PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF RETAIL STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES TO THE FEMALE LARGE-SIZE APPAREL CONSUMER IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

BY

HS JANSE VAN NOORDWYK

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in Consumer Science (Clothing and Textiles)
at the
University of Stellenbosch

PROMOTORS: PROF EM VISSER & MRS ME VAN DER MERWE

DECEMBER 2002

STELLENBOSCH

DECLARATION

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

ABSTRACT

An opportunity currently exists for retailers to develop store image strategies to target the female large-size apparel consumer market within the multicultural South African consumer society. This exploratory study set out to generate and describe retail store image attributes perceived as important to the female large-size apparel consumer within the South African context, as well as identifying differences and similarities in the perception of these attributes based on race and age group. The study also aimed to determine if the existing store image attribute groupings by Lindquist (1974-1975:31) is applicable when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.

Focus groups were used as method of data collection in this study. The sample population (n=37) consisted of account holders who purchased apparel from a specific large-size apparel retail store during a specific time period. Three race groups, namely Africans, Coloureds, and Whites, as well as three age groups i.e. 20-29, 30-39, and 40-54 year age groups were included. Each focus group was homogenous in race and age composition.

A facilitator conducted group discussions by following a focus group schedule. The first part of the discussion generated retail store image attributes deemed important by the focus group participants, followed by the rating of the perceived importance of these attributes using the *Schutte Visual Scale*. The second part of the discussion generated participants' description of Lindquist's nine identified store image attribute groupings, followed by the rating of the perceived importance of each of these attribute groupings using the *Schutte Visual Scale*.

Transcriptions of all the focus group discussions were made. For the first part of the study the transcriptions were compiled into composite lists and refined based on Lindquist's nine attribute groupings. The aggregate ratings for each specific attribute and attribute grouping were calculated. For the second part of the study's results, the descriptions of each of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings was compiled into a single list of descriptive attributes. The aggregate ratings for each of these attributes groupings were calculated.

Respondents perceived *Merchandise* and *Clientele* the most important attribute groupings in the analysis of all race and age groups, followed by *Service*, *Post-transaction satisfaction*, *Promotion* and *Store atmosphere*. *Institutional factors* and *Physical facilities* were perceived as the least important attribute groupings. No attributes relating to *Convenience* were generated. In the analysis of race and age groups, *Merchandise* and *Service*, followed by *Store atmosphere*, were perceived as the most important attribute groupings by most of the focus groups. The specific attributes generated by the different groups showed similarities, whereas the rating and definition of these attributes differed.

Lindquist's descriptions of the nine attribute groupings were compared to the descriptions of the respondents. Similarities and differences were identified. Recommendations were made to refine and adapt Lindquist's attribute groupings and descriptions to develop a store image research framework that could be more applicable to the female large-size apparel consumer.

This exploratory study provides some insight into the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer, given the context of a multi-cultural South African society. Recommendations for future research were made and the implications for retailers were outlined.

OPSOMMING

Daar bestaan tans 'n geleentheid vir kleinhandelaars om 'n winkelbeeld strategie te ontwikkel wat gemik is op die vroulike groter figuur kledingverbruiker binne die multikulturele Suid-Afrikaanse verbruikersamelewing. Hierdie verkennende studie poog om kleinhandel winkelbeeldeienskappe wat deur die vroulike groter figuur kledingverbruiker binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks as belangrik beskou word, te genereer en te beskryf, sowel as om die verskille en ooreenkomste in persepsies van die belangrikheid van hierdie eienskappe tussen ras en ouderdomsgroep te identifiseer. Die studie het ook ten doel om te bepaal of die bestaande winkelbeeldeienskap groeperinge, soos deur Lindquist (1974-1975:31) voorgestel, toepaslik is wanneer die vroulike groter figuur kledingverbruiker bestudeer word.

Fokusgroepe is as metode van data-insameling gebruik. Die steekproef (n=37) was rekeninghouers wat aankope gedoen het by 'n bepaalde groter figuur kledingkleinhandelaar binne 'n spesifieke tydsperiode (n=37). Drie rassegroepe naamlik Swartes, Kleurlinge, en Blankes, sowel as drie ouderdomsgroepe te wete 20-29, 30-39, en 40-54-jariges is ingesluit. Elke fokusgroep was homogeen in ras- en ouderdomsamestelling.

'n Fasiliteerder het die fokusgroepbesprekings gevoer deur 'n fokusgroepskedule te volg. Die eerste deel van die bespreking het kleinhandel winkelbeeldeienskappe, wat deur die fokusgroepdeelnemers as belangrik beskou is, gegenereer. Dit is gevolg deur die meting van die respondente se persepsie van die belangrikheid van hierdie eienskappe met behulp van die *Schutte Visuele Skaal*. Die tweede deel van die bespreking het beskrywings van Lindquist se nege winkelbeeldeienskap groeperinge gegenereer en is gevolg deur die meting van respondente se persepsie van die belangrikheid van hierdie eienskap groeperinge met behulp van die *Schutte Visuele Skaal*.

Transkripsies is van al die fokusgroepbesprekings gemaak. Vir die eerste deel van die studie is die transkripsies in lyste van spesifieke eienskappe saamgestel en georden volgens Lindquist se nege eienskap groeperinge. Die gemiddelde waarde vir elke spesifieke eienskap sowel as vir die eienskap groepering is bereken. Vir die tweede deel van die studie is beskrywings van elk van Lindquist se nege eienskap groepering saamgestel in 'n enkele lys van beskrywende eienskappe. Die gemiddelde waarde vir elk van hierdie eienskap groeperinge is bereken.

Respondente beskou Goedere (*Merchandise*) en Kliëntebasis (*Clientele*) as die belangrikste eienskap groeperinge in 'n analise van alle ras- en ouderdomsgroepe, gevolg deur Diens (*Service*), Na-verkoop tevredenheid (*Post-transaction satisfaction*), Promosie (*Promotion*) en Winkelatmosfeer (*Store atmosphere*). Institusionele faktore (*Institutional factors*) en Fisiese fasiliteite (*Physical facilities*) is die minste belangrik. Geen eienskappe wat met Gerief

(*Convenience*) verband hou, is gegenereer nie. In die analise van ras- en ouderdomsgroepe is Goedere en Diens, gevolg deur Winkelatmosfeer, as die belangrikste eienskap groeperinge beskou deur meeste van die fokusgroepe. Die spesifieke eienskappe wat deur die verskillende groepe gegenereer is, dui op ooreenkomste, terwyl die gemiddelde waarde en fokus van die eienskappe verskil.

Lindquist se beskrywings van die nege eienskap groeperinge is vergelyk met die beskrywings van die respondente. Ooreenkomste en verskille is geïdentifiseer. Voorstelle is gemaak om Lindquist se eienskap groeperinge en beskrywings te verfyn en aan te pas ten einde 'n winkelbeeld navorsingsraamwerk te ontwikkel wat meer toepaslik is op die vroulike groter figuur kledingverbruiker.

Hierdie verkennende studie bied insig in die vroulike groter figuur kledingverbruiker se persepsies van die belangrikheid van kleinhandel winkelbeeldeienskappe, gegewe die konteks van 'n multkulturele Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing word gemaak en die implikasies vir kleinhandelaars is uitgewys.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who made this achievement possible.

- To my Creator, who gave me the strength and determination to succeed in this goal.
- To Prof. Bessie Visser, for her guidance and patience, and above all her confidence in me – not only was it a privilege to study under her, it was a valuable life experience.
- To Mrs. Elsabè van der Merwe, for her guidance and encouragement, and for always seeing the lighter side of things.
- To my parents, Kobus and Hester, for believing in me, encouraging me, and loving me.
- To my brother, Manie, for always being there when I needed him – anytime, anyday.
- To my grandparents, Dirk and Babs Ackermann, whose love supported me to succeed in this goal.
- To my friends, especially William, Amanda, and Lezèl, who made the difficult times easier with their laughs and understanding.
- To Dr. De Wet Schutte, for his expert advice and input throughout the study.
- To Mrs. Maryke Hunter-Hüsselmann, for her valuable contribution in the data analysis of this study.
- To the National Research Foundation (NRF), for financial assistance. Opinions expressed and conclusion arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.
- To SAGUS (Sentrum vir Afrikaanse Gebruikskunde, Universiteit Stellenbosch) for the language revision of the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

PAGE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVES

Consumers go through a process of complex decision-making when selecting stores (Assael, 1992:629). The need to understand the underlying motives for store patronage is important when studying consumer behaviour. In their purchase decision-making, consumers respond not only to the tangible product, but also to the total product. A significant feature of the total product is retail store image (Kotler, 1973-1974:48). Retail store image serves as an evaluative criterion in the decision-making process concerning retail outlet selection (Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1998:599). It also serves as an influence in other store-related behaviours, specifically store contact and store loyalty (Peter & Olson, 1990:528). The in-store influence of a retail store image contributes to the modification of intended purchase behaviour. It is therefore also an important factor in in-store decision-making (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998:644). Therefore, models of decision-making, store patronage and store choice found in consumer behaviour literature are viable options to be used as theoretical models in store image attribute research, as the need for a theoretical point of departure has long been a concern in clothing consumer behaviour research (Nagasawa, Kaiser & Hutton, 1989; and Winakor, 1988).

Retail store image is the result of consumers' sensory perceptions of vision, hearing, smell, and even touch (Mowen, 1995:570). It constitutes a combination of tangible/functional and intangible/psychological factors perceived to be present by consumers. Lindquist (1974-1975:31) investigated store image and identified various groupings of attributes that contribute to the formation of store image, including merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institutional factors and post-transaction satisfaction.

However, as will be discussed extensively in Chapter 2, a universal definition and classification of store image and store image attributes could not be identified from the reviewed literature. This poses a problem for retail store image attribute research. Although this study implements Lindquist's classification of store image attributes (1974-1975:31-32), certain inadequacies of this classification system become evident when analysing current store image attribute literature. Age-related store image attribute research (Chowdhary, 1999; Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney, 1990; and Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker, 1985) indicated attributes that could

1

not be categorised easily, as well as research including specific service attributes (Cary & Zylla, 1981; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978; Lee & Johnson, 1997; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993).

Certain methodological trends within retail store image attribute research can also be observed in the literature available. Of the reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2, only two studies yielded qualitative data. One study employed field research through in-depth interviews (De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe, 1998). The other followed an experimental approach as mode of observation together with a focus group interview as data gathering technique (Lee & Johnson, 1997). Lennon and Burns (2000) comment on concerns raised by certain methodological trends in strategies used to gather data, the time frame of studies, the origin of data elicited, the technique of data elicitation and the qualitative or quantitative treatment of data. In an overview of literature, they found that the strategy most often used to gather data is by means of a survey together with a qualitative treatment of data. This study, therefore, tried to address these needs in its research design.

Store image attribute research, however, is not only relevant to apparel professionals and academics. Terblanché's adaptation from Davidson, Sweeney and Stampfl's model of the retail marketing strategy, indicates that retail store image attributes, relating to both uncontrollable consumer needs and controllable marketing decisions, influence store positioning, which is an important determinant of an integrated retail marketing strategy (1998:106). Retailers, therefore, should also be aware of the importance of store image attributes and the way they influence store image. Consumers' perceptions of retail store image differ. It is important for retailers to know who their target customer is and what level of fashion merchandise they have to present to ensure the right image. A clear image is of vital importance to gain a competitive advantage in the retail environment (Rabolt & Miler, 1997:31). Retail store image needs to be manipulated by the retailer to influence consumers' behaviours, attitudes and beliefs (Mowen, 1995:570).

Competing global and local forces in apparel retailing created more active and demanding consumers who are driven by individual wants and needs, as opposed to mass consumer needs (*Retailing – What does the future hold?*, 2001). Intervening variables such as body sizes in the form of petite, big and tall and large-size consumers, as well as the apparel needs of special groups on the basis of physical, functional and occupational needs, have become increasingly important in identifying markets (Chowdhary, 1999:126).

Research shows that the large-size female market is a viable and important part of the female apparel industry (Lennon, 1992:18). Since the 1980's, the petite and large-size markets for female consumers have received greater attention from apparel retailers (Mueller & Smiley, 1995:57; and Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll, 1990:83). In South Africa, the first female large-size stand-alone apparel chain store was launched in 1996, after the successful growth from a label

in 1992 to a stand-alone brand in 1994. This, however, comes as no surprise, since the average female apparel consumer in South Africa is about a size 14 (Powell, 2001). The literature supports the fact that the female large-size consumer will be a growing market segment in South Africa in the future, as well as in other parts of the world (Cant & Machado, 2002:31; Easey, 2002:32; and Frings, 1999:38).

However, retailers have approached the needs of the female large-size market from a marketing rather than a consumer's perspective, thereby ignoring the actual problems and needs of the target population (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988:783). Retailers are, therefore, only realising a part of this market's potential and need to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the large-size female apparel market by building a relationship with these consumers and following their changing demands (*Retailing – What does the future hold?*, 2001).

Several studies have been conducted in an attempt to describe these markets (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988; Kind & Hathcote, 2000; Lennon, 1992 and 1997). However, it is evident from the available literature that these consumers have not received the attention they deserve in consumer behaviour research, taking into account the viability of this market segment. This is especially true of South Africa, where no published research on this market could be found. Once again, a concern in female large-size apparel consumer research is the lack of an adequate definition and delineation of this market segment. These consumers are generally defined in terms of apparel sizes. Kind and Hathcote (2000:315) found that sizing standards should be re-evaluated and that there is a need for an international sizing standard. They based this on the results in their study, indicating that speciality-size college females were dissatisfied with various apparel fit variables, with the large-size college females being the most dissatisfied.

Consumer behaviour, specifically related to apparel, can draw from social-psychological perspectives as theoretical viewpoints in research. The cognitive and symbolic-interactionist perspectives, as discussed in Chapter 2, are specifically relevant to the study of the female large-size apparel consumer in relation to the importance of store image attributes. Being large-sized might socially disqualify an individual and result in a negative body cathexis, body image and, consequently, self image (Kaiser, 1997:98; and Horn & Gurel, 1981:141). Thus, it is evident that the female large-size apparel consumer might differ from other female apparel consumers, because of the factors influencing self-image. Individuals tend to patronise retailers whose store image closely corresponds to their self-image. Therefore, the concept of self-image has strategic implications within the retail environment, as markets can be segmented based on the relevant consumer self-image (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:111). This further justifies the investigation of the importance of store image attributes to the female large-size apparel consumer, as no published research that includes the role of self-image is currently available.

Culture, within a consumer behaviour context, is the sum total of learned beliefs, values and customs, where these serve to regulate consumer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:322). The South African population is representative of a multicultural heterogeneous society where cultural values are an important determinant variable in consumer decision-making (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:329). Cross-cultural analysis, i.e. conducting systematic comparisons of the similarities and differences in all aspects of specific cultures targeted as appropriate marketing opportunities is, therefore, imperative in consumer behaviour research within the South African context. The cultural and contextual perspectives, which are social-psychological perspectives within the clothing field of study, provide further insight and serve as theoretical basis for studying apparel-related consumer behaviour, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Mowen and Minor (1998:590) define a subculture as a subdivision of a national culture, based on some unifying characteristics. Nationality, race, region, age, religion, gender and social class are identified as demographic characteristics that have also been used successfully to identify subcultures. Demographic characteristics of consumers are useful as bases for market segmentation in apparel retailing. Retailers need to understand the segmentation variables and behavioural correlations applicable to their retail institution (Bearden, Teel & Durand, 1978:65). Demographics of a store's consumers determine their perceptions of a store. Retailers should therefore analyse their customers in terms of these segmentation variables (Pessemier, 1980:94). Different subcultures in South Africa can be identified by, *inter alia*, age, geographical location or ethnic identity, where ethnic subcultures are based on language spoken, religion and race. Both age group and race are regarded as important subcultures. Retailers should be sensitive, emphatic and respectful of the differences in cultural values and the various subcultures in South Africa (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:329).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research on apparel retail store attributes and image has received considerable attention in retailing literature (Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995; Cary & Zylla, 1981; Chowdhary, 1989; Chowdhary, 1999; De Klerk et al., 1998; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984; Kim & Han, 2000; Lee, Hwang & Kang, 1996; Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker, 1985; Marks, 1976; Mattson, 1982; Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Joung, 2000; Roth, Workman & King, 1995; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993; Shim *et al.*, 1990; Summers & Hebert, 1998; Thorpe & Avery, 1983-1984; and Van de Velde, Pelton, Turnbull, Caton & Byrne, 1996). In contrast, the female large-size consumer market received less attention in retailing literature (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988 and Kind & Hathcote, 2000). No published literature on the relation between retail store image attributes and the large-size market could be found. This lack of research raises certain issues that warrant investigation. Furthermore, no evidence exists of

4

what the female large-size market seeks from retailers in their shopping activities, specifically regarding their expectations with regard to store image attributes. In addition, there is no certainty whether the female large-size market constitutes a homogeneous group in terms of the importance of retail store image attributes and demographic characteristics, specifically pertaining to race and age group.

An opportunity currently exists for retailers, specifically in South Africa, to develop retail store image strategies, that target the female large-size apparel consumers, as this is an emerging market segment which has not received much attention previously. Before developing such strategies, it is imperative to understand the importance of store image attributes to the female large-size apparel market and how this market can be described in terms of demographic characteristics.

This led to the formulation of the following problem statement:

What retail store image attributes are perceived as important to the female large-size apparel consumer in the multi-cultural South African consumer society? What are the differences in the perception of these attributes based on race and age group?

The customers of a female large-size apparel retailer,[1] specialising in merchandise ranging in sizes from 14-28, served as sample population for this study. This retailer is part of a large national retail chain, including stores focusing on women's apparel, men's apparel, sportswear, and jewellery. This female large-size apparel retailer developed from a label in 1992 to a stand-alone brand in 1994. In 1996 the first stand-alone store was launched, which was the first in South Africa and is still the only apparel retailer focusing exclusively on the female large-size apparel consumer. The specific retail store employed in this study, whose account holders constituted the final sample, is situated in a shopping centre, The Somerset Mall, near the town of Somerset West in the Western Cape (one of the eleven provinces in South Africa). This is a popular shopping centre frequented by consumers from a wide surrounding area.

This study is exploratory in nature, and is based on a qualitative research methodology, using focus groups to provide initial insight into the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to the female large-size apparel consumer within the multicultural South African consumer society. The research will contribute to a greater understanding of the female large-size consumer and provides information on the store image attributes and demographic characteristics of this consumer, specifically investigating the differences amongst race and age

---

[1] This study was conducted in co-operation with a leading female large-size apparel retailer. Their interest in the results was an important consideration in the research design, specifically the influence of race and age as variables in consumers' perception of store image attributes.

groups. The race groups included in this study are Africans, Coloureds and Whites, where Coloureds are described as individuals of mixed race. The age groups comprised a 20-29 year group, a 30-39 year group, and a 40-54 year group. Apparel professionals could benefit from the information gained by this study, as well as apparel retailers when formulating their store image and retailing strategies.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study was developed by integrating Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (1992:630), the contextual perspective on clothing (Kaiser, 1997:30), and Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings (1974-1975:31). The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.1.

This framework indicates how female large-size apparel consumer characteristics of culture, subculture, specifically race and age, as well as self-image, influence specific female large-size apparel needs. These needs lead to the perceived importance of retail store image attributes, resulting in a store image. The perceived importance of retail store image attributes influences retail strategies. The interactions between these different concepts can be viewed using a contextual perspective, including cognitive, symbolic-interactionist, as well as cultural perspectives.

Assael's model, the socio-psychological perspective, and Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings will be discussed extensively in Chapter 2. There will also be an overview of culture and subculture, specifically race and age, and the way it relates to store image attributes and the female large-size apparel market. Chapter 2 will indicate how self-image as a concept is specific to the female large-size consumer, and discuss female large-size apparel consumers as a separate market segment with distinct features. The discussion of results in Chapter 4 will show how this market segment has specific apparel needs regarding store image attributes. In Chapter 5, I will formulate the implications for female large-size apparel retailers regarding their retail strategy, with specific reference to store image and store image attributes.
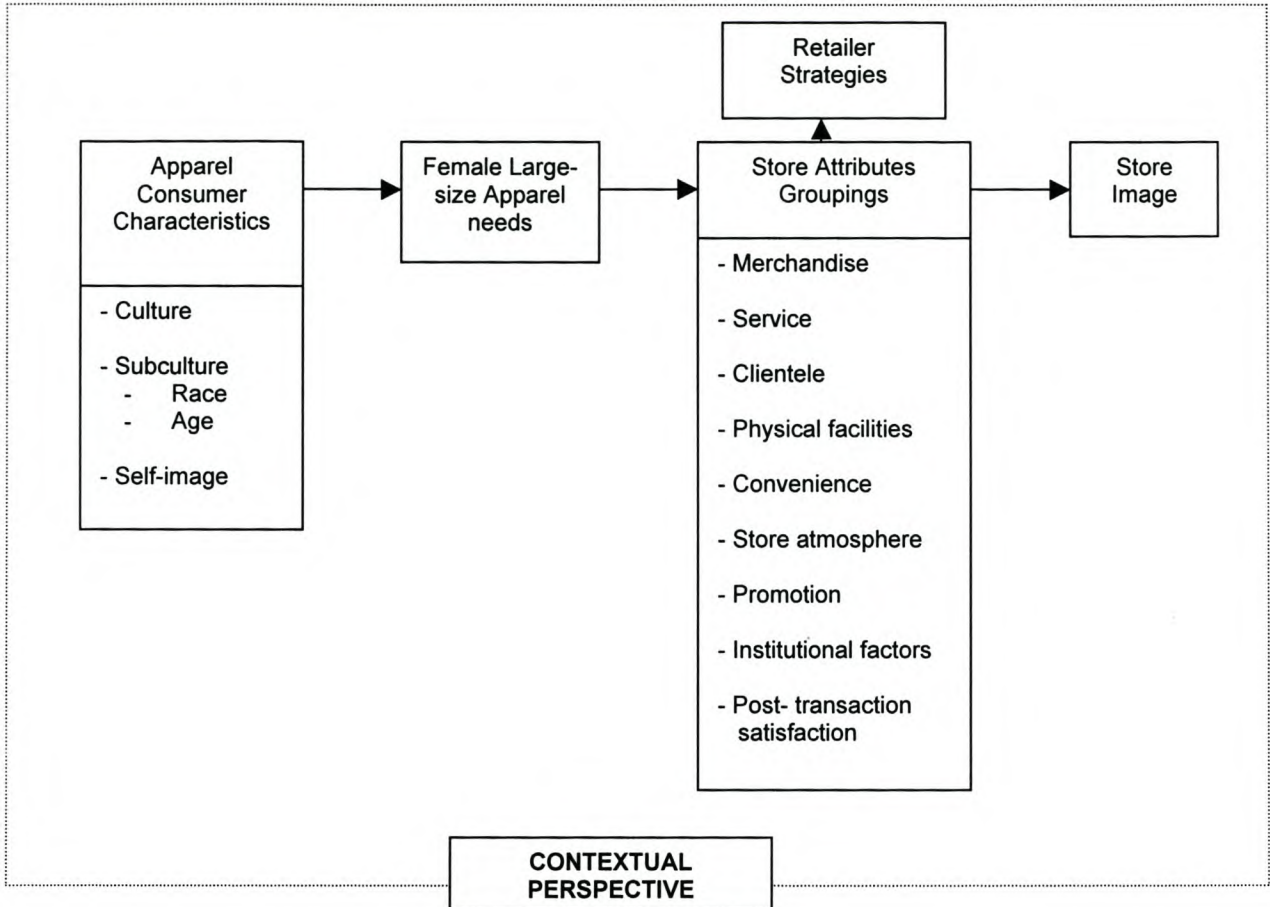
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this study is to expand the existing body of knowledge on apparel store image, with special reference to store image attributes and their relative importance to the female large-size consumer in a multicultural society.

Specific literature-related objectives were formulated for this study:

1. To identify relevant consumer behaviour models to be used in developing a research framework applicable to research on female large-size apparel consumers' perception of store image attributes.
2. To identify relevant socio-psychological perspectives to be used in developing a research framework applicable to research on female large-size apparel consumers' perception of store image attributes.
3. To identify existing knowledge of retail store image from available research.

7

4. To identify existing knowledge of the female large-size apparel consumer from available research.

5. To describe the relevancy of the selected demographic variables, namely race and age group, in studies on retail store image within a multicultural consumer society.

Further specific objectives were set to be met by empirical study and were formulated as follows:

6. To generate retail store image attributes of perceived importance to female large-size apparel consumers.

7. To describe the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to female large-size apparel consumers.

8. To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the race of female large-size apparel consumers.

9. To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the age of female large-size apparel consumers.

10. To determine whether the existing store image attribute groupings by Lindquist (1974-1975) are applicable when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.

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

11. To formulate relevant recommendations for future research on the importance of retail store image attributes and the female large-size apparel consumer.

12. To formulate the implications for female large-size apparel retailers regarding their retail strategy with specific reference to store image and store image attributes.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study the following definitions have been delineated:

1.5.1 Account holders

Account holders are defined as consumers who have credit facilities at the large-size apparel retailer cooperating in this study.

1.5.2 Apparel

Sproles and Burns (1994:7) define apparel as a body covering with the added connotation of a decorative covering. The term is generally used in the industry to refer to actual constructed garments.

1.5.3 Apparel needs

This refers to customers' specific needs regarding apparel, as defined in 1.5.2. Female large-size apparel consumers display distinct apparel needs because of their body size. These needs are also influenced by their culture and subculture, specifically race and age, as well as their self-image.

1.5.4 Clothing

Clothing constitutes any tangible or material object connected to the body, i.e. objects obtained and attached to the body. Clothing is encompassed in the term 'appearance', which also includes the human body and any modifications to it that are visually perceived. Appearance management, therefore, includes all attention, decisions and acts related to personal appearance (Kaiser, 1997:4).

1.5.5 Culture

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:322) define culture as the "sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to direct the consumer behaviour of members of a particular society". South Africa is a multicultural society and culture is an important variable to be considered, specifically in consumer behaviour.

1.5.6 Demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics refer to the vital and measurable statistics of a population and include objective characteristics, such as age, sex, marital status, income, occupation and education (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:38).

1.5.7 Female large-size consumers

Female large-size consumers are consumers of apparel in sizes 14-18, as per the definition used by the apparel retailer whose customer base was used as sample population for this study.

1.5.8 Market

A market is described as a group of people who have needs and wants and has the ability and the willingness to buy (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 1998:212).

1.5.9 Multicultural South African consumer society

The South African consumer society is defined as a multicultural heterogeneous society where cultural values are an important determinant variable in consumer decision-making (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:329).

1.5.10 Perception

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:122) define perception as "the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture".

1.5.11 Retailer strategies

Retailer strategies influence store image, i.e. retailers can manipulate store image through different strategies based on prices offered, product assortment, as well as type of product they offer. In this study, retail strategies refer specifically to what retailers offer to the female large-size apparel consumer (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:150).

1.5.12 Retail store image and store image attributes

Retail store image has a complex nature consisting of a combination of tangible/functional and intangible/psychological factors that consumers perceive to be present. It refers to store image attributes as they contribute to image formation or to favourable/unfavourable consumer attitudes toward retail outlets of various types, including:

1. *Merchandise* (quality, selection/assortment, styling/fashion, guarantees, pricing)
2. *Service* (service-general, salesclerk service, presence of self-service, ease of merchandise return, delivery service, credit policies)
3. *Clientele* (social class appeal, self-image congruency, store personnel)
4. *Physical facilities* (elevators, lighting, air conditioning, washrooms, store layout, aisle placement and width, carpeting, architecture)
5. *Convenience* (convenience-general, locational convenience, parking)
6. *Promotion* (sales promotions, advertising, displays, trading stamps, symbols and colours)

7. *Store atmosphere* (feelings of warmth/acceptance/ease)
8. *Institutional factors* (conservative-modern projection, reputation, reliability)
9. *Post-transaction satisfaction* (merchandise in use, returns, adjustments)

(Lindquist, 1974-1975:31).

Other definitions of store image and store image attributes exist. However, Lindquist's groupings were chosen as framework for this study, as it relates to the set objectives. For the purposes of this study, there will be a differentiation between store image attributes and store image attribute groupings, as defined in 1.5.14 and 1.5.15.

1.5.13 Self-image

Self-image is the general mental picture each person has of both the physical and psychological person (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 2000:16). Being large-sized results in stigmatization of the physical self, which impacts on self-image.

1.5.14 Store image attributes

Store image attributes refer to specific attributes grouped under each specific store image grouping.

1.5.15 Store image attribute groupings

Store image groupings refer to Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings, namely merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institutional factors, and post-transaction satisfaction.

1.5.16 Subculture

Not all segments within a society share the same cultural patterns. A group within a society that has values, customs, traditions, and ways of behaving that are specific to them, are defined as a subculture (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:346; and Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993:128). Within the South African context, race and age are two variables identified as bases for defining subcultures (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:333).

1.6 RESEARCH REPORT SEQUENCE

In Chapter 1, the motivation and relevance of this study is established. The introductory perspectives lead to the formulation of the problem statement and subsequent objectives.

In Chapter 2, a literature review is conducted to establish a sound theoretical framework for this study. It further explores existing literature on the female large-size apparel market, retail store image attributes, lifestyle, demographics, media usage characteristics and the multicultural environment in which this study was undertaken to obtain insight into these variables.

The research methodology for the empirical study is described in Chapter 3. The research design is discussed in terms of the research method used, the sample population and sample selection, the measurement instrument, the procedure used to gather data, as well as the data analysis employed in this study.

The study results are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. These results will then be related to the formulated objectives of this study.

In Chapter 5, conclusions are drawn from the findings obtained from the study. Recommendations and implications for retailers and future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an overview of relevant literature regarding this study is given. Different theoretical perspectives, including theoretical models rooted in consumer behaviour, as well as social-psychological perspectives from the clothing discipline, will be discussed with reference to their relevancy to this study. Store image attributes as a concept within consumer behaviour research, with special reference to apparel stores, will be discussed, followed by a comparison between an analysis of research summarised by Lindquist (1974-1975) and an analysis of literature reviewed for this study. Methodological trends within store image attribute research will also be summarised and commented on. This chapter will also briefly consider perspectives on the female large-size apparel consumer and the reason it constitutes a viable market for research. The concept of self-image, how it relates to the female large-size consumer, and its relevancy to store image attribute research, will be introduced. Lastly, this chapter will focus on the multicultural consumer society within the South African context, as well as the specific implications for research on apparel consumer behaviour.

2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

A concern within the field of clothing is the lack of emphasis on theory building and a strong research base for investigations in the area of apparel consumer behaviour. Firstly, to develop a theoretical base the basic theories that apply to this area of content need to be identified by referring to the root disciplines of economics, psychology and sociology, as well as other related fields. Secondly, this collection of theories from various sources should be organised into a unified body of theory to be tested in research (Nagasawa *et al.*, 1989; and Winakor, 1988). Isolated findings should be organised into a system of knowledge and a broader view of inquiry must be adopted in order for the discipline to advance. There are seemingly few studies on apparel retail store image that employed theoretical frameworks. Available reviewed research on female large-size individuals and their consumer behaviour presented no identifiable theoretical base for study. This supports the pleas of Nagasawa *et.al.* (1998) and Winakor (1988) for developing a theoretical base to use as point of departure when planning and conducting research.

13

Considering the arguments by the afore-mentioned authors and the lack of a theoretical basis in previous research, the researcher considered several models and theories to provide a sound theoretical base for this study on apparel consumer behaviour. Consequently, various relevant models found in the field of consumer behaviour will be discussed, concluding in a theoretical model applied in this study. In addition, social-psychological theories in the clothing field, derived from the root disciplines of psychology and sociology, will be discussed, providing a theoretical framework for this study.

2.2.1 Theoretical models on consumer decision-making behaviour

This section focuses primarily on relevant models found in the field of consumer behaviour, specifically models on decision-making, store patronage behaviour and models of store choice. Models including store image and store image attributes receive special attention because of their relevancy to the present study.

2.2.1.1 Consumer decision-making models

Consumer decision-making models produce useful theoretical models for the study of store image in relation to apparel retailing. Store image is an integral part of store choice. Decision-making models could consequently be considered as point of departure for investigations on store choice. Lennon and Burns (1994:267) emphasise the importance of the retail store in the decision-making process, by stating that consumers seek information, evaluate alternative choices and reach decisions at the point of purchase.

Various general decision-making models exist in the literature on consumer behaviour including, *inter alia*, Assael's *Basic Model of Complex Decision-Making* (1995:81), the *Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell Model* (Berkman, Lindquist & Sirgy, 1998:24), Schiffman and Kanuk's *Simple Model of Consumer Decision-Making* (2000:443), as well as Wilkie's *Model of The Major Stages in Consumer Decision Process* (1994:481). These models differ in the specific stages they state as being part of decision-making. However, the basic, underlying process is similar in the different models. The decision-making process starts with the recognition of a problem or need. This is followed by a search stage, after which the alternatives generated by the search are evaluated. This culminates in a decision and the process concludes with post-decision behaviour, including evaluation. Store image could be related to the search process and the evaluation of alternatives, as it will play an important part in determining where consumers will shop. Rousseau (1990:47) proposes a similar model for use in consumer behaviour research within the South African context.

Decision-making models specific to the apparel consumer have been developed. Sproles (1979:197) proposed a *General Model of the Consumer's Fashion Adoption Process*. Although not strictly a decision-making model, the process central to the model strongly resembles the decision-making process. A more specific decision-making model is offered by Sproles and Burns (1994:264). This is a model of apparel consumers' decision-making processes and includes factors that influence this process. De Klerk (1999) incorporates a symbolic interactionist, as well as a cognitive perspective to develop an apparel consumer decision-making model. Integrated in this model are the models of Rousseau (1990:47), Sproles and Burns (1994:264), as well as a model by Butler and Francis (1997:83) on the influence of attitudes on clothing consumers' purchase behaviour. These clothing-specific models are similar to the more general decision-making models in their simulation of decision-making and the different stages in the process. However, with the first stage of problem recognition, clothing models also include the awareness and interest that an object generates. In addition, a part of the evaluative process will include a trial phase.

When comparing decision-making models for a study on store image in relation to apparel retailing within the South African context, certain considerations have to be taken into account. The most important of these considerations is the successful use of these models in previous research and their applicability to apparel and store image, specifically pertaining to the South African context. The *Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model*, similar to the *Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model* (Berkman *et al.*, 1998:24), has been used extensively in apparel research (e.g. Cassill & Drake, 1987; Gaal & Burns, 2001; Lee & Burns, 1993; Liu & Dickerson, 1999; Shim & Drake, 1990; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996), also in South Africa (Visser & Du Preez, 1998:42). Rousseau's model, on the other hand, have been developed within the South African context (1990:47), but is still a general consumer behaviour model and has not been used specifically in apparel research before. Sproles's (1979:197) *General Model of the Consumer's Fashion Adoption Process* is specific to apparel and has been used in this context. Although not specifically a South African model, it has been employed to develop theoretical or conceptual models within the South African context (Visser & Du Preez, 1998:42). De Klerk's (1999:127) model is both specific to clothing and South Africa, but has not been used as a conceptual framework before. Sproles's (1979:197) *General Model of the Consumer's Fashion Adoption Process* is not acknowledged in De Klerk's (1999:127) model.

2.2.1.2 Store patronage behaviour models

Two store patronage behaviour models provide theoretical frameworks that could be applied in store image research. Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992a:48) utilised *Darden's Patronage Model of Consumer Behaviour*. According to this model personal characteristics and information sources are interrelated and influence shopping orientation. It further indicates that shopping orientation

is a determinant of the importance of store attributes, which concludes in specific patronage behaviour. Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992a:48) proposed an extended model of their own based on this model, which they tested empirically. Their revised model shows that personal characteristics also influence shopping orientation. This model is essentially a model of patronage behaviour. However, it stresses the importance of store attributes in patronage behaviour and how this could relate to predicting apparel shopping behaviour.

Sheth (1983:11) describes an integrative *Shopping Preference Theory* consisting of four basic constructs in their determinants. The constructs are shopping predisposition, choice calculus, shopping motives, and shopping options. The determinants refer to market, company, personal and product determinants. This model shows the importance of store image, through market and company determinants, and how these determine shopping predisposition. It also bears resemblance to the decision-making process by including possible shopping options and the evaluation thereof, which culminates in a process of making calculated choices. Sheth (1983:9) mentions that research on retail patronage has included aspects of store image, as well as store positioning and the influence on customers' patronage behaviour.

2.2.1.3 Store choice model

Assael (1992:629) mentions that the consumer's decision process applies to stores as well as to brands. Consumers go through a process of complex decision-making in selecting stores. This could lead to store loyalty. Assael therefore offers a *Model of Store Choice* (Figure 2.1) developed specifically to describe the process of store selection, the formation of store images, and the development of store loyalty (1992:630).

The model shows that consumer characteristics, such as demographics, lifestyle, and personality, could influence the development of specific shopping and purchasing needs. Consumers establish certain priorities in evaluating store alternatives based on their needs. These needs determine the importance attached to store attributes, such as convenience, general price level, store personnel, breadth of selection, and attractive décor, which are directly related to store image. The model also indicates that store image develops as a result of consumers' needs, as well as retailers' strategies, including retail advertising and in-store stimuli (Assael, 1992:629).

16
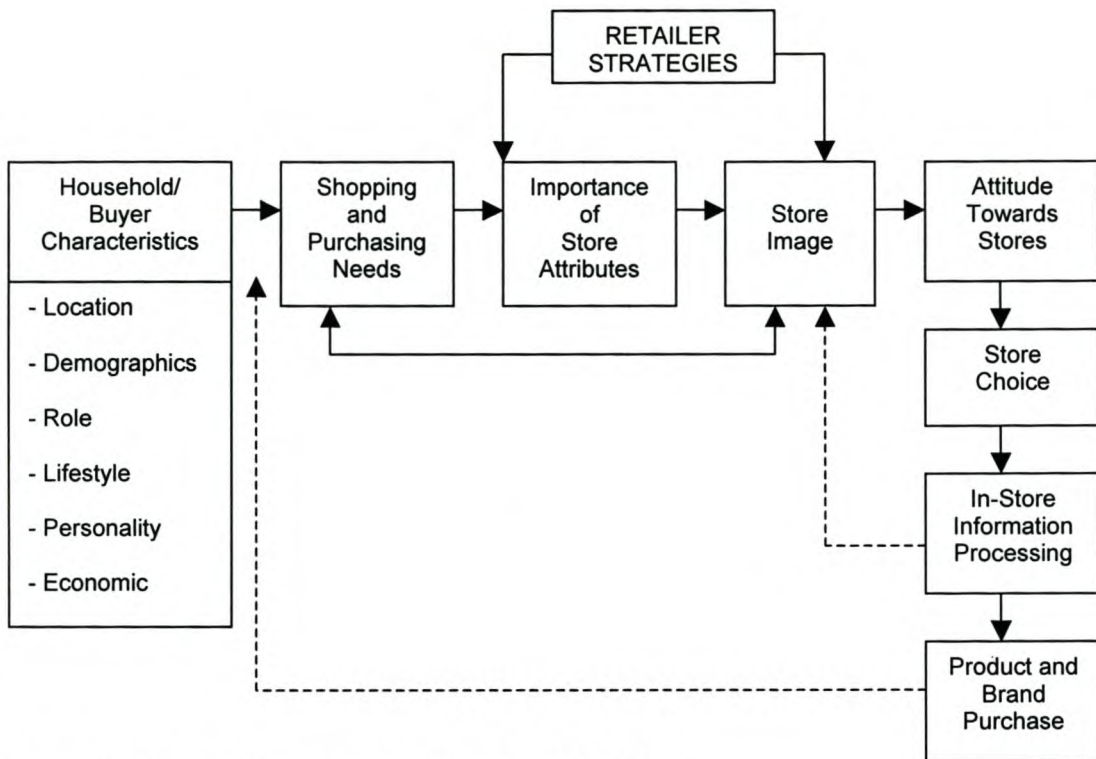
Figure 2.1: Model of store choice (Assael, 1992:630)

This model suggests that the closer a store's image is to the consumer's needs, the more positive the attitude toward the store will be. There will be a greater likelihood that the consumer will shop in the store. Once the consumer has selected a store, in-store stimuli, including product assortment, prices and displays, for example, will be evaluated. Based partly on this, a consumer will buy a product or service. If satisfied with the store environment and the products purchased within the store, the customer's positive image of the store is reinforced. This leads to the likelihood that the store will be revisited, and a continual process of such reinforcement is likely to result in store loyalty (Assael, 1992:630).

2.2.1.4 Summary

Store image is an important variable in consumer decision-making, as well as store patronage behaviour. In conclusion, therefore, it is evident that both decision-making and store patronage behaviour models could successfully be implemented in a store image study.

However, Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (1992:630) was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. In choosing the model, the primary consideration was the fact that this is a specific store choice model – incorporating the important facets of store image and store attributes, which forms the focus of this study. The model allows demographic variables to

17

influence the formation of store image. It is therefore applicable within the multicultural South African context and allows for the consideration of race and age groups as variables. Shopping and purchasing needs are included in the model, accommodating the female large-size apparel consumer as a specific market segment with certain shopping needs and store attribute preferences. Lastly, this model indicates the influence of retail strategies on store attributes and store image.

This model has not been referred to previously in the literature on store image reviewed for the present study. By using Assael's model (1992:630) in this exploratory research the components and their proposed relationships could be evaluated. This could present valuable recommendations in terms of a theoretical point of departure for future research on store image in the South African context, specifically regarding the female large-size apparel consumer.

2.2.2 Social-psychological perspectives on clothing

Consumer behaviour, as a field of study, borrows heavily from concepts developed in psychology, sociology and social-psychology (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997:8). Similarly, behaviour related to clothing can be interpreted from many viewpoints, amongst others psychological, sociological and socio-psychological perspectives. Most of clothing behavioural research falls within the realm of social psychology (Horn & Gurel, 1981:3-5). It is therefore evident that social-psychological perspectives on human behaviour should be considered in a study of consumer behaviour regarding clothing.

Kaiser (1997:4) defines the discipline of social psychology in clothing as being concerned with "the various means people use to modify their appearance of the body, as well as the social and psychological forces that lead to, and result from, processes of managing personal appearance". The social meanings of clothes vary between contexts or circumstances (Kaiser, 1997:29). To understand the meaning of clothes and its potential for change, three theoretical perspectives will be discussed, namely the cognitive, symbolic interactionist and cultural perspective. Together, these three perspectives form a contextual perspective, which will conclude the discussion as a framework within which this study was conducted. De Klerk (1999) incorporates the cognitive and symbolic interactionist perspectives in her model of apparel consumer decision-making. However, this model does not incorporate the cultural and contextual perspectives, which are relevant to the present study.

2.2.2.1 Cognitive perspective

Cognitive social psychology is concerned with the processes by which individuals gain knowledge regarding behaviour and events they encounter in social interaction, as well as how

this knowledge is applied to guide their actions. According to this perspective, people are "constructive thinkers". They search for the causes of behaviour, draw inferences about people and their circumstances and act upon this knowledge (Snyder, Tanke & Berscheid, 1977:656). Davis and Lennon (1988:175) found that theory and research from cognitive psychology provide a relevant framework for the study of clothing and human behaviour and could be considered suitable for such investigations.

The cognitive perspective focuses primarily on appearance perception and the individual thought processes that accompany it. Clothing serves as a stimulus for the formulation of impressions. Basic assumptions underlying this perspective, which could be useful in this study, are that (1) people use clothing and appearance cues to simplify and make sense of social interaction, (2) people strive for consistency and continuity in their appearance perceptions, and (3) people are motivated to explain social occurrences or outcomes in terms of people or situations (Kaiser, 1997:33).

Therefore, it can be argued that the cognitive perspective is relevant to this study. Not only does it provide a framework for understanding how female large-size consumers perceive themselves, but also how others perceive them, as well as the possible consequences of these perceptions. This perspective is, therefore, an important framework within which the female large-size apparel consumer's self-image should be considered. Closely linked to this are the concepts of body cathexis and body image, which together have bearing on the importance of self-image congruency with store image (see 2.4.4).

2.2.2.2 Symbolic-interactionist perspective

Symbolic-interaction theory states that people live in a symbolic environment, as well as a physical one. Behaviour is therefore stimulated by symbols, as well as by physical acts (Horn & Gurel, 1981:159). The symbolic-interactionist perspective focuses on both appearance management and appearance perception. This perspective incorporates the process of negotiation, through which individuals are said to have meaningful communication when the same response is evoked in an observer as in the self (Kaiser, 1997:41).

This perspective is based on various assumptions, some of which could be useful to this study. Firstly, humans create their own realities, in part, by managing their appearance. Secondly, they act toward other people based on the meanings their appearances hold for them. Lastly, meanings associated with appearance symbols emerge from social interactions with others (Kaiser, 1997:41). Incorporating this perspective entails the consideration of the qualities of clothing that present stimulus information to the perceiver. Furthermore, this perspective focuses on the variables in the perception process that determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of

the impressions formed, as well as the consequences of impression formation in the social interaction process (Horn & Gurel, 1981:160).

This perspective presents a framework within which female large-size apparel consumers, as well as the influence of social interaction on their appearance perception and management, can be studied. The symbolic-interactionist perspective is also an important framework to be considered in discussing the self-image of female large-size apparel consumers, as self-image is influenced, in part, on the way others act toward them. Therefore, this perspective is pertinent to store image as it relates to self-image (see 2.4.4).

2.2.2.3 Cultural perspective

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:322) define culture in the context of consumer behaviour as "the sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to regulate the consumer behaviour of members of a particular society". Culture provides the means for the creation of shared meanings, enabling us to understand shared meaning and collective representation through appearance (Kaiser, 1997:346).

The cultural perspective places the study of clothing behaviour within a larger, cultural framework. This perspective stresses that the meaning of clothes should not only be considered in social contexts, but also within larger cultural contexts. Two underlying assumptions of this perspective are also useful in its application to this study, namely (1) that cultural beliefs and values tend to be perpetuated when they are represented on a relatively unconscious level, and (2) that people have the potential to transform their own realities by manipulating objects in their cultural worlds (Kaiser, 1997:48).

Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:329) define the South African population as "representative of a multicultural heterogeneous society where cultural values are an important determinant variable in consumer decision-making". This proves the importance of this perspective in research on apparel consumers' behaviour in a multicultural society.

2.2.2.4 Contextual perspective

From the previous discussions of social-psychological perspectives, it is evident that cognitive processes, as well as social interaction and the larger cultural framework influence the approach to the study of clothing and human behaviour. Kaiser (1997:58) proposes a contextual perspective, which allows for the study of clothing management and perception by considering the actual social situations and the larger cultural or historical context in which people find themselves. Context will include the attributes of the wearer and perceiver of clothing, the

history of their relationship, the nature of the setting in which interaction occurs, the culture in which individuals live and the historical meanings associated with their clothes (Kaiser, 1997:30). This contextual framework is, therefore, the theoretical social-psychological perspective within which this study is conducted.

2.2.3 Summary

The previous discussion derived a useful theoretical point of departure for this study from consumer behaviour models and social-psychological perspectives in clothing. Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (1992:629) together with Kaiser's contextual perspective (1997:58) are integral in the research framework developed for the present study and are discussed as the conceptual framework in section 1.3 of Chapter 1.

Assael's model (1992:629) allows for the incorporation of race and age as specific demographic characteristics of the large-size apparel consumer. It also facilitates the consideration of self-image as an aspect of the large-size apparel consumer's personality. The model shows how these demographic and personality characteristics could influence specific shopping and purchasing needs of the female large-size consumer, namely large-size apparel merchandise. Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) can be incorporated into this model, as the model considers the importance of store attributes, which is the primary focus of the present study. The model indicates how the female large-size apparel consumer's demographic and personality characteristics, as well as shopping and purchasing needs, impact on the importance attached to store attributes, resulting in the formation of a store image. Also integrated in the model is how retail strategies could influence the importance of store attributes and the consequent perceived store image. This is especially significant in this study, as one of the objectives of this study is to formulate implications for the apparel retail environment.

The contextual perspective can be integrated into Assael's *Model of Store Choice,* incorporating a social-psychological point of departure for this study. The cognitive perspective provides insight into how female large-size apparel consumers perceive themselves. The cognitive perspective, together with the symbolic-interactionist perspective on the influence of social interaction on appearance perception and management, are important in considering the self-image of the female large-size apparel consumer and how it relates to the importance of retail store image and its attributes. The cultural perspective allows for the consideration of race and age group as subcultures and how they influence the importance of store image attributes. These perspectives provide a useful context within which the perceived importance of store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer can be studied within a consumer behaviour model of store choice.

Assael's *Model of Store Choice* also allows for further research on store image, which falls outside the scope of this study. The influence of psychographic characteristics on store image could be investigated, as well as the influence of store image on attitude towards stores, culminating in a specific store choice. The model also provides scope for studying in-store information processing and specific product and brand purchasing behaviour. This is useful in achieving yet another objective of this study, namely to formulate useful recommendations for future research.

The literature review of relevant consumer behaviour models, together with socio-psychological perspectives, achieved the first and second set objectives of this study:

To identify relevant consumer behaviour models to be used in developing a research framework applicable to research on female large-size apparel consumers' perception of store image attributes.

To identify relevant socio-psychological perspectives to be used in developing a research framework applicable to research on the female large-size apparel consumers' perception of store image attributes.

