

1. Introduction

This study explores the influence of sport celebrities on the specific consumer-related behaviour and purchase intentions of the Australian Generation Y segment. There is limited research which explores the influence of sport celebrities on the Australian Generation Y segment. The results of this study aim to contribute to the gap in the existing body of knowledge and may also have implications for sport sponsorship and elite athlete endorsements that target the Generation Y segment as a form of brand advertising and communication.

Sports marketing is a large and important industry in Australia (Cincotta, 2008). Some of Australia's most recognised brands including Uncle Toby's and Ford Australia have utilised celebrity athletes to endorse their products (see: phlceci, 2008; tobysuncle, 2008; aussiecricket, 2008). Stevens, Lathrop and Bradish (2003) suggest that athlete endorsement strategies are an important and extremely influential marketing strategy. Athlete endorsement strategies are also considered to be profitable and valuable strategies within advertising and promotion (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Stevens et al. 2003). Despite Charbonneau and Garland (2005a) and Stevens et al. (2003) identifying athlete endorsement strategies as profitable and valuable strategies within advertising and promotion, Phillips (1998) suggests that it is questionable as to whether or not celebrity endorsers really have a financial benefit for advertisers. Charbonneau and Garland (2005a) and Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) support Phillips (1998) view and suggest that there is uncertainty regarding whether consumers are more inclined to purchase products that are endorsed by celebrities.

Generation Y is considered to be an important consumer segment of the sport marketplace (Stevens et al. 2003). According to Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) and Bush, Martin and Bush (2004) Generation Y is one of the most appealing and sought after segments. Despite their appeal, Zolkos (2003) implies that Generation Y present marketers with considerable challenges. Marketers must be aware of the significant differences between Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers

when targeting the Generation Y segment (Zolkos, 2003; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Research has shown that members of Generation Y consider athletes as vicarious role models (Martin & Bush, 2000; Clark, Martin & Bush, 2001; Bush et al. 2004). Martin and Bush (2000), Clark et al. (2001) and Bush et al (2004) explored the influence of vicarious role models on Generation Y in the United States of America (USA). There is limited research in Australia which explores the specific purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour that vicarious role models influence. This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the influence of vicarious role models on Generation Y behavioural intentions. Therefore the objectives of this study are: 1) To explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y; and 2) To investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour.

The remaining sections of this thesis are presented in the following order: literature review, research objectives, methodology, results, discussion and conclusions.

The literature review was conducted in order to identify a gap in the existing body of knowledge. The literature review is divided into three sub-sections (Generation Y, Consumer Socialisation and Athletes as Vicarious Role Models) and provides a comprehensive discussion concerning the major themes for this research project.

Following on from the literature review, the research objectives are presented. The research objectives were formulated once the gap in the existing body of knowledge was identified. The research objectives section of this thesis also presents the research questions and lists the hypotheses for this research project. Also included in this section is the conceptual framework.

The methodology section of this thesis is presented after the research objectives. The methodology section is divided into three sub-sections. A discussion of the research design, data collection and sample is provided in the first sub-section. The second sub-section identifies and explains the scales that were utilised in this

study whilst the final sub-section discusses the statistical techniques that were used to analyse the data.

Following on from the methodology section is the results section. This section provides the results of the data analysis. An overview of the descriptive statistics is provided in which the respondents' gender, course studied, primary citizenship and age are reviewed. This section also presents the results of the correlation analyses, ordinary least squares regressions and hierarchical regressions.

Upon conclusion of the results section, the discussion section is presented. The discussion section specifically addresses the findings of the research project in relation to exploring the research objectives. This section also outlines the significance of the research project as well as identifying the limitations and potential areas for further research.

The final section of this thesis follows the discussion section. The conclusions section presents the most important and significant findings as well as outlining recommendations.

2. Literature Review

The literature review consists of three fundamental areas: Generation Y; Consumer Socialisation; and Athletes as Vicarious Role Models. The first sub-section provides a comprehensive review of the current literature associated with Generation Y in order to determine the importance of Generation Y as a consumer segment to the marketing discipline. In the second sub-section, literature on consumer socialisation is presented to explore the theoretical foundation behind the use of sport celebrity endorsement strategies by organisations. Finally the concept of athletes as vicarious role models explores the effectiveness of athlete endorsement strategies and the use of these strategies in the current Australian business environment.

2.1 Generation Y

Bush et al. (2004) suggest that Generation Y are considered to be one of the most important and sought after target markets for advertisers. Generation Y are characterised as a generation with great potential as well as representing considerable challenges for marketers and organisations (Bush et al. 2004; Zolkos, 2003). There are contrasting views in the literature as to the age ranges that define Generation Y (see Table 1). The most commonly used birth range to define Generation Y is those individuals born between 1977 and 1994 (see: Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Bush et al. 2004; Kim, Knight & Crutsinger, 2009; Cui, Trent, Sullivan & Matiru, 2003; Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007). For the purpose of this thesis, Generation Y will be classified as individuals born between 1977 and 1994. Based on this classification, as at the year 2009, Generation Y are between the ages of fifteen and thirty-two. Therefore Generation Y comprise of teenagers, young adults and adults.

Table 1: Generation Y Classification

Author/s	Journal	Generation Y Classification (Born Between)
Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001	Journal of Advertising Research	1977 – 1994
Bush, Martin and Bush, 2004	Journal of Advertising Research	
Kim, Knight and Crutsinger, 2009	Journal of Business Research	
Cui, Trent, Sullivan and Matiru, 2003	International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	
Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden, 2007	Career Development International	
Heaney, 2007	Journal of Financial Services Marketing	1977 - 1995
Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles III and Chia, 2009	International Journal of Bank Marketing	
Freestone and Mitchell, 2004	Journal of Business Ethics	1977 - 1993
Kumar and Lim, 2008	Journal of Services Marketing	1980 - 1994
Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003	International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	Those born after 1977

It has been identified within the literature that Generation Y is one of the most sought after segments (see: Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Bush et al. 2004). They are appealing as a consumer segment because of their:

- 1) Significant size in comparison with previous generations (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Greene, 2003; Cheng, 1999);
- 2) Ability to act as trendsetters to society (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Martin & Bush, 2000);
- 3) Potential to become lifetime customers (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Braunstein & Zhang 2005);
- 4) General involvement and influence on parental and family purchase decisions (see: Manning-Schaffel, 2002; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999; Zollo, cited in Martin & Bush, 2000); and
- 5) Substantial spending power (see: Stevens et al. 2003; Greene, 2003; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Cheng, 1999).

The sheer size of Generation Y makes them extremely important to marketers (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Greene, 2003; Cheng, 1999). The Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that 17.22% of the Australian population are members of Generation Y (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Furthermore, the ability to act as trendsetters to society makes Generation Y important targets for marketers (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Martin & Bush, 2000). Members of Generation Y have the potential to become lifetime customers, making them a target of organisations and their products (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Braunstein and Zhang (2005) support Wolburg and Pokrywczynski's position (2001) and suggest that marketers have the opportunity to establish consumer loyalty throughout the lives of Generation Y. Lifetime customers are tremendously beneficial to organisations as some of the most successful brands at the present became so by forging ongoing relationships with Baby Boomers early in their lives and following them from their youth and into their later years (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Another factor contributing to the importance of Generation Y to marketers is that individuals in Generation Y are generally deeply involved in and influence parental and family purchase decisions (see: Manning-Schaffel, 2002; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999; Zollo, cited in Martin & Bush, 2000).

Generation Y are an appealing consumer segment because they possess significant spending power (see: Stevens et al. 2003; Greene, 2003; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Cheng, 1999). Members of Generation Y generally have a large amount of discretionary income (Cheng, 1999; Marlatt, 1999) which may explain their significant spending power. Fund-raising consultant, Judith Nichols states in Greene (2003) that families tend to spend money on basic needs which allows those in Generation Y to spend money for discretionary purposes. Generation Y is characterised as having a large amount of disposable income because they tend to be employed whilst living at home and attending school (Marlatt, 1999). Some members of Generation Y defer moving out of their parents' homes and therefore do not have housing expenses and as a result of this, they

generally have more money for discretionary purposes (Koss-Feder, cited in Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Despite their appeal, the literature has identified that Generation Y presents four considerable challenges for marketers. The first is that there is a perceived difficulty in communicating with individuals of Generation Y (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) insist that when communicating with the Generation Y segment advertisers must be cautious as their attitudes regarding the value of advertising differs from the general population. The second challenge presented by Generation Y is that through constant exposure to marketing strategies directly targeted at this generation, Generation Y have developed negative attitudes towards companies attempting to persuade them into purchasing products (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). The third challenge is that Generation Y search for entertainment and information from a greater variety of media sources than previous generations (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Rob Frankel, author of *'The Revenge of Brand X: How to Build a Big Time Brand - On the Web Or Anywhere Else'* (2000) suggests in Manning-Schaffel (2002) that Generation Y are more "tuned in" to media than previous generations because there is a greater variety of media options to "tune in" to. As there is a proliferation of media options for Generation Y to access, there are greater opportunities for marketers to communicate with them (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). The fourth and final challenge identified in the literature is that Generation Y have generally been exposed to years of intense marketing efforts targeted straight at them, and they have therefore developed a resistance to corporate efforts and advertising messages and are now considered to be anti-corporate (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Bagnall, 1999; Zolkos, 2003). Generally some members of Generation Y have developed mistrust towards media, marketers and corporations (Paul, 2001; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999), which enhances the difficulty in communicating effectively with this group from a marketer's perspective (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Despite Paul (2001), Neuborne and Kerwin (1999) and Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) identifying Generation Y as a difficult segment to communicate with and advertise to, Cheng (1999) believes Generation Y are incredibly receptive to marketing messages despite the perception that they possess cynical attitudes towards advertisers and marketing. Advertisers targeting Generation Y believe that members of this generation are in fact paying attention and that advertisements are breaking through advertising clutter (Cheng, 1999).

In addition to the challenges that Generation Y presents to marketers, the literature highlights two unique characteristics of Generation Y that marketers need to be aware of. The first is that individuals belonging to Generation Y are generally savvier than previous generations about being marketed to (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). This could be because Generation Y have generally been raised in a media saturated society (see: Zolkos, 2003; Bagnall, 1999; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). As a result they now possess a media savvy unlike previous generations (Cheng, 1999) and are considered to be very market literate with a thorough understanding of how organisations operate (Bagnall, 1999; Zolkos, 2003). The second is that Generation Y has embraced shameless consumerism unlike any previous generations (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). Rob Frankel, author of *'The Revenge of Brand X: How to Build a Big Time Brand - On the Web Or Anywhere Else'* (2000), suggests in Manning-Schaffel (2002) that members of Generation Y tend to be easy targets for organisations and marketing-practitioners because they have generally been raised in a culture where pure consumerism is the norm unlike past generations. Thus, Generation Y are more inclined to actively purchase products than previous generations as they accept this type of behaviour as part of existence (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). Bagnall (1999), who's views are also consistent with Rob Frankel (Manning-Schaffel, 2002), suggests that Generation Y have generally grown up into a fully-fledged consumer society and did not have to learn how to be consumers unlike previous generations.

