

The influence of brand incongruity on females' perception of the properties of bi-national apparel products

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Dissertation

M Consumer Science (Clothing Retail Management)

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The influence of brand incongruity on females' perception of the properties of bi-national apparel products

**by
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DEDICATED TO

Samuel & Lienka

DECLARATION

I, Lizette Diedericks, declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Masters in Consumer Science: Clothing Retail Management at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Lizette Diedericks

27 September 2013

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This study investigated the influence of brand incongruity on females' perception of the properties of bi-national apparel products. A survey was conducted across Tshwane, a major urban area in South Africa, to provide empirical evidence of female consumers' reliance on brands in the context of an emerging economy where global brands have become widely available and easily accessible in recent years. Data was collected by means of convenient sampling and through self completion of a structured questionnaire by 322 willing, working females. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, factor analysis, ANOVAs and post hoc tests.

This study confirmed the significance of brand names as a cue of the functional performance related properties of female apparel and concluded that the relevance of brands for status related purposes is secondary to females' use of brands to infer the functional and performance attributes or to deduce the eco friendliness of apparel. This was true for all the age, income, and education levels or population categories. Although extant research confirms the importance of brands to convey status and to boost consumers' self image, i.e. serving as an extension of an individual's self, this study revealed that females do not primarily use brands for status purposes. Brands are mostly trusted to provide good fit, durability, comfort and good quality. Consumers do not necessarily seem familiar with the majority of apparel brands that are widely advertised. However, the majority of consumers preferred the country of manufacture (COM) and the country of origin (COO) of brands to match. Overall, they preferred brands originating from Western countries as the COM, and were more approving of locally manufactured goods than apparel manufactured in Eastern countries. As a simplifying strategy, consumers' ignorance about the COM of global brands is probably addressed by opting for brands associated with Western COM. Brand incongruence may therefore have noticeable consequences for brand equity in a highly competitive global market and this should be addressed through clever marketing initiatives to prevent dismay and brand switching.

Key words: apparel brands, brands' country of origin, brands' country of manufacture, brands' COO-effect, status value of brands, functional performance characteristics of apparel, eco friendly attributes of apparel

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Chapter 1

THE STUDY IN PERSPECTIVE

This chapter provides the background of the study and introduces the research problem. It also briefly explains the methodology, theoretical perspective and provides the structure of the study.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African apparel/clothing industry went through several changes in the past two decades. During the years of Apartheid (before 1994), international companies and brands avoided South Africa mostly for political reasons resulted in sanctions, boycotts and withdrawal from the South African retail scene out of own choice (Arvanitis, 2005:65). The import of apparel from the East was also considerably lower than it is at present, which strengthened the local apparel and textile industry (Vlok, 2006:228). After 1994, imports from across the world increased significantly, resulting in the closing down of local factories as well as major job losses (Vlok, 2006:228; Nicolson, 2013:1). Notwithstanding, the apparel retail industry in South Africa is continuously expanding. Emerging economies such as South Africa have recently had an extraordinary surge of new consumers to the market (Cant, Nel, Gerber-Nel & Stanford, 2005:7; Nieftagodien & Van der Berg, 2007:4; Üstüner & Holt, 2010:40). Since 1994, apparel retail sales have risen significantly in South Africa (Vlok, 2006:231) and within this industry the sales of female apparel have generated more than half of the total revenue generated in South Africa (Data monitor, 2009:9). Statistics show that females generally purchase much more apparel than males (Vlok, 2006:231; Hansen & Jensen, 2008:1155) and are therefore very important for apparel retailers and for the economy.

Multiple international retailers are muscling in on the South African apparel scene (Bisseker, 2012:44). Consumers therefore have a wider range of products and brands to choose from than ever before (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928). Developed countries have reached a saturation point and due to rising incomes in developing countries such as South Africa, the biggest growth opportunities for brands from developed countries are expanding into developing countries (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928; Bhardwaj, Kumar & Kim, 2010:80). It is currently possible to visit one mall in the Tshwane metropolitan district of South Africa and purchase apparel brands from America, Australia and various European countries. In addition, the apparel is manufactured across the world in China, India and Bangladesh, from Turkey to Italy, America and South Africa.

Apart from being overwhelmed by the wide selection of apparel brands, it is not necessarily easy to choose apparel. So-called suitable apparel products could be distinguished in terms of multiple product characteristics. Apparel is for example not only purchased/worn for specific functional purposes, it is also selected in terms of its communicative value, i.e. the message that it portrays about the wearer to others (Kaiser, Nagasawa & Hutton, 1991:165; Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004:295). People actually use apparel intentionally as a tool for appearance management, specifically to construct their own image and identity (Kaiser *et al.*, 1991:171; Phau & Leng, 2007:71). Apparel, especially luxury branded apparel, is often intentionally used to impress others and to indicate status (Kaiser, 1997:21; Phau & Leng, 2007:69). Branded apparel can therefore be used as a status enhancer if the meaning of the brand (serves as a symbol) is shared by others (Kaiser *et al.*, 1991:173; Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004:295; O’Cass & Choy, 2008:343). The apparel brand *Louis Vuitton* is for instance associated with extremely expensive apparel, specifically handbags and luggage, whereas another luxury brand, *Nike*, is associated with luxury sportswear. The purpose of an apparel purchase is therefore intricate, and has to fulfil much more than only functional purposes (O’Cass & Frost, 2002:68). Consumers’ apparel choices may therefore eventually be determined by factors other than the obvious.

Generally consumers use both intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics/cues to assess the quality and suitability of apparel products (Retief & De Klerk, 2003:24). Intrinsic characteristics are the actual integral part of the physical product such as the textile and colour. Extrinsic characteristics are those that are not part of the physical products, such as the price, country of origin (hence onwards referred to as COO) and brand (Thakor & Katsanis, 1997:79). When consumers lack the knowledge and expertise to distinguish actual quality indicators, or when they don’t have the time or interest to do so when purchasing apparel, they are inclined to turn to heuristics, explicitly extrinsic cues to simplify their purchase decisions (Veale & Quester,

2010:4). Brand name is one such external characteristic that holds important potential communicative value in terms of the message that a brand name conveys to others, not only about the product, but also about the wearer (Kaiser *et al.*, 1991:165; Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004:295).

Brands are names, symbols or designs that represent a seller's product and act as a differentiating mechanism (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanche, 2004:230). Branded apparel can create an impression that the wearer possesses a certain social standing in society (Solomon, 1996:452). Consumers often purchase brands out of habit (as a heuristic) and because less effort is required; a phenomenon called inertia (Solomon, 1996:290). The brand then acts as a substitute for multiple characteristics such as quality, luxury and status (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237). Rather than going through a whole process of evaluation, consumers trust a brand to produce the positive outcomes experienced in former purchases or that are associated with the brand. As a result of repeat satisfaction with a specific brand, brand loyalty may occur (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:202). Brand loyalty is a highly sought after phenomenon for retailers and manufacturers and any issue that may influence the brand negatively should be avoided. Not all consumers place the same amount of emphasis on brands. Some consumers are more brand conscious and place more emphasis on brands due to their connotation with status and prestige (Liao & Wang, 2009:991). Brand consciousness is the interest in, and perceptions of brands that is associated with brand sensitivity (Nelson & McLeod, 2005:518). It differs from brand loyalty, since brand loyalty is measured by repeat purchasing of a brand, whereas brand consciousness is the role a brand plays in "*the psychological process that precedes the buying act*" (Lachance, Beaudoin & Robitaille, 2003:48; Nelson & McLeod, 2005:518).

Brands have acquired symbolic meanings and convey certain messages, such as status (Keller, 1993:4; Clark, Zboja & Goldsmith, 2007:46). Consumers value these symbols and are prepared to pay a premium price for a brand's symbolic value (O'Cass & Choy, 2008:342). The value of a brand exists in the mind of the consumer (Yasin, Noor & Mohamad, 2007:39). It has been proven that a French brand name, especially an apparel brand, has a significant influence on product ratings, simply because of hedonic value (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:35; Salciuviene, Ghauri, Streder, & De Mattos, 2010:1039). "Frenchness" has rich associations related to elegance, flair, sophistication, refined taste, sensory pleasure and aesthetic sensitivity, all of which contribute to a unified image is part of hedonism (Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé, 1994:264). This is because of the related schema (of "Frenchness") that is constructed within the consumer's mind. Schemas are cognitive structures are formed by organisation of previous knowledge and experiences (Fiske & Linville, 1980:543; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:728).

Consumers' buying behaviour is influenced by perceptions (Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1992:216; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:172). Perception can be defined as the process by which an individual observes, selects, organizes and reacts to environmental stimuli in a meaningful way (Rousseau, 2007a:160; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:728; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). Individuals develop perceived images of products and brands in their minds (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). Marketers therefore intentionally try to create certain perceptions of their products and brands in the minds of consumers based on consumers' needs, a phenomenon called "positioning" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:172). It is therefore important to understand how consumers use, organise and interpret stimuli such as COO cues to get a better understanding of consumers' buying behaviour and to be able to position brands appropriately (Jacobs & De Klerk, 2007:48).

Together with symbolic value, an important advantage of a brand is that it reduces perceived risk during purchasing, because the brand is used as a heuristic due to its established reputation (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:202). Perceived risk is defined as the "*uncertainty that consumers face when they cannot foresee the consequences of their purchase decisions*" (Rousseau, 2007a:176; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:201). Consumers will thus purchase a brand based on its reputation for superior quality without showing any concern about the actual quality, because for them, the brand name warrants high quality. Perceived risk is not only reduced by a brand name, consumers also use COO as a heuristic to simplify consumer decision-making for example to save time (Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol, 1996:380; Tse, 1999:913; DelVecchio, 2001:243). Brand and COO thus serve as shortcuts to facilitate consumers' evaluation of apparel.

Another symbol that generally accompanies the brand is COO (Keller, 1993:11). People associate brands with certain countries of origin while consumers also have pertinent perceptions about the various countries. These perceptions are inevitably then transferred to the brand and the product (Keller, 1993:11; Ko, Kim, Kim, Li, Zou & Zhang, 2009:47).

Country of origin (COO) research is product specific as well as country specific, since each country has its unique strengths, weaknesses and history, which construct the country image (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237; Roth & Romeo, 1992:478; Chao, 1998:3). Country image is the stereotype, picture and reputation consumers attach to a certain country (Pereira, Hsu & Kundu, 2005:103). The perception that consumers have of a country (image) affects their attitude towards products manufactured in that country in either a positive or a negative way (Salciuviene *et al.*, 2010:1040). Consumers inadvertently prefer products coming from developed countries to those from developing countries, based on the favourable reputation of

developed countries (Lee, Phau & Roy, 2012:43). Products originating from a developing country such as China, India and South Africa are mostly associated with lower quality whereas the opposite is true for products derived from a developed country such as the UK, Italy, France and the USA (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007:241; Mukherjee, Satija, Goyal, Mantrala & Zou, 2012:485), which are perceived to be more luxurious and technologically advanced (Lee *et al.*, 2012:45). This however depends on what consumers think they know about a country, its production competence and sense of style (Roth & Romeo, 1992:480).

It also matters whether consumers' perceptions of a country and a product or brand coincide. France, for example, is associated with wine, but not with beer (Roth & Romeo, 1992:482). A perceived match between brands or products and countries positively influences the COO-effect (Usunier, 2011:491). Some brands therefore deliberately market themselves with a certain country or region in mind to tap from the location's existing image in the mind of consumers. As an example, the majority of the shoes in the stores of the South African retailer Europa Art Shoes are manufactured in China, with a small import from Brazil but hardly any styles originating from Europe. Consumers who patronise these stores therefore pay exceptionally high prices for shoes that they perceive to be manufactured in Europe, although it is not so.

At present, the definition of "country of origin" is a far cry from the definitions of the 1960s and 1970s (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928). Due to globalisation a product can be manufactured in one country with parts (e.g. fabrics and trims) manufactured in various other countries (Usunier, 2006:64; Samiee, 2010:443) mostly to save on labour costs (Jo, Nakamoto & Nelson, 2003:637). Many Western brands have in recent years moved the production of their goods to countries with lower labour costs (e.g. Eastern countries) to maximise their profits (Jo *et al.*, 2003:637). Bi-national products are therefore manufactured in a country different to the country where the brand has originated (Han & Terpstra, 1988:235). Bi-national products may cause confusion/ brand incongruity, since the country of manufacturing (hence onwards referred to as COM) may project a lower image in terms of quality and status than the original country of origin of the brand (hence onwards referred to as CBO), resulting in incongruity in consumer perceptions of the brand (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004:321; Jo *et al.*, 2003:637). The term *incongruence* is widely used in COO studies. In marketing research the term *congruence* was defined by Keller (1993) as "*the extent to which a brand association shares content and meaning with another brand association*". Incongruence will thus refer to situations when brand associations differ (Salciuviene *et al.*, 2010:1038) for example Pringle of Scotland that is manufactured in China and South Africa. Research indicates that "*incongruence between a prestigious brand and a less prestigious store could even result in an improvement in store image at the expense of the brand image*" (Chao, 1998:2). Similarly, incongruence between a prestigious brand and a less

prestigious COM may enhance the COM image at the expense of the brand image and brand equity. It is therefore important to know the influence of incongruity to understand consumer behaviour and to strengthen brand equity.

In studies of Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005) and Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2008) it was found that consumers do not know where certain brands originated or/and where they are manufactured. In literature the term used is Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA). Consumers don't have to know the correct CBO or COM for the COO to have an influence on perception; the country where they think something was manufactured or where they think it originated will have an influence, whether it is accurate or not (Magnusson, Westjohn & Zdravkovic, 2011:455).

The magnitude of the COO-effect is apparently larger for fashion-oriented or expensive products (Chattalas, Kramer & Takada, 2008:62) and therefore it can be assumed that COO will be significant when evaluating luxury branded apparel. Luxury apparel brands and their COO thus need to be studied to get a better understanding of consumers' perceptions.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Multiple studies confirm apparel brands' potential to enhance the image/status of the wearer (Kaiser *et al.*, 1991:173; Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004:295; O'Cass & Choy, 2008:343). Females therefore often rely on brands to enhance their image in a social context, regardless of the price of the merchandise (O'Cass & Choy, 2008:342). In a country such as South Africa where female apparel generates the most revenue compared to other apparel products (Vlok, 2006:231; Hansen & Jensen, 2008:1155; Data monitor, 2009:9; Marketline, 2012) the COO-effect can be detrimental if consumers' perceptions of brands are influenced by the image of the COM. The competitiveness in this industry is increasing due to globalisation and the wider variety of brands that have entered the market in recent years (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:44; Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007:240; Bisseker, 2012:44). The trend for many international brands to move production to developing countries and to market bi-national products may therefore discourage further support of the brand (Jo *et al.*, 2003:637; Samiee, 2010:443).

Certain brands are unequivocally associated with certain places of origin (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:429), for instance Nike is associated with the USA and Pringle is associated with Scotland. In various countries and within various product categories, country of origin (COO) was found to influence consumer behaviour

(Ozretic-Dosen, Skare & Krupka, 2007; Veale & Quester, 2009). Due to economical reason, many of the international and local apparel brands are however not manufactured in the country of origin any more (Jo *et al.*, 2003:637; Samiee, 2010:443). Such a brand will thus be bi-national, with a country of brand origin (CBO) and another country of manufacture (COM) (Han & Terpstra, 1988:235).

According to the Consumer Protection Act (68) of 2008 of South Africa it is compulsory for the COM to be indicated on all apparel products. These labels are mostly (and for good reason) not as prominently and visibly attached as the brand label itself, or the size label. It may be beneficial for some brands if consumers do not bother to look for the inside label to see where a product is manufactured, not realising that some items carrying the Pringle of Scotland label are also manufactured in South Africa. They may not necessarily know where the branded products are manufactured and might therefore have no idea of a product's actual COM. This is to the advantage of brands where the COM has an unfavourable reputation e.g. for those who associate China with use of child labour. Unless consumers understand why products (apparel) are produced in countries other than the CBO, and how they benefit from it, disclosure of the incongruence of CBO and COM may instigate negative perceptions of successful brands and that could have irreparable consequences for the brands and for retailers that stock these goods.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

Empirical evidence regarding the influence of incongruity between COM and CBO of branded apparel on consumers' perception of apparel products is limited although the COO-effect has been the focus of various studies in different product contexts in the past (Nagashima, 1977; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Chao, 1993). In international marketing literature, COO is one of the most researched and most debated topics and has become known as the "*made-in paradox*" (d'Astous & Ahmed, 1999:122-123; Bloemer, Brijs & Kasper, 2009:62; Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:454-455; Usunier, 2011:486) because research results tend to be contradictory. While some studies concluded that the COO-effect influences consumers' choices (Han & Terpstra, 1988; Piron, 2000; Ahmed, Johnson, Ling, Fang, & Hui, 2002; Koubaa, 2007) and that COO has an important influence on consumers' evaluation of products in food, electronic and automobile industries (Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2007; Veale & Quester, 2009), other studies disagree (Samiee *et al.*, 2005; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008). One of the very few studies that focused on consumers' perceptions of the COO-effect in apparel was done by Ahmed and d'Astous (2004) in China to provide guidance for the local fashion industry concerning the marketing of their products in a competitive industry. It was envisaged that a similar study in South Africa would be beneficial to explicate consumers' familiarity with exclusive brands as

well as their perceptions of bi-national branded apparel products in the context of an emerging economy to contribute to an existing gap in literature and to provide empirical evidence that could direct strategies to positively influence consumers' perceptions to the benefit of retailers as well as the brands.

When there is a better understanding of consumers' thought processes and behaviour regarding branded apparel, marketing strategies can be revised to influence consumer behaviour to the benefit of the retailer and the brand (Keller, 1993:1-2; Keller, 2008:300). From a marketing point of view, it is important to understand consumers' perceptions of bi-national branded products and their reaction if they are aware of incongruity (Chao, 1998:4-5). If marketers have a better understanding of consumers' perceptions, they will have a better indication when to emphasise COO cues and when to refrain from doing so (Roth & Romeo, 1992:478). It would be possible to manage COO perceptions within retailers' marketing mix (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:454). The traditional marketing mix consists of four components, namely price, product (or service) features, promotion and place (distribution channel) (Keller, 1993:13; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). International examples of brands that used COO cues in their marketing mix are Volkswagen that incorporates their German heritage throughout their promotional campaigns by using the slogan "Das Auto" and the Swedish furniture brand, Ikea, that uses the colours of the Swedish flag (yellow and blue) in their stores and promotional campaigns to secure the brand origin image (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:454-455). Similarly, apparel brands can also manage COO-cues and reap benefits, for example the use of well-known Italian landmarks in Carvella advertisements, which is possibly one of the success factors of the South African retailer Spitz. To maintain a luxury brand's status, the marketers of these luxury brands should be cognisant of consumer markets' perceptions to enable them to manage the brand equity accordingly (Keller 2008: 294). Information on consumers' perceptions of brands and COO will help marketers to improve their marketing strategy to increase and maintain images to enhance the competitiveness of brands. That would also prevent consumers' dismay and dissatisfaction when they become aware of brand incongruity.

As a result of globalisation it has become crucial to understand the consumer (Patterson & Tai, 1991:31). Some powerful global brands have suffered dearly as a result of retailers' ignorance of the COO-effect. As depicted in Figure 1.1, the American brand Nike experienced a flare of negative publicity when their manufacture operations were outsourced to Asian countries that are associated with harsh labour conditions (DeTienne & Lewis, 2005:361). Retailers should therefore be highly sensitive towards consumers' perceptions of brands (Bhardwaj *et al.*, 2010:80). A better understanding of consumers' perceptions of the CBO and COM of brands, as well as their reactions to brand incongruence may therefore be highly beneficial

for all role players, including consumers who should be encouraged to make informed purchase decisions at all times.



FIGURE 1.1: NEGATIVE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF NIKE

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of this study was to explore and describe female consumers' reliance on brands as a heuristic in terms of the properties of apparel merchandise (apparel) and to subsequently investigate how Country of Brand Origin (CBO) and Country of Manufacture (COM) influence females' perceptions of the properties of selected brands when brand incongruity of bi-national products exists.

Specific objectives for the study were:

1 To explore, describe and discuss the significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel choices:

1.1 To explore, describe and discuss females' inclination to purchase apparel products for status related reasons.

1.2 To explore, describe and discuss females' brand consciousness, referring to female apparel brands.

1.3 To explore, describe and discuss females' use of brand names as a cue of the desirable properties of apparel.

2 To explore, describe and discuss females' perception of apparel brand names, i.e.:

- 2.1 To explore, describe and discuss females' familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names.
- 2.2 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands.
- 2.3 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity with the Country of Brand Origin (CBO) of selected prominent apparel brands.
- 2.4 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity with the Country of Manufacture (COM) of selected prominent apparel brands.
- 2.5 To explore, describe and discuss the COO-effect, specifically consumers' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occurs.

1.5 STUDY AREA

The investigation was done in the geographical area of the metropolitan City of Tshwane in the Gauteng province in South Africa. Due to financial constraints, Tshwane was chosen since the researcher is located in the area and was able to recruit twelve voluntary fieldworkers to assist with data gathering. The City of Tshwane's website (2013) states that the metropolitan area forms part of the Gauteng province, which is currently the wealthiest and fastest growing economic region on the African continent. Due to this economical growth and wealth, this area can be assumed to offer a wide variety of apparel stores and brands for consumers to choose from.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Tshwane is a major metropolitan area in the largest, most affluent province in South Africa where major shopping malls with multiple retailers that stock prominent, exclusive brands are situated within reach of most consumers. Self-administered, structured questionnaires were used to collect quantifiable data.

For practical reasons, two non-probability sampling methods, convenient and snowball sampling, were used (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel & Kotze, 2003:49) to distribute 500 questionnaires with an explanatory cover letter to businesses and office blocks in middle- and upper income suburbs across the city where responsible co-workers assisted to target females between 25 and 60 years of age. Working females were targeted because it was assumed that they would be more able to afford sought after brands. The drop-down-collect-later method allowed ample time for self completion of the questionnaires. Within two weeks, 322 useful questionnaires were retrieved – all completed anonymously and returned in sealed envelopes. No pressure was exerted if potential respondents failed to hand back the questionnaire after one reminder.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of 19 questions of which some were self developed (e.g. to investigate females' familiarity with brands, their CBO and COM), as well as established scales [i.e. the status consumption scale of Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999)]. After approval of a statistician, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 17 respondents to correct shortcomings in order to eliminate error in the final study.

Following the data collection, completed questionnaires were coded by the researcher, and data was captured and processed with the assistance of qualified statisticians. Descriptive- and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Although the findings cannot be generalised to the whole population due to the sampling method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:213), effort was made to recruit a substantive sample size that would allow for viable sub sets of the sample to deduce meaningful findings. Effort was made to eliminate error throughout the investigation, e.g. a thorough scrutiny of extant literature, consultation with a statistician, conducting a pre-test and verification by experts to enhance face- and construct validity. The nature of this study is exploratory and descriptive to assist future research.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

First the questionnaires of the pilot test were analysed. A meaningful sample size, seventeen respondents, was used to allow useful feedback and data. The problems identified during the pilot study were rectified in the questionnaire. Data obtained were coded by the researcher, captured and processed with the help of Statomet, the University of Pretoria's Department of statistics. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, medians, and standard deviations), and more extensive analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse and interpret the data. Findings cannot be generalised to the whole population, since non-probability sampling was used (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:213).

1.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The study adopted the assumptions of a cognitive perspective, focusing on how consumers' knowledge about, and perceptions of brands influence their apparel purchase decisions (Kaiser, 1997:33; De Klerk, 1999:124; Rousseau, 2007b:195; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). It was assumed that apparel brands could be used to reduce a cognitive overload during decision-making that is to serve as cognitive shortcuts whereby specific desirable properties such as quality and status could be deduced more easily (Reger & Huff, 1993:105; De Klerk, 1999:124; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). A cognitive perspective proposes that consumers categorise information (for example preferred product characteristics) (Shimp, Samiee & Madden, 1993:323) into groups (for example preferred brands that represent these desirable characteristics) that make sense to them (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:323). In CBO related research, cognition is highly relevant (Sauer, Young & Unnava, 1991; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999) because cognitive schemata encompass individuals' beliefs and perceptions about a country and its products (brands) (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:324; Khan, Bamber & Quazi, 2012:1193). The schemata that are formed of different countries in the memory of consumers (for example countries that are respected or admired) vary in depth due to the amount of exposure to the country, its people and products (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:327). Numerous empirical studies (Sauer *et al.*, 1991; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999) have established that consumers' evaluation of foreign products is largely determined by cognitive processing of CBO information.

1.9 PRESENTATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The dissertation will be structured in six chapters as outlined in Figure 1.2.

