CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS: IDENTIFYING BUYING MOTIVES FOR COOL DRINKS AMONGST SOUTH AFRICANS UNDER 35 YEARS OLD

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Abstract

The consumer is in the centre of any marketing endeavour. Finding out what the consumers (individual or organization) need, desire and demand is the starting point of a marketing approach. Our research is focused on determining consumer behaviour coordinates pertaining to cool drinks amongst South Africans under the age of 35. The findings of this study provide significant information concerning the buying motives considered when purchasing cool drinks which can be extended to other categories of merchandise. The findings show that the consumer behaviour of cool drinks amongst the young South Africans is a complex one. The respondents displayed a tendency towards objective buying decisions but between a collection of brands for which a certain degree of loyalty was shown.

Key words: *consumer behaviour, buying behaviour, buying motives, exploratory research*

JEL classification: M31, D12

1 Introduction

The consumer is in the centre of any marketing endeavour. Finding out what the consumers (individual or organization) need, desire and demand is the starting point of a marketing approach in order to gather the necessary input to develop a tailored product or service for the respective consumers.

Buying behaviour is a process which enables an organisation to understand how consumers select, buy and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences in order to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler and Keller 2006: 173). A provider should pay attention in grasping the activities and influences occurring before, during and after the purchase (Strydom 2004). An organisation should pursue detailed research of the elementary processes of the consumer behaviour (perceptions, learning, attitudes and motivations) in order to make the right marketing decisions. Perception is the

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process through which stimuli are chosen, organized and interpreted by the human five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste (Cant, Brink and Brijball 2009: 115) while learning is the process through which a consumer, based on experience, learns how to buy and use a product or service (Catoiu and Teodorescu 2004: 69). Attitude is a favourable or unfavourable behaviour towards an object, an event or a situation (Botha et al. 1997: 94) and motivation is the process by which consumers are driven or moved to satisfy a particular need (Sheth, Mittal and Newman 1999).

Our research is focused on determining consumer behaviour coordinates pertaining to cool drinks amongst the young South Africans. The findings of this study provide significant information concerning the buying motives considered when purchasing cool drinks which can be extended to other categories of merchandise.

We consider this study to be a starting point of a comprehensive understanding of how people think, what they value and how they decide when acquiring a particular product or service.

As a research method, we used an exploratory research based on a questionnaire, including qualitative and quantitative questions. We surveyed 100 people (18-35 years old) in using direct, online and email questionnaires. In South Africa we collected data from students enrolled at UCT (University of Cape Town), CPUT (Cape Peninsula University of Technology) and the Cornerstone Institute through the assistance of several academics from these institutions.

2 Exploratory research

2.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify consumer behaviour patterns for cool drinks amongst young South Africans (under 35 years old)

2.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this research focus on the determination of consumer behaviour patterns for South Africans, under 35 years old, related to:

1. consumption occasions
2. consumption frequency
3. consumption preferences
4. buying motives
5. buying venues
6. brand preference
7. impact of sales promotions
8. advertising effectiveness
9. ideal product perception

2.3 Research hypotheses

We presume the following aspects for each of the objectives pursued in this research:

1. The young South Africans drink cool drinks for physiological and social reasons.
2. The young South Africans drink cool drinks with a frequency ranging from every day to a few times a year.
3. The young South Africans drink more fizzy cool drinks than the still ones.
4. The young South Africans buy cool drinks for their ingredients (50% Yes/ 50% No), containers (50% Yes/ 50% No), prices (50% Yes/ 50% No) and brands (50% Yes/ 50% No).
5. The young South Africans buy cool drinks from large surface stores, convenience stores and vending machines.
6. More than 60% of the young South Africans are loyal to at least one cool drink brand.
7. 20% of the young South Africans buy very often another brand if this is on sale, 20% buy often another brand if it is on sale, 20% are not certain, 20% buy seldom another brand and 20% buy very seldom another brand if it is on sale
8. The cool drink advertisements are effective in pushing the young South Africans to buy.
9. The young South Africans desire a sweet, fruity, fizzy, cheap cool drink sold in a plastic container.

2.4 Research variables

Variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Consumption occasion	Possible situations in which a particular merchandise is consumed or used	Desire to drink something sweet Thirst Bonding Socialise Other situation
Consumption frequency	Periodical consumption of a particular merchandise	Every day A few times a week A few times a month A few times a year Other situation
Product type	Type of merchandise sold in a particular market	Fizzy drinks Still drinks Both
Ingredients	Substances combined to make a product[4]	Fruit content, colour, aroma Sugar/ Sweetener content

[4] http://oxforddictionaries.com

		Caffeine/ no caffeine Ingredients as close as possible to the natural ones (less preservatives, less artificial flavours, less dye) Other situation
Container	Device in which a particular product is stored and sold	The importance of the container's material and size in the buying decision
Price	Sum of money which must be paid by the buyer to the seller in order to acquire the offer	The importance of the product's price in the buying decision
Brand	Name and/or symbol used by an organisation to differentiate its offer from the competitors' ones	The importance of the brand name in the buying decision and the preference towards a particular brand
Product sales	Occasions in which a particular merchandise is sold at a discounted price	The frequency at which a cool drink (brand or product type) is purchased if it is on sale
Information source	A place or person from which information originates or can be obtained[5]	TV Internet Press Friends Store Family Other source
Advertisement	Message used to communicate about a particular merchandise with the purpose of informing and/or conveying a particular behaviour	The persuasion effectiveness of advertisements to purchase a particular cool drink
Purchase place	Place from which a merchandise can be purchased	Large surface stores (such as hypermarkets, supermarkets etc)

[5] Adaptation from http://oxforddictionaries.com

		Convenience stores Vending machines Restaurants Other place
Ideal product	A projection of a product perceived by a prospect as meeting all of his or her desires	The description of the ideal cool drink (ingredients, container, name etc)

Descriptive variables

Variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Age	The length of time a person has lived[6]	Under 18 19-25 26-35
Place of residence	The place where someone resides	Urban Rural
Education	The highest level at which systematic instruction was received by an individual	High School University Master Other

2.5 Population

The researched population was represented by people under the age of 35 residing in South Africa

2.6 Research methodology

As a research method, due to the fact that prior studies in this matter are not recorded, we considered that an exploratory research based on a questionnaire, including qualitative and quantitative questions was the most appropriate at this stage.

