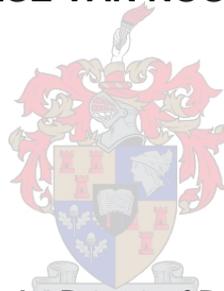


**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE
MEASUREMENT OF THE PERCEIVED
IMPORTANCE OF THE DIMENSIONS OF
APPAREL STORE IMAGE**

BY

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PROMOTERS: PROF R DU PREEZ & PROF EM VISSER

MAART 2008

STELLENBOSCH

DECLARATION

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

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ABSTRACT

The current apparel retail environment is marked by intense competitive activity. The key to survival is the implementation of effective differentiation strategies. Corporate and retail branding provides retailers with a powerful tool to differentiate themselves in the marketplace and store image is a vital component of this branding strategy. This exploratory study set out to investigate the underlying theoretical structure of store image. A store image scale was developed for the measurement of the perceived importance of store image.

The study adopted a five phase methodology, namely (1) construct definition and domain specification, (2) generation and judging of measurement items, (3) purification of the store image scale, (4) assessing the reliability and validity of the store image scale, and (5) assessing the perceived importance of the dimensions of store image in selected discount and specialty stores through practical implementation of the store image scale. The first two phases of the study resulted in a *Model of Store Image* delineating the underlying structure of store image which formed the basis for a store image definition, as well as a 232-item store image scale with established content and face validity. Phase 3 comprised two pilot studies that served to purify the store image scale. The first pilot study concluded in a 214-item scale that was deemed too lengthy for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment. The second pilot study resulted in a 55-item store image scale that was deemed acceptable for practical implementation. Correlation analysis provided support for the shortened version of the store image scale. The scale was not representative of all the sub dimensions associated with store image. This was reflected in the *Revised Model of Store Image*.

Phase 4 employed a mall-intercept research method. The sample population (n=534) consisted of apparel consumers, both male and female, between the ages of 20 and 60. They belonged to the black, coloured or white population groups who patronised specific apparel retail outlets. Trained fieldworkers gathered the data at selected discount and specialty apparel stores.

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the data and results provided support for the reliability of the store image scale. The Atmosphere, Convenience, Institutional, and Promotion dimensions exhibited good model fit. The Facilities and Sales personnel dimensions, as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image* showed evidence of acceptable model fit. The Merchandise and Service dimensions demonstrated poor fit. Only the Sales personnel dimension showed convergent validity. Support was found for marginal convergent validity of the Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Promotion, and Service dimensions, as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image*. The Institutional and Merchandise dimensions did not exhibit convergent validity. Apart from the Convenience and Service dimensions,

discriminant validity for all dimensions was established. Item analysis identified seven scale items for deletion which could potentially result in better model fit of the individual dimensions as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image*. The deletion of these items could contribute to increased convergent and discriminant validity.

For purposes of Phase 5 the data gathered during Phase 4 was submitted to statistical analysis. Results indicated that discount and specialty apparel store consumers ranked the Atmosphere, Promotion, Merchandise, Institutional, and Sales personnel dimensions similarly in perceived importance. Discount apparel store consumers ranked the Facilities and Convenience dimensions higher, whilst specialty consumers ranked the Service dimension higher. However, the differences in ranking for all dimensions remained relatively small for both store types. Statistical differences in the perceived importance of only two dimensions, namely the Institutional and Service dimensions were found.

The study culminated in revised 48-item store image scale. A *Final Model of Store Image* and definition of store image were proposed as point of departure for future research.. The main implications for retailers were formulated as:

- ◆ The *Final Model of Store Image* identified the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image. Retailers should manipulate the tangible and intangible store attributes associated with these dimensions and sub dimensions to build a favourable store image. Due to the gestalt nature of store image it is imperative that all store image dimensions are presented in a cohesive and consistent manner.
- ◆ The store image scale will enable retailers to ascertain which dimensions are salient to their target consumers. These dimensions should be incorporated in the retail strategy.

OPSOMMING

Die huidige klere kleinhandel omgewing word gekenmerk deur sterk kompetisie. Die sleutel tot sukses is die implementering van effektiewe strategieë vir onderskeiding in die mark. Die ontwikkeling van korporatiewe en kleinhandel handelsmerke is 'n kragtige middel waarmee kleinhandelaars hulles in die mark kan onderskei en winkelbeeld is 'n belangrike element in die handelsmerk strategie. Hierdie verkennende studie poog om die onderliggende teoretiese struktuur van winkelbeeld te ondersoek. 'n Winkelbeeld skaal is ontwikkel vir die meting van die waargenome belangrikheid van die dimensies van winkelbeeld.

Die studie berus op 'n vyf-fase metodologie, naamlik (1) konstruk definisie en domein spesifikasie, (2) generering and beoordeling van meet items, (3) verfyning van die winkelbeeld skaal, (4) evaluering en assessering van die geldigheid en betroubaarheid van die winkelbeeld skaal, en (5) assessering van die waargenome belangrikheid van die dimensies van winkelbeeld in geselekteerde afslag- en spesialiteitswinkels deur die praktiese implementering van die winkelbeeld skaal. Die eerste twee fases van die studie het gelei tot die daarstelling van 'n *Model van Winkelbeeld* wat die onderliggende struktuur van winkelbeeld uiteensit. Die model het as basis gedien het vir die winkelbeeld definisie, sowel as 'n 232-item winkel beeld skaal waarvan die inhoud- en gesigsgeldigheid bevestig is. Fase 3 het twee loodsstudies ingesluit om die winkelbeeld skaal verder te verfyn. Die eerste loodsstudie resulteer in 'n 214-item skaal. Die lengte van die skaal was problematies vir praktiese implementering in die klere kleinhandel omgewing. Die tweede loodsstudie het gelei tot 'n 55-item winkelbeeld skaal wat as aanvaarbaar beskou is vir praktiese implementering. 'n Korrelasie analise het die verkorte weergawe van die winkelbeeld skaal ondersteun. Die skaal het nie al die subdimensies wat met winkelbeeld geassosieer word verteenwoordig nie en gevolglik is 'n *Hersiene Model van Winkelbeeld* ontwikkel.

In Fase 4 is gebruik gemaak van 'n opname buite winkels as navorsingstegniek. Die steekproef (n=534) het klereverbruikers, beide manlik en vroulik asook tussen die ouderdomme van 20 en 60 betrek. Swart, kleurling en blanke bevolkingsgroepe wat by spesifieke kleding kleinhandelaars koop, is ingesluit. Opgeleide veldwerkers het die data-insameling by geselekteerde afslag- en spesialiteitswinkels uitgevoer.

Bevestigende faktoranalise is gebruik om die data te ontleed en die betroubaarheid van die winkelbeeld skaal is bevestig. Resultate het aangedui dat die modelpassing van die Atmosfeer, Gerief, Institusionele, en Promosie dimensies as goed beskou kan word. Die Fasiliteite en Verkoopspersoneel dimensies, sowel as die *Hersiene Model van Winkelbeeld* se passing kan as aanvaarbaar beskou kan word. Die Handelsware en Diens dimensies se passing was swak. Slegs die Verkoopspersoneel dimensies se konvergerende geldigheid kon bevestig word. Die resultate dui op gedeeltelike konvergerende geldigheid ten opsigte

van die Atmosfeer, Gerief, Fasiliteite, Promosie, en Diens dimensies, sowel as die *Hersiene Model van Winkelbeeld*. Die konvergerende geldigheid van die Institusionele en Handelsware dimensies is nie bevestig nie. Behalwe vir die Gerief en Diens dimensies, is diskriminerende geldigheid vir al die dimensies uitgewys. Item ontleding het daarop gedui dat sewe items oorweeg moet word vir weglating. Dit kan moontlik lei tot beter model passing van die individuele dimensies en die *Hersiene Model van Winkelbeeld*. Hierdie welating van items sou die konvergerende en diskriminerende geldigheid kon verbeter.

Die data wat ingesamel is gedurende Fase 4 is ook onderwerp aan statistiese analise vir die doel van Fase 5. Die resultate het daarop gedui dat afslag- en spesialiteitswinkelverbruikers die Atmosfeer, Promosie, Handelsware, Institusionele, en Verkoopspersoneel dimensies soortgelyk rangorden op grond van waargenome belangrikheid. Verbruikers van afslagwinkels het die Fasiliteite en Gerief dimensies hoog aangeslaan terwyl dié van spesialiteitswinkels eerder die Diens dimensie prioriteit gegee het. Die verskil tussen die dimensies se belangrikheid vir beide winkeltipes was egter relatief klein. Statistiese verskille in die waargenome belangrikheid vir slegs die Institusionele en Diens dimensies is gevind.

Die studie kulmineer in 'n hersiene 48-item winkelbeeld skaal. 'n *Finale Model van Winkelbeeld* sowel as 'n definisie van winkelbeeld word voorgestel as vertrekpunt vir verdere navorsing. Die belangrikste implikasies vir kleinhandelaars is soos volg geformuleer:

- ◆ Die *Finale Model van Winkelbeeld* het die dimensies en sub dimensies van winkelbeeld geïdentifiseer. Kleinhandelaars moet die tasbare en ontasbare winkeleienskappe wat met hierdie dimensies en sub dimensies geassosieer word manipuleer om 'n gunstige winkelbeeld te bou. Vanweë die gestalt aard van winkelbeeld is dit noodsaaklik dat alle winkeleienskappe as 'n geheel en konsekwent voorgehou word.
- ◆ Die winkelbeeld skaal sal kleinhandelaars in staat stel om te bepaal watter dimensies belangrik is vir hul teikensegment. Hierdie dimensies behoort in die kleinhandel strategie geïnkorporeer te word.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVES

The South African apparel retail industry is a multi-billion dollar industry and has experienced strong growth since 2000. This industry generated total revenues of \$6.1 billion in 2004, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.6 % from 2000 to 2004, compared to a CAGR of 0.7 % for the global industry. Rising consumer income and confidence suggest a continued positive performance in the future, with a projected CAGR of 3.9 % for the 2004-2009 period driving the industry value to \$7.4 billion in 2009 (Datamonitor, 2005). The South African economic growth rate increased by 4.9 % in 2005 from 2004 and the retail industry, together with wholesale, hotels and restaurants, contributed 0.8 % to this increase. The apparel industry contributed 19.2 % of the total income of the retail industry and was the largest contributor to net profit before tax at 39 %. Apparel retail also represented 18.4 % of the total expenditure in the retail industry. The trade industry, including retail and wholesale trade, made the single largest contribution to total employment in South Africa in 2005 at 22.2 %, whilst the apparel industry accounted for 21.4 % of the total number of people employed specifically in the retail industry (Statistics South Africa, 2005b; Statistics South Africa, 2005c; Statistics South Africa, 2006). It is evident that the South African apparel industry is a highly profitable, growing industry that contributes significantly to the growth of the South African economy, specifically the retail industry, as well as being an important source of employment. However, the apparel retail environment is defined by intense competitive activity, market complexity and fast-paced dynamism. Retailers are faced with unique challenges to achieve sustainable growth and it has become vital for retailers to differentiate themselves in the marketplace, thereby gaining a competitive advantage.

The potential differentiating power associated with establishing a strong corporate brand has received growing recognition and underpins a new approach to retail management. Specifically, all elements of the retail process should be aligned to focus on corporate branding as an important source in maintaining credible differentiation (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Carpenter, Moore & Fairhurst, 2005). Corporate branding is based on the interplay between corporate strategy, culture and image and necessitates the alignment of the internal resources and capabilities of the corporation with external factors and demands (Burghausen & Fan, 2002; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). The internal communication of the corporate strategy results in a corporate identity which is embedded in the corporate culture (Markwick & Fill, 1997; Stuart, 1999; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). This corporate identity is the corporation's strategically planned and purposeful presentation of itself to all its relevant stakeholders. It is imperative that the corporate identity be communicated in a consistent manner within the

corporation, as well as externally to all stakeholders, to ensure a coherent and satisfying brand experience. By adopting an integrated marketing communication approach, corporations fulfil an important prerequisite for comprehensive brand presentation (Haynes, Lackman & Guskey, 1999; Mitchell, A., 1999; Stuart & Kerr, 1999). A consistent and positive corporate identity contributes to a favourable corporate image. Corporate image is based on the perception of the corporation by its relevant stakeholders and, over time, leads to a positive corporate reputation (Alessandri, 2001).

The retail store is the culmination of all the elements associated with the corporate brand and allows consumers, as key stakeholders, to actively experience and interact with the brand. Therefore, the retail store brand becomes a vital component of the corporate brand (Van Tongeren, 2004). A retailer enjoys high retail brand equity when consumers respond more favourably to its marketing activities than to its competitors. Thus, retail brand equity serves as impetus to consumer behaviour (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

Store image forms the basis and is an integral component of retail brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). Store image formation relies on the perception of store attributes, including both the tangible and intangible components associated with the store environment. The perceived importance of these store attributes vary by consumer target market, retailer and product group. It is, therefore, imperative that retailers ascertain which store attributes are salient to their target market and confirm that there is congruity between consumers' perceived store image and the retailer's perception of the store image. This will ensure that consumer expectations are met (Lindquist, 1974-1975; Osman, 1993).

However, the dynamic nature of the apparel retail environment results in consumer expectations being in a continuous state of change. Apparel consumer behaviour is impulsive and fickle by nature and is characterised by an era of increased demand for individual needs and preferences to be met. Specifically, consumer needs are changing at a more frequent pace, creating a higher demand for newness. Consumers are revising their apparel wardrobes more often, even within a single season. This exerts pressure on retailers to become more pro-active in order to address the fast-paced and ever-changing nature of the apparel retail environment driven by consumer demand and expectations (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006, Berry, Carbone & Haeckel, 2002; Newman & Foxall, 2003; Newman & Patel, 2004). In addition, consumers are no longer satisfied with an offering of products and services only. They demand an in-store experience that addresses their emotional needs and expectations. Consumers' interaction with the store environment shapes their experience and thus store image becomes salient in ensuring that consumer expectations are met (Morrison, 2006; Osman, 1993; Van Tongeren, 2004). Store attributes also serve as important brand contacts and are integral to integrated marketing communication. Each store attribute becomes a potential marketing vehicle communicating the brand to the consumer and it is,

therefore, essential that they are presented in a consistent and cohesive manner (Kliatchko, 2005; McGrath, 2005; Naik & Raman, 2003).

It is evident that consumer perceptions of the store attributes associated with store image contribute to the development of retail brand associations. Favourable perceptions will lead to positive, strong and unique retail brand associations, allowing retailers to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the mind of their consumers, thus gaining a competitive advantage. By implication, a positive store image should increase the differential effect of a retailer, compared to other retailers, and is critical to achieving high brand equity acting as input to consumer behaviour and store performance (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Hartman & Spiro, 2005). Store image, therefore, is a vital component of apparel retail success in the current challenging environment marked by intense competitive activity and underpins sustainable growth associated with increased revenue and profitability.

Store image and its associated store attributes provides retailers with an essential and powerful tool in their retail brand strategy. Through the manipulation of these attributes, retailers are able to create a unique, positive store image as perceived by consumers. This highlights the need for retailers to ascertain which dimensions and sub dimensions, including specific store attributes, associated with store image are perceived as important by their target consumers. The identified salient dimensions and sub dimensions of store image should be incorporated in retail brand strategies and should serve as basis for allocating resources to optimise their return on investment. This will allow retailers to differentiate themselves successfully in the marketplace and achieve high brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). In addition, this will ensure that retailers achieve image congruity, thereby meeting consumer needs and preferences (Osman, 1993). It therefore is imperative that retailers be provided with a measurement instrument to gauge the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions associated with store image by their target consumers. Such a store image scale will empower retailers to manage their store image and contribute significantly to survival in the volatile apparel retail market.

A review of store image literature, however, highlights the distinct lack of a reliable and valid scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of apparel store image. Reliability and validity are necessary prerequisites to consistent and accurate measurement and the lack of validity, in particular, seriously impairs the ability to draw legitimate inferences from the scale that was employed in a specific earlier research study (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). This lack of a reliable and valid scale prevents retailers from obtaining an accurate assessment of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image for their target consumer. By implication, retailers are unable to capitalise on the potential benefits associated with a positive store image, thereby experiencing a detrimental effect on their

ability to successfully differentiate themselves in the marketplace. This study will attempt to fill this void by developing a store image scale to measure the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of apparel store image for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment.

Further to this, scale development is a critical element in the advancement of a fundamental body of knowledge in a field of study contributing to the quality of research and theory (Churchill, 1979; Peter, 1979). In addition, a necessary prerequisite for scale development is a clear theoretical domain specification and construct definition (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). An overview of store image research highlights the lack of consensus on what constitutes the store image domain and construct definition. This study will develop a conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables from a review of store image research, which will serve to specify the store image domain. A theoretical model delineating the underlying structure of store image, including the dimensions and sub dimensions associated with the construct, will be developed and tested, culminating in the proposal of a store image definition. Thus, this store image study will be relevant to apparel professionals and academics and attempt to fill the current void of a clearly defined store image domain specification and construct definition.

This research study, therefore, is timely and will make a significant theoretical and practical contribution to store image research. From a theoretical perspective, the study will clearly outline the store image domain specification and construct definition through the development of two theoretical models, as well as proposing a comprehensive store image definition. This provides apparel professionals and academics with insight into the store image construct, enabling them to further advance the fundamental body of knowledge in the store image field of study. From a practical point of view, the study will provide retailers with a store image scale to ascertain the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image by their target market and allow them to incorporate these in their retail strategies. This will enable retailers to create a unique, positive store image in the minds of their target consumers, thus differentiating themselves from their competitors in the highly competitive, complex and fast-paced apparel retail industry.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The research problem that directed this research study was: **What is the underlying theoretical structure of apparel store image? How can the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions underlying apparel store image be measured?**

The broad objective of this study was to develop a scale with acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image.

From this broad objective, specific literature-related objectives were formulated for this study:

1. To delineate the existing domain specification of store image from available literature;
2. To develop a conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables;
3. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of the definition and underlying structure of store image from the review of available literature;
4. To develop a theoretical model delineating the underlying theoretical structure of store image;
5. To propose a definition of store image; and
6. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of store image dimensions and sub dimensions from the review of available literature.

Objectives were set to be met by empirical study. Specific objectives to be addressed in the scale development process were formulated as follows:

7. To develop a scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of apparel store image;
8. To purify the developed scale to illustrate acceptable reliability;
9. To develop and further refine this scale for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment;
10. To implement the developed scale to assess whether it illustrates acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity; and
11. To assess the model fit of the developed scale on the proposed model of the underlying theoretical structure of store image.

Further objectives were formulated to be addressed through the practical implementation of the developed scale:

12. To measure the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores; and
13. To investigate whether the perceived importance of store image dimensions differed between selected discount and specialty apparel stores.

Lastly, the following objectives were formulated regarding the implications and recommendations of this research:

14. To formulate the implications for apparel retailers regarding the practical implementation of the developed scale; and
15. To formulate relevant recommendations for future research.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study was designed to meet the set objectives and provide answers to the research problem (see Chapter 3). The study was exploratory in nature and relied on a mall intercept survey research method. The mall intercept method allows for respondents to be exposed to stimuli pertaining to store image, and is also associated with a high degree of sample control, increased quality of data, high response rate, efficiency and ease. For the last phase of the study, an *ex post facto* research design was adopted to allow for investigating the differences between two groups which differ on an independent variable, i.e. store type, with regard to the dependent variable, i.e. perceived importance of store image. Thus, the variables included in the study were not manipulated (Section 3.5.1). The scale development process was conducted in five distinct phases, namely (1) domain specification and construct definition, (2) generation and judging of measurement items, (3) purification of the store image scale, (4) assessing the reliability and validity of the store image scale, and (5) assessing the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale.

Phase 1 involved an extensive literature review of current store image research. This culminated in a proposed conceptual theoretical model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables and served to specify the store image construct domain. In addition, a model delineating the underlying structure of store image was proposed, culminating in a proposed definition of store image. This phase served as the basis for generating measurement items in Phase 2, which were submitted to expert and sample population judging. These two phases were concerned with establishing the content and face validity of the store image scale.

Phase 3 comprised two pilot studies consisting of convenience samples of student respondents. The scale was purified after the first pilot study based on the calculated coefficient alphas, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations. Results from exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, in conjunction with coefficient alphas, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations were employed for scale purification after the second pilot study.

The mall-intercept research method was employed to gather quantitative data for Phase 4. The study population included both males and females of ages ranging from 20 to 60 and was representative of the black, coloured and white population groups of South Africa. Respondents were intercepted within the retail environment according to a screening process based on selected stores, respondent profile, and time of data collection. The developed scale was administered by trained fieldworkers in personal interviews. The data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis and interpreted together with the calculated coefficient alphas, inter-item correlations and item-total correlations to assess the reliability and validity of the store image scale. In Phase 5, the data gathered through the practical implementation of the store image scale in the previous phase were submitted to one-way ANOVA to ascertain the perceived importance of the store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores. In addition, the differences in the perceived importance of the store image dimensions between selected discount and specialty apparel stores were discussed. The analysis of the data resulted in conclusions regarding the research objectives.

1.4 RESEARCH REPORT SEQUENCE

Chapter 1 has provided introductory perspectives on the research phenomenon, thereby establishing the motivation and relevance of the study. The research problem is defined, in addition, and the objectives for the study set. An overview of the methodology is also provided and the research study delineated. In Chapter 2, the importance of store image within the broader context of corporate retail branding is discussed. A literature review is presented to describe the domain specification of the store image construct, as well as to identify and describe the existing knowledge of the definition and underlying structure of store image from available literature. The literature review culminates in two proposed theoretical models of store image and gives an overview of available literature on the identified dimensions and sub dimensions of store image.

The research methodology for the empirical study is described in Chapter 3. The research design is discussed with reference to the five distinct phases in the scale development process. The research method, sample population, as well as the procedures for data gathering and statistical analysis for each of the phases, where relevant, is described. In Chapter 4 the results of the study are presented. The results are discussed in relation to the formulated objectives of the study and linked to the relevant literature. Chapter 5 provides the conclusions reached through this study. The implications for apparel retailers are outlined and recommendations for future research are made.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section highlights the boundaries within which the current research study was conducted. These delimitations were controlled through the research design and include:

- ◆ **Sample population:** The sample population was defined as apparel consumers, both male and female, between the ages of 20 and 60, and belonging to the black, coloured or white population groups, patronising a specific retail outlet. Males and females were included in the study, since changes in gender roles have necessitated the consideration of both genders in consumer behaviour research (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Best, 2007). Respondents younger than 20 years were excluded from the study, since they represent the teenage market (Damhorst, Miller & Michelman, 1999; MacGillivray & Wilson, 1997; Miller, 2003; Moran, 2005; Taylor & Cosenza, 2002). Similarly, respondents older than 60 years were identified as the mature market and not included in the study (Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005; Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney, 1990; Moschis, 2003; Moschis, Curasi & Bellenger, 2004; Mueller & Smiley, 1995; Oates, Shufeldt & Vaught, 1996; Visser, 1994; Visser, Du Preez & Du Toit, 1996). Black, coloured and white respondents were included, but not Indians, since they constitute less than 5% of the population of the Western Cape, where the study was conducted (Statistics South Africa, 2005c). Consumers exiting a specific store were included in the sample population, since they were exposed to store-related stimuli and were able to form perceptions of the store based on their experience (Peter & Olson, 1990). Apparel discount and specialty stores were selected for this study to account for variation in store image perception based on store type (Hawkins et al., 2007). All retailers involved in the study were operating in the specified geographical area of data collection.

- ◆ **Geographical area:** Data were collected from two shopping malls within the greater Cape Town Metropolis, situated in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Two towns in the Western Cape, namely Paarl and Stellenbosch, were identified for data collection from street front stores. The rationale behind the mall and town selection was to ensure that the sample population included respondents from the black, coloured and white population groups.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided introductory perspectives on the research and the motivation for the study. The research questions were outlined and the broad objective of the study was stated. Specific literature-related objectives and objectives set for empirical investigation were formulated. A brief overview of the research methodology was given and the delimitations of the study were formulated.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature relating to this study, with special emphasis on establishing the domain specification and construct definition of store image. Domain specification and construct definition serve as an important first phase in the scale development process, providing a sound theoretical base as point of departure to develop and justify the research study (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The chapter addresses the specific literature-related objectives that were set for this study and were formulated as:

1. To delineate the existing domain specification of store image from available literature;
2. To develop a conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables;
3. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of the definition and underlying structure of store image from the review of available literature;
4. To develop a theoretical model delineating the underlying structure of store image;
5. To propose a definition of store image; and
6. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of store image dimensions and sub dimensions from the review of available literature.

In establishing the domain specification, an overview of the literature is given to highlight the importance of store image in consumer behaviour, together with a discussion of the relationship between store, corporate and brand image. The relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables is consequently investigated through a review of literature. This discussion culminates in a proposal for a theoretical model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. Lastly, limitations imposed on the proposed theoretical model, by variations in the research methodologies that were employed in the reviewed literature on store image, is discussed.

The discussion of the definition of the store image construct provides an overview of literature, highlighting the need for consensus on a definition, as well as the underlying structure of the store image construct. Consequently, the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image are delineated through a review of literature and amalgamated in a proposed model of the underlying structure of store image. Research findings on the dimensions

associated with store image are reported and the chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review.

2.2 STORE IMAGE DOMAIN SPECIFICATION

The measure of a construct needs to be grounded in a theoretical framework to have scientific relevance. Specifying the domain of a construct by clearly specifying the boundaries of the construct is instrumental in guiding scale development and assessing the validity of a construct (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). This section specifies the store image construct domain through a review of literature. Firstly, the broad context of corporate branding is established, by investigating the interplay between corporate strategy, culture, identity and image. Secondly, the relevance of store image within this context, and more specifically the context of the retail store brand, is discussed. Thirdly, a review of store image research is given, with special emphasis on the empirical findings of the relationship between store image and other consumer behaviour variables. Fourthly, the existing store image literature is amalgamated into a proposed theoretical model delineating the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. This section then concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the proposed theoretical model imposed on it by current research findings.

2.2.1 Corporate branding, strategy, culture, identity and image

The current business environment is marked by changes associated with the difficulty of maintaining credible differentiation. This is due to the imitation and homogenisation of the market place, as well as the fragmentation of traditional market segments due to consumers becoming more sophisticated and markets more complex. To address the need for differentiation in an era of increased competitive activity, retailers therefore need to implement differentiation strategies at the corporate level, thus requiring a new approach to retail management (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Retailers have to focus their attention and resources on establishing retailer brands to achieve sustainable growth and success in this increasingly competitive retail environment. The need for aligning all elements of the retail process to focus on the corporate brand, specifically, has received growing recognition. Retailers are thereby offered the potential power to differentiate themselves from their competition (Balmer & Gray, 2001; Bickerton, 2000; Bridson & Evans, 2004; Burt & Sparks, 2002; Carpenter et al., 2005; Dawson, 2002; Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Knee, 2002; Mitchell, 1999).

Knox and Bickerton (2003, p. 1013) define the corporate brand as "...the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation's unique business model". Corporate branding requires a holistic approach to brand management, involving the integration of the internal

activities of the organisation and an external focus on the needs of the market. This total brand integration requires a brand structure to be implemented at the corporation level, through a shared brand value and a total brand communication infrastructure, to ensure cohesion and consistency in the delivery of the brand (Bickerton, 2000; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Burghausen & Fan, 2002; Knee, 2002; Mitchell, 1999).

Hatch and Schultz (2003) posit that a corporate brand is formed on the basis of the interplay between corporate strategy, corporate culture and the corporate image. Corporate strategy is based on the definition of the core values associated with a brand, as well as the corporate philosophy and mission, and expresses top management's vision for the future of the retailer (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Stuart, 1999). The corporate strategy needs to be conveyed internally throughout the corporation, through organisational and management communication, to establish the values, beliefs and basic assumptions that embody the corporation and guide employee behaviour. Corporate culture thus manifests itself through the meanings and values that the members of the corporation hold and use. It is, therefore, evident that employees are becoming integral to the corporate brand and that their behaviour can reinforce or undermine the credibility of the brand, due to the consistency between their behaviour and the corporate brand. To establish a successful corporate brand, it is imperative that corporate strategy is linked directly to corporate culture (Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Stuart, 1999).

In addition to the importance of corporate strategy and culture within the corporate brand building process, the relevance of corporate identity should be considered. Corporate identity results from corporate strategy being fed through, via management and organisational communication, and it encompasses the corporation's visual presentation, as manifested through corporate behaviour, symbolism and communication. By implication, corporate identity is embedded in the context of the corporate culture (Alessandri, 2001; Burghausen & Fan, 2002; Markwick & Fill, 1997; Stuart, 1999; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Of particular relevance are the various forms of communication inherent to the outward presentation of the corporate identity. Corporate communication is composed of three forms, namely management communication, marketing communication and organisational communication (Abratt, 1989; Markwick & Fill, 1997). Both management and organisational communication are inherent to brand building and ensure that the corporate strategy is successfully internalised within the corporation and thus closely aligned with the corporate identity. The management of marketing communication should be emphasised, however, as it is vital to deliver a consistent, coherent and satisfying brand experience (Mitchell, 1999; Stuart & Kerr, 1999). Retailers should embark specifically on integrated marketing communication as an important prerequisite for comprehensive brand presentation (Haynes et al., 1999). Integrated marketing communication realises that all variables affecting stakeholders' experience of the corporate brand act as a potential marketing vehicle. These variables

should be integrated and managed in a consistent manner over time, thus realising the potential existence of synergy in which the combined effect of all communication media exceed the sum of the individual effects (Calder & Malthouse, 2005, McGrath, 2005; Naik & Raman, 2003).

The projection of the corporate identity through the total corporate communication mix leads to the formation of the corporate image, which is defined as the perception of the corporation by its stakeholders. The stakeholders include not only consumers, but also competitors, suppliers, corporate buyers, media, employees, shareholders, local communities, financial institutions, the government, and the general public (Abratt, 1989; Alessandri, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Markwick & Fill, 1997; Stern, Zinkhan & Jaju, 2001; Stuart, 1999). Employee behaviour is of particular importance in the formation of corporate image, due to the employee's influence on the brand as experienced by stakeholders. Corporate image should, therefore, be reflective of corporate culture and this highlights the need of congruent corporate image perceptions, both within the corporation and between the corporation and its stakeholders. Corporate image relies heavily on members of the corporation holding congruent perceptions of the brand, again emphasising the importance of internalising the corporate strategy throughout the corporation. Further to this, it is also imperative that a corporation's image of itself matches that of their stakeholders to ensure that stakeholder expectations are met. Being sensitive to any discrepancies in corporate images enables retailers to feed back into their corporate strategy, thus aligning their corporate strategy, corporate culture (including corporate identity) and corporate image (Burt & Sparks, 2002; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Osman, 1993).

Over time, a positive corporate image leads to a positive corporate reputation. The development of successful, sustainable corporate brands through the interplay of corporate strategy, culture and image is therefore imperative to retailers, since corporate reputation is associated with organisational performance and business survival (Alessandri, 2001; Burt & Sparks, 2002; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Markwick & Fill, 1997; Stuart, 1999; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). To successfully implement a corporate brand building process, management should implement organisational structures, practices, policies and operations, to guide corporate conduct and performance, thereby supporting and underpinning the corporate brand. The corporate brand thus becomes the concern of the entire corporation as shared responsibility spanning functional boundaries. Corporate strategy and culture, and by implication the shaping of the corporate identity and its communication to stakeholders, is within the control of the corporation. By further ensuring that any incongruence in the corporate images are addressed and fed back into the corporate strategy, retailers are ultimately able to exert control over their corporate image and reputation. It is, therefore, evident that retailers should continuously and increasingly invest in the corporate brand

building process to reap the substantial rewards associated with it (Burghausen & Fan, 2002; Cornelissen & Elving, 2003; Knee, 2002).

The above discussion established the context of corporate branding in the current retail environment. The next section will focus specifically on the importance of the retail store brand within this context, with special emphasis on store image.

2.2.2 Retail store branding and store image

Corporate branding serves as a powerful navigational tool to a miscellany of stakeholders, but most importantly, consumer buyer behaviour. By cultivating a corporate brand, retailers are able to identify and protect their retail offer by increasing their visibility, recognition and reputation. This enables retailers to optimise consumer responses, satisfaction and loyalty, as well as increase the degree of differentiation and preference in the marketplace, thereby achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Balmer & Gray, 2001; Burt & Sparks, 2002; Da Silva & Alwi, 2006; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). Consumers actively experience the corporate brand when interacting within the retail store environment. Thus, within the greater realm of the corporate brand, retailers should further focus their attention on the specific retail store brand, defined as the merchandise and services that a retailer offers, which differentiates it from its competitors (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

Where consumers respond more favourably to one retailer's marketing activities than to another, it could be argued that the specific retailer holds higher perceived retail brand equity as opposed to the other, thus emphasising the differential effect of the retail store brand. The equity that a retailer holds for consumers acts as an input to consumer behaviour. Therefore, building retail brand equity offers distinct potential rewards. Consumers associate an element of exclusivity with the retail store brand. This uniqueness is difficult to substitute and holds the potential for harnessing consumer loyalty (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Bridson & Evans, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2005; Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Hartman & Spiro, 2005; Johnson, Herrmann & Huber, 2006). Thus, by insulating a retailer from its competition, brand equity influences retailer performance through a direct impact on increased revenue and profitability, and an indirect impact on decreased costs (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Hartman & Spiro, 2005).

Store image serves as the basis and an integral component of retail brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Hartman & Spiro, 2005). Store image formation relies on the perceived importance of store attributes. The value placed on different store attributes varies by target market and retailer and will influence consumer perception, thereby determining the importance of the store attribute (Faircloth, Capella & Alford, 2001; Newman & Patel, 2004; Osman, 1993).

An important consideration in the evaluation of store attributes and the consequent store image formation is image congruence, i.e. the relationship between the store image and self-image. The greater the similarity between store and self-image, the more favourably the store is evaluated, leading to store satisfaction and preference. It is, therefore, imperative that store image is congruent with consumers' self-image and their consequent expectations of a store (Graeff, 1996; Grovers & Schorrmans, 2005; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000; Jamal & Goode, 2001; Osman, 1993; Quester, Karunaratna & Goh, 2000). To ensure image congruence, retailers need to ascertain which store attributes are perceived as important to their target market when deciding which retail store to patronise. These salient store attributes should be emphasised in the formulation of retail strategies. Furthermore, retailers need to monitor whether the implemented strategy is congruent with the consumer's perception of the store image, thus serving as feedback to direct the retail strategy in accordance with consumer expectations of the store (Osman, 1993).

In the current retail environment, however, consumer expectations change continuously (Newman & Foxall, 2003). Retailers are expected to deliver a consistent minimum level of utilitarian value, whilst gaining a competitive advantage by differentiating themselves and creating value for consumers through offering an exciting consumer experience, thereby building brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Berry et al., 2002; Bridson & Evans, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2005; Schultz, 2004). The experiential aspect associated with store patronage has a direct positive effect on perceived value, store loyalty, purchase amount, as well as number of items that are purchased (Scarpi, 2006). In order to reach consumers, a more consumer-centric approach should be followed through the unified orchestration of a specific, unique consumer experience. This necessitates managing the consumer experience with the same rigor as applied to the management of utilitarianism and functionality (Berry et al., 2002; Carpenter et al., 2005; Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Gilmore & Pine, 2002). Store image and the perception of store attributes are especially relevant in affecting the total consumer experience, since the composite perception of all store attributes contributes to the customer experience. Retailers, therefore, need to assess the expectations and perceived importance of store attributes, as they contribute to the consumer experience (Berry et al., 2002; Osman, 1993; Van Tongeren, 2004).

In addition to this, the store attributes perceived as important contributors to the consumer experience need to be managed in an integrated way over time, to ensure that the consumer experience is affected in the desired way (Calder & Malthouse, 2005). Thus, store attributes are of significant importance in integrated marketing communication, in which each store attribute acts as a potential marketing vehicle that communicates the brand to the consumer. Store attributes should therefore deliver a consistent brand message, ensuring that each attribute enhances the contributions of the other in the brand presentation (Kliatchko, 2005;

McGrath, 2005; Naik & Raman, 2003). In a competitive environment where consumers are inundated with growing volumes of competing marketing messages, integrated marketing communication is central to brand recognition and attitude (McGrath, 2005). Integrating the various store attributes in marketing communication generates both short-term financial returns, as well as building long-term brand value. In addition, it contributes to the achievement of high retail brand equity by creating strong retail brand awareness and a favourable store image (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005; Madhavaram, Badrinarayan & McDonald, 2005; Schultz, 2004).

It is evident that retailers are able to address the unique challenges associated with retail brand equity building by managing store image (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Faircloth et al., 2001). Through the manipulation of store attributes, retailers are able to develop strong and unique retail brand associations, i.e. store image (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Faircloth et al., 2001; Hartman & Spiro, 2005). A positive/negative store image increases/decreases the differential effect of a particular store, thereby having a direct effect on retail brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Faircloth et al., 2001; Hartman & Spiro, 2005). Store image therefore becomes a powerful tool in allowing retailers to grow, diversify and differentiate themselves in the marketplace by contributing to building a recognisable and legitimate retailer brand that is appropriate to the consumer target group and which will significantly influence the retail brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Knee, 2002).

To succeed, retailers need to ascertain which store attributes are salient to their target market, thereby ensuring image congruity and gauging consequent consumer expectations (Osman, 1993). Consequently, an understanding is gained of which store attributes contribute to the consumer experience and should be included in integrated marketing communication, enabling retailers to focus on these store attributes in the implementation of the retailing strategy. An ability to identify the salient store attributes allows the retailer to influence the benefits that consumers associate with them. This will affect the extra effort consumers are willing to expend to patronise the retailer and the priority consumers place on a retailer when shopping. Ultimately, the retailer will enjoy the benefits of repeat purchase behaviour and consumer loyalty, as well as the price premium consumers are willing to pay (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Osman, 1993). This highlights the need for developing a scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of store attributes as they contribute to the formation of store image, thus contributing not only to retail store branding, but also to the broader corporate brand.

This section established the relevance of store image in retail store branding and the building of brand equity. Further to this, it is evident that store image is an integral and complementary component in the formation and maintenance of a corporate image, thus contributing to the corporate branding process (Varley, 2005). The following discussion will

give an overview of empirical findings on the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables, to further delineate the store image construct domain.

2.2.3 Store image and related consumer behaviour variables

Extensive empirical research on the relationship between store image and other consumer behaviour variables has been undertaken. The research includes findings of consumer behaviour variables serving as independent variables influencing the perception of store image, as well as findings showing store image serving as a variable influencing various consumer behaviour variables. Consequently, the discussion will give an overview of store image literature and the empirical findings on the relationship between this construct and other consumer behaviour variables. Firstly, consumer behaviour variables employed as independent variables in predicting store image will be discussed, highlighting all antecedent consumer variables to the construct. Secondly, a review will be given of literature depicting store image serving as a variable in predicting consumer variables associated with it. This literature review includes research findings spanning more than three decades, to provide a broad overview of the construct domain, but does not profess to be inclusive of all related literature.

2.2.3.1 Consumer behaviour variables as independent variables in store image research

The relationship between various antecedent consumer behaviour variables and store image has been investigated. These variables can be grouped broadly into demographic variables, psychographics, socio-cultural variables, personal attributes, information sources, situational influences, shopping orientations, product-specific variables, and store-specific variables. Findings from the reviewed literature, of the relationship between these antecedent variables and store image, will be discussed in the following section.

Demographic variables: Although research often suggests that demographics may have an effect on the importance of retail attributes, the efficacy of demographic predictors is criticised (Gehrt & Yan, 2004). Nonetheless, demographics have been much researched in relation to store image, specifically regarding the variables of age, gender, level of education, marital status, number of children, occupation, residence/location, income level, social status and family life cycle.

Various store image studies investigated the relationship between **age** and store image. Lumpkin, Greenberg and Goldstucker (1985) studied the marketplace needs of elderly consumers. Their findings concluded that age groups within the elderly market differed in the importance they placed on store attributes. However, in other studies on elderly consumers,

no difference was found in their perception of store image (Moye & Giddings, 2002; Oates, Shufeldt & Vaught, 1996). Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan and Lapidus (1990) reputed that age is indicative of the consumer's responsiveness to store atmospherics. This is supported to a certain degree by results from Joyce and Lambert (1996), in a study on the variances in store image across different consumer segments, which showed that younger and older shoppers differ in their perception of store image. In a qualitative study on the large-size female apparel consumer, findings also indicated that the perceived importance of store attributes differ by age (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002). Odekerken-Schröder, De Wulf, Kasper, Kleijnen, Hoekstra and Commandeur (2001) found age to moderate the relationship between technical quality, as an indicator of store image, and store loyalty. A study on Spanish consumers' perceptions of USA apparel speciality retailers' products and services indicated that the influence of store image varied by age (Hyllegard, Eckman, Descals & Borja, 2005). However, the influence of age on consumer perceptions of store attributes is contradicted by other research (Gehrt & Yan, 2004; Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003).

A study on the elderly consumer indicated a relationship between **gender** and the perception of store image (Chowdhary, 1999). Conversely, Williams and Slama (1995) found that gender differentiates market mavens from non-mavens. In turn, the importance placed on evaluative criteria related to retail store selection, i.e. store attributes, differed between mavens and non-mavens. Odekerken-Schröder et al.'s (2001) study revealed that gender moderates the relationship between relational quality, referring to the opportunity for consumers to interact with other consumers during a retail encounter, in store image and store loyalty. In contrast, findings from other studies concluded that the perceived importance of store attributes does not differ by gender (Gehrt & Yan, 2004; Grossbart et al., 1990; Hyllegard et al., 2005; Joyce & Lambert, 1996).

Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) postulated **level of education** to be related to the perception of store image. Similarly, level of education was employed successfully to differentiate between shopping centre patronage factors as related to store image (Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977). However, these findings are contradicted by Grossbart et al. (1990). Bellenger et al. (1977) further successfully differentiated between the perception of store image-related patronage factors based on other demographic variables, including **marital status, number of children, occupation, residence, and income level**. Gehrt and Yan's (2004) study confirmed that store attribute importance is influenced by income level, although findings by Paulins and Geistfeld (2004) refuted this. The influence of occupation, marital status and location were also disproved in the literature (Gerth & Yan, 2004; Grossbart et al., 1990). Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992) indicated an indirect relationship between **social class** and **family life cycle** on the perceived importance of store image, with information sources acting as the mediator variable.

No definitive conclusions can be drawn on the influence of demographic variables on the perceived importance of store image, given the contradictory findings in the research. This is consistent with arguments that the efficacy of demographics is limited (Gehrt & Yan, 2004). The current marketplace is characterised by social diversity, competitive intensity and complexity, thus rendering traditional market segmentation based only on demographics inadequate. Retailers need to take a more holistic view of consumers and gain an understanding of their shopping motives, amongst others, thereby allowing them to meet consumer expectations of the store experience (Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Morrison, 2006).

Psychographic variables: Pronounced shifts in consumer attitudes and values fragmented the marketplace and it is becoming increasingly difficult to define, categorise and reach consumers. This highlights the need for deeper insight into consumer psychographics to enable retailers to anticipate and react to consumer needs and preferences (Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Morrison, 2006). It, therefore, is surprising that few studies have investigated the influence of psychographic variables on the perception of store image.

As far back as the late seventies, Bellenger et al. (1977) identified two types of shoppers based on their perceived importance of shopping centre attributes. The results indicated that these shopper types differed in terms of their lifestyle characteristics. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) tested a patronage model of consumer behaviour in a study on apparel shopping and found an indirect relationship between lifestyle and perceived store image with information sources and shopping orientation as mediator variables. The results from their study, however, did not support a direct relationship between lifestyle and store image perception. In studies on the elderly consumer, findings also indicated that lifestyle characteristics were related to store image perception (Huddleston et al., 1990; Oates et al., 1996). A few studies included more specific psychographic variables. Grossbart et al. (1990) studied consumers' environmental disposition, i.e. their values, beliefs, and sentiments toward the environment, and concluded that environmental disposition influenced consumers' responsiveness to store atmospherics as an indicator of store image perception. Findings by Erdem, Oumlil & Tuncalp (1999) indicated that perceived store image was influenced by the set of terminal and instrumental values viewed as important by consumers.

It can be concluded that psychographic variables influence store image perception directly or indirectly. Retailers should take cognisance of these findings and strive to gain a better understanding of their consumers' lifestyles, thereby to enable them to ascertain which store attributes are salient to consumers with different lifestyle characteristics. These store attributes should be emphasised in the retail strategy to allow retailers to create a more consumer-centric shopping experience. In achieving this, retailers will be able to differentiate themselves from their competitors and reap the financial awards associated with it (Morrison, 2006).

Socio-cultural variables: In an era of retail internationalisation, socio-cultural variables, including family life cycle, social class, sub-culture and, specifically, culture, are becoming increasingly important to retailers, since these variables provide insight into consumption variations across countries (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). It is particularly relevant in store image research, since the store image construct includes both tangible and intangible dimensions. When expanding into international markets, consumers are less familiar with the intangible dimensions of store image which develop with exposure to the retailer over time. Thus, it is imperative for retailers to gain an understanding of the socio-cultural variables of the international market to ensure that store image, specifically the tangible dimensions within their control, is transferred successfully (Burt & Carralero-Encinas, 2000). However, few studies have investigated the influence of socio-cultural variables on store image.

In a study on the patronage behaviour of apparel shoppers, social class and family life cycle were shown to have an indirect influence on store image through the mediator variables of information sources and shopping orientations (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992). Van de Velde, Pelton, Turnbull Caton and Byrne (1996) revealed that the root culture shared by Canadian and English consumers significantly influences their perception of store image. Research results further indicated that UK and Spanish consumers differed in their perception of a UK retailer's store image (Burt & Carralero Encinas, 2000). Differences between ethnic consumer groups with regard to the perception of store image, specifically as it relates to the social class perception of a store, were also verified (Kim & Han, 2000). Janse van Noordwyk (2002) also found differences between sub-cultural groups based on population group and their perceptions of store image in a study of the female large-size apparel consumer. Contrary to this, the findings of Gehrt and Yan (2004) did not indicate that ethnicity influenced the perceived importance of retail attributes.

These research findings allow preliminary conclusions to be drawn on the influence that socio-cultural variables have on store image perception. Results of two studies (Burt & Carralero-Encinas, 2000; Van de Velde et al., 1996) specifically suggest a relationship between culture and the perceived importance of store image. This should serve to remind retailers to acquire an understanding of the differences amongst consumers in different countries, to effectively adapt to cultural values in retail internationalisation (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). Although contradictory results concerning the influence of sub-cultural groups were found, retailers operating in markets characterised by sub-cultural diversity should not ignore the possible implications of differences in the perceived importance placed on store attributes.

Socio-psychological attributes: Self-image becomes an important variable in store image research, since congruity theory postulates that it leads to a favourable attitude and consumer

preference when a consumer's self-image is congruent with the store image. Conversely, image incongruence leads to a less favourable attitude and an adverse effect on consumer preference (Graeff, 1996). Self-image refers to the general mental picture individuals have of themselves, including both the physical and psychological person (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 2000). This concept is a vital component of the physical self incorporated in body image, the mental picture individuals have of themselves at any given moment in time (Kaiser, 1997).

A study on short, average-height, tall and big men investigated their body-cathexis, clothing and retail satisfaction, and clothing behaviour (Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll, 1990). The study found that men with different body types varied with regard to their satisfaction with store attributes. Thompson and Chen (1998) applied a means-end approach to the study of store image. Their study revealed that the importance of store attributes ultimately leads to eight consumer values, one of which was identified as self-image. Various studies have identified a positive relationship between self-image and brand image and brand perceptions, which can be applied to the perceptions of store image as it contributes to retail store branding. Specifically, Graeff (1996) found that self-image and brand image congruence serves as evaluative criterion in the attitude towards a brand. Results from Quester et al. (2000) also indicated that image congruency influences the consumer evaluation process. They also established that congruency is based not only on actual self-image, but also ideal self-image. Following on this, consumers tend to select brands that have a similar image to their ideal self-image (Hogg et al., 2000). A strong positive relationship between self-image congruency with a brand and consequent brand preference and satisfaction was verified by Jamal and Goode (2001).

The results from these studies provide unequivocal support for the importance of self-image congruence with store image. It is, therefore, imperative for retailers to ascertain the self-image of their consumers, as well as ensure that there is congruence between their self-image and store image. This further highlights the need to establish congruence between the consumer's perception of store image and the retailer's perception of their store, thus allowing the retailer to successfully predict consumer's perceived importance of store attributes and meet consumer expectations (Osman, 1993).

Information sources: The formation of store image is based on the perceived importance of store attributes that serve as evaluative criteria in store choice (Faircloth et al., 2001; Jin & Kim, 2003; Osman, 1993). Consumers typically engage in information search to establish the appropriate evaluative criteria to employ in identifying a solution to a recognised need (Hawkins et al., 2007).

Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) found an indirect influence of information sources, including store fashion promotions (personal shoppers, wardrobe consultants, in-store videos/demonstrations), fashion publications (fashion magazines, fashion catalogues), other media (newspaper advertisements, radio/TV commercials), and personal sources (friends/family advice, observing others) on the perception of store image via shopping orientations as mediator variable. Further to this, the study also established a direct relationship between information sources and store image perception. Williams and Slama (1995) studied purchase decision evaluative criteria of market mavens and, identified market mavens as an information source to other consumers. This study concluded that evaluative criteria, i.e. store attributes, were considered more important by mavens than non-mavens.

Information sources serve as a potential vehicle in integrated marketing communication. This emphasises the need for retailers to target identified information sources when considering their retail strategy, which results in a powerful and synergistic brand communications mix that reinforces a positive store image and retail brand (Kliatchko, 2005).

Situational influences: Situational influences frequently govern the perceived importance of store attributes and are thus an important consideration in store image research (Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot, 1999). Mattson (1982) included situational influences relating to time pressure and shopping for a gift versus for oneself in his study on store choice. The findings concluded that these situational influences did have an effect on store image perception. Similarly, Gehrt and Yan (2004) in their study identified time availability (plenty of time vs buying for oneself) and shopping task (buying a gift vs buying for oneself) as situational influences and concluded that retail attribute importance is influenced by situational factors. Van Kenhove et al.'s (1999) study on store choice found five task definitions to influence store attribute salience, namely urgent purchase, large quantities, difficult job, regular purchase, and get ideas. Moye and Kincade (2002) studied the influence of usage situations and consumer shopping orientations on the importance of the retail store environment. They identified three usage situations, namely the purchase of a dress to wear to (1) a formal social gathering, (2) a family gathering and (3) work or a community activity. The results of this study indicated that usage situation differentiated between the importance ratings of environmental dimension factors as they relate to store image.

Although the identified situational influences differ across the reviewed research studies, findings seem to be conclusive on the influence of situational influences on store attribute salience and the consequent formation of store image. Retailers need to bear this in mind when formulating their retailer strategies. It could prove valuable to identify situational influences relevant to their target market and identify corresponding store attributes to address them e.g. express checkout points, automated 24-hour stores, and shop-in-the-shop concepts to accommodate small, emergency and targeted purchases respectively.

Consumers are experiencing more demands on their time and retailers could gain an important competitive advantage by implementing time-saving strategies in-store (Mattson, 1982; Osman, 1993; Van Kenhove et al., 1999).

Shopping orientations: Shopping orientation consists of both a personal dimension (e.g. activities, interests, opinions, motives, needs and preferences) and a market behaviour dimension. The market behaviour dimension "...reflects the personal dimension and indicates needs and preferences for, *inter alia*, information sources, stores *per se* (patronage behaviour) and store attributes (including store image)" (Visser & Du Preez, 2001, p. 73).

Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) conducted a study to empirically test a patronage model of consumer behaviour, including the variables shopping orientations and store image. The results of this study indicated that shopping orientations predict the importance of store attributes. Moye and Giddings (2002) examined the retail approach-avoidance behaviour of older apparel consumers and identified three shopping orientation groups, namely brand conscious/loyal, convenience/time, and economic/price conscious. Their results indicated that these groups differed significantly on the importance placed on store attributes. Similarly, in a study on the influence that usage situations and consumer shopping orientations have on the importance of the retail store environment, six shopping orientations factors were identified (Moye & Kincade, 2002). These included the confident, brand conscious, appearance conscious, convenience/time, bargain, and decisive factors. The study concluded that there was a difference in the importance ratings of the environmental dimension factors for the shopping orientation clusters. Jin and Kim (2003) identified three consumer groups on the basis of shopping motives, which they labelled diversion, socialisation, and utilitarian. The results showed a difference amongst the three groups in their evaluation of discount store attributes. In a study on the perception of store attributes and overall attitude towards grocery retailers, four consumer clusters were identified on the basis of shopping motives. These included one-stop shoppers, time-pressed price shoppers, dedicated quality shoppers and demanding shoppers (Morschett, Swoboda & Foscht, 2005). In contrast, this study did not find consumers' shopping motives to have an impact on their perception of store attributes, although the results indicated that shopping motives have an impact on the consumer's attitude towards a retailer.

The review of literature reveals a lack of consistency in the identified shopping orientation groups. However, it can be concluded that shopping orientation is an important variable in store image research. Retailers should be aware of the different configurations of shopping motives that are present in the market that allow them to attribute other consumer characteristics to these subgroups. The identified subgroups could then be integrated into a customised retail strategy to ensure consumer satisfaction, considering not only functional

store attributes, but also emotional and long-term attitude elements (Morschett et al., 2005; Visser & Du Preez, 2001).

Product specific variables: When consumers engage in a purchase decision process, they often consider product choice prior to store choice (Hawkins et al., 2007). Thus, retailers need to evaluate consumers' perceptions of assortment and choice and ensure that their needs and expectations are met (Amine & Cadenat, 2003).

Jacoby and Mazursky (1984) investigated the relationship between brand and store image. Their results indicated that linking a favourably evaluated brand image with a relatively low store image will improve the perception of store image, whereas a favourably evaluated store image will be damaged if linked to products with a less positive brand image. Similarly, a study on the influence of brand recognition on retail store image concluded that brand image influences perceptions of retail store image (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) conducted a study on perceptions of store image and store brand image in the grocery sector. They concluded that specific store image variables acted as predictors of store brand image and that these store image variables were different for each store. Similarly, Vahie and Pasman (2006) found that private label brand quality perception is positively associated with store image quality and atmosphere. In addition, the affective perception of a private label brand is positively associated with store image convenience, quality and price/value. Findings from a study on efficient retail assortment concluded that consumers form a global assortment image of a store based on their perception of the available choice range across product categories (Amine & Cadenat, 2003).

It is evident, from the quoted results, that product specific variables influence the perception of store image. Brand image, including store brand/private brand label image, specifically, is an important consideration. It is imperative for retailers to ensure that the brand image of the merchandise they carry corresponds and reinforces their store image. Brand image can be seen as extensions of store image and contribute to store differentiation. In addition, store brands could potentially lead to store loyalty and serve to increase higher margin sales with more loyal consumers (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003).

Store-specific variables: Consumers' alternative evaluation in the store choice process is based on the comparison of alternative stores on the consumer's evaluative criteria, namely store attributes (Hawkins et al., 2007). The importance placed on individual store attributes provides insight into the consumer's preference for a particular store type and is beneficial to retailers when implementing retail strategy (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992).

Results from a study on the contribution of store image characteristics to store type choice, indicated that the importance placed on store image characteristics vary between specialty

and department stores (Schiffman, Dash & Dillon, 1977). A study by Thorpe and Avery (1983-1984) concluded that consumers of specialty stores, departmental stores and mass merchandisers differed in their perception of store image. Similarly, Amirani and Gates (1993) found that the importance of store image attribute varied across specialty, department, and mass merchandise stores. Joyce and Lambert (1996) postulated that store image varied by full-service, limited service and self-service stores. Discount stores, off-priced stores, specialty stores and departmental stores were included in a study on consumer expectations for service at apparel stores (Lee & Johnson, 1997). Results indicated that these store types differed with regard to expected consumer service, where service was integral to perception of store image. Mitchell and Kiral (1998) studied primary and secondary store-loyal customer perceptions of grocery retailers. Their findings confirmed that store attributes vary by store types, namely food discounters versus full-service retailers. Results from a study by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) indicated that the significance of the effect of store attributes on store preference varied by store type. This study also included department, discount and specialty stores. In a study on supermarket format choice, results confirmed that store attributes differed with regard to their influence on choice amongst store formats, including discount stores, hypermarkets, and conventional supermarkets (Solgaard & Hansen, 2003). Carpenter and Moore (2006) found significant differences in the importance placed on attributes by consumers frequenting specialty, supermarket, super centre and warehouse club stores respectively.

The results from the reviewed literature indicate that the importance placed on store attributes and consequent store image perception differs across store types. Retailers should take cognisance of these findings to ensure that the salient attributes specific to their store type are incorporated in the retail strategy. This will enable retailers to meet and exceed consumer expectations and exert an influence on consumer preference (Solgaard & Hansen, 2003).

2.2.3.2 Consumer behaviour variables as dependent variables in store image research

A review of store image literature encompasses various studies in which the relationship between store image perception and dependent consumer behaviour variables has been investigated. The variables that are included can be grouped into attitude, emotional state, decision-making, patronage preference, approach/avoidance behaviour, patronage behaviour, store satisfaction, store loyalty, and product-specific attributes. The relationship between these variables and the perception of store image will consequently be discussed.

Attitude: Attitude refers to "...a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event" (Ajzen, 1988, p.3). The relationship between perception of store image and attitude is particularly relevant to store image research, since attitude influences consumer behaviour (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004). Ward, Bitner and

Barnes (1992) investigated the measurement of the prototypicality and meaning of retail environments. Their results confirmed that store environments, as they relate to store image, are significantly and positively correlated with the attitude toward the retail service, in this instance fast food restaurants. Further to this, Koo (2003) found that various Korean discount retail characteristics have positive influences on the attitude towards discount retail stores.

Although few studies have investigated the relationship between perception of store image and consumer attitudes, initial results seem to indicate that such a relationship exists. Retailers need to gain an understanding of which store attributes contribute to favourable consumer attitudes. This allows retailers to place emphasis on these attributes in the retail strategy and enables them to communicate the desired store image to consumers (Ward et al., 1992; Koo, 2003).

Emotional state: Consumers' emotional state influences their consumer behaviour. The two dimensions of pleasure and arousal specifically determine whether a consumer will respond positively or negatively to a consumption environment, including store environments (Solomon, 2002). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found that store atmosphere, as a dimension of store image, is represented psychologically by consumers in terms of two major emotional states, namely pleasure and arousal. Research results also indicated that the service dimension of store image has a significant positive effect on feelings governing consumption (Grace & O'Cass, 2005).

Similar to attitude, few store image studies considered emotional state as a variable in empirical research. Preliminary results do suggest, however, that retailers should not ignore the effect of perceived store image on a consumer's emotional state and the consequent influence on their behaviour. Retailers should aim to effectively simulate positive feelings in their customers and enhance their store experience. Managing the consumer experience by focusing on offering emotional benefits enables retailers to create an unequalled competitive advantage (Berry et al., 2002; Grace & O'Cass, 2005).

Decision-making: Consumers employ store attributes as evaluative criteria when engaging in a decision-making process regarding store choice (Faircloth et al., 2001; Jin & Kim, 2003; Osman, 1993). De Klerk et al. (1993) followed a qualitative approach to investigate the influence of the store exterior and the appearance of sales personnel on consumer decision-making. Their findings conclude that these store attributes determine a consumer's decision to enter a store, as well as the decision to accept advice from the sales personnel. In addition to this, Sen, Block and Chandran (2002) found that the store entry decision is influenced by a store's window displays. However, their results also indicated that product purchase decision is more strongly associated with category-related product information than store-related information gained from window displays.

The research seems to indicate that specific store attributes are salient in the consumer decision-making process, although limited findings prohibit drawing definitive conclusions. In an era in which consumers are inundated with information and are too time-constrained to sufficiently weigh up alternatives, retailers should identify the salient store attributes employed by consumers as evaluative criteria in reaching decisions, thus becoming enabled to anticipate and effect these decisions (Phillips, 2005).

Patronage preference: Sheth's (1983) proposed model of patronage preference contends that personal and product determinants influence a consumer's shopping motives, whilst market and company determinants influence consumers' shopping options. Shopping motives and shopping options combine to influence the consumer's shopping predisposition, referring to "...relative shopping preference, among an evoked set of outlet alternatives, for a specific product-class purchase situation" (Sheth, 1983, p. 11). In this research, store image is identified as a market determinant influencing shopping options.

Amirani and Gates (1993) employed an attribute-anchored conjoint approach in their study on measuring store image. They found that an attribute-anchored conjoint model is able to predict store preference. A similar study by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) investigated consumer perceptions of retail store attributes for a set of department, specialty and discount apparel stores. Their results indicated that consumer perceptions of store attributes had a statistically significant effect on store preference. Thang and Tan (2003) conducted an empirical assessment of the multi-attributes of store image. Their findings confirmed the relationship between consumer perception of store image and preference for retail stores.

Store image research verifies the relationship between store image and store preference as proposed by Sheth's model of patronage preference. By manipulating store attributes, retailers are able to enhance a favourable store image, thus leading to consumer preference (Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003; Thang & Tan, 2003)

Approach/avoidance behaviour: In the proposed model for describing consumer responses to an environment, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) contend that these responses can be represented by approach and avoidance behaviour. Approach behaviour relates to a consumer's "...willingness to physically stay in an environment, to look around or explore the environment, to verbally express preference for the environment, and to approach, communicate, and perform specific tasks in an environment" (Moye & Giddings, 2003, p. 263). In contrast, avoidance behaviour is characterised as a consumer's "...desire to leave and not to return to an environment" (Moye & Giddings, 2003, p. 263).

In their research, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found that store atmosphere influenced the consumer's emotional states of pleasure, arousal and dominance. They further confirmed that emotional states serve as mediator between store atmosphere and approach/avoidance responses. Results from a study of fast food restaurants indicated that the perception of store attributes influenced the perceived typicality of a fast food restaurant, which, in turn, influenced approach/avoidance patronage (Ward et al., 1992). Summers and Hebert (1998) concluded that lighting levels of merchandise display, as an attribute of store image, influenced approach/avoidance behaviour. Moye and Giddings (2002) confirmed that store attributes influence the approach/avoidance behaviour of elderly consumers.

Results from the reviewed literature seem conclusive on the influence of perception of store image on approach/avoidance behaviour. Identifying store attributes that contribute to approach behaviour will serve retailers well. This assumes that retailers need to gain an understanding of their target consumer's needs and integrate this knowledge into their retail strategy (Moye & Giddings, 2002).

Patronage behaviour: Patronage behaviour is related to a set of acts that a consumer performs for the purpose of making an acquisition from a store. This includes acquisition of information, purchase behaviour and post-purchase behaviour. Patronage behaviour includes non-buying related activities performed for the purpose of acquiring information about one or more stores, whereas buying related activities are performed for the purpose of acquiring merchandise from one or more stores (Darden & Dorsch, 1989). Awareness of the influence of perception of store image on patronage behaviour will equip retailers to model their store attributes to reflect the desired store image.

Various studies confirmed the influence of perceived store image on patronage behaviour. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) found that the importance that consumers place on store attributes influences patronage behaviour. These results were confirmed by Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal and Voss (2002). An indirect influence of the service dimension of store image was established through the mediator variables of perceived value for money, consumer satisfaction and consumption feelings (Grace & O'Cass, 2005). Results from Newberry, Klemz and Boshoff (2003) indicate that purchasers, compared to non-purchasers, differ in regard to the importance they place on attributes in a service context.

Results highlight the need for retailers to identify the store attributes that influence patronage behaviour. By implication, retailers need to understand the perceptions of potential consumers in the short term, as well as cultivate a long-term image to attract future consumers. This will guide retailers on the efficient allocation of resources within the retail strategy in order to achieve the greatest return (Newberry et al., 2003).

Consumer satisfaction: Consumer satisfaction refers to "...the outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the store) meets or exceeds expectations" (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998, p. 501). In their study on the relationship between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty, Bloemer and De Ruyter (1998) concluded that satisfaction with the store is a mediator in the relationship between store image and store loyalty. Koo (2003) similarly studied the inter-relationship between store images, store satisfaction, and store loyalty, among Korean discount retail patrons. These findings supported the hypothesis that discount retail store attributes have a positive impact on store satisfaction. Various other studies also confirmed that the perceived importance of store attributes influence consumer satisfaction (Chang & Tu, 2005; Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Miranda, Kónya & Havrila, 2005). Research further indicated that store attributes have different effects on consumer satisfaction. Specific store attributes serve as satisfaction-maintaining factors, whilst different attributes appear to be satisfaction-enhancing factors (Gómez, McLaughlin & Wittink, 2003).

The findings in the research corroborate the relationship between store image perception and consumer satisfaction. Retailers are advised to allocate resources and implement strategies to capitalise on this relationship, since sales performance and store revenue is linked to the level of consumer satisfaction (Gómez et al, 2003).

Store loyalty: Store loyalty refers to "...the biased (i.e. non random) behavioural response (i.e. revisit), expressed over time, by some decision-making unit with respect to one store out of a set of stores, which is a function of psychological (decision-making and evaluative) processes resulting in brand commitment (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998, p. 500). Building loyalty with consumers is prevalent in the current retail environment where consumers are continuously exposed to propositions from competing retailers (Miranda et al., 2005; Osman, 1993).

Odekerken et al. (2001) investigated the impact of a specific store image-related attribute, namely quality, on store loyalty. They identified three types of quality, namely technical quality, i.e. merchandise selection and product availability in the store; functional quality, i.e. the extent to which sales personnel are courteous, friendly and provide information and assistance; and relational quality, i.e. the opportunity for consumers to affiliate with other individuals in a retail encounter. Their findings indicated that a higher level of relational quality leads to a higher level of store loyalty. However, results showed that a higher level of technical and functional quality did not influence store loyalty. Koo (2003) found that Korean discount store attributes have a positive influence on store loyalty, whilst findings from Chang and Tu (2005) confirmed the same for Taiwanese hypermarket consumers. In contrast, Bloemer and De Ruyter's (1998) study found that perception of store image does not have a direct positive effect on store loyalty, rather an indirect positive effect on store loyalty through store satisfaction, i.e. a mediator effect. Miranda et al. (2005) found that different store

attributes contribute to store satisfaction and store loyalty, which could provide a possible explanation for the contradictory findings obtained by Bloemer and De Ruyter (1998).

The findings are significant in confirming a relationship, whether direct or indirect, between the perception of store image and store loyalty. Through the strategic management of store image perception, retailers are able to sufficiently isolate consumers from their competitors by building store loyalty, thus providing them with a strategic advantage in the current dynamic retailing atmosphere (Miranda et al., 2005; Osman, 1993).

Product-specific attributes: In the current complex retail environment, consumers have to rely on the global impressions of a store and brand/product to draw inferences and guide their purchase decisions. Store image and product/brand image are related constructs and the product offering assists in positioning a retailer against its competitors within a market sector (Stern et al., 2001; Varley, 2005).

A study on the effects of store image on perceptions of quality by Wheatley and Chiu (1977) established that high quality was consistently associated with a high prestige store image. When Jacoby and Mazursky (1984) investigated the link between brand and retailer images, they found that a positive brand image is likely to be damaged if it becomes associated with retailers with less positive images. Their results indicated that association with retailers with a more favourable image than the brand will improve the brand image slightly or not at all. In research on the effect of perceived store image on consumers' perceptions of designer and private label clothing, findings showed that apparel prestige is more favourable for clothing from a high prestige image store than for a low prestige image store for both designer and private label clothing (Baugh & Davis, 1989). Support for a positive association between consumers' perceptions of store image and store brand image was found in a study on the influence of store image on store brand attitude and store own brand perceptions (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003). Similarly, Semeijn, Van Riel and Ambrosini (2003) confirmed store image perception to be an important predictor of attitude towards a store brand when they examined consumer evaluations of store brands.

These research results confirm the influence of perception of store image on consumer perceptions of brands and products. This is of particular relevance to retailers with regard to the increasing importance of store brands. Store brands typically result in higher product profit margins, thereby contributing directly to improved retailer performance. By identifying the store image attributes that influence brand/product image, retailers are able to incorporate these attributes in the retail strategy and manage them accordingly. Thus, they are able to influence consumer perceptions of store brands and reap the associated financial rewards. Strong store brands also offer retailers leverage to increase product profit margins on national

brands, which offers further financial benefits to the retailer (Baltas, 2003; Pauwels & Srinivasan, 2004; Vahie & Paswan, 2006).

2.2.3.3 Conclusion

The overview of store image research has highlighted some of the current empirical findings on the relationship between perceived store image and related consumer behaviour variables. Results from studies on the relationship between **demographic variables** and perceived store image were marked by contradicting findings. Initial support for the relationship between perception of store image and lifestyle, as a **psychographic variable**, has been found, although one study indicated that shopping orientations act as mediator in the relationship between lifestyle and store image perception. The relationship between store image and other psychographic variables (i.e. environmental disposition and values), however, were only supported by isolated findings. Isolated findings supported the direct relationships between **socio-cultural variables** and the perception of store image. One study found that socio-cultural variables have an indirect relationship with store image perception mediated by shopping orientation. The relationship between **socio-psychological variables** and perceived store image were supported only by isolated findings. Studies on the relationship between **information sources** and store image perception provided initial support. Similarly, support was found in the literature for the relationship between **situational influences** and the perception of store image. However, the specific situational influence variables included within each study differed significantly. Except for the results from one study the findings on the relationship between **shopping orientation** and store image perception were more conclusive, although the shopping orientation groups that were identified in specific studies differed. Consistent support for the relationship between **product-specific attributes** and **store-specific attributes**, and perception of store image were found.

Results from studies on the influence of perceived store image on consumer behaviour variables offer less contradicting results. Although only a few studies investigated the relationship between perception of store image and **attitude** and **emotional state**, results are indicative of the influence of perception of store image on these variables. Research provides evidence for the relationship between perceived store image and **decision-making**, although the types of decisions vary greatly in the reviewed literature. Strong support is found for the relationship between both **patronage preference** and **approach/avoidance behaviour** and perception of store image. However, a number of studies indicated that the relationship between perception of store image and approach/avoidance behaviour is mediated by emotional state. Similarly, support was found for the influence of perceived store image on **patronage behaviour** and **store satisfaction**. Research investigating the relationship between perceived store image and **store loyalty**, however, concluded with contradicting

findings. Although a direct positive relationship between perception of store image and store loyalty was supported, only partial support for this relationship was found in one study, whereas another study found an indirect positive relationship. Lastly, the influence of perception of store image on **product-specific variables** was supported, although the specific attributes included in the literature varied greatly.