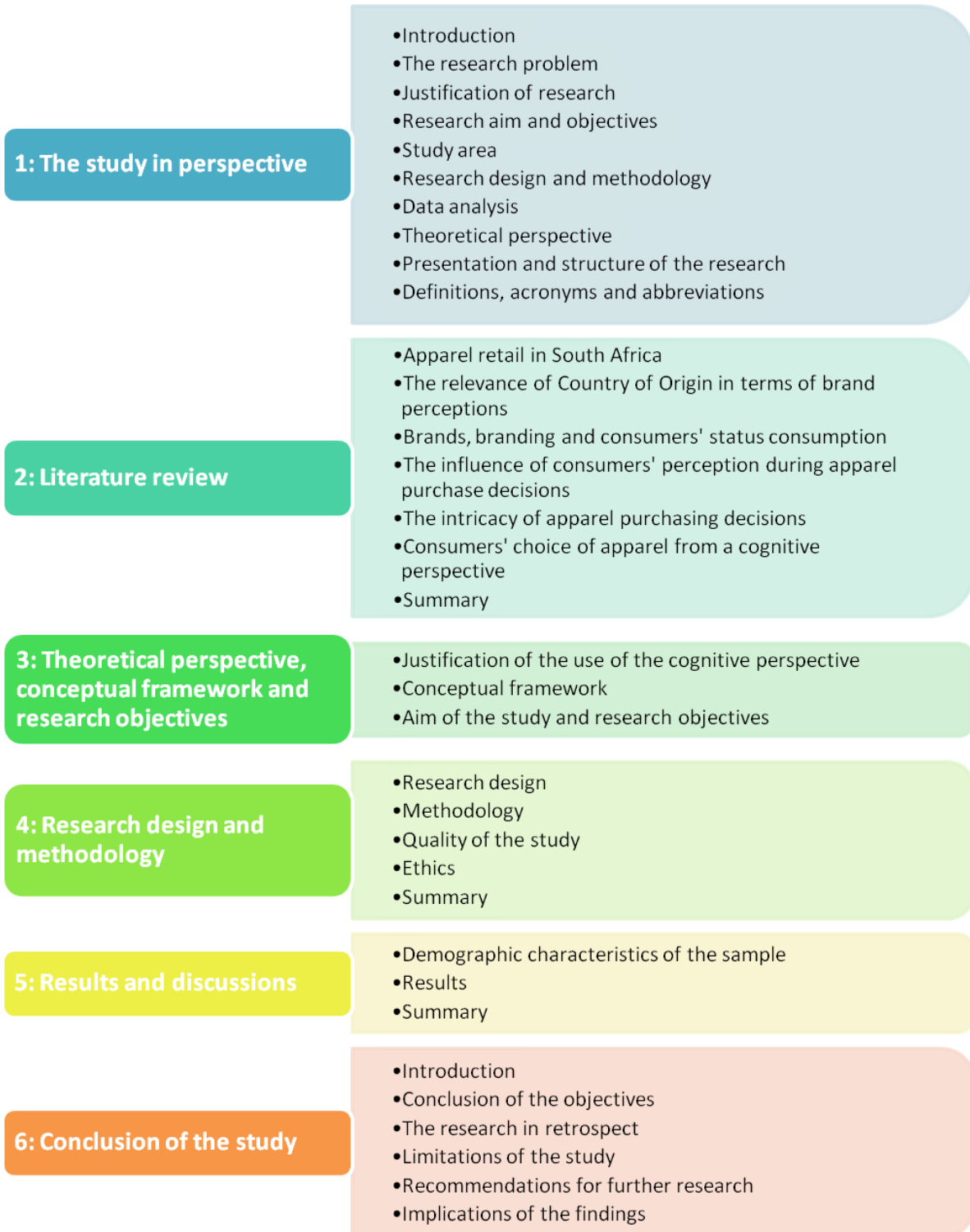


FIGURE 1.2: OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

1.10 DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout this dissertation, various terms, acronyms and abbreviations are used. For the convenience of the reader, the following reference list is included to avoid any confusion in the following chapters. Most of these acronyms, abbreviations and terms have already been explained in this chapter; the rest will be defined and explained when relevant in the chapters to follow.

- **Apparel** A garment constructed from fabric which covers the body (Kaiser, 1997:4).
- **Bi-national products** Branded products that are manufactured in a country different from the country from which the brand originated (Han & Terpstra, 1988:235).
- **BORA** Brand origin recognition accuracy
- **Brand consciousness** *“Psychological construct referring to the mental orientation to choose brand-name products that are well known and highly advertised”* (Liao & Wang, 2009:988).
- **CBO** Country of brand origin
- **Clothing** *“...any tangible or material object connected to the human body.”* (Kaiser, 1997:5.) It therefore includes apparel as well as accessories.
- **COA** Country of assembly
- **COD** Country of design
- **COM** Country of manufacture
- **COP** Country of parts
- **Congruence** *“Congruence is defined as the extent to which a brand association shares content and meaning with another brand association”* (Keller, 1993:7).
- **COO** Country of origin
- **COO-effect** Country of origin-effect
- **Halo effect** A cognitive mediator used to judge or evaluate an object with various dimensions by only using selected dimensions (Rousseau, 2007c:175; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:66; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:184).

- **Heuristic** Cognitive shortcuts used to simplify decision-making (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481).
- **Heuristic effect** “Compensation mechanism where a whole set of moderately valuable cues come to exert a significant effect on product evaluations, because they are processed simultaneously” (Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:67).
- **Hybrid products** The same as bi-national products (Han & Terpstra, 1988:235). When “*more than one country contributing to a finished product*” (Lee *et al.*, 2012:45).
- **Product-attribute effect** Cognitive elaboration, which is the filling of gaps (often unconsciously) when interpreting stimuli (Reger & Huff, 1993:105; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:67).
- **SACTWU** South African Clothing and Textiles Workers’ Union
- **Summary construct effect** “a file of information about various brands from a country that consumers develop over time, store in their memory in the form of overall evaluations of products from the country and retrieve readily when evaluating the brands” (Han, 1990: 34).



Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review commences with a brief overview of the South African apparel retail market and also explicates constructs that are relevant to the study, specifically in terms of their contribution to- and implications for the research.

2.1 APPAREL RETAIL IN SOUTH AFRICA

To understand consumers' apparel purchasing behaviour, one has to understand the background of the apparel industry in South Africa (SA) today, which looks vastly different compared to the scenario of a few decades ago.

The local apparel and textile sector was very strong 20 years ago. Sanctions and boycotts contributed to SA being isolated and forced to produce its own textiles and apparel. After 1994 the local manufacturing industry came under pressure due to cheaper imports (Wolmarans, 2011:2; Jones, 2013:1) and within only one decade, South Africa's apparel and textiles industry has had to shed almost 200,000 jobs as a direct consequence of increased imports. Currently wage disputes are the biggest threat. According to the South African Clothing and Textiles Workers' Union (SACTWU) there are employees that earn about R250 to R400 per week, which is below the benchmark of R534 stipulated by the Department of Labour, but if the Department of Labour decides to enforce higher wages, it might cause up to 22 000 additional workers to lose their jobs (Nicolson, 2013:1).

Regarding the international market, international retailers stayed clear during the Apartheid era and imports from China were limited. After 1994 boycotts and sanctions were removed and international trade increased. A vast amount of apparel is imported from Eastern countries such as China (Vlok, 2006:235-236).

Chinese imports rose from 11 million units in 1995, to 335 million units in 2004 (Wolmarans, 2011:46). Local apparel production has therefore declined and even if apparel is produced locally, most fabric is still imported from other countries (Vlok, 2006:234). The Department of Trade tried to limit imports by issuing Chinese import quotas in 2006. This unfortunately just resulted in growing imports from other countries such as India and Bangladesh (Wolmarans, 2011:2). Pre 1994, sophisticated and exclusive international brands were scarce in SA and only the rich could acquire and afford them. Recently numerous international apparel retailers started to trade in South Africa, for example Ben Sherman, Mango, Forever New, Zara, Cotton On and Top Shop.

The findings of a study conducted in India by Mukherjee *et al.* (2012) clearly indicated that consumers in developing countries differ from consumers in developed countries. Studies done in First-world contexts do not necessarily apply or are not relevant to a context such as South Africa and therefore studies of this kind are necessary to understand and serve the local consumer market. Previous studies conducted in emerging economies confirmed this finding by confirming an inclination towards reversed ethnocentrism, where consumers tend to prefer foreign products for their symbolic meanings, status and cosmopolitanism (Zhuang, Wang, Zhou & Zhou, 2008:441; Essoussi & Merunka, 2007:410; Shukla, 2011:245; Mukherjee *et al.*, 2012:485). Since South Africa is also considered an emerging economy (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:639; Donoghue & De Klerk, 2009:456) the same could be true in South Africa. Apart from reversed ethnocentrism, it is not certain whether South African consumers are aware of the origin of their apparel and where brands come from, neither is there affirmation that consumers care about it. It is furthermore not certain whether consumers' perception of brands is affected when they become aware of the incongruity in terms of CBO and COM. One may therefore ask how the COO-effect influences consumers' perceptions of brands and products as well as their purchase behaviour, i.e. how the COO of a brand will affect the COM image of a brand if they differ and contradict the original image of the brand, This study aimed to provide better insight in these uncertainties regarding consumers' perception of apparel brands.

2.2 THE RELEVANCE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN TERMS OF BRAND PERCEPTIONS

2.2.1 Country of origin defined

Country of Origin (COO) research started in the 1960's with Dichter (1962) who introduced the concept and Schooler (1965) who conducted the first empirical study (Pharr, 2005:34; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:726; Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:456). Since the 1960s, the research and literature have expanded with

over 1000 reported studies (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:726, Ko *et al.*, 2009:49). The first research that focused on brands together with CBO versus COM, were in the 1980's (Usunier, 2011:487).

Country of origin was first defined by Nagashima in 1970 as *"the picture, the reputation, the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country. This image is created by variables such as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditions"* and is widely used in literature (Piron, 2000:308; Pharr, 2005:34; Yasin *et al.*, 2007:38). Numerous other definitions have been constructed over time (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:727). Another widely used definition that suits this study best from a cognitive perspective, was the study by Roth and Romeo (1992:480) that focused on perceptions and that defined country image as *"... the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perception of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses"*.

Today, COO is even more important than in 1960s and 1970s, due to the increase of globalisation (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928). In South Africa (SA) imports of sought after international apparel brands rose significantly after 1994 (Bisseker, 2012:44). While developed countries have more or less reached a saturation point (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928; Bhardwaj *et al.*, 2010:80), the apparel retail industry in developing countries such as South Africa is continually expanding notwithstanding economic hardship world-wide (Cant *et al.*, 2005:7; Nieftagodien & Van der Berg, 2007:4; Vlok, 2006:231; Üstüner & Holt, 2010:40). Consumers in SA have a wider range of products and brands to choose from than ever before and female shoppers have become very important for the survival of apparel retailers in the country (Vlok, 2006:231; Hansen & Jensen, 2008:1155). The increase of global communication through television and the Internet, together with rising living standards, higher education and global travelling, enhance international brand familiarity and globalisation in developing countries (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:928).

The importance of COO is related to the fact that countries have, over time, developed and established pertinent images based on their performance and people perceptions (Veale & Quester, 2010:2). As defined in the introduction, country image is the stereotype, picture and reputation consumers attach to a certain country (Pereira *et al.*, 2005:103) and it affects a consumer's attitude towards products in either a positive or a negative way (Salciuviene *et al.*, 2010:1040). When consumers are unfamiliar with a brand name, the COO's image might be even more important than the brand name (Salciuviene *et al.*, 2010:1040). The economic and political background of a country, its history and traditions, environment, climate as well as

representative products and national stereotypes and characteristics contribute to the construction of a country image (Pereira *et al.*, 2005:103, Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:736).

Stereotypes influence the behaviour of a consumer during the decision making process (Insch & McBride, 2004:256). Stereotypes are the associations, beliefs and perceptions of attributes, characteristics and behaviours that people attach to certain groups or products (Chattalas, Kramer & Takada, 2008:58) and are normally deep-rooted in a consumer's mind (Khan, Bamber & Quazi, 2012:1192). Contact with people of a certain country also influences a consumer's perception of that country (Insch & McBride, 2004:257; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:736). There are mainly two aspects that play a role in national stereotyping, namely perceived warmth and perceived competence (Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:58). The six traits associated with perceived warmth, are friendliness, good intentions, sincerity, good-naturedness, warmth, and trustworthiness (Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:59). On the other hand, the six traits for perceived competence are: competence, intelligence, confidence, efficiency, competitiveness and independence (Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:59). Studies have found that consumers stereotype apparel manufactured in China and other South East Asian countries and perceive it as inferior due to the perception of these countries' lack of competence (Phau & Leng, 2008). In some instances the effect is crucial. It has, for instance, been said that China should work on improving the country's image because the present image is less favourable, has had a noteworthy effect on how consumers perceive products produced in China (Lee *et al.*, 2012:53). Stereotypes and perceptions are transferred from one generation to the next, due to consumer socialisation (John, 1999:201).

The economic development of a country has a major influence on COO cues. Consumers associate products manufactured in developing countries as inferior due to the stereotype (belief) that they have about the country's capabilities. Goods produced in developing countries are mostly perceived as inferior (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007:241; Lee *et al.*, 2012:43) due to the prevalence of immoral labour practices that occur, such as sweatshops (Brodowsky, Tan & Meilich, 2004:744). All of this contributes to the value (including prestige) consumers attach to products manufactured in developed countries. Since it is more expensive to produce goods in developed countries, the prices of these goods are higher and consumers perceive these higher prices as representative of a better quality (Brodowsky *et al.*, 2004:730; Fruchter, Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006:1372). Subsequently these products are seen as luxury, superior products that also signify status (Batra *et al.*, 2000:85; Baker & Ballington, 2002:161; Lee *et al.*, 2012:45).

In studies performed in India, it was found that Indian consumers regarded their own locally produced products as inferior to imported products (Shukla, 2011:245; Mukerjee *et al.*, 2012:485). In developing countries, such as Turkey, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and India, it was found that products from Western, developed countries are seen as an indication of progress and very desirable status symbols, since only the elite and privileged can afford them (Batra *et al.*, 2000:84). Evidence of South African consumers' perceptions is lacking. Like India, South Africa is also regarded an emerging country (Rousseau, 2007b:49), and therefore it may be that South African consumers may also perceive local products as inferior in terms of quality.

In COO research, two aspects that were proven to have a noteworthy influence on the COO-effect were ethnocentrism and animosity. Ethnocentrism, which is the inclination to favour products from your own culture or country above others, is an aspect of personality (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:153). Ethnocentric consumers believe that it is disloyal and unpatriotic to purchase foreign products (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237; Kaynak & Kara, 2002:933; Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:67) and that it will harm the economy and increase job losses (Kaynak & Kara, 2002:933). Such consumers pay more attention to the COO when evaluating products prior to purchase, which affirms the COO-effect (Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:56). These studies were performed in developed countries such as the USA (Shimp & Sharma, 1987:287; Chakraborty *et al.*, 1996:380). In South Africa, it is highly unlikely that ethnocentrism would play such a vital role. Reversed ethnocentrism is more likely to occur. Animosity is the remains of antagonism and dislike of previous or on-going military, political or economic events (Veale & Quester, 2010:4). Consumer animosity has a considerable influence on consumers' purchase decisions since it relates to national stereotypes (Veale & Quester, 2010:4, Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:63). An example would be American consumers who refuse to buy products (like fine rugs) from Iraq as a result of their political conflict. This study excludes the consequences of animosity.

Due to globalisation, the COO construct has become very complicated and cannot simply be defined as the country indicated on the "made-in" label (Brodowsky *et al.*, 2004:730). Companies have endless options to outsource the manufacturing of certain parts, the assembly of products or complete production to other countries for reasons such as lower overhead costs (Brodowsky *et al.*, 2004:730; Fruchter *et al.*, 2006:1732; Usunier, 2006:64; Samiee, 2010:443). Studies that focus on electronics such as VHS and televisions as well as motor vehicles, use the dimensions Country of Design (COD), Country of Parts (COP) and Country of Assembly (COA) (Chao, 1998; Insch & McBride, 2004; Pharr, 2005; Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007). Studies that focus on brands use different dimensions such as Country of Brand Origin (CBO) and Country of

Manufacturing (COM) (Srinivasan, Jain & Sikand, 2004; Chung, Pysarchik & Hwang, 2009; Usunier, 2011). This study will use the dimensions CBO and COM to explicate the COO-effect.

The COO-effect can be influenced by a variety of factors. The effect of an *unfavourable* country of manufacturing can be negated by a higher store/brand reputation or warranty (Chao, 1998:2). Each country has its unique image, history, strengths and weaknesses, which result in COO research to be not only country specific, but also product specific (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237; Roth & Romeo, 1992:478; Chao, 1998:3). Iran is well known for their superior handmade carpets (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:325), but might not be a good association for other product categories such as electronics. In apparel COO research conducted by Ettenson, Wagner and Gaethm (1988) quality, price and fibre content were found to diminish the COO-effect (Chao, 1998:2). Since the magnitude of the COO-effect was found to be larger for fashion-oriented or expensive products (Chattalas *et al.*, 2008:62), it can be assumed that COO will be of great importance when evaluating luxury branded apparel.

Country of Origin remains a very vague and ambiguous international marketing concept (Usunier, 2011:486). It is one of the most researched topics in international marketing literature, but still academics are debating if it really influences the consumer or not. It has therefore become known as the “made-in paradox” (d’Astous & Ahmed, 1999:122-123; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:62; Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:454-455). Various studies found that the COO influences consumers’ perceptions and purchasing behaviour (Han & Terpstra, 1988; Piron, 2000; Ahmed *et al.*, 2002; Koubaa, 2007), but others (Samiee *et al.*, 2005; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008) concluded the contrary. The studies of Häuble and Elrod (1999) and Cho, Wuhner and Werani (2005) found that congruity between the brand image and the perceived image of the COO leads to positive quality perceptions and higher purchase intentions. Others (Leclerc *et al.*, 1994; Hui & Zhou, 2003; Salciuviene *et al.*, 2010:1038) showed the opposite. Liefeld’s study (2004:86) found that most of the respondents were not familiar with, nor cared about a product’s COO and that only a few knew where products were manufactured. It has also become evident that fewer consumers search for, and use COO information prior to purchase (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:455). Kaynak and Kara (2002:935) are of the opinion that different results are simply the result of testing different product categories, in different countries (population sample).

D’Astous and Ahmed (1999:122-123) ascribe the paradox to two main issues. Firstly, during research COO information becomes readily available, which is not the case in a normal shopping environment, and that influences consumers’ perceptions and decisions. Samiee (2010:443) came to the same conclusions and is of

opinion that in this way data gets contaminated during research processes. In real life, a consumer has to search for the “made-in” label on the inside of the apparel item, whereas the brand is a salient cue that is displayed very prominently (Usunier, 2011:488). Secondly, D’Astous and Ahmed (1999:122-123) concluded that consumers use a brand name as a substitute for the COO. Magnusson *et al.* (2011:458) and d’Astous and Ahmed (1999:109) explain that even though one does not consciously think of certain aspects, they still influence one’s actions, such as COO connotations towards a brand that are stored in a consumer’s mind. Most brands already have origin cues embedded within the brand name itself (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:30). Price can also be a COO cue, since a lower price is associated with mass production in emerging economies such as China. Even though the exact country is not identified, incongruence between COM and CBO can still occur and can influence the consumer (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:458). An indication whether a product is imported or locally produced is enough to have a COO-effect and influence the consumer (d’Astous & Ahmed, 1999:109). COO can therefore be communicated in different ways, some more subtle than others.

Names of countries, towns and places are the most obvious COO cue (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:34) such as Europa Art Shoes. Styling such as landmarks and the use of colours also serve as COO indication, which subconsciously have an effect (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:35), for example the Italian landscape in Carvella’s advertisements (See Figure 2.1) and the American flag in Levi’s advertisements (See Figure 2.2). Pronunciation and language of the brand name can also provide a COO connotation (Leclerc *et al.*, 1994:269, Thakor & Kohli, 1996:35; Usunier, 2011:488; Magnusson *et al.* 2011), for example Yves Saint Laurent that immediately triggers “Frenchness”.

In contrast, the use of acronyms weakens the COO connotation (Usunier, 2011:488) for instance H&M that is the trade name of the international Swedish apparel retailer, Hennes & Mauritz. Another cue is the slogan used: in terms of motor cars, Audi’s slogan “Vorsprung durch Technik”, is one of the most classic examples of a brand that wants to link itself to a certain country image to enhance the perception of the brand, since Germany is well-known for exceptional cars (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:37).

Although used to a lesser extent, celebrity endorsement also influences consumers, since a celebrity’s nationality suggests brand origin (Usunier, 2011:488). Sometimes these cues can be confusing in terms of construing the COO: George Clooney as the face of Nespresso, and Claudia Schiffer as the face of L’Oréal, respectively “de-Swissified” and “un-Frenched” the brands (Usunier, 2011:488).



FIGURE 2.1: CARVELLA MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT



FIGURE 2.2: LEVI'S BILLBOARD AND MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT

2.3 BRANDS, BRANDING AND CONSUMERS' STATUS CONSUMPTION

2.3.1 The relevance of brands and branding in apparel retail

The term "brand" was defined by Kotler (1991:442) as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them that are intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors". Consumers use brand names to simplify decision-making, using them as cues or heuristics to construe certain product attributes such as quality, when time, motivation or ability to evaluate a product is lacking (Keller, 1993:5; Solomon, 1996:290). Rather than going

through a whole process of evaluation, consumers trust a brand to produce the positive outcomes experienced in former purchases or that are associated with the brand. The brand reduces perceived risk during decision-making due to its established reputation (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:202) and its indication of multiple characteristics such as quality, luxury, prestige and status (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237; Deeter-Schmelz, Moore & Goebel, 2000:45).

The value of the brand is measured in terms of brand equity, which is defined as the benefit of the brand name to the product, together with its differentiating value to the consumer (Keller, 1993:2; Chen, 2001:439; Yasin *et al.*, 2007:38). The dimensions of brand equity are brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality (Yasin *et al.*, 2007:38). Marketing managers build brand equity through consistent delivery of high quality, and managing brand imagery (Arnould *et al.*, 2004:133; Klopper, 2005:46.). In product manufacturing, outsourcing might be sensible from a cost point of view, but it may have a negative effect on brand equity (Josiassen & Assaf, 2010:295). The world renowned brand, Heineken, anticipated the negative influences of becoming a bi-national product and decided against outsourcing to maintain their brand equity. Heineken's CEO, Mark Ruys pertinently stated that Heineken will only be manufactured in the country where it originated and stated that "US consumers want the real thing. I consider us to be the real thing" (Ewing, 2003:11). Similar views can be taken by well-known apparel brands to avoid any harm to their image if associated with an undesirable COO such as Bangladesh or China. COO research is extremely important since brand origin influences brand image, which together with brand awareness are the basic building blocks of brand equity (Samiee *et al.*, 2005:379-380). Brand equity issues will not be addressed in this study.

In the mind of the consumer, certain associations accompany a brand, of which COO is often one of them (Keller, 1993:11). People connect brands with certain countries of origin and since consumers also have perceptions about the various countries, these perceptions are transferred to the brand and the product (Keller, 1993:11; Ko *et al.*, 2009:47). In order to have long-term success, it is necessary to maintain, develop and communicate a brand's image noticeably (Bhat & Reddy, 1998:32). It is therefore important that the connotations consumers have of the certain country that they associate with the brand, matches the image of the brand.

2.3.2 The relevance of brands and branding during consumers' apparel purchase decisions

"Brands play an important role in the psychological process that precedes the buying act." (Nelson & McLeod, 2005:518). This psychological process where products are chosen according to their brand name

is referred to as brand consciousness (Liao & Wang, 2009:988). Brands have symbolic value for the consumer, as it may be a tool for communicating prestige, status or for self-expression (Keller, 1993:4; Bhat & Reddy, 1998:32; Deeter-Schmelz *et al.*, 2000:45, Clark *et al.*, 2007:46). The image and value of a brand lies within the minds of consumers and the picture the brand evokes is brand symbolism (O’Cass & Frost, 2002:72; Yasin *et al.*, 2007:39). Due to its symbolic value, consumers use brands to create and portray an individual identity and mark their social standing (Solomon, 1996:425; Deeter-Schmelz *et al.*, 2000:44, O’Cass & Frost, 2002:67) and they are prepared to pay a premium price for it (O’Cass & Choy, 2008:342).

Humans have a universal “pecking order”, everybody wants to move up the social ladder and, when they do, they intentionally try to communicate it to others to impress them (Solomon, 1996:433). Social class is the ranking of people in society according to factors such as family background, occupation, education, ownership and income (Hawkins *et al.*, 1992:102; Solomon, 1996:432). The social class in which an individual falls influences his or her preferences, purchases, consumption, communication and lifestyle (Hawkins *et al.*, 1992:102). The various social classes or groups have different norms and views, which determine their affiliation with others as well as their behaviour. Consumers purchase products in a way that is acceptable to the group they belong to, or want to belong to (Clark *et al.*, 2007:46). It does however not end with one’s belonging to a certain group (Clark *et al.*, 2007:46); individuals usually also want to enhance their social standing within the group through their lifestyle and consumption of goods and services (Clark *et al.*, 2007:46) - all because of status and prestige.