Being an exploratory research, we pursued a non-random sampling method and aimed to survey 100 people residing in South Africa in order to obtain general consumer behaviour coordinates using direct, online and email questionnaires consisting of 18 questions.

As a surveyed unit, we considered the individual using only two restrictions for our sample, one related to the respondent's age and the other one to the consumption of purchased cool drinks.

The questionnaire was structured in such a way as to provide data about the: consumption of cool drinks, consumption occasions, consumption frequency, type

[6] http://oxforddictionaries.com

of cool drinks consumed, selection criteria (ingredients, container, brand and price), brand preference, impact of sales promotions, information sources, effectiveness of advertisements, purchase venues, ideal products, non-alcoholic beverage consumption and descriptive variables: age, place of origin and level of education.

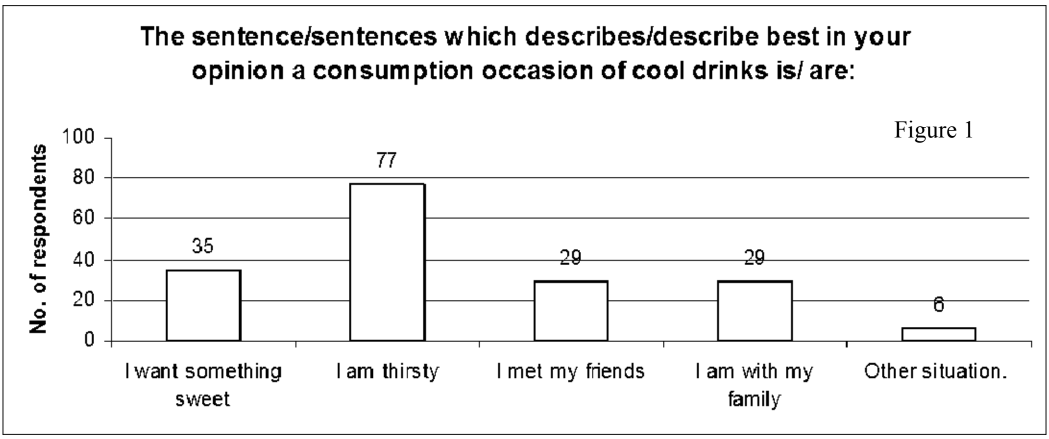
2.7 Data collection

We collected data from 100 people by applying direct and email questionnaires to students from U.C.T- University of Cape Town, C.P.U.T- Cape Peninsula University of Technology and C.I- Cornerstone Institute through the help of several academics from these educational institutions.

2.8 Data analysis and research conclusions

The analysis was performed for each question displaying charts and/or tables and comments.

With regards to the consumption occasions the situation is:



Other situations
with food
during hot days

As it can be seen, most of the respondents mentioned they would drink cool drinks because of thirst (77), followed at a significant distance by the need to drink something sweet (35) and the two options related to socialization (29 for "I met my friends" and 29 for "I am with my family").

Furthermore, four respondents mentioned they would drink cool drinks with every meal, while 2 respondents would drink especially during hot days.

Regarding the consumption frequency of cool drinks, the collected data displayed the following situation:

Table 1

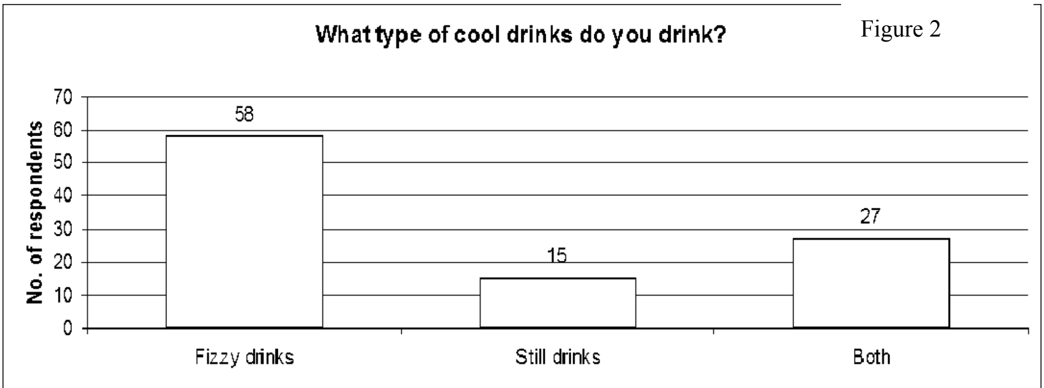
3. How often do you drink cool drinks?				
Every day	A few times a week	A few times a month	A few times a year	Other situation
17	35	41	7	0

The collected data displayed that most of the respondents would drink cool drinks several times a month (41), followed by several times a week (35). Also, 17 respondents mentioned they would drink daily, while 7 respondents only a few times per year.

Regarding the type of cool drink consumed, the respondents were asked to select from fizzy drinks, still drinks or both.

The collected data displayed the following situation:

Figure 2



As it can be noticed, the respondents selected in great number the "Fizzy drinks" option (58), followed by "Both" (27) and "Still drinks" (15).

Regarding the importance of the cool drinks' ingredients in the buying decision, the respondents were asked to mention if they selected cool drinks based on their ingredients and to select amongst: fruit content, colour, aroma; Sugar/ Sweetener content; Caffeine/ no caffeine; Ingredients as close as possible to the natural ones (less preservatives, less artificial flavours, less dye).

