

**Needs and problems of fuller figure South African working women with regard to  
branded apparel**

**DESIREE JASON**

**Dissertation**

**Master's in Consumer Science (Clothing Management)**

**Supervisor: Prof HM de Klerk (University Pretoria)**

**October 2011**

**Needs and problems of fuller figure South African working women with regard to  
branded apparel**

by

**DESIREE JASON**

Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

**Master's in Consumer Science (Clothing Management)**

in the

**Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

**Department of Consumer Science**

**University of Pretoria**

**Supervisor: Prof HM de Klerk**

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I, **Desiree Jason**, hereby declare that this dissertation that I submit for a **Master's degree in Consumer Science (Clothing Management)** at the University of Pretoria is my original work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

**DESIREE JASON**

10 October 2011

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Consumer satisfaction is key for retailers to retain loyal consumers. Retailers use apparel brands as a strategy to differentiate themselves in the market place, to attract potential consumers and to retain loyal consumers. Retailers have discovered the potential of the fuller figure sector as a lucrative market which can assist them to make profits and to increase their sales.

The aim of this research is firstly to explore and describe the needs and expectations that the fuller figure South African working women have with branded career wear secondly, how they evaluate branded career wear apparel against the two broad quality dimensions namely functional and aesthetic dimensions and thirdly the problems they experience with the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions of branded career wear. The study also describes how fuller figure South African working women consumers further evaluate the branded apparel during the decision-making process which can ultimately lead to her either accepting or rejecting the branded career wear.

This research is descriptive in nature, as an attempt is made to describe and understand how working fuller figure females evaluate branded apparel against certain quality dimensions and make decisions to purchase branded apparel to satisfy their needs. The Sproles and Burns' (1994:264) decision-making model theoretical underpins the study.

A quantitative research style was chosen for this study and the objectives and sub-objectives related to the needs and problems of the quality dimensions of the branded career wear were examined. A self-administered, structured questionnaire was designed to gain demographic information of the sample group, their store preferences, where they get their fashion information from as well as their needs and problems with regard to branded career wear apparel. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used to select a sample of working fuller figure females in the Tshwane, South Africa area. The responses to the 150 questionnaires were coded, captured and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The results of this study revealed that most of the respondents ranked the functional quality dimensions higher than the aesthetic quality dimensions. It is clear that most of the fuller figure consumers regard comfort as the most important need, followed by durability (that the material of the branded career wear should be of good quality). The sample group also regarded the emotional aesthetic aspects very important (that the styles are beautiful and make her feel feminine). It is contradictory, that these fuller figure working women experienced major problems with the quality dimensions that they ranked as highly important. The sample group experienced problems with fit at the functional and aesthetic level, although fit is one of the most important factors that consumers use during the evaluation of apparel items.

This study makes certain recommendations to apparel retailers, fashion theorists and image consultants how to obtain optimal consumer satisfaction. The South African apparel retailers should take cognisance of the needs and problems of this growing market related to the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions. The study also revealed how age and income play a role regarding the needs and problems this sample group experienced with branded career wear and how this can influence their decision to either accept or reject a brand.

The results contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the needs and problems of branded career wear apparel for the fuller figure market related to certain functional and aesthetic quality dimensions.

**Keywords: fuller figure apparel consumer, branded career wear, functional quality dimension, aesthetic quality dimension, apparel decision-making process.**

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**ADDENDUM A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN  
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<b>FFSAWW</b>	Fuller Figure South African Working Women
<b>LSM</b>	Living Standard Measurement

## **1.1 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION**

### **1.1.1 Introduction**

Consumer satisfaction is a universal priority for retailers in general to retain loyal consumers (Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1995:19). Consumer loyalty is ideal for retailers because it implies that existing consumers will return to the store again and again to purchase more products leading to more sales (Solomon, 1993:240). Therefore strategies should be implemented to acquire loyal consumers that keep contributing to profits, growth and sales.

Apparel retailers in particular have come to realise that the fuller figure apparel market is a viable economic contributor in terms of profit, growth and sales (Wong, 2008). Apparel as a term is mainly used in the apparel industry referring to a garment constructed from fabric which enhances the appearance of the wearer. Apparel is described in Kaiser (1990:4) as any tangible or material object connected to the human body Sproles and Burns (1994:7) define apparel as a covering of the human body which serves as a second skin and therefore is an extension of the self. For the purpose of the study the researcher refers to outer clothes for e.g. a skirt, trouser or top as apparel items or apparel.

The researcher uses the terms fuller figure and plus-size interchangeably to describe how this target group can use branded apparel to satisfy their needs and expectations. The study defines fuller figure females as wearing apparel ranging from a size 16 to size 28. Du Preez and Visser (2003) state that women these days are economically more active resulting in them having more decision-making power. This subsequently makes them a lucrative market segment for the apparel industry. Schupak and Mclaughlin (2000) state that the plus-size market is the fastest-growing segment of the women's apparel business. In 2000 it accounted for more than 27% of all women's apparel sales in the United States. According to North, de Vos and Kotze (2003) and Wong (2008) a contributing factor is the increase in the number of females entering the workforce over the past decade. The fuller figured female market continues to grow in some countries like the United States, and therefore retailers have become aware of the viability of the fuller figure market and have developed specific brands for this target market (Soucy, 2002). In South Africa in particular, more brands are



available to satisfy the needs of various target markets, including the fuller figure female market (North *et al.*, 2003). It could be beneficial if apparel retailers meet this viable consumers' specific needs with specific branded apparel so that these consumers can become loyal to the retailers that provide the branded apparel.

Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and branding for the plus-size market in the United States have become the norm (Frings, 1999:38; Easey, 2002:32; Soucy, 2002). In South Africa the plus-size is a growing market and retailers have implemented strategies to satisfy the needs of these fuller figured women (Cant & Machado, 2002:31). Department stores in South Africa have responded to the plus-size market and a number of retailers have special brands for the fuller figure with various size categories. As a result there are currently numerous apparel brands that are aimed at the fuller figure female in South Africa. According to a South African researcher, Janse van Noordwyk (2002:3) there is however limited apparel research conducted relating to this growing market segment. More information about this market segment's specific needs could provide information on how to satisfy their specific needs.

A specific category of this market segment can be the working fuller figure target market. Evans, Jamal and Foxall (2006:227) note that there has been an increase in the number of working women worldwide by over 75%. In a recent article Wong (2008) noted that the plus size apparel consumer needs apparel that is suitable for the corporate industry with the following attributes; apparel that is comfortable, stylish, fits well and is easy to care for as well as professional looking that will flatter her and make her feel confident. This has led to a surge in the fashion industry, as working women are continuously exposed to fashion and have the incentives to respond to fashion trends with the aim to look stylish, fashionable and professional. According to Rutter and Edwards (1999) it is crucial that the apparel retailers produce appropriate garments with the emphasis on size, colour and style to cater for these women whom Damhorst, Miller and Michelman (1999:421) describe as fashionable and professional, who consider themselves attractive and confident. This can be done by creating loyal consumers whose needs are satisfied by the branded apparel.

However, consumer loyalty is created by retailers only if they have ample knowledge of the consumer (Hawkins *et al.*, 1995:24). This knowledge should include knowledge about the consumer demographics, needs, possible problems and the way that consumers apply these factors during the decision-making process (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997:544-552). Therefore the following problem statement for the study is provided.

### **1.1.2 Problem statement**

According to Damhorst *et al.*, (1999:424), very little scholarly research has been documented worldwide which focus on the fuller figure market, presently this situation is still the same. This lack of consumer information can lead to a lack of knowledge regarding this consumer (Solomon, 1993:92). The result being that the apparel is probably branded for a specific market without due consideration of the various needs that this specific consumers experiences with regard to apparel items, or the problems that these specific consumers experience with regard to available apparel items branded for this market. In general, du Preez and Visser (2003) note that more quantitative studies are needed to delve into the issues regarding the needs and problems with apparel branded for the working fuller figure female.

Against the above background, the problem lies with gaining knowledge of the fuller figure South African working women. This includes what their needs are with regard to apparel, but also what problems they may experience with the available branded career wear.

Although most major apparel retailers in South Africa supply special brands for the fuller figure woman, no research could be traced regarding this target market's opinions and problems with the current available brands in South Africa, their apparel needs and how they evaluate the branded career wear during the decision-making process.

The overall purpose of this study was therefore to gain an understanding of the needs and problems that fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to apparel branded for this target market. Secondly, the study highlights how critical it is for retailers to understand their markets to ensure effective customer satisfaction for this target group. Thirdly the study makes recommendations to the apparel industry targeting the fuller figure female to highlight their needs and problems with branded apparel.

### **1.1.3 Expected significance of the study**

The outcome of the study will be of importance to the apparel industry who needs an understanding of how the fuller figure working women interprets her apparel needs and how these individuals make different judgments about the same brand of apparel. Retailers and marketers may benefit from a better understanding of the profile of their customers, since this would enable them to maximise consumer satisfaction (Shim & Kotsiopoulos in North *et al.*, 2003). This in turn can assist them to refine their branded career wear apparel as well as their marketing plans to meet the needs of this specific audience (Damhorst *et al.*, 1999:421).

Loyalty exists when consumers have a high regard for the brand and purchase the brand more than any other brand (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2006:273). The information can also be useful to image consultants when dealing with fuller figure females in enhancing their appearance. Fashion theorists can use this information in their studies to expand their understanding of what needs and problems the fuller figure women face with apparel branded for this target population.

## 1.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Retailers have become aware of the growing apparel market within the fuller figure segment. These fuller figure consumers, like all other consumers, have needs and expectations with regard to the performance of apparel items (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:133-134). According to Oh and Fiorito (2002), retailers have designed apparel brands which serve as a vehicle to meet these consumer needs and expectations. These brands can be utilised to enhance consumer satisfaction and the fuller figure consumer becomes loyal to the brand. In order to satisfy and retain customers in the fuller figure market it is however of the utmost importance for retailers to understand the functional and aesthetic needs and problems these fuller figure consumers experience with regard to branded career apparel.

Foxall and Goldsmith (1994:22-23), Schiffman and Kanuk (2002:133-134) and Solomon and Rabolt (2004:452) state that consumers have expectations of how an apparel item should perform. It is important for apparel retailers to know the profile of their fuller figure customers in order to have a better understanding of their specific needs and product performance expectations. Wong (2008) reiterates the importance of retailers to understand the needs and problems of the apparel consumers and to have information on their demographic profile. Du Preez (2003) further agrees that the demographic variables such as age, sex, marital status, income, education level and occupation have an influence on the consumer decision-making process. In a study conducted by de Klerk (1999) it is further reiterated that age and education have a direct influence on the lifestyle of the apparel consumers and decision-making processes. Little research has been conducted in the fashion industry but Thorelli states in Sproles and Burns (1994:275) that better educated females who are higher earners use specific sources of information when making apparel purchase decisions. To add to this Jacobs and de Klerk, (2007) state that age, gender, income and location have an influence on apparel internet purchasing.

For the purpose of this study the researcher applied the two broad quality dimensions i.e. functional and aesthetic aspects to evaluate the branded apparel mentioned by Brown and

Rice (2001:47). Branded apparel according to Kincade (2008:29) and Soucy (2002) can be associated with a certain image, price structure, consistency and level of quality. Consumers purchase brands that are in-line with their self-image and their expectations (Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008). These fuller figure consumers will expect and evaluate the branded career wear apparel against functional quality dimensions which is comfort, durability, fashionability, care and versatility. If the branded apparel perform well against these functional quality indicators and she is satisfied with the product's performance this can then lead to brand acceptance and loyalty to the brand.

Customer satisfaction is not only dependent on the functional quality dimensions but also on the aesthetic quality dimensions (Fiore and Kimle, 1997:42) such as sensory, emotional and cognitive aspects. According to Brown and Rice (1998:38) these aesthetic qualities are associated with evoking emotional pleasure within the consumers. The fuller figure females want to wear branded apparel that has a number of attributes that makes her feel feminine, confident, reflects the latest fashion, and looks good (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:42-43; Sproles & Burns, 1994:141-149).

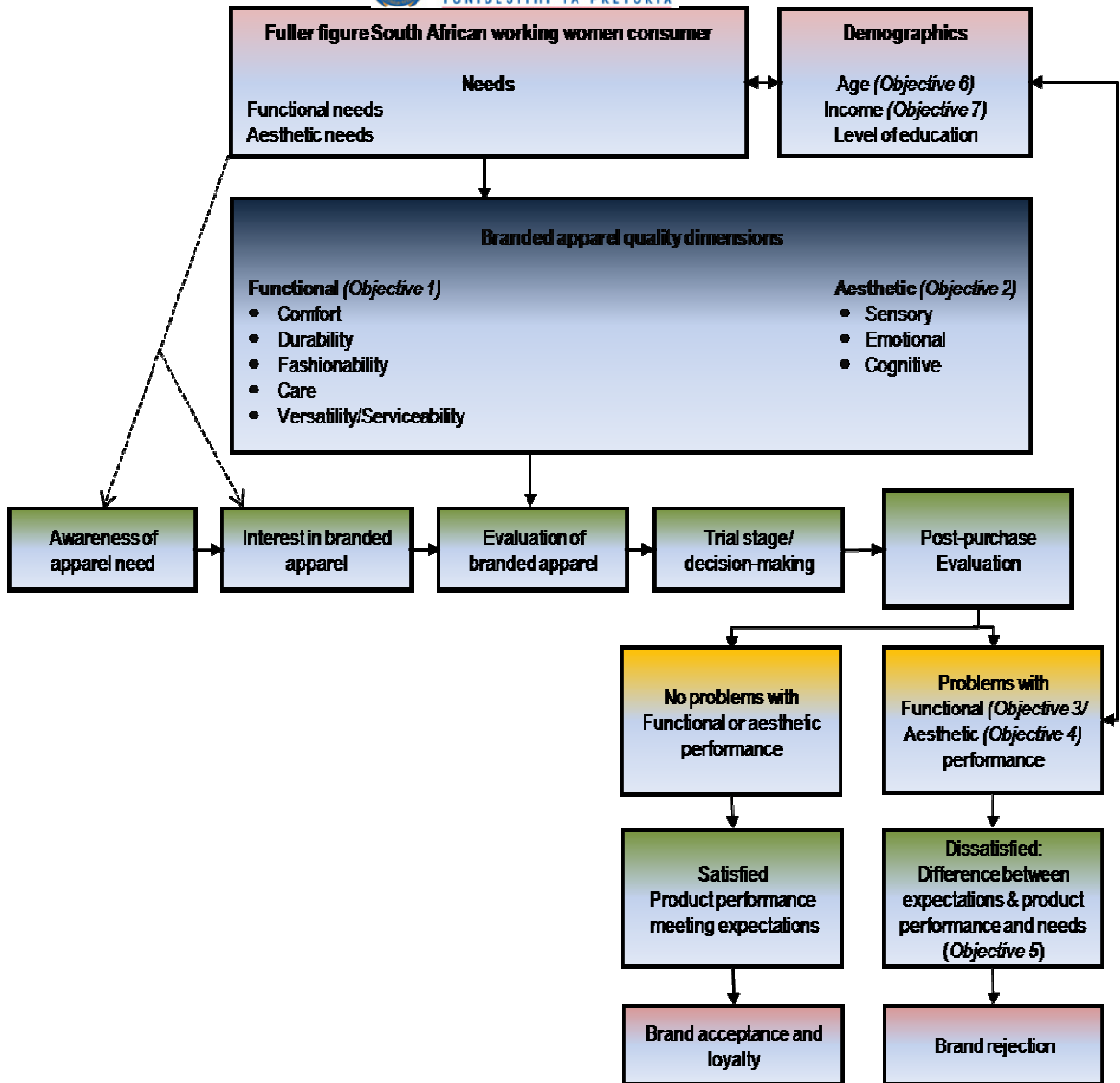
Fit is crucial for customer satisfaction (Brown & Rice, 2001:153 and Goldsberry, Shim & Reich, 1966b) and is linked to the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions of an apparel item. According to Kincade (2008:9) fit is defined as how well the garment conforms to the three dimensional human body and is influenced by the individual's preference. Fit includes both functional and aesthetic aspects of an apparel item and is an important quality indicator for apparel consumers because it is related to the appearance expectations of consumers (Kincade, 2008:89). Goldsberry *et al.*,(1996b) also agree that fit contributes to the functional dimension of an apparel item and a well fitted garment should be comfortable, fashionable and stylish. Fit is multi-dimensional in nature, having sensory, cognitive and emotional qualities. During the evaluation of an apparel item consumers will evaluate whether the style fits her body comfortability, makes her feel confident and is aesthetically pleasing (Kadolph, 1998:27-28). Brown and Rice (2001:153) state that there is a correlation between comfort and fit.

The decision-making model of Sproles and Burns (1994:264) provides the theoretical perspective for the study. It indicates the process consumers follow when evaluating branded career wear against the two broad quality dimensions. The model comprises of five sequential phases, awareness, interest, evaluation, decision-making and post-purchase stage. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:424) these stages involves the cognitive processes of the consumer. During the evaluation of the branded apparel items consumers make use of cognitive shortcuts (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:425) as well her personal

experience with the product will aid the decision-making process. Sproles and Burns (1994:264) state that consumers get information about new styles and fit from various sources such as fashion magazines, colleagues and retail assistants. The consumers will evaluate the branded apparel item against her needs and expectations in the store (Brown & Rice, 1998:43) and will further evaluate the product after the point of sale (post purchase evaluation) while wearing the branded apparel. If the fuller figure female is satisfied that the branded apparel meets her expectations she will accept the brand and may become loyal to the brand. On the other hand if the branded apparel does not meet her quality dimensions she will be dissatisfied and will reject the brand. It is therefore important for retailers to understand the various stages within the decision-making process as well as the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions of an apparel item. In order to ensure consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty for the fuller figure working females when purchasing branded career wear.

### **1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The conceptual framework directed the study and was compiled with the consumer decision-making theory as well as apparel quality theory in mind. The conceptual framework is provided in Figure 1.1.



**FIGURE 1.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The conceptual framework above illustrates how the fuller figure female consumer evaluate the branded apparel against her needs and expectations and goes through the various stages in the decision-making process to either accept or reject the branded career wear. The researcher applied the Sproles and Burns (1994:264) decision-making model as the theoretical underpinning of the study.

The decision-making model comprises of five stages namely awareness, interest, evaluation, decision-making and post-purchase. These South African fuller figure female consumers become aware of an apparel need and have expectations of how the product should perform. These consumers will evaluate the apparel item against two broad quality dimensions which is the functional and aesthetic dimensions. The functional aspect focuses on the performance qualities of an apparel brand. This includes comfort, durability, fashionability,

care and versatility. The aesthetic dimensions refer to the emotional enjoyment that the branded career wear brings to the wearer which includes the sensory, emotional and cognitive aspects. In addition, demographics also play a role during the evaluation of branded apparel. Factors such as age, monthly disposable income and educational level may have an influence during the evaluation of the branded career wear.

These fuller figure females go through the various decision-making stages while evaluating the branded career wear. Awareness is the first stage in the decision-making process. Here her interaction with colleagues, friends, looking at trends in fashion magazines as well as window shopping play a role in creating awareness. She then becomes interested in the branded career apparel which is the second stage of the decision-making model. Whilst in the store she will evaluate the branded career wear. If it meets her needs and expectations. Then she makes the final decision to purchase or not to purchase the branded career wear which occurs at the point of sales. Here factors such as brand name, price, her previous experience with the product can influence her decision. Once she has purchased the product she will use other sets of evaluation criteria to further evaluate the product against her needs and expectations. Here the fuller figure consumer will evaluate the product against the functional dimensions for example the care and durability aspects of the product. She will also evaluate the product against the compliments she receives from colleagues and friends. The fuller figure females want apparel items that fit well and look professional (Wong, 2008). Should she experience problems with the functional or aesthetic dimensions this may cause dissatisfaction with the branded apparel and may lead to brand rejection. On the other hand, if she does not experience problems and is satisfied that the product performance meets her needs and expectations this may lead to brand acceptance and her becoming loyal to the brand.

The aim of the study and the research objectives are outlined as follows.

***The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the needs and problems that the fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to apparel branded for this specific target market.***

### **1.3.1 Research objectives**

The following research objectives were formulated for the study:

## Objective 1

To explore and describe the importance of the **functional needs** that the fuller figure South African working women (FFSAWW) experience with regard to branded career apparel:

### Sub-objectives

- 1.1 To explore and describe the importance of comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 1.2 To explore and describe the importance of durability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 1.3 To explore and describe the importance of care for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 1.4 To explore and describe the importance of fashionability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 1.5 To explore and describe the importance of versatility (end use) of the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.

## Objective 2

To explore and describe the importance of the **aesthetic needs** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

### Sub-objectives

- 2.1 To explore and describe the importance of sensory qualities for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 2.2 To explore and describe the importance of emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/ pleasure) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.
- 2.3 To explore and describe the importance of cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear.

## Objective 3

To explore and describe the extent of the **functional problems** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

### Sub-objectives

- 3.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) regarding career wear.





- 3.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with durability regarding career wear.
- 3.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with care regarding career wear.
- 3.4 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with fashionability regarding career wear.
- 3.5 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with versatility (end use) regarding career wear.

#### **Objective 4**

To explore and describe the extent of the **aesthetic problems** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

##### **Sub-objectives**

- 4.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the sensory qualities regarding to career wear.
- 4.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/ pleasure) regarding to career wear.
- 4.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) regarding to career wear.

#### **Objective 5**

To determine the statistical difference between the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

#### **Objective 6**

To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

##### **Sub-objectives**

- 6.1 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

- 6.2 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic problems of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

### **Objective 7**

To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

#### **Sub-objectives**

- 7.1 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group.
- 7.2 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

## **1.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

### **1.4.1 Sampling procedure**

The unit of analysis was fuller figure South African working women wearing apparel ranging from size 16 to size 28 and working in the Tshwane metropolitan area in South Africa. The ages of the participants varied between 25 years to 55 years.

The sample selection was informed by using two methods of sampling techniques namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling to obtain the sample members for the study with certain criteria. Purposive sampling occurs when the units relevant to the study are selected for a specific purpose (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:206). The sample group had to have the above mentioned criteria which are working female wearing apparel ranging from size 16 to size 28 and working in Tshwane. The snowball sampling technique assisted the researcher, as the respondents could locate more members with the specified criteria to participate in the study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005:330). A total of one hundred and fifty (n=150) respondents participated in the study with the above mentioned criteria.

### **1.4.2 Data collection method**

A quantitative data collection method was used to capture the data and the process adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the researcher in Chapter 3 Research Methodology. The

data collection procedure involved a close ended and open ended questionnaire which was self-administered and completed by the fuller figured working women in Tshwane, South Africa.

Using questionnaires have advantages as it is a relatively cost effective, time consuming and an easy method for collecting data (Walliman, 2005:281). The questionnaire which is attached as (Addendum A), comprised of four sections (Section A to D) which facilitated the data collection process. **Section A** consisted of demographic information which included: age, educational level and average monthly income. This study focused on working women within the Living Standard Measurement (LSM) category LSM 6 to 10, their monthly income ranging from R4 075.00 to more than R18 649.00. **Section B**, focused on the respondents' apparel information such as where do you find suitable apparel? **Section C** dealt with the branded apparel needs and **Section D** focused on the problems the participants experienced with the branded apparel items.