The results of the different store image studies are rife with contradictions, isolated research findings and inconsistent research methodologies. This provides a challenge to drawing definitive conclusions from the research, emphasising the need to qualify any inferences drawn from the results of the studies. The next section will conclude the overview of literature on the relationship between store image and consumer behaviour variables by amalgamating current research into a proposed theoretical model, as well as highlighting the limitations associated with the theoretical model.

2.2.4 Proposed conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables

Figure 2.1 presents the proposed conceptual theoretical model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. Central to this model is the interaction between store attributes and store image, where store image formation is based on the consumer's perception of all the attributes associated with a store (Faircloth et al., 2001; Jin & Kim, 2003; Osman, 1993). The model delineates the influence that consumer behaviour variables have on store image. In addition, the influence of store image on various related consumer behaviour variables is also presented. Relationships with confirmed support in research findings are indicated with a solid line. Where results from the literature reported contradictory findings on a relationship between store image perception and a consumer behaviour variable, the relationship is represented by a broken line.

Considering the antecedent variables to store image, the model proposes a relationship between demographics and perception of store image. However, due to conflicting findings in the research, this relationship is presented by a broken line. The direct influence of psychographics, socio-cultural variables and shopping orientations on the perception of store image, similarly, was not supported by all research findings (broken line). Research findings confirmed support for the influence of psychographics and socio-cultural variables on both information sources and shopping orientations, as well as the direct relationship between information sources with store image perception. These relationships are presented as a solid line in the model. Furthermore, the literature supported the relationship between socio-psychological attributes, situational influences, product-specific variables and store-specific variables with the perception of store image (solid line).

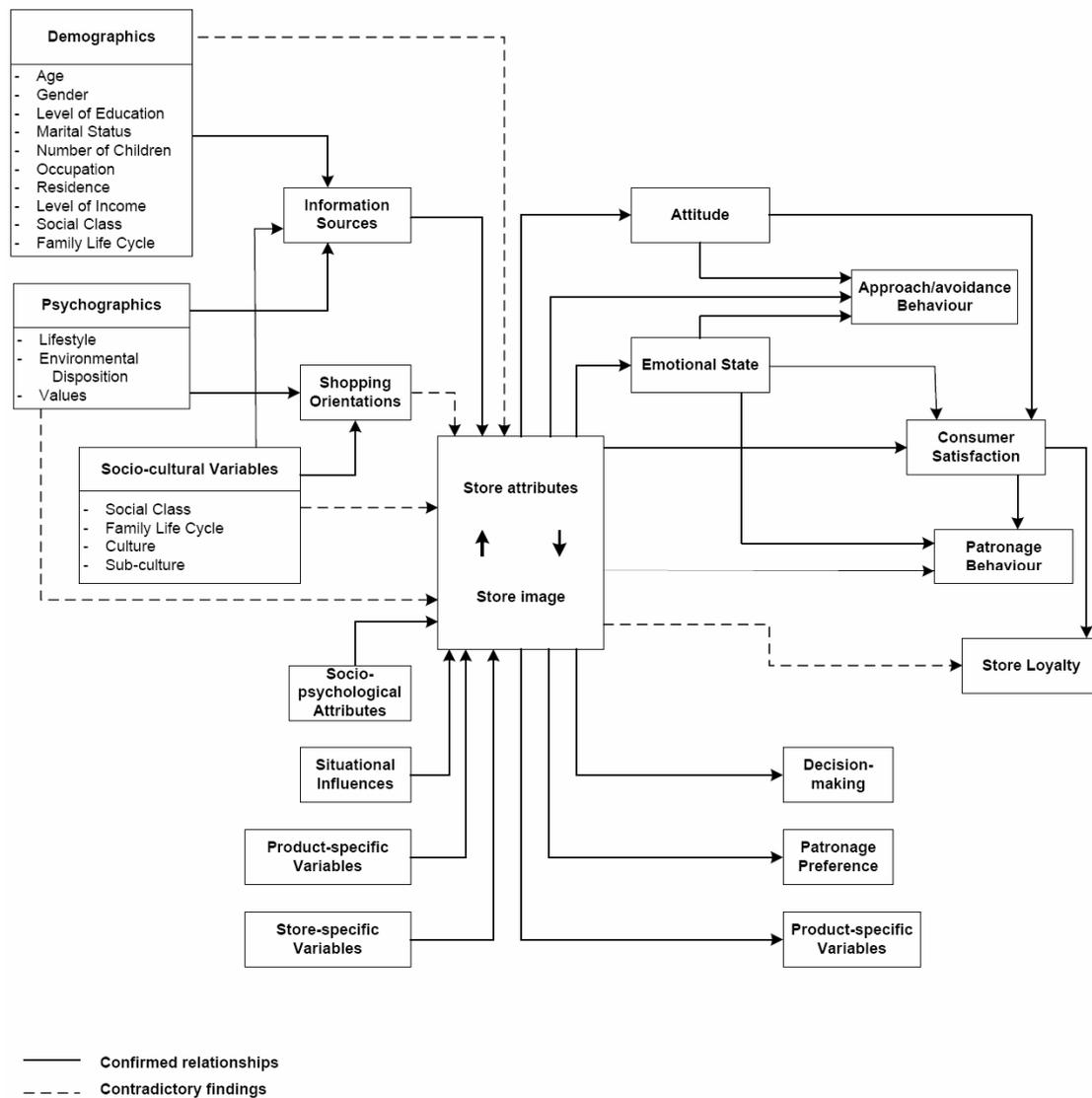


Figure 2.1 Proposed conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables

With regard to the consumer behaviour variables influenced by the perception of store image, most relationships were confirmed in the research findings and are, therefore, presented by solid lines. The model proposes that store image perception influences attitude, which in turn influences approach/avoidance behaviour, as well as consumer satisfaction. The perception of store image also influences the consumer's emotional state. Research findings indicate that emotional state is an antecedent variable to approach/avoidance behaviour, consumer satisfaction and patronage behaviour. The model also proposes a direct influence of store image perception on these three variables. Further to this, consumer satisfaction also influences patronage behaviour, as well as store loyalty. Research results, however, contradict each other in their findings concerning the direct influence of perceived store image on store loyalty, therefore this relationship is represented by a broken line. Lastly, research

support for the influence of perception of store image on decision-making, patronage preference and product-specific variables is presented by a solid line.

2.2.5 Limitations imposed on the proposed theoretical model

The proposed conceptual theoretical model was based on an amalgamation of current store image research findings, although it does not profess to be inclusive of all store image research. However, the previous discussion of the literature presented a challenge in making definitive conclusions on the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. Not only did research findings contradict each other, but relationships often were only supported by isolated findings. Research findings per se are tentative in nature, with results being subject to revision based on findings of future research (Goodwin, 2005, p. 15). In considering the proposed theoretical model, it is, therefore, important to bear in mind that the model was based on tentative findings as reported in the current available research included in this study.

Further to this, the variance in the methodologies employed in the reviewed studies also needs to be highlighted and serves to qualify the proposed theoretical model. Specifically, these relate to the sample population, product group, and the reported reliability and validity of the measurement scales employed in each study and they are summarised in Appendix 1.

Special caution has to be taken when drawing conclusions across studies employing different research methodologies (DeVellis, 2003). The different sample populations and product groups included in the reviewed research should therefore be taken into account when considering the relationships proposed in the theoretical model. Product groups included in the total of 61 studies that were reviewed, were apparel (24 studies), various product groups (19 studies), groceries (9 studies), restaurants (2 studies), and cards and gifts, alcoholic drinks, jewellery, over-the-counter drugs, DIY, carpets and audio equipment (1 study each). A further concern is the variance in the measurement scales employed in the store image literature. Measurement is inherent to all scientific studies. Two fundamental concerns in measurement are reliability and validity, which are the essence of measurement and determines the value of the measurement scale (DeVellis, 2003; Goodwin, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978). A measurement is reliable when study results are repeatable in subsequent measures of the construct, whereas validity is associated with the adequacy with which a measurement scale measures the construct it is intended to measure (DeVellis, 2003; Goodwin, 2005). The review of literature, however, indicates that various differing store image measurement scales were employed, with approximately 55% of studies (excluding qualitative studies) reporting on the reliability, and 9% of the studies reporting on the validity of the scale. The limited number of studies reporting on the validity of store image measurement scales is of particular concern, since validity is indicative of the degree to which

inferences can legitimately be made from measures used in a study and the theoretical constructs on which the operationalisation is based (Netemeyer et al., 2003). This seriously impairs the ability to draw definitive conclusions from the reviewed research. The variance in reporting on reliability and validity in store image research, again, serves as qualifying basis for the interpretation of the conclusions drawn from the literature, as well as the proposed model based on these conclusions.

2.2.6 Summary

This section has focused on the domain specification of store image as an important point of departure for the process of developing a measurement scale. The review of literature established the broad context of corporate branding and retail branding for the study of store image. Within this context, the relationship between perception of store image and related consumer behaviour variables based on the reviewed research findings were discussed. The findings from the store image research were integrated into a proposed conceptual theoretical model indicating the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. The limitations of the proposed conceptual theoretical model were discussed in terms of the contradictions in research findings, isolated support for proposed relationships in current research, as well as variance in the methodologies employed in current store image research.

Therefore, this section addressed the following literature-related objectives:

1. To delineate the existing domain specification of store image from available literature;
and
2. To develop a conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables.

The discussion of the limitations of the proposed conceptual theoretical model, specifically the methodological variance in store image research, highlights the need for further vigorous empirical research into the relationship between store image and consumer behaviour variables to confirm current findings, as well as build on the proposed model. Further to this, the methodological variance in store image research should be addressed in an attempt to report comparable results from which definitive conclusions can be drawn. This is imperative for the advancement of store image research as a primary variable in consumer behaviour.

An important consideration identified from the variance in methodologies employed in the literature, is the number of different store image measurement scales employed in the research. Implicit to this is the variance in store attributes included within each scale, which further justifies the need for the development of a store image measurement scale. Inherent

to the variance in measurement scales applied in the research, is the need to define and delineate the underlying structure of the store image construct to serve as framework for identifying the store attributes to be included in the development of a store image measurement scale. This will consequently be discussed.

2.3 DEFINITION AND UNDERLYING STRUCTURE OF THE STORE IMAGE CONSTRUCT

Validating the conceptual extensions of theory empirically is widely accepted to be a critical element of the scientific process (Chowdhary, Reardon & Srivastava, 1998). It is, therefore, imperative to define and ascertain the underlying structure of store image as an important consideration in the first phase in developing a store image scale to empirically measure this construct. Clearly defining the underlying structure of the construct enables the researcher to delineate what is included and excluded from the consequent operationalisation of the store image construct in empirical research. This serves as basis for the second phase in the store image scale development process, namely to generate measurement scale items, by allowing the researcher to systematically generate items to sample all content areas of store image (Churchill, 1979; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978). Firstly, this section will review store image literature to investigate the definition and underlying structure of the construct. Secondly, this review of literature will culminate in a proposed model of store image. Lastly, the discussion will be concluded with an overview of store image research based on the proposed model of store image.

2.3.1 Definition of the store image construct

Store image is a much researched construct in the field of consumer behaviour. However, a review of the literature revealed a distinct lack of a clear definition of the store image construct per se. Burns (1992) summarises this absence of a clear definition by commenting that no one definition is universally accepted. Underlying the lack of a clear definition are the academic debates concerning the theoretical underpinnings of the store image construct (Chowdhary et al., 1998).

Martineau (1958, p. 47) in his seminal study on store image first defined this construct as "...the way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes". Further to this, Lindquist (1974-1975, p. 31), in his study, concluded that store image is "...complex by nature and consists of a combination of tangible or functional factors and intangible or psychological factors that a consumer perceives to be present". The review of store image literature indicates that most definitions stress that store image is the consumer's perception of a store based on a set of salient attributes (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998; Faircloth et al., 2001; James, Durand & Dreves, 1976; Jin & Kim 2003; Osman, 1993).

However, Oxenfeldt (1974-1975, p. 9) contends that the definition of store image is "...more than a factual description of its many characteristics...an image is more than the sum of its parts...it represents interaction among characteristics". This is supported by Dichter (1985, p. 75), who argues that an image "...describes not individual traits or qualities, but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others", whilst Amirani and Gates (1993) conclude that store image is a consumer's overall impression of a retail store. Zimmer and Golden (1988) and Keaveney and Hunt (1992) refer to the gestalt nature of the store image construct, where the term "gestalt" is defined as "...the idea that the individual's perception of any object incorporates innumerable bits of separate information that are combined in such a manner that the end result of the integration of the inputs amounts to more than the sum of its constituent parts" (Chowdhary et al., 1998, p. 73).

The variation in defining the store image construct parallels comments in store image literature on the conflict surrounding the relationship between the conceptual underpinning of the store image construct and its operationalisation (Chowdhary et al., 1998). Researchers in support of the gestalt nature of store image contend that structured measures of store image are inadequate and cannot account for the gestalt view of store image (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992; Zimmer & Golden, 1988). This poses an important question concerning whether structured scales can adequately capture and measure the construct of store image. However, a study comparing the results from the measurement of store image employing both a structured and unstructured measure concluded that both forms of measurement perform equally in measuring store image (Chowdhary et al., 1998).

The results of this study should contribute to alleviate the need for variation in the store image definition based on debates surrounding the theoretical underpinnings of the construct. However, this still leaves the distinct lack of a clear definition of the store image construct in store image literature. This lack presents a serious obstacle in the development of a store image measurement scale, since, as mentioned previously, a clear definition of the construct and its underlying theoretical structure is fundamental as point of departure for the store image scale development process (DeVellis, 2003; Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Employing different definitions of a construct in research hinders the comparison and accumulation of findings, resulting in an inability to develop syntheses of the existing knowledge of the construct (Churchill, 1979).

Despite the absence of a clear definition of the store image construct, researchers agree that store image is comprised of distinct dimensions (Amirani & Gates, 1993; Burns, 1992; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Zimmer & Golden, 1988, p. 266). These dimensions include both the tangible/functional or intangible/psychological factors perceived in store image (Lindquist, 1974-1975). Research further indicates that these dimensions can be

delineated into sub dimensions (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Zimmer & Golden, 1988). This allows for the investigation of the underlying structure, including the dimensions and sub dimensions, of the store image construct. Furthermore, this enables the identification of the salient store attributes in the formation of store image that should be included in a store image measurement scale.

2.3.2 Underlying structure of the store image construct

Store image research is rife with examples of the underlying structure of the store image construct. Martineau (1958) initially presented layout and architecture, symbols and colours, advertising and sales personnel as the key dimensions in the underlying structure of store image. Burns (1992) cited the store image dimensions probably most widely accepted as those of Lindquist (1974-1975), who included specific sub dimensions in his definition of the structure of store image. Lindquist's study was based on a review of store image literature and resulted in the following dimensions: (1) merchandise (including the sub dimensions of quality, selection or assortment, styling or fashion, guarantees, and pricing); (2) service (including the sub dimensions of service-general, salesclerk service, self-service, ease of return, credit, delivery, and phone orders); (3) clientele (including the sub dimensions of social class appeal, self-image congruency, and store personnel); (4) physical facilities (including the sub dimensions of physical facilities, store layout, shopping ease, and architecture); (5) convenience (including the sub dimensions of convenience, locational convenience, and parking); (6) promotion (including the sub dimensions of sales promotion, advertising or display, advertising, trading stamps, and symbols and colours); (7) store atmosphere (including the sub dimensions of atmosphere or congeniality); (8) institutional (including the sub dimensions of conservative/modern, reputation, and reliability); and (9) post-transaction satisfaction. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978), as well as Janse van Noordwyk (2002) used Lindquist's structure as point of departure in their research studies.

Various other store image research studies proposed similar dimensions underlying the construct. Koo (2003) reviewed store image literature and concluded that the dimensions comprising store image include store atmosphere, location, convenient facilities, value, employee service, after sales service, and merchandising. Zimmer and Golden (1988) presented attribute-specific, global, label, prototype and exemplar, products, behaviour and miscellaneous as dimensions of store image in their study employing content analysis, including a further 47 sub dimensions within these dimensions. Several studies employed exploratory factor analysis to investigate the dimensions of store image as underlying structure of the construct. Chowdhary (1999) identified the dimensions of quality/reputation, convenience, age relatedness, and credit, as well as citing 19 sub dimensions. Similar to this, Huddleston et al. (1990) reported that convenience, age relatedness, quality/reputation, price, and credit are the underlying dimensions of store image, and incorporated a further 19 sub

dimensions. In a more recent study, Kleinmans (2003) found promotion, store layout, physical facilities, merchandise requests, sales personnel service, location and convenience, various store services, preference for salespeople, and credit facilities as dimensions of store image.

It is evident from the review of literature, however, that there is a distinct lack in consistently employing a similar underlying structure of the store image construct in empirical research. The lack of a clear definition of store image, therefore, is further exacerbated by the absence of consensus on a set of universal store image dimensions comprising the underlying structure of the construct (Amirani & Gates, 1993). Burns (1992) contends that this lack of agreement on the salient dimensions underpinning store image derives from the absence of a clear store image definition. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978, p. 60) comment that "...considerable variation exists among authors in the number of relevant image dimensions and the names ascribed to them". The lack of a clear definition of the underlying structure of store image highlights the need for developing a model delineating the underlying theoretical structure of store image.

2.3.3 Delineating the underlying structure of store image

A review of the literature on store image yielded a significant number of research studies presenting a view of the underlying structure of store image. It was therefore argued that conducting another exploratory study to ascertain the structure of the store image construct would be redundant. Various research methodologies were employed to arrive at these structures, including a review of the literature (Cary & Zylla, 1981; Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Ko & Kincade, 1997; Koo, 2003; Kotler, 1973-1974; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Manolis, Keep, Joyce & Lambert, 1994; Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001; Thang & Tan, 2003; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Wong & Yu, 2003), qualitative research (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Zimmer & Golden, 1988), and quantitative research, with the application of exploratory factor analysis (Bellenger et al., 1977; Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty, 1983; Chowdhary, 1999; Erdem et al., 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Kim & Jin, 2001; Kleinmans, 2003; Marks, 1976; Moye & Kincade, 2002; Sullivan, Savitt, Zheng & Cui, 2002) and multiple discriminant analysis (Wong & Teas, 2001).

This section will focus on the amalgamation of the findings of these studies. Firstly, the salient dimensions underpinning store image are delineated. Secondly, sub dimensions of store image are identified on the basis of the store image literature. Finally, this section will be concluded with a proposed model delineating the underlying theoretical structure of store image.

2.3.3.1 Dimensions of store image

The variation in identified dimensions and the names or labels associated with these dimensions within the literature necessitated undertaking the identification of the dimensions of store image in several distinct phases. The first of these phases constituted identifying store image dimensions from the literature. Secondly, the identified dimensions had to be refined to arrive at a final set of dimensions underpinning store image. These phases will be discussed by giving an overview of the methodology employed in each phase, as well as the rationale underlying the methodology.

Identifying the dimensions of store image: The first phase in identifying the dimensions of store image was undertaken through a systematic process that included several distinct stages. This enabled the researcher to integrate the literature into a final set of store image dimensions. The stages included (1) compiling a composite list of dimensions from the literature, (2) identifying the emerging dimensions, (3) compiling a composite list of the sub dimensions included within each dimension, (4) grouping isolated dimensions with the identified dimensions based on a comparison of the sub dimensions, and (5) compiling a set of dimensions to be subjected to refinement to arrive at a final set of dimensions underpinning store image. These stages will be discussed.

A composite list of all store image dimensions, as identified from the literature, was compiled. The composite list was scrutinised to identify dimensions that were supported by findings from different research studies. The names attributed to the dimensions in each research study were used as guideline to identify the dimensions. From this, nineteen dimensions emerged clearly, namely Age, Atmosphere, Clientele, Convenience, Credit, Environment, Facilities, Institutional, Layout, Location, Merchandise, Post-transaction, Price, Promotional, Quality, Reputation, Sales personnel, Service, and Value. These dimensions are summarised in Appendix 2, which highlights the dimensions from the literature included in each of these dimensions.

Various dimensions identified in the literature were not supported by any findings from other research studies. This necessitated the comparison of the sub dimensions of these isolated dimensions with the sub dimensions of the identified dimensions. Further to this, a composite list of the sub dimensions as described by the different research studies of each of the nineteen dimensions was compiled. The frequency with which each sub dimension was mentioned under each dimension was calculated. The sub dimensions were included within the dimension where it was mentioned most frequently. (A discussion of the methodology employed to identify and refine the sub dimensions of store image will be discussed in Section 2.3.3.2). The isolated dimensions were grouped with the dimension to which the sub

dimensions showed the greatest similarity and these are indicated with an asterisk (*) in Appendix 2.

A review of all dimensions and sub dimensions included in the literature and the consequent comparison with the identified dimensions and list of sub dimensions highlighted certain dimensions so dissimilar that the researcher was unable to include them into the dimensions constituting the underlying structure of store image in this investigation. The findings of these studies were, however, included in the subsequent study of the sub dimensions of store image. The dimensions excluded from this part of the study were Attribute-specific (Zimmer & Golden, 1988), Behaviour (Zimmer & Golden, 1988); Evaluative dimension (Bellizzi et al., 1983), General store attributes (Manolis et al., 1994), Global (Zimmer & Golden, 1988), Impulsive shopping (Sullivan et al., 2002), Information sources (Cary & Zylla, 1981), Label (Zimmer & Golden, 1988), Miscellaneous (Zimmer & Golden, 1988), Other attributes (Cary & Zylla, 1981), and Prototype and exemplar (Zimmer & Golden, 1988).

Refining the dimensions of store image: The initial review of the literature to identify the underlying dimensions of store image highlighted the need for further refinement of the dimensions. The main purpose of refining the identified store image dimensions was to (1) ensure that dimensions were grouped together appropriately; (2) address any possible overlap between dimensions; (3) eliminate any redundant dimensions; and (4) determine the relevancy of the dimensions within the current study. This phase in the process of refining the underlying dimensions of the store image construct was, therefore, undertaken in four distinct stages.

Firstly, dimensions were compared with each other to ascertain whether they were grouped appropriately, given that the initial grouping was based only on the names ascribed to dimensions in the literature. The list of sub dimensions included most frequently within each dimension provided a basis for comparison to ensure that all dimensions, together with their sub dimensions, were grouped appropriately with dimensions with the same name. Consequently, the sub dimensions included in the dimension from each study were compared with the composite list of sub dimensions compiled from all the studies. This resulted in certain dimensions being identified as more similar to dimensions with different names and such dimensions were, therefore, included within the more similar dimensions for the subsequent refinement of the store image dimensions. These included:

- ◆ Quality/reputation (Chowdhary, 1999) – moved from Quality and Reputation to Merchandise
- ◆ Functional quality (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001) – moved from Quality to Sales personnel
- ◆ Merchandise (Erdem et al., 1999) – moved from Merchandise to Service

- ◆ Merchandise requests (Kleinhans, 2003) – moved from Merchandise to Service
- ◆ Relational quality (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001) – moved from Quality to Sales personnel
- ◆ Servicescape (Grace & O’Cass, 2005) - moved from Service to Facilities
- ◆ Technical quality (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001) – moved from Quality to Merchandise

Secondly, it was evident, from a review of the identified dimensions and their sub dimensions, that overlapping occurred between dimensions and the sub dimensions of other dimensions. Again, the frequency with which sub dimensions were included within specific dimensions was used as guideline for refining the dimensions. Where this overlapping occurred, the frequency with which the sub dimension was cited for each dimension was calculated. The sub dimension was included in the dimension where it was most frequently mentioned. Where the sub dimension was not most frequently mentioned within the dimension it overlapped with, the dimension was included, with its associated sub dimensions, within the dimension where the sub dimension was most frequently mentioned. This resulted in the following dimensions being incorporated into other dimensions due to overlapping with sub dimensions:

- ◆ Clientele dimension (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975) – included in the Institutional dimension, where the Clientele sub dimension was most frequently mentioned
- ◆ Credit dimension (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Kleinhans, 2003) – included in the Service dimension, where Credit sub dimension was most frequently mentioned
- ◆ Layout dimension (Kleinhans, 2003; Moye & Kincade, 2002) – included in the Facilities dimension, where the Layout sub dimension was most frequently mentioned
- ◆ Location dimension (Kleinhans, 2003; Koo, 2003; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Wong & Yu, 2003) – included in the Convenience dimension, where Location sub dimension was most frequently mentioned
- ◆ Price dimension (Bellizzi et al., 1983; Erdem et al., 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Kim & Jin, 2001; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Sullivan et al., 2002) – included in the Merchandise dimension, where Price sub dimension was most frequently mentioned
- ◆ Value dimension (Ko & Kincade, 1997; Koo, 2003; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004) – included in the Merchandise dimension, where Value sub dimension was most frequently mentioned

Thirdly, a review of the frequency with which sub dimensions were mentioned within dimensions identified certain dimensions in which no one sub dimension was most frequently mentioned within the dimension. Thus, it was argued that these dimensions were already included within other dimensions and these were therefore deemed redundant, namely Environment (Ko & Kincade, 1997; Sullivan et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004), Post-transaction (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975) and Reputation (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Thang & Tan, 2003).

Lastly, some dimensions were identified in which few sub dimensions were most frequently mentioned, namely Age (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Lumpkin et al., 1985) and Quality (Bellenger et al., 1977; Bellizzi et al., 1983; Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Wong & Teas, 2001). The Age dimension emerged from age-specific research, which was argued not to be a relevant consideration for this study. The age of the sales personnel was the only sub dimension mentioned most frequently within the Age dimension. Most of the other sub dimensions relating to sales personnel were most frequently mentioned under the Sales personnel dimension. The age of the sales personnel was therefore included in this dimension.

The only two sub dimensions most frequently associated with Quality related to security and store quality. The security sub dimension was derived from a shopping centre study. Due to the difficulty in interpreting this sub dimension within the current study, which focused specifically on store image, it was decided to exclude it. Store quality was underpinned by other dimensions, including Merchandise and Service, and was, therefore, also excluded. Consequently, the dimensions of Age and Quality were deemed redundant in this study.

Following the identification and refinement of the dimensions, eight clear dimensions emerged as underlying store image. They were Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotional, Sales personnel and Service. A summary of these eight dimensions is given in Table 2.1, together with the composite list of dimension names included within each dimension, based on the literature.

Specific dimensions identified from the literature still overlapped more than one dimension. These dimensions included Congestion (Kim & Jin, 2001); Employee service (Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Koo, 2003); Facility convenience (Kim & Jin, 2001); Price (Erdem et al., 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Sullivan et al., 2002); Promotions/Convenience (Wong & Teas, 2001); Rich mix of commodities and services (Sullivan et al., 2002); Salespeople service (Kleinhans, 2003); Salesperson/service (Manolis et al., 1994); Service convenience (Kim & Jin, 2001); Service – sales associates attributes (Lee & Johnson, 1997); and Service – store facilities (Lee & Johnson, 1997). It was argued that this did not impact the further refinement

of dimensions and that any remaining overlaps would be addressed in the delineation of the sub dimensions, which will be discussed in the next section.

Table 2.1 Final store image dimensions identified from literature

DIMENSION	DIMENSION NAMES INCLUDED FROM LITERATURE
Atmosphere	Activity dimension; Clean and spacious atmosphere; Music/aesthetics dimension; Store atmosphere; Store atmosphere – aural; Store atmosphere – olfactory; Store atmosphere – tactile; Store atmosphere – visual
Convenience	Accessibility; Congestion; Convenience; Convenience (economic); Convenience – store location and mobility; Convenient facilities; Errand shopping; Facility convenience; In-store convenience and physical environment; Leisure activities; Location; Location and convenience; Price; Promotions/convenience; Proximity and familiarity; Service convenience; Variety under one roof
Facilities	Appearance; Congestion; Convenient facilities; Facilities; Facility convenience; Family shopping; Outside attractiveness; Physical facilities; Sensory/layout dimension; Servicescape; Service – store facilities; Store layout
Institutional	Cientele; Institutional; Institutional factors
Merchandise	Brand name; Fabric; Fashionability; Fashion goods; Focused shopping; Merchandise; Merchandise value; Merchandise variety; Merchandising; Popularity; Price; Price and quality aspects; Price competitiveness; Price/quality dimensions; Products; Quality/Reputation; Rich mix of commodities and services; Status; Technical quality; Time/availability; Value; Value-added service
Promotion	Advertising; Interest shopping; Promotion; Promotions; Promotions/convenience; Sales and incentives
Sales personnel	Employee service; Functional quality; Personal interaction; Personnel; Preference for salespeople; Relational quality; Salesmanship; Salespeople service; Salesperson/service; Service – sales associates attributes
Service	After-sales service; Complaint handling; Core service; Credit; Credit facilities; Employee service; In-store service; Merchandise; Merchandise requests; Post-transaction service; Presence of related services; Rich mix of commodities and services; Salespeople service; Salesperson service; Service; Service convenience; Services; Service – sales associates attributes; Service – store amenities; Service – store facilities; Value-added service; Various store services

2.3.3.2 Sub dimensions of store image

Similar to the variation in dimensions underlying the store image dimension cited in the literature, the mentioned sub dimensions are also very varied. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) and Janse van Noordwyk (2002) both used the dimensions from Lindquist's (1974-

1975) study as point of departure. However, the sub dimensions, although overlapping to a certain extent, proved to be inconsistent. Similarly, the store image dimensions identified in studies by Chowdhary (1999) and Huddleston et al. (1990) showed distinct similarities, whereas the underlying sub dimensions within each dimension were dissimilar. This necessitated further investigation into the further delineation of the sub dimensions underlying the store image construct. The delineation of sub dimensions underlying the store image construct was conducted in two distinct phases, namely (1) identifying the sub dimensions associated with each dimension, and (2) refining these sub dimensions to arrive at a final set of sub dimensions underpinning each dimension of store image. The following sections will detail these two phases.

Identifying the sub dimensions of store image: This phase was conducted in conjunction with the identification of the dimensions derived from a review of literature and included several distinct stages. Firstly, a composite list of the sub dimensions included within each dimension was compiled from all the reviewed studies. Secondly, these sub dimensions were grouped together on the basis of similar names assigned to them in the literature. Thirdly, the frequency with which each sub dimension was mentioned was calculated. Fourthly, the sub dimensions for each dimension were identified on the basis of the dimension in which it was mentioned with the highest frequency. This was done for the initial nineteen dimensions that were identified. The frequency with which sub dimensions were included within each dimension was used as guideline for the identification and refinement of the dimensions, as discussed in Section 2.3.3.1. Where a dimension was moved or merged with other dimensions during the process of delineating the dimensions of store image, sub dimensions were therefore moved and merged in accordance with the dimension it was associated with. Lastly, the frequency with which each sub dimension was mentioned within each dimension was again calculated after the refinement phase resulted in a final eight identified dimensions. The sub dimensions included within each of the final eight dimensions are summarised in Appendix 3.

Refining the sub dimensions of store image: A review of the identified sub dimensions highlighted the need to further refine these sub dimensions for inclusion in a model of the underlying structure of store image. Refining the sub dimensions of store image involved four stages, namely (1) identifying overlapping between the sub dimensions within dimensions; (2) scrutinising sub dimensions for relevancy; (3) incorporating literature not previously addressed; and (4) critically assessing the grouping of the final list of sub dimensions. The processes involved in these stages will be discussed below.

Firstly, an overview of the sub dimensions included within each dimension revealed overlapping when a sub dimension was mentioned with similar frequency for more than one dimension. These sub dimensions were initially included in all the dimensions within which

they were mentioned most frequently. This overlapping had to be addressed and eliminated to ensure that the dimensions included in the final model of the underlying structure of store image were mutually exclusive. The following overlapping sub dimensions were considered individually to determine under which dimension they should be included:

- ◆ Checkout – included in both the Convenience and Facilities dimensions. This sub dimension was more closely related to Convenience on the basis of the specific description in varying research studies, e.g. convenient for fast checkout (Chowdhary, 1999) and convenient/fast checkout (Huddleston et al., 1990). It was, therefore, included in the Convenience dimension.
- ◆ Courteous sales personnel – included in both the Sales personnel and Service dimensions. Specific sales personnel attributes were more frequently included within the Sales personnel dimension and the sub dimension was consequently included within the Sales personnel dimension.
- ◆ Professional sales personnel – included in both the Sales personnel and Service dimensions. As per the Courteous sales personnel sub dimension, it was included within the Sales personnel dimension.
- ◆ Realistic models – included in both the Institutional and Promotional dimensions. This sub dimension was more closely related to other Promotional sub dimensions, e.g. special events (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Thang & Tan, 2003; Wong & Yu, 2003) and fashion shows (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002). Therefore, it was included in the Promotional dimension.
- ◆ Size – included in both the Atmosphere and Merchandise dimensions. In the literature, this sub dimension referred specifically to the size of the store and was, therefore, included in the Atmosphere dimension.
- ◆ Social class – included in the Institutional, Facilities and Merchandise dimensions. This sub dimension was related to other Institutional sub dimensions such as Clientele and Store reputation and was, therefore, included in this dimension.
- ◆ Unobtrusive sales personnel – included in both the Sales personnel and Service dimensions. As per the Courteous sales personnel sub dimension, it was included within the Sales personnel dimension.
- ◆ Variety within store – included in the Convenience, Merchandise and Service dimensions. As this sub dimension was more closely related to other Merchandise sub dimensions, e.g. Merchandise assortment and Merchandise availability, it was included in the Merchandise dimension.

Secondly, all sub dimensions were critically reviewed for their relevancy within each dimension and specific to the current study, specifically where a sub dimension was only mentioned once in all of the reviewed studies. This process identified one sub dimension, namely Caring sales personnel (Chowdhary, 1999), that was included within the Service

dimension. However, most other sub dimensions specific to sales personnel were identified within the Sales personnel dimension, therefore this sub dimension was also included in this dimension. Various sub dimensions were difficult to interpret. Sub dimensions that were specific to the context of a particular study, or were implied by other sub dimensions, were excluded, e.g. closed/open (Bellizzi et al., 1983), interesting store (Sullivan et al., 2002), real women (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002), security (Bellenger et al., 1977), smoothness (Kotler, 1973-1974), and softness (Kotler, 1973-1974).

Thirdly, a further review of store image literature was undertaken to ensure that the sub dimensions included in the proposed model of the underlying structure of store image was extensive enough to cover all aspects of store image. Previously, the process of delineating the dimensions and sub dimensions included only studies presenting a view of the underlying structure of store image. At this stage, literature presenting a view of store attributes that constitute store image was reviewed, without investigating the underlying structure per se. A composite list was compiled of all the store attributes mentioned in the literature (Amirani & Gates, 1993; Bearden, 1977; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995; Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy, 1999; Chowdhary, 1989; Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003; Gentry & Burns, 1977-1978; Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson, 1978; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984; James et al., 1976; Joyce & Lambert, 1996; Lee, 1995; Malholtra, 1983; Martineau, 1958; Matson, 1982; Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003; Pessemer, 1980; Shiffman et al., 1977; Shim et al., 1990; Thompson & Chen, 1998; Torres, Summers & Belleau, 2001; Van de Velde et al., 1996; Williams & Slama, 1995; Wu & Petroshuis, 1987; Yavas, 2001).

Based on the sub dimensions identified from the various research studies, the above-mentioned composite list of attributes were grouped within these sub dimensions and their associated dimensions. Attributes in the composite list that were not previously identified were grouped into sub dimensions and included in relevant dimensions, namely:

- ◆ Competent sales personnel (Williams & Slama, 1995) – included in Sales personnel dimension
- ◆ Overall impression (Amirani & Gates, 1993; Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 1993; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984; Joyce & Lambert, 1996; Thompson & Chen, 1998) – included in Institutional dimension as they related to store reputation
- ◆ Sales personnel (Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001; Chowdhary, 1989; Martineau, 1958; Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003; Shim et al., 1990) – included in Sales personnel dimension
- ◆ Sales personnel similar to myself (Joyce & Lambert, 1996) – included in Sales personnel dimension
- ◆ Smoking policy (Yavas, 2001) – included in Convenience dimension

As in the case of the refinement of the sub dimensions, specific store attributes that were difficult to interpret in the context of this study were identified from the literature. Such store attributes were excluded, namely “frequently/never shop at this store” (Joyce, & Lambert, 1996), which was more related to store patronage behaviour, and “security” (Yavas, 2001), which was specific to shopping centre study.

Lastly, all of the sub dimensions were critically assessed to ascertain whether the grouping of the sub dimensions could be further refined. This resulted in sub dimensions being grouped together to arrive at a final set of extensive and mutually exclusive sub dimensions. The refinement phase in the delineation of the sub dimensions within the dimensions underlying the store image construct resulted in the finally identified sub dimensions. These are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Final store image sub dimensions identified from the literature

IDENTIFIED DIMENSIONS	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS
Store atmosphere	Décor Smell Sound Store atmosphere	Colours; Décor; Neatness Smell Sound Size; Store atmosphere
Convenience	Checkout Travel Location Parking Shopping ease Store hours Transportation	Checkout Duration of travel; Ease of travel Enclosed mall; Location; Location close to home; Location close to work; Location near other clothing stores; Location near a variety of other stores/facilities; Smoking policy Parking Convenience; Labels/tags; Package carryout; Phone cards; Shopping ease; Store accessibility; Store familiarity; Strong carry bags; Uncrowded; Store hours Transportation
Facilities	Store layout Store appearance Facilities convenience Fitting rooms Fixtures	Aisle placement; Spaciousness; Store layout Clean store; Entrance/exit; Outside appearance; Store maintenance Family shopping; Refreshment within store; Rest area; Washrooms Fitting rooms Floor covering; Hangers; Information boards; Lighting; Mirrors; Physical facilities; Temperature

IDENTIFIED DIMENSIONS	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS
Institutional	Clientele Overall impression Store reputation Store association	Clientele; Communication; Discrimination; Friend association; Sales personnel – clientele; Social class Overall impression Store reputation Attractive service materials; Can identify with store; Self image; Store name
Merchandise	Merchandise assortment Merchandise style Merchandise price Merchandise quality	Labels/brands; Merchandise assortment; Merchandise availability; Seasonal changes not too early; Unique merchandise; Variety within store Appropriate merchandise; Merchandise fashion; Specialised merchandise Merchandise price; Merchandise value Dependable merchandise; Merchandise quality; Store quality
Promotion	Advertising Displays Sales incentives	Promotion; Advertising; Personal contact; Realistic models Displays Sales; Incentives; Special events
Sales personnel	Sales personnel interaction Sales personnel appearance	Attention from sales personnel; Caring sales personnel; Competent sales personnel; Courteous sales personnel; Friendly sales personnel; Helpful sales personnel; Knowledgeable sales personnel; Professional sales personnel; Sales personnel; Social interaction; Trust sales personnel; Unobtrusive sales personnel Appearance of sales personnel; Sales personnel similar to myself; Sales personnel your age; Sales personnel your gender
Service	After-sales service Payment options In-store service Delivery options	Alterations; Handling of Complaints; Post-transaction satisfaction; Return policy Bank card; Credit; 'Layaway'; Payment options; Store card 'Appro' facilities; Gift wrapping; Inter-store transfers; Number of sales personnel; Packaging; Sales personnel advice; Sales personnel service; Self-service; Service; Trolley/basket; Delivery options; Phone orders

Subsequent to this stage in the refinement of the sub dimensions, a composite list was compiled from the literature of all the associated attributes grouped together within each of the identified sub dimensions (Appendix 4). This served as reference for how each sub

dimension was defined, and provided a basis for the generation of individual items in the process of developing the scale discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3.3.3 Proposed model for the underlying structure of store image

The preceding discussion focused on the delineation of the dimensions and sub dimensions underlying the store image construct. The existing body of knowledge was amalgamated into a proposed model of the underlying structure of store image, presented in Figure 2.2. The model represents four concentric circles representative of the mutual influence of the circles on each other. Central to the model is store image. The eight dimensions underpinning the store image construct is represented in the first concentric circle, followed by the sub dimensions underlying each dimension. The outer concentric circle of the model constitutes the specific store attributes underlying the identified sub dimensions and dimensions. The perception of these store attributes is integral to store image formation. The size of each circle and the components of each circle are not related to the importance of the specific dimension/sub dimension.

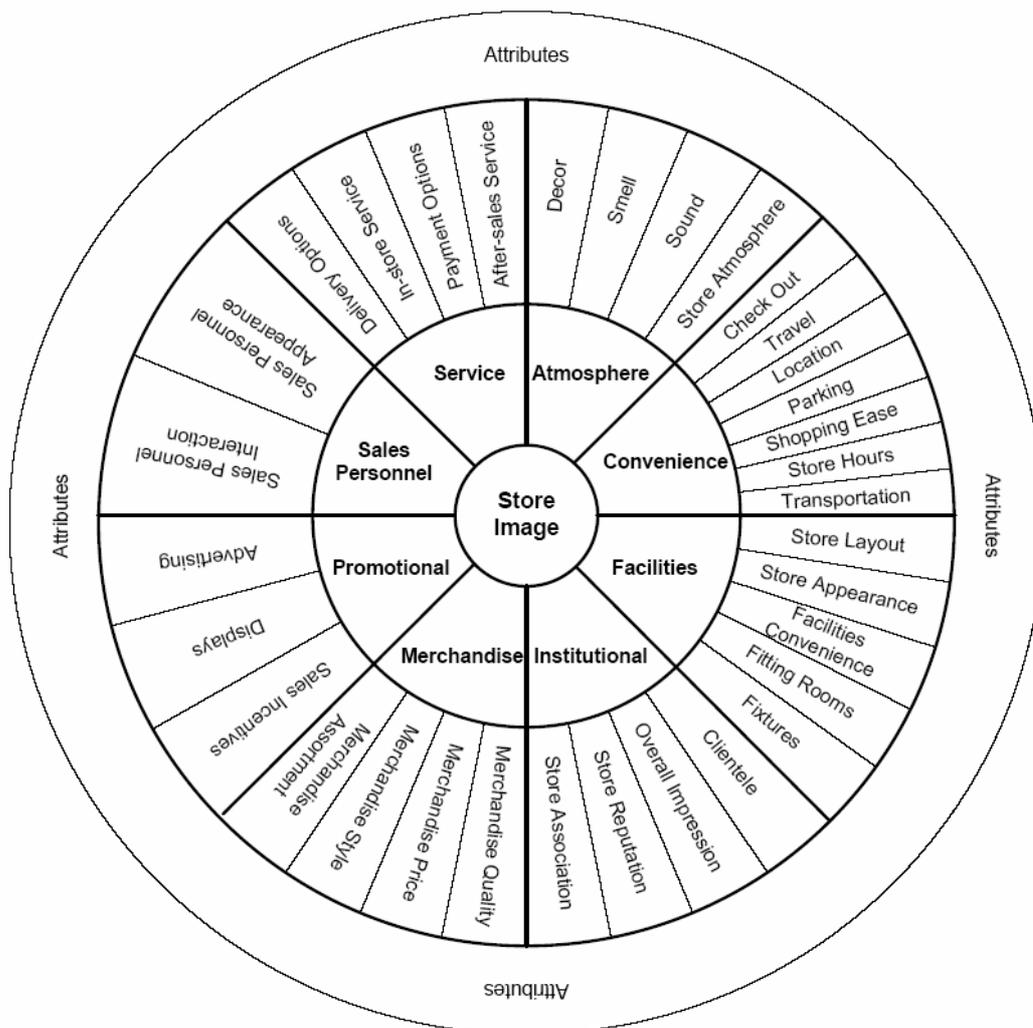


Figure 2.2 Proposed model for the underlying structure of store image

The model serves to define and identify the underlying structure of the store image construct in an attempt to address the lack of consensus on a clear definition of store image. Store image is, therefore, defined as a complex, multidimensional construct based on the perception of tangible and intangible store attributes associated with eight dimensions, namely Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales personnel and Service. These dimensions are further delineated into sub dimensions which are underpinned by specific store attributes. Store image has a gestalt nature that is represented by the interaction between the salient tangible and intangible store attributes. The formation of store image relies on the perception of a store which varies by retailer, product and target market. By implication, store image is influenced by (1) the consumer's perception of a set of salient store attributes, (2) the importance the consumer places on the various store image dimensions, sub dimensions and the associated store attributes, as well as (3) the retailer's manipulation of these store attributes through strategic management. This definition serves as a foundation for the development of a store image measurement scale. The next section will provide an overview of empirical research findings including the specific store image dimensions and sub dimensions.

2.3.4 Research findings on store image dimensions and sub dimensions

A review of store image literature indicates that the dimensions and sub dimensions underlying store image have been researched extensively. It is imperative to take cognisance of these findings for further enhancement of the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the store image construct definition (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Consequently, an overview of existing store image research with special emphasis on the investigation of the underlying dimensions and sub dimensions of the construct will be presented.

2.3.4.1 Atmosphere (décor, smell, sound and store atmosphere)

Store atmosphere is integral to a positive consumer experience, in encouraging consumers to increase their shopping frequency with a specific retailer and leading to increased purchases. This offers the retailer the potential of creating a unique store image and establishing differentiation. Store atmosphere, therefore, plays a crucial role in building retailer brand equity and retail success is dependent on continuously realigning store atmosphere with consumer expectations (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004; Harris, Harris & Baron, 2001; Hartman & Spiro, 2005; Newman & Patel, 2004; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2003). This dimension was first identified by Martineau (1958) in his seminal study on the personality of the retail store. Lindquist (1974-1975) also identified atmosphere in his review of early store image literature and atmosphere has since then often been included as a dimension in store image research.

A direct influence of atmosphere on related consumer behaviour variables has been observed in the literature. Spies, Hesse and Loesch (1997) investigated two stores with different levels of store atmosphere. They established that consumers frequenting a store with a more positive store atmosphere, Store A, assigned higher ratings for *liking the exhibition*, *consumers' satisfaction with their shopping on the whole*, *time spent in the exhibition area* and *time spent in the self-service area* than consumers of a store with a less positive store atmosphere, Store B. Their findings did not provide support for *amount of money spent altogether* being dependent on store atmosphere. However, the *amount of money spent for spontaneous purchases* was larger for Store A than Store B; although no effects of store atmosphere appeared with respect to articles that consumers felt they needed or represented good bargains.

In an investigation into the inter-relationships amongst store images, store satisfaction and store loyalty among Korean discount retail consumers, results indicated that store atmosphere has a significant positive influence on consumer satisfaction. Thang and Tan (2003) found store atmosphere to be a significant variable in influencing consumer preferences. They concluded that the atmosphere in a store validates the link between the emotional responses of a consumer and the physical attributes of a store. A positively perceived atmosphere enhances the sense of wellbeing in a store, and increases the quality of the visit, thereby increasing consumer preference for a store.

Various studies confirmed the relationship between atmosphere and the consumer's emotional state (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Koo, 2003; Spies et al., 1997). When a store atmosphere is perceived as pleasant, it induces a positive emotional state in the consumer. Similarly, an unpleasant store atmosphere leads to a negative emotional state. The emotional state of a consumer, in turn, affects patronage behaviour. Donovan and Rossiter (1982), specifically, found that a positive emotional state leads to consumer approach behaviour, whereas a negative emotional state resulted in avoidance behaviour. Spies et al. (1997) established that positive consumer emotional states lead to higher ratings for *liking of the exhibition*, *satisfaction with shopping*, *time spent in exhibition*, and *time spent in self-service area*, as well as increased *money spent on spontaneous purchases*.

Research further investigated the influence of atmosphere on patronage behaviour through various other mediator variables. Spies et al. (1997) confirmed an indirect relationship between atmosphere and patronage behaviour via the mediator variables of goal-attainment and visiting a café/restaurant in the store. Results showed that a positive store atmosphere influences the consumer's goal-attainment, which leads to higher ratings of *liking of the exhibition*, *satisfaction with shopping* and *intent to return*. A positive store atmosphere further increases the likelihood of consumers visiting the café/restaurant in the store, which increases the *time spent in exhibition area*. Koo (2003) found store atmosphere to have a positive

influence on consumer attitude towards a discount retail store. In turn, a positive attitude towards a discount retail store has a significant impact on store loyalty and store satisfaction.

Additional isolated research findings provide further insight into the relevance of atmosphere in consumer behaviour. A study on the influence that brand recognition has on retail store image concluded that brand image was not related to perceptions of atmosphere (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Findings from a Korean study indicated that consumer's perceptions toward multinational and Korean discount stores differ with respect to atmosphere. Multinational stores were rated significantly higher in clean and spacious atmosphere (Kim & Jin, 2001). In another Korean study, Jin and Kim (2003) found that discount store consumer clusters based on shopping motives held different perceptions of a neat/spacious atmosphere. *Leisurely-motivated shoppers* and *utilitarian shoppers* rated neat/spacious atmosphere positively, whilst the *socially-motivated shoppers* rated neat/spacious atmosphere most positively. *Shopping-apatetic shoppers* rated neat/spacious atmosphere unfavourably. Moye and Kincade (2002) determined that two consumer shopping orientation groups differed significantly regarding the importance they placed on the dimension of atmosphere. The *bargain apparel shoppers* placed a higher importance on atmosphere than did the *appearance conscious apparel shopper*.

Research also focused specifically on the sub dimensions underpinning the Atmosphere dimension. Grossbart et al. (1990, pp. 228-231) investigated the influence of consumers' environmental disposition on their responsiveness to the store's physical design and condition, i.e. the **décor**. Results showed that pastoralism, defined as a consumer's "...appreciation of and sensitivity to natural environments and enjoyment of open, unspoiled landscapes", and a consumer's need for privacy, defined as "...desires for physical isolation from people and extraneous activity and rejection of social involvement", are directly related to the consumer's responsiveness to a store's physical design and condition. Conversely, urbanism, associated with a consumer's "...appreciation of the built and social environment in cities, aesthetic sensitivity to urban design"; environmental adaptation, identified as "...inclinations to dominate environments by modifying them to satisfy desires and needs and provide personal comfort and leisure"; stimulus seeking, defined as "...preferences for unusual and intense stimulation and environmental adventure; and environmental trust, defined as "...general openness to environmental experiences", are inversely related to a consumer's responsiveness to a store's physical design and condition. Baker et al. (2002) found that, as consumers' perceptions of store design cues (i.e. colour, trim, layout and displays) become more favourable, consumers will perceive interpersonal service quality, merchandise quality and monetary price perceptions to be higher, whilst shopping experience costs will be lower. In turn, the higher the consumer's perceptions of interpersonal service quality and merchandise quality, the higher will be the consumer's perceptions of merchandise value, which will lead to higher store patronage intentions. In contrast, the

higher the perceived monetary prices, the lower will be the merchandise value perceptions. Higher perceived monetary prices and shopping experience costs are associated with lower store patronage intentions. Miranda et al. (2005) studied the influence of store attributes on store satisfaction. Their results indicated that store ambience, defined in terms of store design, has a positive effect on the consumer's satisfaction with a store, i.e. the higher the consumer's satisfaction with store ambience, the more satisfied the consumer was with the store.

Orth and Bourrain (2005) studied the effect of ambient scent, i.e. **smell**, on consumer exploratory behaviour. Their results indicated that scent pleasantness moderated the effects of both actual and optimum stimulation levels on consumer exploratory tendencies, including risk taking, variety seeking and curiosity-motivated behaviour. Bosmans (2006) investigated the effect of ambient scents (i.e. scents in the environment that do not emanate from a specific product) on product evaluations. The research found that, when the ambient scent is not salient, a pleasant ambient scent increases product evaluations, regardless of congruency with the product category. In addition, product evaluations were more positive when the ambient scent was made salient and congruent with the product category, as opposed to non-congruent with the product category. The interaction between scent and music as potential drivers of in-store evaluations and behaviour has also been studied by Matilla and Wirtz (2001). Results indicated that matching arousing dimensions of scent and music (i.e. high/high or low/low arousal conditions) lead to enhanced approach behaviour, impulse buying and consumer satisfaction compared to the mismatched conditions. The interaction between music and scent was found to be marginally significant for pleasure, and insignificant for the perceived positivity of the store environment. Chebat and Michon (2003) examined the impact of ambient odours on mall consumers' emotions, cognition, and spending. Similar to Matilla and Wirtz (2001), they concluded that a light and pleasing ambient scent has a somewhat arousing effect, but does not directly induce pleasure in consumers. However, as per Bosmans (2006), they did find that a light and pleasing ambient scent has a direct positive effect on consumers' perception of product quality, as well as the shopping environment. Their results also indicated that ambient scent has a mediating effect on the retail environment, which influences the consumers' perception of quality. This, in turn, leads to a more favourable shopping mood, resulting in more money being spent.

Herrington and Capella (1996) investigated the effects of music, i.e. **sound**, in service environments. They concluded that loud music did not influence the time or amount of money consumers spent in the service environment. The tempo of the background music also did not affect the total shopping time or amount of money spent by consumers. Results did provide support for the hypothesis that consumers' preference for the background music will positively affect the amount of time spent in the service environment, whilst marginal support was found for the hypothesis that preference for the background music will positively affect

the amount of money spent by consumers. In a study on environmental background music and in-store selling, the relation between music tempo-induced arousal and cognitive activity was found to be significantly stronger when in-store sales arguments were weak rather than strong (Chebat, Chebat & Vaillant, 2001). No relation was found between music tempo-induced arousal and cognitive activity when consumer involvement is low rather than high. The study also postulated that music tempo affects cognitive activity the strongest under low arousal (low tempo) music, as opposed to no, moderate and fast tempo music. Lastly, the effects of cognitive activity on consumer attitudes were strongest with low arousal music.

As with design cues, Baker et al. (2002) investigated the influence of music on perceived merchandise value and patronage intentions. Results indicated that, when the consumer's perception of store music cues becomes more favourable, consumers will perceive monetary prices to be higher, which in turn will lead to perceptions of lower merchandise value. In contrast, more favourable perception of store music cues will lead consumers to perceive time/effort costs to be lower, whereas higher time/effort costs are associated with lower store patronage intentions. The role of cognitive responses, including the perception of service and merchandise quality, and emotional responses, including pleasure and arousal, in the music-approach-avoidance behaviour relationship was investigated by Sweeney and Wyber (2002). They found that a liking of the music played in the store had a significant positive relation to service quality, merchandise quality and arousal. Familiarity with the music, however, was not significantly related to either the emotional or cognitive responses. Results also indicated a significant interaction between music genre and tempo with pleasure and service quality. Specifically when classical music was played, consumers had a higher perception of service quality and pleasure when the tempo was fast. When top-40 music was played, a slower tempo led to these perceptions. At a univariate level, a faster tempo generated higher arousal. Further to this, pleasure, service quality and merchandise quality had a significant positive effect on approach behaviour, whilst pleasure, arousal and service quality had a significant positive effect on affiliation (i.e. interaction between consumers and other consumers or staff). Wirtz, Mattila and Tan (2007) manipulated music tempo, sound and lighting to create high, moderate and low arousal environments, as well as high and low pleasure levels. Their findings indicated that consumer satisfaction is maximised in pleasant environments when arousal congruency is achieved (i.e. where the desired level of stimulation and actual level of stimulation match). Over- or under-stimulation results in reduced consumer satisfaction. Arousal congruency was also found to be a more important predictor of satisfaction in a pleasant than an unpleasant environment. Results indicated that in-store approach behaviours are maximised at the point of arousal congruency in pleasant environments, and that under-stimulation will lead to higher levels of in-store approach behaviours than over-stimulation.

Research conducted by Merrilees and Miller (2001) investigated the interactivity between the store and the consumer. Their results showed that **store atmosphere** was differentiated between superstores and traditional specialist stores. Superstores were perceived to provide a more pleasant and enjoyable shopping experience and store atmosphere was identified as a key source of competitive advantage for such stores. They also found that store atmosphere was the most powerful determinant of store loyalty. Jin and Kim (2003) identified consumer segments in Korea on the basis of their shopping motives. They reported that a pleasant environment was considered by socially-motivated shoppers as a main consideration for patronising a store.

Research findings concerning store atmosphere thus indicate that store atmosphere and its sub dimensions influence various consumer behaviour variables and contribute significantly to a positive consumer experience. Thus, atmosphere becomes an important consideration in the retail strategy, since a positive consumer experience is imperative for retail success and a unique source of differentiation (Ailiwadi & Keller, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2005; Turley & Chebat, 2002; Wright, Newman & Dennis, 2006). It is evident that atmosphere provides retailers with a powerful tool to influence consumer behaviour (Bakamitsos & Siomkos, 2004). The store environment can be manipulated by effecting relatively small changes in the store attributes associated with the dimension of atmosphere and its sub dimensions. Firstly, however, it is imperative that retailers ascertain how their target market perceives atmosphere and responds to the store environment with regard to arousal level, consumer motivation and consumer perceptions. This will dictate how the environmental variables should be managed, e.g. the colours and finishes used in the décor, the type, tempo, volume and familiarity of the music, and the salient ambient smell. Retailers also need to ensure that all sub dimensions of atmosphere act in a synergistic manner to create a powerful and consistent image. As shown by the research, there needs to be congruence between the various environmental variables, as well as the desired store image. Lastly, it is important that retailers conduct an atmospheric audit to verify that the store atmosphere stimulates consumer shopping behaviour in the desired manner. By creating a store atmosphere aligned with consumer expectations, a retailer is able to (1) induce the desired sales effects; (2) influence approach/avoidance behaviour, which in turn leads to consumer browsing behaviour associated with increased planned and impulse purchasing; (3) create a positive overall store image; and (4) differentiate the store from Internet retailers (Turley & Chebat, 2002).

2.3.4.2 Convenience (checkout, travel, location, parking, shopping ease, store hours and transportation)

The importance of convenience as an element within the retail strategy cannot be underestimated, especially in an era of increasing Internet retailing and time poverty. Although not conclusive, initial research results indicate that Internet shopping is rated higher

for convenience than store-based shopping, especially for consumers already shopping on the Internet. With increasing computer literacy, particularly the rising exposure amongst younger consumers, store-based retailers should ensure that consumer expectations of convenience are met to address the competitive threat presented by e-tailing (Dennis, Fenech & Merrilees, 2005; Dennis, Harris & Sandhu, 2002; Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002). Thus, retailers should take cognisance of research findings on convenience to integrate this into their retail strategies.

The convenience dimension has been identified as a store image dimension since early research (Lindquist, 1974-1975). This was further confirmed through empirical research in an attempt to operationalise the concept of store image by employing factor analysis (Marks, 1976). Research often indicates convenience to successfully differentiate between various consumer segments. Bellenger et al. (1977) identified two types of shopping centre consumer types, namely recreational and convenience-oriented shoppers. Convenience was not a primary concern to recreational shoppers, whereas convenience shoppers expressed a desire for convenience as a motivation for shopping centre patronage. In a study concerning the elderly consumer, research indicated a relationship between the importance of convenience and lifestyle characteristics of consumers (Huddleston et al., 1990). The five lifestyle factors identified in the study were *shopper*, *positive thinker*, *education-orientated*, *socially active*, and *credit prone*. The positive thinker and education-oriented lifestyle dimensions exhibited a significant relationship with the importance of convenience, whereas no such relationship was found for the other lifestyle factors. However, research did not support the hypothesis that the importance of convenience differed significantly between fashion leaders and fashion followers amongst elderly consumers. This study did indicate that convenience is more important to elderly females than males (Chowdhary, 1999).

The perception of convenience was shown to differentiate Korean consumer segments on the basis of shopping motives. *Utilitarian shoppers* rated both shopping and service convenience positively, whilst these were rated negatively by *socially-motivated shoppers*. *Leisure-motivated shoppers* rated service convenience positively, whilst *shopping-apatetic shoppers* rated most store attributes negatively, except for shopping convenience (Jin & Kim, 2003). Lastly, a study concerning Spanish consumers' perceptions of US apparel speciality retailers' products and services, found that the influence of convenience on store patronage varied by age. Consumers aged 56-88 indicated convenience to be less influential in their store patronage in comparison to younger consumers in the age groups 18-24, 25-36, and 37-55. Results did not indicate that the influence of convenience on store patronage varied by gender (Hyllegard et al., 2005).

Research on convenience with regard to other consumer-related contexts has also been reported. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) found little variance between department and

grocery stores concerning the importance of convenience-related store attributes. These convenience-related attributes were rated amongst the twenty least important store attributes out of a set of 41 for both store types. Kim and Jin (2001), however, concluded that Korean consumers' perception of multinational discount stores and Korean discount stores differed with respect to convenience. Multinational discount stores were rated higher on facility convenience, whereas Korean discount stores were rated more positively on service convenience. A study on the inter-relationship between store images, store satisfaction and store loyalty amongst Korean discount retail consumers concluded that convenience has a direct positive impact on store loyalty, but not on consumer attitude or store satisfaction (Koo, 2003). In contrast to this, Chang and Tu (2005) indicated that convenience is significantly associated with consumer satisfaction, as well as consumer loyalty, and can effectively predict these desired consumer behaviour outcomes. Research results also indicated that the more favourable the consumer's perception of the convenience of the store, the higher will be the consumer's preference for the store (Thang & Tan, 2003).

Further insight into the convenience dimension is gained from research focusing on the various sub dimensions. Studies relating to **checkout** focused specifically on the waiting time associated with retail encounters. Bennet's (1998) study included two personality types. Type A personalities are associated with an exaggerated sense of time urgency, are easily irritated, excessively competitive, hypercritical, aggressive, always in a rush and unable to relax. In contrast, Type B personalities are defined as relaxed, unassertive and conciliatory towards the outside world. Results indicated that consumers displaying the Type A tendency have a greater aversion to queuing and experience more irritation when having to wait in a queue for longer than expected, especially when express checkouts are used illegitimately. This was even more pronounced for Type A personalities residing in more affluent areas. Research indicates that actual waiting time, perceived waiting time and disconfirmation (the difference between actual waiting time and perceived waiting time), predict consumer satisfaction (Davis & Heineke, 1998). An increase in actual and perceived waiting time leads to lower consumer satisfaction, with the effect of actual waiting time seeming greater than perceived waiting time or disconfirmation. However, when consumers are pressured for time, perceived waiting time has a greater effect on consumer satisfaction. Although the results showed statistical significance for the effect of expected waiting time on consumer satisfaction, the effect is much smaller than for the other variables.

Bielen and Demoulin (2007) also studied the effect of waiting time on consumer satisfaction and confirmed that perceived waiting time negatively affected the customer's waiting time satisfaction. They also found that satisfaction with the information provided in case of a service delay and the satisfaction with the waiting environment positively influenced waiting time satisfaction. The satisfaction with the waiting environment, as well as the waiting time satisfaction, in turn, positively influenced the satisfaction with the service. The perceived

waiting time had an indirect impact on service satisfaction with waiting time satisfaction acting as mediator variable. The satisfaction with the information provided in case of a service delay had no direct or indirect impact on service satisfaction. Lastly, the study confirmed that waiting time satisfaction moderate the effect of service satisfaction on loyalty. Baldwin's study (1999) indicated that checkouts have an effect on patronage turnover in Hong Kong supermarkets. Results confirmed that more shoppers will frequent a store where the checkout time is short, i.e. more manned checkout points should be available. Further confirmation for the importance of time variables was reported by Bellizzi and Bristol (2004) as *quick moving checkout lines* was deemed the most important loyalty factor for supermarket consumers.

Stoltman, Morgan and Anglin (1999) studied the relationship between affective and behavioural reactions to events that may occur whilst shopping for apparel. **Parking** availability was identified as one such event and results showed that unexpected events involving parking availability was one of the most frequently encountered events in shopping. Finding parking to be readily available was the most pleasant event for consumers, whilst unforeseen problems with parking were reported to elicit the strongest negative feelings. Parking was also found to be one of the events leading to the most serious behavioural reactions to unexpected events, with 39.5% of respondents indicating that they would move to another shopping area if parking was unavailable (Stoltman et al., 1999, p. 149). De Klerk and Ampousah (2002, p. 98) found that 61% of respondents complained that parking lots were unsuitable for use by disabled consumers. Golias, Yannis and Harvatis (2002) investigated off-street parking choice sensitivity. They showed that the attraction of off-street parking (as opposed to on-street parking) decreased with increased cost and when the time and effort associated with walking from the parking space to the final destination increases. The attraction of off-street parking increased when search time for and parking duration of on-street parking increase. The study concludes that time and cost are the dominant factors in choosing between parking alternatives and this provides valuable insight to retailers. Jin and Kim (2003) indicated that socially-motivated Korean discount consumers state ease of parking as a main reason for patronising a store. Good parking influenced differences between department and specialty stores. A moderate proportion (51% to 75%) of respondents in this study indicated that they perceived specialty stores to offer good parking, whilst a very large proportion (95% to 100%) of respondents perceived this to be the situation for department stores (Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003). Research results indicated that consumers in second-tier cities in China place more importance on parking facilities than do consumers in first-tier cities (Wong & Yu, 2003). 'First-tier' refers to cities that have been granted approval by China's central government to establish joint venture retail enterprises, whereas second-tier cities are those without such approval.

Few of the reviewed studies reported research results on the specific sub dimensions of **travel, transportation** and **shopping ease**. Ibrahim (2002) reported on the weighted factor ratings of different shopping centre attributes (including atmosphere, variety/level, centre-feature oriented, culture/religion, parking, and ancillary facilities), as well as travel and transportation components, perceived as important in shopping centre choice. Effort (e.g. absence of waiting time and low cost of travel) was rated the most important factor affecting the choice of shopping centres in Singapore, followed by tension (e.g. safety of travelling from crime and absence of traffic congestion) and comfort (e.g. smoothness of ride/travel and temperature comfort of transport mode). Distance (e.g. distance from home to shopping centre and reliability of transport mode) and value (e.g. travel time to centre and enjoyment of travel) were rated as the least important travel and transportation components, although it still had a higher importance rating than all of the shopping centre attributes, except for atmosphere. In a Korean study on Korean discount consumer shopping motives, *leisure-motivated shoppers* most frequently stated closeness to their home and shopping ease as reasons for patronising a particular store (Jin & Kim, 2003). Seventy percent of respondents in a study of disabled apparel consumers stated that store accessibility, associated with shopping ease, was inadequate (De Klerk & Ampousah, 2002, p. 98). In the same study, 69% of the disabled respondents complained that most stores are without lifts.

Miranda et al. (2005) investigated consumer satisfaction. Their results indicated that a store's proximity to consumers' homes or work, i.e. **location**, had a positive effect on consumer satisfaction. Research has also reported on the effect of location on first-store loyalty and retention. First-store loyalty (FSL) is defined as "...the customer's expenditure in his/her first store (i.e. where the most money is spent) divided by the total consumer expenditure in the retail category" (East, Hammond, Harris & Lomax, 2000, p. 308). First-store retention (FSR) is shown by "...the period of time that the first store is retained" (East et al., 2000, p. 309). Results indicated that more than half of the reasons given for changing stores relate to store location and this, therefore, affects FSR. However, location does not relate to FSL. Jones, Mothersbaugh and Beatty (2003) determined that convenient location did not have a direct effect on repurchase intentions for either more standardised, less personalised service industries (e.g. banks) or less standardised, more personalised service industries (e.g. hairdressers). Convenient location, however, did impact consumers' repurchase intentions for *more* when satisfaction with the core service was lower.

Three different consumer segments were identified in a study on the effect of multi-purpose shopping on pricing and location strategy (Leszczyc, Sinha & Sahgal, 2004). The first segment, namely *time-constrained price seekers*, economises their shopping by making fewer trips and their shopping is mainly of a multi-purpose nature. To capture the patronage of these consumers, stores should be located near to other stores or in shopping malls. The second segment was identified as *time-constrained service seekers*. This segment consists

both of single and multi-purpose shoppers. The single-purpose shoppers patronise stores with a convenient location, whereas the multi-purpose shoppers are willing to travel to locations where they can combine their shopping purposes. Lastly, the *cherry pickers* were identified as the third segment. These consumers are willing to travel further to store locations to minimise the total cost of their shopping basket of goods.

Kaufman and Lane (1996) conducted qualitative research on the effect of **store hours** in one-stop-shopping. The majority of the interviewed respondents expressed a desire for one-stop-shopping when shopping at a specific shopping centre. Responses indicated that stores within the centre should have uniform operating hours that allow respondents enough time to complete their shopping, and also to clearly state operating hours policy. Only 40% of respondents indicated that they return to the original store at another time if they are unable to complete their shopping errands, whilst half responded that they would go to another shopping centre (Kaufman & Lane, 1996, p. 18). Wong and Yu (2003) found that consumers in first-tier cities in China perceive late closing hours to be of more importance than did consumers from second-tier cities. Richbell and Kite (2007) identified the profiles of night-time shoppers frequenting supermarkets that are open for 24 hours a day. The proportions of males and females were identical, whereas the majority of respondents were within the 21-40 years of age categories. The majority of respondents younger than 35 were females, whilst those 36 and over were predominantly male. Two-thirds of shoppers were married or living with partners, whilst the majority were employed, either full-time or part-time. Sixty-four percent of respondents who were employed full-time were shift workers (Richbell & Kite, 2007, p. 60). The key motivations for shopping at night involved buying essential items or ready meals and doing their weekly shopping. The stores' operating hours also allowed consumers to shop when their employment schedule allowed for it. The store-related reasons for shopping at night concerned the fact that the store was less busy and shopping took less time.

This overview of literature concerning convenience confirms the importance of this dimension. Findings indicated that convenience differentiates between different consumer segments and provided support for a relationship between this dimension and other consumer behaviour variables such as store loyalty and store preference. Contradicting results of the relationship between convenience and store satisfaction and the ability of convenience to differentiate between store types, however, were observed.

Regardless of this, the research does provide valuable insight to retailers about aspects that should be addressed and implemented in their retail strategies. The research findings associated with the sub dimensions specifically highlighted key practical implications. Retailers should take note of the impact of waiting times on different consumer personality types and that of different locations e.g. more affluent areas. Consumer satisfaction can be

significantly improved by providing them with a more satisfying waiting environment, e.g. paying more attention to design, layout and store fittings, and providing information relating to service delays. In addition, the appropriate use of express checkout points should be enforced to minimise consumer irritation. Retailers should consider allocating more resources to ensure checkout efficiency, e.g. more manned checkouts, since consumers nowadays are influenced by time pressure and this influences consumer satisfaction and store patronage. Availability of parking has been identified as one of the most frequently encountered unexpected events associated with shopping. Retailers should ensure that there is ample parking or risk losing the patronage of potential consumers. Parking should be available at minimum or no cost and the time and energy associated with walking from the car park to the store destination should be minimised. The importance of parking varies by consumer segment and store type. Retailers should ascertain the needs of the consumer base, as well as gauge the expectations that consumers have of their store type. This should dictate what provision should be made for consumer parking.

