

Perceived Importance of the Factors Affecting Consumers' Purchase of Sports Brands

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ABSTRACT

The sports brands and sports product market is an ever growing industry that generates billions of dollars yearly. Sports marketers have constantly faced the challenge of fully understanding consumer behaviors and factors that influences the choice of sports brands and the purchase of its products.

This study investigates the importance of sports brand selection factors and how they vary amongst some demographic segments such as gender, age group, education level, sports brand preference, level of engagement in sports and preferred method of shopping (online or stores).

The result showed that there is a significant difference between genders with respect to some of the general selection factors. It also showed a significant difference within each of the other demographic segments which are education level, age groups, level of engagement in sports, sports brand preference and preferred method of shopping all with regards to the general selection factors. The study also points out which element within each of the demographic segments places more importance of the general selection factor.

Keywords: Brands, sports, sports brands, selection factors

ÖZ

Spor markaları ve spor ürünleri pazarı milyarlarca dolar üreten ve sürekli olarak büyüyen bir endüstri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Spor pazarlamacıları, tüketici davranışları ve spor markalarının seçimini ve ürünlerinin satın alımını etkileyen faktörlerin neler olduğunun anlaşılması konusunda zorluklarla sürekli olarak karşı karşıya kalmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, spor markası seçim faktörlerinin önemini, cinsiyet, yaş grubu, eğitim düzeyi, spor markası tercihi, spora katılım düzeyi ve tercih edilen alışveriş yöntemi (çevrimiçi veya mağazalar) gibi bazı demografik faktörler arasında nasıl farklılık gösterdiğini araştırmaktadır.

Çalışmada elde edilen sonuçlara bakıldığında, bazı genel seçim faktörlerine göre cinsiyetler arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, genel seçim faktörleri bakımından, eğitim düzeyi, yaş grupları, spora katılım düzeyi, spor markası tercihi ve tercih edilen alışveriş yöntemi olan diğer demografik faktörlerin her birinde önemli bir farklılık gösterdiği görülmektedir. Çalışmada ayrıca, demografik faktörler arasında hangi ögenin genel seçim faktörlerini daha fazla etkilemekte olduğu ortaya konulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Markalar, spor, spor markaları, seçim faktörleri

DEDICATION

To my beloved friends and family

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I would like to thank Asst. Prof. Dr. Doğan Ünlücan for his tremendous support, assistance and patience during the course of this thesis. All my efforts would have been in vain if it wasn't for her indispensable supervision.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

As the sportswear industry continues to grow rapidly, sports brands such as Nike, Adidas, Puma and the rest of them have been studying consumers' patterns of choosing and selecting certain sports brand products. The sports business industry generates over \$200 billion annually in sales of different sports products and generates over \$45 billion annually in sales in the United states alone (Statista, 2016) which makes it a very big and competitive market.

Understanding what factors influences consumers purchase decisions has been a very complex topic to fully understand. The study of consumer behavior has been a very complicated topic. It is the study of individuals, groups, organizations and every activity associated with purchase. It deals with human beings and the psychological aspect of purchase, which make its almost impossible to fully comprehend.

1.1 Aim of the Study

So far, there have been limited researches with regards to fully comprehending what factors influence the purchase-decision of sportswear consumers. The aim of the research is to offer a better understanding of the ever so complicated sportswear industry and to analyze which factors are the most important and how they affect consumer's choice of sports brand.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The study will examine the social, personal, and psychological aspects of consumers.

Social Factor- Social factors affect consumer's choice greater. Every individual is surrounded by a social environment which influences his/her decisions. They could be family, reference groups, role and status.

Personal Factor - A consumer can be influenced by personal factors such as age, life cycle stage, lifestyle, personality and self-concept. A consumer's personal factor can influence his buying decision, for example, with personality, a consumer that perceives he/she as rugged will want to shop in Levi's that has its brand personality as rugged compared to Gucci that has a brand personality of Class. Other factors such as age and life cycle stage also have influences of choice of sports brands.

Psychological Factor- Every consumer is influenced by four psychological factors, they are: Motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. Sports brands have studied the buying patterns of consumers and have found ways of influencing the psychological consciousness of buyers such as, design of the stores, promotions with celebrities and top athletes and many others.

1.3 Methodology of the Study

Primary data was collected from 300 students of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in the Turkish republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) using a well-designed questionnaire with 2 sets of questions that were gotten from other sources and reworded and redesigned to better fit the purpose of this research. One part includes 12 demographic questions and the second part included 32 general selection factors. The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS software.

1.4 Research Hypothesizes

These hypotheses were developed based after reviewing other relevant studied to the topic.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between genders.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between education levels.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between age group.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between levels of engagement in sports.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The perceived importance of some general factors varies between respondents' preference of sports brands.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between shopping method preference.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

As with any research, there were some limitations encountered during the course of the study. They are:

Time - The limited time required to carry out the research was limited and would eventually cause some oversight to certain details that would need coverage.

Sampling Size – 300 respondents were used to carry out this research, the sample size was inadequate in order to draw a proper logical conclusion about the entire population. The larger the sample size the lesser the error and the more accurate a research usually is.

Data Collection Process – The collection process was really hectic as I had to go around personally giving out the questionnaires and collecting them personally. This was very exhausting and would have been easier to have people to do those whilst I focus on other major details about the research.

Financial Resources – The financial resource towards this research turned out to be a limitation as money to print the needed documents was insufficient thereby slowing the process of the research.

1.6 Structure of the Study

The research paper contains 5 chapters to fully analyze and shed more light on the topic. The first chapter introduces the research and summarizes the entire study. The second chapter is the literature review which extensively analyses and reviews other relevant studies on the topic to have a better and clearer understanding of the topic in order to develop a logical hypothesis. To do this, 6 relevant sub topics on the factors that influences consumers purchase decision were analyzed. Based on the literature review in the second chapter, hypotheses were developed. In the third chapter, methodologies that were used to gather information from respondents were fully examined, it explains the questionnaire and its contents and how the questions were

formulated and tailored to fit the purpose of the research and the background of the respondents. In the fourth chapter, based on the data collected and analyzed in chapter 3, the results were fully examined and findings were made and comprehensively stated. The final chapter concluded the research and based on previous chapters, all hypotheses were partially accepted, recommendations were made to the sellers and suggestions on future studies based on the topic were stated.

In summary, the entire study was generally split into 2 broader categories. These categories are:

The theoretical analysis part. This involves a detailed look into the social, psychological and personal factors of consumer behavior.

The empirical/quantitative part of the research which involves a well-designed questionnaire.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sportswear and athletic products are one of the most branded groups in the apparel market. More than three-quarters of the sportswear industry and almost 80 percent footwear in the industry is heavily branded. According to Newbery (2008), Nike and Adidas have over 50 percent of the whole sportswear and sports footwear industry in the year (Business insider, 2018).

This chapter will review some previous relevant studies about factors that influence the buying-decision of consumers of sports products. These factors are:

- I. Brand Positioning/Equity
- II. Sport team sponsorship and endorsement
- III. Brand Perception
- IV. Athletes associated with the brand
- V. Brand loyalty
- VI. Brand personality

2.1 Brand Positioning / Equity

Brand positioning occurs whether or not a company is proactive in developing a position, however, if management takes an intelligent, forward-looking approach, it can positively influence its brand positioning in the eyes of its target customers (The cult branding company, 2017).

In addition to brand positioning, there are positioning statement and taglines. Positioning statements plays an important role as to how consumers perceive a brand. A positioning statement is a short sentence that communicates a brand's value to customers in comparison to a brand's competitors.

Tagline comes hand in hand with a brand's name and has to effectively communicate the core values of the brand. It tells more of what the brand already is or aspires to be.

Here are the taglines of some of the most popular sports brands:

- Adidas - "Adidas Is All In"
- Reebok - "I Am What I Am"
- FILA- "Power Style"
- New Balance- Let's make excellent happen.
- Nike – "Just do it"

Brand equity are assets and liabilities related to a particular brand's name and symbol, it increases or decreases the value provided by a product or service. Brand equity is used to determine how much value a brand possesses, this idea states firmly that established and reputable brands are more successful (Aaker, 2013). Aaker also stated that the captivating aspect of brand equity provides value to customers as well. The customer's confidence and the ability to interpret and process information improves in purchase decision and it also affects the quality of the user experience.

Keller (2008) also defined brand equity as an act of establishing a brand's offer and image with the aim of occupying a special and valued place in the minds of customer's.

In marketing, Brand equity is describes the value of a brand. A consumer's perceptions and experiences with a brand determine the value of the brand. The more highly a consumer thinks of a brand the more it has positive brand equity. Also, if a consumer holds a negative image or thinks of a brand in a negative way and even tries to avoid the brand, then the brand has a negative brand image (Shopify, 2017).

The cult branding company (2017) stated that there are 7 steps to effectively position a brand in the minds of consumers:

- I. Determine the brand positioning of the brand.
- II. Know direct competitors
- III. Have a knowledge of competitors and their brand positioning
- IV. Make a contrast between your brand positioning and the competitors to know your uniqueness
- V. Position your ideas to be value-based.
- VI. Formulate a brand positioning statement.
- VII. Find out how efficient the brand positioning statement is.

Keller (2008) explained that strategic brand management very much includes designing and implementing marketing programs and activities to develop and manage a brand. This process has four main steps:

1. Knowing and improving the brand plans
2. Designing and implementing the marketing programs of the brand
3. Measuring and interpreting the brand's brand performance
4. Growing and sustaining the brand's brand equity Keller (2008).

