

Full Length Research Paper

Materialism, status consumption and consumer ethnocentrism amongst black generation Y students in South Africa

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which black Generation Y students' exhibit status consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism tendencies, and the relationship between these three constructs. The black Generation Y cohort (individuals born between 1980 and 1994) represents a large percentage of the South African market, and those enrolled at tertiary institutions constitute a particularly attractive target market to marketers given that tertiary education were correlated with higher earning potential and status. A convenience sample of 400 students across the campuses of four South African public higher education institutions situated in the Gauteng Province was taken. Questionnaires, designed to measure black Generation Y students' attitudes towards status consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism, were hand delivered to lecturers at each of these campuses who requested to ask their students to complete them. The collected data were analysed using z-tests and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The findings suggest that the target market has significant materialism, status consumption and ethnocentrism tendencies. A strong positive relationship was found between the constructs of materialism and status consumption. However, there was no significant relationship found between the respective constructs of materialism and status consumption, and that of consumer ethnocentrism.

Key words: Materialism, status consumption, consumer ethnocentrism, black Generation Y students.

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, the growth in the status brand market continues to increase (de Waal, 2008; Park et al., 2008; Demirbag et al., 2010; Schiffman et al., 2010). The rapid increase in the black middle-class, labelled Black Diamonds by the UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing and TNS Research Surveys (Jones, 2007; Olivier, 2007; de Waal, 2008), is largely attributed as being the major contributor to the growth of the status brand market in South Africa (de Waal, 2008). This

segment of the market is characterised as being optimistic, self-confident, education-directed and highly ambitious individuals (Olivier, 2007), and is made up of financially well-off individuals, individuals in professional occupations, upwardly mobile, well-educated individuals, as well as upwardly mobile younger individuals (Olivier, 2007; de Waal, 2008). Future growth in this Black Diamond segment, will stem mainly from members of the black Generation Y cohort (individuals born between 1980 and 1994), who have a tertiary qualification (Bevan-Dye et al., 2009) given that, tertiary education is positively correlated with a higher earning potential (Loudon and Della, 1993; Mowen, 1993; Schiffman et al., 2010) and a higher social class status (Schiffman et al.,

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2010). As such, black Generation Y students represent an important market segment to marketers.

Problem statement

Whilst the value of materialism and its associated behaviour of status consumption have negative connotations (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Kamineni, 2005), they remain important elements in the marketing strategy of segmentation, targeting and positioning (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006; Schiffman et al., 2010). This is particularly true concerning the luxury or status brand market (Park et al., 2008; Phau and Leng, 2008; Demirbag et al., 2010).

Although the media often highlight South Africans' materialistic and status consumption tendencies, there is a dearth of published quantitative research to confirm these views. In addition, the South African market for status goods is predominantly occupied by global rather than local brands (de Waal, 2008), yet little research has been published on South African consumers' attitudes towards consumer ethnocentrism, even though such research may uncover opportunities for developing and marketing national status brands.

Furthermore, despite the potential marketing opportunity that the black Generation Y cohort in general and the students' segment of this cohort in particular offer, only limited research has been undertaken to profile their consumer behaviour characteristics.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study are to investigate, within the South African context, the extent to which black Generation Y students exhibit materialism, status consumption and consumer ethnocentrism tendencies, and to determine the relationship between these three constructs.

Materialism

Richins (2004) defines materialism as "the importance ascribed to the ownership and acquisition of material goods in achieving major life goals or desired states". Chan and Prendergast (2007) define it as "a set of attitudes which regard possessions as symbols of success, where possessions occupy a central part of life, and which include holding the belief that more possessions lead to more happiness". Belk (1985) conceptualises materialism as a personality trait consisting of the three dimensions of possessiveness, envy and non-generosity. Whether viewed as a set of attitudes (Chan and Prendergast, 2007), a value (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Richins, 2004) or a personality trait

(Belk, 1985), materialism is a contentious issue. In religious circles and amongst social critics, materialism typically has a negative connotation (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Kamineni, 2005) and it is associated with such characteristics as avariciousness, envy and miserliness (Belk, 1985).

However, materialism may foster positive motives such as the need to succeed and the need to achieve self-sufficiency (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Kamineni, 2005). Richins and Dawson (1992) argued that the acquisition-of-possessions need motivates people to work harder in order to increase their purchasing power and living standards. In a similar vein, increased consumer demand translates into higher earnings for businesses which, when invested back into, for example, research and development, may lead to improved living standards for society as a whole.