Recent research findings on the sub dimensions of travel and transportation are scarce. This, however, does not diminish their importance in store choice and warrants consideration by retailers. Travelling to a store should be associated with minimum time and maximum ease. The availability of public transport near to the store should also be considered, as well as the frequency, distance, comfort and safety relating to modes of transport, e.g. taxi or shuttle service, buses and trains. Retailers should further address the sub dimension of location. Stores located in close proximity to the consumer's home or work lead to increased consumer satisfaction. This is also a basis for consumer retention, although results did not support the hypothesis that it leads to consumer loyalty. Consumer segments also differ concerning the importance they place on store location; time-constrained consumers prefer store locations that are convenient, i.e. close to work or home for single-purpose shopping trips. To cater for time-constrained consumers on multi-purpose shopping trips, stores should be located near other stores or within shopping malls to facilitate one-stop-shopping. Store hours provide another convenience aspect that should be considered. Later hours should accommodate consumers who are challenged by time pressure during the day due to full-time employment. Twenty-four-hour stores specifically provide a valuable service to consumers who do shift work. Lastly, retailers should take cognisance of the problems relating to the sub dimensions of convenience that are experienced by physically disabled consumers. To facilitate their patronage, there should be adequate space in the parking area, stores should be easily accessible and there should be lifts where necessary in the store to accommodate disabled consumers.

Consumers nowadays actively seek convenience, with associated high expectations of efficiency and shopping ease (Morrison, 2006). Following from this, consumers are willing to trade between various multi-channel contexts, e.g. store and Internet retailing, to fit their need

of convenience. By implication, purchases will be shared across various distribution channels and an identifiable segment of consumers will convert to e-tailing on the basis of the convenience preference (Goldsmith & Flynn, 2005; Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002; Keen, Wetzels, De Ruyter & Feinberg, 2004). Retailers should, therefore, give careful consideration to the underlying sub dimensions of convenience in their strategies, since this will ensure that they are able to retain their consumer base and build consumer loyalty.

2.3.4.3 Facilities (store layout, store appearance, facilities convenience, fitting rooms and fixtures)

The facilities associated with a store should appeal to the target market and lead to increased levels of consumer experience. Facilities, specifically, will have a positive influence on the consumer's emotional response and predisposition towards the retailer brand, thus increasing the competitiveness of the retailer (Harris et al., 2001; Kent, 2003; Newman & Foxall, 2003). The relevance of facilities in the formation of store image has been recognised since early seminal research on store image (Martineau, 1958; Lindquist, 1974-1975). With the emphasis in the current retail environment being placed on the consumer experience, research on the influence of facilities on consumer behaviour remains topical.

Existing empirical research frequently reports on the facilities dimension in results. As with convenience, the facilities dimension has often been employed in an attempt to differentiate between the unique needs of consumer segments. However, research results vary. Oates et al. (1996) found no significant differences related to the importance of facilities as far as the elderly consumer's lifestyle segments were concerned. Burt and Carralero-Encinas (2000) established that UK consumers perceive the facilities of a UK retailer more favourably than Spanish consumers perceive the same UK retailer, in a study on the role of store image in retail internationalisation. Jin and Kim's (2003) results showed no significant differences between Korean consumer segments on the basis of shopping motives and their perception of facilities. Moye and Kincade (2002) found that facilities differentiated between consumer segments on the basis of shopping orientation. *Bargain apparel shoppers* provided a higher mean importance score for the facilities dimension than the *decisive apparel shoppers*, *confident apparel shoppers*, and the *appearance-conscious apparel shoppers*. The same study also concluded that the importance rating for facilities also differed with regard to usage situations. Respondents to the first usage situation, namely formal social gatherings, placed more importance on facilities than respondents to the second usage situation, namely family gatherings. A study concerning the consumers of first-tier and second-tier cities in China confirmed that facilities explain differences between consumers. Second-tier city consumers typically place more importance on a store's physical facilities than consumers from first-tier cities (Wong & Yu, 2003).

Empirical evidence on proposed relationships between facilities and other consumer behaviour variables can also be found in the literature. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) found that importance rankings for facilities in department and grocery stores were similar. Thang and Tan (2003) rejected their hypothesis that stated that the more favourable the consumer's perception of the facilities of the store, the higher the consumer's preference for the store. Grace and O'Cass (2005) found that facilities, as an indicator of store service provision, has a significant positive effect on perceived value for money and consumer satisfaction, with its strongest effect relating to aroused feelings in consumers. This is ascribed to the fact that the affective response is often induced simultaneously or follows closely on the retail store experience, i.e. store service provision. Store service provision, perceived value for money and consumption feelings have a significant effect on consumer satisfaction, whereby the strongest observed relationship was between store service provision and consumer satisfaction. However, Koo's (2003) results showed that facilities did not have a positive impact on consumer attitude, store satisfaction or store loyalty.

Recent research focused on the sub dimensions of store facilities to aid retailers in the development of a retail strategy. Baldwin (1999) found that aisle width, associated with **store layout**, did not affect patronage turnover in Hong Kong supermarkets. However, Miranda et al. (2005) indicated in their study that increased aisle width tend to enhance consumer satisfaction. A study of the physically disabled apparel consumer in South Africa showed that 63% of respondents found the layout between racks to be too narrow (De Klerk & Ampousah, 2002, p. 98). Gilboa and Rafaeli (2003) studied the effects of complexity (e.g. the visual richness and number of variables in the environment) and order (e.g. organisation, coherence and congruity in an environment) as store attributes associated with store layout. Their findings indicated that a less complex and more highly ordered environment leads to positive consumer emotional states and, subsequently, consumer approach behaviour. Semeijn et al. (2003) investigated the effects of store layout on consumer evaluations of store brands. Their results indicated that the more highly a consumer rated the store layout, the more positively the store-branded products were evaluated.

The influence of **store appearance** on the evaluation of store and national brands was investigated. Results showed that store brands were judged to be of a superior quality in stores with an attractive appearance as opposed to stores with an unattractive appearance. However, the quality of national brands was judged similarly in stores with an attractive versus unattractive appearance (Richardson, Jain & Dick, 1996). De Klerk et al. (1998) concluded that female consumers are more likely to enter a store and return for further purchases when the store facilities, especially the outside appearance of the store, closely match their self-image. Siu and Cheung (2001) determined that the physical appearance of a store had a statistically significant positive influence on overall service quality rating. Results further indicated that physical appearance had a statistically significant positive association

with *intention to recommend*, but only a weak positive association with *purchase intention*. Thus, service quality, consumer's intention to recommend a store to others and, to a lesser extent, consumer's purchase intentions, can be positively influenced by creating a more favourable consumer perception of the store's physical appearance. A moderate proportion (51%-75%) of respondents in a study on apparel store preference ranked discount stores highly on outside appearance, whilst a very large proportion (95% to 100%) ranked department stores highly on outside appearance. Conversely, the outside appearance of the store affected store desirability for three discount stores (out of a total of 13 stores, including four discount stores) that were included in the study, i.e. a store with an attractive outside appearance is perceived by consumers as a more desirable place to shop (Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003).

Few studies reported on the sub dimensions of **facilities convenience** and **fitting rooms**, but Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) reported on the ranking of the rest rooms in different store types, i.e. facilities convenience. Only 26-50% of respondents indicated that specialty stores had adequate rest rooms. A moderate proportion of respondents (51%-75%) perceived discount stores to have adequate rest rooms, whilst a large proportion of respondents (76%-94%) perceived department stores to have adequate rest rooms. The majority of respondents perceived discount, specialty and department stores to have pleasant fitting rooms.

The availability of adequate space in fitting rooms for disabled apparel consumers was noted by De Klerk and Ampousah (2002, p. 98). Sixty-five percent of respondents commented that the space in fitting rooms was inadequate. The researchers further reported that 66% of the respondents complained that store display racks, as an attribute associated with store **fixtures**, were usually too high. Kerfoot, Davies and Ward (2003) undertook a qualitative study on the influence of visual merchandising on consumer perceptions, specifically relating this to store fixtures. Their results indicated that hanging out of merchandise for display was perceived as the most attractive manner of merchandise presentation, whilst folded merchandise was perceived as being neat, but this made it difficult to assess the merchandise. Similarly, rails made it difficult to browse through the merchandise. Consumers voiced their preference for order in the store environment and mannequins also elicited positive responses. Glass fixtures was perceived positively, whilst shelves and rails were seen as unattractive. The colours of fixtures were found to influence perceptions of quality and price. White was associated with a perception of below average price, whilst pink and red were associated with a perception of an average to above average price. Neutral/beige colours lead to perceptions of expensive to very expensive price. A clear route through the store increased consumers propensity to browse and neat and sparse displays generated a perception of quality. The sensory qualities of materials used in the store, e.g. wooden hangers and flooring, contributed to an ambience of exclusivity and influenced quality perceptions. Lastly, the effect of lighting was investigated and results indicated that dull or

basic lighting led to negative associations. The study concluded that consumer evaluations of visual merchandising influence approach or avoidance behaviour, with 88% of consumers indicating a liking for the visual merchandising being more inclined to browse in the store and 80% tending to purchase, versus 36% and 19% respectively when consumers indicated dislike of the visual merchandising (Kerfoot et al., 2003, p. 151). Miranda et al. (2005) found shelf signage (e.g. facilitating the ease of locating merchandise) as an attribute associated with store fixtures, to be a significant variable in generating store loyalty.

Empirical results of research into the ability of facilities to differentiate between consumer segments seem contradictory, as do as results pertaining to the relationship between facilities and other consumer behaviour variables. However, research on the sub dimensions of store facilities provides valuable insight into the effect of facilities on consumer behaviour. Retailers should address the practical implications following from these results. Aisle width should be maximised and the store layout should be less complex and more ordered. This could potentially lead to increased consumer satisfaction and induce positive emotional states in consumers, leading to approach behaviour. An attractive appearance (e.g. a clean store and attractive entrance and outside appearance) induces a positive service quality rating and increases a store's desirability for shopping. This could also motivate consumers to enter a shop, return for future purchases and recommend the store to others. Retailers should, therefore, invest in remodelling and renovating stores regularly and ensure that they are well maintained. Few research studies report on facility convenience and fitting rooms. It would be wise for retailers to determine the needs of their consumer base with regard to these sub dimensions (e.g. availability of rest areas, number of fitting rooms, size of fitting rooms and lighting in fitting rooms) and allocate the necessary resources to improve these facilities to match consumer expectations. However, retailers should bear in mind that store types are perceived differently in terms of the adequacy of their rest rooms and fitting rooms. Consumers patronising specific store types, e.g. discount stores, might be willing to sacrifice the convenience of facilities to ensure, for example, lower prices. Store fixtures should facilitate the assessment of merchandise, e.g. hanging versus folded apparel. Fixtures should also ensure that stores look neat and ordered. The materials used in the fixtures, e.g. glass and wood, and the flooring can contribute to create exclusivity and increase the perceived quality of the store and merchandise. Store lighting that is bright, interesting and accentuates the merchandise is also perceived more positively. Shelf signage should be employed to ease the location of merchandise. This could lead to consumer loyalty, especially with time-impooverished consumers. Lastly, findings concerning physically disabled consumers again highlighted specific needs, as with the convenience dimension. Aisle width and accessible merchandise display racks is of particular relevance. Thus, retailers need to take cognisance of these findings and focus on these in the retail strategy. Store facilities are especially important brand contacts in an integrated marketing communications strategy and

should communicate the retail brand effectively, thereby contributing to differentiating the retailer from its competition (Kent, 2003; Kerfoot et al., 2003).

2.3.4.4 Institutional (clientele, overall impression, store reputation and store association)

Within the context of corporate and retail branding, the institutional dimension gains significant importance, specifically because it is underpinned by the sub dimensions of overall impression, store reputation and store association (Ailiwadi & Keller, 2004; Alessandri, 2001; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001). Further to this, the sub dimension of clientele associated with the institutional dimension serves as key feature in differentiating store-based retailing from Internet retailing, since it provides consumers with an opportunity of social interaction in the store experience (Harris, Baron & Parker, 2000). Research results including the institutional dimension are, therefore, vital to providing retailers with the necessary insight into managing corporate and retail branding.

The institutional dimension was first introduced into store image research by Lindquist (1974-1975) who associated this dimensions with store projection, reputation and reliability. Hansen and Deutshcer (1977-1978) employed Lindquist's store image framework as point of departure in their study on the importance of store image in retail store selection. Specific store attributes included within their institutional dimension were *company is well-known* and *been in the community a long time*. Both studies by Lindquist and Hansen and Deutscher identified clientele as a separate store image dimension. Lindquist defined clientele as social class appeal, self-image congruency, as well as specific attributes related to store personnel. Hansen and Deutscher included the attributes of *store is known by friends*, *store is liked by friends*, *store is recommended by friends*, and *many friends shop there*. However, the refinement of the underlying dimensions of store image discussed in section 2.3.3.1 indicated that clientele was more frequently associated with the institutional dimension and this was, therefore, included in this dimension, together with store reputation, overall impression, and store association. This dimension has seldom been studied within store image research. Janse van Noordwyk (2002) also employed Lindquist's store image framework as point of departure in a qualitative study on how the female large-size consumer perceived the importance of store image attributes. Results indicated support for the institutional dimension, and showed that the importance of this dimension varies across age and population groups. The younger age group, namely 20-29 years old, was the only age group to perceive this dimension as important. With regard to population groups, black respondents rated this dimension as more important than the white respondents did.

The sub dimensions associated with the institutional dimension, namely clientele and overall impression, have been included in store image research. Amirani and Gates (1993) followed

an attribute-anchored conjoint approach to measuring store image. Their results indicated that **overall impression** and **clientele** were among the most important contributors to the formation of the consumer's image of specialty, mass merchandising and discount department stores. However, only the overall impression of the store was found to be a statistically significant predictor of preference for discount department stores. In a study on the effect of consumer age on perceived store image, results indicated that overall impression and clientele, as well as store reputation, are evaluated more positively by younger consumers than older consumers (Joyce & Lambert, 1996).

Various studies reported on the importance of **store reputation** in the formation of store image. Chowdhary (1989, p. 1185) reported that 56% of elderly consumers consider store reputation to be an important consideration when shopping for apparel. However, Hyllegard et al. (2005) found that store reputation was more important to the 18-24 year old group of Spanish consumers than to Spanish consumers aged 56-88. Birtwistle and Siddiqui (1995) found store reputation to be ranked sixth in importance in a qualitative study on store image dimensions. The importance of store reputation was confirmed in a quantitative empirical study concerning UK consumers' perceptions of fashion retailers (Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001). Huddleston et al. (1990) indicated that there is a significant relationship between the importance of store reputation and the *positive thinker* and *education oriented* lifestyle segments of the mature female consumer. No relationship was found with *credit prone*, *shopper* and *socially active* segments. Williams and Slama (1995) established that store reputation is more important to market mavens than to non-mavens. Store reputation was further identified as one of the key dimensions used by consumers to achieve the end states of *quality of life* and *enjoyment and happiness* through both functional and hedonic consequences (Thompson & Chen, 1998). An investigation into the role of store image in retail internationalisation concluded that the greatest difference in perceptions of a UK retailer across UK and Spanish consumers occurred in respect of store reputation (Burt & Carralero-Encinas, 2000). UK consumers rated the store reputation for the UK retailer more favourably than the Spanish consumers did. Thang and Tan (2003) found that the more favourable a consumer's perception of the store reputation, the higher will be the consumer preference for the store.

The research results for the institutional dimension provide tentative insight to retailers. The importance of this dimension and its sub dimensions varies by population group and consumer lifestyle segments and contradictory results were observed for different age groups. However, retailers should manage this dimension strategically, since it contributes to corporate and retail branding. Of particular relevance is store reputation, given that the store's interaction with consumers affects the corporate reputation (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). According to Alessandri (2001) corporate reputation is the result of consistent perceptions of a positive corporate image over time. The importance of the corporate reputation cannot be

emphasised enough, since it is the strongest determinant of a corporation's sustainability (Firestein, 2006). Research has indicated that corporations that projected their core mission and identity in a more systematic and consistent fashion, had a more positive reputation. These corporations also provided significantly more information on a range of issues relating to their operations, identity and history (Fombrun & Rindova, 1998). A favourable corporate reputation depends on the delivery of consistent messages about the corporate brand and the unique associated set of values that are relevant to its target market e.g. value for money, reliability, convenience and associated services. This highlights the need to adopt an integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy within a corporation (Christopher, 1996; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; McGrath, 2005; Urde, 2003). At the same time, corporations need to ensure that the promises that are communicated regarding their brand and its values are delivered and fulfilled (Mitchell, 1999).

2.3.4.5 Merchandise (assortment, style, price and quality)

The present dynamic and fiercely competitive marketplace is characterised by impulse purchasing and fickle consumers. Consumer preference is largely driven by the store experience, associated with excitement and emotional benefits offered by the store environment. However, research has shown that consumers still expect a minimum level of functional and utilitarian offer, i.e. the correct merchandise (Berry et al., 2002; Carpenter et al., 2005; Dennis et al., 2002). Consumers are becoming increasingly insistent in their demands for merchandise that meet their individual needs and preferences (Morrison, 2006). In order to gain and maintain a competitive advantage, retailers need to ensure that they align their retail strategy with consumer merchandise preferences. By succeeding in this, retailers are rewarded with consumer loyalty and associated profitability (Newman & Foxall, 2002; Newman & Patel, 2004). Lindquist (1974-1975) found early support for the inclusion of the merchandise dimension in store image research. Since then, merchandise has emerged as a dimension in various research studies concerning the underlying structure of the store image construct (Marks, 1976; Porter & Claycomb, 1997; Zimmer & Golden, 1988).

Few studies report on the merchandise dimension *per se*. Research results have indicated that merchandise did not differentiate between fashion leaders and fashion followers in the elderly market (Chowdhary, 1999) or consumers of Korean discount and multinational discount stores (Kim & Jin, 2001). Thang and Tan (2003) found that merchandise is the most significant store image dimension contributing to consumer preference of departmental stores in Singapore. Consumers of first-tier cities in China perceived merchandise to be of more importance than did consumers of second-tier cities (Wong & Yu, 2003).

Burt and Carralero-Encinas (2000) concluded that the greatest difference between UK consumers and Spanish consumers' rating of a UK retailer was with regards to **merchandise**

assortment, as a sub dimension of Merchandise. UK consumers rated the retailer more favourably on this sub dimension than did Spanish consumers. Hyllegard et al. (2005) concluded that age and gender segments in the Spanish consumer market did not differ in their merchandise assortment perceptions of a US specialty retailer. Odekerken-Schröder et al. (2001) did not find support for the hypothesis that a higher level of technical quality, i.e. merchandise selection and product availability, leads to a higher level of store loyalty. They did conclude that the impact of technical quality on store loyalty is stronger for older than for younger consumers, i.e. age moderates the relationship from technical quality to store loyalty. In contrast, Koo (2003) found merchandise specifically associated with assortment to have a direct positive influence on store loyalty and consumer attitude, but not store satisfaction. Miranda et al. (2005), however, concluded that merchandise assortment had an inverse relationship with store satisfaction. Amine and Cadenat (2003) investigated consumer perceptions of merchandise assortments for three product group categories available at hypermarkets, namely coffee, yogurt and dish detergent. Results have shown that differences in assortment range are more noticeable for product categories where consumers' need for variety is high, i.e. for coffee and yogurt. They established that the presence or absence of a preferred and/or national brand within an assortment where consumers are choice sensitive, i.e. coffee and yogurt, tends to distort consumers' perceptions of the merchandise assortment.

Kahn and Wansink (2004) confirmed their hypotheses that assortment structure, including assortment organisation, size and symmetry, moderates the relationship of actual variety on consumption quantities. Their findings firstly indicated that assortment organisation moderates the effect of actual variety on consumption quantities (i.e. for organised assortments, more options increase consumption quantities to a greater degree than for disorganised assortments). Secondly, when the number of options in an assortment is held constant, a larger assortment (i.e. larger physical display) will increase consumption quantities as opposed to a smaller assortment, although this difference occurs, to a lesser extent, with disorganised assortments. Lastly, for more asymmetric assortments, an increased number of options will increase consumption quantities to a greater extent than with symmetric assortments. Thus, they conclude that by manipulating the perceived variety of an assortment, retailers are able to influence consumption quantities. Research thus indicates that greater perceived merchandise assortment influences consumer behaviour, both directly and indirectly. However, an increased number of different merchandise options does not directly translate to more positive perceptions. Retailers are able to reduce the number of different merchandise options without adversely affecting consumer perceptions by focusing on offering the most preferred brands, the organisation of the assortment and the availability of diverse merchandise attributes (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

The results reported in the previous section include various product groups. However, consumer behaviour varies across different types of product groups and depends on the frequency with which a product is purchased, the cost of the product, the time and effort involved in making the purchase, as well as the perceived risk associated with the product (Terblanchè, 1998, pp. 58-61). Therefore, retailers should take caution not to generalise findings from one product group area to another.

Specific to the merchandise assortment sub dimension, managing brand assortment has become increasingly important to retailers, since brand image influences the perceptions of merchandise (Ailiwadi & Keller, 2004; Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Research on store brands has been particularly prevalent. Semeijn et al. (2003) indicated that the favourable perception of a store's merchandise has a positive influence on consumers' evaluation of store brand quality in grocery product categories. A negative relationship was observed between the perceived functional, psychosocial and financial risk associated with a product category and the attitude towards that product category carrying a store brand. Further research showed that, for store brands, brand equity is present when consumers are loyal to the store carrying the store brand (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, Goedertier & Van Ossel, 2005). Vahie and Paswan (2006) demonstrated that store quality and atmosphere, as dimensions of store image, positively influence the perception of store brand quality, whereas congruence between national brands and store image influences store brands negatively. Store quality, store convenience, store price/value, and the congruence between national and store brands have a positive influence on the affective dimension of store brand image, but congruence between national brands and store image has a negative influence on store brand image. Store brands are not only associated with higher product margins, but also provides retailers with negotiating leverage to attain more attractive prices and promotions on national brands. This, in turn, increases the unit profits on national brands (Ailiwadi & Keller, 2004; Baltas, 2003; Pauwels & Srinivasan, 2004). To maximise the potential benefits associated with store brands, retailers should invest in creating a favourable store image perception. The dimensions and sub dimensions specifically associated with merchandise quality/price, atmosphere and convenience influence store brands positively. A positive store image will also contribute to store loyalty, either directly or indirectly, and this will contribute to store brand equity. Lastly, the risk associated with a product should guide retailers in their store brand policy, since high risk associated with products have a negative effect the attitude towards product categories carrying store brands.

Another important influence to be considered by retailers offering store brands is the national brands they include in their merchandise offer. Offering high quality national brands improves the evaluation of store brands by contributing to a more favourable perception of the retailer's overall store image (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). However, research further showed that both the quality and affective perception of store brands are influenced negatively by the

congruence between national brands and store image (Vahie & Paswan, 2006). This, however, does not imply that retailers should not carry national brands in their assortment, since the congruency between national brand and store brand significantly improves the image of the store brand. Retailers need rather to invest resources to build and maintain store brand equity. In addition to this, retailers need to take cognisance of the relationship between brand image and consumer self-image. Jamal and Goode (2001) concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between self-image congruency with a brand and brand preference, as well as brand satisfaction, in the precious jewellery market. Similarly, Grovers and Schoormans (2005) confirmed that congruency between self-image and brand image has a positive influence on consumer preference across a variety of product categories, including screwdrivers, coffeemakers, soap-dispensers and table wines. It is important, therefore, that the national brands included in the merchandise assortment is congruent with consumers' self-image. However, as mentioned previously, it is imperative that results should be interpreted in the context of the product group employed in the individual studies and should not be generalised across product groups.

Bellizzi et al. (1983) found that colours used in store design only influence the perception of **merchandise style**, but not assortment, price or quality. Respondents perceived merchandise displayed against a warm colour store design as being more up-to-date than merchandise in a cool colour environment. Merchandise in a red environment was rated most up-to-date. Taylor and Cosenza (2002) confirmed that merchandise style, including fit and look, is the most important decision attribute to later-aged female teens when shopping for apparel. Jin and Kim (2003) indicated that leisure-motivated, socially-motivated and utilitarian Korean consumers rated merchandise style, especially of fashion merchandise, positively, whilst shopping-apathetic consumers rated this unfavourable.

A significant relationship between the importance of **merchandise price** and the *shopper* lifestyle segment of the mature female consumer was established by Huddleston et al. (1990). However, no such relationship was reported for any of the other segments, namely *credit prone*, *positive thinker*, *education-oriented*, and *socially active*. In a study on Korean consumer segments on the basis of lifestyle, low merchandise price was one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for patronising a store by leisure-motivated and utilitarian shoppers (Jin & Kim, 2003). Burt and Carralero-Encinas (2000) investigated UK and Spanish consumers' perceptions of a UK retailer's pricing policy. They confirmed that UK consumers perceived the retailer's pricing policy more favourable than Spanish consumers did. Hyllegard et al. (2005) found no difference between Spanish consumer segments on the basis of age and gender and their perception of the merchandise price of a US apparel specialty retailer. However, Sullivan et al. (2002) found that merchandise price successfully differentiated between consumers' apparel shopping intentions amongst different store types. Price sensitivity was seen to be the only factor that significantly affects apparel shopping

choice for department, national and regional chain stores, and national and regional discount stores. Price sensitivity did not affect apparel shopping choice for mail, catalogue, specialty or independently owned stores. Moore and Carpenter (2006) also investigated merchandise price in relation to different retail formats. They identified three price cue factors, namely price consciousness, sale proneness, and prestige sensitivity, and distinguished between stores that implement low price strategies (value department stores, off-price retailers, mass merchants and Internet retailers) and high price strategies (upscale department stores and specialty stores). Their results indicated that price consciousness has a positive relationship with off-price retailers and mass merchants. In contrast, no significant negative relationship between price consciousness and upscale department stores and specialty stores was observed. Sales proneness had a positive effect on value department stores and off-price retailers, but not on the Internet format. Support was only found for a negative relationship between sales proneness and the specialty store format. Prestige sensitivity had a positive effect on upscale department stores, but not specialty stores. Results did support the hypothesis that prestige sensitivity had an adverse effect on value department stores and mass merchants.

Babakus, Bienstock and Van Scotter (2004) confirmed that perceived **merchandise quality** has a positive influence on consumer satisfaction, which, in turn, has a positive influence on store traffic and store sales growth. However, no significant direct influence of perceived merchandise quality on store traffic and sales growth was observed. Of particular importance to retailers, though, is the price-quality relationship. Verma and Gupta (2004) investigated the price-quality relationship within the Indian consumer market. Their results confirmed that price is an important factor in judging the quality of durable (television), semi-durable (T-shirt), and non-durable (toothpaste) goods. Consumers associated a higher price with superior quality. The role of selective information processing in price-quality inference was studied by Kardes, Cronley, Kellaris and Posavac (2004). They identified information load (amount of information available to support judgment), information organisation (easy-to-process ranked orders as opposed to random format), and concern about closure (high concern is associated with consumers that are motivated to reach a judgment or decision as quickly as possible) as determinants of selective information processing. The study concluded that the degree to which price is employed as basis for inferring quality decreases when concern about closure is low, provided that information load is low and information is presented randomly. Consumers were also less likely to neglect belief-inconsistent information under these conditions. In addition, Cronley, Posavac, Meyer, Kardes & Kellaris (2005) confirmed that participants who are exposed to ranked-ordered information organisation perceive a stronger relation between price and quality than participants who reviewed random information. Participants who viewed the ranked-ordered information were willing, on average, to pay 20% more for their purchases than participants that were presented with random information (Cronley et al., 2005, p. 167. Medina, Méndez and Rubio (2004) did not find evidence that

product categories with a higher dispersion of prices (i.e. difference between high and low price) and categories with a higher average price will have a higher price-quality relationship. They attribute this to the fact that consumers were familiar with the quality of the products they investigated (e.g. food and perfumes) and that the dispersion of prices in the product categories was not high enough to lead consumers to associate higher prices with higher quality.

Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein (2005) studied the effects of multiple extrinsic cues on quality perceptions. Results supported their hypothesis that an interaction effect of price and warranty on consumer perceptions of product quality will occur. The effect of either price or warranty was found to be stronger when it was paired with a consistent (i.e. high price/strong warranty) versus inconsistent, alternate cues (i.e. low price/strong warranty or high price/weak warranty). Where price and warranty cues presented inconsistent information, the more negative cue will be more salient and will dominate consumer evaluations (i.e. low price/strong warranty or high price/weak warranty will not be different from low price/weak warranty). Support was further shown for the hypothesis that an interaction effect of intrinsic attribute information and extrinsic cues (i.e. price and warranty) on perceptions of quality will occur. When intrinsic attribute information is scarce, price and warranty will interact to affect consumer's perception of quality. In contrast, when there is an abundance of intrinsic attribute information, price and warranty will not interact to affect quality perceptions.

Research findings on the merchandise dimension of store image provide conclusive evidence of the importance of this dimension to retailers, although contradictory results were observed for the effect of merchandise on consumer satisfaction and store loyalty. Consumers differ in their perception of the importance of merchandise and its sub dimensions and perceptions also vary for different retail formats, specifically with regard to merchandise price. Retailers, therefore, need to develop an integrated view of their consumers and demand a better understanding of how their needs are evolving, to be able to accommodate their expectations by providing flexible merchandise offerings, including assortment, style, price and quality (Morrison, 2006). Stores should offer the optimum assortment level, taking into account the importance of store and national brands. Retailers should take cognisance of the positive effect of a favourable perception of other store image dimensions, e.g. store atmosphere and convenience, on perceptions of merchandise, e.g. store brand and style. Lastly, retailers should be aware of the interaction between price and quality. The effects of price on quality can be diminished by providing consumers with increased and more organised information. Retailers also need to ensure that extrinsic cues, e.g. high price and strong warranty, are consistent, since they interact to influence merchandise quality.

2.3.4.6 Promotion (advertising, displays and sales incentives)

In an environment where consumers are inundated with competing marketing messages an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy has proved to enhance consumer attitudes towards retailer brands (McGrath, 2005). Thus, promotional activities become increasingly important as an integral part of IMC, resulting in a powerful and synergistic brand communications mix (Kliatchko, 2005; Naik & Raman, 2003; Smith, Gopalakrishna & Chatterjee, 2006). Promotions, including advertising, displays and sales incentives, serve as important controllable brand contacts that allow retailers to affect consumers' brand experience (Calder & Malthouse, 2005; Madhavaram et al., 2005). In addition, retailers are able to gain differentiation through promotional messages, by providing consumers with the knowledge needed to make informed buying decisions. This leads to greater sales and consumer loyalty, as opposed to misleading promotional messages often resulting in ambiguous situations and consumer dissatisfaction (Gagnon & Chu, 2005; Newman & Patel, 2004).

Martineau (1958) initially identified advertising as one of the four dimensions of store image. Based on a review of early store image research, Lindquist (1974-1975) expanded on this to include other aspects within promotion, such as sales promotions, displays and incentives. Marks' (1976) study investigating the operationalisation of the store image construct further confirmed the relevance of the promotion dimension. However, few empirical store image studies report on the promotion dimension in their findings. Sullivan et al. (2002) found this dimension to explain consumers' apparel shopping intentions amongst different store types. Thang and Tan (2003) found that the more favourable the consumer perception of a store's promotional activity, including advertisements and special events, the higher the consumer preference for the store will be. Wong and Yu (2003) further indicated in their study that consumers of first-tier cities in China perceive promotions to be of more importance than did consumers of second-tier cities.

Van de Velde et al. (1996) included the specific sub dimension of **advertising**/promotion in their study. They found that this sub dimension was ranked similarly in importance across Canadian and UK consumers, thus supporting their assumption that consumers with a shared root culture will judge store attributes similarly. Results from a study on store preference confirmed that advertising significantly affected store desirability and increased the likelihood of store preference (Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003).

Advertising has undergone dramatic changes alongside transformation in technology, thereby offering retailers the opportunity of potential new advertising channels, e.g. e-mail, Internet and cellular phones (What happened to the good old days?, 2003). Several recent research studies report on these forms of advertising. Kent and Brandal (2003) reported that pre-

notification and personalisation of letters did not increase e-mail response rate. *Neutral* text in the e-mail heading elicited a higher response rate than did a *beneficial* heading. They did not find that e-mail response rates are lower than postal-mail response rates. They also studied the effects of permission marketing, i.e. when consumers provide advance permission to receiving marketing communications. Their results confirmed that permission-based e-mails are (1) read more frequently; (2) seen as more interesting; (3) have a higher click-through rate; and (4) generate more frequent purchasing than spam e-mails, i.e. unsolicited e-mails. With regard to trust, they found that higher levels of trust in a company did not generate higher levels of permission as opposed to low levels of trust. Following from this, high levels of permission did not generate higher response rates than low levels of permission.

Merisavo and Raulas (2004) investigated the impact of e-mail marketing on brand loyalty in the cosmetics industry. Results showed that e-mail contacts had a positive effect on loyalty. Consumers receiving regular e-mails had strong brand attitudes, with 75% of respondents purchasing the communicated brand less than six months previously and 74% recommending it to their friends. E-mail messaging also had a positive effect on stimulating consumers to visit retail stores, with 62% of respondents reporting that they visited a retail store after receiving an e-mail message (Merisavo & Raulas, 2004, p. 500). Store traffic, however, was not generated by e-mail messages with offers or rewards. Store visits, rather, were explained by regular communication, the number of e-mails received, the perception of the usefulness of messages, how interesting the message content was, and whether respondents used communicated e-mail links to visit the brand's website. Respondents indicated that they found e-mail messages useful and interesting and appreciated regular communication. They found message content relating to special sales offers (90%), information about new products (89%), contests (68%), news about beauty in general (68%), information about events (43%), links to interesting Internet websites (43%) and information about international make-up trends (41%) most useful (Merisavo & Raulas, 2004, p. 501). Lastly, this study showed that consumers who are more brand loyal have a greater appreciation for regular communication and value the messages that they receive.

DuFrene, Engelland, Lehman and Pearson (2005) studied the changes in consumers' attitudes that resulted from participation in a permission e-mail campaign spanning an eight-month period. A statistically significant improvement in respondents' attitudes towards the brand, their feelings of trust in the company, their interest in the company's website, and their intention to purchase was noted. Results also confirmed that consumers achieved a level of understanding of the company's products and programmes within the first three weeks of the e-mail campaign, which accounted for most of the change in attitude, purchase intention and actual purchase.

Dahlén and Bergendahl (2001) investigated consumer responses to Internet advertising, particularly banner advertisements, for functional and expressive products. They identified functional products as insurance, automobile parts and detergent, and expressive products as vacations/holidays, clothing, ice-cream and coffee. They confirmed their hypothesis that the click-through rate is higher for banner advertisements of functional products as opposed to expressive products. The brand attitude resulting from banner advertisement impressions for expressive products was observed to be more positive than for functional products. Consumers who click on banner advertisements for expressive products had a more positive attitude towards the brand and higher usage experience of the brand than those who were exposed to the banner advertisement and did not click. No differences were found in brand attitude and usage experience between consumers who clicked and did not click on banner advertisements for functional products. Calisir (2003) reported on perceptions of young consumers (aged 18 to 26) with regard to web advertising. These consumers saw web advertising as the best medium for precipitating action, surpassing point of purchase and telemarketing. Web advertising was perceived as the most reliable source of advertising, effective in providing two-way communication and not irritating. However, consumers perceived that it takes time to examine web advertising and concluded that it is not effective for communicating brand and corporate image. Amongst teenagers in Hong Kong, results indicated that good banner designs, small online games and free gifts contributed significantly to the success of an Internet advertising campaign (Cheung, 2006).

Tsang, Ho and Liang (2004) focused on consumer attitudes toward advertising using the cellular phone as medium. They concluded that consumer attitudes toward cellular phone advertising are generally negative, but observed a positive attitude when prior permission is obtained. Entertainment, informativeness and credibility were positively correlated to the overall consumer attitude, whilst irritation showed a negative correlation. Consumer attitudes towards cellular phone advertising affected their intentions to receive cellular phone advertisements. Providing incentives for receiving cellular phone advertisements have a positive effect on consumer intentions to receive these advertisements. Respondents who were willing to receive cellular phone advertisements read the messages they received immediately and in full. In contrast, respondents whose intention was not to receive messages ignored them. In a New Zealand study by Carroll, Barnes, Scornavacca and Fletcher (2007) it was found that consumers prefer cellular phone messages to be filtered by their service provider and that unsolicited third party messages irritated them. Thus, they concluded that prior permission to send a message was the most important success factor in cellular phone marketing. Results indicated that respondents wish to exert control over the frequency of receiving messages, as well as the time when messages are received. Respondents further stated that messages should take into account the limitations of cellular phones and there should be manageable ways to receive them.

It is evident that technology-based advertising offers retailers significant potential benefits. However, it is imperative that retailers heed the practical implications following from the research results. Retailers should ensure that e-mail marketing is only directed at consumers who have given advance permission to receive it. Permission-based e-mail campaigns elicit positive attitudes towards a brand, trust in a company, interest in the company website, and intention to purchase. It also has a positive effect on consumer loyalty and encourages recommendation to friends, as well as store visits. Internet advertising aimed at consumers of functional products should ensure that consumers are directed to the target website where processing of information is facilitated. For expressive products, the banner ads in themselves are more important, since regular exposure to banner ads induces positive feelings and liking in consumers (Dahlén & Bergendahl, 2001). Retailers targeting younger consumers should focus on advertising design and offer consumers on-line games and free gifts. For cellular phone marketing, explicit permission from consumers is also a necessary prerequisite. Retailers should offer consumers control over the type, timeliness and frequency of messages and content should be relevant and appropriate for the mobile phone medium. By providing consumers with incentives, retailers are able to increase their intention to receive messages, as well as obtain behavioural responses, e.g. actually reading the mobile message and shorter time elapsing before the message is read.

With regard to research on promotional **displays**, Sen et al. (2002) indicated that window displays offering information about sales and promotions were a significant predictor of store entry. However, promotional window displays was not a significant predictor of product purchase. Hu and Jasper (2006) identified in-store graphics as a social cue in the store environment. Their results showed that consumers have a more favourable attitude toward merchandise quality and perceive service quality as higher when more social cues are present in the store environment. Further to this, their study indicated that consumers experience higher levels of pleasure or arousal when there are more in-store graphics in the store environment. Lastly, their results confirmed that consumer formed a more favourable image of a store and were more likely to patronise the store when more socially-oriented in-store graphics were displayed in a store with a highly-personalised service,. Thus, retailers should ensure that window displays offer information about sales and promotions to ensure store entry. A sufficient number of in-store graphics that provide social cues should be present to elicit higher levels of pleasure or arousal, increase likeliness of store patronage and create more favourable perceptions of merchandise and service quality, as well as store image.

The **sales incentives** sub dimension has often been included in research, specifically sales/price promotions and loyalty schemes. Smith and Sinha (2000) proposed three different promotional deals that were equivalent on a unit-cost basis or total cost basis but were worded differently, namely price promotion (50% off), volume/extra product promotion

(buy one, get one free), and mixed promotion (buy two, get 50% off). They investigated the effect of these promotional deals on grocery store preference. The majority of consumers preferred volume to mixed promotions, suggesting that the perception of savings is not solely influenced by how much a consumer saves, but how the deal is framed. The type of promotional deal influenced store preference. Respondents generally preferred promotions that provided immediate gratification with little or no investment e.g. price and volume promotions. Price promotions were the preferred promotional deal for higher priced products, whilst volume promotions were preferred for low priced categories. Alvarez and Casielles (2005) also investigated the effect of different sales promotions, specifically on brand choice. They confirmed that the effect of price promotions on brand selection was greater than the effect of other types of promotional action, including price cuts, extra product free, buy one get one free, samples, price packs, games and sweepstakes, coupons, rebates and premiums.

In another brand-specific study, Dawes (2004) assessed the impact of price promotions on brand, category and competitor sales. The results showed that the price promotion of a specific brand had no identifiable positive or negative long-term effect on the sales volume for the brand that was promoted, although it did temporarily increase the product category sales for the duration of the promotion. The price promotion had an identifiable negative effect on the sales volume of one competing retailer for the duration of the promotion, whilst no negative effect was observed for two other competing retailers. Lastly, the study confirmed that the sales promotion had a long-term negative effect on category sales for the retailer that ran the promotion. Trivedi and Morgan (2003) ascertained consumers' sensitivity to promotions. They concluded that high variety seeking consumers are more sensitive to promotions than low variety seekers. High variety seekers more often purchase non-favourite brands at below-median prices compared to low variety seekers. This corresponds with the high variety seekers' strategy to use low prices to experience a variety of brands over time. The average price paid by high variety seekers is significantly lower than that paid by low variety seekers, again reflecting the high variety seekers' low price strategy.

Bellizzi and Bristol (2004) investigated whether supermarket loyalty cards are associated with consumer loyalty. They found that loyalty cards do not promote store loyalty and that frequent cards users were less likely to be loyal to a store. The majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they had loyalty cards from different supermarkets (Bellizzi & Bristol, 2004, p. 148). Amongst 28 loyalty factors that were examined in the study, factors relating to loyalty cards were rated thirteenth, eighteenth and twenty-first respectively. Moore and Sekhon (2005) reported on the leading UK coalition loyalty card scheme which included retailers across different sectors, including apparel. They, similarly, concluded that the loyalty card scheme did not influence consumer behaviour significantly. In contrast, Gómez, Arranz and Cillan (2006) indicated that respondents who participated in the loyalty programmes of a

Spanish supermarket chain exhibited greater behavioural loyalty, regardless of the type of programme, to that retailer and lesser behavioural loyalty to competitors than did respondents who did not partake in any loyalty programme. Participants in loyalty programmes also showed greater levels of satisfaction, higher trust and greater commitment to the retailer offering the loyalty programmes than did non-participants. They confirmed, though, that participating in a loyalty programme does not cause a behavioural change in most consumers. , Turner and Wilson (2006) conversely concluded that loyalty card ownership contributes to store loyalty to a UK supermarket. The majority of respondents in this study also indicated that the loyalty card influenced the frequency with which they patronise the store.

These results provide insight to retailers on how to incorporate sales incentives in their promotional strategies. Price promotions are associated with a potential financial risk to retailers. Although price promotions were shown to affect brand choice, a successful short-term price promotion on a specific brand could lead to a long-term negative effect on category sales and consequent loss on overall profitability. Retailers should ensure, therefore, that they have assessment capabilities built into their databases to determine the effectiveness of different types of promotions under specific circumstances and for specific product groups (Smith & Sinha, 2000). Retailers also need to take into account that consumer characteristics, e.g. variety seeking, influence the effect of price promotions. This highlights the need for retailers to gain a thorough understanding of their target consumer. Results on the influence of loyalty schemes are inconsistent, but provide tentative insight into how loyalty schemes contribute to consumer loyalty, although it does not function in isolation. Research concur that loyalty schemes do not affect change in consumer behaviour, but serve to retain consumers that are already loyal. Therefore, this becomes an important tool for retailers to ensure consumer retention. Loyalty schemes such as store cards provide retailers with information which should be used to ascertain consumer needs. Retailers should tailor loyalty schemes to address these needs, e.g. through offers on specific products, price reductions and bonus schemes. Rewards and benefits should be tied in with cumulative patronage, which could further contribute to loyalty. By implication, frequent shopper programmes (e.g. golden store cards) whereby most frequent shoppers are identified and receive special treatment in terms of the rewards they are entitled to, could be introduced (Gómez et al., 2006). Retailers need to ensure that such loyalty programmes are fully communicated and the cumulative reward features are highlighted through other promotional activities (Bellizzi & Bristol, 2004).

To conclude, retailers should embrace the potential of technology-driven advertising channels, e.g. e-mail, Internet, and cellular phones, whilst at the same time taking cognisance of the practical implications associated with them. Displays should serve to provide consumers with social cues and information regarding promotional activities. Retailers should

offer consumer sales promotions after carefully assessing the associated risk. Loyalty schemes should be implemented and communicated fully to consumers to reap the potential benefits of consumer retention and loyalty. Thus, the promotional dimension and its associated sub dimensions are becoming increasingly relevant to retailers attempting to attract and keep loyal customers (Antanopoulos, 2006). It is evident that the promotional dimension is inherent to a retailer's IMC strategy, with all the promotional activities acting as potential marketing vehicles that communicate the corporate and retail brand. Therefore, retailers need to ensure that these promotional activities are managed in an integrated way and deliver a consistent message (Calder & Malthouse, 2005). By incorporating promotions in the IMC strategy, retailers are able to capitalise on the potential existence of synergy where the combined impact of various marketing communication activities is greater than the sum total of the individual effects (Naik & Raman, 2003). This allows retailers to achieve high brand equity and affect both immediate and future sales (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005; Madhavarani et al., 2005).

2.3.4.7 Sales personnel (interaction and appearance)

Retailers increasingly offer similar merchandise and price promotions, share common distribution systems and treat consumers similarly in terms of services offered. This increases the merits of increased focus on harnessing consumer relationships where interpersonal communication has been identified as a dominant determinant of perceived relationship investment and quality (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001; Wong & Sohal, 2002). Thus, sales personnel become important assets in a people-intensive industry such as retailing. Consumers in the current retail environment are able to purchase merchandise through various marketing channels. In this situation, the role of sales personnel is increasingly important as a source of differentiation in store-based retailing, since the sales personnel provide consumers with the opportunity to interact with others during the retail experience (Harris et al., 2000). In addition, their experience, knowledge and commitment to the brand, enable them to successfully communicate the brand to consumers and enhance the store and brand experience, thereby creating repeat consumers and increased profitability (Knee, 2002; Mitchell, 2002; Wong & Sohal, 2003).

The importance of sales personnel has been recognised since early store image studies (Marks, 1976; Martineau, 1958). Research on the underlying structure of store image further confirmed sales personnel as a dimension of the store image construct (Manolis et al., 1994). This dimension is also frequently mentioned in current existing empirical store image research. Oates et al. (1996) found that elderly consumer segments based on lifestyle differ with regard to the importance they place on store personnel quality. *Family oriented* consumers considered store personnel quality as very important when selecting a retail outlet, whereas *quiet introverts* did not find it of particular importance. Research showed that a

higher level of functional quality relating to sales personnel did not lead to a higher level of store loyalty (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001). Baker et al. (2002) investigated the influence of store image on perceived merchandise value and store patronage intentions. They concluded that the perceived interpersonal service quality will be higher when a consumer's perceptions of store personnel cues become more favourable and this will influence store patronage intentions. Koo (2003) found no relationship between sales personnel and store satisfaction or store loyalty, but the study did indicate sales personnel to have a significant influence on consumer attitude. In a study on Spanish consumers' perceptions of US retailers, the influence of sales personnel did not vary by consumer age or gender (Hyllegard et al., 2005).

A qualitative study on sales personnel **interaction** indicated that consumer expectations of sales personnel service at apparel retail outlets differed with regard to different store types. Consumers patronising discount stores and off-priced stores expected less from sales personnel service than those patronising specialty and department stores (Lee & Johnson, 1997). Naylor and Frank (2000) confirmed that consumer-initiated sales contact lowered perceptions of the retail experience and overall value to a level similar to consumers who had no sales contact. They concluded that sales contact with consumers is not enough, but that sales personnel should initiate contact with consumers to improve consumers' perceptions of value. In a study on the perceived sales personnel service attributes and retail patronage intentions, consumers were significantly more likely to patronise retailers with *very respectful* sales personnel. More knowledgeable, higher responsiveness and friendliness were the second, third and fourth most important attributes to exert a significant positive influence on store patronage. The least important sales personnel attribute was availability (Darian, Tucci & Wiman, 2001). In an investigation into Korean discount consumer shopping motives, results showed that *socially-motivated* consumers reported kind sales personnel as one of the main reasons for patronising a store (Jin & Kim, 2003). Grace and O'Cass (2005) support the findings that sales personnel service provision has a significant positive effect on perceived value for money, customer satisfaction and consumption feelings, which, in turn, influence consumer re-patronage intentions. Research results indicated that sales assistance had a positive influence on store satisfaction, as well as store loyalty (Miranda et al., 2005). Hu and Jasper (2006) reported that highly personalised service led to a more favourable evaluation of merchandise and service quality. However, highly personalised service did not affect respondents' feelings about the store in terms of pleasure or arousal. Results from the study indicated that, when more socially-oriented graphics were displayed in-store, respondents formed a more favourable store image and seemed more likely to shop in a store where highly personalised service was also present.

Recent research has also focused on the importance of sales personnel in relationship marketing. Consumer's perception of operational competence, problem-solving orientation

and benevolence, i.e. behaviours reflecting an underlying motivation to place the consumer's interest ahead of self-interest, is positively related to sales personnel trust (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol, 2002). Wong and Sohal (2002) indicated that sales personnel trust is positively related to relationship quality, salesperson commitment, and store trust. In turn, salesperson commitment is positively related to relationship quality and store commitment. Thus, retailers should take cognisance of the expectations of their target consumers in terms of sales personnel. This should guide the training and development of sales personnel to deliver on these consumer expectations. Sales personnel should initiate sales contact and provide a highly personalised service to lead to positive value perceptions. It is also imperative that sales personnel are respectful, knowledgeable, responsive and friendly. To build trust with consumers, sales personnel should be competent in assisting consumers and perform their daily task, equipped to solve consumer problems and show kindness and compassion. This could lead to higher relationship quality and elicit trust, not only in the sales person, but also in the store.

Further to this, the sub dimension of sales personnel **appearance** has been studied by Klassen, Clayson and Jasper (1996). They investigated the perceived effect that sales personnel's stigmatized appearance has on store image. Results indicated that obese sales personnel affect perceptions of store image negatively. De Klerk et al., (1998) found that when the appearance of sales personnel is similar to a consumer's self-image, the consumer will be more likely to enter a store, take advice from the sales personnel, as well as return for further purchases. Thus, retailers should provide sales personnel with guidelines and policy on appearance to ensure that it is in line with consumer expectations, as well as the desired store and corporate image.

The research results concerning sales personnel provide unequivocal support for the importance of this dimension to retailers. Retailers, therefore, should recognise sales personnel as valuable resources and ensure that the retail brand is communicated to them effectively, thus guiding the approach to their daily tasks and the manner in which they interact with consumers (Harris et al., 2000; Mitchell, 2002). This approach identifies sales personnel as important vehicles communicating the integrated marketing communications strategy to the consumer. The sales personnel serve as vital brand contacts with consumers and thus aid in the building of strong and potentially highly favourable brand associations with consumers (Calder & Malthouse, 2005; Madhavaram et al., 2005). Time, money and effort should be invested in sales personnel development and training to ensure that they are flexible, responsive and creative in their interactions with consumers, thereby enhancing the consumer brand experience and harnessing consumer loyalty (Harris et al., 2001; Wong & Sohal, 2003).

2.3.4.8 Service (after-sales service, payment options, in-store service and delivery options)

Although more emphasis is placed on enhancing the consumer experience to create differentiation in the marketplace, consumers still expect retailers to deliver a minimum level of utilitarian value, including service (Carpenter et al., 2005). Retailers increasingly offer comparable services and this highlights the need to effectively cater to the needs and wants of consumers. Retailers are thereby able to avoid the risk of losing dissatisfied consumers to competitors, which will ultimately lead to erosion of profits and consequent failure (De Wulf et al., 2001; Wong & Sohal, 2003).

Studies investigating the underlying structure of the store image construct confirmed the relevance of the service dimension (Lindquist, 1974-1975; Marks, 1976; Manolis et al., 1994). Service has often been employed in store image research to account for differences between consumer segments. Service has successfully differentiated between consumer types on the basis of shopping centre patronage motives. *Recreational shoppers* expressed the need for a large number of related services in shopping centre selection, whilst *economic oriented shoppers* perceive this to be a secondary consideration (Bellenger et al., 1977). Oates et al. (1996), however, showed that service did not differ significantly between elderly consumer segments on the basis of lifestyle. A significant difference was found in the service evaluation of Korean discount consumer segments. *Leisure-motivated, socially-motivated and utilitarian shoppers* rated service positively, but *shopping-apathetic shoppers* rated service unfavourably (Jin & Kim, 2003). In a study on Spanish consumers' perception of the products and services of US apparel specialty retailers, the influence of service did not differ with age or gender (Hyllegard et al., 2005). Service has also been included in studies investigating the differences between store types. Lee and Johnson (1997) concluded that the service expectations of consumers differ with regard to apparel discount, off-priced, specialty and department stores. Consumers had low service expectations from discount stores, due to the low prices offered, and expected even less service from off-priced stores. In contrast, consumers expected extensive service from specialty stores and even higher levels of service at department stores. The perceptions of service differed between consumers of shopping centres in first-tier and second-tier cities in China. Consumers in first-tier cities placed greater emphasis on *variety of services*, whereas consumers from second-tier cities stressed *quality of services* (Wong & Yu, 2003).

Further to this, findings on the relationship between service and other consumer behaviour variables have also been reported. The results of a study on brand recognition indicated that brand image does not influence consumers' perceptions of service (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). However, findings of a study by Semeijn et al. (2003) indicated that a more favourable perception of service influences the valuation of store brands in a positive sense. Research

by Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt (2000) confirmed that service quality influences consumer satisfaction, relative attitude and recommendation. By improving store service quality, retailers are able to increase consumer satisfaction, foster a more favourable relative attitude amongst consumers, and increase the likelihood that consumers will recommend the store. Increased store satisfaction, in turn, positively influences relative attitude, recommendation and repurchase, where re-purchase positively influences store loyalty. These findings were confirmed by Grace and O'Cass (2005), who established that service positively influences customer satisfaction, as well as perceived value for money and consumption feelings, which in turn influenced re-patronage intentions. Chang and Tu (2005) similarly showed that service positively influences consumer satisfaction, as well as consumer loyalty, in a study on the Taiwanese hypermarket industry. An investigation into the interrelationships between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty in Korea confirmed a relationship between service and consumer attitudes, as well as store loyalty. In contrast with other research findings, no statistically significant relationship between service and store satisfaction was found (Koo, 2003).

Burt and Carralero-Encinas (2000) confirmed that UK consumers perceive the return policy associated with the **after-sales service** sub dimension, as offered by a UK retailer, more favourable than Spanish consumers perceived the same UK retailer. Thang and Tan (2003) concluded that a favourable perception of after-sales service does not have a positive effect on store preference. In research on the handling of complaints, Stauss (2002) concluded that increased satisfaction with the process and outcome of a consumer complaint leads to increased overall complaint satisfaction, relationship satisfaction and re-purchase intentions. Satisfaction with the outcome of a complaint had a greater influence on overall complaint satisfaction than did satisfaction with the complaint process. This influence was not observed for relationship satisfaction and re-purchase intention. Kim, Kim, Im and Shin (2003) investigated the effect of attitude and perception on consumer complaint intentions. Their results confirmed that greater consumer alienation (i.e. a consumer's overall negative feeling towards a corporation and industry) leads to a more negative consumer attitude toward complaint behaviour, as well as perceived likelihood of a successful complaint. However, greater consumer alienation did not influence the consumer's perceived value of the complaint. An increase in prior positive complaint experiences resulted in a more positive consumer attitude toward complaining. Increased positive complaint experience, however, does not affect the perceived value of the complaint or the perceived likelihood of a successful complaint. Increased feelings of controllability by the consumer resulted in a more positive attitude toward complaint behaviour, greater perceived value of a complaint, and greater perceived likelihood of a complaint being successful. Lastly, a more favourable consumer attitude towards complaining, greater perceived value of a complaint and the greater perceived likelihood of a successful complaint all lead to an increased complaint intention.

Maxham and Netemeyer (2003) determined that perceived consumer distributive justice (i.e. the perception that they have been compensated fairly) in complaint handling positively affects satisfaction with the recovery, overall firm satisfaction, purchase intent, and likelihood of word-of-mouth. A consumer's perception of procedural justice (i.e. the perception that the process in which the outcome was provided was fair) has a positive effect on satisfaction with recovery, overall firm satisfaction, and likelihood of positive word of mouth. However, perceived interactional justice (i.e. the perception that the interaction that occurred between the consumer and employees was fair) leads to overall firm satisfaction and purchase intent. Extra-role behaviours of sales personnel (i.e. performance beyond *in-role* requirements) had a positive and significant indirect effect on consumer outcomes of satisfaction with recovery, overall firm satisfaction, purchase intent and likelihood of word of mouth. This relationship was fully mediated by consumers' perceived distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Schoefer and Ennew (2005) compared the emotional responses to service complaint experiences between groups exposed to low justice levels (including distributive, procedural and interactional justice) and groups exposed to high justice levels. Results confirmed that low justice groups reported significantly higher levels of negative emotion than did high justice groups.

Results indicate that consumer's attitude towards complaining influences complaint intention. This highlights the necessity for retailers to challenge the corporate culture to motivate employees to facilitate consumer complaints and their willingness to attend to it. By implication, retailers need to implement long-term oriented and consistent service improvement efforts to handle complaints satisfactorily. This should include increasing the perceived value of complaining by (1) lowering perceived costs, e.g. speedy and appropriate refund or exchange services, and (2) increasing perceived benefits, e.g. added incentives such as coupons and discounts. Retailers should facilitate the complaint process by making it easy for dissatisfied consumers to complain, e.g. by providing toll-free numbers, online consumer services, a consumer suggestion box, and a consumer voicing centre. Complaint handling should be characterised by retailers admitting their mistakes, by fast and polite response, and means of consistent follow-through (Kim et al., 2003). A consumer's perception of justice during complaint handling significantly affects consumer behaviour. Distributive justice, specifically, had the greatest relative influence on overall consumer satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive word of mouth. Thus, retailers should invest in resources to effectively address consumer complaints and enhance compensation e.g. through refunds and future discounts (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003). Service complaint experience elicits emotional responses from consumers. By recruiting, training and empowering staff to effectively manage consumer's emotional responses, retailers are able to interpret and defuse negative consumer responses, whilst encouraging positive emotions (Schoefer & Ennew, 2005).

With regards to **payment options**, the majority of the reviewed research focused on credit facilities. A study by Huddleston et al. (1990) confirmed that, based on lifestyle characteristics, elderly consumer segments were related to the importance placed on credit facilities. *Shopper, positive thinker, socially active, and credit prone* lifestyle factors all exhibited a significant relationship with the importance placed on credit, whilst no such relationship existed for *education oriented* elderly consumers. Chowdhary (1999) confirmed that credit facilities do not differentiate between elderly fashion leaders and fashion non-followers. Monger and Feinberg (1997) examined the influence of mode of payment on the formation of reference prices (i.e. what consumer's believe is a fair price for a product) and reservation prices (i.e. the highest price a consumer is willing to pay for a product). Their results supported their hypotheses that (1) reference prices differ significantly across mode of payment; (2) reference prices are higher when consumers pay with a credit card as opposed to cash or personal cheques: and (3) reservation prices are higher when consumers pay with a credit card as opposed to cash or personal cheques. Park and Burns (2005) identified four fashion orientation segments, namely *fashion leadership, fashion interests, importance of being well dressed, and anti-fashion attitude*. They concluded that it was only the *fashion interests* orientation that spurred compulsive buying and credit card use. Credit card use was also found to promote compulsive buying. Research results provide support for the influence of credit card usage on consumer behaviour, but also suggest that consumers differ with regard to the importance they place on the availability of credit. Retailers should, therefore, offer consumers the option of credit card payment, but not exclude other means of payment, e.g. cash, store cards or debit cards, since these might be the preferred means of payment for consumers who are not credit prone.

Few studies report on the sub dimensions of **in-store service** and **delivery options**. Thang and Tan (2003) indicated that a favourable perception of in-store service has a positive effect on store preference. Teller, Kotzab and Grant (2006) concluded that time-starved consumers (i.e. dual income households with children) are willing to pay more for home delivery of groceries and their willingness to use home delivery is significantly higher than those of new technologists (i.e. young and technologically interested consumers with no time for shopping). Their study further determined that *distance in metres from home to store* and *distance in minutes from home to store* does not influence consumers' willingness to use home delivery to a considerable degree. The results suggest that a favourable perception of in-store service, e.g. gift wrapping and inter-store transfers, positively influences store preference and delivery options, specifically home delivery, seem to be an attractive option to time-pressured consumers. Thus, retailers should ascertain which in-store services and delivery options are important to their target consumer and ensure that these are offered.

The research results highlight the need for retailers to address the practical implications associated with the results from studies on after-sales service, payment options, in-store

service and delivery options. The current marketplace is marked by increased competition, with consumers becoming more demanding. Thus, retailers need to direct their available resources to improve relevant services that provide consumers with added value and a more satisfying store experience. This will ensure differentiation in the marketplace and consumer satisfaction, ultimately leading to increased repeat consumers and profitability (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000; Wong & Sohal, 2003).

2.3.5 Summary

The foregoing discussion focused on the definition and underlying structure of the store image construct. An overview of store image literature highlighted the lack of consensus on what constitutes the definition of store image, as well as the inconsistencies in the literature in clearly identifying the underlying structure of the construct. From this review of literature, the need for defining the store image construct and its underlying structure clearly emerged. This is of particular importance in the current research study, since a comprehensive definition of the store image construct and its underlying structure is a necessary first phase in developing a store image measurement scale. In consequence, the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image were delineated on the basis of findings presented in the literature. First, the dimensions and sub dimensions were identified. This was followed by the refinement of these dimensions and sub dimensions. The process culminated in a proposed model of the underlying structure of store image, which served as point of departure for the process of developing the measurement scale. Store image was thus defined as a complex, multidimensional construct based on the perception of tangible and intangible store attributes associated with eight dimensions, namely Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales personnel and Service. These dimensions are further delineated into sub dimensions which are underpinned by specific store attributes. Store image has a gestalt nature that is represented by the interaction between the salient tangible and intangible store attributes. The formation of store image relies on the perception of a store which varies by retailer, product and target market. By implication, store image is influenced by (1) the consumer's perception of a set of salient store attributes; (2) the importance the consumer places on the various store image dimensions and sub dimensions, and the associated store attributes; as well as (3) the retailer's manipulation of these store attributes through strategic management.

The section concluded with an overview of store image research including the dimensions and sub dimensions presented in the proposed model. Firstly, the relevance of these dimensions in the current retail environment was highlighted, because it contributes to a more favourable store image, thus aiding the retail brand building process. The importance of these dimensions in ensuring image congruency (e.g. Merchandise); creating a positive consumer store experience (e.g. Atmosphere, Facilities, Institutional, Sales personnel, and

Service); differentiation of the store from other distribution channels (e.g. Atmosphere and Sales personnel); and facilitating relationship marketing (e.g. Sales personnel) were discussed, and the integral part that specific dimensions play in the execution of successful integrated marketing communications strategy (e.g. Facilities, Promotion, and Sales personnel) was emphasised. The need to provide the minimum utilitarian value expected by consumers in a market offering similar merchandise and services was also stressed.

Secondly, the research results were discussed, indicating that dimensions are often employed to differentiate between consumer segments and store types, as well as providing evidence of the relationship between store image dimensions and other consumer behaviour variables. This overview also highlighted dimensions not frequently studied in store image research, namely the institutional and promotion dimensions, where findings focusing more specifically on sub dimensions and store attributes related to these dimensions were discussed.

Lastly, the implications of these findings were highlighted by indicating how retailers can apply their available resources to manipulate the various dimensions and sub dimensions, thereby instigating the desired consumer behaviour, e.g. increased purchase behaviour, repeat consumers, consumer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty. In addition to this, the benefits associated with these consumer behaviours were also discussed. These benefits involve providing retailers with the ability to (1) differentiate themselves effectively from the competition; (2) become increasingly competitive; (3) address possible competitive threats e.g. from e-tailing; (4) induce the desired sales effects; and (5) increase profitability.

This section of the literature review served to meet the third to sixth literature-related objectives, namely:

3. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of the definition and underlying structure of store image from the review of available literature;
4. To develop a theoretical model delineating the underlying structure of store image;
5. To propose a definition of store image; and
6. To identify and discuss existing knowledge of store image dimensions and sub dimensions from the review of available literature.

2.4 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of existing store image literature to ascertain the domain specification, definition and underlying structure of the store image construct. The literature review culminated in two proposed models, namely a proposed theoretical model delineating the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables, and a proposed model delineating the underlying structure of store image. These models will be employed as point of departure in the scale development process discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to describe the methodology employed in this research study. A persuasive argument is formulated in support of the appropriateness of the research methodology for meeting the set objectives and for providing an answer to the research problem. It is therefore imperative to revisit and emphasise the research problem and set objectives for this study.

The research problem was formulated as follows: What is the underlying theoretical structure of apparel store image? How can the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions underlying apparel store image be measured?

The broad objective of this study, namely to develop a scale with acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image was formulated from this problem statement. Objectives 1 to 6 are literature-related objectives and were addressed in Chapter 2. The focus of this chapter will be on the specific objectives that were set to be met by empirical investigation. The specific objectives to be addressed in the process of developing the scale were formulated as:

7. To develop a scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of apparel store image;
8. To purify the developed scale to illustrate acceptable reliability;
9. To develop and further refine this scale for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment;
10. To implement the developed scale to assess whether it illustrates acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity; and
11. To assess the model fit of the developed scale on the proposed model of the underlying theoretical structure of store image.

In addition, the following objectives were formulated to be addressed through the practical implementation of the developed scale:

12. To measure the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores; and

13. To investigate whether the perceived importance of store image dimensions differ between selected discount and specialty apparel stores.

These objectives led to a review of literature to identify an appropriate methodology for developing a scale for the measurement of apparel store image, from here onwards referred to as the store image scale. Churchill (1979) proposed a framework for the scale development process, emphasising that the development of measurement scales with the desirable properties of reliability and validity is a critical element in the evolution of a fundamental body of knowledge in a specific field of study. Churchill's framework has often been employed as point of departure in scale development (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Grace, 2005; Li, Edwards & Lee, 2002; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Based on Churchill's framework, as well as drawing from recommendations by DeVellis (2003), Hair et al. (2006), and Netemeyer et al. (2003), four broad phases were identified in the scale development process, namely (1) domain specification and construct definition; (2) generation and judging of measurement items; (3) purification of the store image scale; and (4) assessing the store image scale by considering reliability and validity. A final phase was included in the study to assess the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale. These phases were used as basis from which the current study methodology was developed as represented in Figure 3.1.

The implementation of these five phases in the current study will be discussed below. Parallels will be drawn according to guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979), DeVellis (2003), Hair et al. (2006) and Netemeyer et al. (2003), as well as according to the methodological strategies employed in other related research studies (for example Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Grace, 2005; Li et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Tian, Bearden & Hunter, 2001).

3.2 PHASE 1: DOMAIN SPECIFICATION AND CONSTRUCT DEFINITION

The importance of this first phase in scale development cannot be overstated, since this phase is a prerequisite for determining the validity of a scale, especially content validity (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The methodology employed in establishing the domain specification and construct definition focused specifically on establishing content validity. Firstly, an extensive literature review was undertaken to (1) specify the construct domain by identifying the theoretical framework in which store image is grounded, and (2) clearly define apparel store image by ascertaining the underlying theoretical structure of store image. Secondly, the underlying theoretical structure of store image was submitted to expert judging to further enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the construct definition (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978).

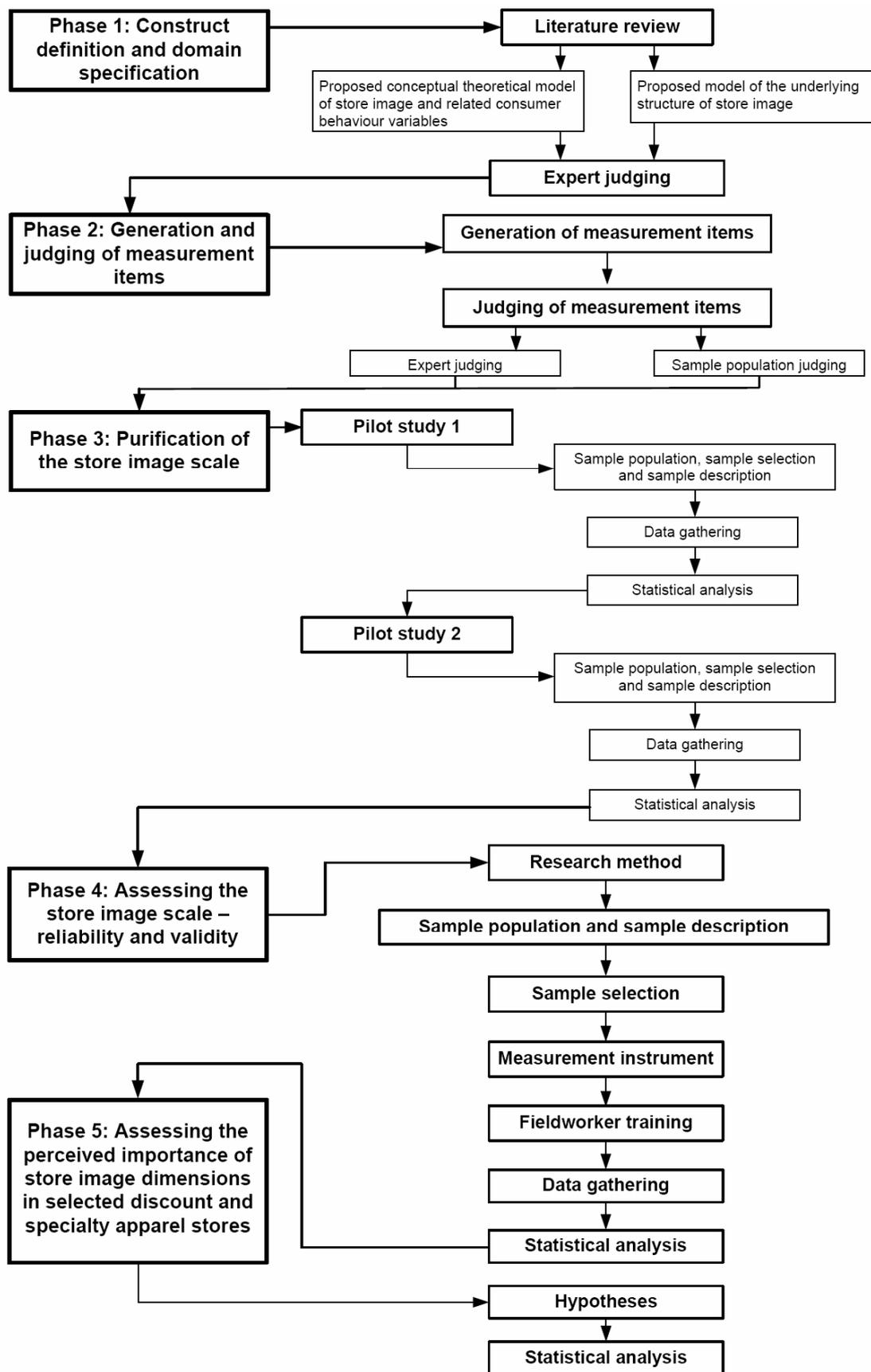


Figure 3.1 The scale development process

3.2.1 Literature review

A thorough literature review is prerequisite to establishing domain specification and construct definition, thereby contributing to content validity (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The literature review, which was discussed extensively in Chapter 2, culminated in two models employed as a basis in the further scale development process. Firstly, a proposed conceptual theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables was developed from empirical evidence in store image literature, to serve as the store image construct's nomological net (Figure 2.1). Netemeyer et al. (2003: p. 90) stressed the importance of embedding a latent construct in a theoretical framework, thereby justifying the relevance of the construct, as well as being instrumental in guiding the scale development process and consequent assessment of validity. Delineating the theoretical framework of a construct has often been employed as point of departure in scale development studies (Bearden, 2001; Li et al., 2002; Tian et al., 2001).

