers regardless of their channel of engagement (Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017). Social media influencers shape audience attitudes through creating content and posting on Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, blogging, tweeting, and using other social media. Influencers are also known as Key Opinion Leader (KOL), which is an important force in the rise of foreign apparel brands; internet celebrity brings traffic, products get the greatest exposure, and a profitable ROI can be achieved. On the other hand, Paid search is the process of placing bids to get your advertisement to show up in the search results pages of most search engines. Banners, simple text, rich media, static graphics, audio, in-stream movies, and skippable video adverts are among the display advertising formats (Mialki, 2021).

South African businesses must be more visible on social media platforms due to the growing popularity of social media to boost sales. Social media sites are used by almost 75% of internet users. More than 90% of young people and teens, who account for 25% of all internet traffic, are drawn to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Killian & McManus, 2015). In South Africa, it is estimated that 61 percent of millennials between the ages of 24 and 40 will use social media every day in 2021, with 88 percent of this demographic using a mobile device or a computer to access it (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). All social media platforms aim to persuade users to visit the companies' websites for comprehensive product and service information. Most social networks have global appeal, like TikTok did start out as a pure Gen Z platform, but statistics show that is no longer the case. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent blockade, TikTok has gone from an open social network that originally provided creative expression for Generation Z to a place where most middle-aged and even elderly people can find happiness (Tien, 2023). Almost every brand now has a TikTok account

because of the platform's massive traffic, in an attempt to connect consumers with the brand using clever marketing techniques and polished visuals. One of the ways to increase brand influence and participation is to show consumers behind-the-scenes things through TikTok short videos, such as the story of the founder behind the brand, so that consumers can understand the uniqueness of the brand (Hartshorne, 2022).

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Social media positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

2.3.5 Effect of Brand Experience on Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Compared with generation X, generation Y pays more attention to service and brand experiential satisfaction (Parker & Kuo, 2021). Many clothing brands simultaneously rely on offline and online existence, adopting a multi-channel approach to achieve appropriate differentiation and promote sales through distribution channels (Dabija & Băbut, 2019). Customers' experiences with a brand online and in-store are one cohesive brand experience that cannot be separated. Customers should be able to expect the same degree of information, product variety, and customer service online as they would in a physical store. Customers should have a single, seamless brand engagement rather than two different ones by connecting the online and offline brand experiences (Glance, 2022).

Returns and refunds are part of the brand experience. There are many reasons why customers are dissatisfied with their orders, such as damage upon arrival, improper size ordered, or quality not meeting expectations. Based on a "easy" or "very easy" return experience, 96% of customers said they would return to a particular retailer (Rose Sutton, 2022). Return policies might vary depending on the logistics used by the company and the type of product, but they should all address some fundamental principles. For instance, the policy should be explicit

about what things and when they may be returned and exchanged, such as whether they have a 14-days or 30-days return window with a receipt (Gordon, 2022). If final sale items cannot be exchanged or returned. Which conditions are acceptable for returns, if items must be in their original packaging and in unworn, lightly used condition. Whether goods can be exchanged for shop credit, a cash refund, or a product of equivalent value. What is the duration until customers obtain a refund, a replacement item, or shop credit. Additionally, any shipping charges the buyer will be liable for (Findlaw, 2019).

Online shopping application designers need to design effective applications to increase the response of Gen Y to e-WOM and encourage the use of mobile shopping apps (Parker & Kuo, 2021). For example, generation Y consumers prefer large or celebrity images and can search for desired products with the least keywords. Apps for fashion brands should be clean and easy to search because smartphones have limited and small screens. App designers usually need to provide consumers with the following four types of information: product information (such as size, fabric, and colour), store information (such as address and business hours), account details and seasonal sales information. Enhance product details, set up more shopping convenience functions, provide easy navigation of store addresses, provide persuasive clothing matching combinations of different styles, and create videos that reflect style inspiration. These measures will make shopping more interesting and interactive. For example, fashion show videos or models showing products, music, or videos will encourage them to buy and may prolong their browsing time on the app. At the same time, discounts and exclusive hot goods are important tools for product promotion (Parker & Kuo, 2021).

Through the application of the space aesthetics of the store, improve the atmosphere of the clothing store to affect customers' purchase behaviour at the cognitive, emotional and behavioural levels. Store atmosphere and the elements of the environment (lighting, temperature, room size, layout, cleanliness, etc.) greatly impact choosing a store (Dabija & Băbut, 2019). At the same time, store design will also affect consumers' preferences and price perception. Under

psychological cues, consumers often associate beautiful environments with high quality. In addition to creating an atmosphere in the clothing store, clothing retailers should focus their attention on salespersons, train competent and polite salespersons, give appropriate help and advice to customers, improve the shopping experience of millennials in the store, and attract and obtain customer loyalty. The quality of a salesperson, such as being careful, friendly, polite, skilled, knowledgeable and helpful, may affect the patronage behaviour of consumers. Therefore, salespersons should be more polite and be able to provide customers with appropriate information about stores and goods (Dabija & Băbut, 2019). Finally, clothing retailers should pay more attention to the categories that should conform to the new fashion trend, catch up with the fashion trend, improve the speed of updating, and improve brand exposure through advertising.

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H5: Brand experience positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

2.4 Influence of Purchase Intention: Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Purchase intention refers to the possibility that consumers consciously decide to buy a certain product or service in the future (Kekana, Chuchu, Venter de Villiers & Van den Berg, 2019), it is usually related to consumers' behaviour, cognition, emotion, needs, wishes, thinking mode and attitude (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015). Purchase intention is characterized as a favorable attitude toward an item that encourages individuals to attempt to acquire it by spending money (Trisatya & Absah, 2022). The customer purchase decision is a complex process, and a purchase intention is an effective tool for predicting the purchase process. Purchase intention will be affected by the price or perceived quality and value (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015); attitude, impulsive consumption, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour will also control it. Consumers will be affected by internal or external factors in the

purchase process. Internal factors include consciousness, knowledge, interest and preference, and external factors such as advertising and promotional activities, so businesses often establish emotional contact with customers through advertising (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015). Purchase intention can predict consumers' purchase behaviour and test new distribution channels' implementation (Pena- García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela & Siqueira-Junior, 2020). Because markets are effective, buyers and sellers serve as meeting points. A well-known finding states that homogeneous commodities should cost the same everywhere (Wolf, 2016). Consumers intend to buy particular fashion products or brands to create a group identity that speaks for the reference group and has a corresponding style. Emotional attachment may strongly support Brand loyalty and buybacks (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011).

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a method of studying human motivation and personality, emphasizing the significant impact of individual freedom and intrinsic motivation on a person's choices and actions (Kendra Cherry, 2022). Under the theory of self-determination, a person's choices and behaviours depend on their own will and willingness, tending towards self-motivation rather than external motivation. Once they receive external motivation or expect external rewards, the results of their behaviour will be negative and negative (Widyarini & Gunawan, 2018). For example, some customers prefer to choose and try on clothing in the shops on their own, and dislike the salesperson's promotional behaviour. If the salesperson does not observe and blindly recommend and promote, the sales behaviour will have the opposite effect, reducing consumers' purchasing intention, and even suppressing potential purchasing behaviour.