## 1.5 PRESENTATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

### Chapter 2: Literature review and the theoretical perspective

Chapter 2 provides a literature overview of the apparel needs and possible problems that fuller figure South African working women experience with branded apparel targeted for this market. The literature firstly presents the expectation theory that explains how consumers evaluate apparel items against their needs and expectations. They use certain quality dimensions such as functional and aesthetic dimensions to evaluate the branded career wear against. Brands are a vehicle to satisfying consumers' needs and expectations. The literature also explains the problems that fuller figure consumers experience with apparel items. Lastly, the five stages in the decision-making process is outlined which then leads to a consumer either being satisfied with the quality dimensions and accepting a brand or experiencing problems with the quality dimensions resulting in being dissatisfied and ultimately rejecting a brand. This chapter ends with the implications of the above study on the research topic.

### Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology. Firstly, the conceptual framework and the study objectives are presented to give a better understanding of the problem statement followed by the research design, the sampling plan which includes the unit of analysis and

the sample selection and size. The data collection techniques explain the data collection method and procedure as well as how the researcher adhered to the ethical aspects. The researcher further describes the instrument which was developed based on the objectives of the study. The operationalisation of the study demonstrates the various objectives and shows the application of the statistical analysis to the various objectives. The researcher discusses the strategies to ensure the quality of the data and closes the chapter on the discussion of the limitations of the study.

#### **Chapter 4: Data analysis and discussion**

Chapter four focuses on analysing the data collected from the 150 questionnaires that were distributed to the target group. Descriptive and inferential statistics describe the quantitative data in the form of tables and graphs. The calculation of the numerical summaries is presented in frequencies, averages, percentages, mean scores as well as the P-value. The chapter describes the demographic characteristics of the sample group using a pie chart, bar graphs and tables to display the frequencies and percentages. The descriptive findings illustrate the sample groups apparel sizes, their dressing style, the amount that they are willing to spend on apparel per month, the apparel brands that they have tried on and purchased and where they get their fashion information. More data is analysed regarding their functional and aesthetic needs and problems in accordance with the objectives of the study. This chapter ends with the discussion and the interpretation of the results. The discussion on the results is interpreted against the viewpoints of the theories presented in the literature review in Chapter 2.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusions, recommendations and evaluations**

After the data analysis and discussion of the results in Chapter 4, this chapter provides the recommendations and overall conclusion as set out by the objectives of the study. This chapter closes with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter one sets out the purpose of the study, namely to explore and describe the needs and problems that the fuller figure working women in the study encounter with branded apparel. The focus of this chapter is to present an overview of the existing literature in creating an understanding of the apparel needs and problems of the fuller figure South African working women experiences with branded career wear and how certain quality dimensions of a branded apparel item can influence her decision to either accept or reject an apparel brand.

The literature review aims to show how the various quality dimensions of branded career wear apparel is being evaluated during the consumer decision-making process in order for the fuller figure women to either reject or accept the branded apparel. The Sproles and Burns (1994:264) consumer decision-making model is employed to outline the conceptual framework for the study and how the various dimensions can be utilised as a quality evaluation indicator during the decision-making process. According to Kincade (2008:5) the word consumer is used to describe the customer in a retail environment. The literature review further explains how various factors play a role during the evaluation of an apparel item, such as social interaction with friends, family, colleagues as well as the media (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:265; de Klerk, 1999). These are one of many factors can contribute to the fuller figure females either being satisfied or dissatisfied with the branded career wear apparel.

## **2.2 THE FULLER FIGURE CONSUMER'S NEEDS/EXPECTATIONS OF BRANDED APPAREL**

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997:50) and Hawkins *et al.*, (1995:31) it is important for retailers to be aware of the profile and the demographics of their target market to be able to meet their needs and expectations in order to ensure customer satisfaction. These demographic variables include, amongst others, age, income and level of education (Solomon, 1993:620). In addition to their demographic information the buying practices of the

female consumers are also important. In a study by Goldsberry, Shim and Reich (1996) the authors conclude that older women for example have more disposable income to spend on apparel than younger women. Schupak and McLaughlin (2000) further reiterate that a significant portion of the plus size market in America consists of high earners who shop more than once a week, buy at least one item of apparel every two weeks and spend an average of \$200 per outfit. According to American demographics (Soucy, 2002) 61% of today's 20 to 74 year olds are categorised in the plus-size market, wearing apparel size 16 to size 28. The above is probably also true with regard to the South African market. This has contributed to the increase in branded apparel, aimed at the fuller figure in retail stores. These retail stores in South Africa have special brands for the fuller figure with various size categories.

In general, consumers have specific needs and expectations about an apparel item and how the product will perform (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004:452; Shiffman & Kanuk, 2000:133-134; Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994:22-23). As a result consumers will evaluate an apparel item against certain quality dimensions; this is also applicable to the target audience of this study whom are fuller figure working women. The authors Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara (2008) define working women as having different professions and are referred to as career women. These fuller figure career women have certain expectations about how their clothes should fit, make them feel and the message it should create to their colleagues. Alexander *et al.*, (2005) provide a number of reasons why consumers use apparel: firstly to identify themselves to a social class, to create a positive image and lastly to improve their appearance. According to Solomon and Rabolt (2004:452), consumers have prior expectations regarding the quality dimensions of an apparel item and this is the primary factor that can influence a consumer to be either satisfied or dissatisfied. Kincade (2008:3) defines quality as meeting the consumers' expectations. These expectations can be established through prior experience with the product, theoretical or technical knowledge of the product, what the product can accomplish, through communication about the product as well as socio psychological needs that the product could satisfy. These expectations or needs maybe functional needs i.e. that the clothes should fit her comfortably, be durable and will last for more than two seasons, or to satisfy her aesthetic needs (Kincade, 2008:6) for example that the styles fits her beautifully and will meet her emotional needs i.e. that she feels in control and feminine when wearing these branded apparel items.

Solomon and Rabolt (2004:452) explain the different terms to describe the expectations of consumers in the expectancy disconfirmation model. When the consumer's expectations are met this is called neutral confirmation; if expectations are not met negative disconfirmation occurs which leads to consumer dissatisfaction. On the other hand when the consumer evaluates the product and her expectations are exceeded and are satisfied then positive

disconfirmation occurs. According to Solomon and Rabolt (2004:452) satisfaction or dissatisfaction is an after-sales evaluation of the product judging whether the product meets the needs of the consumer or not.

According to Liljander, Polsa and van Riel (2009) the primary purpose of branding is to add to the perceived value from a consumer's perspective of good quality. When a retail brand satisfies the needs and expectations of apparel consumers this can assist consumers in becoming loyal to the brand and perhaps telling others about it. According to Kincade (2008:2) satisfied consumers tell others about the satisfaction with the apparel item. Therefore, apparel marketers can take advantage by promoting a retailer by selling branded apparel which can meet the needs and expectations of the consumer.

### **2.3 THE ROLE OF APPAREL BRANDS**

According to Brown and Rice (2001:38) at its simplest level a brand is any name, term or sign that identifies a product or group of products. A company uses its brands to build recognition and acceptance of its product, to differentiate it from other products and to lessen price competition. According to Kincade (2008:29) branded apparel normally has standardized features to ensure consistency in the brand. Consumers form preferences for a brand, and then they may literally never change their minds in the course of a lifetime. Solomon and Rabolt, (2004:369) states that apparel items have a significance that goes far beyond their utilitarian, functional, and commercial value, but rather for their symbolic meaning. Du Preez and Visser (2003) support this by stating that postmodern theory suggests that individuals consume the symbolic meaning of products rather than the product itself. The following can also be said that consumers often purchase products or brands that are congruent with their self-image (Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008). Lindquist and Sirgy (2003:134) describe these brand attributes as the brand image which is defined as the overall vision or position of a brand in the mind of the consumer and reiterate that consumers have certain needs and expectations from an apparel brand, which can be categorized as functional and aesthetic needs.

According to Moore (1995) and Bhat and Reddy (1998) brands hold a number of meanings for the consumer. The symbolic or psychological aspect of brands can satisfy the consumer's utilitarian needs. This means that a consumer can associate a certain level of functional performance with apparel brands. For example consumers may expect that the materials of the branded career wear will be comfortable for all seasons as well as durable. Therefore, according to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:154) consumers try to avoid risks and would rather

purchase brands that they are satisfied and familiar with because of the thinking that brands have consistency.

Burns and Bryant (1997:112), Soucy (2002) and North *et al.*, (2003), note that, with the increase of branded apparel, retailers should be aware that consumers do associate a certain image, level of quality and price structure with a brand name. In a recent study, conducted by Liljander *et al.*, (2009) brand names have shown to have an influence on the consumers overall perception of the product and therefore brands have the power to enhance the loyalty to the store they are associated with.

In South Africa, as is the case elsewhere, apparel shopping choices for fuller figure women are generally limited to department stores with special brands for the plus-size figure. A brand name as well as the store is regarded as the extrinsic attributes meaning that it is not inherent in the product (Swinker & Hines, 2006). Liljander *et al.*, (2009) define a store brand as a private label brand that bears the name of the store and a consumer perceive a certain level of product quality and this can be viewed as a determinant to purchase store-branded products. It is therefore important that the merchandise under the store brand is consistent with the image they want to create.

Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli and Priester (2002:1) define the study of branding within the realm of consumer behavior and note that marketers can use the information for their marketing strategies to get consumers to buy their brands as well as to retain the consumers to be loyal to their brands.

## **2.4 THE QUALITY DIMENSIONS OF APPAREL**

Consumers will evaluate apparel items against certain quality dimensions to attain if it satisfies her needs. If her needs are not met and she evaluates these quality dimensions negatively this can lead to a dissatisfied consumer. In a study by Swinker and Hines (2006) the researchers outlined four cues i.e. (intrinsic, extrinsic, appearance, performance) to explore how female consumers evaluate apparel quality. The results from the study proved that the majority of the consumers preferred popular styles that looks and fits their bodies beautifully.

For the purpose of this study the researcher was guided by the two broad quality apparel dimensions mentioned by Brown and Rice (2001:47), namely the physical dimension and the performance dimension. The physical dimension focus on the intrinsic attributes (i.e. fabric,



style, design, construction and garment finishes) which influence how the garment will fit the wearer, how long it will last etc. Swinker and Hines (2006) define the intrinsic cues as that which is inherent to the product and cannot be changed without changing the product. On the other hand brand labels and stores are regarded as the extrinsic cues which are not the physical features of a product. In cases where consumers have little product knowledge or experience that could assist them with evaluation of the quality of the product, they tend to use extrinsic features such as brand names as quality indicators.

As mentioned earlier in the literature, fuller figure females have needs and expectations for an apparel item and will evaluate the quality of an apparel item against these needs and expectations. These needs/ expectations may be defined as functional needs/ expectations which refer to comfort, durability, ease of care, fashionability and versatility or end-use of a product. According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:26) consumers do not only consider the functional aspects of an apparel item but also the emotional, sensory and cognitive aspects which contribute to the total aesthetic experience. Kadolph and Langford (2001:9) states that aesthetics focus on the attractiveness or appearance of an apparel item.

#### **2.4.1 Functional quality dimensions**

The functional qualities indicate how the apparel item will perform in satisfying the expectations of the consumer. This means that the apparel item should be comfortable, durable, easy-to-care for and versatile, meaning that it should complement the rest of the wardrobe so that the consumer can mix-and-match her clothes as well as being fashionable and affordable (Brown & Rice,1998:38). According to a newspaper article by Ngwenya (2009:16) who interviewed fuller figure females' regarding their quality expectations of apparel items, "apparel should not only look good, but should feel comfortable and be stylish". According to Sproles and Burns (1994:272-276) apparel should therefore fulfill exactly the same functional needs for the plus-size woman as for those with smaller figures.

#### **Comfort**

Kadolph and Langford (2002:9-10) define comfort as the way the material interacts with the body and how the material is affected by heat, air and moisture. Fiore and Kimle (1997:31) state that comfort is a major component of the functional qualities of an apparel item. According to Kadolph, Langford, Hollen and Saddler (1993:7) the apparel material is an important intrinsic physical factor which can influence the functional qualities of an apparel item and according to Brown and Rice (2001:198) this is a major factor that can determine the comfortability of an apparel item. There are various factors which can influence the

comfortability of the apparel item for example the thermal properties of the material which allows the garment to be comfortable for the season i.e. in winter consumers need fabrics with a high thermal retention to help retain body heat and the opposite is required in summer. These fuller figure working women require materials for her branded career wear that is comfortable for the season.

According to Brown and Rice (2001:153) apparel styles have to be comfortable for the wearer and these authors draw a correlation between comfort and fit. The questionnaire utilized in this study asked the respondents if the styles of the branded career wear fit their bodies comfortably at work. Style is described by Sproles and Burns (1994:7) as a distinct characteristic of a particular category of apparel e.g. style of pants either being flared or a straight cut style. Consumers also have their own particular dressing style which either be classic, smart casual, or formal this can also influence her apparel decision. Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara (2008) define an apparel style as a certain standard category to describe a specific combination of apparel attributes for example classic, professional, natural chic and casual. Kaiser (1990:4) further defines styles as a distinctive characteristic or way of expression; style in apparel describes the lines that distinguish one form or shape from another.

Fit preferences are influenced by whether the style is fashionable depending on what is fashionable at that point in time and Brown and Rice (2001:154) states that fit is evaluated in terms of the current fashion. Fit is an important quality indicator and well fitted apparel looks attractive, gives the wearer confidence and can enhance customer satisfaction (Brown & Rice, 2001:153; Alexander *et al.*, 2005). Winks (1997), adds that if apparel items does not fit well this will lead to dissatisfied consumers irrespective of the quality of the material or the fashionability of the garment. Contradictory to this, Alexander, Connell and Presley (2005) states that more than half of the female population in the US cannot find apparel that fits well. Goldberry, Shim and Reich (1996) further reiterates that consumers not only want garments that fit well but also need apparel items that are stylish. According to Swinker and Hines's (2006) study, concluded that the consumers ranked appearance very high indicating that they needed styles that fit their figure well and looks fashionable. These statements can be applicable to the fuller figure working women in this study, if they experience problems with the garment fit this can lead to dissatisfied consumers. These fuller figure career women therefore need garments that fit their figures well and which will be comfortable at work. Fit affects the comfortability as well as the durability of an apparel item and plays an important role in apparel as a quality indicator. this can lead to customer satisfaction

## **Durability**

Durability as a dimension of functionality is about the wearing qualities of a garment (Kadolph, 1998:22). According to Brown and Rice (1998:158); Kadolph and Langford (2002:9) and Kincade (2008:87) state that durability of a fabric measures whether it can withstand constant use, resist tearing, retain its shape and still look attractive after being used and cleaned. When consumers spent a substantial amount of money on branded apparel they expect the apparel to be of good quality which will last for two or more seasons. These fuller figure females cannot evaluate the durability of a branded apparel item at the point of purchase and therefore the functional expectations relating to durability of an apparel item is depended on previous experience with the apparel item or feedback from family members (Kadolph, 1998:33). According to Brown and Rice (1998:166) and Kincade (2008:9) durable garments should be able to withstand constant care as consumers have an expectation that the apparel item will look as new after being used, cleaned and ironed. If this aspects do not live up to her needs and expectations the fuller figure consumer will experience problems with the branded apparel and will be dissatisfied with an apparel item.

## **Care**

According to Kincade (2008:71,82) materials have different properties and characteristics and this affects the quality outcomes of the apparel item. The properties of the material may guide the consumer as what to expect regarding the functional qualities of the apparel item and it is important for consumers read the care labels as some apparel items require little or no ironing at all (Kadolph, 1998:241-243). Brown and Rice (1998:168) and Kadolph (1998:31) further state that good fabrics should not soil easily, show spots easily or wrinkle easily. Branded apparel is rather costly and therefore these working women need branded apparel to be made of material that does not need much ironing and does not show spots easily. These days the fashion trend is to buy apparel made of materials that have a crease like appearance. These wash and wear fabrics require no ironing and maintain their appearance. It is advantages for these career women to buy fabrics that have been treated for crease resistance as these fabrics does not crease easily and needs very little ironing (Kadolph & Langford, 2002: 271). These working women would probably want to wear branded apparel that will enhance their appearance and give them a sense of confidence and satisfaction.

## **Fashionability**

The fashionability of the clothes of the fuller figure females in the study will focus on the structural design and lines. Fashionability is an important quality evaluation indicator according to Kincade (2008:12), because it is linked to the visual impact the apparel items create for the wearer and others. In apparel studies fashion is used as a norm to guide the dress code, style and fit of apparel items (Sproles & Burns, 1994:149). Various authors (Sproles & Burns, 1994:7); Solomon & Rabolt (2004:6) define fashion as being related to a dynamic social process by which new styles are created and accepted by that group (Kaiser, 1990:4). Solomon and Rabolt (2004:19), reiterates that fashion is a form of collective behavior. Sproles and Burns (1994:7) and Solomon and Rabolt (2004:6) regard fashion as a style which can be related to a specific time, situation which is adopted by most members of a social or reference group and evolves continuous change (Sproles & Burns, 1994:1). Peers constitute a reference group to which individuals want to belong too and with whom she compares herself.

The mass media, which includes fashion magazines, play an important role in conveying information about the latest fashion, styles, trends and fit. According to Kopnina (2007) fashion magazines provides the visual forum for various apparel brands to advertise their latest apparel. One can say that the fuller figure working female wants to wear designs and styles that are fashionable, that look similar to that of her colleagues and the smaller sizes. A problem occurs when the fuller figure female evaluates the appearance of the apparel items and finds that the apparel styles do not fit her body and when this occurs she will encounter a problem with the fashionability of the apparel items. Generally the fuller figure female wants to have clothes which is trendy, makes her feel confident and creates a professional image.

## **Versatility**

According to Kincade (2008:8) the author states that versatility or end-use refers to the purpose for which the apparel item will be worn. On the other hand, Swinker and Hines (2006) link versatility to the economic expectations of consumers and it will be beneficial for these fuller figure consumers to be able to mix and match her career wear with other apparel items in her wardrobe and not only use her career wear for work.

### **2.4.2 Aesthetic quality dimensions**

For the consumer it is not only the functional quality of the apparel item that is important but the whole sensory, emotional and cognitive satisfaction that could encompass the total

aesthetic experience. Fiore and Kimle (1997:42) state that apparel items are used to satisfy the wearers emotional, cognitive and sensory needs. This is reiterated by Lindquist and Sirgy (2003:136) who state that the aesthetic needs are needs that are met by products which satisfy sensory expectations. Kaiser (1990:301) defines individuals with a high aesthetic value as persons who place emphasis to enhance their personal appearance. Brown and Rice (1998:38) explain that the aesthetic features of a garment are associated with appearance expectations of the apparel item in terms of the design, the style, the fashion preference which fulfills the emotional needs of the consumer.

According to Fiore and De Long (1994) the aesthetic experience, derived from apparel not only creates emotions within the wearer but also within the observer. According to De Long (1998:3) this relationship between aesthetics and the way that consumers clothe their bodies to be appreciated by themselves, can result in consumers purchasing apparel brands to receive recognition and compliments from friends and colleagues, for example “that suit fits your body beautifully” and “the apparel item looks great on you”. Fiore and Kimle (1997:26) support this view and point out that a total aesthetic experience includes the appreciation of the formal, expressive and symbolic qualities of a product or appearance. The authors emphasize that the aesthetic experience and consumers’ satisfaction can therefore be directly connected with the aesthetic qualities of the apparel product or appearance.

### **Emotional level**

The rousing of the emotions and expression of feelings, after the stimulation of the senses, according to Fiore and Kimle (1997:42-45), is an important aspect not to be neglected in establishing an aesthetic experience concerning apparel. The authors found that the rousing of the emotions and the provision of enjoyment are important components during the purchasing and wearing of apparel items for consumers. Fiore and Kimle (1997:42-43) hold that, in satisfying the consumer at the emotional level, it is important that she should experience enjoyment (in other words should be happy and satisfied) that her emotions be addressed (that she should experience a feeling of elation “that the style of the branded career wear is beautiful”).

Therefore branded apparel items should create positive feelings for the wearer resulting in having a sense of pleasure, for example, when the fuller figure female wears the branded career wear she should feel a sense of femininity and attractiveness.

## **Sensory qualities**

The sensory qualities of an apparel item are important because consumers want apparel items that stimulate their senses. Consumers expect branded apparel items to flatter their figures and styles which can stimulate positive feelings about themselves (Eckman, Damhorst and Kadolph, 1990). The fuller figure consumers want to wear branded apparel that is fashionable and being of the latest fashion trends. Secondly, the styles should stimulate the feeling that the apparel item fits her body beautifully. Fit is an important component of the sensory qualities as it impacts largely on the emotional aspects of the wearer. During the evaluation of an apparel item the consumer looks for styles that fit comfortably and which stimulates her senses giving her the feeling that the apparel item fits her body beautifully. Within the context of the study, Brown and Rice (1998:44) and Fiore and Kimle (1997:31:58) further reiterates that style, fit, textiles and colour are important aspects during the decision-making process and plays a role in motivating consumer satisfaction.

## **Cognitive**

Fiore and Kimle (1997:45) state that apparel has a cognitive significance and an apparel item not only satisfies the wearers' emotional senses but also create a feeling of fantasy which reflects her inner sexuality as well as cognitive enjoyment. This cognitive enjoyment can be linked to past experiences with an apparel item. For example consumers can purchase an apparel item without trying it on but merely by visualising her wearing it or by previous experience from the apparel brand and how she evaluated the fit. Here the consumer makes use of cognitive shortcuts which plays an important role during the evaluation of the fit of the apparel item from previous experience.

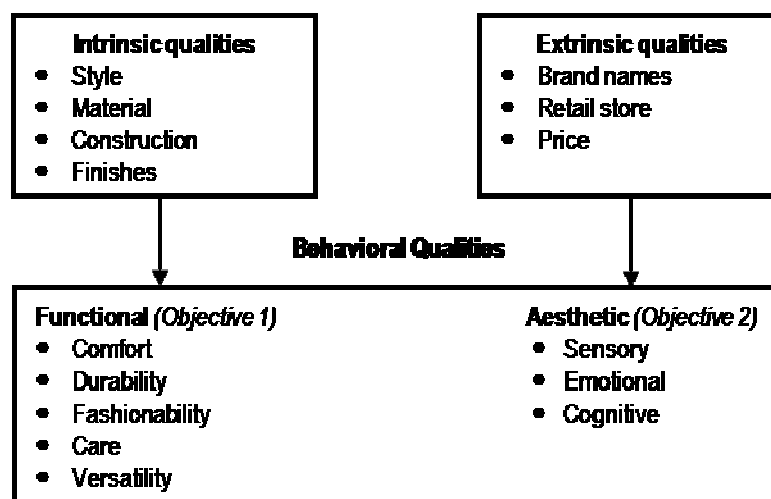
Whilst providing the consumer with a cognitive aesthetic experience, the apparel product has to communicate a message that she belongs to a specific social or reference group and in the case of this study the sample group is working women. According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:42-43) consumers should also experience a feeling of control and a sense of dominance within a group (therefore the person is in charge and that the item of apparel made its contribution). The fuller figured working women want the branded career wear to create a feeling of reality for example "I feel better dressed than my colleagues" or just as well dressed. According to Sproles and Burns (1994:141-149) individuals also want to receive feedback about her apparel and appearance against the norm set by fashion. If she receives positive feedback from friends and colleagues "I receive compliments from

colleagues when wearing the branded career wear” this creates a feeling of satisfaction (Kincade, 2008:9).