Strategic Brand Management Process

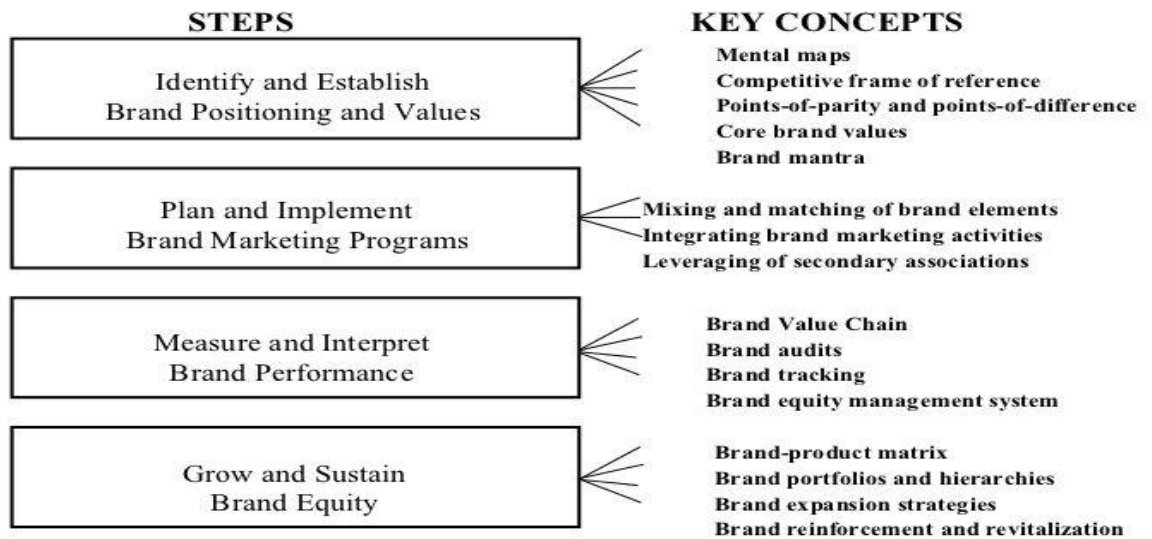


Figure 1: Strategic brand management process.

1. Knowing and improving the brand plans
2. Designing and implementing the marketing programs of the brand
3. Measuring and interpreting the brand's brand performance
4. Growing and sustaining the brand's brand equity Keller (2008).

Knowing and improving the brand plans – Keller explained in his book that a strategic brand management process starts with having a knowledge of how the brand should be presented and it's positioning with respect to competitors. The brand must know how it should be represented and positioned in the minds of consumers. It is also the process of appealing to the customers' mind so that they can connect it with a similar value the brand holds. The objective of positioning is particularly to create a distinction and competitive advantage they have over different brands and in the

meantime to ease conceivable hindrances they may have in contrast with their competitors (as cited in Florian, 2017).

Planning and Implementing Brand Marketing Programs - Keller explained that this is tied to arranging and executing of a brand's promoting programs. Building a one of a kind and great brand value is tied in with setting up a brand with which clients have a good, solid and one of a kind brand affiliation. 3 factors are relying upon this learning building process. The main factor is tied in with picking the brand elements. This implies that the organization ought to painstakingly consider which logo, slogans and motto they are utilizing. Those components would already be able to make a huge favorable position in the market if they are carefully picked. At most, they help to expand the brand value. The second factor is to coordinate the brand on promotions. Albeit as of now, the decision of correct brand components can expand the value of a brand, the greatest increment will originate from marketing exercises which are specifically identified with the brand. The 3rd factor is to use auxiliary affiliations. The brand might be related with another element. A customer may deduce that the brand has a relationship to another brand. For this situation, the advertiser would use or obtain some different affiliations and estimations of another element to build its value (Florian, 2017).

Measuring and Interpreting Brand Performance – Keller explained that this procedure has to do with to estimating and deciphering brand execution. This essential process profits by a brand review. A brand review is an examination of a brand's present position, in comparison with its rivals. It additionally surveys its viability. With the help of the audit, the organization can decide their shortcomings and open doors for enhancements. To oversee and quantify the adequacy of the brand, advertisers

frequently utilize the brand value chain apparatus. This apparatus tracks the value making process for brands so as to improve comprehension of the ventures and consumption. Besides, the brand value estimation framework gives the advertiser opportune and precise data with the goal that they can make the best short and long haul choices. (As cited in Florian, 2017).

Growing and Sustaining Brand Equity - Keller stressed that the final process is to develop and support the brand equity. It can get extremely difficult and troublesome with regards to keeping up and extending the brand equity. Above all, the firm ought to characterize their image system, which gives rules about which brand components to apply over the diverse items. Secondly, they must know about their brand developments procedures. So as to develop and support their value after some time, the organization must have a reasonable vision for future promotional exercises. The last thought advertisers need to do while overseeing brand value, is to perceive and seek for diverse sorts of customers for potential new showcasing exercises (as cited in Florian, 2017).

Shopify (2017) in there article stated that brand equity develops as a result of a customer's experiences with the brand. The process typically involves that customer or consumer's natural relationship with the brand that unfolds following a predictable model:

- I. Awareness – The brand is acquainted with its intended interest group – regularly with publicizing – in a way that gets the required attention or buzz.
- II. Recognition – Customers get comfortable with the brand and remember it in stores or somewhere else.

- III. Trial – After consumers perceive the brand and recognize what it is or depends on, they attempt it.
- IV. Preference – When the customer has a decent involvement with the brand, it turns into the favored decision.
- V. Loyalty – After a progression of good brand encounters, the target person or audience not just prescribe it to other people, it turns into just that item they will continuously purchase and use in that classification. They have a favorable opinion of it that any item connected with the brand profits by its positive values.

The significance of brand value is that it expands the likelihood of brand decision, prompts dedication to the brand, and protects the brand from a proportion of competitive dangers. There are a few ramifications of this. A positive picture should help set its position, separate it versus rivalry, and push it more toward the strength item category. In this manner, it ought to have the capacity to direct more expensive rates, and urge purchasers to look for it. Secondly, Brand value suggests elevated amounts of mindfulness which should expand the viability of promoting correspondences (Pitta, 1995).

Shopify (2017) in there article stated that positive brand equity has certain values which are:

- I. Companies have the ability to a higher price for an item with a high brand value.
- II. That value can be exchanged to line expansions – items identified with the brand that incorporate the brand name so a business can profit from the brand.
- III. It also supports an organization's stock cost.

2.2 Sports Team Sponsorship and Endorsement

Because of regularly expanding media hype, organizations attempt to focus on enormous number of consumers in a brief time frame. As a result, organizations embraced sponsorship to attract numerous consumers by conveying the brand's values, and transmitting the values of the organization and its contributions and building the long haul association with the customers (Simmons & L.Becker-Olsen, 2006). Purchase intention involves shopper's emotions, considerations, experience and outside components that he considers before making any buy. A consumer portrays and communicates their conduct and the manner in which they make choices about their purchasing procedure (Bhakar & Abhay, 2015).

The intention of consumers to purchase depicts the consumer's reaction to buy the product. The higher the expectation, the more it prompts the buying of that product (Bhakar & Abhay, 2015). Purchase intention can be detected through their reactions, input and their contribution. Exceedingly included customers demonstrates high rate of procurement (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

Results recommended that good buy aims were bound to happen when buyers held a positive picture of the sponsoring organizations and had an elevated level of sports association; and that buyers' sports inclusion emphatically affected the sponsors mindfulness, corporate picture and buy expectation (Kim et al., 2008).

Recently, sponsorship has turned into a basic instrument for the advertising systems and focusing on the purchasers. Sponsorship has an offer of 67% in constructing a marketing strategy (Shahid & Tanvir, 2012).

Sponsorship can be characterized as an endeavor, in genuine cash or in kind, in an activity, as a side-effect of access to the exploitable business potential related with that activity (Meenaghan, 1991).

Sponsorship has turned into a compelling and fundamental apparatus for marketers to attract the essential piece of an industry and targeting a colossal market (Thwaites, 1998). An entrenched and perceived brand advances repurchase. Brand is a blend of different affiliations based on a buyer's memory about its attributes and use. (Diminish & Olson, 1994).

Sports sponsorship is an exceptionally powerful process to connect a brand with sports in making an impact about the brand in the minds of buyers. Sponsorship demonstrates the enthusiasm, energy, soul, feelings, emotions and brilliance when the brand esteems connect with that of sports. We recognize from this the general examination and decide from the sponsors their effect on brands and buyers intention to buy (Shahid & Tanvir, 2012).

The main reason of sponsorship is to pull in or center around the huge purchasers and the other one is to redesign the picture of the association through different modes and techniques for publicizing, progression and media introduction. Sponsorship shows the organization and relationship of the relationship with the games exercises (Shahid and Tanvir, 2012).

Smith (2008) additionally expressed that the primary reason for sponsorship is to expand the consciousness of the brand's image which prompts an upgrade in the general brand image and value of the brand.

Sponsors want to get the greatest profit from the venture that they made by sponsoring and guarantees that it will give benefits more than other ventures (Huda 2001; Fan 2001).

A team or group gains the money related help and additionally other in-kind assets expected to enhance group quality and other administrative parts of the club, while the sponsors acquires the unmistakable and impalpable advantages of being related with the sports team (Biscaia, 2013).

Meenaghan (2001) recommends that support's interest in pro teams produces an altruism impact among fans, which thus impacts their demeanor and practices toward the sponsor.

Meenaghan (2001) also stated that a fan's reaction to the sponsors goes through a progression of stages, from first getting to be mindful of the sponsors to at last having an intention to buy and practices toward their items.

Fans' familiarity with the sponsors contributes decidedly to the disposition towards the sponsor, and intention to purchase is consequent to that inspirational frame of mind (Schlesinger and Güngerich, 2011). At the point when fans see sponsors encouraging their interest groups, they may purchase the sponsor's items as an augmentation of altruism or to compensate the sponsor for supporting the group (Parker and Fink, 2010). Having this continuum of results in thought, a few researches have utilized the intention to as the last pointer to assess sponsorship adequacy (e.g., Alexandris et al, 2007).

Sponsorship is superior other forms of marketing and it makes a solid discernment in the psyches of individuals as a result of its alliance with the sponsored entity. Individuals recollect that sponsors when they consider the sponsored entity. Sponsorship works for the both promotional marketing just as building the relationship in the brains of buyers (Rifon, Choi, Trimble and Li, 2004).

Shahid and Tanvir (2012) in their research on the effect of sponsorship on a brand's image and intention to buy demonstrated that there is a moderate connection between games sponsorship and buy aim. What's more, that the relationship is critical? Their research additionally demonstrated that the connection between sports sponsorship and brand is solid and huge.

Taking everything into account, sports sponsorship greatly affects buyer's intention to buy and furthermore assumes a huge job in building a higher brand image which prompts more buy. The sponsoring brands can affect the enthusiasm of gaining things even more suitably when stood out from various strategies for propelling instruments (Shahid and Tanvir, 2012).