Wolburg and Pokrywczyński (2001) and Neuborne and Kerwin (1999) suggest that the current buyer behaviour of Generation Y is important to marketers and organisations in determining future marketing strategies. Wolburg and Pokrywczyński (2001) suggest that marketers are aware that the buying behaviour that Generation Y establish at the present, will more than likely have a considerable influence on the retail environment in the future. Neuborne and Kerwin (1999) support Wolburg and Pokrywczyński's position (2001) by emphasising that the unique buying behaviour that Generation Y demonstrate now will likely continue into the future when members of Generation Y enter the higher-spending years of their lives. A host of successful brands including Nike Inc., Levi Strauss & Co. and PepsiCo which prospered by anticipating and shaping popular trends since the Baby Boomers were young are now experiencing difficulties in attempting to market their brand and products successfully to Generation Y despite their past success with a youth segment (see: Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999; Bagnall, 1999). Nike is a prime example; in the late 1990's Nike experienced a declining market share within Generation Y. This was caused by a failure to adapt to the differences Generation Y presented in contrast to Generation X and the Baby Boomers. Nike established that in order to be successful with Generation Y they had to develop different advertising strategies and new products than those with which they had such success in targeting the Baby Boomers (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999).

As discussed above, Generation Y are extremely important to marketers for five fundamental reasons:

- 1) Their sheer size means they can have a significant impact as consumers (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Greene, 2003; Cheng, 1999);
- 2) They are trendsetters to society (Wolburg & Pokrywczyński, 2001; Martin & Bush, 2000);
- 3) They have the potential to become lifetime customers (Wolburg & Pokrywczyński, 2001; Braunstein & Zhang 2005);

- 4) They are deeply involved in and influence parental and family purchase decisions (see: Manning-Schaffel, 2002; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999; Zollo, cited in Martin & Bush, 2000); and
- 5) They possess significant spending power (see: Stevens et al. 2003; Greene, 2003; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Cheng, 1999).

However Generation Y also present considerable challenges for marketers who target them (Zolkos, 2003). Despite the appeal of Generation Y, organisations must acknowledge that Generation Y are different to Baby Boomers and Generation X in order to market successfully to members of Generation Y (Zolkos, 2003; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Therefore Generation Y represents a viable segment to study. Contributing to the current body of knowledge associated with Generation Y will assist marketers and organisations in marketing more successfully to the Australian Generation Y segment.

2.2 Consumer Socialisation

Consumer socialisation is defined as the process by which an individual develops consumer-related skills, knowledge and attitudes (see: Ward, 1974; Xie & Singh, 2007; Lueg, Ponder, Beatty & Capella 2006; Lachance, Beaudoin & Robitaille, 2003; Ozmete, 2009). Additionally consumer socialisation can be used to explain how individuals become consumers (Ozmete, 2009) and more specifically how individuals learn thought processes and consumer-related behaviour through the concept of modeling (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Historically Ward (1974) suggests that consumer socialisation is the process by which consumer-related thought processes and behaviour are developed through interaction between the consumer and agents, which are also referred to as socialisation agents. Ward's (1974) definition is still commonly referred to as it is still considered to be accurate and applicable (see: Lachance et al. 2003; Lueg et al. 2006). Moschis and Churchill (1978) proposed that socialisation agents transmit norms, attitudes, motivations and behaviour's to a learner. This explanation is still relevant as it is used in more recent studies (see: Bush et al. 2004; Lueg et al. 2006). Lueg et al. (2006) have suggested that a socialisation agent can be any person or

organisation directly involved in the socialisation process due to frequency of contact with the individual. Parents, peers, the mass media and television viewing have all been identified as the most common and the most influential socialisation agents (see: Lachance et al. 2003; Ozmete, 2009; Xie & Singh, 2007).

Bush et al. (2004) emphasise the importance of role models within consumer socialisation as consumer socialisation determines how consumers learn thought processes and consumer-related behaviour through the concept of modeling (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Consumer-related role models are considered to be any individual who comes in contact with and can influence a consumer's decisions and actions (Bandura, cited in Martin & Bush, 2000; Clark et al. 2001). Therefore a role model can include parents, teachers and peers. Recent research has explored the influence of such role models on an individual's consumer-related behaviour and attitudes (see: Roper & La Niece, 2009; Xie & Singh, 2007; Ozmete, 2009). However there is limited research exploring the influence of the vicarious role model and particularly celebrity athletes on the Generation Y segment (Bush et al. 2004). A vicarious role model is any individual that appears in electronic or print media that has the potential to influence consumer-related behaviour and attitudes despite having little or no direct contact with a consumer (Bandura, cited in Martin & Bush, 2000; Clark et al. 2001). Chan (2008) defines the vicarious role model as figures or celebrities who gain popularity among individuals through mass media channels. Thus vicarious role models include entertainers and athletes. Chan's (2008) definition of vicarious role models is consistent with Bandura, (cited in Bush et al. 2004), Martin and Bush (2000) and Clark et al. (2001) who identified Generation Y role models as any individual that a consumer comes into contact with, either directly or indirectly, that can influence a consumer's decisions or actions.

Martin and Bush (2000), Clark et al. (2001), and Bush et al. (2004) indicate that vicarious role models act as socialisation agents and do in fact influence consumer-related behavioural intentions of Generation Y. The consumer socialisation process highlights 'outcomes'. 'Outcomes' refers to the learning or

consumer acquisition of thoughts and behaviours which are also called consumer skills (Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Bush et al. 2004). Therefore the consumer socialisation process results in the consumers' development of behavioural intentions. This is significant to marketers and organisations because behavioural intentions or marketing-related outcomes are associated with both favourable and unfavourable behaviour that a consumer may show towards a brand or product. Adding to the current body of knowledge in relation to the specific behavioural outcomes that Generation Y may exhibit will assist marketers in marketing more successfully to the important Generation Y segment. There is limited research exploring the impact of the vicarious role model on Generation Y behavioural intentions in an Australian context.

2.3 Athletes – Vicarious Role Models

Sports marketing has emerged as a very large and important industry in Australia (Cincotta, 2008). Justin Ricketts, general manager of marketing services at sports marketing specialists Octagon, claims that sports marketing has experienced growth of nine percent annually over the past five years (Cincotta, 2008). The potential return on investment can be significant for brands that choose sport as a marketing platform (Cincotta, 2008). Some of Australia's most recognised brands choose to use athletes as vicarious role models to endorse their products (see: phlceci, 2008; tobysuncle, 2008; aussiecricket, 2008). Uncle Toby's has used Australian swimming stars to promote their products. Swimmers that have appeared in Uncle Toby's promotions include Grant Hackett (tobysuncle, 2008) and Kieren Perkins (phlceci, 2008). Ford Australia has used a variety of Australia's most famous cricketers in their promotions (see: aussiecricket, 2008), including Matthew Hayden, Andrew Symonds and Michael Clark.

Bush et al. (2004) identified athlete endorsement strategies as a large and very visible component of sports marketing. According to Stevens et al. (2003) athlete endorsement strategies have become an important marketing strategy within the business environment, and successful athlete endorsements are considered to be an extremely influential business strategy for organisations. For some time now

marketers have acknowledged the significance of athlete endorsement strategies. Sports figures have developed celebrity status through the commercialisation of athletes and sports by a global economy (Stevens et al. 2003). As a result athlete endorsements have emerged as a profitable and valuable strategy within advertising and promotion (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Stevens et al. 2003). Stevens et al. (2003) also suggest that there are significant financial benefits for organisations that utilise athlete endorsement strategies. The practice of employing athletes as endorsers by organisations and advertising agencies is widespread and does not appear to be decreasing (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a). A study by Stone, Joseph and Jones (2003) found that advertisements featuring athletes as celebrity spokespeople did not decline during a six year period between 1983 and 1988 in comparison with a second six year period between 1993 and 1998. Charbonneau and Garland (2005a; 2005b) discovered that New Zealand advertising practitioners considered the use of celebrity athletes as endorsers to be increasing. The concept of celebrity athletes as endorsers is extremely important to marketers when one considers that sportspeople are paid large sums money to endorse products (Stone et al. 2003; Sukhdial, Aiken & Kahle, 2002).

Despite Charbonneau and Garland (2005a) and Stevens et al. (2003) identifying athlete endorsements as a profitable strategy and Stevens et al. (2003) suggesting that there are significant financial benefits for organisations that utilise athlete endorsement strategies, Phillips (1998) states that there is uncertainty as to whether or not celebrity endorsers really make a difference to the bottom line for advertisers. In a Sweeney Sports (Australian research consultancy firm) study cited by Phillips (1998), forty-four percent of advertising executives claimed that they did not know what percentage increase in sales was attributed to advertising campaigns which utilised celebrity endorsers, which is consistent with Miciak and Shanklin's (1994) findings that only one in five commercials with a celebrity endorser satisfy advertisers' expectations. This ineffectiveness of advertising campaigns involving a celebrity endorser may be explained by a failure to connect or identify with the target audience by the celebrity endorser (Miciak & Shanklin,

1994). Stevens et al. (2003) suggest that marketers need to carefully reassess the criteria by which they pursue athlete endorsement strategies. Stevens et al. (2003) also claim that there is an increase in corporate scrutiny of the sport celebrity marketplace which is evident by three key developments. The first is that theorists and practitioners have expressed a concern in regards to the proliferation and resulting clutter of messages associated with athlete endorsements (Erdogan and Baker, cited in Stevens et al. 2003). The second is the concern of organisations over the problem of increasing endorsement fees in a sensitive consumer marketplace (Dyson & Turco, cited in Stevens et al. 2003). The third is that there are many potential risks and issues associated with selecting an appropriate athlete endorser (Stevens et al. 2003). One such risk is the possibility of negative publicity being generated by the personal and professional behaviour of controversial athletes, which has resulted in recent marketplace scrutiny of athlete endorsement strategies (Burton, Farrelly & Quester, 2000). Any public controversy involving an endorser can result in a transfer of negative attitudes to the brand being endorsed (Pornpitakpan, 2003). Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) found that negative information about a celebrity has the largest impact on celebrity endorsement effectiveness in advertising. Highly publicised events or information of a negative nature associated with a celebrity endorser is expected to have a negative impact on advertising campaigns which involve that celebrity endorser (Amos et al. 2008). In February 2009 Kellogg, a U.S food company announced that it would not renew a contract with Olympic swimming star Michael Phelps after a photograph of the swimmer inhaling from a marijuana pipe was released to the public (Macur, 2009).

In adding to the current corporate concern over athlete endorsement strategies, the literature points out that it is uncertain as to whether or not consumers are more likely to purchase goods or services that are endorsed by celebrities (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). Kamins (1989) and Ohanian (1990) suggest that celebrity endorsers contribute to brand recognition, they can establish positive associations transferring attributes including physical appeal and likeability,

and they can help in establishing distinct and credible brand personalities. Charbonneau and Garland's (2005a) findings suggest that New Zealand advertising practitioners felt that athletes assist in increasing awareness and advertising recall, however they also noted that using a professional athlete as an endorser does not always guarantee an increase in sales or consumer action. Cornwell, Roy and Steinard (2001) and Javalgi, Traylor, Gross and Lampman (1994) emphasise that celebrity endorsements assist in building a product's image. Braunstein and Zhang (2005) argue that the marketing outcomes of celebrity endorsements are similar to the general functions of sports sponsorships, which is used to build brand awareness, brand image and corporate image.