2.3.3 The role of brands in status communication

Status can be defined as the position or ranking of an individual in terms of social class (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42). Status is very closely related to prestige; since prestige is defined as “*constituting a basic symbol of one’s social standing or status*” (Eisenstadt, 1968:67; Deeter-Schmelz *et al.*, 2000:44). This hierarchy within a group suggests a type of superiority and power over others consisting of respect, honour, status and envy (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Clark *et al.*, 2007:46). There are three main ways of acquiring status, firstly through assignment or definition (if one is royalty), secondly through achievements (if one has a prestigious occupation), and lastly through consumption (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42). This study will focus on status consumption, which refers to the conspicuous (visible) consumption of goods in order to enhance social standing or to express social class (O’Cass & Frost, 2002:68; Phau & Leng, 2007:71; Üstüner & Holt, 2010:37; Lee *et al.*, 2012:44). Potentially everyone can engage in status consumption, regardless of income or social class (Basmann, Molina & Slottje, 1988:531; Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Phau & Leng, 2007:71). Even

though some believe that only the wealthy engage in status consumption, Third-world consumers also purchase products that provide a form of status or prestige (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:41). In a study focusing on cosmetics, Chao and Schor (1998:108) found that status consumption is directly positively associated with an increase in income, education level and urbanisation. Consumers “differ in how much they seek to gain status” and can therefore be classified as either status-seeking or role-relaxed consumers (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). Status-seeking consumers are those whose decisions and choices are based on how much status/ prestige it will provide for him/ her within the group and whether it will provide “visible evidence of the superior rank they are claiming” (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). They are more inclined to purchase luxury branded apparel to satisfy symbolic needs (Phau & Leng, 2007:69). Role-relaxed consumers, in contrast, are those consumers whose decisions are mainly based on personal favouritism regardless of the status a brand portrays (Clark *et al.*, 2007:45).

Status consumption is often confused with materialism and conspicuous consumption. The difference between materialism and status consumption is the underlying motivation of the purchase (Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). Materialism is the acquisition of goods “for their own sake” (Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). Unlike status consumption that focuses on the purchase of prestigious goods, conspicuous consumption focuses on the “display of wealth and prosperity” (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). Conspicuous consumption is even associated with wasteful consumption (Basman, Molina & Slottje, 1988:531). Two types of conspicuous consumption exist, namely invidious comparison, where rich people purchase expensive products to communicate their wealth, and pecuniary emulation, where people consume expensive products to imitate a higher social class (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996:350). According to Thorstein Veblen’s theory, “wealthy individuals often consume highly conspicuous goods and services in order to publicly exhibit their wealth, thereby achieving greater social status” (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996:349; Trigg, 2001:100). It does however not only apply to *wealthy* individuals; if consumption can be observed by others, it is classified as conspicuous and if it is consumed in private it will be inconspicuous (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996:352). Since the crux of conspicuous consumption lies within signalling, consumers are often overpaying for luxury/status brands with visible labels (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996:350-351; O’Cass & Frost, 2002:72). Luxury products are seen as special, and as status/prestige bearing non-essentials (Wiedmann , Hennigs & Siebels, 2009:626). They are generally more expensive or scarce and mostly associated with higher levels of quality and rarity (Keller, 2008:291; Wiedmann *et al.*, 2009:627).

The word “luxury” is very subjective. One person can view a certain commodity as luxury while another does not (Wiedmann *et al.*, 2009:626; Shukla, 2011:243). In the luxury branded apparel industry, COO also

serves as a status/ego enhancer that can position a product in the luxury category (Veale & Quester, 2009:136). Consumers may therefore associate certain brands with luxury due to an association of the brand with exemplified qualities, for example assuming that a product that originated in Europe is good quality or another that is produced in an Eastern country is of lower quality. This study's interest is limited to an investigation of brands that consumers associate with luxury.

2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION DURING APPAREL PURCHASE DECISIONS

Various studies (Johansson & Nebenzahl, 1986; Chao, 1993; Inch & McBride, 2004; Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007) conclude that perception is a dominant factor in COO research. When a brand associated with high quality is manufactured in a country associated with poor quality, a negative perception will probably be formed of that brand and its products (Tse, 1999:913; Essoussi & Merunka, 2007:415). A brand perception will have a bigger influence in the brand conscious consumer's purchasing decision than the less brand consciousness consumer's purchasing decision (Liao & Wang, 2009:991). A negative perception can deteriorate the status connotation of a brand in the mind of the consumer and since symbolising status is one of the main reasons why consumers are brand conscious, can influence whether the consumer will purchase the brand or not (Nelson & McLeod, 2005:517; Liao & Wang, 2009:991).

2.4.1 Perceptions explained

Perception, is defined as the process where an individual observes, selects, organizes and reacts to environmental stimuli in a meaningful way (Rousseau, 2007c:160; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:728; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). This process starts with a sensory stimulus from the environment, such as sight, and goes through the human sensory receptors (the eyes), followed by exposure, attention, interpretation and memory (Solomon, 2002:43; Cant, Brink & Brijball, 2006:115). Perceptions influence consumer's expectations, reactions and buying behaviour (Hawkins *et al.*, 1992:216; Cant *et al.*, 2006:115; Rousseau, 2007c:179; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:172). A better understanding how consumers use, organise and interpret stimuli, such as COO cues, can help to better comprehend consumers' buying behaviour (Jacobs & De Klerk, 2007:48).

Not all stimuli have the same amount of influence on consumers. It varies from subliminal perception, which refers to unconscious stimuli below absolute threshold to absolute threshold, i.e. the lowest level of experiencing a sensation. This is also known as the just noticeable difference where the smallest difference

between stimuli can be detected (Rousseau, 2007:162c; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:175-178). Consumers apply stimulation selectivity in perception by blocking out unnecessary and unfavourable stimuli to perceive what they want or need (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). This is influenced by past experiences and current motives (Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998:114). The amount of stimulation that an individual receives also depends on the mood and personality of the individual. Individuals who have a positive mood that is associated with high energetic arousal, will actively seek out, explore, remain in, and prefer the environments where stimulation is high (Fiore & Kimle, 1998:95). After selection, consumers organise their perceptions into unified wholes (Rousseau, 2007:179c; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). It is through interpretation of stimuli that the individual forms a personal opinion or perception (Solomon, 2002:43). An individual is not a passive receiver of a stimulus. Instead, the individual's interpretation of the stimulus is influenced by his/her unique biases, needs and experiences (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004:290-291). Perception is important in buying behaviour, since consumers have certain perceived images in memory regarding certain products and certain brands (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:203). To position a brand in the mind of the consumer, marketers aim to create certain perceptions of their products and brands based on the consumer's needs (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:172).

2.4.2 Consumers' perceptions of the COO and COM of apparel brands

The match between the perceptions of a country and the product or brand is very important in terms of the COO-effect (Roth & Romeo, 1992:482; Usunier, 2011:491). New Zealand, for example, is known for sheep and wool. Consumers' perception of wool jerseys that are made in New Zealand will be favourable due to the analogy in memory (Keller, 1993:12). Various studies (Samiee *et al.*, 2005; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008; Makherjee *et al.*, 2012) indicated that consumers are unaware of certain brands' CBO and/or COM. Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA) might be different from one product category to another. In the motor vehicle product category, research indicated that 71% of consumers know where the product originates from, while only 51% know where fashionable apparel and accessory brands originated (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:463; Usunier, 2011:490). It may be concluded that the COO of apparel is less important, but Magnusson *et al.* (2011:455) put the issue into perspective stating that consumers do not have to know the correct CBO or COM for the COO to have an influence on perception. Instead, the country where consumers think a product is manufactured or where it originates from matters, whether it is accurate or not (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:455). The mental picture or perception a consumer has about certain aspects of a country, such as production competence and sense of style, gets transferred to the brand, whether it is accurate or not (Roth & Romeo, 1992:480).

2.4.3 The relevance of the COO-effect in apparel retail

Brand managers can intentionally mislead consumers, such as the American ice-cream brand Häagen-Dazs that suggests a Scandinavian brand and is therefore associated with Danish pastries and other desert delicacies (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:459). This was most likely done for hedonic purposes. Hedonism is the emotional value and enjoyment of a product, strictly for the non-utilitarian value (Bhardwaj *et al.*, 2010:82). Hedonism is a vital factor in product perceptions and a single cue such as foreign branding is enough to create hedonic perceptions (Leclerc *et al.*, 1994:264;269).

Usunier (2011:494) unequivocally differs from the views of Magnusson *et al.* (2011) believing that accuracy matters, since incorrect classification can instigate unfavourable (Table 2.1). For example, if a brand name is correctly associated with a country with a favourable association for a specific product, the situation is theoretically ideal to enhance purchase intentions. When incorrectly classified - although the country still evokes a favourable association - a branded product will still be in a positive situation until a consumer becomes aware of the true COO that might change consumers' associations. Brand origin may also be classified correctly as one with an unfavourable association. The worst scenario is when a brand is classified incorrectly as one with an unfavourable COO.

TABLE 2.1: BRAND ORIGIN CLASSIFICATION AND ASSOCIATION FAVOURABILITY (USUNIER, 2011:491)

	Correctly Classified	Non-classified/ incorrectly classified
Favourable association	1. Perfect Situation	2. Positive situation (intentional/unintentional)
Unfavourable association	3. Established brand name with an unfavourable image	4. Worst scenario - requires action.

It is therefore not clear how bi-national brands might influence consumers' perceptions.

2.5 THE INTRICACY OF APPAREL PURCHASING DECISIONS

Although perception has an important influence on a psychological level, numerous other factors also influence a consumer's choice and the complexity of consumers' decisions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:36-37). Apparel products are evaluated in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics (Retief & De Klerk, 2003:24). Intrinsic characteristics are related to the physical product itself, such as textiles, size and colour, while extrinsic characteristics are not part of the physical products, such as the price, COO and brand name

(Thakor & Katsanis, 1997:79; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:195). One of the main reasons why consumers tend to rely more heavily on extrinsic- rather than intrinsic cues, is the lack of knowledge and expertise (Veale & Quester, 2010:4). Compared to experienced consumers, the inexperienced will probably rely more on COO as in indicator of quality. This study refers to both intrinsic and extrinsic properties of apparel, although the main focus is on extrinsic product cues and how they may influence a consumer's perception of a product (which is not necessarily true/ realistic). Generally, consumers are more inclined to value extrinsic- than intrinsic cues and to use them as cognitive shortcuts during decision-making (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011:456).

2.5.1 The uniqueness of apparel purchasing behaviour

Consumers' behaviour in terms of apparel purchases differs from other types of consumer decisions (De Klerk, 1999:116) due to the communicative value of apparel and consumers' use of luxury apparel to impress others, to build their self esteem and to satisfy symbolic needs, and as an indication of status (Solomon, 1996:452; O'Cass & Frost, 2002:68; Lee *et al.*, 2012:44). Apparel is used to express one's identity and build one's self-concept (Kaiser, 1997:96). Evaluation and conceptualising are the basic cognitive processes that are very important when making a apparel decision (De Klerk, 1999:124). One aspect that is very important when shopping for apparel products is the perceived quality of the product (De Klerk, 1999:123). When purchasing premium apparel, one expects that the quality will be high, and as explained, consumers are likely to use the COO as an extrinsic cue when evaluating apparel.

2.5.2 The use of garment labels during consumer apparel decision-making

Labels are used to communicate information to consumers about the products, such as the "made in" label that serves as a textual stimulus to indicate the COO (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:728; Samiee, 2010:444). Different labels provide different types of information, which differ in importance but also vary in visibility. Usually a garment has a main label, price ticket/hang tag and care label/inside label that are used in both pre-purchase decision-making as well as post purchase evaluations (Yan, Yurchisin & Watchravesringkan, 2008:533). The main label inside the garment, also known as the brand label, is the most visible of all the labels and communicates the brand name and size. A hangtag normally communicates the price. Care labels are located on the inside of the garment and text and symbols are used to communicate the recommended care procedures. According to the Consumer Protection Act (68 of 2008), the country of manufacturing (COM) should be indicated on all apparel. Manufacturers include an inside label containing the COM together with the fabric composition and wash instructions. Other information that may also be incorporated in the label to educate the consumers, are for example labour

standards, environmental benefits and production/ construction techniques (Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle & Lee, 2012:52). The care label inevitably provides cues about a garment's level of quality (Yan *et al.*, 2008:534). With all these labels and information, consumers are possibly overloaded with information, may result in the neglect or avoidance of some of the labels and information (Kempen, Bosman, Bouwer, Klein & Van der Merwe, 2011:70). Consumers will probably not look for, or evaluate all the above labels when purchasing apparel items and consumers are not necessarily able to understand all the label information (Wyma, Van der Merwe, Bosman, Erasmus, Strydom & Steyn, 2012:433). A study conducted in Britain, a developed country, found that 39% of the respondents did not look at the labels of apparel at all, while only 11% looked at them frequently (Hyllegard *et al.*, 2012:52). In South Africa, which is an emerging economy, the percentage of consumers that actually consult the labels would probably be lower. The level of explicitness further influences whether consumers will use the information or not (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008:492). It is possible that consumers who do not even consult the inside label to determine the COM, might have an inaccurate perception of the COO. On most products in stores, the "made-in" label is not nearly as prominent as the label that indicates the brand or price although they all carry the same weight in most of the COO academic studies (Thakor & Kohli, 1996:30).

Apparel as a product category is therefore evaluated uniquely and consumer perceptions will probably also be unique which confirms the merit of the investigation of this study.

2.6 SUMMARY

International apparel brands are continuously entering the apparel retail market in South Africa, which offers consumers a wide range of international brands. Apart from the fact that international brands are benefiting through the expansion of their markets, South African consumers are now exposed to a multitude of popular and sophisticated international brands that include bi-national branded products – a phenomenon that is mainly attributed to economically driven motives. The COO-effect on consumers' perceptions of brands (and merchandise) and buying behaviour is highly relevant in the apparel product category, because research confirms that consumers have different images of different countries in their minds - mainly respecting Western brands and questioning brands originating from the East. Consumers' perceptions of locally manufactured brands are still conflicting and have been influenced by the prominent call to consume locally to support local industries and the local economy. Brand names can be used as an extrinsic cue when purchasing apparel and brand names subsequently can be used to infer the quality characteristics of apparel merchandise. Literature further proposes that consumers often rely on selected

brands to support and enhance their identity and to convey status based on existing cognitive schema in memory (based on exposure to brands in media and in social context as well as personal experience with branded products). Together with the brand, the COO however also influences consumers perceptions and purchase decisions. Four cognitive COO-effects, namely the heuristic effect, the summary-construct effect, the halo effect and the product attribute effect (Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:64) may influence consumers' perceptions and consumer decision-making, which confirm that schemata in consumers' memory and subsequent perceptions are highly relevant during consumers' purchasing decisions.



Chapter 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This chapter explains and justifies the theoretical perspective used to structure this study as well as the conceptual framework and research objectives.

3.1 JUSTIFICATION OF THE USE OF THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

The theoretical perspective that guided this study, is the cognitive perspective. Previous research (Bloemer *et al.*, 2009) found that the cognitive perspective is most suitable for COO research, since perception and cognitive schemata are highly relevant in terms of COO-effects.

3.1.1 Introduction

The cognitive perspective focuses on people's internal thought processes (Kaiser, 1997:33; Cant *et al.*, 2006:126). People (consumers) are rational thinkers who actively organise and interpret stimuli and information to make sense of the world and to form perceptions (Rousseau, 2007a:195; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). Perceptions are formed on individual's beliefs and are not necessarily true (Rousseau, 2007a:195).

The information and stimuli that the person comes in contact with, are processed and stored in cognitive schemas in memory. A schema is a mental framework containing basic assumptions about the world (Crosbie-Burnet & Lewis, 1993:542). People (consumers) use these cognitive schemata to retrieve information from memory and use the schemata as shortcuts when information overload occurs (Charon, 1979:29; Kaiser, 1997:34; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). Schemata are based on perceptions and may therefore be inaccurate.

The cognitive approach is a suitable theoretical approach for this study. Social cognition focuses on individual thought processes and the influence it has on social behaviour (Kaiser, 1997:33), which is in line with the core of this research. Furthermore, the study aims to gain a better understanding of the structuring and influences on consumers' perceptions, and perception formation is a cognitive process (Crosbie-Burnet & Lewis, 1993:542; Kaiser, 1997:33).

Cognitive processing is highly important in terms of an explanation of different COO-effects (Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:63), mainly because country image is embedded in cognitive schema in memory, which encompasses individuals' beliefs and perceptions about a country and its products (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:324; Khan, Bamber & Quazi, 2012:1193). The schemata of different countries vary, not only from one consumer to another, but also in depth due to the amount of exposure to the country, its people and products (Shimp *et al.*, 1993:327). Numerous empirical studies (Sauer *et al.*, 1991; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999) have established that consumers' evaluation of foreign products is to a large extent determined by cognitive processing of COO information.

3.2 CONSUMERS' CHOICE OF APPAREL FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

According to Bloemer *et al.*, (2009:64) there are mainly four different cognitive COO-effects that may determine consumers' perceptions of specific products, namely the heuristic effect, the summary-construct effect, the halo effect and the product attribute effect.

3.2.1 The heuristic effect (Heuristics)

From a cognitive perspective, consumers can be seen as information processors (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). During consumer decision-making the pre-purchase search represents consumers' internal and external search for information about product alternatives that may satisfy their needs and wants (Lamb *et al.*, 2004:74). The more a consumer purchases and uses a product the less pre-purchase search is required (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:485). Experience with a product, as well as product familiarity influences COO cues (Insch & McBride, 2004:258, Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007:241). Through learning, certain schemas are stored in a consumer's memory, which then aid to simplify, process and store stimuli in future decisions (Charon, 1979:29; Hawkins *et al.*, 1992:261; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). As explained, schemas are cognitive structures that are formed by previous organisation of knowledge and experiences (Fiske &

Linville, 1980:543; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009:728). In the field of cognitive psychology, the organisation of knowledge is one of the most researched and oldest areas (Soars, 2003:629). From a cognitive psychological view, individuals are not passive, but actively involved in the construction of perception (Reger & Huff, 1993:107, Nancarrow *et al.*, 1998:115). They filter the perceptions of the objective world through their constructive system (Reger & Huff, 1993:107).

A consumer does not take every single aspect into consideration when evaluating products, and applies shortcuts or decision rules to make decision-making easier (Erasmus, Boshoff & Rousseau, 2001:86; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). The two main types of decision rules are *compensatory* decision rules and *non-compensatory* decision rules (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:491). With compensatory decision rules a consumer adds the value of all the attributes and purchases the product with the highest score. An unfavourable characteristic can therefore be negated by others that are more favourable (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:491; Arnould *et al.*, 2004:656). A product with shortcomings can therefore be chosen because superior attributes compensate for less satisfactory characteristics (Solomon, 1996:287). Apparel that carries a luxury brand that is manufactured in a country that is associated with inferior quality might for instance be chosen because the brand compensates for the COM. Non-compensatory rules, on the other hand, assign minimum ratings to certain attributes, which results in a disqualification of products with inadequate attributes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:491; Arnould *et al.*, 2004:657). A luxury branded item may therefore be rejected if the COM is perceived to be unacceptable because the CBO cannot compensate for the COM.

Apart from making the consumer decision-making simpler, heuristics are also very helpful as it can reduce risk perception (DelVecchio, 2001:243). Perceived risk can be defined as the “amount of risk the consumer perceives in the buying decision as a result of uncertainty about the decision and/or the potential consequences of a poor decision” (Cant *et al.*, 2006:199). Different types of risk perception are distinguished, such as financial-, social-, psychological-, performance-, physical- and time risk (Rousseau, 2007c:176; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:202). The risk perception varies with the product, the situation and also from one person to another (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:202). Previous experience in a product category will also reduce the perceived risk (Lamb *et al.*, 2004:73). Many studies have found that COO and COM influence perceived risk (Chakraborty *et al.*, 1996:380; Tse, 1999:913). Consumers are aware that the market is loaded with counterfeit products, mostly from developing countries. The problem is that when a brand moves its COM from its CBO to a country associated with counterfeit goods, consumers will not be

able to distinguish fake products from authentic products (Chakraborty *et al.*, 1996:379, 380). This dilemma stimulates financial-, psychological, social- and performance risk.

3.2.2 The summary construct effect

The summary construct refers to the set of information and perceptions that consumers have accumulated over time and organised into easily stored chunks that can be recalled from memory when evaluating brands (Han, 1989:223; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:66). When consumers are acquainted with products from a certain country the COO acts as a summary construct (Han, 1989:228; Shimp *et al.*, 1993:327; Lee *et al.*, 2012:43). A brand name can also serve as a summary construct that has an influence on consumers' perception of quality (Han, 1989:223).

3.2.3 The halo effect

The halo-effect is as a cognitive mediator that is used to judge or evaluate an object with various dimension, by only using one or a few dimensions (Rousseau, 2007c:175; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:66; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:184). When consumers are not acquainted with certain products from a country, then the COO will create a halo effect (Han, 1989:228; Shimp *et al.*, 1993:327; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:66). Based on the perception of a country, consumers assume product attributes, which may influence brand attitude through their inferred beliefs (Han, 1989:228; Kaynak & Kara, 2002:931).

3.2.4 The product-attribute effect

The product attribute effect can be seen as cognitive elaboration, i.e. a filling of gaps (often unconsciously) when interpreting stimuli (Reger & Huff, 1993:105; Bloemer *et al.*, 2009:67).

All of the above effects may influence consumers on a cognitive level when purchasing branded apparel with COO-cues, which explains the magnitude of effects that a single COO-cue may have on consumers' buying behaviour. This study is therefore much needed in the branded apparel domain where bi-national products are in abundance.

3.3 CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

The basic assumptions of this perspective as stated by Kaiser (1997: 34-37) are as follows:

- **Cues are often used to simplify and make sense of the social world**

Consumers live in a world that is cluttered with information and stimuli (Usunier, 2011:493). An individual can only hold and process about seven pieces of information at a time, and thereafter information overload easily occurs (Reger & Huff, 1993:105). The brain cannot cope with everything at once; it has to ignore a great deal of information in order to concentrate (Soars, 2003:629). To cope with information overload, shortcuts are used (Reger & Huff, 1993:105; De Klerk, 1999:124; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481) as a survival mechanism to make decision making faster and easier (Soars, 2003:629). This is described as cognitive simplification (Reger & Huff, 1993:105). Consumers are not always aware that they use these shortcuts, since they are used subconsciously (Kaiser, 1997:34).

During the processing of information, consumers also use categorisation, that is the action of assigning objects (brands) to groups (countries) (Samiee *et al.*, 1993:323). With categorisation, the number of items that is stored in memory is reduced without “jeopardising mental representation” and this helps someone to achieve *cognitive economy* (Soars, 2003:629). Categorisation simplifies a consumer’s evaluation of new stimuli in a specific category (Samiee *et al.*, 1993:323). In this study COO and brands represent a categorisation of cues that facilitate consumers’ thought processes and decisions.

- **People strive for some consistency and continuity in their perceptions.**

People aim to find a cognitive equilibrium, i.e. a balance or fit between various stimuli and information (Kaiser, 1997:34) and are constantly actively trying to find and retain cognitive continuity and consistency because they “strive for a psychological state of internal adjustment” (Kaiser, 1997:34). The relevance of this assumption in this study is that consumers will try to understand (get some consistency) when they come across bi-national branded products.

- **Humans are motivated to explain social occurrences or outcomes in terms of people or situations.**

The brain is continuously busy making sense of stimuli and forming explanations (Kaiser, 1997:37). From a cognitive perspective people are striving to find temporary reasons to why things are a certain way, or occur (Baron & Byrne, 1987:39), which is a basic mental need (Kaiser, 1997:37).

This study aims to understand how consumers try to make sense of incongruent COO information and how it affects their perceptions. This is inevitably influenced by prior experiences whereby existing schemata in memory are created and that aid to make sense of a situation. For instance, “a product made in China being of good quality” or “a product from India being as luxurious as one from France”.

3.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study (Figure 3.1) suggests that consumers’ brand perception may be influenced by two aspects, namely the significance of brand names for that consumer (objective 1) and also the specific brand involved (objective 2).

Consumers may (or may not) be liable to engage in status consumption (objective 1.1). Together with that, they may be brand conscious (objective 1.2) and they subsequently may, by simply looking at the brand name, assume certain product attributes, (objective 1.3), which may result in a predominantly positive (or negative) perception of the merchandise even without scrutinizing it.