2.3 STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES

Having established a theoretical model and social-psychological perspective applicable to this study of store image, this section will focus specifically on defining store image attributes and the various classifications thereof, since it is the primary variable employed in this study. An extensive overview of current store image literature will also be given. Lastly, the research methodologies employed in the reviewed literature will be discussed and commented upon.

2.3.1 Definition and dimensions of retail store image attributes

Dichter (1985:75) describes an image not as individual traits or qualities, but as "the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others". Various definitions of store image exist. In the classical work on store image by Martineau (1958:47), store image was defined as the store's personality and the way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, including functional, as well as psychological attributes. In an extensive study on store image, Lindquist (1974-1975:31) 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". James, Durand and Dreves (1976:25) simply define store image as "a

set of attitudes based upon evaluation of those store attributes deemed important by consumers".

It is clear from the above-mentioned and various other definitions of store image that the perceptual process is an important consideration in store image studies. Definitions of store image generally stress consumers' perception of a store when discussing store image (Peter & Olson, 1990; Assael, 1992; Rabolt & Miler, 1997 and Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Minshall (1994:142) discusses the underlying dimensions and measurement of apparel preferences and relates preference to the perceptual process, which can also be applied to store preference. The dimensions of preference is defined as consisting of a cognitive and an affective component. The cognitive component of preference is based on information inherent to the object, whereas the affective dimension relates to the emotional response an object evokes, including both the experience and expression of emotion. Burns (1992:38) concludes that no universal definition of store image exist, but that all definitions include the common factor that store image is not solely dependant on the physical attributes of the store or on the objective reality. Store image is based instead on the consumer's perception of that reality. Therefore, a definition of store image should include the physical components of the store, as well as the affective components, i.e. the emotional experiences and expressions associated with these physical components.

Various store image dimensions have been proposed. Martineau (1958:51) was the first to do so by indicating that store image consists of the following components: layout and architecture, symbols and colours, advertising and sales personnel. Lindquist (1974-1975:31) produced nine store image attribute groupings, including merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institutional factors, and post-transaction satisfaction, which incorporated Martineau's store image components, while expanding it to include more attributes. Various other researchers generated attributes and groups of attributes. James *et al.* (1976:27) derived six attributes from their study, namely assortment, personnel, atmosphere, service, quality and price. The primary factual elements determining retailer's image are price, variety, assortment within product categories, quality, products, service or lack thereof and location (O'Connor, 1990:524). Type of customer, shop location, price levels, services offered, merchandise mix, advertising and the characteristics of the physical facilities are named by Terblanchè (1998:214) as some factors influencing store image. Peter and Olson (1990:524) observed that the most commonly studied store image dimensions are merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, promotion, convenience and store atmosphere, which closely resemble Lindquist's groupings. However, as with the definition of store image, according to Amirani and Gates (1993:30), no consensus has been reached on a set of universal store image dimensions.

The lack of a store image definition and with the variation in terminology used to describe store image dimensions pose a challenge when studying store image and store image attributes. Lindquist's framework of store image was selected as a viable definition and grouping of store image attributes, since it proves to be the most comprehensive in store image literature, incorporating both the cognitive and affective components of store image. Therefore, in building on the foundation established by Lindquist's review article (1974-1975:31), as well as taking into consideration other researchers' identification, the following nine store image attribute groupings will be used to define store image in this study:

Merchandise – including the specific store image attributes of quality, selection or assortment, styling or fashion, guarantees, and pricing (also mentioned by James *et al.*, 1976; O'Connor, 1990; Terblanchè, 1998; Peter & Olson, 1990).

Service – including the specific store image attributes of service-general, salesclerk service, presence of self-service, ease of merchandise return, delivery service, and credit policies of the store (also mentioned by James *et al.*, 1976; O'Connor, 1990; Terblanchè, 1998; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Clientele – including the specific store image attributes of social class appeal, self-image congruency, and store personnel (also mentioned by Martineau, 1958; James *et al.*, 1976; Terblanchè, 1998; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Physical facilities – including the specific store image attributes of elevators, lighting, air conditioning, washrooms, store layout, aisle placement and width, carpeting, and architecture (also mentioned by Martineau, 1958; Terblanchè, 1998; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Convenience – including the specific store image attributes of convenience – general, locational convenience, and parking (also mentioned by O'Connor, 1990; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Promotion – including the specific store image attributes of sales promotions, advertising, displays, trading stamps, and symbols and colours (also mentioned by Martineau 1958; Terblanchè, 1998; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Store atmosphere – including the specific store image attribute of atmosphere-congeniality (also mentioned by James *et al.*, 1976; and Peter & Olson, 1990).

Institutional factors – including the specific store image attributes of conservative/modern projection of the store, reputation, and reliability.

Post-transaction satisfaction – including the specific store image attributes of merchandise in use, returns, and adjustments.

Inconsistency also occurs with regard to terminology used for these groupings of attributes, such as elements, attributes, dimensions, groups, categories, attribute areas, factors, and classifications. For the purposes of this study, it was decided to refer to Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings and the specific attributes grouped under each, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see 1.5.12, 1.5.14, and 1.5.15).

2.3.2 Research on retail store image attributes

The following discussion will give an overview of retail store image literature in general, including all product categories, as well as retail stores and retail shopping centres, with regards to retail store image. The discussion will focus on a comparison between the results in Lindquist's review article (1974-1975) and the results of the retail store image literature reviewed in this study. This broad review of research on store image attributes will be followed by a discussion of research findings, specifically regarding apparel retail store image attributes.

2.3.2.1 Review of research on retail store image attributes

Lindquist proposed a measurement of the importance of store image by referring to the percentage of scholarly mentions (1974-1975:31). This measurement was accomplished firstly by reviewing nineteen published empirical research studies on retail store image. Secondly, the particular attributes of store image considered by each study were noted. Lastly, the percentage of scholarly mentions were calculated by dividing the total number of times the attribute was mentioned by the number of scholarly mentions within the studies reviewed.

In this study, the same approach was followed to provide a basis for comparison between Lindquist's review (1974-1975:31) and the present study. Store image literature dating from 1974 to 2002 were reviewed, resulting in 40 published empirical research studies. The particular store image attributes considered in each of these studies were noted. Lastly, the percentage of scholarly mentions was calculated by dividing the number of times the attribute was mentioned by the number of scholarly mentions in the 40 reviewed articles. A summary of these studies reviewed for the present study is presented in Appendix 1. The summary employs Lindquist's store image attribute groupings (1974-1975). The researchers are listed alphabetically and the specific store image attributes addressed in each study are indicated. Studies that did not focus specifically on apparel retail stores are indicated. In addition, studies that did not focus specifically on a specific retail store, thereby including retail shopping centres, are identified.

This study differs from that of Lindquist in the definition of scholarly mentions. Lindquist considered each author cited for a published empirical research study as a scholarly mention, resulting in 26 scholarly mentions. The present study, however, defined each published empirical research study as a scholarly mention, regardless of the number of cited authors, resulting in 40 scholarly mentions. Therefore, Lindquist's definition of the number of scholarly mentions was adapted to make comparison possible, resulting in 19 scholarly mentions, which equals the number of published empirical research studies he reviewed. Therefore, the percentage of scholarly mentions for Lindquist was recalculated for his study.

As shown in Table 2.1, a shift in the focus of store image research occurred, especially when considering the nine store image groupings. In Lindquist's study, *Merchandise* (41%) was the most researched group, whereas, in the present study, *Store Atmosphere* (63%) was studied most frequently, with *Merchandise* (51%) in the second place. When comparing the frequencies of the two studies for *Merchandise*, Lindquist's study showed a frequency of 41%, whereas the current study showed a frequency of 51%. It can thus be deducted that *Merchandise* has been studied more frequently in recent research, even though it was not the most frequently studied grouping.

Table 2.1 Comparison of retail store image attributes noted in Lindquist's study (1974-1975) and the present study

Image Attribute	Lindquist (n=19)		Current study (n=40)	
	Scholarly Mentions	(%)	Scholarly Mentions	(%)
MERCHANDISE	**39**	**41%**	**102**	**51%**
Quality	10	53%	26	65%
Selection/Assortment	11	58%	29	73%
Styling, Fashion	7	37%	19	48%
Guarantee	1	5%	2	5%
Pricing	10	53%	26	65%
SERVICE	**34**	**26%**	**70**	**25%**
Service, General	7	37%	16	40%
Salesclerk Service	7	37%	27	68%
Self-Service	1	5%	0	0%
Ease of Return	6	32%	11	28%
Credit	6	32%	11	28%
Delivery	4	21%	4	10%
Phone Orders	3	16%	1	3%
CLIENTELE	**14**	**25%**	**24**	**21%**
Social Class Appeal	5	26%	11	28%
Self-Image Congruency	3	16%	1	3%
Store Personnel	6	32%	12	30%
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	**11**	**14%**	**40**	**25%**
Physical Facilities	2	11%	10	25%
Store Layout	6	32%	11	28%

Table 2.1 (continued)

Shopping Ease	2	11%	10	25%
Architecture	1	5%	9	23%
CONVENIENCE	**16**	**28%**	**38**	**32%**
Convenience	2	11%	10	25%
Locational Convenience	9	47%	18	45%
Parking	5	26%	10	25%
PROMOTION	**15**	**16%**	**24**	**12%**
Sales Promotion	1	5%	6	15%
Advertising/Display	4	21%	8	20%
Advertising	6	32%	7	18%
Trading Stamps	3	16%	0	0%
Symbols and Colours	1	5%	3	8%
STORE ATMOSPHERE	**4**	**21%**	**25**	**63%**
Atmosphere/Congeniality	4	21%	25	63%
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	**8**	**14%**	**18**	**15%**
Conservative/Modern	1	5%	6	15%
Reputation	3	16%	11	28%
Reliability	4	21%	1	3%
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	**1**	**5%**	**10**	**25%**

In both studies, *Convenience* (28%; 32%) was the next most frequently studied grouping, followed by *Service* (26%; 25%). However, in this study's review, *Physical facilities* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* was studied as frequently as *Service* (25%), whereas *Physical facilities* (14%) ranked seventh and *Post-transaction satisfaction* (5%) ranked ninth in frequency in Lindquist's study. *Clientele* (25%) was the next most frequently studied grouping after *Service* in Lindquist's study, whereas *Clientele* (21%) was ranked seventh in frequency in this study. *Store atmosphere* (21%) was only the fifth most frequently studied grouping in Lindquist's study. *Promotion* (12%) was the least frequently studied grouping in the current review, whereas it ranked sixth in frequency in Lindquist's (1974-1975) (16%). Lastly, *Institutional factors* (14%; 15%) was ranked seventh and eighth in frequency in Lindquist's and this study respectively.

In conclusion, it could be deduced that *Store atmosphere* has recently become a much more researched grouping. With a frequency of 63%, it is also the most studied store image grouping when considering both studies. *Merchandise* is still a frequently studied grouping, as well as *Convenience* and *Service*. However, *Physical facilities* and especially *Post-transaction*

satisfaction have recently received much more attention in store image research. In contrast to this, *Clientele* and *Promotion* are not studied as frequently as before, with *Institutional factors* receiving a similar amount of attention.

When considering the more specific attributes within each grouping, not as many differences occur. Within the *Merchandise* grouping, no frequency differences occur in the ranking with which each specific attribute was researched. However, frequencies for each attribute are much higher for this study than was reported in Lindquist's study, except for *guarantee.*

Few differences occur within the *Service* grouping as well. A mentionable finding of the present research review is the high frequency with which *salesclerk service* has been studied. It has the highest frequency of all *Service* attributes (68%). Furthermore, it should be pointed out that in recent studies, *self-service* was not an attribute researched. This could be an indication that this specific attribute is not relevant in current store image research, since it also has the lowest frequency in Lindquist's study.

No differences occur within the *Clientele* grouping when considering the ranking of attributes based on frequencies. However, the frequency for *self-image congruency* in this study (3%) is much lower than for Lindquist's study (16%).

The rankings based on frequencies for *Physical facilities* do not differ. Once again, the frequencies for each attribute in this study are much higher, except for *store layout*, which was higher in Lindquist's study.

Within the *Convenience* grouping, the ranking of attributes based on frequencies was the same, with comparable frequencies for *locational convenience* (47%; 45%) and *parking* (26%; 25%). However, *convenience in general* was studied more frequently recently (25%) than in Lindquist's study (11%).

A marginal shift in focus occurred within the *Promotion* grouping. Lindquist's study indicated that *advertising* was studied most frequently (32%), followed by *advertising/display* (21%), *trading stamps* (16%), *sales promotion* (5%), as well as *symbols and colours* (5%). In comparison, this study showed that *advertising/display* (20%) was most frequently studied, followed by *advertising* (18%), *sales promotion* (15%) and *symbols and colours* (8%). The present study's frequencies are much lower and the attribute of *trading stamps* has not been mentioned once, which places a question on its relevancy.

The *Institutional factors* grouping attributes have shown a complete change in focus in this study, with *reputation* (28%) being studied most frequently, followed by *conservative/modern*

(15%) and *reliability* (3%). Lindquist's study showed the complete opposite in ranking, but with comparable frequencies.

The *Store atmosphere* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* groupings consist of only one attribute in each of the groupings. In both cases these attributes have been studied much more frequently in recent years.

A possible factor that could have contributed to the lack of similarity should be discussed. In the reviewed literature, certain attributes were mentioned that could not be grouped specifically under each of Lindquist's groupings. Store image attributes research related to age included, for example, the following: a place for sitting down (Chowdhary, 1999:129), discount for senior citizens (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:80; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83), salespeople your own age (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:80; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83), as well as age-related sizes and styles (Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83). Other research included real savings represented in sales (Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson, 1978:5) and readable and knowledgeable labels/tags (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:80; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; and Cary & Zylla, 1981:71).

The *Service* grouping provided many such attributes. Lee and Johnson (1997:28), for example, included gift-wrapping, shipping, clubs, pick-up service and wedding registry in their study. Cary and Zylla (1981:71) included adjustments, and layaways were mentioned by Lee and Johnson (1997:28) and Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978:64).

Since Lindquist does not provide an extensive definition of each attribute grouping and the specific attributes included in each grouping, the definition of the various store image groupings and the specific attributes mentioned under them in Lindquist's and the present study might differ. Studies reported in this overview might have used different terms, which have been grouped under different groupings. Therefore, in an attempt to achieve consistency in the grouping of attributes, the researcher tried to group attributes appropriately, referring to Hansen and Deutscher's study (1977-1978), which also employed Lindquist's store image attribute framework, attempting to achieve consistency in the grouping of attributes (1974-1975:31).

2.3.2.2 Research findings on apparel retail store image attributes

The previous discussion gave a comparison of retail store image attributes based on the frequency of scholarly mentions. The following section will focus specifically on **apparel** retail store image attributes. The ranked importance of apparel retail store image attributes, the relationship between these attributes and consumer behaviour, the description and

differentiation of consumer groups based on these attributes and research results relating to specific retail store image attributes will be discussed.

2.3.2.2.1   Ranked importance of apparel retail store image attributes

Various research studies on apparel retail store image attributes present their findings by giving a ranking of the importance of these attributes. Birtwistle and Siddiqui (1995:21) studied male apparel consumers and found that they ranked store image attributes in the following order of descending importance: merchandise quality, merchandise price, merchandise fashion and price, merchandise selection, refund policy and procedures, reputation, professional and friendly sales personnel, internal layout and design, opening hours, location and parking, atmosphere, merchandise presentation, facilities, promotions, as well as windows and fascia. These findings are partially supported by another study focusing on male apparel consumers, which ranked quality as the most important store image attribute, followed by price, assortment, service, personnel, and atmosphere (James *et al.*, 1976:31).

In a study of female apparel consumers, price received the highest order of priority, followed by selection, refund, store personnel, quality, reputation, fashion, and layout (Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13). A study employing both male and female respondents, indicated that merchandise quality, price range, and range of merchandise were perceived as the most important apparel retail store image attributes. Fashion styles, store service, and convenient location followed in perceived importance, and in-store displays, sales assistance, advertising/promotion, and popular with friends were rated the least important (Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384).

These studies indicate no correlation between specific apparel retail store image attributes. It is, however, evident that attributes relating to merchandise and service are, overall, ranked as most important in most of these studies. Attributes relating to promotion, physical facilities and atmosphere are perceived as of less importance. It is interesting to note that these findings do not correlate with the findings in Table 2.1.

Two studies investigated the ranked importance of apparel retail store image attributes by the elderly consumer (Chowdhary, 1989:1185; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:87). Store image attributes investigated in both studies were pricing, store reputation, variety, shopping ease, and sales personnel. The studies, however, did not yield comparative results, since the ranked importance of these attributes showed no similarity, apart from store personnel, which received a relatively low ranking in both studies.

Comparing the ranked importance of the apparel store image attributes proves to be difficult, since few similarities could be identified. However, such comparison could be done by using the same research instruments and including the same items in different studies.

2.3.2.2.2 Relationship between apparel retail store image attributes and consumer behaviour

Research studies have found apparel retail store image attributes to be related to consumer behaviour. Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992a:55) found that a relationship between store attribute importance and patronage behaviour in apparel shopping. They also found shopping orientations, information sources, and personal characteristics to be determinants in predicting the importance of store attributes. Shopping orientations was the most important determinant.

Store elevation and the appearance of sales personnel were two specific apparel retail store image attributes found to influence apparel-shopping decision-making (De Klerk *et al.*, 1998:24). These attributes were perceived to be symbolic of store characteristics. The appearance of sales personnel also influenced consumers' willingness to accept their advice.

Another study showed that situational influences, an important factor in consumer behaviour, have an impact on store image attribute rating (Mattson, 1982:50). When shopping for gifts, sales personnel attention, return policies, prestige brand and product selection become more important store image attributes. When customers shop for themselves, prices and apparel size carried by the store, will be perceived as more important. When consumers are pressured for time, store familiarity, immediate sales personnel attention and broad product selection, become salient store image attributes.

Jacoby and Mazursky (1984:121) investigated the relationship between brand and retailer images in an attempt to link store image attributes to consumer brand behaviour. They found that a store with a relatively low store image could improve its image by carrying brands with a high image. A store with a very favourable image, however, will damage its image if it carried brands with a lower image.

The relationship between store image attributes and fashion leadership or non-leadership amongst elderly consumers has also been studied (Chowdhary, 1999:129). The study yielded four store image attribute factors, namely quality and reputation, convenience, age-related, and credit. The results indicated no significant difference in fashion leadership or non-leadership related to these four factors.

31

It is evident from these research results that apparel retail store image attributes impact on consumer behaviour. However, the studies present isolated findings, with only one study investigating specific relationships. Therefore, an attempt should be made to further investigate these relationships to support the research results. These findings should be organised in such a way that it will yield comparable results and allow for accurate predictions regarding relationships between apparel store image attributes and consumer behaviour (Nagasawa *et al.,* 1989:24).

2.3.2.2.3   Apparel retail store image attributes in relation to consumer groups

Various studies employ apparel retail store image attributes as bases for describing and differentiating between different consumer groups. Birtwistle, Clarke and Freathy (1999:248) identified product price, product selection, product quality, and service by sales personnel as store image attributes used as trade-offs in male apparel store choice decisions. Their study resulted in four segmentation groups based on their perceived importance of these attributes. For the "quality-oriented" group, quality was of highest priority, whereas the "service and quality-oriented" group regarded both service and quality as most important. The "choice-oriented" group ranked merchandise selection as the highest priority and the "value-for-money-oriented" group perceived a combination of quality and price to be the highest-ranking priority. The researchers emphasise how a combination of key choice attributes could be used to further define a specific consumer group.

Another study on male apparel consumers studied short, average-height, tall, and big men in relation to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with apparel store image attributes (Shim *et al.*, 1990:91). This study found that, overall, big males were most dissatisfied with store image attributes, whilst average-height males were the most satisfied. Big and short males were the most dissatisfied of all consumers with size-ranges available, as well as the number and quality of the stores that carried their sizes. Big and tall males were the most dissatisfied of all respondents with the variety in style selection. A study on female apparel shoppers found that they could be segmented into three distinct groups of apparel shopping orientations (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:80). The study results also indicated that these segments ("apathetic apparel shoppers", "convenience-oriented catalogue shoppers", and "highly involved apparel shoppers") differ significantly with respect to the importance attached to store attributes.

Thorpe and Avery (1983-1984:38) focused on profiling customers and non-customers of a specific apparel retail store. They found specific store image attributes to be significant in differentiating a customer from a non-customer. These attributes included sales help, assortment (in terms of fashion accessories, sportswear and women's shoes and apparel),

pricing, advertising, travel distance to store, size selection, contemporary viewpoint of store, and quality merchandise.

Ethnic and age groups have also been studied in relation to apparel retail store image attributes. One study concluded that considerable variation across ethnic groups, namely Blacks, Koreans, and Whites, exists regarding their perceptions of the social classes of stores (Kim & Han, 2000:60). Another study determined that sales personnel, displays, and general services were store image attribute variables that significantly influence college-age consumers' preference for store image (Miller *et al.*, 2000).

Miller *et al.* (2001) also investigated how store image attributes relate to different cultures, namely United States and South African college-age consumers. They found significant differences between these two groups in the degree to which dressing room design, aisle design, and importance of general services (as store image attributes) influence preference for store image. The influence that a shared root culture has on clothing value hierarchies has been investigated (Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384). Based on the findings that store image attributes, used by Canadian and English respondents as store selection criteria, were similar in ranking, they concluded that similar clothing values hierarchies do exist amongst different cultural groups sharing a root culture.

Research reported in this section shows that apparel retail store image attributes are important variables in describing and differentiating between different consumer groups. Store image attributes are used to segment, as well as describe different male apparel consumers. Furthermore, store image attributes can be used to profile female apparel consumers based on apparel shopping orientations. Store image attributes are important variables for differentiating between customers and non-customers, as well as different ethnic and age groups. Lastly, store image attributes could be indicative of similarities and differences between cultural groups. Once again, these studies yielded isolated findings that could not be generalised without further testing.

2.3.2.2.4   Research on specific apparel retail store image attributes

Some of the research on apparel retail store image attributes focus on a specific attribute or related attributes grouped together. The results from these studies could be valuable if they are considered in research on apparel store image attributes with a broader scope. One such study investigated the expectations consumers have of service (Lee & Johnson, 1997:28). The study generated service expectations from respondents, resulting in three main themes related to service, namely store amenities, store facilities, and sales associates' attributes. This study further defined store amenities as liberal returns, refunds, layaways, alterations, gift-wrapping,

shipping, and in-store credit. Store facilities related to lighting, mirrors, sitting area, and fitting. Lastly, sales associates' attributes referred to helpful suggestions, honest sales associates, professional sales associates, and unintrusive customer service.

Summers and Hebert (1998:73) studied the influence of merchandise display light levels on approach-avoidance behaviour of consumers. The study found that supplemental lighting had a statistically significant effect on the number of items picked up and the number of items touched in a store. Results also indicated that the interaction between supplemental lighting and the store was statistically significant.

Research relies on the recording of observations, analysis of results and statements about what have been observed. Knowledge gained from research should be cumulative and findings should be organised systematically. This could culminate in the development of theories that facilitate the examination, integration, explanation and interpretation of data in a process of discovering regularities within a field of study (Nagasawa *et al.*, 1989:24). Reaching any definitive conclusion based on the findings of the previously discussed research studies proves to be problematic. This could be ascribed to the lack of a definition and framework for the study of retail store image attributes, as well as the abundance of isolated findings that cannot be related to other studies. Therefore, there should be an attempt in retail store image attribute research to develop a research framework that could be used consistently, yielding comparable results.

2.3.3 Methodological trends in store image attribute research

According to Mouton (2001:87), a literature review should give an overview of methodological trends in the field studied. This section will focus on identifying such trends in retail store image research.

2.3.3.1 Procedure for analysis of research methodologies

From the 40 reviewed empirical research studies on retail store image attributes, 37 were included in this analysis of methodological trends. Three studies were omitted because they did not include sufficient information on the methodologies employed in the studies. According to literature on research methodology the following could be considered as the most important methodological components that should be addressed and that were included in this analysis: sample, sampling, modes of observation, technique of data collection, pretesting of the instrument, scale, stimulus and treatment of data (Babbie, 1998; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Lennon & Burns, 2000; and Minshall, 1994:144). The data available in the different studies were

also considered in determining the aspects to be discussed. These aspects will consequently be defined.

A sample is defined as a group of elements, including respondents, drawn from a population, which is considered to be representative of the whole population and are studied to acquire knowledge about the entire population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:156). In this discussion of samples the different populations which have been studied are identified, as well as the number of respondents included in each study.

Sampling refers to the technique by which a sample is drawn from the population. In this study there will be differentiated between non-probability and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling refers to sampling techniques where the probability of each element of the population, that is included in the final sample, is unknown. Probability sampling is the sampling technique employed where the probability of each element of the population that is included in the final sample, is determined (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:155-156).

Babbie (1998:230) describes modes of observation as observational techniques or methods used for observation, such as experiments, survey research, field research, unobtrusive research, and evaluation research. This analysis includes a overview of the different the different modes of observation employed in the reviewed literature.

The technique of data collection refers to the instrument used to gather data and record information (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:103). The different techniques of data collection reported included self-administered questionnaires and self-administered mailed questionnaires, as well as structured face-to-face interviews and structured interviews via telephone, since research methodology literature also differentiates between these techniques (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:112). Other techniques included are structured interviews conducted in small groups, unstructured in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. Studies employing open- and close-ended questions are also indicated here, as this relates to the nature of the questionnaires and interviews conducted.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:52) define the pretesting of an instrument as a technique used to evaluate and improve study methods, evaluate difficulty with methods or materials, and investigate accuracy and appropriateness of instruments. Under pretesting of the instrument, several specific procedures are identified. Studies using a pretest sample of respondents to actually generate the items included in the instrument are indicated, as well as studies that pretested the developed instrument to be employed in the study in a pilot sample. Studies employing instruments developed from previous research findings are identified, as well as

studies making use of already existing and tested research instruments. Lastly, studies using an instrument developed by the researchers themselves, which is not pretested, are also indicated.

A scale is a type of composite measure composed of several items that have logical or empiricaly structure among them ((Babbie, 1998:G6). Scales identified in reviewed literature and employed in studies include Likert-scales, rating scales, bipolar scales, dissimilarity-similarity scales and semantic differential scales.

Minshall (1994:144) defines a stimulus as an instrument or technique used to elicit a response. The different types of stimulis identified from the reviewed literature are verbal descriptions, visual presentations, physical in-store experiences, as well as studies where the actual product or substitute has been presented as a stimulus.

Lennon and Burns (2000:217-218) describes the treatment of data as either qualitative or quantitative. In this analysis there is differentiated between qualitative, i.e. non-numerical data interpreted to discover emerging themes, and quantitative, i.e. numerical data analysed using statistical techniques. Both these methods of data treatment were identified in the reviewed literature.

2.3.3.2 Findings of analysis of research methodologies

This section will discuss the findings of the analysis of the methodologies, which are summarised in Appendix 2. From these findings, certain methodological trends in store image research are deduced.

Sample In the reviewed literature, 13 studies' samples consisted of students, a further 24 studies included adults and four studied elderly people. Only one study included both students and adults. Lennon, Burns and Rowold (1995:267-268) reported that comparative research done with student and adult samples did not yield significantly different findings. They concluded that the inclusion of students as respondents is an acceptable practice. However, Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978:61) stressed that specific customers should provide the measure of attribute importance in studies. Only those studies including elderly people had a well-defined consumer segment basis, namely age. This should be a reason for caution when using and interpreting study results.

Eleven of the reviewed studies focused solely on females, whilst one study included males. This could be indicative of a need for more male-specific research on store image attributes. This coincides with the previous comment on the use of consumer segment bases when studying store image attributes.

The sample sizes ranged from four to 3447. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:93-94) comment on the difficulties concerning sample size, including accuracy and cost-effectiveness. Therefore, once again, when considering store image attributes research, caution should be taken not to generalise indefinitely.

Sampling   Six of the studies reviewed did not give a clear indication of the sampling design that was used as part of the methodology. Thirteen studies implemented a non-probability sample and 18 used a probability sample. The sampling procedure, together with the chosen sample, have a great impact on the research results, especially to the extent to which results can be generalised. Probability sampling is critical to describe integral characteristics of a population, as well as for research that attempts to reach definitive conclusions regarding a population (Lennon *et al.*, 1995:265).

Modes of observation   Thirty-five of the 37 reviewed studies used survey research as modes of observation. One study employed in-depth interviews and one study used focus groups, which could be classified, according to Babbie (1998:248), as field research and an experimental approach respectively. This is similar to Lennon and Burns' study (2000:215), where they also found that survey research was most often used in research on textiles, clothing and human behaviour with a consumer behaviour approach. When using survey methods, research relies on respondents to be honest and accurate. Respondents are required to recall things that might not be accessible to memory and they might not have conscious access to information required. This implicates that results and conclusions derived from survey research, might be, in some instances, questionable. Lennon and Burns (2000:220), therefore, postulate the concept of triangulation. Through triangulation, more than one strategy to gather data is employed to provide for greater validity of results and conclusions.

Technique of data collection   Of the studied literature, 26 employed self-administered questionnaires of which eleven were mailed. A further nine studies made use of questionnaires where seven was administered through an interview, one through small groups and one via telephone interview. Four studies relied on close-ended questions and four on open-ended questions. One study conducted in-depth interviews and one yielded data from focus group interviews. Self-report questionnaires are typical of survey methodologies. Therefore, they provide similar shortcomings. Lennon *et al.* (1995:269) listed these, firstly, as responses that are memory-based and memories are often faulty. Secondly, people might not be able to differentiate between what they think influences them and what, in reality, does influence them. Thirdly, especially regarding self-administered questionnaires, people may provide answers to questions they do not understand, and, lastly, people may answer in a socially desirable way. Therefore, it is advised that research should never rely on only one research methodology. Another aspect that needs consideration in the development of an instrument for research

similar to this study, is the selection of attributes. Researchers generally formulate attributes. The disadvantage is that attributes relevant to the consumer might be disregarded. This problem can be overcome by incorporating attributes grounded in consumers' vocabulary (Abraham-Murali & Littrell, 1995:150).

Pretesting of instrument   Ten of the 37 studies reviewed employed a pretest sample to develop the instrument used in the research and seven studies pre-tested the instrument. In three studies the instrument was based on similar previous research, whereas 23 studies used existing instruments or instruments derived from a review of literature. Four studies relied solely on the researchers themselves to develop the questionnaire. These findings, however, should be qualified by mentioning that six studies that employed existing instruments or instruments developed from a review of literature, did pretest these instruments or made use of a pretest sample. An equal number of studies, therefore, did and did not rely on pretesting or a pretest sample to develop the instrument to be employed in the research. Babbie (1998:159) stressed the importance of pretesting the research instrument. A pretest procedure allows the researcher to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and data analysis of the study are adequate and appropriate (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:51 & 155).

Scale   Twenty-three studies employed a Likert scale, with two more studies using an undescribed rating scale. Four studies made use of bipolar scales, two used dissimilarity-similarity scales and five used semantic differential scales. The majority of studies, therefore, employed investigator-determined scales. This type of scale, however, produces a variety of deficiencies in research. Firstly, the individual attributes included in a study depends on the researcher. When a large number of attributes are employed in a study, questions arise as to how many attributes are viewed as interrelated by customers and how many items are salient. In addition, since the investigator chooses attributes, some attributes might be rated low, when they are in fact irrelevant, thus influencing retail strategies in an undesirable way (Marks, 1976:38). Varying results in preference research indicate the limitations of evaluative measures (Minshall, 1994:149). Therefore, research should incorporate a variety of evaluative measures to examine the content of preference judgements by using methods to retain the advantages of rating scales whilst handling the problems of item interaction and saliency (Marks, 1976:39; and Minshall, 1994:149).

Stimulus   In the studies that were reviewed, 28 relied on verbal descriptions as stimuli for responses. Four studies employed visual presentations, five included in-store stimuli and two made use of samples. Of these, one study used verbal descriptions in conjunction with a sample as stimulus, and one combined visual presentations with in-store stimuli. Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995:150) emphasised the importance of detailed specification of the stimuli, as well as the setting in which research is conducted. An actual purchase situation might very

well have an effect on responses and influence research results. The use of appropriate stimuli is crucial to the research question in preference studies. The use of realistic stimuli as opposed to artificial stimuli, such as pictures or verbal descriptions, might allow respondents to consider a variety of multisensory cues that are all relevant to the preference decision and aspects that might be more obscure in artificial stimuli (Minshall, 1994:147). Gardner and Siomkos (1986:30) could only find initial support for the feasibility of written descriptions of store image. They recommend further research to compare the effects of verbal descriptions to tactile stimuli.

Treatment of data   Thirty-five studies yielded quantitative data, whereas only two studies provided qualitative data. This, again, raises the issue that, as with quantitative data, it is often the case that the researcher provides the response categories from which respondents make their selections. These response categories might not be meaningful to consumers. Quantitative data are useful for analysing whether or not a relationship exist amongst variables, the nature of this relationship, as well as the strength of the relationship. However, qualitative data is needed to determine why two variables are related (Lennon & Burns, 2000:220). Therefore, there is a gross deficiency in qualitative data as it needs to provide the reasons behind the findings of quantitative research on store image attributes.

In conclusion, one can make definite inferences regarding methodological trends in research on store image attributes. The studies that were reviewed included mostly students and adults as study populations, with more specific focus on females than males. Sample sizes were relatively small, with only six samples larger than 500 respondents, and the majority of studies implemented probability samples. An overwhelming majority of research used the survey method, together with self-report questionnaires as instrument. An equal amount of research made and did not make use of pretesting methods. Research relied mostly on researcher-determined evaluative scales and verbal descriptions as stimuli in the instruments employed. Lastly, the majority of research yielded quantitative data.

These methodological trends raise certain concerns and recommendations. The samples should be defined more closely based on specific consumer segments, such as specific female apparel consumers, specifically the large-size consumer. In addition, a disproportionate amount of research focused on females, creating a need for more male-focused research. Another issue that should be addressed is the need for more probability samples. The number of published studies, that do not identify their sampling procedure, is of great concern. Once again, because of all these factors, it should be emphasised that caution should be taken when trying to generalise from these research findings. Furthermore, the fact that research relies mostly on survey research, together with self-report questionnaires and evaluative scales based on verbal descriptions, yielding quantitative results, raises definite concerns, because of the inherent bias associated with it. For example, quantitative data, relying on surveys in the form of verbal

descriptions in questionnaires, contains response formats generated by the researchers, which might not be meaningful to consumers. The method of triangulation provides a possible solution to address these methodological issues, as it allows for multimethod approaches (Lennon & Burns, 2000:220). Lastly, the amount of research that does not employ a form of pretesting warrants a comment. As has been said before, pretesting research techniques and instruments increases accuracy, adequacy and appropriateness in research, and should be incorporated in all studies. This is an issue that should be addressed in future research.

2.3.4 Summary

A summary of the main points of relevance that emerged from the reviewed literature concludes this section discussing store image attributes. It is evident that no universal definition of retail store image attributes and the different groupings of retail store image attributes exist. Therefore, this study conformed to Lindquist's nine groupingss of store image attributes (1974-1975:31) to build on the foundation established in his review article. A comparison between literature reviewed by Lindquist and more recent literature reviewed in the present study, showed a definite shift in focus regarding the retail store image attributes that are included in empirical research studies. A specific focus on research on apparel retail store image attributes discussed how apparel retail store image attributes are ranked in importance, the relationship between store image attributes and consumer behaviour, how store image attributes are employed to describe and differentiate between consumer groups, and research that has investigated specific apparel retail store image attributes. Lastly, the review of literature indicated certain methodological trends, which raise concerns in the field of store image attributes research.

This review of literature on retail store image attributes achieved the third set objective of this study:

To identify existing knowledge of retail store image from available research.

2.4 FEMALE LARGE-SIZE APPAREL CONSUMERS

This section focuses on the female large-size apparel consumer, and gives a description of the female large-size apparel market and its implications within a retailing environment. Lastly, there will be a discussion of self-image and store image congruency, and how this is especially relevant when considering the female large-size apparel consumer.

2.4.1 Defining the female large-size apparel consumer

Defining the female large-size apparel consumer produces some difficulty. Previously described as fat, overweight and obese, these individuals are today known as the large-size or plus-size consumer (Lennon, 1992:18). Most recent studies on the female large-size apparel consumer relied on clothing size to define their sample. Typically, women wearing size 14 or larger are defined as large-size (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988:784; Lennon, 1992:20; and Lennon, 1997:61). Another description included women wearing women's or half-size apparel (Kind & Hathcote, 2000:316), where women's sizes are also defined as size 16 or above.

However, research indicates that sizing systems are by no means adequate, specifically in approximations of whole body proportions (Salusso-Deonier, DeLong, Martin & Krohn, 1985-1986:44). These findings are also supported in studies that are more current. Sizing problems regarding petite and tall-sized consumers have been reported by Yoo, Khan and Rutherford-Black (1999:230). Furthermore, speciality-size college females indicated their dissatisfaction with apparel fit. Findings of this study indicate that sizing standards should be re-evaluated and that a universal, international sizing standard is possibly warranted (Kind & Hathcote, 2000:315).

It could thus be surmised that the female large-size consumer has by no means been adequately defined. This poses a problem regarding the development of a theoretical base in this field of study. By nature, theories examine, integrate, explain, and interpret data to suggest new facts not yet observed (Nagasawa et al., 1989:24). From these, hypotheses are developed which are then empirically tested in an attempt to prove or disprove them (Winakor, 1988:33). Only once a hypothesis has been tested empirically, can it be accepted and incorporated into theory. One of the main characteristics of usable hypotheses is that it should be conceptually clear, i.e. all variables should be clearly described through operational definitions (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:33). The lack of an adequate definition of the female large-size consumer, therefore, is an important concern within female large-size consumer research.

Given specific limitations, the female large-size consumer for the purposes of this study was defined as consumers of apparel in sizes 14-28, as per the definition used by the leading South African retailer whose customer base was used as sample population for this study. This definition, therefore, does not only include a physical sizing component, but also a self-definition of being larger-sized.

2.4.2 Female large-size apparel consumers as a market segment

Certain criteria exist for effectively targeting a market segment. These include that the market should be (1) identifiable, (2) sufficient (in terms of size), (3) stable or growing, and (4)

reachable (accessible) in terms of media and cost (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:57). Literature on the female large-size apparel consumer suggests that this market is a viable and important part of the female apparel industry (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988:783; Lennon, 1992:18; and Shim *et al.*, 1990:83). Not only are there reports on the growth in sales in large-size apparel, but also on a revival in large-size retailing and other segments of the apparel industry, such as modeling and manufacturing (Farr, 1999:422-427; Lennon, 1992:18; and Simon, 1995:99-100). This can also be observed in South Africa, where the average female size is about 14. In 1992, a leading apparel retailer launched a label for the large-size consumer. By 1994, this was developed into a stand-alone brand. In 1996, the first stand-alone store carrying this brand was launched (Powell, 2001).

Cant and Machado (2002:31) suggest that this growth in the large-size apparel market will be an ongoing trend in South Africa due to, for example, the increase in numbers of middle-aged South-African consumers. One of the changes this group will create in consumer spending includes a redefinition of large-size apparel. This growth in the female large-size apparel market is not only observed in South Africa, but is also identified as a trend in the United Kingdom (Easey, 2002:32) and the USA (Frings, 1999:38).

It seems, therefore, that female large-size apparel consumers fit the criteria for the effective targeting of a market segment. Firstly, it is easily identifiable on the common characteristic of being large-size consumers, which is a relevant variable in the context of the female apparel market context. Secondly, the literature (Chowdhary & Beale, 1988:783; Lennon, 1992:18; and Shim *et al.*, 1990:83) supporting the viability of this market is a clear indication that this market is also sufficient in number to warrant addressing its specific needs and interests. Thirdly, the market could be described as stable, and literature indicates that it is also growing (Cant & Machado, 2002:31; Easey, 2002:32; and Frings, 1999:38). Lastly, given the South African context, this market is also easily accessible via different marketing strategies.

2.4.3 Research on the female large-size apparel consumer

Several researchers approached the large-size individual from a psychological perspective (Harris, Harris & Bochner, 1982:503; Harris, Walters & Waschull, 1991:1545; and Jasper & Klassen, 1990:519). Few researchers, however, adopted a consumer behaviour approach, and published research on the female large-size apparel consumer is scant.

Chowdhary and Beale (1988:738) investigated large-size women's interest, satisfactions and dissatisfactions with ready-to-wear apparel. They found that, except for suits, respondents were satisfied with five out of six apparel categories. They also found that, in general, the smallest

size and youngest age groups were more satisfied. They further reported that fit and size were the most common problem areas.

In another study, Kind and Hathcote (2000:315-324) investigated speciality-size college females and their satisfaction with retail outlets and apparel fit. They defined speciality sizes as petite, tall and large-size individuals. Their findings indicated that large-size consumers were the most dissatisfied with the number of retail outlets available to them. The large-size college sample also indicated that apparel was of lower quality and targeted towards a more mature person. The large-size individuals were also the only respondents to indicate a significant dissatisfaction with the availability of speciality-size apparel. They indicated the highest levels of dissatisfaction regarding apparel fit at the thighs, abdomen, bust and calf, while dissatisfaction with necklines and trouser length were also reported. Overall, fit and quality were important factors in dissatisfaction with apparel.

To conclude, it can be surmised that the female large-size apparel consumer is a viable market segment. However, very little research has been done concerning this segment of the apparel market. This warrants further research regarding the female large-size apparel consumer.

2.4.4 Self-image and store image

Self-image is the general mental picture each on has of oneself, including both the physical and psychological person (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 2000:16). Therefore, self-image not only affects how individuals feel about themselves, but is also a vital component of the physical self (Kaiser, 1997:98). Body image refers to "the mental picture one has of his or her body at any given moment in time", i.e. the physical self (Kaiser, 1997:98). Body cathexis, as a concept, is closely related to body image. Body cathexis, however, has a more evaluative dimension, as it represents the degree of satisfaction with the body (Kaiser, 1997:108).

The body and the way it is perceived are embedded in an individual's socio-cultural heritage, which changes within their cultural and historical contexts. Especially physical ideals vary from culture to culture and from one historical era to the next (Kaiser, 1997:109). Cultural ideals refer specifically to what is physically perceived as highly desirable or attractive (Damhorst, Miller & Michelman, 1999:13). All cultures value physical attractiveness. Attractiveness is a function of body type or shape and people are rewarded to the extent that they are perceived as attractive (Rudd & Lennon, 2001:124). When appearance deviates from the ideal, individuals might be at a social disadvantage and it may lead to stigmatisation (Kaiser, 1997:133).

Kaiser (1997:133) mentions obesity as a physical attribute that could socially disqualify an individual. This notion is supported by research findings that indicated that larger-sized individuals are perceived as less attractive (Lennon, 1997:43). When an individual is not able to reach the societal ideal of attractiveness, it results in a negative self- and body image (Horn & Gurel, 1981:141). Also, when an individual experiences a lack of social acceptance based on being stigmatised as large-size, it could manifest in a disturbance of or preoccupation with body image (Kaiser, 1997:135).

Stereotypes are often based upon appearance (Marshall *et al.,* 2000:10). This is supported by research findings that people categorise others based on body type or size (Lennon, 1992:22). An abundance of research exists on the negative stereotypical beliefs about obese individuals and the stigmatisation that accompanies it (Harris *et al.*, 1982:503; Harris *et al.*, 1991:1545; and Jasper & Klassen, 1990:519).

Stereotypes rely on assumptions made by individuals of others and these assumptions affect behaviour (Marshall *et al,* 2000:10). Individuals formulate their self-image, in general, based on feedback from others (Kaiser, 1997:173). LaBat and DeLong (1990:43) reported on literature that supports the notion that interaction with others leads to the evaluation of one's body, thereby influencing body image and body cathexis.

It can be deduced that body cathexis and body image, together with self-image as a whole, are important considerations when researching the female large-size consumer. This is especially true within an apparel context, since individuals are rarely presented in a social situation without some form of clothing. Therefore, body boundaries are often extended to include clothing in the body image (Horn & Gurel, 1981:145). Being large-sized is seen as a deviation from the cultural body ideal. This leads to individuals being stigmatised and having lower body and self-images. Furthermore, feedback from others and interaction with others are vital in the formation of body image and body cathexis. Certain negative stereotypical beliefs regarding large-sized individuals exist, which manifest in behaviour towards these individuals and ultimately lead to lower self-images. The symbolic interactionist perspective, which forms a part of the contextual perspective employed in this study, provides a framework for interpreting this phenomena.

Research has been done on the relationship between body satisfaction and shopping practices (LaBat & DeLong, 1990:43; and Shim *et al.*, 1991:35). Self-image, incorporating both body image and body cathexis, is an important concept within consumer behaviour. Every individual has a self-image, including traits, habits, possessions, relationships and ways of behaving. Individuals tend to patronise retailers whose store image closely corresponds to their self-image. This notion is motivated by individuals' attempt to preserve, enhance, alter, or extend their self-images (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:113). Considering the female large-size apparel

consumer, it is evident that the factors influencing the formation of self-image might differentiate them from other female apparel markets.

2.4.5 Summary

In conclusion, the female large-size apparel consumer lacks a clearly defined definition. This is critical, since these consumers are a viable market segment that warrants further research. Given the importance of self-image when considering the female large-size consumer, it is evident that these individuals might prove to be a very specific sample with special apparel needs that could differ considerably from other consumer groups. This should be considered when studying store image and related attributes, as apparel needs influence store image attributes, as is shown in the conceptual framework in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.1).

This discussion of literature on the female large-size apparel consumer achieved the fourth set objective of the present study, namely:

To identify existing knowledge of female large-size apparel consumer from available research.

2.5 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN A MULTICULTURAL CONSUMER SOCIETY

Diversity among cultural groupings is reflected in consumer behaviour (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993:113). Research using a cross-cultural or multicultural approach including different race groups, is scant. Cross-cultural analysis refers to conducting systematic comparisons of the similarities and differences in selected aspects of specific cultures targeted as appropriate marketing opportunities. To maximise these opportunities, culture and values, the way consumers see the world, what they buy, and how they evaluate products and services, should be considered, as they are rooted in culture (Wells & Prensky, 1996:117). Elements of culture that could have an impact on consumer behaviour are time, communication patterns, personal space, materialism and achievement, family roles, religion, competitiveness and individuality, social behaviour, language, customs, colour, and space (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993:113; and Wells & Prensky, 1996:117).

It is therefore evident that cross-cultural analysis is essential in a study within a multicultural society. Studies should identify variables used as bases for identifying subcultures and include these in the research, creating sensitivity to cultural differences, incorporating the cultural perspective studying apparel consumer behaviour.

This section will introduce the concepts of culture and subculture and their influence on consumer behaviour in a multicultural society. Race and age groups, as subcultures, will be discussed, as they relate to the study objectives. Their specific relevancy to this study and the multicultural South African context will be considered. Lastly, the importance of cross-cultural analysis will be stressed. The cultural perspective, incorporated in the contextual perspective employed in this study, provides a valuable framework for considering apparel in relation to clothing in this apparel consumer behaviour research.

2.5.1 Culture, clothing and consumer behaviour

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:322) define culture as the "sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to direct the consumer behaviour of members of a particular society". Du Preez (2001:113-115) compiled a composite list of characteristics of culture, namely that it is (1) functional and prescriptive, (2) a satisfier of needs, (3) a natural influence on behaviour, (4) invented, (5) learned, (6) shared, (7) long term, (8) dynamic, and (9) similar to but different from other cultures. Based on the definition and characteristics of culture, it is evident that an individual's cultural heritage has a very basic and lasting influence on consumer behaviour (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993:129).

Culture can be subdivided into artifacts (articles produced by individuals), sociofacts (those divisions and behaviours devised for social organisation) and mentifacts (the ideas, ideals, and values that govern human behaviour) (Horn & Gurel, 1981:57). Consumer goods, by implication also apparel, can be classified as artifacts of culture. The significance of consumer goods in a culture lies in its ability to communicate cultural meaning, i.e. to communicate symbolically the values, norms, and shared beliefs of a culture. Consumers evaluate, purchase and use products partly because of their symbolic value, as symbols are entities that represent the ideas and concepts specific to a culture (Mowen & Minor, 1998:561 & 574).

Clothing, as a cultural artifact, has important symbolic meaning for consumers (Mowen & Minor, 1998:576). Clothing is only one of a number of elements that constitute the total culture of a society, but is one of the most visual expressions of behaviour, beliefs and conditions characterising such a society (Horn & Gurel, 1981:57). People of all cultures modify their appearance. However, the symbolic systems and codes used to decipher and interpret characteristics differ (Kaiser, 1997:48). Therefore, clothing is of important cultural significance and an important variable in consumer behaviour, specifically regarding consumption patterns (Du Preez, 2001:115). This proves the relevancy of the cultural perspective, as well as the symbolic interactionist perspective as theoretical socio-psychological perspective to be included in this study (see 2.2.2.2 and 2.2.2.3).

Thus, any research on consumer behaviour will have to consider cultural influences and clothing as a well-suited medium through which to guide the study. Since South Africa is per definition a multicultural society, the consideration of culture is all the more relevant and necessary in a study of consumer behaviour.

2.5.2 Subcultures

Not all segments within a society share the same cultural patterns. A group within a society that has values, customs, traditions, and ways of behaving that are specific to that particular group is defined as a subculture (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:346; and Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993:128). Subcultures are characterised by (1) distinctiveness, (2) homogeneity, and (3) exclusion (Assael, 1992:356).