2.5 Motives of Purchase Behaviour: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The research questions mentioned above are related to South Africa's millennial market for overseas clothing creation and marketing, theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) will be applied, and social media will be utilized

as a marketing strategy to increase customer happiness and improve communication with the target market's consumers. According to the theory of planned behavior, purchase intentions influence customer behaviour in the beginning, and attitudes influence it in the end, consumers' initial mindset before to making a purchase is their purchasing intention. Consumer behaviour is product evaluation, where consumers compare the attributes of numerous items and choose which one to buy (Trisatya & Absah, 2022). Purchasing behaviour can be understood as the way, frequency and amount of products or services consumers purchase (Pena- García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela & Siqueira-Junior, 2020). Purchase intention is the reason for purchase behaviour resulting from purchase intention. Consumer behaviour analysis can effectively detect the orientation of consumer behaviour. Purchasing behaviour is a turning point for consumers to obtain products, experience products and provide feedback (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015).

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), It is possible to anticipate purpose using attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control and then predict behaviour. The theory of Planned Behaviour is determined by three variables: personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control. Different dimensions or qualities of people's intentions impact how well those intentions can forecast actual behaviour. Although some specific actions may not be translated into actual behaviour, attitude can only sporadically predict actual behaviour. A chasm must be filled between their goal and behaviour, specifically, between their intention and what they do (Rausch & Kopplin, 2020). The link between intention and conduct contains four successive action stages, which explains why the gap needs to be closed: 1) the pre-decision phase: the desire or desire's release stage (2) After making a choice, but before taking any action, a solid strategy is created. After making a decision, such situational considerations or environmental circumstances may significantly influence the intention and even prevent the successful realisation of the intended conduct. (3) the stage of action, and (4) the evaluation stage (Rausch & Kopplin, 2020). In this case, for example, even though millennial customers have generated purchase intention from the influence of Social Media or because of great brand

experience, it will not necessarily lead to purchase behaviour due to insufficient disposable income or ethnic difference or even controlled by sustainable fashion consciousness.

Based on above literature review, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H6: Millennial customers' purchase intention positively influences their purchase behaviour.

2.6 Study Conceptual Model

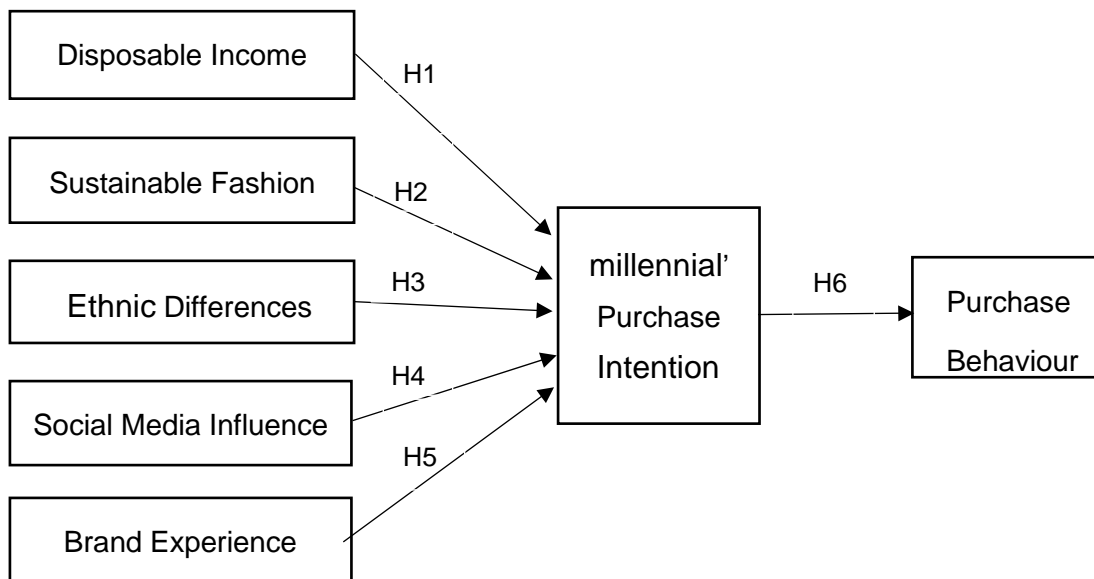


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Study Model

Source: Developed for this study

It can be seen from Figure 2.1, the Study Conceptual Model of this article, five factors disposable income, sustainable fashion, ethnic difference, social media influence and brand experience, are influencing millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands. Furthermore, millennial customers' purchase intention also influences their purchase behaviour.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature and reflections on the core factors related to this study. The objectives and goal of this study were to understand the purchase intentions for foreign apparel in a South African context amongst millennials. Even though these structures were researched in a Western context, the theoretical underpinnings of earlier studies on the African market have suggested themes, considering the elements influencing the developing South African millennial market to completely comprehend the goals of fashion brand buyers. Literature reviews provide a theoretical framework for the research object.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter first introduces the research philosophy and then explains the study's methods, which was quantitative research. Then it introduces the research design and time horizon. Furthermore, it elaborates on research techniques and procedures, including population, sampling technique, data collection sampling size process and research Instrument, data analysis and interpretation. Moreover, validity and reliability issues are explained in the chapter. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations and the specific steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality, followed by the study's limitations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Market research includes different classification methods, including quantitative research, qualitative research, social media, surveys, sampling techniques, customer site visits, ethnography, crowdsourcing, and big data analysis (Burns, Bush & Veeck, 2017). In terms of philosophies, research shows there is Pragmatism, Positivism, Realism and Interpretivism, among others (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Given the quantitative nature of this study, the research adopted the positivism philosophy as it sought to derive the perceptions of millennials towards their intention to purchase foreign apparel, their reasoning and logic emanating from their sensory experiences.

3.3 Research Methods

The research used the quantitative approach to verify the hypothesis in a global clothing business from South Africa. Quantitative research employs observation, experimentation, investigation, statistics, and other techniques to examine phenomena. It also establishes strong criteria for the research's rigorousness,

objectivity, and value neutrality to produce factual results (Burns, Bush & Veeck, 2017). Examples of quantitative research techniques are applied statistics in social sciences, experimental design, sampling surveys, incorporated classed data analysis, multivariate analysis, trend analysis, and applied linear regression models (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

3.4 Research Design

The procedures and strategies researchers employ inside a framework are called research design. The design would enable researchers to focus on the relevant research procedures, and configure their studies for efficiency, in accordance with Boru (2018). Data gathering, measurement and analysis are the three principal categories of study designs. Three main categories of study designs include data gathering, measurement, and analysis (Question Pro Survey Software, 2022).

This study investigated how millennials in South Africa respond to foreign apparel and what factors influence them to choose imported apparel instead of local brands. The participant groups in South Africa were millennials (26 to 41 years). A sample of 797 participants was recruited based on convenience from professional and social media platforms. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires to be posted online through Qualtrics. Data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistical analysis using SPSS V.27. Linear regression analysis was done to test the conceptual framework proposed for the study.

3.5 Research Time Horizon

Because this research paper had a one-year time limit, this study was a cross-sectional study, that is, a study of specific objects at a specific time. Moreover, most researchers spend more time on research than planned (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Besides, data collection is usually completed at one time, so

the time of data collection can usually be predicted for accurate arrangement (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

3.6 Research Techniques and Procedure

3.6.1 Population

With a total population of 60 million in South Africa, and a population of 14 million millennials (Bizcommunity, 2020), this study targeted individual customers aged from 18 to 40 residing in Gauteng's big cities, particularly Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, and Durban, which act as the nation's commercial centres and serve as perfect models for the acceptance of the international garment market.

As reflected in the Study Conceptual Model, ethnic difference was one of the factors that affected millennials' purchase intention. Therefore, this study specifically discussed the population of South Africa according to its demographics characteristics by ethnic groups. Besides, based on the Millennial target customer group, the table below discusses demographic characteristics by age and geography.