According to Brown and Rice (1998:44) the aesthetic aspects can be visually determined at the point of sale which occurs in the store, in contrast to the functional aspects that cannot be evaluated at the point of sales unless the consumer had a specific experience with the apparel item in the past.

This supports the presumption that aesthetics may, consciously or unconsciously, play an important role during the purchase decision-making process and to such an extent that it could overshadow other factors that should also have a role in assessing the quality of the item.

The schematic diagram bellows aims to illustrate the various quality dimensions of apparel items.



**FIGURE 2.1: SCHEMATIC FRAMEWORK OF APPAREL QUALITY**

The diagram above illustrates the framework for the study regarding apparel quality. Apparel items have certain quality dimensions such as intrinsic, extrinsic and behavioural qualities (Swinker & Hines, 2006 and Brown & Rice, 2001:47). The intrinsic qualities are the physical dimensions of an apparel items that includes style, material, construction and garment finishes. The extrinsic qualities are not inherent to the product and include the following quality indicators which are brand name, the retail store and price of the garment which serves as quality dimensions for the fuller figure females. These two quality dimensions have an influence on the behavioral quality aspects of the apparel items which includes functionality and aesthetics. The functional quality dimensions focuses on the physical

aspects of the branded career wear and include comfort, fashionability, care and versatility. The aesthetic quality dimensions are linked to the symbolic qualities of a product (Fiore & Kimle, 1997:26) and stimulate the emotional senses of the wearer. This involves the sensory, emotional and cognitive aspects. The various quality dimensions as mentioned above, plays a role during the decision-making process when the fuller figure female decides to purchase or to reject the branded career wear.

## **2.5 APPAREL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BY FULLER FIGURE CONSUMERS**

### **2.5.1 Background**

Apparel as a product requires intense involvement of the consumer during the decision-making process which Sproles and Burns (1994:263-279) and Kaiser (1990:3-27) describes as a complex process as there are a number of factors which can influence the decision to purchase or reject an apparel item. The consumer evaluates the apparel item against certain quality dimensions such as functional and aesthetic dimensions and other factors which play a role such as demographics, mass media and the consumers' personal experience with the apparel item. Fiore and Damhorst (1992) states that evaluation of a apparel product is an important aspect in the decision-making process and it involves the evaluation of the quality of an apparel item. The authors define quality as the capability of an apparel item to provide satisfaction to the wearer by satisfying her needs and expectations. These quality dimensions play an important role during the decision-making process resulting in a consumer either being satisfied or dissatisfied. Evans *et al.*, (2006:90) states that satisfied consumers can lead to loyal customers and on the other hand consumers that encounter problems with a apparel brand can lead to dissatisfied consumers who will reject a brand.

Evans *et al.*, (2006:19) view the consumer classification characteristics of Sproles and Kendall (1986) to explain the various types of consumers and how they evaluate apparel and branded apparel. The quality conscious shopper looks for the highest possible quality and may not feel satisfied with just good enough brands. The brand conscious shopper looks for more expensive and famous brands, the price-quality link will have a positive attitude towards departmental and speciality stores selling expensive and popular brands and prefers popular brands. Novelty-fashion conscious shoppers seek to buy novelty and fashionable items and get pleasure when purchasing new things and want to be update with new styles and trends. Recreational shoppers look for pleasure, fun and recreation out of shopping. Value conscious shoppers seek for bargains and are concerned with getting best value for money. Impulsive shoppers tend to buy on impulse and concerned with the amount they



spend. Confused shoppers get confused over the choice of brands and information and seek for a load of information. Brand loyal shoppers tend to buy purchase the same brands repeatedly and have developed particular behaviour and habits. The authors further describes Evans *et al.*, (2006:265) describes four patterns of loyalty within consumers; undivided loyalty whereby a consumer purchase one type of brand, divided loyalty the consumer buys alternative brands on various occasions, unstable loyalty is when consumers switching brands and lastly the no loyalty consumer purchases any available brand.

### **2.5.2 Stages in the decision-making process**

During the purchasing of apparel items consumers go through the decision-making process to evaluate a apparel item which Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:424) describe as a cognitive process. These fuller figure females go through the similar stages during the decision-making process. The decision-making model of Sproles and Burns (1994:264) will form the bases to demonstrate the evaluation process that consumers undergo. This process is comprised of five sequential stages namely awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and lastly adoption or rejection stage. Firstly, during the awareness stage the fuller figure female becomes aware of an apparel need or is aware that there is a new apparel product available. This can happen by means of interaction with friends, colleagues, the mass media i.e. magazines, newspapers, television, internet and movies arises awareness within the consumer. Her awareness is enhanced by advertising, store displays and window shopping (Sproles & Burns, 1994:274) which involves paying attention to the store front displays. The consumer then becomes interested in the branded apparel and searches for additional information. Here personal experience has an influence on the consumer decision-making process as well as colour and style of the apparel item. During the above two stages namely the awareness and interest stage, the mass media plays a major role. Consumers will gain information for example about new styles, the fit mainly from fashion magazines and personal sources i.e. visual observation and verbal discussion with family, friends, colleagues who constitute her reference group as well as retail assistants (Sproles & Burns, 1994:264).

Evans *et al.*, (2006:172) displays how reference groups can influence the consumer decision-making process in three ways firstly, a consumer will seek information about a brand from family and friends, secondly the consumer will purchase a brand because of the need to conform to colleagues and lastly the consumer will purchase a brand which they think will enhance their image amongst other. For example “the branded career wear makes me feel better dressed than my colleagues”.

During the evaluation stage (which takes place in the store) the consumer is contemplating whether or not the branded apparel item will satisfy her needs/ expectations and is influenced by a number of factors. She will observe and talk to retail assistants, but her personal information about the apparel item is the predominant source of information.

At the trial or decision-making stage the consumer has the inclination to purchase or not to purchase the branded apparel. According to Kadolph (1998:27-28) consumers will evaluate the fit whilst trying on the apparel items in the store and if the fit and style is perceived as being negative this will result in the rejection of the apparel item. Here the fuller figure consumer makes the final judgment and evaluates the branded apparel item at the point of sales which is normally in the store (Brown & Rice, 1998:43). In a study by Goldsberry *et al.*, (1996b) the authors conclude that women at all ages and especially older women experience problems finding good fitting and stylish apparel. Fit is therefore an important quality evaluation indicator for consumers as it influences the attractiveness and comfort of an apparel item. Therefore, Brown and Rice (2001:153) states that fit is crucial for consumer satisfaction which will influence brand acceptance and loyalty. This statement can confirm that these fuller figure females in the study can experience a number of problems for example “the styles of the branded apparel do not fit her body comfortable, or are not fashionable or do not give her emotional pleasure”.

According to Kincade (2008:9); de Klerk, (1999); Jacobs & de Klerk (2007) there are a number of factors at the point of sale that can influence her decision. They include personal experience or previous experiences with the product, the store display, the store personnel, the colour, and the brand name. Some consumers will test the fabric to make a tactile evaluation of the apparel item in the store, then a few consumers will read the care labels or other consumers will try on the apparel item to evaluate the fit. Most consumers will look at the price labels before the point of purchase. According to Kincade (2008:231) branded apparel has to be consistent and this is the reason that some consumers may not need to try on the apparel item because she depends on her previous experience with the apparel item this can be advantage because it is time consuming.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:395-425) adds that once the consumer has purchased the apparel item she will use other sets of evaluation criteria to further evaluate the product after the point of sale against her needs and expectations. This is termed post purchase evaluation. During this last stage the consumer’s personal experience and satisfaction plays a huge role whereby the consumer will either adopt or reject an apparel item or brand. The fuller figure female will further evaluate the product when wearing the apparel item. During the after purchase phase the feedback from colleagues and friends play an important role

(Kincade, 2008:9). She will also evaluate the feedback she receives from friends, family members and colleagues during this phase. If she receives positive feedback, this can give her a sense of satisfaction. Amongst other fit and comfort (Kincade, 2008:9) are important quality dimensions when the fuller figure females wear the branded apparel. For example she will evaluate the physical/ functional attributes of the product “the styles of the branded career wear fits my body comfortability at work”. The aesthetic quality dimensions are also important during the post-purchase evaluation stage. If she receives negative feedback, “I do not receive compliments from my colleagues when wearing the branded career wear” she will be dissatisfied with the branded apparel and this can lead to her rejecting the brand.

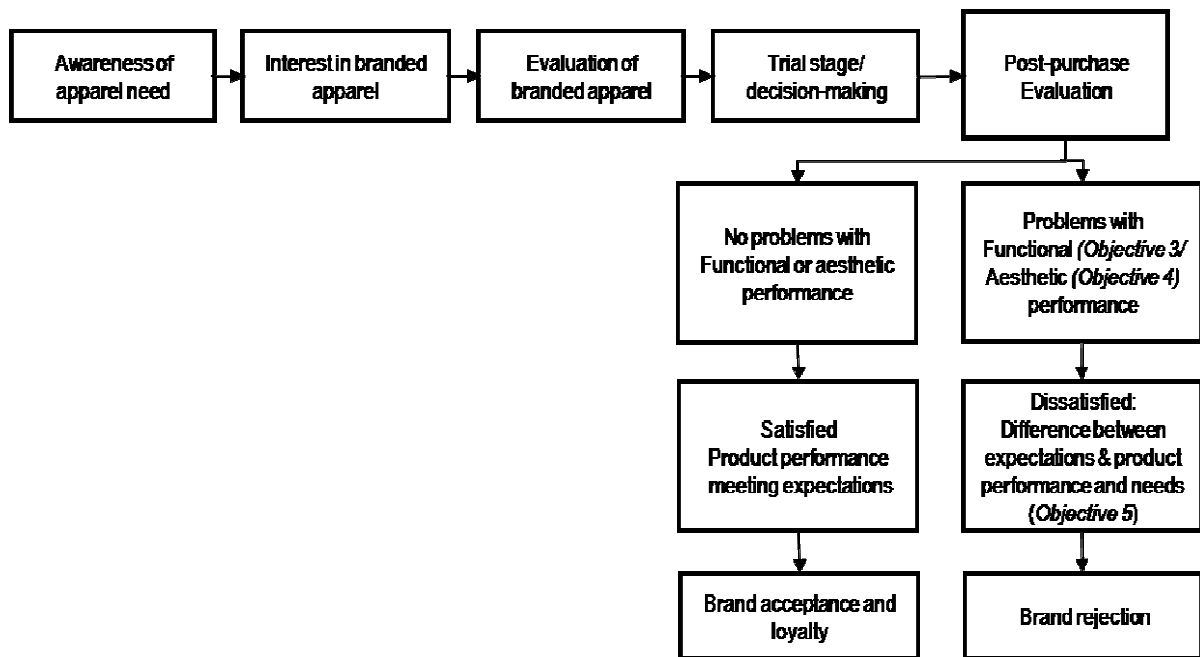
Generally consumers don't differentiate between the functional and aesthetic dimensions of an apparel item. If the branded apparel satisfies her functional and aesthetic needs she will use it on a regular basis, accept the brand and will repurchase the brand. On the other hand if she experiences problems with the quality dimensions and there is a problem between her expectations and the performance of the apparel brand she will be dissatisfied and will rejected the apparel brand.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:425) makes a comparison and argues that the traditional adoption framework is too simplistic and not viewing the following aspects, namely that a need or a pre-existing problem initiates the awareness stage, and that the consumers normally evaluate the product during all the stages i.e. during awareness, interest, evaluation and trail stage in order to make the final decision to adopt or reject a product. The authors further emphasised the post-adoption or post-purchase evaluation stage which can lead to a strengthened commitment to a brand or total rejection. A report by Evans *et al.*, (2006:90) states that post-purchase evaluation is an important factor which can lead to consumer loyalty and satisfaction. On the other hand, Sproles and Burns (1994:264-267), Lindquist and Sirgy (2003:28-52) and Solomon and Rabolt (2004:352-354) justify the acceptance or rejection of a brand by a consumer during the decision-making process. Problems that the consumer encounter with the finding of suitable apparel that will fulfill her needs, may therefore at any stage block the decision-making process and therefore results in no-adoption of the product or brand, while problems that the consumer encounter during the post-purchase stage, may result in a dissatisfied consumer who will probably, in future, not buy the specific brand again.

The consumer as a decision-making unit do, however, according to some theorists, not always go through the entire decision-making process to either accept or reject a brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:425) but often select an easier cognitive path to reach a decision. In support of this, Baron and Byrne (1997:91) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:145-147)

state that consumers make use of cognitive short cuts to evaluate a product and during the decision-making process. Sometimes consumers can refer to past experiences with an apparel item during her evaluation of the apparel item as to whether her needs were satisfied or not.

The schematic diagram in Figure 2.2 explains the framework for the decision-making model applied for the study.



**FIGURE 2.2: SCHEMATIC FRAMEWORK OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

The researcher will provide a schematic illustration how the fuller figure female consumer goes through the various stages of the decision-making model in her decision to purchase or to reject the branded career wear. The Spoles and Burns (1994:263-279) model comprises of five stages namely, awareness, interest, evaluation, decision-making and lastly the post-purchase stage. During this process various factors have an influence on each of these stages. This can include her personal experience with the product as well the kind of information she receives from colleagues and family regarding the branded apparel. Firstly, the awareness stage evokes her interest to purchase branded career wear. Whilst in the store the consumer contemplates buying the branded career wear and will evaluate the product against her needs and expectations. She then makes the decision to purchase or not to purchase the branded career wear which occurs at the point of sale. Here the brand name, the price and her previous experience with the product will influence her decision.

Once she has purchased the product she will use other sets of evaluation criteria to further evaluate the product against her needs and expectations. During the post-purchase stage she will evaluate the performance of the branded apparel against the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions. For example when wearing the branded career wear she evaluate the feedback from colleagues as well as how the styles of the branded career wear fits her body. If she experience problems with the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions she will be dissatisfied and will reject the branded career wear and may never buy that specific brand again. On the other hand if she does not experience problems with the quality dimensions she will be satisfied and will accept the brand which can lead to her purchasing the brand over and over again and becoming loyal to that brand.

## 2.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The study has implications for the retailers as Kincade (2008:28) states that the needs of consumers have been ignored by the apparel industry. Goldsberry *et al.*, (1996) reaffirms this statement by adding that older woman's needs and fitting problems are ignored by retailers despite these women being higher earns and having more disposable income to spend on apparel. According to Swinker and Hines (2006), there is no consensus between retailers and consumers regarding the quality aspects of apparel. The study highlighted how certain functional and aesthetic quality dimensions influence the consumers decision to either accept or reject a brand.

Fuller figure consumers like other apparel consumers have expectations that their needs will be met when purchasing branded career wear. Consumers do not differentiate between functional and aesthetic dimensions of apparel items when evaluating if their needs has been satisfied, but combine these quality aspects. These fuller figure consumers want the branded apparel to fit well, the fabric must be comfortable and durable, to be fashionable and stylish, to make her feel feminine and give her a sense of dominance. Therefore it is important for retailers to understand what the problems are that these fuller figure females experience with the two quality dimensions (functional/ aesthetic) and how this impacts during the evaluation of branded apparel. The other consideration is for retailers to be knowledgeable of the factors that influence the various stages in the decision-making process and how this also has an influence on consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Consumers have expectations of the benefits of branded apparel through reading fashion magazines; interacting with colleagues and friends therefore retailers should study the profile



of the consumers. To understand their income levels, their expectation and needs of branded apparel.

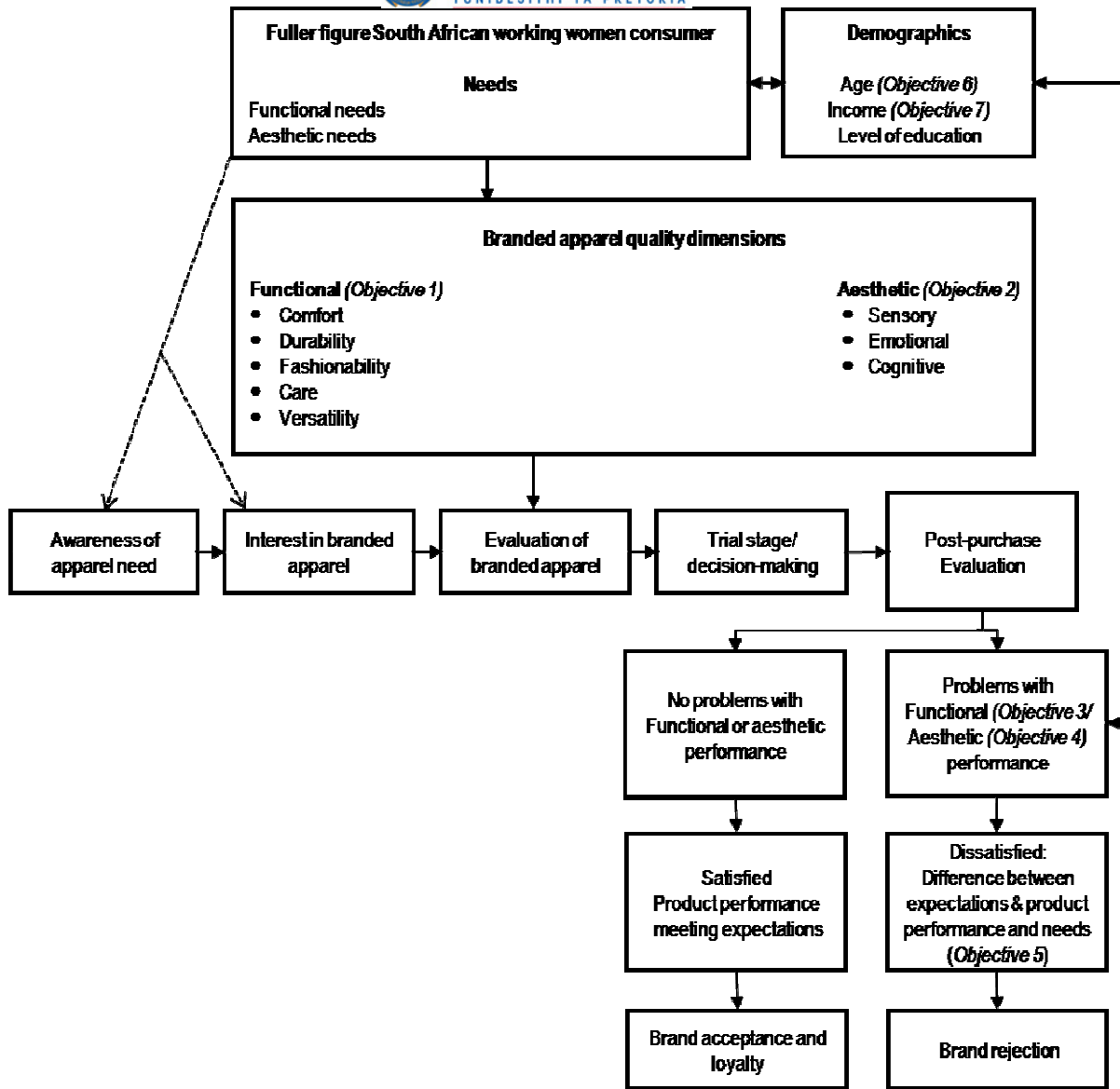
### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Research methodology refers to the methods, techniques and procedures utilised to implement the research design. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:10-11) this allows the researcher to examine the phenomena and make a judgment and generate applicable results. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the research design, data collection methods, techniques and procedures for the study. Firstly, the conceptual framework is outlined to discuss the theoretical model utilized in the study. Next, the research problem and objectives and sub objectives are presented. For this study, an exploratory and descriptive research design is applied to address the apparel needs and problems that the fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group. This process of exploring and describing phenomena leads to the generation of applicable results (Neumann, 2000:21). The research problem and objectives determine the choice of methods, the procedures and statistical analysis utilised as well as the resources available (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:XXV). The quantitative research methodology utilized is explained in this chapter as well as the sampling plan and the data collection technique. The analysis of the data is discussed in terms of the coding and capturing of the data, the operationalisation of measurements and the explanation of the statistical methods applied. Lastly, the quality of the data is discussed in terms of its validity and reliability.

### **3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.2.1 Conceptual framework**

The schematic conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) was developed against the background of the literature and the objectives of the study which focuses on the apparel needs and problems that fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.



**FIGURE 3.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The diagram above illustrates how certain quality dimensions of a branded apparel item can influence the fuller figure consumer to either accept or reject a brand. The fuller figure consumer has specific needs and expectations from an apparel item and will evaluate the product against these quality dimensions. When her needs and expectations are not met the consumer will experience problems with these quality dimensions. These quality dimensions are categorised into the functional and aesthetic dimensions. The functional aspect refers to comfortability, durability, ease of care, fashionability, and versatility of an apparel item. She will also evaluate the apparel item against the aesthetic aspects i.e. the sensory, emotional and the cognitive dimensions. In addition, there are other factors such as the demographic factors i.e. age, level of education, average monthly income and her dressing style that can influence her decision. The decision-making model (Sproles & Burns, 1994:264) form the bases on which the study applies the evaluation process that influences consumers to either



accept or reject an apparel brand. Firstly, during the purchasing of an apparel item the fuller figure female consumer becomes aware of an apparel need and becomes interested in the branded apparel and will evaluate the brand against these needs and expectations, after which she will then make a decision to buy or not to buy the branded apparel item. After purchasing the branded apparel the consumer further evaluates the branded apparel against these needs and expectations, this is termed the post-purchase evaluation. If she does not experience problems with the functional and aesthetic aspects she will be satisfied and will accept the brand. If she encounters problems she will be dissatisfied and will reject the brand. In general, the working fuller figure consumer wants to wear apparel that is comfortable, fits well and looks professional (Wong, 2008). If the branded apparel does not meet the consumers' needs and she experiences problems with the branded apparel in terms of the functional and aesthetic aspects this will result in her becoming dissatisfied and rejecting the brand apparel item.

### **3.2.2 Problem statement and research objectives**

The research problem stated below is outlined in terms of unit of analysis, the research goal and the research methodology utilised.