Various demographic characteristics have been used to identify subcultures. However, demographic features merely distinguish a population on the basis of characteristics. Subcultures focus on a group's values, customs, symbols, and behaviour (Mowen & Minor, 1998:590). In the case where an individual identifies closely with a certain subculture, it frequently results in similar consumer behaviour, one of which is to patronise the same type of stores (Assael, 1992:356). Race and age are frequently mentioned as bases for the identification of subcultures (Assael, 1992:356; and Mowen & Minor, 1998:590). The consideration of age and ethnic identity as subcultures is important within the South African context, where ethnic identity is based on language spoken, religion and race (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:333)

2.5.2.1 Race as subculture

A racial grouping, often referred to as ethnicity, is a frequently employed variable to describe subculture. Racial grouping generally refers to a group bound together by similar values, customs, dress, religion, and language, i.e. presenting a cultural homogeneity (Mowen & Minor, 1998:597). Consumers with similar racial origin have a common heritage or environment, which influences values and purchasing behaviour (Assael, 1992:359).

The South African population is commonly divided into the population or racial groupings of Africans, Asians, Coloureds and Whites (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:333). Current statistics show Africans to comprise 76,7% of the South African population, with Whites comprising 10,9%, Coloureds 8,9%, and Asians 2,6% (South African Statistics, 2000). Since this study was conducted in the Western Cape province of South Africa, it is relevant to consider the statistics of geographical area by racial group as well. Of the total South African population, 54,9%

47

Coloureds, 20,9% Africans, 20,8% Whites and 1% Asians reside in the Western Cape province (South African Statistics, 2000). Table 2.2 is adapted from South African Statistics (2000).

Table 2.2 Population group by race and geographical area

	African	Coloured	White	Asian
% of total population	76,7%	8,9%	10,9%	2,6%
% of Western Cape	20,9%	54,2%	20,8%	1%

It is evident that the racial composition within the Western Cape differs a great deal from that of the whole South Africa. Coloureds, though only the third largest racial grouping within South Africa, are by far the majority in the Western Cape. Whereas Africans have the highest percentage within South Africa, it is roughly equal to the percentage of Whites in the Western Cape, where Whites are the second largest grouping in South Africa. Asians residing in the Western Cape comprise only 1% and will therefore not be included as a racial grouping in this study. It is important to keep these statistics in mind as pertaining to the context within which this study was conducted.

2.5.2.2 Age as subculture

The question whether age groups have sufficient homogeneity and distinctive values to constitute a subculture has been debated (Assael, 1992:357). However, predictable changes in values, lifestyles, and consumption patterns occur as an individual moves through the life cycle. Therefore, various age cohorts can be identified based on these similar values, needs, and behavioural patterns, thus creating distinct market segments (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:357). In addition, the variations in birth-rates create changes in the number of individuals within each age cohort, which also has important marketing implications (Mowen & Minor, 1998:591).

The age groups identified for this study were 20-29 years, 30-39 years and 40-55 years. This study employed females as respondents. This will be taken into account when discussing current statistics, as well as considering racial grouping. The total female population of South Africa constitutes 21 062 685 (South African Statistics, 2000). Of this female population, 77% is African, 11% is White, 9% is Coloured and 3% is Asian (South African Statistics, 2000). Eighteen percent of individuals falls into the age cohort of 20-29 years, 14% falls into the 30-39 years age cohort and 13% falls into the 40-55 years age cohort (South African Statistics, 2000). This indicates a decline in the female population as age increases. Table 2.3 presents the number of individuals in each age group within each racial grouping. The total percentage was

calculated by determining the percentage of each age cohort of the total number of females of each racial grouping (South African Statistics, 2000).

Table 2.3 Population group by race and age

AGE GROUP	POPULATION GROUP (Females)			
	AFRICAN	COLOURED	WHITE	ASIAN
20-24	1 644 350	175 506	176 211	51 828
25-29	1 381 714	169 787	179 772	47 197
TOTAL	3 026 064	135 293	355 982	99 025
TOTAL %	18,7%	18,6%	15,7%	18,7%
30-34	1 219 386	160 347	172 732	45 182
35-39	1 005 643	135 771	175 529	40 888
TOTAL	2 225 029	296 118	348 261	86 070
TOTAL %	13,7%	16%	15,3%	16,1%
40-44	790 312	110 044	161 380	37 526
45-49	590 609	85 261	148 230	32 571
50-55	444 592	63 455	129 082	25 901
TOTAL	1 825 513	258 760	438 692	95 998
TOTAL %	11,7%	14%	19,3%	18%

This table shows that there is a significant decline in the total percentage for each age cohort for the African females as age increases. This is also true of the Coloureds. With the White population, the percentage stays about the same for the first two age cohorts, but increases towards the last cohort. The Asian population shows an initial decline and then an increase. These percentages should be qualified by pointing out that the last cohort spans over fifteen years, and not ten as the previous two. However, this makes the decrease, evident with the African and Coloured groupings, all the more significant.

When considering the 20-29 female age group, the Africans, Coloureds and Asians show roughly the same percentage, with the Whites having a lower percentage. In the 30-39 age group, the Africans have the lowest percentage, followed by the Whites. The Coloureds and Asians have roughly the same percentage. Considering the 40-54 age group, the Whites show the largest percentage for this group, followed closely by the Asians. However, the Coloureds have a significantly lower percentage, with the Africans having even less. It is clear that the age distribution differs significantly amongst the racial groups. The Africans and Coloureds show similar patterns with a decline in numbers as age increases. The Whites and Asians, however, have a significantly higher percentage for the oldest age cohort compared to the Africans and

Coloureds. Not only are there significant differences between age group cohorts, but also between the different racial groups' age group cohorts.

2.5.3 Research relating to culture and subculture, specifically race and age groups, and the importance of apparel retail store image attributes and large-size female apparel consumers

Research findings produce evidence that culture and subculture, specifically race and age group, influence the perceived importance of retail store image attributes. Culture and subculture also impact on female large-size apparel consumers. The findings of Van de Velde *et al.* (1996:388) supported the assumption of similar clothing values hierarchies at different geographical areas, namely Canada and the United Kingdom, with a shared root culture. The findings were based on similar rankings of retail store image attributes by the two different groups sharing the same root culture. Another study investigated the difference between US and South African college-age consumers (Miller *et al.*, 2000:24) who have different cultural backgrounds. The study found a significant difference between US and South African college-age consumers' preference for store image based on the influence of dressing room designs, aisle design and general services as store image attributes.

Within the South African context, ethnic groups relate to race group, language and religion (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:329). Research has found that ethnic groups differ in their perceived images of the social class orientation of selected retail stores (Kim & Han, 2000:60). Therefore, race can be seen to influence the perception of retail store image attributes.

Research has shown that consumers' age significantly affects perceptions of store image (Joyce & Lambert, 1996:24). Thorpe and Avery (1983-1984:28) identified age as a demographic variable that, together with specific store image attributes, will differentiate between customers and non-customers of a specialty store. Sales personnel, displays, and general services were identified as store image attributes that will significantly influence college-age consumers' preference for store image (Miller *et al.*, 2001:24). Research also found that perceived importance of store image attributes, specifically regarding the fashionability of clothing, differed significantly by age group.

Research results regarding the elderly consumer, specifically relating to their age and perception of store image, are inconsistent. Chowdhary (1989:1185) found that elderly and younger individuals differ in their shopping behaviour based on perceived importance of store image attributes. However, another study found that the elderly do not generally require or desire different attributes in a store image than younger apparel consumers (Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:102).

A study by Chowdhary and Beale (1988:783) investigated the female large-size apparel consumer. They found that age influenced respondents' satisfaction with ready-to-wear apparel. The youngest age group was more satisfied with apparel than the older age groups. Results indicated that size and fit was the most common problem areas related to the satisfaction of ready-to-wear apparel.

In conclusion, it seems that relationships could exist between the perceived importance of apparel retail store image attributes, culture and subculture, e.g. race and age groups. The research is also indicative of a possible correlation between age and the female large-size consumer as a specific market segment.

2.5.4 Summary

To conclude this section on consumer behaviour in a multicultural society, it could be deduced that culture, and specifically subcultures, are important considerations in a multi-cultural study, given the South African context. Literature shows that both culture, and the subculture of race and age, influence consumer behaviour. It is evident that a cross-cultural analysis is imperative when research is undertaken in a multicultural society. This review of literature related to consumer behaviour in a multicultural society, achieved the fifth study objective:

To describe the relevancy of the selected demographic variables, race and age group, in studies on retail store image within a multicultural consumer society.

2.6 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of literature relevant to this study. It provided a discussion of consumer behaviour models and the motivation for choosing Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (1992:230) as point of departure. Social-psychological perspectives, including the cognitive, symbolic-interactionist, and cultural perspectives were discussed, and their relevancy to this study was motivated, culminating in the choice of the contextual perspective as theoretical perspective for this study. This model and socio-psychological perspective, together with Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings (1974-1975:31), were integrated to develop a research framework for studying the perceived importance of store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer within a multicultural society.

Store image attributes received considerable attention in this chapter. Definitions and dimensions of this concept were explored and Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings were presented as framework for the discussion of store image attributes. A broad overview of literature relating to retail store image attributes was given, as well as a more focused

discussion of findings in literature on apparel retail store image attributes specifically. In addition, methodological trends in retail store image attributes research were observed.

Female large-size consumers were discussed in terms of defining the market segment and determining the viability as a market, followed by a discussion of literature on the female large-size apparel consumer. Self-image congruency to store image was also considered, as it relates to the female large-size consumer.

Concluding this chapter, culture and subcultures, specifically race and age group, were defined. Literature relating to the influence of race and age on consumer behaviour, was discussed. Lastly, the relevancy of a cross-cultural approach in the study of consumer behaviour in a multicultural society was argued.

This literature review served as framework for the design of the empirical study. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology employed in this study. The research design will be discussed in terms of the research method used, the sample population and sample selection, the measurement instrument, the procedure used to gather data, as well as the method of data analysis applied in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to provide a description of the research methodology applied in this exploratory study to meet the study objectives in an attempt to provide an answer to the research problem. It is therefore imperative to once again emphasise the research problem and set objectives.

The research problem was identified as follows: What retail store image attributes are perceived as important to the female large-size apparel consumer in the multicultural South African consumer society? What are the differences in the perception of these attributes based on race and age group?

From this problem statement the broad objective of this study was formulated as to expand the existing body of knowledge on apparel store image with special reference to store image attributes and their relative importance to the female large-size consumer in a multicultural society.

The specific literature-related objectives (numbers 1 to 5) were addressed in Chapter 2. The specific objectives to be met by the empirical study will be the primary concern of this chapter and were formulated as:

To generate retail store image attributes of perceived importance to female large-size apparel consumers.

To describe the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to female large-size apparel consumers.

To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the race of female large-size apparel consumers.

To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the age of female large-size apparel consumers.

53

To determine whether the existing store image attribute groupings by Lindquist (1974-1975) are applicable when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.

To attain these objectives, it was consequently decided to conduct qualitative research. Focus groups were chosen for appropriate data collection. The focus group schedule had to include all the relevant attributes of the store image attribute variable, as identified by Lindquist (1974-1975). Focus groups had to be conducted following the focus group schedule and had to be applied to the female large-size apparel consumers identified for the study. The focus group data had to be analysed through appropriate data analysis procedures to have a relevant bearing on the set objectives. The systematic, reliable, and scientifically sound research methodology culminated in the attainment of the set objectives.

The research methodology provided the opportunity to draw sound deductive conclusions and recommendations from the generated data. These recommendations focused on the possible implications that the findings of this study hold for, firstly, academia and future research and secondly, for apparel retailers and the formulation of retail strategies, specifically regarding apparel retail store image attributes and the female large-size apparel market in a multicultural society.

3.2   FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were used as the primary method of data collection in this exploratory study. The rationale for choosing this research technique was based on the specific characteristics of focus groups and the set objectives of the study. Focus group interviews have five distinct features, namely (1) involving people who (2) possess certain characteristics and (3) provide qualitative data through (4) a focused discussion culminating in (5) a better understanding of the research problem (Krueger & Casey, 2000:10).

Two of the common uses of focus groups are, firstly to generate impressions of products, programmes, services, institutions or other objects of interest and, secondly to learn how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:15). Focus groups can be used either as a self-contained research method or a technique used in conjunction with other methods. Focus groups provide insight into participants' attitudes and opinions on the topic of interest and, as self-contained focus groups, research results can stand on their own (Morgan, 1997:17-20). This study aimed to generate impressions of products, services and other objects of interest, namely female large-size apparel store image attributes, and to familiarize the researcher with the terminology used to discuss this phenomenon.

Apparel is a high involvement product, therefore focus groups provided insight into participant's attitudes and opinions regarding the research topic, yielding self-contained results.

Focus groups, as a qualitative research method, offer several advantages. A summary of these advantages, as discussed by Krueger (1988:44), Morgan (1997:13) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:16), is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Summary of advantages of focus groups

Characteristic	Advantages
Socially oriented research procedure	Incorporates the social nature of people and their interaction with each other. Allows a natural, real-life situation. Captures the dynamics of group interaction.
Flexibility	Allows moderator to probe. Offers the possibility of exploring unanticipated issues not always possible with other research methods.
High face validity	Easily understood. Results seem believable to those using data. Results presented in lay terminology derived from quotes from participants.
Cost-conscious and speedy results	Relatively low in cost compared to other research methods. Offers considerable advantage when time is a factor, as it yields speedy results.
Increased sample size of qualitative studies	Other qualitative research methods have limited sample sizes due to time and cost constraints. Focus groups are cost- and time-efficient.
Concentrated data	Ability to produce concentrated amounts of data on precise topic of interest.
Direct interaction	Allows for direct interaction between researcher and respondents.
Data quantity	Allows for the capturing of large amounts of rich data with results that are easily understood.

These advantages were incorporated in the research design to realise their full potential. Groups were allowed to interact freely in a natural setting. The moderator, although following a schedule, allowed the exploration of unanticipated issues by probing into them. Results, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, were discussed by employing terminology and quotations derived from the focus group participants. The costs involved in the study were the telephone calls and mailed letters to recruit participants and refreshments after the conclusion of each focus group. The apparel retailer participating in the study provided the incentives for the recruitment of the participants. Data was gathered within a two-week period, except for the last focus group, which was conducted two weeks afterwards because of recruitment complications. A total of 39 individuals participated in the study, which is a relatively large sample for a qualitative study. The data provided by the participants was concentrated on the topic of perceived importance of retail store image attributes and was provided by a very narrowly defined sample, making the data even more precise. Interaction occurred between the researcher and participants, which allowed the researcher to gain further insight into the sample population. The study provided a large amount of data, exhausting the topic under investigation.

Yet, the focus group technique of data gathering is not without its disadvantages, as is mentioned by Krueger (1988:44), as well as Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:16). These disadvantages are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Summary of disadvantages of focus groups

Characteristic	Disadvantages
Less control	Less control compared to quantitative research methods. Allows participants to influence and interact with each other, which could lead to detours in the course of discussion and raising of irrelevant issues.
Data analysis	Difficult to analyse because interpretation relates to the context provided by the social environment through group interaction.
Skilled facilitator	Requires a trained, skilled facilitator. Includes a degree of expertise on and insight into the research problem.
Variety amongst groups	Considerable variety could occur amongst different groups with each displaying unique characteristics.

Table 3.2 (continued)

Group assembly	Requires the assembly of participants who have to take the time and energy to meet at a designated place at a prescribed time.
Conducive environment	Requires to be conducted in an environment conducive to conversation.
Limited generalisation	Generalisation to larger population limited because of the small number of participants.
Bias in discussion	Responses from participants are dependent on one another. Dominant and opinionated participants could lead to undesirable results.
Analysis of results	Summary and interpretation of results difficult due to open-ended nature of responses obtained from participants.
Facilitator bias	Might result if facilitator provides cues about desirable types of responses and answers.

The research design attempted to restrict the effects of the disadvantages associated by focus groups to enhance validity and reliability of the results. The study employed an experienced facilitator and a structured focus group schedule to ensure that the group discussions remained under control, without restricting free responses. A facilitator team, consisting of the facilitator as well as two assistants, was employed in the process of data gathering and analysis, as they were directly involved in the focus group discussion and had an increased understanding of the context in which the focus group took place, thereby limiting the difficulties associated with data analysis. The facilitator was not only skilled in conducting focus group interviews, but also within the field of apparel retailing, as well as studies conducted in a multicultural environment. The variety amongst groups contributed to meeting the set objectives, i.e. to investigate possible differences that might occur between race and age groups. A sound plan for recruiting participants was employed in the study to ensure that viable focus group discussions could be held. The location was chosen bearing in mind the objectives of the study, and to ensure consistency all focus groups were held at the same venue with an informal, neutral setting conducive to conversation. The data obtained from the focus group discussion was analysed

within the given context and care was taken to give an accurate interpretation of the results so as not to lead to overgeneralisation or bias. A systematic approach to the data analysis process was followed to minimise difficulties with the summary and interpretation of results.

It is apparent that, when using focus groups as method of data collection, there are several advantages and disadvantage that should be considered. Certain factors associated with focus groups should be regarded when designing the research methodology to address these advantages and disadvantages. These factors will receive considerable attention in the consequent discussion of the research methodology.

3.3 SAMPLE POPULATION

The focus of this study was on the female large-size apparel consumers. Therefore, consumers purchasing from a large-size apparel retailer were consequently identified as the population of interest. This solved the problem of defining large-size apparel consumers, since these customers define themselves as members of the large-size apparel market.

The large-size apparel retailer identified to cooperate in this study is part of a large national apparel retail chain, including stores specialising in female apparel, male apparel, sportswear and jewellery. The large-size apparel retailer specified in this study caters specifically for large-size apparel consumers, with apparel ranging in sizes 14 to 28. The retailer started as an apparel label for the large-size female apparel consumer in 1992, becoming a stand-alone brand in 1994. In 1996, the first stand-alone store carrying this brand was launched, becoming the first and the only stand-alone female large-size apparel chain group retailer in South Africa at present. The retailer is currently the leader in female large-size apparel, including casual, smart and leisurewear, as well as lingerie, sleepwear, eveningwear, swimwear, shoes, and accessories in their range.

The sample population for this study consisted of all account holders of the specific female large-size apparel retailer. Due to practical considerations, the sample population was drawn from one specific retail outlet situated within a popular shopping center near Somerset West in the Western Cape. This retail outlet draws customers from a wide area surrounding the shopping mall, including different race and age groups. The account holders were selected as the sample population as it was the only available data set from which a sample could be drawn. Table 3.3 provides a description of the total sample population through a cross-tabulation based on age and population group as provided by the retailer.

Table 3.3 Sample population in terms of race and age group (N=3085)

Age group (years)	Number of accounts							
	African		Coloured		White		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
15-19	0	0%	25	0,8%	9	0,3%	34	1,1%
20-24	17	0,6%	137	4,5%	100	3,3%	254	8,3%
25-29	28	0,9%	183	6%	189	6,2%	400	13,1%
30-34	14	0,5%	202	6,6%	237	7,8%	453	14,8%
35-39	12	0,4%	175	5,7%	217	7,1%	404	13,2%
40-44	25	0,8%	148	4,8%	190	6,2%	363	11,9%
45-54	17	0,6%	246	8%	392	12,8%	655	21,4%
55+	16	0,5%	152	5%	327	10,7%	495	16,2%
TOTAL	129	4,2%	1268	41,5%	1661	54,3%	3058	100%

Various demographic characteristics have been used to identify subcultures, of which race and age are both mentioned. Demographic variables, such as race and age, are often used in market segmentation (Mowen & Minor, 1998:590). Race was, therefore, included based on the support in literature that different racial groups have distinct lifestyles, values and norms, which influence consumer behaviour. Age was also included as a variable since different age groups display distinct different lifestyles, and age has an important influence on behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:39-40; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995:58, 641). Race and age are important subcultures within the South African context, contributing to the multicultural nature of the South African society (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:333). It is important that the retail industry should be sensitive, emphatic and respectful of cultural values and the various subcultures, as discussed extensively in section 2.5.

Three race groups were included in this study, namely Africans, Coloureds and Whites. These are the groups commonly used to define the South African population (South African Statistics, 2000). Asians were not included, as they constitute less than 1% of the Western Cape female population (see 2.5.1).

For the final sample population, age categories were combined to form three broad categories, namely 20-29 years, 30-39 years, and 40-54 years, to compile a final sample. Account holders younger than 20 years of age were excluded from the final sample, since individuals younger than 20 years constitute the adolescent market, according to literature (Damhorst et al., 1999:283; MacGillivray & Wilson, 1997:44; and Ryan, 1966:269). The physical, as well as cognitive and socio-emotional development that take place in the adolescent phase, distinguish individuals younger than 20 years as a very specific market with an own characteristic identity.

Account holders older than 55 years were also excluded from the final sample population since they are identified as the mature market (Huddleston *et al.*, 1993:27; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:71; *Mature market: A new look at the over-50's.*, 1988:35; Mueller & Smiley, 1995:59; Visser, 1994:30; and Visser, Du Preez & Du Toit, 1996:1). Within the mature market, very specific consumer-related characteristics can be observed, therefore distinguishing them as a separate market with changing needs, which requires a specific retail strategy (Chowdhary, 1989:1183; Chowdhary, 1999:130; Damhorst *et al.*, 1999:332; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:71; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:101; and Mueller & Smiley, 1995:39). The final sample population is presented in Table 3.4 through a cross-tabulation based on age and population group.

Table 3.4 Final sample in terms of race and age group (N=2529)

Age group (years)	Number of accounts							
	African		Coloured		White		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
20-29	45	1,8%	320	12,7%	289	11,4%	654	25,2%
30-39	26	1%	377	14,9%	454	18%	857	33,9%
40-54	42	1,7%	394	15,5%	582	23%	1018	40,3%
TOTAL	**113**	**4,5%**	**1091**	**43,1%**	**1325**	**52,4%**	**2529**	**100%**

The Whites are the biggest racial group within the whole of the final sample population in this study, followed by the Coloureds. The Africans comprise the smallest racial group, with significantly less account holders. This also holds true when considering the specific age groups, except for the 20-29 year age group, where the Coloureds outnumber the Whites. The number of accounts steadily increases with an increase in age when considering the whole of the sample population. This is also true for the Whites and Coloureds. However, when considering the Africans, the 30-39 year age group is smaller, whereas the other two age groups are about equal in number, but far less than the other two groups.

When one considers the race and age statistics discussed in Chapter 2, it can be derived that this final sample does not reflect the population group by race and geographical area, nor does it represent the population group by race and age. In the Western Cape Coloureds (54,2%) are by far the largest race group, with Africans (20,9%) and Whites (20,8%) being almost equal (South African Statistics, 2000). Where the final sample population of this study increases in number with an increase in age, this does not hold true when considering the female population group by race and age in South Africa. The female Africans show a steady decline with an increase in age. The Coloureds show an increase in 30-39 year age group, but again decline in the 40-54 year age group. The only group that moderately reflects the increase in number with age, is the Whites. Through this discussion, one must bear in mind that this sample population

represents only accountholders at a specific retail outlet in a specific Mall in the Western Cape, i.e. a certain geographical area. Income distribution in South Africa has traditionally followed racial lines, resulting in a highly skewed distribution of income, which is widely accepted as one of the most unequal distributions of personal income in the world (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:353). Traditionally, Whites earn the most, followed by Coloureds and Africans (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:354). This must also be considered when discussing the results of this study.

3.4 SAMPLE SELECTION

The next section will focus on the different aspects involved when a focus group sample is selected. Firstly, a general overview of sample selection will be given based on literature, since this formed the basis for the sample selection process. Secondly, the final sample will be described as presented. Thirdly, the processes involved in the composition, size, and numbers of focus groups will be discussed and justified based on the literature on focus groups. Lastly, the recruitment process will be discussed, once again supported by literature.

3.4.1 Introduction

When considering the sampling for focus groups, it is more useful to think in terms of minimising sample bias rather than achieving generalisations. Focus groups are typically conducted using purposely selected samples where participants are recruited, using a limited number of sources, often only one (Morgan, 1997:35). This was also true for this study, since the sample was drawn from a single list of account holders who purchased from a single store for the period of one year, as this was the only available data. This possible bias, however, should only prove to be a problem when ignored. Therefore, as this sample was drawn from a limited sample, the data should be interpreted in such a way so as not to be seen as representative of a full spectrum of experiences and opinions.

The intent of focus groups is not to infer, generalise, or to make statements about the population. Rather, focus groups intend to provide understanding, determine range and provide insights into what people perceive as the situation. Given the set objectives for this study, it is evident that the focus group technique is well suited to this study. Therefore, the sample selection was done considering the following important factors influencing focus groups: composition of the focus group, the size of the focus group, the number of focus groups and the recruitment of focus group participants.

The final sample list included in this study consisted of a list of account holders who purchased apparel from the specific female large-size apparel retailer during the period of 1 September 2000 to 1 September 2001, and was provided by the retailer. The list included the names and

contact numbers of 1612 female large-size apparel consumers and differentiated between race groups, namely Africans (n=71), Coloureds (n=759), and Whites (n=782), as well as age groups, namely a 20-29 year age group (n=373), a 30-39 year age group (n=850), and a 40-54 year age group (389).

3.4.2 Composition of focus group

The most important considerations in the composition of the focus groups were reasonable homogeneity and unfamiliarity with each other, as this could influence group dynamics. Age and race were used as bases for homogeneity, whilst ensuring enough variation among participants to ensure contrasting opinions. This is in line with recommendations by Krueger (1998:92), Morgan (1997:33-37), and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:36-37). Randomisation, which essentially removes the bias in sample selection, is particularly appropriate when inferences are made to a larger population. Conducting focus groups, however, require a flexible research design. The research design used in this study, proved adequate for these requirements.

The number of participants in the sample had to fit the specific criteria of race and age group. Every N^{th} person on the list of the sample population was selected for participation (Krueger, 1988:96). Randomisation was achieved by the following formula:

N = number of participants in the sample population
       number of participants in the focus group

If an identified participant was unable to attend a focus group, the next participant on the sample list fitting the criteria of race and age group was selected for participation. A degree of randomisation was used in drawing a sample from the list of the sample population, but it was not the primary factor in selection. The first six focus groups were composed based on race and age group as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Final sample selection

	Date	Time	Race	Age	Size
Focus Group 1	22-Sep-01	09:00-11:00	White	20-29	5
Focus Group 2	24-Sep-01	09:00-11:00	White	30-39	5
Focus Group 3	24-Sep-01	12:00-14:00	White	40-54	6
Focus Group 4	24-Sep-01	15:00-17:00	Coloured	20-29	3
Focus Group 5	29-Sep-01	09:00-11:00	Coloured	30-39	8
Focus Group 6	29-Sep-01	12:00-14:00	Coloured	40-54	5
Focus Group 7	29-Sep-01	15:00-17:00	African	n.a.	3
Focus Group 8	20-Oct-01	09:00-11:00	African	n.a.	4

The final sample list proved to be inadequate to recruit African participants for focus groups based on age. Therefore, one focus group, consisting of mixed ages, was composed following the same procedure as the previous focus groups. However, due to further constraints, the retail store involved in the study was asked to provide contact details of African customers who purchased from the retail store in a given time period of one week. These customers were contacted and a second African focus group, also consisting of mixed ages, was composed.

3.4.3 Size of focus group

Considering the objectives and topic of interest of the study, it was decided to aim at including eight participants in each focus group. This is supported by literature suggesting that the ideal focus group size is between seven and ten (Krueger, 1988:93). Ten participants were recruited for each focus group discussion, thereby over recruiting by 25%. This was done in accordance with recommendations in the literature to ensure that the need to cancel a group because too few participants are present did not arise (Krueger, 1988:99; and Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:57).

The advantages and disadvantages of smaller versus bigger focus groups are summarised in Table 3.6 (Krueger, 1988:93; and Morgan, 1997:42).

Table 3.6 Summary of comparison of advantages and disadvantages of smaller versus bigger focus groups

Bigger groups	Smaller groups
Limit each participant's opportunity to share insights and observations, which influence group dynamics.	Give each individual an equal chance to participate in group discussion.
Difficult to manage and break up into smaller groups of conversation.	Easier to manage since group is too small to subdivide.
Enough participants to ensure active involvement through focus group session.	Difficult to maintain active involvement when participants have low level of involvement with topic.
More productive since dynamics among individual participants have less influence.	Less productive because they are sensitive to dynamics among individual participants.

The final focus groups sizes are presented Table 3.5, indicating that the focus groups ranged in size from three to eight. In the case of focus group 4 and 7 it was decided to continue with the focus group sessions and use the data, as there is a tendency towards mini-focus groups, consisting of four to six participants (Krueger, 1988:93; and Morgan, 1997:42). These groups are easier to recruit and host and they are more comfortable for participants. Small groups yield the best results where the intent is to get more in-depth insights as was required in this study. They are also preferable when participants have a great deal to share or have an intense or lengthy experience with the topic of discussion, as proved to be the case in this study. Mini-focus groups are useful since they give clear sense of each participant's reaction to a topic, because they give each participant sufficient time to participate. When comparing the data gathered from all the focus groups, it was evident that the smaller and larger of the groups generated a similar range of data, further justifying the use of a smaller number of participants. The possibility of a limited total range of experiences because of its size was addressed in this study by conducting a large number of focus groups, as will be discussed next.

3.4.4 Number of focus groups

As indicated in Table 3.5, eight focus groups were conducted. Krueger (1988:97) and Morgan (1997:43) recommend three to five focus groups based on the notion that more groups seldom provide meaningful new insights. Therefore, data collection should be stopped when the goal of saturation has been reached, that is the point at which additional data collection will not yield new understanding. Although the number of focus groups conducted constitutes more than recommended in the literature, the objectives of the study, specifically regarding investigation of possible differences and/or similarities between race and age groups, were considered and necessitated the number of focus groups held.

3.4.5 Recruitment of participants

Firstly, meeting times for the focus group discussions that were considered most appropriate were established. It was decided to conduct the focus groups on Saturdays and public holidays, since this was assumed to be the time the most respondents would be available. Apart from the pilot study and the last focus group session, three focus groups were scheduled for each day with one session in the morning from 09:00 to 11:00, one over lunch from 12:00 to 14:00, and one in the afternoon from 15:00 to 17:00 (Table 3.5). Secondly, potential participants were contacted personally via telephone approximately ten to fourteen days before the scheduled meeting to invite them to the group discussion.

The telephonic invitation included a short screening interview to determine whether the specific participant fits the recruitment category and is willing to participate and interested in

participating (Appendix 3). The screening interview included demographic characteristics, namely race and age group, and a question regarding whether they were a customer of the specific retail outlet cooperating in the study. At this stage a general description of the nature of the research and the fact that the focus group will include a group discussion were also mentioned. The topic of the research was explained briefly and emphasis was placed on the importance of the participant's participation and opinion. In addition, the time and place that the focus group was to take place, as well as the starting and adjourning times of the focus groups were mentioned. As participants are generally more willing to partake in a study if they believe it is of importance, each participant was given an incentive by the participating retailer in the form of a R150 gift voucher that could be used at any of the retail group's stores. The participants were informed that refreshments would be served. Transport to the venue where the focus groups were held was also offered.

The telephone interview was followed by sending a personal letter of invitation to the potential respondents one week before the focus group session (Appendix 4). This invitation also included all the relevant information conveyed in the telephonic interview. Lastly, each individual was phoned one day before the focus group session to remind them and to inquire whether they still intended to attend. The recruitment process followed in this study was based on recommendations in the literature (Krueger, 1988:98; Morgan, 1997:38; and Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:54).

3.5 MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

The measurement instrument consisted of a focus group schedule including a questioning route and potential probes (Appendix 5). This ensured that the different group discussions yielded relatively comparable results and that the discussions concentrated on the topics of interest, as guided by the facilitator. The funnel approach (Morgan, 1997:41), as compromise between more and less structured focus groups, was used in this study to overcome the limitations of both a more and a less structured focus group. The first half of the discussion was less structured, starting with the generation of retail store image attributes deemed important by the focus groups participants themselves, followed by the measuring of the perceived importance of each of these retail store image attributes (referred to as the first part of the study). The second half of the discussion was more structured and based on generating participants' description of Lindquist's nine identified store image attribute groupings (referred to as the second part of the study). The sequence in which the nine attributes was discussed, differed from that reported in Lindquist's study (1974-1975) in an attempt to direct the focus group discussion in a logical order. The focus group discussion closed off with the measurement of the perceived importance of each of Lindquist's nine categories.

The perceived importance of different retail store image attributes and groupings was measured by a specially developed non-verbal quali-quantive response technique, known as the *Schutte Visual Scale* (Schutte, 2000:9). The scale allows opinions to be measured between focus groups with equal validity, and also allows for rank ordering. This scale yields both qualitative and quantitative results, by calculating the aggregate of each group's measurements. A recent study showed that the results generated by the *Schutte Visual Scale* are comparable to those generated by the traditional 9-point hedonic scale or 9-point category scale. It was found that the scale was both internally and externally valid (Webb, 2001:90).

The *Schutte Visual Scale* (Appendix 6) consists of a wooden plank, shaded on the side facing the participant, with the shade increasing in colour from left to right. The other side consists of a scale numbered from one to eleven, with one being the lowest and eleven the highest value. Attached to the wooden plank is a lever held by an elastic band. This lever can be pulled from left to right, indicating the importance of the variable being measured, with importance increasing as the elastic is stretched out more towards the darker shaded side of the wooden plank. The numerical value is provided on the other side, which serve as an indication of the perceived importance and can be recorded by the facilitator and assistants.

Each participant was also requested to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the focus group discussion to get background information to provide an accurate description of the respondents in the groups (Appendix 7). The questionnaire consisted of items on demographic variables such as race, language, level of education, occupation, mobility, amount spent of clothes, income, marital status, number of children, age and religion. Questions regarding money spent on clothes, income and age were categorised to increase accuracy of answers and decrease socially desirable responses. The questionnaire was derived from an existing instrument used within the multicultural South African context (Du Preez, 2001:290).

3.6 PILOT TESTING

Pilot testing was done in accordance with Krueger's suggested procedure (1998:67). Pilot testing started with the facilitator reviewing the focus group schedule with a focus on the logical and sequential flow of questions and the ability of probes to elicit the desired data. The facilitator was familiar with the objectives of the study, as well as Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings, and apparel consumers, who were the participants involved in the study (see 3.7.1).

Conducting the first focus group of the study served as the next step in the pilot test. Participants were afterwards requested to comment on how they experienced the focus group

discussion, referring to, inter alia, ambiguity of questions, the facilitator, venue, and other possible problems. No negative comments were reported. The facilitator once again reflected on the wording and sequencing of the focus group discussion, and the room arrangement and composition of the participants were also considered.

The usual procedure following the pilot testing of a focus group schedule will be to adapt the schedule if any major changes are necessary. The results of the first focus group are then disregarded and rescheduled with different participants. However, the first focus group of this study proved to necessitate no major changes, and the data elicited from this focus group discussion was included in the final data analysis.

3.7 DATA GATHERING

3.7.1 Procedure

The schedule for the different focus groups is presented in Table 3.5 (see 3.4.2). Each focus group lasted from one and a half to two hours and started with a short, informal introductory session during which refreshments were served. This allowed the facilitator and the assistants to observe participant interaction and assess personal characteristics of participants that might influence the group dynamics. The discussion started by welcoming the participants and giving them an overview of the study followed by establishing the ground rules for the session. The focus group discussion proceeded by following the focus group schedule (Appendix 5). Participants were shown how to use the *Schutte Visual Scale* (Appendix 6), which was employed in the focus groups to quantify responses. After the discussion was concluded, participants were requested to fill out a questionnaire (Appendix 7). They were thanked for their participation and presented with the incentive as promised during the recruitment interviews (Appendix 3).

The focus groups were conducted in either Afrikaans or English. This was achieved by determining the language understood by the majority of participants, which was the language used by the facilitator. Participants were encouraged to participate in the group discussion in the language that they felt most comfortable using. If any participant did not understand either Afrikaans or English, albeit the language spoken by the majority, the whole focus group was conducted in the alternative language, i.e. either Afrikaans or English. In some instances, both languages were used to accommodate respondents. Thus, the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth focus groups were conducted in Afrikaans. The third focus group was conducted in English since one of the participants did not understand Afrikaans. The seventh and eighth focus groups constituted of African participants and were conducted in English. At the first of these two focus

groups, a female translator, fluent in Xhosa, was present to assist if any difficulties arose in the understanding of certain concepts. However, this proved not to be a problem, and no translator was present at the last focus group session. The atmosphere in the focus groups was relaxed. This was conducive to discussion and eliminated any ambiguity.

The primary means of capturing the focus group data was through tape recording. Ensuring the quality of the recorded data is crucial and was controlled throughout all the focus group sessions. Two assistants (the researcher and the study leader) acted as scribes and recorded the discussions and ratings. Consequently, field notes supplemented the recordings. Observation of the focus group participants also contributed to the process of data gathering. The facilitator and the location are two important factors which should be considered during data gathering through focus groups (Morgan, 1997:54; and Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:47). These factors will consequently be discussed.

3.7.2 Facilitator

The facilitator employed in this study was a male who had extensive experience with group processes, specifically focus groups. He was therefore able to exercise mild, unobtrusive control in the focus groups. The facilitator had adequate background knowledge of the topic under discussion, as he was familiar with the apparel retailing environment and specifically experienced in conducting research in a multicultural society. He was also familiar with the scope of the study and the set objectives. An assessment of the facilitator, after the first focus group discussion, by the participants showed that the opposite sex was, in this case, not a factor of any significant importance. The facilitator therefore met the criteria set by the literature for facilitating focus group discussions (Krueger, 1988:72; Malan, 1992:56; and Stewart & Shamdasani, 1997:69).

The facilitator's primary concern was directing the discussion, keeping the conversation flowing and keeping minimal notes. The two assistants took comprehensive notes, recorded the ratings, operated the tape recorder, handled the environmental conditions and logistics whilst also attending to unexpected interruptions. This procedure was also based on suggestions in the literature (Krueger, 1988:74-75).

3.7.3 Location

The focus groups were conducted in a restaurant lounge within a retirement complex in a suburb of Somerset West near to the shopping mall where the retail store is situated. The lounge chairs were arranged around a coffee table and participants could sit comfortably facing each other, allowing for interpersonal distance. This allowed for a congenial atmosphere, which

induced active participation in the focus group. The lounge was secluded, large enough and nondescript, so the facilitator was able to effectively guide the group discussion in this setting, while the assistants could unobtrusively observe and take notes.

Due to practical considerations, this location was chosen as opposed to a location nearer to the retail store employed in the study, which would have been the ideal. The conference facilities within the shopping mall where the apparel retailer is situated were only available for activities relating to the shopping centre itself, and could therefore not be used. A map with directions to location was mailed to participants (Appendix 4). Where transport presented a problem, it was arranged to meet the participants at a specific time at the retail store. From there, they were transported to the location and taken back to the retail store afterwards. The retirement complex has security guards patrolling the parameters, but they were informed beforehand and given a list of the names of the expected participants, to allow them entrance. Thus, special consideration was given to all aspects to make the location as convenient and accessible as possible.

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis procedure used in this study was in accordance with recommendations in the literature (Krueger, 1988:106). Data analysis started with a debriefing after each focus group discussion. The facilitator, together with the two assistants, compared notes and ascertained whether the field notes captured the information regarding (1) changes in the focus group schedule, (2) participant characteristics, (3) descriptive phrases or words used by participants in the discussion, (4) themes in the responses, (5) subthemes held by particular participants, (6) descriptions of participant enthusiasm, (7) consistency in comments and behaviours, (8) body language, (9) revision of the focus group schedule, and (10) the overall mood of the discussion. From this, a brief summary was compiled on the findings and interpretations of each group discussion.

After each focus group, the tape recording was checked to ensure that it recorded sufficiently. These tape recordings were then used to compile typed transcriptions of each focus group.[2] This, together with the brief summaries, focus group schedule, demographic information about respondents and copies of the facilitator's and assistants' summaries or notes were scrutinised to note potential trends and patterns between the different focus groups, focusing on one section of the focus group schedule at a time. This was done while considering the words used by participants, the context, internal consistency, and specific responses. Comments worthy of quotation were also identified.

---

[2] Copies of transcriptions are available from the researcher on request

69

From the raw data, content analysis was done to reach statements that are more descriptive. Composite lists of the store image attributes, as generated by the focus group participants in the first part of the focus group discussion, were compiled according to race and age group, as well as for the whole group. Each participant's rating for a specific attribute was recorded in the focus group discussion and the aggregate numerical value for each of these attributes was calculated by adding the figures and dividing the sum by the number of respondents, as described by Schutte (2000:15). The aggregates for each focus group were used to calculate the aggregates for each race and age group (Appendix 8).

These store image attributes were grouped together using Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings as framework. This was done for each race and age group, as well as for the whole group. The aggregate ratings were then calculated for each of the groups (Appendix 9). These groupings were further refined for each race and age group, as well as for the whole group. Once again, the aggregate ratings for each group were calculated (Appendix 10). These refined groupings and their aggregate numerical values are used in the discussion of the results (Chapter 4). The discussion is supported by quotes identified from the transcripts of the focus group discussions.

Data obtained from the second part of the focus group discussion was compiled into composite lists of how each focus group described Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings (Appendix 11). These lists were used to compile a list for the whole group (Appendix 12). The frequencies with which each attribute was mentioned within each focus group to describe a specific attribute grouping, were also determined. The aggregate ratings for each of Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings were calculated for each focus group, as well as for the whole group (Appendix 13). The aggregate rating for each of Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings for the whole study were calculated based on the aggregate numerical values of each focus group. These aggregate numerical values will be presented in Chapter 4 together with a comparison of the ratings of the groups based on the self-generated store image attributes.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Careful consideration has been given to establish validity of this focus group study. Focus groups typically have high face validity due to the believability of comments and participants (Krueger, 1988:42). The predictive validity of focus groups can be determined by future research involving a larger representative sample. The *Schutte Visual Scale* employed in this study to quantify perceived importance of retail store image attributes have been found to be

70

internally and externally valid (Webb, 2001:90). This focus group study, therefore, yielded valid results.

Reliability is the central consideration of validity concerning the process of data collection. The researcher, participants, measuring instrument, and the research context are variables influencing the reliability of observations or data (Mouton & Marais, 1990:79). Careful consideration was given to these variables in the research design to prevent any possible bias.

Firstly, the advantages and disadvantages of focus group discussion were acknowledged. The advantages were applied and the disadvantages were addressed to ensure reliability of results. The sample procedure was influenced by practical considerations. However, the procedure was designed in accordance with the study objectives. Suggestions in focus group literature regarding composition, size and number of focus groups, as well as the recruitment of respondents, were used to guide the sample procedure, incorporating a measure of randomisation. The measuring instrument, consisting of a focus group schedule, was developed by carefully considering the study objectives, and an existing questionnaire was employed to gather demographic data.

The focus group schedule and procedure to conduct the focus group discussions, as well as variables that might influence this procedure, were evaluated through a pilot test of the focus group. A review of the pilot test did not identify any problems to be addressed. An experienced facilitator conducted focus groups discussions. Tape recordings of the discussions proved to be successful, and field notes supported these recordings. The method of data gathering can be considered reliable.

Data analysis was based on the study objectives and consideration of suggestions in focus group literature. To determine reliability, an independent individual served as referee and followed the same procedure discussed previously for analysing the data (Appendix 14). The results of the referee's analysis were compared to the results of the present study and the two analyses showed a level of agreement of 87%.

3.10 SUMMARY

An appropriate and scientifically sound research methodology is crucial to the reliability and validity of the conclusions drawn and recommendations made from the results of a study. This study attempted to employ research methods and methods for data analysis best suited to reach the study objectives and to provide an answer to the research problem. The methodology also allowed for the limitations posed by the methods employed in the study, specifically

regarding focus groups, and recognised these limitations in the deductions, assumptions and conclusions made throughout the study.

The actual report of focus group results require a balance between direct quotations of participants and the summary of their discussions. Decisions made when planning the research process, including the type of research, facilitator involvement, and data analysis, influenced the format of the discussion of the results in the next chapter. Effective reporting serves three functions: (1) to communicate results, (2) to assist in developing a logical description of the total investigation, and (3) to provide a historic record of findings (Krueger, 1988:125; and Morgan, 1997:63). The discussion of the study results should be appropriate for the purpose of the study and be targeted to its intended audience, namely apparel professionals and academics, as well as the apparel retail environment. The next chapter will present the results of the study based on the data gathered through the afore-mentioned research methodology.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the methodology of the study was discussed, referring to the sample population and sample selection, the measurement instrument, the procedure used to gather data, as well as the data analysis employed in this study. This chapter reports the results of the research study. The final sample will be described and the findings of the study are presented and discussed. The findings will be related to the perceived importance of store image attributes to the female large-size apparel consumer (first part of the study), the female large-size apparel consumer's delineation of Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) (second part of the study), followed by the ratings of these groupings by the female large-size apparel consumer.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The final sample employed in this study consisted of account holders of a female large-size apparel retail store in the Somerset Mall, Somerset West, in the Western Cape. The demographic information was gathered through a questionnaire which all respondents completed. Items in the questionnaire included questions regarding race, language, level of education, occupation, mobility, amount spent per month on clothes, income, marital status, number of children, age and religion. Questions regarding money spent per month on clothes, income and age were categorised to increase accuracy of answers and decrease socially desirable responses. Some of the respondents' questionnaires were incomplete, therefore the total sample size varies for the different variables.

4.2.1 Race

Given the multicultural context within which this study was conducted, race was included as subcultural population group. Three of the main race subcultural population groups, as described in the previous political dispensation, were included to represent the multi-cultural nature of the South African society. The racial representation of the sample is shown in Table 4.1. Of the respondents, 7 (19%) were African, 14 (38%) were Coloured, and 16 (43%) were White. The final sample, therefore, included more Africans than were proposed in the final sample population (Table 3.4). The Whites were still the largest group, followed by the Coloureds, but were represented in lower percentages than in the sample population, as was

73

discussed in section 3.3 of the Chapter 3. However, the objective of this study was to investigate racial differences in the perception of the importance of store image attributes.

Table 4.1 Frequency distribution of race groups (n=37)

RACE	FREQUENCY	%
African	7	19%
Coloured	14	38%
Whites	16	43%
TOTAL	**37**	**100%**

Focus groups depend on the characteristic of homogeneity within each discussion group for the best results. Homogeneity within each focus group discussion was a primary concern in the sample selection process, therefore the final sample was chosen in such a way as to include the racial groups in separate focus groups. Thus, given the practical limitations of the sample selection process regarding African respondents, the statistician consulted in this study identified the sample as adequate. Since all the main racial groups were represented, this sample could also be considered as a reflection of the multicultural South African society within the given geographical boundaries of the study.

4.2.2   Age

The majority of respondents (45%) fell in the 40 - 54 age group, followed by the 30 - 39 age group (36%) and, lastly, the 20 - 29 age group (19%). The age distribution of the group is presented in Table 4.2. Age was the second demographic characteristic that also served as criterion for the selection of respondents in the sample selection process. Once again, the aim in sample selection was to achieve homogeneity within each focus group and not to have equal representation of the whole sample population. This is reflected in the age distribution of the final sample. As all age groups were represented, the sample once again proved to be adequate.

Table 4.2 Frequency distribution of age groups (n=36)

AGE (years)	FREQUENCY	%
20-29	7	19%
30-39	13	36%
40-54	16	45%
TOTAL	**36**	**100%**

4.2.3   Language

The majority of respondents (56%) indicated that they speak mostly Afrikaans at home. This could be attributed to the geographical area in which the study was conducted where Afrikaans is the predominant language. Xhosa (16%) was the second most frequently language spoken at home, which could also be attributed to the geographical area selected for the study. Respondents indicating that they speak English at home or were bilingual (Afrikaans and English) were equal (14%).

4.2.4   Level of education

Two respondents (5%) indicated having only primary school education, whilst 13% achieved grade 10 and 34% achieved grade 12 as highest level of education. At tertiary level, 34% indicated a diploma as the highest level of education, where 11% held a Bachelor's degree and 3% held a postgraduate degree as the highest level of education. The education level for this sample is relatively high, with 82% having achieved at least grade 12, and 48% having tertiary education. This high level of education, however, is not reflective of the South African society as a whole. Seven percent of the total South African female population have only primary education, 8% achieved grade 10, 11% achieved grade 12, and 2% hold a diploma. Approximately 1% of South African females hold a Bachelor's degree, with less than 1% having a postgraduate qualification (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999). A possible explanation for the high education level could be the location of the store from which the sample was drawn, being semi-urban and near educational institutions.

4.2.5   Occupational status

Of the total sample, 8% were unemployed, 18% were homemakers and 3% were retired (including a severance package). A further 23% indicated that they were employed as a clerk, salesperson, technician or secretary, 29% were employed in middle management (teacher, nursing sister) and 8% were employed as managers in the corporate sector. None indicated their occupational status as that of a professional (doctor, director), and 11% indicated "other" as their occupational status. Thus, 60% of the respondents indicated that they were employed, excluding those indicating "other". This is comparable to the employment status of South Africa's economically active female population. However, this should be interpreted with caution, as the definition of unemployed differs considerably between contexts (South African Statistics, 2000). For the purpose of this study, unemployment was defined as not being formally employed. Female consumers' employment status is an important consideration within consumer behaviour, as it affects consumption patterns (Cassil & Drake, 1987:32).

