

AN EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF SPORTSWEAR BY YOUTH

VIKAS KUMAR¹ & BINAYA BHUSHAN JENA²

¹Assistant Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Patna, India

²Associate Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bhubaneshwar, India

ABSTRACT

Today's youth is in many sense different than that of yesterday. The activities they involve themselves in, the hobbies they have and the behaviors they depict in consumer decision making have all been different. For marketers youth have become an interesting market segment as they are risk taking, they venture out and look for opportunities and try out new products. In general, youths are mostly active people. As apparel is a part of fashion industry, the consumption behavior of apparel speaks volumes about the behavior of youth. In apparel sector, sportswear is especially made for the active people. So sportswear and youth go hand in hand as sportswear happens to be designed and manufactured for active people, at least in essence. Hence a study of youth's behavior regarding the consumption pattern of sportswear would form an interesting study. This study was aimed at developing an understanding and insight in to the use pattern of various sportswear products, the attitude of the youth regarding the brands and trying to understand why they use the sportswear. In order to tap the potential market that youth represents, increasingly, the sportswear brands are becoming fashion conscious. Hence the study probed in to fashion aspect of the sportswear brands.

KEYWORDS: Sportswear, Youth, Consumption Pattern

INTRODUCTION

Objective

To analyze the use of sportswear by youth

Youth

UNESCO describes youth as a fluid category with no fixed age group. United Nations define youth as " a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job". The UN Secretariat uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably to mean age 15-24 with the understanding that member states and other entities use different definitions (World Programme, 1995). There have been many researches aimed at this category because they are young, energetic, enthusiastic, risk taking, adventurous and outgoing. At the same time they also have larger disposable income with limited or very less liability. National Youth Policy, 2014 published by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports reports that at present 27.5% of Indian population is in the age category 15-29 and contributes to 34% of India's Gross National Income. According to Sakshi Juneja, Business Development Manager of Black Panther, the company aims at the age group 14-40 who are active and involve themselves in various sports and hence the company broadens the age group (Black Panther, 2012).

Consumption Behavior

Every individual is groomed as a shopper by its surroundings and various other factors. Friends, Family and peer groups have a lot of influence while the purchases are made. Different circumstances in which shopping is done, further adds to the complex process of buying (Kotler, 2008). The buying behavior of final consumers, individuals and households, who buy goods and services for personal consumption is termed as consumer buying behavior. He further elaborates that the buying behavior is dependent upon cultural, social, personal and psychological factors which affect the buyer (Kotler, 2008). Derakhshide and Emadzadeh (2012), conclude that the buying for high involvement products is a risky situation for the buyer. When the products are bought for personal use, both, internal and external stimuli, impact the decision making. Different firms have different market offerings with which they wish to gain market share. Shopping experience has become important but it cannot outperform the quality of the product. The ultimate aim of the consumer is satisfaction and hence all companies have to aim to satisfy the consumers (Derakhshide & Emadzadeh, 2012). Customer satisfaction is the individual consumer's perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her own experience (Schiffman et. al, 2010). Bae & Miller (2008), investigated the consumer decision making styles for sports apparel among college consumers and found statistical difference between male and female shopping patterns on quality, recreation, confusion, impulse and brand consciousness. However they found both the genders indifferent on fashion and price consciousness. They are always looking for fashion trends and styles. Gender specific study becomes highly imperative as gender has been traditionally used as a segmentation variable (Darley & Smith, 1995). Different studies have been conducted to understand the difference in the shopping patterns and uses by both the gender. Darley and Smith (1995) further explore and find out that men are little behind in the frequency of shopping and the time they devote in the activity of shopping.