2.3 Brand Perception

Brands are especially engaged with the way of creating brand value, this includes mindfulness and properties (Keller, 1993). The image of the brand portrays buyer's understanding and about an offering and its traits. An entrenched and perceived brand advances repurchasing. Brand is a blend of various affiliations expands on a buyer's memory about its qualities and use. (Diminish and Olson, 1994).

The Business Dictionary characterizes buyer observation as a thought that consolidates a customer's impression, care or mindfulness around an association or its commitments (LaMarco, 2018).

Brand perception is additionally characterized by Aaker (1991) as a proportion of customer put together brand value based with respect to four measurements: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand devotion. Brand value alludes to an esteem premium that an organization creates from an item with an unmistakable name when contrasted with its rival. Brand acknowledgment alludes to the capacity to perceive the brand and brand review alludes to the capacity of the customer to recover the brand from memory (Keller and Lane, 1993). Del Rio et al. (2001) correspondingly characterized brand perception as far as bunch of relationship with the brand name in memory. Perception can be characterized as a reaction to a brand by a consumer (Esch et al., 2006).

There is a need for understanding perception by brands (Morris, 1996). Perception can be comprehended as a reaction that a shopper has towards a brand that empowers a superior comprehension of the brand by enabling that brand to be separated, perceived and reviewed versus other comparable brands (Pillai, 2014).

These points out the significance of perception in connection to monitoring the brand, having the capacity to review that product amid purchase circumstances, prescribing the brand to other people, strengthening and empowering repurchase of a brand and at last building brand steadfastness (Pillai, 2014).

The manner in which purchasers see brands cultivates long haul business-customer connections (Fournier, 1998). Subsequently seeing how sports brands are seen by shoppers will conceivably empower organizations to position its brand adequately to speak to the proposed focused group so as to take into account the necessities of purchasers (Pillai, 2014).

A customer's perception decides his/her inclination for a specific brand contrasted with competitors just as their eagerness to pay a value premium versus their ability to change to a contender's brand (Yoo et al., 2000).

Perception empowers customers to distinguish brands and to review the brand when settling on a buy choice inside a lot of brands. A customer's perception decides his/her inclination for a specific brand contrasted with contenders just as their readiness to pay a value premium versus their ability to change to another similar brand (Yoo et al., 2000).

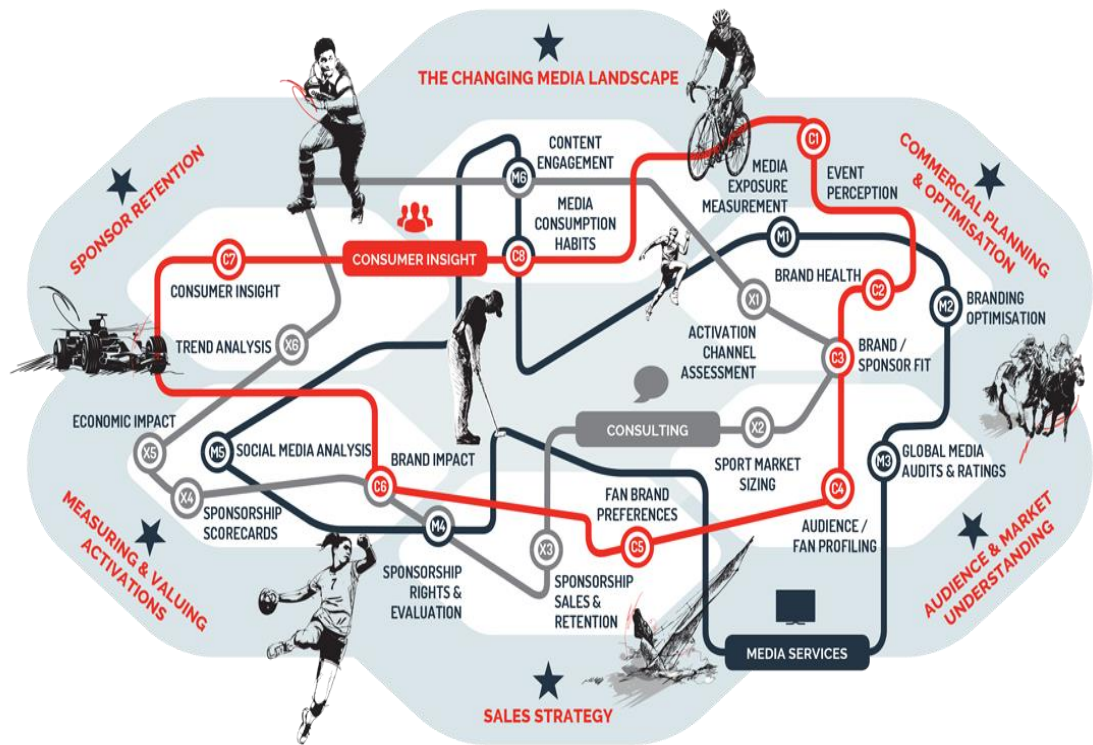


Figure 2: The changing media landscape

Del Rio et al. (2001) examined the components of brand image concentrating on the capacities or estimation of the brand as seen by buyers. Del Rio et al. proposed estimating brand image by four classifications of capacities: assurance, individual distinguishing proof, social ID and status.

Del Rio et al. in their examination contended that these capacities impact the buyers' eagerness to prescribe the brand, pay a value premium for it and acknowledge mark augmentations. The affiliations identified with the capacities speak to a more prominent level of reflection than those alluding to the characteristics, as are increasingly available and stay longer in the buyer's memory (Chattopadhyay and Alba, 1988).

The assurance work which is, the guarantee or certification of valuable quality, depends on the possibility that the brand is solid, productively does its execution

characteristics and meets the created desires (Ambler, 1997). Correspondingly, this capacity could relate with the discernment that the brand is connected to items with an appropriate dimension of execution and is worried about fulfilling customer needs advantageously, contributing assortment and advancement (Sheth et al., 1991; Dubois and Duquesne, 1995).

The individual recognizable proof capacity identifies with a thought that buyers can distinguish themselves with a few brands and create sentiments of fondness towards them. This hypothesis depends on a contention that people can improve their mental self-portrait through the pictures of the brands they purchase and use. Thusly, the hypothesis maintains that the more prominent the consistency between the brand picture and the purchaser's mental self-portrait, the better the shopper's assessment of a brand and the more noteworthy his goal to get it (Graeff, 1996; Hogg, et al., 2000).

Brands with positive recognition build up an upper hand by expanding buyers' interests and consideration towards the brand and furthermore, buyers decidedly assess the item in this way conceivably prompting recurrent buy (Sadeghi and Ghaemmaghami, 2011).

Purchasers intrigued by this capacity will emphatically esteem those brands that appreciate a decent notoriety among the gatherings with which they have a place with or try to frame some portion of (Long and Shiffman, 2000).

The status work communicates the sentiments of profound respect and esteem that the purchaser may involvement after utilizing the brand (Solomon, 1999). The status work communicates the sentiments of profound respect and eminence that the buyer may

understand after utilizing the brand (Solomon, 1999). Vigneron and Johnson (1999) contended that the status work depends on five qualities of the brand: (1) image of the person's capacity and economic wellbeing; (2) impression of social endorsement; (3) eliteness or confinement of the offer to few individuals; (4) commitment of enthusiastic encounters, and (5) specialized prevalence.

Del Rio et al. (2001) expressed that along these lines, the status work simply like the social recognizable proof capacity, are uncovered on account of the need of people to impart certain impressions to individuals in their social condition. In any case, the contrast between the two capacities lies in the way that the social recognizable proof capacity is identified with the craving to be acknowledged by and feel individuals from specific gatherings. Then again, the status work relates to the person's craving to accomplish glory and acknowledgment from others, without this fundamentally implying the brand is illustrative of their social gathering. Accordingly, the status could even block the person's relationship with certain social gatherings.

Del Rio et al. (2001) contended that the upper hands that outcome from a positive brand picture can be arranged into three general segments:

(I) Advantages identified with current execution and productivity (the brand's capacity to direction higher edges and additionally volume, progressively inelastic buyer reaction to cost increments, expanded promoting correspondence viability and more prominent exchange co-task).

(ii) Advantages identified with life span of benefits (mark devotion, less defenselessness to aggressive showcasing activities, less weakness to promoting emergencies).

(iii) Advantages identified with development potential (conceivable permitting openings, age of positive informal, brand's capacity to present new items as brand expansions).

It is subsequently apparent that building associations with buyers is critical. Having an unmistakable comprehension of how purchasers see specific brands and items is basic to building the brand's quintessence, bringing about more prominent intrigue to buyers and making separation between contenders (Pillai, 2014). Most grounded brands are those that associate with the psyches of purchasers, comprehend change and act quicker than contenders, offer esteem, are inventive, make a decent brand guarantee and pass on certainty (Milward Brown, 2009). On the off chance that a brand is comprised of discernments that purchasers shape in their brains, at that point the quality of the brand will be founded on the level of solidarity of 4 observations related with that mark by customers (Milward Brown, 2009).

2.4 Athletes Associated with the Brand

While publicizing is a typical method to advice shoppers, utilizing a representative in the ad has turned into a viable route for promoters to separate their items from rivals (Renton, 2009). As of late, conventional marketing components, for example, publicizing and deals advancement are looked with difficulties of achieving logically divided buyers markets and slicing through an over-burden of messages to communicate to customers. Hence, endorsements, has turned out to be a progressively well-known advertising correspondence vehicle (Azadi, et al., 2016). Endorsement can

be said to be the utilization of a big name to advance items and administrations in which they might be specialists (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997).

The VIP endorser can be characterized "as any person who appreciates an open endorsement and who utilizes this endorsement in the interest of a buyer decent by showing up with it in a public" (McCracken, 1989, p. 310).

As more individuals watch sports, there has been an ascent in athletes being viewed as worldwide big names. The utilization of VIPs to advance items in ads have turned into a vital piece of the promoting biological system (Miller and Laczniak, 2011).

Among superstars, athletes are exceptionally esteemed for publicizing purposes (Choi and Rifon, 2007).

Athletic endorsements have turned into an exceptionally prominent road to enlighten buyers about sports and non-sport brands (Renton, 2009). A superstar, both game and non-sport, is utilized in an expected one out of four broadcast and printed advertisements (Howard, 1979).

