Analysis of consumer behaviour in the UK footwear market

by

Alena Pospisilova

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Tutor: Mrs Janine Day

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Alena Pospisilova
U1273253

Abstract

During the past couple of years, the UK footwear market has gone through a considerable transformation. Demand has significantly changed, thus has consumer behaviour. Therefore, the aim of this study was set to analyse the main aspects of consumer behaviour currently prevailing in the market. Furthermore, the major research was focused on exploring gender and generational differences in purchasing behaviour and consequently examining the current state of brand loyalty in the UK footwear market. The research was based on a questionnaire, which has been distributed to fashion and footwear associations and several universities in the UK. The questionnaire was sent via a social network and the network of the University of Huddersfield. Due to an insufficient number of responses, further research was carried out on a Huddersfield University campus. Results of the questionnaire showed very noticeable differences between women´s and men´s attitudes toward shoe shopping. Although a vast majority of women stated a strong positive relation toward footwear, men showed a significantly more moderate attitude. The results also indicated that nowadays, young consumers purchase rationally and carefully. The research has also revealed markedly low brand loyalty, which suggests that footwear brands/retailers may need to adjust their current offer, which has been found unsatisfactory.

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Introduction

During the historical development, a perception of footwear has gone through considerable changes. In the past, the footwear has amounted different roles in people's lives. Its original purpose as a protection of feet had transferred to an instrument underlining power and richness and nowadays shoes often represent fashion sense and style (Walford, 2007). Since the birth of culture, people have been using shoes as a way to express their personality and uniqueness and how to underpin a social status. According to Walford (2007), fashion is no longer a privilege of the rich. Furthermore, shoes may play an important role in creating a first impression about a person (Gillath et al., 2012). Footwear, which we own, may be an effective "cue" sending signals to our surrounding. It may disclose our "sense of security and insecurity, friendliness, intelligence, happiness or even creativity" (Gillath et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2011; Winget, 2010 cited in Gillath et al., 2012).

Footwear accompanies us though our whole life. Our relation toward shoes is shaped during all this period, while life-changing circumstances modify our perception. Steele (2005) points out that "our attitude toward shoes is surprisingly complicated if we consider that their evident purpose is to protect the feet". Clearly, there are plenty reasons why people purchase footwear these days. From practical reasons to a pure obsession, there is no sufficient handbook giving complex explanation of these motivators. From underpinning a membership in a particular society through enhancing sex appeal, there are still individuals who shoe shop only when they really need to. However, Steele (2005) points out that for shoe enthusiasts a word 'need' does not mean anything.

Finding actual explanations for what, how and why people shop is a key success-making factor for every company trying to find a demand for its products. Recognition of these purchasing habits, coupled with a right understanding of people´s desires, creates perfect conditions for strategy specialists.

Nowadays, there are plenty of great ideas and new technologies, which may help to create a long-lasting relationship with consumers and how to keep their loyalty (LaPlaca, 2004). From an exceptional design to a perfect fit, the technology allows so many options how to make company stand out from a crowd and make customer feel extraordinary (Anonymous, 2011; Zhang et al., 2012).

The current situation in the UK footwear market

The global footwear market has recorded substantial changes in the recent years. The demographic development draws attention to the aging, often overweight population, which significantly changes conditions in every market (see Chart 17 and 18 in Appendix A). These circumstances shift demand in the UK footwear market into a different direction, heading toward shoes that are both stylish and comfortable (Mintel, 2012c). A tremendous boom of mass media also makes population to be more aware of the latest fashion trends. Nowadays, mature consumers are significantly more fashion conscious than they used to be a few years ago (Mintel, 2012c).

During the last year, the overall footwear sales have slightly raised but an annual growth has slowed down (see Chart 19 in Appendix A). A cause may be found in fundamental changes of consumer behaviour. Figures show that specialized footwear stores are in a decline while fashion chains, offering apparel and footwear in the same time, are more sought after (see Chart 20 in Appendix A). Furthermore, especially sport brands benefit from a current trend of switching to footwear that is more casual. Other important issue recently emerged in the market is a rapid decline in spending on footwear repairs (Mintel, 2012c). While in the economic recession people used to extensively prolonged a service life of their shoes, nowadays consumers rather spend money on a new pair (Mintel, 2012c).

In terms of consumer´s loyalty, Clarks seems to have the biggest level of trust amongst customers (Mintel, 2012c). This achievement may come from targeting consumers "seeking out quality" (Mintel, 2012c). Despite this, competing Shoe Zone is also starting to skim its benefits after years of hard work while targeting customers. Cosyfeet and Hotter are heading towards a bright future as well. Mostly thanks to their complex

understanding of consumer needs (Mintel, 2012c). Current market shares of leading retailers may be found in Table 15, Appendix A.

Future development

Future development indicates that non-specialist retailers will continue to grow (Mintel, 2012c). On the other hand, specialists, led by Clarks, will probably need to restructure their portfolio and answer a demand seeking out fashionable appearance of footwear.

The aims of the study

According to constantly changing circumstances in the UK footwear market, the aim of the study was set to discern main aspects of consumer behaviour, currently prevailing in the UK footwear market.

First aim of the study is to find out, how today´s men and women perceive shoe shopping and what the main differences are. Consequently, gender differences in purchasing behaviour will be investigated in more details.

Within the second aim, generational purchasing motivators for footwear will be explored. Furthermore, an impact of gerontographic segments on purchasing behaviour of 55+ aged consumers will be examined.

Finally, the last part of the research is focused on brand/retail preferences and current state of brand loyalty amongst consumers.

1   Literature review

1.1   Customer behaviour

It is important for organisations to have an understanding of consumer behaviour and purchasing habits in order to formulate a marketing strategy to target the relevant groups (Solomon, 2007). Moreover, Solomon (2007) describes that each company is oriented to a different segment of consumers and it is just necessary to choose a proper approach, capable to attract and sustain desirable attention.

The disparities in the behaviour may come from cultural, gender, age, ethnic, occupation or income differences but also customer´s interests and habits may play a role in a decisions making process (Solomon, 2007). However, Solomon (2007) states that in some cases similarities may be found within the category. On the other hand, he agrees with Peter and Oslon (2010) who state that people´s buying behaviour, preferences and desires are changing all the time so it is necessary to keep up and constantly adjust marketing strategy.

Furthermore, Solomon (2007) claims that people are also under influence by their closest surrounding which includes friends, family, co-workers or classmates. A group of people sharing the same interests may be also taken under consideration as a potential influencing element. This person-specific group is called "reference group" (Solomon, 2007, p.5). An individual, either knowingly or unconsciously, subordinates his/her choices according to this group and often waiting for their approval (Solomon, 2007).

Despite all this information, Solomon (2007) points out that it is hard to state, what lead customers to choose a particular brand. However, some rational explanations may be found. Each person concentrates on a different aspect of a product. Sometime it is a product's appearance, attractive colour, extraordinary shape or exceptional quality. Final choice reflects person's desires and the inner feelings and highlights, how an individual expresses him/herself in a public. Moreover, Solomon (2007) emphasizes

that the choice sends a message to the surrounding, which concurrently has an effect on other people.

General characteristics describing the targeting group, its background, interests and desires create a specific demand. This targeting scheme is called "market segmentation" and it is commonly used while marketing strategy is being created (Solomon, 2007, p.5).

1.2 Marketing segmentation and determination of targeting groups

Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004) present an example of the different market segmentations. They distinguish a few types of a segmentation base, called as "geographical, demographic, psychological, psychographic, sociocultural, use-related and use-situation". Nevertheless, in many cases these criteria may be certainly connected. On the other hand, Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004) point out that even if some consumers meet the same characteristics, it is not a harbinger of the similar purchasing behaviour. Discrepancies may be found in ostensibly unimportant factors (Solomon, 2007).

Beside the correct determination of the characteristics of a customer, other two elements have an influence on purchasing behaviour and brand preferences (Morgan and Dev, 1994 cited in Mathur et al., 2003). These factors are "marketing-mix strategies employed by marketers" (Deighton et al., 1994 cited in Mathur et al., 2003) and "situational influences" (Bucklin and Srinivasan, 1991 cited in Mathur et al., 2003). Although these categories present a high influential potential, new attitudes show that a life changing circumstances have a huge impact on a customer´s choice. Researches have proven that these reversals are increasing an initiative to switch a brand (Mathur et al., 2003).

1.2.1 Geography

Different geographic circumstances are important elements, which make the world divided into several differing markets (Schiffmanm and Kanuk, 2004). A theory of Solomon (2007) declares that geographic factor creates specific manners and habits of consumers and these vary according to a country or in a more narrow point, by a region.

However, Solomon (2007) and Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004) add that modern techniques of communication and mass media might erased the differences and the world has begun a one big market. However, Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004) report that many companies have different marketing strategies for each region. Moreover, this strategy allows them to be more flexible and understandable.

In the view of Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004), it is difficult to describe general characteristics of consumer behaviour related to the origin. They claim that these characteristics usually vary in relation to a specific industry or type of a product. Nevertheless, they emphasize that brand selection and brand loyalty may be associated with a different religion, cultural or economic circumstances and a potential diversity in life values. As an example, Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004, p.477) report that Southeast Asia market is typical for a big consumption of luxury products and a comparison of Spanish and British teenage girls has showed, that British ones tend to make their decisions based on values of "friendship, sociability and sense of well-being".

According to further researches of Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004), citizens of certain counties pay higher attention to an origin of the product. Moreover, Shimp and Sharma (1987), in cooperation with Han (1988) cited in Samiee (1994) claim, that some nations may be more willing to buy foreign products in contrast with countries where the nationalism is profoundly ingrained. Furthermore, Schooler and Wildt (1968) cited in Samiee (1994) underline that under these circumstances a price might not be a crucial decisive factor while purchasing. In Samiee´s (1994) opinion, some companies take advantage of a positive country image to create a better value for their products.

1.2.2   Demographic segmentation

1.2.2.1   Age

A specification and a selection of a suitable targeting segment is a crucial decision within a strategy planning. Age groups are commonly used as boundary points separating each category. It is the easiest way, how to sort through customers into different groupings. According to specific preferences and needs, these groups help

narrowing producer´s focus, enable a better concentration on details and increase efficiency in the strategy planning (Solomon, 2007).

Solomon (2007, p.456) indicates that marketers the most commonly use a technique called "age cohorts". The age cohort is a generation of people in approximately same age, which experienced a similar historical development and share common icons.

Although, age is usually seen as a number of years presenting how long a person have lived, this so-called "chronological age" may be widen by many other "age perceptions" (Evans et al., 2009). These perceptions may capture a self-development caused by an influence from people around, obtained knowledge, changing environment or in addition, show a progress while an individual grows up (Evans et al., 2009).

1.2.2.1.1 "Generation Y"

A young consumer segment may be seen as a very important but a highly challenging targeting group. It is hard to draw a line between the age cohorts. Evans et al. (2009) determine this category as a "Generation Y" including "16-33 years olds in 2010". Others, as for example Solomon (2010, p.457) and Newman (2009), distinguish between young customers aged below sixteen and above sixteen. They also implemented a term "teenage", which has been firstly mentioned in 1956.

Despite these facts, all authors agree that the 'teenage' segment is a really wide and powerful grouping of purchasers, strongly controlling the world market. Every year, millions are spend for attractive marketing campaigns, narrowed to a teenage buyer. The main aim is to gain and maintain desirable attention and build a loyalty. However, in Solomon´s (2007) opinion supported by Newman (2009), nothing is that uneasy as to keep an attention of the young. Moreover, Newman (2009) adds that especially teenage minds and preferences are changing all the time and it is hard to discover "what totally rules" these days (Solomon, 2010, p.457).

Evans et al. (2009), as well as Newman (2009), also call this segment of consumers as a "Millennials". According to him, this wide group is highly influenced by mass media, which have guided and accompanied young people's lives since the early beginning and this fact has significantly influenced their personal development. Hence, "Millennials" have a huge power to manipulate with producers. This power is based on their deeply rooted materialism, an orientation towards well-known brands and a huge willingness to

take a risk (Evans et al., 2009). Moreover, Davidson (2003) cited in (Evans et al., 2009) summarize everything by stating that this celebrity/party led generation in unable to save money and proves no signs of individuality.

Newman's (2009) description of successful marketing approaches for the 'Generation Y' segment highlights an urge to be able to adjust, quickly react and often change the strategy. Although it may seem like time consuming and expensive approach leading to increased sales, this targeting group has so wide range that modern companies just cannot afford not to take them under consideration (Newman, 2009). Furthermore, this generation is informed enough to be in an advantage position. It has also been proven that if a narrowing is practiced correctly, it may bring company answers for many questions (Newman, 2009).

According to Evans et al. (2009), this generation uses media and social networks on a daily basis. Therefore, current companies may take an advantage of newly emerged technologies, which allow opportunities not only to promote but also to sell products. According to the Future Foundation (2000) cited in (Evans et al., 2009), the "Generation Y" is multi-national friendly and open-minded, which enables a usage of a big creativity and new opportunities to build a strong relationship with the young customers.

1.2.2.1.2 'Between X and Boomer'

After a dynamic and powerful purchasing group of the generation Y, a "Generation X" comes to a scene. According to Evans et al. (2009), "generation X", sometimes called as 'baby busters', is a group of buyers between 34-44 years old in 2010. In European perspective presented by Solomon (2010, pp.462-463), this group consists of purchasers "between the ages 18 a 29". This mass includes "over 30 million" people in Europe, which represents a huge force finding itself in "fashion, popular culture, politics and marketing" (Solomon, 2010, pp.462-463). Although a detailed description provided by Ritchie (1995) presents „Xers" as careful purchases with a great sense of family values and friendship, other side of a coin shows that they are negatively affected by a rising number of divorces and a decrease of income. In addition, a level of education plays a

significant role for these customers, but a presumed level of wage is quite low (Solomon, 2010). A reason, presented by Solomon (2010) and supported by Ritchie (1995) indicates, that "Xers live at home for a quite a long time". Therefore, the education often overshadows a desire for an early independence. It may be seen as a reason, why this cohort does not react on advertising in the same way as 'Yers'. Although, these people seem to enjoy a quality marketing campaigns, they are usually more cautious if it comes to "commercialization" (Mitchell, et al., 2005). Mitchell et al. (2005) emphasise that this segment is practical, highly resistant to a misleading advertising and commonly oriented toward good services.

A real nature of the "baby busters" has been questioned by Mitchell et al. (2005), who contradict with previous authors. In their opinion, "Xers" have been proven to find themselves in "a family life, local activism, national parks, penny loafers and mountain bikes" but concurrently with a sustain tendency to denial their own identity. Moreover, Mitchell et al. (2005) described them as "FLYERS (fun-loving youth en route to success)" seeking to postpone marriage or as "the NIKES (no income kids with education)". In addition, Mitchell et al. (2005) summarize everything by saying that the busters have been the first generation growing up in a course of a massive development of technology, a computing revolution and a formulation of new media. Therefore, these circumstances have given a rise of a new phenomenon of "dual-income households" and the most educated generation in the history of USA. Those enjoy themselves by purchasing "Rolex, Range Rovers and red suspenders" (Mitchell et al., 2005). Shankar (2002) cited in Evans et al. (2009) adds that a major part of 1960s generation seems to be brand oriented with often tendency to purchase products, which underpin a young appearance.

The last fact, presented by Mitchell et al. (2005), merges with an interesting fact about "Boomer women", showed by Ritchie (1995). She has proven that some women, belonging to this generation, tend to sacrifice a part of their family life for sake of a career growth. It leads to an increased demand for luxury products and brands as "Rolex watches, Saabs, and BMWs". On the other hand, Ritchie (1995) points out a contrary view claiming that the most of these "housewives" still remain family oriented and

everyday shopping consists of functional clothing, quality day care and home offices (Ritchie, 1995).

