

# 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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