Secondly, a proposed model of the underlying theoretical structure of apparel store image was proposed on the basis of empirical findings in store image literature (Figure 2.2). Thus store image was defined as a complex, multidimensional construct based on the perception of tangible and intangible store attributes associated with eight dimensions, namely Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales personnel and Service. These dimensions are further delineated into sub dimensions which are underpinned by specific store attributes. Store image has a gestalt nature that is represented by the interaction between the salient tangible and intangible store attributes. The formation of store image relies on the perception of a store which varies by retailer, product and target market. By implication, store image is influenced by (1) the consumer's perception of a set of salient store attributes; (2) the importance the consumer places on the various store image dimensions, sub dimensions and associated store attributes; as well as (3) the retailer's manipulation of these store attributes through strategic management. Several other research studies employed the same approach in order to define the construct and specify the domain of the construct that was studied. In the development of a service quality scale, both studies by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1995) proposed a structure of the service quality construct to serve as definition and basis for further development of the scale. Similarly, theoretical structures were proposed for in-store shopping experience (Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004), consumer self-confidence (Bearden, 2001), consumers' need for uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001) and price perceptions (Lichtenstein, Ridgway & Netemeyer, 1993).

The proposed theoretical structure enabled the researcher to clearly delineate exactly what is included and excluded from the store image definition and domain. This was an important

prerequisite for the consequent operationalisation of the store image construct in the scale development process (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

3.2.2 Expert judging

The model of the underlying structure of store image was submitted for expert judging as a further aid in establishing content validity. Firstly, the model was considered at a special advisory session with two expert judges in the field of store image and consumer behaviour. Since the model was used as a point of departure for item generation and the subsequent development of the store image scale, it was imperative to ensure that the model represented a logical and practical framework. The review of the model, therefore, was done in conjunction with a review of the initial item pool (discussed in Section 3.3.2). Feedback from this session led to several adaptations to the model, specifically to the wording of the dimensions and sub dimensions, as well as the ordering and grouping of the sub dimensions within each dimension. These adaptations included the following, each within the relevant dimension:

Atmosphere:

- ◆ Décor was changed to Store interior

Convenience:

- ◆ Travel and Transportation were grouped under the sub dimension Transportation
- ◆ Checkout and Shopping ease were grouped under the sub dimension Shopping ease

Facilities:

- ◆ the order of Store layout and Store appearance were changed around
- ◆ the order of Fixtures and Fitting rooms were changed around
- ◆ Facilities convenience was changed to Convenience of facilities and moved to the last of the Facilities sub dimensions

Institutional:

- ◆ Overall impression and Store reputation were grouped together under Store reputation as the first Institutional dimension
- ◆ Clientele and Store association were grouped together under Clientele as the second Institutional dimension

Merchandise:

- ◆ the term merchandise was excluded from the sub dimensions

Sales Personnel:

- ◆ the term sales personnel was excluded from the sub dimensions

Service

- ◆ the ordering of the sub dimensions was changed to In-store service, being the first sub dimension, followed by Payment options, Delivery options and After-sales service.

Secondly, the model was submitted to a panel of experts from different fields of study, all of whom were familiar with the research problem, study objectives, as well as scale development (three Ph.D. holders and one advanced Ph.D. candidate). From the feedback to this review, only one change was effected, namely the grouping of Smell and Sound under the sub dimension Store interior within the Atmosphere dimension. The revised model is presented in Figure 3.2, which is, from here onwards, referred to as the *Model of Store Image*.

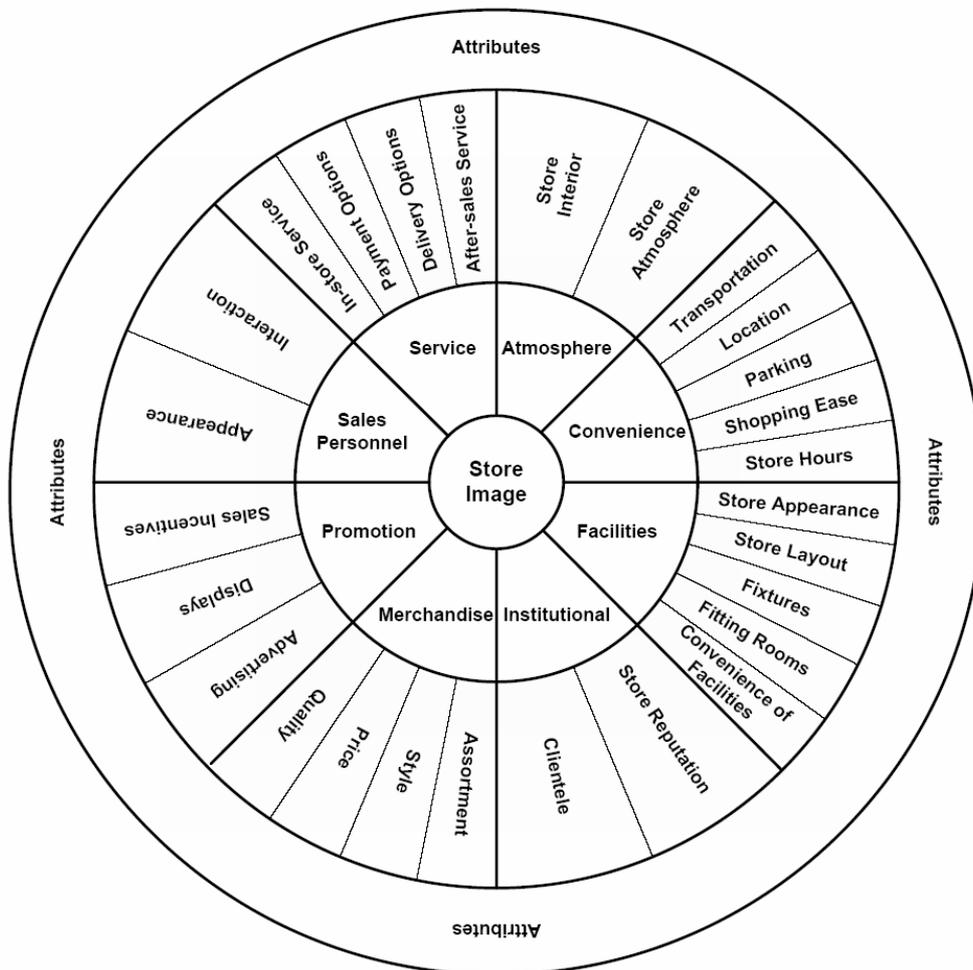


Figure 3.2 Model of Store Image

Store image is thus defined as a multidimensional construct comprised of the Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales personnel, and Service

dimensions (see Section 2.3.3.3). These eight dimensions are represented by the inner concentric circle. The eight dimensions are further delineated into the sub dimensions underlying each dimension that is represented by the second concentric circle. Lastly, the outer circle represents the store attributes that are associated with each sub dimension and dimension. This model served as point of departure for the next phase in the scale development process, namely the generation of measurement items.

3.3 PHASE 2: GENERATION AND JUDGING OF MEASUREMENT ITEMS

The second phase in the development of the store image scale was the generation of measurement items that adequately represent the store image construct and domain, as well as the subsequent judging of measurement items (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The appropriate operationalisation of a construct is imperative for valid empirical results and interpretation (Little, Lindenberger & Nesselroade, 1999; MacCallum & Austin, 2000), therefore, the primary focus of this phase, in conjunction with the first phase, was to establish content and face validity of the measurement instrument (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). In order to achieve this, the methodology employed concentrated on two distinct processes. Firstly, an initial item pool was generated from the literature. Secondly, the items were submitted for review by both expert and sample population judges to develop the store image scale format. This was necessary for the following phase in the scale development process, namely the purification of the store image scale (Section 3.4). Item generation and judging as implemented in this study will subsequently be described, followed by a discussion of the methodology used to establish content validity.

3.3.1 Generation of measurement items

The domain sampling model was used as basis for generating measurement items. In this, the model supposes that the scale is a random sample of items from a hypothetical domain of items. Employing the domain sampling model in this study was imperative, since subsequent reliability assessment reflects this model. For this reason, items were generated systematically to sample all content areas of store image as defined by the *Model of Store Image* (Figure 3.2).

The literature recommends generating measurement items from prior research and theory (Little et al., 1999). Therefore, this study relied heavily on extant literature for generating the initial item pool, with some items added by the researcher, expert judges and sample population judges. Scale development studies frequently report item generation from a review of the literature (Bearden, 2001; Dabholkar et al., 1995; Grace, 2005; Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Hughner & Kuntze, 1999; Li et al., 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Terblanché &

Boshoff, 2004; Tian et al., 2001). Several researchers have reported extensive qualitative procedures to generate items used in subsequent empirical studies on store image (Amirani & Gates, 1993; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Thompson & Chen, 1998; Zimmer & Golden, 1988). It was, therefore, argued that employing an additional qualitative approach in the current study was redundant. This accords with recommendations by Churchill (1979), Netemeyer et al. (2003), and Oppenheim (1992).

A composite list of attributes previously employed as items in store image research (Section 2.3.3.2; Appendix 4) was compiled on the basis of the definition represented by the *Model of Store Image*. Given that store image is a much researched construct, it was argued that, where previous empirical support for specific items already existed, only these items would be included. The inclusion of items was based on criteria reported in the reviewed store image studies, as well as guidelines from scale development literature. These criteria are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Criteria for inclusion of items from reviewed literature

Criteria for inclusion of items	
Coefficient alpha	> 0.7
Factor analysis	Eigen value > 1 Factor loadings > 0.4 Coefficient alpha > 0.7
Mean importance scores	Higher than average of given scale
Number of citations	Summed number higher than 90%

Where no empirical support for the inclusion of individual items was reported, but the items were included as a scale in a consequent empirical study, these items were also considered. Furthermore, items generated from qualitative research were also reviewed (Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995; Thompson & Chen, 1998), as well as items with previous empirical support in store image literature reported by Lindquist (1974-1975). Lastly, items from the initial proposal of store image and its dimensions by Martineau (1958) were included as well.

The composite list of items drawn from the literature indicated a degree of overlapping between items. This necessitated combining certain items into fewer items, but taking care to rather err on the side of being over-inclusive (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Further to this, items that were not generated from the review of literature, but were deemed relevant by the researcher, were also included.

Due to the broad, multifaceted and complex nature of the store image construct, the initial generation of items resulted in a composite list of 371 items. This was a cause for concern, mainly because of the practical implications of administering such a lengthy scale to respondents. It was decided to retain this initial pool of 371 items based on three considerations. Firstly, at this early stage in the process of scale development, it was preferable to be over-inclusive to thereby ensure that the domain of the store image construct was fully captured. Secondly, the internal consistency of a scale is a function of how strongly items correlate with each other. At this stage in scale development, however, the correlation between items was unknown. Retaining items, therefore, guarded against poor internal consistency. Lastly, the scale was submitted to judging of the measurement items, which was needed to assist the process of refining the scale (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003).

Simultaneous to the generation of measurement items, initial consideration was given to the response format to be used in the scale to ensure compatibility between the store image scale and response format employed (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The objective of the store image scale being to measure the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image, it was decided to employ a Likert-type scale in this study. The Likert-type scale as a form of interval scale, is frequently used in consumer behaviour, specifically in the measurement of perceived importance, and lends itself to the statistical procedures considered to be applicable for this study (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978; Oppenheim, 1992; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Tian et al., 2001). Each item from the composite list was, therefore, rewritten into a declarative statement for which respondents had to indicate endorsement to varying degrees. After considering the advantages and disadvantages of including both positively and negatively worded items as per DeVellis (2003) and Netemeyer (2003), all items were worded positively. This was intended to avoid confusing respondents, given the concern regarding the number of items in the initial item pool and the expected lengthiness of the store image scale.

Subsequently, each item was revised for clarity of the wording and to ascertain whether a consistent meaning was conveyed through item phrasing. This procedure was imperative to ensure that items were phrased appropriately to enable respondents to provide accurate information, thereby reducing possible measurement error. Careful consideration was given to review items for ambiguity and to ensure that it did not include multiple negatives or double barrel statements. It was also necessary to ensure that respondents were able to provide responses to items with relatively minimal effort. Items, therefore, were worded concisely and were not exceptionally lengthy. To assess the reading of items for levels of difficulty, they were reviewed by a lay person unfamiliar with the study. This also assisted in avoiding jargon. Feedback on items that were difficult to interpret or understand was used to adapt items or to add explanatory phrases to assist understanding. Finally, the items were reviewed

by an English school teacher to ensure that they were grammatically correct. This procedure was in accordance with recommendations in the literature (Bradburn, Sudman & Wansink, 2004; Brace, 2004; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Dillman, 1991; Frazer & Lawley, 2000; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Oppenheim, 1992; Synodinos, 2003).

The 371 items were grouped within each dimension and sub dimension, as guided by the *Model of Store Image*. The final item pool was reviewed to ensure that a sufficient number of items were included to adequately measure each sub dimension and dimension, namely eight to ten items for each dimension as recommended by Netemeyer et al. (2003, p.147). This is presented in Table 3.2 (at the end of this section). After the initial generation of the measurement items described in this section, the item pool was submitted for expert and sample population judging as recommended by Bradburn et al. (2004) and Netemeyer (2003). This was done in an attempt to further refine items and finalise the format of the store image scale.

3.3.2 Judging of measurement items

Judging of the generated measurement items served three distinct purposes, namely to (1) ensure that the items were relevant in measuring perceptions of the importance of store image, (2) to evaluate items for clarity and conciseness, and (3) to identify possible areas of the store image domain that were not captured (DeVellis, 2003). Furthermore, the process not only included a review of the measurement items, but also of the format and layout of the scale to be employed in the following phase of the scale development process. Judging of the initial item pool is frequently reported in scale development literature (Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Grace, 2005; Li et al., 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 2003; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Tian et al., 2001). The judging of measurement items in this study included two separate expert reviews, as well as a judging review by sample population judges as recommended by Netemeyer et al. (2003) and Oppenheim (1992).

3.3.2.1 Expert judging – first review

The first expert judging of the measurement items was conducted in conjunction with the review of the store image construct definition at a special advisory session with two expert judges, as discussed in Section 3.2.2. Due to the concern regarding the large number of items in the initial item pool, careful consideration was given to redundancy in an attempt to reduce the number of items. The items were again reviewed for clarity of wording. Special attention was given to the wording of individual items to enhance clarity and understanding. Where necessary, the wording of items was changed or further explanatory phrases were added. The grouping and ordering of items were also considered in conjunction with a review

of the *Model of Store Image* (discussed in Section 3.2.2). Changes were effected to ensure a logical flow of items within each sub dimension, as well as in sub dimensions within dimensions, to facilitate the later administration of the store image scale.

The first expert review culminated in a reduced item pool of 284 items. This means that 107 items were deleted from the original 371 items. Twenty new items were generated by the expert judging to further tap the construct domain (Appendix 5). The item pool was reviewed again to ensure that a sufficient number of items were included to adequately measure each sub dimension and dimension, reflecting the changes made to the *Model of Store Image* as described in Section 3.2 and depicted in Table 3.2 (at the end of this section).

A discussion of the response format with the experts resulted in the development of a 5-point Likert-type rating scale. This was in accordance with guidelines indicating that a 5- or 7- point scale would suffice to ensure that a respondent was able to discriminate between response options meaningfully, whilst at the same time giving the researcher the level of information needed (Bradburn et al., 2004; DeVellis, 2003; Gorsuch, 1997; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Consideration was also given to the sample population of interest, namely the South African consumer. Within the South African context the literacy and educational levels of consumers may vary significantly (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999; Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). English is not the home language of all respondents. These sample population characteristics could potentially result in inaccurate information being given in responses (Synodinos, 2003). Therefore, it was decided not to exceed the 5-point scale. The uneven number of scale points also allowed for a scale midpoint to enable respondents to give a neutral response (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Each point was individually anchored as follows:

- 1 – Unimportant
- 2 – Not very important
- 3 – Neither important nor unimportant
- 4 – Important
- 5 – Very important

The format and layout of the store image scale, including response options and instructions, were reviewed to ensure that it was clear and easy to understand, thereby to elicit cooperation from respondents. Care was taken to ensure that the store image scale was compiled in as brief a format as possible, without appearing crowded. This was done in an attempt to increase response rate. Lengthy scales often seem more difficult and time-consuming to complete, resulting in respondent fatigue and inaccuracy (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Oppenheim, 1992).

The scale consisted of three sections. In Section A (284 items), the generated items were listed numerically and grouped under each dimension. A general introductory phrase was

included at the beginning of this section to instruct respondents on completing the scale. The anchoring points for the 5-point scale were specified at the beginning of each separate page of the scale. Five equally spaced, numbered boxes were provided after each question for participants to indicate their responses. This was based on recommendations by Nunnally (1978) and eliminated the inclusion of the anchoring points for each item, resulting in a less crowded scale, whilst allowing for an effective means of coordinating the anchoring points with the response options. In Section B (8 items), respondents were requested to rate the individual dimensions, using the same 5-point scale as response format as used previously. Again, an introductory phrase similar to the one in Section A was included. A demographic section, Section C (12 items), was included at the end of the store image scale to avoid alienating respondents by asking for personal information at the outset of the scale (Synodinos, 2003). The demographic section included questions on gender, population group, home language, age, academic year of study, degree for which registered, marital status, living arrangements, frequency of buying clothes, expenditure on clothes, transportation, as well as a list of apparel stores and the frequency with which they were visited. This section was included to enable the researcher to compile a demographic profile of respondents as recommended by Churchill and Iacobucci (2005) and Oppenheim (1992).

A covering letter was compiled to explain the purpose of the study, as well as give a broad definition of the construct store image. The response format was explained with the help of an example. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary and respondents were assured of confidentiality. The time to complete the store image scale was communicated as an estimated 45 minutes.

3.3.2.2 Expert judging – second review

The store image scale and covering letter were submitted for a second review by expert judges, as discussed in Section 3.2.2. The judges were provided with the *Model of Store Image* to define and specify the domain of the construct store image. Feedback was asked to enable further refinement of the measurement items, and comments on the format and layout of the scale and the response format employed were invited. Feedback from the second expert review was considered; a general concern was raised concerning the length of the scale. Suggestions were made to reduce the number of items to reflect a broader spectrum of the same sub dimension. This necessitated another thorough review of all measurement items to further eliminate redundant items and group items together. Special care was taken not to exclude or group items that captured specific aspects of the construct store image. Based on the feedback, 57 items were eliminated and a further 3 items were generated to further enhance the comprehensiveness of the store image scale (Appendix 6). This resulted in an item pool of 230 items. Items were again reviewed by the researcher to ensure that each dimension and sub dimension was adequately represented (Table 3.2).

Suggestions from the second expert judging resulted in changes to the introductory phrase of the scale to include a phrase at the start of each dimension, reading (for example):

With regards to the **ATMOSPHERE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of store image (i.e. *the [item] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*).

This change served to direct and instruct respondents on the completion of the scale at frequent intervals, which was deemed imperative, given the length of the scale. This necessitated the review of the wording of items to be compatible with the introductory phrase, as well as clear and unambiguous.

Considerable changes were also made to the response format and rating scale, based on feedback from the second judging review. The 5-point scale was changed to a 6-point scale. Only the first and fifth point was anchored, namely 1 = unimportant and 5 = very important. This was as result of the difficulty experienced with the inadequate description of the five anchor points. A sixth point was added to allow respondents a neutral response, namely 6 = unable to rate, and a visual presentation was added to the rating scale to aid responses. This was done in accordance with recommendations in the literature (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978; Synodinos, 2003).

The suggested changes were implemented in the format and layout of the store image scale. Section A (230 items) consisted of the numbered items grouped under each dimension, with the introductory phrase at the start of each dimension. The response format, together with the visual presentation and specified anchoring points, again were included at the top of each page of the scale. Six equally spaced, numbered boxes were provided for each item for participants to indicate their responses. Section B (8 items) was similarly presented with the same introductory phrase. The store image scale again concluded with a demographics section, Section C (12 items).

The covering letter was adapted to reflect the changes made to the store image scale. The rating scale and instructions on how respondents should complete the scale was stated. A detailed example was included to aid understanding.

3.3.2.3 Sample population judging

To conclude the judging process, the store image scale was submitted for review by sample population judges, as recommended in the literature (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Netemeyer

et al., 2003; Oppenheim, 1992). Sample population judging serves the purpose of assessing the practical implementation of the scale with respondents similar to those employed in the administration of the scale in the subsequent phases of the scale development process. Therefore, two group sessions including graduate students in Industrial Psychology from Stellenbosch University were conducted. Students were deemed appropriate as sample population judges, since the following phase in the development of the store image scale employed students in the sample (Section 3.4). The groups consisted of two and four participants respectively and the discussions were supervised by the researcher. The purpose of the study and the role of the group session were explained to participants. The group discussions focused on clarity of item wording, the format of the covering letter, instructions given in the scale, the response format and rating scale, as well as the format and layout of the store image scale. After this, each participant was requested to assess the covering letter, as well as to complete the scale. Participants were asked for feedback whilst completing the scale, to allow for group discussion.

Based on the feedback of these group sessions, two more items were added to the scale, namely “familiarity of mall layout where store is situated” and “availability of sales personnel at fitting rooms”. This resulted in a scale consisting of 232 items. Table 3.2 presents a summary of the number of items included within each dimension and sub dimension during the generation and judging of measurement items in the development of the store image scale.

Furthermore, explanatory phrases were added to items that were difficult to interpret, specifically the dimensions rated in Section B of the scale. Relevant phrases in the covering letter were highlighted to ensure that respondents take note of their importance. The sixth numbered box of the response options created confusion amongst the participants, since it was easy to interpret this as the “very important” response option. It was, therefore, decided to leave the sixth box empty of any number, and to allow a space between this box and the five equally spaced numbered boxes. This added considerably to the ease of completing the scale. These changes in the response format were mirrored in the explanatory example in the covering letter. Lastly, some changes were also made to the demographics section of the scale. These included an additional option of “other” in the question on population group, as well as an option for “fourth year” in the question on academic year of study. The store image scale following the process of item generation and judging of the scale is presented in Appendix 7.

Table 3.2 Summary of number of items included within each dimension and sub dimension during the generation and judging of measurement items

Dimension	Generation of items		Expert judging – first review		Expert judging – second review		Sample population judging	
	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.
Atmosphere	35		33		15		15	
	Décor	8	Store interior	8	Store interior	11	Store interior	11
	Smell	3	Smell	3	Store atmosphere	4	Store atmosphere	4
	Sound	3	Sound	4				
	Store atmosphere	21	Store atmosphere	18				
Convenience	62		48		41		42	
	Checkout	3	Transportation	4	Transportation	3	Transportation	3
	Travel	2	Location	13	Location	11	Location	11
	Location	14	Parking	7	Parking	6	Parking	6
	Parking	7	Shopping ease	20	Shopping ease	17	Shopping Ease	18
	Shopping Ease	29	Store hours	4	Store hours	4	Store hours	4
	Store hours	5						
	Transportation	2						
Facilities	56		48		41		41	
	Store layout	6	Store appearance	10	Store appearance	7	Store appearance	7
	Store appearance	14	Store layout	4	Store layout	4	Store layout	4
	Facilities convenience	11	Fixtures	18	Fixtures	14	Fixtures	14
	Fitting rooms	5	Fitting rooms	8	Fitting rooms	8	Fitting rooms	8
	Fixtures	20	Convenience of facilities	8	Convenience of facilities	8	Convenience of facilities	8
Institutional	31		27		19		19	
	Clientele	14	Store reputation	12	Store reputation	9	Store reputation	9
	Overall impression	1	Clientele	15	Clientele	10	Clientele	10
	Store reputation	11						
	Store association	5						

Dimension	Generation of items		Expert judging – first review		Expert judging – second review		Sample population judging	
	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.	Sub dimension	No.
Merchandise		59		33		28		28
	Merchandise assortment	23	Assortment	15	Assortment	14	Assortment	14
	Merchandise Style	17	Style	8	Style	7	Style	7
	Merchandise Price	10	Price	6	Price	4	Price	4
	Merchandise Quality	9	Quality	4	Quality	3	Quality	3
Promotional		51		36		33		33
	Advertising	26	Advertising	20	Advertising	17	Advertising	17
	Displays	7	Displays	6	Displays	6	Displays	6
	Sales incentives	18	Sales incentives	10	Sales incentives	10	Sales incentives	10
Sales personnel		38		24		18		18
	Sales personnel interaction	30	Appearance	9	Appearance	9	Appearance	9
	Sales personnel appearance	8	Interaction	15	Interaction	9	Interaction	9
Service		39		35		35		36
	After-sales Service	11	In-store service	16	In-store service	16	In-store Service	17
	Payment Options	7	Payment options	7	Payment options	7	Payment Options	7
	In-store Service	16	Delivery options	5	Delivery options	5	Delivery Options	5
	Delivery Options	5	After-sales service	7	After-sales service	7	After-sales Service	7

3.3.3 Content and face validity

Content validity refers to the representation or sampling adequacy of the content of a measuring instrument and is a critical prerequisite for establishing the overall validity of a scale. Face validity is similar to content validity and refers to what the measurement instrument appears to measure. Ensuring face validity enhances the use of the scale in practical situations by supporting respondent cooperation through ease of use, proper reading level, clarity and appropriate response formats (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Netemeyer et al., 2003).

The first two phases in the development of the store image scale were concerned primarily with establishing content validity and face validity as a function of the methodology employed.

Firstly, a *Model of Store Image* delineating the underlying structure of the store image construct was developed on the basis of a thorough review of store image and related consumer behaviour literature. Secondly, within this delineation of store image and based on the domain sampling method, items measuring the construct were generated from relevant sources. Lastly, the *Model of Store Image* and the generated measurement items were submitted to expert and sample population judging. Therefore, it can be argued, that content and face validity of the store image scale were established. The store image scale developed from the first two phases of the study was submitted for data gathering to purify the scale. This phase will be discussed in the next section.

3.4 PHASE 3: PURIFICATION OF THE STORE IMAGE SCALE

The purification phase of scale development focused on establishing the reliability of the store image scale as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for validity (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Hair et al., 2006; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Peter, 1979). The scale was refined and purified on the basis of the reliability measures employed in this study.

A concern specific to this study that needed to be considered and addressed during Phase 3, was the length of the scale. Firstly, the practical implications associated with the administration of long scales had to be addressed. These relate specifically to encouraging respondent cooperation, given the time and ease associated with completing the scale. Respondent boredom and fatigue also had to be considered because these factors relate not only to the length of the scale, but also to the complex nature of the construct, in including several dimensions (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Oppenheim, 1992; Peter, 1979).

Secondly, reducing the length of the scale had to be done in conjunction with establishing the reliability. Reliability is a function of the number of items included in a scale. A positive relationship exists between the reliability of a scale and the number of items included in it (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Therefore, the effect of each measurement item on the reliability of the scale was considered in an attempt to eliminate items and optimise scale length, which resulted in a trade-off between the brevity and reliability of the scale.

The purification phase included two separate pilot studies. The methodology employed in the two studies will consequently be discussed in terms of the sample population and selection, the data gathering process, and the statistical analysis employed, although the results will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.4.1 Pilot study 1

The aim of the first pilot study was to obtain initial estimates of reliability as basis for scale purification, as well as an aid in optimising scale length. The methodology was designed to allow for the practical implications associated with the administration of a long scale, specifically related to sample selection and the method used for data gathering. The procedures for statistical analysis were aimed at facilitating item evaluation and the consequent reduction of items to purify the scale.

3.4.1.1 Sample population, sample selection and sample description

The study employed a student sample population in a class setting. The sample population was deemed appropriate on the basis of several considerations explained in relevant literature (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Firstly, this phase was concerned with providing evidence of internal consistency of the store image scale, for which the sample of students was appropriate in terms of providing accurate results. Although sample representativeness is recommended, using a non-representative sample in this stage of scale development will only yield inaccurate expectations of the scale means. In addition, since this study was concerned with apparel consumer's perception of store image, students were not considered entirely non-representative, since they qualify as apparel consumers.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, the practical implications associated with the length of the scale had to be taken into account. A student sample allowed for group administration of the scale in a class setting. This immediately increased the response rate for the study. This also allowed the researcher to explain the purpose of the study extensively and prepare students for the length of the scale and the time involved in its completion. Students were not warned prior to the class that they would be participating in the study. This was done in an attempt to reduce possible fatigue and boredom, since completing the scale was considered a novel deviation from attending a lecture as they would normally do.

Thirdly, the methodology employed in the subsequent phases of this study allowed for data gathering from a stratified quota consumer sample. The data obtained from the later phases were used to confirm results from the phase including a student sample. Fourthly, the cost benefit associated with student samples was an important consideration. The costs incurred in the last phase of the store image scale development necessitated that costs be kept to a minimum, where possible, during the early phases of the study. Lastly, student samples are frequently employed in scale development research, which serves to justify the student sample in this study (Bearden, 2001; Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999; Grace, 2005; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Li et al., 2002; Tian et al., 2001).

The University of the Western Cape, situated in Cape Town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, agreed to participate in the study. A convenience sample of students was recruited from a first-year Bachelor of Commerce class. All students attending the class on the day of data gathering was included in the sample, resulting in a total number of 89 students. The sample size was deemed adequate for this stage of the scale development process according to recommendations from the literature (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Li et al., 2002; Dhurup, Venter & Oosthuizen, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 1993; Venter & Dhurup, 2005).

3.4.1.2 Data gathering

The researcher gathered the data. A brief overview of the purpose of the study and the definition of store image was given. The respondents were prepared for the length of the scale and the time involved in completing it. Each respondent received the store image scale developed in the first two phases of the study (Appendix 7). The researcher explained the response format and rating scale based on the example given in the covering letter. Respondents were instructed to read the whole covering letter again before completing the scale. The researcher invited respondents to ask questions when they were unsure of the wording or meaning of an item. All questions were noted for later consideration in further refining the store image scale. Respondents were also requested to provide feedback and comments on the scale. To facilitate anonymity, respondents were allowed to write their feedback and comments on the back of the scale. They were allowed to leave the class after completing the scale. It took them on average 20-40 minutes to complete the scale, with only two students unable to complete the scale within the 50-minute period of class time.

3.4.1.3 Statistical analysis

Data capturing was done on a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet. For Section A, each response option was coded from 1 to 5 according to the numbered boxes provided for each item. The “unable to rate” response option associated with the empty box at the end of each item’s response options was coded 6. Section B was coded similarly according to the identical response options in Section A. Numerical codes were given to each of the response options in Section C, the demographics section of the store image scale.

The statistical analyses were done using Statistica (version 7.1). Recommended measures for reliability were employed, namely coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations. Coefficient alpha was particularly relevant to this study, since it reflects the domain sampling model, which supposes that items capturing the same construct domain should be correlated. Therefore, it could be deduced that an item that was not highly correlated with other items was drawn from a different domain and its inclusion would produce

error and unreliability (Churchill, 1979; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003).

For the consideration of individual items, coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations were calculated for all items included within each sub dimension. The criteria set for considering each measure was developed in accordance with scale development literature, as well as acceptable values reported in previous scale development research. The cut-off value for coefficient alpha value was set at 0.7. The acceptable benchmark level for item-total correlations was set at above 0.3, while reports in the literature range from higher than 0.3 to higher than 0.5 The criterion for inter-item correlations was set at a range of 0.2-0.5 (Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; DeVellis, 2003; Dhurup et al., 2005; Eastman et al., 1999; Grace, 2005; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Nunnally, 1978; Shrimp & Sharma, 1997; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Tian et al., 2002; Venter & Dhurup, 2005). The internal consistency of the sub dimensions within each dimension was considered. The same recommended measures and set criteria employed for the individual item analysis were used as basis for the sub dimension analysis.

Based on the results obtained, the items in Section A were reduced to 214. No changes were made to Sections B and C or the covering letter. The final number of items included within each dimension are summarised in Table 3.3 (at the end of this section). The results of this pilot study are discussed extensively in Chapter 4.

3.4.2 Pilot study 2

The aim of the second pilot study was to provide additional evidence of scale reliability for scale purification, as well as to further reduce the scale length. A similar methodology was employed in the second pilot study.

3.4.2.1 Sample population, sample selection and sample description

A convenience sample of students for the second pilot study was recruited from Boland College, situated in Stellenbosch, a town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Students included first-, second- and third-year students in Marketing Management. Data were gathered on two separate occasions and all students attending classes on the day of data gathering were included. A total of 176 students (n=75 for the first sample and n=101 for the second sample) participated in the study. To ensure that no student participated in the study twice, different classes were included in the separate data gathering occasions.

3.4.2.2 Data gathering

The 214-item store image scale derived from the first pilot study was employed. The head of the Marketing Management Department at Boland College coordinated the gathering of the first set of data. Data was collected in class settings with the lecturer for the specific class administering the scale. A letter to each lecturer was included with instructions on the administration of the scale. The importance of taking care in answering all the questions was emphasised during the administration of the scale, due to the high number of missing data in the first pilot study. The time involved in completing the scale was 20-40 minutes, as for the first study. The researcher gathered the second set of data in a similar fashion and in conjunction with the head of the Marketing Management Department at Boland College. After completion of the store image scale, students were asked for feedback and comments.

3.4.2.3 Statistical analysis

Data capturing and coding were conducted as in the first pilot study. A split sample approach was followed and the combined data sets from the separate data gathering occasions were split randomly, based on a 60:40 ratio, and resulting in a training data set (n=110) and a test data set (n=66). The purification of the training data set after statistical analysis was subsequently cross-checked by further statistical analysis including the test data set, as recommended by DeVellis (2003). A specific objective of this phase of the study was to optimise scale length to ensure its practical implementation. A scale that was representative of all sub dimensions proposed in the theoretical *Model of Store Image* (Figure 3.2) was still considered as too long. In addition, to perform confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) each individual sub dimension had to be represented by four items to allow for model identification (Hair et al., 2006). For the 25 identified sub dimensions, this would result in at least a 100-item scale, which would still be considered too long for practical implementation. Therefore, the statistical analysis was only performed on each of the eight broad dimensions associated with the store image construct. This was deemed acceptable for arriving at a store image scale with optimum length, whilst maintaining acceptable reliability. The statistical analysis performed on the training data set included exploratory factor analysis (EFA), in conjunction with coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations, as well as the correlation between the 214-item scale and the shortened scale. CFA was performed on the test data set.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA): The training data set was employed in this statistical analysis procedure. Literature proposes that EFA and confirmatory factor analysis be used in conjunction with one another (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum & Strahan, 1999; Gorsuch, 1997). EFA was deemed appropriate since it allows for scale purification by eliminating items through the examination of factor loadings (Gefen & Straub, 2005). EFA is also often

advocated and employed in scale development literature (Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Dhurup et al., 2005; DeVellis, 2003; Eastman et al., 1999; Grace, 2005; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Li et al., 2002; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Lichtenstein, 1993; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Venter & Dhurup, 2005). The amount of research done on store image allowed the researcher to develop a proposed *Model of Store Image* (Chapter 2 and Section 3.2), thus eliminating the need for EFA to establish the dimensionality of store image. Therefore, the training data set was submitted to the principal axis factoring procedure and the analysis was constrained *a priori* to one factor for the investigation of each dimension separately. This is in accordance with previous studies employing this method for scale purification and optimising scale length (Bearden, 2001; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Parasuraman et al., 1988), as well as suggestions by Churchill (1979) to employ EFA as a means to confirm the number of conceptualised dimensions empirically after initial item evaluation through coefficient alpha and item-total correlations. The training data set sample size was deemed large enough to conduct EFA based on recommendations in the literature that there be at least 5-10 observations for each item in a scale (Hair et al., 2006).

The cut-off value for factor loadings was set at a minimum of > 0.5 based on recommendations in the literature (Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2002; Grace, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Shrimp & Sharma, 1997; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The training data set was further analysed through reliability measures including coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations. The criteria set for these measures were maintained as in the previous pilot study.

The results of all the statistical analyses were considered concurrently and concluded in a shortened store image scale consisting of 55 items (discussed in Chapter 4). A correlation analysis was done between the 214-item and the 55-item store image scales. The analysis provided support for the shortened version of the scale. The number of items for each dimension and sub dimension from the first and second pilot study are summarised in Table 3.3.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA): Subsequent CFA was done on the test data set, employing the shortened store image scale. This procedure was deemed appropriate since literature recommends CFA when there is a sufficient theoretical and empirical basis to specify a model (Byrne, 2005; Fabrigar et al., 1999; Little et al., 1999). CFA enabled the researcher to ascertain how the measurement items represent the dimensions, thereby providing a basis for further refinement of the scale (Hair et al., 2006). This analysis is often

Table 3.3 Summary of number of items included within each dimension and sub dimension after the first and second pilot study

Dimensions and sub dimensions		First pilot study	Second pilot study
Atmosphere		11	6
	Store interior	9	5
	Store atmosphere	2	1
Convenience		38	7
	Location	13	3
	Parking	6	0
	Shopping ease	15	3
	Store hours	4	1
Facilities		37	7
	Store appearance	5	1
	Store layout	4	2
	Fixtures	12	1
	Fitting rooms	8	2
	Convenience of facilities	8	1
Institutional		17	6
	Store reputation	8	0
	Clientele	9	6
Merchandise		26	8
	Assortment	13	5
	Style	7	2
	Price	4	0
	Quality	2	1
Promotion		33	8
	Advertising	17	3
	Displays	6	2
	Sales incentives	10	3
Sales personnel		8	5
	Appearance	8	5
Service		44	8
	In-store service	25	6
	Payment options	7	0
	Delivery options	5	1
	After-sales service	7	1

employed in research on scale development (Bearden, 2001; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2002; Dhurup et al., 2005; Grace, 2005; Li et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Tian et al., 2001; Venter & Dhurup, 2005).

The dimensions identified in the proposed theoretical *Model of Store Image* were used as point of departure for CFA. The use of a well-grounded theoretical model is emphasised in CFA literature, since it should guide the evaluation of results and consideration of

modifications to the model (Hair et al., 2006). For the purposes of this phase of the study, each dimension was submitted to CFA separately to allow for the investigation of individual items for further scale purification. The dimensions were identified as exogenous latent variables and indicated by the symbol KSI (ξ). Each of the scale items was described by X, i.e. the observed indicator variables. LAMBDA (λ) was used to describe the paths between KSI and X. The possible measurement errors observed in the indicator variables were explained by DELTA (δ). Figure 3.3 illustrates the measurement model for the Atmosphere dimension. The measurement models for all the other dimensions were constructed similarly. The number of scale items (indicator variables) associated with each dimension was deemed sufficient to allow for model identification as recommended in the literature (Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

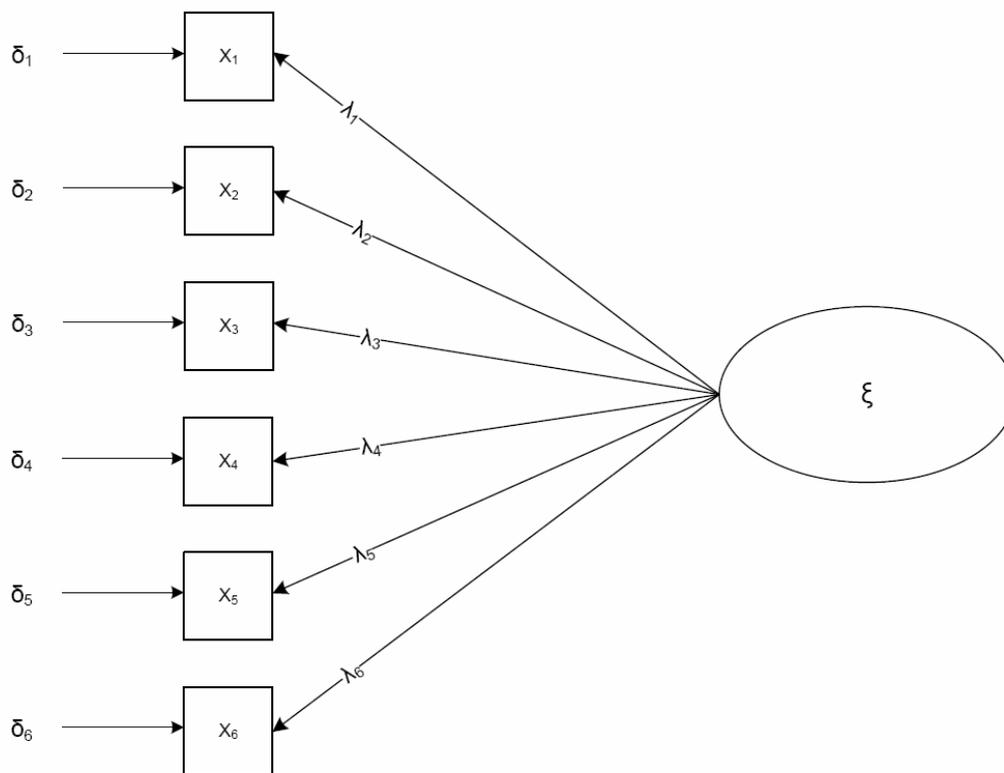


Figure 3.3 Measurement model of Atmosphere dimension

The measurement models were tested through CFA using LISREL (version 8.8). The method of estimation was Diagonally Weighted Least Squares. This method was deemed appropriate for studies employing a Likert-type rating scale (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991). The CFA results provided insight into model fit, i.e. how the measurement items represent each dimension (latent construct). Further to this, the results provided evidence on items to be considered for deletion. Firstly, model fit was assessed through the examination of a combination of goodness-of-fit (GOF) measures. Specifically, two groups of GOF measures were identified, namely (1) absolute fit measures, and (2) incremental fit

measures. Parsimonious fit measures were not included since they are designed to provide information about competing models, which was not deemed relevant for this study (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Literature recommends the use of three or four fit indices to provide adequate evidence of model and fit, given that at least one absolute and one incremental fit measure is included. These fit indices should be reported in addition to the χ^2 -statistic and degrees of freedom (Hair et al., 2006; Kelloway, 1998). Table 3.4 provides a summary of the fit indices proposed and employed in CFA literature and research.

Table 3.4 Summary of fit indices proposed and employed in CFA literature and research

Author/s	Absolute fit indices						Incremental fit indices			
	RMSEA	ECVI	RMSR	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RNI	NNFI/TLI
Bearden, 2001	Yes							Yes		Yes
Blankson & Kalafatis, 2002	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Dabholkar et al., 1995			Yes			Yes		Yes		
Dhurup et al., 2005	Yes				Yes	Yes		Yes		
Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes		
Eastman et al., 1999					Yes					
Grace, 2005	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes				
Hair et al., 2006	Yes			Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes
Lastovicka et al., 1999								Yes		Yes
Li et al., 2002	Yes				Yes	Yes				
Lichtenstein et al., 1993					Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes
Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Tian et al., 2001	Yes							Yes		Yes

Based on these recommendations, absolute and incremental fit indices were identified to assess model fit in this study. Table 3.5 provides a summary of these fit indices, and indicates the acceptable values used as guidelines for assessing GOF (adapted from Schlechter, 2005, p. 148).

Table 3.5 Summary of goodness-of-fit indices

Absolute fit measures	
Minimum Fit Function of Chi-Square	A non-significant result indicates model fit
Normal Theory-Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square	A non-significant result indicates model fit
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Values between 0.08 or below indicate acceptable fit Values below 0.05 indicate good fit Values below 0.01 indicate outstanding fit
Standardised Root Mean Residual (RMR)	Lower values indicate better fit with values below 0.05 indicating good fit
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	Higher values indicate better fit with values > 0.9 indicating good fit
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	Higher values indicate better fit with value > 0.9 indicating good fit
Incremental fit measures	
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	Higher values indicate better fit with values > 0.9 indicating good fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	Values closer to 1 indicate better fit with values > 0.9 indicating good fit

(Adapted from Schlechter, 2005, p. 148)

It is critically important to examine parameter estimates in conjunction with model fit (Kelloway, 1998; MacCallum & Austin, 2000). Further scale purification was considered by investigating path estimates and standardised residuals to identify individual scale items for possible deletion. The estimated loadings of the path estimates linking the dimensions (exogenous variables) to the scale items (indicator variables) were considered. The cut-off value for completely standardised loadings was set at a minimum of > 0.5. The variance extracted (VE) and construct reliability (CR) for each dimension were also calculated. VE provides an indication of the variance due to measurement error in relation to the variance captured by each dimension. The cut-off value for VE was set at > 0.5. Where the VE is less than 0.5 it is indicative of a greater amount of variance in the items being explained by measurement error as opposed to the underlying dimension. This provides additional evidence that the measurement items warrant further scrutiny (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000). CR is a measure of the reliability and internal consistency associated with the measurement items representing each dimension. The criterion for CR was set at > 0.7. In addition, the standardised residuals were investigated. Items with standardised residuals of less than |2.5| were not considered for deletion. Where standardised residuals were between |2.5| and |4|, items were investigated but retained if there was no additional indication that these items should be deleted. Items with associated standardised residuals of higher than |4| were considered for deletion. These criteria were developed in accordance with recommendations by Hair et al. (2006) and Diamantopoulos and Sigauw (2000). The results of the second pilot study, which are discussed extensively in Chapter 4, resulted in retaining the 55-item store image scale. This scale was employed in the fourth phase in the scale development process, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 PHASE 4: ASSESSING THE STORE IMAGE SCALE – RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The purpose of the fourth phase in the development of the store image scale was to assess (1) the reliability, as well as convergent and discriminant validity of the store image scale, and (2) the model fit of the proposed *Model of Store Image*. The methodology employed was designed to allow the researcher to infer whether the store image scale truly reflected the perceptions of the importance of store image, and to obtain data for Phase 5, to determine the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale (see Section 3.6). In conjunction with the research method, the definition of the sample population and the selection of the study sample had to take into account the advocated criteria for sample size and composition. The sample, specifically, had to be large enough for scale development purposes and statistical analysis. Given the complex and multidimensional nature of the store image construct, a sample in excess of 200 would suffice. Furthermore, the sample had to adequately represent the relevant population for the intended implementation of the scale (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The methodology employed will consequently be discussed with specific reference to the research method, sample population, sample selection, measurement instrument, data gathering and statistical analysis as they relate to scale development.

3.5.1 Mall-intercept research method

The mall-intercept research method was employed as the primary method of data collection for this phase of the study. This research method is frequently employed in scale development studies (Dabholkar et al., 1995; Dhurup et al., 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Venter & Dhurup, 2005). The advantages and disadvantages associated with this method were carefully considered on the basis of the criteria affecting the choice of a survey method, specifically the complexity and versatility, quantity of data, sample control, quality of data, response rate, speed and cost as summarised in Table 3.6 (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1994). Given the advantages and disadvantages of the mall-intercept research method, it was deemed appropriate for this study due to the efficiency and ease in obtaining access to a representative group of respondents (Dillon et al., 1994; Du Preez, 2001; Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). Therefore, the advantages of the mall-intercept research method were incorporated in the methodology of this phase of the study, while special care was taken to address the disadvantages. These will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 3.6 Summary of advantages and disadvantages of the mall-intercept research method

Criteria	Advantages	Disadvantages
Complexity and versatility	Highly flexible and versatile due to presence of fieldworker and exposure to store environment; allows respondent interaction	
Quantity of data		Time limit of 25 minutes or less – respondents usually hurried
Sample control	Easy access to respondents Not affected by time of day or weather	Fieldworker chooses respondents Respondents limited to store shoppers – i.e. frequent shoppers have greater chance of being included and potential respondents can intentionally avoid or initiate contact with fieldworker
Quality of data	Allows complete and in-depth responses Provides opportunity to supervise the data gathering process, thereby reducing fieldworker bias	Unnatural environment of store can potentially produce biased responses "Mall burnout" – the same people repeatedly interviewed Selection bias
Response rate	High – up to 80%	
Speed	High – large studies can be completed in a few days	
Cost	Relatively low – determined by length and incidence rate	

Complexity and versatility: Fieldworkers were trained to recruit and conduct personal interviews with respondents (discussed in Section 3.5.6). As fieldworkers were able to interact with respondents, it was possible to allow more complexity and versatility in the study. Furthermore, the mall-intercept method allowed respondents to be exposed to the store environment. This exposure to stimuli pertaining to store image facilitated the completion of the store image scale.

Quantity of data: The previous phases in the development of the store image scale resulted in optimising the scale length whilst maintaining acceptable reliability. Furthermore, ambiguous and confusing items were previously identified and adapted, thereby increasing time efficiency and resulting in minimum time lost to clarify and explain questions. Fieldworker training focused on familiarising individuals with the data gathering process

further aided time efficiency. This allowed for the completion of the scale within the 25 minute time limit associated with the mall-intercept method, whilst maximising the quantity of the data.

Sample control: The mall intercept research method allowed easy access to respondents and a high degree of sample control, thereby eliminating possible complexities associated with the screening process in a survey study. The sample selection process was designed to ensure that fieldworkers intercepted respondents on the basis of specific selection criteria (Section 3.5.4). This sample selection process, together with fieldworker selection and training, reduced the fieldworker's influence in the recruitment of respondents, thereby increasing sample control. The mall-intercept research method is typically limited to store shoppers, with frequent shoppers having a greater chance of being included in the study. The exclusion of non-shoppers in this study was not deemed relevant, since the study focused on the perceived importance of store image. To address the disadvantage of mostly recruiting frequent shoppers, the methodology employed in data gathering was designed to intercept shoppers at different times of the day and week (Section 3.5.7). Street-front stores were included in the study to ensure that data were not limited to mall shoppers.

Quality of data: Fieldworkers were able to ensure that all scales were answered in full. This enabled the researcher to increase the quality of the data. The store environment setting of the mall-intercept method creates the possibility of biased responses from respondents. However, this study is concerned with the perception of store image per se. Therefore, the store environment setting for the data gathering process allowed greater flexibility and versatility, since respondents were able to draw from stimuli in the environment in order to qualify their responses, thereby increasing the quality of the data. The disadvantage of "mall burnout", with the same individuals repeatedly recruited in research studies, was not deemed relevant for this study. Du Preez (2001) reported that not many respondents decline to participate in mall-intercept studies. It is seen as a novelty and an opportunity for respondents to voice their opinions. Selection bias could also influence the quality of data negatively, but fieldworker selection and training focused on eliminating selection bias (Section 3.5.6).

Response rate: The mall-intercept method typically has a high response rate. To increase the response rate, respondents were provided with an incentive to partake in the study.

Speed: Given the large sample size required for the scale development process, the speed of data gathering was a crucial consideration. The data for this study was gathered within a three-week period, capitalising on the high speed advantage of the mall-intercept method.

Cost: Costs in this study involved the training, travelling and compensation costs of the fieldworkers, as well as an incentive for respondents to participate in the study. These were relatively low compared to other survey research methods, again considering the large sample size requirement. Limiting the length of the store image scale together with designing the sample selection process to optimise response rate associated with the mall-intercept research method, further increased cost efficiency.

The previous discussion served to justify the selection of the mall-intercept research method as the appropriate method to be employed in Phase 4 of this store image scale development study. The details of the sample selection process and data gathering will be discussed in the next section, with incorporation of the advantages associated with the mall-intercept method, and an effort to address the disadvantages.

3.5.2 Sample population and sample description

To enable the selection of a representative study sample as prerequisite in the scale development process, it was imperative to define the sample population, as well as justify the inclusion and exclusion of specific respondents from the sample population. Since this study was concerned with measuring perceptions on the importance of store image, specifically as it relates to the apparel consumer, the sample population was defined as apparel consumers, both male and female, between the ages of 20 and 60, belonging to the black, coloured or white population groups, and patronising specific apparel retail outlets.

The inclusion and exclusion of respondents from the sample population was based on the following rationale. Firstly, gender is an important consideration in the apparel market with both genders being of equal significance. In addition, changes in gender roles necessitate the consideration of both genders in consumer behaviour research (Hawkins et al., 2007). Therefore, males and females were included in this study, since this was deemed relevant for the practical implementation and use of the store image scale. Secondly, literature varies with regard to age, on what constitutes the teenage and mature market. For the purpose of this study, it was argued that respondents younger than 20 years should be excluded from the study, since they represent the teenage market (Damhorst, Miller & Michelman, 1999; MacGillivray & Wilson, 1997; Miller, 2003; Moran, 2005; Taylor & Cosenza, 2002). Similarly, respondents older than 60 years were identified as the mature market and were, therefore, not included (Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005; Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Moschis, 2003; Moschis et al., 2004; Mueller & Smiley, 1995; Oates et al., 1996; Visser, 1994; Visser et al., 1996).

Thirdly, the South African population, and consequently also the consumer market, consists of various population groups, namely blacks, coloureds, Indians and whites. Three of these

groups were represented in the study sample. Indians were excluded as they constitute less than 5% of the population of the Western Cape where the study was conducted (Statistics South Africa, 2005c).

Fourthly, store image is derived from the perceptions and attitudes based on the sensations of store-related stimuli received through the five senses (Peter & Olson, 1990). Therefore, all consumers exiting a specific store were included in the sample population, because they had been exposed to the store-related stimuli and were able to form perceptions and attitudes based on their experience.

Fifthly, apparel discount stores and specialty stores were included in this study, since store image differs between store types (Hawkins et al., 2007). All the retailers involved in this study operate at national level, but, due to financial constraints, data were only gathered from stores in Cape Town, a city in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The retailers all carried a wide product range, including ladies' wear, menswear and children's wear, as well as footwear.

Lastly, malls and street-front stores from different geographical areas within the Western Cape Province in the near vicinity of Cape Town were included in the study, since these are typically associated with consumer demographical variables, specifically with regard to population group. To allow for the selection of a representative sample, the inclusion of specific malls and street-front stores was imperative.

This clear definition and justification of the sample population allowed the systematic sample selection process of a representative sample. The procedures involved in the sample selection process are discussed in the next section.

3.5.3 Sample selection

This study relied on a convenience stratified quota sample, allowing the researcher a high degree of sample control, specifically as related to the representativeness of the study sample (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). The stratified quota sample was based on the criteria derived directly from the definition of the sample population, namely, mall and store selection, as well as respondent profile.

Mall and store selection was based on the rationale of including both mall and street-front stores and ensuring that their customer base was representative of the identified population groups specified in the study. The mall-intercept research method was deemed applicable for data gathering that included street-front stores.

Mall selection was subject to obtaining permission for conducting the study from mall managers, who were contacted telephonically. The purpose of the study and data gathering process were explained briefly. Dates and times for the data gathering was confirmed via e-mail once permission for conducting the study was obtained. Based on this procedure, two malls were identified in the bigger Cape Town Metropolitan area. The names and contact numbers of the fieldworkers employed in the study for each mall were given to the mall management. Each fieldworker was given a letter to verify authorisation to conduct the study (Appendix 8). No permission was needed for conducting the research with regard to the street-front stores. Two towns near Cape Town, namely Stellenbosch and Paarl, were identified for the selection of street-front stores.

The retailers included in the study represented two store types, namely discount and specialty stores. The selection of stores was based on their representation within the chosen malls and towns, and ensuring that they carried at least ladies- and menswear. Two of the identified specialty stores represented the same corporate company, but traded as separate stand-alone stores for ladies- and menswear. Respondents were recruited upon exiting the specified store (Section 3.5.6).

A convenience-stratified quota sample of respondents was recruited on the basis of their connection with the selected malls, towns and stores, as well as their being representative of males and females and population groups as summarised in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Sample quota of respondents by store and population group

Location	Store	Male			Female			Store total	Location total
		Black	Coloured	White	Black	Coloured	White		
Mall 1	Discount	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	144
	Specialty	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	
Mall 2	Discount	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	144
	Specialty	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	
Town 1	Discount	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	144
	Specialty	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	
Town 2	Discount	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	144
	Specialty	12	12	12	12	12	12	72	
TOTAL									576

Accordingly, it can be argued that the sample employed in this study can be considered as representative of the South African apparel consumer in the Western Cape. The stratified quota sampling procedure allowed for an equal representation of respondents with regard to gender and population group. Respondents also were equally representative of consumers of different apparel store types, namely discount and specialty stores, as well as location, namely mall and street front stores.

3.5.4 Measurement instrument

The store image scale developed in the previous phases of the research study was employed for data gathering in this phase of the study. Specific comments were added to the covering letter to ease the administration of the store image scale by the fieldworkers. Further to this, the scale was adapted to allow for the coding of location, store, time of day and day of week. The items in Section A (55 items) and B (8 items) remained unchanged from the previous phases. Section C, the demographics section, was adapted to include items on gender, population group, home language, age, occupation, monthly income, marital status, frequency of purchasing apparel, as well as monthly expenditure on apparel. This measurement instrument is presented in Appendix 9.

3.5.5 Fieldworker training

Fieldworkers were trained to increase sample control and the quality of data, as well as to ensure standardisation and scientific data gathering. They were recruited from postgraduate Industrial Psychology students at the University of Stellenbosch. Students had to be fluent in English and have an ability to approach shoppers in a friendly manner.

A training session was conducted one week prior to data gathering to ensure that fieldworkers were able to remember the information they were exposed to in the training sessions and apply it effectively when gathering data. A fieldworker training manual was developed for the training session (Appendix 10). The training session was conducted in accordance with recommendations in the literature (Babbie, 1998; Du Preez, 2001; Frazer & Lawley, 2000):

Goals of the research: The training session commenced with an overview of the purpose of the study to create an understanding of the role of the fieldworkers within the study.

Criteria for sample selection: The fieldworkers were familiarised with the definition of the sample population and taken through the process for recruiting respondents (Section 3.5.6).

Measurement instrument: The covering letter accompanying each scale was discussed with the fieldworkers, together with a detailed explanation of the response format and rating

scale, and given an example on the covering letter. The purpose of each section was explained to the fieldworkers. This followed by a review of each individual item. Specifications on completing the scale, including explanatory comments, were prepared prior to the training session to assist fieldworkers in clarifying respondent confusion with regard to specific items in the scale. The specifications were discussed in conjunction with the store image scale. It was emphasised that fieldworkers should not discuss, lead or give their own opinions when gathering the data. Finally, questions and comments from the fieldworkers regarding specific items were considered.

Data gathering: Fieldworkers were given an overview of the data gathering procedure (Section 3.5.6). A demonstration on completing the scale with a respondent was given to serve as guideline for fieldworkers for data gathering. Again, questions and comments were addressed.

Data capture: Guidelines were given to the fieldworkers as to the data that needed to be captured by them on the scale, e.g. population group.

Store grid: Fieldworkers made use of a store grid to document quotas on the basis of population group, time of day and day of the week (Section 3.5.7). The grid was explained to fieldworkers in the training session.

Practicalities: Each fieldworker was issued with a letter to verify authorisation to conduct the study at the specified malls, as well as the necessary number of scales and store grids. The contact names and numbers for the management of the relevant malls were also provided. Fieldworkers were provided with monetary compensation for each completed scale and for costs relating to travel expenses.

3.5.6 Data gathering

The times for gathering data were chosen to minimise the possibility of bias due to variation in consumer behaviour as a function of time. Firstly, peak season trading periods, e.g. Christmas and Easter, were avoided to eliminate possible non-representativeness (DeVellis, 2003). Secondly, the sample design was stratified into time segments and data was gathered within each time segment to account for any further variation due to time (Dillon et al., 1994). Shopping behaviour varies with the time of month, since sales typically pick up around the end of the month and taper down during mid-month. Therefore, three weeks were specified for data gathering, namely the first, middle and last week of a month. Furthermore, the day of the week distinguishes between weekend and weekday shoppers and effects consumer behaviour. Similarly, the time of day is an important variable, since stores are normally more crowded during the lunch hour (Peter & Olson, 1990). Data gathering therefore took place

from Mondays to Thursdays to capture weekday shoppers, as well as on Fridays and Saturdays to ensure that weekend shoppers were recruited. Lastly, three time slots were identified to include morning, lunchtime and afternoon shoppers.

Fieldworkers employed a store grid adapted from Du Preez (2001) to monitor the selection process. Specified on the store grid was the name of the mall or town and store where data was gathered, as well as the day of the week, time of the day, gender and population group. Two fieldworkers were assigned to each store type at each location. After the data was gathered, the researcher reviewed the store grids to ascertain whether the correct method for selecting respondents was followed.

Respondents who fitted the criteria were recruited after exiting the specified store. Based on the rationale suggested by Du Preez (2001), fieldworkers assessed socially sensitive questions, i.e. population group, prior to approaching a respondent. Where there was uncertainty regarding the population group of a respondent, the respondent was not approached, since incorrect classification of population group would jeopardise the quota sample method. Fieldworkers identified themselves, offered information regarding the study and asked respondents to participate in the study. Once a respondent agreed to participate in the study, the following procedure was followed for gathering data:

- The fieldworker read a brief introduction from the covering letter to the respondent. This included an overview of the purpose of the study, as well as a broad definition of the store image construct. Particular emphasis was placed on participation in the study being voluntary, that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that information obtained from the responses to the scale would be handled with the strictest confidence (Synodinos, 2003).
- Each respondent was given an example of the response format. The rationale of the response format and rating scale was explained by the fieldworker, using the illustrative example on the covering letter. The fieldworker then proceeded to read out each scale item, instructing the respondents to verbalise their response based on the response format. Responses were captured on the scale by the fieldworker. Respondents were invited to ask questions when the meaning of an item or response format was unclear.
- After completing the scale, the fieldworker thanked the respondent. Each respondent was given entry into a lucky draw for a monetary reward as an incentive for participation. Care was taken to maintain the anonymity of respondents.
- Fieldworkers then approached a succeeding respondent for recruitment until the quota for the specific mall, store, day of the week, time of the day and population group was filled. In the event that quotas were not filled, the data gathering process was extended.

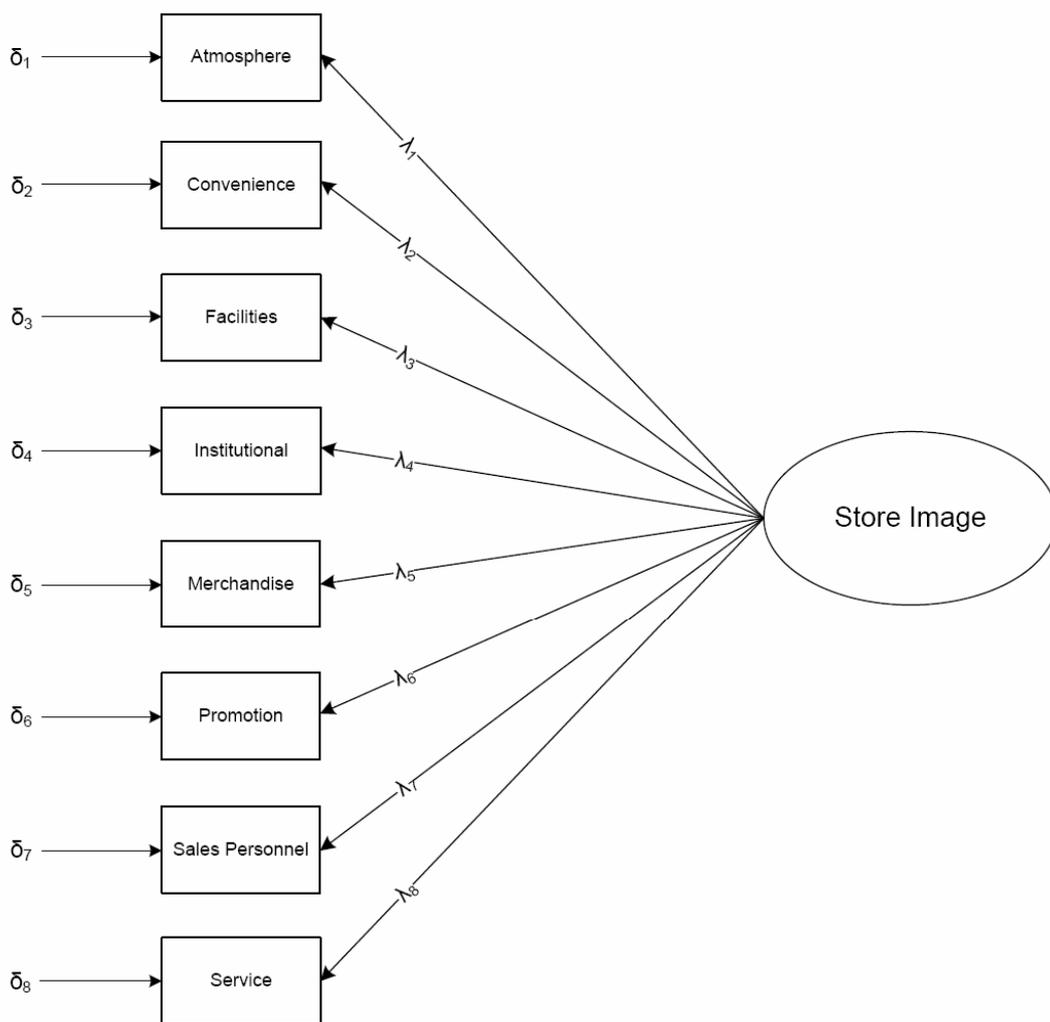
Each fieldworker was also provided with a non-response data sheet. When possible respondents were unable to take part in the study at the given time, fieldworkers indicated the non-response on the provided sheet. This allowed fieldworkers to record the rate of response to the study.

3.5.7 Statistical analysis

Data capturing and coding were done as for the pilot studies in the previous phase. The results from the data set (n=535) were employed to assess the model fit of each of the individual dimensions, as well as the *Model of Store Image*. Reliability was established by employing coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and inter-item correlations. The criteria for the assessment of these measures were the same as those employed and discussed in the previous phase (Section 3.4.1.3). CFA was performed on the data and this offered several distinct advantages in this phase of the study, through (1) allowing the researcher to test and refine the store image scale, as well as the underlying theoretical *Model of Store Image*, and (2) providing powerful statistical means to establish initial validity of the store image scale (Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991). The literature recommends that a well-grounded theoretical model be employed in CFA (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, the proposed theoretical *Model of Store Image* (Figure 3.2) was used as point of departure for CFA.

Firstly, as with the second pilot study, CFA was performed on each of the individual dimensions using LISREL (version 8.8). The method of estimation was Diagonally Weighted Least Squares. This method was deemed appropriate for larger sample sizes, as well as for studies employing a Likert-type rating scale (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991). Model fit was established through a combination of GOF measures and their associated criteria (Table 3.5). In order to identify potentially problematic measurement items that could contribute to possible poor model fit, path estimates and standardised residuals were considered. The cut-off values for path estimates and standardised residuals established in the second pilot study were again employed (Section 3.4.2.3). The convergent validity of each dimension was assessed as an indication of the degree to which the measures associated with the same dimension were correlated (Gefen, 2003; Hair et al., 2006). Factor loadings of > 0.5, variance extracted of > 0.5, and construct reliability of > 0.7 were used as measures and their associated criteria for establishing convergent validity. Discriminant validity establishes that the construct is statistically distinct from other constructs (Gefen, 2003; Hair et al., 2006). This was assessed by the variance extracted of any two constructs being greater than the squared correlation estimate between the constructs. These measures and criteria were developed according to recommendations by Hair et al. (2006).

Secondly, CFA was performed on the *Model of Store Image* (Figure 3.2). The measurement model included store image as the exogenous latent variable. The large number of dimensions and associated measurement items of the model necessitated a sample size requirement outside of the scope of this exploratory study. For this reason, composite scores for the measurement items of each dimension were calculated into a single composite indicator (Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). This was deemed appropriate because the CFAs performed on each of the individual dimensions allowed individual item analysis, whilst the CFA performed on the *Model of Store Image* allowed assessment of the total model fit. Thus, the dimensions (as per the *Model of Store Image*) were identified as indicator variables. The measurement model employed in the CFA is presented in Figure 3.4.



λ - Loading estimate
 $\bar{\delta}$ - Error variance

Figure 3.4 Measurement model of the *Model of Store Image*

The measurement model was tested through CFA using LISREL (version 8.8) with Maximum Likelihood (ML) as the method of estimation. This method was deemed appropriate, as CFA was performed with the use of composite scores and not scores derived from the Likert-type rating scale. Model fit was assessed through employing the goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices and criteria employed in the previous phase of the study (Table 3.5). The construct validity was assessed by investigating the convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was measured as per the analysis for each individual dimension. The results of the CFA are presented in Chapter 4. The fourth phase in the development of the store image scale served to further assess the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the scale, as well as the model fit of the *Model of Store Image*. The next phase focused on assessing the perceived importance of the store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale.

3.6 PHASE 5: ASSESSING THE PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF STORE IMAGE DIMENSIONS IN SELECTED DISCOUNT AND SPECIALTY APPAREL STORES

The aim of the final phase of the study was to (1) measure the perceived importance of the store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores, and (2) determine whether there was any difference in the perceived importance of store image dimensions with regard to selected discount and specialty apparel stores, through the practical implementation of the store image scale.

3.6.1 Hypotheses

Findings recorded in store image literature indicate that perceptions of store image vary by store type (Amirani & Gates, 1993; Joyce & Lambert, 1996; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Mitchell & Kiral, 1998; Moye & Giddings, 2002; Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003; Schiffman et al., 1977; Thorpe & Avery, 1983-1984). Because of this, the following hypotheses were formulated to assess whether there were statistically significant differences between selected discount and specialty apparel stores. This was done with regard to the perception of the importance of each store image dimension.

H1: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Atmosphere** dimension.

H2: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Convenience** dimension.

H3: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Facilities** dimension.

H4: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Institutional** dimension.

H5: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Merchandise** dimension.

H6: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Promotion** dimension.

H7: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Store personnel** dimension.

H8: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Service** dimension.