Sportswear

In the current context sports apparel are also used as casual wear or for non-sporting purpose. Hence it is interesting to find out that how consumers are using the sportswear products in their day to day life. Further it has been found in various studies that consumers are also brand conscious and buy brands which offer them more assurance in terms of quality and value (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Further availability of various brands in the market creates confusion for the customers. Every brand aims at increasing the top of the mind recall for the customers. Many researchers have studied that the consumers do relate the products to the brand names. However many brands try to position themselves very close to the competing brands which results in confusion in the minds of the consumers. Fletcher (1987) concluded that sportswear along with other sectors like automobile and grocery has this issue of confusion in the minds of customers as there are many brands which imitate the leading brands and hence position themselves very close to the leading brand. Hence Bae (2004) argue that the consumers must relate the brands and their products to the uses that they subject these products to. This helps the consumers in identifying the brands and helps them out of the confusing and conflicting ideas that might clutter their minds.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study was carried on to understand the shopping pattern of consumers of sportswear. Generally the consumers of sportswear are young and active, aged 14-40. The brands operating in this field are very well aware of their target segment and market their products keeping them in mind. Their market offerings are aimed at the same segment (

Black Panther, 2012). Hence the research aimed at this segment and tried to find out their shopping behavior. The sampling process used for the selection of respondents was a non-probability sampling, called convenience sampling. According to Bernanrd (1988) it is the most helpful sampling method for exploratory researches. A questionnaire was designed and used as data collection tool, especially for this purpose. The questionnaire aimed at collecting data regarding the usages of different leading brands based on their market share. Further data was collected to understand how the products purchased are put to use by these consumers. Use of Likert scale to obtain further insight in to the behavior was done. Apart from that demographic information like gender and age was collected to complement the findings and further refine them. The data collected was subjected to statistical treatment to obtain meaningful results. The frequency based statistical tools along with Anova and Hierarchical Cluster Analysis gave further insight in to the data collected. With the help of SPSS a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method applying squared Euclidian Distance as the distance or similarity measure was carried out. This gave was done to arrive at the optimum number of clusters that could be worked on with.

Analysis

A sample of 59% female and 42% male respondents was taken and analyzed Figure 1.1. An analysis of age-wise and gender wise responses to the question of whether the respondents indulged themselves in sports or not, among the respondents across all the category there were mixed responses in terms of participation in sports. A majority of the respondents who indicated that they didn't play sports were female, whereas among the male respondents most of them indulged themselves in one or more sports. Interestingly in the age group of 20-27 among the male respondents every one participated and indulged themselves in one or more sports Figure 1.2. Further probe in to the demography of the respondents yields that out of all respondents, 41% of the female respondents and 16 % of the male respondents did not participate in sports Figure 1.3. 25% of the total respondents play Badminton as sport, followed by cricket (18%), and Volleyball, Throw ball and Kho Kho (13% each) Figure 1.4. Only 39% of the total respondents use active sportswear. Out of all the respondents who use active sportswear 48% are female and 52 % are male. To further analyse age wise responses age groups of less than 18, 18-22, 23-27, 28-32 and above 32 were taken. An age wise and gender wise breakup of the data for use of sportswear presented a pattern where in the age group of 18-22, numbers of respondents using sportswear were almost equal in both the genders however there were no female respondents in the age group 28-32 who used sportswear. Interestingly there are only 14% male respondents out of total male respondents, who don't use sportswear Figure 1.5. In an attempt to understand the brand preference of the respondents a multiple choice question was asked. It was observed that 73% of the respondents use NIKE, 55% use Adidas, 50% use Puma and 49% use Reebok. The responses to the question asking for agreement or disagreement on the question "I use sportswear as fashion products" resulted in a normal curve as the responses appeared to be symmetrically distributed around the mean resembling normal pattern Figure 1.6. The researcher divided the respondents in various age groups. The various groups formed were 18-22, 23-27, 28-32. Anova analysis of the age groups for consideration of sportswear as fashion products, variations are significant across different age group for their use of sportswear as fashion product Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Anova Analysis of Responses to the Question Pertaining to the Use of Sportswear as Fashion Wear

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.412	2	1.206	1.276	.286
Within Groups	62.399	66	.945		
Total	64.812	68			

A gender wise breakup of respondents using sportswear for different purposes surprisingly gives us two category of users. The first category of respondents use it for comfort and as a leisurewear whereas the other category uses it for college, Gym or workouts. However no respondents indicate the use of sportswear as fashion wear Figure 1.7, which verifies the earlier finding presented in Table 1.1.