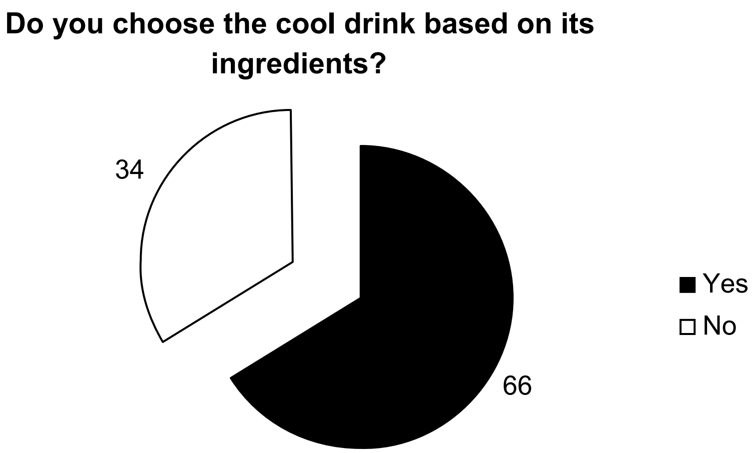


Figure 3

As it can be seen, around two thirds of the respondents mentioned they would make their decision based on the ingredients.

The respondents inclined to buy cool drinks based on their ingredients selected the following features:

Respondents				
Fruit content, colour, aroma	Sugar/ Sweetener content	Caffeine/ no caffeine	Ingredients as close as possible to the natural ones (less preservatives, less artificial flavours, less dye)	Other situation
47	12	13	15	2

Other situation
Protein content

Table 2

The "Fruit content, colour and aroma" option was selected by a significant number of respondents (47), meaning 71.2%. The "Sugar/ Sweetener content" option was selected by 12 respondents (18.2%). The "Caffeine/ no caffeine" option was selected by 13 respondents (19.7%). The "Ingredients as close as possible to the natural ones (less preservatives, less artificial flavours, less dye)" option was selected by 15 respondents (22.7%). Two respondents selected "Other situation", as well, mentioning "Protein content" as the desired ingredient.

Regarding the importance of the cool drink's container in the buying decision, the respondents were asked to mention if they purchased in accordance with the type and size of the container. If the answer was positive, the respondent was asked to select one or several options for the type: PET (plastic), Glass, Can and to mention the regular size of the container.

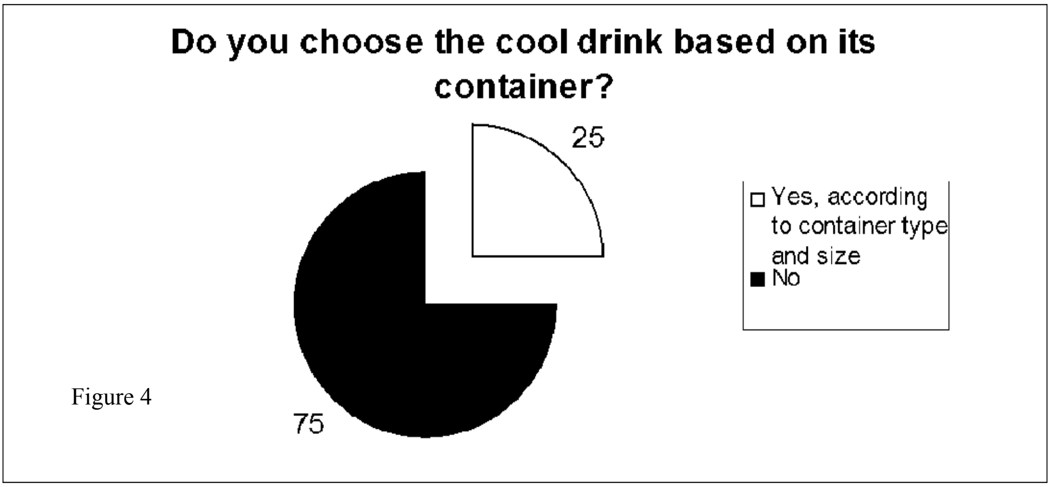


Figure 4

According to the collected data, 25% of the respondents mentioned they would purchase in accordance with the container type and size.

Amongst them, 13 respondents mentioned they would buy cool drinks based on the container type. Their options are displayed below.

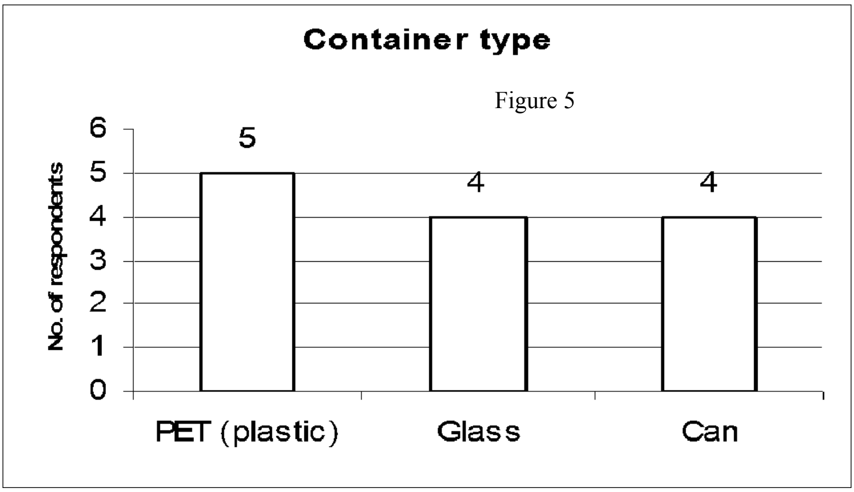
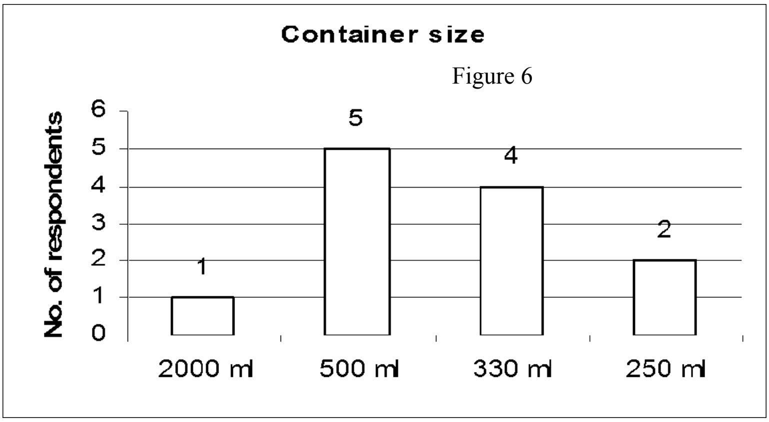


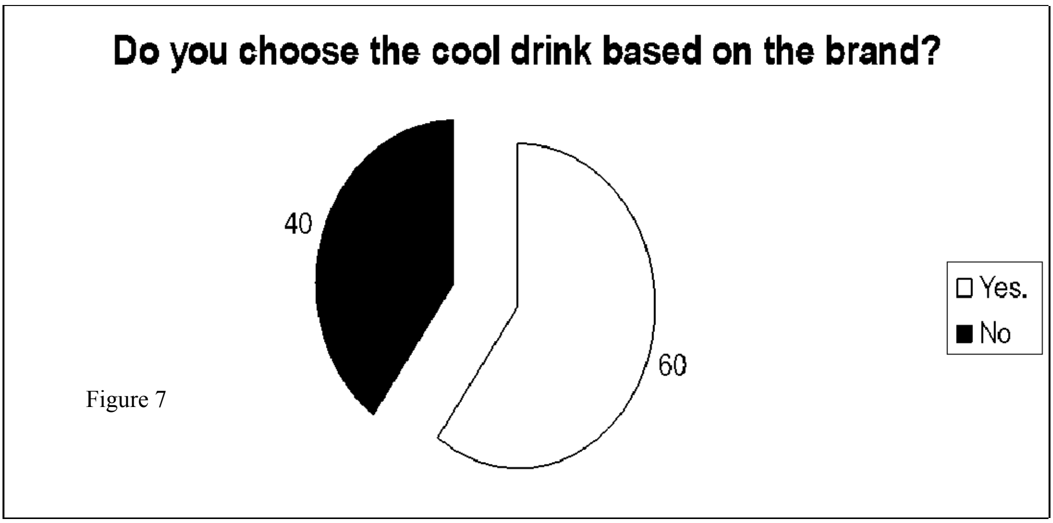
Figure 5

Moreover, 12 respondents mentioned they would buy cool drinks based on the container size. Their options are displayed below:



One respondent would mainly buy cool drinks in 2 litre containers, 5 respondents would mainly buy in 500 ml containers, 4 in 330 ml containers and 2 in 250 ml containers.

In relation to the buying decision based on the cool drink's brand, the respondents were asked to mention if they chose the cool drink based on its brand.



A significant part of the respondents (60%) mentioned they would buy based on the brand.

These respondents were asked to name at least one known brand. 130 options were generated. The brands and the frequencies are found in the chart below.

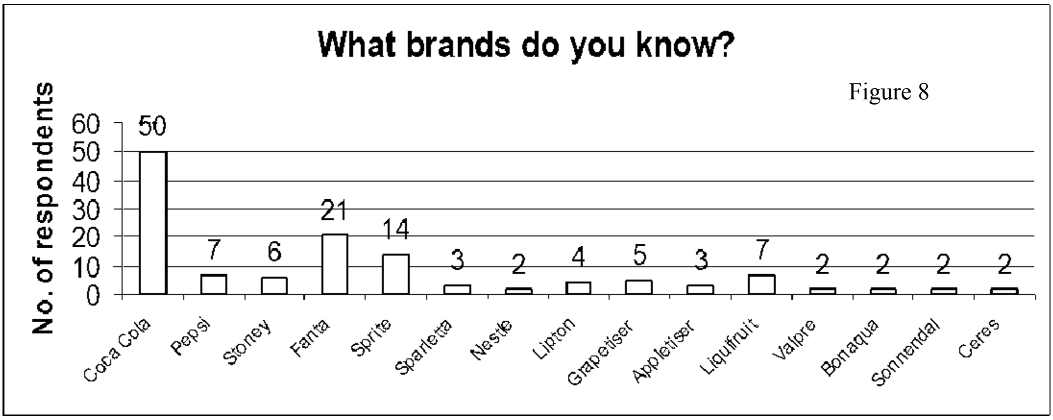


Figure 8

Coca Cola was mentioned by the greatest number of the respondents, followed by Fanta Sprite, Pepsi and Liquifruit.

Regarding the importance of the cool drink's price in the buying decision, the respondents were asked to answer if they purchased based on the price and if they did so, to mention the amount usually paid for a cool drink.

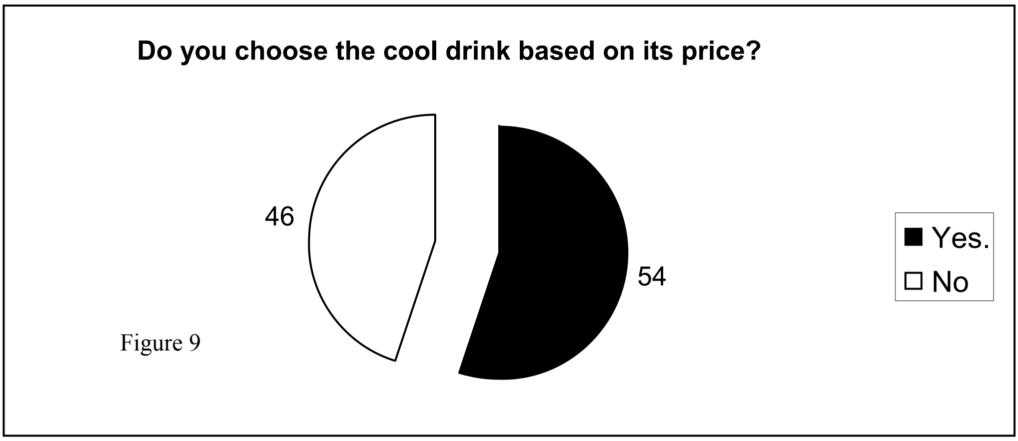


Figure 9

More than half of the respondents (54%) mentioned they would make a decision based on price.

These respondents were asked to mention the usual amounts paid for a cool drink. For analysis purposes these amounts were displayed in intervals. The values are displayed in ZAR (South African Rand). The exchange rate to the EUR is approximately 1 EUR = 10ZAR.

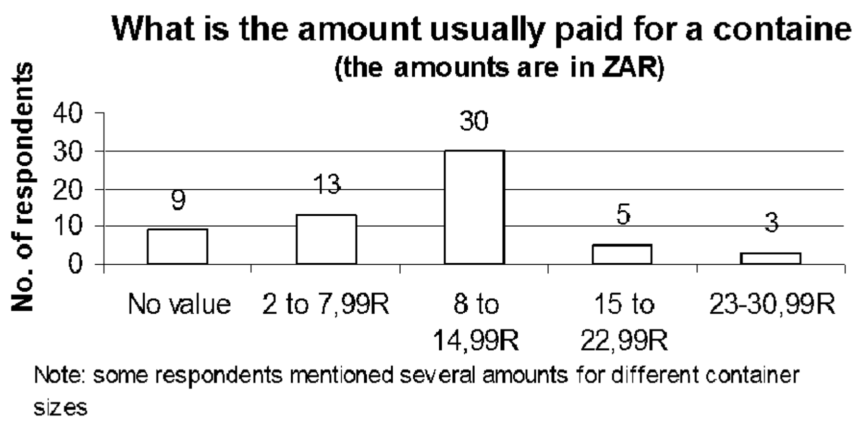


Figure 10

The first column with “No value” refers to the respondents who did not mention an amount. Several respondents associated the usual amount with different container sizes. Anyway, the greatest amount mentioned by a respondent for one container was 30,99R, which is approximately 10EUR.

Regarding the brand preferences, the respondents were asked to mention if they favoured a/ several brand/s and to name it/them.

A significant percentage of the respondents (78%) mentioned they favoured at least one brand.

In the below chart are displayed all the brands mentioned by the respondents and their frequencies.

Coca Cola received the greatest number of references (62), followed by Fanta (22), Stoney (8), Sprite (6), Liquifruit (6) and Grapetiser, Sparletta, Lemon Twist and Quali Juice with 4 references.

With regards to the effects of promotions on buying decisions, the respondents were asked to answer if they were inclined to purchase other cool drinks if those ones were on sale.