It further aims to explore consumers’ perceptions of a selection of apparel brands. Firstly it investigates consumers’ familiarity with selected brands (objective 2.1), followed their by perception of the prestige associated with that brand (objective 2.2). It then investigates consumers’ familiarity with the selected brands’ CBO (objective 2.3), and the COM (objective 2.4). It is possible that consumers may infer specific attributes when they become aware of the CBO of selected brands and the COM of the brands. Consumers’ eventual perception of a brand may therefore be influenced by the COO-effect, which is based on their awareness of the duality of bi-national products (objective 2.5).

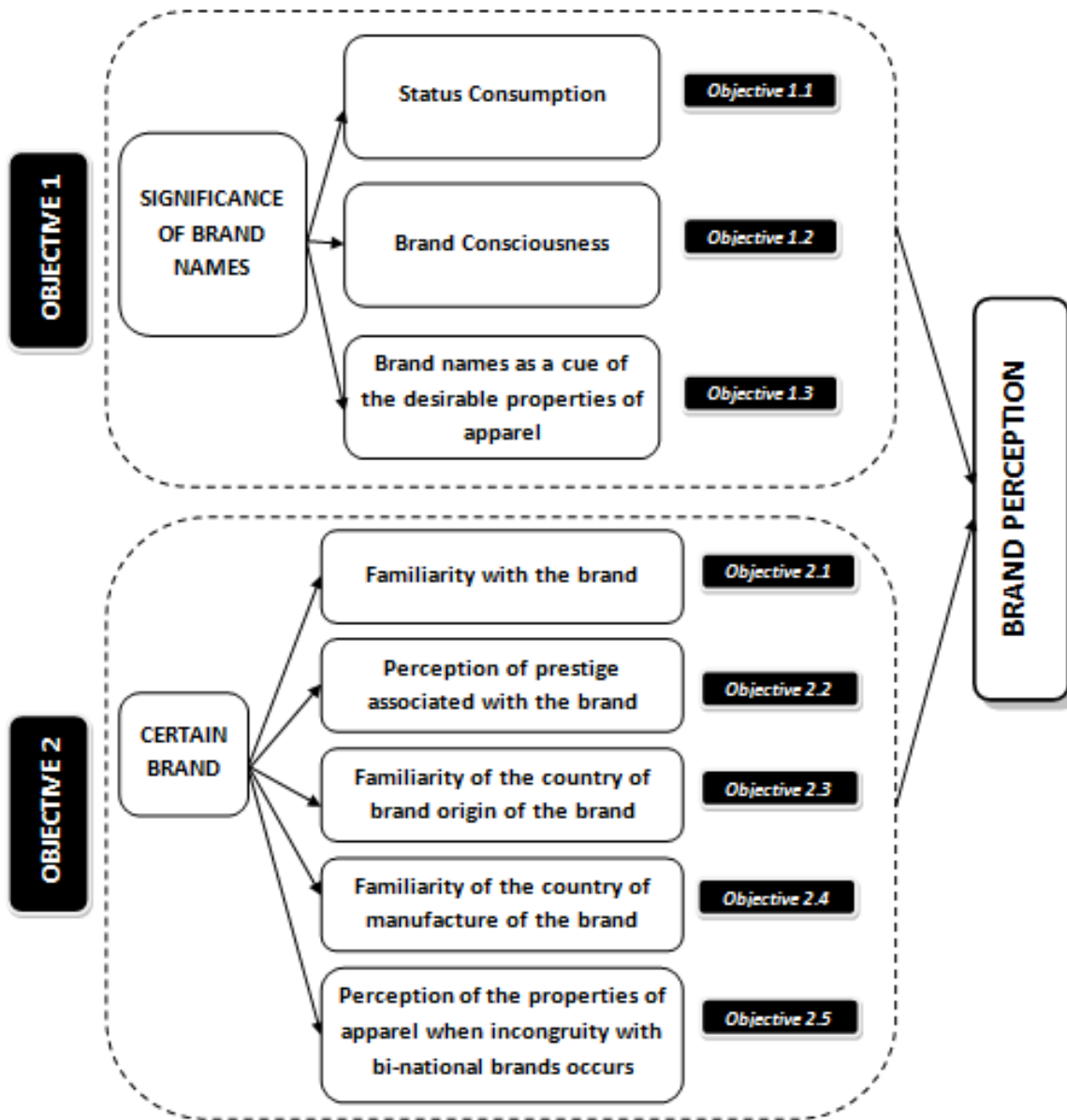


FIGURE 3.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.5 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.5.1 Aim of the research

The principal aim of this study was to explore and describe female consumers' reliance on brands as a heuristic in terms of the properties of apparel merchandise and to subsequently investigate how Country of Brand Origin (CBO) and Country of Manufacture (COM) influence females' perceptions of the properties of selected brands when brand incongruity of bi-national products exists.

3.5.2 Research objectives

Specific objectives for the study were:

1 To explore, describe and discuss the significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel choices:

- 1.1 To explore, describe and discuss females' inclination to purchase apparel products for status related reasons.
- 1.2 To explore, describe and discuss females' brand consciousness, referring to female apparel brands.
- 1.3 To explore, describe and discuss females' use of brand names as a cue of the desirable properties of apparel.

2 To explore, describe and discuss females' perception of apparel brand names, i.e.:

- 2.1 To explore, describe and discuss females' familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names.
- 2.2 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands.
- 2.3 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity with the Country of Brand Origin (CBO) of selected prominent apparel brands.
- 2.4 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity with the Country of Manufacture (COM) of selected prominent apparel brands.
- 2.5 To explore, describe and discuss the COO-effect, specifically consumers' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occurs.



Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the research design and methodology used in this study. It also focuses on attention to the quality of the research and ethical concerns.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the blueprint of methods and procedure selected for the collection and interpretation of data gathered in a research project in order to draw conclusions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:56). The nature of this research is explorative and descriptive. The research design of this quantitative study was done in the form of a survey that utilised a self-administered structured questionnaire as measuring instrument during data collection. The study is cross-sectional because it was conducted at a certain point in time, February/March 2013, in the Tshwane metropolitan of Gauteng, South Africa.

Explorative research is initial research that is meant to gain insight and does not aim to draw conclusions that can be generalised to a larger population, for example South African females (Cant *et al.*, 2003:28; Fouché & de Vos, 2009:106; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:44). This type of research is conducted when there is a “lack of basic information” (Fouché & de Vos, 2009:106) and usually sets the scene for follow-up studies. There are various methods to conduct exploratory research, such as secondary data analysis, experience surveys, pilot studies and case studies (Cant *et al.*, 2003:29). A pilot test was done before the final data collection to eliminate error during the final procedure and to improve the quality of the data (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:54). During the pilot test it became clear that respondents found it difficult to answer certain

questions because they did not clearly understand how to interpret the scales (further explained in 4.2.2). All problems were corrected by reformulation of the instructions.

In descriptive research characteristics of people, objects or environments are described to get a better picture of the situation (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:45). This research follows exploratory research and already has a well defined subject (Fouché & de Vos, 2009:106; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:46). Descriptive research is mostly quantitative in nature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:182; Fouché & de Vos, 2009:106) and accuracy is highly important (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:46). Descriptive research can either be longitudinal (measured repeatedly over time) or cross-sectional (measured once) (Cant *et al.*, 2003:32). A sample of the population participated in this survey once, at a specific point in time and therefore it is a cross-sectional study.

A quantitative approach involves the use of scales for measurement, resulting in numerical figures that can be statistically analysed and hypothesised (Keller & Warrack, 2000:19; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:96). A quantitative study is structured and focused with limited involvement of the researcher during data collection (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:96; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:94). The quantitative approach that was followed has proven to be successful in similar studies, for example the research of Kinra (2006), Koubaa (2007) and Yasin *et al.* (2007).

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Population, sample and sampling

The targeted population, or unit of analysis, was upper socio economic females between the ages of 25 and 65, geographically situated in Tshwane, South Africa. Females are generally more occupied with fashion and apparel than males (Jacobs & De Klerk, 2007:48; Hansen & Jensen, 2008:1155). Women, regardless of the increase of working women, are still seen as the homemakers and it was recently found that women control 85 percent of household spending (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:417). Females furthermore often purchase the apparel of their partners, that increases their exposure to brands and brand names (Hansen & Jensen, 2008:1155), and is further enhanced by reading magazines. Therefore this study decided to concentrate on women.

To try and reach respondents who have the buying power to purchase branded apparel, this research aimed to concentrate on upper socio economic respondents. In many previous COO studies, the sample consisted only of students, and apart from receiving critique for doing so, these studies could only be used to draw inferences of *students'* perceptions and consumer behaviour (Okechuku & Onyemah, 1999:619; Chung *et*

al., 2009:22). To avoid a student sample and also to increase the probability of reaching upper socio economic females, the age interval was 25-65 years. People in this age bracket have mostly completed their studies and earning their own money to spend as they please.

A sample is a part of a population (De Vos, 2009:438; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:301). Twelve well trained volunteer field workers distributed the questionnaires at the work places of potential participants across selected upper income regions of Tshwane. Different types of working places were targeted, for instance an accounting firm, engineering company and a lawyer practise. The most convenient and less expensive way of reaching upper socio economic respondents was to distribute the questionnaire at working places with high profile occupations, such as engineers and accountants, who generally earn higher salaries. The sampling was done conveniently by recruiting suitable individuals in terms of gender and age (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:166; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:212). The sample was then expanded through snowball sampling: willing participants were asked to assist in the data gathering by distributing additional questionnaires to suitable candidates in their social circles. Snowball sampling occurs when the initial respondents locate additional respondents in the same unit of analysis (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:313). Convenient sampling and snowball sampling are non-probability sampling methods (Cant *et al.*, 2003:49). Non-probability sampling is a sampling method where the probability of individuals to be included in the sample is not known and cannot be calculated beforehand (Zikmund, 2003:380; McDaniel & Gates, 2008:51; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:211). Such a sample is not representative of the entire population, which explains why the findings of the research cannot be generalised to the whole population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:205; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:311).

4.2.2 Measuring instrument

A survey is defined as a research technique that involves the interviewing or observation of a sample of respondents (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:187; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:57). Survey research poses a number of questions by means of a questionnaire and summarises the responses (numerical data) by means of statistical methods to draw inferences and to make assumptions regarding the targeted population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:187). This survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire as measuring instrument. The questionnaire was structured according to the objectives of this research to ensure relevancy (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:271).

Questions in a questionnaire can be phrased by open-ended or closed-ended statements (Delport, 2009:174; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:272-273). Open-ended questions involve asking respondents to answer

questions in their own words that unfortunately pose various problems. Responses to these questions may be biased, while both coding and analysis of the responses could be problematic and time consuming (Zikmund, 2003:331-333). In this questionnaire open-ended questions were limited to the minimum. Closed-ended questions are preferable because they eliminate the possibility of a biased response and can be accurately coded to create quantitative data (McDaniel & Gates, 2008:297). Mostly closed-ended questions were used in this questionnaire. The questionnaire was kept as short as possible to ensure more accurate results and a higher response rate (Walliman, 2005:283). Questions were specific to avoid ambiguousness (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:276; Walliman, 2005:283) and all questions only tested a single idea to prevent confusion (Delpont, 2009:171; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:192). Throughout the questionnaire wording of questions was kept simple, and easy language was used to enhance accuracy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:194). Vague questions and unclear instructions may lead to inaccurate data and therefore the pilot test was conducted to overcome potential problems (Delpont, 2009:171; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:192-194).

The final drafting of the questionnaire was done after completion of a pilot test where the questionnaire was handed to five individuals for completion and to comment on the language, the complexity of the scales and time required for completion. The questionnaire used for the pilot test had certain limitations. The first problem that occurred was certain wording. For example at section D, which focuses on the influence of the bi-national nature of brands, the wording confused certain respondents. The respondents had to choose five most important characteristics out of a list of twelve characteristics and then rate the chosen five from 1 to 5 where 1 indicates most important. Some respondents understood it incorrectly and only used the numbers 1 and 5 and rated all twelve characteristics with either a number 1 or a number 5. Other respondents rated all twelve characteristics from 1 to 12. In order to eliminate confusion, the wording was changed and the numbers 1 to 5 were listed with a short indication of what each number represents. A second problem was the length of section D (the influence of the bi-national nature of brands). Initially this section consisted of three sets of labels with a rating scale question for each of the three sets. After the pilot study it became evident that the rating was mostly the same for all three sets. In the final questionnaire only one rating scale question was used and the respondent had to take all three sets of labels into consideration. Lastly, the pilot study indicated where questions were unnecessary and where questions were lacking. For example the question related to occupation was seen as redundant and was removed from the final questionnaire.

The study focused on brand and COO incongruity. A set of fourteen brands were chosen and used in questions relating to COM (question 11), CBO (question 12) and level of prestige (question 13). The set of brands had to include bi-national brands as well as brands where the COM and CBO are the same in order to

determine differences between brands that are bi-national and the brands that are not. The brands also had to be perceived as prestigious brands. Because the female apparel industry is associated with an overwhelming variety of brand names, the brands that were selected for this investigation were chosen by consulting a variety of female lifestyle magazines. The magazines that were consulted were Fairlady, True Love, Drum, Rooi Rose, Sarie and Vrouekeur. The selection had to take into account that the chosen brands should be accessible for the sample of this study (women residing in Tshwane). The luxury brands that mostly featured in the editorials and advertisements were selected for the questionnaire. The pilot test indicated that the entire selection was perceived as prestigious brands (question 13 tested the level of prestige).

The structure of the final questionnaire (addendum B) together with the data analysis measures is set out in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: STRUCTURE OF FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	<u>DATA ANALYSIS MEASURES</u>
Section A: Demographics	
• Various demographic questions	Frequencies; percentages.
Section B: Status & desirable properties of apparel	
• Status Consumption (Scale adapted from Eastman <i>et al.</i> 1999)	Frequencies, means, Standard error of the mean, Cronbach Alpha, regressions. Analyse with demographic data.
• Desirable properties of clothing	Means, standard error of the mean, Cronbach Alpha, percentage variance explained, Spearman correlation coefficient, ANOVA, regressions. Exploratory factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) using a Promax rotation method. Analyse with demographic data.
Section C: Brand consciousness and brand familiarity	
• Brand Conscious (Scale adapted from Sproles & Kendall 1986)	Frequencies, means, Standard error of the mean, Cronbach Alpha, regressions. Analyse with demographic data.
• Familiarity with apparel brands	Frequencies, percentages
• Familiarity with COM	Frequencies, percentages
• Familiarity with CBO	Frequencies, percentages
• Perceived prestige associated with the selection of brands.	Frequencies, percentages
Section D: The influence of the bi-national nature of brands	
• Perception of bi-national brands	Frequencies, percentages

Section A focuses on the demographics of the respondents. This data will be used in conjunction with data in the other three sections for instance to see if respondents with similar demographics have similar perceptions. It will also indicate whether the respondents comply with the parameters of the sample (e.g. female, residing in Tshwane and between the ages of 25 and 65).

Objective 1.1 aims to explore, describe and discuss females' inclination to purchase apparel products for status related reasons. Section B contains an adapted status consumption scale from Eastman *et al.* (1999) which will be used to determine the degree of status consumption. Means will be calculated using the data of the scale in conjunction with certain demographic data to identify possible status tendencies such as whether younger respondents or high income consumers are more prone to engage in status consumption.

Section B furthermore aims to determine which properties of apparel are more desirable (objective 1.3). The data will be used in an exploratory factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) using a Promax rotation method. Factor analysis will indicate if certain properties have the same level of desirability. The data that emerge from the factor analysis will then be analysed with the demographic data in order to indicate whether certain demographic variables influence the desirability of apparel properties.

Section C firstly focuses on objective 1.2 related to respondents' brand consciousness, specifically in terms of female apparel brands using an adapted version of Sproles and Kendall's (1986) brand conscious scale. Similar to the data analysis in section B, this data will also be analysed together with the demographic data.

Familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names (objective 2.1), perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands (objective 2.2), familiarity with the CBO of selected prominent apparel brands (objective 2.3) and familiarity with of COM of selected prominent apparel brands (objective 2.4) are also investigated in section C and results will be indicated in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Section D is an extremely important section of the questionnaire as it explores the COO-effect, specifically consumers' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occurs (objective 2.5). Findings will be presented in terms of descriptive statistics, i.e. frequencies and percentages.

The scales used in the questionnaire will be explained in depth when presenting the results in Chapter 5. The operationalisation of the important constructs used in this study, is presented in Table 4.2. The table gives a clear indication of the items included to investigate the various objectives and sub-objectives as well as the specific procedure of data analysis that will be conducted.

TABLE 4.2: OPERATIONALISATION TABLE

OBJECTIVES	SUB-OBJECTIVES	DESCRIPTORS	INDICATORS	ITEMS	MEASURE
1. To explore, describe and discuss the significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel /preferences:	1.1. To explore, describe and discuss females' inclination to purchase apparel products for their prestige, i.e. status related reasons.	Items that are perceived as being very high quality and exclusive and thus warrant a higher price based on the added value that the purchaser feels they will obtain from the product.	Prestige refers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality • Exclusivity • Higher price • Added value 	Question 7 (V71-V75) (Scale adapted from Eastman <i>et al.</i> 1999)	Descriptive statistics: percentages, means, standard error of the mean, Cronbach's Alpha, regressions.
	1.2 To explore, describe and discuss females' brand consciousness, referring to female apparel brands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand consciousness/ awareness, i.e. the extent to which a brand is recognised and correctly associated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand recognition • Correct association 	Question 9 (V91-V98) (Scale adapted from Sproles & Kendall 1986)	Descriptive statistics: percentages, means, standard error of the mean, Cronbach's Alpha, regressions.
	1.3 To explore, describe and discuss females' use of brand names as a cue of the desirable properties of apparel.	Brand names of cues to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality • Fashionability • Prestige • Fit • Durability • Ease of care • Environmental concern • Concern for human dignity • Price • Comfort 	Use of brand names to assess specific properties	Question 8 (V81-V89; V810-V812)	Descriptive statistics: percentages, means, standard error of the mean, Cronbach's Alpha of the means. Factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis with Promax rotation; Means, percentage variance explained, Spearman correlations, Cronbach's Alpha of the factors, ANOVA.

OPERATIONALISATION TABLE continued

OBJECTIVES	SUB-OBJECTIVES	DESCRIPTORS	INDICATORS	ITEMS	MEASURES
2 To explore, describe and discuss females' perception of apparel brand names, i.e.:	2.1 To explore, describe and discuss females' familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names.	Familiarity with specific apparel brand names	Ability to identify apparel brands	Question 10 (V101-V109; V1010-V1015)	Descriptive statistics: percentages, means, standard error of the mean.
	2.2 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands.	Brand perception: Extent to which brand is recognised and associated with prestige	Perception of the prestige of a variety of apparel brands	Question 13 (V131-V139; V1310-V1314) Question 14: (V141-V142) Question 15 (V151-V152)	
	2.3 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity with the Country of Brand Origin of selected prominent apparel brands.	Perception of CBO of selected brands	Ability to correctly identify the CBO of a variety of apparel brands.	Question 12 (V1211-V1219; V12110-V12114; V1221-V1229; V12210-V12214)	
	2.4 To explore, describe and discuss consumers' familiarity of Country Of Manufacture of selected prominent apparel brands.	Perception of COM of selected brands	Ability to correctly identify the COM of a variety of apparel brands.	Question 11 (V1111-V1119; V11110-V11114; V1121-V1129; V11210-V11214)	
	2.5 To explore, describe and discuss the COO-effect, specifically consumers' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occurs.	Perception of COM of selected brands	Congruent perception Incongruent perception	Question 8 (V81-V89; V810-V812) Question 9 (V91-V98) Question 16 (V16) Question 17 (V17) Question 18 (V18) Question 19 (V191-V199 –V1912)	

4.2.3 Data collection

A pilot-test was firstly done with seventeen respondents that met the prerequisites for participation in the study, aiming to identify problems and to enhance effectiveness (Strydom, 2009a:210). Data collection took place during February and March 2013 in Tshwane and was supervised by the researcher with the assistance of twelve willing field workers. Five-hundred-and-fifty structured questionnaires were dropped at volunteered fieldworkers' homes or places of work for self completion and were collected within three days. To motivate participation, respondents entered their cell phone numbers into a lucky draw on a separate card to win a Nine West handbag. Field workers were provided with questionnaires, closed boxes with a slit to post completed questionnaires in, lucky draw entry cards, envelopes for the completed lucky draw cards and a laminated picture of the Nine West handbag. The fieldworkers distributed the questionnaires at various work places as discussed above. Questionnaires were handed to willing respondents personally, in the form of a hard copy. After completion, the respondent personally posted the questionnaire into a sealed box, which ensured the respondent that their questionnaires would be treated anonymously. Upon completion of the data collection process, 322 useful questionnaires were retrieved. No pressure was exerted if respondents failed to return their questionnaires after one reminder.

4.2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is the achievement of greater understanding of the data by summarising the data and finding consistent patterns (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:59). According to McDaniel and Gates (2008:390), a five-step approach is used by professionals in the analysis of data. These steps include validating and editing responses, coding, converting information to obtain data, revising the data and lastly, statistical analysis. This approach was applied in this study. Data analysis without the help of electronic resources can be time-consuming and can make the data difficult to interpret (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:257) therefore, electronic resources were used.

The pilot test was analysed before distributing the questionnaires. A meaningful sample size, seventeen respondents, was used to allow useful feedback and data. The main data obtained from the final data collection procedure were coded by the researcher, captured in electronic format and analysed by statisticians of the University of Pretoria. The instructions of the original scales were followed and guidance of the statisticians aided to address the objectives of the study in a scientific manner and a publishable format.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, medians, standard deviations), and analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse and interpret the data (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:326; 385) (See Table 4.2).

4.3 QUALITY OF THE STUDY

To ensure that findings are publishable, it is important to attend to the quality of the entire study. The research design, methodology as well as the data analysis is relevant in terms of the quality of a study. Two important aspects that enhance the quality of a study are validity and reliability (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:28).

4.3.1 The importance of the research design and methodology

It is very important to address the advantages and disadvantages of the research design and methodology of the study. Time and financial constraints had a big influence in the design of this study. With regards to sampling, using convenient sampling provides an advantage in terms of affordability of the process while it is also the least time-consuming and the most convenient method (Cant *et al.*, 2003:135). The disadvantage is that convenient sampling is a non-probability sampling method that, as already stated, means that the sample is not representative of the population and data cannot be generalised to the bigger population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:205; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:311). The sample size was 322, which is a relative small sample size, but the statisticians agreed that it would suffice in terms of the objectives of the study. The measuring instrument itself also has its advantages and disadvantages. With a self administered questionnaire, the risk of an interviewer cheating is eliminated and the respondent is not influenced as may happen during a personal interview (Cant *et al.*, 2003:80). A big problem in research is that respondents may provide incorrect answers to look clever and to avoid embarrassment (Cant *et al.*, 2003:79). Since the questionnaire was completely anonymous and was put into a sealed box after completion, the respondents most probably were more honest in their answering, knowing that nobody would be able to trace their questionnaires back to them. In contrast totally anonymous questionnaires provide respondents the option of completing the questionnaire faster by giving incorrect answers without being caught out (Cant *et al.*, 2003:79). The disadvantage of using a self-administered questionnaire on a drop-off and collect later basis is that some respondents just do not fill theirs in, resulting in a low response rate (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:189). People are not always willing to put time aside to fill in forms and answer questions.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have their advantages and disadvantages and by combining both in one research project or study could result in more advantages than disadvantages

(Zikmund & Babin, 2010:93). The inclusion of focus groups to determine their opinions regarding luxury brands, would have been ideal.

4.3.2 Validity issues

The extent to which a specific study measures what it is originally intended to measure is known as validity and can be divided into predictive validity and construct validity (Zikmund, 2003:302; McDaniel & Gates, 2008:249; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:28). Although various other types of validity can be distinguished, such as convergent validity, discriminant validity (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:251) and criterion validity (Delport, 2009:161), this study will only focus on predictive validity and construct validity, since they are the two most fundamental types of validity (Rossiter, 2008:381).

Predictive validity is a measurement of how well a test forecasts future performance (Smith, 2011:1). Predictive validity is the correlation between the test and criterion measured (Rossiter, 2002:311). The purpose of predictive validity should not be to maximize the prediction, but to match the true theoretical correlation between the predictor and the criterion (Rossiter, 2002:311; Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007:178-179; Rossiter, 2008:381). If the same study is repeated using the same unit of analysis and the findings are similar to the findings of this research, then the predictive validity is high, as this would indicate that the findings truthfully reflect consumers' behaviour (Shuttleworth, 2009a:1). In this study, multiple measures were taken to eliminate error throughout the research process, for example training of fieldworkers, pre testing the questionnaire, not exerting pressure to complete the questionnaires, self coding of the completed questionnaires and self checking of the data.

