

A STUDY OF THE BRAND CHARACTERISTICS OF OAKLEY

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any University for a degree.

Signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

Any brand has a specific identity that the company wants to portray to consumers in its target market – its brand identity – what the brand stands for. This is also the case for Oakley, a luxury brand competing in the sports and fashion industries. In essence the brand identity of a company is that what the brand is characterised by and what it stands for in the minds of consumers. By communicating its brand identity to consumers, a company create associations with the brand, which in turn forms the brand image that consumers have of the brand. The greater the degree to which consumers associate the brand with those characteristics that the brand in effect stands for, the greater the congruence between brand image and brand identity. The aim for a company is to realise a brand image in the minds of consumers that is similar, if not the same as the brand identity that it has identified for itself. In this study, the brand identity of Oakley is identified and the brand image that consumers have of the brand examined. The two concepts are then compared to find out to what degree the two are related and whether Oakley has in fact managed to portray their brand identity accurately (as reflected through the brand image).

The relationship between price and quality for a brand represents the degree to which consumers believe the brand to be worth the money paid for it. It is widely believed that a brand with a high price is also of high quality and vice versa. This is not necessarily exclusively the case. The concept of quality and value differ from one individual to another, since it is based on the subjective perception of each individual. As mentioned earlier, associations form part of the brand image that consumers have of a brand. One of these associations might be their perception of quality of the brand, given the price of the brand. A luxury brand can charge a premium price, on the basis of various characteristics, one of which is the fact that the brand is perceived to be of high quality. Oakley is a luxury brand and charges a premium price. The study examines the quality and price of the brand by looking at the perceptions that consumers have of the brand with reference to the price/quality relationship, which represents one of the associations that contribute towards the formation of consumers' brand image.

OPSOMMING

Enige handelsmerk het 'n spesifieke identiteit wat dit aan die verbruikers in sy teikenmark probeer oordra – sy handelsmerk identiteit – dit waarvoor die handelsmerk staan. Dit is ook die geval vir Oakley, 'n luukse handelsmerk wat in die sport en mode industrie kompeteer. In essensie is die handelsmerk identiteit van 'n besigheid daardie eienskappe waardeur die handelsmerk gekenmerk word en waarvoor dit staan in die geheue van verbruikers. Deur sy handelsmerk identiteit aan verbruikers te kommunikeer, kan die besigheid sekere assosiasies met die handelsmerk skep, wat op hul beurt weer bydra tot die vorming van 'n handelsmerk beeld in die geheue van verbruikers. Hoe meer verbruikers die handelsmerk assosieer met daardie eienskappe waarvoor die handelsmerk in effek staan, hoe groter die mate van ooreenstemming tussen die handelsmerk identiteit en die handelsmerk beeld. Dis enige onderneming se doelwit om 'n handelsmerk beeld in die geheue van verbruikers te skep wat tot 'n groot mate ooreenstem met die handelsmerk identiteit wat die onderneming self geïdentifiseer het. In hierdie studie word die handelsmerk identiteit vir Oakley geïdentifiseer en die handelsmerk beeld van Oakley wat verbruikers het ondersoek. Vervolgens word die twee konsepte met mekaar vergelyk om te sien hoe dit ooreenstem en of Oakley daarin geslaag het om hul handelsmerk identiteit suksesvol oor te dra (soos gereflekteer deur die handelsmerk beeld van verbruikers).

Die verhouding tussen prys en kwaliteit van 'n handelsmerk verteenwoordig die mate waartoe verbruikers glo dat die handelsmerk die geld werd is wat daarvoor betaal word. Dis die algemene gevoel dat 'n handelsmerk met 'n hoë prys ook van hoë kwaliteit is. Dit is egter nie noodwendig altyd uitsluitlik die geval nie. Die konsep van kwaliteit en waarde verskil van individu tot individu, aangesien dit grootliks 'n subjektiewe persepsie van elke individu is. Soos reeds vroeër genoem vorm assosiasies deel van die handelsmerk beeld wat verbruikers het van 'n spesifieke handelsmerk. Een van hierdie assosiasies mag dalk die persepsie van die kwaliteit van die handelsmerk, gegewe die prys daarvan, wees. 'n Luukse handelsmerk kan 'n premium prys vra, gebaseer op verskeie eienskappe van luukse handelsmerke. Een van hierdie eienskappe is die feit dat luukse handelsmerke gesien word as hoë kwaliteit. Oakley is 'n luukse handelsmerk en vra 'n premium prys. Die studie ondersoek die kwaliteit en prys van die handelsmerk, deur te kyk na die persepsies wat verbruikers het oor die handelsmerk, met spesifieke verwysing na die prys/kwaliteit verhouding. Dit verteenwoordig een van die assosiasies wat bydra tot die vorming van die handelsmerk beeld van verbruikers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well.”

- Jeff Bezos (CEO of Amazon.com), BusinessWeek, 2 August 2004

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Every brand has a specific identity that it has identified for itself and which it attempts to project to the consumer in the marketplace, in order to position itself in the mind of the consumer and thus influence consumer attitudes about the given brand. The question in respect of any brand is whether consumers perceive this specific brand identity as intended by the brand. Every consumer forms his/her own opinions and images of a specific brand, based on several factors, such as exposure to the brand via advertising and promotions, word-of-mouth, personal use, etc. Because individuals differ in their perceptions, they would necessarily hold different images for any specific brand, which may differ from the identity that the brand would wish to project. The brand image that consumers hold of any given brand consists of the associations that they have of the brand.

A specific brand is the subject of this research study. Oakley is a world-renowned brand and manufactures sunglasses and sports apparel. This study attempts to determine whether consumers actually perceive Oakley’s brand identity in the way intended by the company – this is an attempt to determine whether Oakley’s brand image, as perceived by consumers, is congruent with Oakley’s brand identity, as portrayed by the company. The associations on the part of consumers of the brand are tested to determine to what degree these associations is an accurate reflection of Oakley’s brand identity.

The study further examines consumer perceptions of price and quality, being a specific association. There is a certain trade-off between the price of a given brand or product and the quality received in return. This contributes to the value of a brand. The quality of a brand – and thus the value derived from the consumption or ownership of that brand – is subject to personal evaluation by individuals. One consumer may well perceive a brand to be of outstanding quality, whilst another may hold different quality perceptions.

Oakley is a relatively expensive brand, compared to other brands in the same brand category, and it charges a premium price. Oakley is also generally considered as a brand that signifies

high quality. This study would determine whether consumers perceive the premium price that Oakley charges as worthwhile paying in comparison with the perceived quality received in return. The value of the brand is thus examined. In broad terms this study consequently examines consumer perceptions of and attitude towards a specific brand. The study focuses on the South African consumer market and its perceptions of the brand.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To determine whether the brand identity that Oakley has identified for itself and accordingly communicates to its target market, is perceived as intended by the target market and whether the brand image that consumers hold for the brand is an accurate reflection of the brand's identity.
- To determine whether consumers perceive the premium price that Oakley charges as worthwhile paying for the brand, given the level of quality of the brand's products.

Hopefully Oakley may be able to use the information generated by the study to assess both the effectiveness of its marketing communications and the effectiveness of its positioning strategies. It would provide the company with insight into the minds of consumers with reference to the brand and how consumers perceive the brand. It would certainly provide a sound insight into consumer perceptions of the quality of the brand's products.

1.3 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The sequential method of investigation that this study followed started with a literature study, followed by an empirical study.

1.3.1 The literature study

Various sources of information and literature were consulted and studied, including journal articles, books, internet sources and personal references. These sources of information were used to gather information on the constructs of brand image and brand identity, and also on the price/quality relationship for products. The concept of luxury brands was also examined, because Oakley is considered to be a luxury brand and this may have an influence on consumer perceptions of the brand. International literature was mostly used as basis for the literature study, since little has been published in South Africa on luxury brands.

The literature study centred round three key concepts or constructs, which form the basis for this study. These are brand identity, brand image and the price/quality relationship. Some of the important aspects covered in this literature study include the following:

- Brand identity and its characteristics, elements and functions
- A brand identity mix and brand identity model are examined, which relates to ways in which brand identity could be conveyed
- Brand image comprising of the associations by consumers of the brand
- The distinction between brand image and the related, but not identical concept of brand identity
- The price/quality relationship and different factors influencing it
- The fact that luxury brands could charge a premium price
- A distinction is made between perceived quality and objective quality and reasons for this distinction are provided
- Luxury brands and their characteristics are defined by providing a framework and key dimensions, as well as how they differ from non-luxury brands.

1.3.2 The empirical study

Data for the empirical data were collected via the use of a self-administered questionnaire. A non-probability sample in the form of a convenience sample was used amongst 300 respondents. A quantitative research design was used.

Respondents were posed a series of questions, in the form of a six point Likert scale and also two open-ended questions. The different items measured the following:

- The associations of consumers with the brand, forming the image of the brand amongst consumers.
- The attitude of consumers toward Oakley.
- Whether consumers perceive Oakley to be expensive.
- Whether consumers perceive Oakley's products to be of high quality.
- Whether consumers are of the opinion that Oakley's products are commensurate with the value paid for them.

- Consumers' perception of price and quality for products and brands in general.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed with the aid of specific statistical techniques. The results obtained from these were examined and responses provided to the research questions as identified at the beginning of the study.

1.4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter one is the introductory chapter and provides the background, objectives and methodology followed in the study.

The concept of brand identity is the focus of the second chapter. The chapter contains a broad discussion of brand identity and provides definitions of the construct, by focusing on certain characteristics of brand identity and the functions of brand identity. A brand identity mix is discussed, which relates to ways in which the brand identity may be conveyed. A model of brand identity is discussed, which conceptualises the brand's identity in terms of its vision and culture, which drives its positioning, personality and the subsequent relationships, all of which are then presented to reflect stakeholders' actual and aspirational self-images. Also under consideration are the elements of brand identity and certain brand identity structures. Lastly, a paragraph is devoted to the creation of multiple brand identities, which is essential when the brand needs to adapt to different markets.

Chapter three addresses the concept of brand image. The chapter broadly discusses the construct of brand image and several definitions are furnished. A distinction is made between brand image and the related, but not identical concept of brand identity, as discussed in the previous chapter. Brand associations forming the basis of brand image are discussed in greater detail, and the fact that these associations create value is also covered.

Chapter four examines the price/quality relationship by observing specifically the factors influencing it. The concepts of price and quality are treated as separate constructs – indicating their roles in the relationship. The fact that luxury brands are able to charge premium prices is discussed. Perceived quality is distinguished from objective quality and reasons for this are provided and the dimensions of perceived quality are also discussed. Perceived value is examined by focusing on the different types of value. Coverage is given to perceived quality creating value for both the consumer and the company.

The concept of luxury brands is discussed in the fifth chapter and it is comprehensively defined. The characteristics of luxury brands are examined further to explain the concept and indicate how they are distinguished from non-luxury brands. The tremendous growth in the market for luxury goods and reasons behind this growth is addressed. A framework of luxury brands is proposed, depicting key dimensions of luxury brands. The chapter also discusses Oakley as an example of a luxury brand and provides a basic background of Oakley and analyses the company by observing its history and corporate profile. The company's brand identity is discussed, as well as Oakley's target market.

Chapter six is the first chapter of the empirical study and discusses the research methodology followed to reach the research goals of the study. The research goals are confirmed. The choice of research methodology is motivated from literature, specifically the use of a quantitative research method and the approach followed. Attention is given to the dimensions of the sample used. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the statistical techniques used to analyse the data.

Chapter seven deals with the data analyses and provides the results of these analyses. A profile of the sample is provided. An analysis of respondents' impressions of the brand and an analysis of responses to the close-ended scale items is provided. Reference is made to responses to Oakley specifically and also respondents' attitudes towards products and brands in general. Trends and relationships among certain items are discussed to shed further light on the results.

The last chapter draws conclusions regarding the statistical results and discusses the implications of these conclusions. Recommendations are made with reference to the implications as identified. The limitations of the study are also identified.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF BRAND IDENTITY

“Customers must recognize that you stand for something.”

- Howard Schultz (Founder of Starbucks), allaboutbranding.com, 2004

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Most brands within a given brand category attempt to become the brand leader within that given category, because brand leadership implies that strong associations and, therefore, an awareness of the brand are held in the minds of consumers. Brands that are considered to be leaders in their categories could be differentiated from their main competitors. A strong brand provides a list of possible benefits to a firm, such as greater customer loyalty, and less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions or marketing-related problems, larger margins, more favourable customer response to price increases and increased marketing communications effectiveness (Keller, 2001: 15). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000: 25) states that brand leadership could be achieved by addressing four main challenges. One of the challenges cited is to develop a brand strategy for the brand that includes a motivating brand identity which would, ideally speaking, create a favourable position in the minds of consumers and differentiate the brand from its competitors. The brand identity stands at the heart of brand leadership within a given brand/product category and serves as the driving force behind brand building efforts, which are essential for the brand to remain a leader in the industry (Aaker, et al. 2000: 43).

This chapter examines the concept of brand identity, which would contribute towards an understanding of the purposes of this study, which is to determine whether Oakley’s brand identity – as identified and communicated by the company – is in fact perceived as such by its target markets. The brand identity that a company communicates to its target audiences leads to certain associations that consumers hold about the brand and influences their perceptions of the brand. The main aspects regarding a brand’s identity should, ideally speaking, be reflected in the associations on the part of consumers with the brand. A broad explanation of the concept of brand identity is provided, because a firm comprehension of the concept is needed before one could compare Oakley’s brand identity with the brand associations that consumers hold.

The chapter provides a broad discussion of brand identity and provides definitions of the construct, by focusing on certain characteristics of brand identity and the functions of brand identity. A brand identity mix is discussed, which relates to ways in which the brand identity may be conveyed. A model of brand identity is discussed, which conceptualises the brand's identity in terms of its vision and culture, which drives its positioning, personality and the subsequent relationships, all of which are then presented to reflect stakeholders' actual and aspirational self-images. Also under consideration are the elements of brand identity and certain brand identity structures. Lastly, a paragraph is devoted to the creation of multiple brand identities, which is essential when the brand has to adapt to different markets.

2.2 BRAND IDENTITY: A BROAD DISCUSSION AND DEFINITIONS

Any company or brand has a specific identity that it projects to its target markets by means of a variety of media and channels. This is a function of how the company wishes consumers to perceive its brand (Markwick and Fill, 1997: 397). The organisation would like the consumers to hold certain positive associations of the brand in order to form their own image of the brand. It is the marketer's role to create and maintain these associations. Keller (2001: 16) states that, in order to give meaning to a brand, it is important to create a brand identity and establish what the brand's characteristics are and what they ought to be in the minds of consumers. According to Van Riel (1995: 28) brand identity was originally synonymous with logos, the house style of the company and other different forms of symbolism used by the organisation. The concept has broadened by means of the years and is now more comprehensive. It is now accepted that it is indicative of how the company presents itself by using of symbols, communication and behaviour. In its most fundamental sense it is the brand's identity that the organisation would wish to inculcate in the minds of consumers – how it would like to be positioned and perceived. Many companies do not communicate exactly what their brand is (in other words the essence of the brand) and what it represents, which eventually results in consumers holding vague or inaccurate brand images. Oakley has a specific brand identity and this study would determine how successfully the company has managed to communicate this brand identity to its target markets.

2.2.1 Brand identity defined

Van Riel (1995: 34-35) provides a definition for brand identity, based on two components. These components are “the strategically planned and operationally applied self-presentation of the company” and “on the basis of a desired image”. These components illustrate that

companies desire a specific image in the minds of consumers and actively communicate this to its target markets – they represent their brand in accordance with whom they aspire to be. Similarly, Aaker (1996: 68), see brand identity as a unique set of brand associations that the brand manager attempts to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organisation.

Van Riel (1995: 32-33) defines brand identity as the self-presentation of an organisation; it consists in the cues which an organisation expresses about the brand via the behaviour of employees, communications and symbolism. Added to these definitions is the view of De Chernatony (1999: 165) who alludes to identity relating to the ethos, aims and values of an organisation that presents a sense of individuality differentiating the relevant brand from others. Another definition is offered by Upshaw (1995: 12-13) who states that, in the broadest sense, brand identity is the “configuration of words, images, ideas, and associations that form a consumer’s aggregate perception of a brand.”

2.2.2 Characteristics of a brand identity

It is important to distinguish between the concepts of ‘product’ and ‘brand’, because they are not necessarily similar. The characteristics of the brand determines the brand’s identity and is, therefore, of importance to this study, rather than the characteristics of the product concept. The products sold under a given brand name do contribute towards the total identity of the brand, but is only one of several aspects that contribute towards the formation of a brand identity. The product characteristics include product scope, product attributes, quality/value, uses and functional benefits. A brand also includes many if not all of these characteristics, as well as the following: user imagery, country of origin, organisational associations, brand personality, symbols and customer/brand relationships (Aaker, et al. 2000: 51-52). Oakley is more than merely the pair of sunglasses or the pair of shoes it sells – it is also encompasses the symbolism and the lifestyle it represents. It is obvious that brand is constructed from various elements and that these elements contribute towards a brand’s identity.

Regardless of the attributes of the company, the brand category or the industry in which a brand operates should have a brand identity with certain characteristics that would distinguish it as exceptional and successful. These ideals determine how well a brand would be received by its target market and how accurately the target market would in turn perceive and encode the brand’s intended identity. Wheeler (2003: 14) highlights several criteria for successful brand identities. According to her an effective brand would be bold, memorable and

appropriate; be immediately recognisable; provide a clear and consistent image of the company; communicate the company's persona; be legally protectable; have enduring value; and be applied across media and scale.

These characteristics do not describe brand identity completely and do not enter into the realm of the very heart of a successful brand identity. When one regards the vast number of brands worldwide and all the trademarks registered, it is important to realise that a successful brand identity is crucial in differentiating a specific brand from the rest. One could well speculate why some brands are perceived as better than others and why that would be the case. What then are the characteristics of the best brand identities? Wheeler (2003: 14-33) identifies several ideals (characteristics) for brand identities. These characteristics would now be discussed.

Vision

In terms of any brand firms should have a vision of what it is attempting to be and should consciously bear this vision in mind when creating its brand strategies. This vision needs to be clear and articulated accurately to target markets. A vision is abstract and could, therefore, only be 'seen' by those who envision it. This provides a powerful tool for any marketer, since ideas and innovations may be envisioned without competitors observing and copying it. It could serve as a valuable competitive advantage. If a company is able to deliver on what it perceives to be possible and what it envisions, it would provide value to its customers. Oakley's vision is to connect with young-minded, trendsetting consumers and assert the brand's dominance in design superiority. By having a clear vision, a brand may inspire those exerting themselves to realise this vision. The challenge obviously lies in the vision that needs to be made tangible. If Oakley is able to successfully create a tangible brand identity based on the visions that it has for the brand, the company would most likely portray its brand identity clearly and accurately.

Meaning

The best brands represent some notion, whether it is an idea or a strategic position or even a set of defined values. It distinguishes the brand from others. Oakley seems to be virtually obsessed with innovation, which presents the meaning of the brand to target consumers. The meaning of a brand is conveyed by means of the creative process of attaching meaning to an idea by means of the use of symbols, words or actions. It portrays the rationale behind the

creation of a specific identity and captures exactly what the brand stands for – in other words, what it means.

Authenticity

The brand identity should be a unique expression of the brand and all of its values, ideas and personality. Authenticity refers to the degree to which a brand is able to accurately portray its unique personality. For a brand identity to be authentic it is crucial that the organisation should have clarity about exactly how its target market is constituted, how it is positioned in the minds of consumers, its value proposition and what competitive advantages it has over its rivals. All of these factors contribute towards the authenticity of a brand.

Differentiation

Many different brands are available in every industry and even product categories; all of these brands communicate with consumers in their own distinct ways and compete for the attention of their target markets. The degree to which brands could create unique associations in the minds of consumers and thus differentiate themselves from competitors would ultimately be one of the determinants of the success. A company has to create a brand identity which would differentiate the brand from competing brands by means of clear communication efforts.

Sustainability

In the world of business the only thing that is certain is change. Consequently brands face constant changing conditions in the industries and categories in which they compete. One merely has to consider the rapid rate of change in technology and the impact of science on the manner in which business is conducted. Oakley constantly adapts to changing conditions and fashions, by adapting its advertising and promotions. The company constantly evolves, and a good example is a pair of ultra modern sunglasses, complete with mp3-player in the ear socket, that Oakley recently launched. The company clearly keeps up with changes in technology and fashion and so contributes toward the brand's identity being seen as innovative in nature. Styles change constantly, with a significant impact on brand identities. A brand that is able to adapt to changing conditions and yet retain its core identity and brand essence would prosper. Wheeler (2003: 24) is of the opinion that sustainability is the inherent ability of an identity to dispose of longevity in an environment that is in a constant phase of change, characterised by future developments that cannot be predicted.

Coherence

Irrespective of how a consumer initially comes into contact with a brand, whether it is by means of a sales representative, an advertisement or by means of using the brand, it should communicate the same message and be a unified whole. Metaphorically, the brand needs to speak with unified voice. It has to create a feeling of familiarity with the consumer and reach the desired effect. This is echoed by Wheeler (2000: 26) who states that coherence is the quality that implies that all the pieces of a brand identity are held together in a way that the consumer deems as seamless.

Flexibility

A company needs flexibility in its approach if it wishes the products and services that it offers to appear unique. For example marketers should determine whether a brand identity is flexible enough to facilitate effective brand extensions and whether the brand identity could sufficiently be leveraged and adapted without losing its essence. Oakley has traditionally been seen as a brand that appeals to the sports lover, but the company has recently extended the brand into the entertainment business, hosting various events, such as parties and fashion shows. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, brands need to adapt to changing market conditions and this would only be possible if the brand identity is flexible enough to accommodate change. The best identities are seen to be those that are able to adapt to a broad range of marketing and communication applications over time and simultaneously to achieve sustainability.

Commitment

A good brand identity and brand name with favourable associations is not sufficient to ensure survival in the competitive market place. An organisation has to commit itself to quality and service and also to the future growth of the brand. For a brand identity to be successful, it needs to be accompanied by management's commitment to constantly improve and nurture the brand to offer consumers even better value for their money. As mentioned before, Oakley has committed itself to continuous innovation in order to provide consumers with the very best products in the different categories in which the brand competes. An accurate, recognisable brand identity is an obvious asset to a firm and care should be taken to strategically manage this asset.

Value

The ultimate goal of any organisation is to create superior value for its stakeholders, who may be employees, customers or shareholders in the company. The most successful brands communicate their dedication to quality and customer satisfaction. This should also be communicated by means of the brand's identity by means of symbols and widely recognised as being of high quality.

Wheeler (2003: 5) summarises the characteristics of brand identities in stating that the best brand identities are memorable, differentiated, meaningful, authentic, sustainable and flexible and have value (brand equity). The empirical study would determine whether Oakley has in fact managed to capture some, if not all of these characteristics in the brand's identity, as would be reflected by means of the images and perceptions that consumers may have formed regarding the brand.

2.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF BRAND IDENTITY

Marketers of a brand should be able to articulate the brand identity clearly and convey the meanings attached to all the different elements of a brand, so that consumers are able to form comprehensive images of the brand. Wheeler (2003: 4-5) states that brand identity is the visual and verbal expression of a brand. It supports, expresses, communicates, synthesises and visualises the brand so that the brand's target market may form a clear image of the brand. It is a very effective method of communication with the target market, because it appeals to so many senses – it could ideally be seen, touched, held and heard. The point of departure for the creation of any brand's identity is a brand name and a brand mark (brand logo) which is leveraged and extended so that it would grow exponentially into a specific identity by means of various communication tools.

In order for a brand identity to be successful, it should create "brand salience" (Keller, 2001: 16). This relates to the aspect of brand awareness. How easily is the brand evoked from a set of alternatives in certain conditions when the consumer considers certain brands that may satisfy a specific need? It refers to how recognisable the brand is and how easily it is recalled by consumers. The consumer often recognises a highly salient brand as one that may satisfy a specific need. The degree to which Oakley has managed to create salience for the brand, in other words how easily it is recognised by consumers, is examined in this study. Two important criteria relating to brand awareness should be considered: the depth and breadth of the awareness. These two dimensions distinguish brand awareness. The depth of the

awareness refers to how easily consumers are able to recall or recognise the brand, while breadth refers to the range of purchase and consumption situations where the brand comes to mind. Keller (2001: 16) states that a highly salient brand would have both depth and breadth in awareness.

The brand identity should also guide internal communications efforts, so as to provide cohesion between different departments. All the stakeholders of the company need to understand the brand and what it represents. When the brand identity lacks consensus and clarity, it is unlikely to be realised accordingly in the images that consumers form (Aaker, et al. 2000: 87).

If or when a brand identity is established, it should establish a relationship between the brand and the consumer, as well as other stakeholders, based upon a value proposition that could involve functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits. Roberts and Almquist (2003) state that brand identity is a powerful psychological construct and serves as a source of lasting bonds between a company and its target markets.

2.4 HOW BRAND IDENTITY COULD BE CONVEYED – THE BRAND IDENTITY MIX

In previous paragraphs it was mentioned that a company may present itself by means of the use of symbols, communication and behaviour. These elements form what could be conceptualised as the brand identity mix. The brand identity of a company is a self-presentation of what the brand aims to stand for. According to Van Riel (1995: 32-33) this self-presentation could be done by means of the use of various media to convey the relevant identity. Van Riel (1995: 32-33) identifies three ways to convey a brand's identity to its target markets. These are by means of the use of symbolism, communication by the organisation and the behaviour of the organisation and its employees. These three aspects are discussed next.

Symbolism

Van Riel (1995: 33) states that the tools used to achieve symbolism need to operate in harmony with other elements and expressions of brand identity to create a harmonious whole. Such tools could include the physical facilities of the company or the brand's logo or slogans. It should provide an implicit indication of what the brand stands for or what perception it would like to inculcate among consumers.

Communication

Van Riel (1995: 32-33) states that communication refers to both verbal and visual communication, and also to forms of non-verbal communication, which are often reflected in the company's symbolism. Verbal communication is the easiest way to address target groups directly. Abstract signals and symbolism may also be used and communicated directly to consumers. It stands to reason that the company is in control of the message it sends to its target markets. It is important that the element of communication operates in harmony with, and conveys the same message and meanings as other elements of the brand identity.

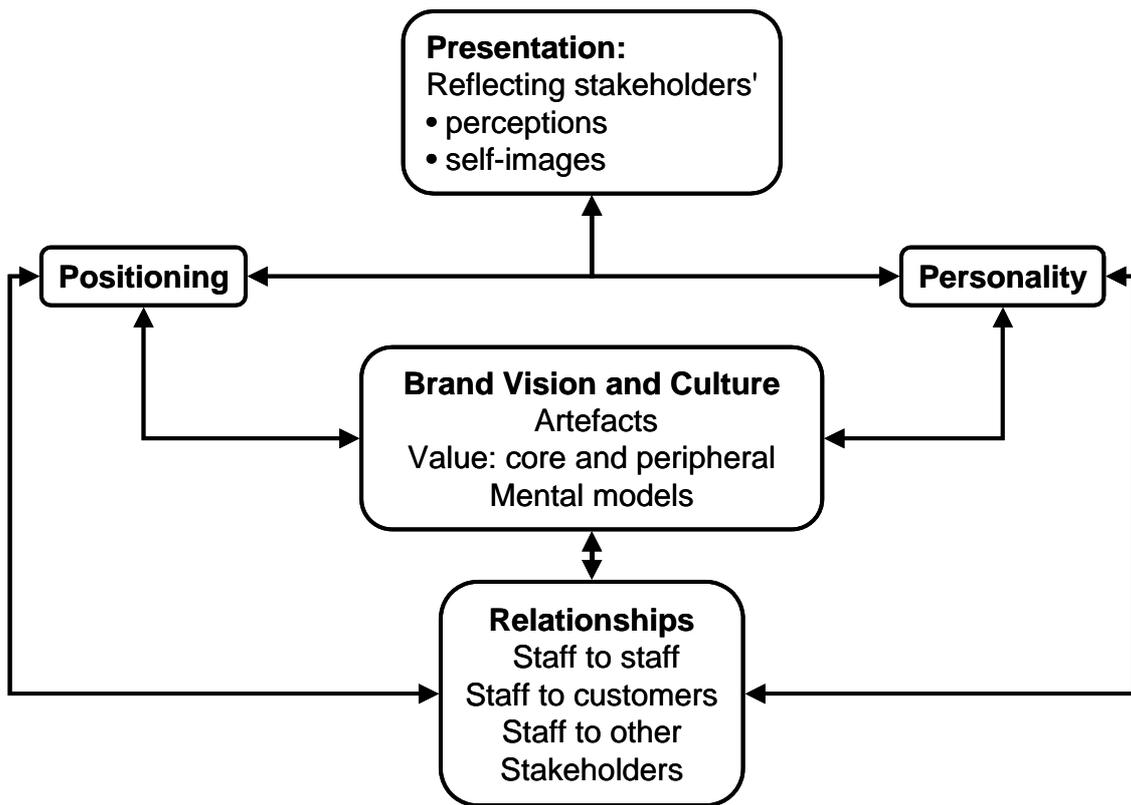
Behaviour

Van Riel (1995: 32) considers behaviour to be the most effective method to create and communicate brand identity. The target market observed the behaviour of the company, which influences opinions and perceptions. Even though symbolism and communications influence the images that consumers form, they would ultimately judge the brand and form their brand images based on the observable behaviour of the company and its employees.

2.5 A MODEL OF BRAND IDENTITY

De Chernatony (1999: 166) proposes a model of brand identity, which conceptualises the brand's identity in terms of its vision and culture and which drives its positioning, personality and the subsequent relationships, all of which are then presented to reflect stakeholders' actual and aspirational self-images. This model is depicted in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1 COMPONENTS OF BRAND IDENTITY



Source: De Chernatony, 1999: 166

The brand's vision

De Chernatony (1999: 166) states that, for a brand to be successful, the organisation needs to have a clear vision of what it is trying to achieve. In order to establish a brand identity, the organisation should know how the brand would contribute to attaining the goals of the company, how these would be achieved and what the means are to do so. The brand's managers need to consider the future of the brand and understand how the brand identity is able to contribute and would have to be changed in order for the company to remain successful in future.

The brand's culture

In order to develop a vision, the company needs to understand its own culture. According to De Chernatony (1999: 167) this culture may be observed by means of visible artefacts, employees' and managers' values and the mental models of those involved in building the brand. The values of the brand are very important and by establishing how current values could be changed, a brand is able to determine its vision for the future. Oakley has a rich

culture of innovation that started with a “mad scientist” – an individual who started the company with one goal: to defy all convention. To this day this culture drives the company.

The brand's positioning

De Chernatony (1999: 168) states that it is important for the organisation to establish a positioning strategy. How the company would want the brand to be perceived and positioned within the minds of consumers would be affected by its vision and culture. The aspects to serve as the basis for the positioning of the brand, such as price and quality, would also be influenced by the vision and culture of the brand. Oakley positions its brand as a high quality brand, obsessed with innovation.

The brand's personality

The core values of the brand do not only influence the functional aspect of the brand, but also its personality. De Chernatony (1999: 169) states that the personality of a brand provides consumers with the assurance of a familiar brand – they recognise the core values of the brand by means of its personality. In addition to the personality of the brand being communicated to consumers by means of various media, the behaviour of employees is also of importance, since it affects the consumers' perceptions about the personality. In addition the core values of the brand have to be evident in the behaviour of employees.

The brand's relationships

After developing a personality, a brand develops a relationship with those relevant parties who are exposed to the brand. These relationships are defined by the values of the brand as reflected by means of its personality (De Chernatony, 1999: 169). Oakley values quality and innovation and the company attempts to reflect this by means of its personality, because it is sophisticated, yet vibrant and exciting. By means of interactions, the different parties to the brand's various relationships learn more about one another and establish common goals and interests. A consumer's own lifestyle may, therefore, be consistent with the personality of a brand, which serves as a basis for the establishment of a relationship. The brand is an active participant in its relationships. As could be seen in Figure 2.1, various relationships are formed: between the brand and employees, customers, others and stakeholders. An eye should be kept on these relationships and regularly monitored to consider to what extent they contribute towards the success of the brand.