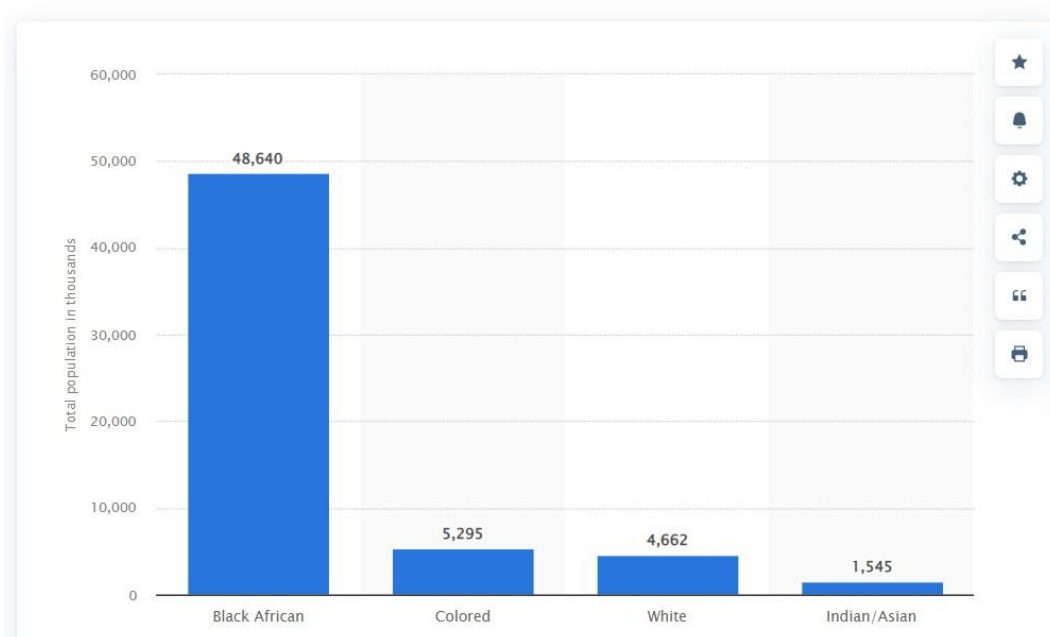


Figure 3.1: Total population of South Africa, 2021 by ethnic groups (in 000s)
Source: Statista (2021)

Table 3.1: Total population of South Africa in 2021 by ethnic, age and geography groups

Ethnic groups	Population (million)	Age groups	Population (million)	Geography groups	Population (million)
Black Africans	48.6	Under the age of 19	21.95	Gauteng	11.5
coloured people	5.7	Age range 20–40	20.5	Cape Town	4.8
white people	4.7	Above age 40	18.09	KwaZulu-Natal	3.7
Indian or Asian	1.54				

Source: Statista (2021)

After investigation, most foreign apparel brands cater to sizes more white people, Indian and Asian people who share similar figures, with 6.24 million population in total, taking up merely 10.4% of 60 million people. The size differences have limited the expanding of foreign apparel brands in South Africa. According to the demographics data Published by Saifaddin Galal in March 2022 on Statista, 20.5 million people were in the 20–40 age range. The population comprises roughly 48.9% men and roughly 51.1% women, or about 30,75 million female people overall (Galal, 2022). As fast fashion is more popular amongst female customers, with a larger population of women, apparel brands would have a bigger market. In the meantime, with the 20.5 million population of millennials, which is 34.1% of the total population in South Africa, there is a huge market potential for foreign apparel brands to explore (Galal, 2022). It also provided hints to foreign apparel brands that Gauteng is the first option chosen as a showroom site when a showroom is needed, then Cape Town before Durban.

3.6.2 Sampling Technique

In quantitative research, many sampling techniques can be utilized to select participants; for example, the most common sampling technique is called convenience sampling, which finds individuals who are available easily and conveniently to approach at a public location and with convenient resources (Freund, Wilson & Mohr, 2010). This research focused on the millennial group in South Africa, a sample of 797 participants was selected based on convenience from online. In this case, marketers can investigate consumers' purchase intention by recruiting participants from professional platforms or social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and emails. In this study, convenience non-probability sampling method was applied, because the participants were easier to find and approach in a limited time period, and there was little variation among the participants.

3.6.3 Procedure for Data Collection

The first way to collect data and use surveys or questionnaires to gather information (Jones, Baxter & Khanduja, 2013). The data for quantitative approaches must always be current, but acquiring fresh data may be expensive or time-consuming. By choosing samples and researching them, the second way of gathering data yields an estimate for the full research object (Jones, Baxter & Khanduja, 2013).

The target population's applicability must be considered with this methodology. Data indicators can be gathered from expert data research websites, e-commerce sites, international consumer surveys, unbiased databases and third-party sources of market data, examination of important macroeconomic and industry indicators, historical developments, present-day trends, conversations with industry specialists and analyses on significant market participation performance (University of Minnesota, 2021).

This study collected data through a self-administered questionnaire that were distributed online through Qualtrics, and the survey link was shared through the Wits student emails, social media platforms such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Instagram and Facebook. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling method, all participants had the freedom to choose to take part in the study and they have the opportunity to stop the survey at any point as they wished.

3.6.4 Sampling Size

The study of inferring quantitative characteristics of a population from sample data is known as inferential statistics (Marino, 2018). Based on the sample data, it produces probabilistic judgments about unknown statistics population quantitative features (Williams, Sweeney & Anderson, 2022). Inferential statistics come in various forms, each appropriate for the kind of design and features of the sample selected (Marino, 2018). Saturation is the principle that is most frequently used to calculate the size of the dug sample and evaluate its sufficiency. The grounded theory was the source of the saturation notion. The study expanded to include multi-site and cross-cultural research, emphasising more heterogeneous samples (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018). The bigger the sample size, the more statistical data likely show group variations (Kuhar, 2010). As a result, the statistical data is stronger when the sample size is bigger. A significant sample population had to be used for this study. This was necessary to test the research hypotheses in a way that would have a high degree of generalizability. Meaning to what degree the report's conclusions could be extrapolated to apply to the complete research population.

To obtain this sample size, this study collected 1013 responses, out of which only 797 responses could be used to make analysis for the study, because the remaining 216 responses were considered inaccurate and incomplete to make any conclusions for this study.

3.6.5 Research Instrument

This study adapted questionnaires as the research instrument; the questionnaire method is one of the research methods in the descriptive study (Koh & Owen, 2000). In order to accurately explain the variables that influence study objectives based on the peculiarities of various regions, eras, and people, descriptive research uses current or specialized survey data. The benefit of this design method is that it is inexpensive, easy to use, and quick, and it collects data from many people using various variables than the original method. Drawbacks are that there are many influencing factors and differences between different groups, these differences come from the unique special experience of individuals, and there is no mechanism to verify these data under most circumstances. To design the questionnaires, millennials' willingness to purchase apparel from foreign brands was measured using a five-point Likert-style scale ranging from "Very Not" (1) to "Very" (5). There are 14 evaluation items in the questionnaire, which respectively evaluate the consumption preferences, economic ability, national style and characteristics, fashion awareness and aesthetic needs of the respondents, namely the millennial generation, and their resistance to or support for foreign brands.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

3.7.1 Reliability

The consistency of a research method's or tool's output from one analysis to the next is referred to as reliability (Dossey, Schaub & Luck, 2014). It is difficult to conduct scientific research with high reliability because there are too many variables, researchers cannot control every detail of scientific research, and it is very difficult to model and measure the impact on the final results. This includes factors such as the ranking of survey questions, the time to participate, and even environmental and background factors (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

3.7.2 Validity

External validity describes the extent to which research conclusions can be extended to other people, situations and time (Andrade, 2018). These three components can be subdivided into ecological validity, overall validity and historical validity. Researchers must consider the environmental requirements and participant differences that differ from the research objectives and note that the study sample and environment may affect the results (Andrade, 2018). Any research conducted by participants in a controlled environment rather than a natural environment will almost always produce attractive results (Attwood, Deeb & Danz-Reece, 2004). Second, any problem seen in the controlled environment, no matter how small it seems, will aggravate the impact on the results once additional environmental requirements and the variability of participants are added (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, researchers need to fix these design problems before further testing. Otherwise, they will risk getting the same feedback from all participants.