4.2.6   Modes of transport

The possible modes of transport were walking, taking the train, taxi or bus, or using own transport. Respondents could indicate more than one mode of transport. The majority of respondents made use of their own transport (90%). Another popular mode of transport was taxis (26%). The total percentage that walked was 11%, while 8% made use of a bus and 5% made use of a train. As the retail store is situated in a mall outside of town, it is conceivable that the majority of its customer base rely on their own transport when shopping. However, taxis are a readily available mode of transport in South Africa, therefore a fairly large percentage of the respondents can rely on taxis for shopping.

4.2.7   Money spent on clothes

Respondents were asked to indicate how much money they spend on clothes per month. The majority (29%) indicated that they spend R400-R499 per month. An equal number of respondents (26%) indicated that they spend R300-R399 and R500 and more. A further 16% indicated spending R200-R299, with 3% spending less than R199. Therefore, 81% of respondents were concentrated in the top three categories of apparel expenditure.

4.2.8   Monthly income

Respondents had to indicate their household's monthly income before tax and deductions. The largest number of respondents (24%) had a monthly income of R10 001-R20 000, followed by 22% having a monthly income of R7 001-R10 000. An equal number of respondents (19%) had indicated that they fell in the categories of R5 001-R7 000 and R3 001-R5 000. A further 11% had a monthly income of R1 001-R3 000 and 5% had a monthly income of R501-R1 000. No respondents indicated falling in either one of the categories of "less than R500" and "R20 001" and more. A high of percentage of the sample (65%) fall in the upper middle income group. This is significant, because 40% of the sample is presumably single income households, since respondents indicated that they have never been married, are divorced or widowed. Once again, the educational level and occupational status of the sample could be factors influencing these results. These results should be interpreted with caution, as they are indicative of gross monthly incomes, not the net monthly income of the household.

The demographic characteristics of educational level, occupation, monthly expenditure on clothing, and monthly income, are closely related. Females' employment is associated with increased education and together these two variables influence lifestyle, a predictor of consumer behaviour (Cassill & Drake, 1987:32). Educational level, occupation and income indicates an individual's socio-economic status (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:306). It is to be expected that

consumers who have the financial ability to purchase from the specific retailer should have a high educational level, high occupational status and high monthly income, thereby implying that they have a high socio-economic status, which could have important implications for the specific retailer in profiling these consumers. Individuals with a higher educational level, spend more on clothing (Yang, 1996:451). Yang also indicated that occupation influences clothing expenditure, and that clothing expenditure was income-elastic (1996:451). The relatively high monthly income of the respondents might be proof of a higher possible disposable income available for apparel purchases. On average, a total of 3% of South Africans' total annual expenditure is on apparel (Orkin, 1997:48).

4.2.9   Marital status

Of the total sample, 60% was married, 16% was divorced, 16% was never married, and 8% was widows. The marital status, as has been discussed, could have had an impact on monthly income, since double income families normally earn more. However, the results of this study do not support this notion totally, as 40% of these households is presumably single income families, yet 65% of the respondents falls into the upper middle income group bracket.

4.2.10   Religion

All respondents indicated that they were of the Christian faith. South African population statistics show that 87% of South Africans conform to the Christian religion, with 3% belonging to other religions, 5% indicating no religion, and 5% indicating that they were uncertain (South African Statistics, 2000). Religion in itself has an important influence on apparel, specifically as it relates to modesty, sexuality and social change. Christianity had, from early times, handed down a code of morals, which included strict rules about clothing. Although strict rules apply within most Christian sects, these only serve as guides. However, the degree of formal and informal control differs. In other religions, such as Islam and Judaism, clothing expectations are dictated (Damhorst *et al.*, 1999). There is a strong presence of the Islamic faith in the area where the study was undertaken. The strict rules regarding Islamic dress could be an explanation for why they were not included in this sample.

4.2.11   Number of children

Of all the respondents, 13% indicated that they have one child of 5 years and younger, and 11% indicated having two children in this category. In the category of 6-11 years, 24% had one child, 8% had two children and 3% had three children. Twelve respondents (32%) had one child in the age category 12-17, with 8% indicating having two children in this category. Lastly, 18% indicated having one child, 8% indicated having two children, 8% indicated having three and 4%

indicated having four children in the age category 18 years and older. Therefore, a fairly equal number of respondents had children in the 6-11 years, 12-17 years and 18 years and older categories. This could be attributed to the age distribution of the respondents. The number of children in the household and their respective ages impact on the disposable income of a household and would therefore also reflect on the amount of money spent on clothing.

4.2.12 Summary

Both the race and age distribution of the study were controlled, due to the given criterion of homogeneity in focus groups. Respondents spoke mostly Afrikaans at home, the majority had achieved grade 12 or a higher qualification and 60% were employed. The most popular mode of transport was own transport. The majority of respondents spent R300 or more on clothes per month and the monthly income, before tax and deductions, was higher than R5 001 for 65%. More respondents were married than not and all responded that they were Christians. The respondents' children were categorised in fairly equal percentages from the 6-11 age group and upwards.

The sample selection relied on the willingness of respondents to partake in the study. This description of the study sample could be indicative of specific personality traits influencing their participation. One could speculate that there is a relationship between respondents self-image, implying their body image, as well as their body cathexis and their willingness to attend the focus groups. This relationship could be investigated in future studies. This study sample included only account holders of the specific female large-size retailer, which could have influenced the demographic characteristics. However, the objective of this study was to determine the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer. This sample was, therefore, appropriate.

4.3 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF APPAREL RETAIL STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS

The results reported in this section relates to the following specific objectives set to be met by this empirical study:

To generate retail store image attributes of perceived importance to female large-size apparel consumers.

To describe the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to female large-size apparel consumers.

To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the race of female large-size apparel consumers.

To determine whether any differences exist regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on the age of female large-size apparel consumers.

In the focus group discussions, respondents were asked to generate attributes they perceived to be of importance in store image (see 3.5). These attributes were rated with the use of the *Schutte Visual Scale* (see 3.5). To obtain the qualitative and quali-quantive data to present these results, the raw data from the transcriptions of the focus group discussions was firstly compiled into composite lists of retail store image attributes for each race and age group. The aggregate of the perceived importance of each retail store image attribute was calculated (Appendix 8). The attributes identified in these lists were then grouped together, employing Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings as framework. The aggregate for each of these refined groupings were calculated (Appendix 9). A refined version of these groupings, including all race and age groups, was made. Once again, the aggregate for each group was calculated (Appendix 10).

These results will be discussed, firstly including all race and age groups, and then considering each race and age group separately. Each discussion will focus, firstly, on the retail store image attribute groupings, followed by the discussion of each separate grouping and its relevant store image attributes. Findings of the study will be supported by quotes from the transcriptions of the focus group discussions. Since some of the discussions were conducted in Afrikaans, the quotes were translated into English for this study. The identification of the retailer's name in the focus group discussions has been omitted from the quotes. The sequence in which the store image attribute groups are discussed were based on the order reported by Lindquist (1974-1975). For the purposes of this chapter, Lindquist's nine store image attribute groupings will be referred to as attribute groupings, and specific attributes will be referred to as attributes, implying that these refer specifically to apparel retail store image attributes and attribute groupings.

4.3.1 Perceived importance of attribute groupings by all race and age groups

The perceived importance of attribute groupings by all race and age groups is presented in Figure 4.1. Convenience, one of the attribute groupings identified by Lindquist, is not included in this discussion. This is due to the fact that none of the generated attributes were grouped under this attribute grouping (see 4.4).
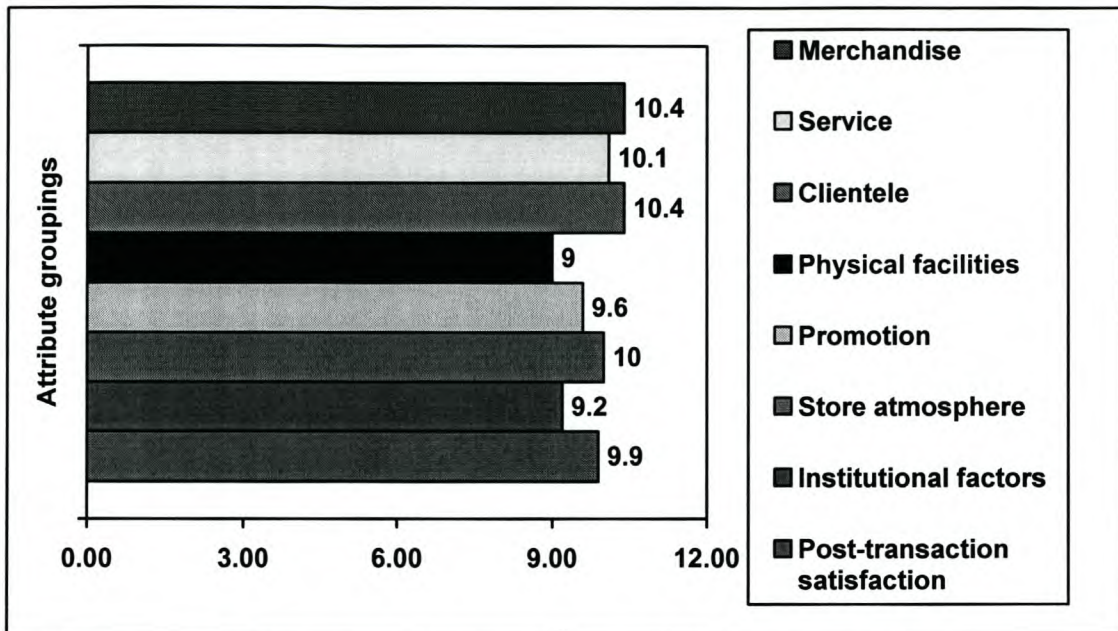
Figure 4.1 Perceived importance of attribute groupings (all race and age groups)

Considering all the race and age groups, *Merchandise* (10,4) and *Clientele* (10,4) were perceived as the most important attribute groupings. *Service* (10,1) was perceived as the next most important. This is partially supported by other studies on apparel retail store image attributes, which also found *Merchandise* and *Service* attributes to be of the highest ranked importance (Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; James *et al.*, 1976:31; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384). *Service* is followed by *Store atmosphere* (10). *Post-transaction satisfaction* (9,9) was considered as the next most important attribute grouping, followed by *Promotion* (9,6) and *Institutional factors* (9,2). Of all the attribute groupings, *Physical facilities* (9) was perceived as the least important, although still rated relatively high. Attributes relating to *Promotion* was found to be ranked the least important by Van de Velde *et al.* (1996:384), and *Promotion* and *Physical facilities* were also found to be ranked the least important by Birtwistle and Siddiqui (1995:21).

4.3.1.1 Merchandise

The perceived importance of the different retail store image attributes grouped together under *Merchandise*, is presented in Figure 4.2.
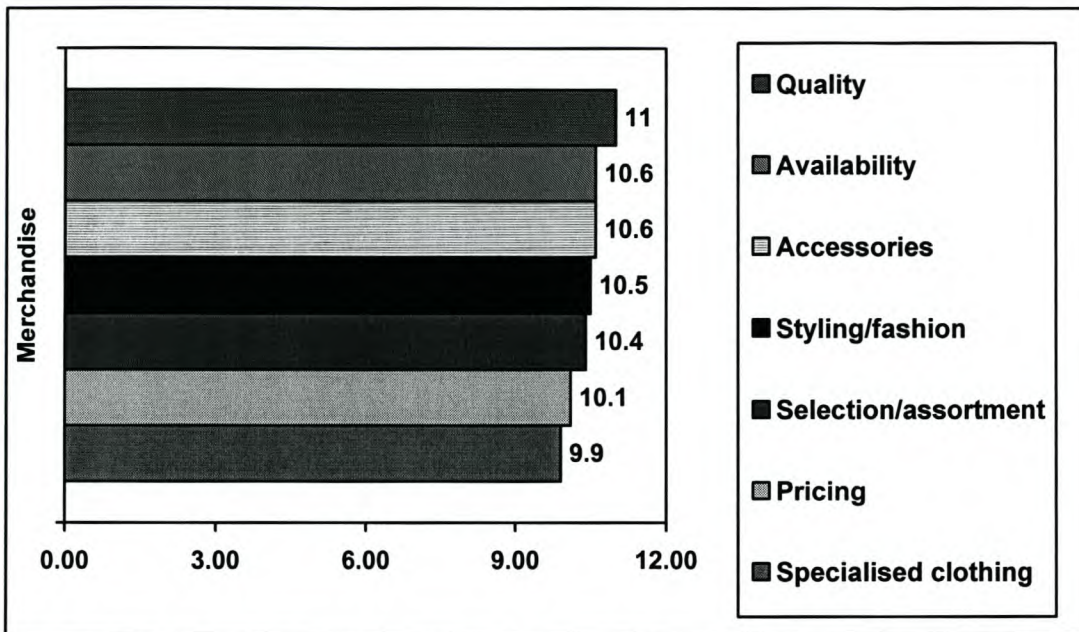
Figure 4.2 *Merchandise* attributes: Perceived importance (all race and age groups)

Of all the attributes grouped under *Merchandise*, *quality* (11) is perceived as the most important. The *availability* (10,6) of merchandise, i.e. the correct styles and sizes, especially the popular sizes, as well as the availability of the right fit at all stores, is an important attribute to consider when catering for the female large-size apparel consumer.

> *One problem is the unavailability of the smaller sizes in their range...They usually have only two or three of the smaller sizes, which are sold quickly...I know this size will fit me...then I am disappointed.* (Focus group 1)

Accessories (10,6), especially shoes, as well as bags, scarves, and costume jewellery, were perceived as important.

> *The bags, the shoes...I think they should have everything as a regular shop...hats...accessories like jewellery.* (Focus group 8)

> *And accessories...scarves...handbags.* (Focus group 1)

Styling and *fashionability* of merchandise (10,5) are perceived as the next most important attribute grouped under *Merchandise*. This relates to the need for correct styles in the right materials and colours, that are both casual and fashionable, as well as to uniqueness.

For me, the most important in a store is the clothing styles. (Focus group 1)

Sometimes I feel...certain colour schemes...a large-size women can't wear it...this is important, as well as specific patterns...you can't wear it...you'll look ten times bigger. (Focus group 2)

The *selection* and *assortment* of merchandise (10,4) follow in perceived importance. The female large-size apparel consumer has the need for a wide variety of styles and colours that she can mix and match within her wardrobe.

I think they should have a wide choice. A wide range of styles...if you want something formal, much formal, you must be able to get it. (Focus group 8)

They [the retailer] *should keep in mind what they brought out last season. They should bring out styles that will fit in with these. So you can mix and match.* (Focus group 5)

Pricing (10,1) is also rated highly. The need for *specialised clothing* (9,9) is the least important of merchandise attributes, but is still regarded as important. This includes appealing underwear and sleepwear, as well as garments for special occasions.

...one thing that disappoints us is the underwear...we also want to be sexy...bright colours. (Focus group 8)

Sleepwear..I like to look good and feel sexy in what I wear. (Focus group 1)

If you've got in your head I'm going to a dance, or I'm going to a Christmas party...I'm the only fat one...what can I have...something to look special. (Focus group 3)

The overall importance of *Merchandise* can be observed due to the fact that the ratings of attributes grouped together under merchandise ratings are only separated by 1,1 on the *Schutte Visual Scale.*

The specific *Merchandise* attributes generated in this study were also included in other research studies on apparel retail store image attributes. These attributes include *quality* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1999:29; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984:111; James *et al.*, 1976: 27; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; Shim & Kotsiopulos 1992a:52; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384), *styling/fashion* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248;

Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Marks, 1976:44; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; Shim & Kotsiopulos 1992a:52; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384), *selection/assortment* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1989:1185; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; James *et al.*, 1976:27; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a:52; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384) and *pricing* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1989:1185; Chowdhary, 1999:29; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984:111; James *et al.*, 1976:27; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; Shim & Kotsiopulos 1993:77; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384). However, *availability, accessories*, and *specialised clothing* were specific attributes generated in this study, which were not included in the reviewed literature. This could indicate that these attributes are specific to the female large-size apparel consumer within the South African context.

4.3.1.2 Service

The *Service* attributes and their aggregate ratings of perceived importance are presented in Figure 4.3.
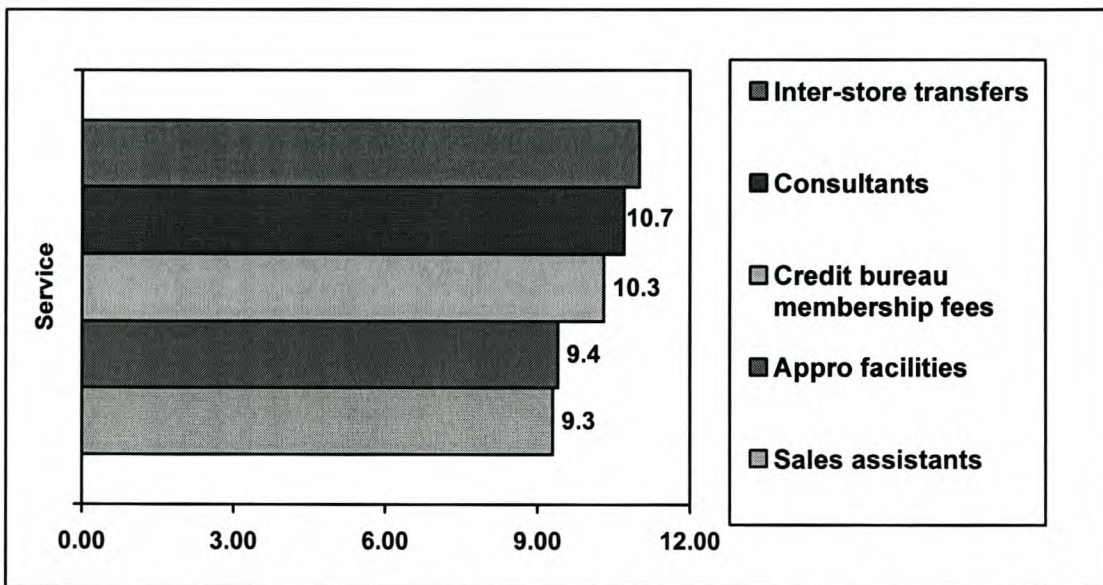
Figure 4.3 *Service* attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)

Within the *Service* grouping, the need for effective *inter-store transfers* (11) is perceived as most important.

If you look for something and they don't have your size, they should get it for you from another branch. (Focus group 4)

The respondents also rate the availability of clothing *consultants* (10,7) in the store of utmost importance.

… and maybe they can sit down with you and make suggestions of clothing items that will fit you. (Focus group 5)

When you've got a special function, you need at least someone who can assist you. Even looking at your figure she will say: you've got more hips, maybe this striped thing will take that hips out more. Or you need a straight cut in this. Just somebody to advise you. (Focus group 8)

The paying of membership fees and a healthy relationship with the *credit bureau* (10,3) were rated as important. *Appro facilities* (9,4) are regarded as highly important.

Sometimes you pay club fees [as an account holder], *but you don't ask to be part of it. And then if you don't pay, they put your name in the credit bureau.* (Focus group 8)

I personally prefer to take my garments home on appro to fit…I'd rather take it home where I have a lot of time to fit. (Focus group 6)

Lastly, service, as related to the *sales assistants* (9,3), was also pointed out as important for the large-size female apparel consumer. This refers to focused, personal attention to customers, combined with a knowledgeable, honest opinion. Sales assistants should be well-trained and attuned to their work.

[Sales assistants] *will help you with anything…It's nice to know they are interested in helping you, but they are not bombarding you…They leave you on your own.* (Focus group 3)

The *Service* attribute of *sales assistants* has frequently been included in recent apparel retail store image research (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1989:1185; Chowdhary, 1999:129; James *et al.*, 1976:27; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; Marks, 1976:44; Miller *et al.*, 2000:22; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a:52; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384). Shim and Kotsiopulos (1993:77) was the only other study in the reviewed literature to inlcude

consultants. Lee and Johnson's (1997:28) study generated attributes relating to customer expectations of *Service*, including returns, refunds, layaways, alterations, gift wrapping, shipping, in-store credit, lighting, mirrors, a sitting area, fitting rooms, helpful suggestions, honest sales assistants, professional sales assistants, and unintrusive customer service. *Sales assistants* was the only attribute also generated in this study, whilst none of the other reviewed literature included *inter-store transfers*, *credit bureau membership fees*, and *appro facilities*.

4.3.1.3 Clientele

Clientele is perceived as the most important store image attribute grouping, together with *Merchandise*. The different attributes related to *Clientele*, are presented in Figure 4.4.
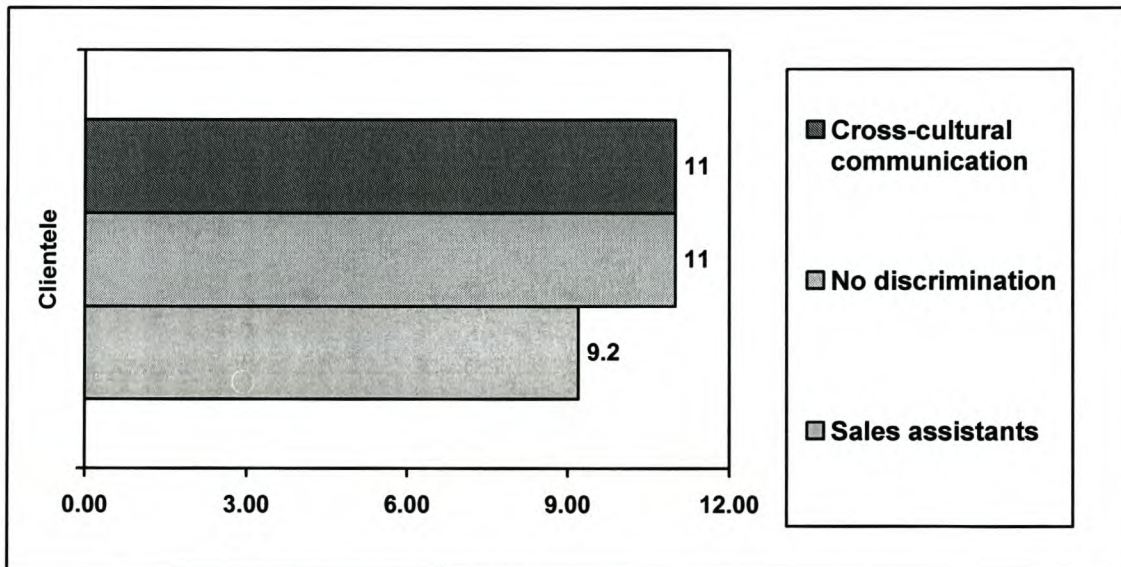
Figure 4.4 *Clientele* attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)

Amongst the *Clientele* attributes, *cross-cultural communication* (11) is perceived as the most important.

> *The communication of the sales assistant. Sometimes the wrong information is conveyed because of different cultures. The language used might be wrong.* (Focus group 6)

No discrimination (11) was perceived as equally important.

I don't like it when I walk into the shop and someone come to me or walk behind me the whole time. I don't like that because I am not walking in there with the intention of stealing or maybe it is because of my colour. (Focus group 7)

The need for large-size female apparel consumers to be able to identify with *sales assistants* (9,2), is also perceived as of relatively high importance. This relates specifically to sales assistants' appearance and demeanor. They should be approachable and consumers must be able to identify with them. Sales assistants must also wear what they sell. De Klerk *et al.* (1998:24) also found that the appearance of sales assistants influence consumers' decision-making related to store choice.

They should have assistants who are large-sized with whom you can identify. (Focus group 1)

...if she wears the store's merchandise, and she looks stylish, she will attract you. (Focus group 6)

Sales assistants were listed as an store image attribute related to both *Service* and *Clientele.* However, the specific characteristics attributed to sales assistants in these two groupings, differ (Appendix 8).

Sales assistants as an *Clientele* attribute, has been included in previous apparel retail store image research (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83). Another attribute related to *Clientele* that has been included in apparel retail store image research, but was not generated in this study, is social class appeal (Jacoby & Mazursky, 1984:111; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; and Kim & Han, 2000:60). This could indicate that this attribute is not applicable to the female large-size apparel consumer within the South African context.

4.3.1.4 Physical facilities

The respondents mentioned numerous attributes grouped under *Physical facilities,* which are presented in Figure 4.5.
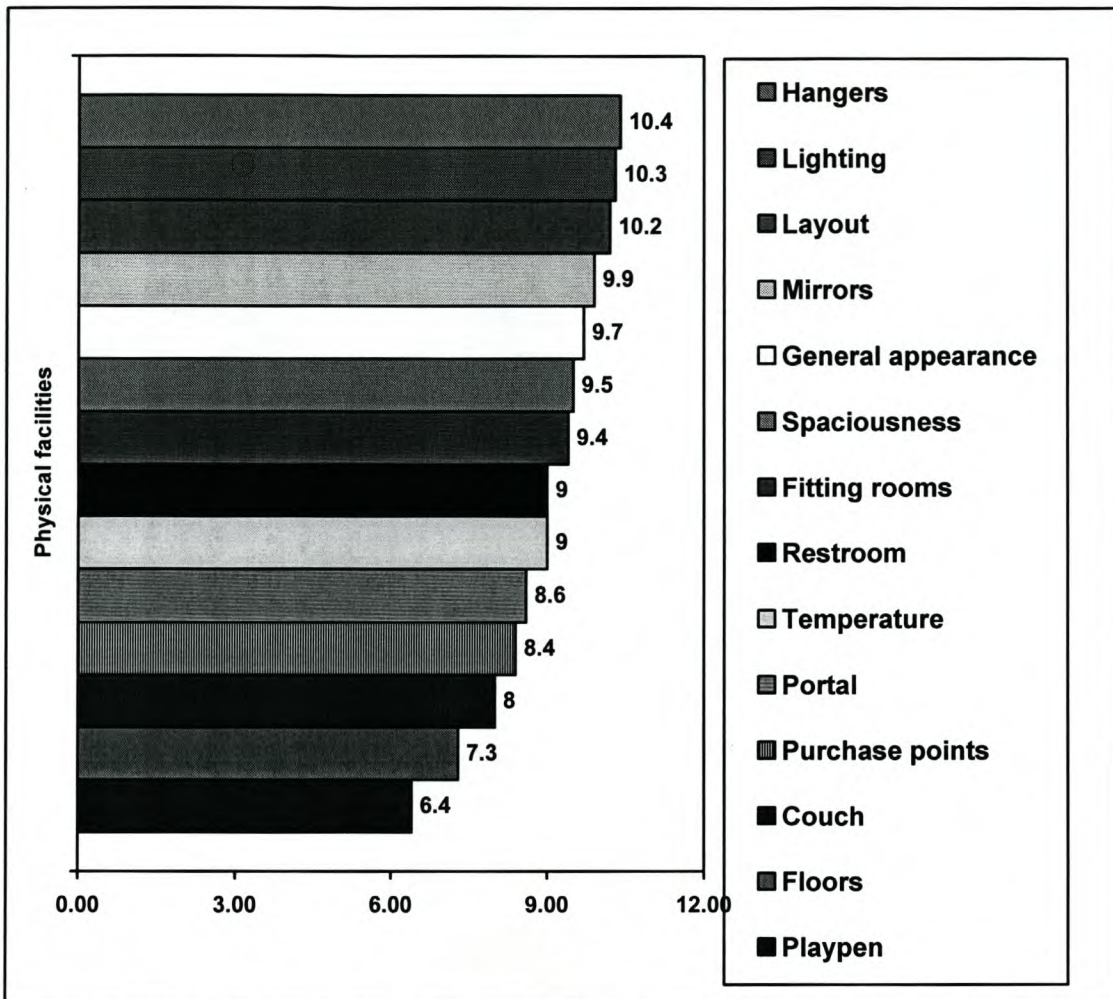
Figure 4.5 *Physical facilities* attributes*:* perceived importance (all race and age groups)

Hangers (10,4), *lighting* (10,3), and *layout* (10,2) are perceived as the most important *Physical facilities* attributes. The need for the right *mirrors* (9,9) is also of perceived importance.

> *The hangers are a pain. The clips, it catches on everything. And some pants are so big you have to fold it over three times to put it back on the hanger...you don't know how to put things back on the hanger.* (Focus group 2)

> *Lighting is very important. Light can make a garment look good or bad.* (Focus group 1)

> *I think the layout of the store is also important.* (Focus group 2)

> *And they must have enough mirrors of all shapes and sizes.* (Focus group 3)

Large-size female apparel consumers perceive the *general appearance* (9,7) of a store as important to them, and the store should be attractive, as well as *spacious* (9,5), with space between rails and a relative uncluttered arrangement.

> [The store] *should be clean and neat.* (Focus group 6)

> *...it must be a nice environment when you get inside...must be attractive.* (Focus group 8)

> *The store should be attractive...from the outside and inside.* (Focus group 4)

> *Spaciousness. There should be space. You already feel big enough. You don't want to feel as if the store depresses you.* (Focus group 2)

The *fitting rooms* (9,4) should be private and spacious enough, have adequate lighting and hooks to hang clothes on, and the correct mirrors should be installed.

> *The one thing I have realised is fitting rooms. It should be wide, and the mirrors and lighting should be right. That is why I'd rather take my merchandise home and fit there.* (Focus group 4)

> *If you're talking about changing rooms then they must have enough hooks.* (Focus group 3)

The availability of *restrooms* in-store (9) and the right *temperature* (9) within the store are also of relatively highly perceived importance to these specific customers.

> *You know, sometimes you need to use the loo and then they don't want you to use the loos. So I think shops are still discriminating against their customers.* (Focus group 7)

> *I don't like to be hot and bothered, especially if it's hot and the air conditioning doesn't work properly. I'll walk out of that store and I won't even buy anything. Because I get hot very quickly.* (Focus group 1)

The female large-size apparel consumer wants a *portal* (8,6), which invites her into the store. This was supported by findings of a previous study, which indicated that a store's elevation influences consumer's store choice (De Klerk *et al.*, 1998:24).

If I'm walking and I suddenly see a nice carpet and maybe two plants next to a doorway, a pretty canopy and the window is looking good, I will definitely stop and think: This is a nice portal to a shop. It must entice me... (Focus group 3)

The female large-size apparel consumer also have the need for *purchase points* (8,4) to be effective and convenient.

If I want to pay, I don't want to look around for someone to help me. I want to pay for it and leave...and only one purchase point available...and people waiting in queues. (Focus group 1)

Other *Physical facilities* attributes mentioned by the female large-size consumer as being of perceived importance are *couches* (8), luxurious *flooring* (7,3), as well as a *playpen* for children (6,4).

I like it that they have a couch and a coffee table with books, because my husband invariably shops with me and he likes to sit. (Focus group 3)

...it must create a nice environment when you get inside...like the nice carpets. (Focus group 8)

...sometimes you can't help it, you have your child with you. Can't they have something like a playpen with puzzles. Just so you can fit your clothes in peace. (Focus group 5)

Other attributes generated in this study that has also been included in recent apparel retail store image research, are *layout* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Miller *et al.*, 2000:22; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77), *general appearance* (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77), *spacious* (Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83), *fitting rooms* (Miller *et al.*, 2000:22; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77), the *portal* or outside appearance of the store (Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; De Klerk *et al.*, 1998:25; Marks, 1976:44; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a:52), *purchase points* (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83), and a *couch* or sitting area (Chowhary, 1999:129; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83). *Hangers, lighting, mirrors, restrooms, temperature, floors* and a *playpen* were *Physical facilities* attributes not included in the reviewed literature, and it could be an indication that these are unique to this study of the female large-size apparel consumer within the multi-cultural South African consumer society.

4.3.1.5 Promotion

This grouping also displays certain attributes of perceived importance to the female large-size apparel consumer (Figure 4.6).
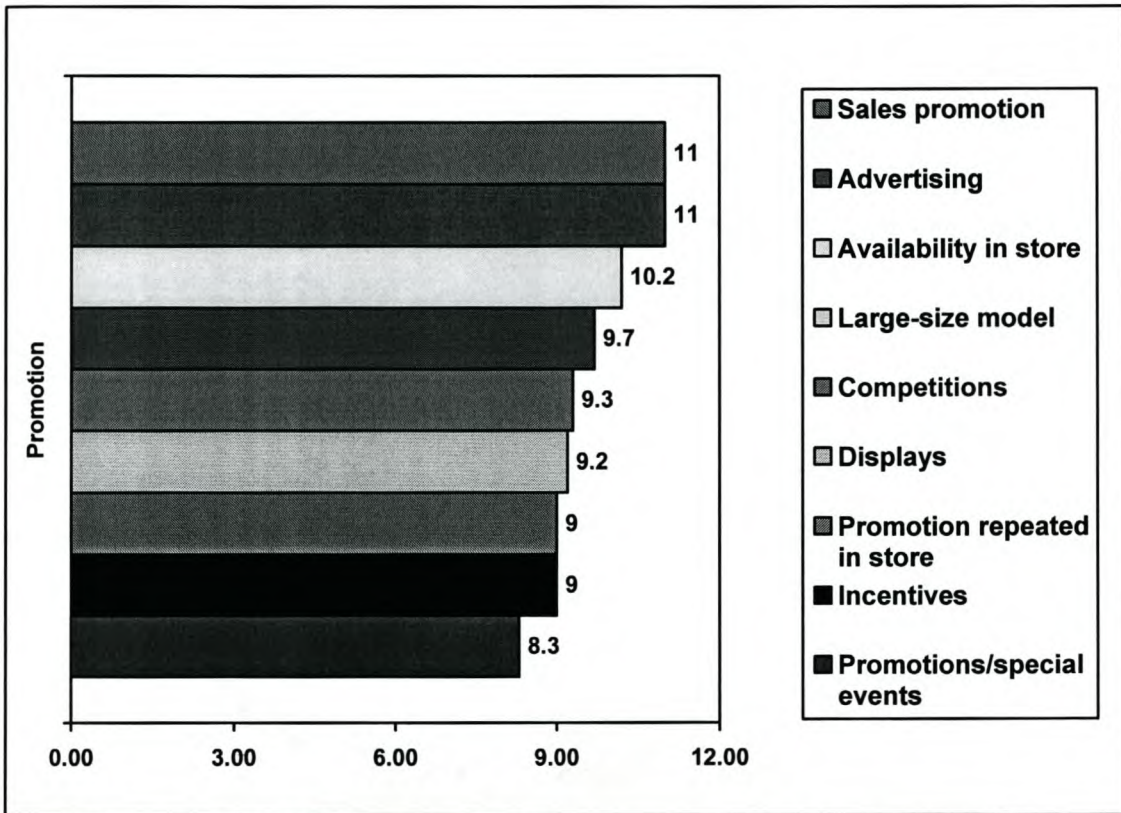
Figure 4.6 *Promotion* attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)

Sales promotion (11) is perceived as the most important promotion attribute. This includes that sales should not include limited stock, that bigger numbers should also be available, and that preference should be given to account holders in the promotional marketing.

> *...the big sizes are never on sale...they should not have limited stock...only have three or four of a certain style...you* [account holder] *are a customer in that shop, at least you deserve to get some letter to say a sale is on...we as customers must have our day for sale and then all the others can come.* (Focus group 7)

Advertising (11) is also considered as important to the female large-size apparel consumer. Advertising should focus on brochures made available to customers and there is also a need for available services to be advertised.

...they never advertise the fuller figure in magazines. If you see it advertised...then it is more attractive. (Focus group 4)

[Brochures]*...yes, usually they send it with your account.* (Focus group 4)

Advertised merchandise, referred to in promotions, should be *available* in the store (10,2). Promotion by a *large-size female model* (9,7) is perceived as important and the female large-size apparel consumer also has the need for *competitions* (9,3). *Displays* (9,2) are important, including displays in the window, in the store and on posters. Displays should focus on mix and match ideas and large-size dolls should be used.

They advertise garments that are not in stores...or only at specific ones. (Focus group 6)

There never is a person...with my type of figure...I feel you should be able to see yourself in that person. It doesn't help to advertise with a skinny person. (Focus group 4)

If I see clothes displayed, it attracts me. So I like seeing dolls wearing clothes...Mix and match possibilities. Especially store windows are important...the window invites you inside. (Focus group 1)

Before you walk in, you are attracted by the display from the window. So you first look from outside and then something attracts you and then you walk inside. (Focus group 7)

Promotion should be *repeated* within the store (9). The female large-size consumer wants *incentives* (9), as well as *promotional* and *special events* (8,3).

...they advertise, using for example pictures. And when you walk into the store and you see that same picture..and then you remember. (Focus group 2)

Fashion shows too. Then we can see it in reality. (Focus group 5)

Sales promotion was an attribute of *Promotion* that was also included in other apparel retail store image research (Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83). *Advertising* (Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Marks, 1976:44; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:348), *availability in store* of what was on promotion (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83), *displays* (Birtwistle & Siddiqui,

1995:21; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Miller *et al.*, 2000:22; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:348) and *incentives*, specifically discount (Chowdhary, 1999:129; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; and Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83) were attributes of *Promotion* included in previous research. Having a *large-size model*, *competitions*, *promotions repeated in store*, and *promotions/special events*, were attributes generated specific to this study.

4.3.1.6 Store atmosphere

The specific attributes grouped under *Store atmosphere* are presented in Figure 4.7.
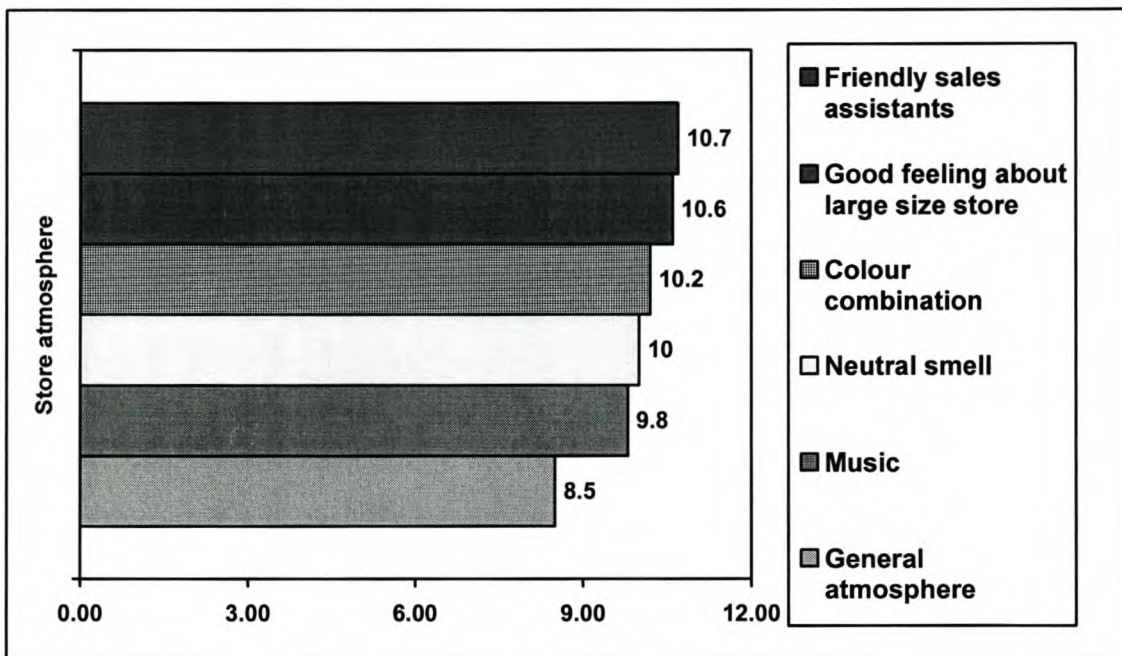
Figure 4.7 *Store atmosphere* **attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)**

The most important attribute within this attribute grouping, is *friendly sales assistants* (10,7). The female large-size apparel consumer wants to *feel good* about shopping at a store focusing on larger sizes (10,6). This includes factors such as feeling special when entering the store, merchandise that makes her feel comfortable when she wears it, and a positive feeling when able to find merchandise that fit.

> *For me the most important when I go shopping…I must feel worthy, feel special.* (Focus group 1)

> *We want to feel special. For years we have been the orphans. And we want to feel special.* (Focus group 2)

92

The correct *colour combination* (10,2), a *neutral smell* (10), and *music* (9,8) are also of importance and contribute to *Store atmosphere*. Lastly, the *general atmosphere* should be one of warmth (8,5).

The colour combination should be right…of the interior. (Focus group 2)

I think they must also have air freshener. (Focus group 7)

When you walk in and there is relaxed music. And the colours in the store also make a difference. (Focus group 5)

It gives you a warm feeling…creates a warm atmosphere. (Focus group 2)

Store atmosphere is an attribute grouping included in previous apparel retail store image research (Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; James *et al.*, 1976:27; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993:77). Chowdhary's (1999:129) research was the only study in the reviewed literature to include a specific attribute relating to *Store atmosphere*, namely *sales assistants*.

4.3.1.7 Institutional factors

The perceived important attributes grouped under *Institutional factors* are presented in Figure 4.8.
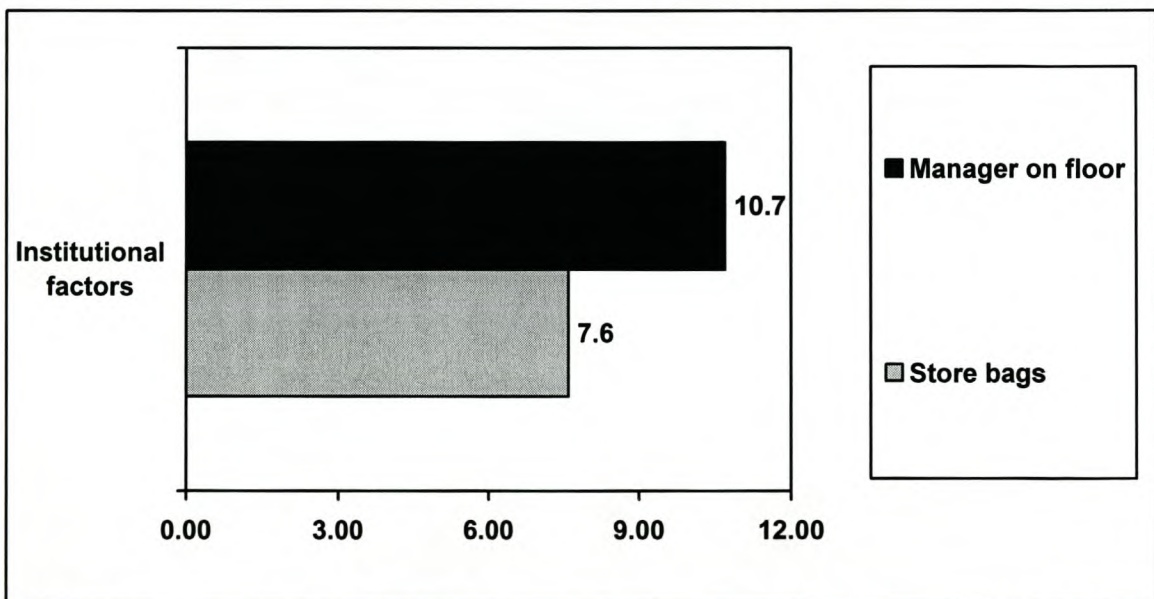
Figure 4.8 *Institutional factors* attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)

The female large-size apparel consumer expects the store *manager* to be *on the floor* (10,7).

> *You see, the manager...I think that the manager should manage by walking around and interacting with customers.* (Focus group 7)

It is also important to these consumers that the *store bags* should reflect the image associated with the store (7,6).

> *The store bags...it feels like you've been to a boutique. It is a strong plastic...it is pretty, it makes you feel special.* (Focus group 1)

Institutional factors as an attribute grouping, has been included frequently in recent apparel retail store image research. However, the specific attributes included in research mostly related to store reputation (Birtwistle *et al.,* 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1989:1185; Chowdhary, 1999:129; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Huddleston *et al.,* 1990:76; Jacoby & Mazursky, 1983:111; Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28; and Lumpkin *et al.,* 1985:83). This attribute was not generated in this study.

4.3.1.8 Post-transaction satisfaction

The two store image attributes related to *Post-transaction satisfaction* are presented in Figure 4.9.
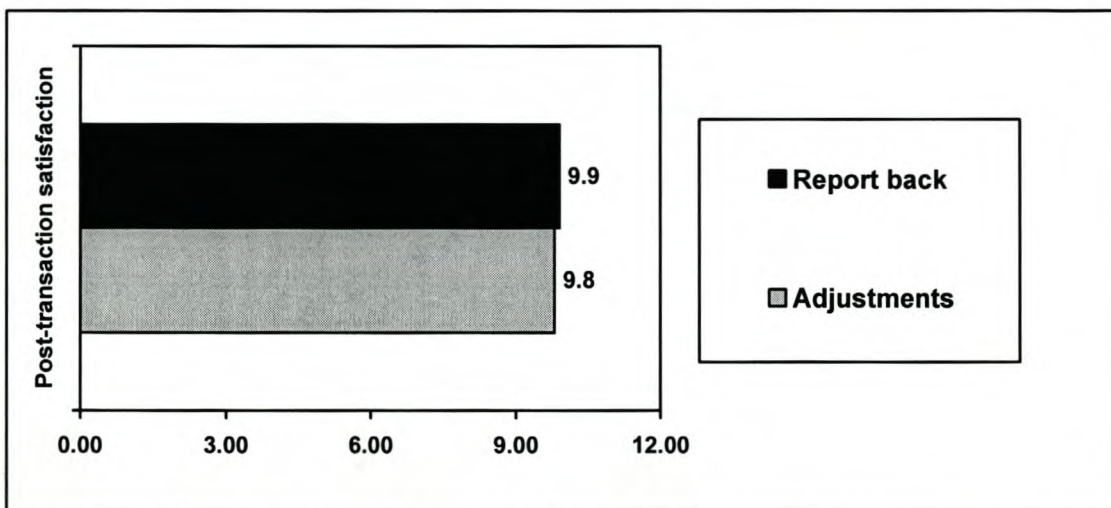
Figure 4.9 *Post-transaction satisfaction* **attributes: perceived importance (all race and age groups)**

It is of importance to the female large-size apparel consumers to be able to *report back* (9,9) on her shopping experiences. These consumers want to be able to communicate to the company her satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the store, specifically regarding merchandise. (Data to support this was captured from the field notes.) Another important post-transaction satisfaction attribute is the availability of a service that makes *adjustments* to apparel when necessary (9,8).

> *Sometimes you get home and then it* [the garment] *is to wide you have to adjust it, and after you have adjusted it, it is not the way you wanted it. There should be someone to make adjustments.* (Focus group 6)

Shim and Kotsiopulos (1993:77) and Hirschman *et al.* (1978:5) also include apparel adjustments in their retail store image research studies. The ability to *report back* to communicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a purchase was not included as an attribute of *Post-transaction satisfaction* in the reviewed literature. This could be an indication that this attribute is specific to female large-size apparel consumers in a multicultural South Africa. Various studies, however, did include ease of return, which could relate to *Post-transaction satisfaction* (Birtwistle *et al.*, 1999:248; Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13; Birtwistle & Siddiqui, 1995:21; Chowdhary, 1999:29; Hansen & Deutscher, 1977-1978:67; Hirschman *et al.*, 1978:5; Huddleston *et al.*, 1990:76; Lumpkin *et al.*, 1985:83; and Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a:52).

4.3.1.9 Summary

All of the above-mentioned attributes and attribute groupings received relatively high ratings on the *Schutte Visual Scale*. This, however, can easily be explained due to the fact that the female large-size apparel consumers generated these store image attributes themselves in a focus group discussion. Furthermore, through the quali-quantive measure by the *Schutte Visual Scale*, the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by these consumers was also described. Thus, the sixth and seventh objectives of the study were achieved:

> *To generate retail store image attributes of perceived importance to female large-size apparel consumers.*

> *To describe the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to female large-size apparel consumers.*

The following section will focus on the differences and similarities between race, as well as age groups, in their perception of the importance of attributes and attribute groupings.

4.3.2 Differences and similarities between the perceived importance of attributes and attribute groupings by race groups

The following discussion will focus on the differences and similarities in the results obtained from the various race groups, in accordance with objective eight of this study, namely to determine whether any differences exist in the perceived importanc of retail store image attributes based on race. Firstly, the perceived importance of the different attribute groupings will be compared. This will be followed by a discussion of the specific attributes grouped together. Findings regarding specific attributes have already been supported by quotes from the focus groups in section 4.3.1. Therefore, only distinct differences and similarities between the different race groups will be supported by quotes from the focus groups. Results will be reported in the sequence in which the focus group discussions were conducted, i.e. firstly Whites, followed by Coloureds and Africans.

Table 4.3 presents the perceived importance of each of the attribute groupings by the three race groups. The three highest ranking groupings for each race group are typed in bold and shaded. Findings are reported in descending ratings for each attribute by each race group. As was reported in section 3.5, the *Schutte Visual Scale* allows opinions to be measured between focus groups with equal validity, which makes comparison possible.