Generation Y has been identified as a vital consumer segment of the sport marketplace (Stevens et al. 2003). Members of Generation Y are important to those looking to utilise celebrity athletes in their promotional material (Stevens et al. 2003). Martin and Bush (2000) reinforce the view of Stevens et al. (2003) claiming that organisations and marketing-practitioners can make significant strides in reaching members of Generation Y by partnering with influential athletes that Generation Y consider to be role models. Amos et al. (2008) suggest that members of Generation Y possibly represent an ideal target market for advertisements that implement celebrity endorsement strategies. Marketing-practitioners are linking stars that Generation Y relates to with their products in an attempt to create relationships with individuals of this generation as they believe that these consumers will be brand loyal consumers in the future (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005). Hodgkinson (cited in Braunstein & Zhang, 2005) suggests that the objective of many organisations is to target Generation Y consumers who could show their brand the same form of loyalty that this generation displays towards celebrity athletes.

As identified above, Generation Y is one of the most appealing and sought after segments (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Bush et al. 2004). Despite their appeal, Generation Y presents considerable challenges for marketers (Zolkos, 2003). It is crucial that organisations are aware of the differences between Generation Y,

Generation X and Baby Boomers in order to be successful in targeting Generation Y (Zolkos, 2003; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). As a result adding to the body of knowledge concerning Generation Y will assist both marketers and organisations who target this important consumer segment. Research indicates that athletes are vicarious role models and therefore act as socialisation agents for members of Generation Y (Martin & Bush, 2000; Clark et al. 2001; Bush et al. 2004). This means that athletes are in a position to influence the consumer-related behavioural intentions and attitudes of members of Generation Y. The use of athletes in endorsement strategies is widespread (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a) and is considered to be a profitable and valuable strategy within advertising and promotion (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Stevens et al. 2003). There are theoretical models which justify the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement strategies (see: Amos et al. 2008; Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Charbonneau & Garland, 2005b; Charbonneau & Garland, 2006). Whilst these theoretical models improve our knowledge on why celebrity endorsers are effective, they fail to explain the influence of celebrity endorsers (particularly athletes) on the specific marketing-related outcomes of Generation Y consumers. This is of particular concern for marketing-practitioners when one considers that organisations pay athletes large sums of money to endorse their products (Stone et al. 2003; Sukhdial et al. 2002) and that advertising dollars are often scarce resources for many organisations (Clark et al. 2001).

There is limited research exploring the specific behavioural intentions and consumer-related behaviour that vicarious role models influence. Martin and Bush (2000) emphasise that vicarious role models have a much greater impact in terms of influencing members of Generation Y to switch or alter their brand choice in comparison to influencing Generation Y consumers to remain loyal to a singular product provider. Martin and Bush (2000) also discovered that the price of products is important to members of Generation Y given that individuals belonging to Generation Y did not appear to be strongly influenced by potential role models when price was a central issue. Clark et al. (2001) found that vicarious role models

have a significant influence on Generation Y's marketplace knowledge, and reported that a significant relationship exists between athlete role model influence and Generation Y's materialism. Therefore marketing managers targeting Generation Y should consider utilising athlete endorsers in their promotional material.

Bush et al. (2004) explored the specific behavioural intentions and consumer-related behaviour that athletes influenced on a Generation Y sample in the USA. They found that members of Generation Y do in fact consider athletes as important role models and supported Martin and Bush (2000) and Clark et al. (2001) in emphasising that advertisers should consider using athletes as spokespeople to endorse products to the Generation Y segment. The most significant finding of this study was that celebrity sports athletes have a positive influence on Generation Y's favourable word-of-mouth and brand loyalty; however, there was not a significant relationship between Generation Y's athlete role model influence and product switching or complaining behaviour. Whilst Bush et al. (2004) explored the specific marketing-related outcomes that sport celebrities influence on a Generation Y sample, there is limited research investigating the specific behavioural intentions and consumer-related behaviour that sports celebrities influence on the Australian Generation Y segment. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of sport celebrities on the specific consumer-related behaviour and purchase intentions of the Australian Generation Y segment. The findings of this study should contribute to the current body of knowledge and assist marketing-practitioners and advertisers in marketing more successfully to the important Generation Y segment.

3. Research Objectives

As identified in the literature review section of this thesis, there is a gap in the existing literature concerning the influence of sport celebrities on Generation Y purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour, in an Australian context. This has led to the development of the following two research objectives: 1) To explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y; and 2) To investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour. In order to address the first research objective two research questions have been developed: 1) Do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models?; and 2) What association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status) and their consumer-related behavioural intentions? To address the second research objective, a third research question was developed: 3) What are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y? To answer these research questions, fifteen hypotheses have been developed and are outlined below. It is expected that the results of this study will add to the current body of knowledge concerning Generation Y and sport celebrity endorsement strategies. The results of this study could also have implications for marketing-practitioners, advertisers and more specifically for sport sponsorship and elite athlete endorsements as a form of brand/product advertising and communication.

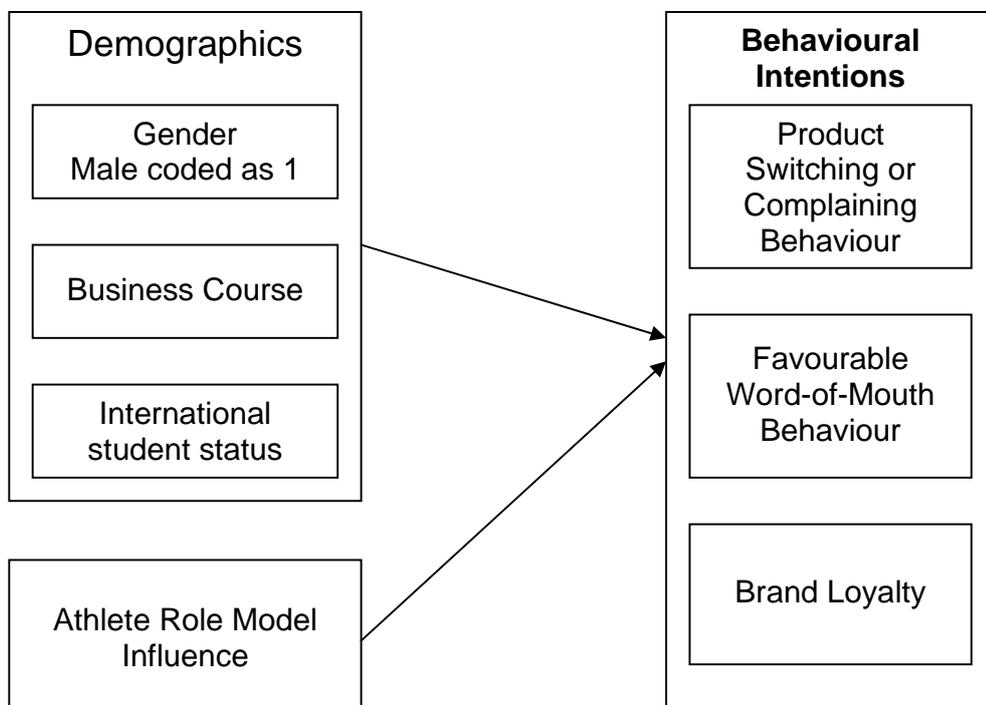
3.1 Hypotheses

- H₁₋₃ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.
- H₄₋₆ Generation Y's athlete role model influence is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.
- H₇₋₉ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) will each explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.
- H₁₀₋₁₂ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.
- H₁₃₋₁₅ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) are controlled for in turn.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework identifies the course of action for this thesis. This thesis will explore the relationship between: Generation Y's demographic profile and their purchase intentions, as well as Generation Y's athlete role model influence and their purchase intentions.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



4. Methodology

The methodology section of this thesis is presented in three sub-sections. Sub-section one provides an outline of the research design, data collection and sample. Sub-section two identifies the scales which are utilised in this thesis and finally, sub-section three provides a discussion of the techniques that were used to analyse the data.

4.1 Research Design, Data Collection and Sample

The research objectives for this study were: 1) To explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y; and 2) To investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour. From these research objectives, three research questions were formulated: 1) Do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models?; 2) What association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status) and their consumer-related behavioural intentions?; and 3) What are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y? As previously outlined in sub-section 3.1, fifteen hypotheses were developed to assist in answering these research questions.

Primary research was conducted to gather data that would assist in testing the fifteen hypotheses. The primary research was conducted in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire has been adapted from Bush et al.'s (2004) study into the influence of sport celebrities on Generation Y behavioural intentions (see Appendix 1 for questionnaire). The questionnaires were interviewer-administered; despite interviewer-administered questionnaires occasionally resulting in contamination or distortion of respondents' answers by the interviewer, the likely response rate of such questionnaires is considered high, between fifty and seventy percent (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Furthermore interviewer-administered questionnaires provide greater control of the research process for the researcher/s in comparison with alternative methods such as self-administered questionnaires

(Kotler, Adam, Denize & Armstrong, 2008). The questionnaires were expected to take approximately ten minutes to complete.

A total of 250 members of Generation Y participated in this study. A response rate at this level is considered to be representative of the sample population. This study aimed to specifically determine the perceptions of Generation Y within an Australian context. Therefore the respondents were aged between seventeen and thirty-two as at the 1st of July in 2008. Participants consisted of higher education students studying a degree qualification at Swinburne University of Technology's Hawthorn campus. Non-Generation Y and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) students were excluded from the study. There was an attempt to obtain a gender balance of respondents as a gender balance would have provided an opportunity to expose any differences in perceptions between genders.

4.2 Scales

This thesis employed the use of two scales, the role model influence scale and the purchase intentions scale.

The role model influence scale was developed by Rich (1997). This scale was adapted by Bush et al. (2004) to refer specifically to the respondent's favourite athlete. The role model influence scale measures athlete role model influence and specifically determines whether the respondent's favourite athlete is in fact a role model. Therefore this scale will assist in addressing the first research question. This is a five-item scale that implements a seven-point strongly disagree to strongly agree likert scale.

The purchase intentions scale was developed by Zeithmal, Berry and Parasuraman (1996). This scale was also adapted by Bush et al. (2004) to refer specifically to the respondent's favourite athlete. This scale identifies whether the respondent's favourite athlete influences product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. The purchase intentions scale will assist in answering the second and third research questions. It

is a twelve-item scale that utilises a seven-point strongly disagree to strongly agree likert scale. Table 2 below identifies the questions in the questionnaire which are associated with each scale.

Table 2: Questionnaire Constructs

Question Number	Question	Scale
Q1	My favourite athlete provides a good model for me to follow.	Role Model Influence
Q2	My favourite athlete leads by example.	
Q3	My favourite athlete sets a positive example for others to follow.	
Q4	My favourite athlete exhibits the kind of work ethic and behaviour that I try to imitate.	
Q5	My favourite athlete acts as a role model for me.	
Q6	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to say positive things about products or brands to other people.	Purchase Intentions
Q7	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to recommend products or brands to someone who seeks my advice.	
Q8	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to encourage friends or relatives to buy certain products or brands.	
Q9	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to buy fewer products from certain companies.	
Q10	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to take some of my purchases to other businesses that offer better prices.	
Q11	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to continue to do business with a certain company even if it increases its prices.	
Q12	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to pay more for products at one business even though I could buy them cheaper elsewhere.	
Q13	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to switch to a competitor if I experience a problem with a company's service.	
Q14	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to other customers if I experience a problem with a company's service.	
Q15	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to external agencies, such as the small claims tribunal, if I experience problems with a company's service.	
Q16	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to a company's employees if I see a problem with that company's service.	
Q17	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to buy certain brands.	