3.6.2 Statistical analysis

The data obtained in the previous phase of the scale development process was employed in Phase 5 (see Section 3.5). Section B of the store image scale, in which respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the individual dimensions, was used for data analysis. The data was submitted to one-way ANOVA using Statistica (version 7.1). This statistical analysis was deemed appropriate as it provided weighted means to ascertain the perceived importance of the store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores. In addition, this statistical procedure allowed for the investigation of statistically significant differences between selected discount and specialty apparel stores in the perceived importance of store image dimensions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of the methodology employed in this study to address the research problem, through the development of a scale for the measurement of

perceptions of the importance of the store image construct, as well as assessment of the underlying theoretical structure of store image. The methodology was based on scale development literature, and also employed input from experts in the field of scale development. A five-phase process was identified as an appropriate and scientifically sound research methodology. The five phases included (1) construct definition and domain specification; (2) generation and judging of measurement items; (3) purification of the store image scale; (4) assessment of the reliability and validity of the store image scale; and (5) assessing the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale. The results derived from the implementation of this methodology will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results and to interpret and discuss the data analysis. Chapter 3 presented an overview of the methodology employed for the development, purification and assessment of the store image scale and discussed the statistical procedures applied during the different phases. The first two identified phases in the process of scale development, namely the construct definition and domain specification, as well as the generation and judging of the measurement items, were discussed extensively in Chapter 3. These two phases did not involve any empirical results and will, therefore, not be included in this chapter to avoid any repetition. Thus, this chapter will focus on the results obtained from the data gathered in phases 3, 4 and 5 of the study, namely the purification of the store image scale, and the assessment of the reliability, validity and practical implementation of the store image scale, as outlined in Figure 3.1.

4.2 PURIFICATION OF THE STORE IMAGE SCALE

The first two phases in the scale development process concluded in a 232-item store image scale that adequately represented the store image construct and domain. The methodology employed in the first two phases was designed to develop a scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions of apparel store image (objective 7). These two phases also served to ensure that the store image scale exhibited acceptable face and content validity. This scale was employed in the third phase of the study, which comprised two pilot studies. The aim of the third phase was to purify the developed scale in order to illustrate acceptable reliability (objective 8), as well as to develop and refine this scale for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment (objective 9). The results of Phase 3 will be reported in this section.

4.2.1 Pilot study 1

The first pilot study served to provide initial reliability estimates, as well as aid in optimising scale length. This section discusses the sample profile of the respondents in pilot study 1, as well as the reliability results based on the statistical analysis.

4.2.1.1 Sample profile

The sample comprised a convenience student sample and was deemed appropriate for this stage of the scale development process, based on recommendations in the literature (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Results obtained from the statistical analysis of the demographic section of the store image scale (Section C) provided a descriptive profile of the respondents participating in the second pilot study. All respondents did not provide answers to all the questions in the section (missing cases), resulting in a varied total sample size for the different variables. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the demographic results.

The percentage of female respondents was slightly higher than male respondents, but this did not raise concerns that results might be skewed towards a specific gender. The respondents' ages varied from 17 to 30, with most respondents aged 18 to 21 (83%). This was to be expected with a sample drawn from a student population. The majority (51%) of the sample belonged to the coloured population group, followed by the black population group. Most respondents (57%) indicated English to be their home language, followed by isiXhosa and Afrikaans. This can be attributed to the tertiary institution and geographical region where the data was gathered.

Respondents predominantly were in their first year of study (76%) and were studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce degree (76%). This, again, was expected as the sample was drawn from a first-year BCom class. The number of respondents indicating their academic year of study as second and third can be attributed to having to repeat the class after failing, or that the specific class was only prescribed in their respective courses in their second or third year of study. That some respondents were enrolled for degrees other than BCom was ascribed to the fact that the class is a prerequisite for other degrees. Respondents mostly indicated that they were not married (97%) and lived at home with their families (69%) or in a hostel/residence (23%). This, again, was typical of a student sample.

Respondents bought clothes when needed or on a monthly basis. About a quarter of the respondents indicated that they spend R300-R399 per month on clothing, followed by R200-R299 and R400-R499. This further served to justify the sample as apparel consumers.

4.2.1.2 Statistical analysis

The data obtained from the first pilot study (n=89) was subjected to statistical analyses using Statistica 7.1. As per recommendations by Churchill (1979), the coefficient alpha (α) was calculated to assist in scale purification by identifying inconsistent items for deletion. Due to

Table 4.1 Demographic profile of respondents – Pilot study 1

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender (n=86)	Male	39	45.35
	Female	47	54.65
Age (n=86)	17	1	1.16
	18	22	25.58
	19	28	32.56
	20	6	6.98
	21	15	17.44
	22	5	5.81
	23	1	1.16
	24	3	3.49
	26	3	3.49
	27	1	1.16
	30	1	1.16
Population group (n=86)	Black	31	36.05
	Coloured	44	51.16
	Indian	7	8.14
	Other	4	4.65
Home language (n=83)	Afrikaans	10	12.05
	English	47	56.63
	isiXhosa	18	21.69
	Sesotho	3	3.61
	Tshonga	1	1.20
	Setswane	1	1.20
	Chinese	1	1.20
	Spanglish	1	1.20
	isiZulu	1	1.20
Academic year of study (n=86)	1 st year	65	75.58
	2 nd year	17	19.77
	3 rd year	4	4.65
Degree (n=86)	BA	5	5.81
	BCom	65	75.58
	BSc	4	4.65
	BAdmin	9	10.47
	LL.B.	3	3.40
Marital status (n=86)	Cohabitation/living together	1	1.16
	Married	2	2.33
	Not married	83	96.51

Variables	Categories	n	%
Stay during study period (n=86)	Home with family	59	68.60
	Hostel/residence	20	23.26
	Hired private room	3	3.49
	Hired flat	3	3.49
	Commune	1	1.16
How often you buy clothes (n=85)	When needed	34	40.00
	Once a year	3	3.53
	Twice a year	3	3.53
	Three times a year	4	4.71
	Monthly	22	25.88
	Weekly	7	8.24
	Other	12	14.12
Average monthly spending on clothes (n=85)	<R99	3	3.53
	R100-R199	10	11.76
	R200-R299	16	18.82
	R300-R399	22	25.88
	R400-R499	12	14.12
	R500-R599	11	12.94
	>R600	11	12.94

the multidimensionality of the store image construct, the coefficient alpha for each sub dimension was calculated separately to ascertain to what extent each item shared a common variance with the other items included in each sub dimension (Netemeyer et al., 2003). Further to this, the coefficient alpha for each dimension and the total scale was calculated, as presented in Table 4.2.

Investigation of the coefficient alphas of the dimensions revealed that Atmosphere ($\alpha=0.57$), Convenience ($\alpha=0.61$), and Sales personnel ($\alpha=0.56$) fell outside the set criterion of > 0.7 . Inconsistent items from the Atmosphere and Convenience dimensions had been identified for deletion, suggesting an improvement in the overall alpha for these dimensions. The sub dimensions included in the Sales personnel dimension that had high coefficient alphas when considered separately were appearance ($\alpha=0.82$) and interaction ($\alpha=0.80$) and no items from these sub dimensions were identified for deletion. In Section 2.3.3.1 various overlaps between the Sales personnel and Service dimensions were identified from the literature review. These involved Employee service (Grace & O’Cass, 2004; Koo, 2003), Salespeople service (Kleinhans, 2003), Salesperson/service (Manolis et al., 1994), Service – sales associated attributes (Lee & Johnson, 1997), and Service – store-associated attributes (Lee & Johnson, 1997). Based on this, it was decided to include the interaction sub dimension with the in-store service sub dimension, since it could be justified as being conceptually related, as per recommendations in the literature (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Table 4.2 Reliability – Pilot study 1

Construct	Dimensions	Sub dimensions	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha			
Store image	Atmosphere		232		0.57	0.90	
			15				
		Store interior	11	0.75			
		Store atmosphere	4	0.50			
	Convenience			42		0.61	
			Transportation	3	0.59		
			Location	11	0.76		
			Parking	6	0.75		
			Shopping ease	18	0.82		
			Store hours	4	0.87		
	Facilities			41		0.78	
			Store appearance	7	0.71		
			Store layout	4	0.76		
			Fixtures	14	0.84		
			Fitting rooms	8	0.81		
	Convenience of facilities	8	0.77				
Institutional			19		0.76		
		Store reputation	9	0.73			
	Clientele	10	0.75				
Merchandise			28		0.85		
		Assortment	14	0.86			
		Style	7	0.79			
		Price	4	0.63			
	Quality	3	0.60				
Promotion			33		0.81		
		Advertising	17	0.89			
		Displays	6	0.82			
	Sales incentives	10	0.85				
Sales personnel			18		0.56		
		Appearance	9	0.82			
	Interaction	9	0.80				
Service			36		0.78		
		In-store service	17	0.86			
		Payment options	7	0.79			
		Delivery options	5	0.90			
		After-sales service	7	0.83			

The changes to the theoretical structure of the *Model of Store Image* (Figure 3.2) suggested by the statistical analysis were affected and are presented in Figure 4.1. A 214-item store image scale was derived from the statistical analysis in the first pilot study. This scale was employed in the second pilot study.

4.2.2 Pilot study 2

The second pilot study served to provide additional evidence of scale reliability for purification, as well as to optimise the scale length. This section will present a discussion on the sample profile of the respondents in the study, as well as the results from the statistical analysis.

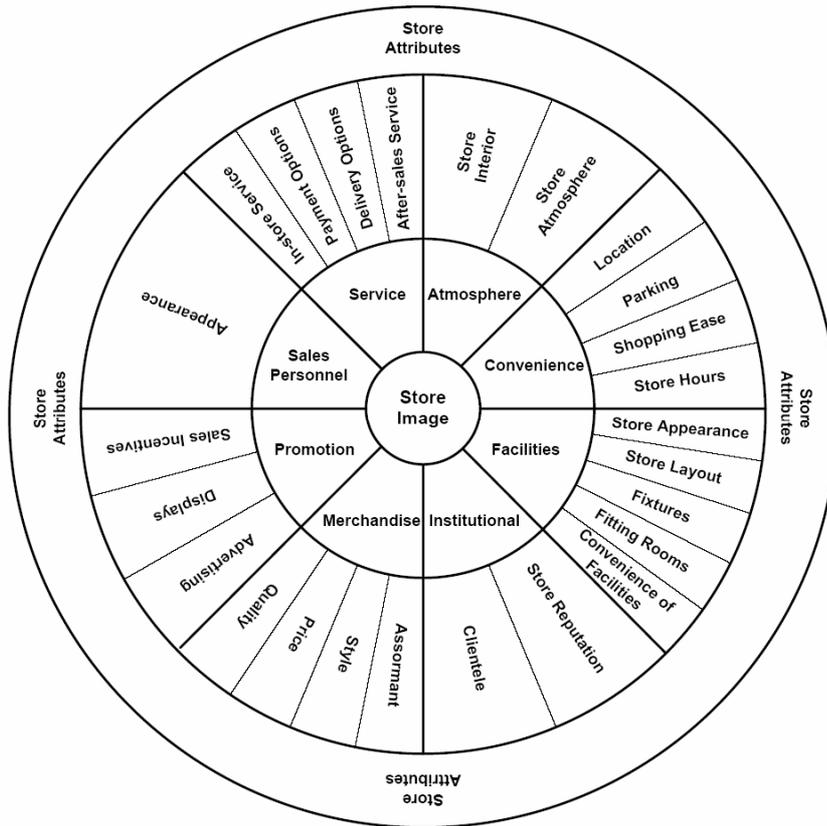


Figure 4.1 Revised Model of Store Image after Pilot study 1

4.2.2.1 Sample profile

As for the first pilot study, demographic results were obtained from the statistical analysis of Section C of the scale. The sample for the second pilot study also comprised a convenience student sample. The varied total sample size for the different variables is again attributed to missing cases. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the demographic results.

The gender distribution between male and female was nearly equal. This was an advantage in the current data analysis since the quota sampling procedure employed in the main mall-intercept study included equal proportions of males and females. Respondents were aged 17 to 24, with most respondents (93%) aged 18 to 21. As in the first pilot study, this was in line with expectations from a student sample. The majority (81%) of the sample belonged to the white population group and indicated Afrikaans as their home language. Again, this was mainly due to the geographical area in which the tertiary institution is situated.

Table 4.3 Demographic profile of respondents – Pilot study 2

Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender (n=175)	Male	85	48.57
	Female	90	51.43
Age (n=174)	17	1	0.57
	18	34	19.54
	19	40	22.99
	20	64	36.78
	21	23	13.22
	22	8	4.60
	23	2	1.15
	24	2	1.15
Population group (n=172)	Black	1	0.58
	Coloured	32	18.60
	White	139	80.81
Home language (n=172)	Afrikaans	160	93.02
	English	10	5.81
	Other	2	1.16
Academic year of study (n=175)	1 st year	79	45.14
	2 nd year	88	50.29
	3 rd year	5	2.86
	4 th year	3	1.71
Degree (n=161)	BA	14	8.70
	BCom	16	9.94
	BSc	1	0.62
	Other	130	80.75
Marital status (n=172)	Cohabitation/living together	6	3.49
	Married	1	0.58
	Not married	165	95.53
Stay during study period (n=175)	Home with family	49	28.00
	Hostel/residence	66	37.71
	Hired private room	5	2.86
	Hired flat	49	28.00
	Commune	2	1.14
	Hotel	1	0.57
	Other	3	1.71

Variables	Categories	N	%
How often you buy clothes (n=175)	When needed	56	32.00
	Once a year	2	1.14
	Twice a year	4	2.29
	Three times a year	15	8.57
	Monthly	69	39.43
	Weekly	17	9.71
	Other	12	6.86
Average monthly spending on clothes (n=173)	<R99	8	4.62
	R100-R199	35	20.23
	R200-R299	32	18.50
	R300-R399	22	12.72
	R400-R499	31	17.92
	R500-R599	20	11.56
	>R600	25	14.45

Respondents predominantly (95%) were in their first or second year of study. This was expected as the population from which the sample was drawn was enrolled in a two-year course at the tertiary institution, with further studies undertaken at a different institution. The course for which the sample population was enrolled was a diploma course with the option of continuing to obtain a degree. Thus, the majority of students indicated that they were not studying for a specific degree. Most respondents were not married (96%) and lived in a hostel/residence (38%), at home with their family (28%) or in a hired flat (28%), as is consistent with student samples.

Similarly to the first pilot study, respondents bought clothes mainly on a monthly basis or when needed. The majority (95%) of respondents indicated that they spend more than R100 per month on clothing, with an almost equal proportion of respondents indicating that they spend R100-R199, R200-R299 and R400-R499 on clothes per month. This provided support to validate the sample as apparel consumers.

4.2.2.2 Statistical analysis

The data obtained from the second pilot study (n=176) were split into a training data set (n=110) and a test data set (n=66) and subjected to statistical analyses. This approach allowed for the purification of the store image scale, based on the statistical analysis of the training data set, to be cross-checked by statistical analysis from the test data set, as recommended by DeVellis (2003). To assist in optimising scale length, the statistical analysis was only performed on each dimension associated with the store image construct (see Section 3.4.2.3). Therefore, the model was adapted to exclude all the sub dimensions with a

focus on the broad dimensions of store image. This model, represented in Figure 4.2, was employed in all further statistical analysis.

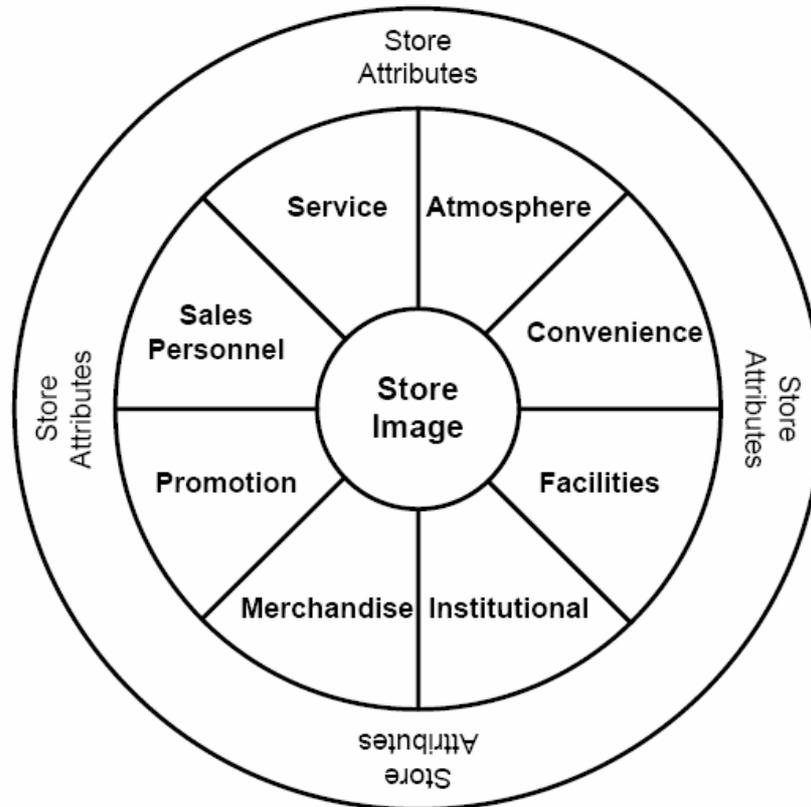


Figure 4.2 Revised Model of Store Image – Pilot study 2 (training data set)

The coefficient alpha, inter-item and item-total correlations for both the training and test data sets were calculated using Statistica (version 7.1). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Statistica (version 7.1) was performed on the training data set, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the test data set using LISREL (version 8.8). The use of both statistical methods is justified by recommendations in the literature that EFA and CFA be used in conjunction in scale development research (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Gorsuch, 1997).

Training data set: Coefficient alpha for each dimension and the total scale for the 214-item scale based on data from the training data set were calculated, as presented in Table 4.4. All item-total correlations met the adopted criterion of > 0.3. Inter-item correlations were within the set criteria of 0.2-0.5, except for the Sales personnel dimension at 0.62.

Table 4.4 Reliability – Pilot study 2 (training data set – 214-item store image scale)

Construct	Dimensions	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha	
Store image		214		0.90
	Atmosphere	11	0.84	
	Convenience	38	0.93	
	Facilities	37	0.93	
	Institutional	17	0.85	
	Merchandise	26	0.91	
	Promotion	33	0.94	
	Sales personnel	8	0.84	
	Service	44	0.95	

EFA was performed employing the principal axis factoring procedure and constraining the analysis to *a priori* one factor for each dimension. This procedure was deemed appropriate, since the *Model of Store Image* was developed and already specified the dimensionality of the store image construct. This model was used as basis for developing the store image scale, allowing the researcher to specify the dimension on which the individual items had to load (Hair et al., 2006). This was in accordance with recommendations by Churchill (1979) and statistical procedures employed in other scale development studies (Bearden, 2001; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Parasuraman et al., 1988). The factor loadings for each item in the 214-item scale ranged from 0.41 to 0.72 for Atmosphere, 0.36 to 0.66 for Convenience, 0.28 to 0.71 for Facilities, 0.20 to 0.69 for Institutional, 0.36 to 0.68 for Merchandise, 0.43 to 0.67 for Promotion, 0.44 to 0.81 for Sales personnel, and 0.39 to 0.74 for Service. Given that the cut-off value for factor loadings was set at a minimum of > 0.5 , the results highlighted that individual items required closer scrutiny.

Item reduction was undertaken by considering item factor loadings in conjunction with item-total correlations. The primary objective of this phase was to purify the scale and address scale length. To achieve this, items with the highest factor loadings and corresponding high item-total correlations were retained. This resulted in the deletion of 159 items across all dimensions, with 55 items being retained. Table 4.5 presents the factor loadings of the individual items retained in the 55-item scale.

The coefficient alpha, inter-item and item-total correlations were again calculated for the 55-item scale. Coefficient alpha for the total scale was recorded at 0.89 and ranged from 0.80 to 0.88 for the individual dimensions, thus exceeding the cut-off value of > 0.7 , as presented in Table 4.6. All alpha values were lower for the shortened scale compared to the 214-item scale, except for Sales personnel. This was to be expected, since alpha increases with the number of items (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The inter-item correlations were all within the adopted criteria ranging from 0.2-0.5 and the item-total correlations were all above the cut-off value of > 0.3 .

Table 4.5 Factor loadings – Pilot study 2 (training data set)

Dimensions	No. of Items	Items	Factor loadings
Atmosphere	6	Item 2	0.639
		Item 3	0.647
		Item 4	0.718
		Item 5	0.685
		Item 6	0.726
		Item 11	0.565
Convenience	7	Item 12	0.613
		Item 19	0.621
		Item 22	0.613
		Item 32	0.644
		Item 38	0.664
		Item 41	0.617
		Item 46	0.607
Facilities	7	Item 53	0.689
		Item 56	0.690
		Item 57	0.701
		Item 60	0.710
		Item 75	0.634
		Item 76	0.625
		Item 80	0.620
Institutional	6	Item 95	0.649
		Item 96	0.691
		Item 98	0.673
		Item 100	0.642
		Item 101	0.698
		Item 102	0.628
Merchandise	8	Item 104	0.685
		Item 105	0.603
		Item 107	0.643
		Item 108	0.633
		Item 111	0.582
		Item 117	0.582
		Item 122	0.585
		Item 128	0.592
Promotion	8	Item 132	0.634
		Item 143	0.603
		Item 144	0.658
		Item 148	0.667
		Item 152	0.673
		Item 153	0.644
		Item 155	0.622
		Item 156	0.613
Sales personnel	5	Item 165	0.800
		Item 167	0.658
		Item 168	0.817
		Item 169	0.708
		Item 170	0.713
Service	8	Item 173	0.659
		Item 174	0.746
		Item 180	0.634
		Item 188	0.698
		Item 189	0.654
		Item 190	0.650
		Item 204	0.649
		Item 208	0.651

Table 4.6 Reliability – Pilot study 2 (training data set – 55-item store image scale)

Construct	Dimensions	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha	
Store image		55	0.89	
	Atmosphere	6	0.83	
	Convenience	7	0.80	
	Facilities	7	0.86	
	Institutional	6	0.84	
	Merchandise	8	0.83	
	Promotion	8	0.84	
	Sales personnel	5	0.88	
	Service	8	0.86	

A correlation analysis was performed between the 214-item and the 55-item store image scales. The correlations between the various dimensions indicated satisfactory values, namely Atmosphere ($r=0.94$), Convenience ($r=0.90$), Facilities ($r=0.90$), Institutional ($r=0.87$), Merchandise ($r=0.90$), Promotion ($r=0.90$), Sales personnel ($r=0.94$), and Service ($r=0.92$) (see Section 3.4.2.3). The 214-item store image scale was representative of all the sub dimensions initially proposed in the *Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.1). The 55-item scale did not represent all of these sub dimensions, but only the broad dimensions of store image. The high correlations between the longer and shorter store image scales provided support for the shortened version and confirmed that the 55-item scale performs satisfactorily.

Test data set: Coefficient alpha from the test data set for the 55-item scale was recorded at 0.83 for the total scale. Coefficient alphas for the individual dimensions ranged from 0.59 to 0.79, with only Atmosphere ($\alpha=0.72$) and Sales personnel ($\alpha=0.79$) satisfying the accepted cut-off value of > 0.7 .

The inter-item correlations of Convenience (0.192), Merchandise (0.192), and Service (0.170) fell outside the set criterion ranging from 0.2-0.5. An investigation of the item-total correlations identified 14 individual items not achieving the set cut-off value of > 0.3 , namely Convenience (item 46), Facilities (item 53, 76 and 80), Institutional (item 102), Merchandise (items 104, 105, 122 and 128), Promotion (item 143), and Service (items 180, 189, 204 and 208). The coefficient alphas and item-total correlations are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Reliability and item-total correlations– Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Construct	Dimensions	Items	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha		Alpha if deleted	Item-total correlations
Store image	Atmosphere		55	0.72	0.83		
			6				
		2			0.68	0.48	
		3			0.67	0.49	
		4			0.68	0.46	
		5			0.67	0.51	
		6			0.68	0.45	
11		0.71	0.37				

Construct	Dimensions	Items	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha	Alpha if deleted	Item-total correlations
	Convenience	12 19 22 32 38 41 46	7	0.62	0.57 0.56 0.57 0.57 0.58 0.58 0.66	0.37 0.40 0.38 0.40 0.35 0.37 0.09
	Facilities	53 56 57 60 75 76 80	7	0.61	0.59 0.54 0.49 0.52 0.57 0.61 0.66	0.26 0.43 0.62 0.48 0.32 0.21 0.09
	Institutional	95 96 98 100 101 102	6	0.69	0.66 0.67 0.64 0.59 0.66 0.70	0.42 0.37 0.47 0.62 0.41 0.29
	Merchandise	104 105 107 108 111 117 122 128	8	0.64	0.64 0.65 0.57 0.52 0.60 0.58 0.62 0.65	0.18 0.18 0.45 0.59 0.37 0.47 0.28 0.15
	Promotion	132 143 144 148 152 153 155 156	8	0.68	0.65 0.71 0.64 0.66 0.66 0.65 0.62 0.64	0.40 0.14 0.45 0.39 0.36 0.41 0.53 0.44
	Sales personnel	165 167 168 169 170	5	0.79	0.80 0.80 0.70 0.73 0.71	0.41 0.40 0.72 0.65 0.70
	Service	173 174 180 188 189 190 204 208	8	0.59	0.55 0.51 0.59 0.51 0.56 0.52 0.56 0.61	0.32 0.46 0.18 0.41 0.26 0.41 0.27 0.12

CFA using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares as the method of estimation was performed for each dimension of the test data set. The indices of model fit for each of the dimensions are summarised in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Model fit indices of CFA on individual dimensions – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Model fit indices	Atmosphere	Convenience	Facilities	Institutional	Merchandise	Promotion	Sales personnel	Service
Absolute Fit Measure								
Degrees of Freedom	9	14	14	9	20	20	5	20
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square	40.02	23.87	53.20	23.35	99.72	41.04	24.12	96.17
	p<0.01	p<0.05	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.096	0.0	0.12	0.054	0.16	0.034	0.12	0.16
Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.10	0.078	0.12	0.093	0.16	0.093	0.084	0.15
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.97	0.92	0.96	0.99	0.90
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0.92	0.95	0.90	0.93	0.85	0.93	0.97	0.81
Incremental Fit Measures								
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.93	1.00	0.86	0.97	0.68	0.99	0.94	0.65
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.96	1.00	0.91	0.98	0.77	0.99	0.97	0.75

The Absolute Fit Measures give an indication of how well the observed covariance matrix reproduces the covariance matrix implied by the model. A non-significant Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square statistic (χ^2 -statistic) implies that there is no significant discrepancy between the covariance matrix implied by the model and the observed covariance matrix. This statistic is based on the assumption that the implied model fits the observed model perfectly (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kelloway, 1998). The Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square statistics were significant for all the dimensions, implying inadequate model fit. However, the Chi-Square statistic is sensitive to multivariate normality and sample size (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000).

RMSEA attempts to correct for model complexity and sample size. This absolute fit measure is an indication of the discrepancy between the observed and implied covariance matrix and includes degree of freedom to allow for model complexity. RMSEA is based on the analysis of residuals and focuses on the error due to approximation. Values below 0.08 indicate acceptable fit, whereas values below 0.05 and 0.01 are indicative of good and outstanding fit respectively (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Hair et al., 2006; Kelloway, 1998). RMSEA for Convenience (0.0) and Promotion (0.034) demonstrated good fit, whilst Institutional (0.054) met the set criterion for acceptable fit. The RMSEA values for Atmosphere (0.096), Facilities (0.12), Merchandise (0.16), Sales personnel (0.12), and Service (0.16) fell outside of the set criteria for acceptable fit.

The Standardised RMR measure is an average of the standardised residuals, i.e. the fitted residuals divided by their estimate standard errors, between the individual observed and implied covariance and variance terms. Fitted residuals represent the difference between the observed covariance (variance) and the implied covariance (variance). Lower values indicate better fit, with values below 0.05 indicating good fit (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kelloway, 1998). The Standardised RMR value for all dimensions exceeded 0.05, indicating poor fit.

The GFI statistic assesses how closely the covariance of the implied model reproduces the observed covariance matrix. It is based on the relevant amount of variances and covariances accounted for by the model. The AGFI measure attempts to account for the different degrees of model complexity by considering the degrees of freedom in the model. Values range from 0 to 1, with values higher than 0.9 for both indices reflecting good fit (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000). The GFI value for all the dimensions exceeded the cut-off value of 0.9, suggesting good model fit. The AGFI criterion of > 0.9 for all the dimensions was met except for Merchandise (0.85) and Service (0.81).

Incremental Fit Indices assess how well the specified model fits compared to an alternative baseline model. The most commonly used baseline model, referred to as the null model, assumes that all observed variables are uncorrelated (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Hair et al., 2006). The NNFI index indicates the percentage improvement in fit of the model compared to the null model and takes the degrees of freedom in the model into account. Therefore, a value of 0.9 indicates that the model has a 90% better fit than the null model. Since this measure is non-normed, it can take on values less than 0 and higher than 1. Typically, higher values indicate better fit; with values exceeding 0.9 indicating good fit (Hair et al., 2006; Kelloway, 1998). All the dimensions met the cut-off value of 0.9 on the NNFI index, except for Facilities (0.86), Merchandise (0.68) and Service (0.65).

The CFI index is based on the non-central χ^2 distribution and is associated with relative, but not complete, insensitivity to model complexity. CFI values range from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate better fit, whilst values > 0.9 is indicative of good fit (Hair et al., 2006; Kelloway, 1998). The CFI values for all dimensions exceeded 0.9 and demonstrate good fit. The set criterion of > 0.9 for the CFI measure was met by all dimensions except for Merchandise (0.77) and Service (0.75).

Results from the Absolute Fit Measures indicated that the model does not adequately reproduce the observed data. None of the dimensions met the set criteria for the Normal Theory Weighted Least Chi-Square statistic or the Standardised RMR. Only the Convenience, Promotion and Institutional dimensions indicated acceptable fit based on the RMSEA measure. All dimensions did meet the set criteria for the GFI and AGFI measure,

except for Merchandise and Service, which did not meet the set parameter for the AGFI index. All the dimensions met the set criteria for the Incremental Fit Measures, except for Facilities, Merchandise and Service. By implication, the specified models for all dimensions apart from Facilities, Merchandise and Service provided a better fit than the null model. Overall, however, the CFA results did not support adequate model fit.

Subsequently, the path estimates and standardised residuals of individual items were considered to identify those items contributing to the poor model fit. These items had to be considered for deletion to further purify the store image scale. The cut-off value for completely standardised loadings of the path estimates linking the dimensions to the items was set at > 0.5 . The variance extracted (VE) and construct reliability (CR) was also calculated, as presented in Table 4.9. VE provides an estimate of the variation explained amongst items and the cut-off value was set at > 0.5 . A VE of less than 0.5 indicates that a greater amount of variance in the items is explained by measurement error than by the underlying dimension. Thus, VE provides further evidence that some measurement items should be considered for deletion. CR was used to further assess the reliability and internal consistency associated with the measurement items of each dimension and the criterion was set at > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006).

Standardised residuals are the raw residuals divided by the standard error of each residual. They refer to the individual differences between the implied and observed covariance terms and can be either positive or negative, based on the implied covariance being under or over the corresponding observed covariance. Standardised residuals identify item pairs for which the implied covariance does not accurately represent the observed covariance between the item pair (Hair et al., 2006). The parameter for item deletion based on the standardised residuals was set at higher than $|4|$. Items with standardised residuals between $|2.5|$ and $|4|$ were considered for deletion only if there were additional support for their deletion.

Table 4.9 VE and CR of individual dimensions – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Dimension	Variance extracted (VE)	Construct reliability (CR)
Atmosphere	0.39	0.79
Convenience	0.28	0.71
Facilities	0.34	0.75
Institutional	0.36	0.76
Merchandise	0.33	0.79
Promotion	0.33	0.78
Sales personnel	0.52	0.83
Service	0.26	0.70

Atmosphere: The measurement model for the Atmosphere dimension is presented in Figure 4.3. The completely standardised loading for item 11 (0.46) did not meet the > 0.5 cut-off value and should be considered for deletion. The VE for the Atmosphere dimension was recorded at 0.39 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . CR was calculated as 0.79, which did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 . The standardised residual between items 5 and 6 (3.44) exceeded the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$. However, no further support for the deletion of these items was recorded and since these items did not exceed the cut-off value of $> |4|$, they should be retained.

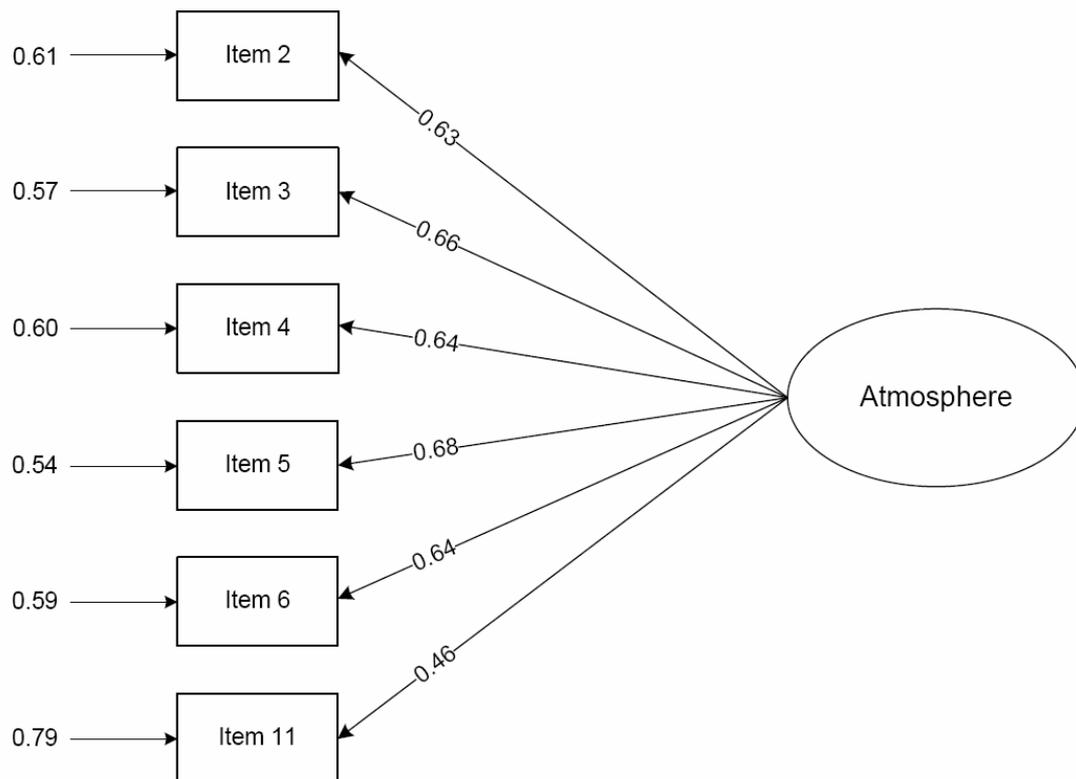


Figure 4.3 Measurement model for the Atmosphere dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Convenience: The completely standardised loading for item 46 (0.14) did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 and should be considered for deletion, as presented in Figure 4.4. The deletion of this item was also supported by its item-total correlation not meeting the set criterion of > 0.3 . The VE for Convenience is 0.28 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . The CR did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 and was recorded at 0.71. None of the standardised residuals exceed the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$.

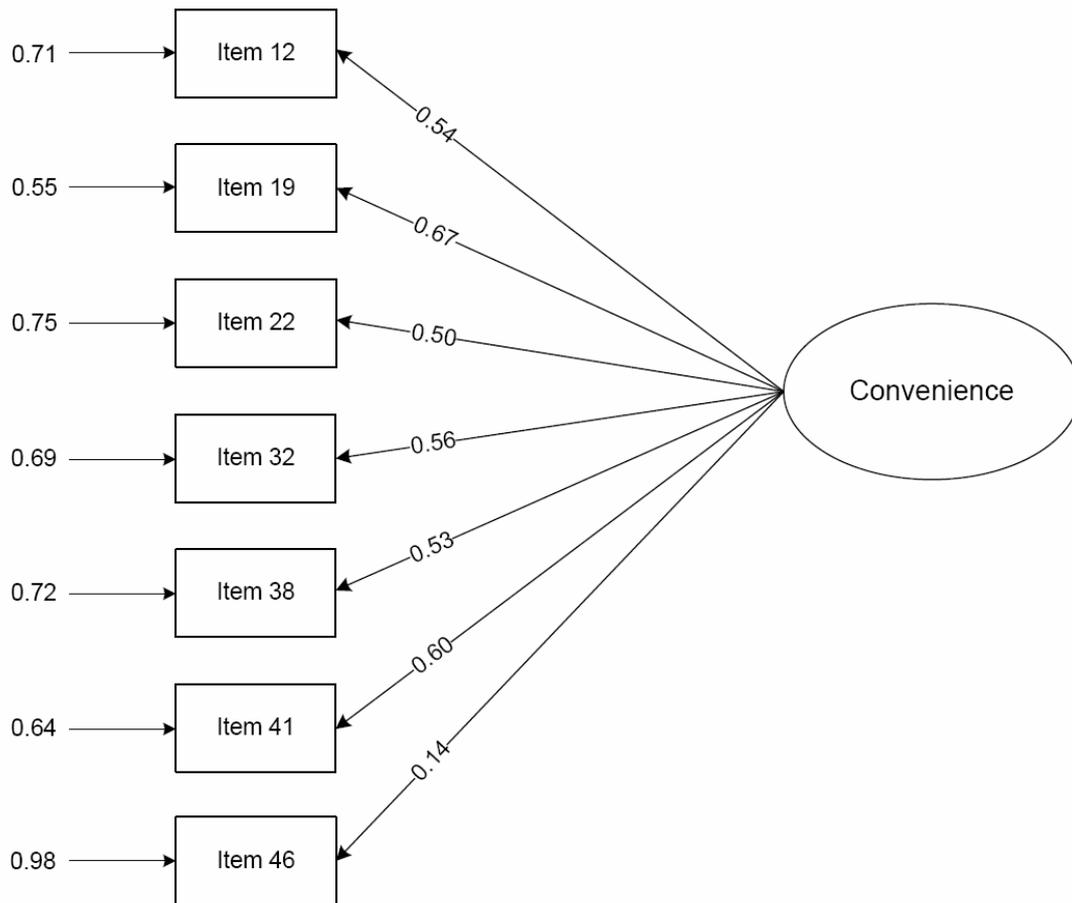


Figure 4.4 Measurement model for the Convenience dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Facilities: As presented in Figure 4.5, the completely standardised loadings of items 53 (0.42), 75 (0.47), 76 (0.36), and 80 (0.22) did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . These items should be considered for deletion. The item-total correlations for items 53, 76, and 80 did not meet the set criterion of > 0.3 and provide further support for their deletion. The VE for the Facilities dimension was recorded at 0.34 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . CR was calculated as 0.75 and exceeded the cut-off value of > 0.7 .

The standardised residual between items 75 and 76 was 3.25. This exceeded the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$. Although this standardised residual did not exceed the higher cut-off value of $> |4|$, the deletion of this item was supported by additional evidence from the completely standardised loadings and inter-item correlations.

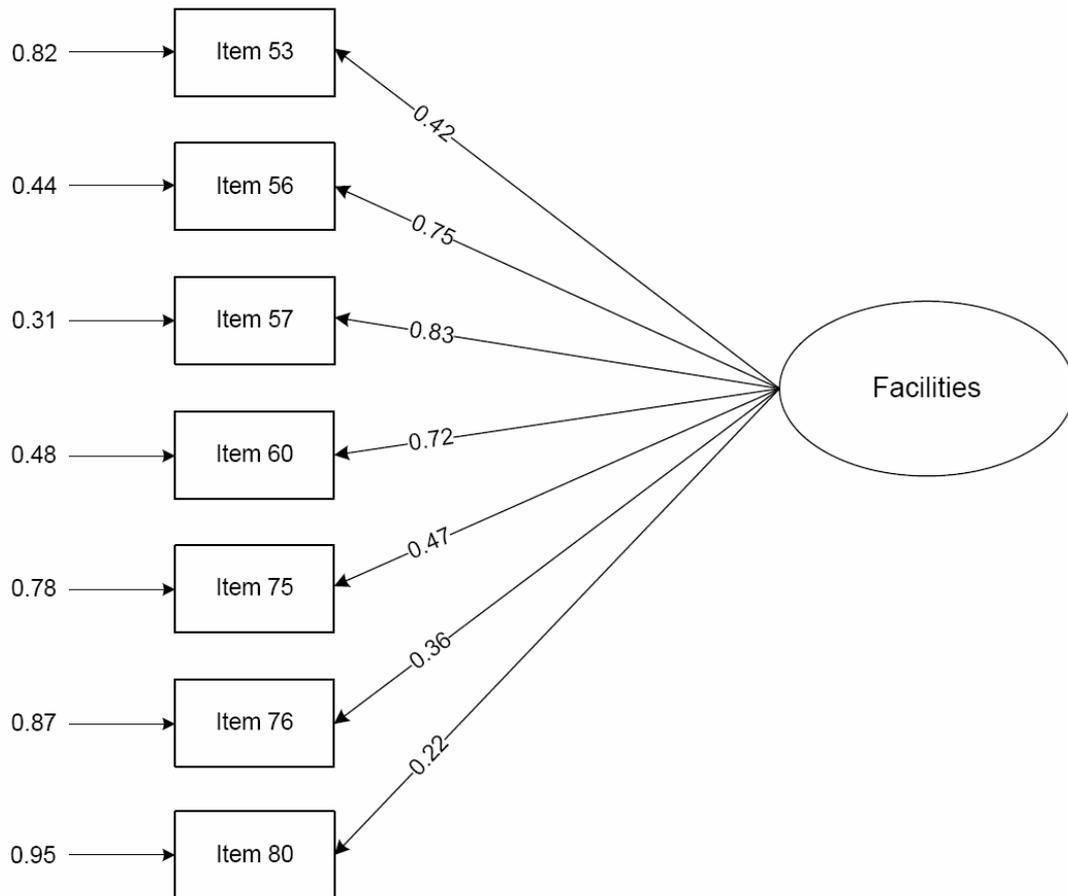


Figure 4.5 Measurement model for the Facilities dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Institutional: Completely standardised loadings for items 96 (0.46) and 102 (0.43) of the Institutional dimension did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 , as presented in Figure 4.6. Additional support for the deletion of item 102 is provided by the item-total correlation not meeting the set criterion of > 0.3 . The VE for this dimension was 0.36 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . The CR did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 and was recorded as 0.76.

The standardised residual between items 95 and 96 (2.58) exceeded the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$. This provided further support for the deletion of item 96, given the additional evidence from the completely standardised loading.

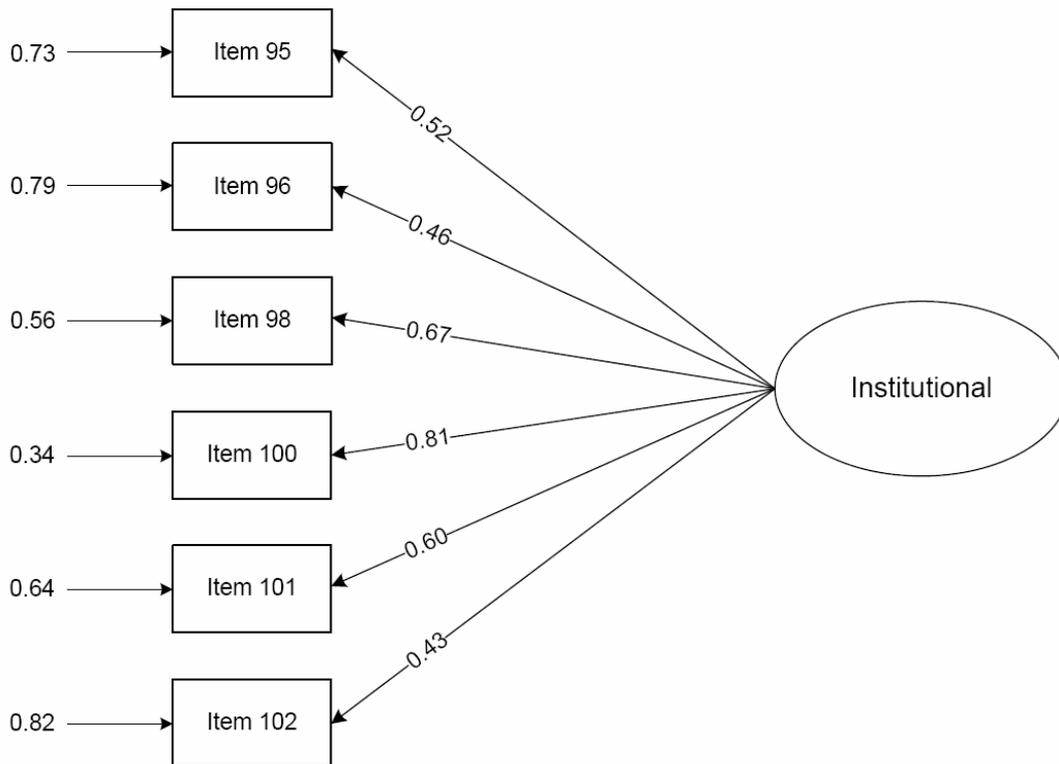


Figure 4.6 Measurement model for the Institutional dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Merchandise: The completely standardised loadings of items 104 (0.26), 105 (0.28), 122 (0.35) and 128 (0.23) did not exceed the set parameter of > 0.5 . This is presented in Figure 4.7. The deletion of these items was further supported by their item-total correlations not meeting the set criterion of > 0.3 . The VE for Merchandise was 0.33 and did not meet the cut-off value of > 0.5 . The CR was recorded at 0.79 and did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 .

The standardised residuals between items 108 and 111 (3.53) and items 117 and 128 (2.61) exceed the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$. The deletion of items 108 and 111 was not supported by any other results, and therefore these items should be retained. However, item 128 was not only associated with a high standardised residual, but its completely standardised loading and item-total correlation further supported its deletion. The standardised residual between items 107 and 108 (4.92) exceeded the adopted criterion of $> |4|$, suggesting that either of these items should be deleted. Since item 108 also shared a standardised residual of $> |2.5|$ with item 111, this item should be considered for deletion.

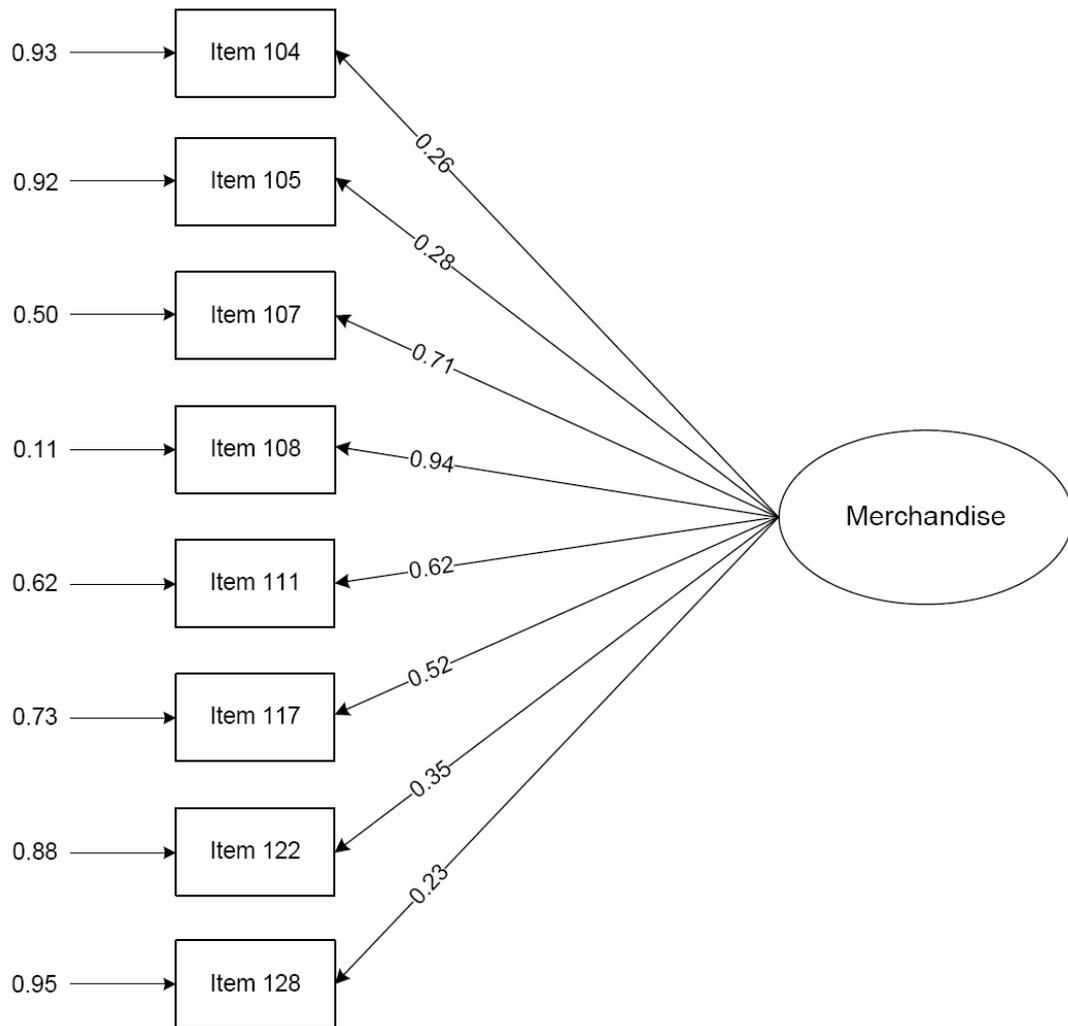


Figure 4.7 Measurement model for the Merchandise dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Promotion: The measurement model for the Promotion dimension is presented in Figure 4.8. The completely standardised loadings of items 143 (0.20) and 144 (0.49) were less than the cut-off value of > 0.5 and should therefore be considered for deletion. Item 143 also had an item-total correlation that did not exceed the cut-off value of > 0.3 , thereby providing further support for its deletion. The VE for Promotion was recorded at 0.33 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . CR did exceed the cut-off value of > 0.7 and was calculated as 0.78. None of the standardised residuals exceeded the cut-off value of $> |2.5|$.

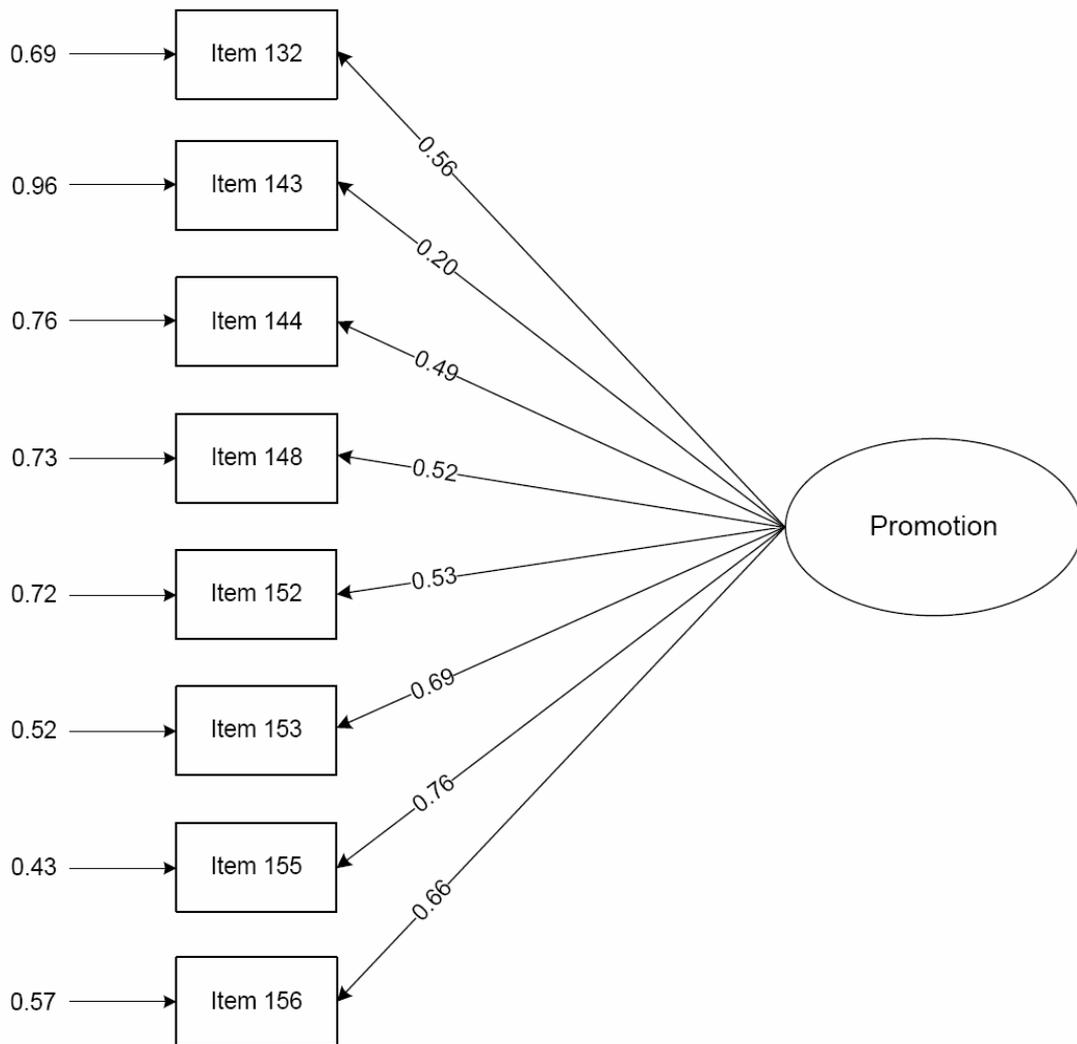


Figure 4.8 Measurement model for the Promotion dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Sales personnel: The completely standardised loadings of items 165 (0.46) and 167 (0.44) did not meet the > 0.5 cut-off value, as presented in Figure 4.9. These items should be considered for deletion. VE exceeded the set parameter of > 0.5 and was calculated as 0.52. CR also exceeded the set parameter of > 0.7 and was recorded as 0.83. None of the standardised residuals exceeded the criterion of $> |2.5|$.

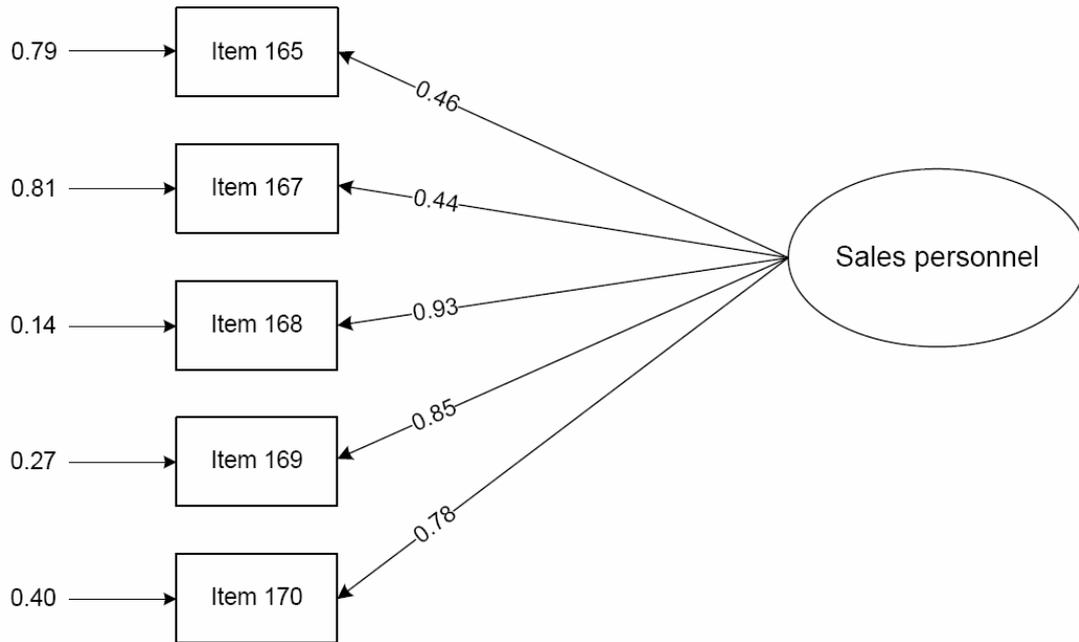


Figure 4.9 Measurement model for the Sales personnel dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

Service: As seen in Figure 4.10, the completely standardised loadings of items 180 (0.47), 189 (0.30), 204 (0.26), and 208 (0.12) did not meet the set parameter of > 0.5 . The deletion of these items was further supported by their item-total correlations not meeting the set criterion of > 0.3 . VE for the Service dimension was calculated as 0.26 and did not meet the cut-off value of > 0.5 . CR did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 , though, and was recorded as 0.70.

Conclusions – Pilot study 2 (Test data set): The results from the item-total correlations, path estimates and standardised residuals provided support for the deletion of 20 items from Atmosphere (item 11), Convenience (item 46), Facilities (items 53, 75, 76, and 80), Institutional (items 96 and 102), Merchandise (items 104, 105, 122, and 128), Promotion (items 143 and 144), Sales personnel (items 165 and 167), and Service (180, 189, 204, and 208). In addition, the VE for all dimensions did not meet the set criterion of higher than 0.5. By implication, a higher amount of variance in the items was captured by measurement error compared to the underlying dimension. This result further supported the deletion of these items. However, all dimensions did meet the cut-off value for CR, namely > 0.7 . This indicated that the items provided a reliable measurement of each dimension. The deletion of the suggested items was expected to improve the model fit of the individual dimensions and further purify the store image scale.

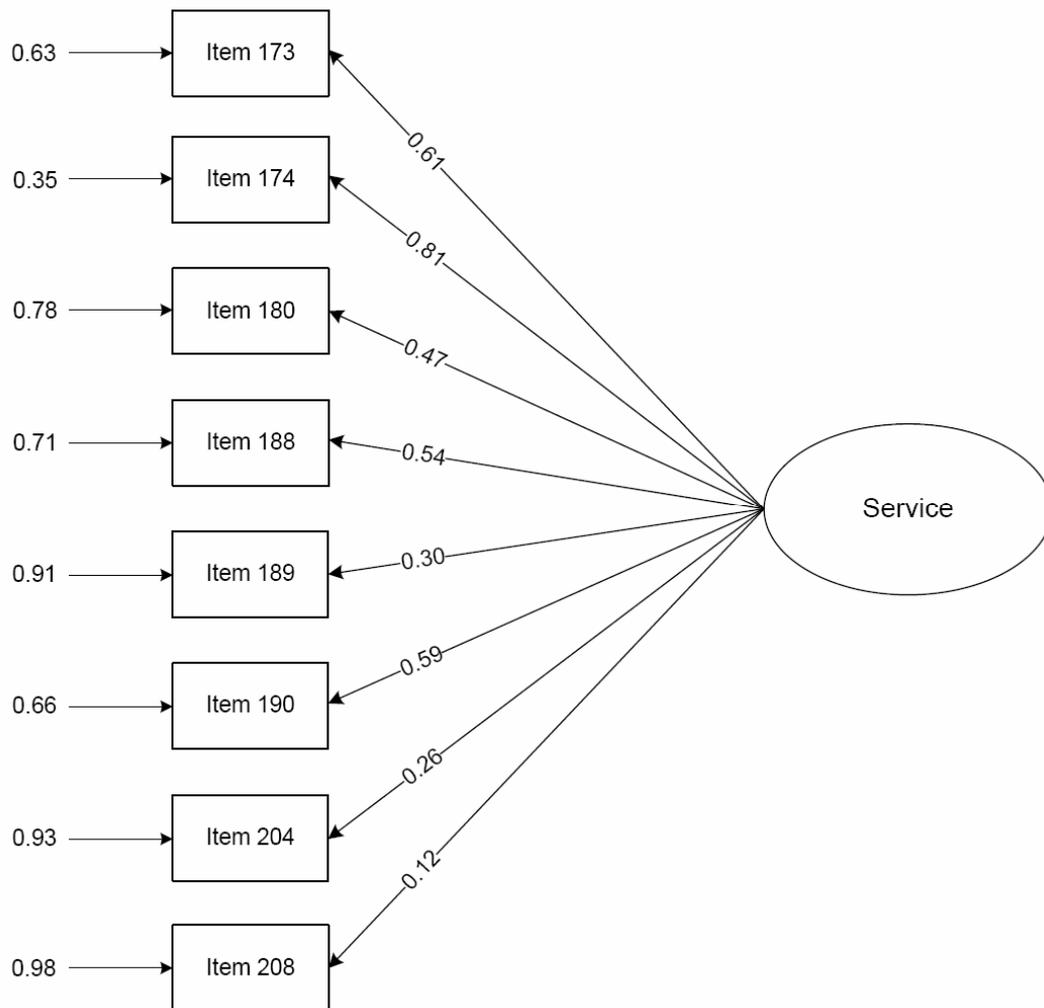


Figure 4.10 Measurement model for the Service dimension – Pilot study 2 (test data set)

However, the CFA results raised concerns that needed to be addressed before the next phase in the study. Firstly, the deletion of the items would result in the Facilities, Merchandise, and Sales personnel dimensions being under-identified, i.e. fewer than four measurement items would be associated with these dimensions to allow for model identification. Secondly, the small sample size ($n=66$) cast doubt on the CFA results, since the literature recommends sample sizes of 100 and more (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, the decision was made to retain the 55-item scale for the next phase in the scale development process. This was deemed appropriate since the 55-item scale showed a high correlation with the longer, 214-item scale. The 55-item scale was also considered as acceptable in length for practical implementation. The scale numbering was changed to reflect the 55-item scale.

It can be concluded that this phase in the study met the set objectives, namely to purify the scale to illustrate acceptable reliability (objective 8), and to refine the scale for practical

implementation in the apparel retail environment (objective 9). The 55-item store image scale derived from the two pilot studies conducted in the third phase of the study was employed in the fourth phase, the assessment of the store image scale.

4.3 ASSESSING THE STORE IMAGE SCALE – RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The data from this phase in the study were analysed to assess whether the store image scale illustrated acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity (objective 10). In addition, the model fit of the developed scale on the proposed *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.2) was assessed (objective 11). This section discusses the sample profile of the respondents and reports the results of Phase 4 (see Figure 3.1).

4.3.1 Sample profile

The demographic section (Section C) of the scale was submitted to statistical analysis to obtain a descriptive profile of the sample participating in the mall intercept study. Variance in the number of respondents recorded for each variable was attributed to missing cases. The study employed a stratified quota sampling technique to obtain a sample (n=534) that included males and females, as well as the three selected population groups.

A total of 552 non-responses were recorded by fieldworkers, as summarised in Table 4.10. This resulted in a 49% response rate. The mall intercept survey method is typically associated with high response rates of up to 80%, although response rates as low as 40% have been recorded (Grace & O’Cass, 2005).

Table 4.10 Non-response by gender and population group

	Black	Coloured	White	TOTAL
Male	99	64	84	247
Female	100	83	112	305
TOTAL	199	147	196	552

Table 4.11 provides a summary of the demographic variables of the sample population. A near equal number of respondents were male (n=265 or 50%) and female (n=266 or 50%). The distribution of respondents by population group was also similar, namely black (n=174 or 33%), coloured (n=181 or 34%) and white (n=170 or 32%).

Table 4.11 Demographic profile of respondents – Mall intercept study

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender (n=531)	Male	265	49.91
	Female	266	50.09
Age (n=533)	<20	52	9.76
	20-29	249	46.72
	30-39	121	22.70
	40-49	56	10.51
	50-59	39	7.32
	>60	16	3.00
Population group (n=528)	Black	174	32.95
	Coloured	181	34.28
	White	170	32.20
Home language (n=514)	Afrikaans	236	45.91
	English	112	21.79
	Other	166	32.3
Marital status (n=523)	Cohabitation/living together	18	3.44
	Married	171	32.60
	Not married	302	57.74
	Divorced/separated	20	3.82
	Widow/widower	12	2.29
Job description (n=534)	Unemployed	59	11.05
	Clerical, salesperson, technician, secretarial	127	23.78
	Middle management (teacher, nursing sister)	57	10.67
	Corporate (manager)	20	3.75
	Professional (doctor, director)	25	4.68
	Homemaker	28	5.24
	Retired	15	2.81
	Other	203	38.01
Monthly income (n=526)	<R500	42	7.98
	R501-R1 000	44	8.37
	R1 001-R 3000	106	20.15
	R3 001-R5 000	76	14.45
	R5 001-R7 000	75	14.26
	R7 001-R10 0000	54	10.27
	R10 0001-R20 000	77	14.64
	R20 001- R30 000	24	4.56
	>R30 000	28	5.43

Variables	Categories	n	%
How often you buy clothes (n=533)	When needed	178	33.40
	Once a year	13	2.44
	Twice a year	28	5.25
	Three times a year	34	6.38
	Monthly	199	37.34
	Weekly	57	10.69
	Other	24	4.50
Average monthly spending on clothes (n=529)	<R99	33	6.24
	R100-R199	52	9.83
	R200-R299	93	17.58
	R300-R399	77	14.56
	R400-R499	61	11.53
	R500-R599	68	12.85
	>R600	145	27.41

More than two thirds of respondents were in the age groups 20-29 (47%) and 30-39 (23%). However, based on the discussion in Section 2.2.3.1, which cast doubt on the efficacy of age to influence store image perception, this was not deemed a relevant concern. Respondents younger than 20 (10%) and older than 60 (3%) who were recorded in the study should have been excluded on the basis of the definition of the sample population. It was decided to include these responses, since the demographic section was the last in the store image scale and the age of respondents was only recorded then. Their results could provide insight to retailers, since the teenage market is a very important and economically viable target market (Miller, 2003; Moran, 2005; Taylor & Cosenza, 2002). Similarly, the mature market has high disposable incomes and cannot be ignored in the currently aging consumer society (Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005; Moschis et al., 2004).

Afrikaans was recorded by 46% of respondents as their home language, which is lower than the percentage of Afrikaans-speaking inhabitants in the Western Cape Province (55%), but higher than the total for the South African population (13%). A higher percentage of respondents in the study indicated English to be their home language (22%) compared to figures for the Western Cape Province (19%), and the total South African population (8%) (Statistics South Africa, 2005c). These variances can be attributed to the geographical areas in which the study was conducted.

The majority of respondents were not married (58%), but a large proportion of respondents indicated that they are married (33%). Most respondents' job descriptions fell outside of the employment categories included in this study (38%). Of the responses that were classified, clerical, salesperson, technician and secretarial occupations were recorded most frequently (24%). The percentage of unemployed respondents (11%) was lower than the recorded

unemployment rate of 18% for the Western Cape Province, and the rate of 26% for the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2005c).

Approximately 16% of respondents had a total monthly household income of less than R1 000. The majority of respondents (34%) fell in the lower middle income bracket (20% = R1 001-R3000, 14% = R3 001-R5001). The higher middle income (15% = R5 001-R7000, 10% = R7 001 – R10 000) and high income groups (15% = R10 001-R20 000; 5% = R20 001-R30 000, 5% = R30 000) were equally represented at approximately 25% each. Interpretation of the income distribution should take into account that 67% of respondents were not married, widowed or divorced, and should therefore be considered as single income households. Eleven percent of respondents indicated that they were unemployed and 5% were homemakers, which further served to qualify the income distribution.

Most respondents indicated that they bought clothes on a monthly basis (37%), or when needed (33%). The smallest percentage of respondents (2%) only bought clothes once a year. The largest group of respondents (27%) recorded spending R600 or more per month on clothing, with only 16% spending less than R200 a month. These results indicated that respondents were frequent clothing shoppers spending a fair amount on clothing purchases on a monthly basis.

Section 2.2.3.1 described the influence of demographic variables in store image research. The stratified quota sampling procedure allowed for the inclusion of respondents who represented gender and population group. No definitive conclusions could be drawn from the demographic findings from previous store image research. This is consistent with arguments in the literature on the efficacy of demographic predictors (Gehrt & Yan, 2004). However, the high frequency and amount of money spent on apparel on a monthly basis served to justify the sample as appropriate for the current apparel study.

4.3.2 Statistical analysis

The data obtained from the 55-item store image scale administered through the mall intercept study was submitted to statistical analysis. Reliability was established by employing coefficient alpha, inter-item and item total correlations using Statistica (Version 7.1). To allow for further item analysis and assess model fit, CFA was performed on the data, using LISREL (version 8.8). Firstly, as with the second pilot study, CFA was performed on each of the individual dimensions to assess model fit and allow for item analysis. Secondly, CFA was performed on the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.2) to assess the overall model fit. Variance extracted (VE) and construct reliability (CR) were calculated for both CFA analyses to report on the convergent and discriminant validity of the store image scale as an indication

of construct validity. The results from the statistical analysis will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.2.1 Reliability

The coefficient alpha for the total scale was recorded at 0.83. Values for the individual dimensions ranged from 0.68 to 0.79. The Atmosphere ($\alpha=0.68$) and Convenience ($\alpha=0.69$) dimensions did not meet the set criteria for coefficient alpha of > 0.7 . All inter-item correlations were within the set parameters of 0.2-0.5. Item-total correlations for item 6 (0.22) and item 49 (0.26) did not meet the adopted cut-off value of > 0.3 . The reliability and item-total correlations are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Reliability and item-total correlations – Mall intercept study

Construct	Dimensions	Items	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha		Alpha if deleted	Item-total correlations
Store image	Atmosphere		55	0.68	0.83		
		1	6			0.62	0.43
		2				0.60	0.51
		3				0.60	0.52
		4				0.65	0.37
		5				0.64	0.41
		6			0.69	0.22	
	Convenience	7	7	0.69		0.66	0.40
		8				0.66	0.40
		9				0.65	0.42
		10				0.66	0.41
		11				0.64	0.48
		12				0.68	0.32
		13				0.67	0.38
	Facilities	14	7	0.77		0.75	0.47
		15				0.74	0.52
		16				0.73	0.55
		17				0.74	0.50
		18				0.75	0.44
		19				0.73	0.53
		20				0.76	0.42
	Institutional	21	6	0.72		0.70	0.40
		22				0.65	0.57
		23				0.69	0.46
		24				0.68	0.49
		25				0.67	0.52
		26				0.72	0.32
	Merchandise	27	8	0.77		0.76	0.34
		28				0.74	0.48
		29				0.73	0.54
		30				0.72	0.56
		31				0.72	0.56
		32				0.73	0.50
		33				0.75	0.40
		34				0.76	0.37

Construct	Dimensions	Items	No. of Items	Coefficient alpha	Alpha if deleted	Item-total correlations
	Promotion	35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42	8	0.78	0.77 0.77 0.76 0.76 0.75 0.76 0.75 0.76	0.40 0.46 0.50 0.47 0.55 0.50 0.57 0.48
	Sales personnel	43 44 45 46 47	5	0.79	0.79 0.77 0.72 0.73 0.73	0.43 0.52 0.65 0.63 0.62
	Service	48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55	8	0.73	0.72 0.73 0.72 0.67 0.68 0.70 0.69 0.69	0.33 0.26 0.30 0.56 0.51 0.45 0.47 0.50

4.3.2.2 Model fit – individual dimensions

CFA employing Diagonally Weighted Least Squares as method of estimation was performed on each of the dimensions separately. The indices of model fit for each of the dimensions are summarised in Table 4.13.