Above definition describes so-called "baby boomers", who are often connected with the generation X (Solomon, 2010). Solomon (2010, pp.464-465) states that this generation "born between 1946 and 1964" has been highly influenced by the post-war development. This led to a creation of the strongest age cohort, which will be responsible for 40 per cent of US spending in 2015 (Solomon, 2010, pp.464-465; Court et al., 2007). According to Solomon (2010), this generation proves its importance from year to year, since a problem of an aging population is affecting the whole world.

Solomon (2010) states that the "boomers" have participated in a creation of a new lifestyle, which had totally turned inside out traditional approaches in economy, politics, trends and marketing. Despite all revolutionary events as hippies or yuppies, by which this generation influenced a world's ordinary flow, many marketers were not considering this cohort as attractive (Solomon, 2010). Moreover, even nowadays many people consider "boomers" as an elderly part of population, which seems to be doomed to spend a rest of their days living decently in a shadow without wider purpose (Solomon, 2010).

However, a reality shows them as people full of vitality, who are waiting to take an advantage of opportunities newly emerging to them (Solomon, 2010). They have a potential of the strongest purchasing force with enthusiasm to spend their life savings. Nevertheless, Court et al. (2007) warn that many "boomers" suffer from early health problems and a financial instability.

1.2.2.1.3 Cognitive age

Besides a determination of the impacts of the "chronological age", Moschis et al. (2011) underpin an importance of "cognitive age". This category reflects how an individual actually perceive him/herself and it most certainly breaks barriers of a classic point of view at the rules of age groups (Evans et al., 2009). This approach considers that a person does not act within general characteristics of his/hers age cohort, but in a way, how he/she feels like to behave. The recent evidence from Solomon (2010, p.470) supported by Rudnick et al. (2006) reports that especially young boomers tend to deny

their age. He states that they act like "you are only as old as you feel". Furthermore, in their research, Mathur and Moschis (2005) have recorded the same results supporting that people in a mature stage of life see themselves significantly younger. The cognitive age raises a significant alert in a relation to a marketing approach, used to attract mature segment. Solomon (2010, p.470) suggests that more than a half of "boomers" would not buy a product, which promotion shows a "stereotyped" view at elderly. According to this, a several groups of over 50s should be determined. Solomon (2010, p.471) distinguishes "an older group (aged 55-64), an elderly group (65-74), an aged group (aged 75-84) and a very old group (85+)".

Evans et al. (2009) summarize everything by saying that from all these targeting groups, people over 50 show a higher level of loyalty towards favourite brands in compare with their younger followers. He also suggests that their nature of being highly practical and rational leads producers to underpin product's qualities rather than implicate a tempting advertisement.

1.2.2.2   Gender

Numerous studies have attempted to explain differences between female and male purchasing behaviour. In Solomon´s (2007) opinion, it is important to state that male and female shopping habits and preferences highly vary according to type of goods, which is being purchased. However, if it comes to fashion, a diversification of these manners seem to be a reasonable action. Solomon (2007) suggests that a selection of brands is often determined by a name of a brand itself. This fact underpins that some producers deliberately design a name of a product to arouse an interest of a particular gender in their products. The differences often come from "the instrumentality of product" (Solomon, 2007, p.217). In their study, Dittmar et al. (1995) supported by Cox and Dittmar (1995) cited in Solomon (2007, p.217) have revealed that women´s fashion habits tend to reflect their "social and personal interrelatedness with others", however males, tend to underpin their "personality and functional benefits".

1.2.2.2.1   Segmenting women

During the past couple of years, a view of a modern mature woman has gone through big changes (Solomon, 2007). Silverman (2000) cited in Wray and Hodges (2008) points out that today´s woman is "independent, educated, employed, career oriented, motivated and self-confident" individual. Solomon (2007) emphasises that woman´s role, which use to be presented as a housewife, is no longer valid. Wray and Hodges (2008) demonstrate that a modern woman pays significantly more attention to her appearance than her predecessors had done. A trend of "working-mothers" created a multitasking woman willing to keep herself fit, good looking and vital, while maintaining a successful career, family and a busy social life. In addition, Abend (1998) and Hall (1986) cited in Wray and Hodges (2008) highlighted that this trend increases the demand for sport brands significantly. Today´s demand requires apparel and footwear with great utility features and an exceptional appearance in the same time.

1.2.2.2.2   Male shopping habits

According to Solomon (2007), men purchasing preferences have evolved as well. A classic marketing approach based on an underpinning manhood is on the half of way to disappear. New marketing approaches presented by Solomon (2007) show, how marketers try to arouse men´s sensitive side and raise interest in fashion goods.
All recent changes have revealed a desire of today´s mature men and women to become younger, prettier and successful. It is playing into the hands of marketers promoting campaigns to "be older and still looking good" (Solomon, 2007, p.221). According to Wray's and Hodge's (2008) research, today's women, in fewer cases men, also tend to consider themselves being younger than they really are.

1.2.3   'Life-changing events'

Researches have proven that immediately after the age groups, 'life-changing events' have a huge impact on consumer behaviour. The impacts of these events have been widely investigated by Moschis (2007). He discovered that besides effects from person's early phase of life, later events have the same influencing potential to shape patterns of future purchasing habits. Besides consecutive coming events during a lifetime, Moschis (2007) examined an impact of unexpected ones as well. He

distinguished three groups of influencing evens and these are "age-graded transition events; expected or unexpected events; and biological, psychological, social and environmental changes". Moschis (2007) states that from unexpected events as for example loss of a family member, to expected events linked for example with a maturation, each of these influential factors leave a trance in person's mind and give him/her new kind of knowledge, experience or competences. Moschis (2007) highlights that consequences shape individuals "physical, social and emotional demands" and later he/she acts in a way to satisfy these newly emerged needs.

In the following table, Moschis (2007) provides examples of a few influential factors and their impacts on person's purchasing behaviour.

Table 1 Life-changing events and their effect on consumer behaviour (Moschis, 2007)

Influential Events	Processes	Outcomes	Examples of developed habits
Age graded transition events	Socialization	Change of personality -adapting of new role in life; new identity;	Changes of possessions Belk (1988) cited in Moschis (2007)
			Products dispositions McAlexander et al. (*1993)* cited in Moschis (2007)
Expected or unexpected events	Stress	Change of emotions and behaviour	Compulsive consumption O'Guinn and Faber (*1989*) cited in Moschis (2007)
			Materialism Rindfleisch et al. (*1997*) cited in Moschis (2007)
			Consumer additions Hirschman (*1992*) cited in Moschis (2007)
			Brand and store preferences Andreasen (*1984*) and Lee et al. (*2001*) cited in Moschis (2007)
Biological, psychological, social and environmental changes	Development and growth and decline	Behavioural and mental changes – developing of new knowledge and competencies	Information processing John (*1999*) cited in Moschis (2007)

1.2.4 Impact of historical development on purchasing behaviour

To determine all possible impacts of the "life-changing events", historical development has to be taken under consideration (Moschis et al., 2011). Although, a relation between historical development and consumer behaviour has been questioned several times, Wray and Hodges (2008) supported by Moschis et al. (2011) have proven a significant dependence. To support the argument, Moschis (2007) emphasises that historical development belongs to the life circumstances, which also playing a role while forming a person's attitude toward life challenges. Moschis et al. (2011) also revealed that history has highly influencing potential, despite a fact that it is irrelevant in relation to the aging process. In their study, Wray and Hodges (2008) have reviewed to a change of attitude of today's women, who pay a significantly higher attention to their appearance. Moreover, Moschis et al. (2011) have revealed that generation, now aged from 50 to 65, have been accompanied by a massive development of "experimentation and novelty". This expansion has emerged to a bigger willingness to experiment with new goods and services but also created a huge challenge for marketers regarding "unpredictability" of these consumers (Moschis et al., 2011).

1.2.5 Psychological states

To demonstrate effects of the previously mentioned influences, it is important to point out that all these have a direct impact on a psychological state of mind of an individual (Mathur and Moschis, 2005). According to Moschis et al. (2011), this finding suggests that a psychology is a driving factor of a decision making process. They have also proven that all influences shape customer's demand, preferences and desires. A level of popularity of certain products and services is also determined by outside circumstances, as well as different responds to "marketing stimuli". Moschis et al. (2011) summarize everything by saying that results have an important implication for developing of a marketing strategy and deepening customer relations.

1.2.5.1 Gerontographic segments

Moschis (1996) have firstly carried out a study of gerontographic segments, investigating behaviour of mature consumers. Moschis (1996) has analysed how "aging,

life circumstances and live-changing events" influence consumers behaviour and purchasing preferences. He used this framework to determine several groups of mature customers [55 and older], which capture impacts of these outside effects. This marketing research attitude is called the gerontographic segments and it distinguishes 'Health Indulgers; Healthy Hermits; Frail Recluses and Ailing Outgoers'. Each one of these groups presents different purchasing behaviour reflecting a psychological state of mind and a willingness to stay active despite negative impacts of aging (Moschis, 1996).

Following table provides brief characteristics of each group mentioned above and captures estimated behaviour and responses to marketing stimuli.

Table 2 The Gerontographic segments (Moschis, 1996)

Group	Intensity of the impact of 'life-changing events' such as 'retirement, widowhood, and chronic conditions'	Characteristics	Priorities/ Purchasing Behaviour	Marketing responses
Health Indulgers	Low	Similar behaviour with younger counterparts; financial and career stability	Leisure activities and entertainment; 'independent living'; high-tech fans; do not mind to pay higher price	'Convenience and personal service'
Healthy Hermits	High impact with negative consequences	'Psychologically and socially withdrawn'; lowering 'self-concept and self-worth'	Orientation toward utility features of goods; Urge of social acceptance; Preference of well-known brands; willingness to pay high prices	Reaching strong relations is achieved by an understanding of their need regarding their age (carefully selected staff, clear description of product´s properties); convenient location of department stores due to their health problems
Frail Recluses	High impact with positive consequences	'Acceptance of old-age status'; determination to cope with inevitable aging changes	Attention paid to traditional values	
Ailing Outgoers	High impact but remaining positive attitude	Remaining positive attitude and view of the world; acceptance of 'aging limitations'; financial stability	'Getting the most out of life'; orientation towards lower prices and sales	Special attention paid to food; positive response to offers capturing their increasing health problems; practical apparel; valuable social network

It is important to state that customers tend to switch the groups due to "aging processes, life circumstances, and life-changing events", which they experience during their lives (Moschis, 1996). A tendency to change groups according to life changes is showed in a following picture.

Chart 1 A possible change of The Gerontographic segments (Moschis, 1996)
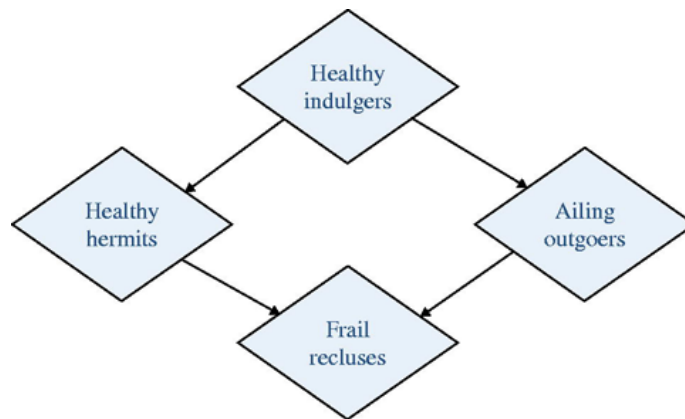
1.3 Consumer behaviour in fashion

Dias (2003) emphasizes that a right understanding of crucial generational differences may lead production and promotion towards a right direction. It applies especially in the fashion industry. Although, purchasing behaviour is mostly unpredictable, a recognition of "the motivators for purchasing" may help producers to determine crucial strategic targets. Despite all the previous strong arguments, in her paper, Dias (2003) has proven that when consumers reach certain age, motivators have a tendency to merge.

1.3.1 Generation Y and its desires in fashion

According to Dias (2003), shopping of fashion items seems to have a significant social meaning for the "generation Y". She has proven that young buyers find shopping in a mall rather as an opportunity to socialize and chitchat about daily twists than wonder around shops with a goal of actual purchase. Her research of buying motivators of American society has showed that "Yers" are finding themselves in purchasing brands which represent "clean cut, all American way of life". The brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Abercrombie and Fitch (Dias, 2003).

There is a huge amount of studies exploring purchasing behaviour of young consumers. Because many of them are directly narrowed to footwear problematic, those will be described in more details in the following chapter.

1.3.2 Generation X and its fashion purchasing motivators

After the spontaneous "generation X", led and influenced by the media and a social surrounding while purchasing fashionable goods, Dias (2003) defines "generation Y" as more rational and practical shoppers. A choice of brands like Banana Republic and J. Crew underpin a rational purchase but highlights a tendency to remain chic (Dias, 2003).

1.3.2.1 Mature Consumers´ Selection

There is a large volume of published studies describing how mature consumers chose a particular brand or a department store. In their research of the US market, Moschis et al.

(2011) have examined differentiators in motives for purchasing and patronizing brands related to the age cohorts, gender and belonging to the gerontographic segment. The main aim of the study was to find out what is the most important and most often determinant, leading customers to purchase a specific brand.

In a general scale, Moschis et al. (2011) revealed that almost eighty per cent of consumers are tempted by sales and special offers. The second most common response was a recommendation from friends or relatives. A small remaining fragment of the sample mentioned other people´s opinions or "following directions provided with the product" as their purchasing motivator (Moschis et al., 2011).

While focusing on the older age cohorts, Moschis et al. (2011) specified customers into three groups: "55-64, 65-74, and 75 +". His finding showed significant similarity in purchasing behaviour between each of these groups. Those emphasise an importance of "availability of coupons, advice of same-age peers, and proper age stereotyping of ads". A statistics also underpinned a fact that an increasing dependency on other people´s help lead the oldest segment [75+] to subordinate their choice due to a salesperson recommendation (Moschis et al., 2011).

Moschis et al. (2011) demonstrate that there is an unambiguous relation between the purchasing behaviour of mature customers and their belonging into the to the gerontographic segment. The recent evidence supported a theoretical background presented by Moschis (1996). Previously mentioned high attention of "ailing outgoers" and "healthy hermits", paid to an understanding of their special needs, has been again proven by Morchis et al. (2011). The study identified that they "twice as likely" purchase a product with practical and physical properties then the rest of the sample (Moschis et al., 2011). Behaviour of "frail recluses" supported a relevance of the gerontographic segments as well. They demonstrated markedly higher concern in clear and visible labels showing necessary information. "Ailing outgoes'" orientation towards lower prices and sales has been supported in the research too. They showed their interest in using coupons while purchasing products (Moschis et al., 2011). "Ailing outgoes" also subordinate their decision to other people´s opinions and recommendations. It is related with their huge concern in the valuable social network.

This research has proven an increasing value and reliability of the gerontographic segments for marketing research.

1.3.3 Women vs. Men

Although it has been said once before, it is important to state that for the right understanding of the differences between customers behaviour, women´s and men´s purchasing habits need to be distinguished.

It applies especially in case of fashion. Statistic data published by US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009) and Mintel (2012a) show that women spend significantly more money for apparel and footwear products than men do. A number of studies have found that if it comes to men, just a very small percentage of current male shoppers show an initiative to purchase fashion goods (Dias, 2003). Nevertheless, statistics data presented by Mintel (2012b) reported a considerable growth of men´s interest in fashion. Dias (2003) presents her opinion by saying that typical characteristics of today's men customers seem to be a clearly lax attitude, a minimal interest in style and resistance against sales offers. Moschis et al. (2011) support this claim by stating that the research revealed an apparent evidence of male dependency on their counterparts or relatives opinion. He also pointed out that price factor is more likely to be taken into an account by women than by men. Dias (2003) demonstrates that the female companions, who are often present while shopping, are often an origin of purchasing decisions. This fact has been supported by Kimmel (1994) cited in Bakewell et al. (2006), who claims that many men takes fashion shopping as a symbol of effeminacy.