4.3 Data Analysis

As previously outlined in Section 3, this thesis seeks to specifically address: 1) Do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models?; 2) What association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status) and their consumer-related behavioural intentions?; and 3) What are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y? In order to address these questions the following hypotheses were developed and are re-listed below:

- H₁₋₃ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.
- H₄₋₆ Generation Y's athlete role model influence is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.
- H₇₋₉ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) will each explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.
- H₁₀₋₁₂ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.
- H₁₃₋₁₅ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male

gender, business course and international student) are controlled for in turn.

To test these hypotheses, this thesis employed the use of the following statistical techniques: Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson's product moment correlation and regression/multiple regression analyses (ordinary least squares regression and hierarchical or stepwise regression).

According to Dunn-Rankin, Knezek, Wallace and Zhang (2004), Cronbach's Alpha is used to determine the reliability of a set of category ratings. "Alpha reliability is based on the assumptions that the item variance is error variance" (Dunn-Rankin et al. 2004, p. 117). Therefore Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the items in the scales for this study.

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient is a statistical test that measures the strength of a relationship between two variables (Saunders et al. 2007). This study assesses the relationship between Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) and the three dimensions of behavioural intentions (product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty) as well as Generation Y's athlete role model influence and the three dimensions of behavioural intentions through Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. A Pearson's product moment correlation was conducted to test hypotheses one to six.

The regression/multiple regression analysis tool was used in this thesis. A regression analysis refers to the "process of calculating a regression coefficient and regression equation using one independent variable and one dependent variable" (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 609). A multiple regression analysis refers to "the process of calculating a coefficient of multiple determination and regression equation using two or more independent variables and one dependent variable" (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 603). According to Saunders et al. (2007) one must

calculate the probability of the regression coefficient having occurred by chance alone when the data is collected from a sample.

A method of estimation for the regression model is ordinary least squares (OLS) (Hair, Money, Samouel & Page, 2007). This study employed the use of OLS regressions to address hypotheses seven to twelve. This determined whether Generation Y's demographic profile would each explain unique variation in their perception of each of the three dimensions of behavioural intentions and whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence would explain unique variation in their perception of each of the three dimensions of behavioural intentions. According to Dytham (2003) with hierarchical or stepwise regression the assumptions and conditions are identical to multiple regressions. The difference between hierarchical or stepwise regression to multiple regression is the way in which the best-fit model is generated. "In stepwise regression the 'causes' are added and subtracted in steps only using those combinations and slopes that generate a better fit" (Dytham 2003, p. 198). A hierarchical or stepwise regression was used to address hypotheses thirteen to fifteen. Stage one controlled for demographics whilst stage two explained unique variation in each of the three dimensions of behavioural intentions on role model influence once the demographic profile was controlled for.

5. Results

The results are presented in four sections.

- 1) Descriptive Statistics;
- 2) Correlation Analyses;
- 3) Regressions (OLS); and
- 4) Hierarchical Regressions.

Section one provides an overview of the descriptive statistics which specifically includes: gender, courses studied, citizenship and age.

Section two presents the testing of hypotheses one to six. Testing of hypotheses one to three specifically used Pearson's product moment correlation to determine whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Testing of hypotheses four to six also used Pearson's product moment correlation as a tool to determine whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty, in turn.

The results of six OLS regressions are presented in section three which test hypotheses seven to twelve. OLS regressions were used to test hypotheses seven to nine which specifically determined whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) each explained unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty in turn. Testing of hypotheses ten to twelve also used OLS regressions to determine whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence explained unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty in turn.

Section four presents the results of three hierarchical regressions that were used to test hypotheses thirteen to fifteen. Hierarchical regressions were used to determine whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence explained unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was controlled for, in turn.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

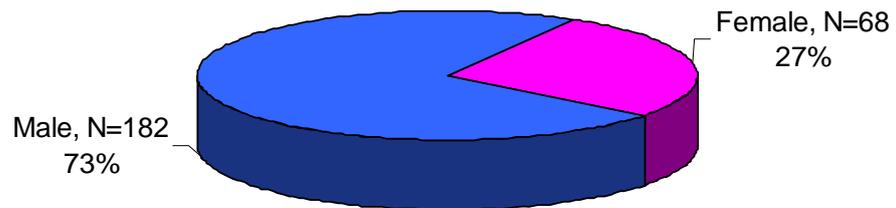
This section provides an overview of the descriptive statistics. It is divided into four sub-sections:

- 1) Participant Gender Breakdown;
- 2) Course Studied by Participants;
- 3) Citizenship of Participants; and
- 4) Age of the Participants.

5.1.1 Participant Gender Breakdown

The sample obtained consisted of 250 Generation Y higher education students from Swinburne University of Technology's Hawthorn campus. Of the 250 respondents, 68 or 27% were female and 182 or 73% were male (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Gender Breakdown



5.1.2 Course Studied by Participants

There was a variety of courses studied by the respondents within the sample. A total of 76 different courses were studied by the respondents (see Table 3 below for full list of courses). Respondents studied courses from: the Faculty of Business and Enterprise, the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences, the Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Design and the Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies. Table 3 shows that the most popular course studied was a business-related course from the Faculty of Business and Enterprise (43.2%). A total of 30.4% of the respondents studied a course from the Faculty of Life and Social Sciences and 17.2% of the respondents studied a course from the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences. Figure 3 below shows that 43.2% of the sample was studying a business related course whilst the remaining 56.8% were studying a non-business related course (see Figure 3 below).

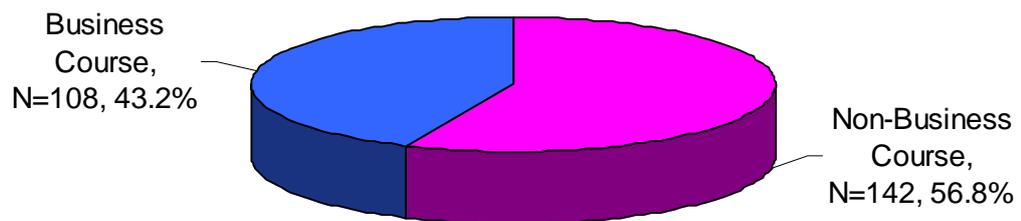
Table 3: Course Studied

Faculty	Name of Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Business and Enterprise	Bachelor of Business (Accounting)	19	7.6
	Bachelor of Business (Accounting and Finance)	10	4.0
	Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management)	10	4.0
	Bachelor of Business (Marketing)	9	3.6
	Bachelor of Business (Information Systems)	7	2.8
	Bachelor of Business (Management)	6	2.4
	Bachelor of Business (International Business)	5	2.0
	Bachelor of Engineering (Civil Engineering)/Bachelor of Business	4	1.6
	Master of Accounting	4	1.6
	Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship and Innovation)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Business (Finance)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Business Information Systems	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Arts (Italian)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical Engineering)/Bachelor of Business	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Aviation/Bachelor of Business	2	.8
	Bachelor of Business (Management and Finance)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Commerce (Commercial Law)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Business	2	.8
	Bachelor of Multimedia (Business Marketing)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Business	1	.4
	Bachelor of Business (Marketing and International Business)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Business Information Systems/Bachelor of Business	1	.4
	Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Arts (Japanese)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Commerce (Entrepreneurship and Innovation)	1	.4
	Business and Enterprise	1	.4
Master of Business (International Business)	1	.4	
Master of Business Administration	1	.4	
Master of Business Finance	1	.4	
Total Faculty of Business and Enterprise		108	43.2
Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences	Bachelor of Engineering (Civil Engineering)	11	4.4
	Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical Engineering)	10	4.0
	Bachelor of Engineering	7	2.8
	Bachelor of Engineering (Robotics and Mechatronics)	4	1.6
	Bachelor of Engineering (Product Design Engineering)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical and Electronic Engineering)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Aviation	2	.8
	Manufacturing and Engineering (Honours)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Science	1	.4
	Master of Engineering/Technology (Advanced Manufacturing Technology)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Engineering (Biomedical Engineering)	1	.4
	Total Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences		43

Exploring the Influence of Sports Celebrities on Generation Y Behavioural Intentions

Faculty	Name of Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Life and Social Sciences	Bachelor of Arts/Science (Psychology and Psychophysiology)	9	3.6
	Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications)	9	3.6
	Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)	6	2.4
	Bachelor of Arts (Games and Interactivity)	6	2.4
	Bachelor of Arts	6	2.4
	Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Multimedia (Media Studies)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Sciences)	3	1.2
	Bachelor of Multimedia	2	.8
	Bachelor of Social Science	2	.8
	Bachelor of Health Science (Public and Environmental Health)	2	.8
	Master of Science (Good Manufacturing Practices)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Science	2	.8
	Master of Science (Network Systems)	2	.8
	Bachelor of Health Science	1	.4
	Bachelor of Multimedia/Bachelor of Science	1	.4
	Bachelor of Science (Biochemistry/Chemistry)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology and Philosophy)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Science (Photonics)	1	.4
	Foundation Studies	1	.4
	Bachelor of Multimedia (Games and Interactivity)/Bachelor of Science (Computer Science and Software Engineering)	1	.4
	Counseling	1	.4
	Graduate Diploma of Arts (Commercial Radio)	1	.4
	Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Philosophy)	1	.4
	Doctor of Philosophy (Applied Science)	1	.4
	Master of Technology Management (Construction Management)	1	.4
Master of Science	1	.4	
Master of Science (Biotechnology)	1	.4	
Total Faculty of Life and Social Sciences	76	30.4	
Faculty of Design	Bachelor of Design (Communication Design)	1	.4
	Total Faculty of Design	1	.4
Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies	Bachelor of Computing	6	2.4
	Bachelor of Information Technology	6	2.4
	Master of Information Technology	5	2.0
	Bachelor of Computing (Network Design and Security)	3	1.2
	Master of Information Communication Technology	1	.4
	Master of Information Systems Management	1	.4
	Total Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies	22	8.8
Total	250	100.0	

Figure 3: Business Course Studied



5.1.3 Citizenship of Participants

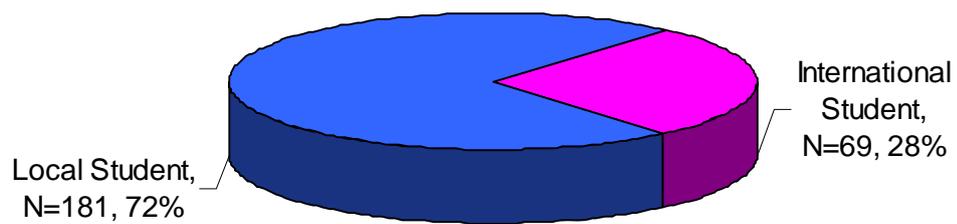
The primary citizenship of the respondents within the sample was diverse. There were 24 different countries of primary citizenship amongst the represented respondents. Of the 250 respondents: 68.4% indicated that Australia is their nation of primary citizenship, 8% were primary citizens of India and 5.2% were primary citizens of China (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Primary Citizenship

Country of primary citizenship	Frequency	Percent
Australia	171	68.4
India	20	8.0
China	13	5.2
Sri Lanka	6	2.4
Vietnam	6	2.4
Malaysia	5	2.0
Thailand	4	1.6
Indonesia	4	1.6
Nepal	2	.8
New Zealand	2	.8
Iran	2	.8
Pakistan	2	.8
United States of America	2	.8
Germany	1	.4
Turkey	1	.4
Canada	1	.4
Libya	1	.4
South Africa	1	.4
Hong Kong	1	.4
Poland	1	.4
France	1	.4
Philippines	1	.4
Peru	1	.4
Bangladesh	1	.4
Total	250	100.0