Construct validity is the "extent to which an instrument measures a characteristic that cannot be directly observed but is assumed to exist based on patterns in people's behaviour" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:92). Ambiguity in literature exists regarding construct validity and content validity. Some are of the opinion they are two separate types of validity (Delport, 2009:160-162), while others are of the opinion that they are the same (Haynes, Richards & Kubany, 1995:238; Rossiter, 2008:380). This study regarded construct- and content- validity as a single form of validity. Shuttleworth (2009b:1) explains that construct validity seeks agreement between a theoretical concept and a specific measuring device or procedure and therefore existing, established scales with excellent reliability measures were incorporated to measure constructs. In order to achieve predictive validity, construct validity is needed (Rossiter, 2008:380, 387), which requires that the questionnaire does indeed test what the study needs it to test (Shuttleworth, 2009b:1). Poor

construct validity results in misleading empirical results (Rossiter, 2008:381). A thorough literature review enabled a selection of appropriate scales and a proper delineation of the relevant constructs.

4.3.3 Reliability

Reliability refers to the internal consistency of a measuring instrument (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:93). “..if the same variable is measured under the same conditions, a reliable measurement procedure will produce identical (or nearly identical) measurements” (Delpont, 2009:162-163). When results are not reliable, they may also not be valid, even though high reliability does not guarantee valid results (Delpont, 2009:163). The test for reliability is to calculate the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. This was done for all the individual items in the questionnaire that formed part of specific measuring instrument. For a multiple scale to be reliable a Cronbach Alpha needs to be a minimum of $\alpha = 0.60$ (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:248, 249). According to Cant *et al.* (2005:157), errors in reliability can result from factors such as respondent tiredness, boredom, lack of understanding and time constraints. To ensure reliability in this study, the questionnaires was designed in a way that enhances reliability of responses. This was done using basic language that is easy to understand, by making the questions and overall questionnaire short and concise, and by making question answering quick and easy, involving the simple tick of a box, that was apparently successful as all the Cronbach Alphas in this study were ≥ 0.7 .

A variety of actions were taken to combat error. The questionnaire was thoroughly put together with expert help from the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria. The pilot test of the questionnaire, conducted with 17 suitable candidates, was done to identify possible problems during completion. The pilot test did indicate some problems in the original questionnaire, that were rectified prior to the main data collection. Established scales were incorporated in the questionnaire where possible and minimal changes were made to incorporate selected brand names. The reliability coefficients were nevertheless calculated and will be explained in chapter 5.

4.4 ETHICS

Ethics refer to the moral principles shared within a society that set the standard of right and wrong behaviour (Cant *et al.*, 2003:11). In social research common research pitfalls are discrimination, omission, stereotyping and bias (Walliman, 2005:342). To ensure that a study is ethically conducted at all times, pertinent actions need to be taken. The respondents need to be protected from harm, participate on a

voluntary basis and at all times have the right to privacy (Cant *et al.*, 2003:11; Walliman, 2005:345-349; Leedy & Ormrod, 2009:101-102). Honesty with professional colleagues is ensured by honest and truthful recording of findings and avoidance of plagiarism (Walliman, 2005:351-352; Leedy & Ormrod, 2009:103-104).

The following actions were taken in this study:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism was avoided at all times. A thorough literature reference list indicates all the sources consulted and used. The plagiarism declaration of the University of Pretoria can be found in addendum A.

Ethical approval: The study received the written consent of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences' Research Ethics Committee as presented in addendum B.

Voluntary participation and informed consent: The cover letter (see addendum C) ensured respondents that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. It also indicated that the questionnaire would take about ten minutes to complete. Informed consent was not necessary in this research, since participation was voluntary, no physical tests were conducted and only adults participated.

Protection from harm: The cover letter of the questionnaire explained the nature of the study. The contact details of the researcher were given in case respondents needed assistance during completion. No questions were asked that could cause emotional pain or could be interpreted as discrimination.

Right to privacy: The cover letter informed participants that their information would be treated confidentially. The questionnaires were completed anonymously and participants personally and willingly submitted them into a sealed box to ensure confidentiality.

Data and interpretations: Another ethical aspect is the truthfulness of findings (Strydom, 2009b:65). Special attention was taken to ensure the data collection and interpretation was done correctly for example by reverse coding negative statements. When shortcomings in the research occurred, the nature of the shortcoming/error as well as its implications were addressed with the help of a qualified statistician (Strydom, 2009b:66).

4.5 SUMMARY

The research design and methodology of this study were carefully constructed to ensure that the best possible research methods were used with the resources available. A quantitative approach was taken using a survey method with self administered questionnaires. The unit of analysis was upper socio economic females between the ages of 25 and 65, situated in the Tshwane metropolitan region. The data collection and data analysis were conducted in a manner that concentrated on the quality of the research. Care was taken during the data collection process to collect useful data and not to contravene the privacy of respondents. Throughout the study the validity- and reliability issues were kept in mind to enhance the quality of the study. Ethics played an integral part during the study. The study was executed with the aim to publish the findings in a scientific accredited journal and therefore effort was made to ensure the quality of the study.



Chapter 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter introduces the demographic characteristics of the sample before presenting the findings in accordance with the objectives for the study. Findings are also interpreted and discussed in accordance with extant literature.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Selected demographic characteristics that were considered relevant to this investigation were included in the demographic section of the questionnaire.

5.1.1 Age

The minimum requisite for participation in the survey was 25 years. Working females were targeted because they are generally more interested in appearance management (Britwistle & Tsim, 2005:453) and it was assumed that working women would be more able to afford sought after brands. Every respondent indicated their exact age in an open question and their ages were afterwards distinguished in terms of three categories (Figure 5.1) for the purpose of statistical analysis as it was expected that different age groups might have dissimilar perceptions.

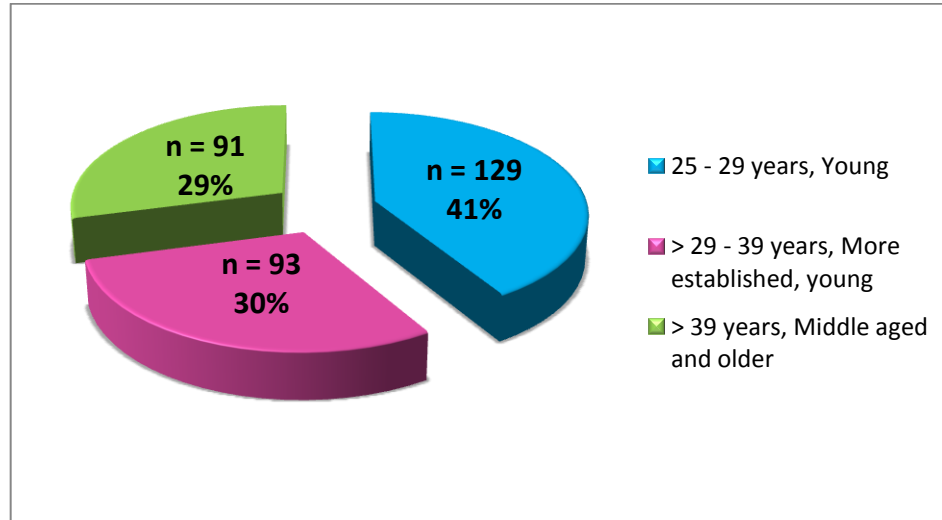


FIGURE 5.1: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS (N = 313; MISSING: n=9)

The three age categories were well represented with slightly more of the youngest age group (41%) than the “more established, young” and “middle aged and older” age groups.

5.1.2 Level of education

Level of education was considered relevant in this investigation as literature confirms its influence in terms of consumers’ status awareness (Chao & Schor, 1998:108), ability to search for information, and consumers’ ability to investigate and dispute issues that concern them (Wallendorf, 2001:508-509). The five categories that were distinguished in the questionnaire were later regrouped as indicated in Table 5.1 for the purpose of statistical analysis.

TABLE 5.1: EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS (N = 320; MISSING: n = 2)

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories of investigation	n	%
Lower than grade 12	17	5.3	Grade 12 and lower	88	27.5
Grade 12	71	22.2			
Grade 12+ diploma	52	16.2	Grade 12 + Diploma/Degree	145	45.3
Grade 12+ a degree	93	29.1			
Postgraduate degree or diploma	87	27.2	Grade 12 + Postgraduate Diploma/ Degree	87	27.2

Although it was expected that higher educated consumers would be more meticulous about brands and their origin, the sample included a sizeable number of respondents who did not progress further than secondary school education (Grade 12 and lower: n = 88) to enable a comparison among groups with

notably different levels of formal education. Only three level of education categories were therefore retained for further analysis as indicated in Table 5.1.

5.1.3 Population group

Respondents indicated which population group they belonged to according to the South African Population Equity Act although this explorative investigation never aimed to distinguish the perceptions of different population groups. A correlation of this kind would have required a much larger sample because the population in South Africa is very cosmopolitan and complex, and logistically that was not viable in this explorative study. Three broad population categories were however distinguished for comparisons that could be used to instigate a follow-up investigation (see Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2: REPRESENTATION OF POPULATION GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE (N = 322; MISSING: n = 0)

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories of investigation	n	%
Black	43	13.4	Black	43	13.4
White	247	76.7	White	247	76.7
Coloured	15	4.7	Other	32	9.9
Asian	14	4.4			
Other	3	0.9			

5.1.4 Household Income

Household income influences members' spending power. Five income categories were distinguished in the questionnaire to ensure a sizeable representation in each category. Three income categories were formed for the purpose of a statistical comparison among income categories that are used by Media organisations in Tshwane (Muller, 2009:1) as indicated in Table 5.3, namely a lower income group (< R10 000) that represent LSM groups up to level 7; middle income group (\geq R10_000 to < R25 000) that more or less represent LSM groups 7 up to level 9 ; and a high income group (\geq R25 000) that represent the more affluent LSM groups 9 and higher. The income categories coincide with the Tshwane Metropolitan's distinction of the characteristic of its population.

TABLE 5.3: MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOMES OF THE SAMPLE (N= 318; MISSING: n = 3)

Household income (monthly) Categories in questionnaire	n	%	Household income (monthly) Categories of investigation	n	%
Less than R5000 per month	30	9.4	Lower income group	72	22.6
R 5 000 - < R10 000	42	13.2			
R10 000 - < R15 000	60	18.9	Middle income group	138	43.4
R15 000 - < R25 000	78	24.5			
R25 000 +	108	34.0	High income group	108	34.0

As indicated in the previous chapters, income does influence luxury expenditure. The higher the income, the higher the likelihood of purchasing luxury branded items (Chao & Schor, 1998:108; Phau & Leng, 2007:69). Throughout the data analysis, income was considered highly relevant as it influences affordability of sophisticated brands.

5.1.5 Area of residence

Area of residence is merely indicated to confirm that respondents were recruited across Tshwane in all five Tshwane regions. Findings are summarised in Figure 5.2.

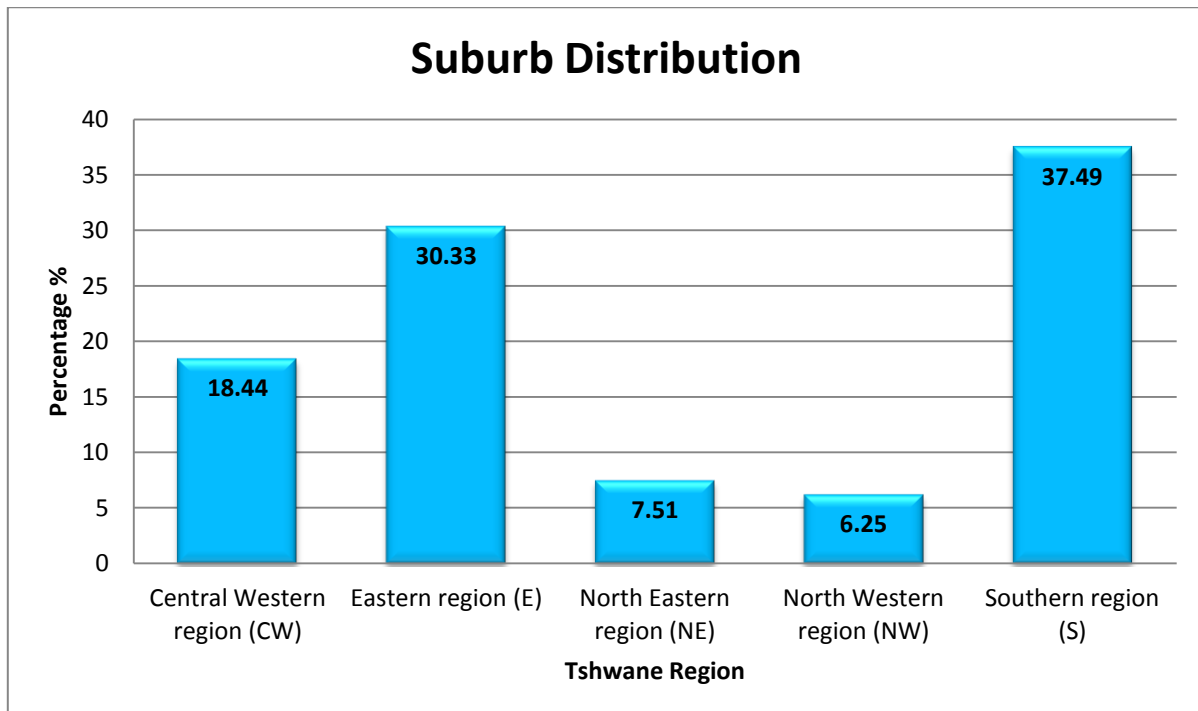


FIGURE 5.2: AREA OF RESIDENCE OF THE SAMPLE (n = 320; MISSING: n = 2)

According to the Tshwane household survey of 2008, the Southern region has by far the highest monthly household income, followed by the Eastern region and then the Central Western region (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, 2008:41). As Figure 5.2 indicates, 86.24% of the respondents were from these three regions, which is beneficiary, since higher income is related to higher purchasing of branded/luxury goods.

5.2 RESULTS

The results of the study are presented and discussed in accordance with the objectives for the study.

5.2.1 The significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel preferences (Objective 1)

Literature confirms the use of brand names as symbols (cue) of the properties of products (apparel) such as quality, status and prestige (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237; Clark *et al.*, 2007:46; Bhardwaj *et al.*, 2010:82). Brands (names and/or logos) can therefore be very important cues/ discriminators in terms of consumers' selection of products and appearance management, especially apparel.

5.2.1.1 Respondents' inclination to purchase apparel products for status related reasons

It made sense to commence with an investigation of respondents' inclination to attend to the perceived status of products during consumer decision-making, in terms of further discussions of the significance of brand names as a cue of luxury when purchasing apparel products. Section B of the questionnaire involved a slightly modified version of the status consumption scale of Eastman *et al.*, (1999) that entailed five statements, and required responses in terms of a four increment Likert-type *Agreement* scale (i.e. the higher the mean for the scale: $M_{\max} = 4$, the higher the degree of status consumption). All five items from the original scale were used, but the wording was adapted slightly to resemble wording used in everyday communication. The original scale implemented a seven increment Likert-type *Agreement* scale. Findings were converted to four increments in accordance with other measures in this questionnaire (Table 5.4).

TABLE 5.4: RESPONDENTS' STATUS CONSUMPTION (N= 315; MISSING: n = 7)

Statement	Mean	Standard error of the mean	Cronbach Alpha
I would buy a clothing item just because it is classy	2.39	0.053	0.77
I am interested in new clothes with status	2.06	0.054	0.75
I would pay more for a clothing item if it is classy	2.49	0.051	0.75
The prestige of a clothing item is relevant to me	2.11	0.049	0.74
A clothing item is more valuable to me if it has some exclusivity	2.43	0.056	0.76
Overall	2.30	0.039	0.79

The Cronbach Alphas for the five items exceed 0.74 that reflects satisfactory internal consistency of responses to this section of the questionnaire. Means for the five statements vary between 2.06 and 2.49 ($M_{\max} = 4$). This suggests that on surface value, status is apparently not a prominent driver of respondents' purchase- and consumption decisions. Means were then calculated for the various categories within each of the demographic categories that were considered in this investigation (see Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.5: RESPONDENTS' STATUS CONSUMPTION PER DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY (N = 315; MISSING: n = 7)

Demographic variable	Categories	n	Mean	Standard error of the mean
Age (n = 313) • $p = 0.18$ • $r^2 = 0.011$	25 - 29 years	129	2.38 ^a	0.056
	>29 - 39 years	93	2.33 ^a	0.065
	>39 years	91	2.21 ^a	0.085
Income (n = 318) • $p = 0.004$ • $r^2 = 0.034$	<R10K	72	2.33 ^a	0.082
	R10K - R25K	138	2.17 ^b	0.057
	>R25K	108	2.46 ^a	0.068
Level of education (n = 320) • $p = 0.07$ • $r^2 = 0.017$	Gr 12 and lower	88	2.23 ^a	0.076
	Gr 12 + degree or diploma	145	2.41 ^a	0.060
	Post graduate qualification	87	2.23 ^a	0.065
Population Group (n = 322) • $p = <0.0001$ • $r^2 = 0.065$	White	247	2.21 ^a	0.040
	Black	43	2.64 ^b	0.109
	Other	32	2.61 ^b	0.160

Means with different super scripts in a particular category differ statistically significantly ($p \leq 0.05$)

Age: A comparison of the means across the three age categories suggests that females younger than 30 years of age, are more status conscious ($M_{25-30 \text{ yrs}} = 2.38$) than their older counterparts and that these young females are significantly more status conscious than females above 39 years of age ($M_{>39 \text{ yrs}} = 2.21$; $p = 0.01$). This coincides with findings in previous studies (Du Preez & Visser, 2003; Lachance *et al.*, 2003) that

found that younger consumers are more aspirational and status conscious. It also coincides with the aspect of “old money”, namely that people who have had money for some time in their family do not need to prove to others that they have got it (Solomon, 1996:433).

Income: Females in the middle income group seem to be significantly less status conscious than those in the highest income group ($p = 0.001$).

Level of education: This study could not confirm significant differences in the status consumption among groups with different levels of education.

Population group: Although the representation of Black and other population groups in this study was small, findings suggest that Whites are significantly less status conscious than Blacks ($p = 0.0001$) as well as other population groups (Coloured and Asian: $p = 0.0018$) and because the means for these two groups exceed 2.6 ($M_{\max} = 4$), one may conclude that they are fairly status conscious. These findings coincide with South African studies that focused on the black emerging middle class. In South Africa there is a tendency under black emerging consumers to purchase status symbols such as expensive cars and branded apparel to flaunt their achievements (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:332; Erasmus, Kok & Retief, 2001:120). It was found that these consumers’ branded apparel expenditure is much higher compared to other population groups (Nieftagodien & Van der Berg, 2007:12), probably because branded apparel is visually significant and can create an impression that the wearer has a higher social standing in society even though it might not be true (Solomon, 1996:452).

5.2.1.2 Respondents’ brand consciousness, specifically female apparel brands

This section was adapted from Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) scale of brand consciousness. The eight questions were answered in terms of a four point Likert –type scale. For all eight questions, the higher the mean ($M_{\max} = 4$), the higher the degree of brand consciousness (Table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6: RESPONDENTS' BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS (N = 317; MISSING: n = 5)

When buying smart casual clothing/ career wear, how specifically do you....	Mean	Standard error of the mean	Cronbach Alpha
Focus on well-known brands	2.00	0.046	0.86
choose more expensive brands	1.82	0.041	0.85
regard more famous brands as of a higher quality	2.24	0.049	0.85
assume that superior brands are sold in nice specialty stores	2.51	0.052	0.87
purchase what I believe are the best selling brands	2.20	0.049	0.86
regard the most advertised brands as good choices	2.08	0.045	0.85
regard imported brands as very good choices	2.11	0.046	0.85
regard local brands as usually very good choices	2.30	0.044	0.88
Overall	2.16	0.034	0.88

The internal consistency of the responses to this question was high (Cronbach Alphas > 0.85). The means indicate that the respondents were not highly brand consciousness (Means varied between 1.82 and 2.51; $M_{\max} = 4$).

Table 5.7 indicates the means for the different demographic groups.

TABLE 5.7: RESPONDENTS' BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS PER DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY (N = 317; MISSING: n = 5)

Demographic variable	Categories	n	Mean	Standard error of the mean
Age (n = 313) • $p = 0.036$ • $r^2 = 0.021$	25 - 29 years	129	2.24 ^a	0.054
	>29 - 39 years	93	2.18 ^a	0.060
	>39 years	91	2.03 ^a	0.065
Income (n = 318) • $p = 0.075$ • $r^2 = 0.016$	<R10K	72	2.19 ^a	0.066
	R10K - R25K	138	2.08 ^b	0.056
	>R25K	108	2.25 ^a	0.054
Level of education (n = 320) • $p = 0.361$ • $r^2 = 0.006$	Gr 12 and lower	88	2.19 ^a	0.068
	Gr 12 + degree or diploma	145	2.20 ^a	0.052
	Post graduate qualification	87	2.09 ^a	0.057
Population Group (n = 322) • $p = 0.0004$ • $r^2 = 0.048$	White	247	2.09 ^a	0.035
	Black	43	2.34 ^b	0.105
	Other	32	2.47 ^b	0.135

Means with different super scripts in a particular category differ statistically significantly ($p \leq 0.05$)

Even when distinguished in terms of specific demographic categories, none were particularly brand consciousness, although Black and the so-called other population groups were more brand conscious, i.e. significantly more so than Whites. The calculated standard error of the mean for White respondents was

noticeably lower (0.035) than the standard error of the mean for Black (0.105) and other (0.135) respondents. This indicates greater consensus among Whites about the issue.

Similar to the findings related status consumption, means for White respondents were significantly lower, i.e. Black and other population groups are significantly more inclined to purchase apparel for status related reasons and are significantly more brand conscious than Whites (Erasmus *et al.*, 2001:120).

5.2.1.3 Respondents' use of brand names as a cue of the desirable properties of apparel

Consumers' association of brand names with diverse characteristics, which included a combination of functional related characteristics, status factors as well as "green"/ environmental related cues was investigated through their responses to twelve self developed items that were listed randomly. The internal consistency of the sample's responses to these statements was confirmed by a calculation of the Cronbach Alphas for the individual items that varied between 0.85 and 0.87. All the items were therefore retained for the following unrestricted exploratory factor analysis procedure (See Table 5.8).

TABLE 5.8: THE USE OF BRAND NAMES AS AN INDICATION OF DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS (N = 306; MISSING: n = 16)

Attention to brand names used as indication of:	Mean	Standard error of the mean	Cronbach Alpha
The quality of the garment	2.62	0.052	0.85
The fashionability of the garment	2.45	0.051	0.85
The prestige of the garment	2.39	0.051	0.85
What your friends' admiration of the outfit could be	2.00	0.053	0.86
The suitability of the outfit for the occasion	2.97	0.053	0.84
The fit of the garment	3.20	0.051	0.84
The durability of the garment	3.08	0.048	0.85
Ease of care of the garment	2.80	0.052	0.85
Care about the environment	2.18	0.056	0.86
Manufacturers' regard for human dignity during manufacture	2.17	0.054	0.85
Price	3.08	0.048	0.86
Comfort	3.18	0.049	0.85
Overall	2.68	0.052	0.86

Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Component Analysis was done using a Promax rotation method with Eigen values: >1. Three factors emerged (see Table 5.9). Because no cross loadings occurred, all the items were retained for further analysis and interpretations. Comfort, fit, appropriate function, ease of care and durability forms part of the functional performance properties (Brown & Rice, 1998:39; Retief &

De Klerk, 2003:24). Factor 1 can therefore be labelled as Functional performance related attributes. Apart from performance properties, apparel is also used in appearance management and to communicate certain messages about wearer such as status (Kaiser *et al.* 1991:165; Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004:295; Phau & Leng, 2007:69). Furthermore, fashionability relates to the popularity of style by a wide audience at a specific time (Kaiser, 1997:4; Brannon, 2005:398). The second group of properties therefore all relates to the status/prestige attributes. The two properties that form part of Factor 3 relate to social responsibility towards the environment and human dignity. Factor 3 therefore is labelled Eco friendliness.

TABLE 5.9: FACTORS THAT EMERGED DURING FACTOR ANALYSIS (N = 306; MISSING: n = 16)

Brand names used as property cues:	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
Comfort	0.82	-0.09	0.04
The fit of the garment	0.82	0.11	-0.03
The durability of the garment	0.76	0.03	0.02
The suitability of the outfit for the occasion	0.71	0.25	-0.08
Ease of care of the garment	0.70	-0.22	0.37
Price	0.43	0.09	-0.03
The fashionability of the garment	0.04	0.88	-0.02
The prestige of the garment	-0.01	0.86	0.05
Your friends' admiration of the outfit	-0.13	0.68	0.34
The quality of the garment	0.32	0.62	-0.14
Care about the environment	0.00	0.03	0.92
Manufacturers' regard for human dignity during manufacture	0.03	0.11	0.86
Mean	3.22	2.37	2.18
Std error of the mean	0.036	0.040	0.500
% Variance explained	48.46	17.26	13.84
Cronbach Alpha	0.84	0.81	X
Spearman correlation coefficient			0.72

Cronbach Alpha coefficients for factors 1 and 2 (> 0.8) confirm the internal consistency of the responses. It made no sense to calculate the Cronbach Alpha for factor 3, as it contained only two items due to an unfortunate oversight in the compilation of the instrument. The Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.72 ($p = <0.0001$) that was subsequently calculated between the two items in the factor confirmed statistical significant consistency. In a future study at least two more items should be added to allow proper factorisation. The variance explained by the factors in the data is 79.56%, which is encouraging.