Internal validity describes how much the experimental procedure contributes to the observed impact (Clark & Middleton, 2010). Or, to put it another way, it is the intensity of the causal connection between the independent and dependent variables. Experts frequently employ significance tests in research due to the type of validity they provide. The significance test aids in identifying whether or not the outcomes are the product of independent variables, often known as experimental manipulation or chance and contingency. Our significance test will often be smaller if our internal validity is not high (Mindrila & Balentyne, 2013). Usually, in social science research, the significance test (good or bad) is based on the study's effect size and the p-value of the effect size (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The effect size illustrates the "strength" of the relationship between the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV). The larger the effect, the stronger the relationship.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analytical method depends on the research question and objectives (Shaheen, Ahmad, Waqas, Waheed & Farooq, 2017). Data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. When a research objective has multiple variables, the research can use the structural equation model in quantitative analysis and use computer software such as SPSS V.27 to do a linear regression analysis to determine the correlation between each influencing factor and the research objective (Shaheen et al., 2017), and to test the conceptual framework proposed for the study. In this study, a structural equation model was utilized. Millennials' purchase intention is the dependent variable, and it can be affected by a few independent variables, such as disposable income, the consciousness of sustainable fashion, ethnic differences, social media influence and brand experience that millennials have received.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

When doing research, ethical concerns are crucial. This study adhered to all ethical guidelines and regulations regarding data collecting, obtained participants' agreement before beginning the study, and ensured that none of the respondents was coerced or forced to participate (Health Ethics & Governance, 2011). The data's privacy and anonymity were also considered.

3.9.1 Ethical Factors

All the ethical factors this study considered are listed in the points below.

1. A letter was obtained from Wits Business School to make the statement in the study's goal that the information gathered through surveys or questionnaires would only be used for research.
2. The findings of the study are available for any interested party.

3. No individual was forced to participate in the research. Informed consent stipulated that individuals had to explicitly agree to participate in the study (Manti & Licari, 2018).
4. No participation was influenced through persuasion or deception. The study also ensured that individuals clearly and fully understood the relevant information to make informed decisions about whether to participate (Largent & Lynch, 2017).
5. Participants did not have to reveal their identities because anonymity and confidentiality of information provided by the participants were kept (Manti & Licari, 2018).
6. Participants were not at risk of any injury.
7. Throughout the study, moral integrity was upheld through transparency, and the data collected was used only for this study.

3.9.2 Steps Taken to Ensure Confidentiality

Confidential information is any information about the private sector that a person does not want to share with others. Participants in study preserve their right to privacy and are not required to share certain details, which is increasingly recognized in the academic community and is subject to stringent legal restrictions (Bos, J. 2020). The fundamental ethical principle of confidentiality in research is on researchers to be responsible for making sure that any information collected from or shared with human subjects is used in a way that respects their autonomy and dignity and does not jeopardize the rights of individuals or communities (Research Ethics Board, 2017).

There are some specific steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality. Researchers first need to provide participants with a brief introduction to the research objectives or objectives, survey methods, and who can access the data. Secondly, it is necessary to obtain the active consent of participants without being forced to participate, and even after the completion of the study, participants still

reserve the right to withdraw their cooperation at any time (Bos, J. 2020)..The study ensured the confidentiality of the participants by ensuring that no personal information such as names, contact details, home addresses or any other information that could reveal their identities. The only information collected from the participants were their age, gender and nationality solely for the purpose of demographic data collection.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Because this research used a cross-sectional approach, the information gathered in a specific time may not apply to other periods, the questionnaire survey results collected in a specific area were only applicable to South Africa, and the research objects were limited to the millennial generation.

3.11 Chapter Summary

From this chapter on research methodology, it could be identified that a quantitative research approach was used to test the hypothesis in South Africa's international clothes brand. A purposive sampling technique was proposed in this study. Furthermore, this research adapted questionnaires as the research Instrument. Data was collected through questionnaires among the millennial generation in SouthAfrica. A structural equation model was utilized as the analytical method, validity and reliability was the two important dimensions to test the results. Besides, ethical issues were considered seriously, the specific steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality on ethical considerations have elaborated.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

4.1 Research Setting and Data Collection

The study was conducted in South Africa, a significant emerging market with a thriving retail sector and a significant presence of national and international clothing brands. Understanding how consumers use international apparel brands and identifying the elements influencing millennial customers' purchase intentions and, ultimately, their purchasing behaviour is useful for brand marketers and business managers.

This study generated online questionnaires on “<https://docs.google.com/forms>”, distributed via Wits students' emails, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and WeChat to millennial respondents. To determine the purchase intention of the selected research subjects for foreign clothing brands, the author of this paper used a multi-item method when developing the questionnaire, and each item was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" measurements. The author conducted an online questionnaire survey in South Africa, the study country, between January 2023 and February 2023 and received 1013 questionnaire results. Ethical guidelines for all data collection, informed consent, and related disclaimers were reviewed and approved by the Wits Ethics Committee. It was rigorously supervised to prevent the possibility of sample selection bias. One thousand thirteen people responded by clicking the email-provided survey link out of the 20000 online questionnaires Wits gave. Some of them did not accurately or completely complete the survey. To do further data analysis, 797 compelling cases were kept after the incomplete and irrelevant responses were eliminated.

In this paper, data from 1013 questionnaire responses were cleaned and processed by deleting incomplete responses and obtained 797 valid surveys. The sample profile consisted predominantly of women (64.99%), predominantly of black ethnicity (75.91%), most of the participants lived in Johannesburg (84.19%), and was between the ages of 19 and 39 (68.89%).

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of the respondent profile (N=797)

Measure	Items	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	263	33.0%
	Female	518	65.0%
	Other	16	2.0%
Age	Under 19	190	23.8%
	19-28	431	54.1%
	29-39	118	14.8%
	Over 39	58	7.3%
City	Johannesburg/ Pretoria	671	84.2%
	Durban	22	2.8%
	Cape Town	12	1.5%
	Other Cities	92	11.5%
Race	Black	605	75.9%
	White	76	9.5%
	Asian	24	3.0%
	Indian	61	7.7%
	Other	31	3.9%
Monthly Income	<R10000	534	67.0%
	R10K-20K	82	10.3%
	R20001-R40K	56	7.0%
	R40001-R60K	50	6.3%
	> R60K	75	9.4%
Annual Budget on Clothes	R1,000-R5,000 a year	516	64.7%
	R5,001-R12,000 a year	182	22.8%
	R12,001-R19,000 a year	60	7.5%
	R19,001-R28,000 a year	14	1.8%
	Over R28,000 a year	25	3.1%
Annual Purchase Frequency	1-3 times a year	428	53.7%
	4-6 times a year	208	26.1%
	Over 6 times in a year	161	20.2%
Factors on Purchase Behaviour	Disposable Income factor	599	35.6%
	Brand Experience factor	422	25.1%
	Fashion Sustainable factor	312	18.5%
	Social Media factor	189	11.2%
	Ethnic Difference factor	161	9.6%

Source: Survey

4.2 Reliability and Validity

4.2.1 Reliability

The correctness and consistency of answers to questions involving attitude scales are particularly important to examining quantitative data and are subject to reliability analysis. The reliability is high if the coefficient is greater than 0.8; good if the coefficient is between 0.7 and 0.8; acceptable if the coefficient is between 0.6 and 0.7; and low if the coefficient is less than 0.6. It is considered to have poor reliability if it is less than 0.6. The item may be deleted and re-analysed if the "alpha coefficient of deleted item" value is higher than the alpha coefficient. Regarding the "alpha coefficient of deleted item", after any item is deleted, the reliability coefficient will not increase significantly, so it means that the item should not be deleted.

The reliability coefficient value of 0.653, which is higher than 0.6, can be observed in Table 4.2, suggesting that the reliability quality of the study data is acceptable. When an item is removed, the reliability coefficient does not significantly increase, indicating that the item should not be deleted, according to the coefficient for "items deleted". For the "CITC value", the corresponding CITC value of Disposable Income is between 0.2 and 0.3, indicating a weak correlation with other analysis items. The CITC value corresponding to Sustainable Fashion is between 0.2 and 0.3, indicating a weak correlation with other analysis items. The CITC value corresponding to Ethnic Difference is less than 0.4, which can be fixed before gathering official data. This item can be eliminated or kept if it is a formal data study and the CITC value for social media influence is less than 0.4. Brand Experience's CITC value ranges from 0.2 to 0.3, showing a modest association with other analytical components. In conclusion, the study data's reliability coefficient value is greater than 0.6, indicating that the data's quality and reliability are acceptable.

Table 4.2: Cronbach Alpha of Reliability

Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)			
Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach α
Disposable Income	0.233	0.628	0.653
Sustainable Fashion	0.278	0.627	
Ethnic Difference	0.303	0.614	
Social Media Influence	0.322	0.612	
Brand Experience	0.242	0.627	
Cronbach α (Standardized): 0.638			

Cronbach Alpha		
N of Items	N	Cronbach α
5	797	0.653

4.2.2 Validity

When analysing quantitative data, validity analysis is particularly useful for examining the validity of the attitude scale item designs (Saunders et al., 2009). There is a need to analyse the KMO value first; if it is greater than 0.8, it indicates that the research data are highly suitable for information extraction and that the validity is excellent; if it is between 0.7 and 0.8, it indicates that the research data are suitable for information extraction and that the validity is better; and if it is between 0.6 and 0.7, it indicates that the research data are more suitable for

information extraction, and the validity is average; if the value is less than 0.6, it means that the data is not suitable for extracting information. If the validity is not good, the relationship between the factor and the item is seriously inconsistent with the expectation (Fidler, 2005). When the correlation between an analysis item and a factor is significantly off, or when the commonness value for an analysis item is less than 0.4, sometimes 0.5 is chosen as the benchmark, it can be said that the item should be deleted.

The p-value of the effect size refers to the "probability value" of the effect amount. The effect size may be due to the relationship between IV and DV (Fidler, 2005). A smaller p-value indicates that other factors, such as randomness, are unlikely to cause the observed relationship. For example, $p = 0.05$ means there is a 95% possibility that the manipulation of variables causes this relationship. That is to say, although the internal effectiveness is assumed to be accurate, there is still a 5% chance it is inaccurate.

All of the research items' commonness values in Table 4.3 are higher than 0.4, demonstrating that it was possible to successfully extract the information contained in each research item. The validity analysis requires passing the Bartlett test. The corresponding p-value needs to be less than 0.05. Table 4.3 shows that the KMO value is 0.654, between 0.6 and 0.7, the data could be effectively extracted, and the research data was more suitable for extracting information.

Table 4.3: KMO value of Validity

Validity Analysis						
Items	Factor Loadings					Communalities
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	
Disposable Income	0.001	0.073	0.863	0.057	0.011	0.754
Sustainable Fashion	-0.015	0.086	0.126	-0.134	0.753	0.608
Ethnic Difference	0.809	0.054	0.078	-0.012	-0.023	0.664
Social Media Influence	0.077	0.753	0.099	0.091	-0.027	0.592
Brand Experience	-0.060	0.085	-0.003	0.795	0.056	0.646
Eigenvalues (Initial)	2.518	1.958	1.431	1.216	1.147	-
% of Variance (Initial)	16.788%	13.053%	9.540%	8.110%	7.645%	-
% of Cum. Variance (Initial)	16.788%	29.841%	39.381%	47.491%	55.136%	-
Eigenvalues (Rotated)	2.164	1.719	1.518	1.457	1.413	-
% of Variance (Rotated)	14.425%	11.458%	10.119%	9.714%	9.420%	-
% of Cum. Variance (Rotated)	14.425%	25.883%	36.002%	45.715%	55.136%	-
KMO			0.654			-
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square)			1672.760			-
df			105			-
p-value			0.000			-

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is performed to determine whether there is a link between the independent and dependent variables and their direction and magnitude. First, to determine whether the model has a collinearity problem, assess the model fitting scenario, specifically the situation related to the R square and VIF values. If there is collinearity, it means that the item is repeated. Then analyse the significance of the independent variable. If the p-value is less than 0.05, it is significant, indicating that the independent variable significantly impacts the dependent variable. The regression model's significance is examined using the F test. If the model passes the F test ($p < 0.05$), it means that the model is meaningful and that at least one independent variable will impact the dependent variable. If

the model fails the F test ($p > 0.05$), the model architecture is useless, and none of the independent variables will impact the dependent variable (Fidler, 2005).

From Table 4.4, it can be seen that disposable income, sustainable fashion, ethnic difference, social media influence, and brand experience are used as independent variables, while for linear regression analysis, the dependent variable is purchase intention. The model formula is, as shown in Table 4.4, $\text{Purchase Intention} = 0.727 + 0.220 * \text{Disposable Income} + 0.045 * \text{Sustainable Fashion} - 0.097 * \text{Ethnic Difference} + 0.089 * \text{Social Media Influence} + 0.068 * \text{Brand Experience}$, and the R-squared value of the model is 0.213. When conducting F-test on the model, we found that the model passed the F-test ($F = 14.067$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), which means that disposable income, sustainable fashion, ethnic difference, social media influence, and brand experience can explain the 21.3% change of purchase intention, which means that at least one of them will have an impact on purchase intention. Additionally, it was discovered that it is possible to examine the multicollinearity of the model. There is no collinearity problem because all of the VIF values in the model are below 5. Furthermore, the D-W value is near 2, demonstrating that the model has no autocorrelation and no connection with the sample data, making it a better model.

Table 4.4: Structural model results of regression analysis

Parameter Estimates			
	Coefficients	95% CI	VIF
Constant	0.727** (4.206)	0.388 ~ 1.065	-
Disposable Income	0.220** (10.640)	0.180 ~ 0.261	1.078
Sustainable Fashion	0.045* (1.986)	0.001 ~ 0.090	1.130
Ethnic Difference	-0.097** (-3.146)	-0.158 ~ -0.037	1.410
Social Media Influence	0.089** (3.495)	0.039 ~ 0.139	1.265
Brand Experience	0.068* (2.552)	0.016 ~ 0.121	1.197
<i>n</i>	797		
<i>R</i> ²	0.213		
Adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.198		
<i>F</i> Value	<i>F</i> (15,781)=14.067, <i>p</i> =0.000		
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention			
D-W: 1.900			
* <i>p</i><0.05 ** <i>p</i><0.01 <i>t</i> statistics in parentheses			

ANOVA						
	Sum	of	df	Mean	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>-
	Squares			Square		value
Regression	106.259		15	7.084	14.067	0.000
Residual	393.294		781	0.504		
Total	499.553		796			

The final specific analysis shows that the correlation between disposable income

and purchase intention is 0.220 ($t=10.640$, $p=0.000<0.01$), which indicates a substantial positive impact. According to the regression coefficient value of 0.045 ($t=1.986$, $p=0.047<0.05$), sustainable fashion will significantly have a favourable impact on purchase intention. Ethnic differences will negatively impact purchase intention considerably, as indicated by the regression coefficient value of -0.097 ($t=-3.146$, $p=0.002<0.01$). Social media influence has a regression coefficient of 0.089 ($t=3.495$, $p=0.001<0.01$), indicating that it will strongly impact purchase intention.

The regression coefficient value of brand experience is 0.068 ($t=2.552$, $p=0.011<0.05$), indicating that brand experience will significantly positively impact purchase intention.

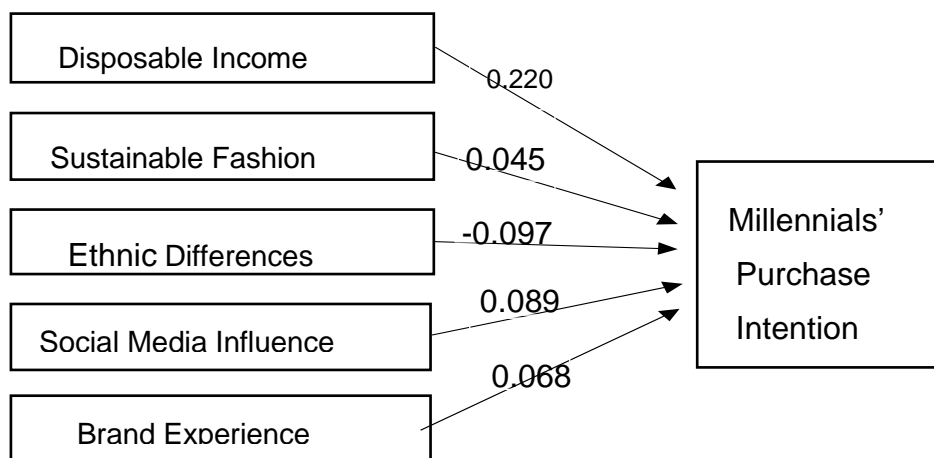


Figure 4.1: Summary of the structural model results

Summary analysis shows that disposable income, sustainable fashion, social media influence, and brand experience significantly impact purchase intention. And ethnic differences will have a significant negative impact on purchase intention.

Table 4.5: Structural model results of regression analysis

Parameter Estimates (n=797)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	VIF
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	<i>Beta</i>			
Constant	1.139	0.050	-	22.831	0.000*	-
Purchase Intention	0.338	0.027	0.400	12.312	0.000*	1.00
R²	0.160					
Adj R²	0.159					
F	<i>F</i> (1,795)=151.574, <i>p</i> =0.000					
D-W	1.868					
Dependent Variable: Purchase Behaviour						
* <i>p</i> <0.05 ** <i>p</i> <0.01						

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	79.993	1	79.993	151.574	0.000
Residual	419.561	795	0.528		
Total	499.553	796			

From Table 4.5, it can be seen that using purchase intention as the independent variable and purchase behaviour as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis, it can be seen that the model formula is: Purchase Behaviour=1.139+0.338 * Purchase Intention and the model's R-squared value

is 0.160, which indicates that the 16.0% change in buying behaviour may be attributed to purchase intention. The model passed the F-test ($F=151.574$, $p=0.000<0.05$), indicating that the model's architecture is meaningful and that buy intention must affect behaviour while making purchases.

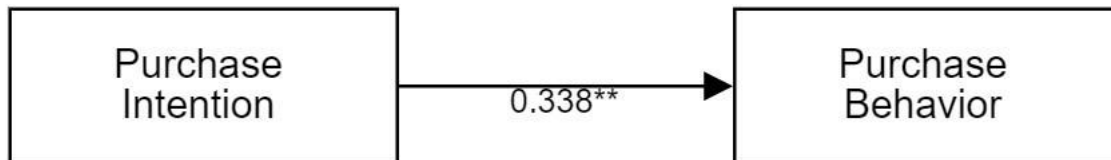


Figure 4.2: Summary of the structural model results

The final particular analysis reveals that the regression coefficient value for buy intention is 0.338 ($t=12.312$, $p=0.000<0.01$), showing that purchase intention will significantly positively influence purchasing behaviour.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The statistical findings of this study's data analysis were presented in this chapter. The process of gathering data was described, and a detailed descriptive analysis of respondents was also covered. The findings and outcomes of the data analysis validated six hypotheses. This study discovered that purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by disposable income, sustainable fashion, social media influence, and brand experience. Additionally, the purchase intention is significantly harmed by ethnic differences. Purchase behaviour is also significantly influenced favourably by purchase intention. The conclusions of this report are covered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In addition to providing insight into the study's six hypotheses, this chapter covers the study's results in great depth. Based on the findings described in the prior chapter, an all-encompassing evaluation is given.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings from Hypothesis Testing

The data analysis method of correlation analysis was applied to verify the hypotheses mentioned above in this study. Correlation analysis was used to study whether there was a relationship between quantitative data and the degree of closeness of the relationship (Kumar & Chong, 2018). Guided by the literature, the study specifically analysed whether there was a correlation between each independent and dependent variable and whether the correlation was positive or negative.

5.2.1 H1: Disposable income positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

According to the data analysis in chapter four, it was proven that disposable income positively affects purchase intention ($\beta=0.220$, $t=10.640$, $p=0.000<0.01$). Therefore, the first hypothesis was tested as valid. This result is also supported by Habanabakize (2021), that current consumption expenditure was found to benefit from income growth. Petrol and exchange rate short-term dynamics have little effect on consumer spending. It was also confirmed by CFI Team (2021) that disposable income positively influences purchase intention. If financial difficulties, like an economic downturn and unemployment, there will be a large fall in discretionary spending. In addition, the high pricing of South African apparel has a negative impact by decreasing purchase intention, while this study discovered that millennial customers are willing to pay a premium amount for value-added

parts of the product, which requires apparel quality, trendy styles and more (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). For example, most participants in the survey accepted premium apparel products, with a premium rate between 11% and 15% (Zhao, 2020). As a result, retailers should ensure that their fashion products' prices are not 15% more expensive than similar ones.

5.2.2 H2: Sustainable fashion would positively influence millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

The second hypothesis focused on the relationship between purchase intention and sustainable fashion. The specific regression analysis in chapter four shows that sustainable fashion positively affects purchase intention ($\beta=0.045, t=1.986, p=0.047<0.05$). This result is similar to the findings of some previous studies, which suggest that corporate social responsibility and brand perception affect how customers see companies and whether or not they are eager to buy their products (Araújo et al., 2023). Sustainability is the current marketplace's main differentiator for fashion brands (Seock & Shin, 2020). However, according to a South African clothing firm survey, the textile industry produces about half of the waste that ends up in landfills (Gam, Cao, Farr & Heine, 2009). This pollution phenomenon will lead to a decline in consumers' intention to purchase clothing, and it requires the joint efforts of factories, business runners and government supervision to improve.

5.2.3 H3: Ethnic differences would negatively influence millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

The third hypothesis assumed that ethnic differences negatively influence millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands. The result in chapter four indicated that millennial customers' purchase intention was negatively influenced by ethnic differences ($\beta=-0.097, t=-3.146, p=0.002<0.01$). Based on previous studies, highly ethnocentric consumers feel that buying imported goods is immoral since it depletes local resources, eliminates jobs, and is perceived as insulting to their country (Muposhi, Dhurup & Shamhuyenhanzva, 2018). In other words, the greater the differences in body

traits and national consciousness of consumers of different nationalities and races, the weaker their willingness to buy foreign-brand clothing can be (Rahman et al., 2009).