In yet another representation of data it was observed that most of the respondents are largely indifferent to the use of sportswear as fashion wear as they have selected the neither agree nor disagree. It reconfirms the earlier findings Figure 1.8 To further Probe in to the data a Hierarchical cluster analysis of the data was done. As a result, there emerged two distinct clusters with following characteristics:

Cluster 1 -- It included the respondents who use active sportswear brand more for playing and outdoor and least as a fashion product. This cluster is dominated by female respondents falling in the age group of 23 to 25. The users who preferred the sportswear more for playing outdoors, Gym, morning walk and evening walk etc. This cluster of respondents preferred T- Shirts and track pants as the most used sportswear product.

Cluster 2 - This cluster consists of respondents using active sportswear for comfort reasons. T-shirts and shoes are their preferred category. These respondents use sportswear more for casual evening outings.

However, It was remarkable here that no statistical proof was obtained to assume that any other cluster existed in any sizeable measure which used the sportswear products as a fashion wear.

Findings and Implication

The research probed in to the uses of sportswear by young respondents. It enquired about their use pattern of the sportswear and what role it played for them. The research pointed out that most of the respondents, irrespective of the fact that they played sports or not, used sportswear for various purposes like casual wear, evening outings, Gym or attending college or for sheer comfort that he sportswear brands provided. There were two distinct group of users identified. First group used sportswear for workouts etc, preferred t-shirts and Track pants. The second group which used sportswear for comfort, preferred t-shirts and shoes as their preferred product in the sportswear category. Interestingly, Fashion still stays away from the sportswear as it was the least preferred reason for choosing sportswear. Meaning, sportswear are yet not viewed as fashion product by the users. Hence there is scope for sportswear brands to utilize the unused impact of fashion in the sportswear category. NIKE followed by Adidas emerged as the winner, as maximum number of respondents indicated that they have been using the above said brands. However, There are other brands like Puma and Reebok also doing relatively good. So all the brands have to capitalize on the opportunities that emerge in this segment. Badminton and Cricket emerged to be the most played games. In female respondents, it was observed that playing sports was not as popular as with the male respondents, especially as we move towards the higher age groups. All most equal number of respondents in both the categories, i.e. male and female use active sportswear. However not all who indulge in sports, use active sportswear.

CONCLUSIONS

Sportswear brands and sports definitely connect with the youth. But still there is unused potential where this category may grow. The sportswear brands may plan to target more fashionable youth, the segment that still eludes the sports brands. The brands and their marketers need to understand this fact and act accordingly. Marketing plans could be

developed to track and communicate to the fashion conscious customers as well. Accordingly product offerings and promotional plans could be developed. Further research could be undertaken to understand how the fashion quotient could be added, if required, to the sportswear to make it more viable. Further there is another segment not completely explored. It consist of potential customers who play sports but still do not use active sportswear much. Their motivation and limiting factors could further be probed.