By relating their items to athletes, endorsements try to exchange view of these competitors to their brands (Xing and Chalip, 2006). The competitor's execution is a vital viewpoint to consider, on the grounds that it influences the prizes acquired by the supported firm after some time: deals and stock returns increment detectably with each significant title won by the endorser (Elberse and Verleun, 2012).

The fruitful and winning competitors are viewed as the best endorsers, in light of the fact that their ability speaks to clients "amazing, superior and assurance of achievement." (MeloNeto, 1995). A competitor's one of a kind association with an

item makes a response that makes advertisers coordinate their items with the star that has the best fit with the apparent picture of the organization (James, 2002).

Pillai et al. (2015) contended that frequently, characteristics related with the competitors embracing sport brands are exchanged to the supported brands, in this way, impacting customer observations. Singular competitors have been appeared to have an effect on client observations in an unexpected way. As indicated by Pikas et al. (2012), the non-physical highlights of male competitors are for the most part considered by endorsers, while more accentuation is set on physical capacity of female competitors.

An investigation was completed to decide the impact of Tiger Woods as a supported Nike competitor, the outcome demonstrated that from 2000 to 2010, the Nike golf ball division benefitted \$103 million from Tiger Woods' underwriting impact. Besides, Tiger Woods' support brought about a value premium of about 2.5% (Chung et al., 2013).

Shoppers' certain convictions toward an endorser are required to exchange to the supported brand dependent on their subjective affiliations (Koo, Ruihley, and Dittmore, 2012). Purchasers will in general be affected when there is a valid seen wellspring of data; this prompts a progressively inspirational demeanor just as increasingly social consistence (Ohanian, 1991). Düsenberg et al. (2016) explored the degree to which sports big name supports are fit for impacting shopper buy goal, the appraisals and essentialness of the institutionalized coefficients of each component of the games superstar's validity in connection to buy goal was then investigated. It was discovered that reliability is the element of sports big name validity with the best effect

on buy aim pursued by skill and engaging quality. Ohanian (1991) inferred that the validity of the endorser has a positive relationship with purchaser intentions.



Figure 3: Athletes, Brands and sponsorships

Kahle and Homer (1985) did an exploration utilizing superstars estimating their physical engaging quality, their agreeability, and their contribution in the items they were underwriting; consequently, they gauged mentality and buy goals of the supported item. Their outcomes demonstrated that customers had more prominent buy goals for that item in light of the affability and appeal of the big name, the more amiable and alluring the VIP, the more great the demeanors purchasers had toward the commercial and the item.

Braunstein and Zhang (2005) additionally had done an examination on the impacts of star competitor's capacity on Generation Y sports utilization. Measurements, for

example, star appeal, ability validity, proficient reliability, social picture, open nature, and agreeable identity were utilized. Results demonstrated that 30% of direct utilization and 20% of media utilization of the embraced item was clarified by the components of star control recorded above separately.

Renton (2009) examined the effect of athletic supports on customers buy on youngsters. The outcome was that athletic endorsers impacted Generation Y's image dependability. This finding recommends that athletic endorsers are vital to young people when settling on choices about brand decision. Young people focused on the way that competitors are imperative good examples to them. They admired competitors to perceive what was "cool" to wear and which brands to purchase.

Taking everything into account, Team execution altogether impacted buyers' expectation to buy the support's item, and this impact was more articulated for easygoing than for devoted fans and increasingly articulated when the group contained a star. A triumphant group with a star created the most grounded buy goal. A losing group with a star delivered the most minimal buy expectation (Heidi et al., 2011).

2.5 Brand Loyalty

Oliver (1999) characterized client unwaveringness as a guarantee to rebuy and advance into the future a most great item reliably.

As indicated by Lim and Aprianingsih (2015), mark dependability could likewise be when customers build up a guarantee to their most favored brand and rehash their buys after some time. Aprianingsih focused on that mark dependability is the consequence of customer conduct and is influenced by purchaser's inclinations. Aprianingsih further proceeded to depict mark reliability as the quality of inclination for a brand contrasted

with other accessible alternatives that is comparative, which is frequently estimated as far as rehashed buy or cost.

Brand unwaveringness has 2 fundamental methodologies, the principal approach is social, which is shown by clients that repurchase certain results of the brand after some time and demonstrates mark dedication to them. The second methodology is attitudinal, this depends on the vital state of brand faithfulness, which is the reliable purchasing, which isn't sufficient to demonstrate the validness of the brand dedication Amine (1998).

Yee & Sidek (2008) in this way presumed brand faithfulness is a component of both conduct and frames of mind. It is a client's tendency to buy a particular brand in a segment. It occurs in light of the way that clients see that the brand offers the right thing features, picture, or measurement of significant worth at the right expense. This perception transforms into the foundation for new buying inclinations. Purchasers will at first make a primer aftereffect of the brand and when content with the purchase, will all in all casing affinities and continue purchasing a comparative brand in light of the fact that the thing is shielded and conspicuous.

Lau et al (2006) has contended that clients' image dedication towards specific sportswear brands is impacted by seven components. These components are: mark name, nature of item, item style, item cost, and nature of administration, limited time exercises and, condition of the store.

Brand name - According to Keller (2003), celebrated brand names can show item advantages and lead to higher retentive view of publicized advantages and more item benefits than brand names which are not main-stream.

Nature of item - The item quality incorporates the capacities, highlights, and agreeableness of an administration or item that conveys its ability to fulfill the requirements of the client. As it were, item quality is characterized as "readiness for use" or 'conformance to prerequisite" (Russell and Taylor, 2006). Quality cognizance is one sort of interest for and attention to astounding items, just as the need of settling on the ideal or best decision as opposed to buying the most readily accessible brand or item (Kendall and Sproles, 1986).

Item style - Style incorporates the line, outline, and subtleties influencing the purchaser's recognition towards the item, which is fundamentally the visual appearance (Frings, 1994). As indicated by Spores and Kendall (1986), form cognizance is characterized as the mindfulness about the more current styles, the changing of designs, and alluring styling just as the longing to purchase in vogue and energizing items.

Duff (1999) examined sportswear showcase and found that shoppers of sportswear will in general be increasingly watchful about the form and however the exploration was done on female buyers of game wears, it inferred that the a la mode items are requested more; for clients will in general wear diverse clothing types in various events.

Item cost - Clients who are unfaltering of top of the line brands are ordinarily arranged to pay the additional expense for their most adored brand's things that they required, as expense can't impact their purchase objective successfully. Also, a couple of customers believe that the expense and estimation of their most adored brands would be the best to be considered with so they could differentiate and evaluate the expenses and the battling brands (Keller, 2003). Faithful clients will in general be happy to pay more expensive rates, regardless of whether the cost is expanded due to the high hazard. They likewise like to pay in more expensive rate staying away from the danger of any change (Yoon and Kim, 2000).

Nature of administration - Gronroos (1990) described advantage quality with the idea that organization should contrast with the customers' wants and satisfy their necessities and requirements.

The impact of sales representative factor generally impacts the whole impression of customers towards the store or brand. Trust in sales reps identifies with the general view of the store's administration quality, and therefore, buyers turn out to be completely happy with the stores. The unwavering quality, the responsiveness, the personalization, the physical assets and the confirmations altogether impact the experience and the assessment of administration and influence the brand dependability of the client (To and Leung, 2001).

Limited time exercises - Rowley (1998) expressed that the Promotion is a critical component of the company's showcasing system. Advancement is one of the showcasing blend parts, which is the sort of correspondence with alternate buyers. Advancement additionally incorporates the utilization of the publicizing, the business

advancements, the individual moving and the attention. Publicizing is a wide introduction of data in the broad communications about the items, the brand, the organization or the store. It influences the customers' picture enormously on the brand picture, the conviction and disposition toward the brands, which impact their buy practices (Evans et al., 1996).

Condition of the store - Store life span and retail showcasing achievement is fundamentally relied upon the earth of the store. Properties strengthened from the store includes the store area, the in-store improvements and the design of the store. These viewpoints influence the brand unwaveringness so some degree (Omar, 1999).

Peradventure clients observe the stores to be truly available amid their excursion to shop and happy with the store's grouping and administrations, these buyers may become loyal overtime (Evans et al., 1996).

Abraham and Littrell (1995), contended in their examination that the in-store improvements, similar to the next customer's qualities and the salesman, the format of the store, the melodies and the smell, the temperature and the rack space with the presentation sign, hues and stocks influence the shoppers and fill in as the components of clothing characteristics.

Milliman (1982), expressed that ambient melodies that is played in the stores likewise influence the frame of mind and conduct of the customers, low-beat melodic choice could prompt higher deals volume, as the buyers invest more energy and cash in a helpful situation.

2.6 Brand Personality

So as to all the more likely fulfill their clients' needs and to set up long haul shopper mark connections, Companies position their brands with interesting identities (Ahmad et al. 2015). In the development of brand identity of sportswear marks, the promoting exercises, for example, publicizing, VIP supports, occasion's sponsorship, client symbolism and so forth assumes a critical job (Chandel, 2015).

Brand identity is characterized as "the arrangement of human qualities related with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). BP was additionally depicted as a procedure by which individuals attribute human characteristics to brands to comprehend and assess them better. Each immediate and backhanded experience with the brand shapes customer discernments. Concentrates also call attention to how individuals use mark identity as a way to figure out which brands they best relate to (Graham, 2015).

Brand identity in game (BPS) has turned into a well-known subject of concentrate among academicians in the game administration field. While the conceptualization and Operationalization has been intensely talked about (Schade et al, 2014).

Aaker (1997) in her article distinguished 5 mark identity measurements which are:

- I. Excitement: This joins qualities like brave, inventive and energetic.
- II. Sincerity: Honest, healthy and rational have a place in this measurement.
- III. Competence: Of which dependable, effective and shrewd are key characteristics.
- IV. Sophistication: Reflected through attributes, for example, marvelous, high society and beguiling.

V. Ruggedness: Examples of characteristics here incorporate manly, extreme and outdoorsy.

Aaker (1997) in her article pointed that acculturating a brand engages it to assume an increasingly focal job in the customer's life: conceivably empowering the shopper to extend a part of their self which may be attractive for connections they look for. Brand identities enable buyers to get emblematic importance from their associations with brands. Earnest brand identity characteristics, for example, are important to buyers who look for connections (less avoidant), however who have a very on edge perspective of self. Energizing brands additionally are represented significantly and are especially important to those on edge people who are centered on independence (Swaminathan et al., 2009).