Table 4.3 Perceived importance of attribute groupings (race group)

	RACE GROUPS		
GROUPINGS	**WHITES**	**COLOUREDS**	**AFRICANS**
Merchandise	**10.2**	**10.4**	10.5
Service	**9.9**	**10.2**	**10.8**
Clientele	9.2	9.6	10.5
Physical facilities	8.8	9.9	8.6
Promotion	8.8	**10.1**	9.5
Store atmosphere	**9.8**	9.2	**10.7**
Institutional factors	7.6	--	**10.7**
Post-transaction satisfaction	--	9.8	--

Both the Whites and Coloureds perceived *Merchandise* and *Service* as the two most important attribute groupings. Coloureds perveiced *Merchandise* as more important (10,4) than the Whites (10,2). The same is true for *Service*, with the Coloureds perceiving it as slightly more important (10,2) than the Whites (9,9). The Africans perceived *Service* as of most importance (10,8), which is higher than both the Whites' and Coloureds' perceived importance of *Merchandise*, as well as their perceived importance of *Service*. The Whites perceived *Store atmosphere* as third most important (9,8), whilst the Africans perceived *Store atmosphere* as second most important together with *Institutional factors* (10,7). Once again, the Africans' rating of perceived importance is higher. The Coloureds' third most important store image attribute grouping is *Promotion* (10,1), which is higher than the Whites' rating of perceived importance for both *Service* and *Store atmosphere*.

It is apparent that differences and similarities regarding the perceived importance of store image attributes occur between the different race groups. Noticeable is that *Institutional factors*, perceived as second most important by the Africans, is not listed at all by the Coloureds, and received the lowest rating by the Whites. Where *Post-transaction satisfaction* is still rated relatively high for the Coloureds, it is not mentioned by either the Whites or the Africans. Both *Merchandise* and *Service*, however, are perceived as important by all three races, being rated as most and second most important by the Whites and Coloureds, and, although rated as first and fourth most important by the Africans, are still of higher perceived importance for the Africans than those of the Whites and Coloureds. Overall, the Africans' ratings are higher than the other two race groups' ratings. Other retail store image research support these findings that culture influences the perceived importance of attribute groupings and specific attributes (Kim & Han, 2000:60; Miller *et al.*, 2000:22; and Van de Velde *et al.*, 1996:384).

4.3.2.1 Merchandise

The different attributes grouped together under *Merchandise*, are represented in Table 4.4, and a discussion of these results follows. Attributes mentioned by all three race groups' ratings are typed in bold and shaded.

The specific attributes mentioned by the different race groups show remarkable similarity. All the race groups mentioned *styling/fashion, selection/assortment, accessories* and *specialised clothing*. Of the remaining attributes mentioned, *availability* is listed by both Whites and Coloureds. *Quality* and *pricing* were mentioned by both the Coloureds and Africans. The ratings for *pricing*, however, differ considerably.

Table 4.4 *Merchandise* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
Styling/fashion	**10.7**	Quality	11	Pricing	11
Selection/assortment	**10.7**	Selection/ assortment	**10.9**	Quality	11
Availability	10.1	Accessories	**10.6**	Accessories	**10.9**
Accessories	**10**	Styling/fashion	**10.6**	Specialised clothing	**10.4**
Specialised clothing	**9.5**	Availability	10.5	Selection/assortment	**10.2**
		Specialised clothing	**10.4**	Styling/fashion	**9.7**
		Pricing	9.1		

Both the Coloureds and Africans rate *quality* (11) highest, whilst the Whites did not mention this attribute. *Styling/fashion* rated highest by the Whites (10,7), were rated secondly by the Coloureds (10,6), and, although mentioned, receive a much lower rating by the Africans (9,7). *Selection/assortment* also received the highest rating (10,7) by the Whites, whereas it received the second highest rating by the Coloureds (10,9), and the fifth highest rating by the Africans (10,2). The ratings by the Whites and Coloureds for these attributes are, however, comparable in perceived importance, whereas the Africans rated these attributes considerably lower. *Availability* is rated third by the Whites (10,1), and, although only rated fifth highest by the Coloureds, still received a higher rating from them (10,5). *Accessories* is rated third most important by both the Coloureds (10,6) and Africans (10,9), but the Africans' rating is higher. Although it is mentioned by the Whites, it is rated lower in perceived importance (10). *Specialised clothing*, including underwear, sleepwear, apparel for special occasions and baby clothes, was perceived as equally important by both the Coloureds and Africans (10,4), but was, once again, of less importance to the Whites (9,5). *Pricing* was perceived as the most important merchandise attribute by the Africans (11), but received the lowest overall rating from the Coloureds, and was not mentioned by the Whites.

As has been discussed previously, *Merchandise* as an attribute grouping was perceived as important by all the race groups. All of the attributes grouped under *Merchandise* are mentioned by at least two of the race groups. However, the ratings show a distinct difference in perceived importance amongst the race groups. The Whites (10,6) needed *Merchandise* to be of the correct *styling* and *fashionable*, and they wanted to be able to choose from a wide *selection* or *assortment* of merchandise, which is *available* to them in their sizes and to their preference.

And the colours...very nice...some clothes that looks both smart and casual...nice fashionable stuff. (Focus group 3)

These factors are also of importance to the Coloureds (10,6), with the addition of *quality* as an important attribute. They also have a distinct need for *accessories* and *specialised clothing*.

Sometimes you look for something that you like, and then you also look for something that can compliment the item...so accessories... (Focus group 5)

When you go to a function and someone else is wearing the same outfit you are...I think they should expand their garments for special occasions. (Focus group 6)

The Africans show the same needs, but do not have such an acute want for specific styling and fashionability. On the other hand, they are, of all the groups, the most price conscious consumers.

Prices...you never get a skirt or a t-shirt for less than R100. (Focus group 7)

Both the Coloureds and Africans mention quality together with pricing, indicating their price-consciousness, where quality is perceived as value for money. This finding is supported by Lamb *et al.* (1998:352). This is opposed to the Whites, who do not mention either of these attributes.

In a study by Van de Velde *et al.* (1996:384), results showed that individuals sharing the same root culture use the same store selection criteria. Respondents ranked merchandise quality, price range, range of merchandise, and fashion styles similarly. This relates to this study's findings that different subcultures differ in their perceived importance of specific *Merchandise* attributes. In their multi-cultural approach to consumer behaviour within the South African consumer society, Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:13) identify merchandise as an important variable in retail strategy.

4.3.2.2 Service

Fewer attributes were mentioned and grouped under *Service* (Table 4.5).

As was the case with *Merchandise*, the specific attributes generated by all race groups show similarities, but, once again, the ratings differ. All three race groups mentioned the need for apparel *consultants*.

Table 4.5 *Service* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Inter-store transfer	11	Inter-store transfers	11	Consultants	**11**
Consultants	**10.3**	Consultants	**10.4**	Sales assistants	**11**
Sales assistants	**8.4**	Sales assistants	**9.9**	Credit bureau membership fees	10.3
		Appro facilities	9.4		

This is the highest rated attribute by the Africans and second highest by both the Whites and Coloureds. The rating of the Africans (11) is higher than those of the Whites (10,3) and Coloureds (10,4), whose ratings are comparable. The Africans also rated *sales assistants* highest while the Whites and Coloureds rated them third most important. There is a considerable difference between all three race groups' ratings and specific needs for sales assistants. The Whites (8,4) want the assistant to give them focused, personal attention. The Coloureds (9,9) identified the attributes needed in a sales assistant as being able to give a knowledgeable, honest opinion and to have a professional attitude towards the job. The Africans (11) also need sales assistants to be well-trained, as well as friendly. Both the Whites' and Coloureds' highest rated store image attribute is *inter-store transfers* (11), but is not mentioned by the Africans at all. The Coloureds identified *appro facilities* (9,4) as an important service attribute, whilst Africans perceived good relations with the *credit bureau* (10,3) as also of importance.

The Whites and Coloureds showed considerable similarities in this grouping, with the only remarkable difference being the Coloureds' higher rating for *sales assistants* and need for *appro facilities*.

> *The sales assistants are also important…if you look at something they should ask you if they can assist you…they should give good service.* (Focus group 4)

> *I personally prefer to take my garments home on appro to fit…I'd rather take it home where I have a lot of time to fit.* (Focus group 6)

The Africans rated both *consultants* and *sales assistants* much higher than the other racial groups and perceived these attributes as of equal importance as the Whites and Coloureds considered *inter-store transfers*. The *Service* grouping, with its specific attributes mentioned by

the female large-size apparel consumer, is of considerable importance overall, as this grouping was rated as one of the three most important attribute groupings by all race groups.

Miller *et al.* (2000:22) found that general service offerings explain variance in store image preference between United States and South African college age consumers. These findings support the results of this study, which found that the perception of *Service* attributes differed amongst race groups as subculture. Van de Velde *et al.* (1996:384) found that individuals sharing the same culture ranked service and sales assistance in a similar order. Culture, and by implication race as a subculture, has an influence on consumer behaviour relating to *Service* (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:167).

4.3.2.3 Clientele

In Table 4.6 the specific attributes grouped under *Clientele* are presented, followed by a discussion of these results.

Table 4.6 *Clientele* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
Sales assistants	9.2	Cross-cultural communication	11	Sales assistants	11
		Sales assistants	8.2	No discrimination	10

All three race groups mentioned *sales assistants* as an important *Clientele* attribute. The ratings, however, differ considerably. Whites (9,2) want to be able to relate to the sales assistants. They want them to be approachable in appearance and show emotional empathy. The Coloureds (8,2) mentioned that they want sales assistants to wear what they sell, paralleling the need of Africans (11) who want the sales assistants to also be large-size. Furthermore, the Coloureds identified the need for good *cross-cultural communication* (11) as most important, and the Africans (10) rated *no discrimination* in terms of race as of considerable importance.

From these results, one can gather that female large-size apparel consumers of all races want *sales assistants* to be similar in appearance to them and therefore also be able to show empathy for the specific apparel problems and needs.

> *A trained person who knows how to make you feel. The person's face and smile alone must tell you that you can approach them...the person should have a fine awareness...training is also important.* (Focus group 5)

To both the Coloured and African consumers, the elimination of prejudice and discrimination needs to be addressed in stores.

> *Sometimes they* [the sales assistants] *give you the wrong information because of language. Maybe they can't speak Afrikaans. We want to be served in Afrikaans. You don't want to be served by someone who can hardly speak English, not to mention Afrikaans.* (Focus group 6)

Kim and Han (2000:60) found that different ethnic groups' perception of social class of stores varied considerably. However, an omission in this study's results generated by the different racial groups that should be noted, is that they do not mention fellow customers. It would seem that the fact that this specific store caters only for large-size consumers allows for customers to be comfortable with each other, regardless of race.

4.3.2.4 Physical facilities

Physical facilities generated numerable specific store image attributes, and are presented in Table 4.7 and discussed in detail.

Similarities can be observed between the different races regarding attributes related to *Physical facilities*. Only two attributes are mentioned by all three race groups, namely *general appearance* and the need for *couches*. The ratings of these attributes differ once again. Whites (10,5) and Coloureds (10,8) rate the *general appearance* of a store as of higher importance than do Africans (8,8). The Whites display the need for the interior of the store to be respectable, the Coloureds want it to be clean and neat and for the Africans it should be attractive.

> *...The building is falling apart...the ceiling is sagged...an old building, the carpets are torn...it must be presented well.* (Focus group 3)
> [The store] *should be clean and neat.* (Focus group 6)
>
> *Like the nice carpets and the walls must be attractive...attractive in terms of colourful.* (Focus group 8)

Furthermore, Whites (7,5) and Africans (7,3) regard *couches* as of less importance than do Coloureds (9,9). Both the Whites and Africans mention *temperature* (9,6; 8,3) and *layout* (9,6; 11). The Whites and Coloureds both mention *lighting* (9,5; 11), *mirrors* (9,4; 10,3), *fitting rooms* (9,2; 9,4), *spaciousness* (9,2; 10,2) and the need for a *playpen* (5,4; 7,4).

Table 4.7 *Physical facilities* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
General appearance	**10.5**	Lighting	11	Layout	10.8
Temperature	9.6	General appearance	**10.8**	Restrooms	9
Layout	9.6	Hangers	10.4	General appearance	**8.8**
Lighting	9.5	Mirrors	10.3	Temperature	8.3
Mirrors	9.4	Spaciousness	10.2	Couch	**7.3**
Fitting rooms	9.2	Couch	**9.9**	Floors	7.3
Spaciousness	9.2	Fitting rooms	9.4		
Portal	8.6	Playpen	7.4		
Purchase points	8.4				
Couch	**7.5**				
Playpen	5.4				

Although similarities occur between groups regarding the listed attributes, the perceived importance of these attributes differs considerably. The Whites also mention the *portal* (8,6) of a store to be of importance, as well as the *purchase points* (8,4). The Coloureds mention *hangers* (10,4) that should be effective. Lastly the Africans also have specific needs for *restrooms* (9) and comfortable *flooring* (7,3). (The perceived importance of these attributes have been supported by quotes in section 4.3.1.4.)

Similarities occur between the race groups regarding the specific attributes listed under *Physical facilities*. However, the ratings of perceived importance of these differ considerably. At this point, one should again emphasise that the mere mention of an attribute warrants it to be addressed by the retailer, as these attributes are generated by the specific female large-size apparel consumers themselves, and are thus regarded as important. A point of interest in these results is the fact that the Whites generated the most specific attributes in the *Physical facilities* grouping and also showed the most parallels with the other two groups. Of all the attributes mentioned, only three were not mentioned by the Whites. This could be an indication of White consumers' need for specific detail regarding *Physical facilities*. However, the Coloureds' ratings showed a higher perceived importance of specific attributes than do the other race groups. This is displayed in their higher overall rating of attributes relating to *Physical attributes* (9,9) discussed earlier (section 4.3.2), and is an indication of the importance of *Physical facilities* to

this race group. Although the Whites' (8,8) and Africans' (8,6) overall ratings of *Physical facilities* are similar (Table 4.3), the Whites rate seven specific attributes as a 9 or higher, whereas the Africans only rate two specific attributes as a 9 or higher (Table 4.7). Africans also mention far less attributes than do the other two groups. *Physical facilities* are the lowest rated grouping for the Africans (Table 4.7). This indicates that, compared to other attribute groupings and race groups, *Physical facilities* are of less importance to Africans.

In their study, Miller *et al.* (2000:22) found dressing room design and aisle design as attributes that explain the variance in store image preference between two cultures, namely United States and South African college age students. These findings support this study's finding that different race groups, where race is identified as a subculture, differ in their perceived importance of attributes relating to *Physical facilities*.

4.3.2.5 Promotion

The specific attributes grouped under *Promotion* are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 *Promotion* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Availability	9	Advertising	10.9	Sales promotions	11
Promotion repeated in store	9	Availability in store	10.2	Displays	**10.1**
Displays	**8.4**	Displays	**9.7**	Competitions	9.3
		Large-size model	9.7	Incentives	9
				Promotions/special events	8.3

The attributes listed in this grouping show very few similarities, with only *displays* mentioned by all race groups. The Whites (8,4) regard *displays* as least important, whereas the Coloureds (9,7) and the Africans (10,1) regard them as more important. Whites define displays by referring to those inside the store, displays in the windows, as well as on posters. The Coloureds refined this definition by adding that displays should show possibilities for mix and match, that clothes should be displayed in a manner that shows how they can be worn and that these displays should include dolls that are large-sized, which is also a need for the Africans.

...If I see clothing displayed, it attracts me...I like dolls wearing the clothes...then I can see what it looks like...Sometimes I walk into a store, then something attracts my eye...especially window displays are also important. (Focus group 1)

...It is how their clothing is displayed...you must be able to mix and match. It shows you what you can wear together. (Focus group 4)
And I also like to see the dolls with my figure...a fuller figure. To show your clothing. (Focus group 8)

Both the Whites (9) and the Coloureds (10,2) identified the *availability* of what is promoted in the store as of importance, but with a considerable higher rating by the Coloureds. Whites prefer that promotion be *repeated* within the store (9).

...It must be in stock. If you see it in that month's brochure, it should be available at the store where you shop. (Focus group 2)

Advertising (10,9) is an important promotional medium for the Coloureds. They also have the need for a *large-size model* for apparel (9,7).

They should advertise...if you see someone who is built the same as you are, then it is more attractive. (Focus group 4)

The Africans perceived *sales promotion* (11), *competitions* (9,3), *incentives* (9) and *promotional/special events* (8,3) as important.

...The big sizes are never on sale...they should not have limited stock [on sale]...*you deserve some letter to say a sale is on.* (Focus group 7)

The fact that *displays*, as means of promotion, were mentioned by all race groups, could be related to their need for an acceptable general appearance of a store. A distinct difference that could be observed from these results is the specific focus of the Africans on financial benefits with regards to *Promotion*. This could be related to the importance of *pricing* regarding *Merchandise*, as well as the possible need for alternative methods of payment as an additional service, discussed in section 4.3.2.1. This again could be an indication of a more economic view towards store image attributes by the African race group. *Promotion* as a grouping is of specific importance to the Coloureds, as they rate it the third most important of all groupings (Table 4.3).

Van de Velde *et al.* (1996:384) found in store displays, advertising and promotion ranked in similar order of importance by individuals living in different countries who share the same root

105

culture. Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:13) identifies *Promotion* as a strategic variable in a multi-cultural approach to consumer behaviour within the South African context. Effective ways of communicating with customers should be found, the effects of illiteracy on communication strategies should be taken into consideration, and the influence of cultural factors on the interpretation of promotional messages needs to be taken into account. There is, therefore, support that culture and subcultures influence the perceived importance of *Promotion* as attribute grouping, as the results of this study also indicates.

4.3.2.6 Store atmosphere

A very diverse set of specific attributes are grouped under *Store atmosphere* and presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 *Store atmosphere* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
General atmosphere	10.2	Friendly sales assistants	**11**	Friendly sales assistants	**11**
Good feeling about large-size store	10.2	Music	9.8	Good feeling about large-size store	10.9
Friendly sales assistants	**9.8**	General atmosphere	6.7	Colour combination	10.7
Music	9.6			Neutral smell	10
Colour combination	9.6				

Friendly sales assistants seem to be an important contributor to *Store atmosphere*. All three race groups regard this as important. It is rated as the most important *Store atmosphere* attribute by both the Coloureds (11) and the Africans (11), but received a lower rating by the Whites (9,8). Other similarities between groups also occur. The *general atmosphere* is rated highest by the Whites (10,2), and, while also mentioned by the Coloureds (6,7), received a distinctly lower rating. Both the Whites (10,2) and Africans (10,9) regard a *good feeling* about shopping in a store offering larger sizes as being of considerable importance to them.

Both these two race groups rated it most and second most important *Store atmosphere* attribute. They define this as feeling special when you enter the store, combined with being able to find sizes in merchandise that makes you feel comfortable.

> *For me the most important thing when I go shopping...I must feel worthy, feel special...a warm feeling when I walk in.* (Focus group 1)

Both the Whites (9,6) and Coloureds (9,8) rated *music* as an important attribute of *Store atmosphere*, whereas the Whites (9,6) and Africans (10,7) regard the *colour combination* as important. Lastly, the Africans also mentioned a *neutral smell* (10) as of importance in store atmosphere (see 4.3.1.6 for quotes).

These results indicate that *Store atmosphere* receives considerable attention by both the Whites and the Africans, who rated store atmosphere overall as one of the three most important attribute groupings. As with *Physical facilities*, the Whites generated more specific attributes, with only one attribute not mentioned by them, but by the Africans, namely a *neutral smell*. It is apparent from the attributes generated, that the *Store atmosphere* is not easily definable as it relates to the consumer's mood and willingness to visit and browse, appealing to consumers' senses through colours, sounds, and odours (Terblanchè, 1998:68). *Store atmosphere* is a culmination of the influences of other attribute groupings, such as *Merchandise, Clientele, Physical facilities*.

4.3.2.7 Institutional factors

Only the Whites and Africans generated *Institutional factors* attributes, presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 *Institutional factors* attributes: perceived importance (race groups)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		AFRICANS	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
Store bags	7.6			Manager on floor	10.7

The Whites referred to *store bags,* and the association of the store made by it, to be of importance (7,6). Walking with a specific store bag should make customers feel good. Also, the Africans expressed their need for the store *manager* to be on the *floor* (10,7) (see 4.3.1.7 for quotes).

These attributes are also closely related to the need to feel special, also mentioned under *Store atmosphere*. This is especially important to the Africans, who rated it third highest of all groupings (Figure 4.1). It is interesting to note that this attribute received such a high rating, whilst it was only mentioned by the Africans.

4.3.2.8 Post-transaction satisfaction

Post-transaction satisfaction attributes were only mentioned by the Coloureds, as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 *Post-transaction satisfaction* attributes: perceived importance (race group)

WHITES		COLOUREDS		BLACKS	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
		Report back	9.8		
		Adjustments/alterations	9.8		

The Coloureds want to be able to *report back* (9,8) on their shopping experience. Of equal importance is the need for *adjustments* or *alterations* (9,8) to be made to garments after they have been purchased. (Data was captured by the field notes.)

It is noticable that respondents of all race groups did not generate attributes in this grouping. It could be argued that, if all the other store image attributes are regarded and addressed, the customer will have no special needs regarding post-transaction satisfaction.

4.3.2.9 Summary

The previous discussion of results addressed objective eight of this study, set to be met by empirical study, i.e. to determine whether any differences exist in the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on race. It can be argued that this objective has been met, and that, indeed, a difference does exist in the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on race.

The results show many similarities between the different race groups with regards to attributes mentioned, specifically *Merchandise, Service* and *Store atmosphere* attributes. The Whites and Coloureds generated similar attributes grouped under *Physical facilities, Promotion* and *Store atmosphere*. The attributes generated by Africans for *Promotion* differs considerably from the

other race groups. It could be concluded that more similarities exist between the Whites and Coloureds, than between these two race groups and the Africans. Overall, Whites seem to generate more specific attributes, whereas the African's ratings are generally higher. The rating of specific attributes mentioned by the different race groups show distinct differences. A shift in focus of how each attribute grouping is specifically defined by race groups also shows differences. South Africa's population represents a multi-cultural, heterogeneous, consumer society, of which race is one identified subculture (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:331). This study's results showed how subcultures based on race differ in their perceived importance of attribute groupings and specific attributes relating to retail store image. These findings identified differences and similarities between subcultures, which should be taken into account within the South African context.

4.3.3 Differences and similarities between perceived importance of attributes and attribute groupings by age groups

In accordance with objective nine of this study, namely to determine whether any differences exist in the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on age group, the discussion in this section will focus on the differences in results based on age group. Once again, the ratings of the different store image attribute groupings will be compared, followed by a discussion of the specific attributes grouped together within each grouping. Findings regarding specific attribute groupings have already been supported by quotes from the focus groups in section 4.3.1. Therefore, only distinct differences and similarities between the different age groups' perception of specific attributes will be supported by quotes from the focus groups in the following section.

Table 4.12 presents the ratings of each of the store image attribute groupings by age. The three highest ranking groups for each age are bold and they are presented in descending order of perceived importance for each race group. It should be mentioned at this point, that, due to practical limitations, the African data could not be broken up into age groups, and are therefore excluded from the following discussion (section 3.4.1).

Both the 20-29 and 40-54 year age groups regarded *Merchandise* (10,4; 10,6) as the most important store image attribute. The 30 - 39 year age group regarded it as the second most important grouping (10,2), but still with a comparatively high rating. The 30 - 39 year age group rated *Service* (10,7) as the most important store image attribute grouping, which is also the highest overall rating amongst all age groups.

Table 4.12 Perceived importance of attribute groupings (age group)

ATTRIBUTES	AGE GROUPS (IN YEARS)		
	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 – 54
Merchandise	10.4	10.2	10.6
Service	7.2	10.7	10.1
Clientele	7.7	9.9	9.7
Physical facilities	9.3	9.1	9.2
Promotion	9.9	9.6	9.9
Store atmosphere	9.5	10	9.5
Institutional factors	7.6	---	---
Post-transaction satisfaction	---	9.5	10.6

The 40-54 year old age group regarded *Service* (10,1) as the third most important grouping. The 20-29 year age group rated *Promotion* (9,9) as second most important, followed by *Store atmosphere* (9,5), that is also rated third most important by the 30-39 year old age group (10). Lastly, the 40-54 year age group rates *Post-transaction satisfaction* (10,6) as equally important as *Merchandise*. *Service* (7,2) was rated the least important by the 20-29 year age group, and is also the lowest rating overall. *Service*, however, is rated the most important store image attribute grouping by the 30-39 year old age group and third most important by the 40-54 year age group. The 30-39 and 40-54 year age groups rate *Physical facilities* (9,1; 9,2) as the least important, whereas it is rated fourth most important by the 20-29 year old group.

Distinct similarities and differences can be observed between the different age groups. The most important similarity amongst groups is the high rating of the *Merchandise* grouping. This, once again, correlates with the high overall rating of *Merchandise* for the female large-size apparel consumer (Figure 4.1). Both the 20-29 and 30-39 year age groups considered *Store atmosphere* as important and both the 30-39 and 40-54 year age groups considered *Service* as important, however, the ratings for these groupings are different. It is interesting to note that, although *Service* rated high overall for the female large-size apparel consumer, this was the lowest rated grouping by the 20-29 year old group. *Promotion* was only rated amongst the three most important attributes by the 20-29 (9,9) year age group, although it received comparative ratings from the other two age groups (9,6; 9,9). *Post-transaction satisfaction* was only rated as one of the three highest perceived groupings by the 40-54 (10,6) year age group, whereas it received a much lower rating from the 30-39 (9,5) year age group and was not mentioned by the 20-29 year age group at all. Lastly, *Institutional factors* (7,6) were only mentioned by the 20-29 year age group, and not at all by the other two age groups.

Overall, the 20-29 year age group rated attributes lower than the other two age groups, with only one rating above 10, and three ratings below 8. The ratings of the other two groups are much higher overall, with three groupings rating 10 or more and the rest falling between 9 and 10 for both groups. These results once again emphasise the importance of *Merchandise* to the female large-size apparel consumer. The following discussion of specific attributes within each age group might prove of more use when trying to differentiate between different ages.

4.3.3.1 Merchandise

The specific attributes grouped under *Merchandise* are presented in Table 4.13 and will be discussed in the following section. The attributes mentioned by all age groups are typed in bold and shaded.

Table 4.13 *Merchandise* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
Quality	11	Selection/assortment	10.9	Styling/fashion	10.8
Specialised clothing	11	Styling/fashion	10.2	Selection/assortment	10.7
Accessories	10.7	Availability of sizes	10	Quality	10.6
Styling/fashion	10.6	Accessories	10	Accessories	10.3
Availability of sizes	10.5	Specialised clothing	10	Specialised clothing	10
Pricing	8.3	Pricing	9.9		

Specialised clothing, accessories and *styling/fashion* are attributes mentioned by all the age groups. Although the ratings differ, they are never separated by more than one on the *Schutte Visual Scale*, thus receiving relatively high ratings of 10 and above. The definition of these specific attributes, however, differs slightly between the age groups. The 20-29 and 30-39 year olds define specialised clothing as specifically sleepwear, whereas the 40-54 year olds also include underwear and apparel for special occasions.

Sleepwear…I don't like it when it clings to my legs, and when you turn around in bed at night, you get stuck in it. (Focus group 1)

The underwear. If you walk into a store, you have to go: Wow! That is so nice. Also not only in white or flesh colour. It's any colour. (Focus group 3)

> *...We like clothes for a special occasion...clothes that work for church, your job, as well as a dance. Clothes for all occasions.* (Focus group 3)

Regarding *accessories*, the 40-54 years old specify shoes as important.

> *Shoes. As an extra, but specifically shoes.* (Focus group 3)

The 20-29 year olds need their clothing to be the correct styles for the large-size female. The 30-39 year olds added to that the right type of material and colours. The 40-54 year olds focus on clothing being both casual and fashionable, as well as unique.

> *It fits right...[the right styles]...yes.* (Focus group 4)

> *I get upset when I walk into a large-size store and I see only the leftover materials and patterns that nobody else wanted...the patterns are too big, or the stripes are in the wrong direction, or it is blocks...you don't want to look like a circus tent.* (Focus group 5)

> *...We battle with that...get nice fashionable stuff.* (Focus group 6)

The ratings of the *styling* and *fashionability* of merchandise as a specific attribute by the three age groups differ by only 0,4 on the *Schutte Visual Scale*. This is a relatively small difference. However, previous findings indicated that age groups differ significantly in their perceived importance of the fashionability of merchandise as a store image attribute (Birtwistle & Shearer, 2001:13).

The 20-29 and 40-54 year age group rated *quality* (11; 10,6) as of high importance, with this attribute rated highest by the 20-29 year age group. The *availability* of all sizes is important to both the 20-29 and 30-39 year age groups (10,5; 10). These two groups also perceive *pricing* as important (8,3; 9,9). However, the rating of this attribute is the lowest of all specific attributes for both groups. *Selection/assortment* was rated as most important by the 30-39 year age group (10,9), and second most important by the 40-54 year age group (10,7).

The similarity between the attributes mentioned by the different groups is evident. In fact, all attributes are mentioned by at least two age groups. Although the ratings differ, as mentioned earlier, all these ratings are relatively high, with only two ratings lower than 10. The mention of pricing by the two younger age groups, could be an indication that they are more price-sensitive than the older age group. Also, the 20-29 year age group regards quality as most important, further supporting this notion that they are more economically inclined, as quality is perceived as

value for money. Whereas the 40-54 year old age group also mentions quality, it could be argued that for them, quality has a definition of distinctiveness rather than a financial consideration (Lamb *et al.,* 1998:352).

The finding of this study that there is a difference in perceived importance of *Merchandise* attributes by different age groups, is supported by other studies investigating the effect of age on store image. A wide variety in merchandise, as well as attributes relating to the label/brand of merchandise and price, influence apparel shopping behaviour of elderly consumers (Chowdhary, 1989:1185). Lumpkin *et al.* (1985:83) found that *Merchandise* attributes of price and quality are determinant attributes in store choice for the elderly consumer. Another study found that a consumer's age influences perceptions of store image relating to merchandise quality and a good selection (Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28).

4.3.3.2 Service

The specific attributes grouped under *Service* are presented in table 4.14.

Table 4.14 *Service* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Sales assistants	7.2	Inter-store transfers	11	Inter-store transfers	11
		Consultants	10.3	Sales assistants	**10.6**
		Sales assistants	**9.7**	Consultants	10.4
		Appro facilities	9.4		

Sales assistants is the only attribute mentioned by all age groups. This is also the only service attribute mentioned by the 20-29 year age group (7,2). A much higher rating is given by the 30-39 year age group (9,7), with the 40-54 year age group giving sales assistants the highest rating of all three groups (10,6). The 20-29 year age group wants personal attention and an honest opinion from sales assistants. The 30-39 year age group needs them to be well-trained and attuned for the work. The 40-54 year old group expects sales assistants to be knowledgeable and attentive, and also give assistance when needed. *Inter-store transfers* is rated equally and of the most importance by both older age groups (11). Both these groups (10,3; 10,4) also perceive *consultants* as of high importance. Lastly, the 30-39 year old age group also mentions the availability of *appro facilities* as of importance, although receiving the lowest rating from this group (9.4). These results correlate with the earlier discussion of the 20-29 year age group's relatively low rating of *Service*, both within the age group analysis, as well as compared to the results of the whole group.

113

Although all three groups mention *sales assistants*, their expectations of the sales assistant differ considerable. Specifically, the oldest age group has a very distinct need for assistance when choosing the right apparel fit for the large-size female and specifically their body types. They also need assistance in the fitting rooms.

> *The fitting rooms. Maybe you are struggling to find the right size, and there is no one to help you.* (Focus group 6)

> *Sometimes you look for someone to give you advice...we go to people for advice.* (Focus group 6)

Both these specific needs could be age-related. The other two groups show distinct similarities, both in the identified attributes, as well as their ratings. This is supported by the literature indicating that older customers differ in their shopping behaviour based on store image attributes (Chowdhary, 1989:1185).

Joyce and Lambert (1996:28) found that consumers' age influences their perceptions of *Service* as attribute grouping, specifically as it relates to how helpful the sales assistant is. Another study found that the general service offered by a store, as well as the service offered by sales assistants, explains the variance in store image preference based on age (Miller *et al*, 2000:22). These findings support the results of this study that also indicated differences in the perceived importance of *Service* attributes between age groups.

4.3.3.3 Clientele

Attributes related specifically to clientele are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 *Clientele* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attributes	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Sales assistants	**7.7**	Cross-cultural communication	11	Sales assistants	**9.9**
		Sales assistants	**8.3**		

All three age groups mention *sales assistants* as important. The appearance of the sales assistant is of specific importance to the 20-29 year age group (7,7), and they expect sales assistants to wear what they sell. The 30-39 year age group (8,3) wants to be able to relate to sales assistants, therefore they have to be approachable, both visually and emotionally. The 40-

114

54 year olds (9,9) also has a need for sales assistants to show emotional empathy towards their customers.

> *I think your clothing is important...she* [the sales assistant] *must wear what is in store.* (Focus group 4)

> *Definitely, the size of the sales assistants is important...and they should be nice...she at least needs to understand.* (Focus group 2)

> *They should also be aware of the emotion of that person...*[empathy]*...yes.* (Focus group 3)

The only other specific attribute is the need for good *cross-cultural communication*, mentioned by the 30-39 year age group (11).

> *The communication of the sales assistant. Sometimes the wrong information is conveyed because of different cultures. The language used might be wrong.* (Focus group 6)

It seems as if *Clientele*, as was the case with the race group analysis, is mostly defined in terms of the sales assistants. Other customers were not mentioned as important to the *Clientele* grouping, therefore again supporting the notion that customers feel comfortable because only large-size females shop at this store. However, Joyce and Lambert (1996:28) found that age influences an individuals perception of a store as "high class", thereby differentiating on the basis of social class.

Based on the results of this research, clientele as a store image attribute grouping is therefore not age-sensitive either. Unfortunately, the data on African consumers could not be included in this analysis. It is therefore difficult to determine whether cross-cultural communication and the need for no discrimination are age-sensitive, as these attributes were race-specific.

4.3.3.4 Physical facilities

A considerable number of specific attributes were grouped under *Physical facilities*, as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 *Physical facilities* **attributes: perceived importance (age group)**

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Mirrors	**11**	Hangers	10.4	General appearance	10.7
Lighting	**10.5**	Mirrors	**10.3**	Spaciousness	**10.4**
Temperature	9.4	Fitting rooms	**9.6**	Lighting	**10.2**
Fitting rooms	**8.5**	Layout	9.6	Temperature	9.8
Purchase points	8.4	Spaciousness	**9.4**	Fitting rooms	**9**
Spaciousness	**7.8**	Couch	9.1	Portal	8.6
		Lighting	**7.6**	Mirrors	**7.8**
		Playpen	6.4	Couch	6.7

The first attribute mentioned by all age groups, is *mirrors*. However, this is rated as the most important attribute by the 20-29 year olds (11), second most important by the 30-39 year olds (10,3), and much lower by the 40-54 year olds (7,8). All age groups also mention *lighting*. Once again, the 20-29 year olds rate this higher (10,5) than the other groups. This is also the second highest rated *Physical facilities* attribute for the whole group of respondents. The 40-54 year olds (10,2) rate this as their third most important *Physical facilities* attribute, whereas the 30-39 year olds (7,6) rate it much lower. *Fitting rooms* are also considered important by all age groups. The 20-29 year olds (8,5) rate it lowest of all groups, whilst the 30-39 year olds (9,6) rate it highest of all the age groups, and this is their third most important *Physical facilities* attribute. The 40-54 year olds (9) also rate it relatively high. Of all the attributes listed by the 20-29 year age group, *spaciousness* was rated lowest (7,8). The 30-39 year age group (9,4) rate it much higher, whilst the 40-54 year age group rated it second highest (10,4) of all *Physical facilities* attributes. Both the 20-29 and 40-54 year age groups (9,4; 9,8) regard *temperature* as an important attribute. The availability of *couches* are mentioned by the 30-39 and the 40-54 year age groups (9,1; 6,7). The 30-39 year olds, however, rate it much higher.

Once again, similarities do occur regarding the attributes mentioned, whilst the ratings differ considerably. A number of *Physical facilities* attributes are mentioned by only one of the age groups, e.g. the 20-29 year olds mention *purchase points* (8,4).

116

A convenient purchase point…I can go in, shop at leisure, and when I'm done, I can pay quickly and go home. (Focus group 1)

The 30-39 year olds are the only group to identify *hangers* (10,4), *layout* (9,6), and a *playpen* (6,4) as important.

I think the layout of the store is also important. (Focus group 2)

Can't they have something like a playpen with puzzles? Just so you can fit you clothes in peace. (Focus group 5)

Lastly, the 40-54 year olds regarded *general appearance* (10,7) and an *inviting portal* (8,6) as important.

[The store]…must be presented well…the interior. (Focus group 3)

…A nice portal to a shop…it must entice me to go in… (Focus group 3)

It is interesting to note that both *hangers* (10,4) and *general appearance* (10,7) are the highest rated attributes for the 30-39 and 40-54 year olds respectively, whilst not mentioned by the other group at all.

Very few definite conclusions can be drawn from these results. This is probably due to the fact that all age groups rate *Physical facilities* as almost equally important (9,3; 9,1; and 9,2). What was evident is that all the age groups mention general attributes associated with *Physical facilities*, namely *mirrors, lighting, fitting rooms* and *spaciousness*. The differences that do occur are mostly regarding very specific attributes, e.g. the *purchase points* for the 20-29 year olds, the *hangers* and *playpen* for the 30-39 year olds, and the *portal* mentioned by the 40-54 year olds. Although the attributes generated cover most of the *Physical facilities*, it could be worthwhile to determine how these attributes are rated when all of them are mentioned to each group. This could typically be done through a survey study and would give a clear indication of how age sensitive these attributes are. A study by Lumpkin *et al.* (1985:83) found that attributes relating to *Physical facilities* are determinant attributes in the store choice of elderly consumers. This is an indication that this attribute grouping could be age sensitive.

117

4.3.3.5 Promotion

The specific attributes generated by the different groups relating to *Promotion* are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 *Promotion* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Advertising	11	Availability of sizes	10.4	Advertising	10.8
Availability of sizes	10.3	Displays	**9.4**	Availability in store	9.5
Fuller figure woman as model	9.7	Promotions repeated in store	9	Displays	**9.3**
Displays	**8.5**				

Displays are the only attribute mentioned by all groups and is rated lower by the 20-29 year age group than by the other two age groups. The 20-29 year olds (8,5) include displays inside the store as well as in the windows as their definition of displays. They also show a need for displays to give an indication of how apparel can be mixed and matched.

> *You must be able to mix and match. It shows you what you can wear together.* (Focus group 4)

The 30-39 year age group (9,4) also identifies these needs, but prefer large-size dolls to be used in displays.

> *Outside in the windows you should have a fuller figure to show of the clothes.* (Focus group 5)

Posters and the presentation of clothes are of importance to the 40-54 year olds (9,3).

> *I also like the posters they put up.* (Focus group 3)

Advertising is regarded as the most important promotion store image attribute by both the 20-29 and 40-54 year olds (11; 10,8). The 20-29 year olds regard brochures as an important means of advertising, whereas the 40-54 year olds include the advertising of services as important.

> *Advertisements…usually they send it* [brochures] *with your account.* (Focus group 4)

[A good store will advertise their services]...*yes.* (Focus group 6)

The 20-29 year olds (10,3) regard *availability* of merchandise referred to in promotional efforts as important, whereas the 30-39 year olds (10,4) regard this as the most important attribute. The 20-29 year olds display a need for a *large-size* woman to be used as a *model* for large-size clothes (9,7). The 30-39 year olds identify the repetition of promotions within the store to make them easier to identify, as important (9). The 40-54 year olds add to these attributes the need to have promotions *available* in all stores, not just specific ones (9,5).

> ...*Stores for the large-size...it doesn't help to advertise with skinny people.* (Focus group 4)

> ...*When they advertise, they use pictures...but if you come there, you don't see it...you look for it in the same combination.* (Focus group 2)

> *But it must be in stock. If you see that month's brochure, it should be available at the store where I shop.* (Focus group 3)

These results show similarities and overlapping of attributes mentioned amongst age groups. However, once again the definition and rating of these attributes, once again, differ, as is clearly shown by the definition of what *displays* should entail. Also, *advertising* is perceived differently by the two age groups that mentioned them. The need expressed for a *large-size model* by the 20-29 year olds indicates the importance of this attribute to them. This could be an indication that they need to have a roll model that they can identify with. Also, the importance attached to the *availability* of merchandise referred to in promotions, mentioned by the 40-54 year olds, could be an indication that they are reluctant, or perhaps unable, to travel to other stores to shop around. This correlates with their distinct need for *inter-store transfers*, as mentioned under the discussion of *Service* (section 4.3.3.2).

Research has shown that consumers' age will influence their perception of *Promotion* as attribute grouping (Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28). This supports the findings of this study, namely that age groups differ in their perceived importance of attributes relating to *Promotion*.

4.3.3.6 Store atmosphere

Store atmosphere and the various specific attributes associated with it are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18 *Store atmosphere* **attributes (age group)**

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
Good feeling about large-size store	11	Music	**10.2**	Friendly sales assistants	9.8
Friendly sales assistants	11	General atmosphere	10.2	Music	**9.6**
Music	**9.2**	Colour combination	9.6	Good-feeling about large size store	9
General atmosphere	6.7				

Store atmosphere was rated the third most important store image grouping by both the 20-29 and 30-39 year age groups (Table 4.12). There are few similarities amongst the groups. In fact, only one attribute, namely *music*, is mentioned by all three groups, with different ratings. The rating for the 20-29 year olds (9,2) is the lowest, with the 40-54 year olds (9,6) rating it slightly higher. The 30-39 year olds (10,2) rated it highest of all groups, and this was also their highest *Store atmosphere* attribute rating. Both the 20-29 and 40-54 year olds (11; 9) associate *Store atmosphere* with a *good feeling* about being able to shop at a store for larger sizes. However, the 20-29 year olds regard this as of much higher importance and associate it with feeling special.

> *I must feel worthy. Feel special.* (Focus group 1)

This is also true for the rating of *friendly sales assistants* and how this contributes to *Store atmosphere*. The 20-29 year olds (11) rate this as equally important to having a good feeling about a large-size store, whereas the 40-54 year olds regard this as the most important *Store atmosphere* attribute. The 20-29 year olds (6,7) rate the *general atmosphere* as much lower, whilst this is rated as equally important to *music* by the 30-39 age group (10,2). The 30-39 year olds also identify the *colour combination* (9,6) used within a store as a contributing factor to *Store atmosphere*.

It appears from these results that the 20-29 and 40-54 year age groups define *Store atmosphere* in a similar fashion, although their ratings differ. They do, however, rate *Store atmosphere,* as an attribute grouping, as of equal importance.

4.3.3.7 Institutional factors

As can be seen from Table 4.19, the 20-29 year age group was the only group to generate any attributes grouped under *Institutional factors*.

Table 4.19 *Institutional factors* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating	Attribute	Rating
Store bags	7.6				

The 20-29 year age group is of the opinion that *store bags* contribute to a store's image.

> [Store bags]...*you feel boutique-like...if you buy something at a store with a nice packaging, it is extra special.* (Focus group 1)

This rating, however, is relatively low compared to other attribute ratings. This grouping is also the lowest for the 20-29 year age groups, and is also the lowest rated grouping of all the age groups. However, the fact that this attribute was mentioned, warrants it to be considered as a store image attribute of importance within retailing.

Other studies found age to influence *Institutional factors* as attribute grouping (Chowdhary, 1989:1185; and Joyce & Lambert, 1996:28). However, these studies included store reputation and "the store is doing well" as specific attributes, which was not generated in this study.

4.3.3.8 Post-transaction satisfaction

The older two age groups are the only ones to identify *Post-transaction satisfaction* store image attributes, as presented in Table 4.20. This grouping, however, received the second highest (10,6) overall rating, as indicated in Table 4.12.

Both of these age groups mentioned the need for *adjustments* or *alterations* to be made as an attribute of *Post-transaction satisfaction*. The 40-54 age group (10,6), however, rate it much higher than the 30-39 year age group (9).

> *There should be someone in the store that can do alterations.* (Focus group 6)

Table 4.20 *Post-transaction satisfaction* attributes: perceived importance (age group)

20 – 29 years		30 – 39 years		40 – 54 years	
Attribute	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**	**Attribute**	**Rating**
		Report back	9.9	Adjustments	**10.6**
		Adjustments/alterations	9		

This can be attributed to the fact that the older age group might have a more distinct need for alterations to be made, possibly because of the change in the female body with age (Damhorst *et al.*, 1999:328). The 30-39 year olds would also like to be able to *report back* to the store on the shopping experience(9,9).

4.3.3.9 Summary

The focus of this section was to meet objective nine, set to be met by empirical study, i.e. to determine whether any differences exist in the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on age. It can be argued that this was done successfully, whereas the discussion indicated both similarities and differences between age groups. Age is identified as a basis for identifying subcultures within the heterogeneous, multicultural South African consumer society (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:340). However, considering the fact that the Africans' data could not be included, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether the attributes mentioned above are age-sensitive for this specific race group. Further research is therefore warranted to investigate these possible differences further.

4.3.4 Summary

The results of the first part of the study can be summarized by comparing the ratings of attribute groupings for the whole group, as well as for each race and age group (Table 4.21). The three highest rated attribute groupings are shaded.

Results for the whole group showed *Merchandise, Service*, and *Clientele* to be the attribute groupings perceived as most important. *Merchandise* was also perceived as one of the most important attribute groupings by all race and age groups, except for Africans. The 20-29 year age group was the only group not to perceive *Service* as one of the most important attribute groupings and rated it least important.

Table 4.21 Comparison: rating of attribute groupings (race and age group, race group, and age group)

ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS	RATINGS (RACE AND AGE)	RATINGS (RACE)			RATINGS (AGE)		
		WHITES	COLOUREDS	AFRICANS	20-29	30-39	40-54
MERCHANDISE	10,4	10,2	10,4	10,5	10,4	10,2	10,6
SERVICE	10,1	9,9	10,2	10,8	7,2	10,7	10,1
CLIENTELE	10,4	9,2	9,6	10,5	7,7	9,9	9,7
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	9	8,8	9,9	8,6	9,3	9,1	9,2
PROMOTION	9,6	8,8	10,1	9,5	9,9	9,6	9,9
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10	9,8	9,2	10,7	9,5	10	9,5
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9,2	7,6		10,7	7,6		
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	9,9		9,8			9,5	10,6

None of the race or age groups perceived *Clientele* as one of the most important attribute groupings. *Physical facilities* was perceived as the least important by the whole group, as well as the Africans, 30-39 year age group and 40-54 year age group. This attribute grouping was not perceived as one of the most important attributes by any of the race and age groups. *Promotion* was perceived by the Coloureds and 20-29 year age group as one of the most important attribute groupings. The Whites, Africans, 20-29 year age group, as well as the 30-39 year age group perceived *Store atmosphere* as one of the most important attribute groupings, whilst the Coloureds perceived this attribute grouping as least important. *Institutional factors* as attribute grouping was only generated by the Whites, who perceived it as the least important attribute grouping, as well as Africans and the 20-29 year age group. Africans perceived this attribute grouping as one of the most important attribute groupings. Similarly, *Post-transaction satisfaction* was generated only by the Coloureds, 30-39 year age group, as well as the 40-54 year age group, with the 40-54 year age group perceiving it as one of the most important attribute groupings. Overall, Africans gave the highest ratings of all groupings, with Whites and the 20-29 year age group giving the lowest ratings.

This study showed that *Merchandise* and *Service* is perceived as one of the most important attribute grouping by most race and age groups, as well as the whole group. *Store atmosphere* and *Promotion* were also perceived as one of the most important attribute groupings by more

than one race and age group. Whilst *Institutional factors* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* were only mentioned by three of the race and age groups, these groupings were perceived as one of the most important attribute groupings by one of these groups. *Promotion* was not perceived as one of the most important attribute groupings by any of the race or age groups, or by the whole group. This attribute grouping was perceived as the least important attribute grouping by three of the race and age groups, as well as the whole group.

The results indicate the attribute groupings, as well as specific attributes that are perceived as important by female large-size consumers. Differences and similarities in perceived importance, have also been discussed. This study provides insight into what female large-size consumers perceive as important in store image, and also gives an indication of what attribute groupings are of importance when focusing on a specific race or age group.

4.4 DESCRIPTION OF LINDQUIST'S ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS BY FEMALE LARGE-SIZE APPAREL CONSUMERS

This section will focus on the tenth objective of this study, namely:

> *To determine whether the existing store image attribute groupings by Lindquist (1974-1975) are applicable when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.*

To obtain the qualitative and quali-quantive data to discuss these results, the raw data from the transcriptions of each of the eight focus groups was compiled into definitions of each of Lindquist's attribute groupings for each focus groups, namely *Merchandise, Service, Clientele, Physical facilities, Convenience, Promotion, Store atmosphere, Institutional factors* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* (Appendix 11). These definitions were then compiled into a composite definition for each of these attribute groupings derived from all the focus group discussions (Appendix 12). From these, the frequency with which each attribute was used to define the attribute groupings, was calculated (Table 4.19 to Table 4.27). The perceived importance of each of Lindquist's groupings was also rated, and the aggregate of these ratings was calculated for the whole group. This data will be used to compare it with the perceived importance of specific attribute groupings generated from the female large-size apparel consumers in the first part of the focus group discussion to determine adequacy of Lindquist's groupings of attributes when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.