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ANNEXURE 1

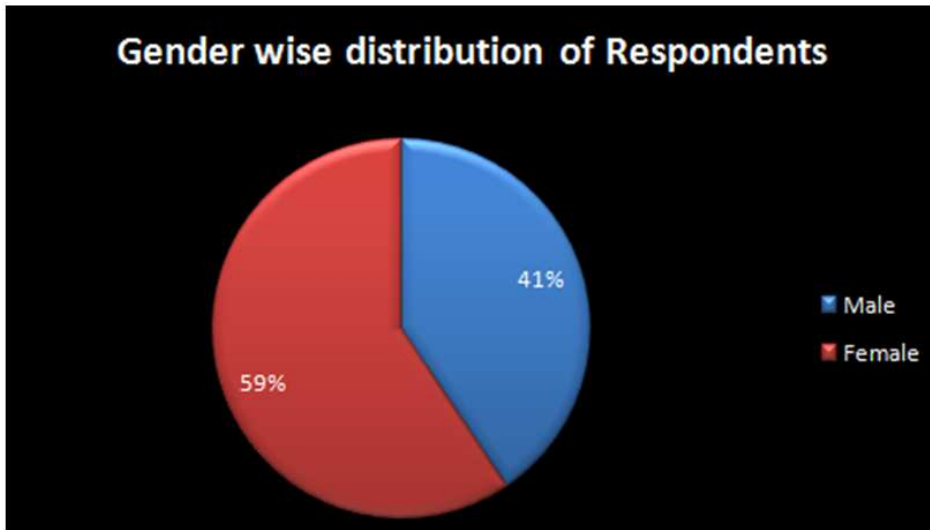


Figure 1.1: Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents

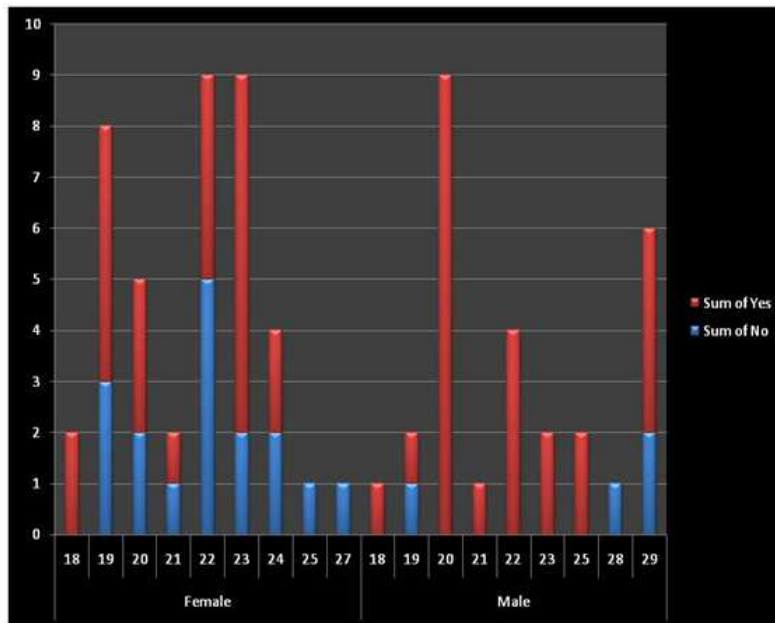


Figure 1.2: Gender Wise and Age Wise Distribution of Respondents Playing Sports

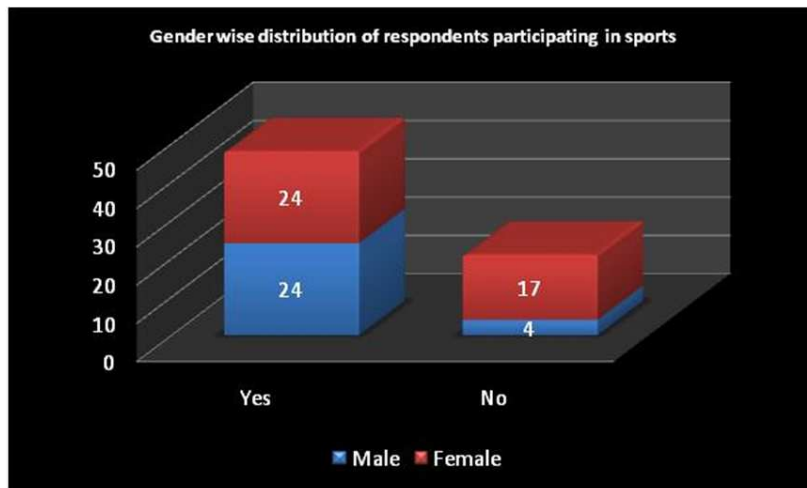


Figure 1.3: Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents Participating in Sports