Manifestations of materialism may vary between different countries (Schiffman et al., 2010). In economic terms, a consumer society is signalled by a significant percentage of a society being motivated to consume goods for non-utilitarian reasons (Richins and Dawson, 1992). Cleveland et al. (2009) indicate that the influence of Western mass media and advertising, coupled with the very human inclination to want higher material living standards, has compelled consumers around the globe to copy the consumer culture of Western societies. Whereas materialism was once seen as a differentiating value, separating Western and non-Western cultures, the forces of globalisation is said to have fostered global materialism (Watchravesringkan and Yurchisin, 2007).

Richins and Dawson (1992) view materialism as a continuum value whereby individuals who tend towards being materialistic consider the acquisition of possessions as being central to their lives, a determinant of their happiness in life, and as a measure of their own success and that of others. In a scale that they developed and validated, they define the three dimensions of the materialism construct as being acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness and possession-defined success. A consumer's total score on this materialism scale has been empirically found to be the most significant predictor of that consumer's level of spending and time spent shopping (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006).

Status consumption

Social status defines the hierarchical stratification of individuals within a society based on their relative wealth, power and prestige, and is often conferred by material possessions and measured using variables such as income level, type of occupation and education level (Schiffman et al., 2010). In contrast, status consumption refers to consumer purchasing behaviour motivated by the desire for status and is independent of specific status

factors such as actual income or social class position (Eastman et al., 1999). O'Cass and Frost (2002) conceptualise social consumption as a consumption driving force that manifests itself in the craving for status symbols. According to Fitzmaurice and Comegys (2006), social consumption represents the all-encompassing motivator of materialists.

Eastman et al. (1999) developed and validated a five-item uni-dimensional scale to measure status consumption, which they formally define as "the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolise status both for the individual and surrounding significant others". Typically used to measure present or near present social consumption purchasing intentions and behaviour (O'Crass and Frost, 2002; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004; Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006; Shukla, 2010), the scale also has value in measuring extended future purchasing intentions. That is, even though an individual may not have the current means to purchase status brands, they may still desire such brands. This desire, as indicated by Richins and Dawson (1992) in relation to materialism, may act as a motivator to achieve success and greater purchasing power. In this regard, studies indicate status consumption to be positively correlated with materialism (Eastman et al., 1999; Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006). According to Eastman et al. (1999), there is an evidence that materialism and status consumption are related; however, each measures a distinct consumer characteristic.

Status consumption and conspicuous consumption are often used interchangeably in literature. However, O'Cass and McEwen (2004) draw a distinction between the two concepts. They define status consumption as "the behavioural tendency to value status and acquire consume products that provide status to the individual" and conspicuous consumption as "the tendency for individuals to enhance their image through overt consumption of possessions, which communicates status to others".

Much of consumer's behaviour driven is by the desire to acquire and consumer goods that infer social status (Eastman et al., 1999) and this desire transgresses social class levels (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004; Truong et al., 2008). Affluent consumers use status goods to communicate their elitism to others and differentiate themselves from lower social classes, while those with a lower purchasing power conspicuously consume status goods to align themselves with their aspiration social class (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993; Truong et al., 2008). In the hedonistic global move towards a culture of retail therapy, as popularised through Western media, the desire for status has superseded consumers' actual purchasing power (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993). Findings by Truong et al. (2010) indicate that today's consumers lend greater credence to

how affluent others perceive them to be than to their actual financial position.

Branding is a central facet of social consumption and Shukla (2010) reports findings that indicate a significantly positive relationship between the antecedents of branding and social consumption. O'Cass and McEwen (2004) advise that brands falling into the conspicuous consumption category should be positioned as being heavily status endowed given their findings that consumers' likelihood of selecting a brand for status consumption and conspicuous consumption is significantly dependent on the brand's degree of perceived status. While an aesthetic designed quality product with a high level of artisanship is paramount to being deemed a status brand (Amatulli and Guido, 2011), the true allure of status goods is that they embody an element of exclusivity (Dubois and Paternault, 1995). This sense of exclusivity is created by charging premium prices and maintaining a level of scarcity through exclusive distribution using elite retail outlets (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993; Dubois and Paternault, 1995). While care should be taken not to over expose the brand and damage its image of exclusivity, brand awareness and recognition are necessary precursors to creating desire for a status brand (Dubois and Paternault, 1995), and to facilitating the brand's ability to signal its owners' prestige and success to others (Vikander, 2010). Such a brand requires a readily identifiable characteristic that provides a symbolic status reference and which supported by a carefully crafted marketing communication appeal that stresses the opulence, expense and exclusivity of the brand (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004). In this regard, celebrities often make perfect status brand endorsers in that their gilded and glamorous lifestyles offer a suitable symbolic status reference (Schiffman et al., 2010). Vikander (2010) suggests the use of non-targeted advertising directed at informing the wider society as to the brand's status in order to facilitate the brand's signalling appeal.