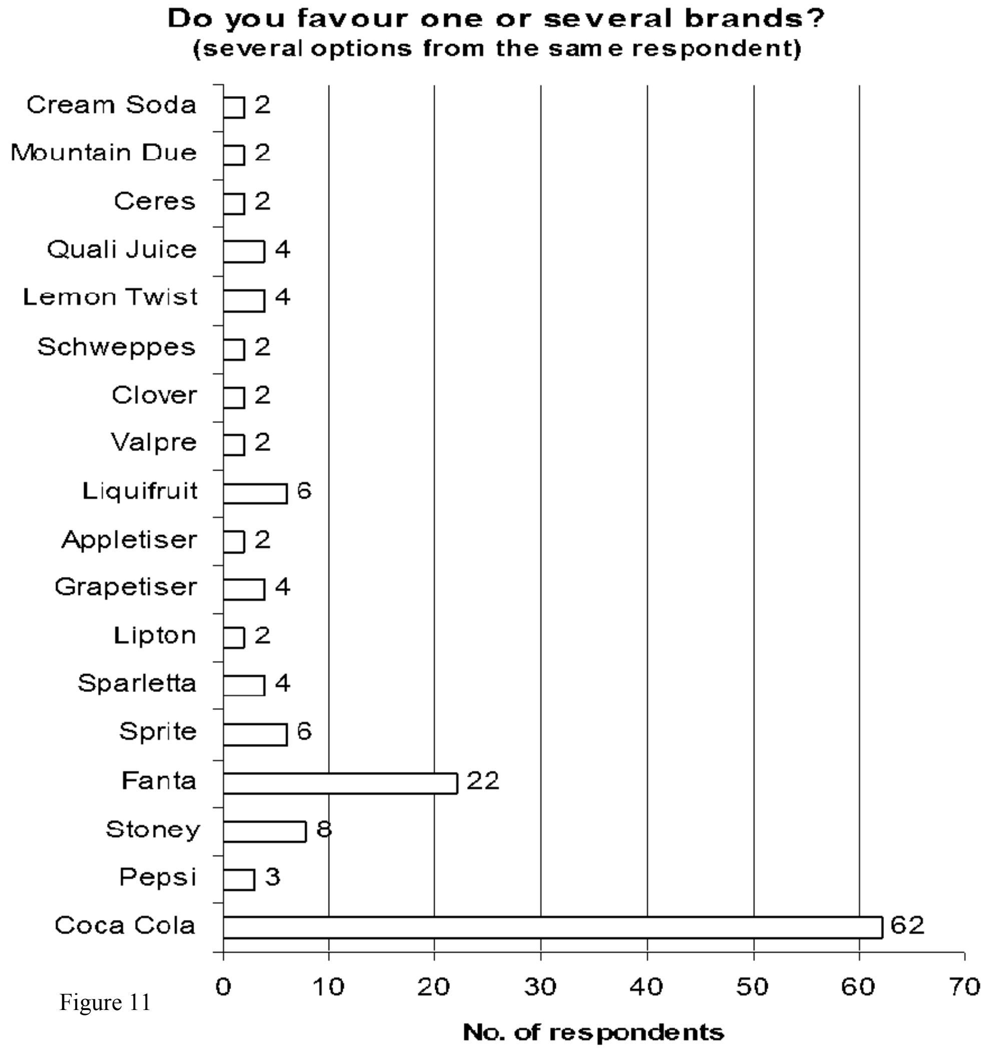

Do you favour one or several brands?
(several options from the same respondent)
Cream Soda
Mountain Due
Ceres
Quali Juice
Lemon Twist
Schweppes
Clover
Valpre
Liquifruit
Appletiser
Grapetiser
Lipton
Sparletta
Sprite
Fanta
Stoney
Pepsi
Coca Cola
2
2
2
4
4
2
2
2
6
2
4
2
4
6
22
8
3
62
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
No. of respondents

Figure 11

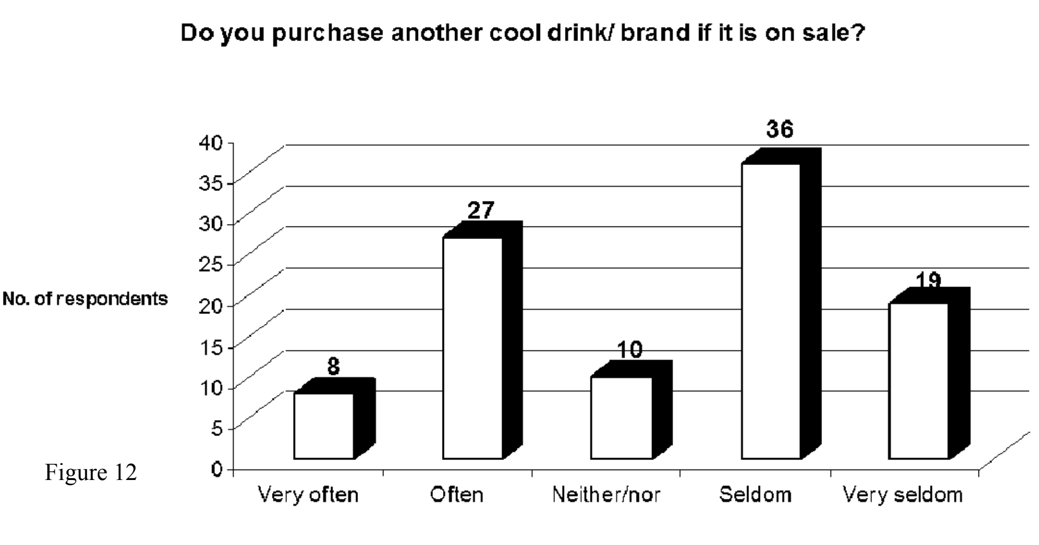


Figure 12

As it can be seen, 55% of the respondents mentioned they would seldom or very seldom switch to other brands based on temporary price reductions, while 35% acknowledged they would often and very often buy other brands and 10% were undecided.

Pertaining to the sources of information used by the respondents to gather data, a question was asked comprising the following sources: TV, Internet, Press, Friends, Store, Family and Other source.

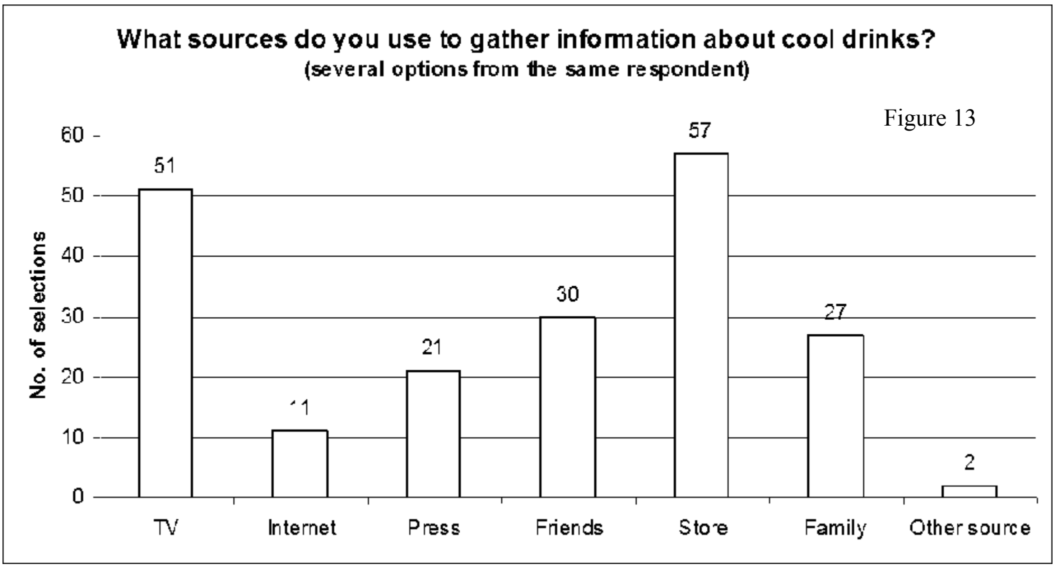


Figure 13

More than half of the respondents gather information from stores and TV. The personal sources, such as friends and family, are used by a significant number as well (30 and 27). The Internet is used by a smaller number than the press, probably because of access and availability. Two respondents mentioned "Other source", referring to catalogues.