So as to all the more likely fulfill their clients' needs and to set up long haul shopper connections, companies position their brands with one of a kind identity. These techniques could be used to grow new clients through the control of brand identity measurements, just as help in the situating of the brand when contrasted with adversary group primer proof to help the general case that sports have unmistakable attributes related with them, seen by game advertisers just as game customers (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Aaker (1999) uncovered that buyers will most presumably select and use marks in accordance with their very own identity in various circumstances. For high self-observing purchasers particularly, her examinations clarifies that available qualities on items may impact customer's image decision and that diverse attributes that are influenced can affect a shopper's frame of mind regarding the brand's identity. Aaker

et al. (2004) clarified that in regards to brand identity idea, associations with earnest brands reinforces after some time.

Nima et al. (2012) directed an exploration on the impact of brand personality on product sale to quantify brand identity, 5 measurements and around 42 attributes of Aaker's image identity were made use of, the discoveries uncovered genuineness, energy, ability, enchanting and roughness as suitable measurements to dissect brand identity. Energizing and genuineness had higher effect while toughness had the most reduced effect. In spite of the fact that the examination was restricted to restorative items, the general aftereffects of the exploration demonstrated that mark identity impacts mark value and item deal.

2.7 Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature review discussed extensively, these 6 hypothesizes were drawn to further shed light on the topic.

Table 1: Hypothesis statement.

H1:	The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between genders.
H2:	The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between education levels.
H3:	The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between age group.
H4:	The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between levels of engagement in sports.
H5:	The perceived importance of some general factors varies between respondents preference of sports brands
H6:	The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between shopping method preference

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of a thorough explanation of the methods involved in the questionnaire design, data analysis and also a detailed description of the respondents and their environment.

It aims to help to answer the research questions and test the hypothesis related to factors that influences consumers' sports brand choices.

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature and it does reflect in the questionnaire. The questionnaire explored a qualitative and quantitative analysis and it was carried out on just students of EMU, TRNC. The questions were gotten from several sources including Katircioglu, Unlucan and Dalci (2010) and also Katircioglu, Fethi, Unlucan and Dalci (2011). The questions were re-structured and re-worded to get relevant information that suits this research.

The demographics part of the questionnaire consists of basic demographic questions with regards to the respondents which are just students

The demographics questions used in the questionnaire are:

- I. Nationality
- II. Educational Level (bachelors, Masters, PhD)

- III. Age group (18-25, 26-33, 34-41, 42-49, 50+)
- IV. Monthly income level (\$0-500, \$501-1000, \$1001-1500, \$1501-2000, \$2000 and over)
- V. Marital status (Single, Married, Separated, Divorced, Widowed)
- VI. How often respondents purchase sports products (Monthly, once every 3 months, once every 6 months, once a year)
- VII. How much respondents spend on sports products a year ((\$0-100, \$101-200, \$201-300, over \$300).

The first part of the questionnaire further explored the respondents knowledge of some sports brands, their sports brand preference and also if they shop online or in stores and the reason for that.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 32 general selection factors that influence the choosing and purchasing of certain sports brands.

The selection factors were designed using a 5 points importance Likert scale. The 5 points and interpretations are:

1 = Not Important

2 = Slightly Important

3 = Moderately Important

4 = Important

5 = Very Important

The 32 selection factors were extracted from other sources and edited and more questions were added to get more details towards testing our hypothesis.

The 32 general selection factors are:

1. Price – This aims to determine how deeply price is considered before purchasing a sports product
2. Brand (i.e. Nike, Adidas, Puma, New Balance etc.) – this construct checks whether or not the brand name and social esteem it gives influences the buying decision.
3. Brand's country of origin – this examines how the brands country of origin influences the buying decision of consumer
4. Product design- how much the design and style of the sports product compared to other sports brands influences the consumer's buying decision
5. Product package
6. Quality
7. Innovation/ New Design
8. Comfort / Ergonomic
9. Mass media advertisement
10. Promotions / Special offers / Discounts
11. Internet / Consumer reviews (comments and ratings) / Blogs
12. Recommendations of surroundings (i.e. friends, relatives etc....)
13. Personal budget
14. Expertise / Sales technique (salespeople)
15. Handling and testing the product (trying out the product at the point of sale)
16. Time spent to search information regarding the brand
17. Time spent to evaluate between alternatives

18. Impulse buying (Buying without thinking) / Random Choice
19. Availability of products
20. Convenient store location
21. Several store locations
22. Available parking space
23. Area of parking space
24. Interior and exterior designs of the stores
25. Shop decoration / Display stand / Shelves
26. Adequate number of sales representatives
27. Friendliness of sales representatives
28. Variety of services offered
29. Speed and quality of service
30. Celebrities, professional athletes and influential people attached to the brand
31. Sports team sponsorship
32. Support of sports team

3.2 Data Collection

The data was collected from EMU students, therefore, questionnaires were distributed to both undergraduate and masters students in EMU in TRNC. 300 questionnaires in total were distributed and collected. There were no missing values or random sampling errors whilst analyzing the responses.

3.3 Eastern Mediterranean University

EMU is a college possessed by the Government University in TRNC. It has more than 20,000 scholars from more than 106 nations and 1,100 academics from 35 distinct nations. EMU offers quality modules in English which acts like an open door for non-

English speakers to become familiar with a second language. EMU additionally offers exchange programs. It has a rich academic, sporting, social and social environment.

EMU offers quality courses and teaching through 100 undergrad and school programs and 81 postgraduate and doctoral certificate programs awarded by 11 faculties, it also has 5 accredited schools and an institute of Foreign Languages and English Preparatory School (EMU, 2018).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed and interpreted using IBM statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). An independent sample t-test was carried out to determine the difference with 2 means from the same group.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Analysis

The table below shows the basic details of our demographic questions. From the table below it is seen that 163 males (54.3%) and 137 females (45.7%) took part in the research. 205 (68.3%) of them were bachelors students whilst 95 (31.7%) of them were masters students. Amongst the entire population of respondents, 250 (83.3%) of them fell 18-25 age group and 50 (16.7%) in the 19-33 age group.

Of the entire population, 181 (60.3%) of the have a monthly income between 0\$- \$500, 104 (3.7%) have income between 501\$- \$1000, 10 (3.3%) of the have a monthly income between 1001\$- \$1500 and 5 of the respondents (1.7%) of the have a monthly income above \$2000.

Of the entire population of respondents, 285 (95%) were single, 10 (3.3%) of them were married and 5 (1.7%) of them are separated. 215 (71.7%) of them engage in sports whilst 85 (28.3%) do not. Further details can be found on the table.

Table 2: Demographic analysis.

Demographic Variable		N	Percent
Gender	Female	137	45.7
	Male	163	54.3
Education Level	Bachelors	205	68.3
	Masters	95	31.7

Age Group	18-25	250	83.3
	26-33	50	16.7
Monthly Income Level	\$0 - 500	181	60.3
	\$501 - 1000	104	34.7
	\$1001- 1500	10	3.3
	\$1500 - 2000	5	1.7
Marital Status	Single	285	95.0
	Married	10	3.3
	Separated	5	1.7
Do you engage in sports?	Yes	215	71.7
	No	85	28.3
Do you prefer certain sports brands?	Yes	260	86.7
	No	40	13.3
How often do you purchase sports products?	Monthly	50	16.7
	Once every 3 months	95	31.7
	Once every 6 months	115	38.3
	Once a year	40	13.3
How much do you spend on sports products a year?	\$0 - 100	115	38.3
	\$101- 200	90	30.0
	\$201 - 300	35	11.7
	\$300+	60	20.0
Where do you prefer to shop for your sports products?	Online	70	23.3
	Stores	230	76.7

4.2 Mean Scores of the General Selection Factors

The table below shows the means of each other selection factors. It represents the average answers of the respondents. The table is arranged in descending order and it shows that the respondents place a higher importance on quality and least importance on available parking space.

Table 3: Mean scores of the general selection factors

SPORTS BRANDS SELECTION FACTORS	MEAN
Quality	4.60
Comfort/Ergonomic	4.43
Price	4.32
Product design	4.30
Innovation/ New design	4.27
Brand	4.07
Personal Budget	4.02
Speed and quality of service	3.93
Availability of products	3.92
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	3.90
Convenient store location	3.82
Handling and Testing the product	3.73
Friendliness of sales representatives	3.70
Variety of services offered	3.68
Time spent to evaluate between alternative	3.63
Recommendations of surroundings	3.63
Several store locations	3.62
Product package	3.53
Expertise/ Sale technique	3.47
Internet/ Consumer reviews	3.40
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	3.30
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	3.27
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	3.25
Support of sports team	3.22
Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	3.20
sports team sponsorship	3.18
Adequate number of sales representatives	3.18
Mass media advertisement	3.07
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	2.90
Area of parking space	2.83
Brand's Country of origin	2.83
Available Parking space	2.77

The values and interpretation of the 5-points Likert scale are:

1 = Not Important

2 = Slightly Important

3 = Moderately Important

4 = Important

5 = Very Important

The Analysis below was carried out using Independent sample t-test to compare the means of some of the demographic factors to the means of the general selection factors:

SIGNIFICANCE (Sig.) – (when $p < 0.5$) this shows that there is a significant difference between the means of the items being compared. The highlighted row in this analysis shows that those factors have a significant difference in their means. This shows a partial acceptance to previous researches done by other researchers based on the topic.

MEAN – The mean is an average that is utilized to get the focal inclination of a lot of information. It is gotten by including every one of the information in a population and afterward partitioning the aggregate by the number of samples. The subsequent number is known as the mean or average. In summary, it is the summation of all the respondent’s answers in that category divided by the total number of respondents.

F value- is a value that is gotten if an ANOVA test or a regression analysis is carried out to find if there are significant differences between the means of two populations. It has similarities to a T statistic. In T-Test, a *single* variable is statistically significant if A-T test tells you and an F test will tell you if a group of variables are significant jointly.

Table 4: t-test between gender and all selection factors.