The brand's presentation

Having identified a unified identity for the brand, the company has to decide how to present this identity to its target markets (De Chernatony, 1999: 169). Presenting the identity to different stakeholders is difficult, because these parties have different forms of contact with the brand and strategies, therefore, have to be adapted to the relevant circumstances. Employees should ensure that they present the brand's identity correctly to the stakeholders with whom they are in contact. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the company could present its brand to consumers by means of both verbal and non-verbal communications, which include advertising, promotions, and other elements of the brand's marketing mix, and also by means of aspects such as behaviour and symbols.

2.6 ELEMENTS OF BRAND IDENTITY

Aaker (1996: 78-85) suggests that, to ensure that its identity has depth and richness, a firm should consider its brand as a product, an organisation, a person and a symbol. These perspectives are very different and focus on diverse elements of the brand identity. By concentrating on these elements, a firm could provide the brand identity with richness, differentiation and clarity.

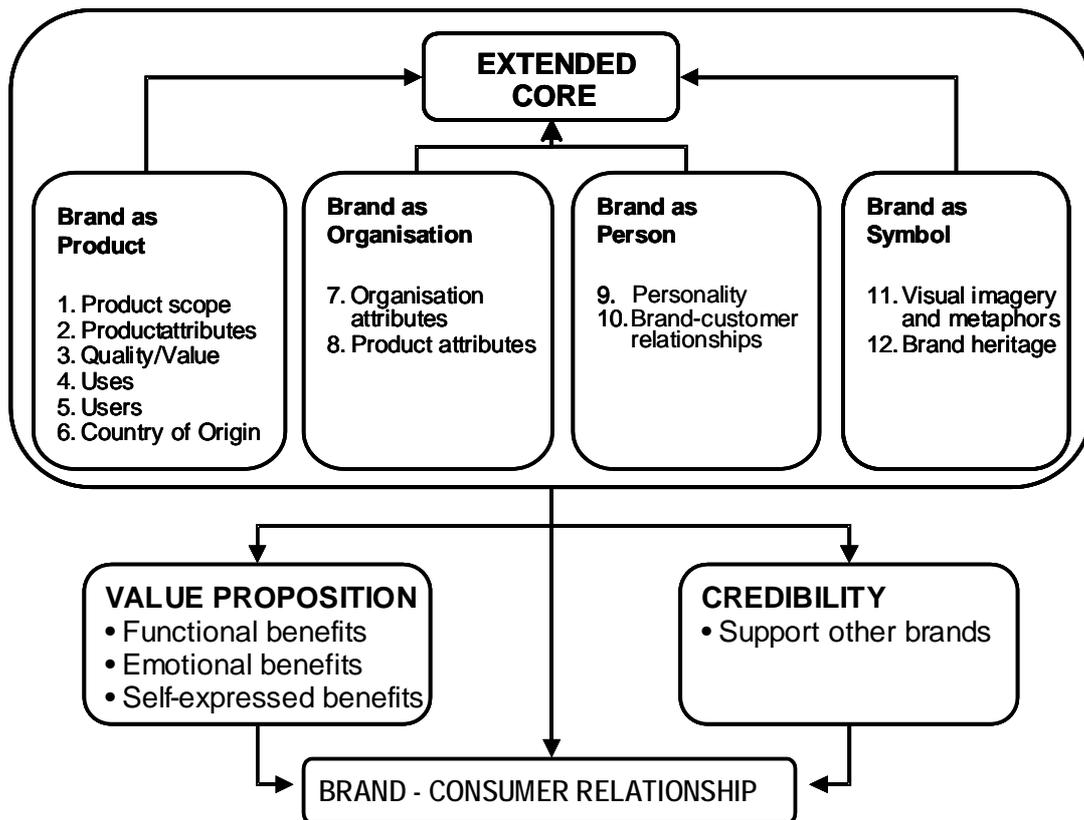
2.6.1 Four brand identity perspectives

These four perspectives of brand identity are depicted in Figure 2.2. They form part of a brand identity system. It should be noted that not all brands need to or have to follow these perspectives – some brands follow only one or two of these perspectives and are still successful. One of Kellogg's' sub brands, Coco Pops, relies almost exclusively on its brand personality to define and present the brand identity, while a brand such as Mercedes Benz follow all of the perspectives of brand identity. Brands should use those perspectives that would communicate their specific brand most successfully to their target markets, based on the characteristics of both the target market and the brand itself. The four perspectives would now be discussed in more detail.

2.6.1.1 The brand as product: product-related associations

It is important for marketers of the brand to concentrate on the product-related attributes of a brand, since this forms such an important part of brand identity, because they are directly linked to brand choice decisions and the use experience (Aaker, 1996: 78). Several aspects regarding the brand as product provide further clarity.

FIGURE 2.2 THE BRAND IDENTITY SYSTEM



Source: Aaker, 1996: 78.

The product scope: associations with the product class

The product or products with which the brand is associated is an important consideration. For example, Oakley is predominantly associated with sunglasses, while Asics is predominantly associated with running shoes. A brand with a strong link to a specific product class would be recalled from memory when a consumer thinks about brands within the product class. A dominant brand within a product class would often be the only one recalled, for example All Gold Tomato Sauce. Aaker (1996: 78) states that the idea is not to get consumers to recall a given product class upon being exposed to a specific brand, but rather vice versa. This refers to top-of-the-mind awareness.

Product-related attributes

The purchase or use of a brand offers direct attributes which are able to provide functional or emotional benefits (Aaker, 1996: 79). A product-related attribute could provide value for a consumer by offering something extra or something better, for example the convenience 24-hour stores at fuel stations (e.g. BP, Shell or Engen), which offer the consumer convenience

and 24 hour availability of products. Marketers should take care not to over-emphasise product attributes when focusing on brand identity at the expense of other perspectives which may also add value to the brand and contribute towards its distinctiveness.

Quality/Value

Amongst the product-related associations to be considered, the quality element is probably the most important. Quality is often used as indicator for the most superior brand and a brand that could create an identity of a high quality product would have a distinct advantage over competitors (Aaker, 1996: 79). Quality may be considered a core identity element. The concept of value is closely related to quality and the dimension of price. The quality of a product, given the price of the product, determines the value of the product for consumers.

Associations with the use occasion

Aaker (1996: 79) alludes to the fact that a brand is able to appeal to a specific use or application of the brand. The brand is associated with the context in which it is used (consumed). Energade, for example, is largely associated with athletes seeking sustained energy levels during competitions or practices.

Associations with users

A brand could position itself by appealing to the type of user or class of users of the brand. (Aaker and Shansby, 1982: 52). Consumers may identify with the users of a brand and associate the brand with those individuals. An example of this is the owners of Harley Davidson motorcycles, who represent a specific type of user of the brand.

Country of origin

Brands also have the option of using a specific country or region as a centre of appeal, which may add credibility to a brand (Aaker, 1996: 80). As a result consumers may associate the brand with a specific country or region. Examples of such brands are Swatch, which is a Swiss brand, or Scotch whisky, where Scotland is often used in advertising various brands of whisky. The brand's association with the country implies a high level of quality, because that country or region has a specific heritage and is famous for making the best products within that given product class.

2.6.1.2 The brand as organisation

In contrast with the previous paragraph, where the brand is seen in terms of product attributes, this perspective focuses on attributes of the organisation. These attributes include innovation,

a drive for quality, a concern for the environment and a concern for consumers (Aaker, 1996: 82). As an organisation Oakley presents itself as being concerned with both innovation and quality. These attributes are developed and reflected by means of the people, culture and values of the organisation. Other examples of such companies are Microsoft, which is associated with innovation, or Rolex, which is associated with precision.

For various reasons organisational attributes are more enduring and more resistant to competitive actions than product attributes. Firstly, it is much easier to copy a product and specific attributes than to duplicate an organisation with its own unique culture, values and people. Duplicating an organisation such as Virgin Atlantic, for example, would be very difficult because of the uniqueness of the brand. Secondly, organisational attributes usually imply that the company applies its trade in various product classes, whilst a focus on product attributes usually concentrates only on a single product class. Virgin Atlantic competes in several product categories, including airlines, the market for soft drinks and even health and fitness, which makes it hard to imitate, while McDonalds only operates in the fast food industry. Thirdly, aspects such as quality and innovation are hard to evaluate and any competitor could find it difficult to communicate that they may have closed the gap between themselves and their more innovative competition.

Another aspect that an organisation should consider is whether its brand should have a global reach, accompanied by prestige and credibility (which is not necessarily exclusively the case), or whether it should merely remain a local brand.

2.6.1.3 The brand as person: brand personality

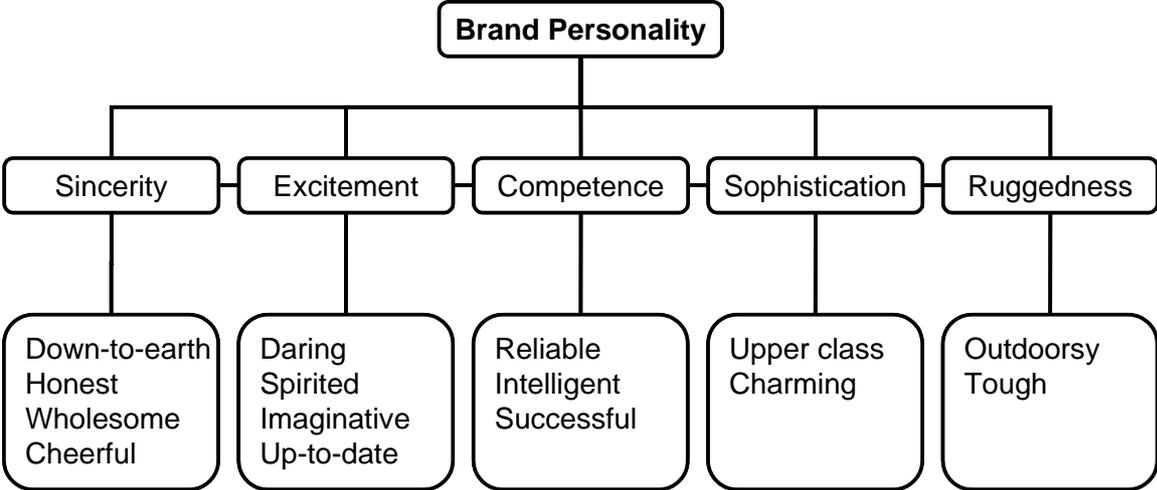
A brand perspective that sees the brand as having a personality has much more depth and richness than a perspective that focuses on product attributes. Aaker (1997: 347) defines brand personality as those human characteristics associated with a brand. A brand may be perceived as having specific traits like being competent, rugged, humorous or intellectual. Oakley's personality could be perceived as being exciting, innovative, stylish, aggressive and constantly in pursuit of excellence.

According to Aaker (1996: 83), a brand personality is able to create a stronger brand in several ways. It could firstly help create self-expressive or emotional (symbolic) benefits that become a vehicle for consumers by means of which to express their own personality. A brand may thus have a personality which is congruent with that of a consumer with which the

consumer could identify. An example of this is Caterpillar, which is a rugged brand, which is congruent with a consumer with a rugged, adventurous personality. On the other hand Gucci is a very stylish, sophisticated brand that appeals to the sophisticated, fashion-conscious individual. Secondly, a brand personality could be the basis for a relationship between the consumer and the brand – merely as human relationships are affected by personalities. Thirdly, a brand personality may communicate a product attribute and so deliver a functional benefit to the consumer. Caterpillar’s personality is rugged and tough, which communicates that the product is actually also tough and suitable for outdoor use to consumers and thus suggests a functional benefit.

Aaker (1997: 352) posits that brand personality has five basic dimensions, which reflect the type of personality that a brand may have. These dimensions are also divided into characteristics that underlie them. The basic dimensions of brand personality are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. The brand personality construct is illustrated in Figure 2.3. By examining these dimensions, it could be said that Oakley’s personality is exciting and competent, with a degree of ruggedness. Oakley is daring, spirited, imaginative and up-to-date, which gives the brand a degree of confidence.

FIGURE 2.3 A BRAND PERSONALITY FRAMEWORK



Source: Aaker, 1997: 352.

2.6.1.4 The brand as symbol

The main function of a strong symbol is to provide cohesion and structure to the brand identity and make it easier to recognise and recall. The fact that symbols could be seen as the identity of a brand reflects merely how powerful it could be. In essence, anything that

represents a brand could be seen as a symbol. An example of this may be the Nike swoosh logo, which is so intimately associated with the brand. Oakley's elliptical logo serves as a very strong symbol of the brand – the logo is strongly associated with the brand. It contributes to the Oakley's brand identity – the brand is well-known by means of the elliptical logo (known as The Icon).

Aaker (1996: 84-85) identifies three types of symbols: visual imagery, metaphors and brand heritage.

Visual imagery

Aaker (1996: 84) mentions that a strong visual image of a brand creates a strong association with the brand's identity, because it has been built up over a period of time. Good examples of these are the yellow McDonald's arches that forms the logo or the previously mentioned Nike swoosh. Even quite limited exposure to these logos could lead to recognition of the brand identity. As mentioned in a previous paragraph, Oakley's Icon is also a very good example of visual imagery.

Metaphors

Symbols are much more effective if they take the form of a metaphor, because the symbol could represent a functional, emotional or self-expressive benefit (Aaker, 1996: 84). The symbol stands for a certain benefit that the brand implicitly promises. An example of this is the Energizer bunny, which promises a long battery life or Sanlam's logo, which are two hands cupping a circular object, which represents how the company takes care of its clients.

Brand heritage

A brand with a rich legacy or colourful history may be the essence of the brand's identity. It refers to some incident, place or historic, defining moment in the history of the brand that defines the brand and gives it a strong heritage (Aaker, 1996: 85). Jack Daniel's makes excellent use of its brand's heritage in using its Tennessee origins and rich history in its advertisements. Aaker (1996: 85) states that a symbol "could be the cornerstone of a brand strategy".

2.6.2 Brand identity structures

Aaker (1996: 85-89) and Aaker, et al. (2000: 43) is of the opinion that a brand's identity has a specific structure that, in combination with the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph,

determine a brand's overall identity. Included in this structure are the brand's core identity, an extended identity and the brand essence. These are discussed next in greater detail.

Core identity

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, a brand identity could consist of up to twelve brand identity categories, which may lead to confusion in terms of exactly what the brand stands for if it is evaluated on too many categories. The brand should, therefore, ensure that it has a core identity, which would include the most important elements of the brand identity and represents the timeless essence of the brand (Aaker, 1996: 85). This core identity provides the crux of what the brand really stands for. It contains the associations that are likely to remain constant over time and would do so if the brand moves into different markets and products.

All the different categories should reflect the overall values and strategy of the organisation, while the core identity needs to be the one association to resonate with consumers and thus serve as differentiation. This core identity of the brand should also be more resistant to change than the elements found in the extended identity of the brand. The core identity is the very heart of the brand. An example of a core identity is that of Volvo, with the focus on safety as the core element of the brand identity. Intuitively it makes sense that there should be a correspondence between the values of the organisation and the core identity of the brand.

It is of great importance that the core identity of the brand should include elements that contribute both to the value proposition and to the uniqueness of the brand. These two aspects would contribute to the differentiation of the brand within a given product category. It would also provide credibility. To use the example of Volvo: its value proposition revolves around the fact that it provides the driver with safety and the uniqueness is derived from fact that it appeals to a consumer's sense of safety and security, rather than luxury or prestige.

Extended identity

The extended identity of the brand is merely those elements that do not form part of the focused core identity. These elements are also organised into meaningful groupings that serve as further signals for consumers. It includes elements that "provide texture and completeness" (Aaker, 1996: 87). It extends the core identity and elaborates the identity to portray everything (including all aspects) for which the brand stands. Visible associations with the brand may be included. Important elements of the brand's marketing program could be included by means of advertisements and promotional efforts. In the case of Nike, for

example, the extended identity may include the product itself, the “Just Do It” slogan, the retail experience, the company’s interactive website and even the brand’s personality. All of these aspects have a role to play in driving the brand identity, but they are not part of the core identity – which in Nike’s case is sports and fitness.

The communication strategies to be followed for the brand are not included in the core identity and this may be part of the extended identity. The core identity often does not include all the elements necessary to communicate the brand identity as a holistic unit.

Brand essence

The core identity of the brand usually consists of two to four dimensions or elements that accurately and concisely describe the brand. Many brands also add even more focus to this core identity by creating a brand essence, which is a single thought or idea that “captures the soul of the brand” (Aaker, et al. 2000: 45). The core essence essentially binds all the other elements of brand identity – it epitomises the brand. Aaker, et al. (2000: 45) alludes to several characteristics that a brand essence should possess. It should resonate with customers and should clearly articulate and advocate the brand’s value proposition. The brand essence should also be ownable, which provides lasting differentiation from competitors. Very importantly, it should be compelling enough to energise and inspire employees as well as other partners of the company.

2.7 MULTIPLE BRAND IDENTITIES – ADAPTING TO DIFFERENT MARKETS

An organisation should determine whether to use the same brand identity in all the markets in which it operates. Some brands have an identity with universal appeal that would be successful in all markets, but most brands would have to adapt the identity in accordance with the characteristics of its target market. Coca-Cola has a basic identity that it uses across markets. The same could be said of Oakley. Two advantages of using a universal identity are that economies of scale would result and that any inconsistencies in brand identity may be eliminated (Aaker, 1996: 104).

A brand may have to adapt its identity for diverse markets, appealing to the consumer specific to that market. One could merely consider the differences in culture or the difference between the market for luxury brands or essential products to understand the adaptations that may have to be made to a brand’s identity.

Aaker (1996: 104) states that, when multiple identities are needed, the goal should be to have a common set of associations. A company may need to adapt its brand identity when it extends to other countries and cultures, because the values and customs within such cultures differ from the brand's origin. The current brand identity may have to be changed in order to be accepted or to be effective in other cultures. Some of these associations would already be present in the core identity of the brand. An identity for all the markets would then be established, but consistent to the core associations. Associations that do not overlap, should be treated with care, since they may lead to inconsistencies. One way to avoid an inconsistent identity is to have the same basic identity, but to place the emphasis on different elements of the identity for each market.

2.8 SUMMARY

Brand identity is broadly defined as the self-presentation of the company to its target markets by means of its controlled communications and behaviours, in order to ensure that consumers would know what the brand stands for. A brand identity has certain characteristics that determine whether the brand identity would be accurately and successfully conveyed to target markets. These characteristics include a clear vision, specific meaning, authenticity, coherence, differentiation, flexibility, sustainability, commitment and value. The brand identity could be conveyed by means of the use of symbolism, communications and the behaviour of the organisation. Brand identity have the basic function of conveying the meaning of the brand to consumers, but it also has to ensure that a relationship is established between the brand and its target markets, by means of creating salience.

A distinction should be made between brand identity and brand image, because they are not identical. While a brand identity is the self-presentation of the company to the consumer, consumers form the brand image by means of their own personal perceptions of the brand. Brand identity could be seen from four different perspectives which include the brand as product, organisation, person and symbol. The basic structure of the brand identity includes the core identity, the extended identity and the brand's essence. A company may have to adapt its brand identity according to the different markets in which it operates, which leads to multiple brand identities.

2.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The study has one basic focal point: consumers' perceptions of Oakley as a brand, which leads to the formation of a brand image for Oakley. The brand image that the respondents in the study have of the brand, based on their perceptions and attitudes, would be compared to Oakley's brand identity – as created and communicated by the company. This chapter provided an explanation of the concept of brand identity, so that, when Oakley's brand identity is compared to consumers' brand images, an understanding would be formed about what exactly a brand identity is. If no explanation is given of brand identity and what aspects contribute to the formation of a brand identity, an accurate brand identity cannot be compiled, which implies that the brand images cannot be compared to any other factor. If there is no clear understanding of the brand identity construct and what Oakley's is, the brand images that the study measures would be compared with a vague identity and, therefore, not answer the two research questions of this study. To compare two subjects and make accurate inferences about these requires an understanding of both. This chapter addresses brand identity to ensure that the difference between brand identity and brand image is clear. The latter is important when a comparison of the constructs is made.

CHAPTER 3 THE CONCEPT OF BRAND IMAGE

The image of a product associated with a brand may be clear-cut or relatively vague; it may be varied or simple; it may be intense or innocuous. Sometimes the notions people have about a brand do not even seem very sensible or relevant to those who know what the product is “really” like. But they all contribute to the customer’s deciding whether or not the brand is the one “for me”.

- Gardner & Levy, Harvard Business Review, March-April 1955.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the construct of brand identity, which represents what the brand stands for, consisting of the cues offered by an organisation via its behaviour, communication and symbols. These signals are received by consumers, which they use, in conjunction with other factors, to form their own brand image of the brand or company. According to Hatch and Schultz (1997: 359) image is not what the company believes it to be, but the feelings and beliefs about the company that exists in the minds of its target markets (associations). Park, Jaworski and McInnis (1986: 135) state that a well-communicated image should help establish a brand’s position, insulate the brand from competition and thus enhance the brand’s performance. This chapter focuses on consumers’ perceptions of the brand, constituting a brand image, because the study attempts to determine whether Oakley’s brand image as held by consumers, and reflected by means of the associations they have with the brand, is in fact congruent with the brand identity that Oakley aims to communicate to its target audiences. The brand image is constructed from the associations that consumers have with the brand and the perceptions they have of Oakley. The study will determine whether the aspects of Oakley’s brand identity are reflected in consumers’ associations. This chapter provides an understanding of brand image and how it is formed, via brand associations.

The chapter starts off by broadly discussing the construct of brand image and several definitions are mentioned. A distinction is made between brand image and the related, but not identical, concept of brand identity, as discussed in the previous chapter. Brand associations, that form the basis of brand image are discussed in greater detail, and reference is made to these associations creating value.

3.2 BRAND IMAGE: A BROAD DISCUSSION AND DEFINITIONS

Consumers form a certain image of any brand or company in their own minds, based on various associations that they have with the brand. Brand image is very important for any brand, since it is an indicator of how consumers perceive the brand and how they consider it.

A positive image may be considered as the cornerstone, or at least a prerequisite, for the establishment of a relationship between the brand and the consumer. The brand image is a function of how the consumer relate to the brand – it serves as a basic point of reference. Consumers often use brand image as a cue for purchasing a specific brand, rather than assessing the relevant physical product attributes or benefits.

3.2.1 Brand image defined

In general terms brand image could be described as what people consider and feel when they see or even hear of the brand – it is essentially a function of what consumers have learnt about a brand. A brand image represents reasoned or emotional responses to a specific brand. It is important to realise that the consumers' associations about a brand, and thus the brand image they perceive, are not necessarily a reflection of objective reality, but rather each individual's perceptions. Each consumer, therefore, has a unique image of the brand. The brand images that consumers have of Oakley would thus vary, but the key for the company is to realise images of the brand that are similar or congruent to the identity. This notion is tested in the empirical study.

A very comprehensive definition of an image is offered by Van Riel (1995: 73-74) and supported by Dowling (1986: 110). According to the authors a brand image is the set of meanings by which a brand is known and by means of which consumers describe, remember and relate to it. It is the result of the interaction of a consumer's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about a brand. According to Low and Lamb (2000: 353) brand image is a function of both symbolic and functional brand beliefs. Functional brand beliefs refer to consumers holding certain perceptions regarding a brand's ability to fulfill its functional requirements. Consumers would expect Oakley sunglasses to protect their eyes from the sun and, therefore, serve a functional need. Symbolic beliefs are more abstract in nature and refer to what the consumer perceive a brand to stand for. Oakley may stand for innovation and excitement. Together, these two constructs contribute towards the formation of consumers' brand images.

Brand image could be referred to as “the schematic memory of a brand” (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 2004: 337). Upshaw (1995: 18) refers to “attitudinal brand associations” when discussing brand image. Support for this definition is provided by Biel (1996: 8) who describes the image of the brand as a cluster of attributes and associations linked to the brand name. Aaker (1991: 109) defines brand image as a set of associations that a consumer holds

for a brand. According to him these associations are organised into groups which hold their own meaning. These definitions are supported by Van Riel (1995: 75), who is of the opinion that consumers form a picture of a brand by means of networks of associations, which are built up over a period of time as a result of accumulating stimuli to which the consumer have been exposed. For example, consumers may associate a given brand with quality, low prices, friendliness or the brand's logo or slogan. This leads to the formation of a mosaic of impressions, which as a whole constitutes the image. Hawkins, et al. (2004: 337) alludes to brand image containing consumers' interpretations of a brand's (product's) attributes, benefits, usage situations, users and manufacturer/marketer characteristics. De Chernatony (1999: 165) sees brand image as the holistic impression of the position of a brand relative to its perceived competitors. This indicates that a brand's attributes, benefits, usage situations, etc. should be seen relative to those of competing brands. Therefore, Oakley's brand image needs to be seen relative to those of brands such as Ray-Ban or Von Zipper.

Dobni and Zinkhan (1990: 118) summarises the concept of brand image, stating the following as the essential structures of brand image, namely that it is the concept of a brand that is held by the consumer; a subjective and perceptual phenomenon that is formed by means of consumer interpretation, whether reasoned or emotional, not inherent in the technical, functional or physical concerns of the product, but rather affected and moulded by marketing activities, by context variables and by the characteristics of the receiver. Where brand image is concerned, the perception of reality is more important than the reality itself.

3.2.2 The difference between brand image, brand identity and brand attitudes

Various sources of literature draw a distinction between brand image and the construct of brand identity. Such literature treats brand identity as being communicated by the company to the consumer as the image that the company would wish the consumers to have of the relevant brand. Del Rio, Vazquez and Iglesias (2001: 210) found that the creation of a brand implies communicating a certain brand identity in such a way that all the firm's target groups link such a brand with a certain set of associations. This is supported by Aaker, et al. (2000: 40) in stating that, in contrast to brand image (the brand's current associations), a brand identity is aspirational and may imply that the current brand image as held by consumers needs to be changed or adapted. Van Rekom (1997: 411) provides further support in stating that the desired image may be different from actual image. Van Riel (1995: 77) and Nandan (2005: 264) echoes the arguments above in stating that it has become generally accepted that

image is the picture of an organisation as perceived by its target markets, while identity is associated with the way in which a company presents itself to those target markets. In order to reach the desired image, an organisation may need to provide different meanings to the target groups from those provided thus far. A brand may be associated with a lower degree of quality at an affordable price, which the company wants to change so that consumers perceive the brand of higher quality, because the brand attempts to compete in a higher price bracket. This study will determine whether customers accurately perceive Oakley's intended brand identity, and if not, it may suggest that Oakley needs to change those brand images so that they would represent the brand's identity. Upshaw (1995: 19) alludes to the term "image" that may potentially suggest a shallow reflection of a brand rather than a brand's more essential, core qualities. Consumers may simply not fully understand what the brand stands for and, therefore, not interpret it correctly, which in turn leads to an inaccurate image of the brand. As a result, when "brand image" and "brand identity" are used interchangeably, it could decrease the importance of a brand's positioning and personality components.

A distinction should also be drawn between the concepts of brand attitude and brand image, because they are not identical. Brand attitude could be seen as one of the components contributing to the brand image that consumers form. Brand image is more multi-faceted than brand attitude. This is echoed by Faircloth, Capella and Alford (2001: 64) in stating that brand image, which is a holistic construct formed from a *gestalt* of all the brand associations related to the brand, is different from brand attitude, which is a consumer's overall evaluation of the brand. Frequently confused with brand image, brand attitude is conceptualised as merely one of the various associations used in the formation of the brand image. An attitude may only represent whether a consumer likes the brand or not. The study will measure consumers' attitudes towards Oakley, since this would contribute towards an understanding of brand images held by consumers. Together with brand associations, attitudes serve as the building blocks of brand image formation.

3.3 BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

The discussions in previous paragraphs identified one mutual construct of brand image, namely associations. Associations are the key word when analysing literature on brand image. Keller (1993: 3) defines brand image as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. Aaker (1991: 109) perceives a brand association as anything linked in memory to a brand. The associations that consumers hold

with reference to a specific brand determine their image of that brand. It contains the meaning of a brand for consumers and is anything linked in the consumers' memory to a brand. Chen (2001: 440) alludes to associations representing the basis for both purchase decisions and for brand loyalty.

According to Keller (2003: 70), brand associations could be created in a variety of ways, in addition to sources controlled by marketers. Brand associations are created by means of direct experience with the brand, from information communicated about the brand by the firm (advertising message and style) and by means of other independent commercials or even non-commercial sources. Further ways in which associations are created are through word-of-mouth, by means of assumptions or inferences about the brand based on what is known about the brand and from the identification of the brand with a company, country, channel of distribution, brand name, symbol or by means of some person (e.g. the chief executive officer of a company or a certain employee), place or event, with examples being Batra and Homer (2004: 319).

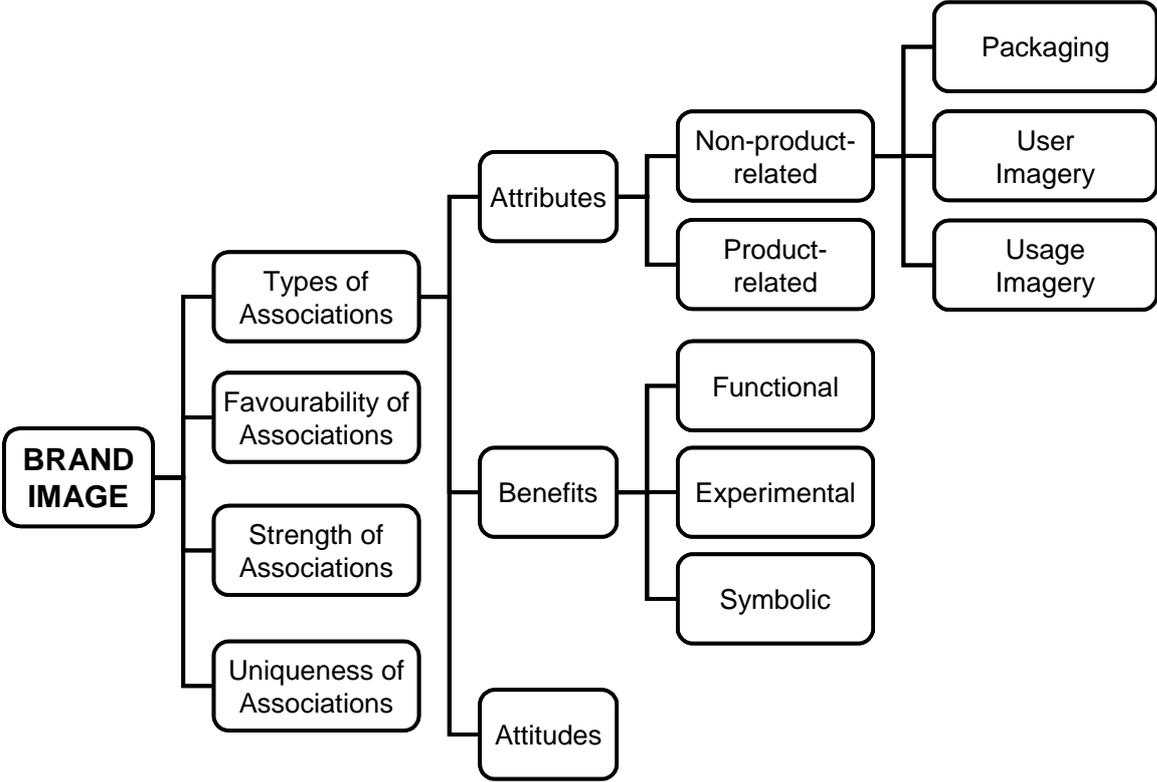
Keller (1993: 3) states that brand image is a result of the strength, favourability, uniqueness and type of brand associations held by consumers about a specific brand. Similarly, Aaker (1991: 113) found that management's interest is not only the identity of a brand's associations, but also whether they are strong and shared by many, or weak and differ from person to person.