Results from the Absolute Fit Measures provided a measure of how well the observed data reproduced the implied model. The significant Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square statistics for all the dimensions were indicative of a significant discrepancy between the covariance matrix of the implied and observed model, thereby suggesting poor model fit. However, caution should be taken when interpreting the Chi-Square statistic, since it is sensitive to multivariate normality and sample size (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000).

RMSEA for Atmosphere (0.02) demonstrated good fit between the observed and implied covariance matrix, whilst Convenience (0.057), Institutional (0.073), and Promotion (0.063) met the set criteria for acceptable fit. The RMSEA values for Facilities (0.13), Merchandise (0.15), Sales personnel (0.15), and Service (0.14) fell outside the set criteria for acceptable fit.

Table 4.13 Model fit indices of CFA on individual dimensions – Mall intercept study

Model fit indices	Atmosphere	Convenience	Facilities	Institutional	Merchandise	Promotion	Sales personnel	Service
Absolute Fit Measure								
Degrees of Freedom	9	14	14	9	20	20	5	20
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square	26.95	79.96	373.85	75.56	826.27	181.93	153.13	626.00
	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.020	0.057	0.13	0.073	0.15	0.063	0.15	0.14
Standardised Root Mean Residual (RMR)	0.031	0.050	0.094	0.050	0.13	0.062	0.071	0.13
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	1.00	0.99	0.97	0.99	0.95	0.99	0.99	0.95
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit (AGFI)	0.99	0.98	0.93	0.98	0.91	0.98	0.96	0.91
Incremental Fit Measures								
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	1.00	0.98	0.92	0.98	0.89	0.99	0.95	0.89
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	1.00	0.99	0.95	0.99	0.92	0.99	0.97	0.92

The Standardised RMR, as an average of the standardised residuals between the individual observed and implied covariance and variance terms, for Atmosphere (0.031), Convenience (0.050), and Institutional (0.050) indicated good fit. The values for Facilities (0.094), Merchandise (0.13), Promotion (0.062), Sales personnel (0.071), and Service (0.13), however, fell outside the set parameter, although Promotion and Sales personnel did so only marginally. The GFI and AGFI for all dimensions exceeded 0.9 and indicated that the covariance of the implied model reproduced the observed covariance closely, thus implying good fit.

Results from the Incremental Fit Indices indicated that the NNFI for all dimension exceeded the 0.9 level, except for Merchandise (0.89) and Service (0.89), which fell outside the accepted criterion, although this was only marginal. The CFI values for all dimensions exceed 0.9 and demonstrated good fit. Thus, the implied models for all dimensions, except for Merchandise and Service, provided a better fit compared to the null model.

The examination of the various model fit indices led to the conclusion that the Atmosphere, Convenience and Institutional dimensions exhibited good fit. The Promotion dimension also demonstrated good fit, except for the Standardised RMR value that fell marginally outside of the proposed fit criterion. The absolute fit measures, apart from the GFI and AGFI measures,

for the Facilities and Sales Personnel dimensions indicated poor fit, although the incremental fit indices supported good fit. It could be argued that these models show at least acceptable fit. Lastly, except for the GFI and AGFI indices, the absolute fit measures for Merchandise and Service suggested poor fit, which was further supported by one of the incremental fit indices, namely, the NNFI index. However, all other incremental fit indices presented a good fit. Thus, the model fit on these dimensions could be considered as marginally acceptable.

4.3.2.3 Item analysis – individual dimensions

The path estimates and standardised residuals of the individual scale items were considered to identify problematic measurement items whose deletion could contribute to improved model fit for each of the dimensions. Variance extracted (VE) and construct reliability (CR) were used in conjunction with the completely standardised loadings for path estimates to provide further evidence that specific items should be considered for deletion (Table 4.14). The set criteria for completely standardised loadings, standardised residuals, VE and CR were as per the second pilot study (Section 4.2.2.2).

Table 4.14 VE and CR of individual dimensions – Mall intercept study

Dimension	Variance extracted (VE)	Construct reliability (CR)
Atmosphere	0.37	0.77
Convenience	0.32	0.77
Facilities	0.39	0.82
Institutional	0.35	0.76
Merchandise	0.40	0.84
Promotion	0.38	0.83
Sales personnel	0.52	0.84
Service	0.34	0.80

The literature cautions, however, that individual items should only be considered for deletion if their deletion can be justified theoretically (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, the results for each dimension were considered in conjunction with results from previous store image research.

Atmosphere: The completely standardised loading of item 6 (0.33) fell outside the set criterion of > 0.5 as presented in Figure 4.11. The deletion of this item was also supported by its item-total correlation (0.22) not meeting the set criterion of > 0.3 . The VE for Atmosphere was recorded at 0.37 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . CR did meet the set cut-off value of > 0.7 and was calculated as 0.77.

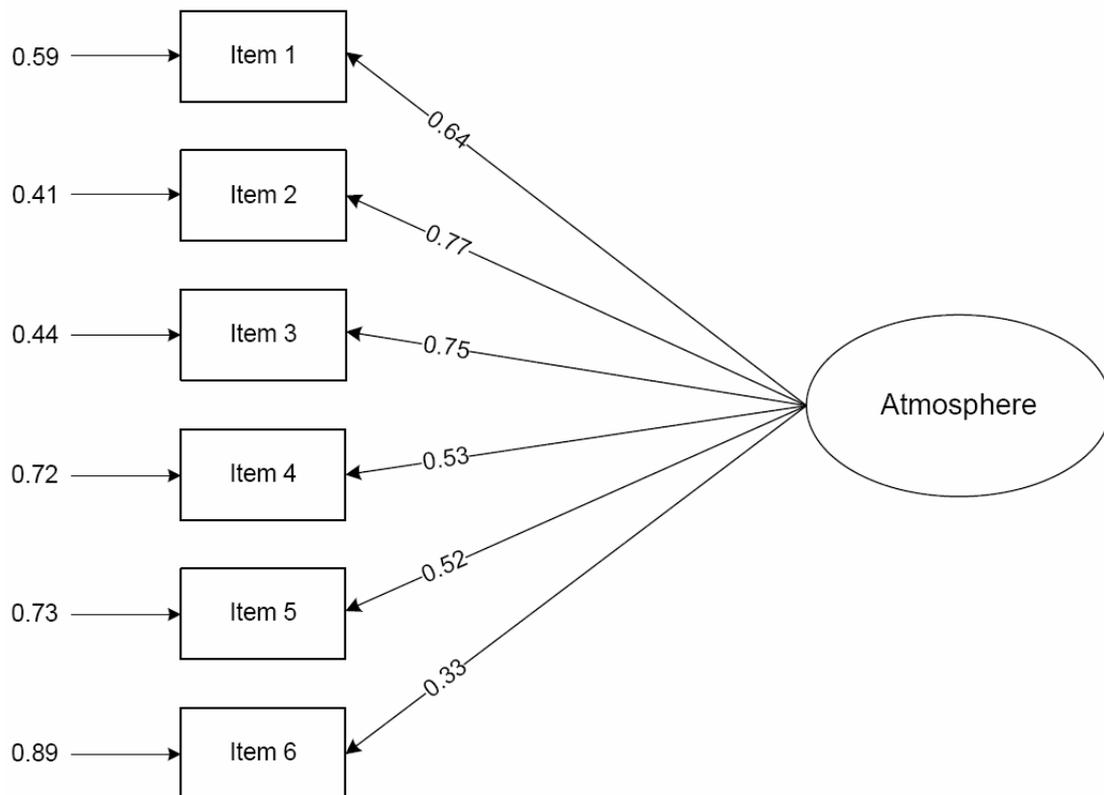


Figure 4.11 Measurement model for the Atmosphere dimension – Mall intercept study

The standardised residuals for the Atmosphere dimensions are presented in Table 4.15. All of the standardised residuals for this dimension met the set criteria. The CFA results supported the retention of items 1 to 5 of the store image scale and were consistent with previous research findings associating these items with the Atmosphere dimension. Kotler (1973-1974) conceptualised the Atmosphere dimension to highlight its relevance as a marketing tool and concluded that colour (item 4) is integral to the visual dimension of store atmosphere. Findings by Janse van Noordwyk (2002) in a qualitative study on the perceived importance of store image to the female large-size apparel consumer confirms the inclusion of store interior and décor (items 1, 2 and 3), colour (item 4), and finishing materials (item 5) in the Atmosphere dimension. Moye and Kincade (2002) studied the influence of usage situations and consumer shopping orientations on the importance of the apparel retail store environment. They corroborated the association of store interior and décor (items 1, 2 and 3) with the Atmosphere dimension through exploratory factor analysis. Results from Thang and Tan (2003) in a study linking consumer perception to preference for department stores provided further support for the retention of store interior and décor (items 1, 2 and 3) in this dimension as conceptualised in their study.

Table 4.15 Standardised residuals for the Atmosphere dimension – Mall intercept study

Item	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
Item 1	-					
Item 2	0.37	-				
Item 3	-1.01	1.27	-			
Item 4	1.01	-1.48	0.10	-		
Item 5	-0.67	-0.69	0.10	1.11	-	
Item 6	0.70	0.36	-0.93	-0.90	0.76	-

Item 6 related to shopping experience and the empirical results from this study indicated that this item should be considered for deletion. This is inconsistent with findings from previous research (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kim & Jin, 2001). However, Terblanché and Boshoff (2004) developed a generic instrument to measure consumer satisfaction with the controllable elements of the in-store shopping experience. Their results indicated that shopping experience is not a function of the *internal store environment* only, but also of *merchandise value, personal interaction, merchandise variety* and *complaint handling*. Results from Kleinhans (2003) showed that shopping experience was associated with sales people service. Previous research results suggested that shopping experience is associated with store atmosphere, but not exclusively so. Thus, the results from these studies did not provide sound theoretical support for the inclusion of this item within the Atmosphere dimension, but suggested that it might be associated with more than one store image dimension. It, therefore, had to be considered for deletion from the Atmosphere dimension.

Convenience: Figure 4.12 presents the measurement model for the Convenience dimension. All of the completely standardised loadings of the scale items for this dimension exceeded the accepted cut-off value of > 0.5. VE was recorded at 0.32 and did not meet the cut-off value of > 0.5. CR at 0.77 did meet the set criterion of > 0.7.

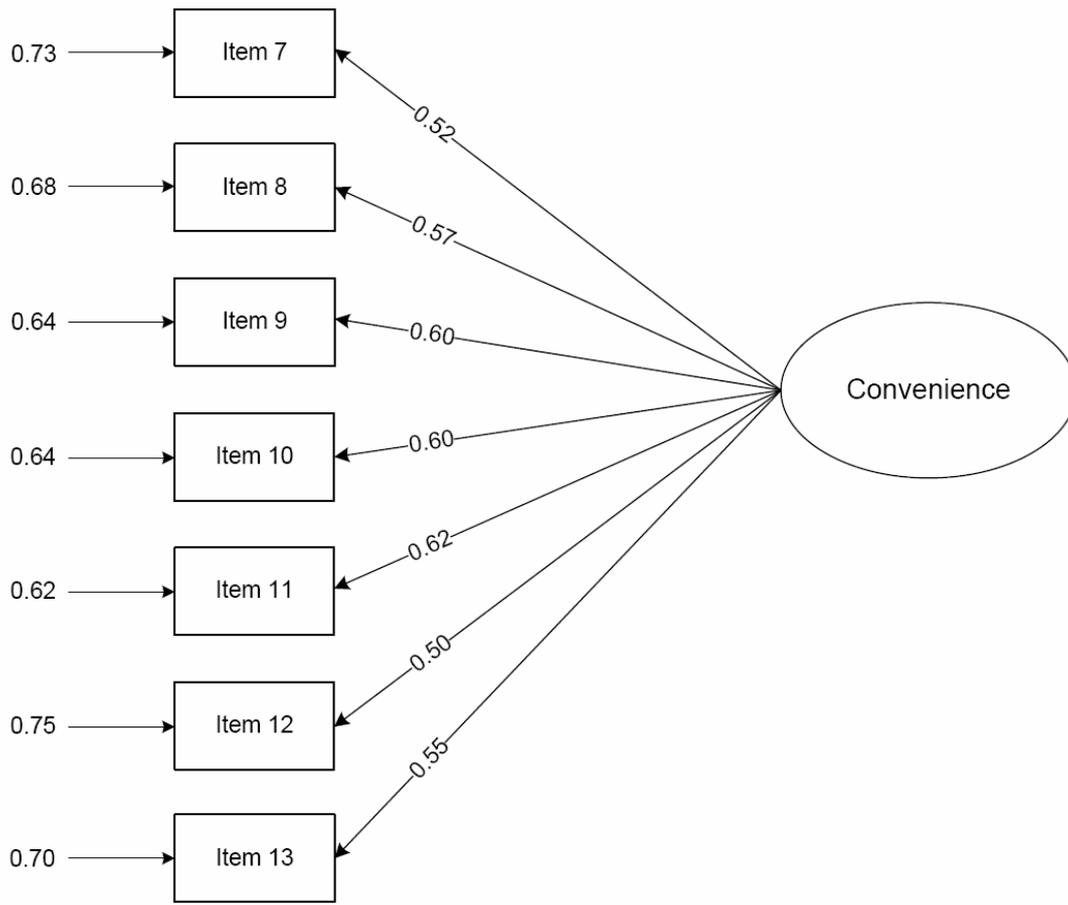


Figure 4.12 Measurement model for the Convenience dimension – Mall intercept study

Standardised residuals for the Convenience dimension are shown in Table 4.16. The standardised residuals between items 9 and 10 (2.93) and items 8 and 12 (2.89) fell outside of the $|2.5|$ criterion. However, they did not exceed the $|4|$ criterion and had to be retained, since there was no evidence from the completely standardised loadings to suggest their deletion.

Table 4.16 Standardised residuals for the Convenience dimension – Mall intercept study

Item	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13
Item 7	-						
Item 8	-0.08	-					
Item 9	-0.97	-1.06	-				
Item 10	0.51	-0.47	2.93	-			
Item 11	2.06	-0.77	0.63	-0.09	-		
Item 12	0.08	2.89	-1.14	-1.85	-2.02	-	
Item 13	-0.81	-0.20	-0.87	-0.33	0.02	2.37	-

The retention of all items from the store image scale is supported by previous store image research. In a study that operationalised the concept of apparel store image, Marks (1976) confirmed that the store location (item 8), as well as store hours (item 13) were associated with Convenience. Bellenger et al.'s study (1977) on shopping centre patronage motives also provides evidence for the inclusion of items associated with location (items 8 and 9) and store hours (item 13) within Convenience.

Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) have provided support for location (items 7 and 8). Kleinhans (2003) and Sullivan et al. (2002) corroborated that location (item 8) is associated with Convenience through their studies employing exploratory factor analysis. Thang and Tan (2003) also included location (item 7) within the Convenience dimension in their study linking consumer perception to preference of department stores. A qualitative study of female large-size apparel consumers' perception of the importance of store image attributes supported the inclusion of items measuring location (item 9) and shopping ease (item 10) within the Convenience dimension (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002). Other studies including the elderly consumer provide further support for items associated with location (item 8) and shopping ease (items 10, 11 and 12) (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Lumpkin et al., 1985). Kim and Jin (2001) confirm that shopping ease (item 10) is associated with Convenience, whereas Wong and Teas (2001) provided support for the retention of items 12 and 13, which are associated with shopping ease and store hours respectively.

Facilities: All of the scale items had completely standardised loadings > 0.5 , suggesting that all items could be retained, as presented in Figure 4.13. However, VE was calculated at 0.39 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . By implication, more variance between items was explained by measurement error than by the dimension. CR met the cut-off value of > 0.7 and was recorded as 0.82.

High standardised residuals between items are presented in Table 4.17. The standardised residual between items 18 and 19 (9.40) and items 15 and 16 (7.05) exceeded the $|4|$ criterion. Item 15 also shared high standardised residuals, although not exceeding $|4|$, with items 18 (-3.91) and 19 (-3.50), as did item 19 with items 15 (-3.50) and 16 (-2.59). This suggested that items 15 and 19 should be considered for deletion on the basis of their high residual values. The standardised residual between items 17 and 20 (2.61) exceeded the $|2.5|$ criterion, but there was no other evidence to suggest the deletion of these items and they, therefore, had to be retained.

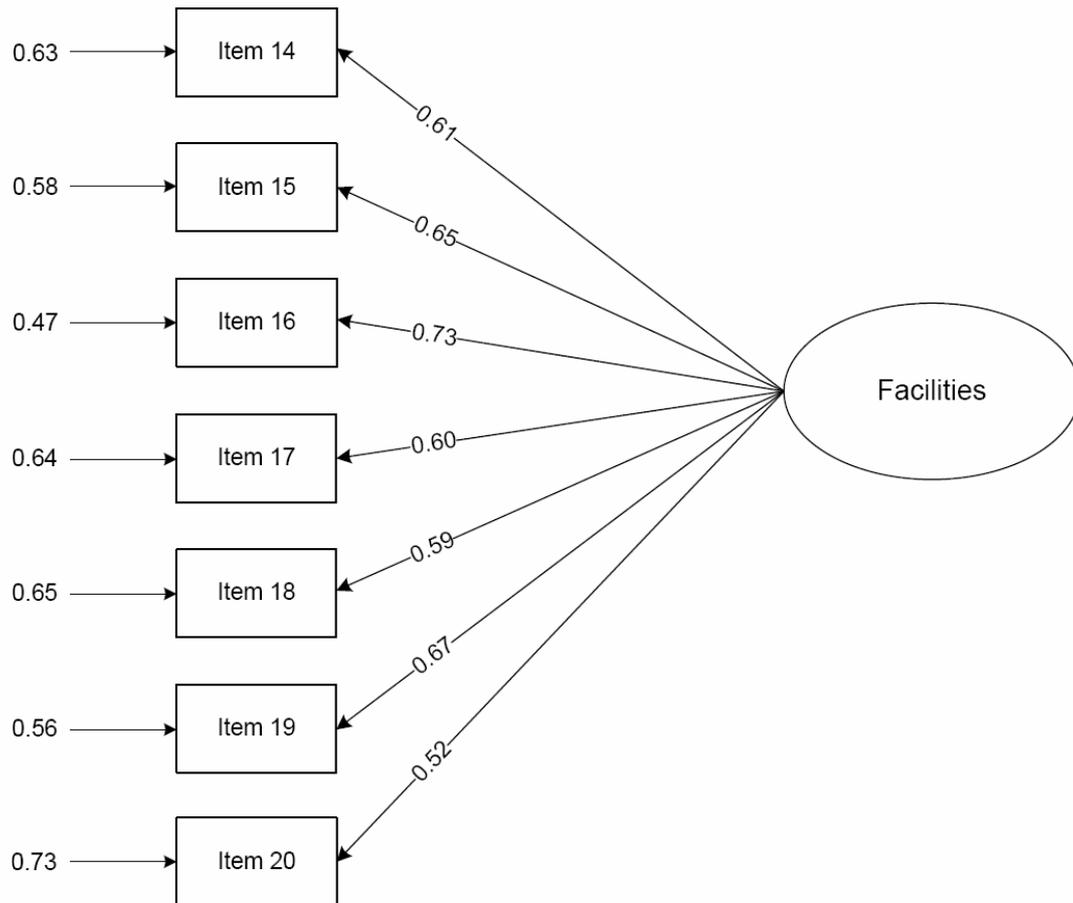


Figure 4.13 Measurement model for the Facilities dimension – Mall intercept study

These results supported findings from earlier store image research. Janse van Noordwyk (2002) included store appearance (item 14) and fixtures (item 17) within the Facilities dimension. Wong and Teas (2003), as well as Kleinhans (2003), corroborated the association of store appearance with the Facilities dimension. Results from Kim and Jin (2001) and Sullivan et al. (2002) have also supported the inclusion of convenience of facilities (item 20) in the Facilities dimension.

Table 4.17 Standardised residuals for the Facilities dimension – Mall intercept study

Items	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
Item 14	-						
Item 15	-0.25	-					
Item 16	-0.32	7.05	-				
Item 17	-0.66	0.88	0.21	-			
Item 18	-0.08	-3.91	-2.48	-1.03	-		
Item 19	-0.22	-3.50	-2.59	-1.86	9.40	-	
Item 20	1.76	-0.38	-1.98	2.61	-1.86	-0.08	-

The deletion of items 15 and 19, as suggested by the CFA results, should be considered in conjunction with the retention of items 16 and 18. Items 15 and 16 respectively relate to the position and width of the aisles in the store. Previous store image research identified layout, proposed as a sub dimension in this study, as underpinning the Facilities dimension. Store layout was first proposed as a sub dimension of store image by Lindquist (1974-1975) in his seminal study. This was confirmed by studies on the perception of store image in grocery and department stores (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978), the female large-size apparel consumer (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002) and Chinese consumers' perceptions of store image in first-tier and second-tier cities (Wong & Yu, 2003). To operationalise layout, items were included to measure both the position and width of the aisles based on previous store image research (Kim & Jin, 2001; Kleinhans, 2003). Similarly, items 18 and 19 refer to the number of and lighting in the fitting rooms respectively. Fitting rooms were identified as a sub dimension of Facilities on the basis of earlier research on consumer expectations concerning service at apparel retail outlets (Lee & Johnson, 1997), the large-size female apparel consumer (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002), and consumer perception and preference of department stores (Thang & Tan, 2003). Store layout was operationalised through items 18 and 19 as per previous research (Kleinhans, 2003). Results suggested that aisle width (item 16) and number of fitting rooms (item 18) were better measures of store layout and fitting rooms. Therefore, there were no theoretical objections to the deletion of aisle position and lighting in fitting rooms.

Institutional: The completely standardised loading of item 26 (0.41) fell outside the > 0.5 adopted criterion and had to be considered for deletion (Figure 4.14). VE was calculated as 0.35 and did not meet the set criterion of > 0.5 . CR was recorded at 0.76 and met the cut-off value of > 0.7 .

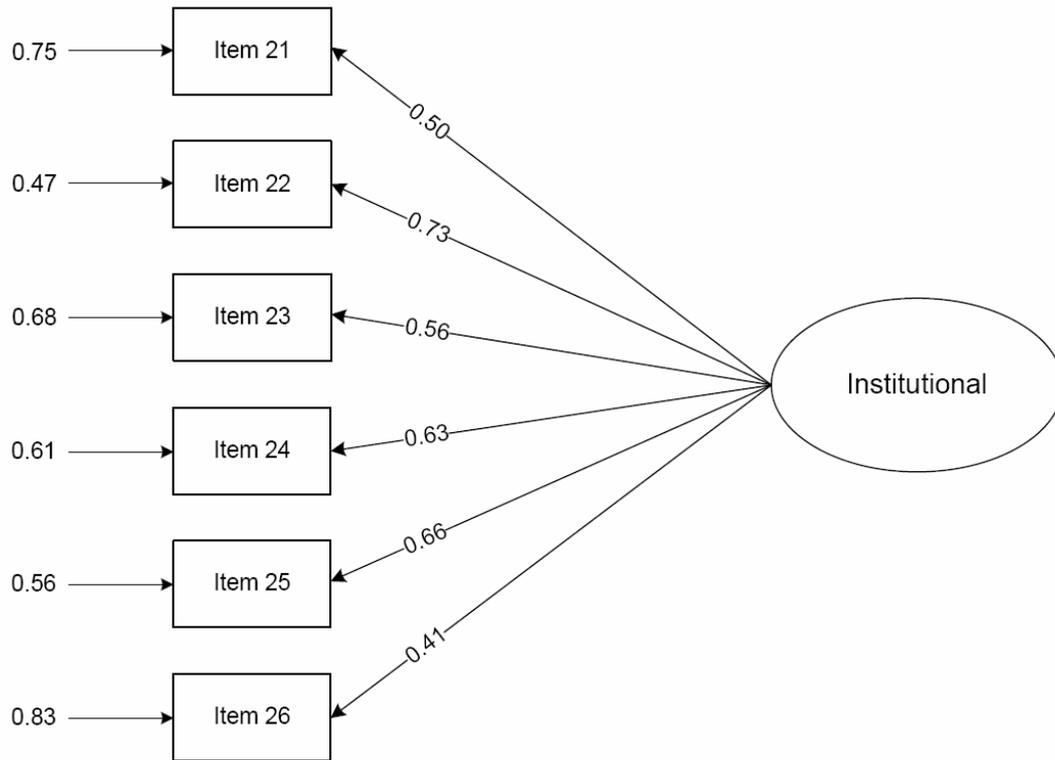


Figure 4.14 Measurement model for the Institutional dimension – Mall intercept study

As presented in Table 4.18, the standardised residual between items 24 and 25 (4.11) exceeded the cut-off value of |4|, but only marginally. No other evidence supported the deletion of either of these items, thereby suggesting that these items had to be retained. Similarly, the standardised residual between items 21 and 22 (2.90) exceeded the |2.5| criteria, but with no other evidence to suggest deletion.

Table 4.18 Standardised residuals for the Institutional dimension – Mall intercept study

Items	Item 21	Item 22	Item 23	Item 24	Item 25	Item 26
Item 21	-					
Item 22	2.90	-				
Item 23	0.49	1.18	-			
Item 24	-0.71	-2.50	-0.34	-		
Item 25	-1.67	-0.49	-2.09	4.11	-	
Item 26	-1.56	-0.39	1.28	0.11	0.50	-

Findings from the current study concerning the retention of items 21 to 25 are supported by previous store image research. Lindquist (1974-1975), in his seminal study on store image, proposed that clientele (items 21, 23 and 25) be associated with the Institutional dimension. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) corroborated this in their study on the importance of

grocery and department store attributes by providing support for item 22. Janse van Noordwyk (2002) confirmed that clientele (items 21, 23 and 24) had to be included in the operationalisation of the Institutional dimension.

Item 26, relating to the *store's efforts to build a personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)*, was derived from research conducted by Janse van Noordwyk (2002) as a measure of the importance of personal communication between the store and the consumer. CFA results support the deletion of this item. As only one isolated research finding employing a specific consumer segment, namely the female large-size apparel consumer, has postulated the inclusion of this item, the theoretical support was not substantial enough to warrant its retention. Thus, this item had to be considered for deletion.

Merchandise: The measurement model for the Merchandise dimension is presented in Figure 4.15. Based on the completely standardised loading of item 27 (0.46) being less than 0.5, this item had to be considered for deletion. The VE of 0.4 further supported the deletion of the item, since it did not meet the set criteria of > 0.5 . The CR, recorded at 0.84, did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 .

The standardised residuals, as presented in Table 4.19, between items 33 and 34 (10.34), items 29 and 30 (10.22), items 28 and 31 (4.58), and items 30 and 33 (-4.01) fell outside the set criterion of $< |4|$. Items 30 and 33 were associated with more than one of these high standardised residuals. Item 30 further shared high standardised residuals with item 32 (-3.42) and item 34 (-2.87), suggesting that it should be considered for deletion. Similarly, item 33 also shared standardised residuals higher than $|2.5|$ with items 29 (-3.87) and item 27 (2.63). This provided support for the deletion of items 30 and 33.

The literature suggests that only one item from a pair sharing a high residual should be dropped (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, although item 29 (associated with a high residual with item 30) and 34 (associated with a high residual with item 33) shared high standardised residuals with other items, these do not exceed $|4|$. Specifically for item 29 these were item 33 (-3.87), item 32 (-3.21), and item 34 (-3.46). Item 34 was associated with high standardised residuals with item 29 (-3.46), item 28 (-3.29), item 30 (-2.87), and item 31 (-2.78). There was no other support for deleting item 29 and 34 and they therefore had to be retained. Lastly, the standardised residuals between items 31 and 32 (3.54) and items 28 and 34 (-3.29) both exceeded the $|2.5|$ criterion, but no further evidence supported the deletion of these items. Since the standardised residual did not exceed $|4|$, these items had to be retained.

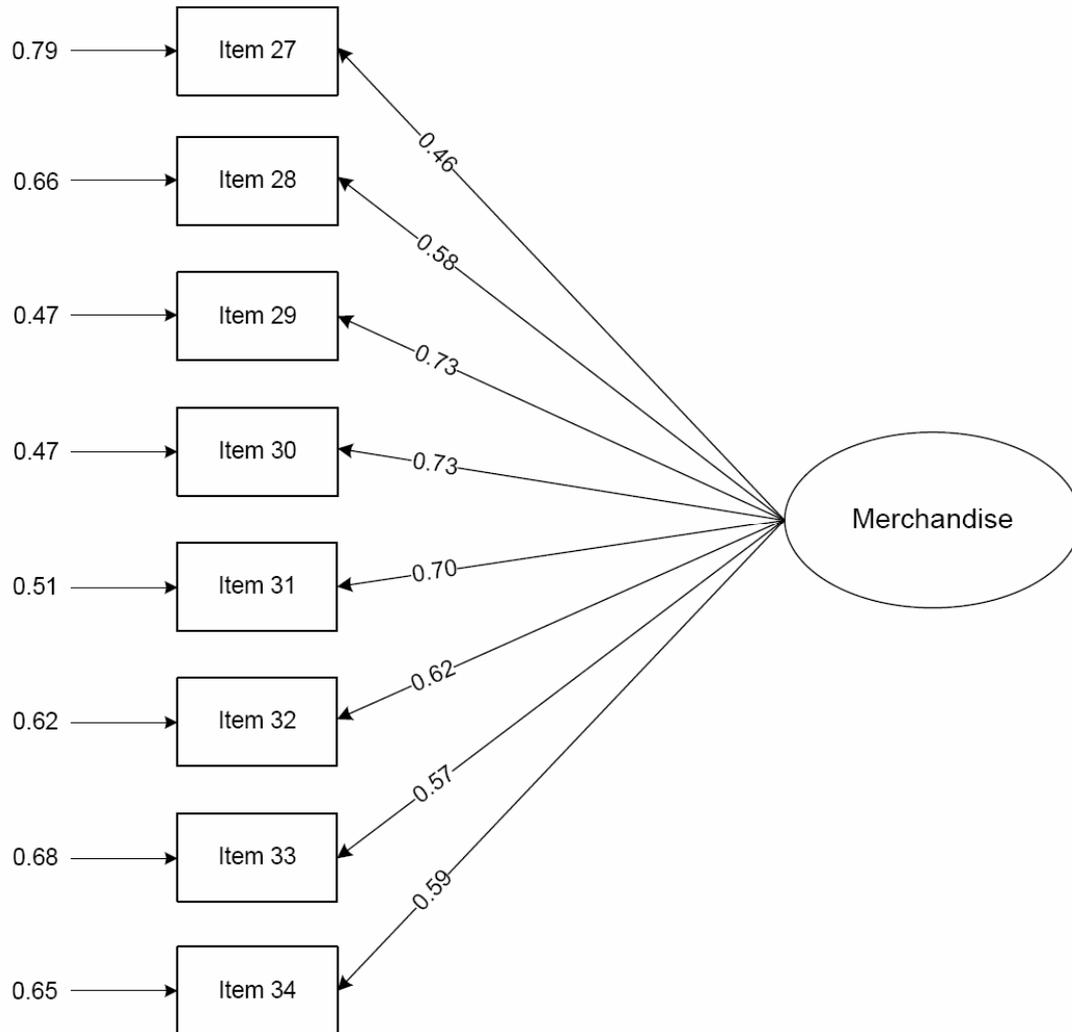


Figure 4.15 Measurement model for the Merchandise dimension – Mall intercept study

The retention of items 28, 29, 31, 32, and 34 as supported by the CFA results confirmed findings from previous store image literature. Marks (1976) operationalised the concept of store image and postulated that merchandise assortment (item 31), style (item 32), and quality (item 34) should be included in the Merchandise dimension. This was confirmed by Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978), as well as Wong and Yu (2003), although the latter included item 29 as a measure of merchandise assortment.

Erdem et al. (1999), Kim and Jin (2001), and Sullivan et al. (2002) all provided evidence, through exploratory factor analysis, for the inclusion of merchandise assortment (item 31) and style (item 32) within the Merchandise dimension. In his seminal study, Lindquist (1974-1975) included style (item 32) and quality (item 34) in his definition of store image. Janse van Noordwyk (2002), as well as Terblanché and Boshoff (2004) confirmed this inclusion. Studies

Table 4.19 Standardised residuals for the Merchandise dimension –Mall intercept study

Items	Item 27	Item 28	Item 29	Item 30	Item 31	Item 32	Item 33	Item 34
Item 27	-							
Item 28	-1.91	-						
Item 29	-0.58	0.88	-					
Item 30	-1.26	0.00	10.22	-				
Item 31	-1.86	4.58	-1.92	-0.78	-			
Item 32	2.31	-0.71	-3.21	-3.42	3.54	-		
Item 33	2.63	-2.00	-3.87	-4.01	-2.27	2.55	-	
Item 34	2.19	-3.29	-3.46	-2.87	-2.78	0.81	10.34	-

focusing on the elderly apparel consumer further supported these findings (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Lumpkin et al., 1985).

Odekerken-Schröder et al. (2001) and Koo (2003) confirmed that merchandise assortment (item 31) is associated with the Merchandise dimension. Odekerken-Schröder studied the impact of quality on store loyalty, whilst Koo determined the inter-relationships between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty amongst Korean discount retail consumers. Cary and Zylla (1981) investigated fabric specialty store consumers' dissatisfaction with selected in-store attributes. Their study supports the inclusion of style (item 32) within the Merchandise dimension. Bellenger et al. (1977), Bellizzi et al. (1983), as well as Wong and Teas (2001) through exploratory factor analysis determined that quality (item 34) is associated with Merchandise.

Items 28, 30 and 33, all associated with merchandise assortment, were derived from store image studies presenting a view on what store attributes constitute store image without investigating the underlying structure per se. Based on the underlying structure of store image proposed in this study, these items were included in the Merchandise dimension. Chowdhary (1989) investigated the apparel shopping behaviour of elderly men and women and included item 28 to measure the importance of the *availability of imported merchandise*. The CFA results from this study support the inclusion of the item in the Merchandise dimension. Item 30, relating to the *availability of exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)* and item 33, relating to the *availability of styles suited to my age*, were included in a study by Thompson and Chen (1998), who followed a means-end approach to retail store image. The results from this study do not support their inclusion within Merchandise. Since their inclusion was based on isolated research findings, there is no substantial evidence in support of their retention. Thus, these items (30 and 33) had to be considered for deletion.

The results from this study further support the deletion of item 27, which is associated with merchandise assortment. However, various earlier store image studies support the inclusion

of this item within the Merchandise dimension (Bellizzi, 1983; Cary & Zylla, 1981; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Ko & Kincade, 1997; Koo, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Marks, 1976; Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001; Sullivan et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Wong & Yu, 2003). The substantial theoretical evidence for the retention of this item and its association with the Merchandise dimension therefore indicated that it should not be considered for deletion.

Promotion: All the completely standardised loadings exceeded the 0.5 cut-off value (Figure 4.16). VE was recorded at 0.38, thus not exceeding the cut-off value of > 0.5 . CR, calculated at 0.83, did meet the set criterion of > 0.7 .

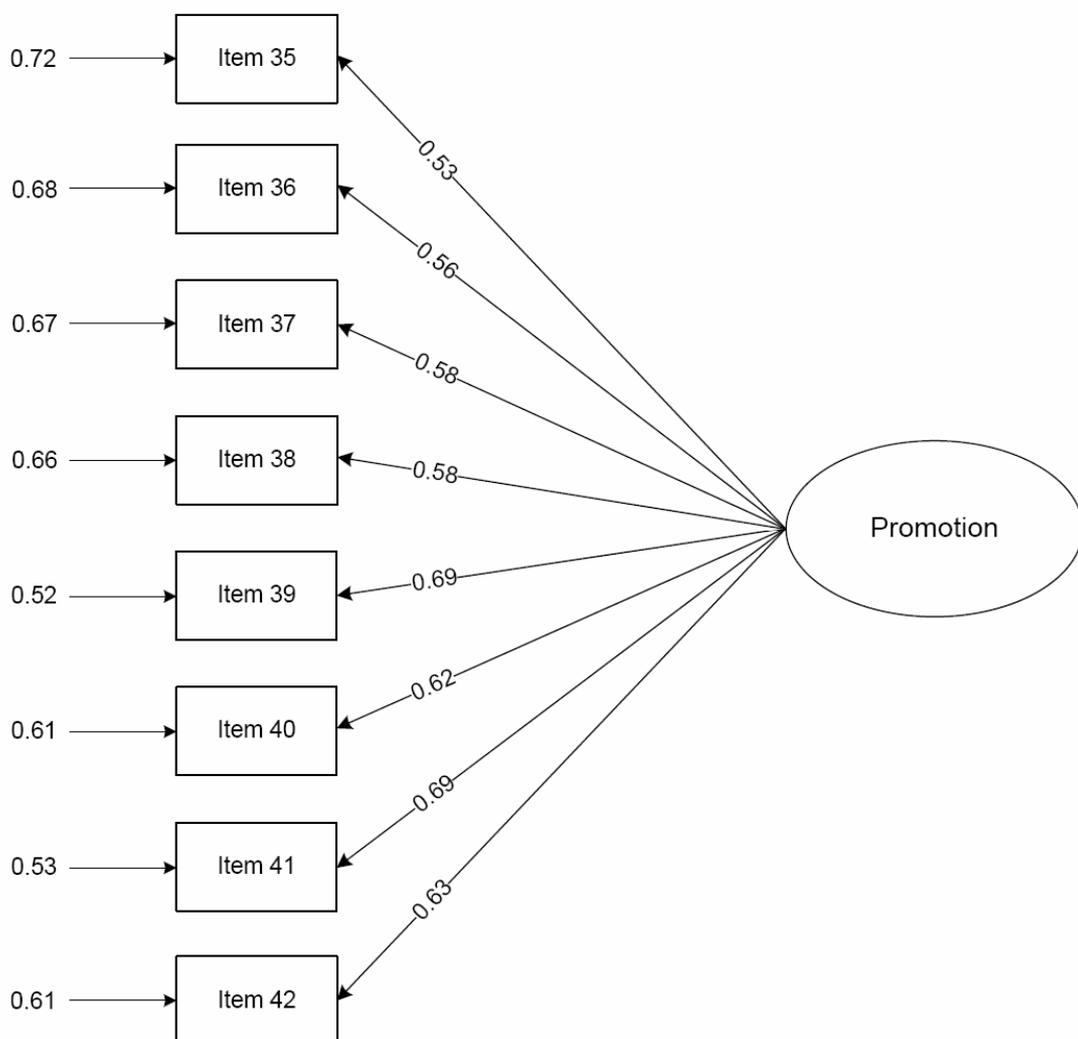


Figure 4.16 Measurement model for the Promotion dimension – Mall intercept study

Table 4.20 presents the standardised residuals for the Promotion dimension. Only one standardised residual was higher than $|2.5|$, namely between items 41 and 42 (2.64), but with

no evidence to suggest the deletion of either item. None of the standardised residuals were higher than |4|.

Table 4.20 Standardised residuals for the Promotion dimension – Mall intercept study

Items	Item 35	Item 36	Item 37	Item 38	Item 39	Item 40	Item 41	Item 42
Item 35	-							
Item 36	0.41	-						
Item 37	0.35	2.14	-					
Item 38	0.30	0.33	1.07	-				
Item 39	-0.57	1.25	-0.44	0.81	-			
Item 40	-0.53	-0.32	-0.67	-1.68	-0.22	-		
Item 41	0.92	-2.09	-1.00	-1.46	-0.05	1.68	-	
Item 42	-1.02	-1.93	-1.39	0.70	-0.90	2.29	2.64	-

Earlier store image research supported the results from this study for the retention of all measurement items. Lindquist (1974-1975) first proposed the inclusion of advertising (item 35), displays (items 38 and 39) and sales incentives (item 40) in the Promotion dimension. This was supported by Janse van Noordwyk's (2002) findings that associate advertising (items 35, 36, and 37), displays (items 38 and 39), and sales incentives (items 40, 41, and 42) with Promotion. Wong & Yu (2003) provided support for advertising (item 35) and sales incentives (item 40) being associated with the Promotion dimension. Kleinhans (2003) included displays (items 38 and 39) and sales incentives (items 40, 41, and 42) in this dimension. Findings by Marks (1976), Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) and Thang and Tan (2003) further corroborated that advertising (item 35) should be included in Promotion. Lastly, Wong and Teas (2001) found that sales incentives (item 40) were associated with the Promotion dimension.

Sales personnel: None of the completely standardised loadings were below the 0.5 criterion as presented by Figure 4.17. Both the VE (0.52) and CR (0.84) met the cut-off values of > 0.5 and > 0.7 respectively.

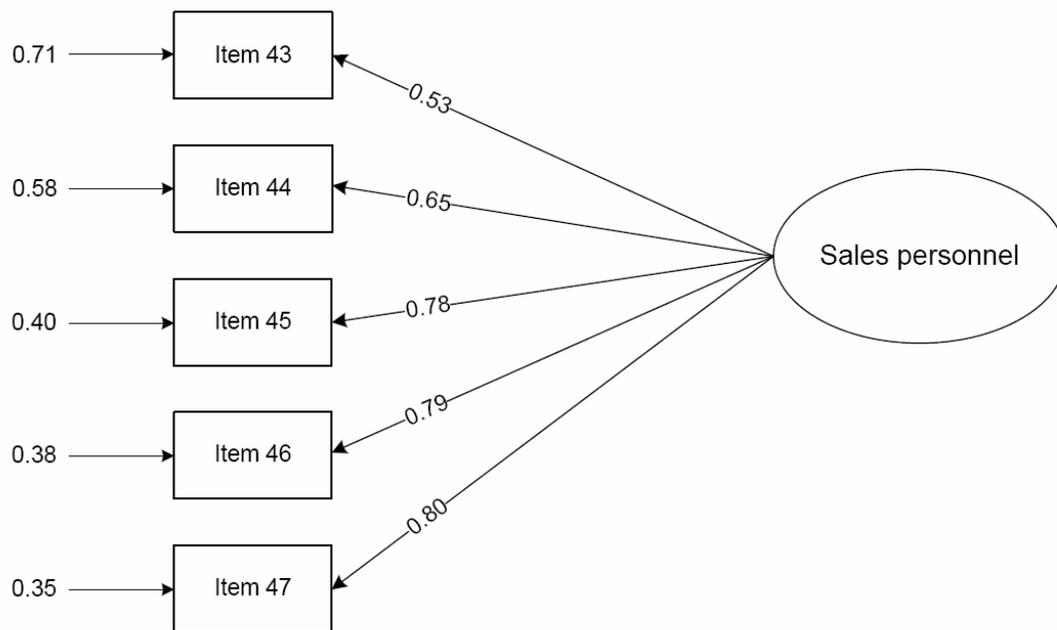


Figure 4.17 Measurement model for the Sales personnel dimension –Mall intercept study

The standardised residuals, presented in Table 4.21, between items 46 and 47 (6.76) and items 43 and 44 (4.70) exceeded the $|4|$ cut-off value. Item 47 shared a residual of -2.58 with item 43, whilst items 44 and 46 shared a residual of -3.32. Deleting more than one item from this dimension would result in fewer than four items for this dimension, in turn resulting in under-identification. Therefore, based on the comparatively low standardised loading of item 43 (0.53), only this item could be considered for deletion. This is in accordance with recommendations in the literature suggesting that, if necessary, a poor performing item should be retained to satisfy statistical identification requirements or to meet the minimum number of items necessary per factor consideration (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 4.21 Standardised residuals for the Sales personnel dimension –Mall intercept study

Items	Item 43	Item 44	Item 45	Item 46	Item 47
Item 43	-				
Item 44	4.70	-			
Item 45	0.20	2.40	-		
Item 46	-1.78	-3.32	-1.07	-	
Item 47	-2.58	-2.37	-1.24	6.76	-

The retention of items 46 and 47, as suggested by the CFA results, provided support for results obtained by Kleinhans (2003). Joyce and Lambert (1996) examined the impact of age on consumers' perception of retail store image. Their study did not focus on the underlying structure of store image, but did include individual items associated with store image. Item 44

(*attractiveness of sales personnel*) and item 45 (*similarity in body type between sales personnel and myself*) were derived from their study. The CFA results confirmed that these items should be included in the Sales personnel dimension and supported their retention.

However, the results from the current study have not provided support for Kleinhans' (2003) finding that item 43 should be retained within the Sales personnel dimension. Based on the isolated theoretical support for the inclusion of this item, it had to be considered for deletion.

Service: The completely standardised loadings of items 48 (0.48), 49 (0.41) and 50 (0.42) were all less than 0.50 and had to be considered for deletion, as presented in Figure 4.17. The deletion of item 49 was further supported by its item-total correlation (0.26) being less than the set criterion of > 0.3. VE did not meet the set cut-off value of > 0.5 and was recorded at 0.34. The CR of 0.80 did meet the set criterion of > 0.7.

The shared standardised residuals (Table 4.22) between items 48 and 49 (6.55), 48 and 50 (5.75), and 48 and 54 (-4.18) all exceeded |4|. In addition, the standardised residuals between items 49 and 52 (-3.80), items 49 and 54 (-3.53), items 49 and 50 (3.06), items 50 and 54 (-3.00), and items 49 and 53 (2.75) exceeded the |2.5| criterion. This supported the evidence from the standardised loadings suggesting that items 48, 49 and 50 had to be deleted. The standardised residuals between items 51 and 52 (3.98), items 54 and 55 (3.41), and items 52 and 54 (3.12) were higher than the |2.5| cut-off value. However, no other evidence suggested their deletion and they had to be retained.

The CFA results supporting the retention of items 52, 53, and 55 confirmed evidence from previous store image research (Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003). Support for delivery options, but not specifically mail-order, could also be found in store image research (Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Ko & Kincade, 1997; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Thang & Tan, 2003). The inclusion of item 55, associated with after-sales service, within the Service dimension was confirmed by Lee and Johnson (1997), as well as Erdem et al. (1999). Lee and Johnson conducted a qualitative study on consumer expectations for service at apparel retail outlets, whilst Erdem et al. examined the interaction between consumer values and store image attributes. Item 51 (*availability of gift vouchers*) relating to in-store service was specific to the current study and its inclusion in Service was confirmed by the CFA results.

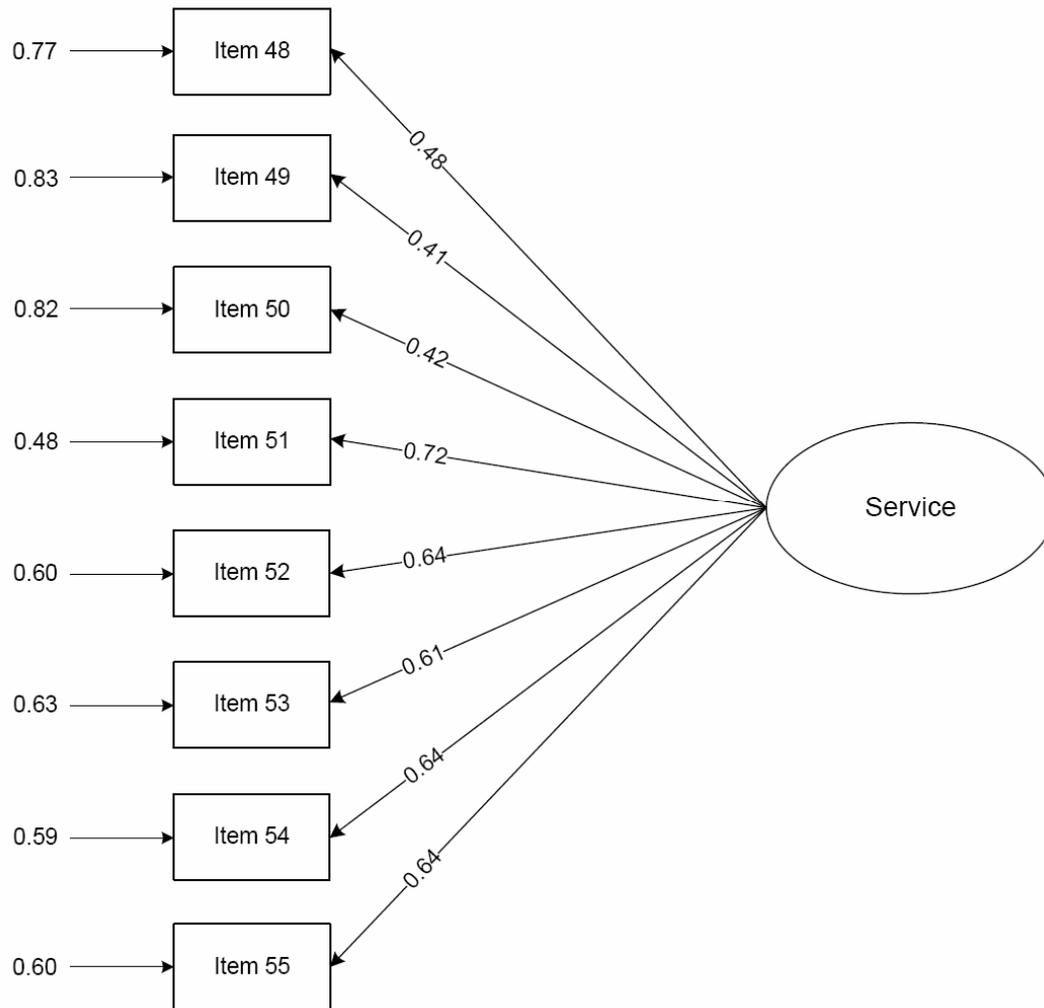


Figure 4.18 Measurement model for the Service dimension – Mall intercept study

Items 48, 49 and 50, all specific to sales personnel in-store service, were not supported by the results obtained from this study. As per the discussion in Section 2.3.3.1 various overlaps occurred between the Sales personnel and Service dimensions in the review of literature. Based on this, the Sales personnel interaction sub dimension (including items 48, 49 and 50) was included in the Service dimension after Pilot study 1 (Section 4.2.1.2). However, the CFA results from this phase of the study suggested that these items should not have been included in the Service dimension, even though findings from previous research indicated that items 48 and 49 should be included in a store image scale (Grace & O’Cass, 2005; Kleinhans, 2003; Koo, 2003; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Marks, 1976; Odekerken-Schröder, 2001; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004).

Empirical findings from specific studies provided evidence that Sales personnel service is a distinct dimension from Service. Lee and Johnson (1997) distinguished between dimensions

Table 4.22 Standardised residuals for the Service dimension – Mall intercept study

Items	Item 48	Item 49	Item 50	Item 51	Item 52	Item 53	Item 54	Item 55
Item 48	-							
Item 49	6.55	-						
Item 50	5.75	3.06	-					
Item 51	-2.29	-1.75	-2.02	-				
Item 52	-2.16	-3.80	-0.48	3.98	-			
Item 53	1.18	2.75	0.71	-1.06	-1.56	-		
Item 54	-4.18	-3.53	-3.00	1.23	3.12	-0.96	-	
Item 55	-1.03	-0.69	-1.28	-0.21	-1.95	0.73	3.41	-

of *service – store amenities*, *service – store facilities*, and *service – sales associates attributes* in their qualitative study. Kleinhans (2003) identified *salespeople service* and *various store services* dimensions through EFA. CFA confirmed two distinct dimensions, namely *employee service* and *after-sales service*, in a study on the inter-relationships between store images, store satisfaction, and store loyalty amongst Korean discount retail consumers (Koo, 2003). Lastly, Grace and O’Cass (2005) confirmed a model postulating that store service provision consists of *core service*, *employee service*, and *servicescape*. Although not all research supports this distinction (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975), there was substantial theoretical evidence for these items to be retained. Based on previous research findings, it could be suggested that the items be included in a distinct dimension incorporating sales personnel service.

Item 50 was specific to this study but there was no theoretical support for its retention. However, should a separate dimension for sales personnel service be included, it will be under-identified for CFA with only two items. Item 50 therefore had to be retained and items previously deleted had to be considered to ensure that the proposed sales personnel service dimension was identified for CFA with a minimum of four items.

The results from the path estimates and standardised residuals in conjunction with theoretical support from previous store image research suggested that specific items had to be considered for deletion. Seven items specifically had to be considered for deletion, namely item 6 (Atmosphere), items 15 and 19 (Facilities), item 26 (Institutional), items 30 and 33 (Merchandise) and item 43 (Sales personnel). Only isolated theoretical findings supported the retention of these items. However, substantial theoretical support was found for the retention of item 27 (Merchandise), as well as items 48, 49, and 50 (Service), although not within the Service dimension, but rather as a separate Sales personnel service dimension. The deletion of item 6 was also supported by results from the item-total correlations. The suggested deletion of specific items could serve to further purify the scale and lead to improve the already good fit of the Atmosphere and Institutional dimensions. In addition, the

acceptable fit of the Facilities and Sales personnel dimensions, as well as the poor fit of the Merchandise and Service dimensions, could also be improved.

4.3.2.4 Convergent and discriminant validity – individual dimensions

Completely standardised loadings, VE and CR were considered to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the store image scale. Completely standardised loadings of > 0.5 , VE of > 0.5 and CR of > 0.7 were used as criteria for establishing convergent validity as per recommendations in the literature (Hair et al., 2006). Completely standardised loadings of items that did not meet the set criteria of > 0.5 had already been identified for a number of dimensions, namely Atmosphere (item 6), Institutional (item 26), Merchandise (item 27) and Service (items 48, 49 and 50). Based on this, the first criterion for convergent validity on these dimensions was not met. The VE for each dimension showed that none of the dimensions, excepting Sales personnel (0.52), met the accepted criterion of > 0.5 . Such dimensions included Atmosphere (0.37), Convenience (0.32), Facilities (0.39), Institutional (0.35), Merchandise (0.40), Promotion (0.38), and Service (0.34). This indicated that a greater amount of variance amongst the items was explained by measurement error than by the underlying dimension. The calculated CR for each dimension met the set criteria of > 0.7 , namely Atmosphere (0.77), Convenience (0.77), Facilities (0.82), Institutional (0.76), Merchandise (0.84), Promotional (0.83), Sales personnel (0.84), and Service (0.80). These results provided support for the convergent validity of the Sales personnel dimension that met all the set criteria. Results further suggested that the individual dimensions of Convenience, Facilities, and Promotion met two of the set criteria for convergent validity, namely completely standardised loadings and CR. It could be argued that this was indicative of marginal convergent validity, although all the prerequisites for convergent validity were not met. The Atmosphere, Institutional, Merchandise, and Service dimensions, however, did not meet two of the set criteria and it could be concluded that these dimensions did not exhibit convergent validity. This provided further support for the further purification of the store image scale through the deletion of the suggested items to improve convergent validity.

The VE of any two constructs and the squared correlation estimates between these constructs were investigated to support the discriminant validity of the scale. The interpretation of the squared correlation estimates has to be qualified by stating that the analysis for each dimension was based on a calculated composite score for all the items associated with the specific dimension. The squared correlation between Convenience and Facilities (0.35) was higher than the variance extracted for the Convenience dimension (0.32). Similarly, the squared correlation between Sales personnel and Service (0.38) exceeded the variance extracted for Service (0.33). These results provided evidence that the Convenience and Service dimensions lacked discriminant validity and, therefore, implied that these dimensions were not statistically distinct from other dimensions included in the *Revised Model*

of *Store Image* (Figure 4.2). The deletion of the suggested items from the Convenience and Service dimensions was expected to further purify the store image scale, thereby improving the discriminant validity. Results, however, provided support for the discriminant validity of the Atmosphere, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion and Sales personnel dimensions.

4.3.2.5 Model fit – Revised Model of Store Image

To assess the overall model fit, CFA was performed on the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.2) based on the data obtained from the 55-item store image scale. Composite scores for the measurement items of each dimension were calculated and a single composite indicator was employed for each dimension, as per recommendations in the literature (Hair et al., 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). This was deemed necessary and appropriate since the large number of dimensions and their associated measurement items necessitated a sample size requirement outside the scope of this exploratory study. Maximum Likelihood was used as method of estimation, since the indicators were no longer associated with a Likert-type scale. Table 4.23 provides a summary of the model fit indices.

Table 4.23 Model fit indices of CFA on the Revised Model of Store Image - Mall intercept study

Absolute Fit Measures	
Degrees of Freedom	20
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square	206.09
	p<0.01
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.14
Standardised Root Mean Residual (RMR)	0.064
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	0.91
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit (AGFI)	0.83
Incremental Fit Measures	
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.89
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.92

The Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square was significant, suggesting poor fit. Again, however, the Chi-Square statistic's sensitivity to multivariate normality and sample size has to be highlighted (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000). RMSEA fell outside the adopted criteria of < 0.08 for acceptable fit. The Standardised RMR also fell outside the set criterion of < 0.05. The GFI value indicated good fit, since it was higher than 0.9. However, the AGFI index did not meet the set criterion for good fit of > 0.9. The CFI value exceeded 0.9 and indicated good fit. The NNFI index did not meet the set criterion of > 0.9 for good fit, although only marginally. From the results derived from the Absolute Fit Measures, it could be concluded that the model did not exhibit acceptable fit. By implication, the implied model did not

reproduce the observed model. The Incremental Fit Measures indicated marginally acceptable fit. It could, therefore, be concluded that the implied model exhibited a better fit compared to the null model, assuming that all observed variables were uncorrelated.

4.3.2.6 Convergent validity – Revised Model of Store Image

Convergent validity was established as per the criteria adopted for the individual dimensions (Section 4.3.2.4). The completely standardised loadings of the dimensions from the CFA performed on the *Revised Model of Store Image* are presented in Figure 4.19.

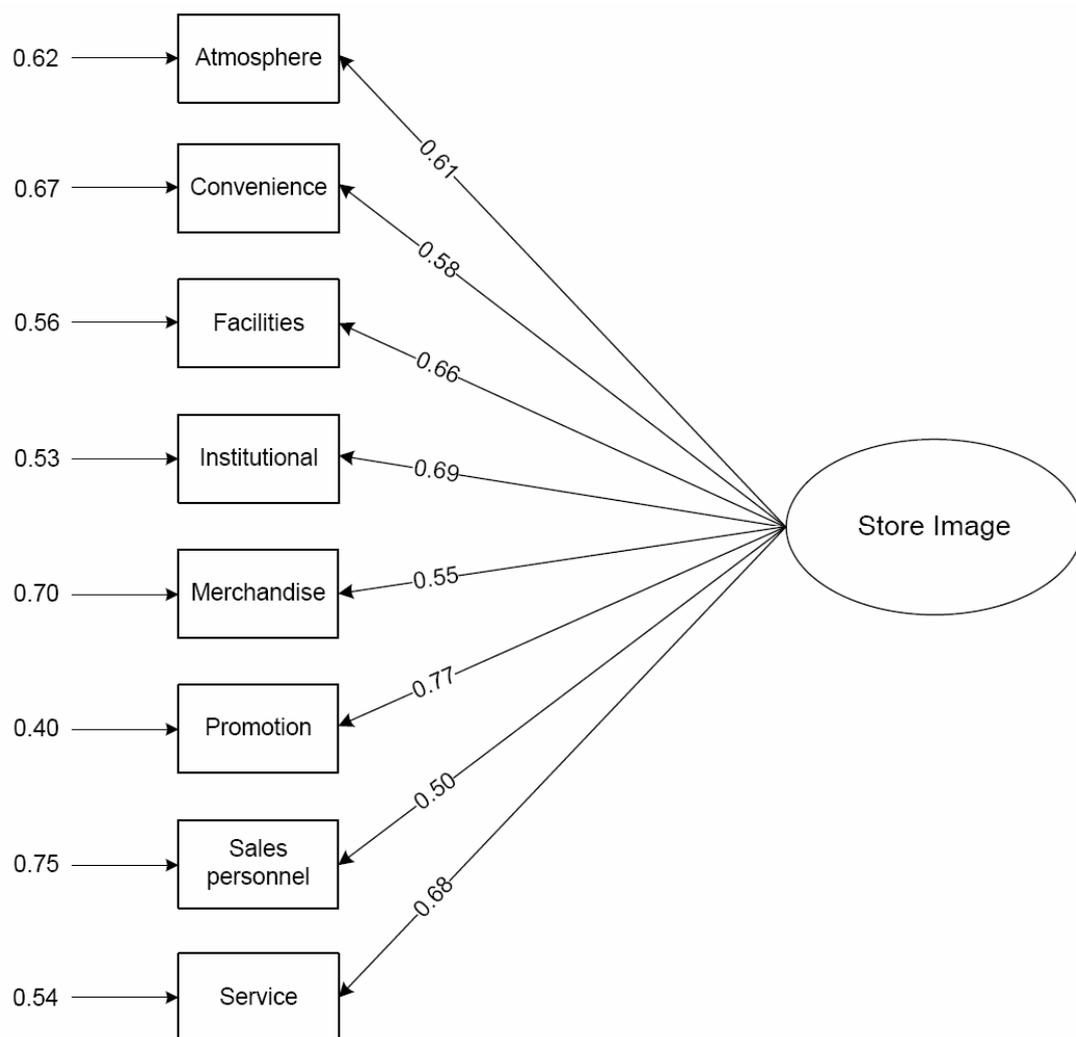


Figure 4.19 Measurement model for the Revised Model of Store Image – Mall intercept study

Upon inspection, the completely standardised loadings of the dimensions all exceeded the accepted level of > 0.5 as the first prerequisite for establishing convergent validity, as presented in Figure 4.19. These loadings ranged from 0.50 for Sales personnel to 0.77 for

Promotion. The VE was recorded as 0.40, which was lower than the cut-of value of > 0.5. The CR was calculated at 0.89 and met the set criteria of > 0.7. It could be concluded that the *Revised Model of Store Image* exhibited marginal convergent validity, since it met two of the set criteria. However, the results were still indicative of all measurements possibly not reflecting the same construct.

4.3.2.7 Conclusion

The results obtained from this phase in the study regarding the model fit, reliability and validity of the individual dimensions and the *Revised Model of Store Image* are summarised in Table 4.24. It could be concluded that the store image scale exhibited acceptable reliability. Based on the CFA results from the individual dimensions, the Atmosphere, Convenience, Institutional, and Promotion dimensions exhibited good fit, whilst the Facilities and Sales personnel dimensions had acceptable fit. However, the Merchandise and Service dimensions did not fit the data well. Item analysis highlighted that items from individual dimensions had to be considered for deletion, namely Atmosphere (item 6), Facilities (items 15 and 19), Institutional (item 26), Merchandise (items 30 and 33), Sales personnel (item 43) and Service (items 48, 49, and 50).

Table 4.24 Summary of conclusions on model fit, reliability and validity of the individual dimensions and *Revised Model of Store Image*

Measure/ Dimension	Reliability	Model fit	Item deletion	Convergent validity	Discriminant validity
Atmosphere	Acceptable	Good	6	Poor	Good
Convenience	Acceptable	Good	N/A	Acceptable	Poor
Facilities	Acceptable	Acceptable	15, 19	Acceptable	Good
Institutional	Acceptable	Good	26	Poor	Good
Merchandise	Acceptable	Poor	30, 33	Poor	Good
Promotion	Acceptable	Good	N/A	Acceptable	Good
Sales personnel	Acceptable	Acceptable	43	Good	Good
Service	Acceptable	Poor	48, 49, 50	Acceptable	Poor
Total model	Acceptable	Poor	N/A	Acceptable	N/A

Evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity was inconclusive. Results indicated that only the Sales personnel dimension exhibited convergent validity, whilst the Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Promotion, and Service dimensions exhibited marginal convergent validity. The convergent validity of the Institutional and Merchandise dimensions could not be established. The discriminant validity of all the dimensions was established, except for the Convenience and Service dimensions. The CFA results from the *Revised Model of Store Image* indicated that the model exhibited acceptable fit and convergent validity. The deletion

of the suggested items from the item analysis was seen to potentially result in a better fit of the individual dimensions and the total model, as well as increased convergent and discriminant validities.

This phase of the study addressed the question of whether the store image scale illustrated acceptable psychometric properties of reliability and validity (objective 10), as well as the model fit of the developed scale on the *Revised Model of Store Image* (objective 11). Although results did not fully support the validity and model fit of the store image scale and the *Revised Model of Store Image*, these objectives were met in that they provided initial insight into the validity and model fit of the store image scale. In addition, the results highlighted problematic measurement items that had to be considered for deletion to improve scale validity and model fit.

4.4 ASSESSING THE PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF STORE IMAGE DIMENSIONS IN SELECTED DISCOUNT AND SPECIALTY APPAREL STORES

The aim of this phase of the study was to measure the perceived importance of store image dimensions in discount and specialty apparel stores (objective 12), as well as to investigate whether there was a difference between selected discount and specialty stores in the perceived importance of these dimensions (objective 13). This section revisits the hypotheses formulated for this phase of the study and discusses the results obtained from the statistical analysis.

4.4.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to assess whether statistically significant differences exist between the selected discount and specialty stores with regard to the perceived importance of each store image dimension.

H1: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Atmosphere** dimension.

H2: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Convenience** dimension.

H3: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Facilities** dimension.

H4: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Institutional** dimension.

H5: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Merchandise** dimension.

H6: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Promotion** dimension.

H7: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Store personnel** dimension

H8: A statistically significant difference between selected discount and specialty apparel stores exists in perceptions of the importance of the **Service** dimension.

4.4.2 Statistical analysis

The data obtained from administering the 55-item store image scale in the mall intercept study in Phase 4 was submitted to statistical analysis. Section B of the store image scale, in which respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the individual dimensions, was employed. One-way ANOVA using Statistica (version 7.1) was performed on the data.

4.4.2.1 Perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty stores

The weighted mean and ranking of the perceived importance of the individual dimensions for discount and specialty stores are summarised in Table 4.25. The Facilities dimension was perceived as the most important dimension for discount stores. Joyce and Lambert (1996) concluded that discount stores are associated with a self-service environment and found that the Facilities dimension and its associated store attributes are of particular importance in self-service stores. Research focusing specifically on specialty stores found that the Facilities dimension and its associated store attributes was ranked in the top 50% of store image dimensions, but was not perceived as the most important dimension

Table 4.25 Weighted mean and ranking of the perceived importance of individual dimensions for discount and specialty stores

Dimension	Discount stores		Specialty stores	
	Weighted mean	Ranking	Weighted mean	Ranking
Atmosphere	4.12	2	4.22	1
Convenience	4.03	4	3.97	6
Facilities	4.17	1	4.09	4
Institutional	3.61	7	3.81	7
Merchandise	3.97	5	4.08	5
Promotion	4.12	2	4.17	2
Sales personnel	3.29	8	3.26	8
Service	3.89	6	4.14	3

(Newman & Patel, 2004; Van de Velde et al., 1996). Thus, the findings from this study are consistent with previous apparel research findings.

The Atmosphere and Promotion dimensions were second in ranking for discount stores, and ranked first and second respectively for specialty stores. Few research studies have reported on the perceived importance of the Atmosphere and Promotion dimensions in discount and specialty stores. Janse van Noordwyk (2002) found that the Atmosphere dimension was ranked third in importance by the female large-size apparel consumer, followed by the Promotion dimension, which was ranked fourth. Newman and Patel (2004) found Atmosphere to be the third most important dimension for UK specialty stores. In contrast, Van de Velde et al. (1996) found Promotion to be the second least important dimension and Newman and Patel (2004) found advertising, associated with the Promotion dimension, as the second and third least important attributes associated with apparel store image across two UK apparel specialty stores. Previous results with regard to the Promotion dimension, therefore, are contradictory. However, results from this study provide support for the importance placed on the Atmosphere dimension found in previous studies, although the ranking of this dimension was higher in the current study, for both the discount and the specialty store.

The Convenience dimension was ranked fourth for discount stores and sixth for specialty stores. Similar to the Atmosphere and Promotion dimensions, few research studies have investigated the perceived importance of the Convenience dimension. Janse van Noordwyk (2002) concluded that Convenience was perceived as the seventh most important dimension to the female large-size apparel consumer. Van de Velde et al. (1996) reported that Convenience, specifically related to location, was ranked fifth and sixth in importance across two different student samples. Similarly, Newman and Patel (2004) found that location was

ranked fifth and seventh for two UK specialty retailers. Thus, the importance ranking for Convenience in specialty stores in this study supports previous findings, although no definitive conclusions on the ranking for discount stores could be reached.

The Merchandise dimension was ranked fifth for both discount and specialty stores. This result contradicts findings by Van de Velde (1996) and Janse van Noordwyk who found that the Merchandise dimension and its associated store attributes were perceived as most important in apparel store image. Newman and Patel (2004) have reported that the Merchandise dimension was the second most important dimension for one UK apparel specialty store, whilst it was ranked sixth in importance for another. Quality, as a store attribute associated with the Merchandise dimension, was ranked sixth and eighth in their study. Another study concluded that quality was ranked most important for limited service stores, third most important for full service stores, and fourth most important for self-service stores. In contrast, merchandise assortment was ranked sixth most important for full service stores, whilst it was ranked seventh for both limited and self-service stores (Joyce & Lambert, 1996). Results from previous research do not provide a definitive conclusion on the importance of the Merchandise dimension in discount and specialty stores. Results from this study, however, are consistent with specific findings on the ranking of the Merchandise dimension and store attributes associated with it.

The Service dimension was ranked sixth and third most important for discount and specialty stores respectively. Joyce and Lambert (1996) found that the Service dimension was ranked in the top three dimensions for limited and full service stores, whilst it was ranked fifth for self-service stores. This is consistent with findings by Lee and Johnson (1997) that indicated that consumers of discount stores expected lower levels of service compared to consumers of specialty stores who expected extensive service. Van de Velde (1996) reported that store service was ranked fourth and fifth respectively across different consumer samples. The results from this study, therefore, supports findings from previous research that the Service dimension is ranked higher in perceived importance in specialty stores compared to discount stores. The relative ranking for specialty stores is also consistent with previous research findings, although the Service dimension was ranked higher for discount stores in previous research.

The Institutional dimension was ranked seventh most important and the Sales personnel was ranked eighth most important for both discount and specialty stores. Store attributes associated with the Institutional and Sales personnel dimensions were ranked least important and third least important in Van de Velde et al.'s (1996) study. Similarly, Janse van Noordwyk (2002) found that the Institutional dimension and its associated store attributes were ranked in the three least important dimensions associated with apparel store image. Joyce and Lambert (1996) found Sales personnel to be ranked fifth for full service stores, sixth for limited

service stores, and eighth for self-service stores. Thus, the results from this study are supported by previous findings.