Despite all previously mentioned facts, Bakewell et al. (2006) disagree with these arguments by claiming, that "generation Y male consumers have showed increasing fashion consciousness". Although recent evidence from Bakewell et al. (2006) demonstrated that young males are aware of current trends and try to keep their outfit up to date, it also has not revealed any excessively great interest in fashion either. Moreover, Bakewell et al. (2006) underpin that a major part of young men tend to be "trendy" but retain a masculine appearance.

If it comes to female consumers, statistic data provided by Mintel (2012a) states that women´s purchasing behaviour in fashion diverse according to the age cohorts significantly. Despite a fact that most of the women are known to be passionate about shopping, in her research, Dias (2003) discovered that mature women do not tend to be oriented toward well know and fashionable brands. Those representing the "generation X" make rational decisions and purchase goods, which are practical rather than good looking.

In addition, overview of mature woman purchasing behaviour, presented in previous chapter, highlights their huge interest in an active sport life. An offshoot of the footwear industry providing sport shoes has recorded a big rise. Quality sport footwear is essential for sports. Demanding shoes are generally segmented into a several groups depending on a sport activity required (Wray and Hodge, 2008).

Data provided by Mintel (2012a) supports the previous claim and adds information that young women under 35s are very fashion oriented and conscious, followed by slightly older females, who still want to be fit and chic.

1.4   Consumer behaviour in the footwear industry

Although an extensive research has been carried out on the consumer behaviour in fashion in general, not many studies exist which would adequately cover all aspects of consumer habits in the footwear industry. There is not enough supporting information showing reasons why, where and how often people purchase footwear. However, a few authors like Munro and Steele (1999) and Belk (2003) have examined certain areas dealing with purchasing shoes. Although, a lack of data may be found in consumer attitudes toward shoe shopping, Belk (2003) supports the idea that people purchase shoes to express themselves.

1.4.1   A frequency of shoe shopping

Mintel (2012c) examines all aspects of shoe shopping in UK while Belk (2003) was trying to determine purchasing motivators in US. Researches presented by Mintel (2012c) have examined in details, how often people buy footwear and why. Results have revealed that an average consumer purchase shoes every six months or less and

only 3.5% of a sample is shopping once a month. According to Mintel (2012c), in past couple of years footwear spending are noticeably increasing. On the other hand, a "slump" in spending on shoe repairs has been recorded by Mintel (2012c) too. This fact shows a tendency of people to widen their wardrobe and invest in new pairs.

Despite all the previously mentioned differences in purchasing behaviour of males and females presented by Dias (2003) and Moschis et al. (2011), Mintel (2012c) has not found significant differences in relation to the footwear purchase. The researched have provided information that men shoe shop equally often as women do (Mintel, 2012c). Some exceptions of males shopping shoes just once a year have been found but the overall number was negligible.

However, the research held by Belk (2003) has proven slightly different results. These results are showing a strong predominance of female shoppers. While Mintel's (2012c) research supports an awareness of practical and rational nature of mature women, Belk (2003) presents extreme shopaholic tendencies of female purchasers. Belk (2003) reports that while no man in his research has proven owning more than "30 pairs" of shoes, a few women revealed a fascinating truth of owning "over 100 pairs". Another research held by Footwear News and analysed by Bell (2008) presents "luxury customers". These shoppers are mainly represented by women with a high wage, capable to sacrifice a nice night in a restaurant for a pair of luxury shoes. Not only that these women indicate that shoe shopping is a hobby, they tend to purchase them during all year to secure themselves the best pieces and prices. Information supporting the claim may be found in a paper from Tong et al. (2012). In their research, they examined women's purchasing behaviour during "retail shoes sales promotions". They based their research on a strong evidence of females' affection for shoe shopping and sales. These "bargain-hunters" do not consider price to be an indicator of quality (Bell, 2008). Belk (2003) considers women from "18-24 years old to be the most price sensitive".

Despite all these claims, Belk (2003) adds that shoes seem to have an equal importance for both genders. They also represent a key factor of making an opinion about people in the closest surrounding.

1.4.2   The most common reasons for purchasing the footwear

As other part of its research, Mintel (2012c) also examined motivators for the shoe shopping. In general, the most commonly mentioned motivator was to "replace a worn out shoes" or "to find something comfortable". Maybe surprisingly, many people reported that their reason for buying shoes is to reward themselves. This finding was mostly true for young women who use the shoe shopping to improve their image as well as mood after a bad day (Mintel, 2012c; Bell, 2008). Other commonly mentioned reasons have been a reduced price or a change of a season (Mintel, 2012c). Goffman (1963) cited in Belk (2003) has found out that possible stimuli for the shoe shopping may be wearing "unpopular shoes during childhood." A purchasing decision made under the pressure from parents, or in adulthood from female counterparts, seem to be commonly occurred motivators as well (Belk, 2003; Mintel, 2012c; Dias, 2003). On the other hand, information presented by Mintel (2012c) has supported the claim that men's interest in fashion is slowly raising and they want to keep up with the latest fashion streams.

All previous reasons seem to be clearly connected with age cohorts. Younger customers tend to purchase shoes more often to stay "trendy" or match their outfit and they put price and fashionable style before quality aspects. According to Munro and Steele (1999) mature and senior customers purchase shoes from obvious practical reasons and prefer comfort at the expense of style.

1.4.3   'Why they buy, by where they buy'

Why people prefer certain brand or department store is usually a big mystery. However, Mintel (2012c) has created an idea that a reason why people purchase footwear is directly linked with a place where they buy it. It explains a reason why a practical purchase is more likely to be connected with specialized shoe shops or websites than with stores well known for great price offer as Primark.

Other important connecting link explaining the brand choice is definitely age. For example, Clarks seem to be an often target for mature customers who appreciate their relevant and wide offers and see it as a guarantee of quality (Mintel, 2012c). On the

other hand, young customers are usually attracted by brands offering apparel as well as footwear. Mintel (2012c) linked this increasing trend with people purchasing shoes to match their new outfits. The researched have noted stores like Primark, New Look and Next (Mintel, 2012c).

On the following picture, Mintel (2012c) presents how is age related to the brand choice.

Chart 2 Where people buy, by age and affluence (Mintel, 2012c)
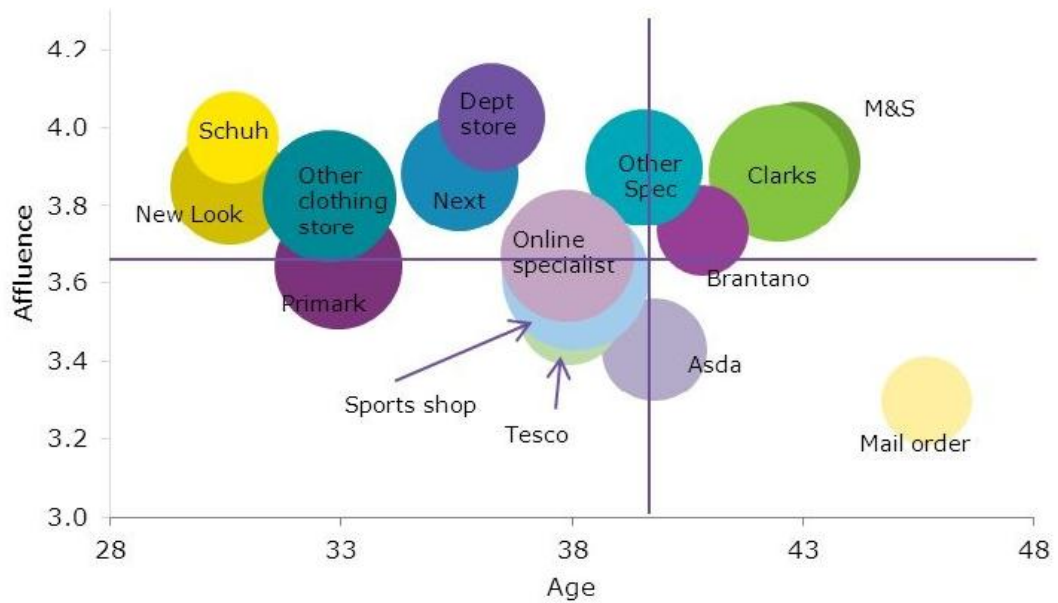
1.4.4 A brand loyalty

According to Mintel's (2012c) results showing that 40% of customers purchase familiar brands, brand loyalty has significantly increased these days. Moreover, Schooler and Wildt (1968) cited in Samiee (1994) have linked brand loyalty with an origin of the product. Schiffmanm and Kanuk (2004) support the claim by adding that some nations pay bigger attention to the product´s origin, while Mintel (2012c) proves it to be true for UK. Once mentioned unimportance of price for customers oriented towards this direction has also been verified in the research of Mintel (2012c).

In his survey, Fenhaus (2011) examined a relation between a customer loyalty and people offering services. He claims that people are a crucial determinant creating a strong relation capable to sustain in long-term perspective. Moreover, he indicates that employees providing customer's service are "the icing on the cake", which gives the product a desired value. The results of Mintel (2012c) shows that people are more satisfied with services provided by online sellers that services in classic department stores. In Munro's and Steele's (1999) report, 65 years old and older consumers revealed a significantly higher attention paid to services provided while shoe shopping due to their reduced mobility and independence.

1.4.5 Young people and shoes

Although, the area dealing with footwear purchasing behaviour of mature consumers is not widely covered, the area of young customer behaviour in the footwear seems to be widely researched. Belk (2003) emphasizes that especially teenagers show their personality and uniqueness by wearing highly fashionable shoes. In their case, shoes serve as a differentiator, commonly used to provoke and express a rebellious stage of life. According to Belk (2003), it seems that nowadays a "special selves expressing, symbolic, transformation to womanhood" trend of teenage girls is to have a first pair of high heels. Belk (2003) who has captured a true origin of teenage shoe shopping better than anyone, states that through shoes "young adults work out issues of identity, individualism, conformity, lifestyle, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and personality".

Current research launched by Mintel (2012c) supported the overall description of young customer behaviour presented by Dias (2003). The research has showed that "generation Y" tends to shoe shop more often than the mature buyers do. Their shoe shopping motivator "to keep up with latest trends" has been also supported by Mintel's (2012c) results. This again proves a clearly higher consciousness of fashion.

Research of a company Piper Jaffrey showed by Anonymous (2007) and supported by Newman (2009) proves that U.S. teenagers mostly prefer sport brands as Nike or Adidas. These brands are considered as highly fashionable but still comfortable and well fitted. These attributes secure them a constantly high percentage of sales and stable position on the market.

Newman (2009) and Keller (2008) point out how these companies wisely use available information about their customers and connect basic traditional elements of their marketing strategy with new approaches. This approach strength their position on the footwear market and helps maintaining a phenomenon of the best brands in the world.
Keller (2008) explains a process of creating strategy, implemented by Nike. He also supports the results of the survey mentioned. Even such a huge and successful company as Nike used to have problems with young people´s needs (Keller, 2008). Nevertheless, in the right time, they discovered the hole in the market and they filled it with great ideas. They launched new websites and features enabling young customers to be more involved (Keller, 2008). Keller (2008) also explains that Nike discovered a success-making factor in focusing on the customer as an individual.

As Belk (2003) has already mentioned, Newman (2009) points out that a key point of making a long-term relationship with the "Generation Y" is an awareness of a young's urge to show the world their own style. Express different selves. In response to this finding, footwear producers started providing new types of services and ran new marketing campaigns in the currently emerged media. Keller (2008) gave an example of Nike´s new strategic decision, which provides an option to create a unique pair of footwear by using its websites or tools in stores. Website tools allow each customer to design a perfectly special pair of shoes with unmistakable style. Afterwards this unique

creation may be delivered in a box and bag with the identically same design. Every successful company have accepted necessary changes but they still keep their original values. Despite all advantaged of the new media, Newman (2009) emphasised that managers of huge footwear producers would never underestimate a magic and a special atmosphere of shopping in a pleasant, modern store with experienced and helpful staff.

1.5 Conclusion

Previous literature sources have proven that customer behaviour is changing all the time due to several factors. These factors affect person's attitude toward shopping during entire life course. From an early stage of life, our mind is shaped by different upbringing techniques, wide scale of people around including friends, family and people from a work environment, by political or economic twists and by the global change of our environment. The differences in the purchasing behaviour are consequence of variable perceptions of everyday as well as unexpected events. However, it is hard to capture these variables, marketers from the whole world try to determine these to create a suitable marketing strategy. A first step may be to investigate current motivators and habits within an industry to have a clear imagination of people's needs and desires.

2 Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to show the aims and objectives of the study arising out of the literature review, followed by a detailed description of a research approach, chosen to investigate these aims.

2.1 The aims and objectives of the study

After summarising main aspects of customer behaviour, with a specification of consumers' attitudes and habits during shoe shopping, the aim of this research has been set to determine purchasing motivators and brand preferences in the footwear industry in the UK. The research is built to distinguish gender and generational differences, and simultaneously investigate an influence of the gerontographic segments on purchasing motivators of mature consumers. To extend the study, brand/retail preferences and brand loyalty are investigated in a final part of the research.

According to the research's aims, the following research objectives have been formed:

- Is a theory of the gerontographic segments, which is explaining shoe shopping behaviour of mature consumers, applicable in the footwear retailing?
- What are the differences between footwear purchasing behaviour of males and females?
- What are the generational purchasing motivators for footwear?
- What are prioritized brands/retailers amongst UK consumers? Are UK consumers brand loyal?

Consequently, the hypotheses have been defined:

- There is a significant association between gender and relation toward shoes.
- There is a very significant association between gender and pairs of shoes, which person owns.
- There is a significant association between age and a frequency of shoe shopping.
- There is a significant association between marital status and person, who influence respondent to go shoe shopping.

- There is a significant association between age and person, with whom people choose to shoe shop.

2.2 Research approach and method

Before starting the research itself, it is necessary to choose a proper approach and method that is going to be used. In addition, Kelemen and Rumens (2008) highlighted that a right understanding and evaluation of the research are conditioned by choosing a proper theoretical background. A determination and selection of a proper theory may help us present our discoveries to others; understand how other people perceive the world or find different linkages between basic characteristics as a gender and age (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008, p.5).

Due to a nature of the research focused on consumer behaviour, realism has shown to be a relevant theory. Although positivism, as well as realism respects a fact that some events and social structures happen independently and act "upon us", realism takes under consideration a power of social relationships (Partington, 2002). As Solomon (2007) has stated, person adapts and conditions his/her behaviour according to a relevant "reference group", people in the closest surrounding. A change of the group evokes a change of an individual's attitude and a perspective.

A large scope of literature, providing a complex theoretical background about the consumer behaviour, pointed to the appropriateness of using deduction as a research approach. The aim of the research is to gather information from wide scale of footwear consumers and deduce specifics applicable to an individual.

2.2.1 Collecting data

Due to the deduction approach, short amount of time and limited financial resources, a collection of quantitative data has been chosen for the study. Walliman (2004) emphasises obvious positives of quantitative data by stating that these are easily measurable and quickly and accurately evaluated. He adds that results are usually exact and reliable since there are numerous mathematical or statistical tests and models to use. Moreover, when a numbers of responses is rising, reliability increases as well. In addition, it is possible to use two ways of asking question while using the quantitative

data (Walliman, 2004). Beside measurement of basic quantitative data like population counts, Walliman (2004) shows a possibility to use qualitative questions that are lately evaluate as a numerical. Due to a principle of research constructed to discover consumers' opinions and attitudes toward shoe shopping, it has turned out to be a suitable way of gathering data. The literature review has provided quality secondary data describing a chosen area. Collecting of primary data will serve to explore, explain and examine relationships and test defined hypothesis.