Brand associations could take on different forms and may reflect characteristics of the product or aspects that are independent to the product, such as self-expressive benefits Chen (2001: 440). According to Keller (1993: 3), one way to distinguish between brand associations is by means of their level of abstraction, which refers to how much information the association contains and conveys. According to this, brand associations could be classified into three categories: attributes, benefits and attitudes. The attributes could be either product-related or non-product related and the benefits inherent to a brand could be symbolic, experiential or functional (Keller, 1993: 4) and Park, et al. (1986: 136). Biel (1996: 8) broadly refers to these as "hard" or "soft" attributes.

Aaker (1991: 113-129) furnishes different types of brand associations, including product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use/application, user/customer, celebrity/person, lifestyle/personality, product class, competitors and country/geographic area.

Farquhar and Herr (2001) suggest that the different types of associations include product category, usage situation, product attribute and benefits. The similarity between these types of brand associations and Keller’s categories of brand associations is quite clear. Brand image and the role that associations play in the formation of brand image are depicted graphically in Figure 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1 BRAND IMAGE



Source: Keller, 1993: 7.

3.3.1 Types of brand associations

Different types of brand associations could be identified, including attributes, benefits and attitudes.

3.3.1.1 Attributes

Attributes are the descriptive factors that characterise the product (brand), which is what the consumer thinks the brand possesses or could do. Consumers may thus perceive Oakley as a brand that could provide social recognition to owners of the product or it may provide the consumer with a product that protects his eyes. Attributes are often used as the basis for positioning the brand, according to Aaker, et al. (1982: 57). Attributes could be distinguished

according to how directly they relate to the product or brand – these attributes are called product-related attributes. These attributes are needed for the product or brand to satisfy the needs of consumers and also meet their expectations about the performance of the brand. They relate to the physical composition of a product. Product-related attributes include factors, such as shape, size, colours, performance, etc. These are all rather obvious attributes of a product or brand and are quite commonly acknowledged, according to Keller (1993: 4).

Non-product related attributes are the external aspects of a product (brand) that relate to its purchase or consumption. Non-product attributes attributed to brand image are price, user/usage imagery, brand personality and feelings and experiences

Price

Price is included as a non-product related attribute because it is a necessary consideration in the purchase process, but it does not bear direct influence on the performance aspect of the product or brand. Price is a very important element, because consumers hold expectations and perceptions about the quality and value of a brand, based on its price and may organise their knowledge of brands according to the price factor. Because Oakley charges a premium price, consumers would expect the products to provide value and to be of high quality.

User/usage imagery

User and usage imagery as attributes could be formed directly from consumers' own experiences with brand users or indirectly by means of the target market as communicated by the brand by means of elements of the marketing mix or by another form of communication, like word-of-mouth for example. The usage situation also plays a role – examples are specific times of the year (seasons), specific times of the day or even a given social usage situation. Oakley sunglasses are especially associated with summer time, whilst Oakley's ski goggles are associated with winter. Oakley has a wide range of sunglasses, ranging from those that pertain specifically to sport to a more formal, fashion-conscious range of sunglasses. The usage situation and users change for the different types of sunglasses.

Brand personality

A result of user and usage imagery is the formation of a brand personality – it produces personality attributes, such as youthfulness or seriousness. Plummer (2000: 81) proposes that the personality or character of the brand is a component of the brand's image and Farquhar (1989: 29) states that "Image means personality". Aaker (1997: 347) defines brand personality

as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. It is further noted that brand personality consists of five basic dimensions, which defines the type of personality of a brand. These dimensions are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness (Figure 2.3). Brand personality serves a symbolic or self-expressive role, rather than a utilitarian role, which is more product-related.

Feelings and experiences

It is important to note that consumers hold different views of a brand's personality and any given brand thus has a unique personality, with different connotations attached to it, for different individuals. These personality attributes attached to a brand may also reflect certain emotions or feelings which are evoked by the brand. The symbolic use of brands could also be explained by the notion of brand personality, because consumers tend to attach human characteristics (as symbolised by the brand) to a brand.

3.3.1.2 Benefits

Benefits refer to the value that consumers attach to a brand or product, based on what they believe the brand could do for them, and what functions it could fulfill. Benefits could be divided into further categories, based on the underlying motivations to which they relate (Keller, 1993: 4). These benefits could be functional, experiential or symbolic.

Functional benefits

These benefits are derived from the intrinsic value derived from product usage, which correspond with product-related attributes. Keller (1993: 4) states that it essentially refers to the degree to which a product or brand meets consumer expectations of the product-related attributes of that product or brand. It refers to whether a brand performs as it is supposed to do. It often involves the removal of a very basic or physiological problem for the consumer, such as dandruff, which may be removed (relieved) by using Gill anti-dandruff shampoo.

Experiential benefits

Experiential benefits refer to how it feels to use the brand or product and is also linked to the product-related attributes. The whole experience of consuming/using the brand/product is assessed and value derived from the usage experience. These benefits satisfy aspects such as sensory stimulation, search for cognition and variety.

Symbolic benefits

Whereas functional benefits are intrinsic to product use, symbolic benefits are derived from the extrinsic experience of product/brand usage and relate to non-product related attributes. These benefits relate to a consumer's need for social recognition, self-esteem needs and personal expression. According to Underwood (2003: 62) "The symbolism associated with products operates in two directions: inward in constructing our self-identity, self-symbolism; and outward in constructing the social world, social symbolism." Value is derived from the brand/product's ability to provide the consumer with these aspects. A consumer may thus value a product's prestige, exclusivity or the fashionability of a brand because of how it relates to the consumer's self-image (Keller, 1993: 4). Many of the associations providing distinction to brands are non-functional – they go beyond the functional benefits or perceived quality, and deal with the intangible properties of the brand, for example Mercedes that symbolises prestige (Batra, et al. 2004: 318)

3.3.1.3 Attitudes

Attitudes are defined as a consumer's overall evaluations of a brand (Keller, 1993: 4). Attitudes are important, because they form the basis for consumer behaviour. Consumers could express their self-concepts by means of their attitudes. Brand attitudes could be seen as a function of the associated attributes and benefits of a brand. Attitudes are often formed in a less thoughtful manner, with less decision-making involved. Attitudes are often created by means of heuristics and simple decision-making rules (Keller, 1993: 5). Consumers often lack the time or motivation to evaluate a brand thoroughly, so they merely use extrinsic cues or signals to form their attitude toward a brand. Consumers may develop an attitude toward a product/brand simply on the basis of product appearance.

3.3.2 The strength, favourability and uniqueness of brand associations

It is evident now that different brand associations constitute a brand's image. These associations could take on the form of attributes, benefits and attitudes and could be either product-related or non-product related. These associations also differ in terms of their strength, favourability and uniqueness (Keller, 1993: 5).

3.3.2.1 The strength of brand associations

The strength of an association refers to the process by which the information regarding the brand enters the consumer's memory (encoding) and how it is maintained as part of the brand image (storage) (Keller, 1993: 5). The strength of the association is a function of both the

amount of processing through which the information passes while being encoded, as well as the nature (quality) of the information processing during encoding. In simple terms this could be referred to as how much the consumer thinks and the way in which the consumer thinks (about the brand/product). Two basic factors affect the strength of associations with any piece of information (Keller, 1993: 5). These are the personal relevance that the information holds for the individual and the consistency with which this information is communicated over an extended period of time. Oakley may hold strong personal relevance for an individual with an active lifestyle, participating in sport and recreational activities. The consumer may thus pay more attention upon being exposed to an advertisement for Oakley or when talking with other individuals about the brand, which would strengthen the consumers' brand associations.

The strength of associations ought to be greater if the consumer spends more time thinking about the information and becomes more involved in the processing of that information. This in turn would impact upon the ease of retrieval of this information in the future. The marketing efforts of an organisation, coupled with other factors, such as the situation or context of exposure to the brand, would affect the strength of the associations linked to the brand (Keller, 2003: 71). It is thus crucial for marketers to create marketing programmes that would positively impact upon brand associations.

Aaker (1991: 109) sums up the strength of brand associations in stating that “the association not only exists but has a level of strength. A link to a brand will be stronger when it is based on many experiences or exposures to communications, rather than a few. It will also be stronger when it is supported by a network of other links.” For example, a consumer who sees a cricket player wearing a pair of Oakley sunglasses or the Oakley brand logo on the surfer's board, would be exposed to different links to the brand, which would strengthen the consumers' associations with the brand

3.3.2.2 The favourability of brand associations

Favourable brand associations are a result of consumer evaluations of a brand/product with regard to whether they satisfy the needs and wants of a consumer, based on attributes and benefits inherent to the brand and expected by the consumer. The importance of an attribute for a given product/brand impacts upon the favourability of associations held by consumers. A brand that satisfies the needs of the consumer and, therefore, performs certain functions would most likely be favourably evaluated and accordingly lead to favourable associations. When discussing consumer evaluations, one should bear in mind that they may depend on the

situation in which the consumer finds himself and also the context in which the evaluation is made. The desirability of a brand depends on the favourability of the brand associations that a consumer holds. According to Keller (2003: 72), the desirability of a brand depends on three factors: how distinctive the consumers find the brand association; how relevant consumers find the association and how believable consumers find the brand association. If a brand aims to be successful, it should not only create favourable, desirable associations, but also deliver those indirect promises.

3.3.2.3 Uniqueness of brand associations

Brands are often compared to other similar brands in the same brand category and may share certain associations with other brands. Oakley may share the association of quality and innovation with Von Zipper. Any company wants to position its brand favourably within the minds of consumers and thus have a “unique selling proposition” (Keller, 1993: 6) which would differentiate the brand from others. This contributes to the uniqueness of the associations that consumers would hold about the brand. This may be achieved by means of explicit reference and comparison to competitors or by means of more implicit statements that do not imply competition.

3.3.3 The importance of congruence between brand associations

Keller (1993: 7) mentions that it is very important that a brand establishes a high degree of congruence between brand associations, which would determine the “cohesiveness” of the brand image. This cohesiveness is determined by the shared meanings between associations or subsets of associations. This cohesiveness of the brand image would determine the holistic picture (comprehensiveness) that consumers form about the brand (Keller, 1993: 8). A brand image where little congruence exists between the brand associations provides marketers with several challenges or problems. Firstly, consumers may be confused as to the meaning of the brand, which would affect future associations which they may form about the brand, because of a lack of information on which to base these associations. Also, because associations share little meaning with other associations, these associations may easily be influenced or changed by competitive actions. A final problem that may occur is when consumers use brands associations to make certain important purchase decisions and they cannot do so effectively, because of the lack of meaning and cohesion among the brand associations they hold (Keller, 1993: 8).

3.3.4 The creation of value by brand associations

According to Aaker (1991: 110-113) brand associations could create value for consumers in a variety of ways. These are: helping to process/retrieve information, differentiating the brand, generating a reason to buy, creating positive attitudes, feelings and providing a basis for extensions.

Associations could summarise facts and specifications and bundle it so that it becomes easier for the consumer to process and retrieve. It creates a chunk of information which makes it easier for the consumer to process it. Associations could also affect the interpretation of facts, as well as the recall of information. Associations could further also provide a basis for differentiation and associations with a brand name could play an important role when the various brands within a given category are hard to distinguish. This could be a valuable source of competitive advantage and also be used for effective positioning. A further source of value creation by means of brand associations is that many associations involve product attributes or consumer benefits which provide consumers with a reason to purchase the brand. Some associations provide credibility and confidence, which would in turn affect the purchase decision. Also, some brand associations create positive associations and stimulate feelings that are transferred onto the brand. This leads to upbeat attitudes toward the brand. How the consumer thus feels about the brand becomes linked in memory to the brand. Lastly, associations could create value by serving as a basis for extensions when a sense of fit is created between the brand name and the proposed new product – or at least by providing reason for the extension (Aaker, 1991: 110-113).

3.4 THE ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE IN BRAND EQUITY

A brand's image contributes towards the brand's equity and plays an important role in the creation of superior brand equity. A brand's equity is a reflection of the value of the brand – what the brand is worth – to the owner of the brand. A luxury brand with strong brand equity is valuable. The brand's exclusivity allows for a premium price.

Keller (1993: 8) alludes to customer-based brand equity, defining it as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on the response of consumers to the marketing of a brand. Brand knowledge is based on a system of associations that consumers have of the brand and consists of two basic components – brand awareness and brand image (Palazon-Vidal and Delgado-Ballester, 2005: 179). Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar

with the brand and holds strong, positive associations with the brand. Brand image thus contributes to a brand's equity and would ultimately effect whether a brand could charge a premium price.

3.5 SUMMARY

The image that consumers hold about a brand is essentially the meaning that consumers attach to the brand and the associations in memory they have with the brand. It is based on the perceptions that consumers have of the brand. How a brand image is formed is determined by the type of association, as well as the strength, favourability and uniqueness of the associations. Types of associations are divided into attributes, benefits and attitudes. The attributes associated with a brand could be either product-related or non-product related. Product-related attributes include the price and packaging of the brand, as well as the users or usage situation. The benefits associated with a brand could be divided into functional, experiential and symbolic benefits. Associations create value for both the consumer and the company.

Brand image differs from brand identity, because it is a reflection of the perceptions of the consumer of the brand and the associations consumers have with the brand, while brand identity is the communications offered by the company about its brand and is thus a projection of what the brand is according to the company.

Brand image forms an essential part of a brand's equity and contributes to the worth of the company. An accurate, favourable brand image would contribute towards the creation of a very equitable brand.

3.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The main focal point of this study is the measurement of the images that consumers hold of Oakley and to then compare these images with the brand identity of Oakley. These brand images are measured by examining consumers' perceptions of the brand as well as their attitudes, which is reflected in brand image. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a company projects a certain identity to its target markets, who then form an image of the brand. This chapter explains the concept of brand image and creates an understanding of how consumers form brand images. Without an understanding of the concept of brand image, it would be very difficult to evaluate and interpret the responses of consumers and compare these with Oakley's brand identity. By understanding how images are created and what

constitute them, the correct questions could be formulated in order to attain the correct information that could be used to form the brand images that consumers have of Oakley. These images could be compared with Oakley's brand identity and inferences made about the similarity between the two concepts. The chapter also links the two concepts and explains how they differ, which is essential for a comparison of the two concepts.

CHAPTER 4

PRICE, PERCEIVED QUALITY AND VALUE: THE RELATIONSHIP

*“Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten”
- Gucci Family Slogan, WorldofQuotes.com, 2003*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters the concepts of brand identity and brand image were discussed. Consumer perceptions of the brand are at the heart of both these concepts and they essentially depict what the brand stands for and how consumers perceive the brand based upon their evaluations of the brand. The price/quality relationship and the value proposition inherent to a brand would impact upon the brand image that consumers form about a brand. The quality and price of a product could also be an integral part of the brand identity that a company projects. This chapter will focus on the price/quality relationship and the resultant concept of value. The price/quality relationship is examined as one of the factors that create certain associations with a brand. For the purpose of the study it is important to understand the price/quality relationship, because consumers have certain perceptions regarding Oakley and the price/quality relationship for the brand. The company’s products are of a given level of quality and it charges a premium price. Before drawing any conclusions regarding the price/quality relationship of Oakley and whether consumers find the brand to be of high quality and providing value, it is firstly of importance to examine and understand the concept.

The chapter begins by examining the price/quality relationship by specifically considering the factors influencing it. The concepts of price and quality are treated as separate constructs – indicating their roles in the relationship. The fact that luxury brands are able to charge premium prices is discussed. Perceived quality is distinguished from objective quality and reasons for this are provided and the dimensions of perceived quality discussed. Perceived value is discussed by focusing on the different types of value. A discussion follows how perceived quality creates value for both the consumer and the company.

4.2 THE PRICE/QUALITY RELATIONSHIP

Consumers seem to regard the price of a product or brand as an indicator or measurement of its quality. In the absence of other cues and information and in cases of uncertainty,

consumers tend to revert to price as an indicator of quality (Shugan, 1984: 627). The relationship between price and quality is conceptualised as the generalised belief across product classes that the price cue is related positively to the quality of the product (Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer, 1993: 236). The belief is that a higher price indicates higher quality and vice versa.

Various studies and research have been conducted in this field to establish whether such a relationship (between price and quality) does in fact exist. These studies have all produced mixed and inconclusive results. In a study conducted by Zeithaml (1988: 11) it was found that in nearly 90 research studies over the past 30 years, which have been designed to test the general wisdom that price and quality are positively related, the results of these studies have provided mixed and inconclusive evidence, despite the expectation of a positive relationship.

Curry and Riesz (1988: 36) researched this relationship and found that product quality has historically been treated simply as the “mirror image” of price. According to the authors the concrete manifestation of the product quality is in tangibles, such as product components, labour, design and durability. The research indicates that experts have of late seriously questioned this “proportional correspondence” between price and quality and placed the emphasis on product quality as a separate construct.

If one were to take an economic perspective of the relationship between price and quality, and assume a competitive, perfectly functioning market, one would expect a strong, positive relationship between product quality and price. Gerstner (1985: 209) identifies market conditions that may lead to the elimination or erosion of the relationship between price and quality. It is mentioned that consumers are often not able to make quality comparisons between brands, because information is not freely available to assist the consumer in making accurate evaluations. Consumers often do not go by means of an information search due to the time and effort it takes, even in situations that hold financial risk.

4.2.1 Factors influencing the price/quality relationship

The relevance of price as a quality cue would depend on a number of factors which include other cues available, the individual and the particular product involved. When other cues (information) regarding the quality of a product is not available, the consumer would use price as cue to evaluate quality. These cues may be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Other cues may include the actual performance of the product, or information regarding the quality of the

product received from other consumers. Each individual would also have an influence on how quality is perceived, since individuals are all different and attach different meanings to product quality.

In a similar vein to the arguments above, Zeithaml (1988: 12) proposes that the use of price as a quality indicator depends on: the availability of other cues to quality, price variation within a class of products, product quality variation within a category of products, the level of price awareness of consumers and consumers' ability to detect quality variation in a group of products

Lichtenstein and Burton (1989: 429) refer to some factors that moderate the price/quality relationship: the amount of search time involved, the perceived risk of the purchase, the frequency of purchase, the price level of the product category, product class and the price range of the product category. All factors play a mediating role in the relationship between quality and price.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, Zeithaml (1988: 12) proposes that the "contingencies" affecting the use of price as an indicator of quality, could be fitted into three groups. The groups are: informational factors, individual factors and product category factors.

Informational factors

The first category of factors consists of other information or cues available to the consumer. This information may include intrinsic clues to quality that are readily available, when the brand name provides evidence of the product's quality, or when the level of advertising communications reflects the quality of the brand and the organisation's belief in its brand. Zeithaml (1988: 12) mentions that the availability of such cues cause the consumer to rather use them as an indicator of quality instead of price.

Individual factors

In addition to the abovementioned factors Zeithaml (1988:12) identifies several individual factors that also influence the price/quality relationship. One of these is the level of price awareness of the consumer. If consumers are not aware of the difference in price between different products and product classes they cannot possibly make accurate evaluations of quality based on price. The ability of consumers to detect differences in quality levels of products or product classes also differ. If a consumer does not have product-specific

knowledge to understand the differences in quality among products, he/she may use other extrinsic cues, including price, to make inferences about quality.

Product category factors

One should further consider that the price/quality relationship may differ between product classes/categories. This is supported by Aaker (1991: 100) who alludes to the use of price as a quality cue, which would differ across product classes. Product classes which are difficult to evaluate are more likely to have price as a quality cue. Products that are high in ambiguity, complexity or very technical products are examples of products that may be difficult to evaluate. Zeithaml (1988: 11) provides further support to this view by stating that consumers tend to use price more as a quality signal in some product categories than in others. A study done by Gerstner (1985: 214) suggests that the price/quality relationship is weaker for frequently purchased products than for non-frequently purchased products. Intuitively this makes sense, since products that are not purchased frequently tend to have a greater degree of risk attached to them. The consumer would thus most likely go by means of a more extensive information search and would use price as a quality cue to reduce this risk. Gerstner offers two reasons why this may be the case. The first explanation is that greater financial commitment to non-frequently purchased goods would lead to a stronger relationship between price and quality. Another explanation offered is that so many more brands and products compete in the frequently purchased goods market and that it is more difficult to compare products and brands across such a wide variety of brands. A good example of this is washing powder, with many brands available on the market, which makes it extremely difficult to evaluate the different brands in terms of the quality provided relative to price. Product classes in which there is little difference in price between the different brands provide few quality cues, because a consumer would not perceive a significant difference in quality on the basis of a few cents difference in price.

4.3 PRICE

Price is obviously one of the most important cues for consumers in the marketplace. At a minimum it represents to consumers the amount of economic outlay that has to be sacrificed in order to engage in a certain purchase transaction (Lichtenstein, et al.1993: 234). Price is more than merely the monetary cost of a transaction though. Price is a more complex construct and as mentioned before, is used as an indicator of quality.

For some consumers, price may play a positive role because of an inference that the level of price is positively related to the level of quality of the product. This view implies that consumers view higher prices as indicative of a higher level of quality; therefore, the more expensive the product/brand, the higher the quality.

Similar to the notion of price being an indicator of quality, consumers often use the price of a product to make inferences about the impact that the purchase/use of the product would have on other consumers and what this signals to others about the user. This prestige sensitivity could be defined as favourable perceptions of the price cue held by consumers, based on feelings of prominence and status that higher prices signal to others about the purchaser (Lichtenstein, et al. 1993: 236).

4.3.1 Price premium and luxury brands

Higher quality products, fancy packaging, exclusive store locations, higher retail margins, expensive promotions, advertising campaigns and brand names all contribute to the higher prices of luxury brands (See paragraph 5.2). The price itself could be one of the factors which reinforce a positive, even exclusive brand image in the mind of the consumer (Groth, et al.1993: 11).

Luxury brands charge a premium price which leads to higher levels of income than would be the case had the brand used a normal, low-priced strategy. It is not this fact alone that induces a luxury brand to maintain a premium price though: if luxury brands are not priced high, they would lose their rarity and exclusivity (Arghavan, et al. 2000: 487). According to Groth, et al. (1993: 10) high prices may even make certain products, brands or services more desirable and actually generate higher sales volume.

In a sense the higher price that consumer pay for a luxury brand makes them feel superior to others that cannot afford to pay a premium price. In essence the consumption of luxury brands then becomes a display of wealth.

4.4 PERCEIVED QUALITY AND OBJECTIVE QUALITY

As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, brand image is formed by means of consumer perceptions. How consumers perceive the quality of a given brand would impact on their brand evaluations and ultimately the brand's image. The question arises as to what is perceived quality? Shetty (1987: 46) provides a very simple explanation by stating that, in

simple terms, quality is an important attribute that consumers use to evaluate products or brands. This is a very elementary explanation though, and a more thorough definition should be provided. According to Aaker (1991: 85), Keller (2003: 238) and Zeithaml (1988: 2) perceived quality could be defined as the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product, brand or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives available. Perceived quality is an intangible, overall subjective feeling about a brand. It would, however, usually be based on underlying dimensions which may include characteristics of the product to which the brand is attached, such as reliability and performance (Aaker, 1991: 86).

Perceived quality is determined relative to an intended purpose and also given a set of alternatives, which may satisfy the same need. The quality of a pair of Oakley sunglasses would thus be determined by the degree to which it performs a specific purpose, e.g. protecting the eyes of the user from the sun or serving as a fashion accessory for the fashion-conscious consumer. The quality of the pair of sunglasses would also be judged relative to other sunglasses, such as Ray-Ban or Von Zipper for example. Perceived quality of different alternatives would be judged on the basis of different criteria, which implies that a brand may be judged to be of high quality given certain conditions and yet be judged as lower in quality in another situation. An example of this could be Nike, which may be considered to be a brand of very high quality in the athletic footwear market and yet be considered to be of lower quality in the eyewear department, compared with specialist brands such as Ray-Ban.

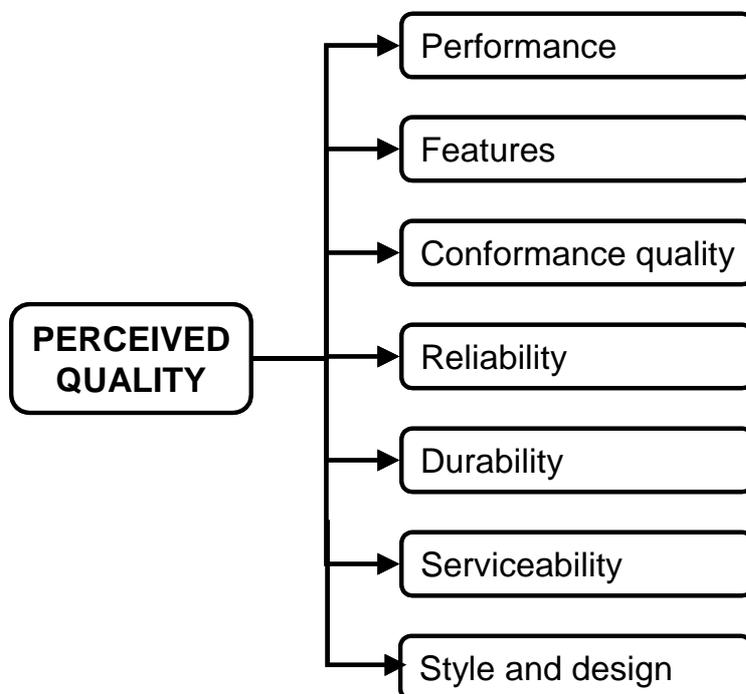
One should be careful not to confuse perceived quality with satisfaction, since a customer may be satisfied with a brand, because he or she had low expectations about the performance level of the brand in the first place and would, therefore, not notice a low level of quality.

4.4.1 Dimensions of product quality

A great deal of research has been done to determine how consumers form opinions about perceived quality. Specific attributes or benefits associated with favourable evaluations are generally identified. Perceptions of quality also differ from product category to product category. Nevertheless, Keller (2003: 238) has identified certain dimensions of product quality, based on previous research. These factors include the performance of the product which refers to the level at which the primary characteristics of the product operate; features of the product, which are secondary characteristics of the product/brand which complements the primary characteristics mentioned above;

- conformance quality of the product, which refers to the degree to which the product conforms to expectations and are free of defects;
- reliability, which is the consistency of performance over time and from purchase to purchase;
- durability, which refers to the expected economic life of the product;
- serviceability, which refers to the ease of servicing the product; and
- style and design or the appearance or feel of quality associated with the brand.

FIGURE 4.1 THE DIMENSIONS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY



Consumers judge the quality of a product along these dimensions which would determine their attitudes toward the brand and also influence their consumption behaviour. The dimensions of perceived quality are depicted in Figure 4.1.

4.4.2 The nature of perceived quality as opposed to objective quality

It is difficult to determine quality objectively, since it is based on perception, which differs from individual to individual. It is also hard to determine because consumers differ in terms of the features that they may find important in a brand/product. “After all, customers differ sharply in their personalities, needs and preferences” (Aaker, 1991: 85). Zeithaml (1988: 5) argues similarly by stating that objective quality may, or may not exist because all quality is

perceived by someone, whether it be consumers, the company or even researchers. One may thus have a valid point in saying that all quality should be termed perceived quality and that no objective quality can be identified.

Perceived quality is different from objective or actual quality in the sense that it is: a higher level of abstraction rather than a specific attribute of a product; a global assessment that in some cases resembles attitude; and a judgment usually made within a consumer's evoked set (Zeithaml, 1988: 2-3).

Since perceived quality has a higher level of abstraction rather than an attribute, refers to the notion that the information held in memory about a product or brand is stored at several levels of abstraction in the mind of the consumer. These levels of abstraction vary along a continuum from merely a product attribute (simplest form) to the value or payoff that the product provides to the consumer (extensive form). Quality is included as a low level attribute.

Perceived quality is a global assessment similar to attitude, which refers to quality that may be viewed as an evaluation of a brand – quite similar to an attitude. Zeithaml (1988: 6) mentions that quality may be divided into affective quality and cognitive quality. Quality may be seen as playing a role in influencing the overall attitudes of a consumer towards a product or brand, which would reflect affective quality. Cognitive quality, in contrast, is the perceptions that a consumer may have on how a product performs on product-related attributes or functional benefits that it may provide.

Furthermore, perceived quality is a judgment made within the consumer's evoked set, which means that judgments of quality or evaluation are usually made in comparison with other options or other brands that may also satisfy the same needs, serving the same general purpose and, therefore, act as a substitute brand. The quality of a product or brand is thus high or low, relative to its overall excellence or superiority, compared to brands in the consumer's evoked set.

Perceived quality is the perception of consumers and is thus not necessarily a reflection of objective reality. Objective quality could be defined as the unbiased measurement of quality based on characteristics such as design and durability, performance, and safety (Riesz, 1978: 19). Aaker (1991: 85) draws a distinction between perceived quality and other similar concepts. It differs from concepts, such as actual or objective reality, which refers to the

extent to which the product or service delivers superior service; product-based quality, which refers to the nature and quantity of the ingredients, features or services included in the augmented product; and manufacturing quality, which is the degree of conformance to specification.

4.4.2.1 Reasons why perceived quality is different from objective quality

Perceived quality may differ from actual, objective quality for various reasons. Aaker (1996: 20) cites the following reasons: Firstly, consumers may be influenced by a previous image of quality and thus not accurately perceive new, additional information. It is, therefore, vitally important for a brand to establish an image of quality, since it could be very difficult to eradicate an image of low quality and replace it with images of high quality. A second reason is that a brand may achieve a superior level of quality on a dimension of the brand that consumers do not find important. In the third place, consumers hardly have all the information available to make rational, objective and accurate decisions regarding quality. Even if they dispose of the information, they often lack the time or motivation to do so. They rely on one or two cues which they associate with quality and then evaluate the brand based on these. Marketers need to be able to identify those cues that consumers consider when evaluating the quality of a brand. Lastly, consumers may be using the wrong cues, since they do not know how best to judge quality.

4.5 PERCEIVED VALUE

Having discussed perceived quality, one should also consider the concept of value and how this relates to perceived quality. According to Keller (2003: 242), consumers often combine quality perceptions with cost perceptions to arrive at an assessment of the value of a brand or product. Similarly, Richins (1994: 504) notes that value is most frequently conceptualised as involving a trade-off between the quality received in return for price paid. It should be noted that the value derived from the use of a product is based on consumer perceptions. Consumers have different perceptions of value - what constitutes value for one consumer – even in a single product category – does not necessarily present value to other customers (Zeithaml, 1988: 13).

There is a difference between quality and value. According to Zeithaml (1988: 14) perceived value differ from perceived quality in two ways. In the first place, value is more individualistic and personal than quality and, therefore, a higher level concept. In addition to

this, more factors are taken into consideration by the individual when assessing the value of a brand, than when quality is assessed. The concept of price is also of importance when assessing value and this also depends further on the perceptions of the individual. Secondly, value involves a trade-off of between that which the consumer has to sacrifice and that which is received in return (Zeithaml, 1988: 14). Many definitions of value include quality as the only benefit that accrues to the consumer, but other factors may also be implicitly added, such as prestige and convenience. Value is a more intricate concept than quality with more considerations and factors that influence the former.

4.5.1 Types of value

A brand or product and its consumption could provide different types of value to the consumer, based on different characteristics inherent to the brand or product. Richins (1994: 507) mentions several types of value that a brand/product could provide for the consumer, each in its own way. These are:

Utilitarian value

A product may provide value based on its usefulness, since it serves a basic function and fulfils a specified role.

Enjoyment

A product or brand may have the ability to enable some enjoyable activity or at least provide pleasure. Items that provide a sensory experience are likely to create a high level of enjoyment value.

Representations of interpersonal ties

Certain products/brands have the ability to create or facilitate the formation of social relationships, which hold interpersonal relevance. An example of this may be a gift that one person has given to another, which serves as the basis for the formation of interpersonal relations.