Consumer ethnocentrism

Shimp and Sharma (1987) first coined the term 'consumer ethnocentrism', which they define as "the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products". They go on to explain that in contrast to non-ethnocentric consumers who evaluate products without consideration to their country of origin, ethnocentric consumers hold a contemptuous view of imported foreign goods, seeing their purchase as being unpatriotic, damaging to the economy and a contributor to national unemployment. According to Saffu et al. (2010), consumer ethnocentrism can be summarised as a preference for national over foreign products. In order to measure consumer ethnocentrism tendencies, Shimp and Sharma (1987)

developed a 17-item uni-dimensional scale (CETSCALE), which, through a series of nomological validation tests, they established to be predictive of consumers' foreign product beliefs, attitudes, purchasing intention and purchasing behaviour. Based on the logic that the CETSCALE measures the uni-dimensional construct that it is wrong to purchase foreign goods, Klein et al. (2006) refined the scale by removing redundant questions. They then validated their revised six-item version of the CETSCALE using student and non-student samples in two countries.

In today's world of global competition, where marketers from developed countries are increasingly looking to developing markets for growth given their markets' demand saturation and maturation, the concept of consumer ethnocentrism is receiving growing attention (Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Cleveland et al., 2009). Consumers with strong ethnocentrism tendencies may be expected to prefer national products to foreign imported products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). In a similar vein, according to Demirbag et al. (2010), consumers who are materialists maybe expected to be more open to foreign brands, especially status global brands. Following findings of a non-significant relationship between materialism and consumer ethnocentrism tendencies, Cleveland et al. (2009) explain that ethnocentric consumers who are materialistic may seek to satisfy their materialistic needs with national brands. This may be true with respect to developed countries but may not apply to developing countries. In developed countries, patriotism coupled with a sense of a natural superiority of anything domestic leads to a preference for domestic brands (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Hamin and Elliott, 2006). In contrast, consumers in developing countries tend to perceive foreign goods, especially those imported from Western nations, as being of a higher quality. Kaynak and Kara (2002) indicate that ethnocentric consumers in developing countries often purchase foreign products because there are no national brands of comparable quality available. So where as normally a highly ethnocentric consumer would be expected to shun foreign products in preference for domestic products, now a situation arises where there is a positive relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the preference for foreign products (Saffu et al., 2010). This is evident from research conducted in Malta (Caruana and Magri, 1996), Turkey (Kaynak and Kara, 2002), China and Russia (Klein et al., 2006), and Indonesia (Hamin and Elliot, 2006). Kara and Kaynak (2002) found that consumers in a developing country positively perceive imported products from the developed nations of Japan, USA and Western Europe to be well-known, technologically advanced, well-styled, expensive and well-advertised status symbols.

Where consumer ethnocentrism is an issue, foreign and multinational companies should consider adopting an ecumenical status that focuses on promoting their

cosmopolitan global appeal and roots in an effort to appear non-foreign.

Several countries have launched 'buy local' campaigns aimed at creating pride in and a preference for national products in an effort to counteract the popularity and consequent effects of imported products on domestic industry (Saffu et al., 2010). In South Africa, the 'Proudly South African' campaign to promote domestic products and services was launched in 2001. The criteria for qualifying for membership include having local content, being of a proven high quality, complying with fair labour practice and being environmentally sound (Proudly South African, 2010).

Generation Y

In South Africa, the black Generation Y cohort represents a segment of significant proportion (Statistics South Africa, 2008). While experts differ on the exact start and end dates of this age cohort, Bevan-Dye et al. (2009) following on the logic that Baby Boomers are those individuals born between 1946 and 1964, and Generation X are those born between 1965 and 1979 (Schiffman et al., 2010), place the starting date for Generation Y as 1980. For the purpose of this study, the end date for this cohort is taken as 1994 (Kotler, 2003; Schiffman et al., 2010), although some writers put this date at 2000 (Schiffman et al., 2010).