*What are the needs and problems that fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to apparel branded for this specific target market?*

The above stated research problem was divided into subcomponents which are stated in the form of objectives and sub-objectives. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:51-53) the researcher has a better understanding of the research problem by viewing the main problem as component parts. The following research objectives and sub-objectives were formulated for this study:

#### **Functional and aesthetic needs of FFSAWW regarding to branded career wear (V14): Objective 1 and 2 (Functional and aesthetic needs)**

##### **Objective 1**

To explore and describe the importance of **functional needs** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

### **Sub-objectives**

- 1.1 To explore and describe the importance of comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.1 & V14.8)
- 1.2 To explore and describe the importance of durability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.2 & V14.11)
- 1.3 To explore and describe the importance of care for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.3 & V14.16)
- 1.4 To explore and describe the importance of fashionability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.5 & V14.7)
- 1.5 To explore and describe the importance of versatility (end use) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.14.13 & V14.15)

### **Objective 2**

To explore and describe the importance of the **aesthetic needs** that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

#### **Sub-objectives**

- 2.1 To explore and describe the importance of sensory qualities for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.4 & V14.9)
- 2.2 To explore and describe the importance of emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/ pleasure) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (14.12 & V14.14)
- 2.3 To explore and describe the importance of cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear (V14.6 & V14.10)

### **Functional and aesthetic problems regarding to branded career wear (V15): Objectives 3 and 4 (functional and aesthetic problems)**

#### **Objective 3**

To explore and describe the extent of the **functional problems** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

#### **Sub-objectives**

- 3.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) regarding career wear (V15.1 & V15.6)
- 3.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with durability regarding career wear (V15.7 & V15.16)

- 3.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with care regarding career wear (V15.2 & V15.14)
- 3.4 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with fashionability regarding career wear (V15.4 & V15.12)
- 3.5 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with versatility (end use) regarding career wear (V15.3 & V15.11)

#### **Objective 4**

To explore and describe the **aesthetic problems** that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

##### **Sub-objectives**

- 4.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the sensory qualities regarding to career wear (V15.13 & V15.15)
- 4.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/pleasure) regarding to career wear (V15.5 & V15.9)
- 4.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) regarding to career wear (V15.8 & V15.10)

#### **Objective 5**

To determine the statistical difference between the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

#### **Objective 6**

To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

##### **Sub-objectives**

- 6.1 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

- 6.2 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic problems of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

### **Objective 7**

To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

### **Sub-objectives**

- 7.1 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group.
- 7.2 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

## **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:74) the purpose of a research design is to give structure and to ensure the research process is successful. The primary focus of this research approach is to explore and describe the functional and aesthetic needs and problems of the sample group with regard to branded apparel. Exploratory research allows the researcher to gain insight into a problem and descriptive research involves observing and then explaining the phenomena and predicting behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:80).

Based on the research problem and the study objectives a quantitative research approach was best suited for this study as the quantitative style is rooted in the positivism paradigm. Babbie and Mouton (2002:44) states that this allows for a level of objectivity and a distance between the researcher and the respondents. The authors, (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:49) further state that the quantitative paradigm is the best way to measure properties of phenomena and emphasis is placed on quantification of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2002:179) the advantages of the quantitative research method is that it is very controlled and defined and a sample is selected from the mass of humanity and observed with insight. This type of research examines a situation as it is and is not aimed at changing or modifying a situation under investigation.

The researcher used a purposive sampling method which was aided by the snowballing technique. A structured questionnaire was used in the study to adequately address the research problem and objectives. The data collection technique focused on the needs and problems that the fuller figure career women have with branded apparel. The data collection method and procedure is discussed in Paragraph 3.5.1 under Data collection.

The study is a cross-sectional study, (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:92) implying that it will examine a section of the population and will be undertaken at a specific point in time and not over a long period. The sample size was small and it will not be representative of the general population. Therefore the findings in this study of the working fuller figure womens needs and problems with branded apparel cannot be generalized to the wider population (Mouton, 2001:185).

The researcher applied a quantitative research approach which involves selecting the sample group, data collection methods and the data analysis process which is discussed in this chapter.

### **3.4 SAMPLING PLAN**

#### **3.4.1 The unit of analysis**

Babbie and Mouton (2002:85) relate the unit of analysis to the unit of observation. The primary subjects in the study were fuller figure females working in South Africa aged between 25 and 55 years, wearing apparel ranging from a size 16 to size 28 and who belong to the Living Standards Measure (LSM) group 6 to 10. For purposes of the study working women and career women are used interchangeably. Working women are viewed as persons pursuing a certain career as means of earning an income (Callahan, 1988:31). These career women are exposed to fashion and earn an income and therefore have the means to purchase branded apparel. The aim of the study is to highlight the needs and problems these fuller figure working women experience with branded apparel targeted for this target group.

The respondents had to belong to the LSM group 6 to 10. According to Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2004:65), the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) has developed a segmentation tool to categorize the South African market. The foundation uses All Media Product Survey (AMPS) data to classify people according to living standards. The aim of the LSM is to measure social class, or living standard, regardless of race, gender, age income and education. The major purpose is to

group people with similar living standards together and also to distinguish between the groups of people in South Africa.

The research focused on the LSM 6 to 10 group with the following characteristics:

- Earn an average monthly income ranging from R4 075 (LSM 6) to more than R18 649.00 (LSM 10).
- Have access to radio, magazines, newspaper, and cinema and normally participate in a number of activities.
- Education level will be Grade 12 and higher
- Age group between 25 to 55 years

The criteria for the sample were South African working fuller figured women wearing apparel ranging from size 16 to size 28. However, in some retail stores the apparel sizing system is different, for example the table below illustrates how the sizing systems are different at Penny-C and Donna-Claire.

	Penny-C		Donna-Claire	
	Size 16	Size 28	Size 16	Size 28
<b>Underbust</b>	<b>90cm</b>	<b>126cm</b>	<b>102cm</b>	<b>138cm</b>
<b>Hip</b>	<b>111cm</b>	<b>146cm</b>	<b>111cm</b>	<b>146cm</b>

**FIGURE 3.2: DIFFERENCE IN SIZING SYSTEMS AT PENNY-C AND DONNA CLAIRE**

### 3.4.2 Sample selection and sample size

Babbie and Mouton (2002:164) define sampling as the process of selecting observations. The nature of this study leans to a very specific sample involving purposeful information on a detailed type of consumer (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:145). Purposive sampling techniques as well as snowballing methods were employed to select the sample group based on their current apparel sizing, gender, age and employment status. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method used to correctly determine the outcome. The advantage of this sampling strategy is that the participants are grouped according to preselected criteria which are relevant to address the research problem and to collect the data for the study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:166) the authors further define purposive sampling as a sample that is selected based on the purpose of the study and the researchers' judgment of the sample members. Therefore this technique will increase the scope of the specific information collected because the participants will be selected purposefully on the grounds of predetermined characteristics.

The snowballing technique is also known as chain referral sampling which is also a type of purposive sampling. In this method the participants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to possible respondents who could contribute to the study having the specified criteria (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:330). The advantage of this method is that the “hidden population” meaning the participants not easily accessible to the researcher can be utilized in the study (Palama, 2010).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:2006) purposive sampling is described as: “*people or other units are chosen... for a specific purpose*”. The study requires the opinions of a defined group of individuals clearly outlined by the research question.

For this study, the structured questionnaire outlined the following demographic attributes which was classified as: gender (female), age (25-35 years, 36-45 years and 46 to 55 years), highest level of qualification (grade 12/ National certificate/ National diploma/ BTech/ B Degree/ Honours degree/ Masters degree/ Doctorate/ other qualification), level of income (R4 075-R6 454, R6 455-R8 470, R8 471-R11 565, R11 566-R18 649, more than R18 649).

The sample size for the study was one hundred and fifty females, working within the Pretoria region and wearing apparel from size 16 to size 28. The Pretoria region was selected because of time and financial constraints for the researcher. A carefully selected sample was selected on the basis of their current apparel sizing, gender, age and employment status. Transferability in the study is enhanced through purposeful sampling methods because the findings can be applied in other context or to other respondents (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277).

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

#### **3.5.1 Data collection**

According to Leedy and Ormrod, (2005:94) quantitative research is used to answer questions about relationships among variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena. The study called for this traditional type of research to examine the correlation between the working fuller figure female and her apparel needs and problems. The authors further state that the questions should be relevant to the study with the aim to collect the necessary information. The researcher compiled the questionnaire based on the objectives of the study as well as an in-depth review of the literature concerning various theories applicable to the problem of this research. The decision-making model served as the

conceptual background for the study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:123) this ensures content validity.

The researcher designed a structured closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire to collect the data for this study. Closed-ended questions are questions in which respondents select an answer from a fixed list of answers (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:233). The advantage of closed-ended questions is that they provide greater uniformity of responses resulting in data being more accurate easier to understand and to interpret, they are economical, efficient, easy to process, lack interviewer bias, and the possibility of anonymity and privacy is encouraged regarding sensitive issues. Regarding open-ended questions the respondents can view their own responses to the questions whilst with closed-ended questions the respondents have to select an answer from predetermined questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:233-266).

The questionnaire aimed to collect data on the needs and problems of the fuller figure consumer with branded apparel and was self-administered by the respondents who completed the questionnaire on their own (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:266). According to Hofstee (2006:132) the advantage of using a questionnaire is that it is in a form of a structured interview and all the respondents are asked the same questions and given the same options in answering. Secondly, the questionnaire is easier, very time consuming and quicker (Walliman, 2005:281) for the respondents to answer and the researcher can analyse the data in a simplified manner. In addition the questionnaire also offers confidentiality to the respondents. Although this technique has a disadvantage as the researcher cannot observe or is not able to probe the respondents.

The questionnaire was accompanied with a covering letter on the University Pretoria letterhead, briefly outlining the aim of the study, the data collection procedures and assurance of their confidentiality and anonymity of the information gathered. The participants had to sign the consent letter before commencing with the data collection in which they agreed to participate in the study and were informed that they were at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time. Anonymity ensures that information about the participants can under no circumstances be linked to them and confidentiality means that information gathered on the participants will never be publicized (Wagenaar & Babbie, 2004:41).

The questionnaire consisted of seven (7) pages including the covering letter (see Addendum A). The questionnaire comprised of four sessions Section A to D and is illustrated below as the different sections measured specific aspects. Section A consists of the participant profile that includes: age, educational level and average monthly income. Section B focused on the consumer apparel information i.e. where do you find suitable apparel? Section C covered the



branded apparel needs and Section D looked at the problems the participants experienced with the branded apparel.

The covering letter and the questionnaire were compiled in English using simple language as the questionnaire aims to guide the data collection procedure (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:265). The questionnaire was pre-tested on females having similar characteristics as the sample group as outlined in the unit of analysis 3.4.1. The aim of the pre-test is to highlight mistakes, repetitions and language ambiguity. This is important especially when dealing with more than one cultural or language group in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:244). The pilot group self-administered the closed ended and open ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented to the sample population once the necessary changes were made regarding the usage of language and then discussed again with the Statistics Department at the University of Pretoria.

A specific procedure was adhered too in collecting the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:49). The completed and piloted questionnaire was distributed in phases to the sample group. The first phase of distribution was at the University of Pretoria where female managers from various government departments attending a course completed the questionnaire as well as females working at the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy in Pretoria (Palama). From there the respondents who completed the questionnaire were asked to identify other females meeting the criteria to also distribute the questionnaire to them for completion. In this manner these respondents were requested to identify other females meeting the criteria. This process was repeated until there were 150 completed questionnaires.

For the purpose of this quantitative study the researcher adhered to the following ethical guidelines (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:256).

- The research project was professionally conducted by following a particular process (Neumann, 2000:444; Babbie & Mouton, 2002:526-528). The researcher followed this process: (1) technical standards were ensured by the Internal Consultation Service at the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria department, (2) the interpretation of the results adhered to scientific standards and (3) limitations of the study is recorded.
- The respondents were asked to participate voluntarily in the study. The researcher ensured the participants consent to partake in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:522). All the information was treated with confidentiality and the participants signed the letter of consent before commencing with the data collection exercise as Creswell (2003:64) stipulates.

- The anonymity and confidentiality of the information gathered was respected and guaranteed. A code on the questionnaire was used instead of the names of the respondents to ensure their anonymity. Therefore the participants in the research were treated with respect and dignity.
- The research caused no psychological or physical harm to the participants and their privacy was not invaded.
- Furthermore, participants have been informed that they are at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time

#### **3.5.1.1 Ethical issues in data collection**

The researcher firstly requested the participant's approval to partake in the study (Babbie, 2005:61) by giving the participants a letter of consent to sign. The cover letter was written on the official letterhead of the University of Pretoria. The cover letter stated that the respondents had the right to participate voluntarily, outlined the purpose of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:525), the data collection process, procedures to be employed and acknowledgement of the participants in the study and the right to be protected during the data collection process.

#### **3.5.1.2 Ethical issues in data analysis and interpretation**

Anonymity of the individuals who participated in the study was ensured. The respondent number used protected the identity of the respondents. During interpretation of the data, the accuracy of the data was checked for inconsistency during the data capturing process.

#### **3.5.1.3 Ethical issues in writing and disseminating the research**

During the dissemination of the findings from the study, the researcher used simple language and not language or words that were biased against the participants involved in the study. This also included the writing of the research report on the real findings, as fraudulent practices are not accepted in the professional research community (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:526:527).

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND OPERATIONALISATION**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:410-412) and Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:227) once the data has been collected, the data analysis process involves making

sense out of data. The questionnaire was designed whereby all the variables on the questionnaire was given a code, which was edge coded on the left side of the questionnaire to make the data capturing process easier. The raw data collected from the questionnaires was coded and converted into meaningful and interpretable information. The data was categorized using open coding. Appropriate statistical methods comprising of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. Once the data was coded it was captured on the software program SAS and SPSS to analyse the data.

### **3.6.1 Coding and capturing of the data**

During the construction of the questionnaire, coding categories were developed for the open ended questions i.e. where the respondents had the option to choose the block “other” and specify additional information.

The researcher conducted the following levels of data analysis:

- Transcribed all the data that has been collected from the structured questionnaire into codes and sent the questionnaire to the Internal Consultation Service at the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria;
- Transcribed the captured information on a spread sheet in Excel by a data typist from the statistics unit;
- The data in Excel was imported into two computer packages for statistical analysis, SAS and SPSS;
- The data was checked for data integrity by comparing the typed version in SPSS to the hard copy questionnaire. Corrections were made on the data set and inconsistencies in the data was cleared up (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:417-418);
- Initial single frequencies for the responses to each one of the questions were then completed. This served as another error checking mechanism and also helped the researcher to familiarize herself with the data set.
- The data was then ready to be analysed and the findings reported.

### 3.6.2 Operationalisation

**TABLE 3.1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN**

Sub-objectives	Aspects measured	Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<b>Section A</b> To determine the demographic information of the FFSAWW	Respondent number	1	V1	Descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, averages and percentages
	Age	2	V2	
	Highest level of education	3	V3	
	Average monthly income	4	V4	
<b>Section B</b> To determine other descriptive statistics	Apparel size (top and trouser)	5	V5	
	Career Dressing style	6	V6	
	Amount willing to spend on apparel per month	7	V7	
	Which apparel brands aimed at the fuller figure female have they tried on	8	V8	
	Which apparel brands aimed at the fuller figure female have they purchased	9	V9	
	How often do they buy career wear apparel	10	V10	
	Where do they purchase most of the career wear apparel	11	V11	
	Where do they get most of the fashion information	12	V12	
	Whether they have purchased specially branded career wear	13	V13	

**TABLE 3.2: OBJECTIVE 1**

**To describe the functional needs of the fuller figure South African working women regarding branded career wear**

Sub-objectives	Aspects measured	Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<b>Section C</b> To explore and describe the importance of functional needs that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to career wear	Branded apparel functional needs	14	V14	Descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, averages and percentages
	To explore and describe comfort needs	14a 14h	V14.1 V14.8	
	To explore and describe durability needs	14b 14k	V14.2 V14.11	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient test
	To explore and describe care needs	14c 14p	V14.3 V14.16	
	To explore and describe fashionability needs	14e 14g	V14.5 V14.7	
	To explore and describe the versatility needs	14m 14o	V14.13 V14.15	



**TABLE 3.3: OBJECTIVE 2**

**To describe the aesthetic needs of the fuller figure South African working women regarding branded career wear**

Sub-objectives	Aspects measured	Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<b>Section C</b> To explore and describe the importance of aesthetic needs that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to career wear	Branded apparel aesthetic needs	14	V14	Descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, averages and percentages  Spearman's Correlation Coefficient test
To explore and describe sensory needs	Sensory needs	14d 14i	V14.4 V14.9	
To explore and describe emotional needs	Emotional needs -arousal -dominance	14l 14n	V14.12 V14.14	
To explore and describe cognitive needs	Cognitive needs -fantasy -reality -cognitive enjoyment	14f 14j	V14.6 V14.10	

**TABLE 3.4: COMBINED FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS**

Aspects measured	Variables	Statistical Analysis
Functional aspects		Spearman's Correlation Coefficient Test was conducted to determine correlation between the two statements indicated at a 5% level of significance for each dimension.
Comfort	V14.1/ V14.8	
Durability	V14.2/ V14.11	
Care	V14.3/ V14.16	
Fashionability	V14.5/ V14.7	
Versatility (end use)	V14.13/ V14.15	
Aesthetic aspects		
Sensory	V14.4/ V14.9	
Emotional	V14.12/ V14.14	
Cognitive	V14.10/ V14.6	

**TABLE 3.5: OBJECTIVE 3**

**To describe the functional problems of the fuller figure South African working women regarding branded career wear**

Sub-objectives	Aspects measured	Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<b>Section D</b> To explore and describe the extent of functional problems that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to career wear	Branded apparel functional problems	15	V15	Descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, averages and percentages
To explore and describe comfort problems	Comfort problems -thermal comfort/ fit	15a 15f	V15.1 V15.6	
To explore and describe durability problems	Durability problems	15g 15p	V15.7 V15.16	
To explore and describe care problems	Care problems	15b 15n	V15.2 V15.14	
To explore and describe fashionability problems	Fashionability problems	15d 15l	V15.4 V15.12	
To explore and describe versatility problems	Versatility problems	15c 15k	V15.3 V15.11	



**TABLE 3.6: OBJECTIVE 4**

**To describe the aesthetic problems of the fuller figure South African working women regarding branded career wear**

Sub-objectives	Aspects measured	Question	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<b>Section D</b> To explore and describe the extent of the aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to career wear	Branded apparel aesthetic problems	15	V15	Descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, averages and percentages
To explore and describe sensory problems	Sensory problems	15m 15o	V15.13 V15.15	
To explore and describe emotional problems	Emotional problems -arousal -dominance	15e 15i	V15.5 V15.9	
To explore and describe cognitive problems	Cognitive problems -fantasy -reality -cognitive enjoyment	15h 15j	V15.8 V15.10	

**TABLE 3.7: COMBINED FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS**

Aspects measured	Variables	Statistical Analysis
Functional aspects		Spearman's Correlation Coefficient Test was conducted to determine correlation between the two statements indicated at a 5% level of significance for each dimension.
Comfort	V15.1/ V15.6	
Durability	V15.7/ V15.16	
Care	V15.2/ V15.14	
Fashionability	V15.4/ V15.12	
Versatility (end use)	V15.3/ V15.11	
Aesthetic aspects		
Sensory	V15.13/ V15.15	
Emotional	V15.5/ V15.9	
Cognitive	V15.8/ V15.10	

**TABLE 3.8: OBJECTIVE 5**

**To determine the statistical differences between needs and problems**

Aspects measured		Aspects measured	Variables	Statistical Analysis
Comfort needs	V14.8	Comfort problems	V15.1	Fishers Exact test was done to determine the statistical differences indicated at a 5% level of significance
	V14.1		V15.6	
Durability	V14.2	Durability	V15.7	
	V14.11		V15.16	
Care	V14.16	Care	V15.2	
	V14.3		V15.14	
Versatility (end use)	14.15	Versatility (end use)	15.3	
	14.13		15.11	
Fashionability	14.7	Fashionability	15.4	
	14.5		15.12	
Emotions	14.12	Emotions	15.5	
	14.14		15.9	
Cognitive	14.10	Cognitive	15.8	
	14.6		15.10	
Sensory	14.9	Sensory	15.13	
	14.4		15.15	

**TABLE 3.9: OBJECTIVE 6**

**To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems experienced by the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear**

Sub objective	Aspects measured	Questions	Statistical analysis
To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear	Functional and aesthetic aspects	V2 and V14	Fishers Exact Test was done to determine the statistical differences between age and the various statements indicated at a 5% level of significance
To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic problems of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear	Functional and aesthetic aspects	V2 and V15	

**TABLE 3.10: OBJECTIVE 7**

**To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems experienced by the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear**

Sub objective	Aspects measured	Questions	Statistical analysis
To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear	Functional and aesthetic aspects	V3 and V14	Fishers Exact Test was done to determine the statistical differences between income and the various statements indicated at a 5% level of significance
To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic problems of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear	Functional and aesthetic aspects	V3 and V15	

### 3.6.3 Explanation of the statistical methods

The following categories of statistical methods were used in the study i.e. descriptive and inferential statistics. According to Mouton (2001:459) and Welman (2005:231) the authors define descriptive statistics to describe and summarize the quantitative data obtained from the sample group and to present the data in a manageable form. In the study the descriptive statistics involved frequencies, averages, percentages as well as cross tabulations.

The inferential statistics is concerned with the inference made about the population to a larger population (Welman, 2005:236) and included the Chi square significance test, Fisher exact and the Spearmans correlation. The Chi square test is a statistical significance test which assesses the relationship between two variables in a total population (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:481) and can be utilized for large sample sizes.

The Fishers Exact Test is an extension of the Chi square test and also used to test significance. It is mainly used where the sample size is small. The test examines the significance of the association and can be compared to a pre-set significance level e.g. 5% which determines whether significant difference exist between the two kinds of classifications (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:487). The Statistics Department at the University of Pretoria used the SPSS program to analyse the data in the study using this method.

Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (1997:201) define the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient Test as a non-parametric measure of statistical dependence between two variables. This statistical test ranges with values from -1 to +1. When these values are close to zero this means that there is little or no association between the variables concerned.

### **3.7 QUALITY OF THE DATA**

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which a specific measurement accurately reflects the concept it is supposed to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004:186). The various types of validity was incorporated in in the whole research process i.e. conceptualization, operationalisation, sampling, data collection and analysis and interpretation of data. The author further quotes the Mouton validity framework which includes: theoretical validity, measurement validity and inferential validity. The validity of measurements (measurement validity) can be determined by using standard yardsticks which include face validity, content validity and construct validity. The following types of validity were observed in the questionnaire instrument for the purpose of the objectives and for the demographic information.

##### **Theoretical validity**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:111) theoretical validity of concepts were guaranteed by conducting a thorough literature review and defining the concepts clearly. Theoretical validity was also achieved by the quantity of sources used to verify the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:122-123).

**Measurement validity** looks at the measurement instrument used to analyse the data from the questionnaire (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:111). The measuring instrument relates to the operationalisation process and the following dimensions are addressed: face validity, content validity and construct validity. The pilot test was used as a measurement tool to witness



which approach will be effective to assist in solving the research problem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004:110).