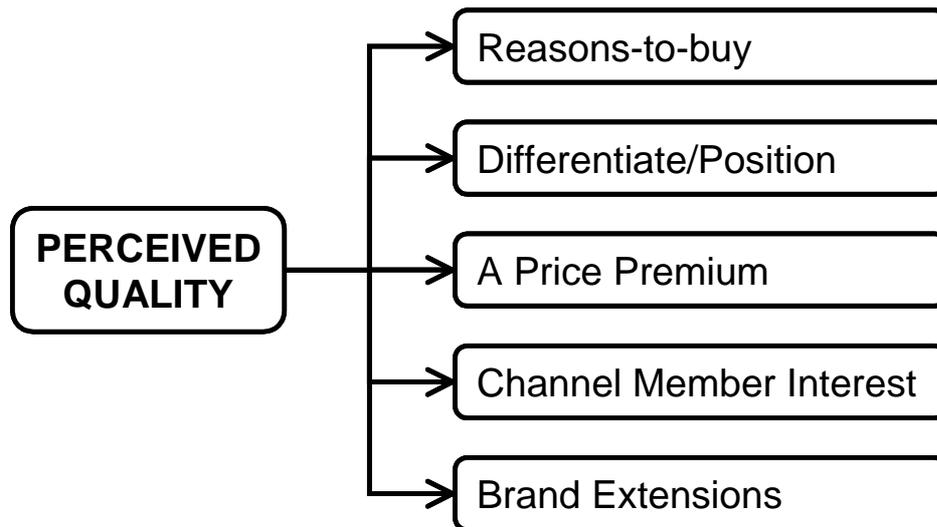
Identity and self-expression

Products and brands hold some value when they are a representation or extension of a person's own values and self-image. There is a similarity between the brand and the individual. Items are especially valuable if they reflect a person's achievements or competence.

4.5.2 How perceived quality creates value

The level of quality that consumers perceive a brand or product to have, exerts an influence on the value that consumers derive from using the product. According to Aaker (1991: 86 - 88) perceived quality could create value for both consumers and the company selling the product/brand in a variety of ways, as Figure 4.2 illustrates.

FIGURE 4.2 THE VALUE OF PERCEIVED QUALITY



Source: Aaker, 1991: 86.

Reason-to-buy

In many contexts perceived quality provides the consumer with sufficient reason to purchase the product/brand. It influences which brands would form part of the evoked set – those which are considered and those that are not and ultimately which brand would be selected. Consumers would often lack the motivation or time to go by means of a thorough information search to make an informed purchase decision, or sufficient information may not be available. This is where perceived quality becomes crucial and serves as a cue to the purchase decision.

Differentiate/Position

Where a brand is perceived in terms of the quality, its dimension would largely determine its positioning strategy. It needs to be determined whether the brand is a premium brand, a value brand or maybe a discount brand and accordingly position itself.

A price premium

A brand perceived to be of high quality (thus having a quality advantage) could exercise the option of charging a premium price. Charging a premium price has obvious advantages and consequences, one of which is increased sales and financial resources. A price premium also serves as reinforcement of perceived quality. A price premium provides consumers with the assurance that they 'get what they pay for' – which should be a product of high quality.

Channel member interest

Perceived quality could also influence other channel members, such as retailers, distributors and other intermediaries. This would enhance and facilitate more effective distribution. Channel members are motivated to carry the products of brands with high perceived quality.

Brand extensions

Perceived quality could also be exploited by using the perceived quality to extend the brand into other product categories and thus leverage the image of high quality.

4.6 SUMMARY

Consumers tend to rely on price as an indicator of quality when evaluating products or brands, especially when little other information is available on which to base evaluations. The belief is that a higher price is an indicator of high quality and vice versa. The relationship between price and quality is influenced by several factors, including informational, individual and product category factors.

The fact that luxury brands could charge a premium price is reflected in the perceptions of consumers that luxury products have a high level of quality.

Perceived quality differs from actual or objective quality, because it is based on the perceptions of consumers. Perceived quality has several dimensions which contribute towards a brand being perceived as of high quality. These dimensions are performance, features, conformance quality, reliability, durability, serviceability and style and design. The concept of value differs from quality, in the sense that it is more individualistic and personal than quality and more factors are taken into account when assessing value, than is the case with quality.

4.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The role that price and quality play in the creation of consumer's perceptions of Oakley is essential to this study, because the second focal point of this study is whether consumers are of the opinion that the premium price that Oakley charges is worth paying, given the perceived quality of the brand. The study also aims to establish whether consumers feel that Oakley provides value. The chapter provides insight into the relationship between price and quality and creates an understanding of the construct. In order to better understand how consumers perceive the quality of Oakley, it should first be understood how quality may be created and what factors influence it. Without understanding the role of price in the formation of quality perceptions, no inferences can be drawn regarding consumer responses pertaining to the quality and value of Oakley.

It is important to bear in mind that perceived quality and objective quality differ, since consumers would have their own subjective opinions regarding Oakley's quality, which should be considered when analysing the responses of consumers regarding Oakley's price-quality relationship. In addition it is also important to note that value and quality differ. Value is more individualistic and personal than quality and more factors contribute towards a consumer's perception of value, as opposed to quality, which should be considered when analysing the perceptions of respondents.

CHAPTER 5

LUXURY BRANDS

“Your premium brand had better be delivering something special, or it's not going to get the business.”

- Warren Buffett (Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway), allaboutbranding.com, 2004

5.1 INTRODUCTION

When conducting a study that has a specific consumer brand as subject of study, one should necessarily consider the type of brand under consideration. Oakley is considered to be a luxury or premium brand, based on its characteristics. A comparison with the characteristics of a luxury brand indicates this. This chapter will focus on the concept of luxury brands and explain why Oakley is considered to be a luxury brand.

The concept of luxury brands is discussed and defined in the first part of the chapter. The characteristics of luxury brands are discussed to further explain the concept and indicate how they are distinguished from non-luxury brands. The tremendous expansion in the market for luxury goods is also examined and reasons identified for this growth. Finally, a framework of luxury brands is proposed, depicting key dimensions of luxury brands. This is followed by a discussion of Oakley as an example of a luxury brand, with specific reference to the company's corporate profile and the industry in which it competes. The company's target market and brand identity are also discussed.

5.2 LUXURY BRANDS DEFINED

A luxury brand or product may be defined as “goods for which the simple use or display of a particular branded product brings esteem on the owner, apart from any functional utility” (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004: 486). Luxury brands or products, therefore, satisfy both the psychological and functional needs of the consumer. These psychological benefits seem to be the distinguishing factor between non-luxury brands or even counterfeits. Nueno and Quelch (1998: 61) agree in stating that luxury brands provide the consumer with few functional benefits, relative to its price and a high degree of intangible or situational utility. Arghavan and Zaichkowsky (2000: 486) define luxury brands as “products for which the mere use or display brings prestige on the owner, apart from any functional benefits it provides.” Oakley sunglasses are of high quality and provide functional utility in protecting the eyes of the owner, but very often the sunglasses are purchased because of the social recognition and

prestige it presents – Oakley sunglasses present a certain social status. Dubois and Duquesne (1993: 36) are of the opinion that luxury goods are expensive in relative and absolute terms, which refers to the level of functional utility derived from the use of the brand, compared to its high price and also since a luxury brand fetches a premium price. It is expensive in relative terms, because it does not necessarily provide superior functional benefits, compared to less expensive, non-luxury brands. Luxury brands could usually charge a premium price and this price is substantially higher than the price of other products in the same category, with more or less the same level of quality. This holds true for Oakley, since the products in the brand's product range trade at a high price level, relative to similar, competing brands.

Quelch (1987: 39) refers to “premium brands” which is a synonym for luxury brands. He states that premium (luxury) brands are typically of high quality, expensive, selectively distributed by means of superior distribution channels and advertised on a limited basis. The last two characteristics of luxury brands are two of the distinctive characteristics of Oakley: The company distributes its brand by means of carefully selected retail outlets, taking care to ensure that the brand retains a degree of exclusivity and that the retail outlets selected do not harm the credibility of the company and ensure optimum exposure to the brand's target markets. Advertising is also done on a limited basis. Advertisements are placed in relevant media, particular to the brand's target markets, in order to generate maximum exposure. Oakley places advertisements in magazines such as *Zig Zag*, which is a magazine for surfers, or a magazine like *GQ*, which is aimed at the fashion conscious male consumer. Conversely one would not find advertisements for Oakley in more generic magazines, such as *You or People*.

The comments in the previous paragraphs tend to suggest that a brand/product could be either luxurious or non-luxurious. This is not entirely true, since a product may be considered to be a luxury brand in one category, while considered a non-luxury brand in another category. An example of this is a pair of Calvin Klein denims, which may be a luxury brand in the category of casual clothing, while the same brand may be less luxurious in the category of top international clothing emporiums. Luxury brands are considered to be luxurious along a continuum of luxury – in other words, different levels of luxury could be detected. Brands could fall in the upper range of luxury or in the lower range of luxury. All luxury brands do not necessarily have the same level of luxury and a brand may have high perceived luxury in one product category, while it has lower levels of luxury in other categories (Vigneron, et al. 2004: 485)

5.2.1 Characteristics of luxury brands

Nueno, et al. (1998: 62), are of the opinion that a luxury brand is “not merely a premium-priced product, an ephemeral status symbol, or a smart investment.” According to the authors, traditional luxury brands share a number of characteristics. These include the consistent delivery of premium quality across all the products in the brand’s product line, from the least expensive to the most expensive; a heritage of craftsmanship, often stemming from the origin of the brand; a recognisable image, style or design; a marketing programme which supports a market position that combines emotional appeal with product excellence, by means of limited distribution and premium prices; a global reputation – since excellence is internationally recognised; an element of uniqueness to each product; the ability to change designs according to demand in a category that is fashion-intensive; the personality and values of its creator; and finally, luxury brands hold higher market shares in categories in which the brand used convey social status and image. Oakley disposes of several of these characteristics. The products in the brand’s product line are of high quality; they have a rich heritage of innovative craftsmanship, and they represent a very recognisable style. The logo (The Icon) is well known; it combines emotional appeal with high quality and premium prices, whilst distributing its products on a limited, exclusive basis; it is internationally recognised and purchased and it most certainly adapts to changes in fashion and design products accordingly.

Another aspect, which perhaps cannot be considered as a characteristic, but needs to be mentioned, is that luxury brands are often imitated on a large scale and sold as counterfeits. Oakley is no different and cheap imitations of the brand may be bought at stalls at flea markets or from vendors selling their merchandise at traffic lights. Oakley has in fact taken a strong stand against such counterfeiting by running an anti-piracy campaign. A further characteristic of luxury brands is that they seem to please people rather than simply alleviate a state of discomfort (Kemp, 1998: 593).

Hui (2002: 30) states that the main characteristic of a luxury brand is that it revolves around exclusivity and he comments that: “luxury is about exclusivity”. Hui mentions that the trick behind every luxury brand is to make it “irresistibly out of reach”, which consequently inculcates it with a degree of exclusivity. Brand exclusivity is the positioning of a brand such that it could command a high price relative to similar products. In support of this view Phau and Prendergast (2000) allude to luxury brands competing on the basis of their ability to

evoke exclusivity. Further support for this argument is given by Groth and McDaniel (1993: 11), who are of the opinion that establishing exclusivity for a brand would be a marketing manager's "Utopia".

5.3 REASONS FOR THE GROWTH IN THE LUXURY MARKET

The market for luxury brands have grown steadily over the last decade or so and having the status of a luxury brand is no longer sufficient to remain competitive in this market. "...it comes down to rising expectations in the consumer marketplace. Simply put "consumers expect to live large every day" (Smith, 2003: 52). Consumers have become used to luxury brands, as they have become the norm because of the steady growth in the market. According to Vigneron, et al, (2004: 486) the market for luxury goods has grown at a steady rate for the past 20 years, reaching a growth rate of 25% in 1989, with a minimum annual growth rate of at least 10%. During the mid-1990s this growth rate stalled or evened out. In another study done by Keane and McMillan (2004: 30), the authors found that consumer spending on luxury brands in the United Kingdom increased by 50% in the last decade, compared to a growth rate of only 7% in the market for basic goods. Keane, et al. (2004: 30) mentions that "middle-market consumers are trading up." Vickers and Renand (2003: 459) echoes this by stating that the market for luxury goods products over the past ten to fifteen years has seen spectacular growth.

The abovementioned authors cite several reasons for the maintenance of this steady growth rate. Some of these reasons relate to a growing aspirational influence (consumers aspire to be better by purchasing luxury brands), a growing population of young and "upwardly mobile" consumers compared to a growing ageing population and a larger relative number of consumers with a high income (Vigneron, et al. 2004: 486). Vickers, et al. (2003: 459 – 460) offer the following reasons for the growth in the market for luxury brands: the rapid rise in living standards and consumer knowledge has given rise to a democratisation of top-of-the range products, while flexible payment systems, such as credit cards, have contributed to the diffusion of luxury brands. Another reason is that the middle class market is starting to consume an increasing number of luxury brands. Silverstein and Fiske (2003: 48) comment that the members of the 47 million American households that form the middle class market (those earning \$50,000 and above in annual income) are broadly educated and well traveled as never before, and they have around \$3.5 trillion of disposable income. As a result, they are often willing to pay premiums of 20% to 200% for quality products. Most importantly

though, luxury products evoke emotions in consumers and contribute to them having higher aspirations in life, even when they address basic necessities.

5.4 A FRAMEWORK FOR LUXURY BRANDS

Vigneron, et al. (2004: 488 - 491) propose a framework (see Figure 5.1) that may explain consumers' behaviour towards luxury brands, based on conceptual work done by other authors. This framework includes personal and interpersonal aspects that affect consumer behaviour. It also suggests that consumers' decision-making process with regard to luxury brands is explained by five main factors that form "a semantic network". These factors could be seen as dimensions of a luxury brand and explain the difference between non-luxury brands and luxury brands. The framework proposes three luxury dimensions that reflect non-personal-oriented perceptions: perceived conspicuousness, perceived uniqueness and perceived quality (Vigneron, et al. 2004: 489). In addition to these dimensions it also contains two personal-oriented perceptions: perceived extended self and perceived hedonism (Vigneron, et al., 2004: 489). These dimensions strongly correlate with each other, but are not identical. Companies that are able to establish these dimensions of luxury brands for their brand would ultimately create a luxury brand that would last. These dimensions are discussed next.

Perceived conspicuousness

The influence that reference groups exert plays a major role in conspicuous consumption, especially when publicly consumed products are involved. The consumption of luxury brands may be important to consumers in order to gain social acceptance or recognition and to establish a prominent social position. Mason (1984: 26) states that, to the conspicuous consumer, the satisfaction derived from any particular purchase does not come from its value, but rather from the reaction of others to the expensive brand being purchased. The social status of a brand is thus very important in conspicuous consumption and contributes toward the brand being considered as a luxury item.

Perceived uniqueness

Scarce products or those that are limited in supply enhance consumers' preferences for the brand. If such a brand is obtained by an individual he/she feels unique in the sense that he/she is one of only a few that owns the brand/product, due to its scarcity. According to Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001: 50), consumers' need for uniqueness refers to an individual's pursuit of something different, relative to others, which is achieved by means of the

acquisition, utilisation and disposition of consumer goods for the purposes of developing and enhancing his/her personal and social identity. Uniqueness enhances one's self-image as well as social image. If a brand is considered to be unique and expensive, it would be even more desirable to consumers. A luxury brand is, therefore, considered to be unique if it is scarce or limited in supply and even more desirable when it is also expensive.

Perceived extended self

Consumers may use luxury brands in order to distinguish themselves from other relevant consumers or to integrate the symbolic meaning of the brand into their own identity (Vigneron, et al. 2004: 490). The social reference and extension of one's own self-concept, therefore, plays an important role in the consumption of luxury brands. The consumption of luxury brands to enhance one's self-concept may also be an effort to avoid being labeled as stereotypical. This appeals particularly to materialistic consumers, who often use luxury brands to attain happiness and may use such brands as cues to their own success or those of others.

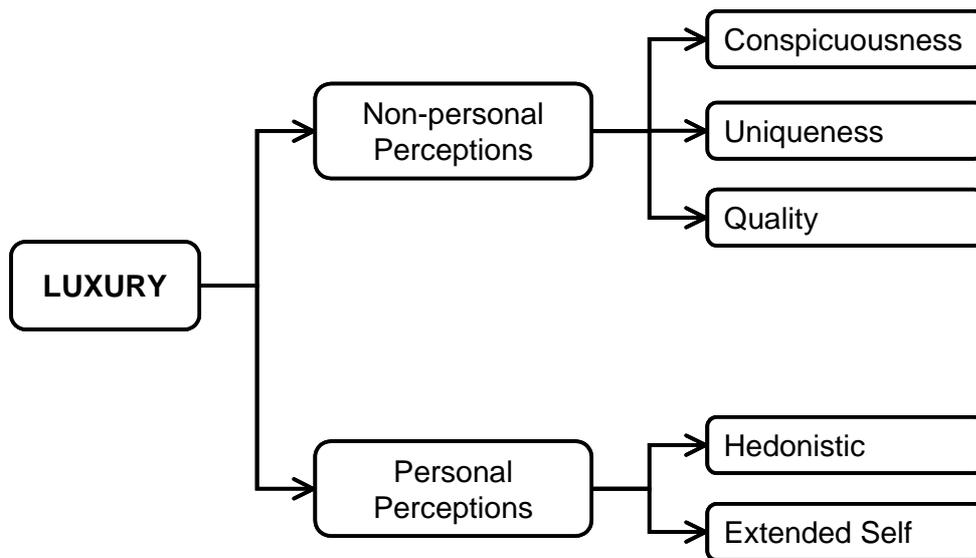
Perceived hedonism

When consumers use a luxury brand in order to gain personal rewards and fulfillment and sensory gratification, they would be considered hedonistic consumers. This is the case when products are evaluated according to the emotional and intrinsic qualities instead of the reasoned or functional benefits with which it is associated. Vigneron, et al. (2004: 490) state that consumers who rely on their own personal opinion, and who are not susceptible to interpersonal influence when considering luxury brands, are hedonistic consumers.

Perceived quality

It is expected that luxury brands would offer a higher degree of quality than other brands considered as non-luxury brands. Consumers may use a luxury brand because they consider it to be of higher quality than other brands and use this as reassurance of their purchase.

FIGURE 5.1 FRAMEWORK OF BRAND LUXURY



Source: Vigneron, et al. 2004: 488.

5.5 OAKLEY AS AN EXAMPLE OF A LUXURY BRAND

This chapter hitherto centered around the concept of luxury brands. This paragraph discusses Oakley as an example of a luxury brand and is discussed with the characteristics of luxury brands in mind, while an overview of the company will also be provided.

5.5.1 Oakley: the company and the brand

The broad concept of Oakley started with a single idea – an idea by an innovative scientist who saw an opportunity in an unexploited market. Jim Jannard designed a motocross handgrip with a very unique orbicular design, which fitted around the closed hand of a motocross rider. It was made from a hydrophilic material called Unobtanium (A.J. Morris, Personal Communication, September 2005). This was in 1975 and led to the creation of Oakley Inc., a technology company “that would soon be fuelled by a raging distaste for mediocrity and a fierce devotion to innovation” (www.oakley.com). The company was started as one that solves problems by use of technology, by letting common sense prevail and by means of lateral, creative thinking. Cocoran (2001) mentions that Oakley has become synonymous with style. Cocoran (2001) is of the opinion that the essence of the company is described by one simple fact: Oakley is one of the most sought after lifestyle brands on the planet. The ellipse icon and everything it represents, is now the passion of a youth culture in action sports that defines its own lifestyle.

5.5.2 Oakley's corporate profile

According to Oakley's corporate profile, the company is driven to seek out problems, create solutions to those problems and wrap those solutions in art. The company is absolutely obsessed with innovation and has defied all conventional thinking, by creating a legacy of science and creative sculpture, based on innovation. In defying convention for the last 30 years, Oakley has excelled beyond its roots as a pioneer in sunglass innovation, with the company being recognised today as an icon for risk-takers and as one of the most coveted brands in action sports.

The reinvention of the eyewear concept was only the first step for the company. What followed was an introduction to the consumer market of high performance footwear, wrist watches, apparel, accessories and prescriptive eyewear. All of these product categories were based on a passion for innovation. Today, the company boasts approximately 550 patents and 875 trademarks.

All of the finished prototypes of products within different product categories are tested by means of intensive tests and procedures. All their new inventions are also tested by means of real-world scenarios by the world's top athletes who use and expose them to physical field-testing. Only the finest materials available are used and the products are produced by custom-built machines, encompassing precision engineering. Only once a product has passed through a complicated manufacturing process and thorough testing is it allowed to be marked with the Oakley Icon (brand logo).

The brand is not carried by any outlet: retailers are carefully selected for their ability to add value to the Oakley brand and also by means of its augmented service quality and its image. The company devotes a great deal of resources in the development and training of sales staff and also to maximise its positioning in the market. As mentioned above, Oakley has a philosophy of selective distribution and it targets specialty retail outlets to enhance its market penetration and to discover new potential target segments.

Oakley is a global brand, with operations and coverage in more than 100 countries around the globe. The company retains a consistency in its brand image in different cultures and continents by using localised marketing strategies and systems of distribution. It has direct operations in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, Japan and Canada. The

integrity of the brand is protected around the world by carefully selected retail distributors, who present the brand to its different markets by using their own local expertise.

5.5.3 The industry in which Oakley competes

Oakley competes in the sports apparel industry, which could be divided into further sub-industries. From a generic perspective, Oakley competes in an industry of luxury brands and consumer durables. Oakley also competes in a variety of smaller industries, including (in other words this list is not all-inclusive) sunglasses, casual shoes, sports clothing, casual wear, golf equipment, entertainment and watches.

Main competitors

In discussing the industry in which Oakley competes, reference should also be made of their main competitors. This is not an easy task, because (as could be seen from the various industries above), they compete in various industries, each with its own role players and competitors. The list of competitors provided here below is thus not all-inclusive of all competitors, but rather representative of the different industries and the main role players and competitors from them. Oakley's main competitors are Von Zipper, Ray-Ban, Billabong, Quiksilver, Nike and Adidas (D. Hyam, Personal Communication, May 2005).

5.5.4 Demographics of Oakley's Target Audience

According to David Hyam, Sports Marketing Manager for Oakley's African operations, Oakley's target audience is as follows (D. Hyam, personal communication, 24 April 2005):

TABLE 5.1 OAKLEY'S TARGET AUDIENCE

<p>Primary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 – 25• Authentic, individual and confident• Active• Inspired• Price conscious• Brave• Technical with appreciation for detail and quality <p>Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 – 30• Youth minded, willing to accept uniqueness• Brand conscious• Performance minded• Technical with appreciation for quality• Individualistic and self confident• Into gadgets and technology• Willing to spend money for quality• Aware of trends, but does not necessarily follow them.

5.5.5 Oakley's brand identity

According to David Hyam, Oakley's brand identity could be described by examining two aspects: what the brand stands for and what Oakley considers them to be (D. Hyam, Personal Communication, May 2005). He sees these aspects as follows:

What Oakley stands for

The company sees itself as a company obsessed with the marketing, distribution and service of innovations that defy convention. It is fuelled by a revulsion for mediocrity and is dedicated to a purpose beyond reason, whilst this doctrine drives its raging devotion to authenticity.

What Oakley is

A lifestyle brand with sports as its foundation.

As one could deduce from the above mentioned definitions by David Hyam, Oakley is a brand that projects the identity of a sports apparel retailer that is fanatic about quality and constant innovation in order to bring the very best products to the consumer market. Oakley obviously takes pride in the fact that it manufactures products of the highest quality.

One could also construct a brand identity for Oakley by considering the model proposed by Aaker. This model focuses on the core identity, the extended identity and the value proposition of the brand. The following figure describes Oakley’s brand identity, in addition to the description provided by David Hyam. Oakley’s brand identity could be seen in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2 OAKLEY’S BRAND IDENTITY

<p>Core Identity</p> <p>Product thrust: Sports and lifestyle</p> <p>User profile: Active individuals with appreciation for technical quality that differ per category</p> <p>Performance: Sunglasses and apparel based on technical and innovative superiority</p> <p>Enhancing lives: Enhancing people’s lives by means of technically superior products</p> <p>Extended identity</p> <p>Brand personality: Exciting, innovative, stylish and aggressive – in pursuit of excellence</p> <p>Product scope: Sports apparel, lifestyle clothing, entertainment, fashion</p> <p>Basis for relationship: Hanging out with stylish/sophisticated individuals who goes for best in sunglasses, clothing and shoes - fashion conscious person</p> <p>Logo: The elliptical Icon</p>  <p>Organisational associations: Innovative; dedicated to quality</p> <p>Endorsers: Top athletes and individuals in entertainment business, including champion cyclist Lance Armstrong.</p> <p>Heritage: Originated in 1975 with the design of a motocross handgrip</p> <p>Value proposition</p> <p>Functional benefits: High-technology sunglasses and apparel, which would improve performance and provide comfort</p> <p>Emotional benefits: The exhilarating feeling of prestige and exclusivity attached to a premium brand; excellence in performance in technical superiority</p> <p>Self-expressive symbolic benefits: Using a product with strong a personality associated with performance and innovation</p> <p>Credibility</p> <p>Manufactures performance sunglasses and apparel that are stylish</p>

Source: An adaptation from Aaker, 1996: 91)

5.6 SUMMARY

Luxury or premium brands share certain characteristics, which distinguish such brands from other non-luxury brands. The most important characteristics are the high degree of quality of the products; a premium price and limited distribution and advertising, which contribute

toward such a brand being exclusive. The purchase and consumption of a luxury brand provides the consumer with a certain degree of social recognition and prestige. Although luxury brands are typically of high quality, the satisfaction is not necessarily derived from the functional utility it provides, but rather from the hedonistic utility or recognition from others. A framework for luxury brands indicate that consumers form attitudes and behave toward luxury brands, based on certain personal and non-personal factors. The personal factors that have an effect are certain hedonistic perceptions of the consumer and the consumers' extended self, while non-personal factors include the conspicuousness, uniqueness and quality of the brand. These dimensions contribute toward the consumers' perception of the brand.

5.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

This chapter deals with luxury brands, by specifically looking at the characteristics of luxury brands and the fact that luxury brands charge a premium price. Oakley is considered to be a luxury brand, based on its inherent characteristics. It is important to understand that the fact that Oakley is a luxury brand would influence the perceptions that consumers have of the brand and thus also the images that they form. Such an understanding would provide some useful insight when Oakley's brand image is compared with its brand identity. It would most likely impact positively on consumers' images of Oakley if they consider the fact that it is a premium brand. The fact that Oakley could charge a premium price, due partly to its status as a luxury brand, impacts on the study, since the effect of a premium price on consumers' perceptions of Oakley's quality is examined.

CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methodology followed to reach the empirical goals of the study.

6.2 THE RESEARCH GOALS

The broad research goal of this study is twofold. The first goal is to determine whether consumers actually perceive Oakley's brand identity as intended by the company. Secondly, the study determines how consumers perceive the price/quality relationship for the brand. In order to reach these two goals, the following empirical goals have been identified that need to be realised if the broader research goal is to be reached:

1. To determine the associations that consumers have regarding the brand, which in turn form the image of the brand on the part of consumers.
2. To determine the attitude of consumers toward Oakley.
3. To determine whether consumers perceive Oakley to be expensive.
4. To determine whether consumers perceive Oakley's products to be of high quality.
5. To determine whether consumers are of the opinion that Oakley's products provide commensurate value for the money paid for them.
6. To determine consumers' perception of price and quality for products and brands in general.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the research methodology that will be followed to reach the goals as set out above.

6.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses quantitative methods to analyse data on the research topic. The choice of research methodology is explained and motivated from literature. The majority of the research was conducted by using quantitative research methods. Qualitative research methods were used to a lesser degree in the questionnaire. These were in the form of the open-ended questions, which generated qualitative data. In essence the predominant research method of

this study is of a quantitative nature though and this is discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

6.3.1 Motivation for the use of a quantitative research method

Baker (2000: 147) states that researchers have of late followed a balanced approach to research. They are thus using elements of both qualitative and quantitative research in the majority of research projects.

Baker (2000: 147) postulates that qualitative research is essential in addressing the basic questions of what, how (process) and why, while quantitative research provides answers to the questions who, where, when and how (quantity). The author further writes that qualitative research should be used to research and define the parameters of the market, understand the nature of the consumer decision-making process, to assess the motivational and attitudinal factors that underlie basic consumer behaviour and help the researcher understand why consumers act the way they do. It should be emphasised that this study is not aimed at understanding human behaviour or why consumers act in the way they do. Consumers' attitudes towards a specific brand are examined, but this study does not attempt to explain how this attitude influences consumer behaviour. Malhotra (2002: 167) states that qualitative research provides "insights and understanding" of the problem setting. According to Malhotra (2002: 168) qualitative study is largely exploratory in nature, while quantitative research seeks to quantify data and look for "conclusive evidence". The aim of this research study is to provide conclusive evidence regarding consumer perceptions of Oakley.

Malhotra (2002: 168) further states that qualitative research is based on small, non-representative samples and the data generated are not analysed via the use of statistical methods. Quantitative research, on the other hand, uses large samples and applies "some form of statistical analysis" (Malhotra, 2002: 168-169). The data generated by quantitative research could also be regarded as conclusive and be used to draw conclusions and recommend future actions, if drawn from a representative sample.

Baker (2000: 148) also mentions that, where qualitative research is best suited to areas of study that require a "flexible approach", quantitative research methods are used to clearly define specific issues of the study. This study focuses on a specific brand and on specific issues, which warrants the use of a quantitative approach.

6.3.2 The research approach

Malhotra (2002: 194) writes that the use of surveys is a possibility for gathering data for quantitative studies. Kotler (2000: 109) states that surveys are “best suited for descriptive research” and since this study is descriptive in nature and makes use of a quantitative approach, the use of a survey is the most suitable method for this particular study. Surveys are based on asking respondents a series of questions. A large number of people are sampled. Hawkins, Best and Coney (2004: 742) state that surveys usually involve the use of structured or semi structured questionnaires. According to Malhotra (2002: 194) surveys could be classified according to how the data are collected. This could take the form of telephone interviews, computer-assisted telephone interviews, in-home interviews, mall intercept interviews, computer-assisted personal interviews, mail interviews, mail panels and electronic surveys (Malhotra 2002: 194; Babbie and Mouton 2003: 259; Kotler, 2000: 113-114). For the purpose of this study, three different techniques of gathering data were used: the majority of the data were collected via mall intercepts, while a small percentage were also collected via electronic surveys. Data were also collected from schools and university residences in Stellenbosch. Questionnaires were used as the method of data collection in the survey. The reason for these methods of data gathering is the convenience with which the data could be collected.

6.3.2.1 The advantages and disadvantages of survey research

Malhotra (2002: 196) identifies the advantages and disadvantages of using surveys. He states that the major advantages are “ease, reliability, and simplicity”. The use of fixed-response questions reduce the variability that may exist in responses and contribute to the reliability. Babbie, et al. (2003: 263) mentions that surveys are “particularly useful when describing the characteristics of a large population.” Babbie, et al. (2003: 263) are also of the opinion that surveys could be quite “flexible”, because several questions could be asked on any given topic.

According to Malhotra (2002: 196) one of the major disadvantages of the survey method is the unwillingness or inability of respondents to provide the desired information. The fact that fixed-response questions are used is also a disadvantage because some of the responses may lose some validity when certain types of data are collected, especially beliefs and feelings. Babbie, et al. (2003: 263) believe that the need for standardisation may result in responses that are not really appropriate, because “by designing questions that will be at least minimally

appropriate to all respondents, you may miss what is most appropriate to many respondents.” Surveys also seldom deal with the social context in which the respondents live and the researcher thus does not necessarily understand the type of life that the respondents may lead and how this may influence their responses.