5.2.4 H4: Social media positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

This hypothesis focused on the relationship between purchase intention and social media. Correlation coefficient analysis chapter four was used to represent the strength of the positive correlation between purchase intention and social media influence ($\beta=0.089$, $t=3.495$, $p=0.001<0.01$). This outcome is in line with earlier empirical findings from research by other authors that the use of social media for brand engagement is significant. For instance, Parker and Kuo (2021) pointed out that through sponsored advertising and interpersonal marketing campaigns, fashion manufacturers entice clients to share products on their preferred social networks. In South Africa, millennials between the ages of 24 and 40 are predicted to use social media daily in 2021 at a rate of 61%, with 88% of this group accessing it via a computer or mobile device (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). Combined with the market's current conditions, this paper's findings have practical significance for brand owners to develop foreign clothing brands in South Africa. All social media channels aim to convince consumers to visit businesses' websites for in-depth product and service information (Jamil et al., 2022).

5.2.5 H5: Brand experience positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands.

This study predicted that brand experience positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands. The statistical result supports this hypothesis that the correlation coefficient value between Purchase Intention and Brand experience is 0.068 and shows a significant level of 0.05, indicating a significant positive correlation between purchase intention and brand experience. This aligns with previous literature (Dabija & Băbut, 2019), which implies that store selection is greatly influenced by elements related to atmosphere and atmospheric features, such as lighting, temperature,

spaciousness, layout, cleanliness, etc. In this regard, it can be concluded that to influence consumers' purchasing decisions on a cognitive, emotional, and behavioural level, salespeople need to be more courteous and knowledgeable about the products and stores they represent.

5.2.6 H6: Millennial customers' purchase intention positively influences their purchase behaviour.

This study concluded that millennial customers' purchase intention significantly positively impacts purchase behaviour ($\beta=0.338$, $t=12.312$, $p=0.000<0.01$). However, this finding sometimes can be contradicted by other authors such as Zang, Qian, and Jiang (2022), who discovered that despite having strong purchase intentions, low-income group members' consumption is severely constrained by a variety of other factors, or they are more conscious of risk mitigation. Therefore, there is little correlation between their purchase intentions and purchase behaviour. The findings are consistent with high-income groups' economic and decision-making capabilities advantages, which encourage their purchasing intention (Indeed Team, 2023). Purchase behaviour originates from purchase intention, viewed as the cause of purchase behaviour. The orientation of customer behaviour can be accurately identified using consumer behaviour analysis. According to Mirabi, Akbariyeh, and Tahmasebifard (2015), consumer behaviour during the purchasing process is a turning point for how customers receive items, use them, and offer feedback.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This study investigated the factors influencing millennial customers' purchase intention in the South African market. Analysis results from chapter four were discussed in this chapter. The findings have supported all six hypotheses proposed in this study. Purchase intention is significantly influenced positively by disposable income, sustainable fashion, social media influence, and brand experience. However, the influence of ethnic differences on purchase intention is very unfavourable. Furthermore, their purchase behaviour positively influences millennial customers' purchase intention.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter wrapped up the entire research after the findings and analyses in the previous chapter. This part examined broader Implications for academics and marketing professionals within a theoretical and practical context. Also following presented were the study's shortcomings. A portion of recommendations were made following the conclusion of this investigation.

6.2 Conclusions

This study investigated the elements influencing millennials in South Africa's intention to buy international clothing. To answer the research objectives and questions, data analysis was made, and it was proven that purchase intention is positively affected by disposable income ($\beta=0.220$, $t=10.640$, $p=0.000<0.01$), sustainable fashion ($\beta=0.045$, $t=1.986$, $p=0.047<0.05$), social media influence ($\beta=0.089$, $t=3.495$, $p=0.001<0.01$), and brand experience ($\beta=0.068$, $t=2.552$, $p=0.011<0.05$), however, negatively influenced of ethnic differences ($\beta=-0.097$, $t=-3.146$, $p=0.002<0.01$). Furthermore, the final specific analysis also indicates that purchase intention will significantly positively impact purchase behaviour ($\beta=0.338$, $t=12.312$, $p=0.000<0.01$). As stated earlier in this article, although the country's fashion and apparel industries are mostly driven by the need to address basic clothing needs, millennial tastes and preferences are largely responsible for setting the trends in the fashion world. As yet, there is still a lack of information on this subject of study, especially when it comes to international clothing brands. Due to the necessity for further expansion and growth in this field of study, this research aimed to produce knowledge while adding to the literature on the subject.

This study analysed the literature to respond to the posed research questions using a theoretical framework created and modified from previous research. The conceptual model in Figure 2.6 assisted in generating six hypotheses to be tested. The survey instrument was adopted, and the quantitative research

method was applied in chapter three to verify the truthfulness and applicability of the six hypotheses posed. In chapters four and five, the results of data analysis were displayed and interpreted, and the finding of this study was discovered further.

6.3 Implications

The findings of this investigation generally concur with earlier beliefs. The author tested this through data analysis and made some supplements and developments. As demonstrated in the above chapters, there are nuances regarding disposable income, sustainable fashion, social media influence, ethnic differences and brand experience in the South African market context with many different races, influencing millennials' purchase intention. Thus, different applications and results of the findings were obtained depending on the cultural and demographic context of the study's location. Based on the findings, foreign clothing brand operators must delve into local life in South Africa, explore local cultural traditions, and combine local cultural characteristics in clothing selection and design to better cater to the local market and consumer recognition. Additionally, this study will benefit marketing professionals and business experts in the South African garment industry by providing references. South Africa has long had strong fashion consumption power (Fitch Solutions, 2022). Given the diversity of ethnic cultures in the "Rainbow Country" of South Africa, consumers also have diverse aesthetic and size requirements for clothing and their consumer awareness. The findings in this study can also guide fashion businesses on product pricing. This is a challenge and an opportunity for operators and marketers. This diversified market is full of possibilities and development potential.

In general, this study is valuable for businessmen looking to invest in foreign fashion apparel industry in South Africa, to marketers working with brands to build their presence in the country, as well as to the customers who are the final consumers of fashion apparel brought into South Africa. For businessmen, this study provides relevant information to help them make business decisions regarding the profitability of the country and the level of disposable income of the

consumers and whether the consumers prefer apparel simply because they are fashionable, or whether sustainability and ethical production practices are embedded in the ethical values of the target market (Ray & Nayak, 2023). For marketers, this study provides insight as to the factors that consumers care most about such as sustainable fashion, large social media presence, ethnic differences and overall brand experience. Also understanding the level of disposable income for the consumers is a big indicator for how much the target market is or will be willing to spend on imported apparel. To consumers, this study gives better understanding on the apparel industry in the country and helps guide their purchase decisions.

6.4 Limitations

Researchers may develop biases due to cultural background and personal beliefs about specific phenomena, which may affect the rationality of the research. Additionally, the author of this study is a non-English native speaker, and there were limitations in the expression and use of language. To minimize this deficiency, proof editing for this article was made. Besides, the method of collecting data in this article was a questionnaire survey, but in fact, some questions in the questionnaire used in this article were ignored and not included in the questionnaire or should be presented in other perspectives, which to some extent limited the ability to comprehensively analyse research results. To address this issue in future research, questionnaire logic should be based on the hypotheses and influencing factors this study poses.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Execute Effective Brand Planning and Advertising Marketing

International marketers need to monitor and assess the changes in consumers' needs and continue to develop updated and effective marketing strategies towards the South African market by conducting digital marketing campaigns, using distinctive apparel brand icons and images, attractive images of apparel products, interesting page contents, appealing website designs, or other effective

marketing techniques. Utilize all available media, producing engaging content for social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. It would be worthwhile to allocate advertising resources towards paid digital advertising, which allows for a large reach, measurable metrics and tracking conversions with the millennials market. A loyalty program is also a good way to attract and keep the most loyal customers while providing room to improve customer satisfaction. Through social media influence, millennials customer's purchase intention can be strengthened, and consumption can be stimulated by arising fashion consciousness and improving aesthetic standards towards fast fashion apparel. Therefore, marketers must educate consumers and deliver more information about global fashion trends, popularize new fashion knowledge to foster consumers' fashion consciousness and convert it into actual purchasing.

6.5.2 Build Community Business Networks

The community economy is developed according to local conditions, and style-matching clothing is promoted to communities of different nationalities and ethnic groups. Since South Africa is a multi-ethnic country, cultures blend with their interpersonal communities. If foreign brands want to sell products in such a complex market, adapting to local conditions is the fastest way to gain fans. For example, a few black sales representatives can build a black customer group or a WhatsApp group and share clothes that match the style and size that the race likes. Several white sales representatives form a white customer group, a few Indian sales representatives form Indian customer groups, and several Chinese sales representatives form Chinese customer groups such as WeChat groups. Different customer groups share different styles of clothing and outfit suggestions. Brand listens to and understands the different voices of customers, but customers share a brand and a website, realizing the true "one-size-fits-all".

6.5.3 Advocate Sustainable Fashion

The circular economy is a notion that brand designers need to incorporate into fashion design, and they should choose raw materials, accessories, and apparel that are recyclable and biodegradable. Design should incorporate the idea of

environmental conservation. The creation of clothes uses non-toxic, non-polluting raw materials, which has a minimal negative environmental impact. Additionally, to reduce waste creation, the energy used in production should be renewable. Clothing will be recycled through borrowing and leasing, and third-party platforms will offer services like secondary clothing design and used apparel, increasing the usefulness of clothing. As a fashion brand, it's a good idea for its official accounts or websites to occasionally offer sustainability advice in everyday life, such as how to upcycle old clothing and create a personalized wardrobe. Create WhatsApp groups where people can communicate directly to promote sustainable living, providing an online market or platform for customers to buy and sell second-hand clothing. When a piece of clothing has reached the end of its lifespan and cannot be worn any longer, its materials and components can either be degraded into raw materials for new goods or composted to provide biological nutrients for soil microbes.

6.5.4 Develop domestic economy

The government should vigorously develop the domestic economy. There are still certain structural differences in South Africa between the various socioeconomic categories and areas. To increase purchase intention, the government should accelerate economic growth in rural areas, raise people's income levels, and close the gap in consumption structure between various income groups and geographic locations. The government policy should concentrate on increasing employment, production, reducing inflation, and maintaining exchange rates to increase South African disposable income.

The research samples employed in this study were primarily collected from economically developed areas and cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban due to data availability. In addition, other demographic factors like gender, educational background, and prior purchases of foreign clothes products are significant considerations. In future studies, it can be examined how these demographic elements affect purchase intention. Additionally, multi-group structural equation modelling for additional demographic factors is recommended for future research.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

This questionnaire will help us evaluate and continually improve our program. We are interested in your honest opinions about the services you have received, whether they are positive or negative. Please answer all the questions.

Questionnaire: Purchase Intention on Foreign Apparel

Please circle the response that best describes how you honestly feel.

1. Please click on your gender:

Female

Male

Non-binary

2. Please click on your age range:

Under 19:

19-28:

29-39:

Over 39:

3. City:

Johannesburg/ Pretoria

Durban

Cape Town

Other cities

4. What is your race:

- Black
- White
- Indian
- Asian
- Other

5. Which category below best describes your monthly income bracket:

-
- <R10000
- R10K-20K
- R20001-R40K
- R40001-R60K
- > R60K
-

6. What's your budget to spend on clothes annually?

- i. R1,000-R5,000 a year
- ii. R5,001-R12,000 a year
- iii. R12,001-R19,000 a year
- iv. R19,001-R28,000 a year
- v. Over R28,000 a year

7. Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please use the scale below.

1=SD = Strongly Disagree, 2=D = Disagree,

3=N = Neither agree nor disagree, 4=A = Agree, 5=SA = Strongly Agree.

	Disposable income	SD	D	N	A	SA
INC1	My disposable income allows me to buy apparel products monthly.					
INC2	My disposable income to buy apparel products have been decreased due to inflation.					
INC3	My disposable income to buy apparel products have been decreased due to the pandemic.					
	Sustainable fashion	SD	D	N	A	SA
SUS1	I think the sustainability of apparel is more important than designs and price.					
SUS2	I don't buy apparel products from China.					
SUS3	I'm willing to pay 15%~25% more to buy sustainable fashion apparel products.					
	Ethnic difference	SD	D	N	A	SA

ETH1	I'll quit buying foreign apparel products due to ethnic differences in sizes.					
ETH2	I'll quit buying foreign apparel products due to ethnic differences in styles.					
ETH3	I only buy apparel products made in South Africa.					
	Social media influence	SD	D	N	A	SA
MED1	I prefer knowing information about apparel brands via Social media accounts like					
MED2	I prefer obtaining information on apparel brands via websites or search engines.					
MED3	I prefer seeing information about apparel products in videos than in pictures.					
	Brand experience	SD	D	N	A	SA
EXP1	I prefer to buy apparel products online than in-stores.					
EXP2	I prefer to buy apparel products on websites than on apps.					
EXP3	The designs and updated speed of domestic clothing already meet my need.					

8. Where do you usually purchase your clothes?

- i. Takealot
- ii. Superbalist
- iii. Shein
- iv. Foschini
- v. Woolworths
- vi. Zara
- vii. H&M
- viii. Cotton On
- ix. Other Stores/website (Please name)_____

9. How often do you purchase new clothes in a year?

- i. 1-3 times a year
- ii. 4-6 times a year
- i. Over 6 times a year

10. What factors below can most probably stop you from buying foreign apparel products? (Please select your top 3 from the list below)

- ii. Disposable Income factor
- iii. Fashion Sustainable factor
- iv. Ethnic Difference factor
- v. Social Media factor
- vi. Brand Experience factor

16. Do you have any comments or suggestions on foreign apparel brands in South Africa?

.....

.....

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg



Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/SM2484940/831

This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).

Project title	Factors influencing purchase intention of foreign apparel by millennials in South Africa
Investigator / Researcher	Ms Yangxiu Zhang
Nature of Project	MM (Strategic Marketing)
Decision of the Committee	Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.
Issue Date of Certificate	2023-01-20
Expiry date	Date of submission of the project / research report
Chairperson	Prof Anthony Stacey  +27 11 717 3587  +27 82 880 4531  anthony.stacey@wits.ac.za 

Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.


Signature

2023-02-01

Date:

Appendix C: Language Editing Confirmation

EDITING CONFIRMATION

To whom it may concern:

This memo serves to confirm that the manuscript/research project detailed below has been language-edited and/or proof-read.

Regards,

-IETS-

IET Innocent (Cert. Lang. Ed.)
Language Editor

Manuscript Title:

Factors influencing purchase intention of foreign apparel amongst
Millennials in South Africa

Author:

Maggie Chang

Issued on:

27/04/2023

Disclaimer:

The editor/proofreader makes no claim as to the accuracy of the manuscript contents nor the objectives of the author. While all possible efforts have been made to ensure the text as edited is readable and grammatically correct, the author(s) have the option to accept or reject suggestions and trackable changes made to the document before submission.



*** Professional Editors ***

sarchcot@gmail.com