Figure 4 below shows the percentage of local and international students. A total of 181 or 72% of the respondents were local or non-international students. It is interesting to note that not all of the 181 respondents who indicated that they were local students are primary citizens of Australia. This means that 69 or 28% of the respondents within the sample were international students (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: International Student Status



5.1.4 Age of the Participants

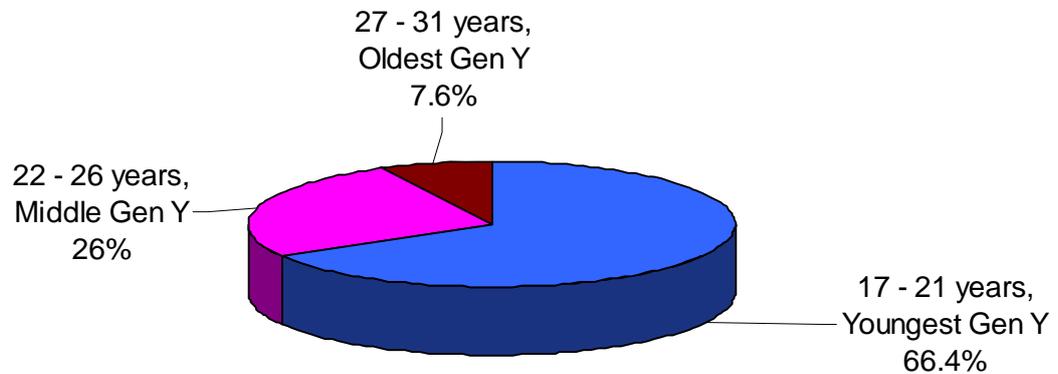
Table 5 below provides an overview of the age of the respondents. The five most common ages were: 18 (64 or 25.6% of the respondents), 21 (33 or 13.2% of the respondents), 20 (30 or 12% of the respondents), 22 (24 or 9.6% of the respondents) and 19 (22 or 8.8% of the respondents).

Table 5: Age as at 1st of July, 2008

Age	Frequency	Percent
17	17	6.8
18	64	25.6
19	22	8.8
20	30	12.0
21	33	13.2
22	24	9.6
23	18	7.2
24	13	5.2
25	5	2.0
26	5	2.0
27	4	1.6
28	7	2.8
30	5	2.0
31	3	1.2
Total	250	100.0

Figure 5 below provides an overview of the participant age groups. A total of 66.4% of the respondents are considered to be the youngest members of Generation Y (between the ages of 17 and 21) within the sample, 26% of the participants are classified as the middle of Generation Y (between the ages of 22 and 26) within the sample and only 7.6% of the respondents are considered to be the eldest members of Generation Y (between the ages of 27 and 31) within the sample.

Figure 5: Participant Age



5.2 Correlation Analyses

This section presents the results of the Pearson's product moment correlation analyses which was used to test hypotheses one to six. Hypotheses one to three were specifically testing whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Hypotheses four to six tested whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty.

Table 6 below reveals very good and excellent Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for each of the scales (see Appendix 3 for full list of items). The Cronbach's alpha value for: product switching or complaint behaviour (0.878), brand loyalty (0.866) and athlete role model influence (0.870) are considered to be very good (see Table 6). The Cronbach's alpha value for favourable word-of-mouth behaviour (0.915) is considered to be excellent. Hair et al. (2007) state that Cronbach's alpha values of

0.80 to 0.90 are deemed to be very good. Hair et al. (2007) further suggest that Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.90 are considered to be excellent. Therefore the Cronbach's alpha values for the scales utilised in this thesis are considered to be very good and excellent.

Table 6: Correlations Table

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	-						
2. Business Course	-.029	-					
3. International Student Status	.056	.076	-				
4. Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour	.075	.140*	.292**	.878			
5. Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour	.089	.182**	.233**	.694**	.915		
6. Brand Loyalty	.049	.250**	.245**	.704**	.735**	.866	
7. Athlete Role Model Influence	.237**	.126*	.087	.274**	.371**	.301**	.870

N = 250, * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Cronbach's alpha values are presented on the diagonal in italics.

Hypothesis one was exploring whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour. The results indicate that there are two significant correlations between Generation Y's demographic profile and product switching and complaint behaviour (see Table 6). The product switching and complaint behaviour dimension has a significant weak positive zero-order correlation with the business course ($r=0.140$, $p<0.05$) and international student status ($r=0.292$, $p<0.001$) dimensions (see Table 6). The product switching and complaint behaviour dimension does not have a significant correlation with male gender ($r=0.075$). Therefore, hypothesis one is only partially supported because only two of the three demographic profile dimensions (business course and international student status) are positively correlated to the product switching and complaint behaviour dimension.

Hypothesis two explored whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was positively correlated to favourable word-of-mouth behaviour. The correlation analysis revealed that there are two significant correlations between Generation Y's demographic profile and favourable word-of-mouth behaviour (see Table 6). The favourable word-of-

mouth dimension has a significant weak positive zero-order correlation with: the business course ($r=0.182$, $p<0.001$) and international student status ($r=0.233$, $p<0.001$) dimensions (see Table 6). Male gender was not significantly correlated to the favourable word-of-mouth dimension ($r=0.089$). Therefore hypothesis two is also only partially supported as only business course and international student status are positively correlated to favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and not male gender.

Hypothesis three tested whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was positively correlated to brand loyalty. Brand loyalty was found to have a weak highly significant correlation with two of the three demographic profile dimensions at the zero-order level (see Table 6). The brand loyalty dimension has a significant weak positive zero-order correlation with business course ($r=0.250$, $p<0.001$) and international student status ($r=0.245$, $p<0.001$). In contrast brand loyalty is not significantly correlated to male gender ($r=0.049$; see Table 6). Hypothesis three is only partially supported as two of the three demographic profile dimensions (business course and international student status) are positively correlated to brand loyalty.

Hypotheses four, five and six examined whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence was positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Hypotheses four, five and six are fully supported as product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty all have significant ($p<0.001$) weak positive zero-order correlations with athlete role model influence, $r=0.274$, 0.371 and 0.301 respectively (see Table 6). As a result hypotheses four, five and six are fully supported because athlete role model influence is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty.

Table 6 indicates that two of the three demographic profile variables (business course and international student status) are positively correlated to product

switching and complaint behaviour (0.140, $p < 0.05$ and 0.292, $p < 0.001$ respectively), favourable word-of-mouth behaviour (0.182, $p < 0.001$ and 0.233, $p < 0.001$ respectively) and brand loyalty (0.250, $p < 0.001$ and 0.245, $p < 0.001$ respectively). Gender was not significantly correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour or brand loyalty (see Table 6). Therefore hypotheses one, two and three are only partially supported. As outlined earlier (see Table 6) athlete role model influence is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty (0.274, 0.371 and 0.301 respectively). As a result hypotheses four, five and six are fully supported.

5.3 Regressions (OLS)

Hypotheses seven to twelve are presented in this third section of the results. The results of six OLS regressions are discussed. Hypotheses seven to nine test whether Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) will each explain unique variation in Generation Y's perception of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty in turn. In order to test hypotheses ten to twelve, OLS regressions were used to determine whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence explains unique variation in Generation Y's perception of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty in turn.

An OLS regression was conducted to address hypothesis seven. The independent variables were Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status), which was regressed on the dependent variable, product switching and complaint behaviour. As outlined in Table 6, business course ($r = 0.140$, $p < 0.05$) and international student status ($r = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$) were significantly correlated at the zero-order level with product switching and complaint behaviour. The multiple R (0.322; see Table 7) for the regression was significantly different from zero and the F value, $F(3,246) = 9.461$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 8). The results suggest the demographic profile (male gender, business

course and international student status) explained 10.3% (9.3% adjusted) of the variation in product switching and complaint behaviour ($R^2 = 0.103$, adj. $R^2 = 0.093$; see Table 7). Of the 10.3% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlations indicate that international student status explained 7.73% and business course explained 1.46% of the unique variance when all other variables in the equation are controlled for (see Table 9). Male gender is not significant when all the other variables in the equation are controlled for indicated by the non-significant t-value of 1.039 (Sig. = 0.300 > 0.05). Therefore hypothesis seven is only partially supported.

Table 7: Demographic - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.322 ^a	.103	.093	1.256

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

Table 8: Demographic - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour ANOVA

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.784	3	14.928	9.461	.000 ^a
	Residual	388.159	246	1.578		
	Total	432.943	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

Table 9: Demographic - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour OLS Regression

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.711	.173		15.686	.000			
	Male Gender	.186	.179	.063	1.039	.300	.075	.066	.063
	Business Course = 1	.321	.161	.121	1.997	.047	.140	.126	.121
	International student status	.823	.179	.280	4.612	.000	.292	.282	.278

a. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

In order to address hypothesis eight, a second OLS regression was conducted. The independent variables were Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) which was regressed on the dependent variable, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour. As outlined in Table 6, business course and international student status were significantly correlated at the zero-order level with favourable word-of-mouth behaviour ($r = 0.182$ and $r = 0.233$ ($p < 0.001$) respectively; see Table 6). The multiple R (0.297; see Table 10) for the regression was significantly different from zero and the F value, $F(3,246) = 7.905$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 11). The results suggest that the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) explains 8.8% (7.7% adjusted) of the variance in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour indicated by $R^2 = 0.088$ and adj. $R^2 = 0.077$ (see Table 10). Of the 8.8% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlations indicate that international student status explains 4.58% and business course explains 2.82% of the unique variance when all other variables in the equation are controlled for (see Table 12). Hypothesis eight is therefore only partially supported as two of the three demographic profile variables (international student status and business course) are significant.

Table 10: Demographic - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.297 ^a	.088	.077	1.539

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

Table 11: Demographic - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour ANOVA

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.144	3	18.715	7.905	.000 ^a
	Residual	582.398	246	2.367		
	Total	638.543	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

Table 12: Demographic - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour OLS Regression

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.704	.212		12.772	.000			
	Male Gender	.293	.219	.082	1.337	.183	.089	.085	.081
	Business Course = 1	.542	.197	.168	2.751	.006	.182	.173	.168
	International student status	.770	.219	.215	3.521	.001	.233	.219	.214

a. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

A third OLS regression was conducted to test hypothesis nine. The independent variables were Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) which was regressed on the dependent variable: brand loyalty. As outlined earlier (see Table 6) business course ($r = 0.250$, $p < 0.001$) and international student status ($r = 0.245$, $p < 0.001$) were significantly correlated at the zero-order level with brand loyalty. The multiple R (0.340; see Table 13) for the regression was significantly different from zero and the F value, $F(3,246) = 10.736$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 14). The analysis indicates that the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) explained 11.6% (10.5% adjusted) of the variance in brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.116$, adj. $R^2 = 0.105$; see Table 13). Of the 11.6% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlations indicate that business course explains 5.43% and international student status explains 5.02% of the unique variance when all other variables in the equation are controlled for (see Table 15). As a result hypothesis nine is only partially supported as only two (business course and international student status) of the three demographic profile variables are significant.