6.3.2.2 The survey methods used

As mentioned earlier, the survey methods for data collection used in this study were mall intercepts, electronic surveys and data collection from schools and university residences.

Mall Intercepts

Respondents were intercepted in the Langenhoven Student Centre (commonly known as the Neelsie) in Stellenbosch and asked to complete a questionnaire. This process involved stopping individuals, after determining their appropriateness as respondents and asking them to complete a questionnaire on the spot. One may argue that the sample is only composed of individuals that frequent the centre, but in this specific case this does not present a major obstacle, since students with a very diverse demographic profile frequent the centre. The sample is a convenience sample and was not randomly selected. While the sample is not necessarily representative of the total population, it does represent the target market, which is people within the age group of 15 and 25. Blankenship, Breen and Dutka (1998: 120-121) refer to some of the advantages of mall intercepts. The first advantage of mall intercepts is the convenience with which the whole process could be done. Another major advantage is the relative low cost of mall intercepts. Kotler (2000: 113) is of the opinion that one of the negative aspects regarding mall intercepts is that it is a non-probability sample.

Electronic surveys

Malhotra (2002: 204) mentions that electronic surveys could essentially take two forms: it could be conducted via e-mail, if the addresses of the respondents are known, or by posting the survey on a website. In this case questionnaires were sent to individuals via e-mail. A copy of the questionnaire was simply sent to the respondents, who then completed the questionnaires and returned them via e-mail or by printing the document and then physically completing the form. The response rate to these electronic surveys was not satisfactory, since 70 questionnaires were sent to individuals and only 19 individuals responded. Kotler (2000: 113) argues that one should not merely assume that the data gathered using this method is representative of the target population, because the respondents are self-selected.

Data collected from schools and university residences

The reason behind the method of data collection followed in this study is one of convenience. The respondents from this method are all included in the target market that the study attempts to gather data from. Learners were specifically chosen because they represent the age group 14 -18 years, which would otherwise not be represented in the collection of data in the Langenhoven Student Centre, since students and young adults frequent the centre rather than learners and teenagers who fall within the 14 – 18 age group.

6.3.3 The use of a questionnaire

As mentioned before, a questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. It is thus very important that an effective questionnaire is compiled that would provide the data to produce the results as desired. It is consequently important that the questionnaire used in this study should have certain characteristics that need to be prevalent in an effective questionnaire.

In an article on questionnaire design on the QuickMBA website (www.quickmba.com), the authors define a questionnaire as “a series of written or verbal questions for which the respondents provide answers.” It is a structured technique by means of which primary data are collected for a survey. The authors further mention that a well-designed (effective) questionnaire should motivate respondents to provide both complete and accurate information.

Babbie, et al. (2003: 239) alludes to the fact that the format of a questionnaire is just as important as the nature and the wording used. If a questionnaire is not laid out properly, it may cause respondents to miss questions and it may cause a misconception of what is desired in the questionnaire. As a general rule, a questionnaire should be uncluttered and well spread out (Babbie, et al. 2003: 239).

Malhotra (2002: 310) is of the opinion that a questionnaire has three basic objectives. The first of these objectives is to turn the researcher’s information needs into a specific set of questions that respondents would be willing and able to answer. Secondly, a questionnaire should be designed to put as little strain on the respondent and demand as little effort as possible. Lastly, a questionnaire should minimise the possibility of response errors, which may be caused by inaccurate answers or misrecording and misanalysis of the data.

It is important to analyse the content of the questions. If a question does not have a specific purpose or goal it should not be included in the questionnaire (www.quickmba.com).

Furthermore, care should be taken to ensure that the wording is unambiguous and easy to understand. Malhotra (2002: 321) states that poorly worded questions could confuse or even mislead respondents – which may result in non-responses or errors in responses. Malhotra further proposes that problems in the wording of questions could be avoided by using five basic guidelines. It could be achieved by means of clearly defining the issue, using ordinary words, avoiding ambiguous words, avoiding leading questions and by using positive or negative statements. The wording used should also take the context of respondents' situation into consideration. The questions who, what, when, why and how should especially reflect this (www.quickmba.com). It also helps if neutral questions are placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. These questions should help the respondent to relax and establish some kind of rapport with the interviewee. Such questions should be simple and not threaten the respondent in any way. Open-ended questions are often used to ease the respondent into the questionnaire and put them more at ease.

6.3.3.1 Characteristics and layout of questionnaire used in the empirical study

In this particular study a self-administered, structured questionnaire was used. Respondents completed the questionnaire in their own time. English and Afrikaans versions of the questionnaire were developed to cater for the different languages of respondents. It was argued that respondents should, given the choice between Afrikaans and English, be able to understand the questionnaire, whatever their preferred language may be. These two languages are the two most widely understood languages in South Africa. Versions of the Afrikaans and English questionnaires may be found in Addendum A.

To formulate the questions to be used in the questionnaire, various examples of research studies on relevant or similar topics and the items and questions used in these studies were examined. Several sources of information regarding relevant and related studies were located in the Marketing Scales Handbook (Bruner II and Hensel, 1994 and 1996). These studies collected data via questionnaires and all used scales. The first item (Oakley is a desirable brand) was taken from Bruner II, et al. (1994: 80), in which several authors used the item “desirable and undesirable” to measure consumer’s attitude towards a product or brand, by way of a semantic differential scale. The item stating “My attitude towards Oakley is favourable” was obtained from a study done by Stayman and Batra in 1991, in which the study measured consumers' attitude towards a specific product (Bruner, et al. 1994: 79-80). The item regarding the quality of Oakley was taken and adapted from a study done by Batra

and Ahtola in 1988, measuring the value-related aspects of a consumer's attitude towards some specific product (Bruner II, et al. 1994: 101-102). The item measuring whether respondents would consider purchasing the brand was taken from a study done by Ratneshwar and Chaiken (1991), in which consumers' attitude toward some new product concept was measured (Bruner II, et al. 1994: 103-104). Mishra, Umesh and Stem (1993) undertook a study measuring the degree of popularity that a specific brand is perceived to have. The item "Oakley is popular and an industry leader" was taken and adapted from this study (Bruner II, et al. 1994: 134-135). The items measuring the price/quality relationship for products and brands in general were obtained from a study by Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer (1993), which measured consumers' belief that there is a positive relationship between product price and quality (Bruner II, et al. 1996: 492; 493 – 496).

By selecting items and scales that are relevant to this specific study, a high percentage of the questionnaire was compiled by using existing scale items. The advantage of this is that the reliability and validity of these items have previously been tested. Questions that are specific to the study were formulated by keeping the purpose of the research and the research questions and goals in mind. After refining these items they were included in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of two broad sections, Section A and Section B (See Addendum A). The first two items in Section A are open-ended questions, which were placed strategically to put the respondent at ease and obtain the respondent's general impressions of Oakley. The questions asked the respondent to mention the first things that came to mind when thinking about Oakley and also to describe the brand. Open-ended questions allow the respondent to answer in his/her own words (Kotler, 2000: 110). The first question needs to spark the interest of the respondent. The 12 items following this are aimed at obtaining the respondent's perceptions regarding Oakley's price and quality, and also to assess the respondent's attitude towards Oakley. Four of these items have been specifically formulated for the study and pertain to Oakley. The last four items of this paragraph measure the respondent's views regarding the price and quality of products in general. This should indicate whether the respondents' views regarding Oakley are also reflected in their views regarding products and brands in general or whether their views specifically concerning Oakley are different from their general views. With the exception of the first two open-ended questions in Section A, all the questions are close-ended, which "prespecify all the possible answers." (Kotler, 2000: 110). The items are all measured on a six-point Likert scale, in

which respondents were asked to respond to a given statement. A six-point scale was used, ranging from the first category “Do not agree at all” to the sixth category “Fully agree with the statement” (See Addendum A). A seven-point scale and a six-point scale were considered, but research indicates that respondents tend to choose the mean value when they are uncertain about a given item.

The second section simply collects the respondent’s demographic information. It is placed at the end of the questionnaire, otherwise respondents may become defensive too early, according to Kotler (2000: 111). This section consists of seven items. Information regarding the respondent’s age, gender, race, preferred language, level of education, personal expenses and money available to spend is collected. This information is used to determine the respondents’ frame of reference and the social context in which the respondents find themselves.

6.3.4 The sampling plan: sample selection, sample size and sample unit

The sample used in the study is a non-probability sample. Malhotra (2002: 349) defines non-probability as “sampling techniques that do not use chance selection procedures, but rather relying on the judgment of the researcher.” and states that respondents are selected because “they are at the right place at the right time” (Malhotra, 2002: 351). Three types of non-probability samples are commonly used: convenience samples, judgment samples and quota samples (Baker 1998: 153; Blankenship, et al. 1998: 163; Kotler 2000: 112). In this study a convenience sample is used, in which information is solicited from a convenient group, which “may have views pertinent to the subject of inquiry” (Baker 1998: 153). Blankenship, et al. (1998: 1998) states that the choice of respondent is left entirely to the researcher. The subject of enquiry in this particular study is consumers’ perceptions regarding Oakley. The sample does include individuals from the target population, although they are not representative of the target population. Malhotra (2002: 352) highlights that convenience sampling is both inexpensive and fast. He further mentions that the sampling population is accessible, easy to measure and usually cooperative. Despite these advantages, Malhotra also identifies various limitations of convenience sampling, of which the most obvious and important one is that the resulting sample is not representative of any specific target population. It suffers from selection bias on the part of the researcher.

Malhotra (2002: 350) states that a researcher should consider both qualitative and quantitative aspects in trying to determine the appropriate sample size. Some of the factors to

be taken into account are the importance of the decision at hand, the nature of the research, the number of variables prevalent, the nature of the analysis, sample sizes used in similar studies and the constraints brought about by limited resources. It is especially useful to consider similar studies and determining the sample size by taking these into account. Malhotra (2002: 351) provides a table (Table 7.1) that provides an indication of sample sizes used in different marketing researches. By taking the information in this table into account, a sample size (n) of 300 respondents was chosen. It is believed that this sample size (n) is large enough to provide data for conclusions.

TABLE 6.1 SAMPLE SIZES USED IN MARKETING RESEARCH STUDIES

TYPE OF STUDY	MINIMUM SIZE	TYPICAL RANGE
Problem identification research (e.g., market potential)	500	1000 – 2500
Problem solving research	200	300 – 500
Product tests	200	300 – 500
Test marketing studies	200	300 – 500
TV/radio/print advertising (per commercial or ad test)	150	200 – 300
Test-market audits	10 stores	10 – 20 stores
Focus groups	6 groups	10 – 15 groups

Source: Malhotra, 2002: 351.

The sample unit for the research study includes both males and females between the ages of 15 -25 (dates of birth between 1980 and 1990). One or two respondents were just below or just above these limits, but could still be considered as valid respondents. This age bracket also coincides with the one that Oakley considers as its own target market (See Table 5.1) and since this study focuses exclusively on this specific brand, it makes sense to use the same parameters as the target population for this study. Both males and females were selected, because both genders would fall within the market for luxury consumer brands. Care was taken to include respondents of different races in the study, since the differences in cultures may lead to different responses and insights.

6.4 METHODS USED FOR THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

For comparing the different groups in terms of how they respond to various questions, one-way ANOVA was used. The responses being Likert scale values, the assumption of normality was probably not met, but the sample size was sufficiently large to warrant the use

of ANOVA. All results were verified in any event, using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test. Structural equations modeling (SEM) using partial least squares were used to establish the relationship between general attitudes and attitudes specifically towards Oakley.

6.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research methodology used in the empirical study was motivated from literature. The methods used for data collection (mall intercept, electronic survey and data collected from schools and university residences) and the questionnaire used were discussed. The different dimensions of the sample were also described. Finally the methods for statistical analysis of the data were mentioned.

CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the empirical study are discussed in this chapter. The discussion of the results is based throughout on the basis of the empirical goals, as identified for the study (see Paragraph 6.2), since a logical link should exist between the results and the goals. Before the results are discussed, the profile of the sample is provided and discussed, since this is necessary to draw inferences from the resulting data.

7.2 THE PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

In order to make the interpretation of the data easier and provide insights into the results obtained from the data, it is important that the demographic and biographic information of the target population be discussed. A frequency table (Table 7.1) that summarises the basic demographic and biographic information is provided below.

If one examines Table 7.1 certain tendencies become evident. The statistics indicate that the average respondent:

- Is between the age of 19 and 21
- Is busy with a pre-graduate tertiary qualification
- has a highest completed education of Grade 12
- parents are primarily responsible for the payment of personal expenses

TABLE 7.1 DEMOGRAPHICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

VARIABLE	CATEGORIES	n	%
Age (n = 300)	14	10	3.3
	15	2	0.7
	16	22	7.3
	17	36	12.0
	18	20	6.7
	19	46	15.3
	20	51	17.0
	21	58	19.3
	22	34	11.3
	23	14	4.7
	24	6	2.0
	27	1	0.3
Gender (n = 300)	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Race (n = 300)	White	240	80.0
	Coloured	53	17.7
	African (Black)	5	1.7
	Asian (Indian)	1	0.3
	Other	1	0.3
Language (n = 300)	Xhosa	5	1.7
	English	83	27.7
	Afrikaans	208	69.3
	Other	4	1.3
Present Educational Qualification enrolled for (n = 300)	Primary School	1	0.3
	High School	77	25.7
	Post School Diploma	3	1.0
	University/Technikon Degree	192	64.0
	Post-graduate	27	9.0
Primarily responsible for payment of personal expenses (n = 300)	Parents	262	87.3
	Self	103	34.3
	Bursary	32	10.7
	Student Loan	23	7.7
	Other	1	0.3
Money available to spend on self per month (n = 300)	R0-R500	201	67.0
	R501-R1000	68	22.7
	R1001-R1500	17	5.7
	R1501-R2000	7	2.3
	R2001-R2500	2	0.7
	R2501-R3000	3	1.0
	R3000 +	0	0

The distribution of **gender** is equally distributed – 150 respondents were female while 150 were male. The predominant **race** of the respondents is white (80%), while 18% of respondents were coloured. The **language** most often spoken at home is Afrikaans (69.3%). This could be attributed to students at the University of Stellenbosch being predominantly Afrikaans speaking, according to the language survey done by the University of Stellenbosch. The parents of the respondents are predominantly responsible for **payment of personal**

expenses (87.3%), while 34.3% of the respondents pay for their own personal expenses. It should be noted that respondents could have combinations of sources for the payment of personal expenses and that the percentages cited are the source primarily responsible for personal expenses. Approximately two thirds (67%) of the respondents have R500 per month or less to **spend on themselves**.

7.3 ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' IMPRESSIONS OF THE BRAND

As mentioned in the discussion about the questionnaire used for this specific study, two open-ended questions were used at the start of the questionnaire in order to put the respondents at ease. These questions asked the respondents to mention the first things that came to mind when thinking about the brand and also to write down words that came to mind when thinking about the brand (descriptions of the brand). The information obtained from these questions are qualitative in nature and their purpose is to evaluate respondents' attitudes towards the brand, and also to assess how they perceive the brand and what associations they have with the brand. This data should provide a general description of the brand image that the respondents have of Oakley. This could be compared with the Oakley's brand identity (See Table 5.2) to analyse whether any similarities do in fact exist between the respondents' brand image of Oakley and Oakley's brand identity. From the responses on these open-ended questions one would be able to draw quite a number of conclusions.

The overwhelming majority of respondents cited sunglasses as the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about Oakley. It was also mentioned that Oakley is known for their performance eyewear, whether it be sunglasses, ski goggles or optic eyewear. This indicates that respondents largely associate Oakley with sunglasses and eyewear. Some respondents even went as far as to say that they were not aware that Oakley sells any products other than sunglasses. In addition to sunglasses, several of the respondents mentioned clothing, footwear and fashion (sport) accessories as coming to mind when thinking about Oakley.

The high quality of Oakley's products (as represented by the brand name) was also mentioned by many of the respondents, in both the questions regarding the first things that came to mind and their description of the brand. Respondents also mentioned that the quality of Oakley's products is of higher quality than other brands in the same category. Many respondents also described Oakley as durable, which also indicates a perception of quality.

A sizeable percentage of the respondents immediately thought of the brand as being expensive and unaffordable. Respondents felt that the brand fell in a high price class. Words such as “unpayably expensive”, “over expensive” and “out of my budget constraints” were used. Although one would be inclined to perceive this as negative, it is worthwhile to note that several of the respondents mentioned that Oakley is expensive and yet of high quality, which may indicate that they believe it is worth the high price.

The notion of sport also came to mind with several of the respondents. Several kinds of sports were identified, especially extreme sports such as rock climbing, water sport, skiing and snowboarding. It was also associated with cycling. Several of the respondents also associated the brand with top sportsmen and athletes. The sport with which the respondents associated Oakley most is surfing. Several of the respondents stated that the first thing that came to mind was surfers.

The respondents also associated the brand with youth and mentioned that especially affluent young people (teenagers and adolescents) purchase the brand. Some respondents also felt that these individuals are arrogant and have inflated self-images – people who consider themselves to be popular and “cool”.

Oakley was described as very exclusive and unique. It was mentioned that Oakley is individualistic, different and original. In addition Oakley was described as fashionable, trendy and stylish. Words such as “modern” and “latest” were used to describe the brand. Adding to these views, several respondents described Oakley as innovative and market leaders who constantly add cutting edge new designs to their current range. Words such as “extravagant”, “extreme”, “rebellious”, “hardcore” and “exciting” were also used in description of Oakley and add to the descriptions of the brand as mentioned above.

The brand was also described as being dominant, with words such as “bold”, “powerful”, “intimidating”, “superiority” and “authority” being used to describe the brand.

Two very interesting and important aspects regarding Oakley’s perceived target market surfaced in the responses. The first of these is that many of the respondents, especially female respondents, perceived the brand to be aimed at the male market and that sufficient marketing is not done to reach females. It was further mentioned that Oakley’s sunglasses are mostly made with the male gender in mind and that the products are often too bulky. The word “manly” was used to describe the brand.

A second aspect regarding Oakley's perceived target market that was highlighted is that some of the coloured respondents felt the brand was aimed at the white market and that Oakley had mainly a white client base. One respondent said that he associated Oakley with "white boy shades".

7.4 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO STRUCTURED, CLOSE-ENDED SCALE ITEMS

Following the open-ended questions at the start of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to complete a series of scaled items, by ranking the degree to which they agree with certain statements. The first twelve of these items pertain specifically to Oakley, while the last four items measure the respondents' perceptions regarding products and brands in general.

7.4.1 Responses to items specific to Oakley

The second part of the first section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to rank the degree with which they agree with a given statement about Oakley. These statements attempt to determine respondents' perceptions of the brand, their attitudes towards the brand and how they perceive the price/quality relationship of Oakley. The statements and the responses to these specific statements are discussed in greater detail below.

Oakley is a desirable brand

This statement attempts to determine whether respondents perceive Oakley as a desirable brand. Respondents agreed with this statement to a large degree, since 251 of the 300 respondents opted for options 4, 5 and 6 on the rating scales and thus agreed rather strongly with the statement. This represents a percentage of 83.7% of all respondents. A high percentage of the respondents thus perceive Oakley is a desirable brand.

Oakley is expensive

A large percentage of respondents opted for options 5 and 6 of the rating scale. 247 respondents agreed rather strongly, with 137 of these respondents agreeing very strongly with the statement that Oakley is expensive. The 247 respondents represent 82.3% of all respondents, which indicates that a very large proportion of the respondents perceive Oakley to be expensive.

My attitude towards Oakley is favourable

Respondents' responses regarding their attitudes toward Oakley varied, with 160 respondents choosing options 4 and 5. 53 said that they agreed strongly with the statement and that they thus have a positive attitude towards Oakley. 213 respondents thus have a favourable attitude towards Oakley, which represents 71% of all respondents. The remainder of the respondents does not have a positive attitude towards Oakley.

Oakley is popular and an industry leader

The responses to this statement are very similar to the previous reactions. A total of 187 respondents chose options 4 and 5, which indicate that they agreed to some degree with the statement and thus perceive Oakley to be popular and an industry leader. 47 of the respondents fully agreed with the statement, which means that 234 respondents agreed (to various degrees) with the statement. This represents 78% of the total number of respondents. The majority of the respondents thus perceive Oakley to be popular and a leader in the given industry in which it competes.

Oakley's products are of high quality

A high percentage of the total number of respondents agreed with this statement rather strongly, since 235 respondents chose options 5 and 6 in rating Oakley's quality. 78.3% of the respondents thus agreed that Oakley's products are of high quality.

Oakley's products are technically superior compared to similar brands

Responses to this statement also varied and a large percentage of the respondents seemed to either agree to some degree with the statement while others seemed rather undecided. 162 of respondents opted for options 3 and 4, which indicate that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. They represent 54% of all the respondents. 118 or 39.3% of the respondents indicated either option 5 or 6, which indicated strong agreement with the statement. The majority of the respondents are thus rather undecided regarding the technical superiority of Oakley's products.

Oakley is an innovative company

The responses to this statement follow very much the same trend as the previous item. 158 of the respondents chose option 3 and 4, which indicates that 52.7% of respondents were undecided or do not completely agree with the statement. 127 of the respondents also opted for options 5 and 6, which indicate a strong agreement with the statement. This represents

42.3% of the total number of respondents. A large portion of the respondents thus perceived Oakley as innovative, while a large number also seemed to be undecided regarding Oakley's innovativeness.

Oakley is fashionable (stylish)

The greatest proportion of the respondents opted for options 5 and 6 in rating this item. 200 respondents fall in this category, which represents 66.6% of the total number of respondents. A large number of respondents (49) chose option 4, which also agreed with the statement. 83% of respondents thus agreed with this statement, most of whom agreed strongly or fully with the statement. This indicates that Oakley is perceived by respondents to be fashionable or stylish.

The use of Oakley products would improve a sportsman's performance

Most of the respondents did not agree with this statement and the greater majority of respondents chose options 1, 2 and 3, which indicate that they did not agree with the statement. 93 respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in fact, while a further 127 disagreed to a lesser degree in choosing option 2 and 3. 220 respondents thus disagreed with the statement that the use of Oakley products would enhance a sportsman's performance. This constitutes 73.3% of all the respondents. Only 18 respondents chose option 5 and 6, reflecting the fact that not many respondents believe that the use of Oakley products would enhance a sportsman's performance.

Oakley's products are worth the money you pay for them

Responses to this statement varied. The greater majority of respondents opted for the two middle options (options 3 and 4). 66 respondents chose option 3, while 107 respondents opted for the fourth option. Together, these options constitute 57.7% of the total responses, which indicates that these respondents are undecided about whether Oakley is worth the money that one pays for the brand. 90 respondents agreed to a great extent or fully agreed with the statement, which indicates that 30% of the respondents do perceive the brand to be worth the money paid for the product.

If I have an Oakley product at present, I would consider purchasing the brand again

The responses to this statement were more or less evenly distributed between the third and fourth options and options 5 and 6. 120 respondents chose options 3 and 4, which represents 40% of the total number of respondents, while 137 respondents chose options 5 and 6,

constituting 45.7% of the total number of respondents. Most respondents were thus either undecided about whether or not they would purchase the brand again or sure that they would consider buying the brand again.

If I do not have an Oakley product at present, I am likely to try the brand

193 respondents opted for options 4, 5 and 6 in response to this statement, representing 64.3% of the total number of respondents. This indicates that a large portion of the respondents agreed to a strong degree with the statement, thus showing an inclination among respondents to try the brand. 101 respondents also indicated that they were not likely to try the brand.

7.4.2 Responses to items about products and brands in general

Whilst the first twelve rank-scale items measured respondents' perceptions regarding Oakley, the last four items measure respondents' perceptions regarding products and brands in general. These items are used in order to compare the respondents' general perceptions with their perceptions of Oakley specifically. These items and how respondents responded to them are discussed below.

Generally speaking, the higher the price of a product, the higher the quality

The majority of the respondents indicated that they are either undecided or agreed to some extent with the statement. 200 of the respondents chose options 4, 5 and 6, constituting 66.6% of all the respondents, while 47 respondents chose option 3, representing a further 15.7% of the total number of respondents. 82.3% of the respondents were, therefore, either undecided or agreed with the statement to some degree, if not fully. The majority of respondents were thus of the opinion that the higher the price of a product, the higher the quality of that product.

You always have to pay a bit more for the best

A high percentage of the respondents chose options 4, 5 and 6. 245 of the responses fell into these options, with 114 respondents choosing option 5. This represents 81.7% of the total number of respondents, indicating that a large majority of the respondents agreed to a large degree that one always has to pay a bit more for the best.

People notice when you buy the most expensive brand of a product

As with the previous item, the majority of respondents opted for options 4, 5 and 6. 243 of the responses fell into this bracket, constituting 81% of the total number of respondents. 174

of these were options 5 and 6. The majority of the respondents thus agreed that people do notice when one buys the most expensive brand of a product.

I enjoy the prestige of buying a high priced brand

The responses to this item were evenly distributed among the different options. 124 respondents chose options 1, 2 and 3, indicating that 41.3% of respondents do not agree (to different extents) with the statement. 133 of the respondents opted for options 4 and 5, while 41 chose option 6. The respondents who agreed to some degree with the statement thus constitute 58% of the total number of respondents. These figures indicate that the respondents varied in the degree to which they enjoy the prestige of buying a high priced brand.

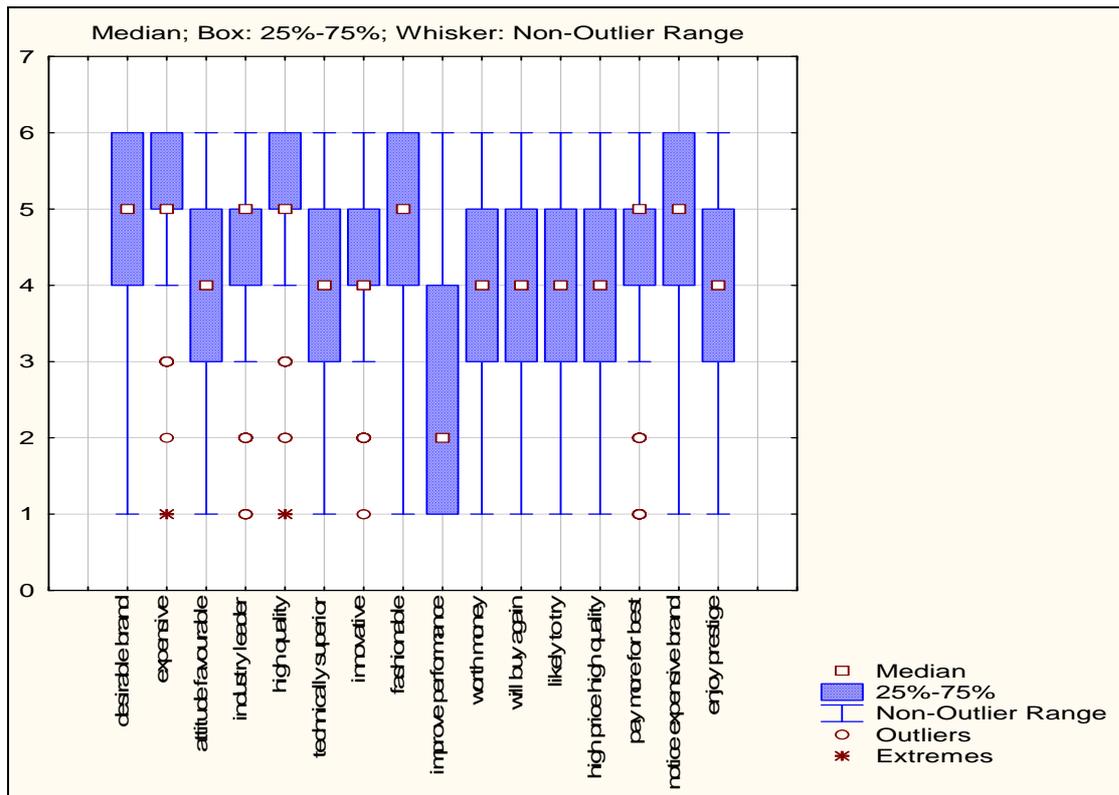
The histograms depicting the results for the items discussed above are contained in Addendum B.

7.4.3 Discussion of the box plot of the ranked items

In the figure below, the results are presented in the form of a box plot, which indicates the median responses for the different scale items. The median for an item represents “a measure of central tendency, given as the value above which half of the values fall and below which half of the values fall” (Malhotra, 2002: 478).

In the figure the median for each item is represented by a square block. Also indicated in this figure is the area in which 50% of all the responses for the item fell and the outliers and extremes for each item. As could be seen from the figure, the majority of the medians for the items lay on the fourth or fifth option, which indicates that respondents tended to agree with most of the statements. In actual fact, the only item for which the mean does not lie on these options is the item regarding the use of Oakley products to improve the performance of a sportsman.

FIGURE 7.1 BOX PLOT OF THE RANKED ITEMS



The median for this item was option 2, which indicated that most of the respondents tended to disagree with the statement. As mentioned earlier, the area in which 50% of the responses fell is indicated by a rectangular column. The smaller the area covered by the column, the more concentrated the responses on the specific item. The majority of these fell in the area between the third and fifth option. It is interesting to note that the items “expensive” and “high quality” is represented by a highly concentrated area (between options 5 and 6). This indicates that respondents were in strong agreement that Oakley is both expensive and of high quality. The item regarding the use of Oakley products by a sportsman and whether it would improve performance once again shows an abnormality with regard to the other items. The area covered by 50% of the responses is relatively large (between the first and fourth option), indicating that respondents had quite different views on this item.

7.4.4 Trends and relationships among scale items

Some of the items in the questionnaire were compared with each other to determine whether there were certain relations between the items. Statistical inferences are drawn and used to draw certain conclusions.

7.4.4.1 A comparison between male and female attitudes towards Oakley

A comparison was made between the attitudes towards Oakley of males and females. The specific items of the questionnaire that were compared, were the items “desirable”, “attitude favourable”, “favourable” and “likely to try”. As mentioned in paragraph 7.3, female respondents perceived the brand to be aimed at the male market and that insufficient marketing is done to reach females. This was of course in response to the open-ended questions. By comparing the resulting data from the statistical analysis regarding respondents’ attitudes towards Oakley with these statements, clarity may be obtained regarding these statements and whether statistical evidence in fact proves the same or not.

After a comparison was made between the responses of males and females to the “desirability” item, a clear trend emerged that males do in fact perceive Oakley to be more desirable than female respondents do (See Figure C1 in Addendum C). The mean value for male respondents on this item is 4.8, while the mean for female respondents is 4.4. It is clear that females do show a tendency to find Oakley to be less desirable, given that $p=0.02$.

Much the same results came to the fore when the “likely to try” item was compared. The statistics indicate that male respondents are more likely to try the brand than female respondents, with the mean for male respondents on this item being 4.2 and for females 3.8 (See Figure C2 in Addendum C). This does not represent a significant difference ($p=0.06$), but males clearly tend to be more likely to buy the brand.

A comparison between responses on the “fashionable” item indicates no significant difference in responses were found with $p=0.36$. The mean for male respondents is 4.8, while the mean for females is 4.6 (See Figure C3 in Addendum C). It still indicates that males do perceive Oakley as somewhat more fashionable than females, even though not to a marked degree.

The last item for which responses was compared, is the “attitude favourable” item. As with the previous items, the statistics indicate that male respondents have a more favourable attitude towards Oakley than female respondents. The mean score for males is 4.3, while the mean score for females is 4.0 and $p=0.07$ (See Figure C4 in Addendum C).

When taking the discussions regarding the different items pertaining to respondent’s attitudes toward Oakley into account, it is quite clear that there is a tendency for males to have a more favourable attitude towards Oakley than females. This coincides with and supports the views (expressed in paragraph 8.3) that Oakley is more aimed at the male market and not sufficient

attention is given to the female section of the market. The opinions expressed are reflected in the attitudes of the female respondents.