	Gender	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Price	Female	137	4.37	.001	.976
	Male	163	4.27		
Brand	Female	137	4.09	2.357	.126
	Male	163	4.04		
Brand's Country of origin	Female	137	2.82	.401	.527
	Male	163	2.85		
Product design	Female	137	4.31	.664	.416
	Male	163	4.29		

Product package	Female	137	3.52		
	Male	163	3.55	1.098	.296
Quality	Female	137	4.65		
	Male	163	4.56	4.417	.036
Innovation/ New design	Female	137	4.26		
	Male	163	4.27	.972	.325
Comfort/Ergonomic	Female	137	4.44		
	Male	163	4.43	.786	.376
Mass media advertisement	Female	137	2.97		
	Male	163	3.15	2.287	.131
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	Female	137	3.87		
	Male	163	3.93	.505	.478
Internet/ Consumer reviews	Female	137	3.44		
	Male	163	3.37	.045	.832
Recommendations of surroundings	Female	137	3.59		
	Male	163	3.67	.026	.873
Personal Budget	Female	137	4.04		
	Male	163	3.99	.002	.963
Expertise/ Sale technique	Female	137	3.47		
	Male	163	3.46	2.188	.140
Handling and Testing the product	Female	137	3.83		
	Male	163	3.65	2.924	.088
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	Female	137	3.26		
	Male	163	3.24	2.039	.154
Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	Female	137	3.61		
	Male	163	3.66	.095	.758
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	Female	137	2.94		
	Male	163	2.87	1.660	.199
Availability of products	Female	137	3.98		
	Male	163	3.87	3.084	.080
Convenient store location	Female	137	3.77		
	Male	163	3.86	.054	.816
Several store locations	Female	137	3.61		
	Male	163	3.62	.030	.862
Available Parking space	Female	137	2.77		
	Male	163	2.76	.394	.531
Area of parking space	Female	137	2.86		
	Male	163	2.81	.619	.432
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	Female	137	3.23		
	Male	163	3.30	1.956	.163
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	Female	137	3.31		
	Male	163	3.29	.372	.542
Adequate number of sales representatives	Female	137	3.21		
	Male	163	3.16	.421	.517
Friendliness of sales representatives	Female	137	3.73		
	Male	163	3.67	2.460	.118
Variety of services offered	Female	137	3.76		
	Male	163	3.62	6.432	.012
Speed and quality of service	Female	137	3.96		
	Male	163	3.91	1.098	.296

Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	Female	137	3.21	.121	.728
	Male	163	3.19		
sports team sponsorship	Female	137	3.22	.238	.626
	Male	163	3.15		
Support of sports team	Female	137	3.19	.500	.480
	Male	163	3.24		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by males and females. The highlighted parts in Table 4.3 above shows that there are significant differences ($p < 0.5$) amongst respondents regarding their gender with regarding quality and variety of services offered. Females placed more importance on quality and variety of services offered as compared to males. ($P < 0.5 = 0.036$) and also variety of services offered ($P < 0.5 = 0.012$).

Table 5: t-test between education level and all selection factors

Education Level		N	Mean	F	Sig.
Price	Bachelors	205	4.32	.047	.828
	Masters	95	4.32		
Brand	Bachelors	205	4.05	6.274	.013
	Masters	95	4.11		
Brand's Country of origin	Bachelors	205	2.80	3.618	.058
	Masters	95	2.89		
Product design	Bachelors	205	4.34	13.475	.000
	Masters	95	4.21		
Product package	Bachelors	205	3.32	.033	.857
	Masters	95	4.00		
Quality	Bachelors	205	4.54	11.884	.001
	Masters	95	4.74		
Innovation/ New design	Bachelors	205	4.15	19.734	.000
	Masters	95	4.53		
Comfort/Ergonomic	Bachelors	205	4.39	.059	.808
	Masters	95	4.53		
Mass media advertisement	Bachelors	205	3.07	3.312	.070
	Masters	95	3.05		
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	Bachelors	205	4.00	21.946	.000
	Masters	95	3.68		
Internet/ Consumer reviews	Bachelors	205	3.37	.798	.372
	Masters	95	3.47		
Recommendations of surroundings	Bachelors	205	3.71	2.331	.128
	Masters	95	3.47		

Personal Budget	Bachelors	205	3.98	.039	.844
	Masters	95	4.11		
Expertise/ Sale technique	Bachelors	205	3.44	.195	.659
	Masters	95	3.53		
Handling and Testing the product	Bachelors	205	3.85	6.075	.014
	Masters	95	3.47		
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	Bachelors	205	3.34	.506	.477
	Masters	95	3.05		
Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	Bachelors	205	3.71	.295	.588
	Masters	95	3.47		
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	Bachelors	205	3.00	4.936	.027
	Masters	95	2.68		
Availability of products	Bachelors	205	3.93	6.991	.009
	Masters	95	3.89		
Convenient store location	Bachelors	205	3.88	12.669	.000
	Masters	95	3.68		
Several store locations	Bachelors	205	3.66	24.154	.000
	Masters	95	3.53		
Available Parking space	Bachelors	205	2.66	.021	.886
	Masters	95	3.00		
Area of parking space	Bachelors	205	2.83	6.483	.011
	Masters	95	2.84		
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	Bachelors	205	3.24	.475	.491
	Masters	95	3.32		
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	Bachelors	205	3.27	20.424	.000
	Masters	95	3.37		
Adequate number of sales representatives	Bachelors	205	3.20	2.984	.085
	Masters	95	3.16		
Friendliness of sales representatives	Bachelors	205	3.68	.042	.838
	Masters	95	3.74		
Variety of services offered	Bachelors	205	3.76	5.829	.016
	Masters	95	3.53		
Speed and quality of service	Bachelors	205	3.95	26.614	.000
	Masters	95	3.89		
Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	Bachelors	205	3.02	1.172	.280
	Masters	95	3.58		
sports team sponsorship	Bachelors	205	3.29	.099	.754
	Masters	95	2.95		
Support of sports team	Bachelors	205	3.34	8.539	.004
	Masters	95	2.95		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by Bachelors and masters students. The highlighted parts in

Table 4.4 above shows that there are significant differences ($p < 0.5$) amongst respondents regarding their education level and some selection factors.

Brand ($P < 0.5 = 0.013$), Product design ($P < 0.5 = 0.00$), Innovation/ New design ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Promotions/Special offers/Discounts ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Handling and Testing the product ($P < 0.5 = 0.014$), Impulse buying/ Random Choice ($P < 0.5 = 0.027$), Availability of products ($P < 0.5 = 0.009$), Convenient store location ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Several store locations ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Area of parking space ($P < 0.5 = 0.011$), Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Variety of services offered ($P < 0.5 = 0.016$), Speed and quality of service ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Support of sports team ($P < 0.5 = 0.004$). There is a significant difference between the educational levels with regards to 14 out of the 32 selection factors as highlighted on the table. Undergraduates recorded a higher score showing more importance on the selection factors before purchase as compared to the masters' students.

Table 6: t-test between age groups and all selection factors.

AGE GROUPS		N	Mean	F	Sig.
Price	18-25	250	4.32	3.390	.067
	26-33	50	4.30		
Brand	18-25	250	4.16	.805	.370
	26-33	50	3.60		
Brand's Country of origin	18-25	250	2.90	.932	.335
	26-33	50	2.50		
Product design	18-25	250	4.36	4.342	.038
	26-33	50	4.00		
Product package	18-25	250	3.66	6.250	.013
	26-33	50	2.90		
Quality	18-25	250	4.56	13.968	.000
	26-33	50	4.80		
Innovation/ New design	18-25	250	4.24	1.230	.268
	26-33	50	4.40		
Comfort/Ergonomic	18-25	250	4.36	34.127	.000
	26-33	50	4.80		
Mass media advertisement	18-25	250	3.10	.012	.912
	26-33	50	2.90		

Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.92 3.80	2.768	.097
Internet/ Consumer reviews	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.46 3.10	10.746	.001
Recommendations of surroundings	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.70 3.30	16.079	.000
Personal Budget	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.94 4.40	4.546	.034
Expertise/ Sale technique	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.52 3.20	4.300	.039
Handling and Testing the product	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.74 3.70	1.243	.266
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.30 3.00	2.641	.105
Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.70 3.30	.968	.326
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	18-25 26-33	250 50	2.88 3.00	1.064	.303
Availability of products	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.92 3.90	1.151	.284
Convenient store location	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.86 3.60	1.371	.243
Several store locations	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.62 3.60	.009	.923
Available Parking space	18-25 26-33	250 50	2.82 2.50	.852	.357
Area of parking space	18-25 26-33	250 50	2.86 2.70	11.840	.001
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.34 2.90	5.981	.015
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.42 2.70	.254	.615
Adequate number of sales representatives	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.28 2.70	9.474	.002
Friendliness of sales representatives	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.70 3.70	14.858	.000
Variety of services offered	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.70 3.60	7.168	.008
Speed and quality of service	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.96 3.80	.019	.890
Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	18-25 26-33	250 50	3.26 2.90	5.598	.019
sports team sponsorship	18-25	250	3.24	1.914	.168

	26-33	50	2.90		
Support of sports team	18-25	250	3.18	.667	.415
	26-33	50	3.40		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by certain age groups. The highlighted parts in Table 4.5 above shows that there is a differences ($p < 0.5$) and the difference is significant amongst respondents regarding their age groups and some selection factors.

Product design $P < 0.5$ (0.0038), Product package $P < 0.5$ (0.013), Quality $P < 0.5$ (0.000), Comfort/Ergonomic ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Internet/ Consumer reviews ($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), Recommendations of surroundings ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Personal Budget ($P < 0.5 = 0.034$), Expertise/ Sale technique ($P < 0.5 = 0.039$), Area of parking space ($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), Interior and exterior designs of the stores ($P < 0.5 = 0.015$), Adequate number of sales representatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.002$), Friendliness of sales representatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Variety of services offered ($P < 0.5 = 0.008$). Significant differences between the two age groups were detected. 13 factors out of the 32 selection factors as highlighted in the previous chapter had significant differences with a higher importance on the selection factors by age group 18-25.

Table 7: t-test between respondent's engagement in sports and all selection factors.