Table 13: Demographic - Brand Loyalty Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.340 ^a	.116	.105	1.466

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male gender, Business Course = 1

Table 14: Demographic - Brand Loyalty ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	69.237	3	23.079	10.736	.000 ^a
	Residual	528.827	246	2.150		
	Total	598.064	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male gender, Business Course = 1

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Table 15: Demographic - Brand Loyalty OLS Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.606	.202		12.918	.000			
	Male Gender	.149	.209	.043	.714	.476	.049	.045	.043
	Business Course = 1	.731	.188	.234	3.889	.000	.250	.241	.233
	International student status	.779	.208	.225	3.740	.000	.245	.232	.224

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

A fourth OLS regression was conducted in order to test hypothesis ten. The independent variable, athlete role model influence was regressed on the dependent variable, product switching and complaint behaviour. As indicated in Table 6, athlete role model influence was significantly correlated at the zero-order level with the product switching and complaint behaviour dimension ($r = 0.274$, $p < 0.001$). The analysis reveals that the multiple R (0.247; see Table 16) for the regression was significantly different from zero, $F(1,248)=20.052$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 17). Athlete role model influence explained 7.5% (7.1% adjusted) of the variance in product switching and complaint behaviour ($R^2 = 0.075$, adj. $R^2 = 0.071$; see Table 16). Of the 7.5% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlation indicates that athlete role model influence explains 7.5% of the unique variance in product switching and complaint behaviour (see Table 18). Based on this analysis, hypothesis ten is fully supported.

Table 16: Athlete Role Model Influence - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.274 ^a	.075	.071	1.271

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 17: Athlete Role Model Influence - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.387	1	32.387	20.052	.000 ^a
	Residual	400.556	248	1.615		
	Total	432.943	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

b. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

Table 18: Athlete Role Model Influence - Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour OLS Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.915	.301		6.366	.000			
	Athlete Role Model Influence	.278	.062	.274	4.478	.000	.274	.274	.274

a. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

To test hypothesis eleven a fifth OLS regression was conducted. The independent variable, athlete role model influence was regressed on the dependent variable favourable word-of-mouth behaviour. As discussed earlier (see Table 6) athlete role model influence was significantly correlated at the zero-order level with favourable word-of-mouth behaviour ($r = 0.371$, $p < 0.001$). The results indicate that the multiple R (0.37) for the regression is significantly different from zero (see Table 19). Athlete role model influence explains 13.8% (13.4% adjusted) of the variance in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour, $F(1,248)=39.653$, $p < 0.01$ ($R^2 = 0.138$, adj. $R^2 = 0.134$; see Tables 19 and 20). Of the 13.8% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlation suggests that athlete role model influence

explains 13.8% of the unique variance in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour (see Table 21). Therefore hypothesis eleven is also fully supported.

Table 19: Athlete Role Model Influence - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.371 ^a	.138	.134	1.490

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 20: Athlete Role Model Influence - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88.024	1	88.024	39.653	.000 ^a
	Residual	550.519	248	2.220		
	Total	638.543	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

b. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

Table 21: Athlete Role Model Influence - Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour OLS Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1 (Constant)	1.224	.353		3.472	.001			
Athlete Role Model Influence	.459	.073	.371	6.297	.000	.371	.371	.371

a. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

A final OLS regression was conducted to test hypothesis twelve. The independent variable was athlete role model influence and the dependent variable was brand loyalty. As discussed earlier (see Table 6), athlete role model influence was significantly correlated at the zero-order level with brand loyalty ($r = 0.301$, $p < 0.001$). The results show that the multiple R (0.301) for the regression is significantly different from zero (see Table 22), $F(1,248)=24.626$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 23). Athlete role model influence explains 9% (8.7% adjusted) of the

variability in brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.090$, adj. $R^2 = 0.087$; see Table 22). Of the 9% explained variance, the squared semi-partial correlation indicates that athlete role model influence explains 9% of the unique variance in brand loyalty (see Table 24). Hypothesis twelve is therefore fully supported.

Table 22: Athlete Role Model Influence - Brand Loyalty Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.301 ^a	.090	.087	1.481

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 23: Athlete Role Model Influence - Brand Loyalty ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54.022	1	54.022	24.626	.000 ^a
	Residual	544.042	248	2.194		
	Total	598.064	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Athlete Role Model Influence

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Table 24: Athlete Role Model Influence - Brand Loyalty OLS Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.569	.351		4.476	.000			
	Athlete Role Model Influence	.360	.072	.301	4.962	.000	.301	.301	.301

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

5.4 Hierarchical Regressions

The fourth section presents hypotheses twelve to fifteen. The results of three hierarchical regressions are discussed. Hypotheses twelve to fifteen test whether Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) are controlled for in turn.

A hierarchical regression was conducted to explore hypothesis thirteen. Table 25 indicates that for the first step in the hierarchical regression, the multiple R (0.322) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.103$, $F(3,246) = 9.461$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 26), for the demographic profile: male gender, business course and international student status. The introduction of the athlete role model variable into the second step of the hierarchical regression caused R^2 to change from 0.103 to 0.155 (see Table 25). The multiple R (0.394) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.155$, $F(4,245) = 11.271$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 26). The R Square Change statistic and the Sig. F Change value shows that the athlete role model influence variable makes a significant unique contribution of 5.20% to the variance of product switching and complaint behaviour after the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 25: Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour Model Summary Hierarchical Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.322 ^a	.103	.093	1.256
2	.394 ^b	.155	.142	1.222

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1
 b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 26: Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour ANOVA Hierarchical Regression

ANOVA ^c						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.784	3	14.928	9.461	.000 ^a
	Residual	388.159	246	1.578		
	Total	432.943	249			
2	Regression	67.288	4	16.822	11.271	.000 ^b
	Residual	365.655	245	1.492		
	Total	432.943	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1
 b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence
 c. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

Table 27 below shows that the standardised regression coefficient (Beta = 0.237, $p < 0.001$) for the athlete role model influence variable was significant. Hypothesis

thirteen was fully supported as the athlete role model influence variable explained 5.20% of the unique variance in product switching and complaint behaviour when the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 27: Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour Hierarchical Regression

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1								
(Constant)	2.711	.173		15.686	.000			
Male Gender	.186	.179	.063	1.039	.300	.075	.066	.063
Business Course = 1	.321	.161	.121	1.997	.047	.140	.126	.121
International student status	.823	.179	.280	4.612	.000	.292	.282	.278
2								
(Constant)	1.753	.299		5.873	.000			
Male Gender	.019	.179	.006	.106	.915	.075	.007	.006
Business Course = 1	.240	.158	.090	1.522	.129	.140	.097	.089
International student status	.778	.174	.264	4.473	.000	.292	.275	.263
Athlete Role Model Influence	.242	.062	.237	3.883	.000	.274	.241	.228

a. Dependent Variable: Switching Complaint Behaviour

A second hierarchical regression was conducted to test hypothesis fourteen. Table 28 shows that for the first step in the hierarchical regression, the multiple R (0.297) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.088$, $F(3,246) = 7.905$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 29), for the demographic profile: male gender, business course and international student status. The introduction of the athlete role model influence variable into the second step of the hierarchical regression caused R^2 to change from 0.088 to 0.193 (see Table 28). The multiple R (0.440) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.193$, $F(4,245) = 14.691$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 29). The R Square Change statistic and the Sig. F Change value shows that the athlete role model influence variable makes a significant unique contribution of 10.5% to the variance of favourable word-of-mouth behaviour after the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 28: Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour Model Summary Hierarchical Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.297 ^a	.088	.077	1.539
2	.440 ^b	.193	.180	1.450

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 29: Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour ANOVA Hierarchical Regression

ANOVA ^c						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.144	3	18.715	7.905	.000 ^a
	Residual	582.398	246	2.367		
	Total	638.543	249			
2	Regression	123.527	4	30.882	14.691	.000 ^b
	Residual	515.016	245	2.102		
	Total	638.543	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence

c. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

The standardised regression coefficient (Beta = 0.338, $p < 0.001$) for the athlete role model influence variable was significant (see Table 30). Hence, hypothesis fourteen was fully supported as the athlete role model influence variable explained 10.56% of the unique variation in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour when the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 30: Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour Hierarchical Regression

Model		Coefficients ^a							
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.704	.212		12.772	.000			
	Gender	.293	.219	.082	1.337	.183	.089	.085	.081
	Business Course = 1	.542	.197	.168	2.751	.006	.182	.173	.168
	International student status	.770	.219	.215	3.521	.001	.233	.219	.214
2	(Constant)	1.046	.354		2.953	.003			
	Gender	.004	.213	.001	.020	.984	.089	.001	.001
	Business Course = 1	.402	.187	.125	2.145	.033	.182	.136	.123
	International student status	.692	.207	.194	3.352	.001	.233	.209	.192
	Athlete Role Model Influence	.418	.074	.338	5.662	.000	.371	.340	.325

a. Dependent Variable: Favourable Word-of-Mouth

Hypothesis fifteen was tested with a third hierarchical regression. Table 31 indicates that for the first step in the hierarchical regression, the multiple R (0.340) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.116$, $F(3,246) = 10.736$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 32), for the demographic profile: male gender, business course and international student status. The introduction of the athlete role model influence variable into the second step of the hierarchical regression caused R^2 to change from 0.116 to 0.179 (see Table 31). The multiple R (0.423) was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.179$, $F(4,245) = 13.341$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 32). The R Square Change statistic and the Sig. F Change value shows that the athlete role model influence variable makes a significant unique contribution of 6.3% to the variance of brand loyalty after the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 31: Brand Loyalty Model Summary Hierarchical Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.340 ^a	.116	.105	1.466
2	.423 ^b	.179	.165	1.416

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence

Table 32: Brand Loyalty ANOVA Hierarchical Regression

ANOVA ^c						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	69.237	3	23.079	10.736	.000 ^a
	Residual	528.827	246	2.150		
	Total	598.064	249			
2	Regression	106.964	4	26.741	13.341	.000 ^b
	Residual	491.100	245	2.004		
	Total	598.064	249			

a. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1

b. Predictors: (Constant), International student status, Male Gender, Business Course = 1, Athlete Role Model Influence

c. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

The standardised regression coefficient (Beta = 0.262, $p < 0.001$) for the athlete role model influence variable was significant (see Table 33). Hypothesis fifteen was fully supported as the athlete role model influence variable explained 6.3% of the unique variation in brand loyalty when the demographic profile dimension are controlled for.

Table 33: Brand Loyalty Hierarchical Regression

Coefficients ^a									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.606	.202		12.918	.000			
	Gender	.149	.209	.043	.714	.476	.049	.045	.043
	Business Course = 1	.731	.188	.234	3.889	.000	.250	.241	.233
	International student status	.779	.208	.225	3.740	.000	.245	.232	.224
2	(Constant)	1.366	.346		3.948	.000			
	Gender	-.067	.208	-.019	-.323	.747	.049	-.021	-.019
	Business Course = 1	.626	.183	.200	3.418	.001	.250	.213	.198
	International student status	.721	.202	.208	3.575	.000	.245	.223	.207
	Athlete Role Model Influence	.313	.072	.262	4.338	.000	.301	.267	.251

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

6. Discussion

The discussion is presented in four sub-sections. The first sub-section addresses the first research objective, which was to explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y. The second sub-section addresses the second research objective, which was to investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour. The third sub-section explains the significance of the research to the marketing discipline and the fourth and final sub-section discusses the limitations of the research project as well as identifying areas for further research.

6.1 Research Objective One

The first research objective was to explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y. To address this research objective, the following two research questions were developed: 1) Do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models?; and 2) What association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status) and their consumer-related behavioural intentions?

6.1.1 Research Question One

The first research question was: do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models? In order to answer this research question, three hypotheses were developed and tested and are re-listed below.