Means for the three factors suggest that females use brands names more pertinently as an indication of the functional performance characteristics of apparel (M = 3.22; Max = 4.0) rather than the status of the garment (M = 2.37) or its eco friendliness (M = 2.18).

In order to make inferences about differences in the use of brand names among the various demographic groups as an indication of the properties of apparel, means for the three factors were re-calculated per subset of each demographic category within a model that acknowledged all four demographic variables; an ANOVA was done with the classification variables of age, level of education, population group and income in a model under the condition that Mean F1, Mean F2, Mean F3 = LSMean (age), LSMean (level of education), LSMean (population group), LSMean (income). Interpretations were therefore done in terms of a model where all the demographic categories were acknowledged simultaneously. Findings are presented in Table 5.10.

TABLE 5.10: A COMPARISON OF THE MEANS FOR THE VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES (N = 322)

Means for the three factors per demographic category					
Category (n = 322)			Factor 1 Mean (SEM [*])	Factor 2 Mean (SEM)	Factor 3 Mean(SEM)
Age:	25 – 29yrs	n = 129	3.01 ^a (0.050)	2.48 ^a (0.060)	2.10 ^a (0.076)
	30 - 39 yrs	n = 93	3.07 ^a (0.069)	2.41 ^{ab} (0.067)	2.28 ^a (0.091)
	40 yrs +	n = 91	3.09 ^a (0.076)	2.19 ^{bc} (0.087)	2.24 ^a (0.102)
r ²			0.002	0.027	0.007
p-value			0.694	0.014	0.317
Income:	<R10K	n = 72	3.07 ^a (0.079)	2.47 ^a (0.073)	2.35 ^a (0.106)
	R10K - R25K	n = 138	3.03 ^a (0.060)	2.30 ^a (0.063)	2.12 ^a (0.077)
	>R25K	n = 108	3.07 ^a (0.053)	2.38 ^a (0.071)	2.18 ^a (0.085)
r ²			0.001	0.009	0.010
p-value			0.886	0.259	0.195
Education level:	Gr 12 and lower	n = 88	3.04 ^a (0.072)	2.40 ^a (0.075)	2.34 ^a (0.097)
	Gr 12 + degree or diploma	n = 145	3.10 ^a (0.054)	2.45 ^{ac} (0.062)	2.23 ^a (0.077)
	Post graduate qualification	n = 87	3.02 ^a (0.061)	2.24 ^b (0.072)	1.98 ^b (0.084)
r ²			0.003	0.015	0.023
p-value			0.604	0.094	0.025
Population group:	White	n = 247	3.01 ^a (0.041)	2.28 ^a (0.045)	2.10 ^a (0.054)
	Black	n = 43	3.22 ^b (0.092)	2.73 ^b (0.093)	2.38 ^b (0.166)
	Other	n = 32	3.12 ^{ab} (0.110)	2.60 ^b (0.139)	2.63 ^b (0.147)
r ²			0.013	0.056	0.038
p-value			0.118	0.0001	0.0023

*SEM: Standard error of the mean

In terms of females' use of brand names to infer the **functional performance characteristics** of apparel (Factor 1), significant differences were only prevalent among the three population groups ($R^2 = 0.13$; $p = 0.118$). Black females' use of brand names to distinguish functional performance related properties was statistically more significant ($M = 3.22$) than the use of brand names by Whites ($M = 3.01$), or the other population groups (Coloured and Asian) ($M = 3.12$). Neither income level nor education level or age groups differed significantly in terms of their use of brand names to signify functional performance characteristics of apparel. In summary, findings suggest that females mostly/always ($M = >3$) use brand names as an indication of the functional performance characteristics of apparel, which include aspects such as the fit, comfort as well as the textile- and construction quality of apparel.

In terms of females' use of apparel brands as an indication of **status** (Factor 2), significant differences were evident across different age- ($p = 0.014$) as well as the population categories ($p = 0.0001$). Although findings indicate that all females mostly use brand names as an indication of status ($M = 2.37$), their use of brand names as an indication of status is less prevalent than to deduce the functional performance characteristics. Extant literature indicates that younger females are generally more aspiring (Du Preez & Visser, 2003:18; Lachance *et al.*, 2003:47) and also more concerned about their social self (Kaiser, 1997:131), specifically that they are inclined to be more status conscious in terms of their apparel. This study confirms that younger females (i.e. females younger than 40 years of age) are significantly ($p = <0.05$) more inclined to use brand names as a symbol of status ($M_{25 - 29 \text{ yrs}} = 2.48$; $M_{>29 - 39 \text{ yrs}} = 2.41$) than their older counterparts ($M_{>39 \text{ yrs}} = 2.19$) who probably have more established self concepts and who do not necessarily have to depend on apparel as an extension of the self to the same extent that younger females do. Significant differences ($p = <0.05$) were also evident among the different population groups: Whites' use of brand names as an indication of status was significantly less prevalent compared to the other two population groups who did not differ significantly from one another ($M_{\text{White}} = 2.28$; $M_{\text{Blacks}} = 2.73$; $M_{\text{Other}} = 2.60$).

In terms of females' use of brand names to infer desirable **eco friendly properties** of apparel products, significant differences ($p = <0.05$) were confirmed between females with a post graduate qualification ($M_{\text{Post grad}} = 1.98$) and the lower educated respondents ($M_{\text{Gr12 \& dipl/deg}} = 2.23$; $M_{\leq \text{Gr12}} = 2.34$). For lower educated females, brand names are statistically more significant as indicators of eco friendly properties. Significant differences ($p = <0.05$) were again evident between White females and the other two population groups ($M_{\text{White}} = 2.10$; $M_{\text{Blacks}} = 2.38$; $M_{\text{Other}} = 2.63$). Findings therefore indicate that for population groups other than Whites, the use brand names as a cue of the properties of apparel, whether functional/ performance related, its status value or eco friendliness, is significantly more prevalent.

Interestingly, income level does not seem to be a significant predictor of consumers' use of brand names as a heuristic to infer specific /desirable properties of apparel. Population group, however, in the context of this study seems to be a significant predictor. In future studies more effort should be made to increase the number of Black, Coloured and other respondents to gain more insight in their use of brand names as a heuristic during the decision-making process.

5.2.2 Females' perception of apparel brand (Objective 2)

The study aimed to explore consumers' familiarity with certain brands (objective 2.1) and their perception of prestige associated with those brands (objective 2.2). It also aimed to look into consumers' familiarity with the selected brands' CBO (objective 2.3) and the COM (objective 2.4) and whether consumers' eventual perception of a brand may be influenced by their awareness of the duality of bi-national products (objective 2.5).

5.2.2.1 Respondents' familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names

To determine consumers' knowledge and awareness of brands, 15 prestige brand names of a variety of products were supplied based on scrutiny of popular lifestyle magazines, including brand names other than apparel brands to determine whether respondents actually recognised true apparel brands. Only ten of these brands were apparel brands to ensure that respondents were really able to distinguish apparel brands. Respondents had to identify the apparel brands and indicate whether they were familiar with these brands (whether it was objective or subjective did not matter at this point).

The findings are indicated in Table 5.11 in descending order. Apparel brands are shaded.

TABLE 5.11: RESPONDENTS' FAMILIARITY WITH APPAREL BRANDS (N = 322)

Brand name	Correct answers		Missing data
	n	%	
Donna Claire	265	83.07	3
Tumi	221	68.85	1
Pringle	180	56.96	6
Charter Club	162	50.63	2
Hilton Weiner	160	50.00	2
Country Road	152	47.65	3
Forever New	150	47.17	4
Jenni Button	150	47.17	1
Jo Borkett	137	43.35	6
French Connection	120	37.62	3
Busby	104	32.60	3
Cellini	98	30.63	2
Aca Joe	94	29.47	3
Montblanc	80	25.16	4
Maserati	46	14.56	6

Shaded columns refer to apparel brands.

The apparel brands that respondents were most familiar with, were Donna Claire (> 80% of sample), followed by Pringle (> 50%). The apparel brand that they were least familiar with was Aca Joe (< 30%). On average, 44.33% of the sample was familiar with the apparel brands correctly, that suggests that most females are not really highly brand conscious.

The questionnaire contained a list of 14 exclusive apparel brand names that are widely available in retail and that are advertised in popular female magazines. In a separate question, the respondents were deliberately asked which of the 14 brands they were not familiar with. These were identified as Zara, Trenergy and Jo Borkett. Seventy three respondents (22.67%) indicated that three to five of these brands are unknown to them and 30 (9.31%) indicated they were unfamiliar with six to ten of the brands. Only five respondents (1.55%) were familiar with all the brands. In an open question, respondents were asked to indicate which apparel brands they actually purchase. The brands mostly listed were Levi's, Sissy boy, Jeep, Ginger Mary, Forever New and Polo. Sissy boy and Forever New are two brands that mainly target younger consumers. This may have influenced the findings. It must be noted however, that the brands included in the questionnaire were thoughtfully selected from a wide variety of magazines published in a specific month. The exclusion of the brands that seem popular among young consumers was therefore unfortunate.

The researcher tried to limit the length of the questionnaire and did not want to include too many brands. This may have been an oversight.

Findings indicate that respondents are not very familiar with a wide variety of luxury apparel brands. Due to the relatively low means (six of the brands were correctly identified by $\leq 50\%$ of the sample), it did not make sense to analyse the findings per demographic group because it would not change the fact that in general, consumers are not necessarily familiar with a wide variety of exclusive brands. In a future study this list should be extended to allow further analysis per demographic category.

5.2.2.2 Respondents' perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands

The image of a brand exists in consumers' minds and the perception of status and prestige differs from one person to another (Keller, 1993:4; Bhat & Reddy, 1998:32; Clark *et al.*, 2007:46). Prestigious and status-bearing non-essentials are seen as luxury products (Wiedmann *et al.*, 2009:626). It was necessary to get an indication of whether the respondents perceived the selection of brands as prestigious or not. To get a better picture of their perceptions, respondents had to evaluate the fourteen brands chosen for this study in terms of prestige in terms of four categories, namely: 1 = Not prestigious at all, 2 = Limited in prestige, 3 = Fairly prestigious and 4 = Very prestigious. For further analysis the data were categorised into two categories, "Limited in prestige" and "Prestigious" as presented in Table 5.12.

TABLE 5.12: CATEGORISATION OF PRESTIGE

Categories in the questionnaire	Categories of investigation
Not at all prestigious	Limited in prestige
Limited in prestige	
Fairly prestigious	Prestigious
Very prestigious	

The findings are presented in Table 5.13 in descending order for prestigiousness and in a visual format in Figure 5.3.

TABLE 5.13: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PRESTIGE OF BRANDS (N=322)

	Limited prestige (n)	Prestigious (n)	Missing (n)
1. Guess	21	281	20
2. Diesel	31	273	18
3. Daniel Hechter	46	257	19
4. Pringle	44	252	26
5. Jenni Button	46	240	36
6. Queenspark	83	218	21
7. Woolworths - W Collection	100	204	18
8. Jo Borkett	82	203	37
9. Marion and Lindie	81	198	43
10. Country Road	93	188	41
11. Mango	107	173	42
12. Zara	102	172	48
13. Trenery	101	171	50
14. Donna Claire	141	160	21

Findings are also visually presented in Figure 5.3

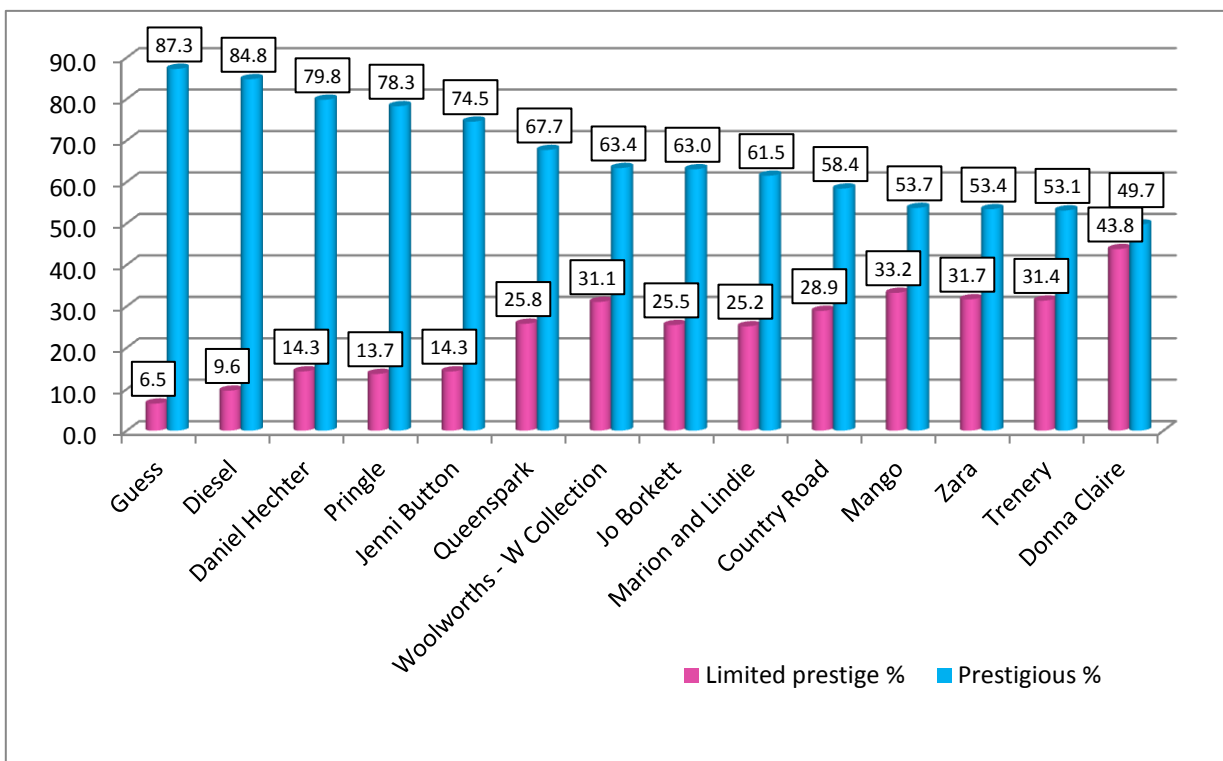


FIGURE 5.3: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PRESTIGE OF BRANDS (N=322)

Although respondents were not necessarily acquainted with all the apparel brands (see Table 5.11), the majority of the sample (>50%) considered 13 of the 14 apparel brands listed in a subsequent question as prestigious. Five of the brands were considered prestigious by >70% of the sample. The only brand not regarded prestigious by the majority, is a brand that is aimed at plus size women. Consumers may therefore perceive the brand as aiming at a specific target market that is not necessarily associated with status and prestige related characteristics.

The brands were subsequently presented in descending order with disclosure of the Country of Brand Origin (CBO) in Table 5.14.

TABLE 5.14: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF BRAND PRESTIGE (CBO ANALYSIS) (N=322)

Brand	CBO	Prestigious
1. Guess	America	281
2. Diesel	Italy	273
3. Daniel Hechter	France	257
4. Pringle	Scotland	252
5. Jenni Button	South Africa	240
6. Queenspark	South Africa	218
7. Woolworths - W Collection	South Africa	204
8. Jo Borkett	South Africa	203
9. Marion and Lindie	South Africa	198
10. Country Road	Australia	188
11. Mango	Spain	173
12. Zara	Spain	172
13. Trenery	Australia	171
14. Donna Claire	South Africa	160

The brand that was perceived as prestigious by nearly 90% of the sample, was an American brand (CBO), namely Guess. Since only one American brand was included, it cannot be concluded with certainty whether it is considered prestigious due to the CBO, explicitly the image of the USA as an affluent, First-world country) or due to the brand equity of Guess (the brand). The three brands that were perceived to be prestigious by > 78% of the sample, either originated from Europe or the UK. This is possibly due to the cognitive schemata that consumers have of countries such as France and Italy. These countries are well-

known for their trend setting fashion houses and superior quality and style regarding apparel (Brannon, 2006:234-235). Brands originating from Spain (Zara and Mango) were considered prestigious by the majority although they were outperformed by local brands. The five South African (CBO) brands were perceived as prestigious by >60% of the sample, which is highly positive for the South African apparel retail market. This does not coincide with findings of studies that were conducted in other emerging economies such as India where local products are perceived to be inferior (Shukla, 2011:245; Mukerjee *et al.*, 2012:485). Although the South African brands were considered less prestigious than the American- and the European brands (CBO), consumers' perceptions of local brands are encouraging. The fact that Donna Claire was not perceived as prestigious, explains its position at the bottom of the list: the reason is therefore not necessarily associated with the CBO of the brand (which is South African) but rather with the brand itself. Australian brands did not perform very well in terms of prestigiousness. This might be due to Australia's image that is not really associated with the superior apparel industry and trend setting to the same extent as the USA and Europe.

To conclude, consumers' perception of the prestigiousness of brands may be coincidental (if consumers are not aware of the true CBO of the brands). Nevertheless it is encouraging that South African brands are perceived positively.

5.2.2.3 Respondents' familiarity with the Country of Brand Origin of selected prominent apparel brands

In an open ended question, respondents had to indicate where the 14 chosen brands listed in the questionnaire, originated from. They had the option to indicate that they "know", that they "guess", or "don't know at all". Findings are presented in Table 5.15 and are visually presented in Figure 5.4.

TABLE 5.15: RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE CBO OF BRANDS (N=322)

Brand	Correct (n)	Correct (%)	Don't know (n)	Don't know (%)
1. Guess	189	58.7	70	21.7
2. Donna Claire	181	56.2	67	20.8
3. Woolworths - W Collection	171	53.1	60	18.6
4. Queenspark	151	46.9	70	21.7
5. Pringle	150	46.6	75	23.3
6. Marion and Lindie	116	36.0	100	31.1
7. Jenni Button	106	32.9	83	25.8
8. Jo Borkett	74	23.0	94	29.2
9. Country Road	70	21.7	77	23.9
10. Zara	59	18.3	91	28.3
11. Daniel Hechter	47	14.6	74	23.0
12. Mango	45	14.0	83	25.8
13. Trenery	42	13.0	102	31.7
14. Diesel	33	10.2	65	20.2

Shaded brands: CBO =South Africa

Near 60% of the sample correctly indicated that the CBO of Guess, the brand that was perceived to be prestigious by near 90% of the sample, was the USA. Findings confirm that consumers are not really aware of the CBO of brands. Only three brands were correctly associated with their CBO by the majority. Consumers' ignorance is confirmed by the fact that only a small percentage of the sample admitted that they "do not know" where brands originated from, while the percentage of answers that were correct, was relatively low. Findings are visually presented in Figure 5.4.

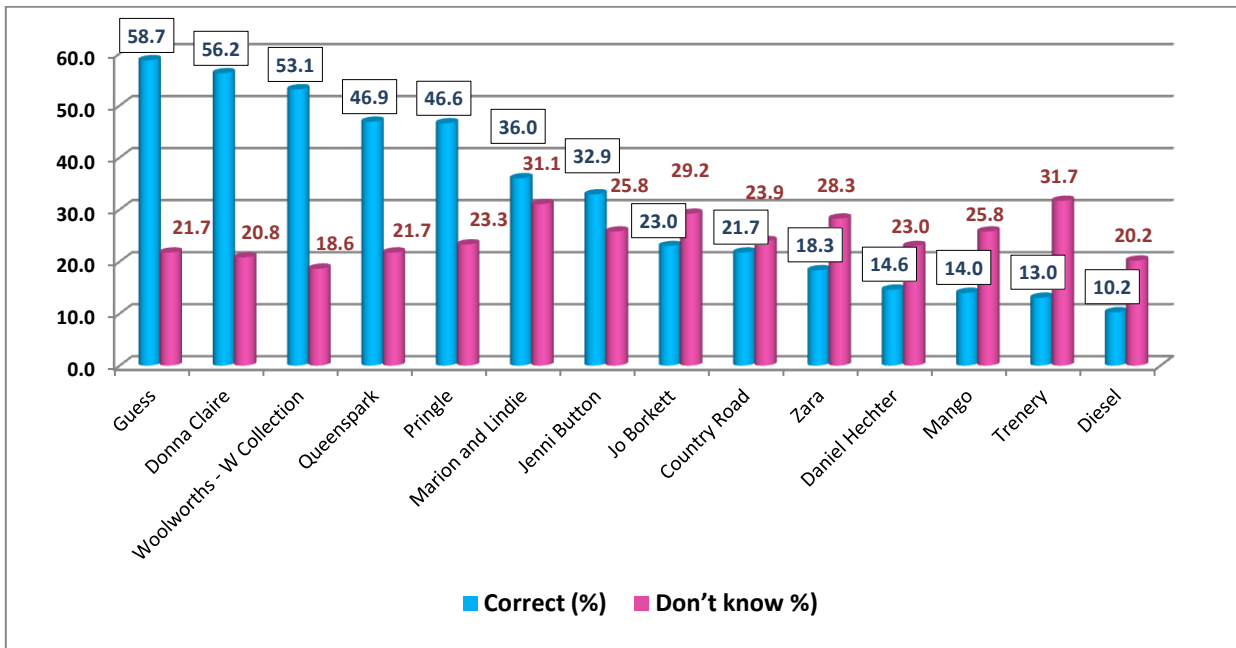


FIGURE 5.4: RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE CBO OF BRANDS (N=322)

In conclusion, it could be concluded that female consumers are not necessarily aware of the CBO of the brands and that their perception of the CBO of brands that are perceived to be prestigious, can not necessarily be related to the CBO (compare Figure 5.3), and may rather be related to brand equity. Brand equity is the value of the brand as a result of the consumer's trust in the brand, identification with the brand, perception of its superiority as well as the benefit for the self esteem generated through using the brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:236). Reasons for the inaccurate answers may however also be due to confusion created by bi-national brands (for example Pringle of Scotland that may be manufactured in South Africa).

Brands should perhaps promote the CBO more prominently to boost their brand images.

5.2.2.4 Respondents' familiarity of Country of Manufacture (COM) of selected prominent apparel brands

Similar to the CBO question, respondents also had to indicate where the 14 brands included in this study are manufactured (COM). Like the previous question, they could have indicated that they "know" or that they "guess" or do not know at all. Findings are presented in Table 5.16.

TABLE 5.16: RESPONDENTS' FAMILIARITY OF COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE (COM) OF APPAREL BRANDS (N = 322)

Brand	COM	Correct (n)	Correct (%)	Don't know (n)	Don't know (%)
1. Woolworths - W Collection	South Africa	229	71.1	39	12.1
2. Donna Claire	South Africa	216	67.1	53	16.5
3. Queenspark	South Africa	195	60.6	62	19.3
4. Marion and Lindie	South Africa	147	45.7	94	29.2
5. Zara	Spain	141	43.8	86	26.7
6. Jenni Button	South Africa	135	41.9	69	21.4
7. Daniel Hechter	France	100	31.1	66	20.5
8. Diesel	Italy	76	23.6	51	15.8
9. Mango	Spain	48	14.9	72	22.4
10. Pringle	Scotland	48	14.9	73	22.7
11. Trenery	Australia	46	14.3	87	27.0
12. Guess	America	43	13.4	50	15.5
13. Jo Borkett	South Africa	35	10.9	99	30.7
14. Country Road	Australia	33	10.2	65	20.2

On face value, the sample was better acquainted with brands that are manufactured in South Africa. Despite the fact that the majority (> 50%) of the sample were incorrect about the COM of 11 of the 14 brands, less than 30% of the sample indicated that they “did not know” where the branded products were manufactured. Consumers’ perceptions about the COM of brands therefore seem imperfect.

Findings are also visually presented in Figure 5.5.