Do you engage in sports?		N	Mean	F	Sig.
Price	Yes	215	4.26	5.414	.021
	No	85	4.47		
Brand	Yes	215	4.07	.398	.528
	No	85	4.06		
Brand's Country of origin	Yes	215	2.91	2.116	.147
	No	85	2.65		
Product design	Yes	215	4.23	.716	.398
	No	85	4.47		

Product package	Yes	215	3.49	1.236	.267
	No	85	3.65		
Quality	Yes	215	4.56	5.371	.021
	No	85	4.71		
Innovation/ New design	Yes	215	4.40	2.734	.099
	No	85	3.94		
Comfort/Ergonomic	Yes	215	4.37	16.254	.000
	No	85	4.59		
Mass media advertisement	Yes	215	3.05	.875	.350
	No	85	3.12		
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	Yes	215	3.91	8.418	.004
	No	85	3.88		
Internet/ Consumer reviews	Yes	215	3.44	8.316	.004
	No	85	3.29		
Recommendations of surroundings	Yes	215	3.67	4.745	.030
	No	85	3.53		
Personal Budget	Yes	215	3.93	1.166	.281
	No	85	4.24		
Expertise/ Sale technique	Yes	215	3.40	.002	.968
	No	85	3.65		
Handling and Testing the product	Yes	215	3.72	8.052	.005
	No	85	3.76		
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	Yes	215	3.40	3.302	.070
	No	85	2.88		
Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	Yes	215	3.77	1.481	.225
	No	85	3.29		
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	Yes	215	3.05	9.436	.002
	No	85	2.53		
Availability of products	Yes	215	3.95	2.311	.130
	No	85	3.82		
Convenient store location	Yes	215	3.81	2.890	.090
	No	85	3.82		
Several store locations	Yes	215	3.65	.330	.566
	No	85	3.53		
Available Parking space	Yes	215	2.98	9.525	.002
	No	85	2.24		
Area of parking space	Yes	215	3.05	1.989	.159
	No	85	2.29		
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	Yes	215	3.37	1.260	.262
	No	85	3.00		
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	Yes	215	3.26	4.438	.036
	No	85	3.41		
Adequate number of sales representatives	Yes	215	3.28	3.802	.052
	No	85	2.94		
Friendliness of sales representatives	Yes	215	3.67	3.538	.061
	No	85	3.76		
Variety of services offered	Yes	215	3.70	.355	.551
	No	85	3.65		
Speed and quality of service	Yes	215	3.81	9.254	.003
	No	85	4.24		
	Yes	215	3.14	8.064	.005

Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	No	85	3.35		
sports team sponsorship	Yes	215	3.30	1.834	.177
	No	85	2.88		
Support of sports team	Yes	215	3.35	.540	.463
	No	85	2.88		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by people that engage in sports and people that don't. The highlighted parts in Table 4.6 above shows that there are significant differences ($p < 0.5$) amongst respondents regarding their engagement in sports and some selection factors.

Price ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), quality ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Comfort/Ergonomic ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Promotions/Special offers/Discounts ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Recommendations of surroundings ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Handling and Testing the product ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Impulse buying/ Random Choice ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Available Parking space ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Speed and quality of service ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$), Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement ($P < 0.5 = 0.0038$). The result revealed significant differences between whether or not the respondents prefer a particular sports brand or not with regards to 12 factors were significantly different of which people who do not engage in any sports activity recorded a higher score. This concludes that people who do not engage in any sports activity attach more importance to the selection factors before making a purchase decision.

Table 8: t-test between sports brand preference and all selection factors.

Do you prefer certain sports brands?		N	MEAN	F	Sig.
Price	Yes	260	4.27	14.023	.000
	No	40	4.63		
Brand	Yes	260	4.04	.015	.902
	No	40	4.25		
Brand's Country of origin	Yes	260	2.85	.188	.665
	No	40	2.75		
Product design	Yes	260	4.23	12.417	.000
	No	40	4.75		
Product package	Yes	260	3.52	1.256	.263
	No	40	3.63		
Quality	Yes	260	4.56	32.517	.000
	No	40	4.88		
Innovation/ New design	Yes	260	4.29	56.769	.000
	No	40	4.13		
Comfort/Ergonomic	Yes	260	4.42	.206	.650
	No	40	4.50		
Mass media advertisement	Yes	260	3.00	11.132	.001
	No	40	3.50		
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	Yes	260	3.92	15.271	.000
	No	40	3.75		
Internet/ Consumer reviews	Yes	260	3.48	2.749	.098
	No	40	2.88		
Recommendations of surroundings	Yes	260	3.60	.175	.676
	No	40	3.88		
Personal Budget	Yes	260	3.98	21.888	.000
	No	40	4.25		
Expertise/ Sale technique	Yes	260	3.44	2.453	.118
	No	40	3.63		
Handling and Testing the product	Yes	260	3.73	5.743	.017
	No	40	3.75		
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	Yes	260	3.15	4.460	.036
	No	40	3.88		
Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	Yes	260	3.56	26.329	.000
	No	40	4.13		
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	Yes	260	2.81	.588	.444
	No	40	3.50		
Availability of products	Yes	260	3.83	4.157	.042
	No	40	4.50		
Convenient store location	Yes	260	3.81	1.796	.181
	No	40	3.88		
Several store locations	Yes	260	3.60	.008	.930
	No	40	3.75		
Available Parking space	Yes	260	2.71	2.896	.090
	No	40	3.13		

Area of parking space	Yes	260	2.81	12.623	.000
	No	40	3.00		
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	Yes	260	3.21	4.892	.028
	No	40	3.63		
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	Yes	260	3.29	13.877	.000
	No	40	3.38		
Adequate number of sales representatives	Yes	260	3.08	3.444	.064
	No	40	3.88		
Friendliness of sales representatives	Yes	260	3.63	4.631	.032
	No	40	4.13		
Variety of services offered	Yes	260	3.67	2.386	.123
	No	40	3.75		
Speed and quality of service	Yes	260	3.96	7.918	.005
	No	40	3.75		
Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	Yes	260	3.19	1.023	.313
	No	40	3.25		
sports team sponsorship	Yes	260	3.15	.074	.786
	No	40	3.38		
Support of sports team	Yes	260	3.17	2.813	.095
	No	40	3.50		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by whether or not respondents prefer certain sports brands. The highlighted parts in Table 4.7 above shows that there are significant differences ($p < 0.5$) amongst respondents regarding their sports brand preference and some selection factors.

Price $P < 0.5$ (0.000), Product design $P < 0.5$ (0.0000), quality $P < 0.5$ (0.000), Innovation/ New design $P < 0.5$ (0.000), Mass media advertisement ($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), promotions/ special offers/ discounts ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Personal Budget ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Time spent to search for information regarding the brand ($P < 0.5 = 0.036$), Time spent to evaluate between alternatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), area of parking space ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Interior and exterior designs of the stores ($P < 0.5 = 0.028$), Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Friendliness of sales representatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.032$), Speed and quality of service ($P < 0.5 = 0.005$). 14 of the general selection factors that revealed significant

differences as highlighted in the previous chapter. 11 of the significant factors showed that people who do not prefer a particular sports brand recorded more score and placed more importance on the selection factors before purchase as compared to people who do.

Table 9: t-test between preferred shopping method and all selection factors.

Preferred shopping method		N	Mean	F	Sig.
Price	Online	70	4.29	.081	.776
	Stores	230	4.33		
Brand	Online	70	4.29	.135	.713
	Stores	230	4.00		
Brand's Country of origin	Online	70	3.43	11.607	.001
	Stores	230	2.65		
Product design	Online	70	4.36	.398	.529
	Stores	230	4.28		
Product package	Online	70	3.86	1.849	.175
	Stores	230	3.43		
Quality	Online	70	4.57	.311	.577
	Stores	230	4.61		
Innovation/ New design	Online	70	4.43	4.059	.045
	Stores	230	4.22		
Comfort/Ergonomic	Online	70	4.14	.957	.329
	Stores	230	4.52		
Mass media advertisement	Online	70	3.57	2.893	.090
	Stores	230	2.91		
Promotions/Special offers/Discounts	Online	70	3.57	.113	.737
	Stores	230	4.00		
Internet/ Consumer reviews	Online	70	3.64	2.097	.149
	Stores	230	3.33		
Recommendations of surroundings	Online	70	3.50	1.061	.304
	Stores	230	3.67		
Personal Budget	Online	70	4.07	1.307	.254
	Stores	230	4.00		
Expertise/ Sale technique	Online	70	3.86	11.961	.001
	Stores	230	3.35		
Handling and Testing the product	Online	70	3.36	21.005	.000
	Stores	230	3.85		
Time spent to search for information regarding the brand	Online	70	3.29	1.954	.163
	Stores	230	3.24		

Time spent to evaluate between alternatives	Online	70	3.64	4.288	.039
	Stores	230	3.63		
Impulse buying/ Random Choice	Online	70	3.00	17.830	.000
	Stores	230	2.87		
Availability of products	Online	70	4.29	11.155	.001
	Stores	230	3.80		
Convenient store location	Online	70	3.29	4.334	.038
	Stores	230	3.98		
Several store locations	Online	70	3.71	7.621	.006
	Stores	230	3.59		
Available Parking space	Online	70	3.07	2.800	.095
	Stores	230	2.67		
Area of parking space	Online	70	3.57	13.158	.000
	Stores	230	2.61		
Interior and exterior designs of the stores	Online	70	3.57	.255	.614
	Stores	230	3.17		
Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves	Online	70	3.86	16.220	.000
	Stores	230	3.13		
Adequate number of sales representatives	Online	70	3.21	24.990	.000
	Stores	230	3.17		
Friendliness of sales representatives	Online	70	3.64	6.346	.012
	Stores	230	3.72		
Variety of services offered	Online	70	3.86	14.891	.000
	Stores	230	3.63		
Speed and quality of service	Online	70	4.14	24.965	.000
	Stores	230	3.87		
Celebrities, Pro athletes and influential people endorsement	Online	70	3.36	6.048	.014
	Stores	230	3.15		
sports team sponsorship	Online	70	3.57	.170	.681
	Stores	230	3.07		
Support of sports team	Online	70	3.36	.850	.357
	Stores	230	3.17		

Independent Sample t-test was used to test which general selection factors are perceived as important by whether or not respondents prefer to shop online or in stores. The highlighted parts in Table 4.8 above shows that there are significant differences ($p < 0.5$) amongst respondents regarding their method of shopping and some selection factors.

($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), Innovation/ New design ($P < 0.5 = 0.045$), Expertise/ Sale technique ($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), Handling and Testing the product ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Time spent to evaluate between alternatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.039$), impulse buying/ Random Choice ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Availability of products ($P < 0.5 = 0.001$), Convenient store location ($P < 0.5 = 0.038$), Several store locations ($P < 0.5 = 0.006$), Area of parking space ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Shop decoration/ Display stand/ Shelves ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Adequate number of sales representatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Friendliness of sales representatives ($P < 0.5 = 0.012$), Variety of services offered ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Speed and quality of service ($P < 0.5 = 0.000$), Celebrities, Pro athlete and influential people endorsement ($P < 0.5 = 0.014$), 16 out of the 32 selection factors showed a significant difference between online shoppers and store shoppers. Overall, people that shop online recorded a higher score which shows that they place a greater importance on the selection factors before purchase as compared to people that shop in stores.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research investigated which general selection factors were most influential towards consumers purchase decision of sports brands

Based on the literature review, 6 hypothesizes were formulated and after analyzing the data gotten from distributing 300 questionnaires to students of Eastern Mediterranean University- Turkish republic of North Cyprus, these conclusions were drawn.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1 (H1)

The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between genders: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

Based on the result gotten from the independent sample t-test, H1 is partially accepted as there is a significant difference between the genders with regards to the quality of product and services offered. This is in contrast with a research carried out by Hindustantimes (2017) where they concluded that more women (30%) than men (28%) are likely to spend more money on an expensive brand with a variety of service because it promises better quality.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2 (H2)

The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between age group: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

Based on the result gotten from the independent sample t-test, significant differences between the two age groups were detected. This is in line with the study by Lizarraga, Baquedano, and Cardelle-Ellawar (2007) where they investigated the importance of several factors such as money, information, environmental influence etc. and found age group 18-25 having a higher score and placed higher importance towards selections factors before making a purchase decision.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3 (H3)

The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between levels of engagement in sports: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

The result from the t-test showed differences between people that engage in sports and people that don't. This concludes that people who do not engage in any sports activity attach more importance to the selection factors before making a purchase decision. This is similar to a research by Jenny (2016) where she carried out a secondary research on students and defined a sportswear segment called "athleisure" (sportswear that could be worn for daily activities). From her research, she deduced that less than 40% of her respondents participated in any form of sports activity, but people who do not necessarily participate in any sports activity pay a bit more attention to comfort, functionality and sportswear that are fashionable for casual outing in comparison with people who engage in sports.

5.1.4 Hypothesis 4 (H4)

The perceived importance of general selection factors varies between respondents preference of sports brands: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

Based on the results gotten from the independent sample t-test, H4 is partially accepted. The result revealed significant differences between whether or not the respondents prefer a particular sports brand or not with regards to 14 of the general selection factors that revealed significant differences as highlighted in the previous chapter. This conforms with a research carried out by Lim and Apriangsih (2015) where they analyzed factors that influences brand loyalty, they defined a category of buyers called “switchers” (customers with no loyalty to a particular brand) and concluded that switchers pay more attention to the selection factors before making a buying decision as compared to those people who prefer a particular brand.

5.1.5 Hypothesis 5 (H5)

The perceived importance of some general factors varies between respondents preference of sports brands: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

The results from the t-test showed H5 is partially accepted as there is a significant difference between the educational levels. Overall, Undergraduates recorded a higher score showing more importance on the selection factors before purchase as compared to the masters’ students. This slightly corresponds with a research by Harmankaya, Guzel and Filiz (2013) on factors affecting university student shoes selection in Turkey. With the majority of respondents within the age group 21-25, the result concluded that the age group 21-25 which are mostly undergraduates places more importance on selection factors such as functionality, style and variety of usage as

compared to older post-graduate students which in turn influences which brands to choose.

5.1.6 Hypothesis 6 (H6)

The perceived importance of decision-making factors in selecting sports brands varies between shopping method preference: **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED.**

From the t-test results, H6 is partially accepted as there is a significant difference between whether or not respondents prefer to shop online or in stores with regards to some selection factors. Overall, people that shop online recorded a higher score which shows that they place a greater importance on the selection factors before purchase as compared to people that shop in stores. This conclusion is consistent with that of Retaildive (2018) where they concluded that stores are facing an ever growing competition from online players with Amazon being the biggest threat in terms of selling sportswear. Buyers have more flexibility and are able to compare various alternatives whilst considering many selection factors as compared to buyers that shop in store.

5.2 Suggestions to Sellers

Based on the outcome of the hypothesis, the following are suggestions to sports brands:

Based on the conclusions drawn from H1, it shows that women placed more importance on selection factors than men. This should prompt sellers to place more emphasis on women as they are more cautious of many important factors that influences their buying decision.

From the conclusion drawn from H2, it shows that age group 18-25 place more importance in some of the general selection factors. This should prompt the sellers to spend more resources towards satisfying the needs of consumers within that age group.

From the conclusion on H3, it has been known that people who do not participate in sports do have an opinion on sports products and they place a higher importance on the selection factors. Therefore sellers should extend their marketing towards targeting non sport-active consumers to fulfil their needs.

Based on the conclusion drawn from H4, it is known that switchers or non-loyal customers attach more importance to the general selection factors. Therefore for sellers should channel a huge chunk of their resources towards not only satisfying their needs adequately and attracting these customers but retaining them and growing their customer base through references from the newly converted loyal customer.

From the conclusion on H5 it is obvious that consumers are slowly moving to online methods of shopping. It would only be proactive for sellers to move part of their sales from the traditional stores to online in order to fully capture their target market..

Based on the conclusion from H6, undergraduates attach more importance to most of the general selection factors. Therefore a proactive move by sellers would be to attract, grow and retain these students from their freshman year so as to make them hardcore loyal customers so that when they become graduates they wouldn't feel the need to switch for common reasons.

5.3 Recommendations

Brand decision was clearly observed to be predetermined. However, switching may occur at point of purchase because the research indicated that brand choice is influenced by so many factors we analyzed and more.

More broadened researches are required to be carried out to decide if and how so many other factors and components impacts buyer decision.

Certain factors were strongly linked with sports brands and factors like top athlete celebrities and influential people endorsements and sponsorship and a particular age group of younger generation. Further research is recommended to determine how strong the association is and other associations most strongly linked to sports brands.

These can be used to get a better understanding of marketing communication.

5.4 Future Studies

This research was carried out on only students of Eastern Mediterranean University, TRNC. The respondents included only undergraduate and Masters Students, all the respondents were single and they belonged to only 2 age groups 18-25 and 26-33.

For future studies, a more extensive range of respondents should be used to get a better understanding and result of the topic.

5.5 Limitations

The major limitation faced is the inadequate number of sample size. The total number of samples used in this research was 300.

Because of how small the sample size is, it is difficult to draw a general conclusion on the topic. Furthermore, in an attempt to get as much vital information from the respondents, the 2 pages questionnaire seemed to be time consuming with an observed average time of around 7minutes.

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APPENDIX

Thank you for kindly participating in this study. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study will help us to understand your **opinions in choosing and purchasing sport brands**. Please read all of the questions carefully and answer the questions on your sport brand selection factors.

Your responses are completely confidential.

Please answer the following questions.

I-Demographic Information:

1-Gender:

a-Female

b-Male

c-Other

2-Nationality: _____

3-Education level:

a-Bachelor's degree

b-Master's degree

c-Doctorate degree

4-Age group:

a-18 – 25

b-26 – 33

c-34 – 41

d-

42 – 49

e-50 +

5-Monthly income level:

a-\$0 – 500

b-\$501 – 1000

c-\$1001 – 1500

d-

\$1501 – 2000

e-\$2001 and Over

6-Marital status:

a- Single

b-Married

c-Separated

d-

Divorced

e-Widowed

7-Do you engage in sports?

a- Yes

b-No

8-Do you prefer certain sport(s) brands?

a- Yes

b-No

9-Which of the following brands do you know? Please choose all brands that you know. Multiple answers permitted.

a- Nike

b-Adidas

c-Puma

d-Umbro

e-New Balance

f-Reebok

g-Underamor

h-Kappa

i-ASICS

j-Skechers

k-Columbia

l-DKS

m-Fila

n-Vans

o-Others: _____

10-How often do you purchase sports products?

a- Monthly

b-Once every 3 months

c- Once every 6 months

d-

Once a year

e-Once a year

11-How much money do you spend on sport products a year?

a-0- 100USD

b-101-200 USD

c-201-300 USD

d-

More than 300 USD

12-Where you prefer to shop for your sports product?

a-Online

b-Stores

13-Why? _____

II- Selection Decision

How important are each of the following factors to you while choosing and purchasing sport brands. Please mark on the number which is mostly appropriate for you in order to specify your **choosing and purchasing certain sport brands**. (5-Very important / 1-Not important)

		VERY NOT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT				
		😊		☹️		😞
General Factors						
1	Price	5	4	3	2	1
2	Brand (i.e. Nike, Adidas, Puma, New Balance etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
3	Brand's country of origin	5	4	3	2	1
4	Product design	5	4	3	2	1
5	Product package	5	4	3	2	1
6	Quality	5	4	3	2	1
7	Innovation / New design	5	4	3	2	1
8	Comfort / Ergonomic	5	4	3	2	1
9	Mass media advertisement	5	4	3	2	1
10	Promotions / Special offers / Discounts	5	4	3	2	1
11	Internet / Consumer reviews (comments and ratings) / Blogs	5	4	3	2	1
12	Recommendations of surroundings (i.e. friends, relatives etc....)	5	4	3	2	1
13	Personal budget	5	4	3	2	1
14	Expertise / Sales technique (salespeople)	5	4	3	2	1
15	Handling and testing the product (trying out the product at the point of sale)	5	4	3	2	1
16	Time spent to search information regarding the brand	5	4	3	2	1
17	Time spend to evaluate between alternatives	5	4	3	2	1
18	Impulse buying (Buying without thinking) / Random Choice	5	4	3	2	1
19	Availability of products	5	4	3	2	1
20	Convenient store location	5	4	3	2	1
21	Several store locations	5	4	3	2	1
22	Available parking space	5	4	3	2	1
23	Area of parking space	5	4	3	2	1
24	Interior and exterior designs of the stores	5	4	3	2	1
25	Shop decoration / Display stand / Shelves	5	4	3	2	1
26	Adequate number of sales representatives	5	4	3	2	1
27	Friendliness of sales representatives	5	4	3	2	1
28	Variety of services offered	5	4	3	2	1
29	Speed and quality of service	5	4	3	2	1
30	Celebrities, professional athletes and influential people attached to the brand	5	4	3	2	1
31	Sports team sponsorship	5	4	3	2	1
32	Support of sports team	5	4	3	2	1

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.