**Face validity** is enhanced by subjecting the instruments to the scientific community's (study leader and the statistician) scrutiny and pilot testing the questionnaire instrument to a group of fuller figure career women to ensure that the measurement item actually measures what it is intended to measure (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:122). The statistics department at the University of Pretoria advised the researcher on the design layout of the questionnaire and the phrasing of the questions as well as the options for the closed ended questions.

**Content validity** is to ensure content validity in the concepts in the conceptual framework. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:123) content validity is concerned with the representivity or sampling adequacy of the content (topics or items) of an instrument and whether the instrument really measures the specific concept.

**Construct validity** refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument used in the study measures the relevant theoretical construct, the definitions within the boundaries of the study and that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure and not something else (Neumann, 2000:144).

### **Inferential validity**

According to Mouton (2001:277) inferential validity relates to the analysis and the interpretation of the data as well as stating the problem clearly. To have appropriate techniques of analyses to gather the findings and to have an in-depth understanding of the literature this was used to draw the conclusions.

### **3.7.2 Reliability**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2004:186) the authors describe reliability as the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured hasn't changed. Babbie and Mouton (2002:119) talks about yielding the same results each time of a given phenomenon.

The reliability of the questionnaire developed for this study has been enhanced by the pilot testing, on a purposive sample of working fuller figure women, to determine the clarity of the instructions, items, and language and to establish the time it will take to complete the questionnaire. This process facilitated correcting and adjusting the items accordingly before the actual event (Neumann, 2000:138-141). To achieve perfect reliability is not always

possible but pilot testing on subjects with characteristics similar to the sample of the study has ensured that a given measurement technique has repeatedly yielded the same description of a given phenomenon each time it was used. All the respondents received the same questions and the information will be kept confidential (Mouton, 2001:111). In the context of the study the term “researcher” refers to the researcher per se and the term “participants” refers to the respondents.

In the covering letter the researcher outlines that the research study is only interested in the opinions of the respondents and that there is no right or wrong answers to the questions and the respondents were assured their anonymity and confidentiality, this prevents respondent bias.

### **3.7.3 Ethical considerations**

A scientific research study has to be accurate and truthful and therefore the researcher ensured that the ethical procedures were applied whilst conducting the study. Mouton (2001:10) defines ethics as providing guidelines on what constitutes appropriate moral behaviour in the sphere of science. The ethical considerations applied in the study are explained in detail in this chapter, under the section 3.5.1 Data collection. The researcher considered the ethical aspects related to the sample group, the data collection process, data analysis, interpretation and the writing up of the study. The study was submitted and approved by the University of Pretoria ethics committee.

## **3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study has certain limitations. The author is aware that the research was limited to working fuller figure female apparel consumers buying South African branded apparel targeted for this market. In addition the study also has geographical limitations because the sample was restricted to the Pretoria region. It cannot be assumed that the needs and problems experienced by the sample group with branded apparel for this target audience can be applicable to other branded apparel for this target market. This study can be used as a point of departure to structure a questionnaire in a quantitative study where the findings can be generalised to the whole population.

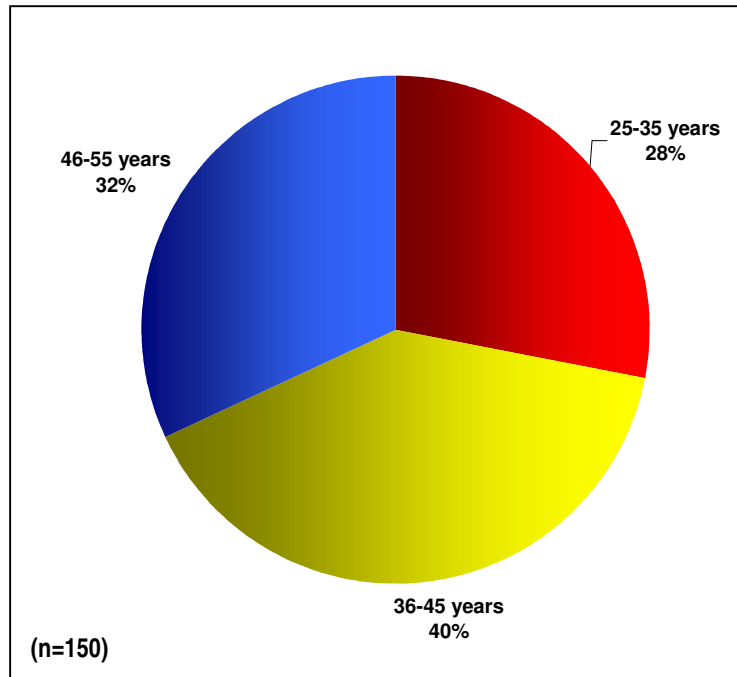
#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the data analyses and the results of the questionnaire will be discussed. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and summarize the quantitative data that emerged from the questionnaire instrument that was applied during the study. Tables, graphs as well as the calculations of the numerical summaries such as frequencies, averages and percentages are used to present the descriptive statistics. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:481) inferential statistics is used to generalize the findings to a larger population from which the sample has been selected. The researcher analysed the data according to the objectives and sub objectives of the study as well as the conceptual framework with the aim to address the research problem. The structured questionnaire guided the analysis process. The study population consisted of one hundred and fifty (n=150) FFSAWW participants and the initial data analysis process started with the demographic description of the sample.

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE**

The quantitative results will report on the following categories guided by the questionnaire which was utilized to solicit information from the sample group. Firstly the demographic description includes the age profile, level of qualifications and the average monthly income of the sample group.

#### 4.2.1 Distribution of the sample by age (V2)

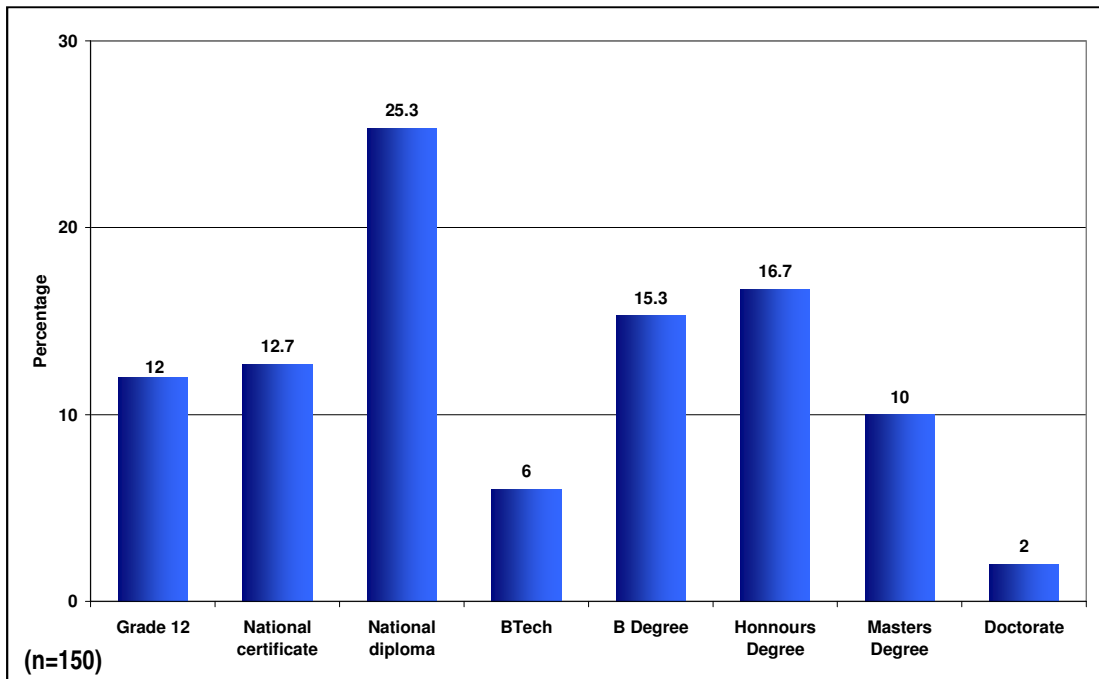


**FIGURE 4.1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY AGE**

The age profile of the 150 respondents that participated in the study is illustrated in the figure above (Figure 4.1). The data analysis indicates that the 36 to 45 age group constitutes the highest proportion (40.00%) followed by the 46 to 55 age category (32.00%) and lastly the 25 to 35 age group (28.00%).



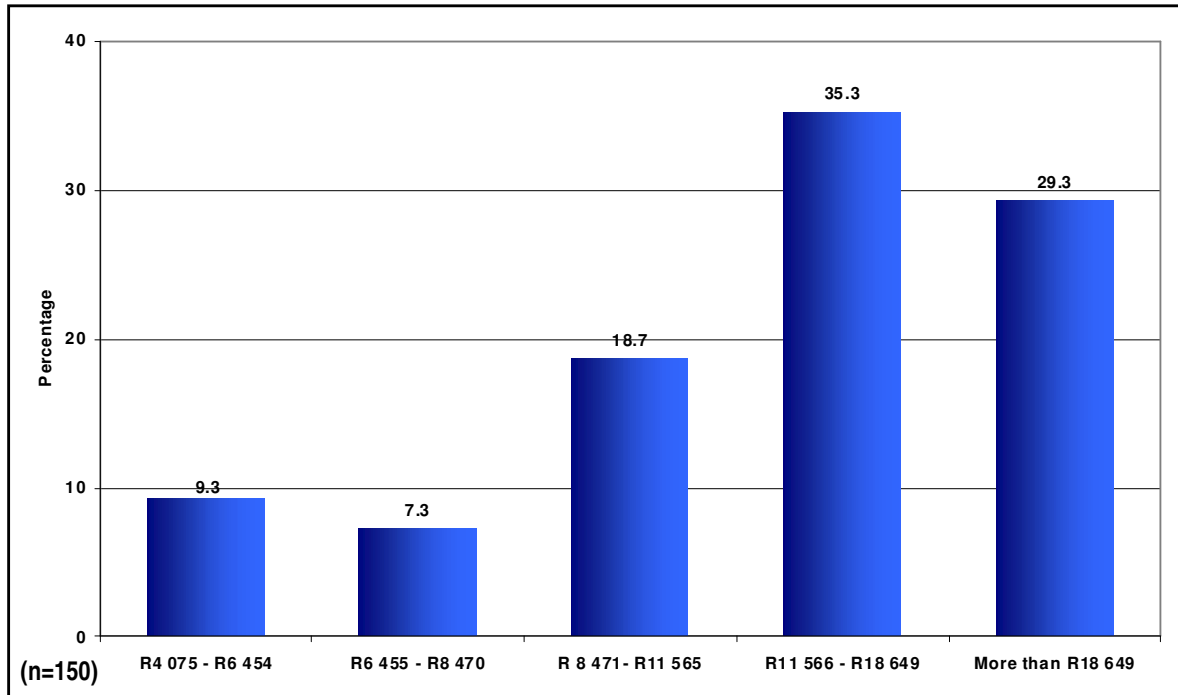
#### 4.2.2 Distribution of sample by level of highest qualification (V3)



**FIGURE 4.2: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY LEVEL OF HIGHEST QUALIFICATION**

The highest level of education of the respondents is displayed in Figure 4.2. The data indicates that a large proportion, which is 88% (12.70% + 23.30% + 6.00% + 15.30% + 16.70% + 10.00% + 2.00%) of the respondents, has a post matric and tertiary qualification.

### 4.2.3 Average monthly income distribution (V4)



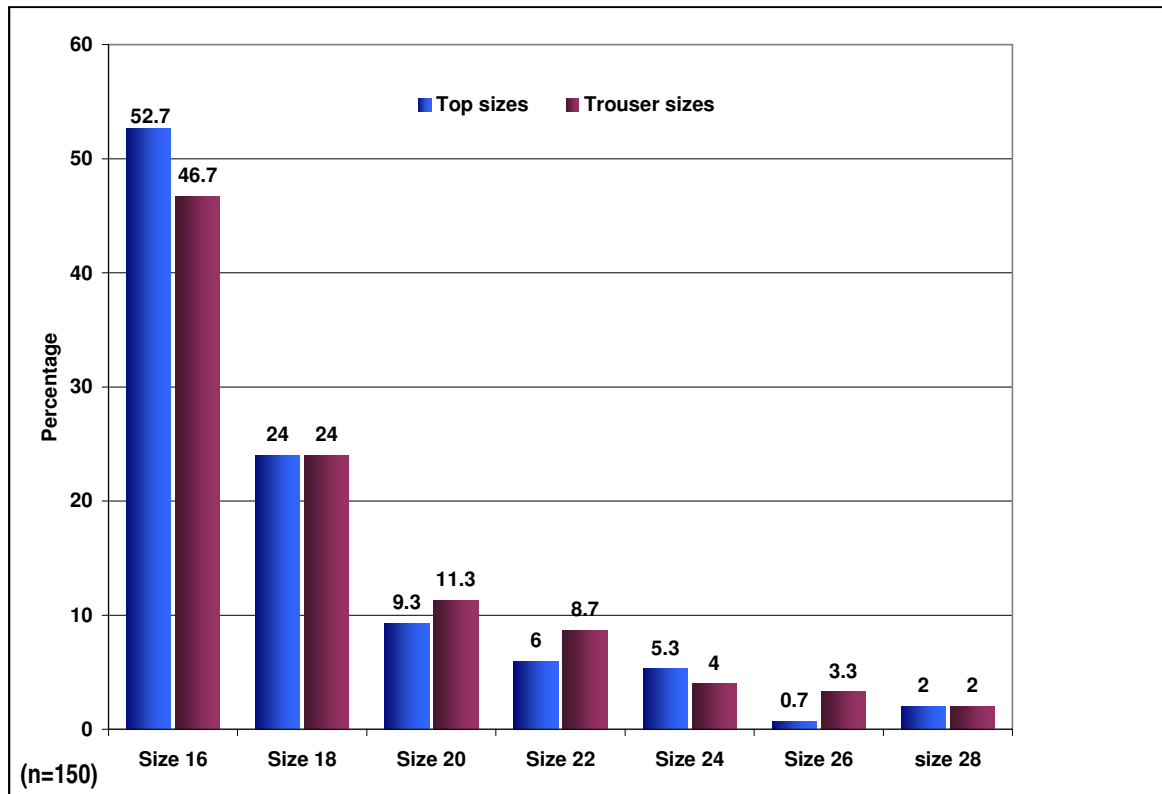
**FIGURE 4.3: AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME DISTRIBUTION**

The statistical breakdown in Figure 4.3 represents the LSM 6 to 10 categories of the respondents. The table above provides an indication that the respondents earn a substantial amount of money monthly. The monthly disposable income of the respondents is high reflecting 35.30% earning between R11 566 – R18 649 monthly and 29.30% earning more than R18 649 per month. That indicates that the respondents most probably have a substantial amount of money to spend on apparel.

### 4.3 OTHER DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The following graphs and tables will demonstrate and describe the data analysis relating to the top and trouser sizing, the dressing style, the amount of money spend on apparel per month, the fuller figure apparel brands the respondents have tried on and purchased, when and where the respondents purchase career wear, where they obtain their fashion information as well as their needs and problems related to branded career wear for the fuller figure.

### 4.3.1 Top and trouser apparel size distribution (V5)



**FIGURE 4.4: TOP AND TROUSER APPAREL SIZE DISTRIBUTION**

The graph above summarizes the top and trouser sizes of the respondents. The majority of the respondents displayed to be wearing size 16 and size 18 which is the lower range of the sizing category for fuller figured women. Figure 4.4 illustrates that most of the respondents wear size 16 top and trouser. A total of 76.70% (52.70% + 24.00%) of the respondents wear a top size 16 and size 18 respectively. Most of the respondents 70.70% (46.70% + 24.00%) indicated to be wearing a trouser size 16 and 18. It is important to note that, this sizing category gives the wearer the opportunity to purchase apparel from the ordinary size ranges as well as from the fuller figure sizing ranges.

### 4.3.2 Career dressing style distribution (V6)

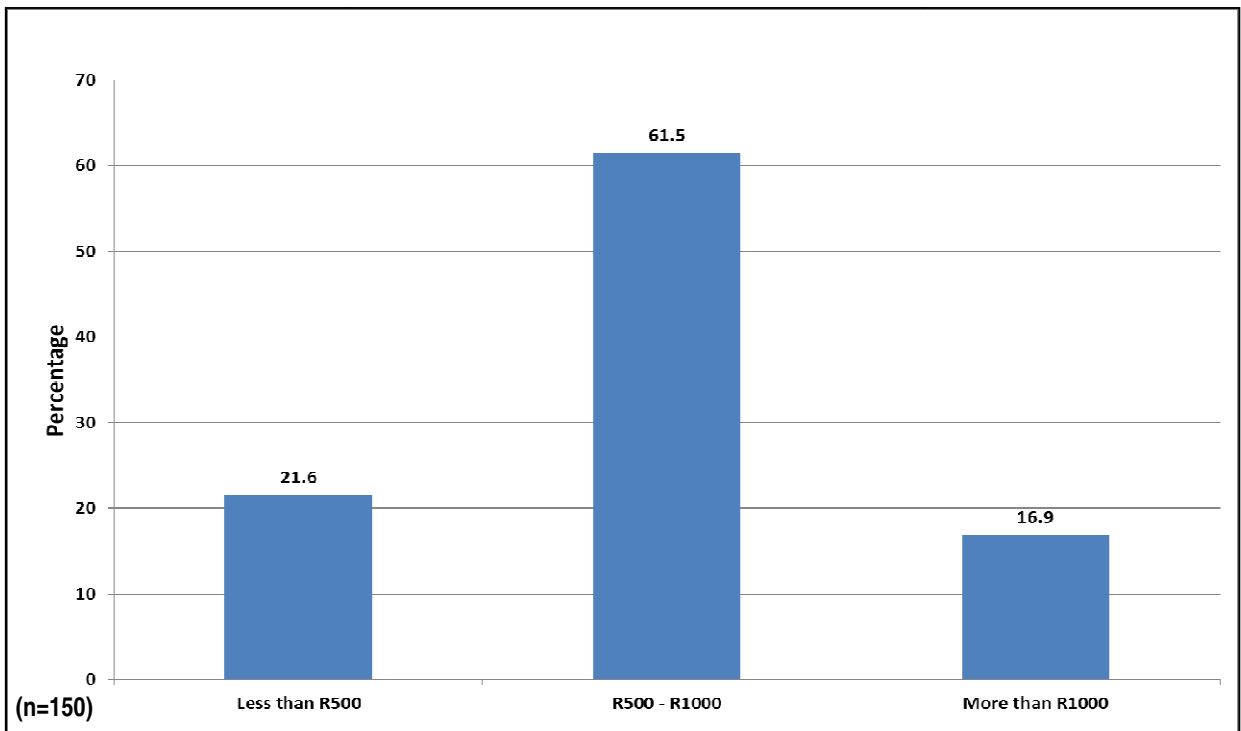
**TABLE 4.1: CAREER DRESSING STYLE DISTRIBUTIONS**

Career dressing style	Number of responses
Classic style	17
Casual style	14
Smart casual	82
Formal style	43
Other	None
Total	156

(n=150)

The respondents could select more than one option to describe their career dressing style; Table 4.1 displays the number of responses relating to the career dressing styles of the sample group. The majority (82) of the respondents favoured the smart casual style of dressing, followed by forty three (43) respondents indicating a preference for the formal dressing style. This indicates that the respondents most probably pay a higher amount of money for their career wear as smart casual and formal style apparel are generally more expensive than classic and casual styles.

### 4.3.3 Distribution related to the amount per month spent on apparel (V7)



**FIGURE 4.5: DISTRIBUTION RELATED TO THE AMOUNT PER MONTH SPENT ON APPAREL**



Figure 4.5 displays the amount of money the respondents spend per month purchasing apparel. It is evident the majority of the respondents (61.50%) spend between R500 and R1 000 rand per month to purchase apparel and therefore this points to the fact that the respondents belong to a target market that the retailers should not ignore. The average amount spend on apparel by the group is R847.70 (standard deviation R607.69) with a median of R600.00 per month.

#### 4.3.4 Distribution of the apparel brands that have been tried on and purchased (V8 and V9)

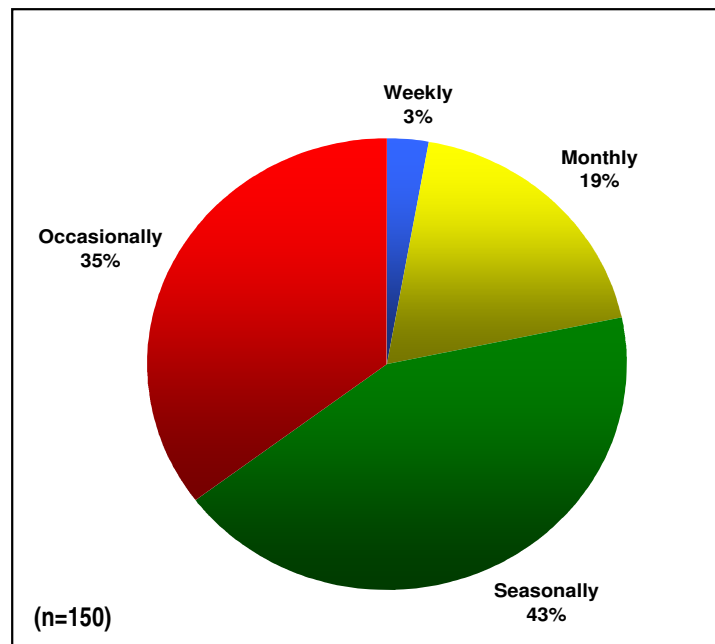
**TABLE 4.2: DISTRIBUTION OF THE APPAREL BRANDS THAT HAVE BEEN TRIED ON AND PURCHASED**

	Number of respondents who have tried each of the following brands n=150	Number of respondents who have purchased the following brands n=150
Donna Claire	104	107
Penny C	75	77
Zeta	31	35
Rene Taylor	43	42
Other	9	6

(n=150)

The respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed apparel brands aimed at the fuller figure they have tried on and purchased. This was a multiple response question where a respondent could choose more than one option when answering the two questions (Question 8 and question 9, Section B - Addendum A). The data indicated that 104 respondents have tried on apparel from Donna-Claire and a further 75 respondents from Penny-C, these brands seem to be the most popular. On the other hand 107 respondents have purchased garments from Donna-Claire and 77 from Penny-C. It is interesting to note that respondents purchase the apparel brands without trying on the clothes. The information is displayed in Table 4.2.

#### 4.3.5 Distribution of time frame when respondents purchase branded career wear (V10)



**FIGURE 4.6: DISTRIBUTION OF TIME FRAME WHEN RESPONDENTS PURCHASE BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

An examination of Figure 4.6 reveals that most of the respondents indicated that they shop for career apparel seasonally 43.00% followed by 35.00% who indicated they shop occasionally for career wear. Five (5) respondents indicated more than one option for example that they purchase branded career wear weekly/ monthly as well as seasonally or seasonally as well as occasionally. In these cases the researcher decided to select the option that indicated the more frequent purchase option of the two options. For example, in the case of weekly/ monthly as well as seasonally, the weekly/ monthly option and in the case of seasonally as well as occasionally, the seasonally option were selected.