Regarding the advertising impact on the buying decision, the respondents had to answer if they were influenced or not by the ads and in what ways or why not.

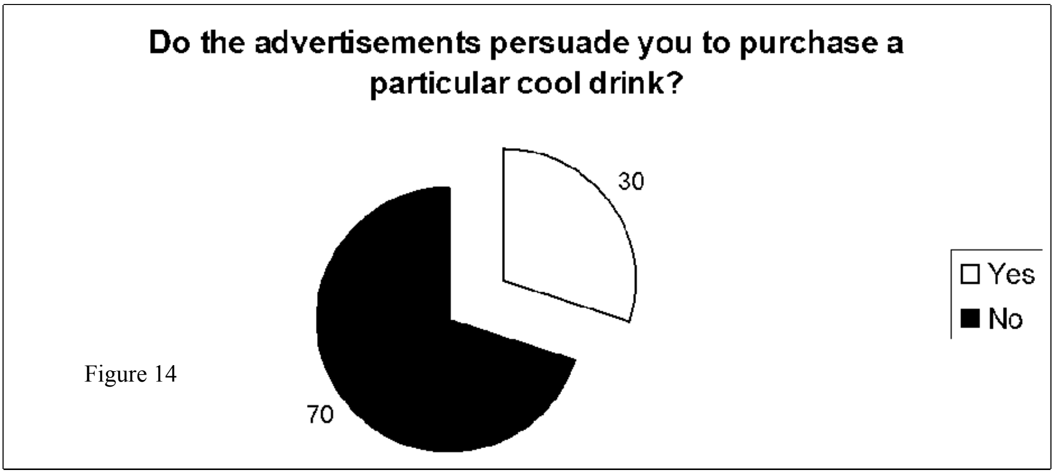


Figure 14

For the 30 respondents, who mentioned they were persuaded by the ads to buy, their answers are summarized as follows:

Table 3

Yes	Main conclusions
How?	They display benefits (ingredients, price, consumption occasions)
	I desire the same decent advertised experience
	Some advertisements are appealing
	I am open to new
	Some brands are endorsed by popular people

For the 70 respondents, who mentioned they were not influenced by ads, their answers are summarized as follows:

Table 4

No	Main conclusions
Why?	I do not pay attention to advertisements
	I always compare products and brands
	I trust those brands I know

	I am loyal to certain brands
	I am not easily influenced by advertisements
	I do not trust advertisements
	I do not like to be disappointed
	I prefer to taste something first

Regarding the place of purchase, the respondents were asked to select the place or places from where they usually purchased cool drinks. The following options were displayed: Large surface stores (such as hypermarkets, supermarkets etc), Convenience stores, Vending machines, Restaurants, although you do not go there especially for a cool drink, Other place

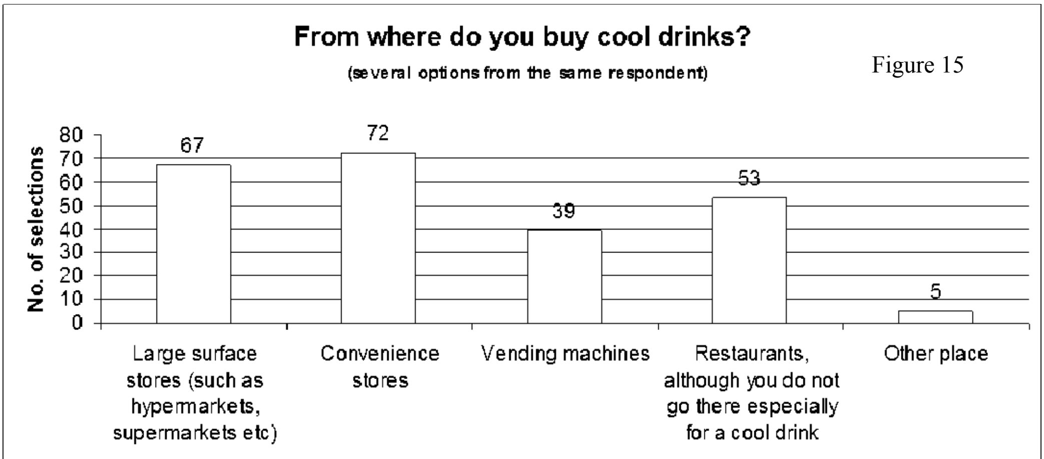


Figure 15

The greatest number of the questioned respondents mentioned they would usually buy from convenience stores (72), followed by large surface stores (67) and restaurants (53). Only 39 mentioned they would use the vending machines and 5 respondents mentioned street markets and campus booths.

Regarding the perception of how a cool drink should actually be in order to satisfy in the best possible way the needs of the consumers, the respondents were asked to describe the ideal cool drink.

Their descriptions are summarized in the following table.

Table 5

The ideal cool drink
ingredients: lemon, prune, ginger, sugar (different levels), caffeine, fruity, natural
type: mainly fizzy
colour: bright
container: type: plastic and can, size: 330ml and 500ml
less calories, less preservatives

In order to determine the rank of the cool drink consumption within the non-alcoholic beverage group, the respondents were asked to select one option amongst: cool drinks, energy drinks, still/sparkling water and coffee.

The distribution of the answers provided by the respondents is displayed in the next chart.

Figure 16

The biggest percentage of the respondents selected “cool drinks” as the most consumed beverage (60), followed by coffee (20), still or sparkling water (12) and energy drinks (8).

The last three questions where aimed at covering the following demographic variables: age, place of origin and education.