H₄₋₆ Generation Y's athlete role model influence is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.

The hypotheses listed above were fully supported as Generation Y's athlete role model influence was positively correlated at the $p < 0.001$ level to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. These results suggest that Generation Y do in fact consider sport celebrities as important role models. These findings support the results of Bush et al. (2004),

Clark et al. (2001) and Martin and Bush (2000) who found that celebrity athletes act as role models for Generation Y based on their studies conducted in the USA. The similarities between this study's results and those of Bush et al. (2004), Clark et al. (2001) and Martin and Bush (2000) may be explained by Hofstede's (1984) cultural framework. Hofstede's (1984) culture classification suggests that Australian's and Northern American's are expected to behave in a similar manner in relation to consumer behaviour. As a result it is not necessarily surprising that the results of this Australian study are similar to those conducted in the USA.

Given that Generation Y consider sport celebrities as important role models, Australian marketing-practitioners and advertisers should strongly consider using sport celebrities as spokespeople to endorse products and brands to the important Generation Y segment. Generation Y are considered to be an important consumer segment in Australia as the sheer size of this cohort is substantial (Heaney, 2007). Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimate that 17.22% of the Australian population are members of Generation Y (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). In contrast Heaney (2007) suggests that over 27% of the Australian population are members of Generation Y. Steven's et al. (2003) identifies Generation Y as a vital consumer segment of the sport marketplace and claimed that Generation Y were important to marketers and advertisers who look to utilise celebrity athletes in promotional material. Martin and Bush (2000) also emphasised that organisations and marketing-practitioners can make significant strides in reaching members of Generation Y by partnering with influential sport celebrities that Generation Y consider to be role models. The findings of this thesis support the results of Martin and Bush (2000) in that Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models and therefore athlete endorsement strategies are likely to be effective in reaching the important and large Generation Y segment.

6.1.2 Research Question Two

The second research question was: what association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status)

and their consumer-related behavioural intentions? To answer this research objective, six hypotheses which are re-listed below, were developed and tested.

- H₁₋₃ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) is positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn, at the zero order level.
- H₇₋₉ Generation Y's demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) will each explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.

The results show that business course and international student status are positively correlated to product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Business course and international student status explained more of the variance in Generation Y's perception of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Gender was found to be insignificant as a predictor of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Business course and international student status are important variables because they drive Generation Y's perceptions of product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty.

These findings suggest that members of Generation Y who study a business-related degree or are international students are more likely to engage in product switching and complaint behaviour in comparison to members of Generation Y who are not studying a business-related degree or are not international students. Students studying a business-related degree at Swinburne University may be more likely to engage in product switching and complaint behaviour as they are considered to be business-savvy. Swinburne business students are 'capable in their chosen professional, vocational or study areas' (*Bachelor of Commerce at*

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia 2009). Business students may be more likely to engage in product switching and complaint behaviour than non-business students because they have a greater understanding of 'business'. Furthermore, selecting a course at university is considered to be a high-involvement decision (Wilhelm, 2004). Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) argue that the decision for international students to study abroad is also considered to be high-involvement and high-risk. Consumers are more likely to be critical or extensively evaluate the performance of a product when the purchase involves a high-involvement purchase decision (Neal, Quester & Hawkins, 2004). Therefore business and international students are likely to extensively evaluate their choice of university and course selection as their decision to study a course, or study abroad, is considered to be a high-involvement purchase decision. Neal et al. (2004) suggest that when customer's experience dissatisfaction, that is when perceived performance fails to meet their expectations, customer's may engage in product switching and complaint behaviour. Therefore business and international students may be more likely to engage in product switching and complaint behaviour as a result of experiencing dissatisfaction with a product.

Marketing-practitioners targeting Generation Y and specifically seeking to influence Generation Y to switch products, may find it beneficial to target students studying a business-related degree or international students given that these students engage in this behaviour. Furthermore, marketing-practitioners who seek to retain Generation Y consumers or who find that Generation Y customers are switching from their product to a competitor may find it beneficial to target business students and international students in their promotions. This could be achieved by engaging business and international students through media sources. Marketing-practitioners and advertisers should consider the positioning of promotional material and utilising sport celebrities in promotions. For example, promotional material should be placed in areas likely to reach business and international students. Areas of interest may include international student services or building facilities that are frequently attended by business students on university property. Sport celebrities should also be used in these promotions. Sport celebrities with

international profiles, such as tennis professional Roger Federer, are likely to appeal to international students. Whilst international sport celebrities appeal to business students also, domestic sport celebrities are also likely to appeal to the business student segment. Further research may focus on identifying the sport celebrities that the Australian Generation Y segment consider to be role models.

Despite business students and international students being more critical than their non-business and domestic student counterparts, the findings suggest that those in Generation Y who study a business-related degree or are international students are also more likely to engage in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour. Neal et al. (2004) explain that satisfied customers are likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communications about a brand or product. Customer satisfaction occurs when perceived performance equals or exceeds customer expectations (Rittichainuwat, Qu & Mongkonvanit, 2002; Tsang & Qu, 2000). Furthermore the results of this study also indicate that members of Generation Y who study a business-related degree or are international students are also more likely than non-business students and local students to show loyalty towards brands. Neal et al. (2004) suggests that when product performance exceeds a customer's expected performance, the outcome will be satisfaction and sometimes loyalty. Therefore business and international students are likely to engage in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour or show loyalty towards a brand when they experience satisfaction with a product. Marketing-practitioners and advertisers who target the important Generation Y segment and specifically seek to influence members of Generation Y to spread positive word-of-mouth or enhance their brand loyalty may find it beneficial to target students studying a business-related degree or international students given that these students engage in these activities.

6.2 Research Objective Two

The second research objective was to investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour. Addressing this research objective required answering the third

research question: what are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y?

6.2.1 Research Question Three

The third research question was: what are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y? To answer this research question the following hypotheses were developed and tested.

- H₁₀₋₁₂ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in their perception of product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty in turn.
- H₁₃₋₁₅ Generation Y's athlete role model influence will explain unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour; favourable word-of-mouth behaviour; and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student) are controlled for in turn.

This study found that sport celebrities have a positive influence on Generation Y's product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. The findings indicate that Generation Y's athlete role model influence explained unique variation in product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty once the demographic profile (male gender, business course and international student status) was controlled for.

These results revealed that Generation Y perceive sport celebrities as important in influencing product switching and complaint behaviour. This finding is particularly interesting considering that Bush et al. (2004) discovered that there was not a significant relationship between Generation Y's athlete role model influence and product switching and complaint behaviour based on their study which was conducted in the USA. The difference between this research and Bush et al.'s (2004) findings could possibly be explained by differences in the samples. There

are two significant differences between the samples. First of all, this study had a gender imbalance. The current study had thirty-two fewer females participate or 19% fewer females than Bush et al. (2004). Bush et al. (2004) did find that there was not a significant relationship between female members of Generation Y athlete role model influence and product switching and complaint behaviour. Therefore it is also possible that the differences in the samples relating to gender were not the cause for the difference in the findings concerning product switching and complaint behaviour. The second significant difference in the samples was associated with the age of the respondents. Bush et al.'s (2004) sample contained 58% of respondents aged seventeen years old or younger and did not have any respondents above eighteen years old. This thesis did not have any respondents below the age of seventeen and 67.6% of the respondents were older than eighteen. This finding suggests that marketing-practitioners and advertisers who seek to encourage Australian Generation Y consumers to switch products or express complaint behaviour about another product or brand should utilise sport celebrities to endorse their products or brands.

The findings of this thesis also suggest that sport celebrities influence Generation Y to discuss products or brands in a positive manner and spread positive word-of-mouth about products or brands. Furthermore, sport celebrities influence Generation Y when they make brand choices and enhance Generation Y's brand loyalty. These findings are consistent with Bush et al. (2004) who found that sport celebrities were important in influencing Generation Y to engage in favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Therefore the findings of this study indicate that sport celebrities are vicarious role models as they act as socialisation agents by influencing the consumer-related behavioural intentions of Generation Y. This finding reinforces and is consistent with Martin and Bush (2000), Clark et al. (2001) and Bush et al.'s (2004) findings. Marketing-practitioners and advertisers who aim to encourage the Australian Generation Y segment to spread positive word-of-mouth or seek to enhance brand loyalty among Generation Y consumers should use athlete endorsement strategies as a form of brand/product advertising and communication.

6.3 Significance of Research

The literature review section of this thesis identified that there is a gap in the existing literature concerning the influence of sport celebrities on the purchase intentions of the Australian Generation Y segment. In order to address this gap in the literature, two research objectives were developed. The first research objective was to explore the concept of sport celebrities as role models for Generation Y. Addressing this research objective led to the following two research questions: 1) Do members of Generation Y consider sport celebrities as role models?; and 2) What association is there between Generation Y's demographic profile (gender, business course and international student status) and their consumer-related behavioural intentions? The second research objective was to investigate whether or not sport celebrity role models influence Generation Y's purchase intentions and consumer-related behaviour. This research objective led to the development of the third research question: what are the specific consumer-related behavioural intentions that the *sport celebrity influence* has on members of Generation Y?

This study has made a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge by identifying that the Australian Generation Y segment considers sport celebrities to be role models. The implication for marketing-practitioners and advertisers is that sport celebrities should be utilised in promotional material as promotional material containing sport celebrities is likely to be effective in reaching the Australian Generation Y segment.

The findings also show that the members of the Australian Generation Y segment, who study a business-related degree or are international students, are more likely than non-business or domestic students to engage in: product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. This is a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge and suggests that marketing-practitioners and advertisers should target business and/or international students when they seek to influence the Australian Generation Y segment to engage in: product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Promotional material should be positioned in areas

likely to reach business and international students. Such promotional material could involve athlete endorsements as sport celebrities have been identified as role models for Generation Y.

The current research has further contributed to the body of knowledge by highlighting that the Australian Generation Y segment are influenced by sport celebrities to engage in: product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty. Marketing-practitioners and advertisers who aim to influence Australian Generation Y consumers to engage in products switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and/or brand loyalty, should strongly consider utilising influential sport celebrities to endorse their products or brands.

6.4 Limitations and Areas for Further Research

There are three limitations of this study which are associated with the sample utilised in this thesis. The first limitation is that there is an imbalance of genders within the sample. The sample consisted of 182 males, or 73% of the respondents and 68 females or 27% of the total sample. Further research may explore the differences in sport celebrity influence on the behavioural intentions of female and male members of Generation Y. Given that the vast majority of the respondents in this study were male, making significant conclusions regarding the differences in perceptions between males and females would be difficult.

The second limitation is that this study was conducted on members of Generation Y from one university in Australia. One could argue that this sample may not represent all Australian members of Generation Y. Further research may involve exploring the influence of sport celebrities on a more diverse geographical sample. This could involve exploring Generation Y behavioural intentions on a sample consisting of members of Generation Y from different cities or geographical locations across Australia.

The third and final limitation is that the sample used in this study contained a large proportion of the youngest members of Generation Y. A total of 66.4% of the respondents were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one. Therefore an implication for this study is that applying the findings to Generation Y as a whole may be too broad. The findings of this study may be more applicable to the younger segment of Generation Y (respondents between seventeen and twenty-one years old). Further research may explore the influence of sport celebrities on a sample that consists of a more even spread of the age groups that make up Generation Y.