#### 4.3.6 Distribution of shops where respondents purchase branded career wear (V11)

**TABLE 4.3: DISTRIBUTION OF SHOPS WHERE RESPONDENTS PURCHASE BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

	Number of positive responses
Apparel chain stores	131
Boutiques	23
Other	11

(n=150)

Although the question stated that respondents should indicate where they purchase most of their branded career wear, fifteen (15) respondents indicated more than one option. The researcher therefore decided to treat the answer to this question as multiple responses where one respondent could mark more than one option.

Table 4.3 displays that the majority (131) of the respondents purchase their career wear at chain stores. This supports the previous information that most of the respondents have tried on and purchased branded career wear available at chain stores for the fuller figure as illustrated in Table 4.2. A total of thirty four (34) respondents (23 + 11) have indicated that they purchase their career wear at boutiques and other apparel stores such as Woolworths, Queenspark Plus, Mr Price and Baby Phat.

#### 4.3.7 Fashion information distribution (V12)

**TABLE 4.4: FASHION INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**

Fashion information	Number of respondents
Magazines	100
Newspapers	11
Television	47
Friends	43
Family	30
Colleagues	23
Window shopping	101
Internet	11
Other sources	1

(n=150)

Table 4.4 provides an overview of where the respondents acquire their fashion information. The respondents could choose more than one option. The data indicates that most of the respondents get their fashion information from magazines with 100 out of 150 respondents and it clearly illustrates that fashion magazines are utilized by retail stores to advertise their apparel brands. One (1) respondent indicated that she does not use any of the given sources

of information but follows her own style and taste. It is interesting to note that 101 of the respondents have a preference for window shopping to get their fashion information.

#### 4.3.8 Distribution of the respondents' responses to the following statements (V13)

**TABLE 4.5: DISTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS**

	Very important %	Important %	Less important %	Not important %
That the Branded Career Wear should be available in every store	26.70	40.00	16.00	17.30
That the Branded Career Wear should be available only at specialty stores	17.60	19.60	29.70	33.10
That the bigger sizes should be specially branded for the fuller figure	26.80	37.60	17.40	18.10
That the Branded Career Wear should be available at various price categories	49.30	32.70	11.30	6.70
That the Branded Career Wear should be available at the same price as the smaller sizes	48.70	22.00	18.70	10.70

(n=150)

In Table 4.5 the respondents were asked to rate their opinion regarding the following statements referring to the questionnaire (Question 13, Section B - Addendum A). It is evident from Table 4.5 that a large proportion of the respondents 66.70% (26.70% + 40.00%) indicated that it very important and important that branded career wear should be available in every store. On the other hand, a total of 62.80% (29.70% + 33.10%) of the respondents indicated that it's not important or less important that branded career wear should only be available at specialty stores. The majority of the respondents 64.40% (26.80% + 37.60%) indicated that branded career wear should be specially branded for the fuller figure. Eighty two percent (49.30% + 32.70%) of the respondents indicated that it is very important and important that branded career wear should be available at various price categories. A total of 70.70% (48.70% + 22.00%) of the respondents indicated that it is very important and important that the branded career wear should be available at the same price as the smaller sizes. The above poses as a challenge for retailers, as it is clear that this target group, seemingly does not want to be treated differently as other female target groups. They want their branded career wear to be available in every store, most probably chain stores, as that is where they buy their career wear. As is the case for other female target groups they want their career wear to be available in various price ranges and certainly not more expensive than the smaller apparel sizes. This is perhaps unrealistic as it costs much more to manufacture larger sizes due to, amongst others the fact that more fabric is needed to produce these sizes.



#### 4.4 FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS RELATED TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR OF THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN

The one hundred and fifty (150) FFSAWW were asked to indicate their branded career wear needs against a scale from very import, important, less important and not important. The functional needs comprises of comfort, durability, fashionability, care and versatility. The aesthetic needs are grouped as the emotional, cognitive and sensory qualities.

##### 4.4.1 Functional and aesthetic needs of fuller figure South African working women regarding branded career wear (V14)

###### Objective 1 and 2 (Functional and aesthetic needs)

###### Objective 1

To explore and describe the importance of the **functional needs** that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

###### Sub-objectives

- 1.1 To explore and describe the importance of comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear
- 1.2 To explore and describe the importance of durability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear
- 1.3 To explore and describe the importance of care for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear
- 1.4 To explore and describe the importance of fashionability for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear
- 1.5 To explore and describe the importance of versatility (end use) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear

###### Objective 2

To explore and describe the importance of **aesthetic needs** that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

###### Sub-objectives

- 2.1 To explore and describe the importance of sensory qualities for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear



- 2.2 To explore and describe the importance of emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/ pleasure) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear
- 2.3 To explore and describe the importance of cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) for the FFSAWW with regard to career wear

The fuller figure career women were asked to indicate an important need by marking the most appropriate statement. The results are indicated in the tables below.



**TABLE 4.6: FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS OF FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARDING BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

		Very Important %	Important %	Less Important %	Not Important %	Very important /important %	Less important/ Not important %	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Statement</b>								
Comfort V14.1	That the style of the branded career wear fits my body comfortably at work	84.60	12.80	1.30	1.30	97.40	2.60	1.03	0.16
Comfort V14.8	That the material used for the branded career wear is comfortable for the season	75.00	22.30	2.70	0	97.30	2.70	1.03	0.16
<b>Average</b>		<b>79.80</b>	<b>17.50</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>97.35</b>	<b>2.65</b>		
Versatility V14.13	That the branded career wear can be worn for other occasions than work	55.40	34.50	6.80	3.30	89.90	10.10	1.10	0.30
Versatility V14.15	That I will be able to mix and match the branded career wear	70.90	27.00	1.40	0.70	98.00	2.00	1.02	0.14
<b>Average</b>		<b>63.00</b>	<b>31.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>93.95</b>	<b>6.05</b>		
Durability V14.2	That it is possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons	53.70	33.60	8.70	4.00	87.30	12.70	1.13	0.34
Durability V14.11	That the material of the branded career wear is of a good quality that will last long	84.20	14.40	1.40	0	98.60	1.40	1.01	0.12
<b>Average</b>		<b>68.95</b>	<b>24.00</b>	<b>5.05</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>92.95</b>	<b>7.05</b>		
Care V14.3	That the material used for the branded career wear does not need ironing	31.50	23.50	32.90	12.10	55.00	45.00	1.45	0.50
Care V14.16	That the material used for the branded career wear does not show spots easily	62.20	29.10	4.10	4.70	91.20	8.80	1.09	0.28
<b>Average</b>		<b>47.00</b>	<b>26.30</b>	<b>18.50</b>	<b>8.40</b>	<b>73.10</b>	<b>26.90</b>		
Fashion V14.5	That the style of the branded career wear looks similar to those that my colleagues wear	14.20	28.40	29.10	28.40	42.60	57.40	1.57	0.50
Fashion V14.7	That the design of the branded career wear looks the same as the smaller sizes	27.00	28.40	33.10	11.50	55.40	44.60	1.45	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>20.00</b>	<b>28.40</b>	<b>31.10</b>	<b>34.10</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>51.00</b>		
Emotions V14.12	That the branded career wear should make me feel feminine	68.30	20.00	9.70	2.00	88.30	11.70	1.12	0.32
Emotions V14.14	That the style of the branded career wear is beautiful	74.30	25.00	0.70	0	99.30	0.70	1.01	0.08
<b>Average</b>		<b>70.00</b>	<b>23.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>93.80</b>	<b>6.20</b>		
Sensory V14.4	That the branded career wear should be of the latest fashion	34.90	32.20	24.70	8.20	67.10	32.90	1.33	0.47
Sensory V14.9	That the styles of the branded career fits me beautiful	73.30	24.00	2.70	0	97.30	2.70	1.03	0.16
<b>Average</b>		<b>54.60</b>	<b>28.60</b>	<b>12.70</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>82.20</b>	<b>17.80</b>		
Cognitive V14.6	That I will receive compliments from colleagues when wearing the branded career wear	31.10	33.10	20.90	14.90	64.20	35.80	1.36	0.48
Cognitive V14.10	That the branded career wear makes me feel better-dressed than my colleagues	23.60	24.40	33.80	18.20	48.00	52.00	1.52	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>27.00</b>	<b>28.00</b>	<b>27.00</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>56.10</b>	<b>43.90</b>		

(n=150)

Table 4.6 refers to the Questionnaire (Question 14, Section C – Addendum A). By looking at the combined percentages of each dimension in Table 4.6 it is clear that, except for the

fashionability (49.00%) and cognitive (56.10%) dimensions, all other dimensions form an important or very important need in the life of the career women with regard to her career wear. It seems that, in general, the functional needs are seen as relatively the more important ones with comfortability as the most important need (97.35%) followed by versatility/ end use (93.95%), durability (92.95%) and care (73.10%). Fashionability, as part of the functionality needs was not seen as an important need, with only 49.00% of the respondents indicating that it is important or very important. It is interesting to note that the care dimension although still important was indicated as important and very important by far less of the respondents than in the case of comfort, end use and durability.

For interpretation purposes it is however also important to consider the individual statements of each dimension, especially in the cases where there are big differences between each statements' responses. The two functional dimensions where there are notable differences between the two statements is care and fashion. With regard to care 91.20% of the respondents indicated that it is important and very important to them that the branded career wear should not show spots easily (mean = 1.09), while only 55.00% of the respondents indicated that it is important and very important that the career wear does not need ironing (mean = 1.45). The reasoning might be that they are full-time career women and have support systems that care for their apparel. In addition the current fashion that also asks for a more creased look might also have influenced their responses.

On the other hand, with regard to fashionability, 42.60% of the respondents felt that it is importance and very important to them that the styles of the branded career wear looks similar to those of their colleagues (mean = 1.57), while 55.40% stated that it is important and very important to them that the design of the branded career wear looks the same as the same as the smaller sizes (mean = 1.45), which may not be the case in reality.

With regard to the aesthetic dimensions it seems that the emotional dimension is a very important need in the life of the career women with regard to her career wear (93.80%), specifically that the branded career wear makes her feel feminine (mean = 1.12) and even more important, that the styles of the branded career wear is beautiful (V14.14), with the lowest mean of 1.01. Eighty two point two percent (82.20%) of the sample population indicated that the sensory aesthetic dimension is important and very important with regard to their career wear. There are, however, big differences between the responses relating to the two statements that measures this dimension. It seems that the fact that the career wear should be of the latest fashion is not so important to the career women, where 67.10% indicated that it is important or very important to them (mean = 1.33). It is, on the other hand for most of the respondents (97.30%) very important or important that the styles of the career



wear fits them beautifully (V14.9) with a mean of 1.03. This supports the research results of previous researchers such as Fiore and Damhorst (1992) and Brown and Rice (1998:43) which indicated that fit is one of the most important quality indicators for the apparel consumer. Fit does not only influence the sensory aesthetic dimension, but also the cognitive aesthetic dimension (in that a specific fit sends out a specific message) as well as the emotional aesthetic dimension (as a specific fit can make you feel more dominant).

It is evident from Table 4.6 that the cognitive aesthetic dimension (V14.4 and V14.10) is far less important to the respondents than the other aesthetic dimensions, with only 56.10% indicating it as an important or very important need. There are again big differences between the two scores of the two statements that measure this dimension. Sixty four point two percent (64.20%) of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important that they receive compliments from their colleagues (mean = 1.36) while only 48.00% of the respondents felt that it is important or very important to them that the branded career wear makes them feel better dressed than their colleagues (mean=1.52).

It seems that comparison with colleagues' appearance is not important to these career women as they have also indicated on the fashion statement (V14.5) that it is not so important to them that the styles of the career wear is similar to those of their colleagues, with the highest mean of 1.57.

#### **4.4.2 Means of combined functional and aesthetic needs for the fuller figure South African working women regard to branded career wear**

For interpretation purposes it was, however, further necessary to test the correlation between the two statements that were added together so as to determine if the statements can be grouped and interpreted together. Spearman's correlation coefficient indicated at a 5% level of significance that the statements of all the dimensions could indeed be added and interpreted together because there is a statistically significant correlation between them ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). In the cases where the percentage scores between the two statements that measured specific dimension (Table 4.6) were notably big, the responses on the two statements were also discussed separately.

Table 4.7 illustrates the means and standard deviations as well as the P-values of the Spearmans Correlation Coefficient of the functional and aesthetic dimensions for the fuller figure sample group.

**TABLE 4.7 MEANS OF COMBINED FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARD TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

Statements		Needs	Functional/ Aesthetic	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value
V14.5	V14.7	Fashionability	Functional	5.01	1.67	<.0001***
V14.10	V14.6	Cognitive	Aesthetic	4.66	1.87	<.0001***
V14.3	V14.16	Care	Functional	3.76	1.46	<.001***
V14.4	V14.9	Sensory	Aesthetic	3.36	1.16	.021**
V14.13	V14.15	Versatility	Functional	2.90	1.07	<.0001***
V14.2	V14.11	Durability	Functional	2.79	0.94	.001***
V14.12	V14.14	Emotional	Aesthetic	2.71	1.05	<.0001***
V14.1	V14.8	Comfort	Functional	2.45	0.81	<.0001***

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

<2 (less than) or equal to 2 = very important  
>2 (more than) or  $\leq 4$  = important  
>4 (more than) or  $\leq 6$  = less important  
> 6 (more than) or  $\leq 8$  = not important

Table 4.7 illustrates the means (out of 8) of the scores obtained by adding the two combined statements of a dimension, ranging from very important/ important and less important/ not important. The functional and aesthetic needs dimensions are ranked according to the order of importance to the sample population i.e. the lower the mean score the more important the need. The means and standard deviation were rounded off to two decimal places.

Referring to Table 4.6 it is clear that comfort is the most important functional need. This is confirmed in Table 4.7 where the comfort dimension has an average mean of 2.45 followed by the emotional needs with an average mean of 2.71. Fashionability is the least important functional need with an average mean of 5.01 which was also documented in the results in Table 4.6. Overall, the functional needs were rated higher than the aesthetic needs by the fuller figure women.

#### **4.5 FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE BRANDED CAREER WEAR OF THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN**

The respondents were asked to indicate the **problems** they experience with branded apparel marketed for fuller figure career women, by marking the most appropriate statement (Question 15, Section D – Addendum A). The results appear in Table 4.8.



#### 4.5.1 Functional and aesthetic problems regarding branded career wear (V15): Objectives 3 and 4 (functional and aesthetic problems)

##### Objective 3

To explore and describe the extent of the **functional problems** that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

##### Sub-objectives

- 3.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with comfort (thermal comfort/ fit) regarding career wear
- 3.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with durability regarding career wear
- 3.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with care regarding career wear
- 3.4 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with fashionability regarding career wear
- 3.5 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with versatility (end use) regarding career wear

##### Objective 4

To explore and describe the extent of the **aesthetic problems** that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

##### Sub-objectives

- 4.1 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the sensory qualities regarding to career wear
- 4.2 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with emotional aspects (arousal/ dominance/ pleasure) regarding to career wear
- 4.3 To explore and describe to what extent the FFSAWW experience problems with the cognitive aspects (fantasy/ reality/ cognitive enjoyment) regarding to career wear



**TABLE 4.8: FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO BRANDED APPAREL**

		Very serious %	Serious %	Not that serious %	Not a problem %	Very serious/ serious %	Not that serious/ Not a problem	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Statement</b>								
Durability V15.7	It is not possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons	25.00	30.40	31.10	13.50	55.40	44.60	1.45	0.50
Durability V15.16	The material of the branded career wear is not of a good quality that last long	39.90	22.30	23.00	14.80	62.20	37.80	1.38	0.49
<b>Average</b>		<b>32.45</b>	<b>26.35</b>	<b>27.05</b>	<b>14.15</b>	<b>58.80</b>	<b>41.20</b>		
Comfort V15.6	The style of the branded career wear does not fit me comfortably at work	34.90	22.60	22.60	19.90	57.50	42.50	1.42	0.50
Comfort V15.1	The material of the branded career wear is not comfortable for the specific season	22.30	25.70	35.80	16.20	48.00	52.00	1.52	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>28.60</b>	<b>24.15</b>	<b>29.20</b>	<b>18.05</b>	<b>52.75</b>	<b>47.25</b>		
Care V15.14	The material of the branded career wear needs too much ironing	24.00	23.30	31.50	21.20	47.30	52.70	1.53	0.50
Care V15.2	The material of the branded career wear show spots easily	23.60	28.50	32.40	15.50	52.00	48.00	1.48	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>23.80</b>	<b>25.90</b>	<b>31.95</b>	<b>18.35</b>	<b>49.65</b>	<b>50.35</b>		
Versatility V15.11	It is not possible to wear the branded career to other occasions than work	20.30	25.00	35.10	19.60	45.30	54.70	1.55	0.50
Versatility V15.3	It is not possible to mix and match the branded career wear	17.00	34.70	26.50	21.80	51.70	48.30	1.48	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>18.65</b>	<b>29.85</b>	<b>30.80</b>	<b>20.70</b>	<b>48.50</b>	<b>51.50</b>		
Fashion V15.12	The style of the branded career wear does not look similar to those that my colleagues wear	16.40	19.20	36.30	28.10	35.60	64.40	1.64	0.48
Fashion V15.4	The designs of the branded career wear does not look similar to those of the smaller sizes	23.80	23.80	37.40	15.00	47.60	52.40	1.52	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>20.10</b>	<b>21.50</b>	<b>36.85</b>	<b>21.55</b>	<b>41.60</b>	<b>58.40</b>		
Emotions V15.5	The branded career wear does not make me feel feminine	26.40	30.40	25.60	17.60	56.80	43.20	1.43	0.50
Emotions V15.9	The styles of the branded career wear are not beautifully	27.40	25.30	29.50	17.80	52.70	47.30	1.47	0.50
<b>Average</b>		<b>26.90</b>	<b>27.85</b>	<b>27.55</b>	<b>17.70</b>	<b>54.75</b>	<b>45.25</b>		
Sensory V15.15	The branded career does not match the latest fashion look	27.00	20.30	39.20	13.50	47.30	52.70	1.53	0.50
Sensory V15.13	The styles of the branded career does not fit me beautifully	32.90	27.40	23.30	16.40	60.30	39.70	1.40	0.49
<b>Average</b>		<b>29.95</b>	<b>23.85</b>	<b>31.25</b>	<b>14.95</b>	<b>53.80</b>	<b>46.20</b>		
Cognitive V15.10	I do not receive compliments from colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear	12.20	17.70	38.10	32.00	29.90	70.10	1.70	0.46
Cognitive V15.8	I do not feel better dressed than my colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear	10.80	20.90	36.50	31.80	31.80	68.20	1.68	0.47
<b>Average</b>		<b>11.50</b>	<b>19.30</b>	<b>37.30</b>	<b>31.90</b>	<b>30.85</b>	<b>69.15</b>		

(n=150)

Table 4.8 refers to the Questionnaire (Question 15, Section D- Addendum A) which deals with the problems the FFSAWW experience with the branded apparel. From a marketing point of view one would prefer the branded career wear that the retailer offers to satisfy the highest possible percentage of their target market on most of the functional and aesthetic dimensions and would definitely not expect them to have serious or very serious problems with the offer. It is clear from Table 4.8 that many of the respondents experienced serious and very serious problems with many of the dimensions of the available branded career wear for the fuller figure, with more than 50% of the respondents who indicated that they experienced serious or very serious problems on four of the eight dimensions.

It seems as if durability poses the biggest problem where 58.80% of the respondents indicated serious or very serious problems, specifically that the branded career wear is not of good quality that last long (62.20%, mean = 1.38) and it is not possible to wear the career wear for two or more seasons (55.40%, mean = 1.45). Career wear is generally more expensive than casual wear and one expects it to last longer. These women also spend a substantial amount of money on their career wear, this is evident in Figure 4.5 where 61.50% of the respondents indicated that they spend between R500.00 to R1 000.00 and 16.9% indicated that they spend more than R1 000.00 per month on their career wear. From a financial point of view this makes the problem even worse as they spend a substantial amount of the money on clothes that are, most probably, more expensive, but does not last long enough.

With regard to the other functional dimensions, it seems that most of the career women also experience serious or very serious problems with the comfortability of the branded career wear (52.75%), as well as care (49.65%). The importance of fit again came to the fore as 57.50% of the respondents indicated serious or very serious problems with the fit of the career wear. A substantial percentage of the respondents also indicated serious or very serious problems with the end use (48.50%), specifically that it is not possible to mix and match the branded career wear (51.70%, mean = 1.48). It seems that the fashionability of the branded career wear poses the least problem for the career wear, where 41.60% of the respondents indicated serious and very serious problems with the branded career wear. It should however be kept in mind that fashionability was not a very important or important need for the respondents (49.00%). There are also notably bigger differences between the scores of the two statements that measure the dimension where 47.60% of the respondents indicated serious or very serious problems with the fact that the designs of the branded career wear do not look similar to those of the smaller sizes (mean = 1.52). It should be noted from the results of Table 4.6 that the fact that the design should look similar to those of smaller sizes was also more important (55.40%) to the respondents than the other fashion

statement that measures the dimension. As previously mentioned it is reality that the designs and styles of the larger sizes do differ from those of the smaller sizes. With regard to the aesthetic dimensions, it is clear from Table 4.8 that more than 50% of the respondents indicated serious or very serious problems with the emotional dimension (54.75%) as well as the sensory dimension (53.80%). What worsens the issue is that both these dimensions were reported as an important or very important need by the respondents, emotions (93.80%) and sensory (82.20%).

There are, however again notable differences between the responses on the two statements that measure the sensory dimension, where 60.30% of the respondents indicated serious and very serious problems with the styles that does not fit beautifully (mean = 1.40). The fact that 97.30% of the respondents' indicated a beautiful fit as an important or very important need (Table 4.6) and that such a high percentage of the sample group now encounter serious or very serious problems with the fit, should be seen as a red flag with regard to branded career wear for the fuller figure. It seems that the cognitive dimension poses the least problems for the career women. Only 31.80% of the respondents indicated that they experience serious or very serious problems with the dimension with a mean score of 1.70. According to Table 4.6 the cognitive dimension was also indicated as one of the less important aesthetic needs (56.10%) by the respondents.