2.2.2   Research method

One of the most common methods of collecting quantitative data is a survey (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Thanks to a determination to collect as big amount of responses as possible, a self-completion survey has been chosen for the research (Hair et al., 2011). The self-completion survey is structured in a questionnaire, which use the internet and mail as a distribution channel (Hair et al., 2011). Thanks to substantial advantages of using mass media, internet questionnaire seems to be a suitable method. From all its advantages, impersonality may be considered as the main positive (Walliman, 2004). Moreover, a short period of time reserved to the research pointed to an option of using the internet, enabling wide scale, fast and economic communication (Walliman, 2004). To meet the research objectives several types of questions need to be asked. Beside basic information about age and gender, dividing consumers into a few different groupings, consumers' opinions will be questioned as well. An option to use multiple quotes, expressing different points of view, is another key advantage why the questionnaire has been chosen (Walliman, 2004).

2.2.2.1   Limitations of the chosen method

Beside obvious advantages of the survey questionnaires, there are some drawbacks and negatives of this particular method. According to Walliman (2004), due to the internet, costs of distribution are no longer valid. On the other hand, he points out that neither these modern media cannot secure a high response rate. Impersonality is maybe popular advantage but some aspects of personal communication may enable to overcome question difficulties and achieve desirable responds rate. Moreover, questions need to

be asked clearly by an appropriate and relevant language. The language used should not be misleading but short, to keep respondent's attention (Walliman, 2004).

2.3 Population

The targeting population of the study is UK citizens. The research would like to map out several age groups representing this population with a goal to examine adequate shoe purchasing behaviour. Therefore, the population has been divided into several age groups, starting with young consumers from 18 to 33 years old representing the "generation X" and then 34-44, 45-54 and 50+ aged representing baby busters and baby boomers.

2.4 Sampling

Data represents the most essential part of every research. In ideal case, the data would be collected from whole population. But due to limited time, proper sample needs to be chosen to represent the population. If the sample is selected carefully, discoveries may accurately reflect the population (Hair et al., 2011).

According to Hair et al. (2011), there are two methods of sampling, probability and non-probability sampling. Although, the probability sampling would be more suitable for the research, due economic and time limitations, non-probability sampling has been chosen (Hair et al., 2011).

Consequently, several UK universities, fashion and footwear associations have been chosen as a sample.

There are several techniques of non-probability sampling. A convenience sampling has been selected due to an easy access to students via a social network and to lecturers and staff via the network of University of Huddersfield. A wide range of respondents may also be accessible at the University of Huddersfield campus (Hair et al., 2011).

Other techniques presented by Hair et al. (2011) called judgment sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling, have been rejected after careful consideration. The judgment sampling is not suitable due to a high probability of biased results; the

snowball sampling that use probability methods may be too time consuming and the quota sampling has not shown to be appropriate as well (Hair et al., 2011).

2.5 Distribution of the questionnaire

A social network has been selected as a primary distribution channel. It has been noted as appropriate after reconsidering of its advantages to spread the questionnaire to a wide range of consumers. In addition, with an assistance of author´s personal tutor, the questionnaire has been sent out via the email client of University of Huddersfield, with a goal to reach mature consumers who do not use social networking.

After a preliminary check of received responses and discovery that only one age cohort had been represented in results, the author has decided to distribute the questionnaire in a printed form as well. The collection of data has been carried out at the University of Huddersfield campus and in a shopping centre.

2.6 Design of the questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into four main parts. Most of the questions have been designed according to the previous studies held by Dias (2003), Moschis et al. (2011), Bakewell et al. (2006) and Mintel (2012c). A part of the questions requires selection of only one answer. The rest of the questions are designed on the principle of check boxes, allowing respondent to choose more answers suitable for him/her.

The first part of the questionnaire explores general information about a respondent and contains questions asking about gender, age, marital and occupational status. This information will serve to sort through the respondents into different groupings, which will simplify processing of results. To meet an objective related to the gerontographic segments, this part also contains a specific question asking about an everyday life-style of mature consumers.

Second part of the questionnaire contains single question asking about fashion awareness, which will be used to examine fashion consciousness of today's males and females.

Third part is reserved for the footwear problematic. Some questions are formed into statements indicating relation toward shoes. While processing of the results, these statements will be used to express a perception of shoe shopping and other related areas explaining footwear purchasing motivators and habits.

Finally, the last section explores brand/retailer loyalty with a goal to find out motives for patronizing certain brand or retailer.

The questionnaire may be found in Appendix B.

2.7 Ethical issues

While designing the questionnaire, ethical issues have been taken under consideration. The most common issues that may occur and need to be clarified before launching the research are voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality (Collins and Hussey,2009, pp.47-48). It is also advised to think about inform consent, when giving information about a research topic may bias responses; dignity, to avoid embarrassment by asking inappropriate question and finally publications, suggesting careful and responsible processing of results (Collins and Hussey,2009, pp.47-48).

After filling The Research ethic form designed by University of Huddersfield, all ethical issues have been clarified.

2.8 Limitations of the research

The biggest disadvantage of the study is represented by non-probability sampling. Because of a lack of time and economic constraints, randomness of the chosen respondents could not been accomplished. The chosen exploring element may not represent the population adequately. In addition, information value and reliability may likely to be slightly lower.

Another issue is linked with a response rate. Despite a fact that very high response rate has been aimed to achieve, an actual number was significantly lower. Although the questionnaire has been posted on a wall of many UK universities, fashion and footwear associations with thousands of member, 82 questionnaires have been filled overall. A majority of received responses also represented just a young age cohort that uses social

networking constantly. Therefore, to increase response rate and achieve bigger

representativeness, other distribution channels had to be taken under consideration.

3   Analysis of the research results

Previous chapters provided a theoretical background and the research approach designed to explore the chosen research topic. The research has been designed to reveal answers for previously set objectives. This chapter describes what has been discovered.

The first five questions of the questionnaire have been designed to describe important general characteristics of the chosen sample. The rest of the questions have been narrowed to fashion consciousness and footwear problematic. All results are presented by descriptive statistics, mainly tables and charts. To support arguments and statements, previously set hypotheses are tested by statistics tests. These will be focused on measuring associations between the questions.

Considering, that received data are mostly categorized as nominal/categorical variables, with a few cases of ordinal data, testing options are quite limited. Moreover, normality of variables has been assessed with a final negative result (see Appendix C). Therefore, associations between variables cannot be tested by parametric tests but by non-parametric substitutes (Pallant, 2007). Finally, Chi-Square test has been selected due to an option to measure nominal data.

3.1 Main characteristics of the sample

Although, an amount of responses has been aimed to reach more than one hundred, a final number of respondents is 82.

The following pie chart shows a gender ration represented in the sample. The sample consists of 47 females and 35 males.

Chart 3 Gender ration
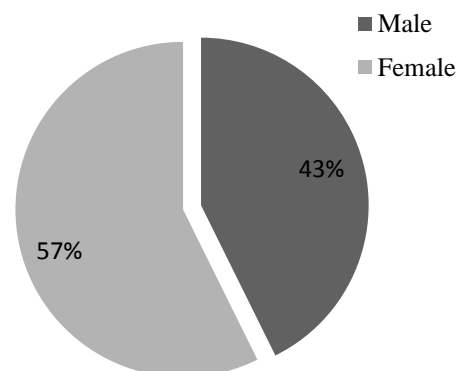
The sample has also been dived into four age cohorts. The youngest cohort, consisting of people from 18-33 years old, represents the biggest percentage because it is easily accessible via social networks. In contrary, the oldest group represents only 13.4% of a whole unit (see Table 3). This age cohorts have also been asked to answer question 2.1 (see Appendix B), used to sort through the respondents into several gerontographic segments.

3.1.1   The gerontographic segments

The theory of gerontographic segments explains purchasing behaviour of consumers aged 55+. From all questionnaires, only 11 respondents represent this group (see Table 3).

Table 3 Age cohorts and the gerontographic segments

	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age groups		
18-33	42	51.2
34-44	14	17.1
45-54	15	18.3
55+	11	13.4
Total	**82**	**100**
The Gerontographic Segments (55+)		
Healthy Indulgers	8	72.7
Healthy Hermits	1	9.1
Frail Recluses	0	0.0
Ailing Outgoers	2	18.2
Total	**11**	**100.0**

Based on the results, purchasing behaviour of the 55+ consumers mostly corresponds with characteristics of a healthy indulgers segment. On the other hand, no similarity has been found with a frail recluses segment. The investigated sample is too small to objectively evaluate achieved responses and reliably determine applicability of the

theory. Although, the results mainly do not merge with the theory, a few similarities in purchasing behaviour have occurred.

According to Table 4 and Table 5, most of the healthy indulgers do not mind to pay higher price for quality products. Moreover, the most effective factor stimulating their brand loyalty has proven to be to a quality of services provided. Despite opposite information provided by the theory, reasonable prices seem to be an important factor as well.

On the other hand, utility features of products are a crucial determinant for healthy hermits who prefer to show in shops, where they have already verified these qualities (see Table 4 and Table 5).

Although previous groups have indicated similarities with the theory, purchasing behaviour of ailing outgoers does not fit within the theory (see Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4 Shoe purchasing behaviour of customers divided into the gerontographic segments

Shoe purchasing behaviour	**Healthy Indulgers (%)**	**Healthy Hermits (%)**	**Ailing Outgoers (%)**
I am willing to pay higher price for the guarantee of quality	31.3	0.0	0.0
Price is a crucial determinant for me	12.5	0.0	0.0
I buy from a few retailers that I know and trust	6.3	0.0	25.0
It is hard to find a shoes which are both stylish and comfortable	18.8	50.0	0.0
I tend to buy the same brands	0.0	0.0	50.0
I prefer shoes which are made in Britain	0.0	0.0	25.0
I have a problems with finding shoes which fits me	12.5	50.0	0.0
I shop in stores offering Sales/promotion	12.5	0.0	0.0
I do not mind to pay high price for well-known/luxury brand	6.3	0.0	0.0

Table 5 Factors stimulating a brand loyalty

Factors stimulating a brand loyalty	Healty Indulgers (%)	Healty Hermits (%)	Ailing Outgoers (%)
Relevant and wide offer	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reasonable prices	28.6	0.0	25.0
What other people think about the brand	0.0	0.0	0.0
Quality of services provided/Helpful personnel	35.7	50.0	25.0
Previous positive experience	14.3	50.0	50.0
A recommendation of salespeople	0.0	0.0	0.0
Advice of spouse or relative	7.1	0.0	0.0
Prestige of the brand	7.1	0.0	0.0
Other	7.1	0.0	0.0

3.1.2 Question 3 and 4

As a part of general information, third and fourth questions have been questioning occupational and marital status of respondents (see Table 18 and Chart 23 in Appendix C for detailed responses). Later, these questions will be used to help investigate gender difference in purchasing behaviour.

3.2 Gender differences in footwear purchasing behaviour

3.2.1 Fashion consciousness

Firth question has been designed to explore fashion consciousness of today´s males and females. One of the aims of the research is to investigate in details how today's men and women are conscious of fashion. According to the results, if it comes to fashion, men act more practically than women do. Moreover, a majority of men let other people advise them about their outfit. Although results show that 10% of men do not think about their outfit or buy what they like, even if it is not merging with the latest trends, twice the men answered that they consider themselves as a very fashion conscious (see Chart 4).

Furthermore, it has been discovered that female respondents are more like to be concern about their outfit at work/school. These women mostly belong into two middle age cohorts [34-44, 45-54]. However, the youngest cohort has only a slightly smaller percentage.

Due to a low amount of responses received, results do not necessarily have to reflect a reality prevailing in a whole population.

Chart 4 Males and females fashion consciousness
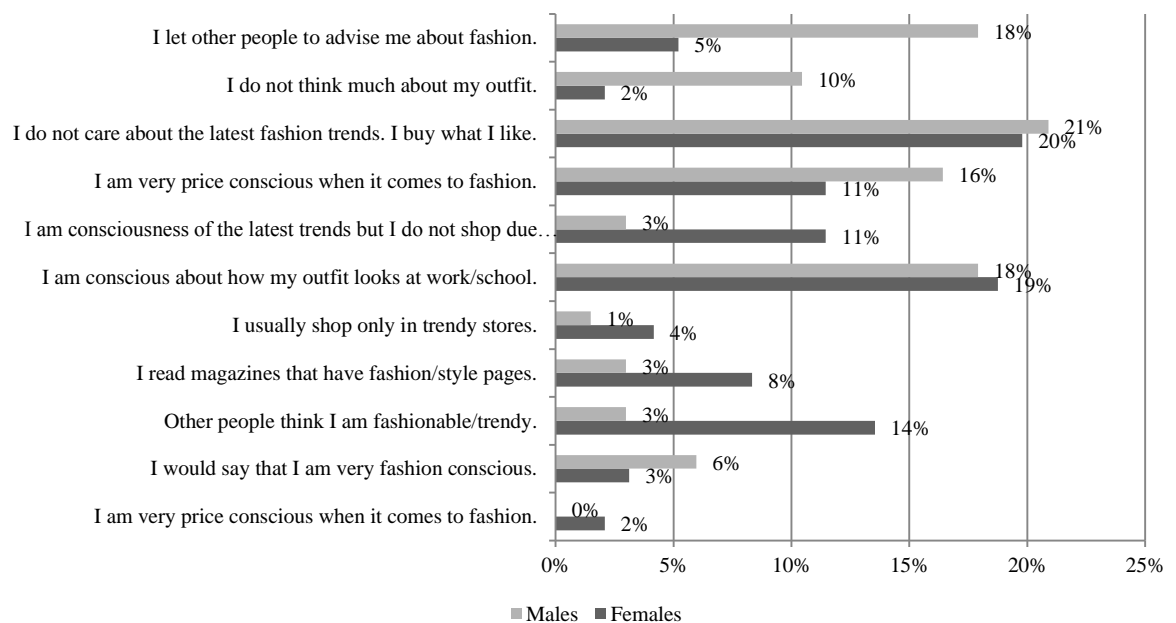
3.2.2 Gender perception of shoes

3.2.2.1 Hypothesis 1

H_0=There is a significant association between gender and relation toward shoes.

H_1= There is no association between gender and relation toward shoes.

Question 6 was designed to reveal general view of respondent of shoes. The aim was to determine a gender differences between perceptions of shoes. According to results showed in Chart 5, there is a significant difference between males and females relation toward shoes. Numbers have proven an unequivocally strong passion of women in shoes, in contrary with men who by 45% dislike shoe shopping. However, quite a big part of men stated that shoes are very important part of their overall outfit. Furthermore, many women noted that they prefer shopping for clothes and accessories rather than for shoes (see Chart 5 for more details).