Finally, another area worth further research is identifying the sport celebrities which are considered to be role models by the Australian Generation Y segment. This type of study should also identify why Generation Y consider these sport celebrities as role models. This would assist marketing-practitioners and advertisers in selecting sport celebrities to endorse their products and brands more successfully.

7. Conclusions

Generation Y are considered to be an important consumer segment who represent enormous commercial potential for marketers and organisations. The importance of Generation Y extends to the sports marketplace. Within advertising and promotion the use of sport celebrities to endorse products or brands has become common practice (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005a; Stevens et al. 2003). Sport celebrities are often paid large sums of money to endorse products and brands. However the question must be asked: what influence, if any, do sport celebrities have on the important Generation Y segment?

This study revealed that sport celebrities are role models for Generation Y and are important in influencing their purchase intentions. Sport celebrities specifically influence Generation Y to switch products and/or engage in complaint behaviour, spread positive word-of-mouth, and also enhance the loyalty shown towards brands. This study has also shown that members of Generation Y who study a business-related degree or are international students, are more likely than non-business and local students to engage in product switching and complaint behaviour, spread positive word-of-mouth, and show loyalty towards brands.

It is vital that marketing-practitioners and advertisers understand the behaviour of Generation Y and the influence that sport celebrities can have on this segment in order to market products and brands more successfully when targeting Generation Y. Marketing-practitioners and advertisers should strongly consider utilising sport celebrities as endorsers given that sport celebrities are likely to be effective in reaching the Generation Y segment. Sport celebrities should particularly be utilised in promotional material when the objective of practitioners is to influence Generation Y to engage in: product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable word-of-mouth behaviour and/or brand loyalty. Additionally practitioners seeking to influence members of Generation Y to switch products, spread positive word-of-mouth or enhance their loyalty would find it beneficial to specifically target members of Generation Y who study a business-related degree at university or

international students. When targeting business and/or international students promotional material should be positioned in areas likely to be effective in reaching these students. Promotional material which contains sport celebrities and is targeted at business and international students is particularly likely to be effective in influencing product switching and complaint behaviour, favourable behaviour and brand loyalty given that Generation Y identified sport celebrities as important in influencing these purchase intentions and that business and international students were identified as being more likely than non-business and local students to engage in these activities.

Marketing-practitioners and advertisers need to be aware of the influence that sport celebrities can have on Australia's Generation Y segment. Sport celebrities should be utilised as endorsers and particularly when the objective of communications is to influence specific consumer-related behavioural intentions of Generation Y.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Measure of Constructs

Appendix 3: Cronbach's Alpha

Appendix 4: Ethics Clearance

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Good (morning/afternoon). I'm Ivan Buksa, a student studying for a Business Honours degree at Swinburne. For the research component of my degree I am collecting data for a study exploring the concept of sports celebrities as role models for Generation Y. I would like to find out whether or not celebrity role models influence intentions and behaviours of about 250 Swinburne Students. This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete and you may find that it provides you with some insights about yourself. All information you provide will be aggregated ensuring your privacy and confidentiality. Would you be willing to participate? (IF THE ANSWER IS NO SAY THANKYOU; IF THE ANSWER IS YES SAY: FIRST I MUST CHECK THREE THINGS TO SEE IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE). First, are you an HE student? (IF THEY SAY THEY ARE FROM TAFE SAY THANKYOU, BUT THE ETHICS APPROVAL IS FOR HE STUDENTS ONLY). Second, were you born between 1977 and 1991? (IF THEY SAY NO, SAY THANKYOU, THE ETHICS APPROVAL IS FOR GENERATION Y STUDENTS ONLY). Third, have you already been interviewed as part of this survey? (IF THEY SAY YES, SAY THANKYOU; IF THEY SAY NO CONTINUE TO READ THEM THE PROJECT AND INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION). Agreeing to take part in this survey is taken as your Informed Consent. Informed Consent means that you agree that your participation is voluntary and you understand that you are free to stop answering the questions at any time. You will not be asked to give your name ensuring your anonymity, but you will be asked for personal details of a general nature. The aggregate data from this study will be reported in an unpublished dissertation and may be published in academic, professional or news media.

As I read out some statements concerning sports celebrities as role models would you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement, using a 7 point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

1	My favourite athlete provides a good model for me to follow.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2	My favourite athlete leads by example.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3	My favourite athlete sets a positive example for others to follow.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4	My favourite athlete exhibits the kind of work ethic and behaviour that I try to imitate.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5	My favourite athlete acts as a role model for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to say positive things about products or brands to other people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to recommend products or brands to someone who seeks my advice.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to encourage friends or relatives to buy certain products or brands.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to buy fewer products from certain companies.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to take some of my purchases to other businesses that offer better prices.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to continue to do business with a certain company even if it increases its prices.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to pay more for products at one business even though I could buy them cheaper elsewhere.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to switch	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- to a competitor if I experience a problem with a company's service.
- 14 The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to other customers if I experience a problem with a company's service. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 15 The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to external agencies, such as the small claims tribunal, if I experience problems with a company's service. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 16 The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to complain to a company's employees if I see a problem with that company's service. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 17 The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to buy certain brands. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Finally some questions to help classify your answers:

- What is your Age as at the: 1st July 2008?
- What Course Are You Studying?
- Was English your level of instruction at: (a) Primary Level (5 to 11 years)
Yes No
- (b) Secondary Level (12 to 18 years)?
Yes No
- Are you an international student? Yes No
- What nation are you a primary citizen of:
- Record Participant's Gender: Female Male

Thank you for your participation.

Interviewer to sign to verify that it is a true and honest interview:

Date: __/__/2009

Appendix 2: Measure of Constructs

Appendix 2.1: Role Model Influence

My favourite athlete...

- 1. provides a good model for me to follow.
- 2. leads by example.
- 3. sets a positive example for others to follow.
- 4. exhibits the kind of work ethic and behaviour that I try to imitate.
- 5. acts as a role model for me.

(Source: Rich, 1997)

Appendix 2.2: Purchase Intentions

The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to...

- 1. say positive things about products or brands to other people.
- 2. recommend products or brands to someone who seeks my advice.
- 3. encourage friends or relatives to buy certain products or brands.
- 4. buy fewer products from certain companies.
- 5. take some of my purchases to other businesses that offer better prices.
- 6. continue to do business with a certain company even if it increases its prices.
- 7. pay more for products at one business even though I could buy them cheaper elsewhere.
- 8. switch to a competitor if I experience a problem with a company's service.
- 9. complain to other customers if I experience a problem with a company's service.
- 10. complain to external agencies, such as the small claims tribunal, if I experience problems with a company's service.
- 11. complain to a company's employees if I see a problem with that company's service.
- 12. buy certain brands.

(Source: Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996)

Appendix 2.3: Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour

The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to...

- 1. buy fewer products from certain companies.
- 2. take some of my purchases to other businesses that offer better prices.
- 3. switch to a competitor if I experience a problem with a company's service.
- 4. complain to other customers if I experience a problem with a company's service.
- 5. complain to external agencies, such as the small claims tribunal, if I experience problems with a company's service.
- 6. complain to a company's employees if I see a problem with that company's service.

(Source: Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996)

Appendix 2.4: Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour

The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to...

- 1. say positive things about products or brands to other people.
- 2. recommend products or brands to someone who seeks my advice.
- 3. encourage friends or relatives to buy certain products or brands.

(Source: Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996)

Appendix 2.5: Brand Loyalty

The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to...

- 1. continue to do business with a certain company even if it increases its prices.
- 2. pay more for products at one business even though I could buy them cheaper elsewhere.
- 3. buy certain brands.

(Source: Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996)

Appendix 3: Cronbach's Alpha**Table 34 - Cronbach's Alpha**

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Athlete Role Model Influence	.870	My favourite athlete... 1. Provides a good model for me to follow. 2. Leads by example. 3. Sets a positive example for others to follow. 4. Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behaviour that I try to imitate. 5. Acts as a role model for me.
Product Switching and Complaint Behaviour	.878	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to... 1. Buy fewer products from certain companies. 2. Take some of my purchases to other businesses that offer better prices. 3. Switch to a competitor if I experience a problem with a company's service. 4. Complain to other customers if I experience a problem with a company's service. 5. Complain to external agencies, such as the small claims tribunal, if I experience problems with a company's service. 6. Complain to a company's employees if I see a problem with that company's service.
Favourable Word-of-Mouth Behaviour	.915	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to... 1. Say positive things about products or brands to other people. 2. Recommend products or brands to someone who seeks my advice. 3. Encourage friends or relatives to buy certain products or brands.
Brand Loyalty	.866	The opinions of my favourite athlete influence me to... 1. Continue to do business with a certain company even if it increases its prices. 2. Pay more for products at one business even though I could buy them cheaper elsewhere. 3. Buy certain brands.

Appendix 4: Ethics Clearance

Appendix 4.1: Ethics Clearance Letter and Extension

Dear Ann and Ivan

SUHREC Project 2009/036 Exploring the influence of sports celebrities on
Generation Y Behavioural Intentions

Dr Ann Mitsis FBE Mr Ivan Buksa

Approved Duration: 24/04/2009 To 31/07/2009

I am pleased to advise that the Chair of SHESC3 (or delegated member) has approved the revisions and clarification as emailed by you on 17/04/2009 in response to previous communication (SHESC email 07/04/2009). The Chair wishes to thank you for the very clear way you set out your responses to the Committee.

Unless otherwise notified, human research activity in the project may commence in line with standard or any special conditions for on-going ethics clearance.

The standard conditions for ethics clearance include the following:

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the current National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.
- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.
- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.
- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project can be undertaken at any time.

Please contact me if you have any queries or concerns about on-going ethics clearance. The SUHREC project number should be cited in communication.
Best wishes with the project.

Yours sincerely

Anne Cain

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Dear Ann and Ivan

SUHREC Project 2009/036 Exploring the influence of sports celebrities on
Generation Y Behavioural Intentions
Dr Ann Mitsis FBE Mr Ivan Buksa
Approved Duration Extended to 31/10/2009

I refer to a request, submitted on your behalf by Dr Toby Harfield on 24 May 2009, seeking an extension of ethics clearance. There being no change to the protocol as approved to date, I am authorised to approve the extension in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions previously communicated and reprinted below.

Best wishes for the continuing project.

Yours sincerely

Keith Wilkins
Secretary, SUHREC

Appendix 4.2: Research Information Statement and Informed Consent Form

Exploring the Influence of Sports Celebrities on Generation Y Behavioural Intentions

I am currently undertaking research for my Business Honours degree. The purpose of the research is to explore the concept of sports celebrities as role models for Generation Y.

By participating in this research you might find that you will learn something about your own attitudes to sports celebrities as role models.

Between 50 and 250 Generation Y (aged between 18 and 32) Swinburne students will be invited to participate.

I will personally administer the questionnaire to both males and females at the Hawthorn campus. It should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your name will not be put on the questionnaire and only general personal information will be used ensuring your anonymity, confidentiality and privacy.

The outcome of this study will be an unpublished dissertation and possibly co-authored academic, professional or popular media reports. All reports on the study will only use aggregated data.

Agreeing to take part in this survey is taken as your Informed Consent. Informed Consent means that you agree that your participation is voluntary and you understand that you are free to stop answering the questions at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this project please contact my supervisor.

Ivan Buksa
BBus(Hons) Student

Dr Ann Mitsis
Supervisor
amitsis@swin.edu.au

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer, Office of Swinburne Research (H95),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122.
Tel (03) 9214 5218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or resethics@swin.edu.au