#### 4.5.2 Means of combined functional and aesthetic problems for the fuller figure South African working women regard to branded career wear

**TABLE 4.9: MEANS OF COMBINED FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARD TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

Statements		Problems	Functional/ Aesthetic	Mean	Standard deviation	P value
V15.10	V15.8	Cognitive	Aesthetic	5.79	1.77	<.0001***
V15.4	V15.12	Fashionability	Functional	5.20	1.68	<.0001***
V15.3	V15.11	Versatility	Functional	5.08	1.67	<.0001***
V15.2	V15.14	Care	Functional	4.89	1.77	<.0001***
V15.6	V15.1	Comfort	Functional	4.72	1.78	<.0001***
V15.9	V15.5	Emotional	Aesthetic	4.71	1.90	<.0001***
V15.13	V15.15	Sensory	Aesthetic	4.62	1.80	<.0001***
V15.7	V15.16	Durability	Functional	4.46	1.76	<.0001***

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

<2 (less than) or equal to 2 = very serious  
>2 (more than) or  $\leq 4$  = serious  
>4 (more than) or  $\leq 6$  = not that serious  
> 6 (more than) or  $\leq 8$  = not a problem

Table 4.9 illustrates the means (out of 8) of the two combined statements of a dimension relating to the functional and aesthetic problems with regard to branded career apparel for the fuller figure. Spearman's correlation coefficient test indicated at a 5% level of significance that the statements of all the dimensions could be added together because there is a statistically significant correlation between them ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Referring to Table 4.8, durability is the major problem for the sample group. This is again confirmed in Table 4.9 where the durability dimension has an average mean of 4.46 followed by the sensory dimension with an average mean of 4.62. The cognitive dimension is the least serious problem with an average mean of 5.79 which was documented in Table 4.8. Overall the functional problems are rated higher than the aesthetic problems.

#### **4.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEEDS AND PROBLEMS**

For interpretation purposes it was further necessary to test the difference between the needs and problems. Ideally the fuller figure working women should not experience serious and very serious problems with regard to the dimensions that they deem as important and very important.

##### **Objective 5**

To determine the statistical difference between the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the fuller figure South African working women experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

Table 4.10 displays the Fishers Exact Test which was done to determine statistical significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between very important and important needs versus not that serious and no problems.

**TABLE 4.10: NEEDS VERSUS PROBLEMS**

Very important/ important needs		%	Not that serious/ no problem		%	P value Fishers exact test
V14.8 Comfort	How important is it to you the material used for the branded career wear is comfortable for the season	97.30	V15.1 Comfort	The material of the branded career wear is not comfortable	52.00	0.621
V14.1 Comfort	That the style of the branded career wear fits my body comfortably at work	97.40	V15.6 Comfort	The style of the branded career wear does not fit me comfortably at work	42.50	0.637
V14.2 Durability	That it is possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons	87.30	V15.7 Durability	It is not possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons	44.60	.012**
V14.11 Durability	That the material of the branded career wear is of a good quality that will last long	98.60	V15.16 Durability	The material of the branded career wear is not of a good quality that last long	37.80	1.000
V14.16 Care	How important is it to you that the material used for the branded career wear does not show spots easily	91.20	V15.2 Care	The material of the branded career wear shows spots easily	48.00	0.007***
V14.3 Care	That the material used for the branded career wear does not need ironing	55.00	V15.14 Care	The material of the branded career wear needs too much ironing	52.70	<.0001***
V14.15 Versatility	How important is it to you that you will be able to mix and match the branded career wear	98.00	V15.3 Versatility	It is not possible to mix and match the branded career wear	48.30	0.610
V14.13 Versatility	That the branded career wear can be worn for other occasions than work	89.90	V15.11 Versatility	It is not possible to wear the branded career to other occasions than work	54.70	0.174
V14.7 Fashion	How important is it that the branded career wear looks similar as the smaller sizes	55.40	V15.4 Fashion	The design s of the branded career wear does not look similar to those of the smaller sizes	52.40	<.0001***
V14.5 Fashion	That the style of the branded career wear looks similar to those that my colleagues wear	42.60	V15.12 Fashion	The style of the branded career wear does not look similar to those that my colleagues wear	64.40	<.0001***
V14.12 Emotions	That the branded career wear should make me feel feminine	88.30	V15.5 Emotions	The branded career wear does not make me feel feminine	43.20	0.073
V14.14 Emotions	That the style of the branded career wear is beautiful	99.30	V15.9 Emotions	The styles of the branded career wear are not beautiful	47.30	1.000
V14.10 Cognitive	That the branded career wear makes me feel better-dressed than my colleagues	48.00	V15.8 Cognitive	I do not feel better dressed than my colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear	68.20	<.0001***
V14.6 Cognitive	That I will receive compliments from colleagues when wearing the branded career wear	64.20	V15.10 Cognitive	I do not receive compliments from colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear	70.10	<.0001***
V14.9 Sensory	That the styles of the branded career fits me beautiful	97.30	V15.13 Sensory	The styles of the branded career does not fit me beautifully	39.70	1.000
V14.4 Sensory	That the branded career wear should be of the latest fashion	67.10	V15.15 Sensory	The branded career does not match the latest fashion look	52.70	<.0001***

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

It was clear from Table 4.10 that with regard to eight of the sixteen statements there was no statistical significant differences between very important and important needs, and not that





serious and no-problem problems ( $p>0.05$ ). This indicates that the respondents indeed experienced serious problems with regard to many of the dimensions that are important needs with regard to their branded career wear.

Comfort was indicated as the most important need with regard to the respondents career wear (combined mean 2.45) yet it is clear that the respondents experienced problems with regard to both the material and the styles of the branded career wear that do not contribute to the comfortability of the garment. Likewise, the emotional dimension of their career wear was indicated as the second most important need (combined mean 2.71, Table 4.7), yet the respondents again experienced problems with both the statements that measured this dimension.

Durability was indicated as the third most important need with regard to the career wear (combined mean 2.79 Table 4.7), while the respondents seem to also experience problems with the quality of the material of the branded career wear. Versatility (end use) was indicated as the fourth most important need with regard to their career wear (combined mean 2.90, Table 4.7). As in the case with the comfort and emotional dimensions, it is clear that the respondents experienced with regard to both the statements that tested the needs and problems. They also experienced problems with the fact that the style does not fit beautiful.

It seems that the style of the branded career wear posed problems for the career women with regard to many of the dimensions, as they indicated that the style does not contribute to comfortability, that the style does not fit them beautifully, and that the style is not beautiful and therefore also does not give them emotional pleasure.

#### **4.7 THE ROLE OF AGE IN THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS AND THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN**

The survey questionnaire was categorized into three age groups and the results in the table below discuss the age composition of the 150 FFSAWW respondents in relation to the functional and aesthetic needs and problems.

## Objective 6

To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

### Sub-objectives

- 6.1 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.
- 6.2 To determine the role of age in the functional and aesthetic problems of the FFSAWW with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

#### 4.7.1 The role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs of the fuller figure South African working women with regard to branded career wear (V2 and V14)

A Fishers Exact Test was done to determine if there was statistically significant association between age and the various statements that tested the functional and aesthetic needs dimensions.

**TABLE 4.11: THE ROLE OF AGE RELATED TO THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARD TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

Construct	Statement	Age group	Important/ Very important			Less/ Not important			P value
			Count	Expected Count	%	Count	Expected Count	%	
<b>Care</b> V14.3	That the material used for the branded career wear does not need ironing	25 - 35 years	21	22.6	51.2	20	18.4	48.8	<.0.000***
		36 - 45 years	24	33.0	40.0	36	27.0	60.0	
		46 - 55 years	37	26.4	77.1	11	21.6	22.9	
<b>Cognitive</b> V14.10	That the branded career wear makes me feel better dressed than my colleagues	25 - 35 years	13	19.7	31.7	28	21.3	68.3	0.045**
		36 - 45 years	33	28.3	55.9	26	30.7	44.1	
		46 - 55 years	25	23.0	52.1	23	25.0	47.9	

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

It is clear from Table 4.11 that only in the case of one care statement (the material used for the branded career wear does not need ironing) and one cognitive statement (the branded career wear makes me better dressed than my colleagues), statistical significant associations were found between age and a specific need. It was highly significantly more

important to the 46-55 years group that the material does not need ironing ( $p < 0.000$ ). It was also significantly less important for the 25-35 years old group that their career wear should make them feel better dressed than their colleagues ( $p = 0.045$ ).

#### 4.7.2 The role of age in the functional and aesthetic problems of the fuller figure South African working women regard to branded career wear (V2 and V15)

A Fishers Exact Test was done to determine if there was statistically significant association between age and the various statements that tested the functional and aesthetic problem dimensions.

**TABLE 4.12: THE ROLE OF AGE IN THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS OF THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARD TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

Construct	Statement	Age group	Serious/ Very serious			Not that serious/ Not a problem			P value
			Count	Expected Count	%	Count	Expected Count	%	
<b>Sensory</b> V15.13	That the styles of the branded career does not fit me beautifully	25 - 35 years	29	24.1	72.5	11	15.9	27.5	.042**
		36 - 45 years	28	35.0	48.3	30	23.0	51.7	
		46 - 55 years	31	28.9	64.6	17	19.1	35.4	
<b>Care</b> V15.14	That the material of the branded career needs too much ironing	25 - 35 years	17	18.9	42.5	23	21.1	57.5	.019**
		36 - 45 years	22	27.9	37.3	37	31.1	62.7	
		46 - 55 years	30	22.2	63.8	17	24.8	36.2	

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

As with regard to the various functional and aesthetic needs, the Fishers Exact Test indicated that there was again only two cases a statistical significant associations between age and the problems that the fuller figure career women experienced with their branded career wear. The fact that the styles of the branded career wear does not fit beautifully was less of a problem for the 36-45 years group ( $p = 0.042$ ) while the 46-55 years old group indicated that the fact that the material of the branded career wear needs too much ironing was for them a more serious problem than for the other two groups. The older group also indicated that it was significantly more important to them that the material should not need ironing than to the other two groups.

#### **4.8 THE ROLE OF INCOME IN THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC NEEDS AND THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN**

A Fishers Exact Test was conducted to see if there were statistically significant associations between income and the needs and problem statements. In the survey questionnaire the average monthly income of the respondents were categorized into five groups. For purposes of reporting here, the income groups were categorized into two categories i.e. lower income group ranging from R4 075.00 to R8 470 and a higher income group ranging from R8 741.00 to more than R18 649.00.

##### **Objective 7**

To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group:

##### **Sub-objectives**

- 7.1 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs that the FFSAWW experiences with regard to branded career wear for this target group.
- 7.2 To determine the role of income in the functional and aesthetic problems that the FFSAWW experience with regard to branded career wear for this target group.

##### **4.8.1 The role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs of the fuller figure South African working women regard to branded career wear (V3 and V14)**

A Fishers Exact Test was conducted to ascertain an association between income and the functional and aesthetic needs statements. The results proved that there was no significant association between the income and the needs statements.

##### **4.8.2 The role of income in the functional and aesthetic problems of the fuller figure South African working women regard to branded career wear (V3 and V15)**

The Fishers Exact Test was done to determine if there were statistically significant association between income and the various statements that tested the functional and aesthetic problems dimensions.

**TABLE 4.13: THE ROLE OF INCOME IN THE FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC PROBLEMS FOR THE FULLER FIGURE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING WOMEN REGARD TO BRANDED CAREER WEAR**

Construct	Statement	Monthly Income Groups	Serious/ Very Serious			Not that serious/ not a problem			P value
			Count	Expected Count	%	Count	Expected Count	%	
<b>Emotions</b> 15.5	The branded career wear does not make me feel feminine.	R4 075.00 – R8 470.00	9	13.6	37.5	15	10.4	62.5	0.044**
		R 8 741.00 – More than R18 649.00	75	70.4	60.5	49	53.6	39.5	
<b>Emotions</b> 15.9	The styles of the branded career wear are not beautiful	R 4 075.00 – R8 470.00	7	12.1	30.4	16	10.9	69.6	0.023**
		R8 470.00 – More than R18 649.00	70	64.9	56.9	53	58.1	43.1	

(n=150)

\*\*5% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

\*\*\*1% level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

The Fishers Exact test demonstrated that there were only two cases where a statistically significant association between income and the problems that the fuller figure career women experienced both related to the emotional dimension of their career wear. The higher income group experienced significantly more serious problems with the fact that the branded career wear does not make them feel feminine ( $p=0.044$ ), as well as that the styles of the branded career wear are not beautiful ( $p=0.023$ ).

#### 4.9 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the needs and problems that FFSAWW experience with branded career wear. The research study focused on the functional and aesthetic apparel needs and problems of branded career wear for the fuller figure and several objectives were defined in the study. The data analysis revealed that the functional apparel dimensions were rated as more important than the aesthetic apparel dimensions of the sample group. On the other hand the respondents experienced problems with both the functional and aesthetic dimensions.

The demographic and background information describes the respondents as South African working women in the Tshwane, South African region, between the ages 25 and 55 years old and wearing apparel sizes ranging between sizes 16 and size 28. Most of the respondents have a post matric and tertiary qualification. These women earn a substantial amount of

money per month and are willing to spend a considerable amount on apparel items and would therefore expect value for money. Dickerson (2003:21) states that consumers are value driven and expect more for what they are prepared to pay for. Most of the respondents indicated that they prefer a smart casual dressing style and they mostly buy their apparel items seasonally from retail chain stores. The sample group seemingly does not want to be treated differently as other female consumers and would like to purchase their branded career wear at the same price as women wearing smaller sizes. This is reiterated by Sproles and Burns (1994:272-276) who state that apparel should fulfill the same needs for the plus size woman as for the smaller figures. These fuller figured women also indicated that they get most of their fashion information from magazines which display the current fashion trends, the styles and the fit. Sproles and Burns (1994:149) state that fashion is used as a norm as to how apparel should fit. The analysis, reveals that a number of the respondents have purchased apparel brands without trying on the clothes. This means that the respondents most probably have knowledge and experience of the garment fit and style which suits her body and is able to visualize a garment on her without trying it on. These results support the work of Baron and Byre (1997:91) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:145-147) that consumers do not always go through the entire decision-making process every time they consider a purchase or when evaluating a apparel item but make use of cognitive shortcuts. One can also add that consumers associate a certain level of quality with an apparel brand. This is supported by North *et al.*, (2003) whom state that consumers use brand names to evaluate the garment quality.

The first aim of the study was to explore and describe the functional needs. Brown and Rice (1998:38) and Fiore and Kimle (1997:31:58) define the functional dimension of apparel as the physical qualities which include durability, comfort, care, end use and fashionability which can be related to fit. The respondents rated the comfort dimension (i.e. thermal comfort and fit) as the most important need. Comfort relates to how the fabric interacts with the body (Kadolph & Langford, 2002:9-10) meaning how it reacts to heat loss and gain, absorbs moisture and does not irritate the skin. It is very important to the respondents that the styles of the branded career wear should fit their bodies comfortably at work and that the material is comfortable for the season. Comfort is related to fit which is influenced by the style of the garment. These results support the study conducted by Alexander *et al.*, (2005) who also found that fuller figured consumers regard garment comfort as an important component of quality. These women prefer a style and fabric which will give them comfort as well as fit them well. Well fitted apparel normally gives the wearer confidence and these career women consider fit as an important quality indicator which is confirmed in the study of Fiore and Damhorst (1992) and Brown and Rice (1998). As was found in Kadolph and Langford (2002:9-10) female consumers regard comfort as an important quality dimension of a apparel

item and the same can be stated for the fuller figure female women in the sample group. These results support the findings in the survey study conducted by Ngwenya (2009:16), who reported that plus size females want apparel that not only look good but should be comfortable and stylish.

In contrast, the respondents experienced problems with the comfort statement as the styles of the branded career wear did not fit them comfortably at work. A study conducted by Goldsberry *et al.*, (1996) and Damhorst *et al.*, (1999) states that generally fuller figured women do experience problems with regard to the fit of clothes. Bearing in mind that style is influenced by fashion which is an important aspect of garment fit. As mentioned earlier, fit is an important quality indicator and according to Brown and Rice (2001:153) if an apparel item does not fit well this will lead to consumer dissatisfaction. Fit preferences are influenced by the functional (physical) aspects i.e. how the garment fits the body, whether the fit is comfortable and whether the style fits beautifully which evokes the sensory aesthetic aspects.

The respondents also encountered very serious problems with the durability dimension. Brown and Rice (1998:158) define durability as fabrics or material that can withstand constant use. According to Kadolph *et al.*, (1993:7) material is an important intrinsic factor which can influence the physical qualities of a garment. The respondents indicated that the material of the branded career wear is not of good quality which will last long and it is not possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons. From the Spearman's correlation coefficient test, it was also evident that durability posed the biggest problem. These women have a substantial amount of money to spend on branded apparel that is made of good quality that will give them a professional image. According to Burns and Bryant (1997:135) consumers have certain expectations from an apparel brand and therefore associate a certain level of quality to that apparel brand as well as how the apparel item should perform i.e. that it is possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons. In addition Liljander *et al.*, (2009) state that consumers associate a certain level of product quality to the store where the branded product can be purchased.

The second objective of the study was to explore and describe the aesthetic needs of the FFSAWW regarding branded career wear. According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:55) consumers do not only consider the functional aspects of but also the aesthetic (sensory, emotional, symbolic) aspects as this contributes to the total aesthetic experience. The respondents considered the emotional aspects (arousal, dominance) as the most important aesthetic dimension. The respondents indicated that it is important that her career wear should make her feel feminine and that the styles of the career wear is beautiful. Style relates

to the functional and aesthetic aspects of apparel. The sample group is career working women who want to have a positive feeling of dominance and the styles of the branded career wear should make her feel professional. This is supported in the work of Fiore and Kimle (1997:42-43) and De Long (1998:3) and Brown and Rice (1998:44). The emotional aspect was indicated as the most important aesthetic need statement i.e. that the styles of the branded career wear is beautiful but unfortunately the women in the higher income group had significantly more problems stating that the branded career wear does not make them feel feminine and the styles of the branded career wear is not beautiful. According to Fiore and Kimle (1997:42-43) it is important to satisfy the consumer at the emotional level as this is an important component of the purchasing and decision-making process.

The data analysis reveals that the fuller figured respondents also experienced serious problems with the aesthetic sensory statement. Lindquist and Sirgy (2003:136) indicate that the aesthetic qualities of a product can also satisfy the sensory needs of consumers. The sample group experienced problems with the sensory statement indicating that the styles of the branded career wear did not fit them beautifully. Fit is multi-dimensional having a functional (physical) dimension and an aesthetic (sensory, cognitive, emotional) dimension which is regarded as an important quality indicator for apparel consumers stated by Fiore and Damhorst (1992) and Brown and Rice (1998:43). A comfortable fit is important to consumers according to Fiore and Kimle (1997:59) and can make the wearer feel good. Swinker and Hines (2006) state that consumers like apparel styles that fit their bodies beautifully and the same can be applicable to the fuller figure consumer as well.

In general, regarding the needs and the problems of the two dimensions durability was an important need but posed the biggest problem whereby the respondents indicated that the material was not of good quality that will last long. Comfort was also indicated as an important need and yet posed as a serious problem because the respondents felt that the branded career wear did not fit their bodies comfortably at work. A recent interview survey conducted by Ngwenya (2009:16) states that the plus size consumers also want clothes that are comfortable and stylish. One can make the deduction that these women have the money to spend on fuller figure branded career wear that is made of good quality and which fits them comfortably.

It is interesting to note that the respondents did not consider fashionability (structural design) as an important need and neither was it a problem that the styles of the branded career wear looked similar to their colleagues. These career women seemingly do not have the need to conform to the dressing styles of their peers. This contradicts the statement by Sproles and Burns (1994:149) that fashion is used as a norm to indicate how clothes should look. On the



other hand the respondent had a problem with the versatility dimension as they find it difficult to be able to mix and match the branded career wear.

Regarding the cognitive aesthetic statement, the Fishers Exact Test shows that the older women (36 to 55 years age group) indicated that it is significantly more important to them that they feel better dressed than their colleagues. According to Sproles and Burns (1994:141-149) peers constitute a reference group to whom individuals can compare themselves. One could make the deduction that career advancement might be an important aspect to these working women.

The study sample seems to be a valuable target group for apparel retailers but unfortunately, these women experienced serious problems with the branded career wear and therefore are mostly not satisfied with the apparel available to them. According to Burns and Bryant (1997:135), Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:133-134) consumers have certain expectations of an apparel brand and how it should perform. The fuller figure career woman has certain expectations or needs for the branded career wear for e.g. how it should fit, make her feel and the message it should create to her colleagues. Schiffman and Kanuk (2001:3) point out that it should be priority for retailers to be aware of the needs and problems of consumers. Consumer needs vary as some consumers may place a high value on the functional (comfort, durability etc.) needs for e.g. the styles of the branded career wear should be comfortable or the aesthetic (emotional, sensory, cognitive) needs that the branded apparel should make her feel feminine, that the styles should fit beautifully or that she should feel better dressed than her colleague when wearing the branded apparel. Secondly retailers should also understand how consumers evaluate apparel items during the process of making a purchasing decision, for example how the styles of the branded career wear fits them or at the after sales e.g. the material of the branded career wear is not of good quality that last long and the styles of the branded career wear does not fit comfortably at work or the material of the branded career wear is not comfortable for the season.

Therefore, it is important that retailers use the consumer information to address the consumer's apparel needs and problems, Solomon and Rabolt (2004:452) and Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli and Priester (2002:1) state that once consumers are satisfied with a apparel item, this can lead to consumers who are willing to spend money on the brand and be loyal to the brand.

## *Conclusions, recommendations & evaluations*

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the needs and problems that FFSAWW experience with regard to apparel branded for this target group, so as to be able to make recommendations to manufacturers and retailers who want to target this consumer segment. The theory on apparel quality evaluation, aesthetic and the apparel decision-making process served as point of departure for the research and objectives. In chapter 4 results were discussed and interpreted according to each objective. It should, however, be noted that this study incorporated purposive and snowball sample techniques. Conclusions can therefore not be generalised to the whole population.

### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.2.1 Demographic background of the sample**

The sample of this study consisted of 150 FFSAWW wearing apparel ranging between size 16 to size 28 and working in the Tshwane area in South Africa. It should be noted that the results of this study cannot be generalized to the whole South African population.

The sample group was between the ages of 25-55 years a larger percentage of the respondents had a post matric and tertiary qualification. These fuller figure females earn a substantial amount of money per month. The sample group fell in the LSM category 6 to 10, and a total of 35.30% earned a monthly disposable income between R11 566 – R18 649 per month, while 29.30% earned more than R18 649. A larger percentage of the respondents wore apparel size 16 top and trouser, the next largest size was size 18 top and trouser. Most of the respondents preferred the smart casual dressing style followed by the formal dressing style. A total of 61.50% of the respondents spend between R500 and R1 000 per month on apparel. A significant number (104) of the respondents had tried on apparel brands for the fuller figure at retail stores such as Donna-Claire followed by Penny-C. A total of 43.00% indicated that they shop seasonally for branded career wear, while 35.00% shop occasionally. The majority (131) of respondents indicated that they purchase branded career

wear from clothing chains, while others had purchased apparel from boutiques and other stores such as Woolworths and Mr Price. A significant number (101) of respondents got their apparel information from window shopping, while 100 respondents received their information from fashion magazines. A total of 66.70% of the respondents indicated that the branded career wear should be available in every store. On the other hand, 64.40% indicated that it is not important that the branded career wear should be available only at specialty stores. A larger percentage (82.00%) indicated that the branded career wear should be available at various price categories and 70.70% wants the branded career wear at the same price as the smaller sizes.