4.4.2.2 Statistical differences in perceived importance between selected discount and specialty stores

Results showed no statistically significant differences between selected discount and specialty apparel stores for the Atmosphere ($p=0.08$), Convenience ($p=0.32$), Facilities ($p=0.20$), Merchandise ($p=0.09$), Promotion ($p=0.42$), and Sales personnel ($p=0.78$) dimensions. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H5, H6 and H7 stating that statistically significant differences exist in the perception of the Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Merchandise, Promotion and Sales personnel dimensions between selected discount and specialty apparel stores were rejected. Support was found for H4 and H8 with results indicating statistically significant differences between selected discount and specialty stores for the Institutional ($p=0.01$) and Service ($p=0.01$) dimensions.

Amirani and Gates (1993) employed discount and specialty department stores in their study, although they did not focus exclusively on apparel. The results of their study provided partial support for the acceptance of H4, which postulated a statistically significant difference in the perception of the importance of the Institutional dimension between selected discount and specialty apparel stores. They found specialty stores to have *higher income clientele* and an *exclusive global impression* compared to discount stores that are associated with generally *lower income clientele* and a *tacky global impression*. These results, however, are derived from considering only two attributes associated with the Institutional dimension and can therefore not be considered as providing conclusive support. Similarly, their findings partially contradict the rejection of H5, which hypothesised that a statistically significant difference exists in the perception of the importance of the Merchandise dimension between selected discount and specialty apparel stores. The results indicated that specialty stores are associated with *high merchandise pricing* and *quality merchandise*, as opposed to *low merchandise pricing* and *value for money* associated with discount stores (Amirani & Gates, 1993, p. 33). These results again only considered two attributes associated with the Merchandise dimension, which could account for the differences found.

Joyce and Lambert (1996) also did not focus specifically on apparel and included full service, limited service and self-service stores in their study. It could be argued that specialty stores are associated with full service, whereas discount stores are associated with self service. Their results indicated significant differences between these store types with regard to *good quality merchandise* (associated with Merchandise), *informative signs* (associated with Facilities), *discounted prices* (associated with Merchandise), *good selection merchandise* (associated with Merchandise), *high class* (associated with Institutional), *doing well*

(associated with Institutional), *sales personnel are helpful* (associated with Service), *store is similar to others* (associated with Merchandise), and *sales personnel are attractive* (associated with Sales personnel) (Joyce & Lambert, 1996, p. 28). These results again only relate to specific attributes and provide little insight into differences between dimensions. However, based on the dimensions associated with these individual attributes, their results partially contradict the rejection of H3, H5, and H7. These hypotheses stated that a statistically significant difference existed in the perception of the importance of the Facilities, Merchandise and Store personnel dimensions between selected discount and specialty apparel stores. Conversely, the acceptance of H4 and H8 is partially supported. H4 and H8 postulated that a statistically significant difference in the perception of the importance of the Institutional and Service dimensions existed between selected discount and specialty apparel stores.

Paulins and Geistfeld (2003, p. 378) found differences between discount and specialty stores with respect to *store displays*, associated with the Promotion dimension, as well as *type of clothing* and *reasonable prices*, associated with the Merchandise dimension. These results seemingly contradict the rejection of H5 and H6, associated with the Merchandise and Promotion dimensions. Similar to the interpretation of the results by Amirani and Gates (1993) and Joyce and Lambert (1996), the study by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) included isolated attributes associated with specific dimensions, which confounds the drawing of definitive conclusions.

The results in support for accepting H8, relating to the Service dimension, are consistent with findings from Thorpe and Avery (1983-1984) who found that sales personnel service is the single most important store image variable distinguishing specialty store consumers from non-consumers. Lee and Johnson (1997) provided further support for this hypothesis in their qualitative study on consumer expectations for service at apparel stores. They concluded that discount store consumers do not expect extensive customer service, including lower level sales personnel service, although they did expect a liberal return policy. In contrast, specialty store consumers did expect extensive customer service, including better return policies than other stores, knowledgeable sales personnel and personal attention.

Results from Mitchell and Kiral (1998) did not provide any insight into the interpretation of the results from the current study, since their study related to specific grocery stores in the UK market. Moye and Giddings (2002), in the statistical analysis of their study, employed five factors do not resemble the dimensions of the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.2). The results obtained from their study, therefore, could not be compared to findings from the current study.

4.4.2.3 Conclusion

It can be concluded from the above-mentioned results that the Atmosphere, Promotion, Merchandise, Institutional and Sales personnel dimensions were ranked similarly for discount and specialty store consumers. The Facilities and Convenience dimensions were ranked higher by discount store consumers, compared to specialty store consumers. Specialty store consumers ranked the Service dimension higher than discount store consumers. However, the difference between the dimension ranked most important and least important was relatively small for both store types. No statistical differences in the perceived importance of the Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Merchandise, Promotion, and Sales personnel dimensions were found between discount and specialty stores. These dimensions were, therefore, perceived as important regardless of whether consumers frequent a discount or specialty store, although the Facilities and Convenience dimensions were ranked higher for discount stores. Results supported the existence of statistical differences between the perceived importance of the Institutional and Service dimensions. Thus, although respondents ranked the importance of Institutional similarly, they experience the importance of this dimension as it contributes to apparel store image differently. The Service dimension was ranked higher by specialty store consumers than by discount store consumers and a statistically significant difference was found between discount and specialty stores in the perceived importance of this dimension. This indicates that specialty store consumers attach a significantly higher value to the Service dimension as it contributes to apparel store image.

The discussion of the results highlighted inconsistencies between the findings of this study and those of previous research findings. Support was found for the importance ranking of the Facilities, Service, Institutional, and Sales personnel dimensions for both store types, as well as for the Convenience dimension for specialty stores. Although previous research highlighted the importance of the Atmosphere dimension, results from this study indicated a higher importance ranking. Previous research on the Promotion and Merchandise dimensions were contradictory. With regard to the results of the statistical differences in perceived importance between discount and specialty stores, none of the results from reviewed studies challenged the rejection of H1 and H2, i.e. that no statistically significant difference in the perception of the importance of the Atmosphere and Convenience dimensions exists between discount and specialty apparel stores. The rejection of H3, H5, H6 and H7, relating to the Facilities, Merchandise, Promotion and Sales personnel dimensions, was partially supported by evidence from previous research. Similarly, the acceptance of H4, associated with the Institutional dimension, was partially supported. The acceptance of H8 regarding the Service dimension seems to be consistently supported by previous store image research.

However, as discussed in Section 2.2.5, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from available store image research findings due to relationships between store image and other consumer behaviour variables, including store type, only being supported by isolated and often inconsistent findings. This is further exacerbated by the variance in methodologies employed in reviewed store image studies. Of particular relevance is the variation in store types, product groups, as well as store image dimensions and attributes included in studies. This presents a significant challenge in ascertaining whether the results from this study are consistent with or contrary to prior research findings.

In addition, Newman and Patel (2004) reported differences in the perceived importance of store image dimensions across different studies within the UK apparel market. They concluded that various variables account for these differences. The studies they compared in particular included different consumer segments and store types, and were administered in different geographical areas. Thus, where the results from this study are inconsistent with previous studies, it can be attributed to the inclusion of a specific sample population and selected discount and specialty stores in South Africa, specifically the Western Cape region.

These results should further be interpreted in the context of the current complex consumer environment in which consumers are inundated with an increasing volume of competing messages. Thus, consumers have to rely on global impressions to form inferences about a store. This is manifested in the *gestalt* nature of the store image construct (McGrath, 2005; Stern et al., 2001). The results from this study seem to provide support for the *gestalt* nature of store image. The absence of significant differences in perceived importance of the individual dimensions, except for the Institutional and Service dimensions, could be the result of consumers' *gestalt* perception of store image, with consumers failing to differentiate between the perceived importance of the individual dimensions across store types. This implies that all the dimensions associated with store image are important across store types as they contribute to the formation of store image.

Lastly, results showed that consumers perceive the importance of store image dimensions similarly in selected discount and specialty stores. However, the study did not investigate whether there are differences on the store attribute level. Therefore, although discount and specialty store consumers attach similar perceptions of importance to store image dimensions, the emphasis on the importance of specific store attributes could vary.

4.5 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the results of the empirical study and their interpretation (Phases 3, 4 and 5). The purification of the store image scale, as described, resulted in a 55-item scale that was employed in the main mall intercept study. The psychometric properties of

reliability and validity of the scale were assessed. The results provided evidence of scale reliability and partial support for scale validity was found. Especially the Sales personnel dimension met all criteria for convergent validity, whilst the Convenience, Facilities and Promotion dimensions and the *Revised Model of Store Image* showed marginal convergent validity. Results from the Atmosphere, Institutional, Merchandise and Service dimensions did not support convergent validity. The Atmosphere, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, and Sales personnel dimension all exhibited discriminant validity, whilst this was not the case for the Convenience and Service dimensions.

Results assessing the model fit of the individual dimensions, as well as the total *Revised Model of Store Image*, provided support for the good fit of the Atmosphere, Convenience, Institutional, and Promotion dimensions. The Facilities and Sales personnel dimensions exhibited acceptable fit, whilst it can be argued that the Merchandise and Service dimensions are associated with marginally acceptable fit. The *Revised Model of Store Image* did not exhibit acceptable fit. An investigation of the path estimate and standardised residuals of the individual items associated with each dimension identified items that should be considered for deletion. This could result in improving the model fit of individual dimensions, as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image*.

The empirical results concluded with an assessment of the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty apparel stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale. The Atmosphere, Promotion, Merchandise, Institutional and Sales personnel dimensions were ranked similarly in perceived importance for discount and specialty stores. The Facilities and Convenience dimensions were ranked higher for discount stores and the Service dimension was ranked higher for specialty stores. Support was found for a statistically significant difference between discount and specialty apparel stores in the perception of the importance of the Institutional and Service dimensions. No statistically significant differences were recorded for any of the other six dimensions. These results were partially supported by previous findings in store image research.

It can be concluded that the objectives set for the empirical study were met. A store image scale was developed to illustrate acceptable reliability (objective 7 and 8) and was further refined for practical implementation in the apparel retail environment (objective 9). This scale was submitted to practical implementation and the psychometric properties of reliability and validity was assessed (objective 10). The model fit of the developed scale on the *Revised Model of Store Image* was also assessed (objective 11). Lastly, the perceived importance of store image dimensions in discount and specialty apparel stores were measured (objective 12), and the difference between selected discount and specialty stores was investigated (objective 13). This chapter provided a basis for the conclusions and implications of this study, to be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to develop a scale to measure the perceived importance of the dimensions of apparel store image. As prerequisite to the process of development of the scale, the study had to specify the store image domain and propose a definition of the store image construct.

In Chapter 1, introductory perspectives on the research study were discussed. This served as motivation for the study. The problem statement and research objectives were outlined, together with a framework within which the subsequent chapters were to follow.

Chapter 2 established the relevance of store image as an integral component of retail store branding and in building brand equity within the broader realm of corporate branding. The store image construct domain was established through an integration of empirical research findings into a proposed conceptual model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables. The lack of consensus in the literature on a definition of store image, as well as the inconsistencies concerning what constitutes the underlying structure of the store image construct, was highlighted. The dimensions and sub dimensions of store image were delineated on the basis of previous findings from literature dealing with store image and were integrated into a proposed model of the underlying structure of store image, which culminated in a proposed definition of store image. The chapter concluded with an overview of store image research, with specific reference to empirical findings on the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image and their relevance in the current retail environment. The implications for retailers were discussed by highlighting how the manipulation of specific store attributes could instigate desirable consumer behaviours associated with potential rewards and benefits.

Chapter 3 focused on the methodology employed in this study which was designed to meet the objectives set to be met by empirical research. The five distinct phases of the development of the scale were discussed, namely (1) domain specification and construct definition, (2) generation and judging of measurement items, (3) purification of the store image scale, (4) assessing the reliability and validity of the store image scale, and (5) assessing the perceived importance of store image dimensions in selected discount and specialty stores through the practical implementation of the store image scale.

The results obtained from the empirical research in accordance with the empirical objectives were presented in Chapter 4. Phase 1 and 2 of the scale development process resulted in a 232-item scale representing the dimensions and sub dimensions of store image. The methodology employed in these two phases served to establish the content and face validity of the store image scale. Phase 3 of the store image scale aimed to purify the scale and address scale length for practical implementation. This phase consisted of two pilot studies and resulted in a 55-item store image scale.

The store image scale was administered in the main mall intercept study (n=534) and exhibited acceptable reliability. The Atmosphere, Convenience, Institutional, and Promotion dimensions demonstrated good fit, whilst the Facilities and Sales personnel dimensions showed evidence of acceptable fit. The Merchandise and Service dimensions, as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image*, did not demonstrate good fit. Convergent validity for the Sales personnel dimension was established, whilst the Facilities, Convenience, and Promotion dimension, as well as the *Revised Model of Store Image*, exhibited marginal validity. Support for the convergent validity of the Atmosphere, Institutional, Merchandise, and Service dimensions was not found. The Convenience and Service dimensions did not exhibit discriminant validity. The construct reliability for all dimensions, as well as the total model, was established. Based on the empirical results, further items were identified for deletion to improve model fit, convergent and discriminant validity of the individual dimensions and the *Revised Model of Store Image*.

The practical implementation of the store image scale made it possible to derive that discount apparel store consumers and specialty apparel store consumers rank store image dimensions as similar in importance. Discount apparel store consumers, however, ranked Convenience and Facilities higher, and specialty apparel store consumers ranked Service higher. The difference between the most and least important dimensions for both store types, though, was relatively small. In addition, no statistically significant differences between discount and specialty apparel stores were found in the perceived importance of store image dimensions for any of the store image dimensions besides the Institutional and Service dimensions. These findings were partially supported by results from previous research on store image. However, drawing definitive conclusions from previous research proved challenging due to the isolated and contradictory nature of findings, as well as the variation in previous research methodologies.

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications of the study, based on the results that were obtained. Recommendations for future research and the implications of this study for apparel retailers will also be discussed. The last of the set objectives of this study will be addressed, namely:

14. To formulate the implications for apparel retailers regarding the practical implementation of the developed scale.
15. To formulate relevant recommendations for future research.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

What is the underlying theoretical structure of apparel store image? How can the perceived importance of the dimensions and sub dimensions underlying apparel store image be measured? These were the research questions that were set for this study and provided the basis for the formulation of the research objectives. The conclusions from this study will be discussed in accordance with these research questions and objectives.

The literature review concluded that store image is a relevant and integral component of retail branding within the broader realm of corporate branding. This provided a context for establishing the store image domain. The proposed conceptual theoretical model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables (Figure 2.1) provided further insight into the store image domain. Various consumer behaviour variables that influence store image perception were identified. These included socio-psychological variables, information sources, situational influences and store-specific variables, such as store type, as well as an indirect influence of psychographic variables through information sources. There also was an indication that demographics, socio-cultural variables, shopping orientations and product-specific variables might have an influence on store image. In addition, a positive store image is seen to serve as stimulus to specific desirable consumer behaviours. Specifically, a favourable store image could lead to positive consumer attitudes and emotional states, as well as patronage preference, approach behaviour, patronage behaviour and consumer satisfaction. Store image also influences consumer decision making, the perception of certain product-specific variables such as product quality and brand image and has an indirect influence on store loyalty through consumer satisfaction is isolated. However, the research is rife with contradictions and support for proposed relationships. The variation in research methodologies employed in previous research on store image poses a further challenge to providing definitive conclusions regarding these relationships. The variations in research methodology were specifically related to the sample population, product group and scales employed in previous studies.

The lack of a clear definition and consistent implementation of the underlying structure of store image was evident. The proposed model of the underlying structure of store image (Figure 2.2), incorporating specific dimensions and sub dimensions associated with the construct, served to amalgamate current research findings on the structure of store image. This model provided a basis for defining the store image construct. The various dimensions

and sub dimensions identified in the *Proposed model of the underlying structure of store image* (Figure 2.2) were investigated.

It can be concluded that these dimensions are of significant importance in creating a positive consumer store experience (e.g. Atmosphere, Facilities, Institutional, Sales personnel, and Service), ensuring image congruency (e.g. Merchandise), facilitating relationship marketing (e.g. Sales personnel), differentiating the store from other distribution channels (e.g. Atmosphere and Sales personnel), as well as executing a successful integrated marketing communications strategy (e.g. Facilities, Promotion, and Sales personnel).

The identified domain specification and construct definition served as basis for developing a store image scale to measure the perceived importance of the dimensions of store image for practical implementation in the apparel store environment. Scale length was of particular relevance. As the multidimensional nature of store image, including specific dimensions and sub dimensions, resulted in a lengthy scale that was not considered acceptable for practical implementation, the study concluded that a store image scale representing all the sub dimensions of store image would be too lengthy. This led to the development of a 55-item store image scale that only represented the identified store image dimensions. Consequently, the model fit of the proposed sub dimensions could not be assessed through statistical analysis in the subsequent phases of the study. This prohibited the verification of the sub dimensions underpinning the store image construct. However, the scale was successfully implemented in a mall intercept survey including both discount and specialty apparel stores.

The store image scale exhibited acceptable reliability, as well as content and face validity. It demonstrated varying degrees of convergent and discriminant validity for each of the dimensions, as well as for the total scale, and the variance extracted for most of the individual dimensions did not meet the accepted criteria. The results suggested that more error remained in the individual items than the variance that was explained by the individual dimensions and that the individual dimensions are possibly not statistically distinct from one another. This highlighted the need for further scale purification to provide conclusive support for scale validity. Results provided support for the deletion of individual scale items to improve convergent and discriminant validity. The store image scale representing the deletion of these specific items is presented in Appendix 11.

In addition, the store image scale was employed to ascertain whether the proposed model of the underlying structure of store image could be verified empirically. Model fit varied from good to marginally acceptable fit for individual dimensions, but not acceptable fit for the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.2). From the results of this study, the *Final Model of Store Image*, presented in Figure 5.1, was developed. This model reflects the deletion of suggested items from the store image scale to improve the model fit. An additional dimension

was added, namely Store personnel interaction and sub dimensions that were not represented by items retained in the store image scale were excluded.

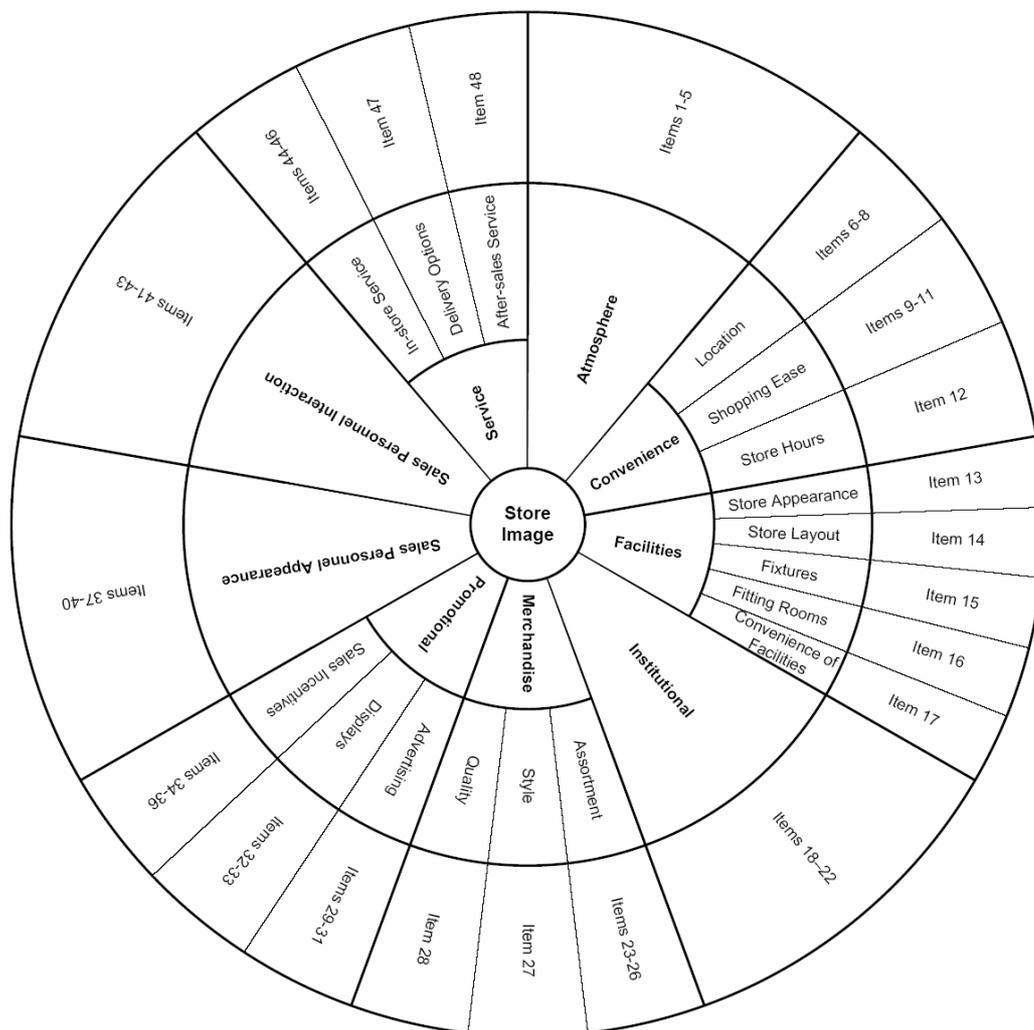


Figure 5.1 Final Model of Store Image

Results derived from the practical implementation of the store image scale concluded that discount and specialty apparel store consumers give similar rankings in perceived importance to store image dimensions. Exceptions were the Convenience and Facilities dimensions, which were ranked higher by discount apparel store consumers and the Service dimension which was ranked higher by specialty apparel store consumers. However, the variances in means between the most and least important dimensions for both discount and specialty stores were relatively small. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that dimensions with a relatively lower ranking were unimportant to consumers. In addition, no statistically significant differences between discount and specialty apparel stores were found in the perceived importance of the dimensions, except for the Institutional and Service dimensions. It can be concluded that all the store image dimensions were perceived as important, regardless of

whether consumers frequent discount or specialty apparel stores. The conclusions drawn from these results, however, should be qualified by highlighting that the study employed a specific sample population, included only selected stores and was undertaken in a specific geographical area within South Africa.

These findings seem to support the gestalt nature of the store image construct where consumers fail to differentiate between the perceived importance of specific dimensions. Consumers form a global impression of a store, based on the interaction between both the tangible and intangible store attributes associated with individual store image dimensions. The positive/negative perception of a specific dimension impacts on the perception of other dimensions and, ultimately, will have a positive/negative effect on the overall perception of store image, i.e. the halo effect. The gestalt nature of store image presents challenges to the measurement of store image. However, it does not eliminate the need for measurement as a prerequisite for theoretical development. This exploratory study found statistical differences between discount and specialty apparel stores in the perception of two dimensions. Further research could expand on these findings and provide insight into other possible differences in the perceived importance of store image dimensions.

The *Final Model of Store Image* and the results from the practical implementation of the store image scale led to a revised definition of store image as *a complex, multidimensional construct based on the perception of tangible and intangible store attributes associated with nine dimensions, namely Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales personnel appearance, Sales personnel interaction and Service. These dimensions are further delineated into sub dimensions which are underpinned by specific store attributes. Store image has a gestalt nature that is represented by the interaction between the salient tangible and intangible store attributes. The formation of store image relies on the perception of a store which varies by retailer, product and target market. By implication, store image is influenced by (1) the consumer's perception of a set of salient store attributes, (2) the importance the consumer places on the various store image dimensions, sub dimensions and the associated store attributes, as well as (3) the retailer's manipulation of these store attributes through strategic management.*

It can be concluded that the store image scale and store image definition, including the *Final Model of Store Image*, developed in this study contributes significantly to the study of apparel store image. A clear construct definition, as well as reliable and valid measures, is vital to the scientific research process and theoretical development. The consistent employment of this scale and definition could significantly enhance the generalisation of results across different research studies, thereby expanding the existing body of knowledge on apparel store image.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR APPAREL RETAILERS

The conclusions regarding this study and the specific set objectives hold a variety of implications for retailers. The current apparel retail environment is marked by intense, competitive activity providing retailers with a challenge to achieve sustainable growth and associated increased profitability. Of significant importance to retailers is their ability to differentiate themselves from their competitors, although this in itself is becoming more difficult in a marketplace defined by unprecedented consumer diversity and market complexity. By following a consumer-centric approach, retailers gain a thorough understanding of the consumer's individual needs and preferences and are able to ensure that these are met. This will enable retailers to successfully differentiate themselves and secure a competitive advantage, thereby laying the foundation for continued success. The following implications can be derived from this research study:

- ◆ The *Final Model of Store Image* (Figure 5.1) postulated in this study identifies the dimensions and sub dimensions underpinning apparel store image. The perceived importance of these dimensions and sub dimensions by the target consumer provides a framework for retailers to build a favourable store image. Manipulating the tangible and intangible store attributes associated with these dimensions and sub dimensions will enable retailers to strategically manage their own store image.
- ◆ The store image model developed in this study provides retailers with a comprehensive but concise definition of the multidimensional nature of store image. It enables retailers to gain an understanding of store image formation based on the consumer's perception of salient store attributes and the importance the consumer places on various store image dimensions, which varies by retailer, product and target market. The definition also emphasises which store image dimensions and sub dimensions could be manipulated through strategic management in order to influence store image formation by the consumer.
- ◆ Store image has a gestalt nature that is represented by the interaction between salient tangible and intangible store attributes. By implication, consumers rely on a global impression of the store and are, therefore, subject to the halo effect, where the positive/negative perception of individual store image dimensions is subject to the positive/negative overall impression. Thus, it is vital that store attributes should be manipulated in such a manner as to ensure that there is cohesion and consistency. Any dissonance will have a negative impact on the positive gestalt perception of store image.
- ◆ The perceived importance of the dimensions of apparel store image can be measured. A reliable and valid scale should be employed to ensure that legitimate inferences are made

from the results obtained. This study makes a significant contribution to the development of such a scale for practical implementation. This store image scale will assist retailers in ascertaining which store image dimensions are salient to their target market and allow them to incorporate results in their corporate and retail store strategy.

- ◆ Both discount and specialty apparel retailers should gain insight into their target consumers' expectations with regard to the Atmosphere, Promotion, Merchandise, Institutional and Sales personnel dimensions, since their importance is ranked similarly by consumers of both store types. These expectations should be addressed in their retail strategy.
- ◆ The Facilities and Convenience dimensions are ranked higher in perceived importance by discount apparel store consumers. Thus, discount retailers should ensure that they allocate adequate resources to ensure that store facilities meet consumer needs. In addition, discount stores should offer consumers their expected level of convenience.
- ◆ Specialty apparel store consumers ranked the Service dimensions higher in perceived importance. Specialty store retailers should, therefore, place specific emphasis on the services they offer.
- ◆ The difference between the dimensions ranked most and least important by both discount and specialty apparel store consumers are relatively small for both store types. This indicates that all dimensions are important to consumers, regardless of whether they shop at a discount or specialty store. This highlights the need for retailers to focus on all dimensions of store image in their retail strategies and will ensure a positive gestalt perception and halo effect.

It is imperative that retailers gain an understanding of the salience of store image dimensions for their target consumer. This will allow them to manipulate these dimensions in their retail strategy to meet and exceed consumer expectations. Ultimately, this will lead to successful differentiation in the current competitive market, as store image contributes to corporate and retail store branding.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

This study relied on the strengths derived from a rigorous study methodology underpinned by a sound theoretical base. These strengths include the development of two theoretical models as point of departure for the study, extensive pilot studies and a regulated sampling procedure, as well as the development, testing, purification and practical implementation of a store image scale. However, some limitations were imposed on the study. This section aims

to highlight the boundaries and limitations of the study in accordance with time, financial and feasibility constraints.

- ◆ The proposed relationships in the theoretical model of store image and related consumer behaviour variables were conceptual in nature. They were not investigated through empirical research in this study.
- ◆ The study was limited to the geographical area of Cape Town, a city in the Western Cape province of South Africa. This imposes limitations on the generalisation of the study's results.
- ◆ The language employed in the store image scale could be considered a limitation. The scale was administered in English, although this was not the home language of all respondents in the specific geographical area. This could have had a negative effect on the comprehension of the scale items.
- ◆ To ensure that the scale length was acceptable for practical implementation, the store image scale could not be representative of all the sub dimensions proposed in the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.1). Therefore, the model fit of the individual sub dimensions could not be assessed through statistical analysis. This limited the insight into the underlying theoretical structure, specifically regarding the sub dimensions, of store image investigated in this study.
- ◆ The sample size requirements for the testing of the *Revised Model of Store Image* (Figure 4.1), including the sub dimensions, simultaneously through confirmatory factor analysis fell outside the scope of this exploratory study. It could be argued that the testing of the comprehensive model would have provided additional insight.

However, these limitations were considered and addressed in the research design, statistical analysis and interpretation of the results. Therefore, the importance and relevance of the results of this exploratory research study continue to serve as a basis for future research.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for future research could be formulated:

- ◆ The *Final Model of Store Image* (Figure 5.1) should be tested on the basis of results obtained from administering the revised store image scale (Appendix 11). The further

validation of the model will enhance the definition of store image by confirming the dimensions that underpin the construct.

- ◆ The store image scale (Appendix 11) that was adapted on the basis of the items identified for deletion in this study should be tested empirically. Research in this regard will serve to verify scale reliability and further establish scale validity.
- ◆ The store image scale should be employed to measure consumers' and retail management's perception of store image. This will assist in ensuring that there is congruency between the perceived importance of store image dimensions by consumers and retail management.
- ◆ The store image scale should be adapted to measure consumers' perception of store image, i.e. whether they have a positive or negative perception of store image. This will enable insight into consumers' actual perception of a store's image. It could further be adapted to measure consumers' ideal of store image, i.e. how consumers would like the store image to be.
- ◆ The store image scale data could be employed to identify the dimensions that have the greatest impact on the formation of store image. Thus, a small variation in the most important dimensions should result in a large effect on the overall positive perception of store image.
- ◆ The store image scale should be applied to include other product areas, as well as different geographical areas and sample populations. Such research will provide additional evidence of scale reliability and scale validity, as well as the fit of the *Final Model of Store Image*. In addition, it will improve the generalisation of results obtained from the employment of the store image scale.
- ◆ The methodology employed in this study could be used as point of departure in further scale development research. A comprehensive five-phase scale development process is outlined. It guides the researcher from initial domain specification and construct definition, to assessing the reliability and validity of the store image scale through practical implementation in the apparel retail environment.
- ◆ The relationship between apparel store image and corporate and retail store branding warrants further investigation through empirical research. This will enhance the contextual framework for the study of store image.

- ◆ The proposed conceptual theoretical model of the relationship between store image and related consumer behaviour variables could be tested empirically. Thus, further insight will be gained into the store image construct domain.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Corporate and retail store branding strategies empower retailers to successfully differentiate themselves from their competitors in the complex, competitive apparel retail environment. The retail store is the culmination of the differentiation strategies. It is here that consumers actively interact with the corporate and retail store brand. Thus, store image becomes an integral component of corporate and retail store branding. By implication, an understanding of the perceived importance that consumers place on the dimensions of apparel store image becomes vital for retail differentiation. This exploratory study provides insight into what constitutes the underlying structure of apparel store image through the *Final Model of Store Image* and developed a scale for the measurement of the perceived importance of the dimensions of apparel store image. This will enable retailers to gain insight into the complex and multidimensional nature of store image, as well as being able to measure which dimensions are perceived as important by their target consumer. The integration and manipulation of these salient dimensions in the corporate and retail store brand strategies will be the key to retail differentiation and, ultimately, success and survival in the complex and highly competitive apparel market.

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Appendix 1

Summary of sample population, product group, and reported reliability and validity of the store image measurement scale employed in store image research

RESEARCHER/S	SAMPLE POPULATION	PRODUCT GROUP	RELIABILITY	VALIDITY
Amine & Cadenat, 2003	French males and females – all age groups	Various product groups	No	No
Amirani & Gates, 1993	American male and female students	Various product groups	Qualitative	Qualitative
Baker et al., 2002	American male and female students	Cards and gifts	Yes	Yes
Baugh & Davis, 1989	American female students	Apparel	Yes	No
Bellenger et al., 1977	American adult females	Various product groups	No	No
Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998	Swiss males and females – all age groups	Various product groups	Yes	No
Burt & Carralero-Encinas, 2000	Spanish and British males and females – all age groups	Various product groups	No	No
Carpenter & Moore, 2006	American male and female adults	Groceries	No	No
Chang & Tu, 2005	Taiwanese male and female adults	Various product groups	Yes	No
Chowdhary, 1999	American elderly males and females	Apparel	Yes	No
Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003	Canadian households	Groceries	Yes	No
De Klerk et al., 1998	South African female adults	Apparel	Qualitative	Qualitative
Donovan & Rossiter, 1982	American male and female students	Various product groups	Yes	No
Erdem et al., 1999	American households	Apparel	Yes	No
Gentry & Burns, 1977-1978	American households; American male and female students	Various product groups	No	No
Gehrt & Yan, 2004	American males and females – all age groups	Various product groups	Yes	No
Gómez et al., 2003	American males and females – all age groups	Groceries	Yes	No
Grace & O’Cass, 2005	Australian males and females - all age groups	Various product groups	Yes	Yes
Graeff, 1996	American male and female adults	Apparel	Yes	No
Grossbart et al, 1990	Belgian male and female adults	Various product groups	Yes	No
Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000	British male and female adults	Alcoholic drinks	No	No
Huddleston et al., 1990	American elderly females	Various product groups	Yes	No

RESEARCHER/S	SAMPLE POPULATION	PRODUCT GROUP	RELIABILITY	VALIDITY
Hyllegard et al., 2005	Spanish male and female adults	Apparel	Yes	No
Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984	American males and females - all age groups	Apparel	No	No
Jamal & Goode, 2001	British males and females – all age groups	Jewellery	Yes	No
Janse van Noordwyk, 2002	South African female adults	Apparel	Qualitative	Qualitative
Jin & Kim, 2003	Korean married female adults	Groceries	Yes	No
Joyce & Lambert, 1996	American males and females - all age groups	Various product groups		No
Kim & Han, 2000	American male and female students	Apparel	No	No
Ko & Kincade, 1997	American apparel retailers	Apparel	No	No
Koo, 2003	Korean male and female adults	Various product groups	Yes	Yes
Lee & Johnson, 1997	American male and female students	Apparel	Qualitative	Qualitative
Lumpkin et al., 1985	American elderly males and females	Various product groups	No	No
Marks, 1976	American female students	Apparel	No	No
Mattson, 1982	American adult females	Apparel	Yes	No
Miranda et al., 2005	Australian male and female adults	Groceries	No	No
Mitchell & Kiral, 1998	British males and females - all age groups	Groceries	No	No
Morschett et al., 2005	German male and female adults	Groceries	No	No
Moye & Giddings, 2002	American elderly males and females	Apparel	Yes	No
Moye & Kincade, 2002	American adult females	Apparel	Yes	No
Newberry et al., 2003	American males and females – all age groups	Restaurants	No	No
Oates et al., 1996	American elderly males and females	Over-the-counter drugs	Yes	No
Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001	Dutch males and females – all age groups	Various product groups	Yes	Yes
Paulins & Geistfeld, 2003	American adult females	Apparel	No	No
Porter & Claycomb, 1977	American male and female students	Apparel	Yes	No
Quester et al., 2000	Australian and Malaysian students	Various product groups	Yes	No
Schiffman et al., 1977	American male and female adults	Audio equipment	No	No

RESEARCHER/S	SAMPLE POPULATION	PRODUCT GROUP	RELIABILITY	VALIDITY
Semeijn et al., 2004	Dutch males and females – all age groups	Groceries	Yes	No
Sen et al., 2002	American male and female students	Apparel	Yes	No
Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 2002	American adult females	Apparel	Yes	No
Shim et al., 1990	American adult males	Apparel	No	No
Solgaard & Hansen, 2003	Danish households	Groceries	No	No
Sullivan et al., 2002	American male and female students	Apparel	No	No
Thang & Tan, 2003	Singaporean male and female adults	Various product groups	No	No
Thorpe & Avery, 1983-1984	American adult females	Apparel	No	No
Van de Velde et al., 1996	Canadian and British male and female students	Apparel	No	No
Vahie & Paswan, 2006	American male and female Gen Y	Apparel	Yes	Yes
Van Kenhove et al., 1999	Belgian male and female adults	DIY	No	No
Ward et al., 1992	American male and female students	Fast food restaurants	Yes	No
Wheatley & Chiu, 1977	American adult females	Carpets	Qualitative	Qualitative
Williams & Slama, 1995	American adult couples	Various product groups	No	No

Appendix 2
Summary of dimensions identified from the literature

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	DIMENSION FROM LITERATURE	RESEARCHERS
Age	Age related Special needs of the elderly	Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990 Lumpkin et al., 1985
Atmosphere	Activity dimension* Clean and spacious atmosphere Music/aesthetics dimension* Store atmosphere Store atmosphere – visual Store atmosphere – aural Store atmosphere – olfactory Store atmosphere - tactile	Bellizzi et al., 1983 Kim & Jin, 2001 Moye & Kincade, 2002 Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Koo, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Than & Tan, 2002 Kotler, 1973-1974 Kotler, 1973-1974 Kotler, 1973-1974 Kotler, 1973-1974
Clientele	Clientele	Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975
Convenience	Accessibility* Congestion* Convenience Convenience (economic) Convenience – store location and mobility Convenient facilities Errand shopping* Facility convenience In-store convenience and physical environment Leisure activities* Location and convenience Promotions/convenience Proximity and familiarity* Service convenience Variety under one roof*	Thang & Tan, 2002 Kim & Jin, 2001 Chowdhary, 1999; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Huddleston et al., 1990; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002 Lindquist, 1974-1975; Marks 1976 Bellenger et al., 1977 Lumpkin et al., 1985 Koo, 2003 Sullivan et al., 2002 Kim & Jin, 2001 Lumpkin et al., 1985 Sullivan et al., 2002 Kleinhans, 2003 Wong & Teas, 2001 Sullivan et al., 2002 Kim & Jin, 2001 Bellenger et al., 1977
Credit	Credit Credit facilities	Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990 Kleinhans, 2003

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	DIMENSION FROM LITERATURE	RESEARCHERS
Environment	Internal store environment Shopping environment Store environment	Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Sullivan et al., 2002 Ko & Kincade, 1997
Facilities	Appearance* Congestion Convenient facilities Facilities Facility convenience Family shopping* Outside attractiveness* Physical facilities Service – store facilities	Manolis et al., 1994 Kim & Jin, 2001 Koo, 2003 Thang & Tan, 2002; Wong & Yu, 2003 Kim & Jin, 2001 Sullivan et al., 2002 Marks, 1976 Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975 Lee & Johnson, 1997
Institutional	Institutional Institutional factors	Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978 Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975
Layout	Sensory/layout dimension Store layout	Moye & Kincade, 2002 Kleinhans, 2003
Location	Convenience – store location and mobility Location Location Location and convenience	Lumpkin et al., 1985 Koo, 2003 Wong & Yu, 2003 Kleinhans, 2003
Merchandise	Brand name* Fabric* Fashionability* Fashion goods Focused shopping* Merchandise Merchandise requests Merchandise value Merchandise variety Merchandising Popularity* Products	Sullivan et al., 2002 Cary & Zylla, 1981 Marks, 1976 Kim & Jin, 2001 Sullivan et al., 2002 Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Erdem et al., 1999; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Wong & Yu, 2003 Kleinhans, 2003 Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Koo, 2003; Thang & Tan, 2002 Wong & Yu, 2003 Zimmer & Golden, 1988

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	DIMENSION FROM LITERATURE	RESEARCHERS
	Rich mix of commodities and services Status* Time/availability*	Sullivan et al., 2002 Erdem et al., 1999 Ko & Kincade, 1997
Post-transaction	Post-transaction satisfaction	Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978 Janse van Noordwyk, 2002 Lindquist, 1974-1975
Price	Price Price and quality aspects Price competitiveness Price/quality dimensions	Erdem et al., 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990; Sullivan et al., 2002 Lumpkin et al., 1985 Kim & Jin, 2001 Bellizzi et al., 1983
Promotion	Advertising* Interest shopping* Promotion Promotions Promotions/convenience Sales & Incentives*	Marks, 1976 Sullivan et al., 2002 Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975 Thang & Tan, 2002 Wong & Teas, 2001 Wong & Yu, 2003
Quality	Functional quality Price and quality aspects Price/quality dimensions Quality of the centre Quality/reputation Relational quality Technical quality Upscale quality	Odekerken-Schroder et al., 2001 Lumpkin et al., 1985 Bellizzi et al., 1983 Bellenger et al., 1977 Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990 Odekerken-Schroder et al., 2001 Odekerken-Schroder et al., 2001 Wong & Teas, 2001
Reputation	Quality/reputation Reputation	Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston et al., 1990 Thang & Tan, 2002
Sales personnel	Employee service Personal interaction* Personnel Preference for salespeople Salesmanship Salespeople service Salesperson/service Service – sales associates Attributes	Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Koo, 2003 Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Wong & Teas, 2001 Kleinhans, 2003 Marks, 1976 Kleinhans, 2003 Manolis et al., 1994 Lee & Johnson, 1997

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	DIMENSION FROM LITERATURE	RESEARCHERS
Service	After sales service Handling of Complaints* Core service Employee service In-store service Post-transaction service Presence of related services Rich mix of commodities and services Salespeople service Salesperson/service Service Service convenience Services Service – sales associates attributes Servicescape Service – store amenities Service – store facilities Value-added service Various store services	Koo, 2003 Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Grace & O’Cass, 2004 Grace & O’Cass, 2004; Koo, 2003 Thang & Tan, 2002 Thang & Tan, 2002 Bellenger et al., 1977 Sullivan et al., 2002 Kleinhans, 2003 Manolis et al., 1994 Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Marks, 1976; Wong & Yu, 2003 Kim & Jin, 1997 Sullivan et al., 2002 Lee & Johnson, 1997 Grace & O’Cass, 2004 Lee & Johnson, 1997 Lee & Johnson, 1997 Ko & Kincade, 1997 Kleinhans, 2003
Value	Merchandise value Value Value-added service	Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004 Koo, 2003 Ko & Kincade, 1997

Appendix 3
Summary of sub dimension identified from the literature

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	SUB DIMENSIONS	RESEARCHERS
Store atmosphere	Colours Décor Neatness Size Smell Smoothness Softness Sound Store atmosphere	Bellizzi et al., 1983; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kim & Jin, 2001 Koo, 2003; Kotler, 1973-1974; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Moye & Kincade, 2002; Thang & Tan, 2002
Convenience	Caring sales personnel Check out Convenience Duration of travel Ease of travel Enclosed mall Labels/tags Location Location close to home Location close to work Location near other clothing stores Location near a variety of other stores/facilities Package carryout Parking Phone cards Shopping ease Store accessibility Store familiarity Store hours Strong carry bags Transportation Uncrowded Variety within store	Bellenger et al., 1977; Chowdhary, 1999; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Huddleston et al., 1990; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kim & Jin, 2001; Kleinhans, 2003; Koo, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Marks 1976; Sullivan et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Thang & Tan, 2002; Wong & Teas, 2001; Wong & Yu, 2003
Facilities	Aisle placement Check out Clean store Entrance/exit Family shopping Fitting rooms Floor covering Hangers	Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003 Kim & Jin, 2001; Koo, 2003; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Manolis et al., 1994; Marks, 1976; Moye & Kincade, 2002; Sullivan et al., 2002; Thang & Tan,

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	SUB DIMENSIONS	RESEARCHERS
	Information boards Lighting Mirrors Outside appearance Physical facilities Refreshment within store Rest area Social class Spaciousness Store layout Store maintenance Temperature Washrooms	2002; Wong & Yu, 2003
Institutional	Attractive service materials Can identify with store Clientele Communication Discrimination Friend association Real women Realistic models Sales personnel – clientele Self image Social class Store name Store reputation	Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Lindquist, 1974-1975
Merchandise	Appropriate merchandise Closed/open Dependable merchandise Labels/brands Merchandise assortment Merchandise availability Merchandise fashion Merchandise price Merchandise quality Merchandise value Seasonal changes not too early Security Size Social class Specialised merchandise	Bellizzi et al., 1983; Cary & Zylla, 1981; Chowdhary, 1999; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Huddleston et al., 1990; Erdem et al., 1999; Janse van Noordwyk; Kim & Jin, 2001; Ko & Kincade, 1997; Koo, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Marks, 1976 Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001; Sullivan et al., 2002; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Thang & Tan, 2002 Wong & Yu, 2003; Zimmer & Golden, 1988

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	SUB DIMENSIONS	RESEARCHERS
	Store quality Unique merchandise Variety within store	
Promotional	Advertising Displays Incentives Interesting store Personal contact Promotion Realistic models Sales Special events	Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Marks, 1976; Sullivan et al., 2002; Thang & Tan, 2002; Wong & Teas, 2001; Wong & Yu, 2003
Sales personnel	Appearance of sales personnel Attention from sales personnel Courteous sales personnel Friendly sales personnel Helpful sales personnel Knowledgeable sales personnel Professional sales personnel Sales personnel your age Sales personnel your gender Social interaction Trust sales personnel Unobtrusive sales personnel	Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Kleinhans, 2003; Koo, 2003; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Manolis et al., 1994; Marks, 1976; Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2001; Terblanché & Boshoff, 2004; Wong & Teas, 2001
Service	Alterations 'Appro' facilities Bank card Complaint handling Caring sales personnel Credit Delivery options Gift wrapping Inter-store transfers Layaway Number of sales personnel Packaging Payment options Phone orders Post-transaction satisfaction Professional sales personnel Return policy Sales personnel advice	Bellenger et al., 1977; Chowdhary, 1999; Erdem et al., 1999; Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Huddleston et al., 1990; Janse van Noordwyk, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003; Kim & Jin, 1997; Ko & Kincade, 1997; Koo, 2003; Lee & Johnson, 1997; Lindquist, 1974-1975; Manolis et al., 1994; Marks, 1976; Sullivan et al., 2002; Thang & Tan, 2002; Wong & Yu, 2003

IDENTIFIED DIMENSION	SUB DIMENSIONS	RESEARCHERS
	Sales personnel service Self-service Service Store card Trolley/basket Unobtrusive sales personnel Variety within store	

Appendix 4
Composite list of attributes identified from the literature

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
Store Atmosphere	Décor	Colours Décor Neatness	symbols and colours colour colour combination colours drab/colourful fashionable interior attractive décor store has attractive décor decorations shapes decoration finishing materials posters style of décor physical attractiveness of store exciting and bright store design internal layout and design the store is neat
	Smell	Smell	scent freshness neutral smell air quality
	Sound	Sound	volume pitch music background music noise level
	Store atmosphere	Size Store atmosphere	small/large size store atmosphere is important pleasant atmosphere feeling special and welcome when entering the clothing store it is pleasant to shop in atmpshere/congeniality good feeling about large-size store general atmosphere relaxed cosy boring/stimulating depressing/cheerful unlively/lively unmotivating/motivating store ambience conservative/progressive dull/exciting positive shopping experience congeniality conservative/modern old-fashioned/modern outdated/modern
Convenience	Check out	Check out	convenient/fast check-out convenient for fast checkout it takes too much time to be checked out purchase points fast checkout faster checkout time
	Travel	Duration of travel Ease of travel	short time to reach stores duration of travel closeness of a mall easy to drive to store ease of travel

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
	Location	<p>Enclosed mall Location</p> <p>Location close to home</p> <p>Location close to work</p> <p>Location near other clothing stores</p> <p>Location near variety of stores/facilities</p> <p>Smoking policy</p>	<p>enclosed mall</p> <p>convenient location</p> <p>located at retailing belt</p> <p>inconvenient/convenient location</p> <p>locational convenience</p> <p>location</p> <p>convenience of location</p> <p>convenience of store location</p> <p>location convenience</p> <p>location of store</p> <p>store location</p> <p>location and parking</p> <p>store location close to home</p> <p>clothing store close to my home</p> <p>store is located close to my house</p> <p>store is nearby</p> <p>convenient to home</p> <p>convenience to home</p> <p>proximity to home</p> <p>convenient to work</p> <p>shopping centre where other clothing stores are nearby</p> <p>variety of stores close together</p> <p>restaurants and other stores nearby to clothing stores</p> <p>variety of stores located near the store</p> <p>convenient to other stores shopped</p> <p>near/not near other stores I want to shop</p> <p>presence of convenient facilities including drug store/eye and health care centers etc.</p> <p>presence of public facilities such as bank/post office/public office</p> <p>the store has excellent entertainment alternatives for sport/food and beverages</p> <p>convenient to do one-stop-shopping</p> <p>restaurant</p> <p>variety of stores</p> <p>number of large department stores</p> <p>I usually combine things at bank and post office with shopping trips</p> <p>I can buy groceries on the same trip</p> <p>I usually go somewhere to eat on the same trip</p> <p>I like to combine leisure activities with shopping trips</p> <p>I go to the nearest department store or supermarket because it is convenient</p> <p>availability of supermarket</p> <p>food courts</p> <p>having a bank/restaurants/movie theatre</p> <p>there are cafes and restaurants in the same area</p> <p>I usually go to shopping areas where there are supermarkets, department stores and specialty stores</p> <p>comparative shopping</p> <p>eating places (restaurants, food courts etc.)</p> <p>entertainment facilities (theatres/video games etc.)</p> <p>existence of department/discount stores</p> <p>kiosks</p> <p>smoking policy/availability of smoking designated areas</p>
	Parking	Parking	<p>there is easy parking</p> <p>availability of parking</p> <p>availability of parking area near clothing stores</p> <p>convenient parking</p> <p>easy to park</p> <p>it has good parking facilities</p> <p>parking</p> <p>parking facilities</p> <p>poor/good parking facilities</p> <p>ample parking</p> <p>free parking available</p> <p>location and parking</p> <p>parking facilities</p>

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
	Shopping ease	Convenience Labels/tags Package carryout Phone cards Shopping ease	convenience readable labels/tags on products package carryout MTN/Vodacom/Telkom prepaid cards easy to find what you are looking for ease of finding items small store so items can be found easily limited variety so items can be found easily cater for people in a hurry as well as on a stroll I get what I need as quickly as possible package units are too bulky to purchase access to merchandise merchandise easy to find easy to find what I'm looking for in the store the shelf is not too high to pick up merchandise with hands user-friendly easy to find items you want shopping ease ease of location of merchandise too much walking traffic flow in and out of mall it's easy to get from one place to another it is convenient to move from one floor to another or to a parking lot it is convenient to move around with a cart due to narrow aisles ease of movement vertical transportation easy accessibility accessible location within mall ease of access in and out of mall easy to find stores I shop at stores I am familiar with store familiarity strong carry bags uncrowded stores it is too crowded with people congested environment congestion in walkway/crowding traffic congestion
	Store hours	Store hours	convenient operating hours convenient store hours inconvenient/convenient store hours convenient operation hours late closing hours opening hours shopping hours store hours
	Transportation	Transportation	availability of access to public transport transportation to store convenient to take public transportation to get to store it offers convenient time schedules for shuttle bus service
Facilities	Store layout	Aisle placement Spaciousness Store layout	position of aisles width of aisles wide aisles aisle placement/width spaciousness layout convenient store layout the layout makes it easy to get around easy to move through store store layout attractive layout good/bad layout internal layout and design layout and architecture layout and atmosphere
	Store appearance	Clean store	cleanliness cleanliness of the store store is clean cleanliness of stores

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
		Entrance/exit Outside appearance Store maintenance	convenient entrance/exit visible/easy access of entrance visible/easy access of store exit interesting store front adequate well-designed entrances portal architecture outside appearance of clothing store building and landscaping good/bad appearance layout and architecture outside appearance store appearance windows and facia maintenance of the store general appearance good/bad appearance good/bad physical condition up-to-date store need/does not need to be remodelled
	Facilities convenience	Family shopping Refreshment within store Rest area Washrooms	it is a good place for shopping with children playpen I like to go shopping with my family it is easy to shop with my family ease of taking children refreshment booths water cans comfortable place for sitting and resting when tired rest areas in store sitting area resting seats couch availability of seats/rest areas in the mall washrooms restroom restrooms
	Fitting rooms	Fitting rooms	large private dressing rooms fitting room try-out rooms sufficient number of dressing rooms enough light in the dressing room mirrors in the dressing rooms fitting rooms dressing rooms number of fitting rooms
	Fixtures	Floor covering Hangers Information boards Lighting Mirrors	carpet flooring floor covering floors hangers sufficient direction information boards and posters signs lighting brightness dull/bright enough lights in the store mirrors

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
		Merchandise availability Seasonal changes not too early Unique merchandise Variety within store	availability of advertised products availability of advertized clothing availability in store availability fully stocked a variety of brand names that are available in many different sizes availability as advertised availability of fashion fabrics availability of household fabrics reduced stockouts fast turnaround of goods seasonal changes not too early unique merchandise ordinary,uninteresting/unusual, interesting merchandise uniqueness exclusive store similar/not similar to other stores special/ordinary variety in one store I usually get all I need from the same place
	Merchandise style	Appropriate merchandise Merchandise fashion Specialised merchandise	right merchandise for target market sizes and styles suited to my own age correct styling correct materials merchandise that suits the large-size female accuracy of product filled a niche market garment fit appeal of clothing in store availability of petite clothing fit and size for your age group merchandise styling narrow/broad age group market size sizes carried style taste similarity youthful styles number and quality of stores that carries his sizes size ranges presence of new fashions the store has the latest merchandise high fashion items styling/fashion fashionable fashion newest styles later/sooner than other stores reputation for fashion outdated/up-to-date merchandise styles attractive up-to-date merchandise fashion styles fashions I like merchandise fashion and style stock latest items stock newest fashions style of merchandise good for specific products negative comments about specific products accessories specialised clothing perfume cosmetics bathing suits sexy apparel I like to buy from specialty stores

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
		<p>Friendly sales personnel</p> <p>Helpful sales personnel</p> <p>Knowledgeable sales personnel</p> <p>Professional sales personnel</p> <p>Sales personnel</p> <p>Social interaction</p> <p>Trust sales personnel</p>	<p>friendly personnel</p> <p>friendly/unfriendly store personnel</p> <p>salespeople are unfriendly, discourteous/friendly, courteous</p> <p>friendly cashiers</p> <p>friendly salespeople</p> <p>friendly store personnel</p> <p>friendly sales assistants</p> <p>store atmosphere - sales assistants</p> <p>friendliness of salespeople</p> <p>friendly sales personnel</p> <p>friendly/not friendly</p> <p>professional and friendly staff</p> <p>willingness of sales people to wait on older consumers</p> <p>help in finding items in store</p> <p>easy to get questions answered</p> <p>always willing to help</p> <p>caring/helpful salespeople</p> <p>employees always willing to help</p> <p>employees never too busy to respond to requests</p> <p>salespeople are/are not helpful</p> <p>employees of the store are helpful and friendly and courteous</p> <p>employees at the store are always willing to respond to my request promptly</p> <p>are always willing to help me</p> <p>provide me with prompt service</p> <p>are never too busy to assist me</p> <p>helpful store personnel</p> <p>employees at the store are very kind in respond to my questions and inquiries</p> <p>employees always willing to help</p> <p>employees never too busy to respond to requests</p> <p>helpful sales personnel</p> <p>put clothes back after shoppers have fitted</p> <p>helpfulness of salespersons</p> <p>helpful sales clerks</p> <p>helpful sales people</p> <p>helpful/not helpful salesperson</p> <p>prompt helpful service</p> <p>knowledgeable salespeople</p> <p>salespeople do/do not know their merchandise well</p> <p>knowledgeable sales personnel</p> <p>salespeople don't/do know their merchandise</p> <p>employee knowledge</p> <p>knowledgeable sales clerks</p> <p>salesman's expertise</p> <p>professional</p> <p>professional and friendly staff</p> <p>sales assistants</p> <p>general quality of sales personnel</p> <p>sales personnel</p> <p>staff</p> <p>store personnel</p> <p>the store is conveniently located to meet people</p> <p>having a chat with other shoppers or store personnel</p> <p>social contact with other shoppers or store personnel</p> <p>friendship with other shoppers or store personnel</p> <p>store in which only a few/all people shop</p> <p>can trust employees</p> <p>honest salespeople</p> <p>honest</p> <p>I can trust employees of the store</p> <p>safe transaction with employees</p>

DIMENSION	IDENTIFIED SUB DIMENSIONS	INCLUDED SUB DIMENSIONS	SUB DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FROM LITERATURE
		Payment options Store card	convenience of payment payment options lay-away available store card facilities it is convenience since payment can be made with a store credit card difficult/easy to open charge account store cards available
	In-store service	Appro facilities Gift wrapping Inter-store transfers Number of sales personnel Packaging Sales personnel advice Sales personnel service Self-service Service Trolley/basket	appro facilities gift wrapping inter-store transfers enough salespeople adequate number of sales personnel few salespeople/limited service number of salespeople appropriate packaging salespeople's advice to help me with my buying decisions helpful suggestions appropriateness of salesperson's explanation advice on purchase advice regarding merchandise salespeople's advice to help me find clothes consultants salesclerk service sales assistants employee service personnel and service quick/slow service by salesperson sales service in the store self-service no commission self-help sale I always get good service offers good/bad service I prefer good services to low prices service/general international service service quality service variety good service good/bad service service service and global policy store service a trolley or basket to carry clothing basket/bag to put things in when shopping
	Delivery options	Delivery options Phone orders	delivery to home delivery delivery options shipping delivery service to my home/residence mail-order services through catalogue internet ordering facilities easy to get home delivery mail order is a convenient way to do shopping home delivery deliveries phone orders telephonic orders phone in orders

Appendix 5
Item pool after first expert judging

Items in black indicate corresponding items in both item pools (numbering of original item pool were maintained to indicate changes in ordering/grouping)

Items in bold indicate deleted items from the first item pool

Items in italics indicate new items in the second item pool

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
Atmosphere décor 1 style of décor in store 2 fashionable store interior 3 attractive décor in store 4 exciting store interior 5 colour combination used in store décor 6 colourful store interior 7 suitable finishing materials used in store interior 142 comfortable temperature in store 8 store is neat smell 9 neutral smell in store 10 fresh smell in store 11 pleasant scent in store sound 12 music played in store 13 volume of music played in store 14 acceptable noise level store atmosphere 15 store atmosphere 16 store congeniality (amiability/friendliness) 17 store ambience (mood/vibe/character/setting) 18 store is pleasant to shop in 19 positive shopping experience 20 feeling special when entering store 21 feeling welcome when entering store 22 good feeling about store 23 relaxed atmosphere in store 24 cosy atmosphere in store 25 stimulating store atmosphere 26 cheerful store atmosphere 27 lively store atmosphere 28 exciting store atmosphere 29 store is conservative 30 store is progressive 31 store is modern 32 store is old-fashioned 33 store is youthful 34 store is mature 35 size of store	Atmosphere store interior 1 style of décor in store 2 fashionable/trendy store interior 3 attractive décor in store 4 exciting store interior 5 colours used in store interior 6 suitable finishing materials used in store interior 7 comfortable store temperature 8 store is neat smell 9 neutral smell in store 10 fresh smell in store 11 pleasant scent in store sound 12 music played in store 13 <i>type of music played in store</i> 14 volume of music played in store 15 acceptable noise level store atmosphere 16 store congeniality (e.g friendliness) 17 store ambience (mood/vibe) 18 store is pleasant to shop in 19 positive shopping experience 20 feeling special when entering store 21 feeling welcome when entering store 22 relaxed atmosphere in store 23 cosy atmosphere in store 24 stimulating store atmosphere 25 cheerful store atmosphere 26 lively store atmosphere 27 exciting store atmosphere 28 conservative store atmosphere 29 modern store atmosphere 30 old-fashioned store atmosphere 31 youthful store atmosphere 32 mature store atmosphere 33 size of store

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>location</p> <p>41 convenient store location</p> <p>42 store location close to home</p> <p>43 store location close to work</p> <p>44 store is near to other clothing stores</p> <p>45 store is conveniently located to variety of other stores</p> <p>store is close to variety of other stores</p> <p>46 (department stores/discount stores/specialty stores/supermarket)</p> <p>47 store is close to eating places (restaurants/cafes/kiosks/food courts)</p> <p>48 store is close to entertainment/leisure facilities (movie theatre/video games)</p> <p>49 store is close to health care options</p> <p>50 store is close to bank</p> <p>51 store is close to post office</p> <p>52 store located in enclosed mall</p> <p>63 store is easily accessible within mall</p> <p>53 availability of smoking designated areas in store</p> <p>54 availability of smoking designated areas in mall</p> <p>parking</p> <p>55 convenient parking</p> <p>56 availability of parking facilities</p> <p>57 parking facilities located near clothing store</p> <p>58 availability of ample parking</p> <p>59 availability of free parking</p> <p>60 availability of secure parking</p> <p>61 easy parking</p> <p>shopping ease</p> <p>62 store is easily accessible</p> <p>64 ease of finding store</p> <p>65 easy flow of traffic in mall</p> <p>67 easy flow of traffic in store</p> <p>66 walkways in mall are not crowded with people</p> <p>68 store is not crowded with people</p> <p>69 ease of getting from one area to another within store</p> <p>70 aisles are not crowded with people</p> <p>71 store aisles are wide enough to shop with trolleys</p> <p>72 convenient to move from one floor to another</p> <p>73 availability of vertical transportation (escalators/lifts)</p> <p>74 convenient to move from store to parking area</p> <p>75 not too much walking required within store</p>	<p>location</p> <p>38 store location close to home</p> <p>39 store location close to work</p> <p>40 store is near to other clothing stores</p> <p>41 store is close to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store)</p> <p>42 store is close to restaurants or food courts</p> <p>43 store is close to entertainment/leisure facilities (e.g. movie theatre/video games)</p> <p>44 store is close to health care options (e.g. doctors/dentists)</p> <p>45 store is close to banking facilities (e.g. bank/ATM)</p> <p>46 store is close to post office</p> <p>47 store is located in enclosed mall</p> <p>48 store is easily accessible (e.g. location within mall)</p> <p>49 availability of smoking designated areas in store</p> <p>50 availability of smoking designated areas in mall</p> <p>parking</p> <p>51 availability of parking</p> <p>52 parking located near clothing store</p> <p>53 availability of ample parking</p> <p>54 availability of free parking</p> <p>55 availability of secure parking</p> <p>56 <i>availability of undercover parking</i></p> <p>57 easy parking (e.g. layout of parking bays)</p> <p>shopping ease</p> <p>58 easy flow of traffic in mall</p> <p>59 easy flow of traffic in store</p> <p>60 aisles are not crowded with people or merchandise</p> <p>61 store aisles are wide enough to shop with trolleys/prams</p> <p>62 convenient to move from one floor to another in store (e.g. escalators/lifts)</p> <p>63 <i>convenient to move from one floor to another in mall (e.g. escalators/lifts)</i></p> <p>64 not too much walking required within store</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>76 ease of shopping when I am in a hurry</p> <p>77 ease of shopping when I am on a stroll</p> <p>78 store is familiar to me</p> <p>79 ease of finding merchandise items you are looking for</p> <p>80 store is small so merchandise can be found easily</p> <p>81 store has limited variety so merchandise can be found easily</p> <p>82 merchandise items can be found quickly</p> <p>83 easy access to merchandise</p> <p>84 readable labels/tags on merchandise</p> <p>85 visible labels/tags on merchandise</p> <p>86 package units are not too big to purchase</p> <p>87 strong store carry bags</p> <p>88 ease of carrying store bags</p> <p>89 availability of package carryout service</p> <p>90 availability of telephone cards within store (MTN/Vodacom/Telkom)</p> <p>check out</p> <p>36 store check out is convenient</p> <p>38 conveniently located check out points in store</p> <p>37 fast check out time in store</p> <p>store hours</p> <p>91 convenient store hours</p> <p>92 early store opening hours</p> <p>93 late store closing hours</p> <p>94 normal store hours over weekends</p> <p>95 normal store hours on public holidays</p>	<p>65 ease of shopping when I am pressed for time</p> <p>66 store layout is familiar to me</p> <p>67 ease of finding merchandise items you are looking for</p> <p>68 merchandise items can be found quickly</p> <p>69 spacious arrangement of merchandise</p> <p>70 readable labels/tags on merchandise</p> <p>71 visible labels/tags on merchandise</p> <p>72 strong store bags</p> <p>73 <i>free store bags available (e.g. don't have to bring own bags)</i></p> <p>74 <i>convenient size store bags</i></p> <p>75 conveniently located check out points in store</p> <p>76 <i>number of check out points in store</i></p> <p>77 fast check out time in store</p> <p>store hours</p> <p>78 early store opening hours</p> <p>79 late store closing hours</p> <p>80 normal store hours over weekends</p> <p>81 normal store hours on public holidays</p>
<p>Facilities</p> <p>store appearance</p> <p>104 attractive outside appearance of store (architecture/building/landscaping)</p> <p>105 appropriate store windows</p> <p>106 appropriate store facia</p> <p>109 attractive store entrance</p> <p>107 interesting store front</p> <p>108 convenient store entrance/exit</p> <p>110 well-designed store entrance</p> <p>111 visible store entrance/exit</p> <p>112 easy access to store entrance/exit</p> <p>113 store is clean</p> <p>114 good general store appearance</p> <p>115 good physical condition of store</p> <p>116 store is well-maintained</p> <p>117 store does not need remodelling</p> <p>store layout</p> <p>98 convenient layout in store</p> <p>99 attractive layout in store</p> <p>100 position of aisles in store</p>	<p>Facilities</p> <p>store appearance</p> <p>82 attractive outside appearance of store (e.g. architecture/building/landscaping)</p> <p>83 appropriate store front</p> <p>84 attractive store front</p> <p>85 interesting store front</p> <p>86 well-designed store entrance</p> <p>87 visible store entrance/exit</p> <p>88 easy access to store entrance/exit</p> <p>89 store is clean</p> <p>90 good general store appearance</p> <p>91 store is well-maintained</p> <p>store layout</p> <p>92 attractive layout in store</p> <p>93 position of aisles in store</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
101 width of aisles in store	94 width of aisles in store
102 ease of movement through store due to layout	
103 store is spacious	95 store is spacious
fixtures	fixtures
134 attractive physical facilities in store (e.g. checkout counter/shelves)	96 attractive physical facilities in store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)
135 comfortable physical environment in store	
136 appropriate physical facilities for clothing store (e.g. checkout counter/shelves)	97 appropriate physical facilities for clothing store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)
137 modern physical facilities in store (e.g. checkout counter/shelves)	98 modern physical facilities in store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)
144 accessible merchandise shelves	99 accessible merchandise shelves
145 accessible merchandise rails	100 accessible merchandise rails
146 easy to shop merchandise from shelves, i.e. not too full	101 merchandise shelves not too full
147 easy to shop merchandise from rails, i.e. not too full	102 merchandise rails not too full
148 strong hangers used for merchandise	103 strong hangers used for merchandise
149 hangers display merchandise appropriately	104 hangers display merchandise appropriately
138 appropriate floor covering in store	105 appropriate floor covering
139 enough lights in store	106 enough lights
140 bright enough lights in store	107 bright enough lights
141 lights in store reflect true colours of merchandise	108 lights reflect true colours of merchandise
143 sufficient number of information boards in store	109 sufficient number of information boards in store
150 sufficient number of mirrors in store	110 sufficient number of mirrors in store
151 mirrors conveniently located in store	111 mirrors conveniently located in store
152 appropriate size of mirrors in store	112 appropriate size of mirrors in store
153 availability of seating in store when fitting shoes	113 availability of seating in store when fitting shoes
fitting rooms	fitting rooms
	114 <i>availability of fitting rooms</i>
	115 <i>conveniently located fitting rooms</i>
129 large fitting room in store	116 enough space in fitting rooms
130 private fitting room in store	117 private fitting room
131 sufficient number of fitting rooms in store	118 sufficient number of fitting rooms
132 enough lights in fitting rooms of store	119 enough lights in fitting rooms
133 sufficient mirrors in fitting rooms of store	120 sufficient mirrors in fitting rooms
	121 <i>hooks/chair available in fitting rooms to hang clothes</i>
	convenience of facilities
	122 ease of shopping with family in store
	123 ease of shopping with family in mall
facilities convenience	
118 ease of shopping with family in store	
119 ease of shopping with family in mall	
120 ease of taking children to store	
121 ease of taking children to mall	
122 playpen for children in store	124 playpen for children in store
123 rest areas available in store	125 rest areas available in store
124 rest areas available in mall	126 rest areas available in mall
125 comfortable seating in store	127 comfortable seating in store (e.g. couch)
126 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in store	128 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in store
127 convenient availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in mall	129 convenient availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in mall