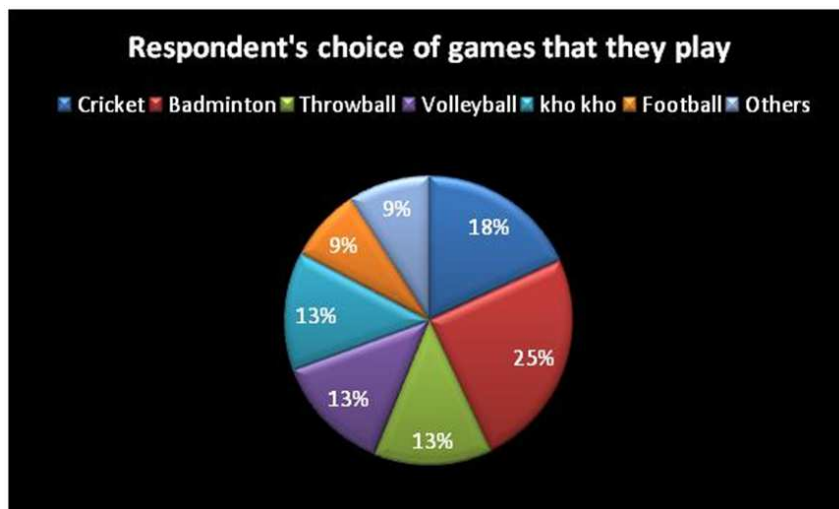


Figure 1.4: Respondent's Choice of Games that They Play

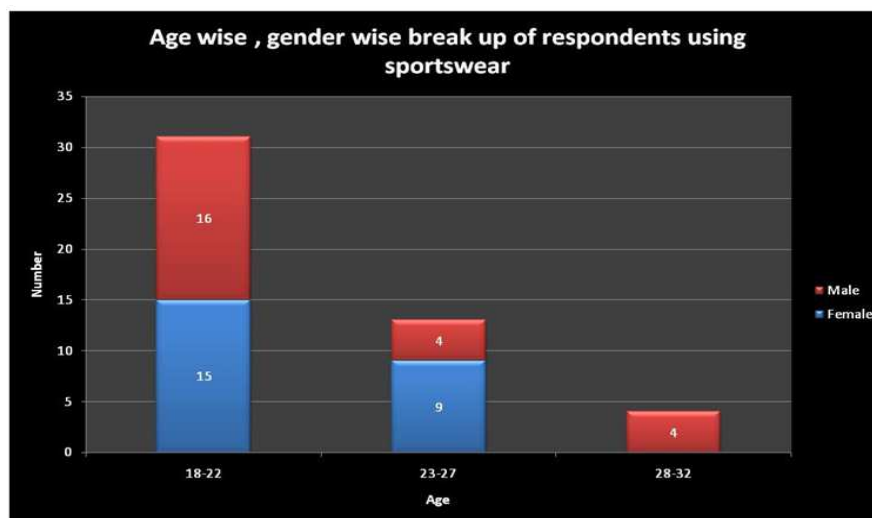


Figure 1.5: Age Wise, Gender Wise Break Up of Respondents Using Sportswear

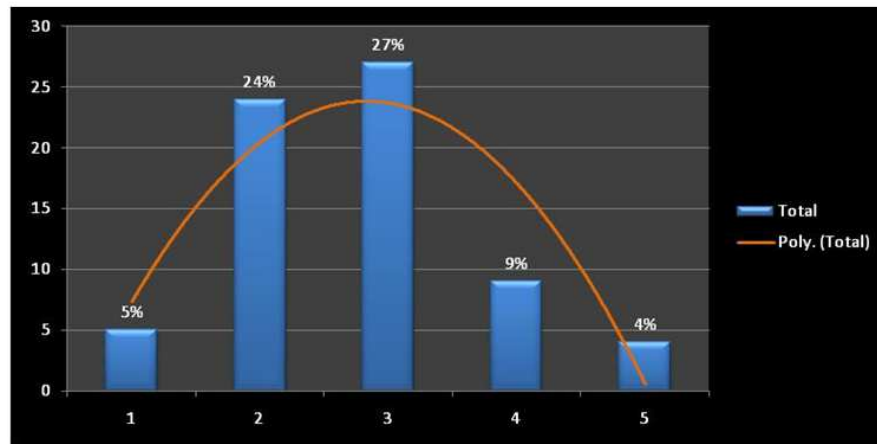


Figure 1.6: Distribution of Responses to the Question "I Use Sportswear as Fashion Product"

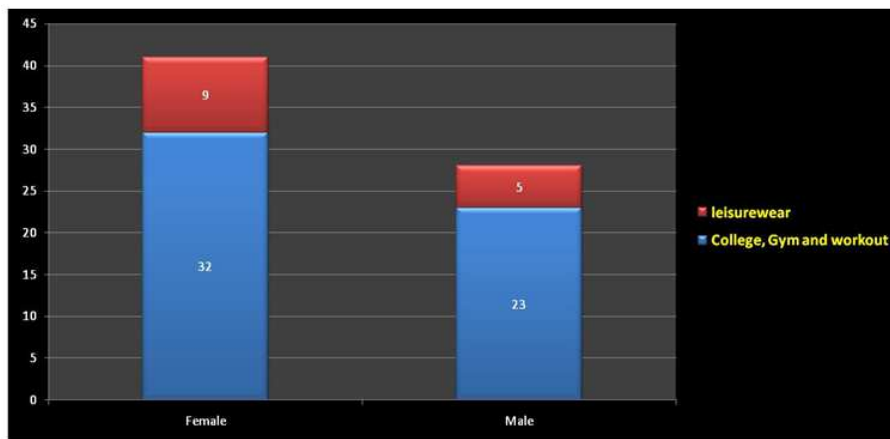


Figure 1.7: Gender Wise Break Up of Respondents using Sportswear for Different Purposes.

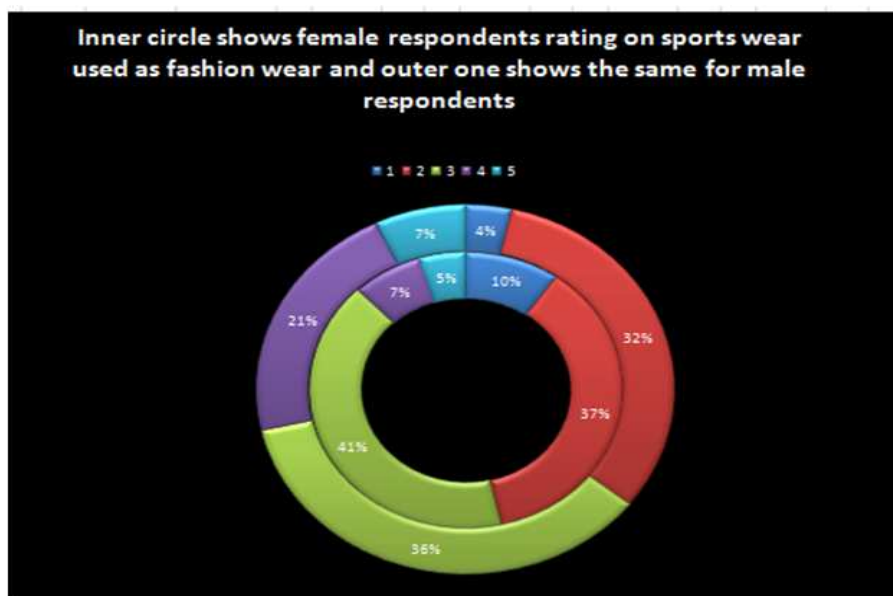


Figure 1.8: Representation of Responses to the Question "I Use Sportswear as Fashion Product"

ANNEXURE 2: ONEWAY ANNOVA AND CLUSTER ANALYSIS REPORT FROM SPSS

a. One-Way Anova

Table 1.2

Anova					
Sportswearforfashion					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.412	2	1.206	1.276	.286
Within Groups	62.399	66	.945		
Total	64.812	68			

Conclusion: variations are significant across different age group for their use of sportswear as fashion product.

b. Cluster Analysis

CLUSTER sportswearforfashion useforcomfort forplayoutdoors

/METHOD BAVERAGE

/MEASURE=SEUCLID

/PRINT SCHEDULE

/PLOT DENDROGRAM VICICLE.

Meaning: The researcher divided the respondents in various age groups. The various groups formed were 18-22, 23-27, 28-32.

Cluster

Table 1.3

Case Processing Summary ^{a,B}					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
69	100.0	0	.0	69	100.0
a. Squared Euclidean Distance Used					
b. Average Linkage (Between Groups)					

Average Linkage (Between Groups)

Table 1.4

Agglomeration Schedule						
Stage	Cluster Combined		Coefficients	Stage Cluster First Appears		Next Stage
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2		Cluster 1	Cluster 2	
1	18	68	.000	0	0	45
2	28	67	.000	0	0	39
3	34	66	.000	0	0	16
4	63	64	.000	0	0	5
5	9	63	.000	0	4	32
6	17	60	.000	0	0	43