Working within the categorical parameters used to report population counts in South Africa, 2008 was identified as being the most suitable and most recent year to indicate the relative size of the Generation Y cohort, as defined in this study. In 2008, Generation Y comprised 15 and 29 year-old individuals, which accounted for approximately 14 303 800, or 29%, of South Africans. The black Generation Y totalled 11 865 800, which made up 83% of South Africa's Generation Y cohort and 24% of the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2008).

The division of society into generational cohorts is founded on the concept that each generation shares experiences brought about by distinct environmental forces prevalent during their formative years, which serve to shape their behaviour and distinguish them from other generations (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Twenge and Cambell, 2008). An important shared experience to have influenced the Generation Y cohort is that they were the first generation to be born into the age of the Internet, cellular (mobile) phones, convergent technologies and multi-platform media. This cohort have grown up in a multimedia rich world that allows for 24/7 access to instantaneous global news and information, virtual social networking (Facebook, MXIT), virtual social reporting (Twitter) and virtual social media (YouTube). Global television news channels that report 24/7, such as Cable News Network (CNN) and Sky News have allowed them

to witness wars, natural disasters and other newsworthy events practically as they occur around the world and have assailed them with reports on the threats of terrorist attacks, global warming (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008) and HIV/Aids, which is pandemic in Africa (Walker and Mullins, 2011).

Having been socialised into a media-saturated, brand-conscious and materialistic world (Wolburg and Pokrywczyński, 2001; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003), the younger generation has been found to be more materialistic (Belk, 1985; Richins and Dawson, 1992; Cleveland et al., 2009), more status consumption oriented (Park et al., 2008; Phau and Leng, 2008) and less consumer ethnocentric (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Caruana and Magri, 1996; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Chrysochoidis et al., 2007; Cleveland et al., 2009) than their older counterparts. They expect instant gratification and rewards (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008), and, compared to previous generations, they are also more self-absorbed, have a higher self-esteem, are less in need of social approval, are more demanding of authenticity and have a greater expectation of being treated as individuals in their own right (Twenge and Campbell, 2008).

In the South African market, the Generation Y cohort is the first generation to grow up in the post-apartheid era. Prior to the 1994-democratisation elections, the South African schooling and higher education systems were strictly segregated based on race. Many Generation Y members became the first in their families to attend multi-racial schools and mix freely with youth from other races. For the black Generation Y cohort, this, coupled with exposure to an increasingly Westernised mass media, means having to straddle the often bipolar cultures of Western and traditional ideologies. On the positive side, black Generation Y members have far more possibilities available to them in terms of education, career and wealth-creation opportunities than that which was afforded to previous generations from this racial group. In addition, the growing Black Diamond segment provides aspirational examples of what can be achieved, as do super wealthy black business people, such as mining magnate Patrice Motsepe, South Africa's first black billionaire (de Waal, 2008).

In terms of materialism, this generation has witnessed overt expressions of materialism by public figures, with a number of national sport heroes defecting overseas in the pursuit of higher pay (Raubenheimer, 2009) and well-publicised corruption and self-enrichment charges being levelled against high-ranking government officials and even church ministers. These life experiences may foster a greater acceptance, and even embracement, of materialism amongst this generation. One study that focused on black Generation Y students' perceptions of national sport celebrity endorsers as role models found no significant relationship between the level of materialism exhibited by sport celebrities and their role model status amongst this target market, which was interpreted as indicating that this target market is more accepting of

materialism (Bevan-Dye et al., 2009).