Chart 5 Relationship toward shoes, by gender
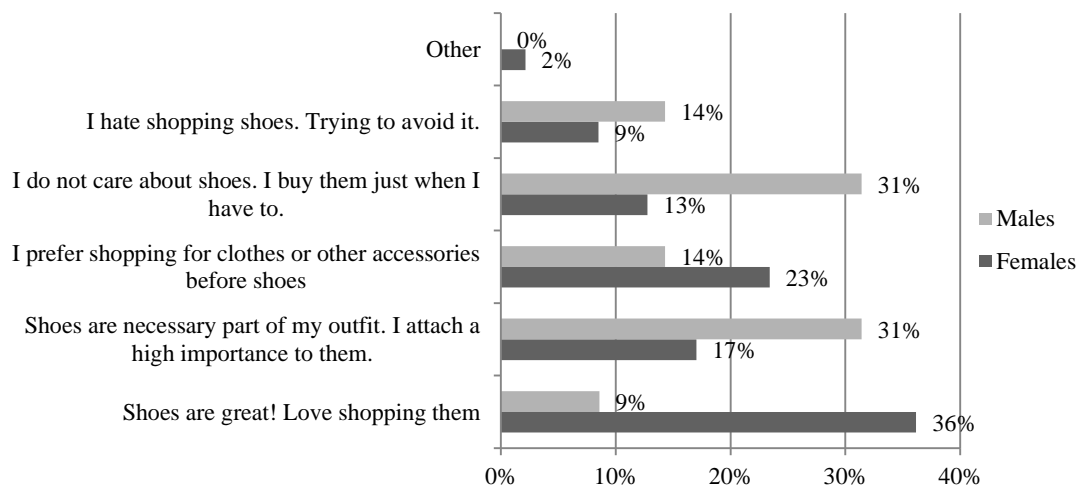
The relation has been also tested by Chi-Square test of independence. Complete results are shown in Table 6. The most important information from the table is Pearson Chi-Square value and associated significance level (Pallant, 2007). In this case, Pearson value is 13.641, with an associated significance level of .018. Thanks to a fact that the sig. value is smaller than the alpha (.05), result is significant. Moreover, a positive relation requires a usage of Post-hoc test, which will measure the strength of the relation. For tables larger than 2 by 2, Cramer´s V test is suggested (Pallant, 2007)

Results of Cramer´s V test, evaluated according to Cramer´s V value (.408), indicate that there is a moderate association between gender and relation toward shoes (see Table 7).

Consequently, author accepts H_0.

Table 6 Chi-Square Test of Independence for relationship toward shoes

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.641[a]	5	.018
Likelihood Ratio	14.827	5	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.360	1	.037
N of Valid Cases	82		

Table 7 Effect size test for relationship toward shoes

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.408	.018
	Cramer's V	.408	.018
N of Valid Cases		82	

3.2.3 Differences in a number of pairs of shoes, owned by females and males

The following related question was asking about how many pairs of shoes respondents own. Results of this question are supporting previous statements. Therefore, women's desire in shoes is clearly linked with an amount of shoes, which they own. Although more than a half of men own less than five pairs of shoes, women, on the other hand, in average own more than 10 pairs. Results have also revealed a few extreme cases, showing women with more than 50 pairs (see Chart 6).

Chart 6 How many pairs of shoes do they own by gender
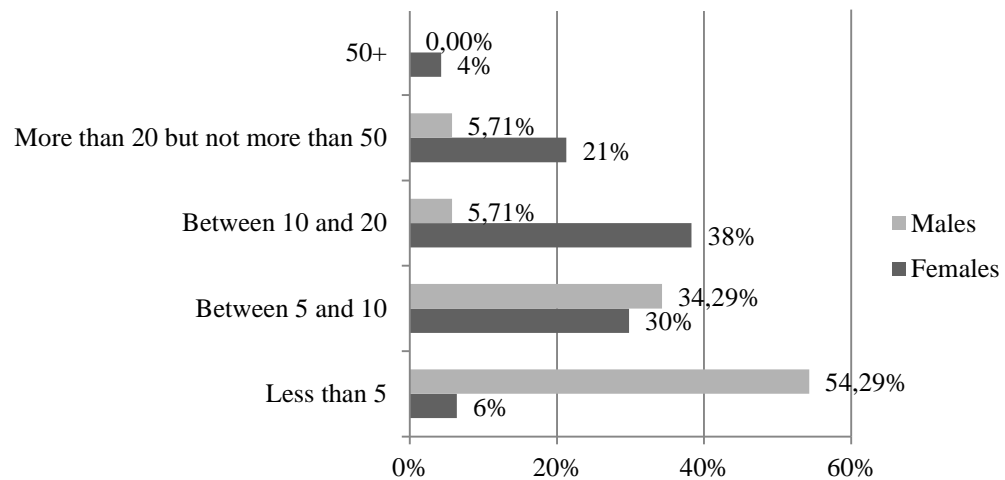
3.2.3.1 Hypothesis 2

H_0= There is a very significant association between gender and pairs of shoes, which respondents own.

H_1= There is no association between gender and pairs of shoes, owned by respondents.

Before launching a test, two extreme values in a form of two women with more than 50 pairs of shoes have been excluded from the test.

Results of Chi-Square Test of independence support information from Chart 6. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 29.129, with an associated significance level of .000. Thanks to a fact that the sig. value is smaller than the alpha (.05), result is significant. Consequently, the Cramer´s V value .603 indicates large association between gender and pairs of shoes, which respondents own (see Table 8 and Table 9 below). In addition, H_0 may be accepted.

Table 8 Chi-Square Test of Independence for gender and pairs of shoes

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.129[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.418	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.468	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	80		

Table 9 Cramer´s V test for gender and pairs of shoes

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.603	.000
	Cramer's V	.603	.000
N of Valid Cases		80	

3.2.4 Gender differences in a frequency of shoe shopping

Question 8 has been asking about a frequency of shoe shopping. Results of the previous question have emphasised a strong relationship of women toward shoes. A fact that women own significantly more pairs of shoes is undoubtedly linked with a frequency of shoe shopping. Although, the most of the women shoe shop once every three months, the vast majority of males, represented by 51%, shoe shop once every six months. Results have also revealed that with a raising purchasing frequency, number of male shoppers is decreasing. However, with declining frequency, numbers follow opposite tendency. Moreover, Chart 7 shows that women also tend to be extremely frequent shoppers.

How the shoe shopping frequency diverse amongst age cohorts will be investigated in the section focused on generational differences in purchasing behaviour.

Chart 7 Frequency of shoe shopping by gender
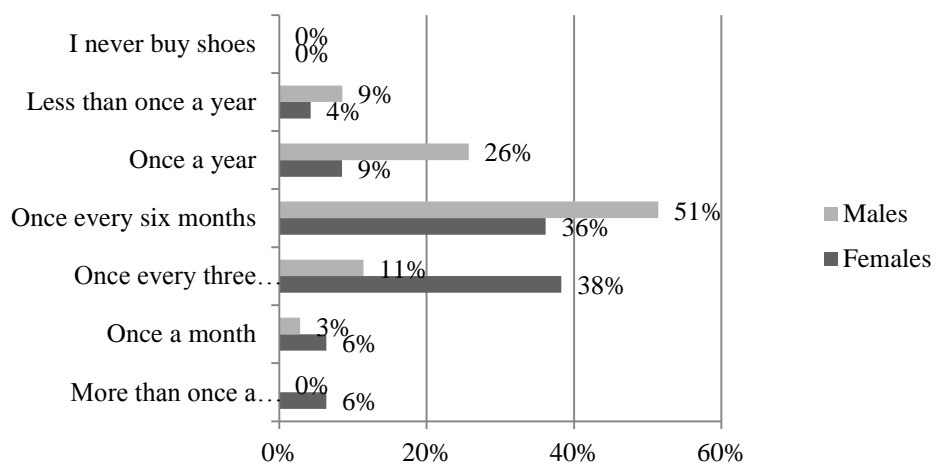
3.3 Why do they buy footwear

Ninth question was questing reasons why people usually shoe shop. A respondent could have picked from one to three answers but majority answered only twice.

Generally, the results have revealed that most of the people shoe shop from practical reasons, to replace their worn out shoes. A second, the most common purchasing motivator, has showed to be a special offer or Sale. Surprisingly, only four people, taking a part in the research, stated their desire to keep up with the latest trends. Moreover, only two respondents indicated that they purchase footwear to impress their friends (see Table 19 and Chart 23 in Appendix C).

3.3.1 Why they buy footwear, by gender

There is a strong correlation between gender and motivators for shoe shopping. According to results, males are more likely to be rational shoppers. Practical reasons are almost twice as many represented by men than women. However, men seem to prioritize price as a decisive factor (see Chart 8).

Women, on the other hand, have more likely chosen fashionable motivators over practical ones. They are known for their passion for shoes. Stating that "It is simply fun!" has supported the argument. Moreover, part of women sees shoe shopping as a form of a reward. Although comfort, as well as price, seem to be a significant factors for women, matching of new outfit showed to be reason that is more common (see Chart 8).

Since a typical man owns less than five pairs of shoes, which he usually wears all year, women shoe shop twice as many due to changing seasons.

Chart 8 Why they buy footwear, by gender
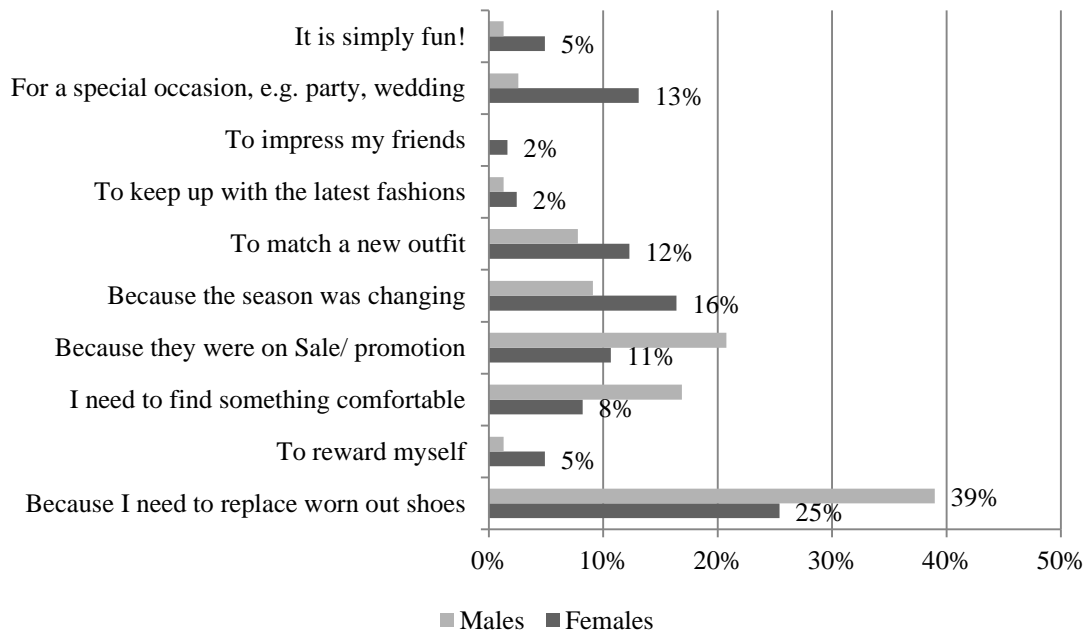
3.4 Generational purchasing motivators for footwear

Third research objective is narrowed to discover the generational purchasing motivators for footwear. Based on a fact that the research sample consists of the youngest age group by 51%, numbers and percentages have been calculated for each age group separately. Therefore, conclusions made about older age groups may not have sufficient information value.

3.4.1 Why they buy footwear, by age

Results indicate that age does not have a significant effect on reasons why people decide to purchase footwear (see Chart 9).

Majority of all age cohorts shoe shop when they need to replace shoes that are no longer wearable. However, a quite substantial part of 34-44 years old is being tempted by Sales or promotion. In addition, comfort is most likely to be preferred by the 55+ (see Chart 9).

Maybe surprisingly, 55+ also dominate the answer stating that matching a new outfit is their motive for shoe shopping. Despite the fact, the youngest consumers are the only ones indicating their desire to stay fashionable and trendy (see Chart 9).

Chart 9 Why they buy footwear, by age
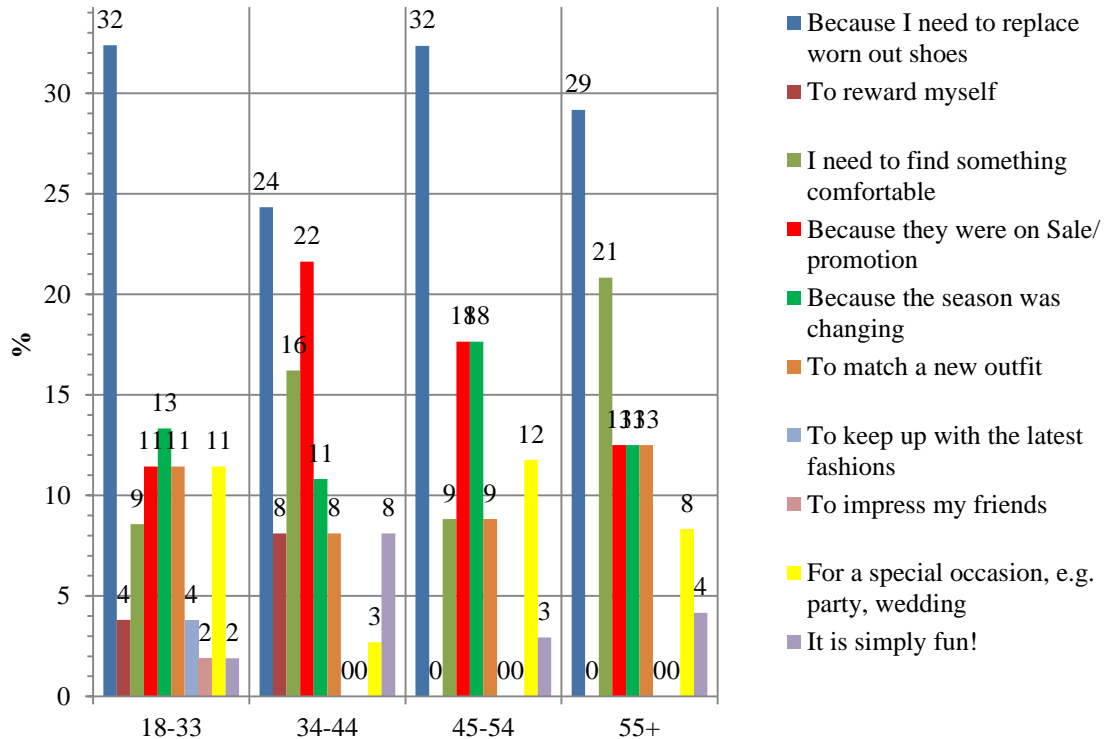
3.4.2 A frequency of shoe shopping by age

To extern overall knowledge, information, given by question 8 is now used again to determine the differences in purchasing behaviour amongst age groups.

3.4.2.1 Hypothesis 3

H_0= There is a significant association between age and frequency of shoe shopping.

H_1= There is no significant association between age and frequency of shoe shopping.

If we compare a shoe shopping frequency by age (see Chart 10), results show that majority from all age groups shoe shop once every six months. With decreasing frequency, the amount of the oldest shoppers [55+] decline as well. However, when the frequency increases, this oldest group is not present at all. On the other hand, the youngest group [18-33] seems to follow an opposite tendency. Despite a fact that 40%

of young respondents shoe shop equally often as other groups, 15% of them reported higher frequency (see Chart 10).

Chart 10 How often they buy footwear, by age
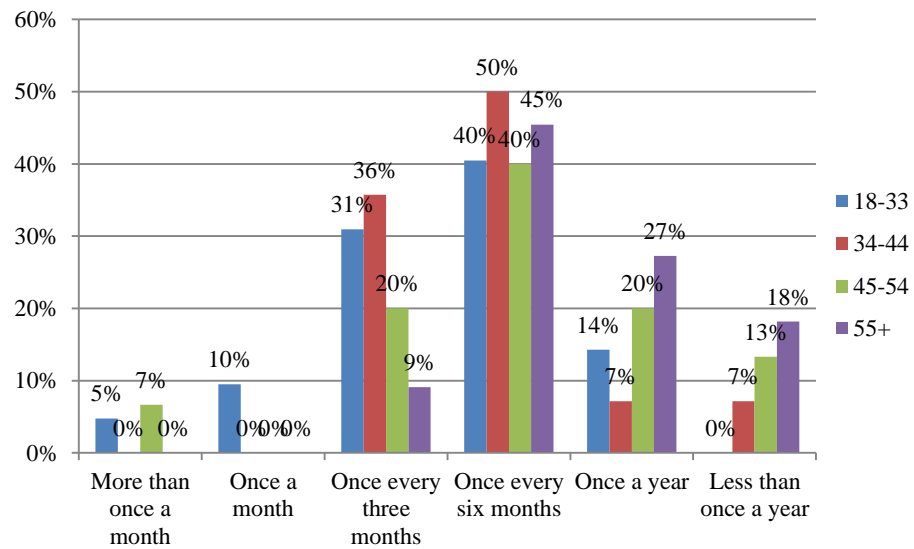
Consequently, Chi-Square Test of Independence has been used to support previous statements. Results of a Chi-square test for independence indicates a moderate association between age and frequency of shoe shopping, χ^2 (5, n=82) = 13.596, p=.018, Cramer´s V value = 0.407). Therefore, H_0 may be accepted.