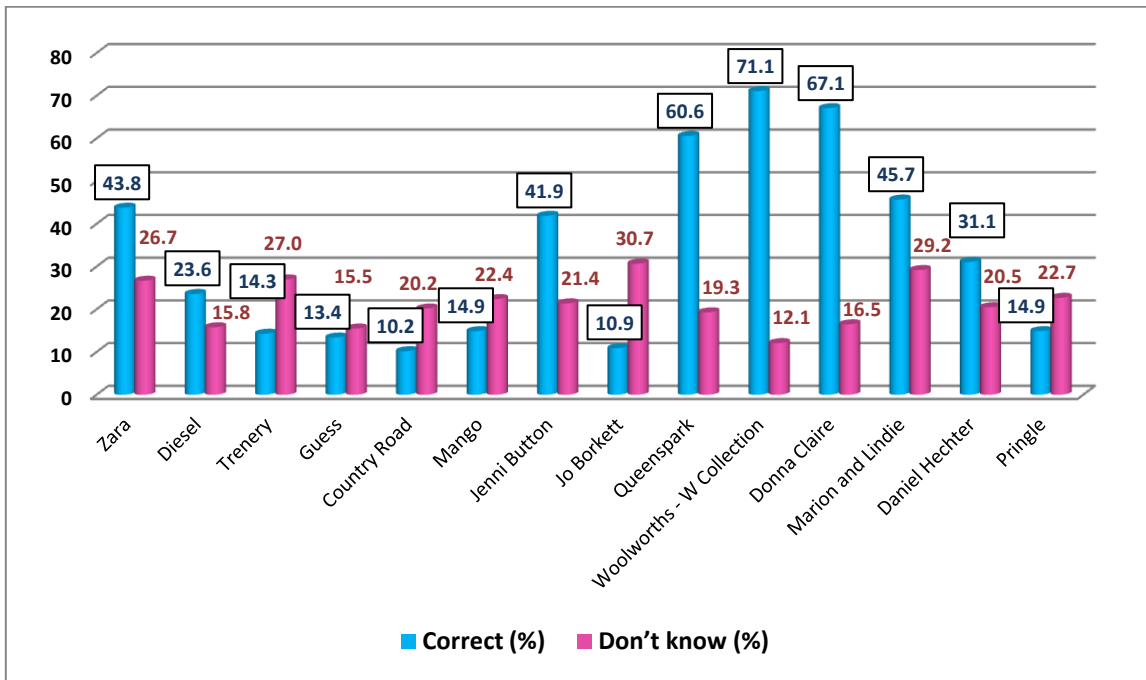


FIGURE 5.5: RESPONDENTS' FAMILIARITY WITH THE COM OF APPAREL BRANDS

In Figure 5.6, a visual presentation of the correct responses for CBO and COM investigations are offered to allow a visual comparison.

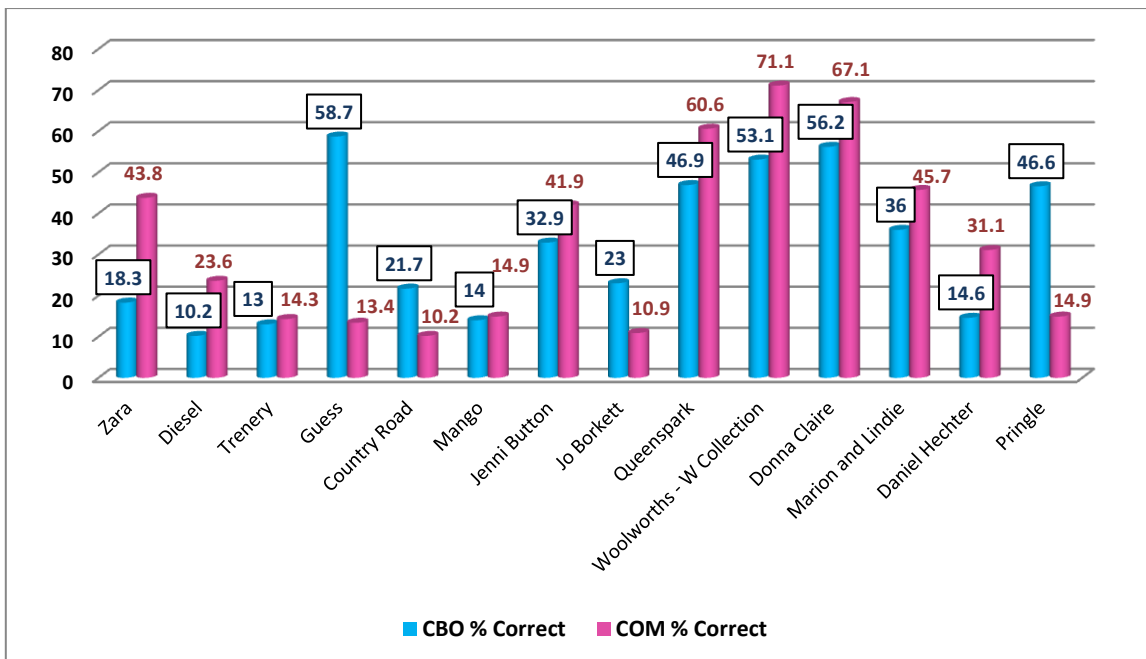


FIGURE 5.6: A COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' FAMILIARITY WITH THE CBO AND COM OF APPAREL BRANDS

Findings indicate that although less than 32% of the sample admitted to not knowing the CBO and the COM of the apparel brands, the majority of the sample's answers for both questions were incorrect for 11 of the 14 brands. Figure 5.6 shows that for 8 of the 14 brands there were more correct responses for the CBO of the brands.

According to the findings female consumers are actually poorly informed about the COM of brands. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that only 13.4% of the sample was aware that Guess, the brand that is perceived to be the most prestigious of the brands listed, is not manufactured in the USA. Discrepancies in the CBO and COM responses (see Figure 5.6) for brands such as Guess, Pringle, Zara and Daniel Hechter, suggest that consumers are uncertain and probably confused about the COO-issue and that the topic deserves further attention as literature indicates that the CBO and the COM of brands are highly influential in consumers' perceptions of branded products (Keller, 1993:11; Ko *et al.*, 2009:47). It might be that consumers are not really aware that the CBO and the COM may differ. The findings indicated that the respondents in most cases assume that the COM is the same as the CBO. Although respondents had the wrong impression of certain brands' CBO (like Diesel that is Italian, not American as 76% of respondents thought), the countries they indicated as the CBO were also the countries they indicated as the COM (71% indicated America as the COM of the brand Diesel). This phenomenon occurred with 13 of the fourteen brands. In the whole question, the indication of Asia as COM was only 12%. This is exceptionally low, since most of the apparel sold in South Africa is imported from Asia, with China manufacturing 74% of the countries apparel (Wolmarans, 2011:47). Consumers' may therefore be ignorant about the percentage of apparel that is actually manufactured in Eastern countries based on the industry's efforts to save on production costs. Respondents were not familiar with the COM of the study's selection of apparel brands.

5.2.2.5 Respondents' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occur

Lastly, respondents were subjected to a simulation and were asked to select the most preferred apparel labels from three sets of similar labels where the COM was intentionally alternated to include a Western-, Eastern, and local origin (COM) (see Figure 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9). In each of the three sets, all the labels are identical, except for the COM. The choice of label can therefore not be influenced by properties such as functional and performance properties, since fibre content and care instructions are identical for all three labels.

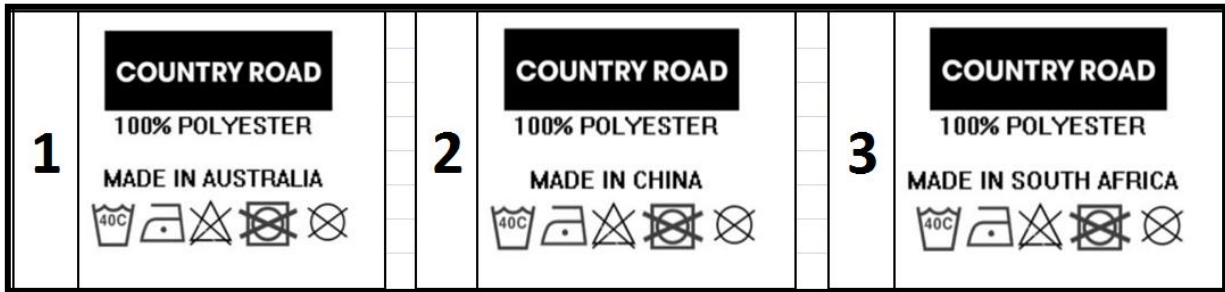


FIGURE 5.7: COUNTRY ROAD LABELS WITH DIFFERENT COM

Figure 5.7 portrays the three label options respondents had to choose from for the brand Country Road. Findings are indicated in Table 5.17.

TABLE 5.17: PREFERRED LABELS FOR THE VARIOUS BRANDS (N = 322)

	COUNTRY ROAD N= 313; MISSING: n = 9		PRINGLE N= 312; MISSING: n = 10		LEVI'S N= 312; MISSING: n = 10	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
CBO (Western)	109	34.80	173	55.45	174	55.80
China (Eastern)	23	7.40	25	8.01	28	9.00
South Africa	181	57.80	114	36.50	110	35.30

Country Road is a leading Australian brand, which is owned by Woolworths Holdings Limited, a South African company (WHL, 2013:1) and is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. In South Africa Country Road is only available in Woolworths stores and a small number of standalone Country Road stores in upper class malls such as Brooklyn (Tshwane), Sandton City, Hyde Park Corner and V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. In a previous question when respondents were asked to indicate the CBO of the brand Country Road, 39.70% of respondents correctly indicated Australia as the CBO, and 30.29% of respondents indicated South Africa as the CBO. The perception of the brand being a South African brand is understandable, since Woolworths is a South African retailer and almost all the apparel brands they offer are in-house brands such as the brands Re- and Woolworths - W Collection. As can be seen in Table 5.17, most respondents (n = 181) chose the label which indicated South Africa as the COM, while considerably fewer (n = 109) chose Australia as the COM. All Country Road merchandise is manufactured in the East, predominantly China and also India. The findings indicate that consumers do not associate this brand with Eastern countries. It is possible that consumers prefer the CBO and COM to be congruent, since many also identified Country Road as a South African brand and therefore chose the “Made in South Africa” label.

The second set of labels is from the brand Pringle of Scotland as can be seen in Figure 5.8. This brand was chosen, since it deliberately uses their CBO in the name and marketing mix.



FIGURE 5.8: PRINGLE LABELS WITH DIFFERENT COM

Findings are presented in Table 5.17.

The Scottish brand Pringle originated in 1815 as the first luxury knitwear brand worldwide (Pringle of Scotland history, 2013:1). Pringle South Africa has their own unique ranges and does not stock the same ranges as Pringle UK. The Pringle of Scotland South African women's ranges are currently manufactured in China and South Africa, with no merchandise manufactured in Europe. As Table 5.17 indicates, only 8.01% of respondents chose China as the brand's COM in contrast to 36.54% of respondents who chose South Africa as the CBO and 55.45% of respondents who chose Scotland as the CBO. In a previous question, which was an open question, 12.38% of respondents indicated China/Asia as the brand's COM opposed to 52.55% who indicated the COM to be Scotland and 36.68% of respondents who indicated that they "don't know". It is unknown whether these respondents are aware of the vast amount of Pringle apparel that currently is manufactured in China. The results support the findings for the Country Road brand, namely that consumers prefer the CBO and COM to be congruent. It is interesting to note that South Africa is still acceptable for the consumer as the COM for a Scottish brand. Consumers probably perceive apparel made locally to be of good quality and more prestigious than apparel made in China.

The last set of labels referred to the American brand Levi's. In 1853, San Francisco, Levi Strauss, an emigrant, started to make the first denim jeans with rivets at stress points (Watkinson, 2006:43-44). The brand still uses the CBO in their marketing mix, as seen in Figure 2.2, an example of a Levi's advertisement used for billboards and magazines.



FIGURE 5.9: LEVI'S LABELS WITH DIFFERENT COM

The findings regarding this set of labels can also be seen in Table 5.17.

Unlike the previous two brands, Levi's was not incorporated in the selection of brands used in the study. Results, as depicted in Table 5.17 are similar to those of the previous two brands, indicating that consumers prefer the CBO and COM to match (55.77%). It also strengthens the possibility that consumers are comfortable with leading international brands being manufactured in South Africa, probably because they trust the quality of local manufacturing and do not see local products as inferior, which is comforting for the local economy. Together with this, it enhances the possibility that consumers' image of China and Asia does not coincide with good quality, status and prestige and therefore they do not prefer China as the COM of luxury apparel brands.

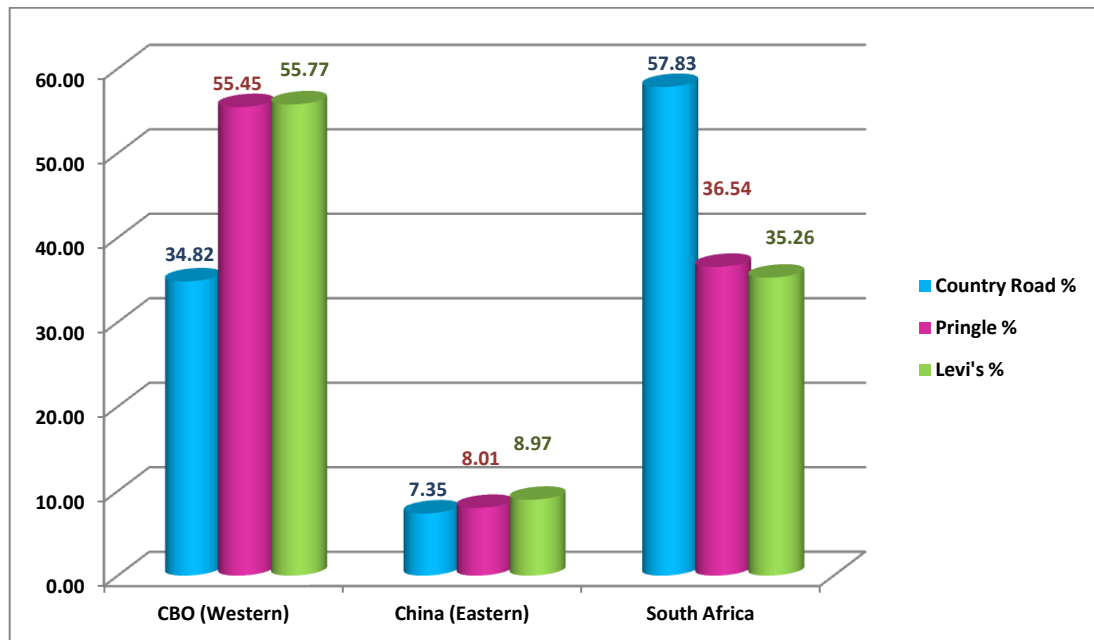


FIGURE 5.10: PREFERRED COM OF SELECTED BRANDS

The findings of all three sets indicated that almost 50% of the respondents (48.68%) preferred labels of which the COM and the CBO matched. Overall the most preferred COM, was a Western country followed by South Africa (i.e. a local brand) (Figure 5.10). This is encouraging in an economic climate where local industry needs to be boosted. Only 8.11% of respondents preferred China as COM, which may be detrimental in terms of the COO-effect (the Asian respondents may have influenced this figure). Many exclusive apparel brands have already diverted their production to Eastern countries to reduce labour costs. When aware of the true COM of their favourite brands, consumers might switch brands because this study confirmed that brand names are pertinently used to deduce important properties of apparel, especially functional performance characteristics. Consumers' risk perception is therefore largely reduced by purchasing specific brands that they believe possess certain desirable properties

5.3 SUMMARY

The respondents, all females, were distinguished in terms of three age categories, with 41% young (25 – 29 years), 30% more established, young (>29 – 39 years) and 29% middle aged and older (> 39 years). The sample's level of education was categorised into three categories that included 27.5% with grade 12 and lower; 45.3% with grade 12 plus a diploma or degree, and 27.2% who possessed a postgraduate diploma or degree. The majority of the sample was White (76.7%) and the rest Black (13.4%) or other (9.9%) population groups (Coloured and Asian). It was unfortunate to have such a low representation of Black and other population groups, but the time and financial constraints of this study made it difficult to recruit a more representative sample and it was decided to continue, as this study's scope is limited to an explorative investigation only. Although five categories for household income were used in the questionnaire, they were collapsed to three categories for the analysis of the data. Only 22.6% of the respondents were in the lower income group (< R10 000 per month); 43.4% were in the middle income group (R10 000 - < R25 000 per month) and 34% were in the higher income group (\geq R25 000 per month). The study focused on females within the Tshwane metropolitan area. Tshwane is divided into five regions and the two most affluent regions were better represented in the sample that made sense in terms of the aims of the study, namely attention to more sophisticated brands that are fairly expensive (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, 2008:41). Most respondents were from the Southern (37.49%) and Eastern (30.33%) regions.

The **first objective** focused on the significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel choices. Respondents' inclination to engage in status consumption (objective 1.1) was tested using a modified version of the status consumption scale of Eastman *et al.* (1999). The scale was a four increment Likert-type scale ($M_{\max} = 4$) and the overall mean of 2.30 thus indicated that status consumption is not that crucial for respondents. Younger respondents were found to be more inclined to engage in status consumption. Even though the representation of the different population groups was not optimal, it was found that population group influences status consumption. Black ($p = 0.0001$) and other population groups had a significantly greater tendency to consume apparel for status reasons than Whites ($p = 0.0018$).

To determine respondents' brand consciousness (objective 1.2), an adapted brand conscious scale from Sproles and Kendall (1986) was used. Similar to the status consumption scale, this scale also used a four incremented Likert-type scale ($M_{\max} = 4$). The overall mean ($M = 2.16$; $M_{\max} = 4$) indicated that respondents were not very brand conscious. With regards to population groups, the brand consciousness scale's confirmed the findings of the status consumption scale. Black respondents ($M = 2.34$) and other population groups ($M = 2.47$) were much more brand conscious than White respondents ($M = 2.09$). With regard to the use of a brand name as a cue for certain desirable apparel properties (objective 1.3), it was found that a brand is mostly used to deduce functional performance related properties rather than as a cue for status/prestige. It is rarely used as a cue for eco friendly properties. Results indicated that Black- and other respondents are more inclined to use brand as a cue for all the types of properties (functional /performance properties, status related properties as well as eco-friendly properties) than White respondents. The assumption of the cognitive perspective relating to the use of cues for cognitive economy reasons was evident in this study. However, it indicated that population group influences which cues are used as well as the way in which categorisation takes places. It is highly likely that population group influences consumers' brand choice behaviour and this merits further studies.

The **second objective** of this study aimed to explore and describe female's perceptions regarding a selection of apparel brand names. The study was conducted using a selection of 14 prestigious apparel brand names. Consumers' familiarity with the selection of brands (objective 2.1) as well as their ability to distinguish apparel brands in list including brands from other product categories indicated that consumers are not very familiar with apparel brands. The findings confirm that most respondents were not status seekers or brand conscious. Furthermore, when the prestige associated with the selection of brands was tested (objective 2.2), 13 out of 14 brands were perceived as prestigious by more than half of the respondents. The brands

originating from America, Italy, Paris and Scotland (Western countries) were perceived to be more prestigious, followed by the South African brands. The brands from Australia and Spain were however perceived as less prestigious than the other Western brands (CBO). It is very positive to see that consumers from an emerging economy place such value on their local goods. This differs from findings of studies that were done in other emerging economies (Shukla, 2011:245; Mukerjee *et al.*, 2012:485). Australia is possibly not associated with fashion to the extent that Italy, Paris and other European countries are. Another possibility might be that the other brands' brand equity is much higher than those of the Australian and Spanish brands. The brands Trenery, Country Road, Zara and Mango have not been available in South Africa for that long, compared to Guess, Daniel Hechter and Pringle. Upon requesting respondents to indicate the CBO and the COM in two separate questions (objective 2.3 and 2.4), it became evident that consumers' perceptions of both CBO and COM are congruent with the real origin, since eleven out of fourteen were incorrectly indicated by more than half of the respondents for both questions. In both the questions, respondents could have indicated that they "know" or "guess" the country. Some indicated "don't know". Regarding to the CBO, the origin of the American brand Guess was mostly correct as well as the South African brands, and Pringle (of Scotland). Respondents had a wrong perception about the other brands' CBO. From this, the prestige associated with these apparel brands are most probably contributed/enhanced by the brand equity and not necessarily the COM, unlike other product categories such as motor vehicle brands (German cars). The COM question brought interesting findings regarding consumers' perceptions of where clothes are manufactured. Respondents predominantly indicated South Africa and Western countries, such as America, as the COM. This contrasts reality, as 74% of apparel sold in South Africa is manufactured in China (Wolmarans, 2011:47). Although a large amount of apparel is manufactured in South Africa, it is much less than a few years ago (Wolmarans, 2011:2; Jones, 2013:1). A western country as COM is exceptionally rare, and when it occurs, it is mostly less affluent European countries such as Portugal.

In a different question that was meant to confirm/ support previous findings, respondents received three sets of labels, each set with three labels of the same brand. The only difference in the three labels was the COM. Fibre content, care procedures and brand name/logo were identical in all three labels. Respondents had to choose which label they preferred. For two of the three sets, the Pringle set as well as the Levi's set, most respondents (55.61%) chose the label where the COM matched the CBO. One can assume that consumers prefer the CBO and COM to be congruent. This coincides with the assumption of the cognitive perspective that people strive for some consistency and continuity in their perceptions. Together with this, consumers don't have a problem with leading international apparel brands being manufactured locally. This

might indicate that consumers do not perceive locally manufactured apparel to be inferior, even though South Africa is an emerging economy. The low affinity for China as the COM might be due to a country image. As the assumption of the cognitive perspective proposes, humans are motivated to explain certain occurrences or outcomes. There might be a cognitive connotation of counterfeit goods, child labour, inferior quality and mass production that is incongruent with the image of certain prestigious brands. It is therefore highly likely that it would have a negative COO-effect when consumers become aware of the duality of bi-national products (objective 2.5).



Chapter 6

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

In this chapter conclusions and limitations of this study are presented and recommendations are made for future studies

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study investigated female consumers' reliance on brands as a heuristic in terms of the properties of apparel merchandise. It furthermore investigated how CBO and COM influence females' perceptions of the properties of selected brands when brand incongruity of bi-national products exists. The nature of the study was descriptive and explorative. The data gathering was conducted during March 2013 in the metropolitan of the City of Tshwane. Since data gathering was conducted at a certain time (March 2013), the study is cross-sectional. Convenient and snowball sampling, both non-probability sampling methods, were used due to time and financial constraints. This quantitative study used a self-administered questionnaire that consisted of fixed alternative as well as an open ended question. It incorporated slightly adapted versions of established scales as well as self developed questions. Three hundred and twenty two workable questionnaires were retrieved. With the use of the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics data were analysed using a variety of statistical procedures including descriptive statistics as well as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Factor analysis.

The theoretical perspective of this study was the cognitive perspective, since it focused on how consumers' perceptions and knowledge of brands and the origin of brands might influence their brand perceptions and

buyer behaviour (Kaiser, 1997:33; Rousseau, 2007b:195; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). Due to a cognitive overload, consumers use heuristics, such as brands and COO, to deduce certain properties and to simplify their decision making (Reger & Huff, 1993:105; De Klerk, 1999:124; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:481). Many COO studies suggest the cognitive perspective, since the COO-effect exists due to cognitive schemata of certain countries in the consumers' mind (Sauer *et al.*, 1991; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). People connect brands with certain countries and perceptions of a country can influence the perception of the brand (Keller, 1993:11; Ko *et al.*, 2009:47), which also supports the use of the cognitive perspective.

This chapter reiterates the conclusions of the objectives of the study. In addition, the research is reviewed to determine if the objectives were met and all procedures were followed correctly and ethically. The chapter closes with limitations, recommendations and implications of the study.

6.2 CONCLUSIVE REMARKS ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

6.2.1 Demographics of the sample

Only females were involved in this study. A convenient sampling method was used due to time- and financial constraints. However, effort was made to include respondents from different geographic areas in Tshwane and to include different age groups. The level of education and the income of consumers could not be verified beforehand but the eventual sample involved a useful representation for statistical analysis. The sample involved females between the ages of 25 and 65, geographically situated across Tshwane.

6.2.2 The significance of apparel brand names as a prominent cue in terms of female consumers' apparel preferences (Objective 1)

The first objective involved three sub-objectives that specifically explored consumers' status consciousness, their brand consciousness and use of brands as a heuristic to deduce other properties of apparel.

6.2.2.1 Females' inclination to purchase apparel products for status related reasons

Literature indicates that a brand can serve as a status indicator (Han & Terpstra, 1988:237) and consumers vary in the extent to which they engage in status consumption (Eastman *et al.*, 1999:42; Clark *et al.*, 2007:45). The importance and perception of a brand will therefore also be affected by consumers'

inclination to engage in status consumption. The status investigation indicated that status and prestige is not that imperative for the respondents (Overall $M = 2.30$). When data were further analysed in terms of demographic characteristics, it became clear that younger females (25 years – 39 years) are significantly more status conscious compared to older consumers (> 39 years). Black ($M = 2.64$) and other population groups ($M = 2.61$) were also significantly more status conscious than Whites ($M = 2.21$). Various reasons can be offered to explain these findings. Mostly, literature suggests that South African Blacks are more status conscious and more prone to consume conspicuously to convey their success in social context (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999:332; Erasmus *et al.*, 2001:120).