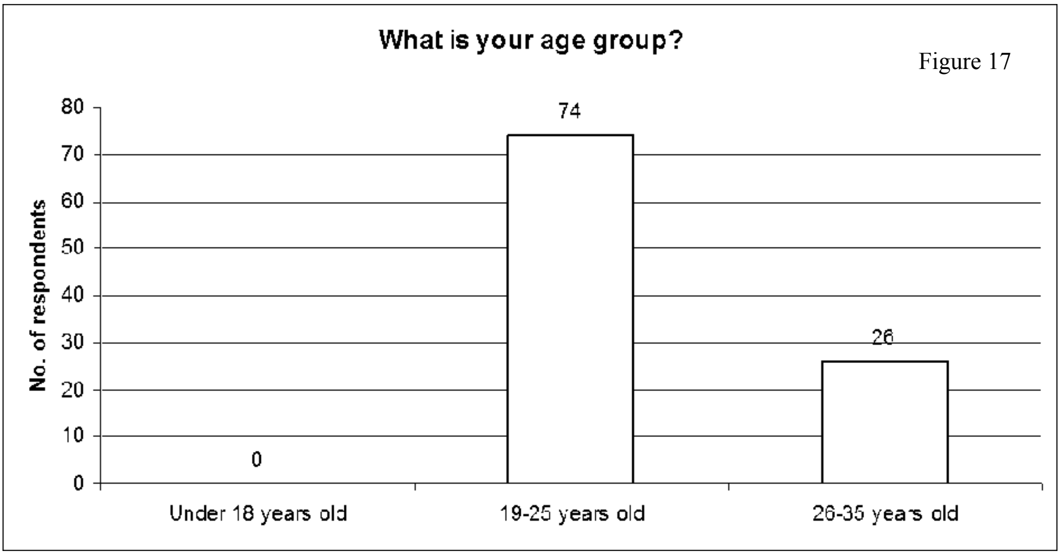


Figure 17

74 respondents were between 19 and 25 years old, while 26 were between 26 and 35 years old.

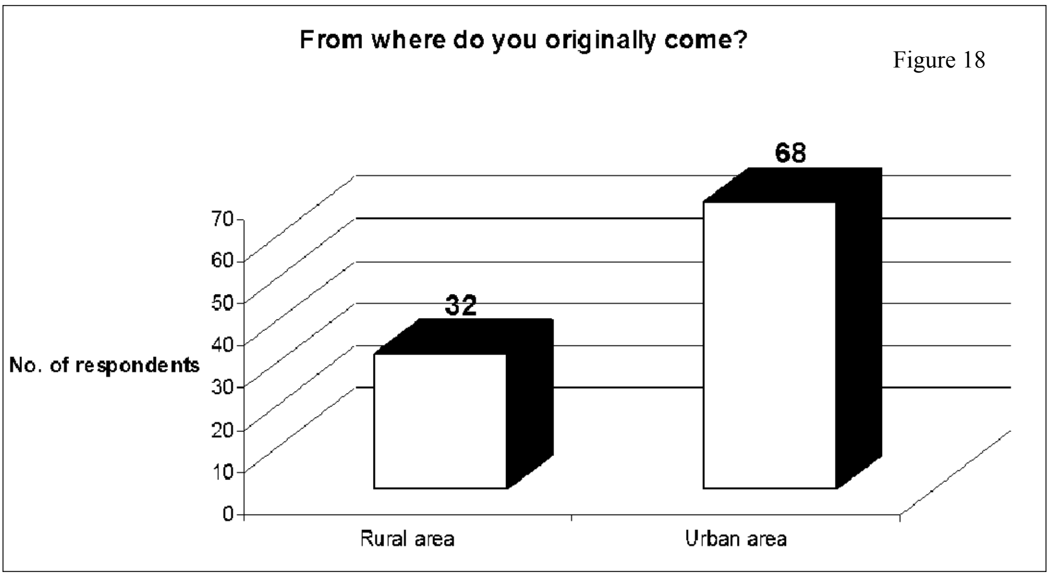
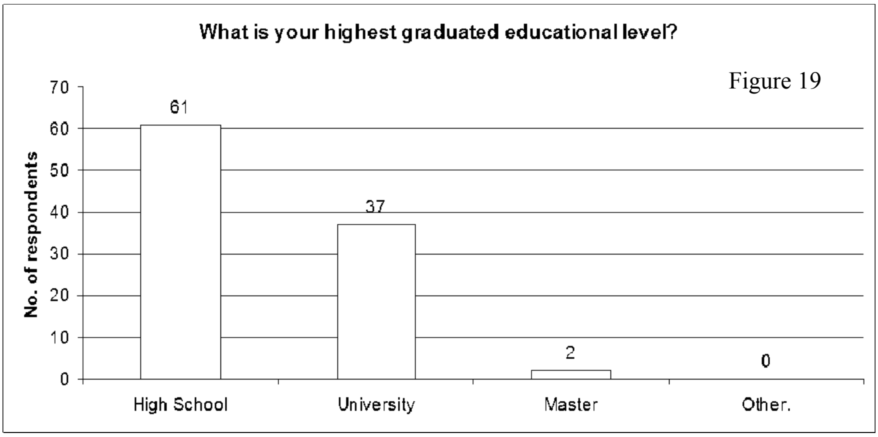


Figure 18

68 respondents grew up in urban areas, while 32 grew up in rural areas.



61 respondents had a high school diploma, 37 had a bachelor degree and 2 had a master degree.

3. Final remarks

The findings of our research display a complex consumer behaviour pertaining to cool drinks. The respondents showed a tendency towards objective buying decisions but amongst a collection of brands for which a certain degree of loyalty was displayed.

This study delivers insights about the criteria used by young South African people when making a buying decision and can be considered a suitable starting point for further research in consumer behaviour.

4. Acknowledgements

The data were gathered through the assistance of 5 academics to whom we would like to thank for their extremely valuable support: Mrs. Ileana Rogobete (PhD) – Corner Institute, Cape Town; Mr. Cristoffel Lombard- Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town; Assoc. Prof. AJ Nicol, Assoc. Prof. P Navsaria and Dr. S Edu- University of Cape Town, Cape Town

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