4.4.1 Lindquist's description of attribute groupings compared to the description generated by female large-size apparel consumers

This section will provide a description of each of Lindquist's attribute groupings generated by the respondents in all the focus groups. Each attribute grouping will be discussed individually. Firstly, Lindquist's description of each group will be given (1974-1975:31). Secondly, the description provided by the respondents in the eight focus group sessions will be tabulated and discussed, indicating the frequency with which each specific attribute was mentioned. This discussion will be based on descriptions from the transcriptions of the focus groups. Thirdly, this discussion will identify specific attributes overlapping between two attribute groupings. Fourthly, Lindquist's description will be compared to the description of each attribute grouping generated by the respondents in this study. Lastly, the discussion will conclude with a description of each attribute grouping, considering Lindquist's description, as well as the descriptions generated by respondents in the first and second part of the study, which will be included in the final list of attributes for each attribute grouping. Where specific attributes overlapped between more than one attribute grouping, they were included in the final description of the attribute grouping it was mentioned most frequently to describe. The attributes mentioned most frequently under a specific store image attribute group are typed in bold and shaded.

4.4.1.1 Merchandise

Lindquist (1974-1975:31) defined the attributes considered under *Merchandise* in his study as: quality, selection or assortment, styling or fashion, guarantees, and pricing. The description of *Merchandise* by the respondents in the eight focus group discussions are presented in Table 4.22.

The respondents partaking in this study most frequently described *Merchandise* as having a wide *assortment* available (75%). This was followed by *fashionability* and *correct styling* (62,5%), *availability* (50%) and *quality* and *correct materials* (37,5%). *Availability as advertised*, *perfume*, and *accessories* were also mentioned by more than one focus group (25%). Other attributes mentioned specifically under *Merchandise* were *merchandise that suits the large-size female, cosmetics, bathing suits, sexy merchandise, seasonal changes that shouldn't be too early*, and high *brand image* for large-size merchandise (12,5%).

Two attributes, namely displays and spaciousness regarding merchandise displays, were also used to define merchandise (12,5%). These, however, overlapped with attributes mentioned under other attribute groupings, and were mentioned most frequently to define *Physical facilities*.

Table 4.22 Description of *Merchandise* (n=8)

MERCHANDISE	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Assortment	6	75%
Fashionable	5	62,5%
Correct styling	5	62,5%
Availability	4	50%
Quality	3	37,5%
Correct materials	3	37,5%
Availability as advertised	2	25%
Perfume	2	25%
Accessories	2	25%
Merchandise that suits the large-size female	1	12,5%
Cosmetics	1	12,5%
Bathing suits	1	12,5%
Sexy apparel	1	12,5%
Seasonal changes not too early	1	12,5%
Brand image	1	12,5%
Displays	1	12,5%
Spaciousness	1	12,5%

When comparing Lindquist's description of *Merchandise* to the description generated by this study, similarities and differences can be observed. The attributes of *quality, assortment, styling*, and *fashionability* described *Merchandise* in both studies. Guarantees, included in Lindquist's description, were not mentioned in this study, but could be part of *brand image*. *Pricing*, although not mentioned specifically in relation to *Merchandise* in this part of the study, was mentioned when respondents were asked to generate specific attributes in the first part of this study (Figure 4.2), and were grouped under *Merchandise*, based on Lindquist's study. *Affordable prices* was mentioned in this part of the study under *Institutional factors*. Therefore, one can argue that this should be included in a description of *Institutional factors*.

In conclusion, it seems as if Lindquist's description of *Merchandise* is not extensive enough when studying the female large-size apparel consumer. Considering the specific attributes generated by respondents in the first part of this study (section 4.3.1.1), as well as the description of *Merchandise* they provided in the second part of the study (section 4.4.1.1), it is evident that a description of *Merchandise* by the female large-size consumer should included the following:

- Assortment
- Styling/fashion, including correct materials, merchandise that suits the large-size female, sexy apparel, and merchandise conveying the right image, as well as correct and fashionable colours, as discussed in section 4.3.1.1
- Availability, specifically in terms of styling, sizes and fit, as discussed in section 4.3.1.1, as well as merchandise being available as advertised
- Quality
- Accessories, including perfume and cosmetics, as well as shoes, scarves, bags and jewellery, as discussed in section 4.3.1.1
- Specialised clothing, including bathing suits, as well as sleepwear, underwear, and garments for special occasions, as mentioned in section 4.3.1.1.

4.4.1.2 Service

Lindquist described *Service* by including the attributes of service-general, salesclerk service, presence of self-service, ease of merchandise return, delivery service, and credit policies of the store (1974-1975:31). The description from respondents in this study are presented in Table 4.23.

The service offered by *sales assistants* (100%) was mentioned by all the focus groups as a service attribute in this study. This was followed in frequency by the availability of *inter-store transfers* (75%). Other attributes mentioned included the service of *putting garments back after shoppers have been fitted, a basket or bag to put things in when shopping, telephonic orders, deliveries, cash discount, international service, the top structure of the firm should visit stores and consult with customers*, that the *firm should treat their employees in the right* manner, and *no commission on self-help purchases* (12,5%). Numerous attributes used to describe *Service* were also used to describe other groupings with a higher frequency. *Ease of return* (25%), *satisfaction*, and *clothing adjustments* (12,5%) were used more frequently to describe *Post-transaction satisfaction*. Similarly, *quality of materials*, the *availability of merchandise*, the *availability of merchandise as advertised* in brochures, and *merchandise for special occasions* (12,5%) were used more frequently to describe *Merchandise*. *Spaciousness* and *effective hangers* (12,5%) were mentioned more frequently under *Physical facilities*, and *free gifts/purchase coupons* (12,5%) were mentioned more frequently to describe *Promotion*. *Purchase points* (25%) was used to define both service and physical facilities. *Purchase points* was, however, included under *Physical facilities*, since, in the context of *Service*, it related more to sales assistants' services provided at the purchase point.

Table 4.23 Description of *Service* (n=8)

SERVICE	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Sales assistants	8	**100%**
Inter-store transfers	6	**75%**
Ease of return	2	25%
Purchase points	2	**25%**
Put clothes back after shoppers have fitted	1	**12,5%**
Basket/bag to put things in when shopping	1	**12,5%**
Telephonic orders	1	**12,5%**
Deliveries	1	**12,5%**
Cash discount	1	**12,5%**
International service	1	**12,5%**
Quality of materials	1	12,5%
Availability of merchandise	1	12,5%
Spaciousness	1	12,5%
Effective hangers	1	12,5%
Brochures - available in store	1	12,5%
Free gifts/purchase coupons	1	12,5%
Special occasions	1	12,5%
Satisfaction	1	12,5%
Top structure must visit stores and consult customers	1	12,5%
Clothing adjustments	1	12,5%
Firm must treat employees right	1	**12,5%**
No commission - self-help sale	1	**12,5%**

Lindquist included the presence of self-service and the credit policies of the store in the description of *Service* (1974-1975:31), which was not mentioned in this study. However, a good relationship with the credit bureau was mentioned in the first part of the present study, where respondents were asked to generate the attributes relating to store image (section 4.3.1.2). Whereas Lindquist included the ease of *merchandise return* in service, this was mentioned more frequently to define *Post-transaction satisfaction* in this study. Similarities between Lindquist's description and the description in this study include *salesclerk service*, as well as a *delivery* service. Lindquist (1974-1975:31) used general service as an attribute to define *Service*. However, Lindquist's (1974-1975:31) study didn't specify what this includes. Therefore, it proves difficult to compare this attribute to the findings of this study. In the first part of the study, respondents also mentioned the need for a consulting service, as well as the availability of service to take garments on appro (section 4.3.1.2). The respondents mentioned that a *firm*

should treat their employees in the right manner. This relates to the service offered by the *sales assistants*, as training and support will provide sales assistants with the competencies to provide a service comparable to international standards, another attribute mentioned to describe *Service*.

Therefore, based on the previous discussion, an adaptation of Lindquist's description of *Service* as an attribute grouping more specific to the female large-size consumer should include:

- Sales assistant service, referring to well-trained assistants who are knowledgeable, who give honest advice and focused attention, and are able to consult with customers as to what they should wear, as was discussed in section 4.3.1.2, as well as including the service of putting clothes back after shoppers have fitted
- Inter-store transfers
- Basket/bag to put things in when shopping
- Telephonic orders
- Deliveries
- Cash discount
- Interaction with top structure of firm
- Credit policy, including a good relationship with the credit bureau, as discussed in section 4.3.1.2
- Appro facilities, as discussed in section 4.3.1.2
- No commission on self-help purchases

4.4.1.3 Clientele

Lindquist's *Clientele* group includes the attributes of social class appeal, self-image congruency, and store personnel (1974-1975:31). The description of *Clientele* in this study, is presented in Table 4.24.

This study showed that *class, race and age* (75%) were not used to describe *Clientele*. The most frequently mentioned attributes used to describe *Clientele* were *sales assistants* (37,5%), a *store for only large-size consumers* (25%), and a *model that is also large-size* (12,5%). Attributes that overlapped with descriptions of other groupings were *merchandise being more important than clientele* (12,5%), relating to the importance of *Merchandise* as a group, and *no discrimination* (12,5), most frequently used to describe *Store atmosphere*.

Table 4.24 Description of *Clientele* (n=8)

CLIENTELE	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Class/race/age not an issue	6	**75%**
Sales assistants	3	**37,5%**
Store for only large-size	2	**25%**
Merchandise more important than clientele	1	12,5%
Model – misleading, not always large-size	1	**12,5%**
No discrimination	1	12,5%

Lindquist's description of *Clientele* included social class appeal, whereas this is not included in the female large-size consumer's description of *Clientele*. Similarities between Lindquist's and this study's description of *Clientele* include *sales assistants*, as well as self-image congruency, relating to this study's definition of *Clientele* based on having a *store specifically for large-size consumers*. This includes a model that shouldn't be misleading, but that should represent the female large-size individual.

A description of *Clientele* specific to the female large-size consumer, based on Lindquist's description, as well as this study's findings, should therefore include:

- Sales assistants, including that they should be large-size, have emotional empathy, and that they should wear what they sell (section 4.3.1.3)
- Large-size consumers

4.4.1.4 Physical facilities

Lindquist's definition of *Physical facilities* covers attributes including elevators, lighting, air conditioning, restrooms, store layout, aisle placement and width, carpeting, and architecture. This study's description of *Physical facilities* is presented in Table 4.25.

The respondents in this study described *Physical facilities* most frequently by the availability of *restrooms, spaciousness*, and the availability of a *couch* (50%). The right *temperature, fitting rooms, mirrors*, and *rails* (37,5%) were also used frequently to describe *Physical facilities*. Following these attributes were *seating when fitting shoes*, as well as *purchase points* (25%). Other attributes used in describing *Physical facilities* were the *portal, water cans, hangers*, and the *vision and mission* of the store to be *displayed* (12,5%).

Table 4.25 Description of *Physical facilities* (n=8)

PHYSICAL FACILITIES	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Restrooms	4	**50%**
Spaciousness	4	**50%**
Couch	4	**50%**
Temperature	3	**37,5%**
Fitting rooms	3	**37,5%**
Mirrors	3	**37,5%**
Rails	3	**37,5%**
Displays	2	**25%**
Seating when fitting shoes	2	**25%**
Purchase points	2	**25%**
Lighting	2	25%
Attractive decoration	2	25%
Portal	1	**12,5%**
Water cans	1	**12,5%**
Hangers	1	**12,5%**
Music	1	12,5%
Vision and mission displayed	1	**12,5%**

Lighting (25%), *attractive decoration* (25%), and *music* (12,5%) were more frequently used to describe *Store atmosphere*. The *layout* of the store and a *playpen for children* were store image attributes generated from the first part of this study (section 4.3.1.4), which were also included under *Physical facilities*.

Similarities between Lindquist's and this study's description of *Physical facilities* include air conditioning/temperature, restrooms, store layout, aisle placement and width/spaciousness, and architecture/portal. Lindquist's description also included lighting and carpeting, which were mentioned more frequently to describe *Store atmosphere* in this study. Different terminology were used by Lindquist and the respondents of this study. Lindquist's terms of air conditioning, aisle placement and width, and architecture were defined as *temperature, spaciousness*, and a *portal* in this study.

The description of *Physical facilities* generated by this study, compared to Lindquist's description, show that a description of *Physical facilities* relating specifically to female large-size apparel consumers should include the following:

- Restrooms
- Spaciousness, relating specifically to the arrangement of merchandise and the spacing between rails (section 4.3.1.4)
- Couch
- Temperature
- Fitting rooms, including privacy, mirrors, lighting, hooks, and size, as discussed in section 4.3.1.4
- Mirrors
- Seating when fitting shoes
- Purchase points, their placement and that there should be enough (section 4.3.1.4)
- Portal
- Water cans
- Hangers
- Vision and mission displayed

4.4.1.5 Convenience

Lindquist's description of *Convenience* included general convenience, locational convenience, and parking (1974-1975:32). The description of *Convenience* in this study is presented in Table 4.26.

This study described *Convenience* with attributes relating to *parking* (62,5%), *accessible location within a shopping mall* (37,5%), general *location* (25%), as well as the availability of *MTN, Vodacom, and Telkom prepaid cards*, a store *catering for people in a hurry and those on a stroll, strong carry bags*, and the availability of a *restaurant* (12,5%). The attributes listed under *Convenience* as a grouping overlap with quite a number of other groupings. The specific attributes that overlap were used more frequently to describe other groupings.

These included *fitting rooms*, a *couch*, and *spaciousness* (25%), mentioned more frequently to describe *Physical facilities*, as well as *hangers, rails, restrooms, mirrors, temperature,* and *purchase points* (12,5%). Attributes more frequently used to describe *Service* include *inter-store transfers* (25%), *sales assistants*, and someone to *hang clothes back after being fitted* (12,5%). *Displays* (12,5%) were used more frequently to describe *Promotion*; a *clean and neat store* (12,5%) and the *follow-up on satisfaction* (12,5%) were used more frequently to describe *Store atmosphere* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* respectively.

132

Table 4.26 Description of *Convenience* (n=8)

CONVENIENCE	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Parking	5	**62,5%**
Merchandise	5	62,5%
Location within mall – accessible	3	**37,5%**
One-stop shopping	2	25%
Fitting rooms	2	25%
Couch	2	25%
Location	2	**25%**
Inter-store transfers	2	25%
Spacious	2	25%
MTN, Vodacom, Telkom prepaid cards	1	**12,5%**
Cater for people in a hurry as well as on a stroll	1	**12,5%**
Strong carry bags	1	**12,5%**
Restaurant	1	**12,5%**
Sales assistants	1	12,5%
Hangers	1	12,5%
Someone to hang clothes back	1	12,5%
Rails	1	12,5
Restrooms	1	12,5%
Mirrors	1	12,5%
Displays	1	12,5%
Temperature	1	12,5%
Purchase point	1	12,5%
Clean and neat	1	12,5%
Follow-up on satisfaction	1	12,5%

Respondents included *Merchandise* (62,5%), one of the attribute groupings, in their description of *Convenience*. The overlap in the definition of *Convenience* with other attribute groupingss indicates that *Convenience* is a broad, and perhaps less specific grouping, that underpins many aspects of store image.

Lindquist's description of *Convenience* includes an attribute of general convenience, but there is no specification of what this attribute includes. This, once again, proves to be problematic when trying to compare the results of this study with that of Lindquist. Lindquist's (1974-1975:32) description include *parking* and *location*, which were also mentioned in this study. These two attributes were not generated in the first part of the study.

In conclusion, a definition of *Convenience* specific to the large-size consumer, based on Lindquist's and the findings of this study, should include:

- Parking, including free, safe parking that is close to the store
- Location – both the general location, as well as the specific location within a shopping mall, and also including the location to be near a restaurant
- One-stop shopping
- MTN, Vodacom, Telkom prepaid cards available
- Catering for people in a hurry, as well as for those on a stroll
- Strong carry bags

4.4.1.6 Promotion

According to Lindquist, *Promotion* refers to sales promotions, advertising, displays, trading stamps, and symbols and colours (1974-1975:32). The description generated by respondents in this study is depicted in Table 4.27.

Brochures sent with an account was most frequently used to define *Promotion* (62,5%). This was followed by *timely communication regarding sales* (37,5%), *promotion on television* and *in magazines*, as well as *in-store advertising* (37,5%). *Sales, fashion shows, window displays, promotional efforts with account*, and *a large-size model* used to promote merchandise were also used to describe *Promotion* (25%). Other attributes included in the description of *Promotion* were *promotion in newspapers* and *on radio, personal contact, word of mouth, personal letter, a good store that is promoted by itself*, a *gold card* and *cash card system, cut-down prices, discount coupons, competitions, vouchers*, and *SMS messages* (12,5%).

Overlaps between the definition of *Promotion* and other groups include *sales assistants* (25%), more frequently mentioned under *Service* and *Clientele*, the *relationship between customers and sales assistants* (12,5%) that could be related to the definition of sales assistants in both the *Service* and *Clientele* grouping, as well as enough *merchandise available as promoted* (12,5%), more frequently used to describe *Merchandise*.

Similarities between Lindquist's and this study's description of *Promotion* can be observed. Both studies refer to *Promotion* through *sales, advertising*, and *displays*, with this study providing more detail regarding attributes describing *Promotion* with special reference to the female large-size consumer. *Trading stamps*, as well as *symbols and colours* were not mentioned in this study. Respondents described a *good store* as being *promotion by itself*. Therefore, one can argue that all other attribute groupings will also underpin *Promotion* as an attribute grouping.

Table 4.27 Description of *Promotion* (n=8)

PROMOTION	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Brochures included with account	5	**62,5%**
Timely communication regarding sales	3	**37,5%**
Promotion on television	3	**37,5%**
In-store advertising	3	**37,5%**
Promotion in magazines	3	**37,5%**
Sales	2	**25%**
Fashion show	2	**25%**
Sales assistants	2	25%
Window displays	2	**25%**
Promotional efforts with account	2	**25%**
Large-size model	2	**25%**
Enough merchandise	1	12,5%
Promotion on newspapers	1	**12,5%**
Personal contact	1	**12,5%**
Word of mouth	1	**12,5%**
Personal letter	1	**12,5%**
Good relationship – sales assistant and customer	1	12,5%
Good store - promotion by itself	1	**12,5%**
Promotion on radio	1	**12,5%**
Gold card system	1	**12,5%**
Cash card	1	**12,5%**
Cut-down prices	1	**12,5%**
Merchandise available as advertised	1	12,5%
Merchandise	1	12,5%
Discount coupons	1	**12,5%**
Competitions	1	**12,5%**
Vouchers	1	**12,5%**
SMS messages	1	**12,5%**

Attributes used to describe *Promotion* in this study can be grouped together. A description of *Promotion* to be used in relation to the female large-size apparel consumer should therefore include:

- Promotion with account, specifically through brochures
- Sales, including timely communication of sales, as well as cut-down prices
- Media, including television, magazines, papers, and radio
- Promotional events, specifically fashion shows
- Displays, both in the window and in-store
- Large-size model

- Personal contact, including letters and SMS messages, as well as promotion by word of mouth
- Incentives, including a gold and cash card system, discount coupons, competitions, and vouchers

4.4.1.7 Store Atmosphere

Store atmosphere, as described by Lindquist includes the atmosphere of congeniality, which relates to the feeling of warmth, acceptance, or ease (1974-1975:32). This study's description is presented in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28 Description of *Store atmosphere* (n=8)

STORE ATMOSPHERE	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Sales assistants	5	62,5%
Music	5	62,5%
Lighting	5	62,5%
Colours	3	37,5%
Decoration	3	37,5%
Displays	2	25%
Carpet	2	25%
No discrimination/prejudice	2	25%
Spaciousness	2	25%
User-friendly	1	12,5%
Relaxed	1	12,5%
Rotation of clothing on display	1	12,5%
Finishing materials	1	12,5%
Cosy	1	12,5%
No dolls without heads – impersonal	1	12,5%
Posters	1	12,5%
Merchandise that fits	1	12,5%
Clothes not too close together	1	12,5%
Couch	1	12,5%

Sales assistants was used most frequently to describe *Store atmosphere* in this study, together with *music*, and *lighting* (62,5%). *Colours* and *decoration* were used second most frequently (37,5%), followed by the *interior decoration* of the store, carpets, and the absence of *discrimination and prejudice* within a store (25%). A store that was *user-friendly, relaxed* and

cosy, the *finishing materials* used in a store, as well as *posters*, were also used to describe *Store atmosphere* (12,5%).

Spaciousness (25%), *clothes not hung too closely on rails* (12,5%) and a *couch* (12,5%), were also used to describe *Store atmosphere*, but were used more frequently in connection with *Physical facilities*. Similarly, *displays* (25%), the *rotation of clothes on display* (12,5%), and *dolls used in the displays should not be without heads*, since this made it impersonal (12,5%), were mentioned more frequently to describe *Promotion*. *Merchandise that fits* (12,5%) was mentioned more frequently to define *Merchandise*.

Lindquist's description of *Store atmosphere* does not include specific attributes. *Lighting* and *carpeting* were inlcuded in *Physical facilities* by Lindquist, whereas in this study both of the attributes were listed under *Store atmosphere*. In the first part of this study, respondents mentioned a neutral smell (section 4.3.1.6), as being important to store image. This could, however, be included under *Store atmosphere* as well. Attributes relating to the general appearance of the store, namely an attractive interior, as well as a clean and neat store, were grouped under *Physical facilities* in the first part of this study. However, regarding the previous discussion, it seems as if these attributes relate more to *Store atmosphere*. Once again, this grouping is interrelated to other attribute groupings, such as *Merchandise, Physical facilities* and *Promotion*, as they all influence *Store atmosphere*.

Store atmosphere, as it relates specifically to the female large-size apparel consumer, can be described by using the following attributes:

- Sales assistants, specifically their friendliness (section 4.3.1.6)
- Music
- Lighting
- Colours
- Interior decorating, including posters
- No discrimination/prejudice
- Carpeting
- User-friendly
- Relaxed atmosphere
- Finishing materials
- Cosy
- Smell (section 4.3.1.6)
- General appearance, including an attractive interior, and a clean and neat store (section 4.3.1.6)

4.4.1.8 Institutional factors

According to Lindquist (1974-1975:32), *Institutional factors* can be described by the conservative-modern projection of a store, as well as its reputation and reliability. This study's description of *Institutional factors* are presented in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29 Description of *Institution factors* (n=8)

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Specific large-size store	8	**100%**
Style of clothing	5	62,5%
Quality	5	62,5%
Merchandise colours	5	62,5%
Fashionable clothing	5	62,5%
Affordable merchandise	4	**50%**
Tasteful/elegant	3	37,5%
Unique clothes	3	37,5%
Always find something	2	25%
Can identify with store	1	**12,5%**
Not fuller figure, other name	1	**12,5%**
Real women	1	**12,5%**
Positive shopping experience	1	**12,5%**
Separate store	1	**12,5%**
Filled a niche market	1	**12,5%**
Beautiful clothes	1	12,5%
Trained staff	1	12,5%
Attractive, classy stores	1	12,5%
Convenience	1	12,5%
Large-size model	1	12,5%

This study described *Institutional factors* primarily by referring to a *store being specifically for the large-size apparel consumer* (100%). Numerous other attributes were mentioned that could contribute to a *positive shopping experience* (12,5%), e.g. *affordable merchandise* (50%) and being *able to identify with a store* (12,5%). The respondents wanted to be referred to as "*real women*", *not the fuller figure* or other descriptions that could stigmatise them (12,5%). Supporting the description of a store catering specifically for the large-size consumer, they also mentioned that such a store *filled a niche*, and that it should be a *separate store* (12,5%).

Other attributes used to define *Institutional factors* included *style, quality, merchandise colours,* and *fashionable clothes* (62,5%), *tasteful/elegant and unique clothes* (37,5%), *always being able to find something*, as well as *beautiful clothes* (12,5%). These attributes refer to *Merchandise. Trained staff* (12,5%) was used more frequently to define *Service. Attractive, classy stores* (12,5%) was more frequently used to define *Store atmosphere*, and the *large-size model* (12,5%) was more frequently used to define *Promotion*. Lastly, *Convenience* (12,5%), one of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings, was also used in connection with *Institutional factors*.

No definite similarities occur between Lindquist's and this study's description of *Institutional factors*. However, one could argue that this study's description of a *specific, separate store for large-size apparel consumers* could be related to what Lindquist referred to as reputation (1974-1975:32). The first part of this study also generated two other attributes that could be related to *Institutional factors*, namely that the *manager* should be present *on the sales floor*, as well as the image of the store projected by its *store bags. Institutional factors* as a grouping is also interrelated with other attribute groupings, such as *Merchandise, Store atmosphere, Promotion*, and *Convenience*.

To compile a list of descriptive attributes for *Institutional factors* specific to the large-size female apparel consumer, proves to be difficult. It could be surmised that this grouping was not clearly understood by respondents. However, it is evident that a separate store catering specifically for the female large-size apparel consumer, together with a positive image and no stigma relating to it, are vital to this consumer. Therefore, a description of *Institutional factors* should include:

- Specific female large-size apparel store with which consumers are able to identify
- Niche market
- Affordable merchandise
- Manager present in store
- Projected image, including store bags and store name

4.4.1.9 Post-transaction satisfaction

Areas included in Lindquist's description of *Post-transaction satisfaction* are merchandise in use, returns, and adjustments, thus referring to the customer's satisfaction with the purchase and the store (1974-1975:32). Table 4.30 presents this study's description of *Post-transaction satisfaction*.

Table 4.30 Description of *Post-transaction satisfaction* (n=8)

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	FREQUENCY (n)	%
Ease of return	8	**100%**
Adjustments	3	**37,5%**
Feedback and follow-up	3	**37,5%**
Honest communication	1	12,5%
Send SMS	1	12,5%
Phone to inform about new season's merchandise	1	12,5%

This study described *Post-transaction satisfaction* with *ease of return* (100%), *adjustments* (37,5%), and *feedback and follow-up* (37,5%). Other attributes were *honest communication* (12,5%), the *sending of SMS's* (12,5%), and *phone calls to inform consumers about new season's merchandise* (12,5%).

Ease of return and *adjustments* were used to define *Post-transaction satisfaction* by Lindquist and this study. "Merchandise in use" could be related to what focus groups described as *feedback and follow-up*. *Communication* (12,5%) was more frequently mentioned with reference to *Promotion*, but could also be implied in feedback and follow-up. Sending *SMS's* and *phone calls* to customers (12,5%) could be related to personal contact, also mentioned more frequently in the description of *Promotion*.

Post-transaction satisfaction relating specifically to the female large-size apparel consumer should, therefore, include the following:

- Ease of return
- Adjustments
- Feedback by customers, specifically regarding styles
- Follow-up on purchases, specifically to gauge customer's satisfaction with merchandise

4.4.2 Ratings of descriptions of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings compared to aggregate ratings of generated attributes by female large-size apparel consumers

The perceived importance of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings by the female large-size consumer was measured on the *Schutte Visual Scale*. In the first part of this study, the generated attributes perceived as important in store image by the female large-size apparel consumer were grouped based on Lindquist's nine attribute groupings. The perceived importance of the generated attributes was measured on the *Schutte Visual Scale*, and the

aggregate ratings for the groups were calculated based on the individual ratings. A comparison of these ratings is presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.31 Comparison of ratings: first and second part of this study

Lindquist's groups	Ratings of second part of study	Aggregate ratings of first part of study
Merchandise	10.6	10.4
Service	10.5	10.1
Clientele	5.4	10.4
Physical facilities	9.2	9
Convenience	9.8	0
Promotion	10	9.6
Store atmosphere	10.1	10
Institutional factors	9.9	9.2
Post-transaction satisfaction	9.9	9.9

The aggregate ratings of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings by the female large-size apparel consumer in the first part of the study differ from the ratings based on their description of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings. Ratings based on their description are generally higher, except for *Clientele*, which is considerably lower (5,4; 10,4).

In addition, the rank order of attribute groupings based on these ratings also shows differences. *Merchandise* was rated as most important in both measurements (10,6; 10,4), but *Clientele*, rated equally important based on aggregate ratings (10,4), was rated least important in the ratings based on the description of this group (5,4). *Service* (10,5; 10,1) was rated as next most important in both measurements, followed by *Store atmosphere* (10,1; 10). However, *Promotion* (10) was perceived as next most important based on the description of Lindquist's attribute groupings, followed by *Institutional factors* and *Post-transaction satisfaction* (9,9), *Convenience* (9,8), and *Physical facilities* (9,2).   In the rank order based on aggregate ratings, *Store atmosphere* was followed by *Post-transaction satisfaction* (9,9), *Promotion* (9,6), *Institutional factors* (9,2), and *Physical facilities* (9). None of the generated attributes were grouped under *Convenience*, therefore resulting in no rating for this group based on generated attributes.

The discrepancies regarding *Clientele* warrant further discussion. In the first part of the study, respondents generated attributes they perceived as important in store image. These were grouped together based on Lindquist's nine attribute groupings. This resulted in the highly perceived importance of *Clientele*. However, when presented with the concept of *Clientele*, they perceived it as least important. This is an indication that Lindquist's description of *Clientele*,

used as basis to group attributes together, might not be applicable when defining the grouping as perceived by the female large-size apparel consumer.

4.4.3 Summary

The female large-size apparel consumer's views on and descriptions of Lindquist's nine attribute groupingss differ from the descriptions provided by Lindquist (1974-1975:31-32). Firstly, Lindquist's description of attribute groupings proved to be vague, specifically regarding *Service, Convenience*, and *Store atmosphere*. Attributes generated by the respondents in the first part of this study were grouped based on Lindquist's nine attribute groupings and the description of each of these groupings. In the second part of this study, when respondents were asked specifically to describe these groupings, their description of a specific group included attributes that were grouped differently in the first part of the study. This was especially true for the definitions regarding *Physical facilities* and *Store atmosphere*. This argument is further supported by the differences between this study's grouping of attributes generated in the first part of the study, and the grouping of attributes in the referee analysis (section 3.8).

Secondly, Lindquist's group descriptions allowed for attributes listed under attribute groupings to overlap. This is supported by the numerous overlaps that occurred between the descriptions of different groups in the second part of the study. The descriptions of *Physical facilities* and *Store atmosphere* overlapped to a great extent. In addition, definitions of *Convenience* and *Institutional factors* were interrelated to definitions of other groups, such as *Merchandise, Service, Promotion*, and *Store atmosphere*. Furthermore, the return of merchandise was included in Lindquist's definition of *Service*, as well as *Post-transaction satisfaction*. A study related to expected levels of service further supports this argument (Lee & Johnson, 1997:28). In their study, participants were asked to generate attributes related to service. Attributes identified included lighting, mirrors, a sitting area, as well as fitting rooms, which were used to define physical facilities in this study.

In the first part of this study, specific attributes were grouped together based on Lindquist's description of nine attribute groupings. No attributes in this study were grouped under *Convenience. Convenience* in the second part of this study was described by *parking, location, one-stop shopping, the availability of MTN, Vodacom, Telkom and prepaid cards, a store catering for people in a hurry, as well as for those on a stroll*, and *strong carry bags*. None of these specific attributes were generated in the first part of the study. This could be attributed to the focus group schedule (Appendix 5), where respondents might have been prompted to include the above-mentioned attributes in their description of *Convenience*. Specific attributes describing *Convenience* in the second part of this study were generated in the first part of the study. These attributes, however, were used more frequently to describe other attribute

groupings in the second part of the study. This proves the previous argument that Lindquist's nine attribute groupings and the descriptions of these groupings are not mutually exclusive.

Thirdly, the names given to the different groupings proved to be problematic, again leading to overlapping definitions. Especially *Clientele* and *Institutional factors* were concepts that the respondents had difficulty to define. Lastly, it should also be mentioned that attributes generated in this study were not specified in Lindquist's (1974-1975:31-32) description of the nine groupings. This is especially true for the descriptions related to M*erchandise, Physical facilities, Promotion*, and *Store atmosphere.*

The grouping of attributes in the first part of the study was based on Lindquist's descriptions of attribute groupings, concluding in aggregate ratings for these groupings. The ratings of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings based on the descriptions by respondents compared to the aggregate ratings in the first part of the study, show distinct differences. These differences can be observed in both the ratings of different attribute groupings, as well as the rank order of the attribute groupings, indicating that the respondents' perceptions of attribute groupings differed from Lindquist's descriptions, resulting in different ratings. This emphasizes the need for refining Lindquist's descriptions when studying the female large-size apparel consumer.

In conclusion, the results of this study showed that Lindquist's nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) could be reviewed and refined to provide an adequate research framework for the study of perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer. The descriptions given by respondents in this study showed how Lindquist's groupings could be described more specifically, including all attributes related to a specific grouping as described by the respondents. Special care should be taken to ensure that attribute groupings are mutually exclusive. In addition, the names assigned to groups could be reconsidered, ensuring that they are clearly defined concepts in the mind of the female large-size apparel consumer. This might include the regrouping of Lindquist's groups by combining and renaming them, or incorporating attributes of a certain group in other groups. An opportunity exists to develop a store image attribute framework specific to the female large-size apparel consumer by adapting Lindquist's nine attribute groupings. This could provide an applicable research framework for future studies on female large-size apparel consumers in a multicultural consumer society.

4.5 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the results of the present study. The sample of the study was described in terms of race, age, language, level of education, occupational status, modes of transport, money spent on clothes, monthly income, marital status, religion, and number of children. The

results of the first part of the study described the attributes perceived as important to apparel retail store image, together with the ratings of these attributes by female large-size apparel consumers. Differences and similarities in perceived importance of attributes between race and age groups were also discussed. The second part of the study's results were presented through a comparison of Lindquist's description of nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) and descriptions provided by respondents to determine whether Lindquist's nine attribute groupings are appropriate when studying female large-size consumers. Lastly, the ratings of Lindquist's attribute groupings in the first and second part of the study were compared. This discussion provides a basis for the conclusion and recommendations of this study, presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to expand the existing body of knowledge on retail store image and the female large-size apparel consumer, with special reference to the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size consumer in a multicultural society. The problem statement of this study was formulated as follows:

What retail store image attributes are perceived as important to the female large-size apparel consumer in the multicultural South African consumer society? What are the differences in the perception of these attributes based on race and age group?

In Chapter 1, the introductory perspectives on the research topic were discussed, together with the problem statement and research objectives. Based on reviewed literature, a research framework was developed as basis for this study, considering Assael's *Model of Store choice* (1992:630) in conjunction with Kaiser's contextual perspective on clothing (1997:58), as well as including Lindquist's nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31).

Chapter 2 gave an overview of relevant literature pertaining to this study. This included a discussion of different theoretical perspectives, focusing on theoretical models rooted in consumer behaviour, as well as social-psychological perspectives from the clothing discipline. Store image attributes as a concept within consumer behaviour research, with special reference to apparel retailers, was discussed, and consideration was given to literature relating to the female large-size apparel consumer. This chapter also included certain aspects of the multicultural society, specifically within the South African context, referring to culture and the subcultures of race and age group.

Chapter 3 focused on the methodology employed in this study. The research design was discussed in terms of the research method used, the sample population and sample selection, the measurement instrument, the procedure used to gather data, as well as the data analysis procedure followed in this study.

The discussion of results was presented in Chapter 4. Firstly, the generated attribute groupings perceived to be of importance to the female large-size apparel consumer were discussed, together with the aggregate ratings of perceived importance of these groupings, based on

Lindquist's nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31). The differences in perceived importance of attribute groupings and specific attributes between specific race and age groups within the female large-size apparel market were addressed next. The description of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings by the female large-size apparel consumer were also presented in the discussion of the results. Lastly, a comparison of the ratings of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings based on the description by the female large-size consumer and the aggregate ratings of the generated attributes perceived as important in store image by female large-size apparel consumers were discussed.

This chapter focuses on the conclusions based on the results from this study, as well as recommendations for further research and the implications of this study for the female large-size apparel retailer. The last of the set objectives of this study will be addressed, namely:

To formulate relevant recommendations for future research on the importance of retail store image attributes and the female large-size apparel consumer.

To formulate the implications for female large-size apparel retailers regarding their retail strategy with specific reference to store image and store image attributes.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (1992:630), Kaiser's contextual perspective (1997:58), and Lindquist's nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) were incorporated in a research framework to facilitate the study of the perceived importance of retail store image attributes in relation to the female large-size apparel consumer within the multicultural South African consumer society. This research framework proved to be adequate to address the research problem and achieve the set objectives of this study. Its implementation provides a valuable basis for future research, and also contributes to the development of a useful theoretical base in this field of study.

Results showed *Merchandise* and *Clientele* to be the attribute groupings of highest perceived importance. The importance of *Merchandise* as an attribute grouping could be an indication of the ignorance of the apparel retailing environment, resulting in the neglect of this specific consumer market in the past. These consumers have specific apparel needs and the high rating of *Merchandise* as attribute grouping emphasise the need for retailers to address these needs. The high rating of *Clientele* could be attributed to the need of these consumers to be able to identify with each other and the store when entering a store specifically for the female large-size apparel consumer. *Merchandise* and *Clientele* were followed by *Service, Store atmosphere, Post-transaction satisfaction, Promotion, Institutional factors* and *Physical facilities* in perceived importance. However, the difference between the attribute groupings perceived as most and

least important is relatively small, emphasising the importance of all store image attributes groupings.

All the specific attributes generated in this study received relatively high ratings, and, the mere fact that they were mentioned, proves their significance to the female large-size apparel consumer. This study also generated specific attributes that were not included in any of the studies in the reviewed literature. These attributes could prove to be significant, specifically relating to the female large-size apparel consumer. These results have important implications for retailers in their store image strategy, as discussed in section 5.5.

This part of the study also allowed for the comparison of the different race and age groups. This study concluded that differences and similarities exist in the perceived importance of retail store image attributes based on race and age group. Overall, the different groups showed significant similarities in the specific attributes that were generated. However, there were considerable differences in the ratings of these attributes between specific groups. Africans generally gave higher ratings, with Whites and the 20-29 year age group giving the lowest ratings. Whites also tended to generate the most detailed specific attributes within each grouping. These results could be attributed to the legacy of apartheid where, traditionally, Africans and Coloureds were disadvantaged. Typically, Whites were more exposed to higher levels of apparel retailing. This explains the detailed specific attributes generated by Whites, whereas Africans and Coloureds place emphasis on attribute groupings, with less emphasis on specific detail regarding specific attributes. Caution should be taken not to generalise from these findings. The study's results did not yield definitive conclusions regarding race and age groups other than to show that differences as well as similarities occur, which emphasises the need for further research.

In the second part of the study, the descriptions of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings by the female large-size apparel consumer were presented. These descriptions differed from the descriptions provided by Lindquist's study. Findings indicated that Lindquist's groupings could be considered as vaguely defined, not mutually exclusive, and in some instances did not include all the attributes perceived as important by the female large-size apparel consumer. In addition, the names attributed to the different attribute groupings proved to be difficult to define by the female large-size apparel consumers. The study, therefore, concludes that Lindquist's description of attribute groupings can be refined and regrouped to provide a more appropriate framework to study the female large-size apparel consumer. The differences in the ratings of Lindquist's nine attribute groupings based on the description of respondents, compared to the aggregate ratings obtained in the first part of the study, emphasised the need to adapt Lindquist's nine attribute groupings and their descriptions when studying the female large-size apparel consumer. Although this was an exploratory study focusing on a specific group of

apparel consumers, it could be concluded that the proposed adaptions regarding Lindquist's nine attribute groupings could be implemented in research regarding other apparel consumers.

This study showed that store image is a complex phenomenon that includes both tangible and intangible attributes. Store image cannot be universally defined, as it is specific to different consumer markets. The grouping of attributes also proves to be a challenge since groupings overlap to a great extent. This study contributed to an understanding of the way store image relates to the female large-size apparel consumer by refining the description of specific attributes and attribute groupings.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

This exploratory study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on retail store image attributes, as well as the female large-size consumer as a viable market segment. It also provides a basis from which future research can be undertaken. However, there were some limitations to this study. Section 3.9 described the measures taken to ensure valid and reliable results, given the practical constraints of this study. The following section will acknowledge and discuss the limitations of this study. The limitations of this study relate mostly to the nature of focus groups as a research method, and include the following:

- The sample employed in this study was relatively small. This can detract from the generalisability of results.

- The sample list, from which the sample for this study was selected, was representative of a very specific group of female large-size apparel consumers, namely account holders who purchased from a specific retailer within a specific geographical area and time. Responses included in this study's results was therefore limited to those female large-size apparel consumers included in the sample list. This should be taken into consideration when interpreting results.

- The sample list did not prove to be adequate to segment Africans into different age groups. The results based on age group excluded African respondents, limiting the conclusions drawn based on age.

- Not all respondents who indicated their willingness to partake in this study during the recruitment process, showed up for the focus group discussions, thereby diminishing the sizes of the focus groups. This might have limited interaction between respondents.

- The facilitator of this study was a male. This factor might have inhibited open discussion amongst the female large-size apparel respondents in the focus group discussions.

- The location of the focus group discussions could have discouraged respondents with transport difficulties to attend discussions. In addition, the ideal of having the discussion in-store could not be achieved. An in-store discussion could have elicited responses, that were otherwise not mentioned.

- Lastly, researcher bias could have been introduced in the data analysis process, due to the characteristics and orientations of the researcher. This might have influenced the results of the study.

However, careful consideration was given to these limitations in the research design by acknowledging them and taking precautions to address their influence. The results of this exploratory study, therefore, continue to serve as a reliable and valid base for future research.

Considering the current competitive retail environment and the growing female large-size apparel market, this study's findings indicate that further research into the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by this market is warranted. The results also imply that retailers should take action. Therefore, recommendations aimed at academics and retailers will consequently be discussed.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the results of this study, the following could be considered in future research:

- The research framework employed in this study could be implemented and expanded in future studies, including the influence of store image on consumers' attitudes towards stores, store choice, in-store information processing, and product and brand purchases, as proposed in Assael's *Model of Store Choice* (Assael, 1992:630).

- Demographic variables other than race and age group could be included in future research, as well as other consumer characteristics, such as psychographic variables of role, lifestyle and personality.

- The findings of this study could be used as point of departure to develop a questionnaire to be implemented in quantitative research studies, providing descriptive and explanatory findings on this research phenomenon.

- The tentative findings on the differences between race and age groups regarding the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumers could be further explored in future research, leading to definite conclusions.

- Findings related to Lindquist's description of nine attribute groupings (1974-1975:31) offer an opportunity to refine and regroup these descriptions to provide an appropriate framework for the study of the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer.

- Findings on methodological trends in retail store image attribute research presented in section 2.3.3 could be acknowledged and addressed in future research.

- The congruency between self-image and store image can be investigated, specifically relating to the female large-size apparel consumer.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEMALE LARGE-SIZE APPAREL RETAILERS

The findings of this study hold specific implications for female large-size apparel retailers from which the following recommendations can be made. Retailers should address the following aspects:

- *Merchandise*:
  - there should be an assortment of styles and colours that consumers can mix and match
  - merchandise should be fashionable, modern and sexy, as well as unique
  - styling should be specific and sensitive to the female large-size apparel consumer, considering the specific apparel needs
  - merchandise should be available in all sizes at all retail stores
  - merchandise should be of high quality, specifically relating to the materials used
  - materials, including colour and pattern, should be suited to the female large-size apparel consumer
  - accessories, especially shoes and including scarves, bags, jewellery, perfume and cosmetics, should be available
  - merchandise should include specialised clothing, such as sleepwear, underwear, and garments for special occasions, once again suited to the female large-size apparel consumer.

- *Service:*
  - sales assistants should be trained and knowledgeable about the female large-size apparel consumer's apparel needs, and also provide focused attention
  - efficient inter-store transfers should be available
  - clothes should be put back after being fitted
  - there should be a basket or bag available to put things in whilst shopping
  - female large-size apparel consumers have the need for telephonic orders and deliveries.

- *Clientele:*
  - sales assistants should be large-size, wear what they sell, and show empathy with the female large-size apparel consumer.

- *Physical facilities:*
  - washrooms should be available
  - the store should be spacious
  - there should be a couch
  - the temperature should be regulated
  - there should be enough fitting rooms that are comfortable, spacious, private, and have sufficient lighting and mirrors
  - mirrors within the store should be sufficient
  - rails should be within reaching distance and not too full
  - there should be appropriate seating for the fitting of shoes
  - purchase points should be enough and manned to eliminate waiting, and there should be a special purchase point to pay accounts
  - the store should have an attractive, inviting portal
  - water cans should be available
  - hangers should be efficient.

- *Convenience:*
  - there should be free, enclosed parking nearby that is safe
  - the location of the store, as well as the location of the store within a shopping mall, should be accessible
  - convenience should be an underlying dimension in all aspects of a store.

- *Promotion:*
  - brochures, as well as other promotional efforts, should be sent to consumers with their account

- media used for promotion should include television, magazines, papers, and radio
- in-store advertising should be a repetition of other promotional efforts
- there should be enough sales announced through timely communication
- promotion should included special events such as fashion shows
- window and in-store displays should be attractive and show suggestions for wear, as well as mix and match suggestions on large-size dolls
- there should be a large-size, representative model
- the store should have a personal relationship with consumers
- promotion should be done through personal letters and SMS messages
- stores should offer a gold and cash card system
- discount coupons, competitions, and vouchers are important promotional tools.

- *Store atmosphere:*
  - there should be soft, relaxing music in the store
  - lighting should not be too bright or harsh and should allow consumers to see garments' true colours
  - colours should be soft and neutral
  - the interior decoration should be attractive and inviting, creating a warm feeling through finishing materials of wood and stainless steel
  - the carpet should be soft, plush and luxurious
  - the store should be relaxed and cosy
  - there should be no discrimination or prejudice.

- *Institutional factors:*
  - female large-size apparel consumers have a specific need for a separate store with which they can identify
  - the name of the store should not refer to these consumers as the fuller figure - they regard themselves as real women.

- *Post-transaction satisfaction:*
  - merchandise should be easy to return, including a return period of up to one month, with a full refund or credit even without proof of purchase, i.e. consumers should be trusted when returning merchandise
  - there should be a service available to make garment adjustments
  - store should build a personal relationship with consumers through personal contact by following up on purchases, as well as allowing consumers to provide feedback.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This exploratory study provides some insight into the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to the female large-size apparel consumer, given the context of the South African society. South Africa is a heterogeneous, multicultural consumer society, characterised by the meeting of the first and third world, and influenced by globalisation, as well as a highly competitive market. One prominent issue that needs to be addressed in retailing in South Africa is effective ways to communicate within a multicultural market. Marketing strategies should be developed that can be implemented successfully on a cross-cultural basis. Therefore, a need exists to experiment with research tools, resulting in reliable and valid data from this multicultural society.

Retail store image and store image attributes is a multidimensional research phenomenon, and, in relation to the female large-size apparel consumer within the South African society, proves to be even more complex in nature. The female large-size apparel consumer is a growing market segment that has specific needs relating to retail store image attributes and the way they contribute to store image, as per the findings of this study. Academics should explore these needs and female large-size apparel retailers should take note and address them, thereby benefiting from the knowledge gained from the understanding of the female large-size apparel consumer and their perceived importance of retail store image attributes.

LIST OF REFERENCES

ABRAHAM-MURALI, L & LITTRELL, MA. 1995. Consumers' perceptions of apparel quality over time: an exploratory study. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 13(3):149-158.

AMIRANI, S & GATES, R. 1993. An attribute-anchored conjoint approach to measuring store image. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 21(5):30-39.

ASSAEL, H. 1992. *Consumer behaviour and marketing action.* 4th ed. Ohio. PWS-Kent.

ASSAEL, H. 1995. *Consumer behavior and marketing action.* 5th ed. Cincinnati, Ohio. Southern-Western College Publishing.

BABBIE, E. 1998. *The practice of social research.* 8th ed. Johannesburg. Wadsworth.

BEARDEN, WO. 1977. Determinant attributes of store patronage: Downtown versus outlying shopping centers. *Journal of Retailing* 53(2):15-22.

BEARDEN, WO, TEEL, JE Jr. & DURAND, RM. 1978. Media usage, psychographic, demographic dimensions of retail shoppers. *Journal of Retailing* 54(1):65-74.

BELLENGER, DN, ROBERTSON, DH & GREENBERG, BA. 1977. Shopping center patronage motives. *Journal of Retailing* 53(2):29-38.

BELLIZZI, JS, CROWLEY, AE & HASTY, RW. 1983. *Journal of Retailing* 59(1):21-45.

BERKMAN, HW, LINDQUIST, JD & SIRGY, MJ. 1998. *Consumer behaviour.* Lincolnwood, IL. NTC.

BIRTWISTLE, G, CLARKE, I & FREATHY, P. 1999. Customer segmentation in fashion retailing: A conjoint study. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 3(3):245-254.

BIRTWISTLE, G & SHEARER, L. 2001. Consumer perception of five UK fashion retailers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 5(1):9-18.

BIRTWISTLE, G & SIDDIQUI, N. 1995. Store image – characteristics for menswear fashion retailers. *The Home Economist* 14(6):20-22.

BLESS, C & HIGSON-SMITH, C. 2000. *Fundamentals of social research methods. An African Perspective.* 3rd ed. Landsdowne. Juta.

BURNS, DJ. 1992. Image transference and retail site selection. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 20(5):38-43.

BUTLER, SM & FRANCIS, S. 1997. The effects of environmental attitudes on apparel purchasing behavior. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 15(2):76-85.