3.4.3 Influencer

Question 10 has been included in the questionnaire to help analyse a relation between marital status and person, who influence respondent to go shoe shopping.

Before analysis, men and women have been divided into two groups according their marital status. Groups of females/males without partner consist of single, divorced and widowed respondents. Concurrently, two males have been excluded from the analysis because of their inaccurate answers (see Table 20 in Appendix C for exact numbers).

Final results have been transferred into following Chart 11, which shows a big difference between shoe shopping behaviour of males and females, who are single or having a partner.

Although the vast majority of women single or in a relationship, shoe shop on their own initiative, men do not. Men in a relationship are more likely to be pushed by their female counterparts, rather than by themselves. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant correlation between marital status and person, who influence men to go shoe shopping.

In addition, surprisingly, any respondent has stated that their friends influence him/her to shoe shop (see Chart 11 for more details).

Chart 11 Who influence them to go shoe shopping, by marital status
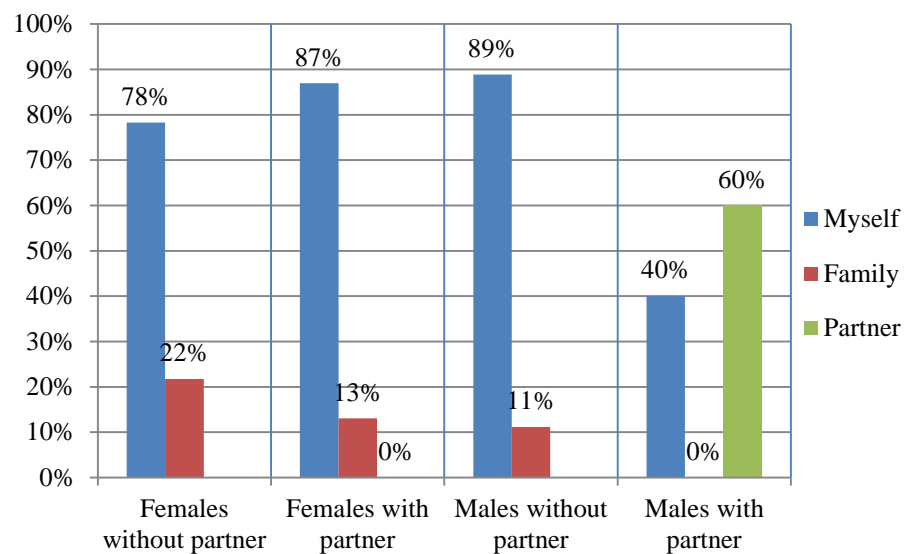
Chi-Square Tests of Independence has also been used to test mentioned relation. The relation has been measured in two separate tests, one for females and the second one for males. Therefore, two different hypotheses have been stated.

3.4.3.1 Hypothesis 4

H_0= There is a significant association between women´s marital status and person, who influence her to go shoe shopping.

H_1=There is no significant association between women´s marital status and influencer.

Because this test uses 2x2 table, calculated continuity correction and Phi value are taken under consideration. The corrected value is .206, with an associated significance level

of .65. Thanks to a fact that the sig. value is bigger than the alpha (.05), result is not significant. A Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) shows no significant association between marital status of women and person, who influence them to go shoe shopping, χ^2 (1, n=47) = 0.21, p=.65, phi = -0.123). H_0 may be rejected.

Table 10 Chi-Square Test of Independence for marital status and influencer

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.710[a]	1	.400		
Continuity Correction[b]	.206	1	.650		
Likelihood Ratio	.715	1	.398		
Fisher's Exact Test				.461	.325
Linear-by-Linear Association	.695	1	.405		
N of Valid Cases	47				

Table 11 Cramer´s V Test

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.123	.400
	Cramer's V	.123	.400
N of Valid Cases		47	

3.4.3.2   Hypothesis 5

H_0= There is a significant association between men´s marital status and person, who influence him to go shoe shopping.

H_1=There is no significant association between men´s marital status and the influencer.

Due to an insufficient number of men, indicating family as their influencers, those have been excluded from the sample before launching the test.

Despite the previous result of female test, Chi-Square test for males has proven to have significant dependence value. A Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicates a high level of association between marital status of men and person, influences them to shoe shop, χ^2 (1, n=33) = 10.77, p=.001, phi = .661). H_0 may be accepted.

Table 12 The Chi-Square Test of Independence for males

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.527[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	10.772	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	17.161	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.091	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	31				

Table 13 Phi test of effect size for males

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.661	.000
	Cramer's V	.661	.000
N of Valid Cases		31	

3.4.4 Who accompanies them while shoe shopping

Eleventh question has been included to find out, with whom people prefer to shoe shop. According to literature, each age group perceives shopping activity in a different way. Although results indicate that an overwhelming majority of each age cohort prefers shoe shop independently, the youngest cohort recorded a markedly high percentage of people

shopping with friends. Mature consumers, on the other hand, are more likely to be accompanied by their relatives (see Chart 12 for more details).

Chart 12 With whom they shoe shop, by age
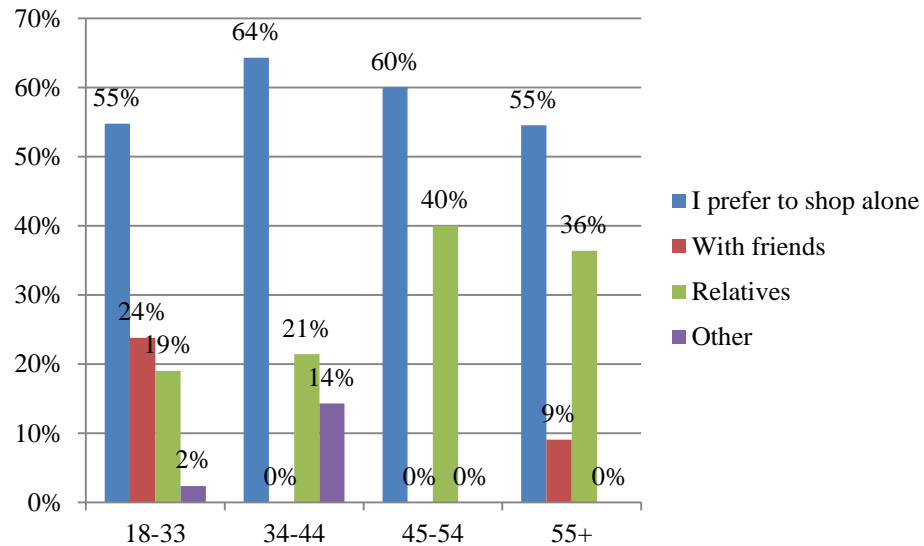
Consequently, hypothesis has been determined.

3.4.4.1 Hypothesis 6

H_0= There is a significant association between age and person, with whom respondent chooses to shoe shop.

H_1= There is no significant association between age and person, with whom respondent chooses to shoe shop.

Results of Chi-Square Test, presented in Table 14, shows that there is no significant association between age and person, with whom respondent choose to shoe shop. Thanks to a fact that the sig. value (.126) is bigger than the alpha (.05), result is not significant.

Table 14 Chi-Square Test of Independence for a shopping friend

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.974[a]	6	.126
Likelihood Ratio	13.029	6	.043
N of Valid Cases	79		

3.4.5 Decisive factor while shoe shopping

Twelfth question has examined a decisive factor while shoe shopping. Answers have been used to support already discovered generational differences in purchasing behaviour.

Based on data from the following bar chart 13, there are not many noticeable differences in purchasing behaviour between generations.

Despite their age, 18-33 years old purchase responsibly and rationally. They subject their decision to good utility properties and reasonable prices. Surprisingly, brand does not play a significant role in their decision making process.

Decisive factors of older groups mainly merge with the youngest cohorts. However, an importance of comfort seems to rise with age (see Chart 13).

Chart 13 What is their decisive factor while shoe shopping, by age
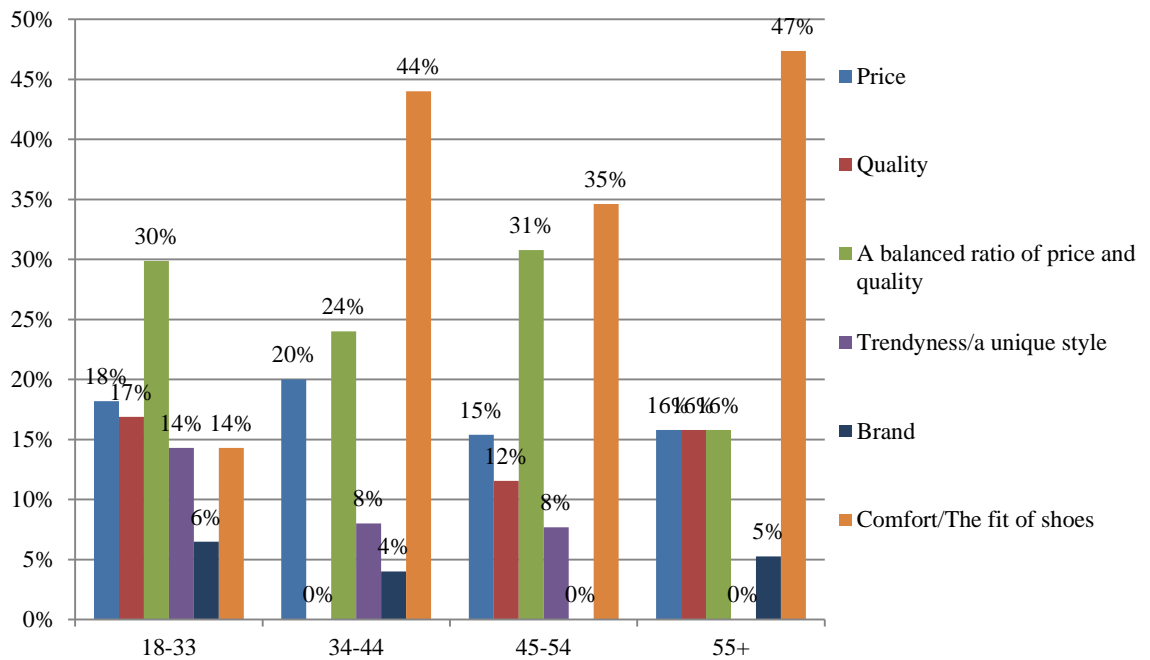
3.4.6 Question 13

The results from question 13 complete all the information about the age differences in shoe shopping. Although, in the previous chart young shoppers preferred a balanced ration of price and quality, further data shows that they put a quality on a first place. Their older counterparts, on the other hand, subject their purchase to different price levels. However, group of 34-44 years old appears to be almost twice as much willing to pay higher price than the rest of the sample. Representatives of the older generation seem to have clear problems with finding well-fitted footwear. Therefore, they often look for retailers, with whom they have already had a positive experience (see Chart 14 for more details). Moreover, only one respondent seems to seek for shoes, which are made in Britain.

Chart 14 Further details of generational differences in shoe shopping behaviour

Legend:
- 55+
- 45-54
- 34-44
- 18-33

I do not mind to pay high price for well-known/luxury brands: 5%, 4%, 8%, 1%

I shop in stores offering Sales/promotion: 9%, 19%, 8%, 11%

I have problems with finding shoes which fits me: 14%, 11%, 12%, 3%

I tend to buy the same brands: 9%, 4%, 4%, 11%

It is hard to find a shoes which are both stylish and comfortable: 18%, 0%, 15%, 19%

I buy from a few retailers that i know and trust: 9%, 15%, 12%, 10%

Price is a crucial determinant for me: 9%, 22%, 27%, 11%

I am willing to pay higher price for the guarantee of quality: 23%, 26%, 15%, 34%

3.5 Brand Loyalty

Final part of the questionnaire has been focused on a brand loyalty. Part of this section has also been used while sorting through the 55+ respondents into the gerontographic segments.

Firstly, respondents have been asked to state if they prioritize certain brands/retailers more than the rest. Consequently, a list of the most profitable brands/retailers in UK has been offered, allowing respondents to choose or write down their favourite ones.

Results of the previous question indicated that not many respondents tend to buy the same brands. Findings from this section support this statement by showing that from the whole sample, a vast majority of 53 respondents stated negative brand loyalty.

When the author was asking about prioritized brands/retailers, respondents most commonly reported Nike/Converse as their favourite brands. Consequently, results showed an equal share of Adidas, Sports Direct and Clarks. Although supermarkets offering footwear and apparel seem to be on a rise, the research proves otherwise. Asda and Tesco have been prioritized only by 3% of the sample (see Chart 24 in Appendix C for more details).

Six, the most commonly mentioned brands/retailer have been used to examine, how the preferences diverse amongst age cohorts. Thanks to a fact that a first two positions are held by brands offering sports footwear and Sport Direct as a retailer sells each of these brands, no significant generational differences might be seen (see Chart 15). Therefore, it is important to distinguish whether person prefer to shoe shop in independent shoe shops or general shoe specialist.

In case of Clarks, there is clear dominance of 45-54 years old. However, the youngest consumers share expressive percentage as well (see Chart 15).
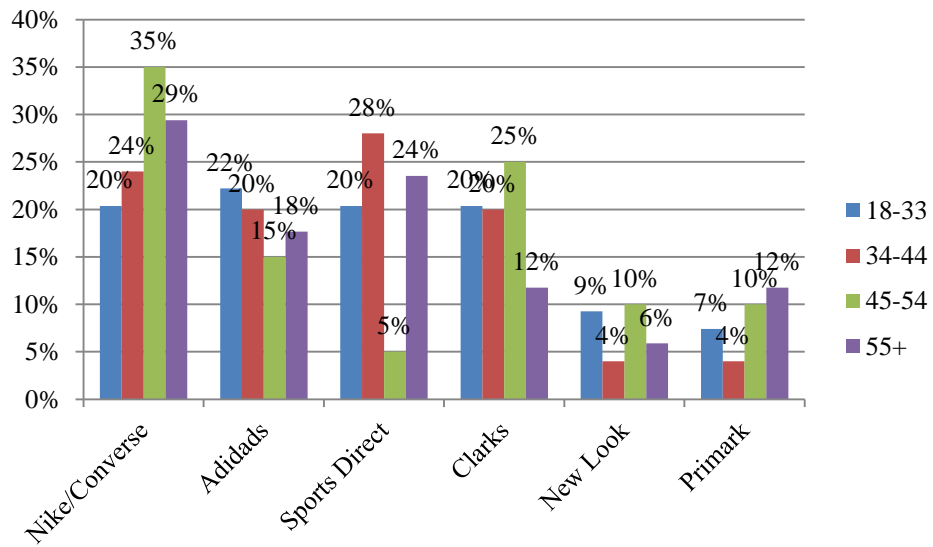
3.5.1 A brand loyalty stimuli

Final question has been questioning, what stimulates respondents´ brand loyalty. Results have been entered into Chart 14, showing differences amongst age cohorts. Reasonable priced dominate amongst all age groups except 45-54 years old, who pay more attention to a relevant and wide offer. Furthermore, a considerable part of respondents chooses their brand/retailer according to previous positive experience. Attentive and friendly staff also serves as a reliable stimuli. Surprisingly, only a negligible percentage of consumers expressed their concern about other people´s opinion.