7.4.4.2 A comparison between white and coloured respondents' attitudes towards Oakley

The attitudes by coloured respondents towards Oakley were compared with the attitudes of white respondents, by comparing the specific items “desirable”, “attitude favourable”, “favourable” and “likely to try” between the groups. As mentioned in paragraph 8.3, some of the coloured respondents mentioned (in response to the open-ended questions) that they perceive Oakley to be mainly aimed at a white target market and that the brand does not sufficiently cater for needs of other cultural groups or races. By comparing the resulting data from the statistical analysis regarding respondents' attitudes towards Oakley with these statements, clarity may be obtained regarding these statements and whether statistical evidence in fact reveals that these sentiments are evident in the attitudes of coloured respondents towards Oakley.

When a comparison was made between respondents' responses on the “desirable” item, it became clear that coloured respondents perceive Oakley to be less desirable than white respondents. There is limited statistical evidence ($p=0.09$), but a very clear trend emerges. The mean score for white respondents on this item is 4.7 while the mean for coloured respondents is 4.4. This may be seen in Figure C5 in Addendum C).

A comparison on the items “likely to try” and “fashionable” indicates no significant difference between the responses of white and coloured respondents. The mean scores on the “likely to try” item is 4.0 and 3.9 respectively, indicating very little difference. On the “fashionable” item the mean scores for both race groups is 4.7, indicating no difference (See Figures C6 and C7 in Addendum C). The two races both perceive Oakley to be a fashionable brand, since this score was relatively high.

The last item to be compared is the “attitude favourable” item. The responses on this item indicate that coloured respondents indeed have a more negative attitude towards Oakley than white respondents ($p=0.04$). The mean score on this item for coloured respondents was 3.9, which is relatively low and indicates a negative or neutral attitude. In contrast to this, the mean score for white respondents is 4.3 (See Figure C8 in Addendum C).

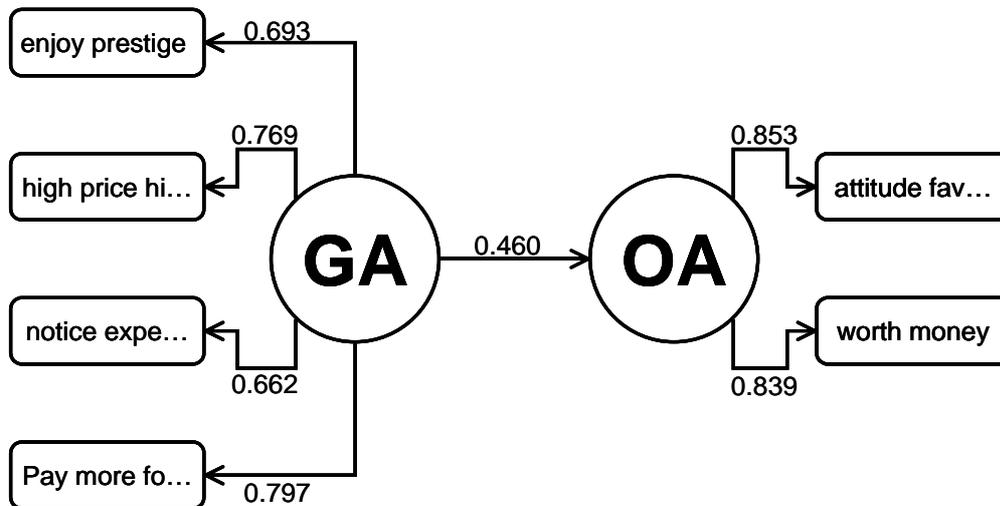
When taking the discussions regarding the different items pertaining to respondent's attitudes toward Oakley into account, it is quite clear that there is a tendency for coloured respondents to have a less favourable attitude towards Oakley than white respondents. This coincides with and supports the views (expressed in paragraph 8.3) that Oakley is more aimed at the white market and not sufficient attention is given to other cultures and races of the market. The opinions as expressed are reflected by means of the attitudes of the coloured respondents.

7.4.4.3 Respondents' attitudes towards products and brands in general compared with their attitude specifically towards Oakley

This section compares the attitude that respondents have towards products and brands in general with their specific attitude towards Oakley. This is done in order to determine whether respondents' attitudes in general are also conveyed onto the Oakley brand, or whether they have specific attitudes regarding Oakley that may differ from their attitudes in general. For this purpose two constructs were created: the general attitude (GA) and Oakley attitude (OA). Several items were also used to measure these two attitudes. The items measuring the general attitudes (GA) (enjoy prestige; high price, high quality; notice expensive brand and pay more for best) is examined and also the items "attitude favourable" and "worth the money", since they contribute towards the respondents' attitudes towards Oakley (OA). A structural equations model (SEM) as shown in Figure 8.2 was used to determine the relationship between GA and OA.

In the Figure 7.2, the two circles, marked GA and OA, represent the general attitudes of respondents (GA) and the respondents' attitude towards Oakley (OA). The different items depicted in the blocks entitled "enjoy prestige", "high price, high quality", "notice expensive brand" and "pay more for the best" are the items that was used to measure the general attitudes of respondents. The boxes titled "attitude favourable" and "worth the money" represent the items used to measure the respondents' specific attitude toward Oakley. The general attitude (GA) of respondents determines how they would respond on the items as mentioned. The same holds true for respondents' attitude towards Oakley (OA). Both the GA and OA show strong correlations with the items. The horizontal line between GA and OA represents the link between the two concepts. As could be seen from the figure there is a correlation between the general attitudes of respondents and their attitudes towards Oakley. Respondents, therefore, do not have specific attitudes towards Oakley that differ from their attitudes towards products and brands in general.

FIGURE 7.2 A COMPARISON BETWEEN GENERAL ATTITUDES AND SPECIFIC ATTITUDES OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS OAKLEY



7.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the results from the empirical study were discussed. The most important results will be highlighted in the following paragraph.

The results indicate that respondents perceive Oakley to be a very desirable and fashionable brand. Respondents have a positive attitude towards Oakley and perceive the brand to be innovative and agree that the brand is a leader in the industry in which it competes. Respondents further agree to some extent that Oakley's products are of higher technical quality than competing brands. Respondents who do not currently own an Oakley product indicated that they may consider purchasing the brand and those who already own an Oakley product indicated a willingness to consider purchasing the brand again. Respondents strongly agree that Oakley is expensive and of high quality and also to some degree that Oakley is worth the money paid for the brand. Responses regarding the improvement of a sportsman's performance by using an Oakley product were mixed, but most respondents disagreed with the statement that the use of Oakley products would improve the performance of a sportsman. Respondents agreed to some degree with the general statement that the higher the price of a product, the higher the quality of the product and strongly agreed with that one has to pay more for the best products. Furthermore, respondents strongly agreed that other people notice when one wears the most expensive brands in a product class. Respondents also agreed that they enjoy the prestige that accompanies wearing a high-classed brand.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The research objective of the study was twofold. The first objective was to determine whether the brand identity that Oakley has identified for itself and communicates accordingly to its target market, was perceived as intended by the target market and whether the brand image that consumers held for the brand was an accurate reflection of the brand's identity. The second objective was to determine whether consumers perceived the premium price that Oakley charged as worthwhile paying for the brand, given the level of quality of the brand's products. To reach these objectives a literature study, comprising a theoretical discussion of the main aspects of the study, was conducted. The second section of the study was an empirical study, which provided empirical data pertaining to the research objectives, as identified earlier. The results and analysis of this research data were discussed in the previous chapter.

In this chapter certain conclusions will be drawn regarding the results of the research data. The brand image that respondents have of Oakley will be constructed from the results of the data and compared with Oakley's brand identity. The implications of the findings and conclusions for Oakley will be discussed and certain recommendations be made with regard to the findings.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

Since the study has two basic research objectives, the conclusions drawn based on the results from the empirical study (Chapter 7) will be discussed with these in mind.

8.2.1 Conclusions regarding the brand image that respondents have of Oakley

Respondents have a certain brand image for Oakley, based on their attitudes, the associations they have with the brand and perceptions regarding certain aspects of Oakley. The following conclusions may be drawn, based on the results from the empirical study:

- The respondents have a positive attitude towards Oakley. Oakley is perceived as desirable and popular, as well as being fashionable and stylish.

- Although the general attitudes towards Oakley is positive, some respondents suggest that those individuals who own the brand are arrogant and that they purchase the brand to contribute towards their own image of a fashion-conscious individual.
- A very important aspect that emerged from the study is that some of the coloured respondents felt that the brand is aimed mainly at the white market and that sufficient marketing is not done to reach the coloured market. Oakley is thus perceived to be a brand mainly for a white target market.
- Similar to the argument above, female respondents mentioned that the brand is not sufficiently marketed to the female market and that not sufficient care is taken to accommodate the female sector of the market. The brand is perceived as very masculine.

8.2.2 Conclusions regarding perceptions of Oakley's price/quality relationship

Based on the results from the empirical study, the following conclusions could be drawn regarding respondents' perceptions of Oakley's price\quality relationship:

- Even though respondents have a favourable attitude towards Oakley, they nevertheless perceive the brand to be expensive.
- Oakley is perceived to be of high quality and a durable brand. It is perceived to be of a higher quality than other brands in the same industry and of a higher technical quality.
- Given that Oakley is perceived to be expensive but high quality, respondents agreed to a certain extent that Oakley is worth the money that one pays for the brand.
- Even though respondents have a positive attitude towards Oakley, based on a variety of factors, they may not necessarily purchase the brand because it is expensive.

8.3 OAKLEY'S BRAND IMAGE AS HELD BY RESPONDENTS

The brand image that respondents have of Oakley could be compiled by taking the different associations that they have with the brand into consideration and by bearing in mind their descriptions of the brand (Paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4). The conclusions – as mentioned in the previous paragraphs – should also be taken into account. By combining the effect on respondents' brand image with the associations and descriptions of the brand, one could arrive at respondents' brand image of Oakley.

Respondents gave several descriptions of the brand and several associations with the brand were mentioned. The main elements contained in these could be described as follows:

Associations with Oakley

- Oakley is especially associated with sunglasses, clothing, footwear and sport and fashion accessories.
- Oakley is associated with quality and technical superiority in the industry in which it operates. The brand is associated with durability. The brand logo is seen as an indicator of quality.
- The brand is seen as expensive.
- Oakley is also associated with sports, especially extreme sports and an active, outdoor lifestyle. The brand is also associated with top athletes and sportsmen.
- The user base of the brand is young, affluent people who are fashion conscious individuals.

Descriptions of Oakley

- The brand is described as exclusive and unique. Words such as “individualistic”, “different” and “original” were used to describe the brand.
- In addition to this Oakley was described as fashionable, trendy and stylish, with words such as “modern” and “latest” being used to describe the brand.
- Oakley is seen as innovative and a market leader who constantly adds cutting edge new designs to its current range.
- The brand is described by means of terms, such as “extravagant”, “extreme”, “rebellious”, “hardcore” and “exciting”.
- The brand is seen as dominant, being described as “bold”, “powerful”, “intimidating”, “superiority” and “authority”.

8.3.1 A comparison between Oakley’s brand identity and respondents’ brand image

The first component of the research objective is to compare Oakley’s brand identity with the brand image that respondents have of the brand. In the previous paragraph such a brand image was discussed and compiled. In the following paragraphs, this brand image is

compared with Oakley’s brand identity, as identified by the company. Oakley’s brand identity is reflected in Table 5.2. In the table below, Oakley’s brand identity is compared with the resulting brand image. The brand identity column is based on the information contained in Table 5.2.

TABLE 8.1 A COMPARISON BETWEEN OAKLEY’S BRAND IDENTITY AND THE RESULTING BRAND IMAGE

OAKLEY’S BRAND IDENTITY	RESULTING BRAND IMAGE FOR OAKLEY
Product thrust is sports and lifestyle	Associated with sports and an active, outdoors lifestyle
Sunglasses and apparel based on technical and innovative superiority	Associated with sunglasses, footwear, clothing and sport and fashion accessories
Brand personality is exciting, innovative, stylish and aggressive – in pursuit of excellence	Extravagant, extreme, rebellious, hardcore, exciting Dominant, bold, powerful, intimidating, superiority, authority Exclusive, unique, individualistic, different, original
Product scope is sports apparel, lifestyle clothing, entertainment and fashion	Associated with sunglasses, footwear, clothing and sport and fashion accessories
Basis for relationship is opportunity to hang out with stylish, sophisticated individuals who goes for the best in sunglasses, clothing and shoes – a fashion conscious person	User base is seen as young affluent people who are fashion conscious individuals
Organisational associations is innovation and dedication to quality	Seen as innovative market leaders who constantly add cutting edge new designs to current range Associated with quality
Endorsers are top athletes and individuals in entertainment industry	Associated with top athletes and sportsman

The similarities between the brand identity and brand image is striking. If one examines Table 8.1, it is clear that the brand image by respondents is very much in line with Oakley’s brand identity, given the similarities between the components of the brand identity and associations with and descriptions of the brand that form the brand image.

It should be added that respondents recognise Oakley’s brand logo (elliptical icon), which is part of the brand identity. The very first item in the questionnaire depicted the brand logo and items portraying the logo and respondents were asked whether they recognised the logo and could associate it with Oakley. Only four individuals did not recognise the logo, which is indicative that the elliptical icon is widely recognised and associated with the brand.

According to Oakley’s brand identity, the brand wishes to enhance peoples’ lives by means of the quality of their products. It also advocates that the use of Oakley products would enhance

performance. Although respondents strongly associate the brand with quality, it was never mentioned that the brand may enhance people's lives and respondents disagreed with the view that the use of Oakley products may improve a sportsman's performance. There is thus a discrepancy in this regard between the brand identity and brand image.

Based on the study, it would appear that Oakley has managed to successfully convey its brand identity to consumers, since the resulting brand image from the study is very similar to the brand identity.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS

The previous paragraph dealt with the conclusions that could be drawn from the study. These conclusions hold certain implications for Oakley, especially the marketing department. The implications for the company, based on the results of the empirical study, could be summarised as follows:

Since some of the coloured respondents felt that Oakley has mainly white consumers as target market, this may imply that coloured consumers will not purchase the brand and that the growing coloured section of upper-income market is lost to Oakley. Given the socio-political situation in South Africa, this represents quite a substantial part of the market, which represents enormous business potential.

Since female respondents indicated that they perceived the brand to be very masculine and not sufficiently catering for the female market holds similar implications to the one mentioned above. A large part of the consumer market consists of female consumers. The industry in which Oakley operates is especially relevant, since females constitute a high percentage of the specific industry.

Because respondents perceive the brand to be expensive, this may imply that consumers would rather not purchase the brand and even buy cheaper brands within the same product category as Oakley.

The fact that respondents' brand image for Oakley is very similar to and an accurate reflection of Oakley's brand identity implies that Oakley succeeds in its brand building efforts.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The most important possible limitation of the study is that a convenience sample was used. As mentioned in paragraph 7.3.4 this is a non-probability sample. The problem with a convenience sample is that it is not representative. Even though a sufficient number of individuals were chosen for the sample size, the results cannot necessarily be regarded as representative

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous paragraphs of this chapter dealt with the conclusions that could be drawn based on the results of the study and the resulting implications for Oakley. These implications affect Oakley, whether in a positive or negative way, and in turn imply that the effects brought about by these implications need to be managed. In this paragraph recommendations are made as to how Oakley could address the challenges imposed by the implications as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The first aspect that Oakley's marketing department could examine is a possible revision of its target market and marketing strategies employed to reach their target market. Emanating from the conclusions is that coloured respondents and female respondents feel that Oakley does not sufficiently cater for their needs. Basic marketing research into the psychographics and preferences of these interest groups may provide insights that could be used to alter marketing strategies to specifically reach the aforementioned parties. By adapting its current advertising and marketing strategies to also meet the needs and expectations of these parties, in addition to the company's current strategies, a much larger audience could be reached. Simple practical examples may be to advertise more extensively in female orientated fashion magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*, or a magazine such as *Saltwater Girl*, a surf magazine aimed at a female readership. In effect, the whole concept is to reach a broader audience and thus broaden the target market. Oakley may even consider revising its target market to broaden the demographics that it includes in its target market. When considering that respondents do indeed perceive Oakley as intended by means of their brand identity, it is safe to assume that Oakley's marketing department does in fact portray the brand accurately. The challenge is to adapt or augment the current marketing strategies so as to spark the interest of both female consumers and also other South African sub-cultures.

It is obvious from the responses of respondents that they perceive Oakley to be both expensive and of high quality. Since Oakley is a premium brand, this is to be expected. Despite Oakley being perceived as expensive, respondents' attitudes towards Oakley are still favourable. Respondents indicated that they would strongly consider purchasing the brand whether they are already an owner of the brand or not. Respondents also indicated that they believe one has to be willing to pay a premium price for the best products. The facts as presented above indicate that it would be beneficial for Oakley to continue follow the same price strategy as is presently the case. It is imperative that Oakley maintains the level of quality of its products and that it would constantly further this quality. This would ensure that Oakley retains its reputation for quality products and as a premium brand. Oakley should leverage its perception as being a premium brand and it could be done as mentioned above. Being perceived as an expensive brand could actually benefit a company – it should be used to the company's advantage.

While Oakley's brand identity is successfully portrayed to its target market as a stylish and fashionable brand, it seems to lack the ability to convince consumers that Oakley could actually enhance a sportsman's performance. It seems paradoxical that respondents strongly associate Oakley with sports and top athletes and yet not perceive the brand as one that would enhance a sportsman's performance. It would, therefore, appear that respondents fail to draw a link between performance and sportsman using the brand in their respective fields. It may thus be worthwhile for Oakley to emphasise that top athletes use Oakley products in their respective disciplines.

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ADDENDUM A

AN ENGLISH AND AFRIKAANS VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

BRAND IMAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire consists of two sections. Please ensure that you complete both. We assure you that your answers will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Most of the questions should be answered by making a **cross (x)** on the appropriate space on the right-hand side of the option you choose. Please choose only one answer per question, except when specified that you do otherwise. If you feel that the given options are insufficient in portraying your situation, please make use of the **“Other”**-option and **write out** your answer. The amount of space provided under the **“Other”**-option is only a guideline; feel free to write as much as you consider necessary in the blank space next to the question. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers – we are interested in your opinion. The questionnaire consists of two sections (Section A and Section B). Please ensure that you fill in both sections.

SECTION A

Do you recognise the brand depicted in the following images? YES / NO



If you do, please mention the brand. _____

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you see this brand?

What words would you use to describe the brand?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about Oakley, ranging from option 1, where you do not agree at all, to option 6, where you fully agree with the statement?

Oakley is a desirable brand.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley is expensive.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

My attitude towards Oakley is favourable.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley is popular and an industry leader.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley's products are of high quality.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley's products are technically superior compared to similar brands.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley is an innovative company.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley is fashionable (stylish).

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

The use of Oakley products will improve a sportsman's performance.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

Oakley's products are worth the money you pay for them.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

If I have an Oakley product at present, I would consider purchasing the brand again.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

If I do not have an Oakley product at present, I am likely to try the brand.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

The following statements relate to the price and quality of products/brands in general. To what extent do you agree with the following statements, ranging from option 1, where you do not agree at all, to option 6, where you fully agree with the statement?

Generally speaking, the higher the price of a product, the higher the quality.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

You always have to pay a bit more for the best.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

People notice when you buy the most expensive brand of a product.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

I enjoy the prestige of buying a high priced brand.

Strongly disagree 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Fully agree

SECTION B

How old are you (in years)? Please write your age in the box below.

Please indicate your answer to the following items by crossing the appropriate option provided below each item.

What is your gender?

Male____Female____

How do you describe yourself in terms of race?

White__Coloured__African(Black)__Asian(Indian)__Other__(Please specify)_____

What language do you speak most often at home?

Xhosa _____ English_____Afrikaans _____ Other (Please specify)_____

What is the level of educational qualification with which you are currently busy or the highest that you have completed?

Primary School	High School	Post School Diploma	University/Technikon	Post-graduate
----------------	-------------	---------------------	----------------------	---------------

Who pays your personal expenses? (You may choose more than one option)

Parents _____ Self _____ Bursary _____ Student loan _____ Other (please specify) _____

How much money do you have available to spend freely on yourself per month, after paying compulsory expenses (on articles, such as accessories and cosmetics, etc.)?

R0-500	R501-1000	R1001-1500	R1501-2000	R2001-2500	R2501-3000
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R3000 +

VERTROULIK

HANDELSMERKVRAELYS

ALGEMENE INSTRUKSIES

Hierdie vraelys bestaan uit twee afdelings. Maak asb seker dat u beide afdelings voltooi. U word ten sterkste verseker dat u antwoorde uiters vertroulik hanteer sal word.

Die meeste van die vrae moet beantwoord word deur 'n **kruisie (x)** in die blokkie regs van die opsie wat u kies, te trek. Merk asseblief **slegs een** opsie per vraag, tensy anders vermeld. Indien u voel die gegewe opsies is onvoldoende om u situasie te weerspieël, maak asseblief gebruik van die "**Ander**"-kategorie, deur u antwoord **uit te skryf**. Die hoeveelheid skryfspasie by die "**Ander**"-kategorie verskaf is slegs 'n riglyn. U kan soveel skryf soos wat u goeddink in die oop spasies langs die betrokke vraag. Let asb daarop dat daar nie regte of verkeerde antwoorde is nie – ons stel slegs belang in u opinie.

AFDELING A

Herken u die handelsmerk soos uitgebeeld in die volgende beelde? JA / NEE



Indien wel, sal u die handelsmerk asb noem _____

Wat is die eerste ding wat in u gedagtes opkom wanneer u hierdie handelsmerk sien?

Watter woorde sou u gebruik om die handelsmerk te beskryf?

In watter mate stem u saam met die volgende stellings oor Oakley, vanaf opsie 1, waar u glad nie saamstem nie, tot opsie 6, waar u ten volle met die stelling saamstem.

Oakley is 'n begeerlike handelsmerk.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley is duur.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

My houding teenoor Oakley is gunstig.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley is populêr en 'n leier in sy industrie.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley se produkte is van hoë kwaliteit.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley se produkte is tegnologies beter in vergelyking met ooreenstemmende handelsmerke.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley is 'n innoverende onderneming.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley is modieus (stylvol).

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Die gebruik van Oakley produkte sal 'n sportman se prestasie verbeter.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Oakley se produkte is die geld werd wat 'n mens daarvoor betaal.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Indien ek tans 'n Oakley produk besit, sal ek dit oorweeg om weer die handelsmerk te koop.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Indien ek nie 'n Oakley produk besit nie, is daar 'n waarskynlikheid dat ek dit sal beproef.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Die volgende stellings hou verband met die prys en kwaliteit van produkte/handelsmerke in die algemeen. Tot watter mate stem u saam met die volgende stellings, vanaf opsie 1, waar u glad nie saamstem nie, tot opsie 6, waar u ten volle met die stelling saamstem.

In die algemeen, hoe hoër die prys van 'n produk, hoe hoër die kwaliteit daarvan.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

'n Mens moet altyd 'n bietjie meer betaal vir die beste.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Ander mense let op wanneer 'n mens die duurste handelsmerk in 'n produkkategorie koop.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

Ek geniet die prestige daaraan verbonde om 'n handelsmerk met 'n hoë prys te koop.

Stem glad nie saam nie 1___ : 2___ : 3___ : 4___ : 5___ : 6___ Stem ten volle saam

AFDELING B

Hoe oud is u (in jare)? Skryf asb u ouderdom in die blokkie hieronder.

Dui asb u antwoord op die volgende items deur 'n kruisie te maak by die toepaslike opsie soos verskaf onder die item.

Wat is u geslag?

Manlik _____ Vroulik _____

Hoe sou u uself beskryf in terme van ras?

Blank ___Gekleurd___Afrikaan(Swart)___Asiër(Indiër)___Ander___(Spesifiseer asb)_____

Watter taal praat u die meeste tuis?

Xhosa _____ Engels _____ Afrikaans _____ Ander (Spesifiseer asb)_____

Wat is die vlak van opleiding waarmee u tans besig is of die hoogste vlak van opleiding wat u reeds voltooi het?

Laerskool	Hoërskool	Na-skool Diploma	Universiteits-/Technikongraad	Nagraads
-----------	-----------	------------------	-------------------------------	----------

Wie betaal u persoonlike uitgawes? (U mag meer as een opsie kies)

Ouers _____ Self _____ Beurs _____ Studielening _____ Ander (Spesifiseer asb) _____

Hoeveel geld het u beskikbaar om vrylik op uself te spandeer per maand nadat verpligte uitgawes betaal is? (Op artikels soos bykomstighede en kosmetiese produkte?)

R0-500	R501-1000	R1001-1500	R1501-2000	R2001-2500	R2501-3000
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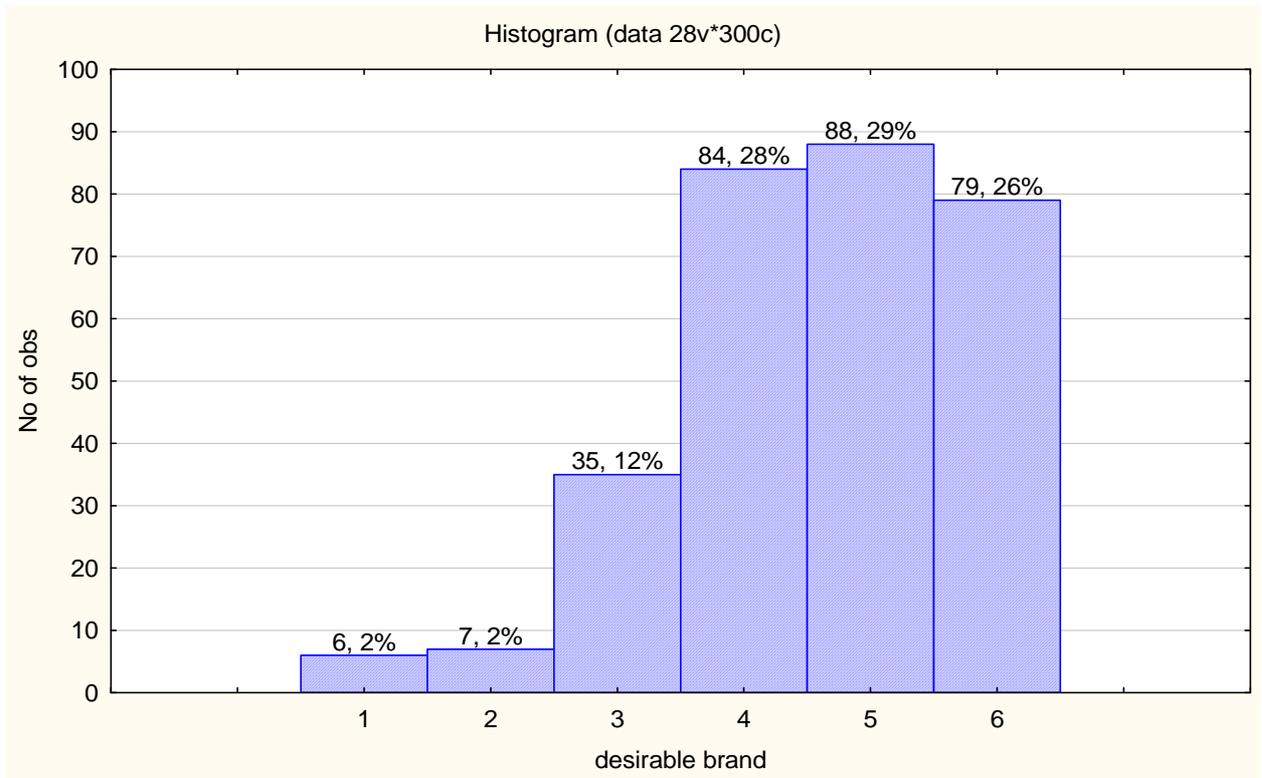
R3000 +