CANT, M & MACHADO, R. 2002. *Marketing success stories.* 4th ed. Cape Town. Oxford University Press.

CARY, RT & ZYLLA, JM. 1981. Fabric speciality stores: Consumer dissatisfaction with selected in-store attributes. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 5:69-78.

CASSILL, NL & DRAKE, JF. 1987. Apparel selection criteria related to female consumers' lifestyle. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 6(1):20-28.

CHOWDHARY, U. 1989. Apparel shopping behaviour of elderly men and women. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 68:1183-1189.

CHOWDHARY, U. 1999. Retail store attributes, fashion leadership and older consumers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 3(2):126-132.

CHOWDHARY, U & BEALE, NV. 1988. Plus-size women's clothing interest, satisfactions and dissatisfactions with ready-to-wear apparel. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 66:783-788.

DAMHORST, ML, MILLER, MA & MICHELMAN, SO. 1999. *The meanings of dress.* New York. Fairchild.

DAVIS, LL & LENNON, SJ. 1988. Social cognition and the study of clothing and human behavior. *Social Behavior and Personality* 16(2):175-186.

DE KLERK, HM. 1999. 'n Sosiaal-sielkundige en kognitiewe benadering tot die ontwikkeling van 'n kledingverbruikersbesluitnemingsmodel. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences* 27(2):116-128.

DE KLERK, HM, VELLEMAN, AK & MALHERBE, E. 1998. 'n Kwalitatiewe ondersoek na die invloed van aspekte van die klerewinkel en die verkoopsdame se voorkoms op die

dameskelereverbruiker se besluitnemingsproses. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences* 26(1):15-26.

DICHTER, E. 1985. What's in an image. *Journal of Marketing* 2(1):75-81.

DONOVAN, RJ & ROSSITER, JR. 1982. Store atmosphere: An environmental psychology approach. *Journal of Retailing* 58(1):34-57.

DU PLESSIS, PJ & ROUSSEAU, GG. 1999. *Buyer behaviour. A multi-cultural approach.* 2nd ed. Halfway House, South Africa. Thomson.

DU PREEZ, R. 2001. *Female apparel shopping behaviour within a multi-cultural consumer society: Variables, market segments, profiles and implications.* Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch.

EASEY, M. 2002. *Fashion marketing.* 2nd ed. United Kingdom. Blackwell Science.

ENGEL, JF, BLACKWELL, RD & MINIARD, PW. 1995. *Consumer behavior.* Fort Worth. Dryden Press.

FARR, BA. 1999. Plus-size modeling: The industry, the market, and reflections as a professional in the image industry. In Damhorst, ML, Miller, KA & Michelman, SO. 1999. *The meanings of dress.* New York. Fairchild.

FRINGS, GS. 1999. *Fashion. From concept to consumer.* 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.

GAAL, B & BURNS, LD. 2001. Apparel descriptions in catalogues and perceived risk associated with catalogue purchases. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 19(1):22-30.

GARDNER, MP & SIOMKOS, GJ. 1986. Toward a methodology for assessing effects of in-store atmospherics. In Lutz, R (ed). 1986. *Advances in Consumer Research*:27-31.

GENTRY, JW & BURNS, AC. 1977-1978. How "important" are evaluative criteria in shopping center patronage? *Journal of Retailing* 53(4):73-86.

GROSSBART, S, HAMPTON, R, RAMMOHAN, B & LAPIDUS, RS. 1990. Environmental dispositions and customer response to store atmospherics. *Journal of Business Research* 21:225-241.

HANSEN, RA & DEUTSCHER, T. 1977-1978. An empirical investigation of attribute importance in retail store selection. *Journal of Retailing* 53(4):59-72.

HARRIS, MB, HARRIS, RJ & BOCHNER, S. 1982. Fat, four-eyed, and female: stereotypes of obesity, glasses, and gender. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 12(6):503-516.

HARRIS, MB, WALTERS, LC & WASCHULL, S. 1991. Gender and ethnic differences in obesity-related behaviors and attitudes in a college sample. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 21(19):1545-1566.

HAWKINS, DI, BEST, RJ & CONEY, KA. 1989. *Consumer behavior: Implications for marking strategy.* 4th ed. Boston, Massachusetts. Irwin.

HAWKINS, DI, BEST, RJ & CONEY, KA. 1998. *Consumer behavior. Building marketing strategy.* 7th ed. New York. McGraw-Hill.

HIRSCHMAN, EC, GREENBERG, B & ROBERTSON, DH. 1978. The intermarket reliability of retail image research: An empirical examination. *Journal of Retailing* 54(1):3-12.

HORN, MJ & GUREL, LM. 1981. *The second skin.* 3rd ed. Boston. Houghton Mifflin.

HUDDLESTON, P, FORD, I & BICKLE, MC. 1993. Demographic and lifestyle characteristics as predictors of fashion opinion leadership among mature consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 11(4):26-31.

HUDDLESTON, P, FORD, I & MAHONEY, MY. 1990. The relationship between importance of retail store attributes and lifestyle of mature female consumers. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 14:71-85.

JACOBY, J & MAZURSKY, D. 1984. Linking brand and retailer images – do the potential risks outweigh the potential benefits? *Journal of Retailing* 60(2):105-122.

JAMES, DL, DURAND, RM & DREVES, RA. 1976. The use of a multi-attribute attitude model in a store image study. *Journal of Retailing* 52(2):23-32.

JASPER, CR & KLASSEN, ML. 1990. Stereotypical beliefs about appearance: implications for retailing and consumer issues. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 71:519-528.

JOYCE, ML & LAMBERT, DR. 1996. Memories of the way stores were and retail store image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management* 24(1):24-33.

KAISER, SB. 1997. *The social psychology of clothing. Symbolic appearances in context.* 2nd ed. New York. Macmillan.

KIM, Y & HAN, S. 2000. Perceived images of retail stores and brands: Comparison among three ethnic consumer groups. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* 92(3):58-61.

KIND, KO & HATHCOTE, JM. 2000. Speciality-size college females: Satisfaction with retail outlets and apparel fit. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 4(4):315-324.

KOTLER, P. 1973-1974. Atmospherics as a marketing tool. *Journal of Retailing* 49(4):48-55.

KRUEGER, RA. 1988. *Focus groups. A practical guide for applied research.* Newbury Park, California. Sage.

KRUEGER, RA & CASEY, MA. 2000. *Focus groups. A practical guide for applied research.* Thousand Oaks, California. Sage.

LABAT, KL & DELONG, MR. 1990. Body cathexis and satisfaction with fit of apparel. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 8(2):43-48.

LAMB, CW Jr., HAIR, JF Jr. & MCDANIEL, C. 1998. *Marketing.* 4th ed. Cincinnati, Ohio. South-Western College Publishing.

LEE, M & BURNS, LD. 1993. Self-consciousness and clothing purchase criteria for Korean and United States college women. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 11(4):32-40.

LEE, S, HWANG, S & KANG, J. 1996. Understanding preferred attributes of Korean fashion specialty stores: Employment of conjoint analysis. In Ladisch, CM. *International Textiles and Apparel Association Proceedings.* Monument, Colorado. International Textile and Apparel Association. p. 96.

LEE, M & JOHNSON, KKP. 1997. Customer expectations for service at apparel retail outlets. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*:26-30.

LENNON, SJ. 1992. Categorization as a function of body type. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10(2):18-23.

LENNON, SJ. 1997. Physical attractiveness, age and body type: Further evidence. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 15(1):60-64.

LENNON, SJ & BURNS, LD. 2000. Diversity of research in textiles, clothing, and human behaviour: The relationship between what we know and how we know. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 18(4):213-226.

LENNON, SJ, BURNS, LD & ROWOLD, KL. 1995. Dress and human behaviour research: Sampling, subjects, and consequences for statistics. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 13(4):262-272.

LINDQUIST, JD. 1974-1975. Meaning of image. *Journal of Retailing* 50(4):29-38.

LIU, K & DICKERSON, KG. 1999. Taiwanese male office workers: Selection criteria for business apparel purchase. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 3(3):255-266.

LOUDON, DL & DELLA BITTA, AJ. 1993. *Consumer behavior. Concepts and applications.* 4th ed. New York. McGraw-Hill.

LUMPKIN, JR, GREENBERG, BA & GOLDSTUCKER, JL. 1985. Marketplace needs of the elderly: Determinant attributes and store choice. *Journal of Retailing* 61(2):75-105.

MACGILLIVRAY, MS & WILSON, JD. 1997. Clothing appearance among early, middle and late adolescents. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 15(1):43-49.

MALAN, A. 1992. *Kwalitatiewe navorsing in verbruikersgedrag: Die rol van die fasiliteerder.* MCom Thesis, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit. Johannesburg.

MALHOLTRA, NK. 1983. A threshold model of store choice. *Journal of Retailing* 59(2):3-21.

MARKS, RB. 1976. Operationalizing the concept of store image. *Journal of Retailing* 52(3):37-46.

MARSHALL, SG, JACKSON, H, STANLEY, MS, KEFGEN, M & TOUCHIE-SPECHT, P. 2000. *Individuality in clothing selection and personal appearance.* 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Prentice Hall.

MARTINEAU, P. 1958. The personality of the retail store. *Harvard Business Review* 36:47-55.

MATTSON, BE. 1982. Situational influences on store choice. *Journal of Retailing* 58(3):46-58.

Mature market: a new look at the over-50's. How they spend. 1988. *Stores* May:35-36.

MAY, R, SHIM, S & KOTSIOPULOS, A. 1992. Market segmentation of tuxedo customers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 11(1):31-38.

MILLER, NJ, VAN AARDT, AM, VISSER, EM & JOUNG, H-M. 2000. U.S. and South African college age consumers' preference for apparel store image. Unpublished report. NJ Miller, Department of Textiles, Clothing and Design, University of Nebraska, Nebraska.

MINSHALL, BC. 1994. Apparel preferences: Underlying dimensions and measurement. In DeLong, MR & Fiore, AM. 1994. Aesthetics of textiles and clothing: Advancing multidisciplinary perspective. *International Textile and Apparel Associations Special Publication #7.* Monument, Colorado. International Textiles and Apparel Association.

MORGAN, DL. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, California. Sage.

MOUTON, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your Master's & Doctoral studies. A South African guide and resource book.* Pretoria. Van Schaik.

MOUTON, J & MARAIS, HC. 1990. *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences.* Pretoria. Human Sciences Research Council.

MOWEN, JC. 1995. *Consumer behavior.* 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.

MOWEN, JC & MINOR, M. 1998. *Consumer behavior.* 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.

MUELLER, CS & SMILEY, EL. 1995. *Marketing today's fashoin.* 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.

NAGASAWA, RH, KAISER, SB & HUTTON, SS. 1989. Theoretical development in clothing and textiles: Are we stuck in the concrete? *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 7(2):23-31.

O'CONNOR, MJ. 1990. On the subject of image. *Supermarket Business* 47(1):35-40.

ORKIN, FM. 1997. *Earning and spending in South Africa. Selected findings of the 1995 income and expenditure survey.* Pretoria. Central Statistics.

PESSEMIER, EA. 1980. Store image and positioning. *Journal of Retailing* 56(1):94-106.

PETER, JP & OLSON, JC. 1990. *Consumer behavior and marketing strategy.* 2nd ed. Boston. Irwin.

POWELL, T. 2001. *Donna-Claire – background.* Foschini Stores (PTY) LTD. Stanley Lewis Centre, 340 Voortrekker Road, Parow East, 7500. (Personal interview).

RABOLT, NJ & MILER, JK. 1997. *Concepts and cases in retail and merchandise management.* New York. Fairchild.

Retailing – what does the future hold? 2001. *Pursuit* April/May:28-31.

ROTH, J, WORKMAN, J & KING, J. 1995. Managers' opinions of sales associates appearance and store image. In Ladisch, CM. *International Textiles and Apparel Association Proceedings.* Monument, Colorado. International Textile and Apparel association, Inc. p. 54.

ROUSSEAU, GG. 1990. The decision-making process. In Du Plessis, PJ, Rousseau, GG & Blem, NH (eds.). *Consumer behaviour. A South African perspective.* Halfway House. Southern.

RUDD, NA & LENNON, SJ. 2001. Body image: linking aesthetics and social psychology of appearance. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 19(3):120-133.

RYAN, MS. 1966. *Clothing: A study in human behavior.* New York. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

SALUSSO-DEONIER, CJ, DELONG, MR, MARTIN, FB & KROHN, KR. 1985-1986. A multivariate method of classifying body form variation for sizing women's apparel. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 4(1):38-45.

SCHIFFMAN, LG, DASH, JF & DILLON, WR. 1977. The contribution of store-image characteristics to store-type choice. *Journal of Retailing* 53(2):3-14.

SCHIFFMAN, LG & KANUK, LL. 2000. *Consumer behavior.* 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.

SCHUTTE, D. 2000. *People first. Determining priorities for community development.* Parow East. Ebony Books.

SHETH, JG. 1983. An integrative theory of patronage preference and behaviour. In Darden, WR & Lusch, RF. *Patronage behavior and retail management.* New York. North Holland.

SHIM, S & DRAKE, MF. 1990. Influence of lifestyle and evaluative criteria for apparel on information search among non-employed consumers. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 14(4):381-395.

SHIM, S & KOTSIOPULOS, A. 1992a. Patronage behavior of apparel shopping: Part I. Shopping orientations, store attributes, information sources, and personal characteristics. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10(2):48-57.

SHIM, S & KOTSIOPULOS, A. 1992b. Patronage behavior of apparel shopping: Part II. Testing a patronage model of consumer behavior. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10(2):58-64.

SHIM, S & KOSTIOPULOS, A. 1993. A typology of apparel shopping orientation segments among female consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 12(1):73-85.

SHIM, S, KOTSIOPULOS, A & KNOLL, DS. 1990. Short, average-height, tall, and big men: body-cathexis, clothing and retail satisfactions, and clothing behavior. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 70:83-96.

SHIM, S, KOSTIOPULOS, A & KNOLL, DS. 1991. Body cathexis, clothing attitude, and their relations to clothing and shopper behaviour among male consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 9(3):35-44.

SIMON, N. 1995. BAT shows potential of plus-size fashions. In Fiore, AM & Kimle, PA. 1997. *Understanding aesthetics for the merchandising and design professional.* New York. Fairchild.

SNYDER, M, TANKE, ED & BERSCHEID, E. 1977. Social perception and interpersonal behavior: On the self-fulfilling nature of social stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35(9):656-666.

South African Statistics 2000. 2000. Pretoria. Statistics South Africa.

SPROLES, GB. 1979. *Fashion: Consumer behavior toward dress.* Minneapolis. Burgess.

SPROLES, GB & BURNS, LD. 1994. *Changing Appearances. Understanding dress in contemporary society.* New York. Fairchild.

STEWART, DW & SHAMDASANI, PN. 1990. *Focus groups: Theory and practice.* Newbury Park, California. Sage.

SUMMERS, TA & HEBERT, PR. 1998. Influence of merchandise display light levels on approach-avoidance behaviour of consumers. In Owens, NJ. *International Textiles and Apparel Association Proceedings.* Monument, Colorado. International Textile and Apparel Association, Inc. p. 73.

TERBLANCHè, N. 1998. *Retail management.* New York. Thomson.

THORPE, DI & AVERY, CE. 1983-1984. A demographic and psychographic assessment of a specialty store's customers and non-customers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 2:35-41.

VAN DE VELDE, J, PELTON, W, TURNBULL CATON, S & BYRNE, M. 1996. Consumer behaviour reflected in store and clothing selection criteria: A pilot study in Canada and England. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 20(4):377-391.

VAN KENHOVE, P, DE WULF, K & VAN WATERSCHOOT, W. 1999. The impact of task definition on store-attribute saliences and store choice. *Journal of Retailing* 75(1):125-137.

VISSER, EM. 1994. The mature clothing consumer: A research review. *Journal of Dietetics and Home Economics* 22(1):40-46.

VISSER, EM & DU PREEZ, R. 1998. Consumer behaviour of mature female apparel shoppers: A cultural perspective. In Miller, NJ & Littrell, MA eds. 1998. *International apparel consumer behaviour.* Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

VISSER, EM, DU PREEZ, R & DU TOIT, JB. 1996. The mature female clothing shopper: Profiles and shopping behaviour. *Journal of Industrial Psychology* 22(6):1-6.

163

WEBB, J. 2001. *A comparison of the nine-point hedonic scale, categorical scale, and the Schutte visual scale using consumer panels.* Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia. United States of America.

WELLS, WD & PRENSKY, D. 1996. *Consumer behavior.* New York. Wiley.

WHEATLEY, JJ & CHIU, JSY. 1977. The effects of price, store image, and product and respondent characteristics on perceptions of quality. *Journal of Marketing Research* 14:181-186.

WILKIE, WL. 1994. *Consumer behavior.* 3rd ed. New York. Wiley.

WILLIAMS, TG & SLAMA, ME. 1995. Market mavens' purchase decision evaluative criteria: Implications for brand and store promotion efforts. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 12(3):4-21.

WINAKOR, G. 1988. Research in fashion merchandising – the need for a theoretical base. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 7(1):31-35.

YANG, Y. 1996. Income elasticities for clothing expenditure: a comparison among different occupational groups. *Consumer Interests Annual* 42:447-452.

YOO, S, KHAN, S & RUTHERFORD-BLACK, C. 1999. Petite and tall-sized consumer segmentation: Comparison of fashion involvement, pre-purchase clothing satisfaction and clothing needs. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 3(3):219-235.

APPENDICES

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON RETAIL STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES

Store Image Attributes

Store Personnel	Self-Image Congruency	Social Class Appeal	Clientele	Phone Orders	Delivery	Credit	Ease of Return	Self-Service	Salesclerk Service	Service, General	Service	Pricing	Guarantee	Styling, Fashion	Selection/Assortment	Quality	Merchandise	Researchers
•		•					•		•	•		•		•	•	•		Amirani & Gates (1993) ~
									•			•			•	•		Bearden (1977) ~ #
		•							•	•		•			•			Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
												•		•	•	•		Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
									•			•		•	•	•		Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
•							•		•			•		•	•	•		Birtwistle & Siddiqui (1995)
•		•							•	•					•	•		Burns (1992) ~
									•	•		•	•	•	•	•		Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
						•			•	•		•		•				Chowdhary (1989)
•					•	•	•		•			•		•		•		Chowdhary (1999)
•																		De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
																		Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
																		Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
		•							•			•		•	•	•		Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
																		Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
		•			•	•	•		•			•	•	•	•	•		Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
						•	•		•			•	•	•	•	•		Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
					•	•	•		•			•		•	•	•		Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
		•										•				•		Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
•									•	•		•		•	•	•		James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
•		•							•	•		•		•	•	•		Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
		•										•						Kim & Han (2000)
										•				•	•	•		Lee, Hwang & Kang (1996)
•						•	•			•						•		Lee & Johnson (1997)
•				•	•	•	•		•			•		•	•	•		Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
									•	•						•		Malhotra (1983) ~
		•				•	•		•			•		•	•	•		Marks (1976)
	•					•	•		•			•		•	•	•		Mattson (1982)
•									•	•								Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)
•										•								Roth, Workman & King (1995)
									•			•	•		•			Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~
•							•		•	•		•		•		•		Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)

Researchers

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

za

http://scholar.sun.ac.za

Notes:
- ~ not specifically clothing
- # not retail outlet

Researchers	Atmosphere/Congeniality	Store Atmosphere	Symbols and Colours	Trading Stamps	Advertising	Advertising/Display	Sales Promotion	Promotion	Parking	Locational Convenience	Convenience	Convenience	Architecture	Shopping Ease	Store Layout	Physical Facilities	Physical Facilities
Amirani & Gates (1993) ~	*												*				
Bearden (1977) ~ #	*								*	*							
Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #	*								*	*	*		*				
Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~	*		*														
Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)															*		
Birtwistle & Siddiqui (1995)	*						*		*	*	*		*		*	*	
Burns (1992) ~	*				*										*		
Cary & Zylla (1981) ~	*					*	*				*			*			
Chowdhary (1989)						*	*				*	*		*			
Chowdhary (1999)	*				*					*	*			*		*	
De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)													*				
Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~	*																
Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~	*																
Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #	*				*				*	*	*		*		*		
Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~	*												*		*	*	
Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~	*				*				*	*				*	*	*	
Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~	*					*				*					*		
Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~							*		*	*	*			*			
Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)	*																
James, Durand & Dreves (1976)	*																
Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~	*					*							*		*	*	
Kim & Han (2000)																	
Lee, Hwang & Kang (1996)							*										
Lee & Johnson (1997)	*		*											*		*	
Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)	*				*		*		*	*	*		*	*		*	
Malhotra (1983) ~							*									*	
Marks (1976)	*				*	*			*	*	*			*	*		
Mattson (1982)																	
Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)			*			*									*	*	
Roth, Workman & King (1995)	*																
Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~										*							
Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)										*			*				

168

Post-Transaction Satisfaction	Reliability	Reputation	Conservative/Modern	Institutional	Store Image Attributes
			*		Amirani & Gates (1993) ~
					Bearden (1977) ~ #
					Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
			*		Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
*		*			Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
*		*			Birtwistle & Siddiqui (1995)
					Burns (1992) ~
*	·				Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
		*			Chowdhary (1989)
*		*			Chowdhary (1999)
					De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
					Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
					Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
		*			Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
					Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
*		*			Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
					Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
		*			Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
		*	*		Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
					James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
		*	*		Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
					Kim & Han (2000)
					Lee, Hwang & Kang (1996)
*					Lee & Johnson (1997)
*		*			Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
					Malhotra (1983) ~
			*		Marks (1976)
	*				Mattson (1982)
					Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)
					Roth, Workman & King (1995)
					Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~
*					Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

Researchers

Researchers	Quality	Merchandise	Selection/Assortment	Styling, Fashion	Guarantee	Pricing	Service	Service, General	Salesclerk Service	Self-Service	Ease of Return	Credit	Delivery	Phone Orders	Clientele	Social Class Appeal	Self-Image Congruency	Store Personnel
Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)			*	*		*		*	*			*						*
Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)	*		*	*					*									
Summers & Hebert (1998)																		
Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)	*		*	*		*			*									
Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)	*		*	*		*		*	*							*		
Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~	*		*	*		*		*										
Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~	*																	
Williams & Slama (1995) ~			*	*		*			*		*					*		

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

170

Researchers	Atmosphere/Congeniality	Symbols and Colours	Trading Stamps	Advertising	Advertising/Display	Sales Promotion	Parking	Locational Convenience	Convenience	Architecture	Shopping Ease	Store Layout	Physical Facilities
Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)	*				*	*	*	*			*	*	*
Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)													
Summers & Hebert (1998)					*								
Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)				*									
Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)	*							*					
Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~	*							*		*	*		
Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~													
Williams & Slama (1995) ~	*							*	*				

Column groups: Store Atmosphere, Promotion, Convenience, Physical Facilities — under Image/Attitude Attributes

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

171

Researchers	Institutional	Conservative/Modern	Reputation	Reliability	Post-Transaction Satisfaction
Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)					*
Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)					
Summers & Hebert (1998)					
Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)		*			
Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)					
Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~					*
Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~					
Williams & Slama (1995) ~			*		

Image/Attitude Attributes

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

172

APPENDIX 2

METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS IN RETAIL STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTE RESEARCH

Probability Sample	Non-probability Sample	Elderly Females	Elderly People	Adult Males	Adult Females	Adults	Female Students	Students	Researchers
	•							160	Amirani & Gates (1993) ~
•						95			Bearden (1977) ~ #
	•					261			Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
•						125			Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
	•					97			Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy (1999)
•						791			Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
	•							369	Burns (1992) ~
•						264			Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
	•		72						Chowdhary (1989)
•			122						Chowdhary (1999)
	•				4				De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
	•							66	Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
	•					80			Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
•						199			Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
•						243			Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
•						485			Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
•						3447			Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
•		512							Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
	•					91		77	Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
	•							199	James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
•						720			Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
	•							376	Kim & Han (2000)
	•							29	Lee & Johnson (1997)
•			3009						Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
	•					210			Malholtra (1983) ~
•							139		Marks (1976)
•						104			Mattson (1982)
	•							208	Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)

Sampling / Sample / Researchers

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

Closed-ended Questions	Open-ended Questions	Focus Group Interview	Unstructured In-depth Interview	Structured Interview via Small Groups	Structured Questionnaire via Telephone Interview	Structured Questionnaire via Face-to-face Interview	Self-administered Questionnaire (Mailed)	Self-administered Questionnaire	Experiment	Field Research	Survey	Researchers
								•			•	Amirani & Gates (1993)~
								•			•	Bearden (1977) ~ #
							•				•	Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
								•			•	Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
							•				•	Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy (1999)
	•						•				•	Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
								•			•	Burns (1992) ~
								•			•	Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
•	•					•					•	Chowdhary (1989)
•						•					•	Chowdhary (1999)
		•		•						•		De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
•								•			•	Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
								•			•	Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
								•			•	Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
						•					•	Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
						•					•	Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
					•						•	Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
						•					•	Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
								•			•	Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
								•			•	James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
						•					•	Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
								•			•	Kim & Han (2000)
•	•									•		Lee & Johnson (1997)
						•					•	Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
				•							•	Malholtra (1983) ~
								•			•	Marks (1976)
						•					•	Mattson (1982)
								•			•	Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)

Technique of Data Collection

Modes of Observation

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

175

Legend:
~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

Semantic Differential Scale	Dissimilarity-similarity Scale	Bipolar Scale	Rating Scale	Likert-scale	Developed by Researchers	Existing Instruments	Developed Instrument Based on Previous Research	Pretesting of Developed Instrument	Pretest Sample of Respondents to Develop Instrument	Researchers
	•		•						•	Amirani & Gates (1993)~
	•	•							•	Bearden (1977) ~ #
				•		•	•			Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
		•				•	•			Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
			•					•		Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy (1999)
•								•		Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
				•			•			Burns (1992) ~
				•			•	•		Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
							•			Chowdhary (1989)
				•			•			Chowdhary (1999)
					•					De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
•							•			Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
•									•	Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
				•				•		Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
				•			•	•		Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
				•			•			Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
				•			•			Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
				•			•	•		Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
•									•	Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
				•					•	James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
•							•	•	•	Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
		•			•					Kim & Han (2000)
								•		Lee & Johnson (1997)
				•			•			Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
				•			•		•	Malholtra (1983) ~
		•					•			Marks (1976)
				•					•	Mattson (1982)
				•			•	•		Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)

Treatment of data		Stimulus				Researchers
Quantitative	Qualitative	Actual Product/Substitute	In-Store	Visual Presentations	Verbal Descriptions	
•					•	Amirani & Gates (1993)~
•				·	•	Bearden (1977) ~ #
•					•	Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977) ~ #
•				•		Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty (1983) ~
•					•	Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy (1999)
•		•				Birtwistle & Shearer (2001)
•				•		Burns (1992) ~
•		•				Cary & Zylla (1981) ~
•					•	Chowdhary (1989)
•					•	Chowdhary (1999)
	•			•	•	De Klerk, Velleman & Malherbe (1998)
•					•	Donovan & Rossiter (1982) ~
•		•			•	Gardner & Siomkos (1986) ~
•					•	Gentry & Burns (1977-1978) ~ #
•					•	Grossbart, Hampton, Rammohan & Lapidus (1990) ~
•					•	Hansen & Deutscher (1977-1978) ~
•					•	Hirschman, Greenberg & Robertson (1978) ~
•					•	Huddleston, Ford & Mahoney (1990) ~
•					•	Jacoby & Mazursky (1984)
•					•	James, Durand & Dreves (1976)
•				•		Joyce & Lambert (1996) ~
•					•	Kim & Han (2000)
	•				•	Lee & Johnson (1997)
•					•	Lumpkin, Greenberg & Goldstucker (1985)
•					•	Malholtra (1983) ~
•					•	Marks (1976)
•					•	Mattson (1982)
•					•	Miller, Van Aardt, Visser & Young (2001)

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

177

Sample							Sampling		Researchers
Students	Female Students	Adults	Adult Females	Adult Males	Elderly People	Elderly Females	Non-probability Sample	Probability Sample	
		424					*		Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~
			482					*	Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)
			482					*	Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)
				269				*	Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)
		459						*	Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)
117							*		Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)
		610						*	Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~
			157				*		Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~
		584						*	Williams & Slama (1995) ~

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

Researchers

	Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~	Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)	Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)	Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)	Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)	Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)	Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~	Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~	Williams & Slama (1995) ~
Modes of Observation									
Survey	*	*	*	. *	*	*	*	*	*
Field Research									
Experiment									
Technique of Data Collection									
Self-administered Questionnaire						*		*	
Self-administered Questionnaire (Mailed)	*	*	*	*	*				
Structured Questionnaire via Face-to-face Interview							*		*
Structured Questionnaire via Telephone Interview									
Structured Interview via Small Groups									
Unstructured In-depth Interview									
Focus Group Interview									
Open-ended Questions									
Closed-ended Questions		*							

~ not specifically clothing

not retail outlet

179

Semantic Differential Scale	Dissimilarity-similarity Scale	Bipolar Scale	Rating Scale	Likert-scale	Scale	Developed by Researchers	Existing Instruments	Developed Instrument	Developed Instrument Based on Previous Research	Pretesting of Developed Instrument	Pretest Sample of Respondents to Develop Instrument	Pretesting of Instrument
				•					•			Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~
				•					•		•	Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)
				•					•			Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)
				•					•			Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)
				•					•	•		Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)
				•					•			Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)
				•							•	Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~
				•							•	Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~
				•					•			Williams & Slama (1995) ~

Researchers

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

	Treatment of data		Stimulus				
Quantitative	Qualitative	Actual product/Substitute	In-Store	Visual Presentations	Verbal Descriptions		Researchers
*					*		Schiffman, Dash & Dillon (1977) ~
*					*		Shim & Kotsiopulos (1992a)
*					*		Shim & Kotsiopulos (1993)
*					*		Shim, Kotsiopulos & Knoll (1990)
*					*		Thorpe & Avery (1983-1984)
*					*		Van de Velde, Pelton, Caton & Byrne (1996)
*				*			Van Kenhove, De Wulf & Van Waterschoot (1999) ~
*		*					Wheatley & Chiu (1977) ~
*					*		Williams & Slama (1995) ~

~ not specifically clothing
# not retail outlet

181

APPENDIX 3

TELEPHONE RECRUITMENT INTERVIEW

Interviewee name: _____

Date: _____ Phone: (___) _____

Address: _____

_____

Good day, may I please speak to _____

My name is _____, I am calling from the Department of Consumer Science at the University of Stellenbosch. We are conducting research, in co-operation with [Retailer], on the perceived importance of retail store image attributes to the female large-size apparel consumer. I would like to ask you a few questions, please?

1. Do you perceive yourself to be a [Retailer] customer?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

2. In which one of the following age categories do you fall?

[ ] 20-29 years

[ ] 30-39 years

[ ] 40-54 years

3. With which racial group do you associate mostly?

[ ] African

[ ] Coloured

[ ] White

You have been selected to partake in our investigation on the perceived importance of retail store image attributes by the female large-size apparel consumer. We would like to invite you, as a [Retailer] account holder, to join a group of other [Retailer] customers to discuss the importance of female large-size apparel store image attributes. The discussion will be held on [Date] at [Venue]. We would like you to join us for refreshments at [Time] and the discussion will be over by [Time]. Each participant will receive a R150 gift voucher from [Retailer]. Will you be able to attend?

[ ]   Yes   [CONFIRM NAME AND ADDRESS]
[ ]   No   [THANK AND TERMINATE]

[IF YES]   Do you have transport to the venue?

[ ]   Yes   [CONTINUE]
[ ]   No   [OFFER TO PROVIDE TRANSPORT]

I will be sending you a letter in a few days to confirm the details. If you need any more information or if you need to cancel, please call me at [*Telephone number*]. Thank you and goodbye.

APPENDIX 4

RESPONDENT LETTER

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

Date

Respondent's name
Address

Thank you for accepting our invitation to attend the discussion at [*Venue*] on [*Date*]. We would like you to join us for refreshments at [*Time*]. The discussion will conclude by [*Time*].

We are inviting a limited number of [*Retailer*] customers and the success and quality of the discussions are based on the cooperation of the people who attend. We anticipate your attendance at the discussion that will contribute to the success of the research project.

The discussion group will consist of a group of [Retailer] customers. The topic of discussion is the importance of retail store image attributes to the female large-size apparel market. Your opinions on this subject are of utmost importance to [Retailer]. Each participant will receive a gift from [Retailer] at the conclusion of the discussion.

If for some reason you find you are not able to attend, please call me as soon as possible at [*Telephone number*].

We look forward to seeing you on [*Date*] at [*Time*].

Sincerely,

H.S. Janse van Noordwyk
M. Consumer Science (Clothing and Textiles)
University of Stellenbosch

Departement Verbruikerswetenskap: Voedsel, Kleding, Behuising
Department of Consumer Science: Foods, Clothing, Housing
Privaat Sak/Private Bag XI • Matieland 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa
Tel +27 21 808 3398 • Faks/Fax: +27 21 808 4804
http://www.sun.ac.za/consumer/
185

HELDERBERG VILLAGE

BAKKERSKLOOF ROAD

SECURITY CHECK

ROUTE GOING IN

HELDERBERG VILLAGE SIGN POSTS

STELLENBOSCH

80K

STEYNSRUST ROAD

BRIDGE

SOMERSET WEST

R44

LORD CHARLES

MAIN ROAD

SOMERSET WEST

EXIT 43

CAPE TOWN N2

CALEDON

STRAND

CAPE TOWN (N2)

186

APPENDIX 5

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

1.   Welcome

2.   Overview and topic

3.   Establishing ground rules

4.   Questioning route for generating perception of important apparel retail store image attributes:

- *If you walk into an apparel store, what would make a positive or a negative impression on you?*
- *What is it in apparel stores that you like, and what is it that you don't like?*
- *When you walk into an apparel store, you have build up an image of what you expect from a "good store". What constitutes a "good store"?*
- *What appeals to you in a apparel store?*

5.   Measurement of generated store image attributes
     Explanation and demonstration of how to use the *Schutte Visual Scale*. Respondents were requested to use the *Schutte Visual Scale* to quantify their perceptions.

6.   Questioning route for generating definitions of Lindquist's nine retail store image attribute groupings:

- *The last part of our discussion will focus on nine concepts that are used to define an apparel store. We would like you to describe these concepts and tell us what they mean to you.*
    - *Service*
    - *Physical facilities*
    - *Atmosphere*
    - *Convenience*
    - *Promotion*
    - *Post-transaction satisfaction*
    - *Merchandise*
    - *Clientele*
    - *Institutional factors*

7. Measurement of Lindquist's nine retail store image attribute categories using the *Schutte Visual Scale*.

8. Conclusion

APPENDIX 6

SCHUTTE VISUAL SCALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11

SIDE FACING INTERVIEWER

SIDE FACING RESPONDENT
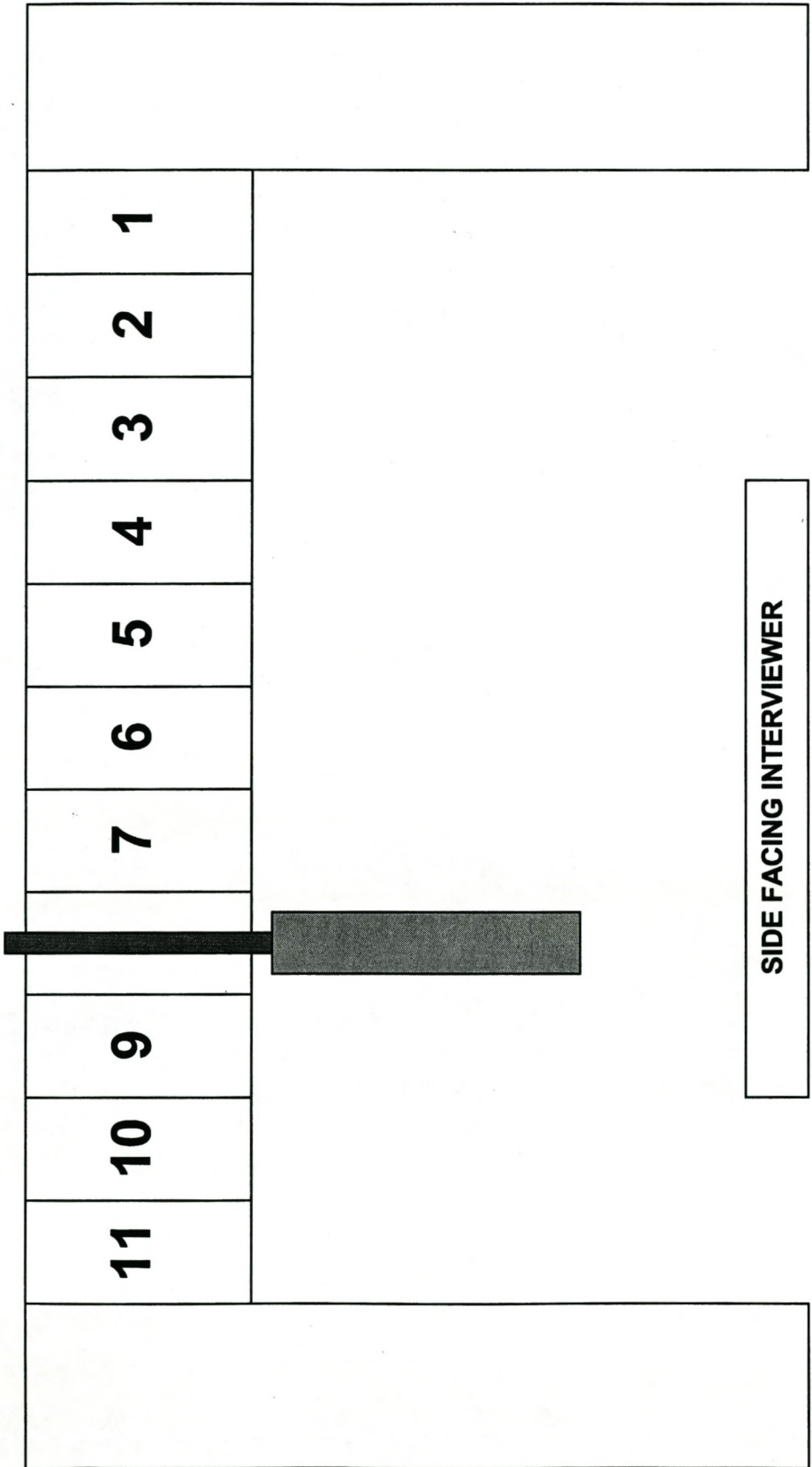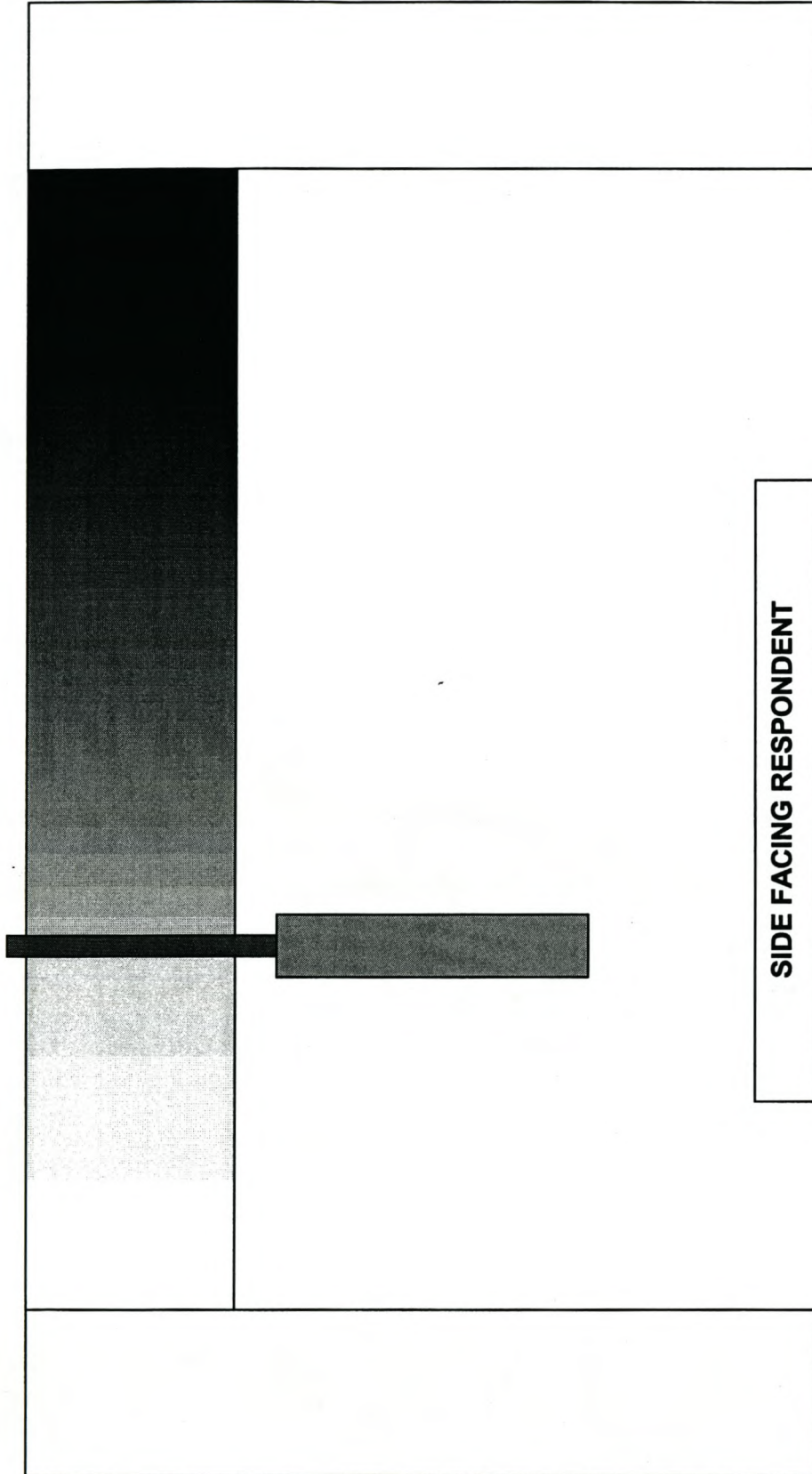
APPENDIX 7

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Questionnaire on Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. Which racial group do you associate with mostly?