Legend:
- Relevant and wide offer
- Reasonable price
- What other people think about the brand
- Quality of services provided/Helpful personnel
- Previous positive experience
- A recommendation of salespeople
- Advice of spouse or a relative
- Prestige of the brand
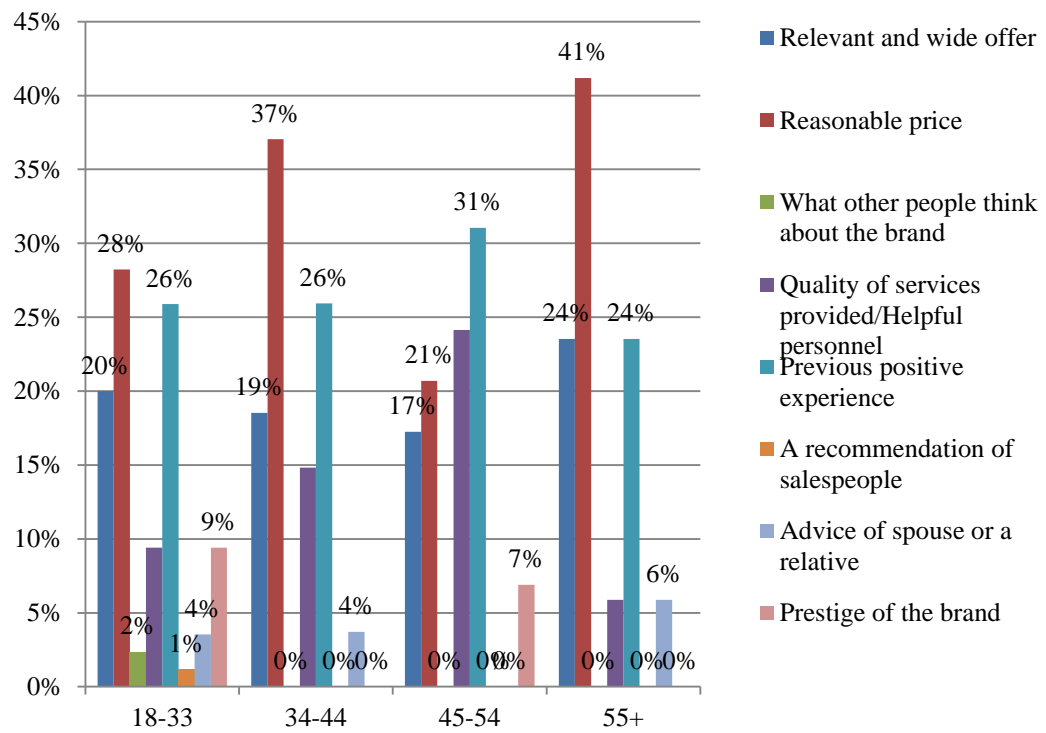
4   Discussion of the research results

This chapter will now discuss the research results, which have been described and analysed in the previous section.

4.1   Research Objective 1

An excessive study held by Moschis (1996) shows that purchasing behaviour of mature consumers [55+] may be explained by a theory of gerontoghaphic segments. This framework explains how a psychological state of mind may directly influence person´s behaviour.

Author of this research has been trying to discover, if this theory is applicable on footwear consumers. Unfortunately, due to a low response rate, only 11 respondents might have been used as a sample for this study. Therefore, following conclusions may not have a reliable information value.

However, the achieved results indicate a few similarities within the theory.

According to information given by Moschis (1996), most of the 55+ respondents have been put in a group of Healthy Indulgers. These consumers have proven to be willing pay a higher price for footwear products, which is consistent with the theory. If it comes to marketing responses, the most common reason, effectively stimulating brand loyalty of the Healthy Indulgers, was a quality of services provided. Moschis (1996) have also pointed out this information. However, results indicate that reasonable prices are quite as important for this group, which more or less does not match with the theory.

Purchasing behaviour of Healthy Hermits, represented by a single respondent, consists with the theory as well. Hence, author´s results are identical with Morchis´ (1996) information. He states, that these consumers are oriented toward utility features of products. They also do not response to marketing stimuli. Therefore, they prefer retailers, with whom they have already had a previous positive experience.

While first two groups seem act simultaneously with the theory, behaviour of Ailing Outgoers is slightly different. Morchis (1996) points out that these consumers are

strongly oriented toward low prices and are often tempted by Sales and promotion. However, author´s results have not recorded this information.

Unfortunately, not a single person, who would represent a segment of Frail Recluses, has been found in the sample.

4.2 Research Objective 2

The second research objective has been set to find out what the differences between purchasing behaviour of males and females are. Consequently, how are today´s men conscious of fashion has also been aimed to discover.

According to information available in the literature review, it may be noted that there are significant disagreements related to the fashion consciousness of today´s men. Although Dias (2003) and Kimmel (1994) cited in Bakewell et al. (2006) highlight a prevailing lack of interest in fashionable goods showed by today´s men, Bakewell et al. (2006) seems to be inclined in the opposite direction. In his opinion, in the past couple of years, young males have evidently strengthened their interest in fashion.

Author´s results seem to be somewhere in between. Males from author´s sample dominate all statements indicating a negative relation toward fashion. However, twice as many men than women reported having a considerable good knowledge of fashion. Females, however, seem to care more about their appearance at work. This fact merges with a discovery of Wray and Hodges (2008), who emphasise a rising number of women giving a significantly high importance to their career, sometimes even at the expense of a happy family life.

When the research problematic was narrowed to footwear area, the differences have become more noticeable. Although Belk (2003) and Mintel (2012c) stated that shoes have an equal importance for men and women, author´s results mostly disproves this statement. Because of a fact that most of the men have indicated shoe shopping as displeasure, it has clearly reflected results of following questions. Mintel´s (2012c) research has proven that men shoe shop equally often as women. Here again the results differ. Author found out that men shoe shop significantly less often than women do. Moreover, with a rising frequency, a number of men shoppers decline. However, results

strongly support information given by Belk (2003). He states that no single man has proven to own more than 50 pairs of shoes.

If it comes to women shoppers, the research results mostly agree with Belk (2003), however mainly disagree with Mintel (2012c). This research as well as Belk (2003) proves that there is a strong predominance of female shoppers, who see shoe shopping as a pleasure and hobby. These women purchase footwear quite frequently, which reflects a large number of shoes owned by them. These statements have also been supported by Chi-Square Tests of Independence, which found a large association between gender and the relation toward shoes. So-called "Luxury female shoppers", presented by Belk (2003), have also been found in the research. These women see footwear shopping as a huge passion, sometimes demonstrated by shopaholic behaviour. Females from author´s research, who shoe shop extremely often and own more than 50 pairs of shoes, may be put into this group.

Very important question from the research was asking about reasons, why people purchase footwear. Overall results are mainly similar with findings of Mintel (2012c). Mintel (2012c) indicates that the most common reasons for shoe shopping are to replace worn out shoes and find something comfortable.

When the focus is again narrowed to the gender motivators for purchasing footwear, author´s results mostly agree with Mintel (2012c). Generally, males tend to be more rational shoppers, however females sometime purchase for unpractical reasons.

In addition, further research supported a claim of Dias (2003), who highlighted that men generally do not shop voluntarily. The Chi-Square test proved that there is a significant association between marital status of male and person, who influence him to shoe shop. In other words, a vast majority of males in a relationship is forced to shoe shop by their female counterparts.

4.3 Research objective 3

Third research objective is focused on the generational purchasing motivators for footwear. The sample is by 51% represented by the youngest age group so all

conclusions may be slightly biased. However, a sufficient amount of young respondents has helped to discover many interesting information.

Although a vast majority of literature describes young consumers as an attention-seeking generation, negatively influenced by mass media, author´s research captures those in a quite different light.

Mintel´s research (2012c) mostly emphasises strong differences between generational motivators for footwear. The youngest cohort is there presented as an irrational generation, shoe shopping only to stay fashionable and trendy and stand out from a crowd. Although gender differences found in the research are very excessive, generational differences are not that noticeable.

Results prove that majority of young consumers shoe shop from practical reason not to impress their closest surrounding.

Baby busters [34-44 years old] from author´s research seem to behave in accordance with theory of Moschis et al. (2011) and Dias (2003). In their opinion, so-called bargain-hunters from this age cohort are often tempted by Sales/promotion. This information is supported by results of question 14, which shows that price is a crucial determinant for this age cohort.

If it comes to a frequency of shoe shopping, author´s results mainly agree with Mintel (2012c). All generation seem to shoe shop equally often, however representatives of the older groups tend to be less frequent shoppers. Moreover, Chi-Square Test of Independence also found a moderate association between age and the shopping frequency.

Question 11 has been included in the questionnaire due to a research, held by Dias (2003). She emphasised clear differences between generational perceptions of shopping. According to her, young consumers see shopping more as an opportunity to socialize than actually purchase something. Author´s research has not revealed any information, which would clearly support the claim. Results show that a vast majority of people from all age groups prefer to shoe shop independently. However, younger respondents are

more likely to be shopping with their friends, in contrary with older ones, who mostly accompanies themselves by their relatives.

When it comes to a decisive factor while shoe shopping, this research again contradicts with the previous theory. Although Mintel (2012c) found out that younger participants put trendiness before quality, author´s study shows the opposite. However, desire for comfortable footwear seems rise with age. Older people also often expressed dissatisfaction with current footwear offer. Moschis et al. (2011) emphasised that 55+ consumers seek for quality, good fit and comfort due to their increasing health problems.

Mitchell et al. (2005) highlighted that some baby busters [34-44] increasingly seeking for luxury products despite their high price. Author´s further research found 8% respondents merging with these criteria.

In addition, Mintel (2012c) showed that percentage of local consumers seeking for UK products rapidly grows these days. However, only one respondent from the author´s sample noted prioritizing of the UK products.

4.4 Research Objective 4

Final objective has been narrowed to brand loyalty and brand/retail preferences.

According to Mintel (2012c), UK customers are often seen as very loyal ones. Moreover, Mintel (2012c) indicates that the brand loyalty seems to be on a rise.

Despite all this information, 53% of author´s respondents reported negative brand loyalty. Furthermore, only one respondent seems to seek the UK footwear products.

If it comes to brands/retailers prioritizing, this study shows strong similarities within the age groups. The most of the respondents reported sports brands or retailers as their favourite ones, which may be caused by a rapidly growing interest in active style of living presented by Wray and Hodges (2008). Furthermore, Mintel (2012c) highlights a rising popularity of supermarkets and unspecialized shoe shops amongst consumers. The author´s sample did not support this data and these retailers were placed quite low in an overall ranking.

When it comes to brand loyalty stimuli, these seem to be relatively equal amongst age groups. Reasonable prices and previous positive experience got the highest percentage within all cohorts. Surprisingly, a quality of services provided showed to be the most important for the baby boomers. This result contradicts with Munro and Steel (1999), who tagged 55+ as the most services oriented customers.

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, there are many factors influencing consumer behaviour. When it comes to gender, age, family or work circumstances, all of these elements significantly affect consumer´s everyday purchasing decisions. Author found out that especially gender differences clearly reflect how person perceives fashion in all its forms. Widely known, long-lasting and sometimes even passionate relation between woman and her shoes has been more than a once supported by the results of this study. On the contrary, men have demonstrated a significantly more moderate attitude toward footwear. However, a quite substantial part of the men agreed that shoes underpin their overall appearance.

Furthermore, author´s research of the generational differences has revealed quite surprising results. When it comes to purchasing decisions, young consumers seem to choose rationally and cautiously. Their older counterparts appeared to act adequately according their age, with a few exceptions of enthusiastic, middle-aged shoppers.

In addition, author has discovered that a substantial part of the sample does not consider current footwear offer satisfactory. It is more than difficult to find trendy shoes, which simultaneously fits well. This may be solved by newly emerging opportunities, enabling consumers to customize footwear according to their individual needs. Unique, customized footwear may change current rules of competition in the footwear market and concurrently offer a completely different enjoyment of walking.

Limitations

Author´s results mainly disprove previous information, showed in the literature review. However, this may be caused by a quite low response rate. Although author has been aiming to achieve a sufficient number of responses, final number has not exceeded one hundred. Therefore, an information value may be slightly lower.

Furthermore, extremely small sample of 55+ aged consumers has not provided an adequate base, necessary for a detailed research of the theory of the gerontographic segments. This concept offers priceless knowledge, enabling complete understanding of mature consumer behaviour. It is particularly true in the recent years, when the world

has to deal with the aging population. It is more than obvious that this segment will

soon enough account for more than a half of purchasing power.

Appendix A

Chart 17 Over-65s as a percentage of the total UK population, 2010 -30
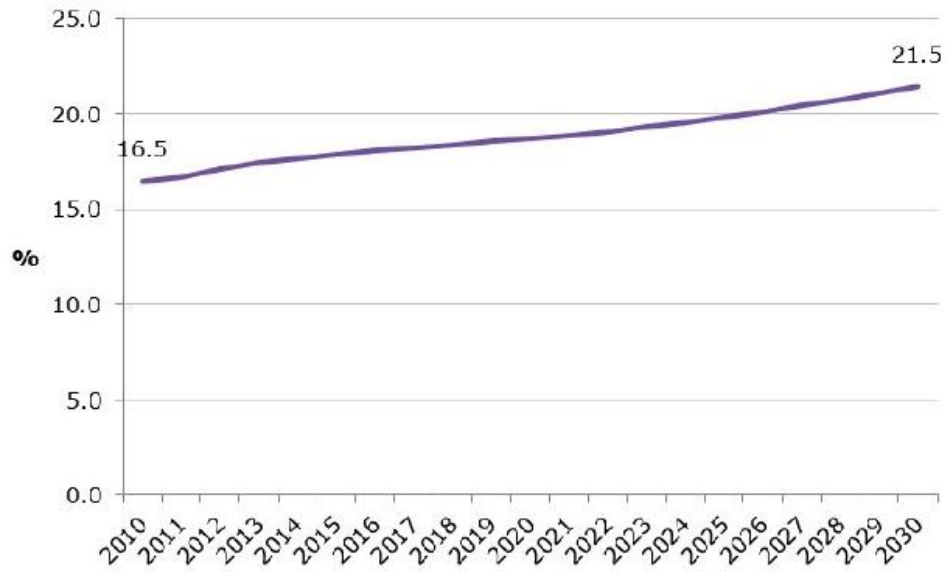
Source: National Statistics/Mintel

Chart 18 England: % of total population classified as overweight or obese, 1993-2010
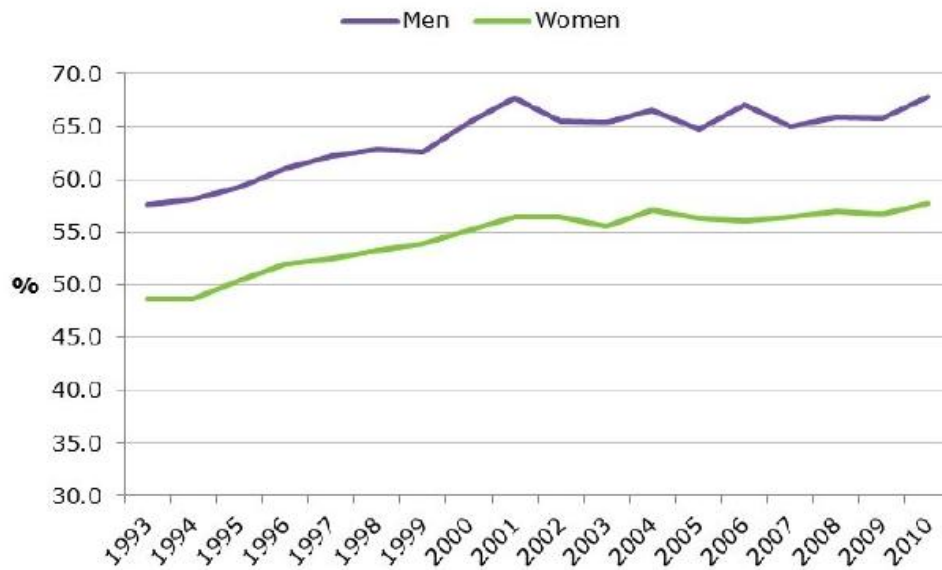
Source: National Statistics/Mintel