ADDENDUM B

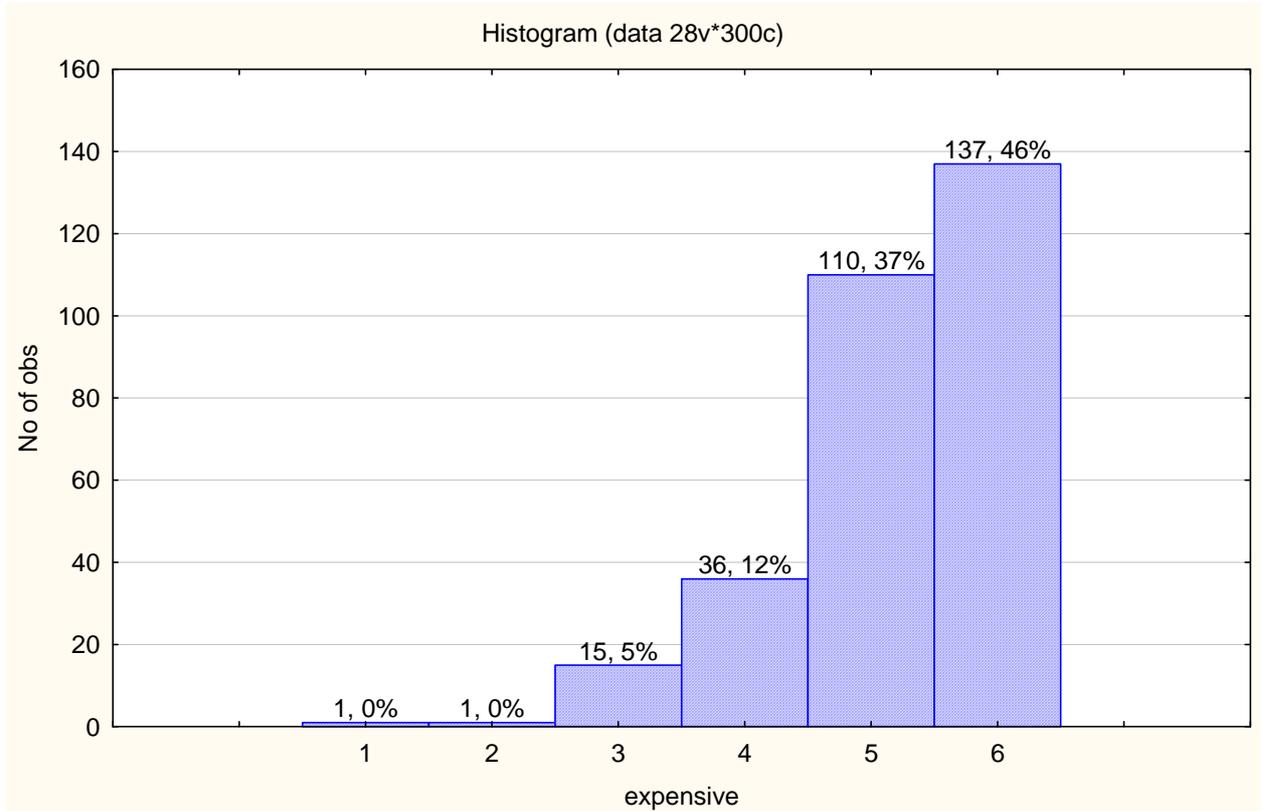
HISTOGRAMS DEPICTING THE RESPONSES ON CLOSE-ENDED ITEMS

A. RESPONSES ON OAKLEY SPECIFIC ITEMS

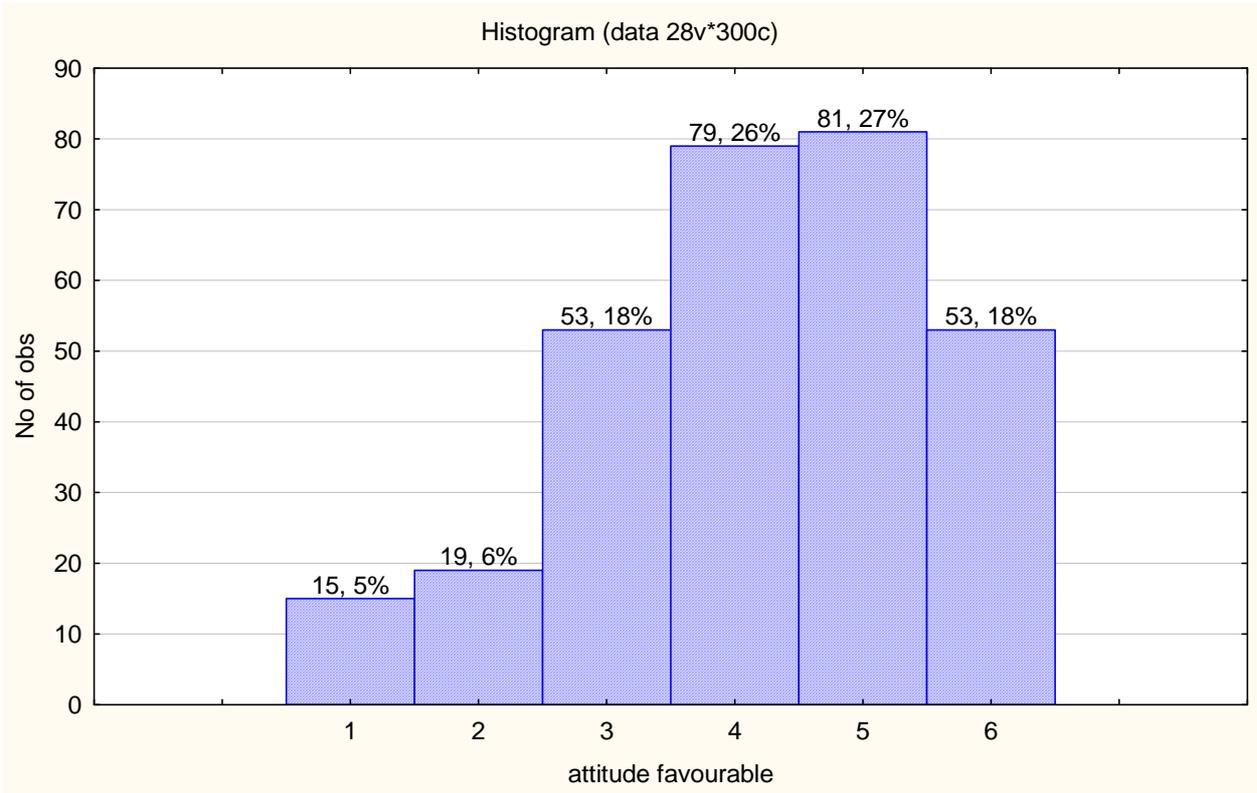
OAKLEY IS A DESIRABLE BRAND



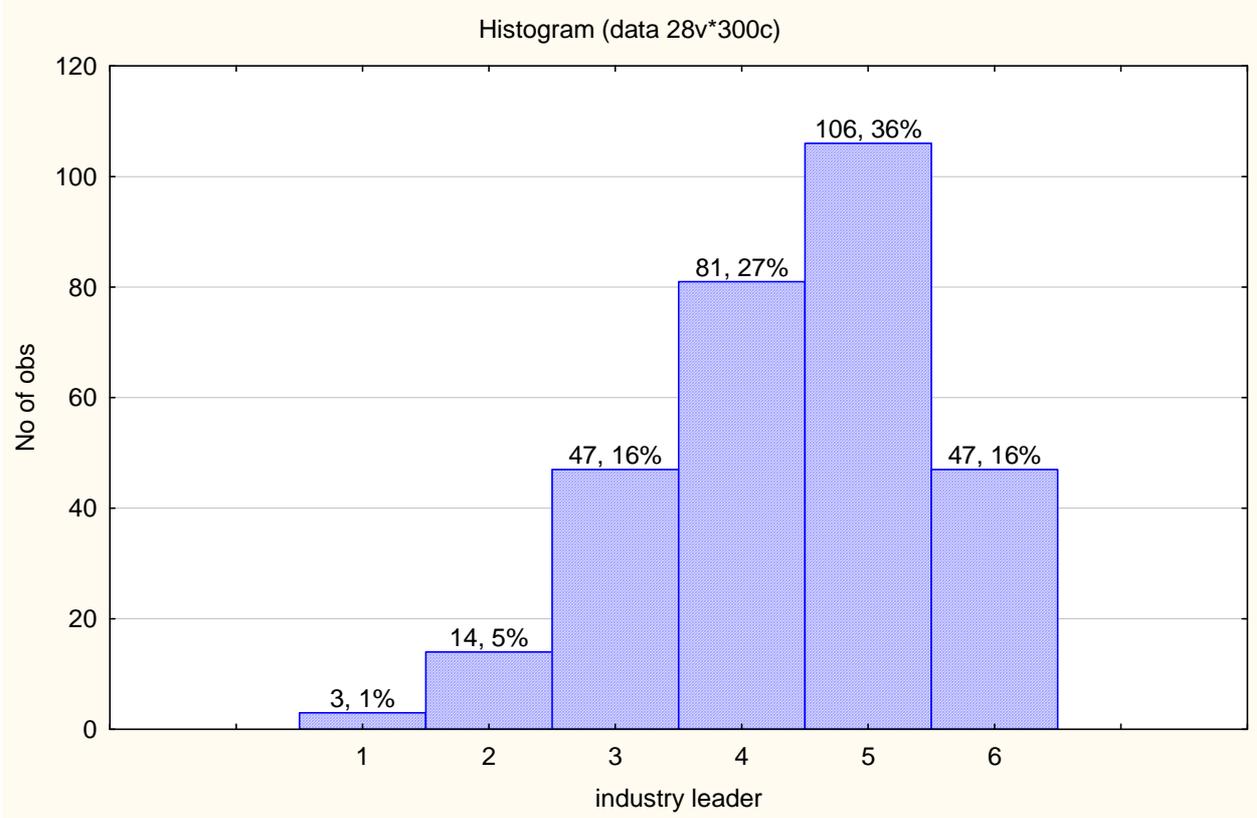
OAKLEY IS EXPENSIVE



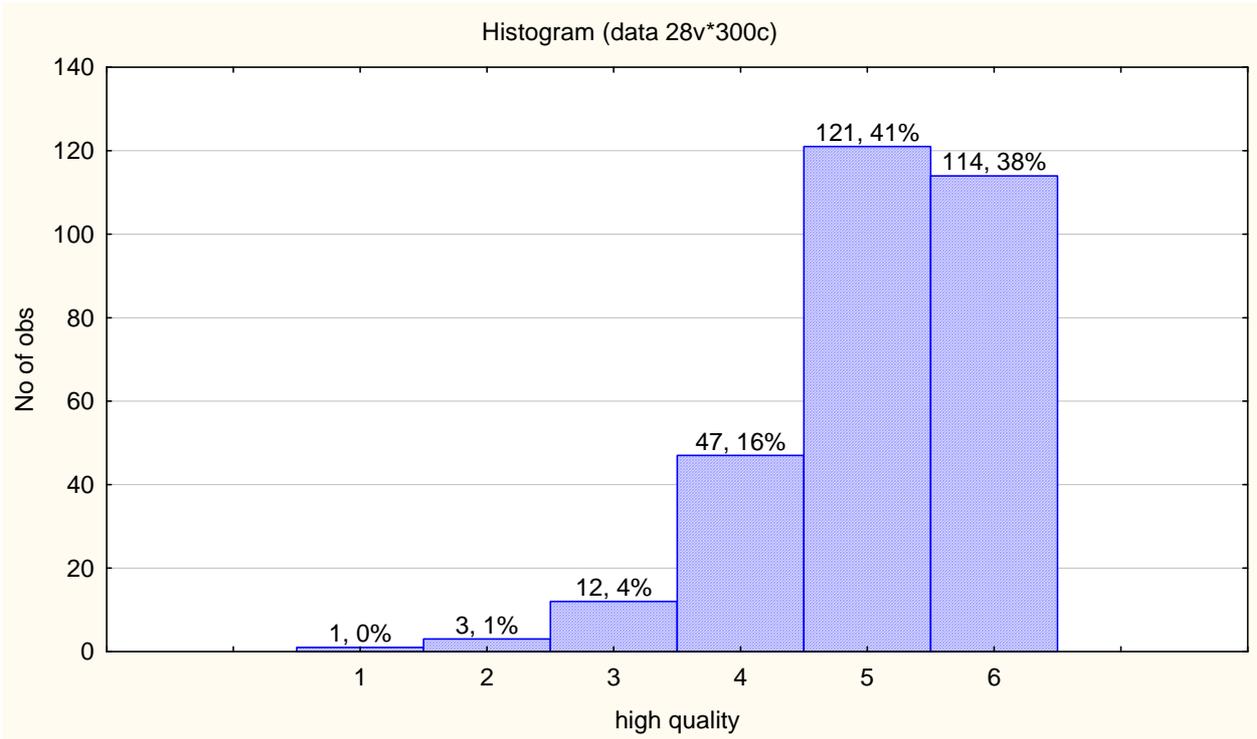
MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS OAKLEY IS FAVOURABLE



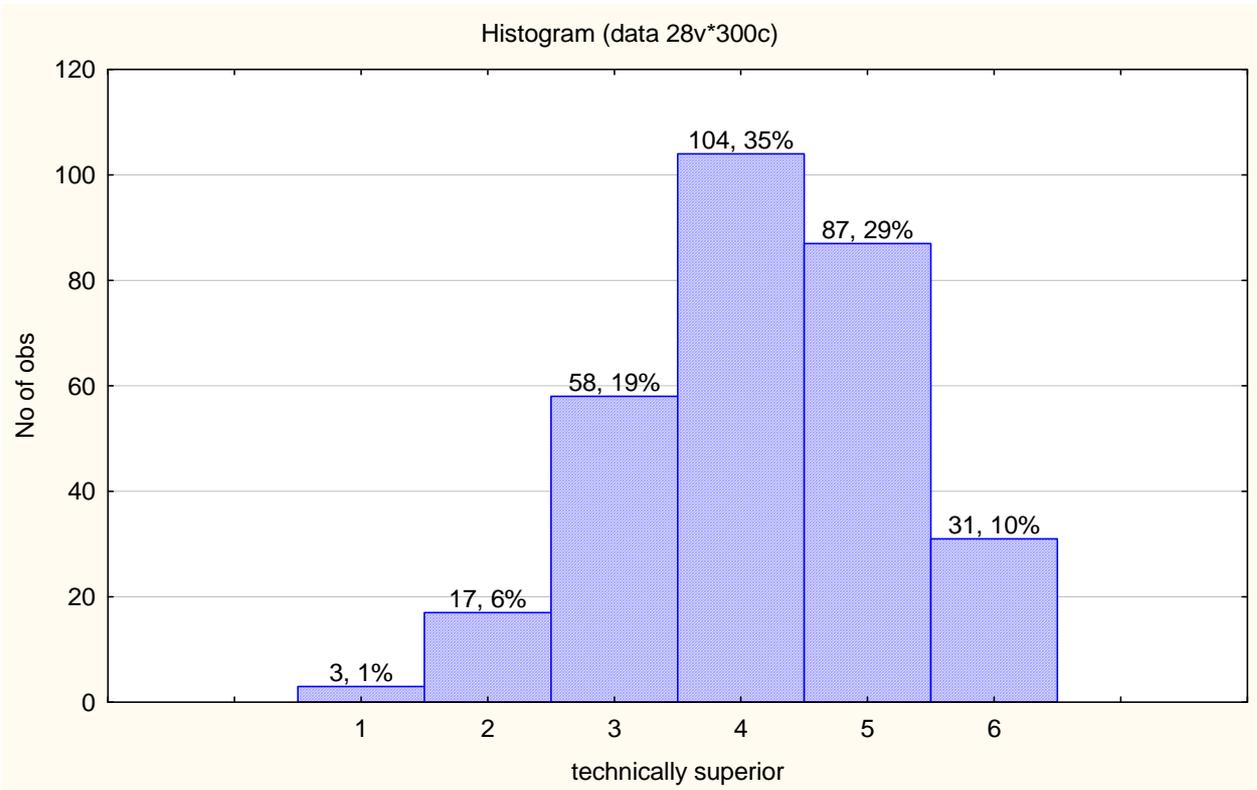
OAKLEY IS POPULAR AND AN INDUSTRY LEADER



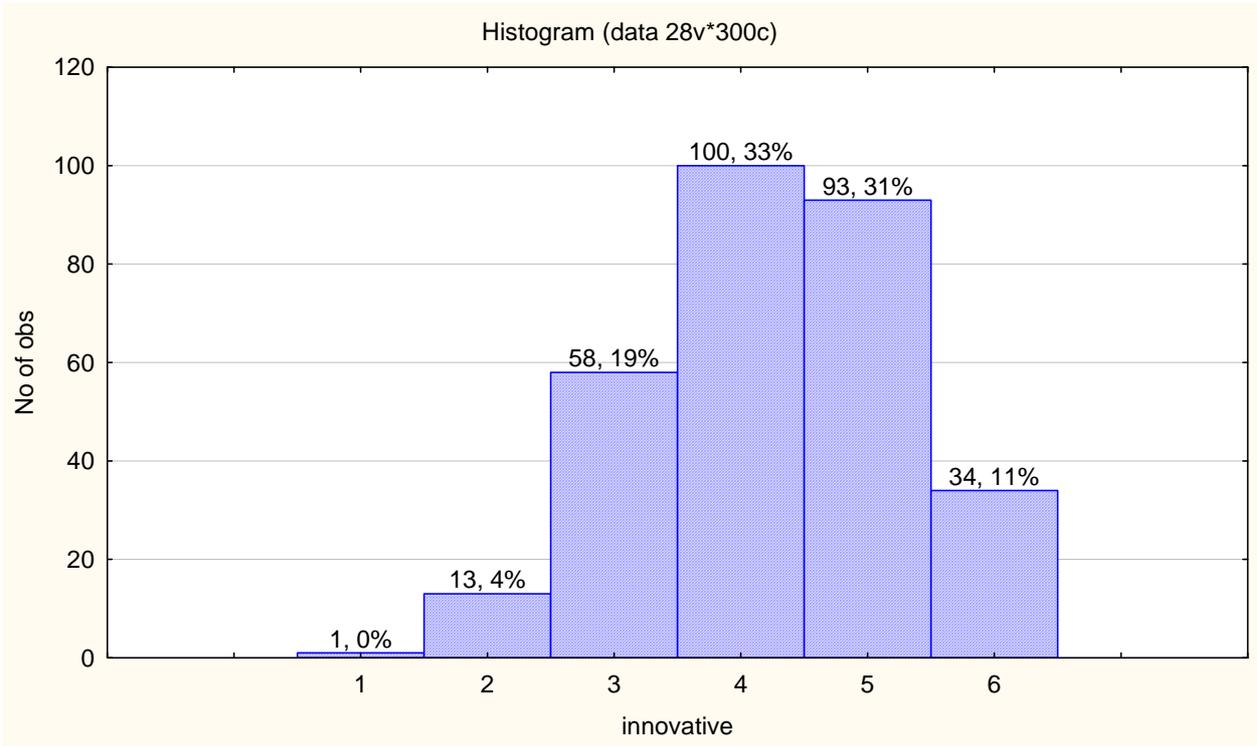
OAKLEY'S PRODUCTS ARE OF HIGH QUALITY



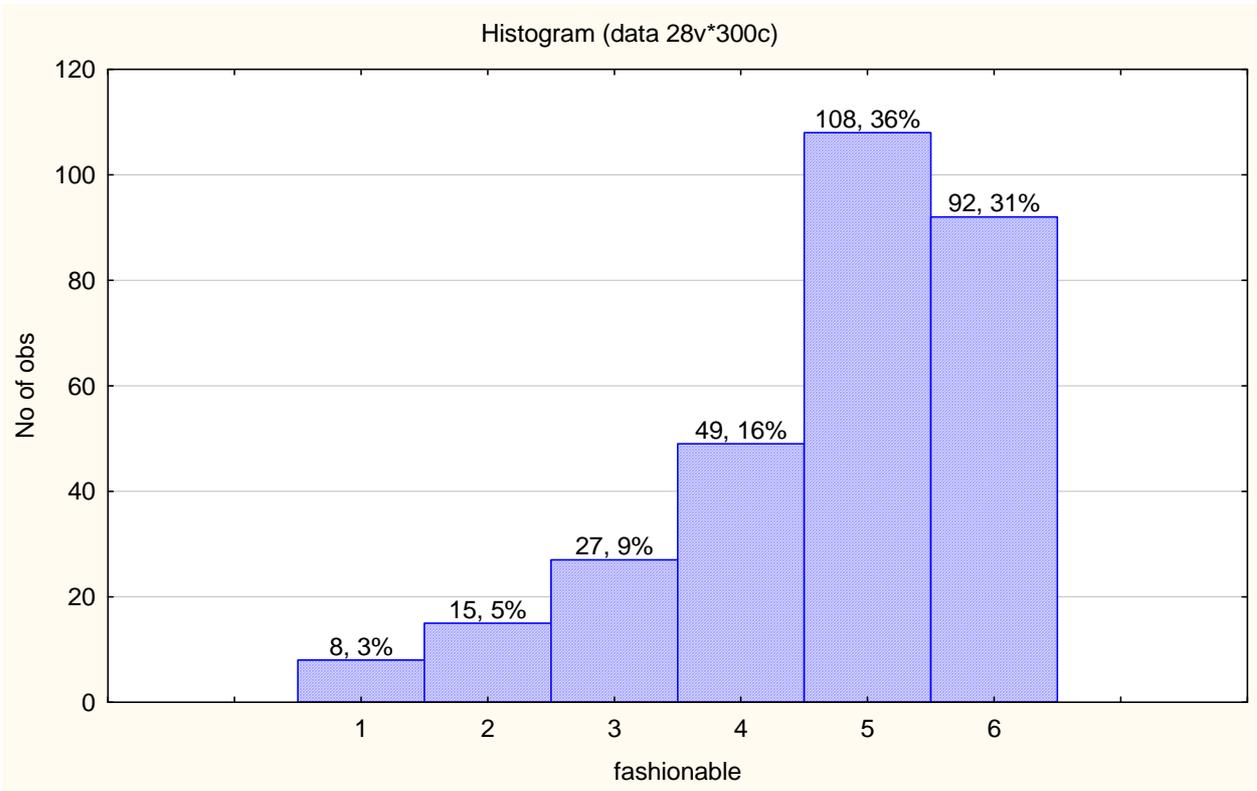
OAKLEY'S PRODUCTS ARE TECHNICALLY SUPERIOR TO SIMILAR BRANDS



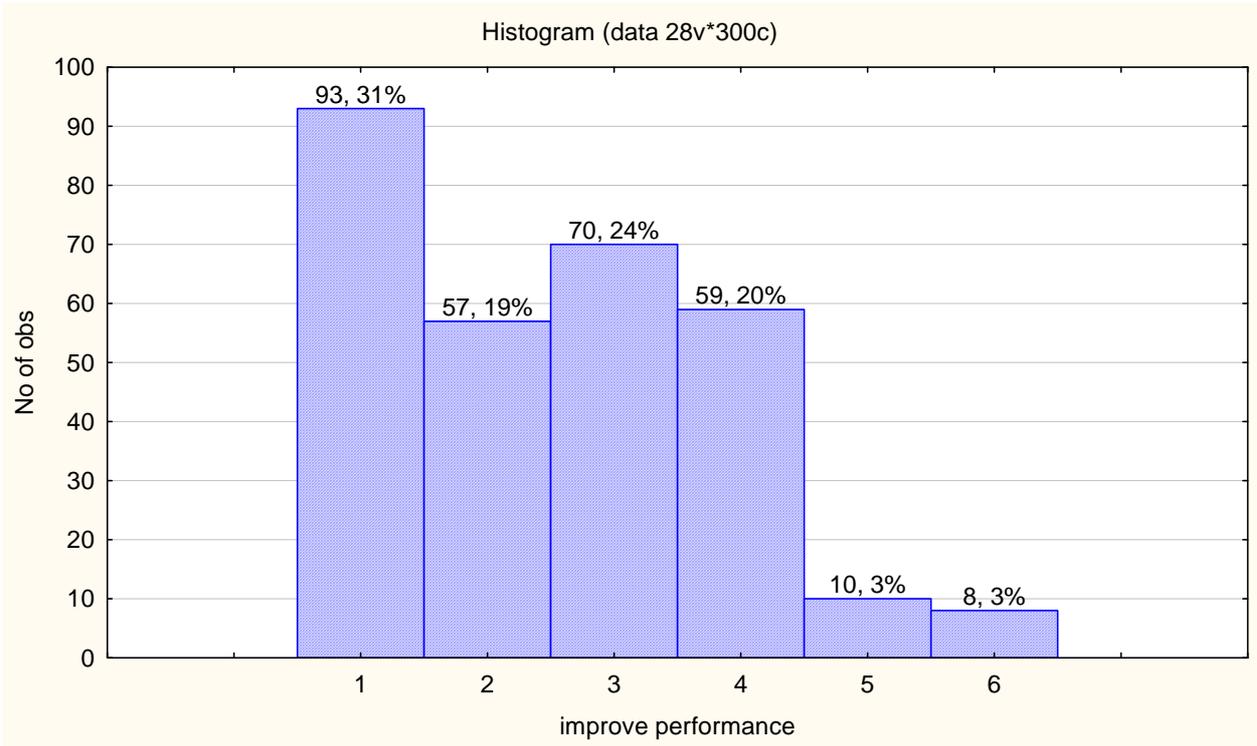
OAKLEY IS AN INNOVATIVE COMPANY



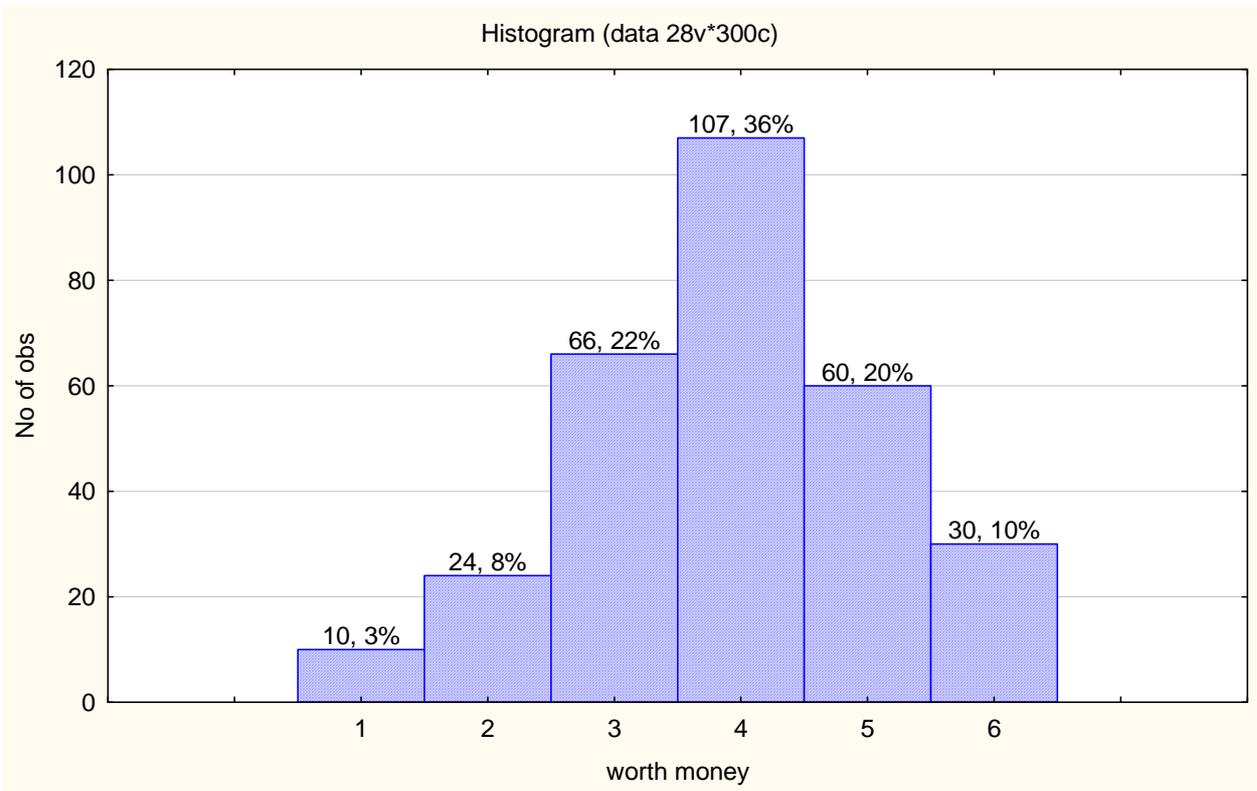
OAKLEY IS FASHIONABLE (STYLISH)



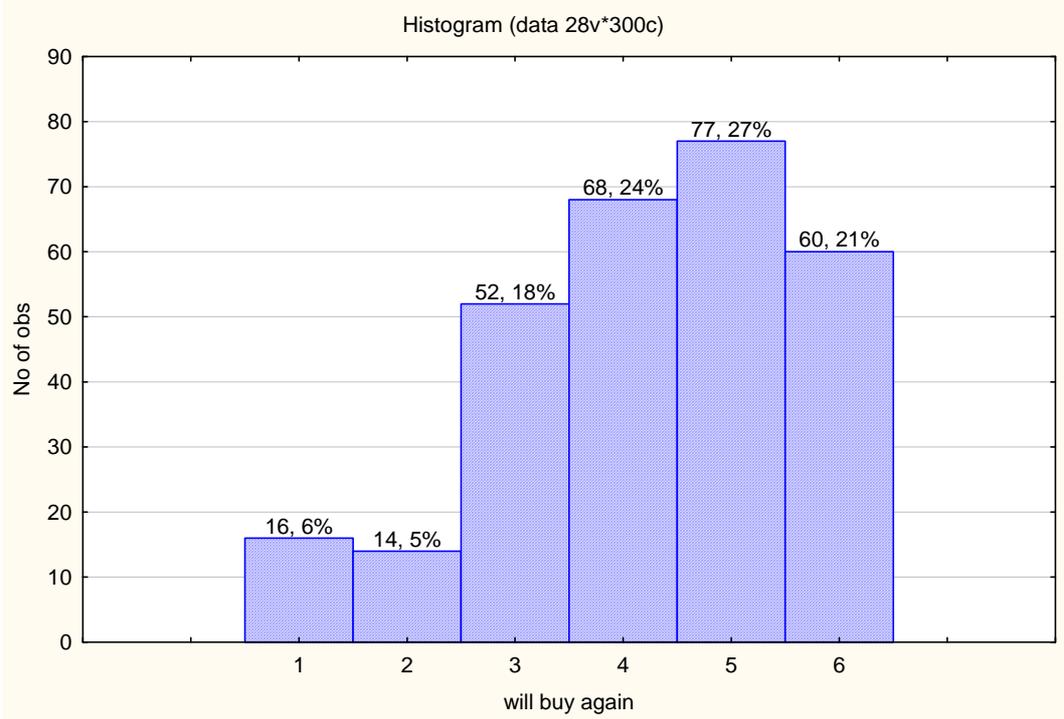
THE USE OF OAKLEY PRODUCTS WOULD IMPROVE A SPORTSMAN'S PERFORMANCE



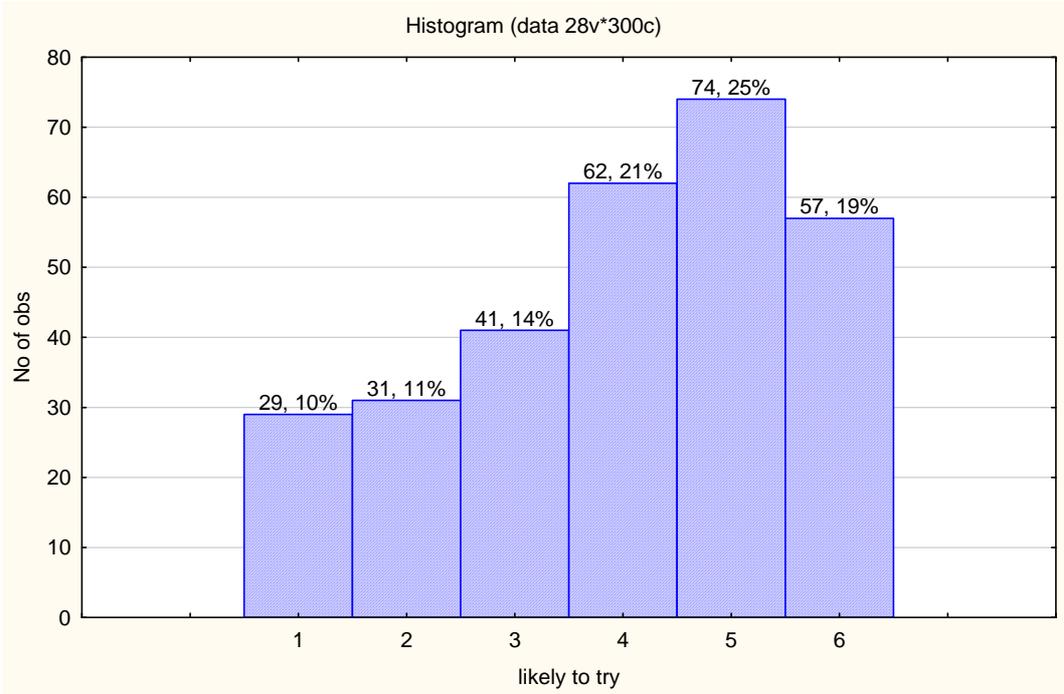
OAKLEY'S PRODUCTS ARE WORTH THE MONEY YOU PAY FOR THEM