6.2.2.2 Females' brand consciousness, specifically referring to female apparel brands

Because brand consciousness may also influence consumers' product (apparel) perceptions, a modified scale from Sproles and Kendall (1986) was used to test consumers' brand consciousness. A four increment Likert-type scale ($M_{Max} = 4$) produced an overall mean of 2.16 for the sample, indicating that the respondents were not highly brand conscious. However, when the findings were interpreted in terms of the demographic groups, significant differences came to the fore among the different population groups. Whites were significantly less brand conscious ($M = 2.09$) than Blacks ($M = 2.34$) and the other population groups ($M = 2.47$); this could be interesting for retailers in terms of their marketing initiatives. Findings suggest that Whites would probably be less familiar with apparel brands and probably less persistent about specific brands compared to the rest of the population.

6.2.2.3 Females' use of brand names as a cue of the desirable properties of apparel

In a self-developed question with twelve items an attempt was made to determine which properties eventually direct consumers' apparel decisions. Three primary factors were identified during exploratory factor analysis, namely functional/performance properties, status/prestige related properties as well as eco friendliness. Findings revealed that females use brands names more pertinently as an indication of the functional and performance characteristics of apparel ($M = 3.22$; $Max = 4.0$) than to deduce the status of the garment ($M = 2.37$) or its eco friendliness ($M = 2.18$). Rather than to objectively evaluate garment construction and textile characteristics, consumers therefore use brand names as a cue/ simplifier to deduce/ assume functional characteristics. In terms of females' use of brand names to infer the functional - performance characteristics of apparel, the only demographic characteristic that seemed to have an influence in terms of the importance of brand names as a cue to infer the desired properties, was

population group. Black females' use of brand names to distinguish functional performance related properties was statistically more significant ($M = 3.27$) than the use of brand names for this purpose by Whites ($M = 3.01$), or the other population groups (Coloured and Asian) ($M = 3.11$). There was no significant difference between income level, level of education or age groups in terms of their use of brand names to signify functional performance characteristics of apparel.

Confirming extant literature that indicate that younger females are generally more aspiring (Du Preez & Visser, 2003:18; Lachance *et al.*, 2003:47) and inclined to be more status conscious in terms of their apparel, this study confirmed that younger females (< 39 years) are significantly ($p = <0.05$) more prone to use brand names as a symbol of status, probably because older females have more established self concepts and do not necessarily have to depend on apparel as an extension of the self to the same extent that younger females do. In terms of brands as a cue of status, significant differences ($p = <0.05$) were also evident among the different population groups: Whites' use of brand names as an indication of status was significantly less prevalent compared to the other two population groups. Combined with the previous finding that Blacks and population groups other than Whites are also significantly more brand conscious, this study suggests that apparel brands are particularly relevant in these consumers apparel purchase decisions. In terms of females' use of brand names to infer desirable eco-friendly properties of apparel products, education level and population group seemed to influence consumers' reliance on brand names as a cue. Lower educated females were significantly more prone to use brand names to infer the eco friendliness of apparel products. The same applied for Black females and other population groups compared to Whites. Findings therefore indicated that for population groups other than Whites, the use of brand names to deduce the properties of apparel is significantly more prevalent, whether functional /performance-, status- or eco friendliness related. Although income level influences affordability of brands and apparel, this study could not confirm income level as a significant predictor of consumers' use of brand names to infer specific /desirable properties of apparel. Population group, however, in the context of this study seem to be a significant predictor.

6.2.3 Females' perception of apparel brand names (Objective 2)

Female consumers' familiarity with a selection of 14 apparel brands that were identified through scrutiny of popular magazines during the month prior to data collection was investigated in terms of the brands themselves, their CBO and COM.

6.2.3.1 Females' familiarity with selected prominent apparel brand names.

Findings revealed that females are not very familiar with apparel brand names even though they appear prominently in various magazines, bill boards and in retail stores. This was expected after the conclusion that females are not particularly brand conscious (6.2.2.2) nor prone to engage in status consumption (6.2.2.1).

6.2.3.2 Consumers' perception of the prestige associated with prominent apparel brands.

Findings indicated that Western brands, particularly an American brand and European brands were perceived as the most prestigious of the brands listed, while South African brands were also perceived favourably, which is very positive since most consumers from emerging economies perceive their local goods to be inferior (Shukla, 2011:245; Mukerjee *et al.*, 2012:485). Reasons why Australian brands were not perceived that prestigious, are not clear and can be investigated in a future study as these brands are widely available in South Africa.

6.2.3.3 Consumers' familiarity with the Country of Brand Origin of selected prominent apparel brands.

The CBO of only three out of the fourteen brands were indicated correctly by more than 50% of the respondents, which indicates that consumers might be very unfamiliar with CBO of brands. The connotation of prestige with certain brands is most probably due to its brand equity and not due to the CBO.

6.2.3.4 Consumers' familiarity of Country of Manufacture of selected prominent apparel brands.

Similar to the findings regarding CBO, only three out of fourteen brands' COM were correctly indicated by more than 50% of the respondents. Consumers most probably do not know where clothes get manufactured, since for most of the brands a significant number of respondents indicated that they "don't know" the COM. Most respondents who indicated certain countries, indicated Western countries and South Africa as the COM and an exceptionally small number indicated Asia and/or China as the COM. Consumers might have a misperception of how many clothes are manufactured locally, how few are really imported from the West and how much apparel is imported from the East – especially luxury branded apparel. This might be investigated in a future study.

6.2.3.5 Consumers' perception of the properties of apparel when incongruity with bi-national brands occurs.

Lastly, consumers might still be ignorant to the bi-national nature of many luxury apparel brands. Most respondents perceived the CBO to match the COM. It was furthermore found that most respondents prefer the COM to match the CBO and when not possible will be content with an international brand being manufactured locally. Respondents do not prefer China (Asia) as the COM, which is possibly due to negative perceptions of the country compared to the USA or European countries. The image they have of the brand (and its CBO) might be incongruent with the image they have of China. Since it was found that consumers mostly are unaware of the COM, brands can still prosper despite of their bi-national nature, but when COM becomes known, the brand image might get damage.

6.3 THE RESEARCH IN RETROSPECT

It is important to assess a study after completion to identify if the objectives were met, that data and findings are accurate and reliable and that the study was executed in an ethical and honest manner.

The study commenced with a thorough literature review that aided in the structuring of the objectives, conceptual framework and also with the structuring of the questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaire was developed with the help of an expert statistician. Some existing scales were incorporated in the questionnaire and slightly adapted to be more understandable for the South African consumer. The use of these existing scales increased the reliability of the questionnaire. A pilot test was executed to test the questionnaire; problems were identified and corrected. A cover letter was added to the questionnaire to explain that the information would be used for academic purposes, that participation was voluntary and all information would be anonymous and treated confidentially.

Prior to data collection, approvals were received from the ethical committee of the University of Pretoria as well as the Department of Consumer Sciences. Data were collected at a certain point of time (cross-sectional) and twelve voluntary fieldworkers assisted the researcher with the data gathering. The limitation of resources (specifically financial resources and time) influenced the sample and sampling procedure. Convenient and snowball sampling (both non-probability sampling methods) were used and therefore no generalisation can occur. Other sampling limitations were the sample size of 322 respondents and the small

amount of black respondents. The questionnaire was distributed on a drop-down-collect later basis and participation was motivated by a lucky draw with a Nine West handbag as prize.

Completed questionnaires were coded by the researcher and captured by the Department of Statistics, where after the captured data were checked thoroughly by the researcher to ensure accuracy. The captured data was analysed with the help of a statistician with the use of certain processes such as ANOVA, factor analysis and Promax rotation. The statistician also conducted reliability tests, such as the Cronbach Alpha calculation which indicated internal consistency of the instrument.

Throughout the study attention was given to accuracy, reliability and validity as actions explained in Chapter 4 indicate. The study aimed to provide descriptive and explorative information, and not to receive conclusions. The aim and the objectives were all met.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although care was taken to conduct the study in the best possible, ethical and reliable manner, certain limitations still occurred.

One of the biggest limitations was available resources. This study received no financial support from any organisation and thus had to do the best with a limited budget. Secondly, time constraints had various negative implications. This study was conducted for a Masters degree that had to be completed within a certain time frame. The limitations of time and finances influenced various aspects.

The first aspect is the sample and sampling. Due to the resource constraints, the sample size was limited to 322 respondents. Adding to this, the study was limited to convenient and snowball sampling. Due to these sampling methods, the representation of the different population groups was not substantial. A big drawback was the small number of Black respondents. Pertinent differences between the consumer behaviour of Whites and non-whites (Black and Other) became evident when analysing the data. Specifically their brand consciousness and status consumption showed significant differences. Another limitation with the sampling was that it had to be limited to the Tshwane Metropolitan region, was the most accessible for the researcher and fieldworkers. If the study had been conducted in the business centre of Johannesburg, for instance the region of Sandton, Rosebank and Melrose Arch, the brand awareness, brand consciousness and status consumption might have shown a different trend, since the income is probably higher than in

Tshwane and there are many more luxury branded apparel stores. However, this study was meant to be explorative only and the sample size was sufficient according to the statisticians.

The second aspect is the data gathering. Self-administered questionnaires were a less expensive and less time consuming method. If more time and money were available, the study could have incorporated a qualitative component with the quantitative questionnaire. If focus groups had been held prior to the structuring of the questionnaire, a better questionnaire could have been drawn up. One aspect on it would certainly have made a big difference would have been the selection of the brand names. Although care was taken in choosing these brand names in accordance with magazine exposure, focus groups could have indicated low brand familiarity with certain brands and higher familiarity with others. The selection might therefore have been better.

Apart from limitations due to resources, the measuring instrument itself created limitations. Firstly at question eight the factor analysis indicated three distinct factors. The problem occurred with the factor related to environmentally significant indicators, only included two items. It was therefore not possible to calculate the Cronbach Alpha to determine the internal consistency. At least two additional items related to environmental indicators should have been included in this question. Secondly, it would have been beneficial if the selection of brands incorporated more than one brand that originated in America. As mentioned, the findings regarding the American brand Guess cannot be assumed to be due to its American origin, since it can also be because of the strong brand equity of the brand itself. Apart from incorporating a second American brand, a selection of only general luxury apparel brands, and not niche luxury brands would have improved the study. Donna Claire is a niche brand, that targets the fuller figure woman. The type of niche market can influence perceptions regarding aspects such as the prestige of the brand, since it is not a successful accomplishment to be seen as a fuller figure woman. Thirdly, the drop-down-collect later method of distribution possibly added to the list of limitations. It probably added to the low response rate (550 were distributed and only 322 were returned), since it is easy to use excuses such as “I forgot about it”, “I didn’t have time” and “I lost it” when a questionnaire is dropped off and collected later. Another possible limitation might have occurred with the totally anonymous participation. The respondents deposited the completed questionnaires in a sealed box and there was no way in which someone could have traced a certain questionnaire back to a certain respondent. Respondents were aware of this reassurance of anonymous status and could have easily answered in a haphazard and untruthful way just to complete the questionnaire as quickly as possible. It would always be unclear if this occurred and to what extent.

In spite of the limitations noted, this was only a study on masters level, bound to have limitations due to the time and financial constraints.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Throughout the study, the researcher identified possible opportunities for further research.

A more representative sample of the various population groups might possibly have interesting findings. This could be done in a comparative study which focuses on the difference between the population groups. A study could be conducted that focuses solely on the black emerging middle class. A bigger sample will also enhance the findings and be more credible in international literature.

A similar study could be done by including male respondents, since this study only focused on females. Certain differences in the consumer behaviour of the genders regarding bi-national brands might be indicated.

The conducting of a predominantly qualitative study with in depth interviews might complement this study and addresses some of the limitations of quantitative research.

It would be interesting to repeat this study with a different selection of brand names. A possibility is to concentrate on a certain apparel or clothing product category, such as shoes or jeans and to then focus on the predominant brand names in that apparel product category. If the study for instance concentrates on jeans, the pool of jean brand names is much smaller than the pool of apparel related brand names and it can possibly include the most well-known and prominent jean brand names such as Guess, Levi, Sissy Boy, True Religion, Apple Bottom and Diesel in its selection.

In 1999 D'Astous and Ahmed conducted a study that focused on the importance of country images in the formation of consumer product perceptions. It was conducted using a very different approach than other COO research, since half of the respondents were consumers and half of the respondents were salesmen. The salesmen provided very interesting information about the consumer, since they communicated with and observed the consumer behaviour daily and were able to identify the properties (such as COO) which influenced the consumer more clearly than the consumer self (D'Astous & Ahmed, 1999:110). A future

study including a focus group with salesmen at branded fashion retailers might bring much more insight into this problem. It could be conducted by means of a case study and focus on one brand, similar to the Levi case study conducted by Bhardwaj *et al.*, in 2010 in India.

It is clear that the influence of brand incongruity on consumers' perception of the properties of bi-national apparel products has endless opportunities for further research and that many uncertainties regarding this topic still exist.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study can assist academics, retailers, and the marketing industry.

This study was exploratory in nature and findings can assist in further studies as comprehensively explained in the recommendations for further research.

For local brands and local manufacturers, this study indicated very positive results. Consumers seem to value local manufactured apparel and even perceive local brands as prestigious. This is a very positive finding for the local apparel industry that can assist in job creation in South Africa.

Marketers can benefit from this study, since it became clear that consumers are not aware of the CBO and COM of brands. This is positive when the image of the COM of bi-national apparel might not be congruent with the image of CBO and might harm the brand equity. CBO might be a tool that can be used in the marketing mix to build brand equity, since the study found that brands from certain countries, like America France and Scotland are seen as prestigious. The study also indicated that consumers use brands as a cue for functional and performance properties rather than a cue for status and prestige and the least for eco-friendly properties. Marketers can therefore enhance brand equity by focusing on functional and performance properties of the brand. Findings also revealed that consumers from the different population groups have different consumer behaviour. Marketers and retailers should therefore know exactly who their target market is and concentrate on what that specific consumer values. Black consumers were found to be more inclined to use brands as a cue for functional performance properties as well as status and prestige properties. Although the representation of the Black and Other population groups were very low, results indicated that they are more liable to engage in status consumption and are possibly more brand conscious than White consumers.

Although there are still major uncertainties regarding perceptions of bi-national apparel brands, this study contributed to literature and can be used practically by retailers and marketers.



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ADDENDUM A: PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY: Agriculture
DEPARTMENT: Consumer Science

The Department of Consumer Science places specific emphasis on integrity and ethical behaviour with regards to the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation.

Although academic personnel will provide you with information regarding reference techniques as well as ways to avoid plagiarism, you also have a responsibility to fulfill in this regard. Should you at any time feel unsure about the requirements, you must consult the lecturer concerned before you submit any written work.

You are guilty of plagiarism when you extract information from a book, article or web page without acknowledging the source and pretend that it is your own work. In truth, you are stealing someone else's property. This doesn't only apply to cases where you quote verbatim, but also when you present someone else's work in a somewhat amended format (paraphrase), or even when you use someone else's deliberation without the necessary acknowledgement. You are not allowed to use another student's previous work. You are furthermore not allowed to let anyone copy or use your work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own.

Students who are guilty of plagiarism will forfeit all credit for the work concerned. In addition, the matter can also be referred to the Committee for Discipline (Students) for a ruling to be made. Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the University's regulations and may lead to suspension from the University.

For the period that you are a student at the Department Consumer Science, the under mentioned declaration must accompany all written work to be submitted. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and attached.

I (full names): **Lizette Diedericks**
Student number: **27140131**
Subject of the work: **The influence of brand incongruity on females' perception of the properties of bi-national apparel products**

Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this dissertation is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
4. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE

ADDENDUM B: QUESTIONNAIRE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Consumer Science

012 420 2531

February 2013

Dear Respondent

This questionnaire forms part of a research project for my Masters degree that focusses on the (clothing) buyer behaviour of South African women in the Tshwane region. Thank you for assisting me by completing this questionnaire which **will only take 10 minutes** of your time to complete.

Please complete every question. There are no right or wrong answers. Rather, your honest perceptions are very valuable in terms of the outcome of this study. You may refuse to participate and may withdraw at any time if you wish to do so but please keep in mind that **all the questionnaires are completed anonymously** and the **content will therefore remain confidential**.

Please read the instructions before answering to ensure that the information is useful and relevant. If you leave out a question, the whole questionnaire might have to be discarded. Please answer carefully.

PLEASE NOTE ALL QUESTIONS ARE RELATED TO APPAREL (CLOTHING) BRANDS AND APPAREL (CLOTHING) PRODUCTS

Your participation is much appreciated.

Kind Regards,
Lizette Diedericks

Student: M Consumer Science Clothing Retail Management

Study leaders: Dr A Retief & Prof Alet C Erasmus

QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY - RESPONDENT NUMBER

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

V0

Please circle the relevant number of your choice

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your gender	Female	1
	Male	2
2. What was your age (in completed years) at your last birthday?		
3. What is your highest level of education?	Lower than grade 12	1
	Grade 12	2
	Grade 12+ diploma	3
	Grade 12+ a degree	4
	Postgraduate degree or diploma	5
4. In terms of the Employment Equity Act, to which population group do you belong?	Black	1
	Coloured	2
	White	3
	Asian	4
	Other (Specify)	
5. What is your approximate total monthly HOUSEHOLD INCOME? (Joint income of partners/spouses)	Less than R5000	1
	R5 000 or more but less than R10 000	2
	R10 000 or more but less than R15 000	3
	R15 000 or more but less than R25 000	4
	R25 000 or more	5
6. Please specify your area of residence within the greater Tswane Metropolitan area, for example <i>Sunnyside</i>		
Suburb:		

V1

V2

V3

V4

V5

V6

Please take note that the rest of this questionnaire only relates to your purchasing of smart casual and career wear for yourself.

SECTION B:

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below:

	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Mostly	Almost Always
7. When buying smart casual clothing/ career wear...				
1. I would buy a clothing item just because it is classy	1	2	3	4
2. I am interested in new clothes with status	1	2	3	4
3. I would pay more for a clothing item if it is classy	1	2	3	4
4. The prestige of a clothing item is relevant to me	1	2	3	4
5. A clothing item is more valuable to me if it has some exclusivity	1	2	3	4

V71

V72

V73

V74

V75

	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Mostly	Almost Always
8. When buying clothes (smart casual and career wear), do you use brand names as an indication of: ...				
1. The quality of the garment	1	2	3	4
2. The fashionability of the garment	1	2	3	4
3. The prestige of the garment	1	2	3	4
4. What your friends' admiration of the outfit could be	1	2	3	4
5. The suitability of the outfit for the occasion	1	2	3	4
6. The fit of the garment	1	2	3	4
7. The durability of the garment	1	2	3	4
8. Ease of care of the garment	1	2	3	4
9. Care about the environment	1	2	3	4
10. Manufacturers' regard for human dignity during manufacture	1	2	3	4
11. Price	1	2	3	4
12. Comfort	1	2	3	4

V81

V82

V83

V84

V85

V86

V87

V88

V89

V810

V811

V812

SECTION C:

9. When buying smart casual clothing/ career wear, how specifically do you....	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Mostly	Almost Always
1. focus on well-known brands	1	2	3	4
2. choose more expensive brands	1	2	3	4
3. regard more famous brands as of a higher quality	1	2	3	4
4. assume that superior brands are sold in nice speciality stores	1	2	3	4
5. purchase what I believe are the best selling brands	1	2	3	4
6. regard the most advertised brands as good choices	1	2	3	4
7. regard imported brands as very good choices	1	2	3	4
8. regard local brands as usually very good choices	1	2	3	4

V91	
V92	
V93	
V94	
V95	
V96	
V97	
V98	

10. Which of the following are CLOTHING brands are associated with LADIES SMART CASUAL and CAREER WEAR?	Yes	No	Don't know
1. French Connection			
2. Aca Joe			
3. Cellini			
4. Country Road			
5. Montblanc			
6. Jo Borkett			
7. Donna Claire			
8. Pringle			
9. Charter Club			
10. Maserati			
11. Busby			
12. Hilton Weiner			
13. Forever New			
14. Jenni Button			
15. Tumi			

V101	
V102	
V103	
V104	
V105	
V106	
V107	
V108	
V109	
V1010	
V1011	
V1012	
V1013	
V1014	
V1015	

11. In which COUNTRY do you think the following brands are MANUFACTURED?		
Specify the country in column A or in column B	A: I KNOW this brand is manufactured in	B: I GUESS this brand is manufactured in ...
1. Zara		
2. Diesel		
3. Trenergy		
4. Guess		
5. Country Road		
6. Mango		
7. Jenni Button		
8. Jo Borkett		
9. Queenspark		
10. Woolworths - W Collection		
11. Donna Claire		
12. Marion and Lindie		
13. Daniel Hechter		
14. Pringle		

A1/B1				
A2/B2				
A3/B3				
A4/B4				
A5/B5				
A6/B6				
A7/B7				
A8/B8				
A9/B9				
A10/B10				
A11/B11				
A12/B12				
A13/B13				
A14/B14				

12. In which COUNTRY do you think the following BRANDS ORIGINATED FROM?		
Specify the country in column A or in column B	A: I KNOW this brand originated from....	B: I GUESS this brand originated from....
1. Zara		
2. Diesel		
3. Trenery		
4. Guess		
5. Country Road		
6. Mango		
7. Jenni Button		
8. Jo Borkett		
9. Queenspark		
10. Woolworths - W Collection		
11. Donna Claire		
12. Marion and Lindie		
13. Daniel Hechter		
14. Pringle		

A1/B1				
A2/B2				
A3/B3				
A4/B4				
A5/B5				
A6/B6				
A7/B7				
A8/B8				
A9/B9				
A10/B10				
A11/B11				
A12/B12				
A13/B13				
A14/B14				

13. Please rate the following brands in terms of prestige:	Not at all prestigious	Limited in prestige	Fairly prestigious	Very prestigious
1. Zara	1	2	3	4
2. Diesel	1	2	3	4
3. Trenery	1	2	3	4
4. Guess	1	2	3	4
5. Country Road	1	2	3	4
6. Mango	1	2	3	4
7. Jenni Button	1	2	3	4
8. Jo Borkett	1	2	3	4
9. Queenspark	1	2	3	4
10. Woolworths - W Collection	1	2	3	4
11. Donna Claire	1	2	3	4
12. Marion and Lindie	1	2	3	4
13. Daniel Hechter	1	2	3	4
14. Pringle	1	2	3	4

V131		
V132		
V133		
V134		
V135		
V136		
V137		
V138		
V139		
V1310		
V1311		
V1312		
V1313		
V1314		

14. Which of the brands mentioned above are you NOT really familiar with?	
Brand:	
Brand:	




V141		
V142		

15. When purchasing smart casual wear, which OTHER luxury brands not listed above do you purchase for yourself?	
Brand:	
Brand:	

V151		
V152		

SECTION D:

16. Study the set of labels below carefully in terms of all the information printed on the label. Circle the number of the label that you prefer.

SET A	1	COUNTRY ROAD 100% POLYESTER MADE IN AUSTRALIA 	2	COUNTRY ROAD 100% POLYESTER MADE IN CHINA 	3	COUNTRY ROAD 100% POLYESTER MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA 
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V16

17. Study the set of labels below carefully in terms of all the information printed on the label. Circle the number you prefer.

SET B	1	PRINGLE OF SCOTLAND 100% COTTON MADE IN SCOTLAND WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 	2	PRINGLE OF SCOTLAND 100% COTTON MADE IN CHINA WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 	3	PRINGLE OF SCOTLAND 100% COTTON MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 
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V17

18. Study the set of labels below carefully in terms of all the information printed on the label. Circle the number you prefer.

SET C	1	 100% COTTON MADE IN AMERICA WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 	2	 100% COTTON MADE IN CHINA WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 	3	 100% COTTON MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA WASH DARK COLOURS SEPARATELY 
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V18

19. After studying the sets of labels above, consider the 12 characteristics of a garment that are listed below, then rank THE TOP 5 characteristics in order of importance without repeating, using the following scale:

1 = Crucial
 2 = Less crucial than 1, but still very important
 3 = Less crucial than 2, but still important
 4 = Less crucial than 3, but still important
 5 = Less crucial than 4, but still important

Characteristics (Your priorities, i.e. 1,2,3,4 or 5 should be written in the column)	Rank
1. The quality of the garment	
2. The fashionability of the garment	
3. The prestige of the garment	
4. What your friends' admiration of the outfit could be	
5. The suitability of the outfit for the occasion	
6. The fit of the garment	
7. The durability of the garment	
8. Ease of care of the garment	
9. Care about the environment	
10. Human dignity during manufacture	
11. Price	
12. Comfort	

V191
V192
V193
V194
V195
V196
V197
V198
V199
V1910
V1911
V1912