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>Institutional</p> <p>overall impression</p> <p>168 good overall impression of store</p> <p>store reputation</p> <p>169 store company has good reputation</p> <p>170 store company is well-known</p> <p>171 store company treats employees fairly</p> <p>172 good reputation of store</p> <p>173 store has been operating a long time</p> <p>174 good history of store</p> <p>182 acceptable store name</p> <p>175 store is reliable</p> <p>176 store is a popular place to shop</p> <p>177 store is prestigious</p> <p>178 store is successful</p> <p>179 store vision and mission displayed in-store</p> <p>clientele</p> <p>154 separate store for target market</p> <p>155 specific store for target market</p> <p>156 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)</p> <p>157 social reference value of store (e.g. high/low class)</p> <p>162 store is known by friends</p> <p>163 store is liked by friends</p> <p>164 store is recommended by friends</p> <p>165 store is popular with friends</p> <p>322 social contact possible with other shoppers/sales personnel</p> <p>166 sales personnel are representative of clientele</p> <p>167 store personnel communicate effectively with consumers (e.g. own language)</p> <p>158 no discrimination/prejudice towards customers</p> <p>159 no discrimination against customers based on social class</p> <p>160 no discrimination against customers based on age</p> <p>161 no discrimination against customers based on race</p> <p>store association</p> <p>180 ability to identify with store</p> <p>181 store is well-known</p> <p>184 store image is similar to self image</p> <p>269 manager present in store</p>	<p>Institutional</p> <p>store reputation</p> <p>130 good overall impression of store</p> <p>131 store has good reputation</p> <p>132 store is well-known</p> <p>133 store treats employees fairly</p> <p>134 store has been operating a long time</p> <p>135 store has good history</p> <p>136 store name does not offend</p> <p>137 store is reliable</p> <p>138 store is a popular place to shop</p> <p>139 store is prestigious</p> <p>140 store is successful</p> <p>141 store promises and policy displayed in-store</p> <p>clientele</p> <p>142 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)</p> <p>143 store is known by friends</p> <p>144 store is recommended by friends</p> <p>145 store is popular with friends</p> <p>146 social contact possible with other shoppers/store personnel</p> <p>147 sales personnel are similar to clientele</p> <p>148 sales personnel communicate effectively with consumers (e.g. own language)</p> <p>149 no discrimination/prejudice towards customers</p> <p>150 no discrimination against customers based on social class</p> <p>151 no discrimination against customers based on age</p> <p>152 no discrimination against customers based on race</p> <p>153 ability to identify with store</p> <p>154 store image is similar to self image</p> <p>155 <i>store attempts to build personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)</i></p> <p>156 manager present in store</p>
<p>Merchandise</p> <p>merchandise assortment</p> <p>185 merchandise assortment in store</p> <p>186 adequate selection of merchandise in store</p> <p>187 variety of merchandise categories in store e.g. formalwear/leisurewear</p> <p>188 store offers variety of fashion merchandise</p>	<p>Merchandise (clothing and related products)</p> <p>assortment</p> <p>157 adequate selection of merchandise</p> <p>158 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/accessories)</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
189 variety of merchandise from different manufacturers in store	
190 store offers imported merchandise	159 store offers imported merchandise
191 store offers locally manufactured merchandise	160 store offers locally manufactured merchandise
192 store offers unique merchandise	161 store offers unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store)
193 store offers interesting merchandise	162 store offers interesting merchandise
194 store offers exclusive merchandise	163 store offers exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)
195 variety of merchandise within one store	
196 store offers well-known labels/brands	
197 store offers numerous well-known labels/brands	
198 store has a good selection of well-known labels/brands	164 store has a good selection of well-known labels/brands
199 store is known for well-known labels/brands	165 store is known for well-known labels/brands
200 store offers designer label merchandise	166 store offers designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein)
201 store offers prestigious labels/brands	167 store offers prestigious labels/brands (e.g. Diesel)
202 availability of advertised merchandise in store	168 availability of advertised merchandise
203 store is fully stocked	169 no out-of-stock situations
204 availability of wide range of sizes in store	170 availability of wide range of sizes in store
205 availability of merchandise in store	
206 store has fast turnaround of merchandise (i.e. replaces sold merchandise items quickly)	
207 seasonal changes in merchandise implemented timeously	171 seasonal changes in merchandise implemented in good time
merchandise style	style
208 store offers appealing merchandise	172 store offers appealing merchandise
209 store offers latest fashion merchandise	173 store offers latest fashion merchandise
210 high fashion merchandise in store	
211 store offers fashion merchandise before other stores	174 store offers fashion merchandise before other stores
212 store has reputation for fashion	175 store has a reputation for fashionable merchandise
213 appropriate fit of merchandise in store	176 merchandise fits well
214 store offers wide size range	177 store offers wide size range (e.g. full sizes 10 or 12 and half sizes 11 or 13)
215 store offers specialty merchandise	
216 store offers accessories	
217 store offers perfumes	
218 store offers cosmetics	
219 store offers swimwear	
220 store offers merchandise suited to target market	
221 store offers styles suited to my age	178 store offers styles suited to my age
222 store offers styles suited to my body type e.g. large-size/petite	179 store offers styles suited to my body type (e.g. large-size/petite)
223 store offers materials suited to my body type e.g. large-size/petite	
224 merchandise for a niche market in store	
merchandise price	price
225 appropriate prices for merchandise in store	180 appropriate prices for merchandise in store
226 affordable prices for merchandise in store	181 affordable prices for merchandise in store

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>227 store offers low prices</p> <p>228 store offers a variety of price levels</p> <p>229 store offers a variety of merchandise at different price levels</p> <p>230 store offers acceptable prices compared to other stores</p> <p>231 store is price competitive</p> <p>232 store offers merchandise value</p> <p>233 price for merchandise in store is reasonable for the value</p> <p>234 store offers value for money</p> <p>merchandise quality</p> <p>235 store offers merchandise quality</p> <p>236 good quality merchandise in store</p> <p>237 high quality merchandise in store</p> <p>238 store has reputation for quality</p> <p>239 store offers satisfactory merchandise</p> <p>240 merchandise function the way they are supposed to</p> <p>241 merchandise is free from defects and flaws</p> <p>242 store offers dependable merchandise</p> <p>243 store offers guarantee on merchandise</p>	<p>182 store offers low prices</p> <p>183 store offers a variety of merchandise at different price levels</p> <p>184 store offers comparable prices to other stores</p> <p>185 store offers good value for money merchandise quality</p> <p>186 good quality merchandise in store</p> <p>187 store has reputation for quality</p> <p>188 merchandise function the way they are supposed to (e.g. sportsbra/thermal jacket)</p> <p>189 merchandise is free from defects and flaws</p>
<p>Promotion advertising</p> <p>244 store has advertising</p> <p>247 store advertising is informative</p> <p>248 store advertising helps to plan shopping</p> <p>249 store advertising is appealing</p> <p>250 store advertising is believable</p> <p>251 store advertising is enticing</p> <p>252 store advertising is attractive</p> <p>253 store advertising is interesting</p> <p>254 store advertises in newspapers</p> <p>255 store advertises on television</p> <p>256 store advertises in magazines</p> <p>257 store advertises on radio</p> <p>258 store advertises through mail flyers</p> <p>259 store advertises on the internet</p> <p>245 store has visible in-store advertising</p> <p>246 advertising is repeated in store</p> <p>260 store advertises specials</p> <p>261 realistic models used in store advertising</p> <p>262 models used in store advertising are not misleading</p> <p>263 word of mouth advertising of store</p> <p>264 advertising included in mailed store card account</p> <p>183 attractive materials associated with store service (e.g. shopping bags/catalogues)</p> <p>265 brochures included in mailed store card account</p> <p>266 personal letter included in mailed store card account</p>	<p>Promotion advertising</p> <p>190 store advertises merchandise</p> <p>191 store advertising is informative</p> <p>192 store advertising helps to plan shopping</p> <p>193 store advertising is believable</p> <p>194 store advertising is enticing</p> <p>195 store advertising is attractive</p> <p>196 store advertises in newspapers</p> <p>197 store advertises on television</p> <p>198 store advertises in magazines</p> <p>199 store advertises on radio</p> <p>200 store advertises through mail flyers</p> <p>201 store advertises on the internet</p> <p>202 store has visible in-store advertising</p> <p>203 mass media advertising is repeated in store (e.g. mother's day/Valentine's day)</p> <p>204 store advertises specials</p> <p>205 <i>store has stock of advertised merchandise</i></p> <p>206 realistic models used in store advertising</p> <p>207 advertising brochures included in mailed store card account</p> <p>208 attractive promotional materials associated with store (e.g. store bags)</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>267 store communication through sms</p> <p>displays</p> <p>270 attractive in-store displays of merchandise</p> <p>271 well-spaced in-store displays of merchandise</p> <p>272 uncluttered displays of merchandise</p> <p>273 neat displays of merchandise</p> <p>274 clean displays of merchandise</p> <p>275 attractive window displays of merchandise</p> <p>276 advertising displayed in store</p> <p>sales incentives</p> <p>277 store offers attractive sales with marked-down prices</p> <p>278 store sales represent real savings</p> <p>279 store announces sales timeously</p> <p>280 store offers attractive specials</p> <p>281 store offers sales incentives</p> <p>282 store offers competitions</p> <p>283 store offers discount</p> <p>284 store offers vouchers</p> <p>285 store offers a gold card system</p> <p>286 store offers a cash card system</p> <p>287 store accepts manufacturing coupons</p> <p>288 store offers free samples</p> <p>289 store offers trading stamps</p> <p>290 store offers cash discount</p> <p>291 store organizes special events</p> <p>292 store holds promotional events</p> <p>293 store organizes fashion shows</p> <p>294 store organizes special exhibits</p>	<p>209 store communication through sms</p> <p>displays</p> <p>210 attractive in-store displays of merchandise</p> <p>211 well-spaced in-store displays of merchandise</p> <p>212 neat displays of merchandise</p> <p>213 clean displays of merchandise</p> <p>214 attractive window displays of merchandise</p> <p>215 <i>displays give ideas for wearing merchandise</i></p> <p>sales incentives</p> <p>216 store offers sales with marked-down prices</p> <p>217 store sales represent real savings (e.g. 50% markdown)</p> <p>218 store announces sales in time</p> <p>219 store offers attractive special offers (e.g. buy one and get one free)</p> <p>220 store offers competitions</p> <p>221 store offers loyalty programmes (e.g. points on gold/cash card)</p> <p>222 store offers free samples (e.g. cosmetics)</p> <p>223 store offers cash discount (e.g. boutiques)</p> <p>224 store holds promotional events (e.g. ladies race/cleavage day)</p> <p>225 store organizes fashion shows</p>
<p>Sales Personnel</p> <p>sales personnel appearance</p> <p>325 sales personnel make a good impression</p> <p>328 sales personnel are well-dressed</p> <p>326 sales personnel are fashionably dressed</p> <p>327 sales personnel are neat</p> <p>329 sales personnel are attractive</p> <p>330 sales personnel are similar to me</p> <p>331 sales personnel are similar to me in age</p> <p>332 sales personnel are similar to me in gender</p> <p>sales personnel interaction</p> <p>295 store has high quality sales personnel</p> <p>296 sales personnel provide prompt service</p> <p>297 sales personnel are competent</p> <p>298 sales personnel are professional</p> <p>301 sales personnel are helpful</p> <p>302 sales personnel are willing to help</p>	<p>Sales Personnel</p> <p>appearance</p> <p>226 sales personnel make a good impression</p> <p>227 sales personnel are well-dressed</p> <p>228 sales personnel are fashionably dressed</p> <p>229 <i>sales personnel are dressed in accordance with store image</i></p> <p>230 sales personnel are neat</p> <p>231 sales personnel are attractive</p> <p>232 sales personnel are similar to me in body type (e.g. large-size/petite)</p> <p>233 sales personnel are similar to me in age</p> <p>234 sales personnel are similar to me in gender</p> <p>interaction</p> <p>235 sales personnel are competent</p> <p>236 sales personnel are willing to help (e.g. finding merchandise/answering questions)</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
<p>303 sales personnel help in finding merchandise</p> <p>304 sales personnel are willing to answer questions</p> <p>305 sales personnel are not too busy</p> <p>307 sales personnel are knowledgeable</p> <p>308 sales personnel know store merchandise well</p> <p>309 sales personnel have expertise</p> <p>310 sales personnel put merchandise back after fittings</p> <p>311 sales personnel are courteous</p> <p>312 sales personnel are polite</p> <p>313 sales personnel are friendly</p> <p>315 sales personnel are sympathetic to problems</p> <p>316 sales personnel are reassuring to problems</p> <p>317 sales personnel are trustworthy</p> <p>318 sales personnel are honest</p> <p>299 sales personnel provide personal attention</p> <p>300 sales personnel provide prompt attention</p> <p>306 sales personnel respond to requests promptly</p> <p>314 sales personnel have caring attitude</p> <p>319 sales personnel provide unobtrusive service</p> <p>320 store is conveniently located to meet people</p> <p>321 ease of chatting with other shoppers/sales personnel</p> <p>323 ability to form friendship with other shoppers/sales personnel</p> <p>324 many people shop in store</p>	<p>237 sales personnel are knowledgeable</p> <p>238 sales personnel are courteous</p> <p>239 sales personnel are polite</p> <p>240 sales personnel are friendly</p> <p>241 sales personnel are sympathetic to problems</p> <p>242 sales personnel are reassuring to problems</p> <p>243 sales personnel are trustworthy</p> <p>244 sales personnel are honest</p> <p>245 sales personnel provide personal attention</p> <p>246 sales personnel provide prompt attention</p> <p>247 sales personnel respond to requests promptly (e.g. when phoning store)</p> <p>248 sales personnel have caring attitude</p> <p>249 sales personnel provide service without bothering you</p>
<p>Service</p> <p>in-store service</p> <p>351 store offers good service</p> <p>352 store offers quality service</p> <p>353 store offers a variety of services</p> <p>354 store has adequate number of sales personnel</p> <p>355 sales personnel offer advice on buying decisions</p> <p>360 merchandise consultants available in store</p> <p>356 sales personnel offer appropriate explanations</p> <p>357 sales personnel offer helpful suggestions</p> <p>358 sales personnel provide good service</p> <p>359 sales personnel provide quick service</p> <p>361 opportunity for self-service</p> <p>362 store offers appro facilities</p> <p>363 store offers gift wrapping facilities</p>	<p>Service</p> <p>in-store service</p> <p>250 store offers quality service</p> <p>251 store has adequate number of sales personnel</p> <p>252 availability of sales personnel to provide advice on buying decisions</p> <p>253 availability of sales personnel to hang merchandise back after fittings</p> <p>254 merchandise consultants available in store (e.g. lingerie consultant)</p> <p>255 opportunity for self-service</p> <p>256 store offers appro facilities (e.g. ability to fit at home)</p> <p>257 store offers gift wrapping facilities</p> <p>258 store offers gift vouchers</p> <p>259 store offers gift registry</p>

First proposed item pool	Refined item pool after first expert review
364 store offers inter-store transfer facilities	260 store offers inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores)
365 availability of trolley/basket to carry merchandise in store	261 availability of trolley/basket to carry merchandise in store
366 store has appropriate merchandise packaging	262 store has appropriate merchandise packaging (e.g. put delicate merchandise in tissue paper)
128 refreshment available within store (e.g. water cans)	263 refreshment available within store (e.g. water cans)
	264 <i>availability of coffee shop in store</i> 265 <i>availability of telephone cards within store (e.g. MTN/Vodacom/Telkom)</i>
payment options	payment options
344 store offers convenient payment options	
345 store accepts credit card payment	266 store accepts credit card payment (e.g. Visa/Mastercard)
346 store has fair credit policies	267 store has fair credit policies
347 store accepts bank card payment (debit card)	268 store accepts bank card payment (debit card)
348 store accepts store credit card payment	269 store accepts store credit card payment (e.g. Woolworths/Foschini)
349 ease of opening store credit card account	270 ease of opening store credit card account
350 store offers layaway/lay-by facilities	271 <i>store accepts buy aid</i> 272 store offers layaway/lay-by facilities
delivery options	delivery options
367 store provides home delivery	273 store provides home delivery
368 store provides shipping facilities	
369 store provides mail-order service	274 store provides mail-order service
370 store provides internet ordering service	275 store provides internet ordering service
371 store provides telephonic ordering facilities	276 store provides telephonic ordering facilities 277 <i>store provides gift delivery</i>
after-sales service	after-sales service
333 store provides after-sales service	
334 store provides alteration service	278 store provides alteration service
335 store offers fairness on alteration policy	
336 store offers ability to return unsatisfactory merchandise	279 store accepts the return of unsatisfactory merchandise
337 ease of returning unsatisfactory merchandise	280 ease of returning unsatisfactory merchandise
338 store has a liberal return policy	281 store has liberal refund policy
339 store has fair refund policy	
340 store has fair exchange policy	282 store has liberal exchange policy
341 store deals with customer complaints effectively	283 store deals with customer complaints effectively
342 store has fair system for handling complaints	
343 store personnel efficiently deal with customer complaints	
268 personal feedback from store	284 store provides personal feedback (e.g. complaints)

Appendix 6
Item pool after second expert judging

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
<p>ATMOSPHERE</p> <p>1 style of décor in store 2 fashionable/trendy store interior 3 attractive décor in store 4 exciting store interior 5 colours used in store interior 6 suitable finishing materials used in store interior 7 comfortable store temperature 8 store is neat 9 neutral smell in store 10 fresh smell in store 11 pleasant scent in store 12 music played in store 13 type of music played in store 14 volume of music played in store 15 acceptable noise level 16 store congeniality (e.g friendliness) 17 store ambience (mood/vibe) 18 store is pleasant to shop in 19 positive shopping experience 20 feeling special when entering store 21 feeling welcome when entering store 22 relaxed atmosphere in store 23 cosy atmosphere in store 24 stimulating store atmosphere 25 cheerful store atmosphere 26 lively store atmosphere 27 exciting store atmosphere 28 conservative store atmosphere 29 modern store atmosphere 30 old-fashioned store atmosphere 31 youthful store atmosphere 32 mature store atmosphere 33 size of store</p>	<p>1 appearance of store interior 2 fashionability of store interior 3 style of décor in store 4 attractiveness of décor in store 5 colours used in store 6 suitable finishing materials used in store 7 store temperature 8 neatness of store 9 smell in store 10 music played in store 11 noise level in store 12 store atmosphere (e.g. friendliness/mood/vibe) 13 shopping experience (feeling when shopping in store e.g. special/welcome) 14 store projection (e.g. conservative/modern/youthful/mature) 15 size of store</p>
<p>CONVENIENCE</p> <p>34 time it takes to travel to store 35 ease of travel to store 36 availability of public transport near store 37 convenient access to public transport near store 38 store location close to home 39 store location close to work 40 store is near to other clothing stores 41 store is close to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store) 42 store is close to restaurants or food courts</p>	<p>16 time it takes to travel to store 17 ease of travel to store 18 availability of public transport near store 19 <i>store location (geographical area)</i> 20 location of store close to home 21 location of store close to work 22 proximity of store to other clothing stores (i.e. near/far) 23 proximity of store to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store) 24 proximity of store to leisure facilities (e.g. restaurants/food courts/movie theatre)</p>

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
43 store is close to entertainment/leisure facilities (e.g. move theatre/video games)	
44 store is close to health care options (e.g. doctors/dentists)	
45 store is close to banking facilities (e.g. bank/ATM)	25 proximity of store to other facilities (e.g. banking/post office)
46 store is close to post office	
47 store is located in enclosed mall	26 location of store in enclosed mall
48 store is easily accessible (e.g. location within mall)	27 accessibility of store (e.g. location within mall)
49 availability of smoking designated areas in store	28 availability of smoking designated areas in store
50 availability of smoking designated areas in mall	29 availability of smoking designated areas in mall where store is situated
51 availability of parking	
52 parking located near clothing store	30 proximity of parking facilities to clothing store
53 availability of ample parking	31 availability of enough parking bays
54 availability of free parking	32 availability of free parking
55 availability of secure parking	33 availability of secure parking
56 availability of undercover parking	34 availability of undercover parking
57 easy parking (e.g. layout of parking bays)	35 ease of parking (e.g. size and shape of parking bays)
59 easy flow of traffic in store	36 flow of people in store
58 easy flow of traffic in mall	37 flow of people in mall where store is situated
60 aisles are not crowded with people or merchandise	38 crowding in store
61 store aisles are wide enough to shop with trolleys/prams	39 ability to shop with trolleys/prams in store
	40 <i>ability to shop with trolleys/prams in mall where store is situated</i>
62 convenient to move from one floor to another in store (e.g. escalators/lifts)	41 availability of escalators/lifts in store
63 convenient to move from one floor to another in mall (e.g. escalators/lifts)	42 availability of escalators/lifts in mall where store is situated
64 not too much walking required within store	43 amount of walking required within store
65 ease of shopping when I am pressed for time	
66 store layout is familiar to me	44 familiarity of store layout
67 ease of finding merchandise items you are looking for	45 ease of finding merchandise items
68 merchandise items can be found quickly	
69 spacious arrangement of merchandise	
70 readable labels/tags on merchandise	46 readability of labels/tags on merchandise
71 visible labels/tags on merchandise	47 visibility of labels/tags on merchandise
73 free store bags available (e.g. don't have to bring own bags)	48 availability of store bags (i.e. don't have to bring my own bags)
72 strong store bags	49 characteristics of store bags (e.g. size/strength)
74 convenient size store bags	
75 conveniently located check out points in store	50 location of check out points in store
76 number of check out points in store	51 number of check out points in store
77 fast check out time in store	52 check out time
78 early store opening hours	53 store opening hours
79 late store closing hours	54 store closing hours
80 normal store hours over weekends	55 store hours over weekends
81 normal store hours on public holidays	56 store hours on public holidays

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
FACILITIES	
82 attractive outside appearance of store (e.g. architecture/building/landscaping)	57 outside appearance of store (e.g. architecture/building/landscaping)
83 appropriate store front	58 appearance of store entrance
84 attractive store front	
85 interesting store front	
86 well-designed store entrance	
87 visible store entrance/exit	59 visibility of store entrance/exit
88 easy access to store entrance/exit	60 accessibility of store entrance/exit
89 store is clean	61 cleanliness of store
90 good general store appearance	62 general in-store appearance
91 store is well-maintained	63 maintenance of store
92 attractive layout in store	64 layout of store
93 position of aisles in store	65 position of aisles in store
94 width of aisles in store	66 width of aisles in store
95 store is spacious	67 spaciousness of store
96 attractive physical facilities in store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)	68 appearance of physical facilities in clothing store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)
97 appropriate physical facilities for clothing store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)	
98 modern physical facilities in store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)	
99 accessible merchandise shelves	69 accessibility of merchandise shelves
100 accessible merchandise rails	70 accessibility of merchandise rails
101 merchandise shelves not too full	71 number of merchandise items on shelves
102 merchandise rails not too full	72 number of merchandise items on rails
103 strong hangers used for merchandise	73 functionality of hangers (e.g. strength/display)
104 hangers display merchandise appropriately	
105 appropriate floor covering	74 floor covering in store
106 enough lights	75 lighting in store
107 bright enough lights	76 ability of lighting to reflect the true colours of merchandise
108 lights reflect true colours of merchandise	
109 sufficient number of information boards in store	77 number of information boards in store
110 sufficient number of mirrors in store	78 number of mirrors in store
111 mirrors conveniently located in store	79 location of mirrors in store
112 appropriate size of mirrors in store	80 size of mirrors in store
113 availability of seating in store when fitting shoes	81 availability of seating in store when fitting shoes
114 availability of fitting rooms	82 availability of fitting rooms
115 conveniently located fitting rooms	83 location of fitting rooms
116 enough space in fitting rooms	84 spaciousness of fitting rooms
117 private fitting room	85 privacy in fitting rooms
118 sufficient number of fitting rooms	86 number of fitting rooms
119 enough lights in fitting rooms	87 lighting in fitting rooms
120 sufficient mirrors in fitting rooms	88 mirrors in fitting rooms
121 hooks/chair available in fitting rooms to hang clothes	89 availability of hooks/chair in fitting rooms to hang clothes
122 ease of shopping with family in store	90 ease of shopping with family in store
123 ease of shopping with family in mall	91 ease of shopping with family in mall where store is situated
124 playpen for children in store	92 availability of playpen for children in store
125 rest areas available in store	93 availability of rest areas in store
126 rest areas available in mall	94 availability of rest areas in mall where store is situated
127 comfortable seating in store (e.g. couch)	95 availability of seating in store (e.g. couch)
128 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in store	96 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in store
129 convenient availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in mall	97 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in mall where store is situated

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
INSTITUTIONAL	
130 good overall impression of store	98 overall impression of store
131 store has good reputation	99 reputation of store
132 store is well-known	
133 store treats employees fairly	100 store's treatment of employees
134 store has been operating a long time	
135 store has good history	101 history of store
136 store name does not offend	102 store name
137 store is reliable	103 reliability of store
138 store is a popular place to shop	104 popularity of store
139 store is prestigious	105 prestige of store
140 store is successful	
141 store promises and policy displayed in-store	106 display of store promises and policy in store
142 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)	107 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)
143 store is known by friends	108 store's appeal to my friends
144 store is recommended by friends	
145 store is popular with friends	
146 social contact possible with other shoppers/store personnel	109 possibility of social contact with other shoppers/store personnel
147 sales personnel are similar to clientele	110 similarity between sales personnel and customers
148 sales personnel communicate effectively with consumers (e.g. own language)	111 sales personnel's communication with customers (e.g. own language)
149 no discrimination/prejudice towards customers	112 equal treatment of all customers
150 no discrimination against customers based on social class	
151 no discrimination against customers based on age	
152 no discrimination against customers based on race	
153 ability to identify with store	113 ability to identify with store
154 store image is similar to self image	114 similarity between store image and self image
155 store attempts to build personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)	115 store's efforts to build personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)
156 manager present in store	116 presence of manager in store
MERCHANDISE (clothing and related products)	
157 adequate selection of merchandise	117 selection of merchandise
158 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/ accessories)	118 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/ accessories)
159 store offers imported merchandise	119 availability of imported merchandise
160 store offers locally manufactured merchandise	120 availability of locally manufactured merchandise
161 store offers unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store)	121 availability of unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store)
162 store offers interesting merchandise	
163 store offers exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)	122 availability of exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)
164 store has a good selection of well-known labels/brands	123 selection of well-known labels/brands
165 store is known for well-known labels/brands	124 reputation of store for well-known labels/brands
166 store offers designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein)	125 availability of designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein)
167 store offers prestigious labels/brands (e.g. Diesel)	126 availability of prestigious labels/brands (e.g. Diesel)
168 availability of advertised merchandise	127 availability of advertised merchandise
169 no out-of-stock situations	128 stock levels in store (e.g. out-of-stock/in stock)
170 availability of wide range of sizes in store	129 availability of wide range of sizes in store
171 seasonal changes in merchandise implemented in good time	130 implementation of seasonal changes in merchandise in good time

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
172 store offers appealing merchandise	131 availability fashion merchandise
173 store offers latest fashion merchandise	132 availability of fashion merchandise before other stores
174 store offers fashion merchandise before other stores	133 reputation of store for fashionable merchandise
175 store has a reputation for fashionable merchandise	134 merchandise fit
176 merchandise fits well	135 availability of wide size range (e.g. full sizes 10 or 12 and half sizes 11 or 13)
177 store offers wide size range (e.g. full sizes 10 or 12 and half sizes 11 or 13)	136 availability of styles suited to my age
178 store offers styles suited to my age	137 availability of styles suited to my body type (e.g. large-size/petite)
179 store offers styles suited to my body type (e.g. large-size/petite)	138 merchandise price
180 appropriate prices for merchandise in store	139 availability of a variety of merchandise at different price levels
181 affordable prices for merchandise in store	140 availability of comparative prices (i.e. price competitive)
182 store offers low prices	141 availability of value for money merchandise
183 store offers a variety of merchandise at different price levels	142 quality of merchandise in store
184 store offers comparable prices to other stores	143 reputation of store for quality merchandise
185 store offers good value for money merchandise	144 functionality of merchandise (e.g. sportsbra/thermal jacket)
186 good quality merchandise in store	
187 store has reputation for quality	
188 merchandise function the way they are supposed to (e.g. sportsbra/thermal jacket)	
189 merchandise is free from defects and flaws	
PROMOTION	
190 store advertises merchandise	145 advertising of merchandise
191 store advertising is informative	146 information provided in advertising
	147 <i>credibility of store advertising</i>
192 store advertising helps to plan shopping	
193 store advertising is believable	148 attractiveness of store advertising
194 store advertising is enticing	149 advertising in newspapers
195 store advertising is attractive	150 advertising on television
196 store advertises in newspapers	151 advertising in magazines
197 store advertises on television	152 advertising on radio
198 store advertises in magazines	153 advertising through mail flyers
199 store advertises on radio	154 advertising on the internet
200 store advertises through mail flyers	155 visibility of in-store advertising
201 store advertises on the internet	156 repetition of mass media advertising in store (e.g. mother's day/Valentine's day)
202 store has visible in-store advertising	157 advertising of specials
203 mass media advertising is repeated in store (e.g. mother's day/Valentine's day)	
204 store advertises specials	
205 store has stock of advertised merchandise	158 models used in store advertising
206 realistic models used in store advertising	159 inclusion of brochures in mailed store card account
207 advertising brochures included in mailed store card account	160 promotional materials associated with store (e.g. store bags)
208 attractive promotional materials associated with store (e.g. store bags)	161 store's communication through sms
209 store communication through sms	162 attractiveness of in-store displays
210 attractive in-store displays of merchandise	163 spaciousness of in-store displays
211 well-spaced in-store displays of merchandise	164 neatness of displays
212 neat displays of merchandise	165 cleanliness of displays
213 clean displays of merchandise	166 attractiveness of window displays
214 attractive window displays of merchandise	167 ideas for wearing merchandise given in displays
215 displays give ideas for wearing merchandise	168 sales with marked-down prices
216 store offers sales with marked-down prices	169 real savings in sales (e.g. 50% markdown)
217 store sales represent real savings (e.g. 50% markdown)	

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
218 store announces sales in time	170 timely announcement of sales
219 store offers attractive special offers (e.g. buy one and get one free)	171 availability special offers (e.g. buy one and get one free)
220 store offers competitions	172 availability of competitions
221 store offers loyalty programmes (e.g. points on gold/cash card)	173 availability of loyalty programmes (e.g. points on gold/cash card)
222 store offers free samples (e.g. cosmetics)	174 availability of free samples (e.g. cosmetics)
223 store offers cash discount (e.g. boutiques)	175 availability of cash discount (e.g. boutiques)
224 store holds promotional events (e.g. ladies race/cleavage day)	176 promotional events (e.g. ladies race/cleavage day)
225 store organizes fashion shows	177 fashion shows
SALES PERSONNEL	
226 sales personnel make a good impression	178 overall impression of sales personnel
227 sales personnel are well-dressed	179 appearance of sales personnel
228 sales personnel are fashionably dressed	180 fashionability of sales personnel
229 sales personnel are dressed in accordance with store image	181 similarity between appearance of sales personnel and store image
230 sales personnel are neat	182 neatness of sales personnel
231 sales personnel are attractive	183 attractiveness of sales personnel
232 sales personnel are similar to me in body type (e.g. large-size/petite)	184 similarity in body type between sales personnel and myself (e.g. large-size/petite)
233 sales personnel are similar to me in age	185 similarity in age between sales personnel and myself
234 sales personnel are similar to me in gender	186 similarity in gender between sales personnel and myself
235 sales personnel are competent	187 competency of sales personnel
236 sales personnel are willing to help (e.g. finding merchandise/answering questions)	188 helpfulness of sales personnel (e.g. finding merchandise/answering questions)
237 sales personnel are knowledgeable	189 expertise of sales personnel
238 sales personnel are courteous	190 courteousness of sales personnel
239 sales personnel are polite	
240 sales personnel are friendly	191 friendliness of sales personnel
241 sales personnel are sympathetic to problems	
242 sales personnel are reassuring to problems	
243 sales personnel are trustworthy	
244 sales personnel are honest	192 honesty of sales personnel
245 sales personnel provide personal attention	193 personal attention from sales personnel
246 sales personnel provide prompt attention	194 prompt attention from sales personnel
247 sales personnel respond to requests promptly (e.g. when phoning store)	
248 sales personnel have caring attitude	
249 sales personnel provide service without bothering you	195 availability of sales personnel without bothering me
SERVICE	
250 store offers quality service	196 service quality
251 store has adequate number of sales personnel	197 number of sales personnel
252 availability of sales personnel to provide advice on buying decisions	198 availability of sales personnel to provide advice on buying decisions
253 availability of sales personnel to hang merchandise back after fittings	199 availability of sales personnel to hang merchandise back after fittings
254 merchandise consultants available in store (e.g. lingerie consultant)	200 availability of merchandise consultants(e.g. lingerie consultant)
255 opportunity for self-service	201 opportunity for self-service
256 store offers appro facilities (e.g. ability to fit at home)	202 availability of appro facilities (e.g. ability to fit at home)
257 store offers gift wrapping facilities	203 availability of gift wrapping facilities
258 store offers gift vouchers	204 availability of gift vouchers

Refined item pool after first expert review	Refined item pool after second expert review
259 store offers gift registry	205 availability of gift registry
260 store offers inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores)	206 availability of inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores)
261 availability of trolley/basket to carry merchandise in store	207 availability of trolley/basket to carry merchandise in store
262 store has appropriate merchandise packaging (e.g. put delicate merchandise in tissue paper)	208 merchandise packaging (e.g. put delicate merchandise in tissue paper)
263 refreshment available within store (e.g. water cans)	209 availability of refreshment within store (e.g. water cans)
264 availability of coffee shop in store	210 availability of coffee shop in store
265 availability of telephone cards within store (e.g. MTN/Vodacom/Telkom)	211 availability of telephone cards within store (e.g. MTN/Vodacom/Telkom)
266 store accepts credit card payment (e.g. Visa/Mastercard)	212 option of credit card payment (e.g. Visa/Mastercard)
267 store has fair credit policies	213 fairness of credit policies
268 store accepts bank card payment (debit card)	214 option of bank card payment (debit card)
269 store accepts store credit card payment (e.g. Woolworths/Foschini)	215 option of store credit card payment (e.g. Woolworths/Foschini)
270 ease of opening store credit card account	216 ease of opening store credit card account
271 store accepts buy aid	217 option of buy aid
272 store offers layaway/lay-by facilities	218 option of layaway/lay-by facilities
273 store provides home delivery	219 availability of home delivery
274 store provides mail-order service	220 availability of mail-order service
275 store provides internet ordering service	221 availability of internet ordering service
276 store provides telephonic ordering facilities	222 availability of telephonic ordering facilities
277 store provides gift delivery	223 availability of gift delivery
278 store provides alteration service	224 availability of alteration service
279 store accepts the return of unsatisfactory merchandise	225 option of returning unsatisfactory merchandise
280 ease of returning unsatisfactory merchandise	226 ease of returning unsatisfactory merchandise
281 store has liberal refund policy	227 availability of liberal refund policy
282 store has liberal exchange policy	228 availability of liberal exchange policy
283 store deals with customer complaints effectively	229 efficiency of dealing with customer complaints
284 store provides personal feedback (e.g. complaints)	230 provision of personal feedback (e.g. complaints)

Appendix 7

Store image scale after the first two phases in the scale development process

DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF APPAREL STORE IMAGE

The purpose of this study is to develop a scale for the measurement of apparel (clothing and related products) store image. We rely on your contribution to be able to complete the study. Your participation is **voluntary** and will be handled **confidentially**.

Please read the following questionnaire and complete the questions asked. This will not take more than 45 minutes of your time. Please make sure you answer all the questions. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

Section A and B of the questionnaire relates to **store image**. Store image is defined as **the customer's perception of the cognitive/functional/tangible (e.g. store layout) or affective/psychological/intangible (e.g. store atmosphere) components of a store**. Store image comprises various dimensions, namely atmosphere, convenience, facilities, institutional, merchandise, promotion, sales personnel and service. Each of these dimensions is defined by a number of store attributes.

We are interested in your perception of how important these attributes and dimensions are when shopping for apparel (clothing and related products). **Please rate the importance of the following items as they contribute to the formation of store image on the following scale ranging from 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important.** For example, when you enter an apparel store, how important is the *style of décor in store* in the formation of the store's image. If it is **unimportant** (i.e. *style of décor in store does not* contribute to the formation of the image you have of the store), indicate this by marking 1 with an X:

1					5	
Unimportant	Very important					Unable to rate
1	X	2	3	4	5	X

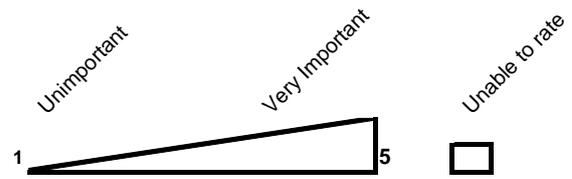
If you are unable to rate the item, indicate this by marking the last empty box with an X.

Section C of the questionnaire relates to your personal particulars and is for research purposes only.

Thank you for your time and cooperation with the completion of the questionnaire.

H.S. Janse van Noordwyk
University of Stellenbosch
August 2005

SECTION A: APPAREL STORE ATTRIBUTES



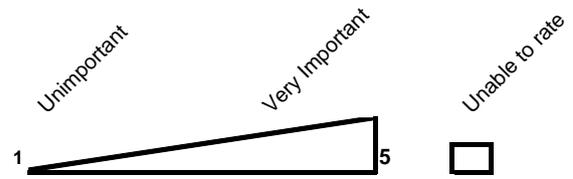
With regards to the **ATMOSPHERE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

1 appearance of store interior	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2 fashionability of store interior	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3 style of décor in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
4 attractiveness of décor in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5 colours used in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
6 suitable finishing materials used in store (e.g wood/stainless steel)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
7 store temperature	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8 neatness of store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
9 smell in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
10 music played in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
11 noise level in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
12 store atmosphere (e.g. friendliness/mood/vibe)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
13 shopping experience (feeling when shopping in store e.g. special/welcome)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
14 store projection (e.g. modern/youthful)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
15 size of store	<input type="checkbox"/>					

With regards to the **CONVENIENCE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

16 time it takes to travel to store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
17 ease of travel to store (e.g. traffic)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
18 availability of public transport near store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
19 store location (geographical area e.g. suburb/city centre)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
20 location of store close to home	<input type="checkbox"/>					
21 location of store close to work	<input type="checkbox"/>					
22 proximity of store to other clothing stores (i.e. near/far)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
23 proximity of store to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
24 proximity of store to leisure facilities (e.g. restaurants/food courts/ movie theatre)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
25 proximity of store to other facilities (e.g. banking/post office)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

						Unable to rate
	1	2	3	4	5	
26 location of store in enclosed mall (i.e. not street front)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
27 accessibility of store (e.g. location within mall)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
28 availability of smoking designated areas in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
29 availability of smoking designated areas in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/>					
30 proximity of parking facilities to clothing store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
31 availability of enough parking bays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
32 availability of free parking	<input type="checkbox"/>					
33 availability of secure parking (e.g. car watch/parking attendant)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
34 availability of undercover parking	<input type="checkbox"/>					
35 ease of parking (e.g. size and shape of parking bays)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
36 flow of people in store (i.e. ease of movement)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
37 flow of people in mall where store is situated (i.e. ease of movement)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
38 crowding in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
39 ability to shop with trolleys/prams in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
40 ability to shop with trolleys/prams in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/>					
41 availability of escalators/lifts in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
42 availability of escalators/lifts in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/>					
43 amount of walking required within store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
44 familiarity of store layout	<input type="checkbox"/>					
45 familiarity of mall layout where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/>					
46 ease of finding merchandise items	<input type="checkbox"/>					
47 readability of labels/tags on merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
48 visibility of labels/tags on merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
49 availability of store bags (i.e. don't have to bring my own bags)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
50 characteristics of store bags (e.g. size/strength)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
51 location of check out points in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
52 number of check out points in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
53 check out time	<input type="checkbox"/>					
54 store opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/>					
55 store closing hours	<input type="checkbox"/>					
56 store hours over weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>					
57 store hours on public holidays	<input type="checkbox"/>					



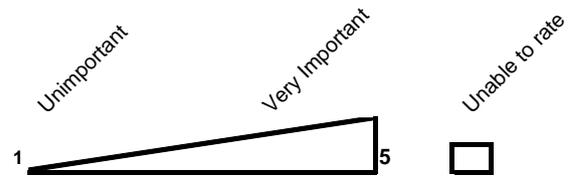
With regards to the **FACILITIES** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

58 outside appearance of store (e.g. architecture/building/landscaping)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
59 appearance of store entrance	<input type="checkbox"/>					
60 visibility of store entrance/exit	<input type="checkbox"/>					
61 accessibility of store entrance/exit	<input type="checkbox"/>					
62 cleanliness of store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
63 general in-store appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>					
64 maintenance of storen (e.g. painting/broken windows)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
65 layout of store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
66 position of aisles in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
67 width of aisles in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
68 spaciousness of store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
69 appearance of physical facilities in clothing store (e.g. shelves/rails/hangers)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
70 accessibility of merchandise shelves	<input type="checkbox"/>					
71 accessibility of merchandise rails	<input type="checkbox"/>					
72 number of merchandise items on shelves	<input type="checkbox"/>					
73 number of merchandise items on rails	<input type="checkbox"/>					
74 functionality of hangers (e.g. strength/display)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
75 floor covering in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
76 lighting in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
77 ability of lighting to reflect the true colours of merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
78 number of information boards in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
79 number of mirrors in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
80 location of mirrors in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
81 size of mirrors in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
82 availability of seating in store when fitting shoes	<input type="checkbox"/>					
83 availability of fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
84 location of fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
85 spaciousness of fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
86 privacy in fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
87 number of fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
88 lighting in fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					

						Unable to rate
89 mirrors in fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
90 availability of hooks/chair in fitting rooms to hang clothes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
91 ease of shopping with family in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
92 ease of shopping with family in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
93 availability of playpen for children in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
94 availability of rest areas in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
95 availability of rest areas in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
96 availability of seating in store (e.g. couch)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
97 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
98 availability of washroom/restroom/bathroom in mall where store is situated	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

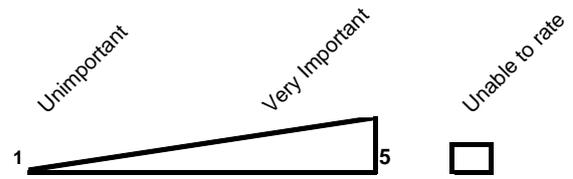
With regards to the **INSTITUTIONAL** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

99 overall impression of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
100 reputation of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
101 store's treatment of employees	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
102 history of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
103 store name	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
104 reliability of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
105 popularity of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
106 prestige of store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
107 display of store promises and policy in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
108 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
109 store's appeal to my friends	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
110 possibility of social contact with other shoppers/store personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
111 similarity in appearance between sales personnel and customers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
112 sales personnel's communication with customers (e.g. own language)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
113 equal treatment of all customers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
114 ability to identify with store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
115 similarity between store image and self image	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
116 store's efforts to build personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
117 presence of manager in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>



With regards to the **MERCHANDISE (clothing and related products)** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

118 selection of merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
119 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/accessories)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
120 availability of imported merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
121 availability of locally manufactured merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
122 availability of unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
123 availability of exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
124 selection of well-known labels/brands	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
125 reputation of store for well-known labels/brands	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
126 availability of designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
127 availability of prestigious labels/brands (e.g. Diesel)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
128 availability of advertised merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
129 stock levels in store (e.g. out-of-stock/in stock)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
130 availability of wide range of sizes in store (i.e. have size you are looking for in stock)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
131 implementation of seasonal changes in merchandise in good time	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
132 availability fashion merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
133 availability of fashion merchandise before other stores	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
134 reputation of store for fashionable merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
135 merchandise fit (e.g. length/width)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
136 availability of wide size range (e.g. stock full sizes 10 or 12 and half sizes 11 or 13)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
137 availability of styles suited to my age	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
138 availability of styles suited to my body type (e.g. large-size/petite)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
139 merchandise price	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
140 availability of a variety of merchandise at different price levels	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
141 availability of comparative prices (i.e. price competitive)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
142 availability of value for money merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
143 quality of merchandise in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
144 reputation of store for quality merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
145 functionality of merchandise (e.g. support from sportsbra/thermal jacket keeps warm/raincoat keeps rain out)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>



With regards to the **PROMOTION** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

146 advertising of merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
147 information provided in advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
148 credibility of store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
149 attractiveness of store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
150 advertising in newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
151 advertising on television	<input type="checkbox"/>					
152 advertising in magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>					
153 advertising on radio	<input type="checkbox"/>					
154 advertising through mail flyers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
155 advertising on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>					
156 visibility of in-store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
157 repetition of mass media advertising in store (e.g. mother's day/ Valentine's day)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
158 advertising of specials	<input type="checkbox"/>					
159 models used in store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
160 inclusion of brochures in mailed store card account	<input type="checkbox"/>					
161 promotional materials associated with store (e.g. store bags)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
162 store's communication through sms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
163 attractiveness of in-store displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
164 spaciousness of in-store displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
165 neatness of displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
166 cleanliness of displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
167 attractiveness of window displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
168 ideas for wearing merchandise given in displays	<input type="checkbox"/>					
169 sales with marked-down prices	<input type="checkbox"/>					
170 real savings in sales (e.g. 50% markdown)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
171 timely announcement of sales	<input type="checkbox"/>					
172 availability special offers (e.g. buy one and get one free)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
173 availability of competitions	<input type="checkbox"/>					
174 availability of loyalty programmes (e.g. points on gold/cash card)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

		Unimportant		Very Important		
	1				5	
175 availability of free samples (e.g. cosmetics)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
176 availability of cash discount (e.g. boutiques)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
177 promotional events (e.g. ladies race/cleavage day)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
178 fashion shows	<input type="checkbox"/>					

With regards to the **SALES PERSONNEL** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

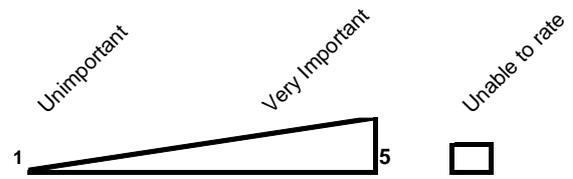
179 overall impression of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
180 appearance of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
181 fashionability of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
182 similarity between appearance of sales personnel and store image	<input type="checkbox"/>					
183 neatness of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
184 attractiveness of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
185 similarity in body type between sales personnel and myself (e.g. large-size/petite)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
186 similarity in age between sales personnel and myself	<input type="checkbox"/>					
187 similarity in gender between sales personnel and myself	<input type="checkbox"/>					
188 competency of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
189 helpfulness of sales personnel (e.g. finding merchandise/ answering questions)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
190 expertise of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
191 courteousness of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
192 friendliness of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
193 honesty of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
194 personal attention from sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
195 prompt attention from sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
196 availability of sales personnel without bothering me	<input type="checkbox"/>					

With regards to the **SERVICE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

197 service quality	<input type="checkbox"/>					
198 number of sales personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
199 availability of sales personnel to provide advice on buying decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>					
200 availability of sales personnel at fitting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>					
201 availability of sales personnel to hang merchandise back after fittings	<input type="checkbox"/>					
202 availability of merchandise consultants(e.g. lingerie consultant)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
203 opportunity for self-service	<input type="checkbox"/>					

						Unable to rate
	1	2	3	4	5	
204 availability of appro facilities (e.g. ability to fit at home)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
205 availability of gift wrapping facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
206 availability of gift vouchers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
207 availability of gift registry	<input type="checkbox"/>					
208 availability of inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
209 availability of trolley/basket to carry merchandise in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
210 merchandise packaging (e.g. put delicate merchandise in tissue paper)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
211 availability of refreshment within store (e.g. water cans)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
212 availability of coffee shop in store	<input type="checkbox"/>					
213 availability of telephone cards within store (e.g. MTN/Vodacom/Telkom)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
214 option of credit card payment (e.g. Visa/Mastercard)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
215 fairness of credit policies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
216 option of bank card payment (debit card)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
217 option of store credit card payment (e.g. Woolworths/Foschini)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
218 ease of opening store credit card account	<input type="checkbox"/>					
219 option of buy aid	<input type="checkbox"/>					
220 option of layaway/lay-by facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
221 availability of home delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>					
222 availability of mail-order service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
223 availability of internet ordering service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
224 availability of telephonic ordering facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
225 availability of gift delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>					
226 availability of alteration service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
227 option of returning unsatisfactory merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
228 ease of returning unsatisfactory merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/>					
229 availability of liberal refund policy	<input type="checkbox"/>					
230 availability of liberal exchange policy	<input type="checkbox"/>					
231 efficiency of dealing with customer complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>					
232 provision of personal feedback (e.g. complaints)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

SECTION B: APPAREL STORE IMAGE DIMENSIONS



Ask yourself how important are the following **DIMENSIONS** as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [dimension...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

1 atmosphere (e.g. store interior/store atmosphere)	1	2	3	4	5	
2 convenience (e.g. transportation/location)	1	2	3	4	5	
3 facilities (e.g. fixtures/fitting rooms)	1	2	3	4	5	
4 institutional (e.g. clientele/store reputation)	1	2	3	4	5	
5 merchandise (e.g. assortment/style)	1	2	3	4	5	
6 promotion (e.g. advertising/displays)	1	2	3	4	5	
7 sales personnel (e.g. appearance/promotion)	1	2	3	4	5	
8 service (e.g. payment options/delivery options)	1	2	3	4	5	

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Please indicate your gender:

 Male

 Female

2. Which population group do you belong to?

 Black

 Coloured

 Indian

 White

 Other (please specify)

3. What is your home language?

 Afrikaans

Afrikaans

 English

English

 Other (specify in box below)

Other (specify in box below)

4. How old are you?

5. Indicate what academic year of study you are currently busy with

 1st year

1st year

 2nd year

2nd year

 3rd year

3rd year

 4th year

4th year

 Postgraduate

Postgraduate

 Other (specify in box below)

Other (specify in box below)

6. For what degree are you currently registered:

 B.A.

B.A.

 B.Comm.

B.Comm.

 B.Sc.

B.Sc.

 Other (specify in box below)

Other (specify in box below)

7. What is your marital status?

 Cohabitation/living together

Cohabitation/living together

 Married

Married

 Not married

Not married

 Divorced/Separated

Divorced/Separated

 Widow/widower

Widow/widower

8. Where do you stay during your study period?

 At home with your family

At home with your family

 Hostel/residence

Hostel/residence

 Hired private room

Hired private room

 Hired flat

Hired flat

 Commune

Commune

 Hotel

Hotel

 Other (specify in box below)

Other (specify in box below)

9. How often do you buy clothes?

 Only when I need clothes

Only when I need clothes

 Once a year

Once a year

 Twice a year

Twice a year

 Three times a year

Three times a year

 Monthly

Monthly

 Weekly

Weekly

 Other (specify in box below)

Other (specify in box below)

10. Approximately how much money, **on average**, do you spend on clothing and related products **per month** (including all outerwear, underwear, shoes and accessories, but excluding fine jewellery)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than R99
<input type="checkbox"/>	R100-R199
<input type="checkbox"/>	R200-R299
<input type="checkbox"/>	R300-R399
<input type="checkbox"/>	R400-R499
<input type="checkbox"/>	R500-R599
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than R600 per month

11. How do you travel when shopping for clothing?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Walk
<input type="checkbox"/>	Own car
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend's car
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bus
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify in box below)
<input type="text"/>	

12. At which of the following stores do you buy clothes, and how often?

	Never	Twice a year	Three times a year	Four times a year	Five or more times a year
Ackermans					
Bergers					
Cape Union Mart					
Choice Clothing					
Due South					
Edgars					
Exact					
Fashion Express					
Foschini					
Identity					
Jet					
Legit					
Markham					
Milady's					
Mr Price					
Pep Stores					
Pick 'n Pay Clothing					
Queenspark					
RJL					
Romens					
Topics					
Truworhs					
Woolworths					
YDE					

Other, specify the name of the store and how often you buy there:

<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 8
Fieldworker authorisation letter



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

August 2006

This research is part of a Ph.D. study in Consumer Science at Stellenbosch University. The main objective of the study is to develop a measurement instrument to measure apparel store image. This serves an important purpose for the advancement in store image research as a part of consumer behaviour. The measurement scale will also provide apparel retailers with a powerful tool to improve their store image and your shopping experience.

Please accept this as an introduction to the fieldworkers who were trained to conduct this phase of the data collection. We appreciate your cooperation and support in the study.

Regards,

H.S. Janse van Noordwyk
Ph.D. student
Consumer Science

Prof. R. du Preez
Study Promoter
Department of Industrial Psychology

Appendix 9
Store image scale employed in the fourth phase of the scale development process

DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF APPAREL STORE IMAGE

The purpose of this study is to develop a scale for the measurement of **apparel (clothing and related products) store image**. We rely on your contribution to be able to complete the study. Your participation is **voluntary** and will be handled **confidentially**. This will not take more than 15 minutes of your time. Please make sure you answer all the questions. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

Sections A and B of the questionnaire relate to **store image**. Store image is defined as **the customer's perception of the cognitive/functional/tangible (e.g. store layout) or affective/psychological/intangible (e.g. store atmosphere) components of a store**. Store image comprises various dimensions, namely atmosphere, convenience, facilities, institutional, merchandise, promotion, sales personnel and service. Each of these dimensions is defined by a number of store attributes.

We are interested in your perception of how important these attributes and dimensions are when shopping for apparel (clothing and related products). **Please rate the importance of the following items as they contribute to the formation of store image on the following scale ranging from 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important.** For example, when you enter an apparel store, how important is the *style of décor in store* in the formation of the store's image? If it is **unimportant** (i.e. *style of décor in store* **does not** contribute to the formation of the image you have of the store), indicate this by calling out 1:



If you are unable to rate the item, indicate this by calling out **unable to rate**.

Section C of the questionnaire relates to your personal particulars and is for research purposes only.

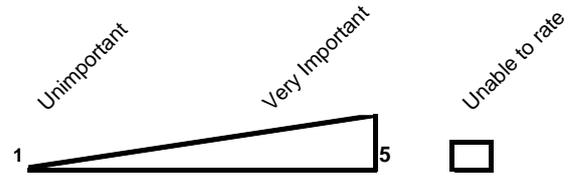
Commence to complete measurement scale.

Thank you for your time and cooperation with the completion of the questionnaire.

STORE CODE
LOCATION CODE
QUESTIONNAIRE NO.

TIME OF DAY
DAY OF WEEK

SECTION A: APPAREL STORE ATTRIBUTES



With regards to the **ATMOSPHERE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

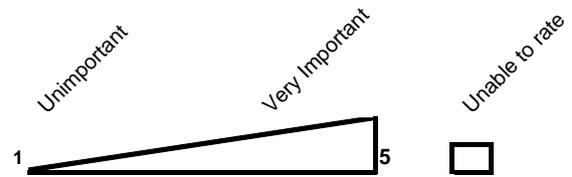
- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | fashionability of store interior | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | style of décor in store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | attractiveness of décor in store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | colours used in store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | suitable finishing materials used in store (e.g wood/stainless steel) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | shopping experience (feeling when shopping in store e.g. special/welcome) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **CONVENIENCE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7 | time it takes to travel to store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | proximity of store to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | accessibility of store (e.g. location within mall) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | flow of people in mall where store is situated (i.e. ease of movement) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | amount of walking required within store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | ease of finding merchandise items | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | store opening hours | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **FACILITIES** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 14 | accessibility of store entrance/exit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | position of aisles in store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 | width of aisles in store | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 | accessibility of merchandise rails | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 | number of fitting rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 | lighting in fitting rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 | ease of shopping with family in mall where store is situated | <input type="checkbox"/> |



With regards to the **INSTITUTIONAL** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

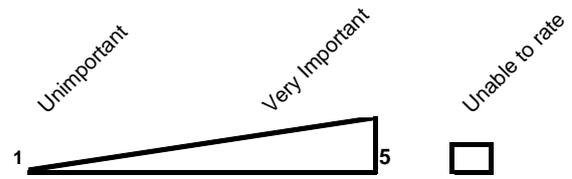
21 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 store's appeal to my friends	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 similarity in appearance between sales personnel and customers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 ability to identify with store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 similarity between store image and self image	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 store's efforts to build personal relationship with customers (e.g. personalised letters)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

With regards to the **MERCHANDISE (clothing and related products)** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

27 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/accessories)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 availability of imported merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
29 availability of unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 availability of exclusive merchandise (e.g. limited number manufactured)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 availability of designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
32 availability fashion merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
33 availability of styles suited to my age	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 quality of merchandise in store	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

With regards to the **PROMOTION** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

35 credibility of store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 models used in store advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
37 inclusion of brochures in mailed store card account	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
38 spaciousness of in-store displays	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
39 ideas for wearing merchandise given in displays	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 sales with marked-down prices	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
41 timely announcement of sales	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
42 availability of special offers (e.g. buy one get one free)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/>



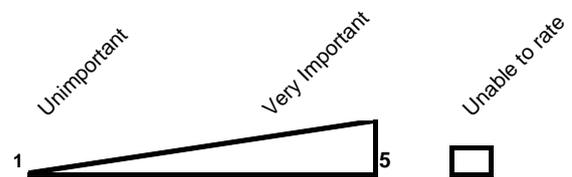
With regards to the **SALES PERSONNEL** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 43 fashionability of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 44 attractiveness of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 45 similarity in body type between sales personnel and myself
(e.g. large-size/petite) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 46 similarity in age between sales personnel and myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 47 similarity in gender between sales personnel and myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **SERVICE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 48 expertise of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 49 courteousness of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50 number of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51 availability of gift vouchers | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 52 availability of gift registry | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 53 availability of inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 54 availability of mail-order service | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 55 availability of alteration service | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION B: APPAREL STORE IMAGE DIMENSIONS



Ask yourself how important are the following DIMENSIONS as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [dimension...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 atmosphere (e.g. store interior/store atmosphere) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 convenience (e.g. transportation/location) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 facilities (e.g. fixtures/fitting rooms) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 institutional (e.g. clientele/store reputation) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 merchandise (e.g. assortment/style) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 promotion (e.g. advertising/displays) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 sales personnel (e.g. appearance/promotion) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 service (e.g. payment options/delivery options) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Please indicate your gender:

 Male

 Female

2. Which population group do you belong to?

 Black

 Coloured

 Indian

 White

 Other (please specify)

3. What is your home language?

Afrikaans

English

Other (specify in box below)

4. How old are you?

Younger than 20

20-29 years old

30-39 years old

40-49 years old

50-59 years old

Older than 60

5. What job do you do?

Unemployed

Clerical, salesperson, technician, secretarial

Middle management (teacher, nursing sister)

Corporate (Manager)

Professional (doctor, director)

Homemaker

Retired (including a severance package)

Other (specify in box below)

6. What is the total **monthly** income of your household before tax and deductions?

Less than R500

R501-R1000

R1001-R3000

R3001-R5000

R5001-R7000

R7001-R10 000

R10 001-R20 000

R20 001 - R30 000

R30 001 and more

7. What is your marital status?

Cohabitation/living together

Married

Not married

Divorced/Separated

Widow/widower

8. How often do you buy clothes?

Only when I need clothes

Once a year

Twice a year

Three times a year

Monthly

Weekly

Other (specify in box below)

9. Approximately how much money, **on average**, do you spend on clothing and related products **per month** (including all outerwear, underwear, shoes and accessories, but excluding fine jewellery)?

Less than R99

R100-R199

R200-R299

R300-R399

R400-R499

R500-R599

More than R600 per month

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 10
Fieldworker training manual

FIELDWORKER TRAINING MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

South African retailing is entering a new era characterised by dramatic change and intense competitive activity. Retailers have to anticipate and plan for the constantly changing demographic, psychographic, economic, technological and legal environments, as well as embark on initiatives and strategies to remain competitive (Terblanché, 1998). This is especially true for the apparel retail industry, due to its dynamic nature and continuous changes over time (Forsythe, Butler & Kim, 1991; Hawkins, Best & Coney, 2001). The apparel industry is a rapidly paced, highly competitive global business affecting almost all consumers in society (Kunz, 1998; Rath et al., 1994; Solomon, & Rabolt, 2004). To succeed, apparel retailers should take cognisance of all variables influencing the behaviour of consumers.

Consumers typically engage in a decision-making process when selecting a retail outlet. The consumer recognises a problem that requires an outlet to be selected, engages in internal and possible external search, evaluates relevant alternatives, and finally applies a decision rule to make a selection. Different consumer market segments have specific needs that establish certain priorities in evaluating store alternatives. These priorities are based on store attributes, which serve as consumers' evaluative criteria when comparing alternative outlets. The perception of all attributes associated with a retail outlet is referred to as store image. When a store's image closely resembles the consumer's needs it will lead to a positive attitude towards the store and result in a greater likelihood of store selection (Hawkins et al., 2001; Mowen & Minor, 1998; Terblanché, 1998). Retailers can create the store image they wish to project through the combination and manipulation of the different store attributes, thereby meeting consumers' needs (Terblanché, 1998). It is critical, therefore, for retailers to ascertain the perceived importance of store attributes in store image to gain a competitive advantage in the retail environment.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Store image is defined as the customer's perception of the cognitive/functional/tangible (e.g. store layout) or affective/psychological/intangible (e.g. store atmosphere) components of a store (Lindquist, 1974-1975). The purpose of this study is to develop a measurement scale to measure store image and the dimensions underpinning the construct. The outcome of the research will deliver a measurement scale with reported reliability and validity, as well as provide proof of the practical implementation of the measurement scale.

MEASUREMENT SCALE

The measurement scale consists of three sections:

- Section A & B: These sections relate to the measurement of store image
Section C: This section includes demographical information

COMPLETING THE MEASUREMENT SCALE

The following procedure will be followed:

- ◆ The measurement scale will be completed through an interview. The fieldworker will give instructions for the completion of the measurement scale as indicated by the headings within the scale, i.e. by asking respondents how important each of the items in the measurement scale are in contributing to the formation of apparel store image. Following this, the fieldworker will mention each item in the measurement scale to the respondent.
- ◆ Respondents must indicate their response to each statement on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1=unimportant to 5=very important. Each respondent will be provided with a page showing a visual representation of the scale format. Respondents will choose their answers by indicating a number as it relates to the response format.
- ◆ The respondent's answer will be recorded by the fieldworker by indicating the correct answer number in the appropriate box next to the correct item with an X.
- ◆ Respondents should in no way be led in their answers. Each of the scale items should be stated objectively and answers noted accurately. Under no circumstances should an own opinion be given.
- ◆ It is very important that respondents give responses to all the items in the measurement scale. If this is not the case, the particular respondent's feedback will be unusable and time will be wasted.
- ◆ Measurement scales will be completed according to a quota system. To ensure that the research study is conducted scientifically, the guidelines for the quotas to be filled should be followed carefully. These guidelines include quotas relating to store type, store location, gender, population group and time as per the store schedule.
- ◆ Details relating to the quotas need to be captured on the measurement scale. There are spaces available on the scale page to code these details. Please ensure that these are filled out correctly, since this information is important for the later analysis of the data. Refer to the included information sheet.
- ◆ Each fieldworker will be allocated one store in one location. The fieldworker will visit this store at the allocated times and complete the number of measurement scales as per the quotas on the store schedule.

- ◆ Fieldworkers collecting data from stores situated outside of shopping malls who are unable to fill their quotas at the allocated times, will return the following week to fill the quota.
- ◆ Fieldworkers collecting data from stores situated within shopping malls who are unable to fill their quotas at the allocated times, will fill their quotas in the following week in stores situated outside of shopping malls. Please ensure that this practice is kept to the minimum.
- ◆ If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact any of the individuals on the study committee. Their telephone contact details are on the last page of this manual.
- ◆ Please do not ask anyone else to complete your measurement scales. Rather return them if they are not completed.
- ◆ Completed measurement scales should be handed in on the date that has been agreed.

RESPONDENT CRITERIA

- ◆ Two types of stores in different locations have been identified for the purposes of this study. You will be conducting interviews with consumers exiting these stores in the specific locations after shopping.
- ◆ Population groups will serve as criteria for selecting respondents. Black, coloured and white consumers will be approached for participation in the study according to the quotas indicated on the store schedule.
- ◆ Both male and female consumers will be included in the study. Again, both genders will be approached according to the guidelines in the store schedule.
- ◆ Please approach individuals of all age groups.
- ◆ Quotas fitting the respondent criteria are to be filled within the allocated times.

SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

The following procedure must be followed:

- ◆ Position yourself at the exit of the store you are allocated. Start the interview process by approaching the first consumer who fits the respondent criteria and exits the store.
- ◆ Introduce yourself and inform the consumer that you are part of a research study for which their help is needed. Ensure that you extend a friendly request to consumers to participate in the study by completing the measurement scale. Show them the introductory letter included in the measurement scale.
- ◆ Inform consumers that they, by participating in the study, will be entered into a lucky draw with a R1000 gift voucher as prize.
- ◆ If individuals refuse to participate, accept this in a positive manner. No individual should be forced to complete the measurement scale. If an individual refuses to participate in the study, be sure to record this on the included no-response page.

- ◆ Be sure to stress to consumers that the information that is collected will be handled in the strictest confidence, that individuals will remain anonymous and that there will be no way by which the information that is given could be linked to any one individual. Information that is gained will be used for research purposes only.
- ◆ If an individual is willing to participate in the study you will complete the measurement scale with them as discussed previously.
- ◆ Upon completing the measurement scale, each respondent must be asked to fill out a ticket for the lucky draw. The ticket will be placed in the lucky draw boxes given to each fieldworker.
- ◆ After the completion of one measurement scale, the following consumer will be approached. This process will continue within the allocated times until all the quotas are filled.
- ◆ Please ensure that all interviews are recorded on the store schedule and handed in with the completed measurement scales. Please ensure that the quota guidelines as represented in the store schedule are followed carefully.

STORES INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH

- ◆ The two types of stores selected for the study includes discount and specialty stores. For each of these types, specific stores were identified to be representative of discount stores (Pep/Mr Price) and specialty stores (Foschini/Markham/Truworths).
- ◆ For interviewing taking place within shopping malls, permission has been obtained from the centre management. Fieldworkers will be allowed to interview consumers inside the mall on specific days and times. Please ensure that you have your introductory letter with you to identify yourself. The contact details for individuals representing the centre's management are included should any problems arise.
- ◆ The store schedule is included to stipulate the times, stores and store locations at which each individual fieldworker needs to be present. Please ensure that you keep to these schedules.

COMPENSATION

- ◆ Fieldworkers will receive R10,00 for each completed measurement scale. This includes transport costs. Fieldworkers will be paid in cash after handing in the completed measurement scales.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

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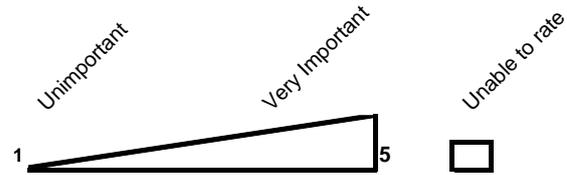
Tel: (021) 981 2288

Appendix 11
Final store image scale

STORE CODE
LOCATION CODE
QUESTIONNAIRE NO.

TIME OF DAY
DAY OF WEEK

SECTION A: APPAREL STORE ATTRIBUTES



With regards to the **ATMOSPHERE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

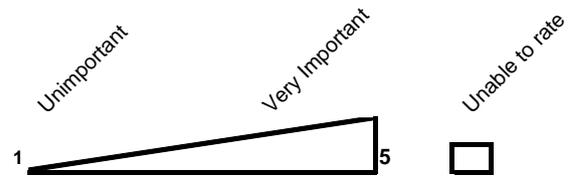
- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | fashionability of store interior | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | style of décor in store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | attractiveness of décor in store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | colours used in store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | suitable finishing materials used in store (e.g wood/stainless steel) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **CONVENIENCE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 | time it takes to travel to store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | proximity of store to variety of other stores (e.g. grocery store) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | accessibility of store (e.g. location within mall) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | flow of people in mall where store is situated (i.e. ease of movement) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | amount of walking required within store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | ease of finding merchandise items | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | store opening hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **FACILITIES** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13 | accessibility of store entrance/exit | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | width of aisles in store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | accessibility of merchandise rails | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 | number of fitting rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 | ease of shopping with family in mall where store is situated | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |



With regards to the **INSTITUTIONAL** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18 social class appeal of store (e.g. high/low class) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 store's appeal to my friends | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 similarity in appearance between sales personnel and customers | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 ability to identify with store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22 similarity between store image and self image | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **MERCHANDISE (clothing and related products)** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

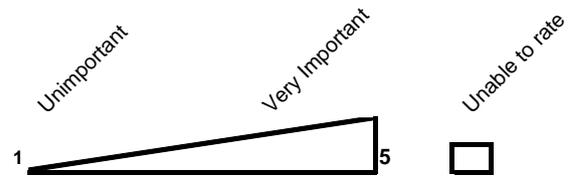
- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 23 variety of merchandise categories (e.g. formalwear/leisurewear/lingerie/shoes/accessories) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24 availability of imported merchandise | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25 availability of unique merchandise (e.g. only offered by specific store) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26 availability of designer label merchandise (e.g. Calvin Klein) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27 availability fashion merchandise | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28 quality of merchandise in store | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **PROMOTION** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 29 credibility of store advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30 models used in store advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31 inclusion of brochures in mailed store card account | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32 spaciousness of in-store displays | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33 ideas for wearing merchandise given in displays | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34 sales with marked-down prices | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35 timely announcement of sales | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36 availability of special offers (e.g. buy one get one free) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

With regards to the **SALES PERSONNEL APPEARANCE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 37 attractiveness of sales personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38 similarity in body type between sales personnel and myself (e.g. large-size/petite) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39 similarity in age between sales personnel and myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40 similarity in gender between sales personnel and myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |



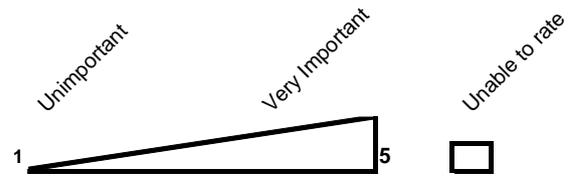
With regards to the **SALES PERSONNEL INTERACTION** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- 41 expertise of sales personnel 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 42 courteousness of sales personnel 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 43 number of sales personnel 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate

With regards to the **SERVICE** dimension, ask yourself how important are the following items as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [item...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- 44 availability of gift vouchers 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 45 availability of gift registry 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 46 availability of inter-store transfer facilities (e.g. find items from other stores) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 47 availability of mail-order service 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 48 availability of alteration service 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate

SECTION B: APPAREL STORE IMAGE DIMENSIONS



Ask yourself how important are the following **DIMENSIONS** as they contribute to the formation of apparel store image (i.e. *the [dimension...] is unimportant/important in my formation of apparel store image*)

- 1 atmosphere (e.g. store interior/store atmosphere) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 2 convenience (e.g. transportation/location) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 3 facilities (e.g. fixtures/fitting rooms) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 4 institutional (e.g. clientele/store reputation) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 5 merchandise (e.g. assortment/style) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 6 promotion (e.g. advertising/displays) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 7 sales personnel (e.g. appearance/promotion) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate
- 8 service (e.g. payment options/delivery options) 1 2 3 4 5 Unable to rate

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Please indicate your gender:

 Male

 Female

2. Which population group do you belong to?

 Black

 Coloured

 Indian

 White

 Other (please specify)

3. What is your home language?

Afrikaans

English

Other (specify in box below)

4. How old are you?

Younger than 20

20-29 years old

30-39 years old

40-49 years old

50-59 years old

Older than 60

5. What job do you do?

Unemployed

Clerical, salesperson, technician, secretarial

Middle management (teacher, nursing sister)

Corporate (Manager)

Professional (doctor, director)

Homemaker

Retired (including a severance package)

Other (specify in box below)

6. What is the total **monthly** income of your household before tax and deductions?

Less than R500

R501-R1000

R1001-R3000

R3001-R5000

R5001-R7000

R7001-R10 000

R10 001-R20 000

R20 001 - R30 000

R30 001 and more

7. What is your marital status?

Cohabitation/living together

Married

Not married

Divorced/Separated

Widow/widower

8. How often do you buy clothes?

Only when I need clothes

Once a year

Twice a year

Three times a year

Monthly

Weekly

Other (specify in box below)

9. Approximately how much money, **on average**, do you spend on clothing and related products **per month** (including all outerwear, underwear, shoes and accessories, but excluding fine jewellery)?

Less than R99

R100-R199

R200-R299

R300-R399

R400-R499

R500-R599

More than R600 per month

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE