

It's in the jeans

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Sixty two percent of South Africans keep a keen eye on the jeans brands worn by others on the street. This is compared to a 26% global average, according to a recent global study conducted by Synovate.

Synovate surveyed around 7,700 people in South Africa, the United States, Canada, Brazil, France, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Serbia and Russia on all-things denim: fit, quantity, brand preferences and the amount people are willing to spend to achieve jeans nirvana. Here is what was found...

Price aside, Synovate asked respondents which **brand they would most like to own**. With no restrictions on answers - brands could be global or local - a third of all people chose a global and/or designer brand.

The clear global favourite is Levi's, with more than one in five respondents nominating the classic brand as their most preferred choice. This was as high as 45% in France. South Africans followed this trend with 32% labelling Levi's as their brand of choice, followed by Diesel jeans (7%). Around a third of all people in Malaysia, the United States and Serbia also chose Levi's!

Looking at the local brands which came up tops in South Africa, 8% of South Africans favoured Daniel Hechter jeans, 4% choose Woolworths and 3% said Mr Price RT Jeans were their brand of choice.

The Synovate jeans survey also looked at whether people **noticed jeans brands worn by celebrities**. An overall 26% agreed with the statement 'I notice the brands of jeans that celebrities wear in magazines'. South Africans ranked highest with 60% agreeing, this reinforcing the value of celebrity endorsements in the South African media and advertising industries.

Again, the countries who disagreed were intriguing, with the French topping the list at 94%, US at 84% and Canada at 88%. Perhaps with US magazines full of celebrity endorsements and style watches, people have become somewhat desensitised to the brands on famous bottoms.

Picking the perfect pair

A great pair of jeans can elevate an outfit from drab to fab and a person from woe to wow. Why, then, is it such a challenge for people, especially women, to find flattering jeans?

Forty five percent of all respondents agreed with the statement 'I find it very difficult to find a pair of jeans that fits perfectly'. People who have the hardest time are Serbians (59%), Americans (57%) and Canadians (53%). South Africans are in line with the global average of 45%.

Not surprisingly, more women (55%) than men (37%) reported difficulties in getting a perfect fit. This may be because women have higher expectations of how jeans should make them look and, potentially, lower self-esteem.

Synovate also asked female respondents to rank the jeans search against the similarly challenging quest for a swimsuit. Expecting the swimsuit search to inspire far greater despondency, we were surprised to find that 16% of women across the ten markets find this easier than buying jeans.

The Synovate jeans survey showed that 63% of women said buying jeans was easier than a swimsuit - and 10% said neither was! Canadian and American women faced the greatest difficulties with 30% and 28% respectively saying neither

purchase was an easy one. South African ladies on the other hand, appear to have little difficulty in choosing the perfect fit as 87% said that they find it easier than choosing a swimsuit.

Synovate asked respondents what **decision making factors** play the largest role in their end purchase decision. The global average indicates that the most important factor is that jeans are of good quality and will last a long time, with 50% of South Africans agreeing with this. The second most important factor to South Africans was that the jeans made them look slimmer (14%), followed closely by their fondness of the brand (13%).

What are South Africans prepared to **pay for the perfect pair**? Forty five percent of South Africans said that they were willing to pay up to R 308 for the perfect pair of jeans. Thirty nine percent said that they were willing to pay between R 309 to R 616 and only 2% were willing to pay between R 1548 and R 1848, the percentage clearly declining as prices increase.

When are jeans stylish and when are they inappropriate? Synovate asked people whether jeans were okay for the office or passé for parties and found that the style-conscious French have a different perspective from most others.

An overall 38% agreed that 'jeans are appropriate office attire' but this shot up to an amazing 87% in France.

Again this is in considerable contrast to the overall results, with 40% happily donning jeans for parties, with up to three quarters of all South Africans doing so.

45% of all respondents agreed that, given a choice, they would wear jeans every day. This figure rose to 68% in Serbia and 65% in South Africa.

CURIOSITIES

- Around two thirds of all American women have kept a pair of jeans that are too small for them in the hope that one day they will fit again.
- Of all women, Koreans have the easiest time buying jeans with 52% disagreeing with the statement 'I find it very difficult to buy a pair of jeans that fits perfectly'. Of men, Brazilians have the fewest hassles (67% disagree with the statement).
- When it comes to jeans, it seems one pair is not enough for most of our respondents. Across the nine markets surveyed, 31% of people own three or four pairs of jeans and another 29% own from five to 10 pairs.
- Globally, 44% of people expect to pay less than US\$40 for a pair of jeans and this is not just confined to lower income countries. 76% of US respondents selected US\$1-40 as the most they would pay - making Americans by far the lowest spenders for denim.
- Value appears to be the highest determinant of purchase when it comes to jeans with 39% of all respondents choosing 'They are good quality and will last a long time' and the most important decision making factor.
- Thirty six percent of South Africans own between five to ten pairs of jeans.

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