7	49	58	.000	0	0	32
8	50	54	.000	0	0	31
9	19	52	.000	0	0	34
10	38	51	.000	0	0	36
11	46	47	.000	0	0	31
12	15	42	.000	0	0	44
13	40	41	.000	0	0	14
14	39	40	.000	0	13	35
15	22	37	.000	0	0	20
16	12	34	.000	0	3	17
17	12	33	.000	16	0	24
18	1	27	.000	0	0	35
19	14	25	.000	0	0	21
20	4	22	.000	0	15	40
21	6	14	.000	0	19	42
22	10	11	.000	0	0	23
23	3	10	.000	0	22	41
24	12	69	1.000	17	0	41
25	36	65	1.000	0	0	49
26	24	62	1.000	0	0	56
27	44	61	1.000	0	0	54
28	45	57	1.000	0	0	48
29	53	56	1.000	0	0	46
30	16	55	1.000	0	0	52
31	46	50	1.000	11	8	47
32	9	49	1.000	5	7	54
33	21	48	1.000	0	0	59
34	19	43	1.000	9	0	57
35	1	39	1.000	18	14	45
36	2	38	1.000	0	10	43
37	13	35	1.000	0	0	53
38	30	32	1.000	0	0	50
39	7	28	1.000	0	2	44
40	4	20	1.000	20	0	42
41	3	12	1.200	23	24	53
42	4	6	1.250	40	21	60
43	2	17	1.333	36	6	55
44	7	15	1.333	39	12	55
45	1	18	1.400	35	1	61
46	23	53	1.500	0	29	58
47	26	46	1.500	0	31	57
48	8	45	1.500	0	28	51
49	31	36	1.500	0	25	52
50	5	30	1.500	0	38	63
51	8	29	1.667	48	0	56
52	16	31	1.833	30	49	60
53	3	13	2.000	41	37	59
54	9	44	2.100	32	27	62
55	2	7	2.320	43	44	58
56	8	24	3.000	51	26	64
57	19	26	3.067	34	47	68
58	2	23	3.267	55	46	62
59	3	21	3.300	53	33	61
60	4	16	3.629	42	52	65
61	1	3	3.929	45	59	63

62	2	9	4.000	58	54	64
63	1	5	4.088	61	50	65
64	2	8	6.200	62	56	66
65	1	4	8.697	63	60	66
66	1	2	9.921	65	64	67
67	1	59	12.600	66	0	68
68	1	19	14.721	67	57	0

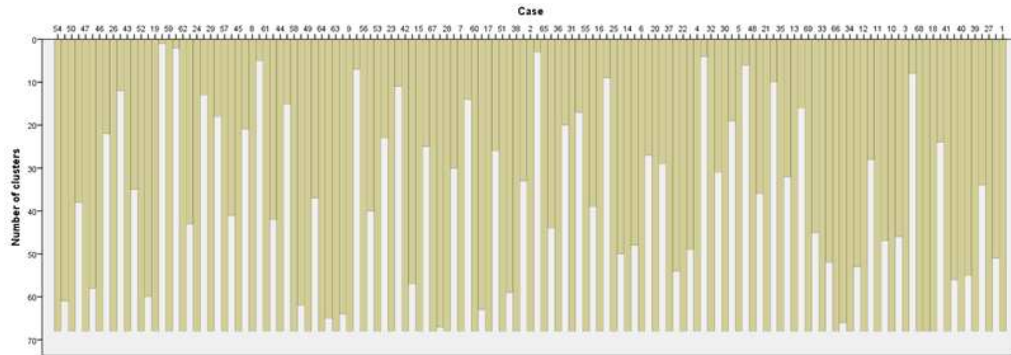


Figure 1.9

Conclusion: Based on Hierarchical cluster analysis, there emerges two distinct clusters with following characteristics

Cluster 1: Consist of respondents who use active sportswear brand more for playing and outdoor and least as a fashion product. This cluster is dominated by female respondents falling in the age group of 23 to 25. T- Shirts and track pants are their preferred category.

Cluster 2: This cluster consists of respondents using active sportswear for comfort reasons. T-shirts and shoes are their preferred category. It is remarkable here that we have no statistical proof to assume that a third cluster exists in sizeable measure that uses the product as a fashion wear.