### **5.2.2 Conclusions with regard to the functional and aesthetic needs of fuller figure South African working women regarding to their branded career wear**

These fuller figure females evaluated the quality for the branded career wear against their functional and aesthetic needs or expectations. These fuller figure women in the study had a higher preference for the functional qualities of the branded career wear than the aesthetic qualities of the apparel items. The females ranked comfortability as the highest quality dimension meaning that the material should be comfortable for the season and that the styles should fit comfortability. Fit is a primary quality indicator as these fuller figure consumers want apparel items that fit their bodies well and will be comfortably at work. This quality aspect can make the working females feel confident which can then enhance customer satisfaction.

Versatility/ end-use, was the next ranked important quality dimension as the sample group indicated that it is important that the branded career wear should be worn for other occasions than work. This has economic advantages because the branded career wear apparel can be mixed and matched with other items in their wardrobe. The durability quality indicator “that the material of the branded career wear should be of good quality” was ranked as the most important statement.

On the other hand fashionability was the least important need as they did not find it important that the styles should look similar to their colleagues or that the designs look similar to the smaller sizes. This was rather contradictory as these fuller figure women enjoyed viewing fashion magazines to gain information about the latest styles, trends and fit. Yet they do not have the need to conform to the apparel styles of their peers as well as the apparel designs of the smaller sizes.

Consumers do not only focus on the functional quality aspects of apparel items, but also the aesthetic quality indicators which is important for customer satisfaction, such as the emotional, cognitive and sensory aspects. The sample group ranked the emotional aesthetic aspects as the overall most important quality indicator as these females want to be satisfied at an emotional level and experience a sense of enjoyment when wearing the branded career wear. One can conclude that these fuller figure females want the styles of the branded career wear to be beautiful and to make them feel feminine.

The sensory aspects were also important to the respondents, in that the styles should fit her body beautifully. Once again the aspect of fit as a quality indicator is emphasised. One can hereby deduce that style and fit are important quality indicators for these fuller figure females which give them a sense emotional pleasure and can lead to consumer satisfaction. On the other hand, the respondents regarded the cognitive aspects as less important. These fuller figure females do not have a strong group affinity; it is not that important to them if they receive compliments from their colleagues or if they feel better dressed than their peers.

In general, the respondents regarded the following “emotional” statement as the overall most important quality need, namely “that the styles of the branded wear is beautiful” followed by the durability statement “that the materials of the branded career wear is of good quality that will last long”. The following quality statement regarding the versatility/ end-use aspects was also important for the respondents that they are able to mix and match their career wear which has an economical advantage. On the other hand the fashionability statement “that the styles of the branded career wear looks similar to those of their colleagues” was the least important need followed by the cognitive statement “that the branded career wear makes me feel better dressed than my colleagues”.

### **5.2.3 Conclusions with regard to the functional and aesthetic problems of fuller figure South African working women regarding to their branded career wear**

One would expect the branded career wear apparel to satisfy most of the functional and aesthetic quality dimensions for this growing market, as brands signify a certain level of apparel quality which will ensure that consumer needs and expectations are met resulting in customer satisfaction. Contradictory, to this, a large number of these women in the study experienced serious problems with the certain functional and aesthetic quality dimensions that they rated highly. If these fuller figure consumers experience problems with certain quality dimensions, this can cause the fuller figure females to be dissatisfied with the apparel brand and ultimately rejecting the brand.

These fuller figure working women are willing to spend a substantial amount of money per month on branded apparel that will satisfy their needs and make them look professional and fit them well. It is unfortunate that these females experienced problems with certain aspects that they regarded as important quality indicators. These fuller figure females experienced notably problems with the durability aspects of the branded apparel. It is contradictory that these females regarded durability as an important need yet they experienced major problems especially with the quality aspects of the branded material “it is not of a good quality that will last long”. One would expect retailers to use good quality materials that will perform well and that will last for two or more seasons as career wear is generally more expensive than casual wear.

The comfort aspects were also regarded as an important quality indicator yet it posed as a problem with the sample group, specifically that the styles did not fit comfortably at work. If apparel items do not fit well this can compromise the confidence of the wearer at work. These females also experienced problem with the versatility aspects which was also rated highly important by the respondents. This means that the fuller figure females felt that they could not mix and match the branded career wear with the rest of their wardrobe and this can turn out to be very costly. It is interesting to note that fashionability posed the least problem as one would expect them to want to conform and have styles that look similar to those of their colleagues. It is mentioned earlier that these females are aware of the latest fashion trends and enjoy window shopping and viewing fashion magazines, this therefore makes it contradictory.

When consumers evaluate the quality aspects of apparel, the emotional, cognitive and sensory aspects are important for consumer satisfaction. These fuller figure females therefore want apparel items to stimulate a feeling of femininity and give her a sense of control when wearing the branded apparel. The emotional aspects posed a problem to the sample group as they felt that the career wear did not make them feel feminine and that the styles are not beautiful. A larger percentage of the sample also experienced problems with the sensory aesthetic aspects whereby the styles did not fit them beautifully. Yet, fit is an important quality indicator for consumer satisfaction. The sample group experienced the least problems with the cognitive aspects and were less concerned whether they received compliments from colleagues when wearing the branded career wear. Here again one can conclude that conformity and group association was not that important to the sample group.

#### **5.2.4 Conclusions with regard to the role of age in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems related to branded career wear for the fuller figure South African working women**

Age plays a role in during the evaluation of the two broad quality indicators namely functional and aesthetic dimensions. The older women in the age category (36 to 45) years and (46 to 55) years regarded the aesthetic cognitive statement more important as they felt a need to be better dressed than their colleagues. On can conclude, that these older women had a strong sense for group affiliation and want the branded career wear to give them a feeling of reality “that I’m better dressed than my colleagues” or just as well dressed. On the other hand one can also say that career advancement is important to these older working women and if they feel better dressed than their colleagues this will give them a sense of confidence and professionally.

The data analysis revealed that these females had a high preference for the care aspects which is a functional quality dimension. These older females did not want to spend much time ironing apparel. These days it is fashionable to wear apparel that has a crease like appearance. On can make the judgement that branded career wear apparel is costly and these working women do not mind spending extra money for material that have been treated for crease resistance which will enhance their appearance and give them a sense of satisfaction which can lead to brand acceptance and brand loyalty.

#### **5.2.5 Conclusions with regard to the role of income in the functional and aesthetic needs and the functional and aesthetic problems related to branded career wear for the fuller figure South African working women**

These working women are categorised in the LSM category 6 to10 and spend a substantial amount of money monthly on branded career wear apparel. The higher income group experienced more problems with the emotional aspect specifically that the branded career wear does not make them feel feminine and that the styles are not beautiful. Retailers should note that the aesthetic emotional quality indicators are important for customer satisfaction. It is important for the fuller figure females to experience a feeling of pleasure and arousal when wearing the branded career wear. These high earners have a substantial amount of money to spend on branded apparel, but want the apparel items to give them a sense of being attractive and sensual. If the apparel items do not enhance their aesthetic expectation they will experience problems with the product and will be dissatisfied, resulting in brand rejection.



### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumer satisfaction and retaining loyal consumers' are important aspects for retailers which can contribute to profits and sales. Therefore it is imperative for retailers to have an understanding of the consumers apparel needs, problems and the knowledge that is processed during the various stages whilst purchasing an apparel item as well as be aware of the post purchasing evaluation stage. Brown and Rice (1998:38) agree that by doing this, the apparel industry could be assured to keep their consumers satisfied and at the end have a loyal consumer base which will aid in expanding their business. These fuller figure female high-earners have expectations from these branded apparel items, they want to wear branded apparel that fits well, is comfortable, fashionable which will enhance their appearance and make them look professional.

From the interpretation of the results in Chapter 4 as well as the conclusions, it is clear that the following functional quality dimensions were important to the sample group i.e. durability, versatility and comfort. For retailers to satisfy consumers, they should produce apparel that is made of good quality material that will last as consumers are willing to spend a substantial amount of money on branded apparel. The sample group experienced the most problems with the functional durability aspects of the material. The styles and colours should allow the consumers to mix and match the apparel items with other items in their wardrobe. The comfort quality dimension was also an important need. Retailers should design branded apparel that is comfortable because comfort is related to fit. It is further recommended that retailers use fabric that is not only comfortable but also have been treated for crease resistance.

With regard to the aesthetic quality dimensions it is clear that the emotions and sensory aspects were important to the sample group. The sample group experienced huge problems with the aesthetic sensory dimensions as the styles did not fit them beautifully. To ensure loyal consumers, it is recommended that retailers are aware of the importance of fit as a quality indicator which consumers use to evaluate a product and which will determine consumer satisfaction. Retailers should manufacture branded apparel that will satisfy the consumer's emotions by designing branded apparel that fits beautifully and is fashionable.

In the South African context, an understanding of the cross-cultural groups regarding their needs and problems that they experience with branded career wear can be helpful to retailers and manufacturers. These various cultural groups have different body shapes and therefore will have different needs and will also experience different problems with the branded career wear. This understanding can assist the retailer to retain these consumers,

especially the African emerging market. It is also important for retailers to understand which quality dimensions the various cultural groups regard as important and how the various stages of the decision-making process influence their decision to purchase or not to purchase an apparel item. Retailers should encourage consumers to provide them with feedback regarding their needs and experiences with the branded career wear. This can prevent consumers from tell others about their negative experience which can assist retailers to increase consumer satisfaction and retain loyal consumers.

This study can be useful to fashion theorist and image consultant in understanding the needs and problems fuller figure consumers experience with certain quality dimensions when evaluating branded apparel. The research also gives an understanding of the complex nature of the decision-making process that consumers undergo to make a decision to either purchase and accept or reject an apparel brand.

#### **5.4 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH**

As part of the conclusion, an evaluation of the quality of the data is discussed in terms of the validity and reliability of the results. According to Mouton (2002:122-124) validity and reliability are important concepts in measuring the quality of the results, to ensure that the measuring instrument covered all the concepts in the objectives of the study. The author will discuss the theoretical validity and the measurement validity which include (face validity, content validity, construct validity, inferential validity) as the standard yardsticks. Leedy and Ormrod (2004:186) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:119) states that reliability is concerned with the measuring instrument applied repeatedly yields the same results of a given phenomenon.

##### **Theoretical validity**

A thorough review of the literature was conducted to become familiar with related concepts and theories that have been applied in similar studies. The Sproles and Burns (1994:264) decision-making model formed the theoretical framework that guided this research. The research looked at other sources of information such as, journal articles, books, newspaper articles to explore and gain a better understanding how certain quality dimensions are utilised to evaluate apparel products.

The researcher then learnt what would be the most meaningful way to compile the questions used in the questionnaire. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of closed and opened questions was used in the survey to collect the data.



## **Measurement validity**

The measuring instrument was developed during the operationalization stage. The measurement instrument includes the following dimensions; face validity, content validity and construct validity. The pilot test was employed to ensure the measurement validity of the measuring instrument.

## **Face validity**

Although face validity is not scientifically a form of validation, it measures what the measuring instruments intends to measure (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:122). Firstly, the face validity was ensured by making use of the subject expertise at the University of Pretoria which involved the study leader and the Statistics Department. Secondly, the questionnaire was piloted to a group of fuller figure career women to ensure it measures what it is was supposed to measure. The questionnaire clearly related to the functional and aesthetic needs and problems of branded career wear regarding certain quality dimensions.

## **Content validity**

The content validity was ensured by including all the concepts in the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 and Figure 3.1. Additionally, content validity was also ensured as the questionnaire related to all the sub-objectives of the study linked to functional and aesthetic needs and problems. This ensured that the content of the instrument measured the specific concepts (Babbie & Mouton 2002:123).

## **Construct validity**

The questionnaire was pilot tested on a sample group with the same characteristics and criteria of the study. To ensure that it measures what it is intended to measure and not something else (Neumann, 2000:144). The instrument covered all the objectives of the study and measured the constructs (of functional and aesthetic quality dimensions).

## **Inferential validity**

In the study, appropriate statistical methods (descriptive and inferential statistics) were used for specific levels of measurement. Descriptive statistics used in the study included frequencies, averages, percentages, the mean and the standard deviation. The inferential statistical methods included the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient test to determine correlation between two statements at a 5% level significance related to the needs and problems of the quality dimensions. The Fishers Exact test was utilised to test for significant differences at a 5% level of significance.

## **Reliability**

Babbie and Mouton (2002:119) states that reliability is ensured when the measuring instrument yields the same results each time. The following techniques ensured the reliability of the study. Firstly the instrument was piloted on subjects with similar characteristics to the sample study. The same measuring instrument was completed by 150 fuller figure females working in the Tshwane area. The questionnaire used simple language and was free from ambiguity making it easy for respondents to complete.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter which assured the respondents of their anonymity and confidentiality (Mouton, 2001:111). Respondent bias was also ensured as the covering letter stated that the research study was only interested in their opinions and there was no right or wrong answer regarding their needs and problems experienced with branded career wear aimed at the fuller figure female. Getting back the completed 150 questionnaires and the signed consent letters was not a problem as the researcher collected the questionnaires and most respondents emailed back the completed instruments.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Due to time and finance constraints the researcher limited the study in a number of ways. For example, the study focused on a specific sample utilising the purposive sampling and snowballing technique to obtain the 150 responses from the fuller figure working women in the Tshwane, South Africa area. The research only concentrated on the needs and problems that FFSAWW experience with branded career wear.

This therefore means that the findings cannot be generalised to a large population. However, this does not mean that the findings of this research study cannot be used by retailers, marketers, image consultants and fashion theorists. This study can open up avenues for future research in trying to understand the needs and problems of fuller figure consumers. The study only focused on the needs and problems of working females between the ages of 25 to 55 years and experience with branded apparel for this target group. Future research can look at the needs and problems experienced by males and adolescents with regard to apparel aimed at larger sizes. Future researchers can use the same instrument and methodology in other areas and provinces within South Africa.

South Africa constitutes many cultures and individuals within these cultures have different body shapes and expectations from apparel. This suggests that future research can

investigate the needs and problems these different cultures experience with apparel. Retailers can use this information to ensure customer satisfaction and store loyalty.

Bearing in mind, the South African multi-cultural context which provides a rich canvas for investigating what are the needs and problems female fuller figures experience with branded apparel. Future consumer studies can apply a qualitative methodology to gain insight into the behavior and emotions of these apparel consumers.

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*Addendum A*  
*Questionnaire for the fuller figure*  
*South African working women*

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Date

Dear Participant

The focus of the study is to look into Branded Clothing for the South African fuller figure female market. Results of the research will assist manufacturers and retailers in addressing the needs of the fuller figured female market as well as the problems that the market encounters with regards to available career wear that is specially branded for the fuller figured woman.

It will be of great benefit to the study if you would answer the questionnaire. There is no right or wrong answers. We are only interested in your own opinion and your confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured.

Please read the accompanying information and if you are in agreement to participate in the research, please complete and sign in the applicable place.

### **Declaration of Participants**

I am willing to take part in the research project. I hereby grant permission for the content of the questionnaire to be used for research.

I fully understand that no pressure is being brought upon me to participate in the study.

I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that participation is on a voluntary basis.

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**QUESTIONNAIRE**

<b>SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION</b>		<b>For office use only</b>	
<p><b>Please provide the following information by placing a cross (x) in the appropriate block:</b></p>			
1	Respondent number	V1	<input type="text"/>
2	Age group:	V2	<input type="text"/>
	1. 25-35 years		<input type="text"/>
	2. 36-45 years		<input type="text"/>
	3. 46-55 years		<input type="text"/>
3	Highest level of qualification:	V3	<input type="text"/>
	1. Grade 12		<input type="text"/>
	2. National certificate		<input type="text"/>
	3. National diploma		<input type="text"/>
	4. BTech		<input type="text"/>
	5. B Degree		<input type="text"/>
	6. Honours degree		<input type="text"/>
	7. Masters degree		<input type="text"/>
	8. Doctorate		<input type="text"/>
	9. Other (specify)		<input type="text"/>
4	In which category does your average monthly income fall?	V4	<input type="text"/>
	1. R4 075.00 – R6 454.00		<input type="text"/>
	2. R6 455.00- R8 470.00		<input type="text"/>
	3. R8 471.00- R11 565.00		<input type="text"/>
	4. R11 566.00- R18 649.00		<input type="text"/>
	5. More than R18 649.00		<input type="text"/>



<b>SECTION B - CLOTHING INFORMATION</b>			<b>For office use only</b>																							
5	Indicate which clothing size (Top and Trouser) are you currently wearing:																									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;"></th> <th style="width: 35%; text-align: center;">Top</th> <th style="width: 35%; text-align: center;">Trouser</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1. Size 16</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Size 18</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Size 20</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4. Size 22</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5. Size 24</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6. Size 26</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7. Size 28</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Top	Trouser	1. Size 16			2. Size 18			3. Size 20			4. Size 22			5. Size 24			6. Size 26			7. Size 28			V5.1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V5.2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>
	Top	Trouser																								
1. Size 16																										
2. Size 18																										
3. Size 20																										
4. Size 22																										
5. Size 24																										
6. Size 26																										
7. Size 28																										
6	How would you describe your professional/ career dressing style?																									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td>1. Classic</td><td style="width: 30px;"></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Casual</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Smart casual</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4. Formal</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5. Other (specify)</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	1. Classic		2. Casual		3. Smart casual		4. Formal		5. Other (specify)		V6.1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V6.2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V6.3 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V6.4 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V6.5 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>														
1. Classic																										
2. Casual																										
3. Smart casual																										
4. Formal																										
5. Other (specify)																										
7	Please indicate how much you are willing to spend on career/professional clothes per month in Rand. _____		V7 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>																							
8	Which of the following clothing brands aimed at the Fuller Figure Female have you tried on? You may choose more than one clothing brand.																									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td>1. Donna Claire</td><td style="width: 30px;"></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Penny C</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Zeta</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4. Rene Taylor</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5. Other (specify)</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	1. Donna Claire		2. Penny C		3. Zeta		4. Rene Taylor		5. Other (specify)		V8.1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V8.2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V8.3 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V8.4 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V8.5 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>														
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5. Other (specify)																										
9	Which of the following clothing brands aimed at the Fuller Figure Female have you purchased? You may choose more than one clothing brand.		<b>For office use only</b>																							
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1. Donna Claire																										
2. Penny C																										
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4. Rene Taylor																										
5. Other (specify)																										
10	When shopping for clothes, how often do you buy career wear items?																									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td>1. Weekly</td><td style="width: 30px;"></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Monthly</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Seasonally</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4. Occasionally</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	1. Weekly		2. Monthly		3. Seasonally		4. Occasionally		V10.1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V10.2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V10.3 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V10.4 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>																
1. Weekly																										
2. Monthly																										
3. Seasonally																										
4. Occasionally																										
11	Where do you purchase most of your career wear clothing?																									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td>1. Clothing chain stores</td><td style="width: 30px;"></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Boutiques</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Other (specify)</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	1. Clothing chain stores		2. Boutiques		3. Other (specify)		V11.1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V11.2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> V11.3 <input style="width: 40px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>																		
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2. Boutiques																										
3. Other (specify)																										



		<b>For office use only</b>																			
12	Where do you get your fashion information from? You may choose more than one area.																				
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 80%;">1. Magazines</td><td style="width: 20%;"></td></tr> <tr><td>2. Newspapers</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Television</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4. Friends</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5. Family</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6. Colleagues</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7. Window shopping</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>8. Internet</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9. Other (specify)</td><td></td></tr> </table>	1. Magazines		2. Newspapers		3. Television		4. Friends		5. Family		6. Colleagues		7. Window shopping		8. Internet		9. Other (specify)		V12.1	<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Magazines																					
2. Newspapers																					
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4. Friends																					
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7. Window shopping																					
8. Internet																					
9. Other (specify)																					
		V12.2	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.3	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.4	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.5	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.6	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.7	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.8	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V12.9	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
<p><b>Please answer the following questions whether you have ever purchased Specially Branded Career Wear or not.</b></p>																					
13	Please state how important each of the following statements is to you with regard to your career wear by placing a cross (x) in the appropriate block of each statement.																				
		1 Very important	2 Important																		
		3 Less important	4 Not important																		
a	That the Branded Career Wear should be available in every store	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
b	That the Branded Career Wear should be available only at speciality stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
c	That the bigger sizes should be specially branded for the fuller figure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
d	That the Branded Career Wear should be available at various price categories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
e	That the Branded Career Wear should be available at the same price as the smaller sizes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V13.1	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V13.2	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V13.3	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V13.4	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
		V13.5	<input type="checkbox"/>																		



SECTION C – BRANDED CLOTHING NEEDS						For office use only		
14 Please state how <b>important</b> each of the following statements is to you with regard to your career wear by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block of each statement.								
			1 Very important	2 Important	3 Less important	4 Not important		
a	That the style of my career wear fits my body comfortably at work						V14.1	
b	That it is possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons						V14.2	
c	That the material used for my career wear does not need ironing						V14.3	
d	That the branded career wear should be of the latest fashion						V14.4	
e	That the style of my career wear looks similar to those that my colleagues wear						V14.5	
f	That I will receive compliments from colleagues on my career wear						V14.6	
g	That the design of my career wear looks the same as the smaller sizes						V14.7	
h	That the material used for my career wear is comfortable for the season						V14.8	
i	That the styles of the branded career wear is beautiful						V14.9	
j	That my career wear will make me feel better-dressed than my colleagues						V14.10	
k	That the material of my career wear is of a good quality that will last long						V14.11	
l	That my career wear should make me feel feminine						V14.12	
m	That my career wear can be worn for other occasions than work						V14.13	
n	That the style of my career wear fits me beautifully						V14.14	
o	That I will be able to mix and match my career wear						V14.15	
p	That the material used for my career wear does not show spots easily						V14.16	





SECTION D – PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH BRANDED CLOTHING					For office use only		
15	Please indicate the <b>level of the problems</b> that you experience/have experienced with current available career wear that is specially branded for the fuller figure (Penny C, Donna Claire, etc.) by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block of each statement.						
		1 Very serious	2 Serious	3 Not that serious	4 Not a problem		
a	The material of the branded career wear is not comfortable for the specific season					V15.1	
b	The material of the branded career wear shows spots easily					V15.2	
c	It is not possible to mix and match the branded career wear					V15.3	
d	The designs of the branded career wear does not look similar to those of the smaller sizes					V15.4	
e	The branded career wear does not make me feel feminine					V15.5	
f	The style of the branded career wear does not fit me comfortably					V15.6	
g	It is not possible to wear the branded career wear for two or more seasons					V15.7	
h	I do not feel better-dressed than my colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear					V15.8	
i	The styles of the branded career wear are not beautiful					V15.9	
j	I do not receive compliments from colleagues when wearing these specially branded career wear					V15.10	
k	It is not possible to wear the branded career wear to occasions other than work					V15.11	
l	The style of the branded career wear does not look similar to those that my colleagues wear					V15.12	
m	The styles of the branded career wear do not fit me beautifully					V15.13	
n	The material of the branded career wear needs too much ironing					V15.14	
o	The branded career wear does not match the latest fashion look					V15.15	
p	The material of the branded career wear is not of a good quality that lasts long					V15.16	