Chart 19 Year-on-year real-terms growth in consumer spending on clothing and footwear Q1 2007-Q4 2011
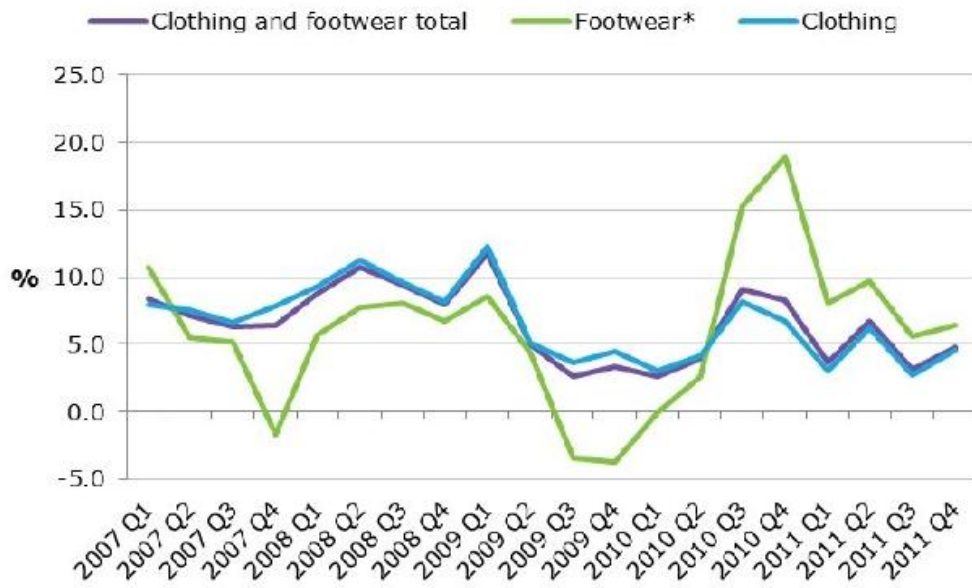
*excluding repairs

Seasonally-adjusted data

Source: National Statistics/Mintel

Chart 20 UK footwear specialists' sales relative to all spending on footwear, 2005-12
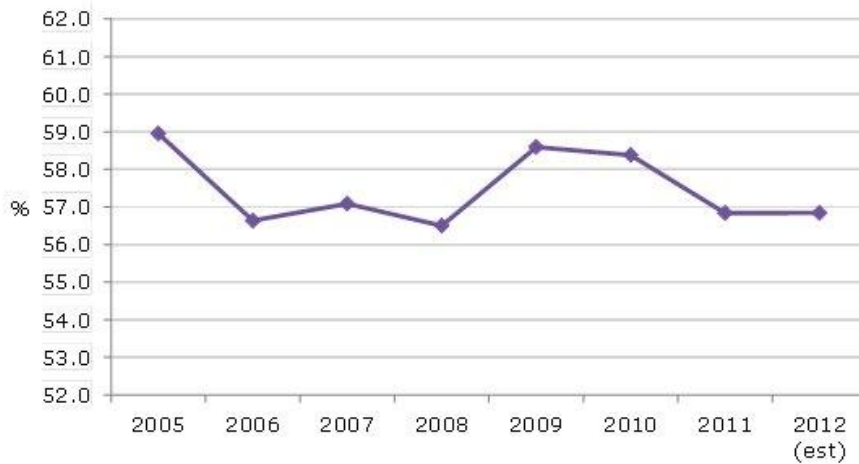
Source: Office for national statistics/Mintel

Table 15 Leading retailers estimated share of all footwear spending*

	£m	**%**
Clarks	601	8.8
M&S	410	6.0
Sports Direct	360	5.3
Next (incl. Next Directory)	350	5.1
JD Sports Fashion	300	4.4
Primark	260	3.8
Shoe Zone/Stead & Simpson	241	3.5
Arcadia Group	235	3.5
Kurt Geiger	214	3.1
Office	200	2.9
New Look	190	2.8
Schuh (UK)	153	2.3
Barratts/Priceless	130	1.9
Dune	122	1.8
Debenhams	110	1.6
Brantano	106	1.6
TK Maxx	105	1.5
Russell & Bromley	98	1.4
Asda	95	1.4
A.Jones	93	1.3
Matalan	85	1.3
LK Bennett	70	1.0
Tesco	65	1.0
Lloyd Shoe Co	63	0.9
Total of above	**4,653**	**68.4**

* Share of footwear spending of £7,852 million incl-VAT or an estimated £6,800 million excl-VAT

Source: Companies/national statistics/Mintel

Appendix B

General information

1. **What is your gender?** *
   ○ Male
   ○ Female

2. **How old are you?** *
   ○ 18-33
   ○ 34-44
   ○ 45-54
   ○ 55 +

2.1. How would you describe your everyday life?
Please fill this question only if you have chosen 55+ in the previous question.
   ○ I am feeling younger than I actually am.
   ○ I am active and sociable person, spending much time in society and dedication of my hobbies.
   ○ I try to enjoy my life fully despite worsening of my health condition.
   ○ I prefer to stay at home. I enjoy a company of myself or my family.
   ○ Other: [   ]

3. **What is your occupational statuse?** *
   ○ Student
   ○ Employee/Self-employer
   ○ Maternity leave/Unemployed
   ○ Retired

4. **What is your marital status?** *
   ○ Single
   ○ Married/in pernament relationship
   ○ Divorced
   ○ Widowed

A relationship towards fashion

5. **Which of these quotes fits you the most?** *Please choose max. 2 answers

☐ I am very alert to changes in men´s/women´s fashion.

☐ I would say that I am very fashion conscious.

☐ Other people think I am fashionable/trendy.

☐ I read magazines that have fashion/style pages.

☐ I usually shop only in trendy stores.

☐ I am conscious about how my outfit looks at work/school.

☐ I am consciousness of the latest trends but I do not shop due to them

☐ I am very price conscious when it comes to fashion.

☐ I do not care about the latest fashion trends. I buy what I like.

☐ I do not think much about my outfit.

☐ I let other people to advise me about fashion.

☐ Other: [_____]

Shoe shopping motivators and habits

6. Which of these quotes about shoes do you agree with? *

○ Shoes are great! Love shopping them!

○ Shoes are neccessary part of my outfit. I attach a high importance to them.

○ I prefer shopping for clothes or other accessories before shoes.

○ I do not care about shoes. I buy them just when I have to.

○ I hate shopping shoes. Trying to avoid it!

○ Other: [_____]

7. How many pair of shoes have you got? *

○ Less than 5

○ Between 5 and 10

○ Between 10 and 20

○ More than 20 but not more than 50

○ 50+

8. How often do you buy footwear? *

○ More than once a month

○ Once a month

○ Once every three months

○ Once every six months

○ Once a year

○ Less than once a year

○ I never buy shoes

9. Why do you buy new footwear? *
Please check max. 3 answers

☐ Because I need to replace worn out shoes

☐ To reward myself

☐ I need to find something comfortable

☐ Because they were on Sale/ promotion

☐ Because the season was changing

☐ To match a new outfit

☐ To keep up with the latest fashions

☐ To impres my friends

☐ For a special occasion, e.g. party, wedding

☐ It is simply fun!

☐ None of these

10. Who influences you to go shoe shopping? *
○ Myself

○ Family

○ Partner

○ Friends

○ Other: _____

11. Who are you shoe shopping with? *
○ I prefer to shop alone

○ With friends

○ Relatives

○ Other: _____

12. What is/are decisive factor/s when shoe shopping? *
Please check max. 2 answers

☐ Price

☐ Quality

☐ A balanced ratio of price and quality

☐ Trendyness/a unique style

☐ Brand

☐ Comfort/The fit of shoes

☐ Other: [   ]

13. Which of these statements fits you the most? *
Please check max. 2 answers

☐ I am willing to pay higher price for the guarantee of quality

☐ Price is a crucial determinant for me

☐ I buy from a few retailers that i know and trust

☐ It is hard to find a shoes which are both stylish and comfortable

☐ I tend to buy the same brands

☐ I prefer shoes which are made in Britain

☐ I have problems with finding shoes which fits me

☐ I shop in stores offering Sales/ promotion

☐ I do not mind to pay a high price for well-known/luxury brands

A brand loyaly

14. Do you have a favorite footwear brand? *

○ Yes

○ No

15. What is/are your favorite footwear brandsretailers in UK? *
You can choose up to 4 brands

☐ Clarks

☐ M&S

☐ Next (incl. Next Directory)

☐ JD Sports Fashion

☐ Primark

☐ New Look

☐ TK Maxx

☐ Debenhams

☐ Asda

- ☐ Tesco
- ☐ Nike/Converse
- ☐ Adidas
- ☐ Sports Direct
- ☐ H&M
- ☐ Other: [＿＿＿＿＿＿]

16. What stimulates your brand loyalty? *
Please check max. 2 answers

- ☐ Relevant and wide offer
- ☐ Reasonable prices
- ☐ What other people think about the brand
- ☐ Quality of services provided/Helpful personnel
- ☐ Previous positive experience
- ☐ A recommendation of salespeople
- ☐ Advice of spouse or a relative
- ☐ Prestige of the brand
- ☐ Other: [＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Appendix C

Table 16 Test of Normality 1

Tests of Normality

	Status	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Influence	Females without partner	.479	23	.000	.512	23	.000
	Females with a partner	.519	24	.000	.393	24	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 17 Test of Normality 2

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	.372	80	.000	.631	80	.000
Pairs of shoes	.205	80	.000	.866	80	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 18 Occupational and marital status of respondents

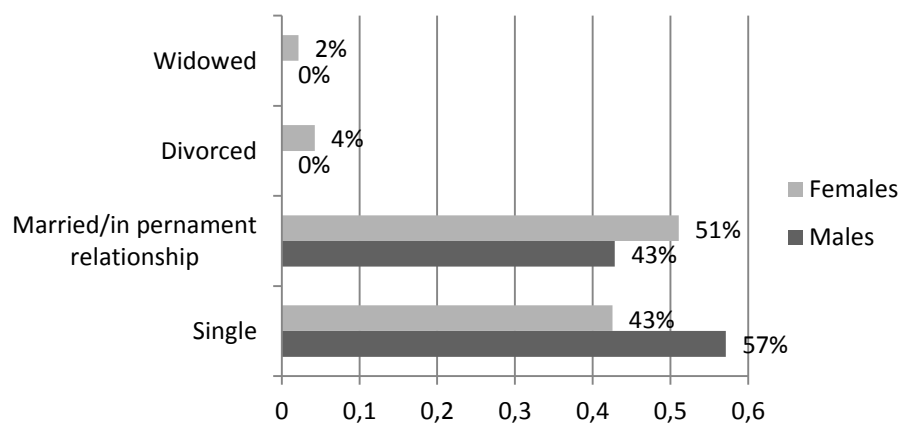| Occupation Statuses	Number of respondents	Marital Status	Number of respondents
Student	37	Single	40
Employee/Self-employed	44	Married/in permanent relationship	39
Maternity Leave/Unemployed	0	Divorced	2
Retired	1	Widowed	1
Total	82		82

Chart 21 Marital statuses, by gender

Chart 22 I am conscious how my outfit looks at work/school
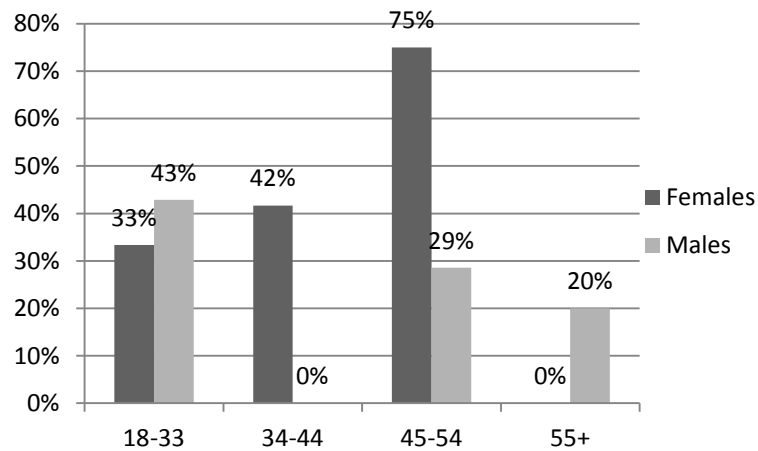
Table 19 Why they shoe shop

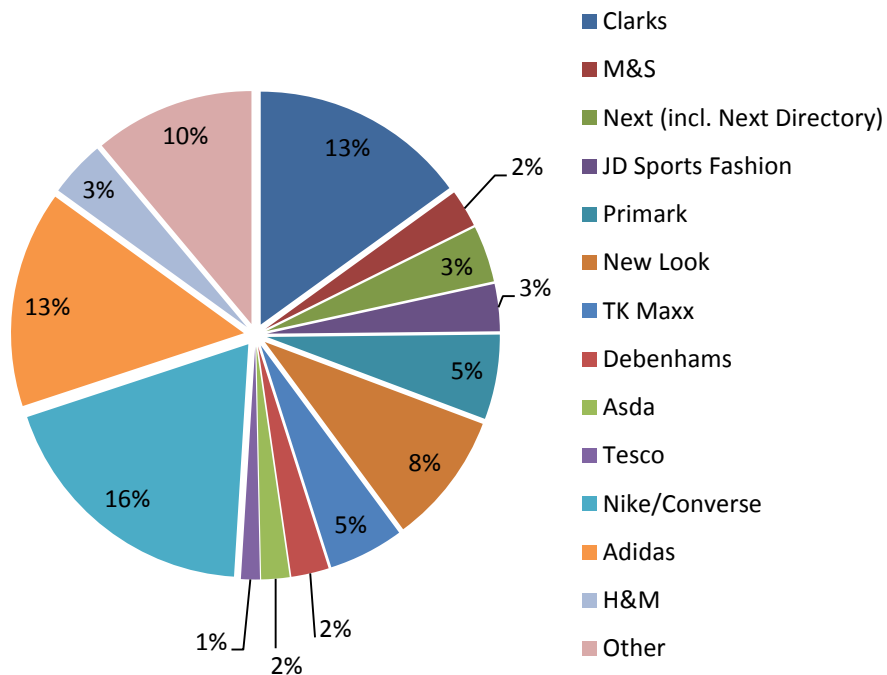|	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Because I need to replace worn out shoes	68	0,34
To reward myself	7	0,03
I need to find something comfortable	23	0,11
Because they were on Sale/ promotion	29	0,14
Because the season was changing	25	0,12
To match a new outfit	20	0,10
To keep up with the latest fashions	4	0,02
To impress my friends	2	0,01
For a special occasion, e.g. party, wedding	15	0,07
It is simply fun!	8	0,04
None of these	0	0,00

Chart 23 Why they shoe shop

Table 20 Who influence them to go shoe shopping, by marital status

	Single Females	Females with partner	Single Males	Males with partner
Myself	18	20	16	6
Family	5	3	2	0
Partner		0		9

Chart 24 Prefered brands/retailers

- Clarks
- M&S
- Next (incl. Next Directory)
- JD Sports Fashion
- Primark
- New Look
- TK Maxx
- Debenhams
- Asda
- Tesco
- Nike/Converse
- Adidas
- H&M
- Other

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