As a nation, South Africans seem to embrace the conspicuous consumption of status products. For the black Generation Y cohort there is no shortage of *nouveau* rich, young, black celebrities to act as role models regarding conspicuous consumption. Celebrities, such as mining magnet/nightclub owner Kenny Kunene, African National Congress (ANC) Youth League leader Julius Malema and socialite Khanyi Mbau, point the way in the unapologetic conspicuous consumption of luxury international status brands, from luxury motor cars to designer apparel (Naidoo, 2011). The media reports that the South African Generation Y cohort has strong status consumption tendencies (Naidoo, 2008) and a materialistic outlook (Naidoo, 2009), with them ranking designer clothing ahead of happiness (Seopa, 2008). Given that international rather than local brands are ranked as the most popular brands amongst this segment (Naidoo, 2008), suggests that South African Generation Y members are either not particularly consumer ethnocentric or that there is a lack of national status-laden brands.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample frame selected for the study was a list of the 28 campuses of the public South African higher education institutions situated in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The Gauteng province was selected over other provinces in the country because it contains the highest percentage of the 23 public higher education institutions and the highest percentage (31%) of these institutions' 91 campuses (Note: certain higher education institutions have more than one campus, which may be located in different provinces). In addition, the Gauteng Province has the highest percentage of people falling into the black Generation Y cohort (Statistics South Africa, 2008). As such, the Gauteng province is more representative of black Generation Y students than the other provinces. From this sample frame, a non-probability judgement sample of four campuses was selected – two belonging to traditional universities and two to universities of technology. Of these campuses, two are located in the country region and two in the city region.

Sampling method

A non-probability convenience sample of 400 students across the 4 campuses was taken for the final study. Lecturers at each of the 4 campuses were contacted and requested to ask their students to complete the questionnaire. These lecturers were given strict instructions that no student should be forced into completing the questionnaire; that is, the questionnaire should be completed on a voluntary basis only. Questionnaires were hand delivered to the lecturers at each of the 4 campuses.

Research instrument

The self-administered questionnaire was designed based on the research studies conducted by Eastman et al. (1999), Richins and Dawson (1992), and Klein et al. (2005). In accordance with the

Table 1. Sample description.

Age	Percent (%)	Gender	Percent (%)	Province	Percent (%)
18	12.8	Male	50.7	Eastern Cape	3.4
19	19.3	Female	47.6	Free State	10.5
20	22.0			Gauteng	35.1
21	18.9			KwaZulu-Natal	4.4
22	13.5			Limpopo	27.0
23	6.4			Mpumalanga	6.4
24	3.7			Northern Cape	1.4
				North West	9.0
				Western Cape	0

Table 2. Status consumption, materialism and ethnocentrism orientation of black Generation Y students.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	z-score	p-value
Status consumption	3.20	1.26	0.074	2.71	0.004*
Materialism	3.59	0.61	0.036	16.60	0.000*
Consumer ethnocentrism	3.72	0.91	0.056	12.97	0.000*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (one-tailed).

objectives of the study, three scales were used. These scales were designed to measure black Generation Y students' status consumption (five items), level of materialism (18 items) and consumer ethnocentrism (7 items). Responses were measured on a six-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree.

The five-item scale developed and validated by Eastman et al. (1999) was utilised to measure status consumption. Materialism was measured using the 18-item scale developed and validated by Richins and Dawson (1992). A seven-item scale, adapted from the 6-item CETSCALE validated by Klein et al. (2006) was utilised to measure consumer ethnocentrism. Items in the adapted version of the CETSCALE were reworded to specify the South African context of the study. The item "Russian/Chinese consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Russians/Chinese out of work" was substituted with the item "South Africans should not buy foreign products as it damages the country's economy". Furthermore, the item "Russians/Chinese should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Russian/Chinese business and causes unemployment" was separated into two separate items to avoid ambiguity, with the words "Russians/Chinese" substituted with "South African". As suggested by Malhotra (2010) and in line with the other two scales utilised, one negatively worded item was included in the scale: "South African consumers should not feel obliged to buy South African made products". Negatively worded items in each of the three scales were reverse scored prior to them being summated.

Questions pertaining to respondents' demographical information were included. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 45 black Generation Y students located on a campus not included in the final study. The scales returned acceptable Cronbach alphas (Malhotra, 2010) ranging from 0.641 to 0.821.

RESULTS

From the sample of 400 respondents, 290 completed

questionnaires were received back, which translates into a response rate of 72.5%. Respondents ranged from 18-24 years of age. With the exception of the Western Cape, each of South Africa's nine provinces was represented. The majority of respondents indicated their province of origin to be Gauteng (35.1%), followed by Limpopo (27.0%). The sample contained more male respondents (50.7%) than female respondents (47.6%). Demographic information for respondents is provided in Table 1.

The reliability coefficients for the scales in the final study were all above the recommended level of $\alpha = 0.700$ (Nunnally, 1978), with status consumption at $\alpha = 0.835$, materialism at $\alpha = 0.706$ and consumer ethnocentrism at $\alpha = 0.716$.