IF I HAVE AN OAKLEY PRODUCT AT PRESENT, I WOULD CONSIDER PURCHASING THE BRAND AGAIN

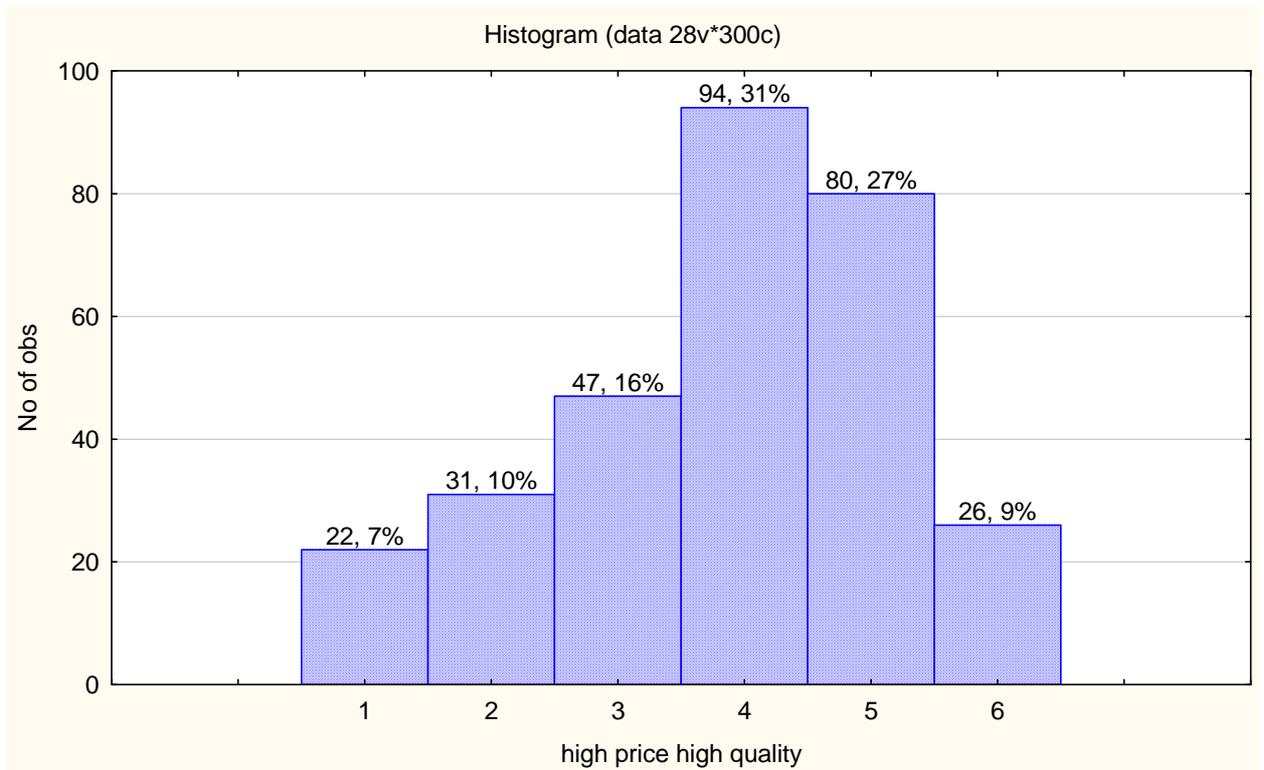


IF I DO NOT HAVE AN OAKLEY PRODUCT AT PRESENT, I AM LIKELY TO TRY THE BRAND

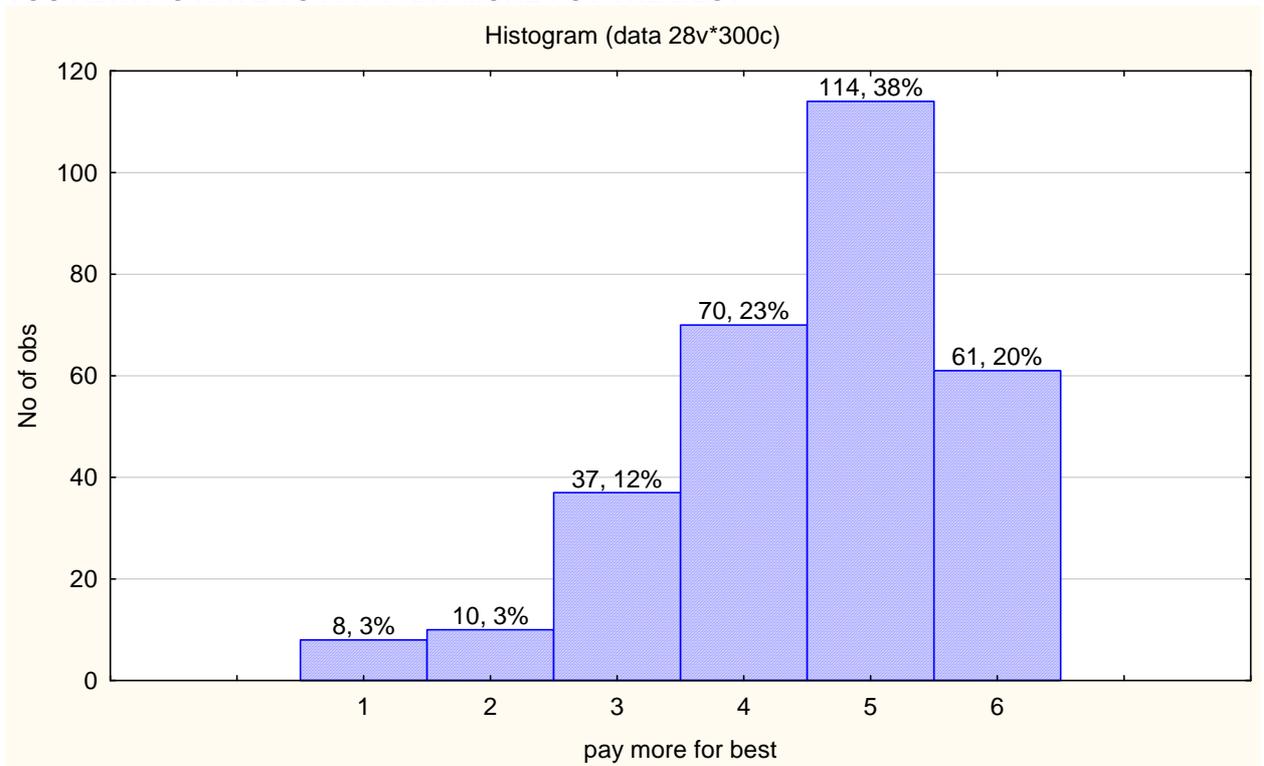


B. RESPONSES TO ITEMS ABOUT PRODUCTS AND BRANDS IN GENERAL

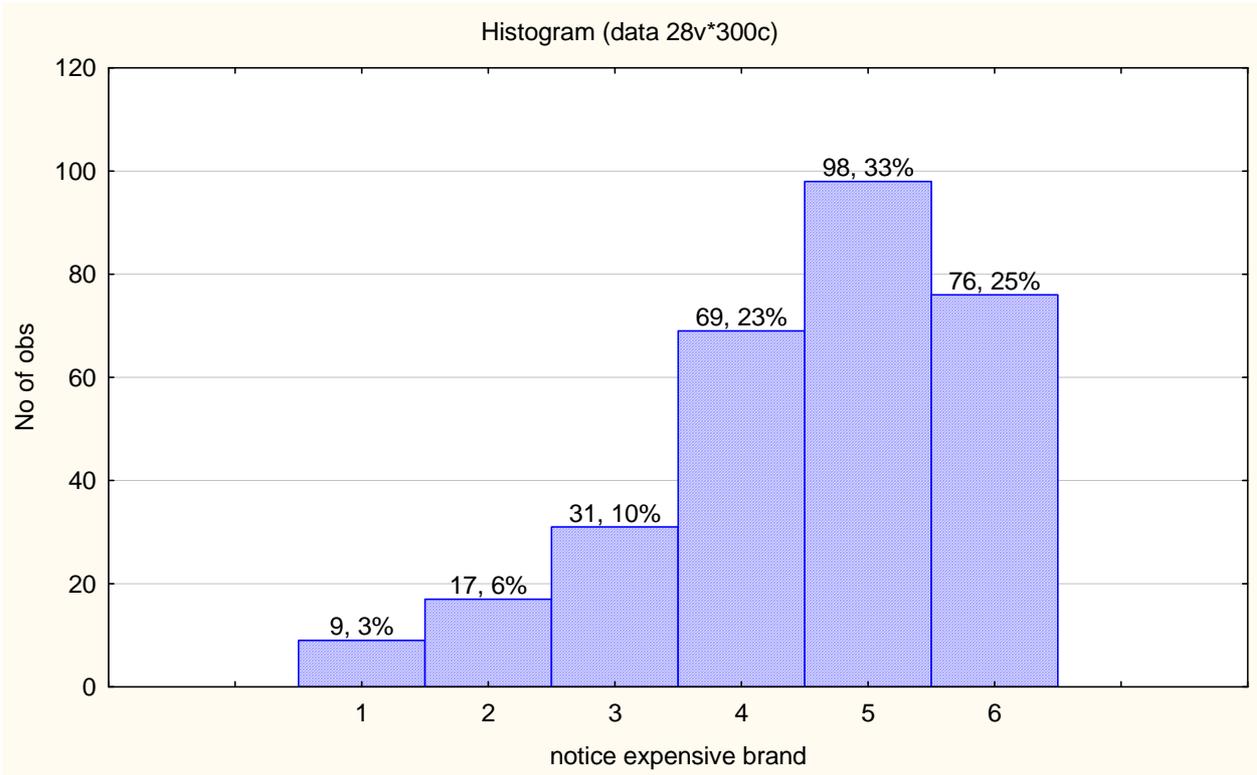
GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE HIGHER THE PRICE OF A PRODUCT, THE HIGHER THE QUALITY



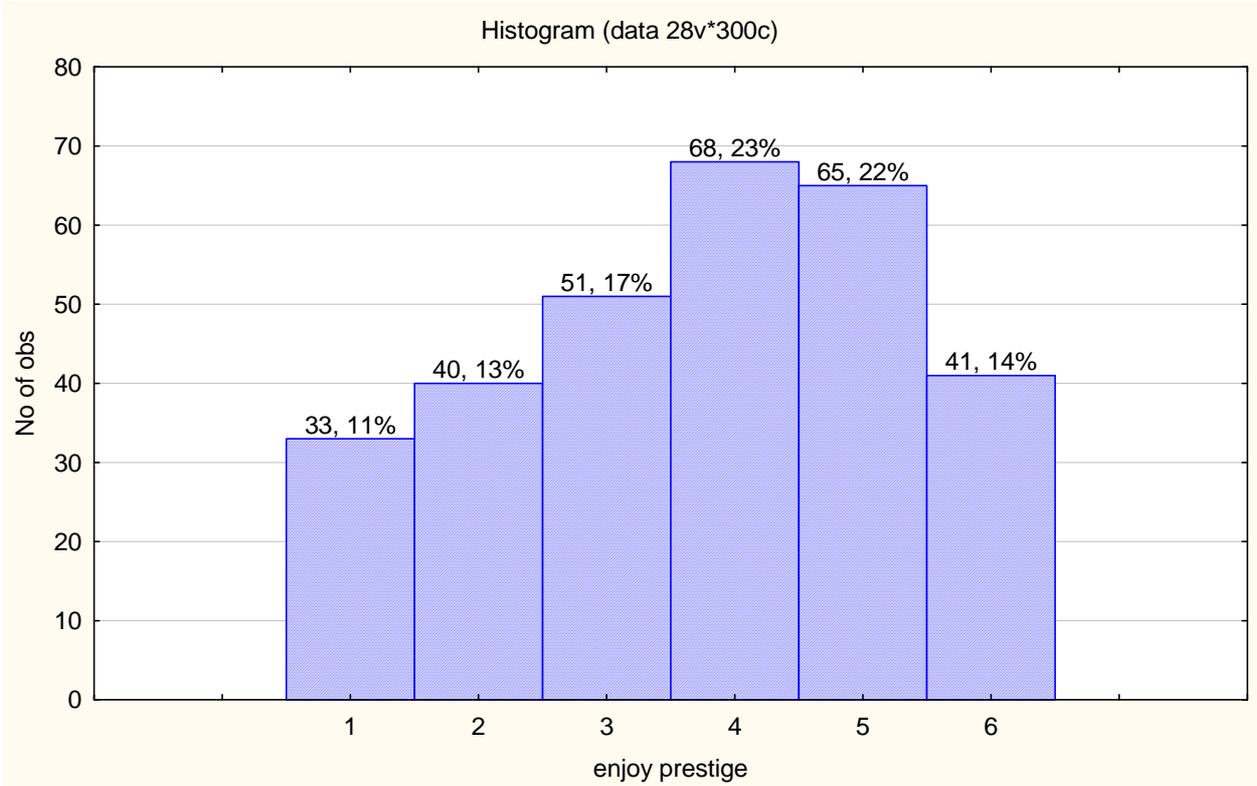
YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO PAY A BIT MORE FOT THE BEST



PEOPLE NOTICE WHEN YOU BUY THE MOST EXPENSIVE BRAND OF A PRODUCT



I ENJOY THE PRESTIGE OF BUYING A HIGH PRICED BRAND



ADDENDUM C

TRENDS AND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SCALE ITEMS

A COMPARISON BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE ATTITUDES TOWARDS OAKLEY

FIGURE C1

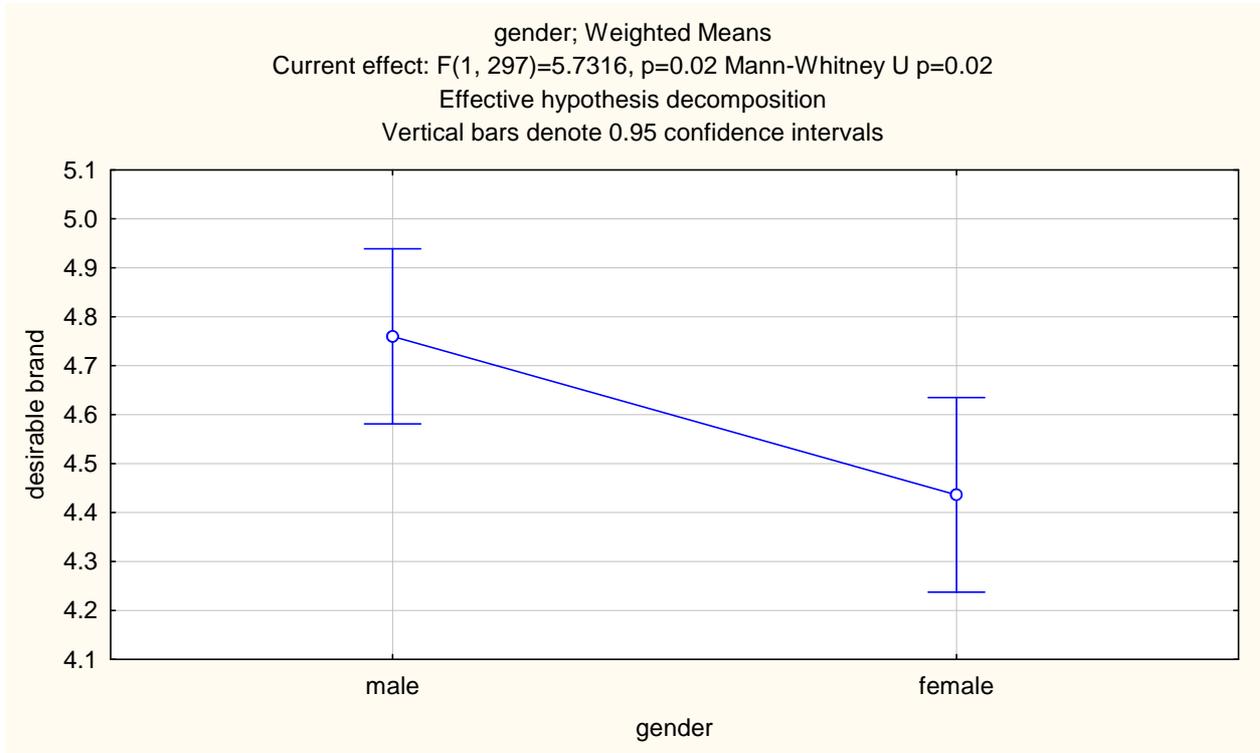


FIGURE C2

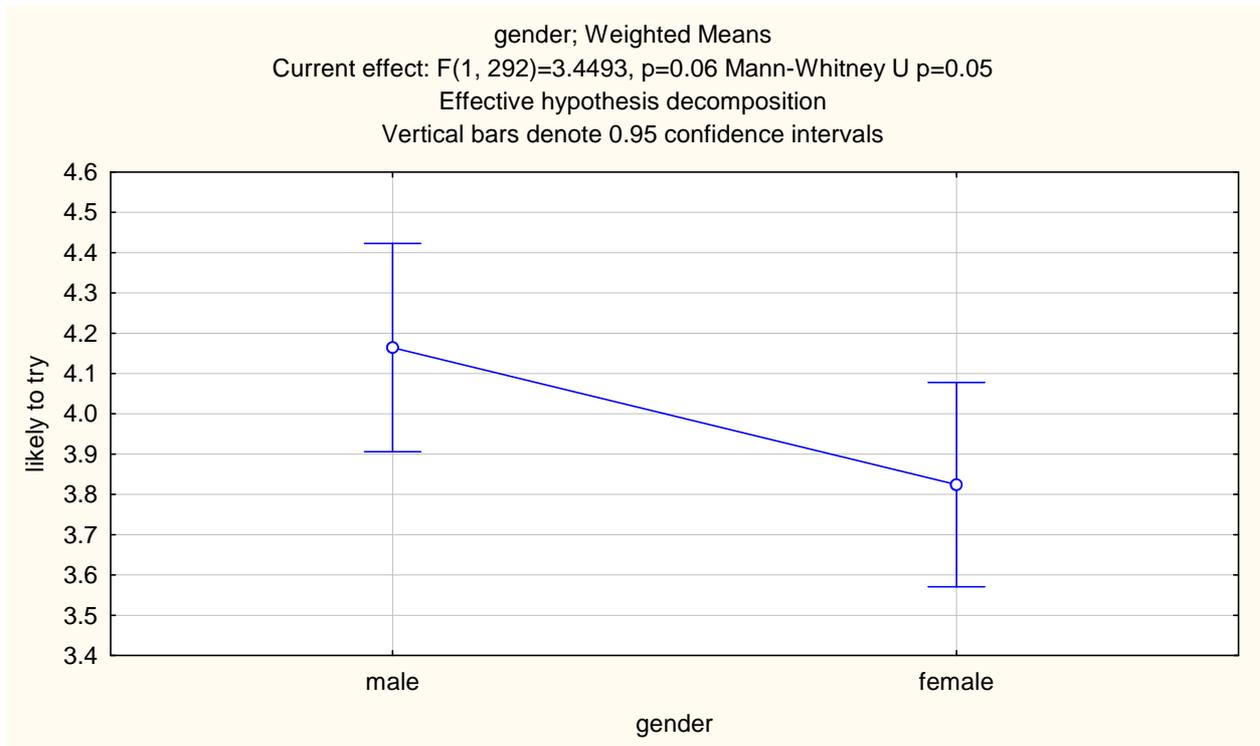


FIGURE C3

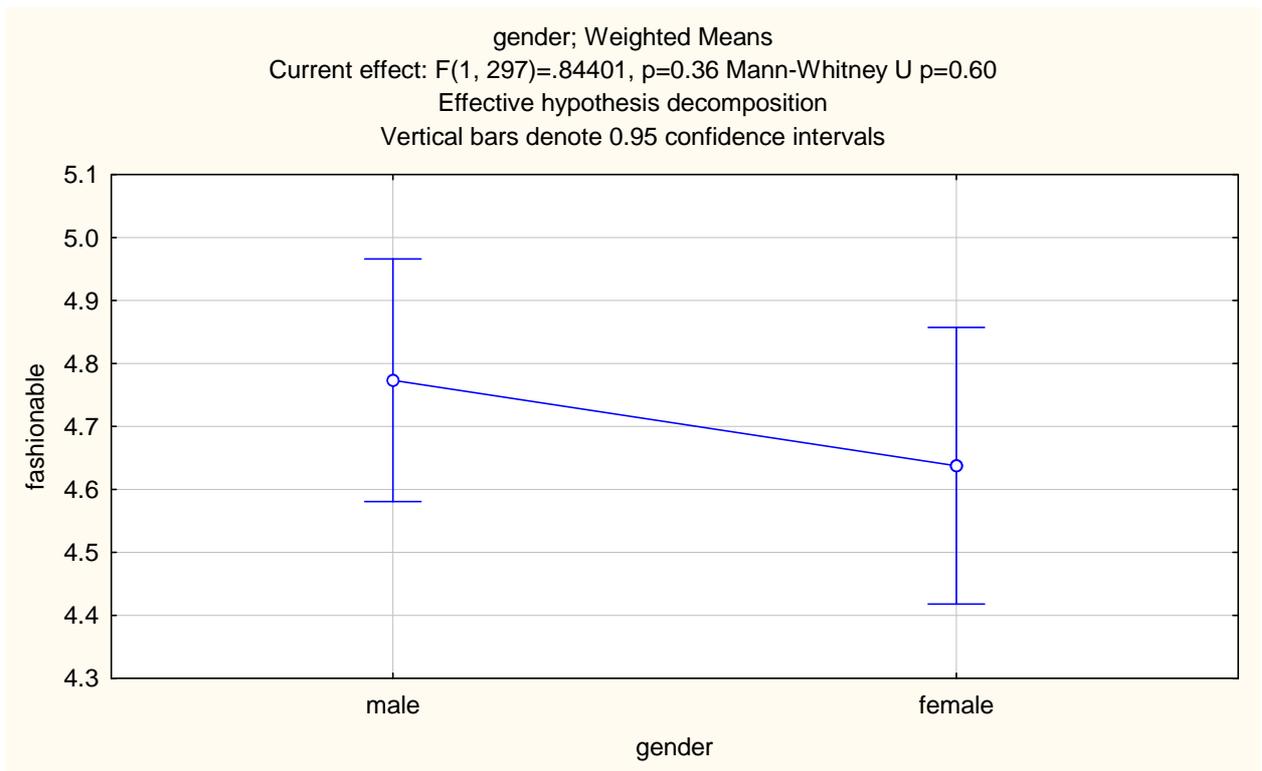
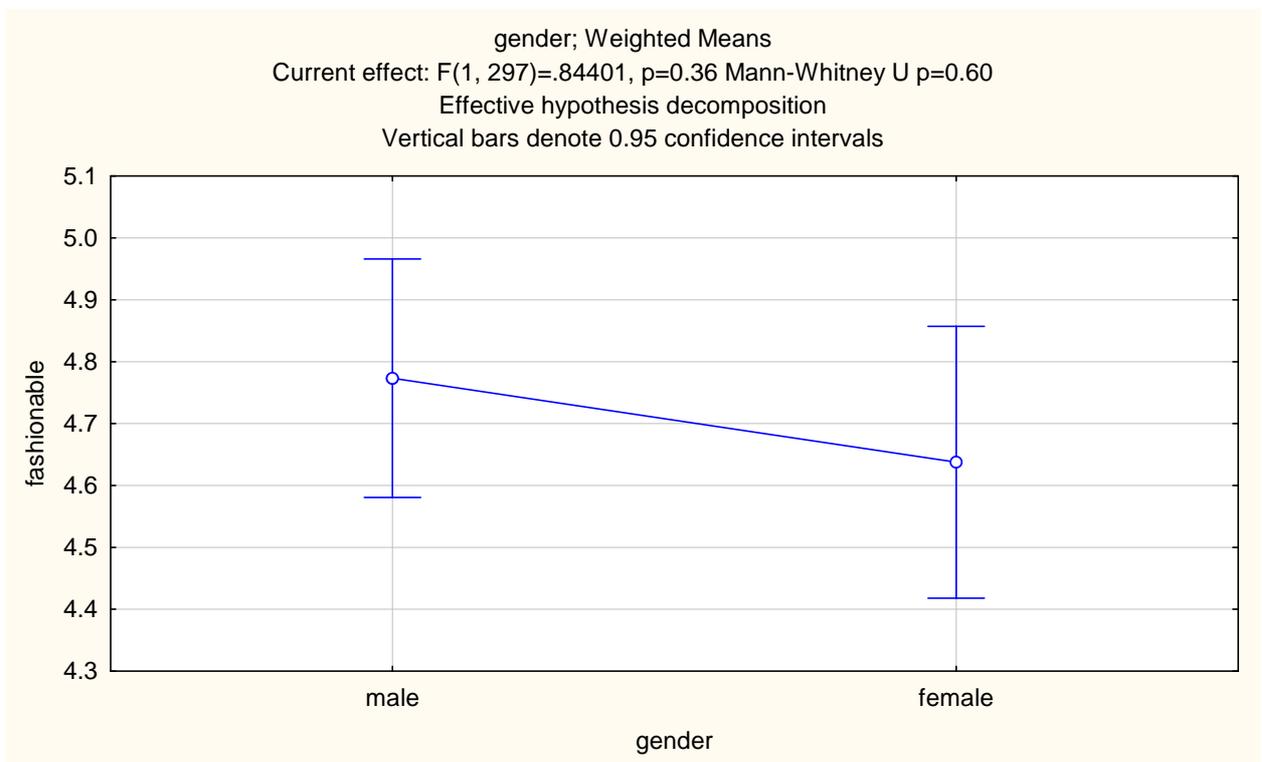


FIGURE C4



A COMPARISON BETWEEN WHITE AND COLOURED RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OAKLEY

FIGURE C5

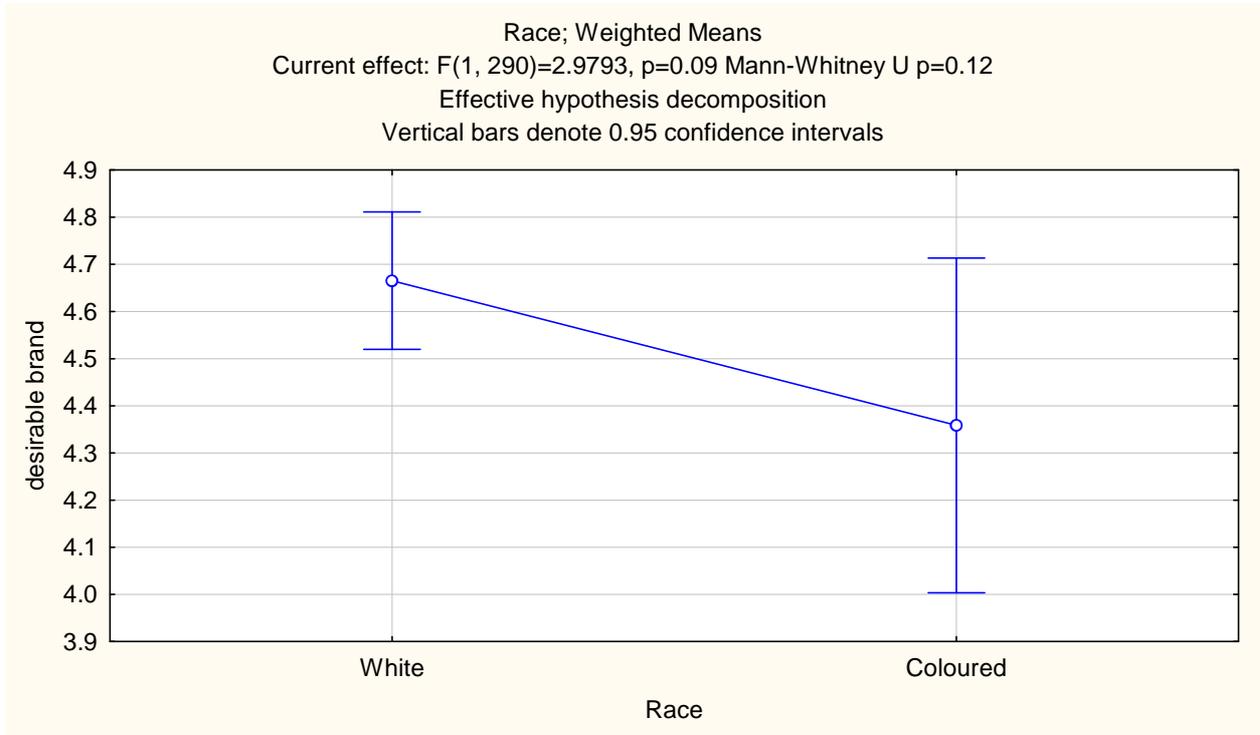


FIGURE C6

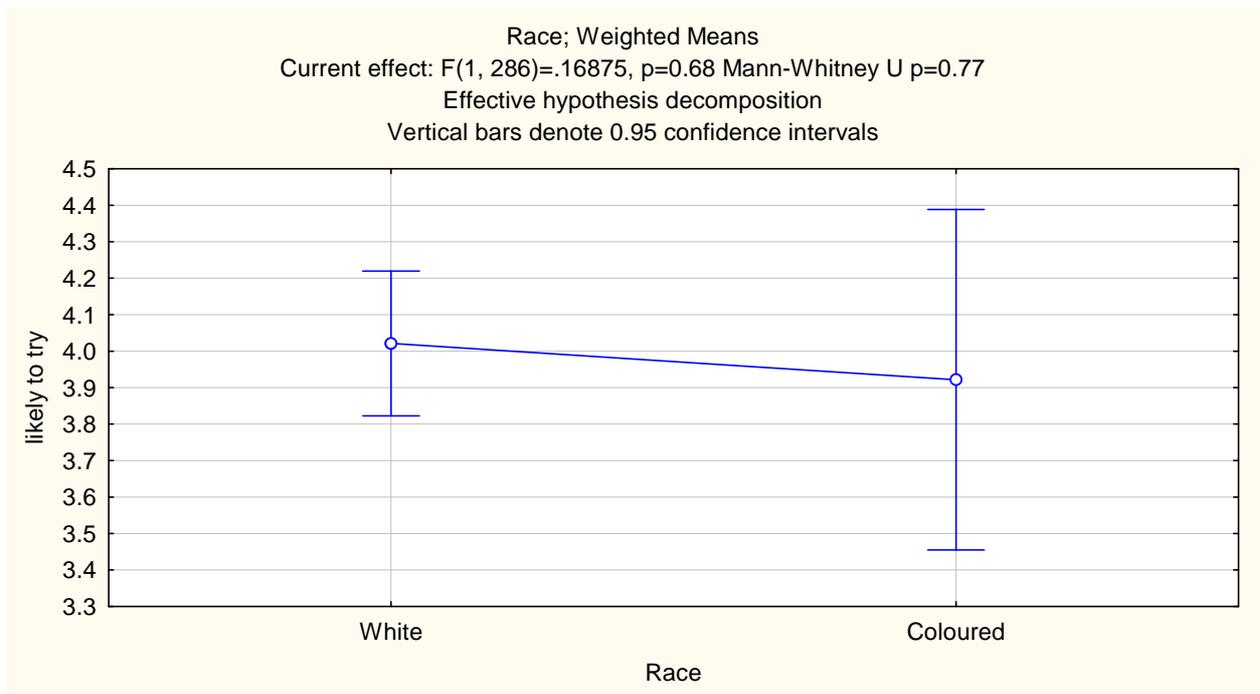


FIGURE C7

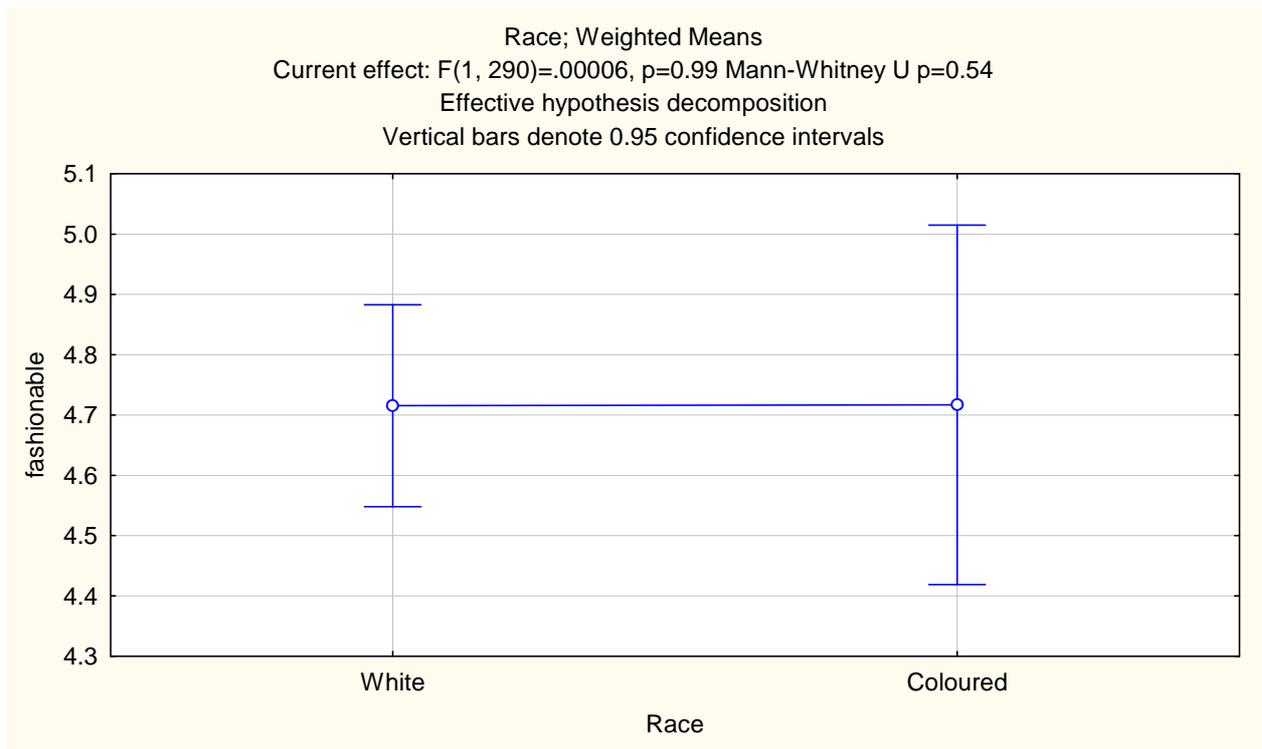


FIGURE C8