African	Coloured	White

2. What language do you mostly speak at home?

English	Afrikaans	Other, specify

3. Indicate the highest level of education you have achieved yourself.

3.1 Primary school

3.2 Grade 10 (Std. 8)

3.3 Grade 12 (Std. 10)

3.4 Diploma(s)

3.5 B.Degree (First degree)

3.6 Post graduate (Hons., M. & PhD.)

3.7 Other, specify

4. State your employment status.

4.1 Unemployed

4.2 Clerical, salesperson, technician, secretarial

4.3 Middle management (teacher, nursing sister)

4.4 Corporate (manager)

4.5 Professional (doctor, director)

4.6 Homemaker

4.7 Retired (including a severance package)

4.8 Other, specify

5. What modes of transport do you usually use when shopping? (indicate all applicable options)

	YES	NO
5.1 Walk		
5.2 Train		
5.3 Taxi		
5.4 Bus		
5.5 Own transport		
5.6 Other, specify		

6. How much money (approximately) do you spend on clothes per month? (excluding jewellery, shoes and accessories)

6.1 Less than R199

6.2 R200-R299

6.3 R300-R399

6.4 R400-R499

6.5 R500 and more

Afrikaans, see overleaf

7. What is the total MONTHLY income of your household before tax and deductions?
7.1 Less than R500
7.2 R501-R1000
7.3 R1001-R3000
7.4 R3001-R5000
7.5 R5001-R7000
7.6 R7001-R10 000
7.7 R10 001-R20 000
7.8 R20 001 and more

8. What is your marital status?
8.1 Never married
8.2 Married
8.3 Divorced
8.4 Widow

9. How many children do you have in each of the following age categories?
9.1 5 years and younger
9.2 6-11 years
9.3 12-17 years
9.4 18 years and older

10. In which of the following age categories do you fall?
10.1 20-24
10.2 25-29
10.3 30-34
10.4 35-39
10.5 40-44
10.6 45-49
10.7 50-54
10.8 55 and older

11. What is your religion?
11.1 Christian
11.2 Moslem
11.3 Jewish
11.4 Roman Catholic
11.5 Other, specify

Afrikaans, see overleaf

Thank you for your co-operation

Vraelys oor Demografiese Eienskappe van Respondente

1. Met watter rassegroep assosieer u die meeste?

Swart	Kleurling	Blank

2. Watter taal praat u meestal tuis?

Engels	Afrikaans	Ander, spesifiseer

3. Dui die hoogste vlak van geleerdheid aan wat u self bereik het.

3.1 Primêre skool
3.2 Graad 10 (St. 8)
3.3 Graad 12 (St. 10)
3.4 Diploma(s)
3.5 B.Graad (Eerste graad)
3.6 Nagraads (Hons., M. & PhD.)
3.7 Ander, spesifiseer

4. Watter beroep beoefen u?

4.1 Werkloos
4.2 Klerklik, verkoopspersoon, tegnies, sekretarieel
4.3 Middelbestuur (onderwyser, verpleegster)
4.4 Korporatief (bestuurder)
4.5 Professioneel (dokter, direkteur)
4.6 Tuisteskepper
4.7 Afgetree (insluitend pakket)
4.8 Ander, spesifiseer

5. Van watter tipes vervoer maak u gewoonlik gebruik wanneer u inkopies doen?
   (dui alle toepaslike opsies aan)

	JA	NEE
5.1 Stap		
5.2 Trein		
5.3 Taxi		
5.4 Bus		
5.5 Eie vervoer		
5.6 Ander, spesifiseer		

6. Hoeveel spandeer u (naastenby) aan klere per maand?
   (uitgesluit juwele, skoene en bykomstighede)

6.1 Minder as R199
6.2 R200-R299
6.3 R300-R399
6.4 R400-R499
6.5 R500 en meer

English, see overleaf

7. Wat is u MAANDELIKSE huishoudelike inkomste voor belasting en aftrekkings?

7.1 Minder as R500

7.2 R501-R1000

7.3 R1001-R3000

7.4 R3001-R5000

7.5 R5001-R7000

7.6 R7001-R10 000

7.7 R10 001-R20 000

7.8 R20 001 en meer

8. Wat is u huwelikstatus?

8.1 Nooit getroud nie

8.2 Getroud

8.3 Geskei

8.4 Weduwee

9. Hoeveel kinders het u in elk van die volgende kategorieë?

9.1 5 jaar en jonger

9.2 6-11 jaar

9.3 12-17 jaar

9.4 18 jaar en ouer

10. In watter van die volgende ouderdomskategorieë val u?

10.1 20-24

10.2 25-29

10.3 30-34

10.4 35-39

10.5 40-44

10.6 45-49

10.7 50-54

10.8 55 en ouer

11. Tot watter geloof behoort u?

11.1 Christen

11.2 Moslem

11.3 Joods

11.4 Rooms Katoliek

11.5 Ander, spesifiseer

English, see overleaf

Baie dankie vir u samewerking

196

LISTS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES

1.   **LISTS AND AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES – RACE GROUPS**

WHITES

Inter-store transfer	11
Fashionable casual merchandise	10,8
Fashionable merchandise	10,7
Mix and match of merchandise	10,7
Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally	10,6
Correct merchandise styles	10,6
Appealing underwear	10,5
Respectable interior	10,5
Uncluttered inside	10,5
Consulting service	10,3
Warm atmosphere	10,2
Accessories	10,1
Availability of merchandise sizes	10,1
Feel special	10
Friendly sales assistants	9,8
Mirrors in fitting rooms	9,8
Shoes	9,8
Hooks in fitting rooms	9,7
Colour combination in store interior	9,6
Inviting store layout	9,6
Music	9,6
Temperature	9,6
Lighting	9,5
Mirrors	9,4
Spacing between rails	9,4
Appearance of sales assistants	9
Availability of merchandise as advertised	9
Knowledgeable sales assistants	9
Lighting in fitting rooms	9
Promotion repeated in store	9
Relate to sales assistants	9

Privacy in fitting rooms	8,9
Merchandise displays inside store	8,8
Size of fitting rooms	8,8
Inviting portal	8,6
Focused attention from sales assistants	8,5
Merchandise for special occasions	8,5
Convenient purchase points	8,4
Window displays	8,4
Emotional empathy from sales assistants	8,3
Posters	8
Spacious store	7,8
Personal attention from sales assistants	7,6
Store bags	7,6
Couch	7,5
Playpen for children	5,4

COLOUREDS

Advertising	11
Correct merchandise style and sizes	11
Cross-cultural communication	11
Friendly sales assistants	11
Inter-store transfer	11
Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants	11
Lighting	11
Promotion through brochures	11
Quality merchandise	11
Mix and match of merchandise	10,9
Advertise available services	10,8
Clean and neat store	10,8
Merchandise displays inside store	10,8
Shoes	10,8
Uniqueness of merchandise	10,8
Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants	10,6
Correct merchandise styles	10,6
Personality and training of sales assistants	10,6
Sleepwear	10,5
Accessories	10,4
Assistance in fitting rooms	10,4
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10,4

Consulting service	10,4
Hangers	10,4
Material used for merchandise	10,4
Mirrors	10,3
Privacy in fitting rooms	10,3
Appealing underwear	10,2
Spacing between rails	10,2
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10
Availability of merchandise at all stores	10
Merchandise for special occasions	10
Couch	9,9
Report back on styles that work	9,9
Window displays	9,9
Adjustments	9,8
Music	9,8
Report back to company	9,8
Colour range in merchandise	9,7
Large-size model	9,7
Clothing on apro	9,4
Mix and match displays	9,3
Competitive and affordable prices	9,1
Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms	9
Size of fitting rooms	8,9
Large-size dolls in displays	8,6
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	8,2
Playpen for children	7,3
Atmosphere	6,7
Honest opinion of sales assistants	6,7

AFRICANS

Affordable prices	11
Consulting service	11
Friendly sales assistants	11
Great feeling that your sizes are available	11
Larger sizes available on sale	11
No discrimination	11
Not limited stock at sales	11
Preference to account holders at sales	11
Quality merchandise	11

Trained sales assistants	11
Accessories	10,9
Appealing underwear	10,8
Arrangement of merchandise	10,8
Comfortable merchandise	10,8
Colour combination in store interior	10,7
Merchandise displays inside store	10,7
Manager on floor	10,7
Availability of full merchandise range	10,4
Credit bureau	10,3
Baby clothes	10
Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants	10
Neutral smell	10
Wide assortment of styles	10
Colour range in merchandise	9,7
Large-size dolls	9,5
Competitions	9,3
General appearance	9,3
Restrooms	9
Incentives	9
Attractive interior	8,3
Special events	8,3
Temperature	8,3
Couch	7,3
Floors	7,3

2. LISTS AND AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES – AGE GROUPS

20-29 YEAR AGE GROUP

Advertising	11
Feel special	11
Friendly sales assistants	11
Mirrors	11
Quality merchandise	11
Sleepwear	11
Promotion through brochures	11
Accessories	10,7
Correct merchandise styles	10,6

Availability of popular merchandise sizes	10,5
Lighting	10,5
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10,3
Large-size model	9,7
Temperature	9,4
Mix and match displays	9,3
Music	9,2
Appearance of sales assistants	9
Lighting in fitting rooms	9
Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms	9
Convenient purchase points	8,4
Competitive prices	8,3
Window displays	8,2
Merchandise displays inside store	8
Personal attention from sales assistants	7,6
Spacious store	7,8
Store bags	7,6
Privacy in fitting rooms	7,6
Atmosphere	6,7
Honest opinion of sales assistants	6,7
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	6,3

30-39 YEAR AGE GROUP

Inter-store transfer	11
Mix and match of merchandise	10,9
Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally	10,6
Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants	10,6
Personality and training of sales assistants	10,6
Style and colours fit for the large-size	10,5
Consulting service	10,4
Hangers	10,4
Material used for merchandise	10,4
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10,3
Mirrors	10,3
Privacy in fitting rooms	10,3
Music	10,2
Warm atmosphere	10,2
Availability of merchandise sizes	10,1
Accessories	10

Sales assistants – wear what they sell	10
Sleepwear	10
Window displays	10
Affordable prices	9,9
Report back on styles that work	9,9
Mirrors in fitting rooms	9,8
Report back to company	9,8
Colour range in merchandise	9,7
Merchandise displays inside store	9,6
Colour combination in store interior	9,6
Inviting store layout	9,6
Spacing between rails	9,4
Size of fitting rooms	9,2
Couch	9,1
Adjustments	9
Promotion repeated in store	9
Relate to sales assistants	9
Large-size dolls in displays	8,6
Lighting	7,6
Playpen for children	6,4

40-54 YEAR AGE GROUP

Cross-cultural communication	11
Inter-store transfer	11
Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants	11
Quality merchandise	11
Advertise available services	10,8
Availability of right fit of merchandise	10,8
Clean and neat store	10,8
Fashionable casual merchandise	10,8
Merchandise displays inside store	10,8
Uniqueness of merchandise	10,8
Fashionable merchandise	10,7
Mix and match of merchandise	10,7
Adjustments	10,6
Appealing underwear	10,5
Respectable interior	10,5
Uncluttered inside	10,5
Assistance in fitting rooms	10,4

Accessories	10,3
Consulting service	10,3
Appealing underwear	10,2
Lighting	10,2
Shoes	10,2
Spacing between rails	10,2
Friendly sales assistants	9,8
Temperature	9,8
Hooks in fitting rooms	9,7
Music	9,6
Availability of merchandise as advertised	9,5
Clothing on apro	9,4
Merchandise for special occasions	9,3
Window displays	9,2
Feel special	9
Knowledgeable sales assistants	9
Inviting portal	8,6
Focused attention from sales assistants	8,5
Emotional empathy from sales assistants	8,3
Size of fitting rooms	8,3
Posters	8
Mirrors	7,8
Couch	6,7

3. LISTS AND AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES – WHOLE GROUP

Advertising	11
Affordable prices	11
Consulting service	11
Correct merchandise style and sizes	11
Cross-cultural communication	11
Feel special	11
Friendly sales assistants	11
Great feeling that your sizes are available	11
Inter-store transfer	11
Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants	11
Larger sizes available on sale	11
Lighting	11

Mirrors	11
No discrimination	11
Not limited stock at sales	11
Preference to account holders at sales	11
Promotion through brochures	11
Quality merchandise	11
Sleepwear	11
Trained sales assistants	11
Accessories	10,9
Mix and match of merchandise	10,9
Advertise available services	10,8
Appealing underwear	10,8
Arrangement of merchandise	10,8
Availability of right fit of merchandise	10,8
Clean and neat store	10,8
Comfortable merchandise	10,8
Merchandise displays inside store	10,8
Fashionable casual merchandise	10,8
Shoes	10,8
Uniqueness of merchandise	10,8
Accessories	10,7
Colour combination in store interior	10,7
Fashionable merchandise	10,7
Friendly sales assistants	10,7
Manager on floor	10,7
Merchandise displays inside store	10,7
Mix and match of merchandise	10,7
Adjustments	10,6
Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally	10,6
Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants	10,6
Correct merchandise styles	10,6
Personality and training of sales assistants	10,6
Appealing underwear	10,5
Availability of popular merchandise sizes	10,5
Respectable interior	10,5
Sleepwear	10,5
Style and colours fit for the large-size	10,5
Uncluttered inside	10,5
Accessories	10,4

Assistance in fitting rooms	10,4
Availability of full merchandise range	10,4
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10,4
Consulting service	10,4
Hangers	10,4
Material used for merchandise	10,4
Accessories	10,3
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10,3
Consulting service	10,3
Credit bureau	10,3
Mirrors	10,3
Privacy in fitting rooms	10,3
Appealing underwear	10,2
Lighting	10,2
Music	10,2
Shoes	10,2
Spacing between rails	10,2
Warm atmosphere	10,2
Accessories	10,1
Availability of merchandise sizes	10,1
Accessories	10
Availability of merchandise as advertised	10
Availability of merchandise at all stores	10
Baby clothes	10
Feel special	10
Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants	10
Merchandise for special occasions	10
Neutral smell	10
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	10
Sleepwear	10
Wide assortment of styles	10
Window displays	10
Affordable prices	9,9
Couch	9,9
Report back on styles that work	9,9
Window displays	9,9
Adjustments	9,8
Friendly sales assistants	9,8
Mirrors in fitting rooms	9,8

Music	9,8
Report back to company	9,8
Shoes	9,8
Temperature	9,8
Colour range in merchandise	9,7
Hooks in fitting rooms	9,7
Large-size model	9,7
Merchandise displays inside store	9,6
Colour combination in store interior	9,6
Inviting store layout	9,6
Music	9,6
Temperature	9,6
Availability of merchandise as advertised	9,5
Large-size dolls in displays	9,5
Lighting	9,5
Clothing on apro	9,4
Mirrors	9,4
Spacing between rails	9,4
Temperature	9,4
Competitions	9,3
General appearance	9,3
Merchandise for special occasions	9,3
Mix and match displays	9,3
Lighting	9,2
Music	9,2
Window displays	9,2
Couch	9,1
Competitive and affordable prices	9,1
Restrooms	9
Adjustments	9
Appearance of sales assistants	9
Availability of merchandise as advertised	9
Feel special	9
Incentives	9
Knowledgeable sales assistants	9
Lighting in fitting rooms	9
Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms	9
Promotion repeated in store	9
Relate to sales assistants	9

Privacy in fitting rooms	8,9
Size of fitting rooms	8,9
Merchandise displays inside store	8,8
Size of fitting rooms	8,8
Inviting portal	8,6
Large-size dolls in displays	8,6
Focused attention from sales assistants	8,5
Merchandise for special occasions	8,5
Convenient purchase points	8,4
Window displays	8,4
Attractive interior	8,3
Competitive prices	8,3
Emotional empathy from sales assistants	8,3
Size of fitting rooms	8,3
Special events	8,3
Temperature	8,3
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	8,2
Window displays	8,2
Merchandise displays inside store	8
Posters	8
Mirrors	7,8
Spacious store	7,8
Lighting	7,6
Privacy in fitting rooms	7,6
Personal attention from sales assistants	7,6
Store bags	7,6
Couch	7,5
Couch	7,3
Floors	7,3
Playpen for children	7,3
Atmosphere	6,7
Couch	6,7
Honest opinion of sales assistants	6,7
Playpen for children	6,4
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	6,3
Playpen for children	5,4

GROUPING AND GROUPING AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES BY RACE AND AGE GROUP, AS WELL AS FOR THE WHOLE GROUP

1. **GROUPING AND GROUPING AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES – RACE GROUPS**

WHITES

Merchandise 10,2

Fashionable casual merchandise

Fashionable merchandise

Mix and match of merchandise

Correct merchandise styles

Appealing underwear

Accessories

Availability of merchandise sizes

Merchandise for special occasions

Service 9,3

Inter-store transfer

Consulting service

Knowledgeable sales assistants

Focused attention from sales assistants

Personal attention from sales assistants

Clientele 9,2

Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

Appearance of sales assistants

Relate to sales assistants

Emotional empathy from sales assistants

Physical Facilities 9

Respectable interior

Uncluttered inside

Mirrors in fitting rooms

Hooks in fitting rooms

Inviting store layout

Temperature

Lighting

Mirrors

Spacing between rails

Lighting in fitting rooms

Privacy in fitting rooms

Size of fitting rooms

Inviting portal

Convenient purchase points

Spacious store

Couch

Playpen for children

Promotion   8,6

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Promotion repeated in store

Merchandise displays inside store

Window displays

Posters

Store Atmosphere   9,8

Warm atmosphere

Feel special

Friendly sales assistants

Colour combination in store interior

Music

Institutional Factors   7,6

Store bags

COLOUREDS

Merchandise   10,5

Correct merchandise style and sizes

Quality merchandise

Mix and match of merchandise

Shoes

Uniqueness of merchandise

Correct merchandise styles

Sleepwear

Accessories

Material used for merchandise

Appealing underwear

Availability of merchandise at all stores

Merchandise for special occasions

Colour range in merchandise

Competitive and affordable prices

Service   **10**

Inter-store transfer

Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants

Advertise available services

Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants

Personality and training of sales assistants

Assistance in fitting rooms

Consulting service

Honest opinion of sales assistants

Clientele   **9,6**

Cross-cultural communication

Sales assistants – wear what they sell

Physical Facilities   **9,8**

Lighting

Clean and neat store

Hangers

Mirrors

Privacy in fitting rooms

Spacing between rails

Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms

Size of fitting rooms

Couch

Playpen for children

Promotion   **10,2**

Advertising

Promotion through brochures

Advertise available services

Merchandise displays inside store

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Window displays

Large-size model

Mix and match displays

Large-size dolls in displays

Store Atmosphere   9,2

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Atmosphere

Post-transaction Satisfaction   9,8

Report back on styles that work

Adjustments

Report back to company

AFRICANS

Merchandise   10,5

Affordable prices

Quality merchandise

Accessories

Appealing underwear

Arrangement of merchandise

Availability of full merchandise range

Baby clothes

Wide assortment of styles

Colour range in merchandise

Service   10,8

Consulting service

Trained sales assistants

Credit bureau

Clientele   10,5

No discrimination

Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants

Physical Facilities   8,6

Arrangement of merchandise

General appearance

Ablution facilities

Attractive interior

Temperature

Couch

Floors

Promotion   **10**

Larger sizes available on sale

Not limited stock at sales

Preference to account holders at sales

Merchandise displays inside store

Large-size dolls

Competitions

Incentives

Special events

Store Atmosphere   **10,7**

Friendly sales assistants

Great feeling that your sizes are available

Comfortable merchandise

Colour combination in store interior

Neutral smell

Institutional Factors   **10,7**

Manager on floor

2.   **GROUPING AND GROUPING AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES – AGE GROUPS**

20-29 Year Age Group

Merchandise   **10,4**

Quality merchandise

Sleepwear

Accessories

Correct merchandise styles

Availability of popular merchandise sizes

Competitive prices

Service   7,2

Personal attention from sales assistants

Honest opinion of sales assistants

Clientele   7,7

Appearance of sales assistants

Sales assistants – wear what they sell

Physical facilities   9,3

Mirrors

Lighting

Temperature

Lighting in fitting rooms

Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms

Convenient purchase points

Spacious store

Privacy in fitting rooms

Promotion   9,9

Advertising

Promotion through brochures

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Large-size model

Mix and match displays

Window displays

Merchandise displays inside store

Store Amosphere   9,5

Feel special

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Atmosphere

Institutional Factors   7,6

Store bags

30-39 YEAR AGE GROUP

Merchandise   **10,2**

Mix and match of merchandise

Style and colours fit for the large-size

Material used for merchandise

Availability of merchandise sizes

Accessories

Sleepwear

Affordable prices

Colour range in merchandise

Service   **10,7**

Inter-store transfer

Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants

Personality and training of sales assistants

Consulting service

Clientele   **9,9**

Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

Sales assistants – wear what they sell

Relate to sales assistants

Physical Facilities   **9,2**

Hangers

Mirrors

Privacy in fitting rooms

Mirrors in fitting rooms

Inviting store layout

Spacing between rails

Size of fitting rooms

Couch

Lighting

Playpen for children

Promotion   **9,5**

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Window displays

Merchandise displays inside store

Promotion repeated in store

Large-size dolls in displays

Store Atmosphere 10

Music

Warm atmosphere

Colour combination in store interior

Post-transaction Satisfaction 9,6

Report back on styles that work

Report back to company

Adjustments

40-54 YEAR AGE GROUP

Merchandise 10,5

Quality merchandise

Availability of right fit of merchandise

Fashionable casual merchandise

Uniqueness of merchandise

Fashionable merchandise

Mix and match of merchandise

Appealing underwear

Accessories

Shoes

Merchandise for special occasions

Service 9,7

Inter-store transfer

Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants

Advertise available services

Assistance in fitting rooms

Consulting service

Clothing on apro

Focused attention from sales assistants

Clientele 9,7

Cross-cultural communication

Emotional empathy from sales assistants

Physical Facilities   9,4

Clean and neat store

Respectable interior

Uncluttered inside

Lighting

Spacing between rails

Temperature

Hooks in fitting rooms

Inviting portal

Size of fitting rooms

Mirrors

Couch

Promotion   9,9

Advertise available services

Merchandise displays inside store

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Window displays

Posters

Store Atmosphere   9,5

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Feel special

Post-transaction Satisfaction   10,6

Adjustments

3. **GROUPING AND GROUPING AGGREGATES OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES FOR THE WHOLE GROUP**

Merchandise   10,4

Affordable prices

Correct merchandise style and sizes

Quality merchandise

Sleepwear

Accessories

Mix and match of merchandise

Appealing underwear

Availability of right fit of merchandise

Fashionable casual merchandise

Shoes

Uniqueness of merchandise

Fashionable merchandise

Correct merchandise styles

Availability of popular merchandise sizes

Style and colours fit for the large-size

Availability of full merchandise range

Material used for merchandise

Availability of merchandise sizes

Availability of merchandise at all stores

Baby clothes

Merchandise for special occasions

Wide assortment of styles

Colour range in merchandise

Competitive and affordable prices

Competitive prices

Service   9,7

Consulting service

Inter-store transfer

Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants

Trained sales assistants

Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants

Personality and training of sales assistants

Assistance in fitting rooms

Relationship with credit bureau

Knowledgeable sales assistants

Focused attention from sales assistants

Personal attention from sales assistants

Honest opinion of sales assistants

Clothing on apro

Clientele   9,6

Cross-cultural communication

No discrimination

Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants

Sales assistants – wear what they sell

Appearance of sales assistants

Relate to sales assistants

Emotional empathy from sales assistants

Physical facilities   9,3

Lighting

Mirrors

Arrangement of merchandise

Clean and neat store

Respectable interior

Uncluttered inside

Assistance in fitting rooms

Hangers

Privacy in fitting rooms

Spacing between rails

Couch

Mirrors in fitting rooms

Temperature

Hooks in fitting rooms

Inviting store layout

General appearance

Ablution facilities

Lighting in fitting rooms

Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms

Size of fitting rooms

Inviting portal

Convenient purchase points

Attractive interior

Spacious store

Floors

Playpen for children

Promotion   9,8

Advertising

Larger sizes available on sale

Not limited stock at sales

Preference to account holders at sales

Promotion through brochures

Mix and match of merchandise

Advertise available services

Merchandise displays inside store

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Window displays

Large-size model

Mix and match displays

Competitions

Incentives

Promotion repeated in store

Large-size dolls in displays

Special events

Posters

Store Amosphere   9,9

Feel special

Great feeling that your sizes are available

Comfortable merchandise

Colour combination in store interior

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Warm atmosphere

Neutral smell

Atmosphere

Institutional Factors   9,2

Store bags

Manager on floor

Post-transaction Satisfaction   9,8

Adjustments

Report back on styles that work

Report back to company

<div align="right">**APPENDIX 10**</div>

REFINED ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GROUPINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES

1.   **REFINED ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GROUPINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES – RACE GROUPS**

WHITES

MERCHANDISE	**10,2**

Styling/fashion

Correct merchandise styles

Fashionable casual merchandise

Fashionable merchandise

Selection/assortment

Mix and match of merchandise

Availability

Availability of merchandise sizes

Accessories

Specialised clothing

Appealing underwear

Merchandise for special occasions

SERVICE	**9,9**

Inter-store transfer

Consulting service

Sales assistants

Knowledgeable sales assistants

Focused attention from sales assistants

Personal attention from sales assistants

CLIENTELE	**9,2**

Sales assistants

Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

Appearance of sales assistants

Relate to sales assistants

Emotional empathy from sales assistants

PHYSICAL FACILITIES   8,8

General appearance

    Respectable interior

Temperature

Layout

    Inviting store layout

Lighting

Mirrors

Fitting rooms

    Mirrors in fitting rooms

    Hooks in fitting rooms

    Lighting in fitting rooms

    Size of fitting rooms

    Privacy in fitting rooms

Spacious

    Uncluttered inside

    Spacing between rails

    Spacious store

Inviting portal

Convenient purchase points

Couch

Playpen for children

PROMOTION   8,8

Availability in store

    Availability of merchandise as advertised

Promotion repeated in store

Displays

    Merchandise displays inside store

    Window displays

    Posters

STORE ATMOSPHERE   9,8

General atmosphere

    Warm atmosphere

Good feeling about large-size store

    Feel special

Friendly sales assistants

Colour combination in store interior

Music

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS   7,6
Store bags

COLOUREDS

MERCHANDISE   10,4
Quality
Selection/assortment
     Mix and match of merchandise
     Colour range in merchandise
Accessories
     Shoes
Styling/fashion
     Uniqueness of merchandise
     Correct merchandise styles
     Material used for merchandise
Availability
     Correct merchandise style and sizes
     Availability of merchandise at all stores
Specialised clothing
     Sleepwear
     Appealing underwear
     Merchandise for special occasions
Pricing
     Competitive and affordable prices

SERVICE   10,2
Inter-store transfer
Consulting service
Sales assistants
     Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants
     Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants
     Personality and training of sales assistants
     Assistance in fitting rooms
     Honest opinion of sales assistants
     Clothing on apro

CLIENTELE 9,6

Cross-cultural communication

Sales assistants

> Sales assistants – wear what they sell

PHYSICAL FACILITIES 9,9

Lighting

General appearance

> Clean and neat store

Hangers

Mirrors

Spacious

> Spacing between rails

Couch

Fitting rooms

> Privacy in fitting rooms
>
> Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms
>
> Size of fitting rooms

Playpen for children

PROMOTION 10,1

Advertising

> Promotion through brochures
>
> Advertise available services

Availability in store

> Availability of merchandise as advertised

Displays

> Merchandise displays inside store
>
> Window displays
>
> Mix and match displays
>
> Large-size dolls in displays

Large-size model

STORE ATMOSPHERE 9,2

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Atmosphere

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION 9,8

Report back

    Report back on styles that work

    Report back to company

Adjustments

AFRICANS

MERCHANDISE	10,5

Pricing

    Affordable prices

Quality

Accessories

Specialised clothing

    Appealing underwear

    Baby clothes

Selection/assortment

    Availability of full merchandise range

    Wide assortment of styles

Styling/fashion

    Colour range in merchandise

SERVICE	10,8

Consulting service

Sales assistant

    Trained sales assistants

Credit bureau

CLIENTELE	10,5

No discrimination

Sales assistants

    Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants

Physical Facilities	8,6

Layout

    Arrangement of merchandise

Restrooms

General appearance

    Attractive interior

Temperature

Couch

Floors

PROMOTION	**9,5**

Sales promotion

> Larger sizes available on sale
>
> Not limited stock at sales
>
> Preference to account holders at sales

Displays

> Merchandise displays inside store
>
> Large-size dolls

Competitions

Incentives

Special events

STORE ATMOSPHERE	**10,7**

Friendly sales assistants

Good feeling about large-size store

> Great feeling that your sizes are available
>
> Comfortable merchandise

Colour combination in store interior

Neutral smell

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	**10,7**

Manager on floor

2.   **REFINED ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GROUPINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES – AGE GROUPS**

20-29 YEAR AGE GROUP

MERCHANDISE	**10,4**

Quality

Specialised clothing

> Sleepwear

Accessories

Styling/fashion

> Correct merchandise styles

Availability

> Availability of popular merchandise sizes

Pricing

> Competitive prices

SERVICE   7,2

Sales assistants

> Personal attention from sales assistants
>
> Honest opinion of sales assistants

CLIENTELE   7,7

Sales assistants

> Appearance of sales assistants
>
> Sales assistants – wear what they sell

PHYSICAL FACILITIES   9,3

Mirrors

Lighting

Temperature

Fitting rooms

> Lighting in fitting rooms
>
> Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms
>
> Privacy in fitting rooms

Convenient purchase points

Spaciousness

> Spacious store

PROMOTION   9,9

Advertising

> Promotion through brochures

Availability in store

> Availability of merchandise as advertised

Large-size model

Displays

> Mix and match displays
>
> Window displays
>
> Merchandise displays inside strore

STORE AMOSPHERE   9,5

Feel special

Sales assistants

      Friendly sales assistants

Music

Atmosphere

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	**7,6**

Store bags

30-39 YEAR AGE GROUP

MERCHANDISE	**10,2**

Selection/assortment

      Mix and match of merchandise

Styling/fashion

      Style and colours fit for the large-size

      Material used for merchandise

      Colour range in merchandise

Availability

      Availability of merchandise sizes

Accessories

Specialised clothing

      Sleepwear

Pricing

      Affordable prices

SERVICE	**10,7**

Inter-store transfer

Sales assistants

      Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants

      Personality and training of sales assistants

Consulting service

CLIENTELE	**9,9**

Sales assistants

      Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

      Sales assistants – wear what they sell

      Relate to sales assistants

PHYSICAL FACILITIES	**9,1**

Hangers

Mirrors

Fitting rooms

     Privacy in fitting rooms

     Mirrors in fitting rooms

     Size of fitting rooms

Layout

     Inviting store layout

Spacious

     Spacing between rails

Couch

Lighting

Playpen for children

PROMOTION   9,6

Availability in store

     Availability of merchandise as advertised

Displays

     Window displays

     Merchandise displays inside store

     Large-size dolls in displays

Promotion repeated in store

STORE ATMOSPHERE   10

Music

General atmosphere

     Warm atmosphere

Colour combination in store interior

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION   9,5

Report back

     Report back on styles that work

     Report back to company

Adjustments

40-54 YEAR AGE GROUP

MERCHANDISE   **10,6**

Quality

Styling/fashion

    Availability of right fit of merchandise

    Fashionable casual merchandise

    Uniqueness of merchandise

    Fashionable merchandise

Selection/assortment

    Mix and match of merchandise

Accessories

Shoes

Specialised clothing

    Appealing underwear

    Merchandise for special occasions

SERVICE   **10,1**

Inter-store transfer

Consulting service

Clothing on apro

Sales assistants

    Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants

    Advertise available services

    Assistance in fitting rooms

    Focused attention from sales assistants

CLIENTELE   **9,7**

Cross-cultural communication

Sales assistants

    Emotional empathy from sales assistants

PHYSICAL FACILITIES   **9,2**

General appearance

    Clean and neat store

    Respectable interior

Spaciousness

    Uncluttered inside

    Spacing between rails

Lighting

Temperature

Fitting rooms

    Hooks in fitting rooms

    Size of fitting rooms

    Inviting portal

Mirrors

Couch

PROMOTION	**9,9**

Advertising

    Advertise available services

Availability of merchandise as advertised

Displays

    Merchandise displays inside store

    Window displays

    Posters

STORE ATMOSPHERE	**9,5**

Sales assistants

    Friendly sales assistants

Music

Good feeling about large-size store

    Feel special

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	**10,6**

Adjustments

3.   **REFINED ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GROUPINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGES ATTRIBUTES – RACE AND AGE GROUPS**

MERCHANDISE	**10,4**

Quality

Availability

    Availability of right fit of merchandise

    Correct merchandise style and sizes

    Availability of popular merchandise sizes

    Availability of merchandise at all stores

    Availability of merchandise sizes

Accessories

> Shoes

Styling/fashion

> Fashionable casual merchandise

> Uniqueness of merchandise

> Fashionable merchandise

> Correct merchandise styles

> Style and colours fit for the large-size

> Material used for merchandise

> Colour range in merchandise

Selection/assortment

> Mix and match of merchandise

> Availability of full merchandise range

> Wide assortment of styles

Pricing

> Affordable prices

> Competitive and affordable prices

> Competitive prices

Specialised clothing

> Sleepwear

> Appealing underwear

> Baby clothes

> Merchandise for special occasions

SERVICE 10,1

Consulting service

Inter-store transfer

Relationship with credit bureau

Sales assistants

> Knowledgeable and honest advice from sales assistants

> Trained sales assistants

> Attuned/fine touch for job by sales assistants

> Personality and training of sales assistants

> Assistance in fitting rooms

> Knowledgeable sales assistants

> Focused attention from sales assistants

> Personal attention from sales assistants

> Honest opinion of sales assistants

Clothing on appro

CLIENTELE   10,4

Cross-cultural communication

No discrimination

Sales assistants

      Approachable sales assistants – visually and emotionally

      Friendly, understanding, large-size sales assistants

      Sales assistants – wear what they sell

      Appearance of sales assistants

      Relate to sales assistants

      Emotional empathy from sales assistants

PHYSICAL FACILITIES   9

Lighting

Mirrors

Layout

      Arrangement of merchandise

      Inviting store layout

General appearance

      Clean and neat store

      Respectable interior

      Attractive interior

Spaciousness

      Uncluttered inside

      Spacing between rails

      Spacious store

Hangers

Fitting rooms

      Privacy in fitting rooms

      Mirrors in fitting rooms

      Hooks in fitting rooms

      Lighting in fitting rooms

      Mirrors and lighting in fitting rooms

      Size of fitting rooms

Couch

Temperature

Restrooms

Inviting portal

Convenient purchase points

Floors

Playpen for children

PROMOTION   9,6

Sales promotion

  Larger sizes available on sale

  Not limited stock at sales

  Preference to account holders at sales

Advertising

  Promotion through brochures

Promotion repeated in store

Displays

  Mix and match of merchandise

  Advertise available services

  Merchandise displays inside store

  Window displays

  Mix and match displays

  Large-size dolls in displays

  Posters

Availability in store

  Availability of merchandise as advertised

Large-size model

Competitions

Incentives

Special events

STORE AMOSPHERE   10

Friendly sales assistants

Good feeling about large-size store

  Feel special

  Great feeling that your sizes are available

  Comfortable merchandise

Colour combination in store interior

Friendly sales assistants

Music

Neutral smell

General atmosphere

  Warm atmosphere

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS 9,2

Store bags

Manager on floor

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION 9,9

Report back

     Report back on styles that work

     Report back to company; Adjustments

APPENDIX 11

RESPONDENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF LINDQUIST'S ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS BY EACH FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP 1

Merchandise:

Seasonal changes not too hasty

Accessories

Modern – especially sleepwear & underwear

Assortment in colours and styles

Fit/look good

Quality

Brand image

Service:

Shop assistants – available when needed, on request

- friendly
- serve in own language

Inter-store transfers

Put clothes back after you've fitted

Clientele:

Same problems and frustrations

Shared experience – can relate, feel safe

Be able to converse – ask opinions (in fitting rooms)

Overlapping self-images

Race, social class and age not consideration

Physical facilities:

Effective hangers

Spacing between rails

Rails not too full

Clothing within reaching distance

Fitting rooms – available and convenient

Couch

Place to sit when fitting shoes

Colour scheme

Temperature

Lighting

Music

Convenience:

Spacious

Temperature

Merchandise numbers available

Easy purchase point

Close by

Enclosed parking

Quick inter-store transfers

Promotion:

Good store – enough promotion by itself

In store announcements

Radio/TV announcements

Brochure – for some

Magazines

Discount coupons

Gold card system

Cash card system

SMS messages

Atmosphere:

Warm feeling

Lighting

Colour

Interior

Finishing materials – wood and stainless steel

Carpet

Couch

Coziness

Small store

Sales assistants – must relate well to customers, "people person"

Dolls without heads – impersonal

Institutional factors:

Shop for me and my needs

Style

Convenience

Affordable

Exclusivity

No negative connotation

Proud

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Return of items – refund/credit account

Longer than 7 day return period

Clothing adjustments

Phone clients to enquire about shopping experience

General interest

FOCUS GROUP 2

Merchandise:

Availability of all merchandise numbers

Availability of advertised merchandise – immediately

Colours and styles

Style and fit – must cater for all figure types

Convenient display

Spacious

Mix 'n match displays

Service:

Exchange of merchandise

Inter-store transfers

Purchase points- don't want to wait

- must be manned

- enough

Sales assistants   - trained

- knowledgeable about merchandise

- knowledgeable about large-size figure

- right advise

- consultant

- friendly

- must wear what they sell

- speak language of client

- helpful

Basket/bag to put other things in when shopping e.g. bandbag

Merchandise too close together – keep in stockroom

Hangers – not effective, difficult to put clothes back on

Firm must treat employees right

Top structure must visit stores en acquire from clients themselves

Clientele:

Klas/ras nie 'n issue

Sales assistants must be professional

Physical facilities:

Fitting rooms

Couch

Mirrors

Visible purchase points

Convenience:

Cater for people in a hurry as well as those on a stroll

Availability

Easy access

Parking   - close by

                - safe

                - free

Store close by

Easy access to store in shopping centre

Spacious, couch

Restaurant

Promotion:

Brochure – via mail with account

Large-size model – can identify with

Advertisements repeated in store

Advertised merchandise available

Atmosphere:

Music

Lighting

Colour scheme

Relaxed

Institutional factors:

Style

Large-size

Affordable

Positive shopping experience

Separate store (Donna Claire first)

Filled a niche

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Ease of return

Phone to inform about new season's merchandise

Send sms

Longer than 7 days to return – rather 14 days

FOCUS GROUP 3

Merchandise:

Fasionable

Well-cut

Quality materials – not as much synthetic, more naturals (too hot)

Mix 'n match

Consider different figure forms

Materials – not all are suited to large-size

Long wintercoats – with hoods

Jerseys without ribs

Service:

Sales assistants   - knowledgeable

- immediate attention

- personal advicer – honest, knowledgeable

- well-groomed

- trained – not busy with personal issues

Speedy and efficient inter-store transfers

Purchase points   - no queues

- special purchase points to pay bills

Clientele:

Shop for only large-size = positive (not thin shop assistants)

Social class not an issue

Physical facilities:

Uncluttered

Mirrors

Couch – especially if you're sick/operation

Portal

Convenience:

Availability of merchandise – also as advertised

Parking - close by

                    - safe

Location within mall – accessible

Promotion:

Brochures with account

Fashion show – every season

Model – large-size/different races

Shop assistants – wear what they sell

Unique clothes – not to be lablelled as fat, not identifiable

Atmosphere:

Music

Lighting

Appearance

Posters

Carpets

Institutional factors:

Classy

Fashionable

For the large-size

No stigma

Quality

Model

Will find something that fits

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Ease of return

Personal contact

Must trust you – when returning goods

Consulting the clients experience

Be able to complain about bad quality

FOCUS GROUP 4

Merchandise:

Availability of the right numbers

Assortment of styles and colours

Fashionable

Sexy

Service:

Sales assistants   - available

                    -    offer help

Ease of return

Satisfaction

Inter-store transfer

Clientele:

Not an issue

Physical facilities:

Attractive interior – display of physical objects

Interior decorating

Not only clothing – vase, couch

Rails – not too high, must be reachable

Convenience:

Parking - close by

                  - free

One-stop shopping – everything available within one store

Couch

Good displays – all the pants together so you don't have to look for it

Ordering of displays

Promotion:

Window displays

Brochures with account

Magazines

Atmosphere:

Friendliness

Good service

Harmony amongst shop assistants

Music

Lighting

Institutional factors:

Larger sizes

Quality

Fasionable clothes for the large-size

Attractive and classy stores

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Ease of return

Longer return period than 7 days – 14 days/month

FOCUS GROUP 5

Merchandise:

Styles

Perfume

Cosmetics

Correct designs and materials – must fit fuller figure

   = sensitive merchandise

Right buyer for firm

Not sweat

Bathing suits

Service:

Sales assistants   – eye contact

     - availability

     - honest opinion

     - emotional empathy

-    must be able to relate

Clothing adjustments

Cash discount

No commission when self-help sale

Free gifts/purchase coupons

Special occasions

Clientele:

Own shop

Physical facilities:

Mirrors within store

Good lighting – colours are true

Restrooms

Water cans

Convenience:

Fitting rooms

Clean and neat

Find everything – including accessories

Restrooms

Mirrors

Follow-up on satisfaction

Strong carry-bags

Promotion:

Fashion show with bigger models

Sales assistants advertise through wearing store clothing

Window display – models with big figure

Advertising in magazines and papers not necessary

Personal contact

Promotional efforts with account

Word of mouth

Personal letter

Good relationship between sales assistant and client

Atmosphere:

Merchandise that fits me

Clothes not hung too closely together - marked down clothing

Mix'n match clothing – suggestions for wear

Rotate clothing frequently

Institutional factors:

Fuller figure

Style

Elegance

Not just women, younger children too

Unique

Still have young outlook – want to look fashionable

Na 30 – classic

Not fuller figure – other name

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Letter asking for feedback

Ease of return

Follow-up

Adjustments

FOCUS GROUP 6

Merchandise:

Correct merchandise for large-size

Applicable materials

Brochures – availability of merchandise in store

Perfume and accessories

Service:

Telephonic orders – measurements on computer

Deliveries

Quick response to merchandise requests

Communication – especially body language

Brochures – enough merchandise available in store

Courtesy

Clientele:

Sales assistants   – not teenagers

                        - large-size

                        - wear what they sell

Model – misleading, not always large-size consumer

Physical facilities:

Fitting rooms   - availability

-     comfortable
-     spacious
-     curtain must close properly/sliding doors
-     good mirrors
-     must be able to look at yourself in mirrors

Restrooms for clients

Convenient seating when fitting shoes

Couch

Ventilation – sometimes too hot

Convenience:

Convenient to fit clothes

Good advice

Satisfaction if something fits

Rails not too ful

Effective hangers

Someone to hang the clothes back on the rails

Promotion:

Timely advertisement of sales

Enough merchandise in stockroom

Television

Not mail – gets lost

Papers

In store advertising

Atmosphere:

Reception

Store appearance   - spacious

Trust in clients when shopping

Soft music

Wider corridors in fitting rooms

Sales assistants   – friendly, approachable, people person

        - personal attention

        - knowledgeable about cosmetics

Institutional factors:

Large-size

Stylish

Beautiful clothes

Tasteful

Quality

Can identify with store

Affordable

Unique

Always finds something there

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Ability to return sales shoes

Ease of return

Ability to return at any branch of store

Guarantee on clothes

Adjustments – specialist

FOCUS GROUP 7

Merchandise:

Enough merchandise

Wide range

Fulle range of styles and colours

Quality

Service:

Availability of merchandise

Inter-store transfers

Quality of materials

Comparable to international service

Helped when needed

Sales assistants   – excuse before attending to others

- focused attention
- trained
- good manners

Clientele:

No discrimination

Social class not issue

Shop with younger influence e.g. daughter

Physical facilities:

Layout

Spacious – rails not cramped

Displays – matching colours and suggestions to wear

Fitting rooms – enough, no queues

Vision and mission of store – displayed

Enough purchase points

Restrooms

Not too full

Convenience:

One-stop shopping

Parking is important

Parking nice to have – but are forced to shop at specific shop

Leave when cannot find parking

MTN, Vodacom, and Telkom prepaid cards

Promotion:

Timely communication in writing about sales

Sales – more merchandise at cheaper prices

Atmosphere:

Soft colours

Attractive display of merchandise

Warm welcome

Inviting

User friendly

Don't turn customers away when you think they can't afford it – "it's very expensive"

Institutional factors:

Big sizes/large-size

Style

Quality

Colours

Trained staff

Stock your size

Fashionable

Not ashamed

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Ease of return

Longer than 7 days to return – especially if buying for other people

Honest communication regarding prices – price on slip same as at till

FOCUS GROUP 8

Merchandise:

Quality

Fashionable

Full range

Numbers

Service:

Warm welcome, smile

Assistance – when you need help

Helpful

Advice - sincere and honest regarding your look

Please the customer, make you comfortable

Clientele:

Shop with anybody

Stock more important

Physical facilities:

Toilets

Temperature – fitting rooms too hot

Convenience:

Get what you want in your size

Get what you want for you – even from other stores

Promotion:

Account holders should get info in catalogues

Sales – timely, when have money

Competitions

Vouchers

Cut-down prices

Preference to cardholders

Tv

Magazine

Timely promotion

Atmosphere:

Friendliness

Brightness – not dull and dark inside

Soft music

Institutional factors:

Real woman

Big women

Fuller figure

Affordable

Fashionable

Quality

Post-transaction satisfaction:

Should take merchandise back – ease of return

Even without slip

DESCRIPTION OF LINDQUIST'S ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS BY ALL FOCUS GROUPS

MERCHANDISE

Availability

Assortment

Quality

Fashionable

Correcty styling

Correct materials

Availability as advertised

Perfume

Accessories

Cosmetics

Bathing suits

Right buyer, sensitive merchandise

Sexy

Wintercoats with hoods

Jerseys without ribs

Seasonal changes not too hasty

Brand image

Displays

        Convenient

        Mix and match

Spacious

SERVICE

Sales assistants

        Available/attention

        Friendly/courteous

        Communication

                Serve in own language

                Body language

        Trained

        Knowledgeable

        Advice

        Well-groomed/wear what they sell

        Helpful

Inter-store transfers

Exchange of merchandise

Purchase points

> Enough, manned, not wait

> Special purchase points for bills

Quality of materials

Availability of merchandise

Put clothes back after you've fitted

Basket/bag to put things in when shopping

Merchandise too close together – in stock-room

Effective hangers

Treat employees right by firm

Top structure must visit stores and consult with customers

Satisfaction

Telephonic orders

Deliveries

Brochures – available in store

International service

Clothing adjustments

Cash discount

No commission – self-help sale

Free gifts/purchase coupons

Special occasions

CLIENTELE

Class/race not an issue

> Same problems/frustrations

> Shared experiences

> Able to converse

> Overlapping self-images

Sales assistants

> Professional, not teenagers

> Not thin

> Wear what they sell

Stock more important

Shop for only large-size

Model – misleading, not always large-size

No discrimination

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Restrooms

Temperature

      Fitting rooms too hot

Spacious

      Rails too cramped

Displays

      Matching colours

      Suggestions to wear

      Attractive

Fitting rooms

      Enough, no queues

      Comfortable

      Spacious

      Privacy

      Effective mirrors

Vision and mission displayed

Seating when fitting shoes

Couch

Purchase points

      Enough

Mirrors

Lighting

Water cans

Attractive decoration

Rails

      Reachable

      Not too full

Portal

Hangers

      Effective

Music

CONVENIENCE

One-stop shopping

Parking

      Nice to have, forced to shop at specific store

      Leave when cannot find parking

      Free

        Close by

        Safe

        Enclosed

Fitting rooms

MTN, Vodacom, Telkom prepaid cards

Sales assistants

        Advice

Merchandise

        Availability

        Right fit

Rails

        Not too full

Hangers

        Effective

Cater for people in a hurry, as well as on a stroll

Someone to hang clothes back

Location within mall – accessible

Clean and neat

Follow-up on satisfaction

Restrooms

Strong carry bags

Mirrors

Couch

Displays – ordered

Location

Inter-store transfers

Spacious

Restaurant

Temperature

Purchase point

PROMOTION

Timely communication

Sales

        More merchandise at lower prices

        Timely, when have money

Enough merchandise

Available as advertised

Television

Papers

In store advertising

       Repetition of other promotional offers

Fashion show

Sales assistants

       Wear what they sell

Window displays

Personal contact

Word of mouth

Promotional efforts with account

Personal letter

Good relationship between sales assistants and customer

Brochures with account

Magazines

Model

       Large-size

       Different races

Merchandise

       Unique

       Not lablelled as fat

Good store – promotion by itself

Radio

Discount coupons

Gold card system

Cash card

SMS messages

Competitions

Vouchers

Cut-down prices

STORE ATMOSPHERE

Colours

       Soft

Displays

Decorating

       Inviting

Sales assistants

       Warm welcome

       Friendly, approachable, people person

       Personal attention

Knowledgeable

Service

Harmony amongst themselves

User friendly

No discrimination/prejudice

Spacious

Fitting rooms

Music

Lighting

Merchandise that fits

Posters

Clothes not too close together

Carpet

Relaxed

Rotate clothing

Finishing materials

Couch

Cozy

No dolls withou heads – impersonal

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Large-size

Style

Quality

Colours

Trained staff

Fashionable

No stigma

Tasteful/elegance

Beautiful clothes

Can idenitfy with store

Affordable

Unique

Always find something

Younger children too

After thirty, classic

Not fuller figure, other name

Attractive, classy stores

Model

Convenience

Real women

Positive shopping experience

Separate store

Filled a niche

POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION

Ease of return

> Longer than seven days (fourteen days/one month)

> Refund/credit

> Trust when return

> Even without slip

> Guarantee on clothes

> Sales merchandise

Phone to inform about new season's merchandise

Send SMS

Adjustments

Phone clients to enquire about shopping experience

> Personal contact

> Feedback

> Follow-up

Honest communication – price on slip same as till

RATING OF LINDQUIST'S ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS BASED ON RESPONDENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS

FOCUS GROUP 1

MERCHANDISE	9,2
SERVICE	9
CLIENTELE	6
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	8,6
CONVENIENCE	9,2
PROMOTION	8
STORE ATMOSPHERE	8
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9,6
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	7,8

FOCUS GROUP 2

MERCHANDISE	11
SERVICE	10,4
CLIENTELE	4,4
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	8,6
CONVENIENCE	8,8
PROMOTION	9,2
STORE ATMOSPHERE	9,6
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9,2
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	9,4

FOCUS GROUP 3

MERCHANDISE	11
SERVICE	10,8
CLIENTELE	6,7
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	9,8
CONVENIENCE	9,7
PROMOTION	10,5
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10,5
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	9,8

FOCUS GROUP 4

MERCHANDISE	11
SERVICE	11
CLIENTELE	11
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	3
CONVENIENCE	9,3
PROMOTION	10,3
STORE ATMOSPHERE	11
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	10,7
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	10,7

FOCUS GROUP 5

MERCHANDISE	10,4
SERVICE	10,3
CLIENTELE	5,9
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	10
CONVENIENCE	9,7
PROMOTION	10,3
STORE ATMOSPHERE	9.6
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9,7
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	9,3

FOCUS GROUP 6

MERCHANDISE	10,6
SERVICE	10,6
CLIENTELE	9
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	10,2
CONVENIENCE	10,2
PROMOTION	10,6
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10,8
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	10,8
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	10,8

FOCUS GROUP 7

MERCHANDISE	11
SERVICE	10,7
CLIENTELE	5
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	11
CONVENIENCE	10,7

PROMOTION	10
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10,3
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	10
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	10,7

FOCUS GROUP 8

MERCHANDISE	10,8
SERVICE	11
CLIENTELE	5,4
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	8,4
CONVENIENCE	10,9
PROMOTION	11
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10,9
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	10,6
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	10,9

AGGREGATE RATING FOR ALL FOCUS GROUPS

MERCHANDISE	10,6
SERVICE	10,5
CLIENTELE	5,7
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	9,2
CONVENIENCE	9,8
PROMOTION	10
STORE ATMOSPHERE	10,1
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	9,9
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	9,9

REFEREE ANALYSIS

REFINED ATTRIBUTE GROUPINGS AND AGGREGATE RATINGS OF GROUPINGS OF GENERATED STORE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES - RACE AND AGE GROUPS

MERCHANDISE	**10,6**
Quality	**11**
Availability	**10,8**
Of correct styles and numbers in store	11
Of right fit	10,8
Casual, fashionable	10,8
Merchandise – availability of popular numbers	10,5
Accessories	**10,8**
Styling/fashion	**10,4**
Uniqueness	10,8
Merchandise – correct styles	10,5
Type of material	10,4
Colours	9,7
Selection/assortment	**10,5**
Mix and match	10,8
Latest fashionable stock	10,8
Wide arrangement of styles	10
Pricing	**10,1**
Prices competitive	10,1
Specialised clothing	**10**
Merchandise – appealing underwear	10,6
Sleepwear	10,5
Shoes	10,3
Baby clothes	10
Merchandise for special occasions	8,5
Comfort	**10,8**
SERVICE	**10,3**
Inter-store transfers	**11**
Service – helpful (inter-store transfers)	11
Consultants	**10,7**
Service consultants	10,7

Credit bureau	**10,3**
Credit bureau – membership fees	10,3
On appro	**9,4**
On appro for longer	9,4
Sales assistants and in store manager	**10,7**
Sales assistants – knowledge, honest advice	11
Sales assistants – personality and training	10,8
Sales assistants – friendly	10,7
Sales assistants – attuned/fine touch for work	10,6
Sales assistants – knowledgeable about colour and body	9
Sales assistants – focused attention	8,5
Sales assistants – emotional empathy	8,3
Sales assistants – honest opinion	6.7
Manager on floor	10,7
Link between head office and stores	**9,9**
Report back on styles that work	9,9
Report back to company	9,8
CLIENTELE	**10,2**
Cross-cultural communication	**11**
No discrimination	**11**
Sales assistants	**8,6**
Sales assistants – relate to them	9
Sales assistants – wear what they sell	8,2
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	**9**
Layout	**9,6**
Layout inviting	9,6
General appearance	**9,5**
Clean and neat	10,8
Respectable interior	10,5
General appearance	9,3
Inviting portal (lighting, carpets)	8,6
Attractive interior	8,3
Fitting rooms	**9,4**
Fitting rooms – mirrors	9,8
Fitting rooms – hooks	9,7
Fitting rooms – mirrors and lighting	9
Fitting rooms – lighting	9

Hangers	**10,4**
Lighting	**10,3**
Mirrors	**9,9**
Restroom	**9**
Temperature	**9**
Couch	**8**
Floors	**7,3**
Playpen	**6,4**
Children must be kept busy	6,4
CONVENIENCE	
Spacing	**9,4**
Uncluttered inside	10,5
Space between rails	10,2
Spacing between rails	9,4
Size of fitting rooms	8,9
Spacious store	7,8
Privacy	**9,6**
Privacy in fitting rooms	9,6
Purchase points	**8,4**
Convenient purchase points	8,4
Availability	**10**
Availability of merchandise in all stores	10
PROMOTION	**9,5**
Sales promotion	**11**
Sales – preference to account holders in marketing	11
Advertising	**10,9**
Advertise	11
Promotion – sales/brochures	11
Advertise services available	10,8
Availability	**10,7**
Sales – bigger numbers also available	11
Sales – not limited stock	11
Advertise – availability in store	10,2
Large-size model	**9,7**
Promotion – large-size woman as model	9,7
Competitions	**9,3**
Displays	**9,4**

Arrangement of merchandise	10,8
Display – inside store	10,3
Display in window	9,5
Large-size doll	9,5
Displays – mix and match	9,3
Displays – doll with large-size	8,6
Posters	8
Promotions repeated in store	**9**
Incentives	**9**
Promotions/special events	**8,3**
Store bags	**7,6**
STORE ATMOSPHERE	**10**
Sales assistants	**9,8**
Appearance of sales assistants	9
Approachability of sales assistants	10,6
Good feeling about large-size store	**10,5**
Feel great that your sizes are there	11
Feel special	10
Colour combination of store	**10,2**
Music	**9,8**
General atmosphere	**9**
Warm atmosphere	10,2
Atmosphere	6,7
Smell – neutral	10
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	**-**
POST-TRANSACTION SATISFACTION	**9,8**
Adjustments	**9,8**