Means above 3 were computed for all three scales. In order to determine whether these computed means are significant, a one-tailed z-test was performed. The expected mean was set at $X > 3$ and the significance level at the conventional $\alpha = 0.05$. Table 2 shows the calculated z-scores and p-values. A p-value of $p < 0.05$ was recorded for all three constructs indicating each to be statistically significant. This infers that black Generation Y students do exhibit status consumption ($p = 0.004 < 0.05$), materialism ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and consumer ethnocentrism ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) tendencies. In order to determine the relationship between status consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism, Pearson's Product-Moment correlation coefficient was used. The results are reported in Table 3.

The results show a significantly positive relationship between status consumption and materialism ($r = 0.507$, $p < 0.01$). The relationship between status consumption

Table 3. Relationship between status consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism.

Variable		Status consumption	Materialism	Consumer ethnocentrism
Status consumption	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.507**	0.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.062
Materialism	Pearson correlation	0.507**	1.000	0.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.621
Consumer ethnocentrism	Pearson correlation	0.114	0.030	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.062	0.621	

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

and consumer ethnocentrism is not significant ($r=0.114$, $p<0.01$), nor is the relationship between materialism and consumer ethnocentrism significant ($r=-0.030$, $p>0.01$).

DISCUSSION

In South Africa, the growing black middle class represents a valuable target market for both national and international marketers. Future growth in this segment is expected to come mostly from black Generation Y graduates, making it necessary for marketers to gain a clear understanding of their consumer behaviour.

This study established that black Generation Y students exhibit significant status consumption and materialistic tendencies and, as was the case in previous studies (Eastman et al., 1999; Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006), a strong positive relationship was found between these two constructs. Whilst black Generation Y students' level of ethnocentrism indicates that they are predisposed to purchase South African produced goods, there was no significant relationship between status consumption and consumer ethnocentrism or between materialism and consumer ethnocentrism.

The absence of a significant relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the respective constructs of materialism and status consumption maybe attributed to them satisfying their material and status consumption needs through seeking out nationally manufactured brands, as explained by Cleveland et al. (2009). Alternatively, given that international brands are ranked as the most popular brands amongst this segment, it may be attributed to a lack of national status brands comparable to the available global status brands. This would be consistent with other studies of this nature carried out in developing countries (Caruana and Magri, 1996; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Klein et al., 2006; Hamin and Elliot, 2006). This suggests the existence of a substantial opportunity to establish and market South African status brands.

Marketers of the 'Proudly South African' brand need to exploit the significant consumer ethnocentrism of this target segment by paying greater attention to creating and promoting an image of status amongst their portfolio of brands, given this target segment's status

consumption and materialistic tendencies.

For national marketers seeking to establish local status brands, strong emphasis needs to be placed on developing high quality products that embody a level of aesthetic craftsmanship that are able to compete against international status brands. Such products will need to be positioned as being very expensive, exclusive and opulent. The use of glamorous and successful local black celebrity endorsers will lend symbolic status to such brands as well as appeal to this target market's consumer ethnocentrism.

For marketers of global status brands, these results indicate that even though this segment has a strong domestic country bias, manifesting in a strong buying intention preference for South African made goods, they still do not equate these goods with status. Until national status brands are developed and properly marketed, there remains a significant market potential for global status brands amongst the black Generation Y cohort. In order to overcome any consumer ethnocentrism within this target market, marketers of international status brands are advised to focus on their cosmopolitan global roots.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitation of this study is that it is a cross-sectional research design and as such is unable to encapsulate the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour. In addition, caution should be exercised in generalising the results obtained from the sample to the target population given that non-probability sampling was utilised in the study. A longitudinal study is advised in relation to developing and establishing national status brands. Future research also needs to be carried out to determine the precise brand antecedents that this target segment perceives as conferring status. Given the paucity of research on the consumer behaviour of the black Generation Y cohort in South Africa, future research in this area is suggested.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate South

African black Generation Y students' status-consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism tendencies, and to determine the relationship between these three constructs. The study's findings indicate that black Generation Y students have significant status consumption, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism tendencies. While a strong positive relationship was found between their materialism tendencies and their status-consumption tendencies, no significant relationship was found between either one of these two constructs and the construct of consumer ethnocentrism. These findings suggest a gap in the South African market for developing and marketing national luxury status brands under the 'Proudly South African' brand umbrella. For marketers of global status brands, South African black Generation Y students represent an important target market given this cohort's likely future Black Diamond status.

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